



## GREENBERG MILLENNIAL PROJECT

FOCUS GROUP #2  
AFRICAN-AMERICANS, MIXED GENDER  
NEW YORK  
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MODERATOR: INTRODUCTION AND INSTRUCTIONS.

I'm Juliella and I'm from Brooklyn and I'm a student. At home, there is my kid, husband. I work for a social services agency and I'm in college taking nursing.

I'm Bedris and I'm done with school but I take continuing education classes for art. Right now I work as a proofreader in law firms and I live in Brooklyn with my family.

MODERATOR—IS THAT YOUR PARENTS OR DO YOU HAVE KIDS AND FAMILY?

Parents and family.

I'm Demetrius and I am actually working right now, planning to go back to school in August to study forecasting. I work for the American Red Cross. I'm married, no kids.

I'm Junior and I'm from Queens. I work for an entertainment company and I live at home with my parents.

MODERATOR—WHERE IN QUEENS ARE YOU FROM?

St. Alden's.

MODERATOR—OKAY, I GREW UP IN FLUSHING.

I'm Keith and I work with the classical theater in Harlem. At home, it's just me.

MODERATOR—IS THAT THE COMPANY THAT DID LEAR LAST SEASON?

Yes.

MODERATOR—I'VE BEEN UP THERE.

I'm Tiffany and I'm a social worker for Children's Services. At home, it's me. I live in Manhattan.

I'm Andrew and I live in Freeport, Long Island. I'm a professional dancer/choreographer in the industry. I live with my family.

I'm Kedra and I live in Jersey City. I moved here from Michigan to go to the Aley School. I graduated a year and a half ago and now I'm a personal trainer. I live with one roommate.

I'm Kaisha and I work for the city of New York. I live in Brooklyn and I graduated two times over. I'm probably going for my JD but I'm broke right now.

MODERATOR—WHEN YOU LOOK AT WHERE WE ARE NOW IN THE UNITED STATES, WE OFTEN IN THIS COUNTRY HAVE TALKED ABOUT DIFFERENT GROUPS OF PEOPLE IN TERMS OF THE GENERATIONS THAT THEY'VE LIVED IN. WE'VE HAD GENERATION X, WE'VE HAD BABY BOOMERS, THEY HAD THE GENERATION DURING WWII THAT WE ARE NOW CALLING THE GREAT GENERATION. I'M WONDERING NOW WE'VE GOT PEOPLE YOUR AGE WHO ARE UNDER 30 AND WONDERING IF YOU HAVE A SENSE AT THIS POINT OF HOW YOUR GENERATION MAY BE DIFFERENT FROM THE GENERATIONS THAT CAME BEFORE IN TERMS OF WHATEVER.

I think one way that my generation is different from the generation that came before us, I think as a male we are a lot more involved. I know the generation before mine, when I was coming up as a kid, we had a lot more of males having children and then just breaking out. Now, there are literally programs for single parent gentleman. So as a male, this generation is a lot more involved in the family atmosphere than the last generation was.

Communication has been broken down a little bit. There is more technology, cell phones, My Space. As far as communication, you no longer sit down and write a letter anymore. It's very quick and easy and I think that breaks down a lot of how things move in this time now and how things get done. It's a different way of communicating.

It's funny because I was talking to some people the other day, the way that it is broken down, the way that we may necessarily feel as people and going through different things in society is not expressed as it would have been I guess back in the days. I'm guessing. This older guy was telling me this. There was more opportunity for that time to talk and to get thoughts across. Now it's a little ...things move a little quicker and there is less of that inner...I don't know if I'm making any sense at all.

I was going to say something along that line. Go ahead if you are not finished.

I'm trying to put into words...

It's less personal.

Yeah, there is less of a quality of that understanding of the day to day of an individual's struggle or journey.

If you think about it, when I was younger I had fifteen friends and I would know all fifteen of those friends house numbers. I would dial it on the phone and I would just pay attention to the tone of the keys. Now you have speed dial and people don't even know their close friend's phone numbers. I think that's along the lines of what you are talking about. I think also when you have these new gadgets that people run out and sleep out on the street for a \$600 phone, you know, just so that people can have access to every single moment of the day, that goes more along the line of being disconnected from people on the personal level.

**MODERATOR—EVEN THOUGH THERE IS MORE ACCESS.**

Yeah.

I was just going to say along the lines of what everybody is saying, this generation moves so much quicker. And more access, more ways to communicate, but less time to do so. You don't know people's phone numbers...I grew up in a front porch community and you know all your neighbors because they all sit out on the front porch and they talk, whether it's church meetings or neighborhood association or whatever. And that doesn't go on as much, I feel, anymore because of the Internet, e-mail, just send me a text or send it to my Blackberry or whatever. It's not as much personal time.

I disagree. I'm sorry. I'm only saying that because we know at our age, the twenty range, we know what it's like to...I remember when I had a beeper and I remember, oh \$10 a month to maintain my beeper. So our generation, we know what it is like to know someone's phone number and be personal. I'm thinking of the people below us, the sixteen, the seventeen who are growing up with the technology. They are more disconnected. They are more like, oh, catch you on My Space where we are like, oh we'll hang out. I'll see you at the lounge. So our generation in the twenties, I say that we have the best of both worlds. And that's because we know what it was like before. I know what it was like hanging outside. And in terms of prior generations, like my parent's generation, I think with them they were more of a close knit because they hung out more. It was more like our generation we hung outside, so we kind of know what it was, we kind of dabbled and dabbled. But prior generations, like the baby boom generation, it was more of a village type environment. My mom can recall times when she was coming in late and her next door neighbor was like, oh you are going to get a beating. And I can recall me coming in when I was younger and the people in our building would be going, do you know your mother was outside looking for you? But now, my little brother could be outside, he's sixteen and he could be outside till like ten o'clock. He'll call, I'm on my way home. It's kind of like the generation before us and the generation that's coming up now has a total disconnect, no personal. But we know what it's like to be personal because we had the beepers, we had to memorize the phone numbers. We had the I'm going to sneak the phone when Mommy goes to sleep so she don't know I'm on it. I think that we had that personally.

**MODERATOR—AND WHAT IS ACTUALLY HAPPENING BECAUSE OF THE WAY THEY'VE DEFINED THIS PARTICULAR RESEARCH IS THEY'VE EXTENDED IT FROM**

LIKE 29 ALL THE WAY DOWN TO 18. SO BASED ON WHAT YOU ARE SAYING, I'M GUESSING THERE MIGHT BE A LITTLE BIT OF OVERLAP THERE.

Yeah.

MODERATOR—OTHER THINGS THAT YOU THINK SORT OF ARE HALLMARKS OF YOUR GENERATION?

I think one thing that came up that Kendra mentioned, the Internet changed the game. Me and my sister were talking yesterday and I realized, in all actuality, you don't have to leave your house. I can work from home, I can buy groceries from home, I can do clothes shopping from home. I can do everything from home, so what it actually does is it makes some of us very non-social. I don't have to associate or interact with anyone because I can do everything in my house and maintain a "state of happiness." I think that the internet really just changed the game.

I agree. But I think the internet also and I can only say this from when I was in college, when I was in college I remember we all used to...the library, the internet café or whatever it was called, that was the place we hung out. Even though everyone was on the computer doing research or whatever, that was the place that we all hung out. And the internet, though it takes away personal one-on-one communication, it still has a dialogue. There is instant messaging. Like at my job, I never have to get up from my desk. People that I work with e-mail me all day and then I'll e-mail them my response, unless I have to actually deliver a sheet of paper. So I think there are also levels of that.

MODERATOR—TIFFANY, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS?

I kind of agree with what she's saying. It's all about how you take it. I live for my text messaging. I think I'm too social. I think I have too much of a social life. My text messaging is like my time to say I can't talk now but here you go, we'll talk later. I hate to say it, but I live by it because that's what works for me, my clients, appointments, everything. But it's all on the level of how you take it. If you are going to say I'm good like this, that doesn't work for everyone, just sitting home. I want to look at what I buy. I want to look at people that I'm talking to. If you are on the level where you say, okay, this is perfect for me, that's fine. But some people are going to say, no that's not good for me, I'd rather do both. I'd rather have the best of both worlds and that's how I feel.

I think this generation is more so than other generations, we are at a major crossroads right now. Just the way you disagree with the internet to be used for social things and you say you don't have to leave your house, it's the same thing with communications. Some teenagers can use their cell phones to stay in touch with as many people as they can, some people lose touch with all the communication. I think that right now because of the state of the world, we are questioning everything right now. Is too much communication a good thing? Is too much communication a bad thing? We are at a crossroads right now where every decision we make makes a difference. We are analyzing those questions. We are doing this right now. The world is doing this right now, but not in the office setting.

To piggyback that, there are also images. Going along with the internet, there are a lot of images, there are a lot of choices. There are more choices than there was in the past. There is a lot to choose from and if you don't want to dial, you can just do voice command or if you don't want to do voice command you can text message. If you don't want to text message, you can go to the internet...there are a lot of options to get things done. There are so many different images.

MODERATOR—WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE ...DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU DO HAVE A LOT OF OPTIONS...THAT YOUR GENERATION HAS MORE OPTIONS THAN PREVIOUS GENERATIONS?

Oh yeah.

Yes.

MODERATOR—MY QUESTION IS, WHAT DOES HAVING ALL OF THOSE OPTIONS DO FOR YOU?

I think it just comes down to the individual person.

MODERATOR—THINKING IN TERMS OF YOUR GENERATION, YOU ARE PRETTY MUCH LIKE THE FIRST GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO GREW UP WITH ALL OF THIS STUFF, YOU ARE SORT OF AT THE TOP END OF THIS AGE RANGE SO YOU SAW THE TRANSFORMATION. THOSE OF YOU IN THE MID TO EARLIER TWENTIES, THIS HAS ALWAYS BEEN HERE FOR YOU. WHAT KIND OF SENSE MIGHT YOU HAVE OF HOW THIS IS MAKING YOU DIFFERENT FROM OTHER GROUPS OF PEOPLE?

One of the things, and I noticed this because I have little cousins, seriously if these kids leave the house without their cell phones, they freak out. They will literally be at the bus and they'll run back. Whereas with us, we had pagers, if you left it there it would be vibrating and ringing and you wouldn't even really know. Even now sometimes I run out and forget the cell phone. I have voice mail on my cell phone saying, I forgot my cell phone, call me at the office. Some people really feel they cannot live without it because that's all they know. And I remember growing up in the 80's when microwave ovens first came out. That was a sight. Wow. Wow. So, I guess it would kind of be the same difference. Our parents had to use the ovens or toaster ovens. I guess it's all transcending as it goes along as the accessibility comes and the reliability. You are just living this with your day-to-day life. If you don't know it's there, then you don't miss it. Coming up with these things in our lives, especially the younger generation, the sixteen and seventeen-year-old kids, they don't know any better. I don't mean to sound like that, but this is what they know.

I'm twenty-six and now that I'm thinking about it I realize that with almost every new technology I've fought it. When cell phones really became popular when I was about seventeen or eighteen, I don't need it, I don't need it. I've never had one. Why do you need to call me

when I'm in class? I just bought it. To this day, I won't get a My Space page. I don't see the point. I see people and I meet people and I talk...I just don't find the need. I don't understand why sixteen-year-old kids need a cell phone in high school. What is the point? And I find like on the older end of it, I know my younger cousins and everyone, they have the sidekicks, all that good stuff, and they just can't live without it. With me coming up, I fought everything. I just was very resistant to technological changes. Once you are in it, you are comfortable, but I could still live without it. But it is a convenience thing. You can find a house online. It's a convenience thing, very efficient.

What I was going to say to the younger generation, I teach in a high school. I see it as the media is portraying what is cool, it's cool to have a sidekick, it's cool to have a Blackberry or something like that. In the music videos nowadays you'll see the new phone that's not even out yet. Kids will try and get that before it's not out. This is the phone that TI had, oh yeah. So that's what I see it as.

**MODERATOR—BUT HOW AS YOUR GENERATION RESPONDING TO STUFF LIKE THAT?**

I guess for us it's kind of like been there, done that kind of thing. And as we are getting older, our responsibilities change too. So it's like going out and spending \$300 for a new Blackberry is kind of like...it's not as important. I guess it goes back to just having income. Like when we were growing up, CD's is what we bought. Your first check you went out and bought the first Tupac CD.

I remember records.

(many talking at once)

I guess it's just more so a perception thing, for lack of better words. So, these kids have the expendable income because they don't pay bills at sixteen or seventeen-years-old. So affording the buy the phone, it fits your lifestyle. For us, you've got to worry about rent on the first and you can't afford to spend it.

**MODERATOR—OKAY, SO YOUR NEEDS ....**

You can go ahead because mine is kind of changing it a little bit.

**MODERATOR—YOU SAID YOU ARE NOW AT A POINT WHERE YOUR NEEDS ARE STARTING TO CHANGE.**

Definitely.

They are different.

He said ...he mentioned the word perception. I think one of the key differences for our generation is like she was saying, she fought technological changes. That's the mindset that this is actually a luxury. The next generation coming behind us, it's a necessity.

MODERATOR—I'M REALLY MUCH MORE INTERESTED IN HOW YOU DIFFER FROM THE GENERATIONS THAT CAME BEFORE YOU AS OPPOSED TO THE ONES THAT ARE COMING AFTER. THAT'S REALLY WHAT I'M HERE TO LOOK AT AS HOW YOU ARE NEW AS OPPOSED TO...

This is how I was changing it actually, was perception of a struggle. I believe that my parents were struggling in the sense that it was the end of the 60's, the Civil Rights movement, they were beginning to work. Their parents ...my grandmother used to work for Coca Cola putting the tops on the bottles. So, they came from that we are struggling and we are just going to figure things out as we go along. If I have to get in contact with you, I know you are on this corner every day at six o'clock, I'll be there. Our generation, we came out of that in the sense that we are aware of it, but we know what it is like to work for certain things. In order for me to get a beeper, I had to get a job. I was working at McDonald's. And then baby-sitting. My mother, that's what she instilled in me. Now we know what we have to work for, we know we have things that we need to do. We've seen the change, whereas the generation coming up ...it's kind of like I'm not going to make you go through what I went through. Our generation is we are going to work hard just like our parents worked hard so you don't have to go through what we've gone through, so they are not working as hard. And we are working, but we are not working as hard as the generation before us. I think the difference is kind of like ...I definitely think it's the struggle. We don't know the struggle. We know the struggle verbally, we don't know it physically. That's the difference to me.

I think because of their struggle, we have more opportunities. And that's one thing that me and my wife discuss very often that I don't think people take into consideration. It's too often that we seemingly forget that very struggle that you are talking about. We tend to mentally bypass it. We know about it verbally, but we don't pay homage enough to the former generation to say, I appreciate what you went through because I don't have to go through it. I get up every morning and I go to work. There are invisible resistances and things like that, but I don't literally see it in the physical sense the way my mom and the way my grandmother...my grandmother would head to work and literally people would curse her out and call her all types of things. And the crazy thing about it, she's going to clean somebody's house. Me, I'm just going to an office. I look at the past generation and I go, yeah, you guys did a great job, but it's not really in my mind how much I appreciate what you did because I don't have to go through what you went through now.

I think this generation has a greater potential to make changes.

Yeah definitely.

Because of all the knowledge of a lot of the things that the people before us made possible for us. We have knowledge of that, we have knowledge of technology now, we have knowledge of



business, we have education with the professors, the scholars. We have all of these different resources at our disposal now. I think that we are at a point where we can make greater changes in the world because we are aware of a lot of the different types of races and oppression that exists.

To add onto what he is saying, it makes complete sense. We are kind of like in the middle between the two generations, the younger techno-savvy kids and our parents who were part of the struggle. So we fall right into that gap. We know what it is like before and we know what it is like behind us. The kids coming up behind us, forget about it. Our parents, those are like the blue collar workers who kind of paved the American way, for lack of better words. I mean, honestly we can't really understand that beyond the word.

That's right.

Like he said, we are knowledgeable of what is going on so we are able to make better choices right now.

I think we also realize that there's a difference between middle and poor class of our age range. There are a lot of people who I know ...I had more than them growing up and they are resistant...I know my friend who pretty much was...look, my mom was a crack head and I went to Temple University and I'm just going to be better than that. She's resistant. She will not waste money on technology. She's like, look, I will go to the library to use the internet before I buy a computer at this point in time. It's not something...and she's twenty-six, twenty-seven, so I think that we need to always remember that there's a difference between the middle class growing up in our age range and the poor class.

**MODERATOR—SO THE SENSE THAT IT'S NOT NECESSARILY A MONOLITHIC THING, THAT YOU ARE ALL GOING THROUGH THE SAME EXPERIENCES, THAT PEOPLE OF YOUR GENERATION ARE ALL HAVING THE SAME EXPERIENCES?**

Then I start thinking about race. I think there are different opportunities for different races.

Of course.

This focus group, when you say our generation, do you mean the generation of people of color?

**MODERATOR—ACTUALLY I MEAN IT ANYWAY YOU MEAN TO DEFINE IT. IF YOU WANT TO DEFINE IT AS JUST PEOPLE OF COLOR, YOU CAN. IF WHEN I SAY YOUR GENERATION, IF YOU ARE THINKING OF SOMETHING BROADER THAN THAT, I'D LIKE TO KNOW THAT. WHEN YOU THINK OF YOUR GENERATION, WHO DO YOU THINK OF AS BEING PART OF YOUR GENERATION?**

I think looking around the room, I think all of us can pretty much speak from the generation of people of color. I don't know what it is to be white with those types of privileges or Asian with those privileges or disadvantages. I don't know. I think that we are all of color right here so...



I think her perception, because she said she was from Michigan, her perception is even different than ours from New York. We were born and raised in New York and the way we are thinking of our generation could be different. She could have had...I don't know about that whole front porch thing. I was in a building.

I wasn't on a stoop. I was at the park.

MODERATOR—YOU DIDN'T HAVE A STOOP?

(many talking at once)

Okay, a hallway, but that is different. A hallway, yes. I was just thinking that our perceptions would just be different just because she wasn't raised here in New York. My boyfriend is from Florida. Everything he says I've never experienced. I don't know what...all their laws down there are totally different than here. I don't know.

MODERATOR—I WANT TO...WE'VE BEEN TALKING A LOT ABOUT THE DIFFERENCES AND DIFFERENT STRANDS AND I'D LIKE TO SORT OF DISCUSS THE COMMONALITIES. WHAT ARE THE THINGS THAT PEOPLE YOUR AGE DO HAVE IN COMMON THAT WOULD DISTINGUISH YOU FROM SOMEONE WHO IS LIKE FORTY OR SO?

A work ethic.

I'd say the expectation for income. Kind of to go along with the last topic we were talking about, the struggle of the generation before us, I think our generation also strives, but to kind of meet a certain income. I don't know if this is since I've come here. In the Midwest, \$100,000, that's two people. And that's a lot of money. You are living mid to upper class if you bring in \$100-\$150,000 between you and your husband or wife. Out here, that's like what I'm trying to make now and ...I think that's a common thing between our two generations. My parents worked really hard to make that and survive on it and build your family on it. I feel like we've almost ...maybe it's not that common because I think we've stepped it up with all the music videos and the people living the way that they do. I feel like I need to make \$150,000 this year. I don't need to, but you know what I'm saying? I feel pushed to.

I agree with that. I feel our generation can be lax and lazy at times, even towards simple things as cooking. I'll get lazy and just microwave something instead of just making my own meal. My parents are always ready to cook and stuff like that. That's about it.

MODERATOR—WHAT KINDS OF THINGS WOULD YOU SAY ...ANY SPECIFIC EXPERIENCES THAT YOU GUYS HAVE HAD THAT HAVE DEFINED YOUR GENERATION?

Yeah, for me when I was a kid growing up in Brooklyn, it was really a bad, bad time. A lot of the kids, their parents were crack heads, so a lot of the kids had to fend for themselves. Little kids taking care of their little brothers and things like that. So the difference was if you are looking for a generational thing, a lot of the people before us, they lost a lot of responsibility, especially in the 80's. Like he said, fathers were just having kids and running out. The little kids, our generation, we had to fend for ourselves a little earlier. At least in New York City, I don't know about in Michigan. In New York City, it was rough.

I disagree. And I only say that from personal experience.

**MODERATOR—WHAT KIND OF EXPERIENCES DO YOU THINK HELPS DEFINE YOUR GENERATION?**

I know my dad, he took care of my uncle who is younger than him. And that's pretty much what he tells us. My little brother is sixteen, we are ten years apart. And I'm kind of like responsible. I'm at parent/teacher night, I'm helping out with him. So, I think that's a commonality. And that's again, I think it's pretty much the environment we were raised in.

But I would say if I looked at a majority, I would agree with what he said. I know when I ...it's amazing how many friends I had and how many people I know who you would hear that same, I was raised by the streets. People say, okay, well that's a cliché. No, let's be real. My mom was doing whatever she was doing. Me and my brothers and my sister was running the streets. Thank God because we had such a close knit group, we were able to stay away from a lot of the things that were surrounding us, a lot of the influences. But we were still doing our own thing out there. Me and my wife were talking and I said, had I not made certain decisions, I would probably be either in jail or dead right now. It's just that one or two decisions here and there that were made that defined my destiny. I really believe that a lot of our generation, one of the commonalities of most of our generation, you have a lot of single parent families.

I agree.

You had a lot of people where they had their parents and they were doing their thing. And yeah, they are there, but how much are they actually there?

**MODERATOR—OKAY.**

I wanted to say growing up, I grew up in Jamaica/Queens, but I live in Manhattan now. I wanted to say, I think with our generation now because I work with Children's Services and back then, I think that now is parents letting people raise their kids instead of doing it. I know growing up, there was certain stuff I didn't ask to do because I knew my mother and father were not playing that. I could not...I sat on the stoop...I thought I was something when I got to sit on the stoop. Anytime it was in the backyard and if you walked past the front by the driveway, you better have a good explanation when my mother comes to front door. So I think it has a lot to do with kids are raising parents now and back then it was my mother and father fighting so hard to instill in us everything they knew and their values. I took it to heart because I thought I had the meanest

mother because my friends could do stuff that I couldn't do. But as I got older in the field that I worked in, I realized that I had a parent that cared. Now I can go back to Jamaica/Queens and there are girls that are my age who are just like...and I hate to put them down, but I realize that when I'm doing what I'm doing you've got to be careful of the friends you pick, the places you go, where you kind of put yourself at. So I think it has a lot to do with now parenting is much different from back then. So that plays a lot in the adults that we are today.

And I agree. One thing I wanted to say was that I know a lot of the stigma is that kids are raising kids. They are thirteen having a kid. Our parents were the same way, but we didn't come out as bad. My boyfriend's mother had him at fourteen. He's college, everything. So I think it's more of a care, more of a nurturing thing. I know there is a stigma now and the media is like, oh we have kids raising kids. Well, if these kids learned enough by the time they were fourteen, they can instill anything they believe they didn't get in these...I know the times are different.

Yeah, I agree with that as well. I grew up in St. Alden's and I wasn't even allowed to cross the street until I was like fourteen.

Hello, the corner store either. I think I just started being able to go by myself.

**MODERATOR—I WANT TO JUMP...THERE ARE A COUPLE THINGS THAT I WANT TO COVER. WHAT KINDS OF THINGS MOTIVATE YOU AND YOU HAD SAID THE NEED TO MAKE MORE MONEY THAN YOUR PARENTS. WHAT OTHER KINDS OF THINGS MOTIVATE PEOPLE YOUR AGE?**

To be better than your parents.

Proving people wrong. Even with this group, it's funny that you mentioned the Generation X. That was us about five or six years ago. So, there is still a very large perception that this generation, even though they are getting some things right, but in the totality of it, the majority of it, there's a negative perception. So I think that's one of the things that really motivates our generation. Okay, you say I can't do this, let me show you what I'm actually capable of.

I also think the fact that we realize that there are a lot of possibilities out there as well. Just looking at in terms of the success out there, either sports athletes or the entertainment industry. Like I said, I work in the entertainment industry and I write sheet notes for music videos. So I work with the best of the best people. I just think our generation is the accessibility, that these things are very, very possible whereas a few years ago, a lot of these things didn't even exist. So seeing it you realize that it can be achieved. It's not a dream anymore, it actually can happen.

I think there is a need to be independent more so in this generation. Just being able to ...it goes hand-in-hand with what I was saying about the need to make a certain amount of money. I feel like there are so many opportunities handed to our generation. There is financial aid, college opportunities, just to kind of get out of the house at an earlier age. I think Beyonce even made a song about independent women or I don't know who it was, but somebody...and especially for the females. People are marrying way later, they are having less kids. My grandma was married

at like eighteen. Kids having kids, but she was eighteen and married and she had five kids. She didn't have the career or profession. I think more of my generation is focusing on our careers, our professions, whether we are raising kids by ourselves or not.

We've been enlightened.

We are taking it to the next level.

Yeah.

(many talking at once)

We are still going to college. We are not living with our parents as long as we used to. I think independence.

And I think that's more selfish. From what I'm hearing, I think we are selfish is what she's saying. That was my interpretation of it.

No, that's fine. I agree with that to some extent. I totally think for me it is a selfish thing. I don't want to share my life with any kids right now. I have a long ways to go.

(many talking at once)

For me it's selfish in a positive way because there are things that I want to accomplish before I bring a man or children into my life.

I think one of the positive things about it is we have to understand that because I am selfish and because I'm very self-centered, I don't want to bring a child into a situation where I'm not willing to sacrifice with that child. I'm not at the point where I want to put my desires and my personal needs aside for another person. Yeah, I was ready to do it for a wife, but I'm sorry I'm not ready to do that yet.

I'll get a dog.

(many talking at once)

When I think about kids, I was saying God forgive me for feeling like this, but I feel like I'm serious. This is all about ...what gets me mad I think with a lot of people in our ages, you can put your kids on this, that and the other that you can't even spell. They don't have any insurance, they don't have anything to offer kids except you are dressing them nice. And what is that? I don't understand that. As a social worker, I come to the kids school and I see them dressed nicely. When I come to your house, nobody is sleeping in a bed. I don't understand that. It's all about ...to me priorities are more important than anything. I'll admit that I love my nieces and nephews to death, I love my dog to death, but priorities. I want to be able to say, okay, boom my child is good in this way, my child is good in that way versus, okay, I can make

her look cute. What is making her look cute going to do if your child is dumb and don't know anything because you can't teach them anything?

That's right.

That's right.

I think priority means a lot to me.

**MODERATOR—OKAY. THE PEOPLE WHO WERE YOUR AGE IN THE 80'S AND 90'S ARE REFERRED TO AS THE ME GENERATION.**

That's the selfishness right there.

**MODERATOR—I'M WONDERING, WHAT WOULD YOU CALL YOUR GENERATION? WOULD YOU CALL IT THE ME GENERATION, WOULD YOU CALL IT SOMETHING ELSE?**

The I generation.

The progressive generation.

**MODERATOR—PROGRESSIVE IN WHAT SENSE?**

In the sense that we have more options out there for us, we are more open minded. We can move in so many different directions. A lot more can be done in less time than people in the past generations prior to us. They took forty years to buy their dream home, some people can do it sooner than others, six months. If you can get it done...so I think it's more progressive.

**MODERATOR—ANY OTHER WORDS THAT YOU MIGHT USE TO DESCRIBE YOUR GENERATION?**

The opportunity generation. The level of opportunities we have now, I don't think we actually take into consideration how many opportunities we actually have. Like she said, financial aid. If you really want to go to school and you really want to get an education, you can do so. I'm married to a woman who has a bachelor's degree, a master's degree and is studying for a doctorate program. I was with her when she was living out of pocket for the master's program. Okay, I got this job. Okay, honey you take care of the bills. She's putting money away and I'm looking at her now and I'm saying, okay, you've got to set the game up. Even now it's me beginning to understand that. Those opportunities are out there. Step it up. This is the opportunity generation.

I hear the financial aid thing. School is not that expensive that we need financial aid now.

Oh true.

When my mom went to Berouk when she was younger it was not that expensive. She could pay out of pocket or they had like little programs.

MODERATOR—I'M GOING TO INTERRUPT YOU BECAUSE I'M REALLY NOT TERRIBLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE OLDER GENERATION. I WANT TO JUST KEEP THAT FOCUS BACK ON YOU GUYS.

I would say steadfast.

MODERATOR—IN WHAT SENSE?

That we think, we move. We are steady. We know what we want, we are going to go for it. We know how to get it. We've researched it, we've gone there, we've done it. We are like goal oriented more.

MODERATOR—YOU ACTUALLY SORT OF SEGUED ME INTO MY NEXT QUESTION WHICH IS, WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS AND PEOPLE OF YOUR GENERATION, DO YOU THINK THAT YOUR GENERATION IS FOCUSED MORE ON PERSONAL GOALS OR MORE ON PUBLIC WELFARE, GREATER GOOD KINDS OF THINGS?

Good question. I think it's just an individual thing or perception. I wouldn't paint everybody with a broad brush.

I was and it's interesting that you ask that because at one point in my life I would say that I've got to get and now I'm more like how do I get us....

MODERATOR—I'M GOING TO TAKE THIS AWAY FROM THE INDIVIDUAL PERSON AND I'M GOING TO ASK YOU TO SPEAK ABOUT YOUR GENERATION IN GENERAL.

Are you saying that people we are amongst or are you trying to get us to be very general?

Very general.

MODERATOR—YEAH EVERYBODY, PRETTY MUCH.

Then I'd say it's definitely more of an individual ....

Most people are trying to get theirs.

That goes to the selfish thing.

Yeah.

I think it's done selfishly, but not intentionally. I don't think like you do things and it's intentional to be selfish, but it just boils down that this is the best way that I can get where I want to be if I follow this path. I don't put myself as a selfish person, but when it comes to certain things I realize that I have to be on my ground if I'm going to make it happen, so that's when I got to get how I get.

Somebody will get dropped if they are not...if you are not with me then....

Exactly, that's right.

(many talking at once)

When I was growing up, I wished I could have had the Nikes and all that stuff. My mom didn't have that stuff. My mom would put the Velcro on us and that would be it. Now our generation because we grew up like that a lot of us grew up with not having, a lot of us are okay now I'm at the stage where I can go get mine, so I'm about to go get it now.

Of course.

I think this generation as a whole is more superficial than anything. I think with all the technology...everybody's self worth is based on things that they own. If they don't have it, then a lot of people feel worthless. Even from material things...even beauty has become like a material object in a sense. The friends you have, you could be judged based on how your friends look or what they have, not even you any more. It's trickled down to everything else that you have and I think people judge so much based on all these other things aside from a person's personality. I think this generation is very superficial.

I would like to speak on that also. The fact that people go by what they see. They spend money frivolously. They have nothing in the bank, nothing saved, nothing to retire on. They don't live in their own home. I find that a lot of people in our generation are more concerned about how they look and what they want to have people think about them rather than what they .....there is no value. They just don't have values. I don't understand where the disconnect came from.

I'm going to elaborate on what she said. I'm going to tell you where the disconnect came from. It came back to television and people seeing things that are not real. Trust me.

(many talking at once)

And my mama had to break this down to me, some people really don't know. And I'm telling you when you think ...and you are like what the...and I'm serious when I say this, some people really don't know. And it's sad to say, but it's true. You've got people who are older than me who I have to teach things. Well, they should be teaching me. But some people think they know and when they talk ...like I was always taught, think about what you say before you say it. But some people really don't know and you can't get mad at some people sometimes. You really can't.



MODERATOR—I WANT TO MOVE ONTO ANOTHER AREA AND GET INTO HOW POLITICS MIGHT AFFECT PEOPLE YOUR AGE. YOU HAVE THE SORT OF STANDARD SORT OF POLITICAL POSITIONS. YOU GO FROM LIBERAL TO CONSERVATIVE. AND WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT PEOPLE YOUR AGE, YOUR GENERATION, THE PROGRESSIVE GENERATION OR THE STEADFAST GENERATION, IS IT POSSIBLE TO PUT YOU GUYS ON A CONTINUUM HERE?

Yes.

MODERATOR—AND IF SO, WHERE WOULD IT BE?

Liberal.

Liberal.

I don't think so.

There are a lot of us who aren't liberal. When you are speaking generally....

I think not.

You are going against a grain. Everybody I know is trying to do me in and it doesn't matter which side you are on. I don't care who is president, I don't care what is going on...

MODERATOR—SO IT'S IRRELEVANT TO SOME PEOPLE.

Yeah.

Oh sure.

I think that our generation, we are more ....since we are so personal oriented, we are more republican, more conservative. We are in the middle. I think in the spectrum we are in the middle.

MODERATOR—REPUBLICAN?

We are more conservative in the sense that when you are about me, you are thinking of how I can gain my capital. That's conservative. Capital gain is conservative. But then at the same time we can address how we grew up and what we know. And we know how we can be or how we should be based on how we've grown up and I think that's where liberal comes in. But because we want capital, we are conservative. Capital gain, hustle, how to make that happen.

I think the (inaudible) stands for confused because black votes in politics, I think that we may go from liberal to conservative in a certain span of years, but because nothing seems to work we go back and forth. I think we are confused.

MODERATOR—OKAY. I AM JUST GOING TO SUM THIS UP AND CONTRASTED TO SORT OF THE GENERAL SENSE THAT I WAS GETTING, THAT MOST PEOPLE SEEM TO AGREE WITH YOU THAT YOU ARE KIND OF MORE TOWARDS THE LIBERAL SIDE. BUT WHEN YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT BEING CONSERVATIVE, YOU ACTUALLY PUT PEOPLE RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE. YOUR GENERATION, IF IT'S GOING TO BE DEFINED SOMEWHERE IN HERE AND FOR YOU ALL THE IDEA OF BEING CONSERVATIVE IS ACTUALLY THE GENERAL SPECTRUM, IT'S ACTUALLY KIND OF CENTRAL. I WANT TO MOVE ON. AT THIS POINT NOW I'M GOING TO BE DOING A LOT OF JUMPING BECAUSE I'VE GOT A LOT TO COVER. HOW DO YOU DEFINE PATRIOTISM?

I can't even answer that.

I don't know.

Not nowadays at least.

I'll be the first and I know I'm probably going to be martyred for this, but hey. I define patriotism as whether you agree with some of the things that are going on, whether you disagree with some of the things that are going on, you are an American. And in my opinion, my house the way I grew up, what happens in our house stays in our house. I see a lot of people who because they disagree with certain decisions that are being made or certain things that are going on, they are siding with other people. I can't do that in my house. There is no way in the world that me and my brothers and my little sister are going to go out in the street and because my brother says something to me...

MODERATOR—IN A LARGER SENSE, ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT THE UNITED STATES?

Yes. I think patriotism is defending your home, even when you don't agree. It's okay, I'm going to back you up because this is home. That's how I define it.

MODERATOR—ANY OTHER SENSE OF WHAT PATRIOTISM IS?

I don't know, but I think that if you don't vote then you don't have any right to say bad things about the country. You had your chance when you voted. Even if your person didn't win, I kind of feel that that's a part of patriotism.

I think patriotism is more of an American word. I think it's just a word to say follow me blindly.

Yeah, support America.

When I hear that word I think American and that to me is kind of ....

It's kind of...it just seems that it doesn't necessarily register as something that is in my vocabulary.

I agree. For some reason, I know I'm an American but I don't pay homage to America. When I think of patriotism, I think you are paying homage to the country. Like paying so much respect to it and I can't for some reason.

In our time, I think we hear the word a lot when it comes to the war, the Iraq war. And for the most part for me personally, why are we in Iraq still? The negative feelings that you get knowing that young men are dying every day. And to be patriotic, and then you see people on Long Island throwing up their American flags. I'm patriotic, I'm patriotic. It means nothing to me.

**MODERATOR—DOES IT HAVE ANY MEANING FOR ANY OF THE REST OF YOU?  
DOES IT CONJURE UP ANYTHING AT ALL POSITIVE?**

Just maybe frustrating.

(many talking at once)

**MODERATOR—AM I RIGHT IN SAYING, DO YOU GUYS CONSIDER YOURSELVES  
TO BE PATRIOTIC?**

No.

Not at all.

I do.

I'm not. Let me go out of the country, I am not an American.

If you were raised outside of ...I'm from the Virgin Islands and they are still a US Territory, but we don't really connect with the mainland on that level.

I think, again, if you were to ask that question in a different part of America you might get a different answer as well. I do a lot of traveling and when you go to certain places, like Heartland America, it's shocking to see that people are diehard red, white and blue. So whereas like in New York, we are so disconnected from everything. We went through the Trade Center stuff and we survived. New Yorkers are a different breed. We were in Ohio last weekend and I'm not kidding you. We stop at a local store and it's like red, white and blue diehard Americans. Again I was thinking that these people are disconnected in some which way, whereas us as New

Yorkers we have so much other things going on that words like patriotism don't even really register to us the same.

Sometimes you truly feel it when you are not in the country. Being in Japan...I have to go to Japan and dance and they didn't even know I was a dancer yet. They just knew I was a dancer from America and they praised me like I was Michael Jordan. So that's when I felt, oh okay, I'm glad to be from New York, I'm glad to be from the United States.

Are you sure they didn't do that because you were black?

They knew I was a dancer.

I think there's a difference. This is kind of a side note. I travel a lot and just because you are black, they are amazed.

I was with a group of people so it wasn't just me as a black person, but it was a group of Americans.

I think from New York period because when I go places and you say you are from New York, they think everybody from New York is rich. They will follow you....

(end of side)

Everybody wants to do my room because they knew that, okay, she's from New York, she's going to give us a tip. I think New York period. I think color is nothing, but when you say New York and you are someplace, you are rich. You are a rapper, you are something that they think you are.

**MODERATOR—DO YOU CONSIDER PATRIOTISM TO BE...I'M GOING TO LEAVE THAT. I WANT TO GO ONTO SOMETHING ELSE.**

Can I just say one thing? I don't know if it's that we are not patriotic or that it's not a concern. If it was something that was more of a concern, like if America controlled something that we knew was just like inevitable. Let's say...they do control things...but if it's not out there in the front. If you know that your bank is insured, but that's a part of American government. You don't think like I need to be part of the American government. You think like, my money is insured. Unless you take my money out of the bank and I don't get nothing back like the Great Depression....

**MODERATOR—DO YOU THINK PATRIOTISM FOR YOU AND YOUR PEERS, IS THAT AN IMPORTANT THING?**

No.

No.

Not at all.

Not unless something crucial happens like 9/11 and then all of a sudden people find themselves to be patriotic.

Absolutely.

MODERATOR—BUT MY SENSE IS THAT THAT’S NOT REALLY ....

(many talking at once)

There are too many different things happening in America. It’s different if we were like all Chinese and we were all from China, you know what I’m saying? It’s not like a whole melting pot of people live in China. And there are a lot of people who live in China. I would say the majority of them are Chinese whereas here we may be American, but you’ve got Africans, you’ve got people from the islands, your Chinese.

In New York.

Well everywhere really, but you can see more in New York. I think for America as a whole and our generation, I just don’t think it’s really that relevant.

MODERATOR—HOW WOULD YOU CATEGORIZE THE LEADERSHIP IN OUR COUNTRY THESE DAYS?

In terms of the president?

MODERATOR—AND BY LEADERSHIP I MEAN POLITICAL, CORPORATE AND RELIGIOUS, ALL THOSE SPHERES KIND OF COMBINED. AND I WANT TO TAKE IT BEYOND GEORGE BUSH AND JUST REALLY THE COUNTRY IN GENERAL.

The people who are running this country are also responsible for all the issues we were talking about today as far as technology, as far as media, as far as all those things. Viacom owns pretty much all of television so they pretty much control all the messages that go out on the TV. So, I think leadership in this country is a big façade because you have people at the high end who believe one thing, but they let all the masses see something else. I think that they have control over...just all the subliminal messages that are being put out to all the people. I think that people are always getting confused with all the messages that they see. Nobody is stepping up to say this is one way that you can do things and this is another way that you can do things. I think they are just letting people run around crazy when they know that they can step in and teach people how to be leaders themselves. We don’t need somebody to come in and lead us, but we need somebody who can come and say you know what, you are all leaders, now lead yourselves.

I don't know. I think of them differently. In my mind I separated corporate leadership from governmental leadership.

**MODERATOR—RIGHT NOW I WANT TO KEEP THEM TOGETHER BECAUSE I'M GOING TO SEPARATE THEM LATER. THIS IS JUST SORT OF LIKE THE LEADERSHIP ECHELON IN THE COUNTRY.**

I'll talk as far as me being an artist and that perspective. At one point it did feel like it was a selfish, I want to get out there and be seen. And now I feel that my work and whatever I can contribute to society should be something that can change instead of being manipulated by somebody above me, which usually is the case with a lot of things. You go to school and you get...you train or you study to do something, but then at some point or another you are working for somebody else. And you are working for that person who basically can somehow funnel you into a way of thinking that is already out there. The way that...I don't know if this is...we are doing a Tennessee William's play right now and I heard something ridiculous. Puff Daddy on Broadway, it's great, but it's like there has to be underground and more of the individual thoughts need to develop to form a leadership from those original ideas. Instead of the people who have been doing it for years, and I'm speaking in a general way, that that's how change...that's what I want. And that's how things can be changed from the beliefs of what things need to look like, how they should bling and how they should shine, how it needs to look.

**MODERATOR—IT'S GOT TO BUBBLE UP AS OPPOSED TO TRICKLE DOWN.**

For me there is a little bit of...I don't feel secure with the people who run Viacom. I don't feel secure that they've got my best interests in mind.

That's why I think the leadership is selfish.

It's selfish, right.

I would define leadership in our country as under pressure. And I think they are under pressure from a lot of different angles. I think they are being pressured from external...I mean outside of our country. There is pressure coming from inside of our country. People are pressuring people to make decisions in terms of how our society operates, in terms of what is "moral or immoral," right or wrong. And I think they are also under pressure in terms of peers. There are a lot of people within "leadership" positions who are making decisions basically because the person or the people that I work with...I'll give you an example. Let's say I have a point of view. These are all my peers. My peers have a different point of view. So because my peers have a different point of view, I may make a decision based upon my peers pressuring me to make that decision. I think that's how I would define leadership in this country.

**MODERATOR—ARE THERE ANY ORGANIZATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS IN THIS COUNTRY THAT YOU THINK ARE PROVIDING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP?**

Some non-profits.

MODERATOR—FOR INSTANCE....

The Urban League. The National Urban League. I like the fact that they put out the State of Black America. And that Mark Morrell is always on. They don't take that...they just talk about what they believe the demographic that they serve needs. Also the Food Bank, the New York Food Bank, the New Jersey Food Bank. They take an interest and they work that interest. They collect food, they do clothing drives. So I think that some non-profits who actually work in that sense for that mission....

I think Oprah is actually a good leader for this country. She has become so huge that whether people like to admit it or not, she's kind of monumental for the things that happen in this country. I think she's doing a really good job and outside of the country too. She goes all over. It's not really an organization.

MODERATOR—I SAID INDIVIDUALS OR ORGANIZATIONS.

Harpo.

Gates, Bill Gates. He is solely responsible for the technology. You can't even imagine what America would be like without his input and his money.

The world.

Yeah, the world actually, so I would say Gates definitely. He's a huge influence.

The Rockefeller's too. They give a lot of money.

MODERATOR—IN TERMS OF POLITICAL LEADERS, I'D LIKE TO KNOW HOW YOU CATEGORIZE THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN THE COUNTRY. FIRST JUST TO CUT IT SHORT, DOES ANYBODY HAVE ANYTHING POSITIVE TO SAY ABOUT GEORGE BUSH?

I have one thing. Should I say it?

MODERATOR—NO, NO. I WANT TO KNOW HOW YOU WOULD CATEGORIZE THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN THIS COUNTRY RIGHT NOW.

Struggling.

A circus.

Hollywood.

MODERATOR—ELABORATE.



A circus, he's the only president in American history had fourteen or fifteen people quit from his cabinet in his term. It's a circus. Nobody wants blood on their hands at the end of the day.

I'd say struggling because I think when Clinton left that Bush had ...everyone loved Clinton, but Clinton was about home. He took care of home. He wasn't about the international world as much, which is why Rwanda happened and so many other things internationally. So I think it was a struggle for him to say, you know what? I'm going to take care of home and the international community. Then there is a struggle to understand everything. Politics is very complicated, especially when you are president. You have to understand the international community, how the international community affects your home. And I think it's just a constant struggle. When there is a struggle, you never know how to do something. You are kind of like, let me experiment. When you are running a country, that experiment is at the expense of your people. And that's why I take the war. It's a struggle and it's at the expense of our people. And a lot of people that are in the Army are African American.

**MODERATOR—AND IS YOUR REACTION TO THAT POSITIVE? IS THAT A COMPLIMENT OR IS THAT A CRITICISM OR IS THAT A NEUTRAL STATEMENT?**

It's a neutral statement, but for me it's sad.

I like the word that she used, but I think I might use it in a different context. I would say struggling. In my mind, struggling to stand for what they believe in because the majority is so against what they believe in. They say, okay, this is my position, this is what I believe in. And I believe that a lot of our political leaders are struggling. Even with a lot of people dropping out of the cabinet, a lot of people walking away, that's a tough situation to be in. When you are in a group and people won't go with you....

**MODERATOR—SO DO YOU ADMIRE THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP FOR THIS?**

No.

No.

Me personally, I do.

Admire the people that left?

**MODERATOR—NO, THE PEOPLE WHO ARE LEADING THE COUNTRY.**

Oh.

I think it's a hard job, but I don't really think that they are doing their best at it either. My term for it is a take-off of what you said. I think the leadership of this country is just misleading.

I don't think we are in a position to really talk about it because I think there are so many different things that contradict and don't seem to add up, that don't seem to make sense. I think as far as our generation is concerned, there seems like there is a lot of confusion. Nobody can really pinpoint and go, this is A, B or C. There is a lot of maybe this is possibly happening and there is a lot of confusion. It seems like there are these roundtable discussions happening. And people who are discussing and seeing things probably getting out of hand and trying to finagle and fix things for the better, I'm sure. I'm hoping. But it doesn't seem real to me when I watch the news or read, the media, I don't know what to believe.

Right, right.

MODERATOR—I'M GOING TO PUT YOU ON THE SPOT SINCE YOU BROUGHT THIS PART UP. THIS WHOLE IDEA OF WHAT IS GOING ON OR....

Even in debating, because that's really putting them on the spot, which is the only part I actually like. They don't have their cabinet or their writers behind them. This is when you could really tell Bush fell apart because he never knew what to say. Things just came out of his mouth and you were like, was that a complete sentence? He just didn't know. That's when I feel like the truth kind of comes out and where I go back to they are just misleading. They can't hold their own thoughts anymore because they have to represent a certain party. Maybe their daughter had an abortion and they are really not for it personally, but it doesn't matter because they are a democrat and so, therefore, you know what I'm saying. It's just really misleading to me. It's very frustrating.

MODERATOR—MY THEN QUESTION IS, WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE YOU? WHAT DO YOU DO ABOUT THAT?

What can you do?

I personally don't vote because I personally think my opinion doesn't count.

What can you really do, seriously?

I was going to agree with her about voting. I'm registered to vote, but at the same time, my demographic and the way I feel is not going to make a difference at all.

(many talking at once)

When I made the comment about not voting, she was reacting. But the truth of the matter is, a couple years ago they did that whole vote or die thing. They worked really hard on it. And not for nothing, they spent millions of dollars for New Yorkers to get out there and do whatever. And Bush at the time was probably the most hated man in the country. And we had Kerry. And all the New Yorkers voted for Kerry and Kerry still lost to Bush. That's a cruel reality of how America is set up. It doesn't matter if me, him or all of us in New York City or even on the Eastern seaboard voted for this guy, America knew who they had in there. And it was proven

from the first election in 2000. So, if you want to vote just to make yourself feel like you are making a difference, you are not. And that's the truth of the matter.

The whole voting process is tricky because....a certain percentage of people in East New York votes, right, and there are potholes on the street and we call and complain about those potholes, they say oh you know what, take it to the records. 75% of East New Yorkers voted for democrats, let's go help them out, let's go fix these streets. If you don't vote, then they are like....these people don't care, we are not helping them out at all. It's real tricky like that with voting. So it's like on the one hand I do not want to vote because we see how backwards this country is and how the whole politics is all backwards and our vote doesn't count, but on the other end it does count on a smaller scale.

It's like a lottery ticket. That's really what it is.

I was going to say everyone says that they feel that nothing is going to happen so they don't vote. Everyone says that and that's why nothing is happening because you are not voting. But then you also have to think, the majority of this country are patriotic. They are the red states and the ones who kind of have things swing in the opposite direction from where you want it to go. But the fact that you are not voting, like he said, there is no voice. And they are not really paying us much attention. When you think about it, blue and red, there are a lot of us in New York and we are a blue state, but then the entire rest of the country is red. So it's like I think you should still vote, but....

**MODERATOR—SO WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO GET YOU ALL TO TAKE ACTION?**

I just want to say ....first I want to mention (inaudible). He got a lot of people to register, not to vote. We have to remember that. He got people to register who knew nothing about politics who just went in and did names. But in terms of not voting, it angers me so much that people don't vote. And it angers me because you don't realize who or what you are voting for. If you are not going to vote for the presidential election, fine. Vote for your city, state, local, those are the people who affect you instantly.

Do you think that's a coincidence though?

**MODERATOR—OKAY, I'M GOING TO JUMP IN HERE FOR A SECOND. WHAT IS IT GOING TO TAKE FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO WERE TALKING ABOUT BEING DISAFFECTED BY THE POLITICAL SYSTEM...**

Not necessarily disaffected, they don't know.

**MODERATOR—MY SENSE IS THAT THEY ARE ALL VERY INTELLIGENT AND THEY'VE ALL GIVEN VERY GOOD REASONS FOR NOT VOTING AND WE HAVE TO RESPECT THAT. BUT MY QUESTION IS, WHAT IS IT GOING TO TAKE TO GET YOU BACK INTO THE PROCESS?**

I will answer your question, but just to kind of agree with what you are saying, the reason why I don't vote is I really don't pay attention to what is going on. I'm not going to go in there and write down a name when I don't know what in the world I'm voting for. There are other reasons why I haven't...I finally did register last year, but just for the record, this is the first time I've ever talked about it. In the beginning of the day I did say, I think if you don't vote you shouldn't say anything about your president because you didn't voice your opinion. So for me to want to vote, I think it would have to be more in my face. Let's say when I have a family, when I have kids, you better believe I'll be at the school board or in the community, voting for the leaders of the community. But for me personally, I don't pay enough attention to what is going on in the country. That's my own fault. I'm not doing any good to vote for someone because I like their hair color or their name. You know what I'm saying? That's where I stand.

There is an e-mail going around and I don't know how true it is about the clause that whatever president signed that black people have the right to vote for however many years. I think if their right was taken away, then they would have a problem. And if the right was actually taken away for you to vote....

I agree.

We don't really have the right to vote. The Congress has to renew the clause.

(many talking at once)

**MODERATOR—SO, SOME KIND OF BLATANT ADVERSITY. BUT YOU VOTE..**

Yes.

**MODERATOR—WHAT ABOUT YOU GUYS OVER HERE WHO SAID YOU DIDN'T WANT TO VOTE OR ....WHAT'S IT GOING TO TAKE?**

I vote.

He doesn't vote.

Yeah, I said I didn't vote. I kind of agree with her. There are the few names that you do know, but there are the seven other names that you go, I really don't know who these....I have voted before, but when it came to the Kerry/Bush election, that's when I was like...

**MODERATOR—BUT AGAIN, WHAT IS IT GOING TO TAKE TO GET YOU BACK INVOLVED?**

Just being more educated.

Depending on whatever views or whatever they have for me.

Right.

Just being more educated and being more aware.

And less confused.

(many talking at once)

Something that someone has said to me before, he never voted, he never paid attention voting until he became a homeowner and that's when he started to vote. This affects how I pay my interest rates, so I think when personal things like as we grow and we start to do personal things, that's when people will be more involved.

Once you have children or whatever.

I think it takes more than just voting and waiting for something to happen in our own favor, I think it takes more leaders to point us in the direction of where to go. I think that it starts with ourselves. If you want to see a change in our community, if our community is very dirty, it starts with us holding that piece of garbage in our hands and finding a garbage and throwing it out. It is things like that, starting from that small of a...I think it starts from us starting community up again. You said you were from Michigan and you grew up in a porch community, right? Everybody was outside, people knew what was going on, people weren't afraid to speak to children they see doing things wrong. That's where it starts with us getting involved. Yeah, politics, we can vote and we can see changes here and changes fifteen years from now, but it's really going to start with us doing things actively now and start with ourselves and branching out.

That's about being active though. How do you personally get yourself active?

**MODERATOR—AND THAT'S MY QUESTION, WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO GET YOU TO DO THAT?**

Be the change that you want to see.

Yeah.

Me personally, I'm very active with children. I mentor kids all the time, teenagers, so I'm concerned about education, about scholarships and stuff like that. So, I think it's more of a personal thing.

**MODERATOR—OKAY, ALRIGHT. (HANDOUTS PASSED OUT) THIS IS A LIST OF MAJOR CHALLENGES FACING THE COUNTRY. READ THROUGH THESE AND RANK ORDER THEM IN TERMS OF FOR YOU WHICH ONE WOULD BE THE MOST IMPORTANT CHALLENGE AND WHICH WOULD BE THE LEAST IMPORTANT. MOST IMPORTANT WOULD BE A ONE AND THE LEAST IMPORTANT WOULD BE A TEN.**

I'M GOING TO GO THROUGH THESE STATEMENTS A THROUGH J AND WHEN I SAY THE LETTER, LET ME KNOW IF IT WAS YOUR NUMBER ONE. A? B? 2. C? 2. D? 1. E? 1. F? 1. G? 1. H? I? J? 1. AND SECOND PLACE, ANYBODY HAVE A? 1. B? 4. C? 1. D? E? 1. F? G? 1. H? I? J? 1. OKAY, LET'S LOOK BRIEFLY AT B, WHICH IS DECLINING QUALITY AND RISING INEQUALITY OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM. THOUGHTS ABOUT THAT?

It's absolutely ridiculous in my opinion. As somebody who has worked in the school system for a short period of time, and married to somebody who works in the school system, it's amazing how low the educational system is for our future kids. Even when you compare public schools to private schools, private schools back in the days when I was a kid if you went to private school...my cousin went to private school and when he took his SAT he got a 1600. Nowadays you go to private schools and it's not even like it was back then. The educational system now in my opinion is ridiculous.

It has tanked.

MODERATOR—DO YOU THINK THAT'S TRUE FOR PRETTY MUCH EVERYBODY IN THE COUNTRY?

I don't know.

I won't say it's as broad as the entire country, but from this standpoint, yeah, definitely. I would say our region.

I think it depends on where you are, what type of money you make, what kind of community you live in.

It's regional, yeah.

MODERATOR—BUT IN TERMS OF YOU, HOW IMPORTANT IS IT AS A PROBLEM?

It's very important.

I think it's important as far as like for the whole country. I think in certain fields, say math and science that are not based on language and not based on comprehension or anything, it's about like...it's insular. We score lower amongst many countries in the world. I think that is a reflection of the educational system.

I don't know necessarily that it's poor all over the country. Where I grew up, we had a great education system. I'm not saying that I got the best education in the world, but it wasn't really a huge issue that faced our Michigan area. Our teachers were paid well, everybody went to school. But I think as a country, as a whole, it is so important because we are raising the leaders of our country through our education system, so therefore it should be the top challenge, or maybe not necessarily the top challenge, but maybe if it's a challenge, it should be one of the top focuses.

Right.

MODERATOR—ANYBODY FEEL THAT IT DOESN'T NEED TO BE ONE OF THE TOP FOCUSES? OKAY. I WANT TO DO YOUR NUMBER THREE AS WELL BECAUSE I WANT TO CHECK SOMETHING ELSE HERE. FOR YOUR NUMBER THREE, ANYBODY PICK A? 1. B? 2. C? 1. D? E? 3. F? G? 1. H? I? J? 1. OKAY. ONE OF THE THINGS UP HERE IS THE RISING COST OF HEALTHCARE, WHICH WAS C. HOW WORRIED ARE YOU ABOUT THAT RIGHT NOW?

I would say it's a definite worry.

My ....I moved and I was supposed to renew my Medicare and I didn't get the notice. I was sick, but then my Medicare was cancelled. And people were saying go to the emergency room and I'm like....I'm not going to go pay \$1,000 to get like lozenges or something.

Or wait for them to tell you that you'll be okay.

Yeah.

MODERATOR—THERE ARE TEN THINGS DOWN THERE THAT HAVE BEEN STATED THAT ARE BIG CHALLENGES FOR THE UNITED STATES AT THIS TIME. AS YOU WERE GOING THROUGH THAT LIST, DID ANYTHING ELSE COME TO YOUR MIND THAT IS A CHALLENGE THAT ISN'T ON THAT LIST?

Poverty.

I don't know what it is, but I'm saying helping raise the poor. Implementing programs and things that help them to be....I don't know what the word is.

Like government programs?

MODERATOR—THAT WOULD BE RELATED TO DEALING WITH POVERTY.

Oh, okay.

MODERATOR—SO HELPING WITH POVERTY. ANYTHING ELSE?

I would say the growing number that's in the prison systems that are ...the ages are getting lower versus higher. And age is not the number of inmates, but it's like a lot of sixteen, seventeen that are committing like major crimes....

I've heard the women's prison is getting an overflow.

(many talking at once)



Sexual education or awareness.

Yep.

Based on pregnancies and diseases.

You know what? Re-establishing the family court structure.

But can the government do that?

It's just the county.

**MODERATOR—CHALLENGES TO THE COUNTRY RIGHT NOW.**

Helping cities, lack of physical education.

City restoration.

It's an epidemic guys, I'm telling you.

He said community.

More after school programs or more money in....I guess that falls underneath education and development.

(many talking at once)

**MODERATOR—SO COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT.**

That guy who is developing...he ate McDonald's every day for a year and he almost died. His liver or something ....something happened internally.

**MODERATOR—DO YOU HAVE A SENSE THAT ANY OF THESE ISSUES THAT YOU JUST RATED OR ANY OF THE OTHERS THAT HAVE BEEN STATED HERE, IS PROGRESS BEING MADE IN ANY OF THESE?**

Progress? I would say yes. I think the one area where progress is being made is ....I was thinking about American's dependency on foreign oil I was thinking about coal....the first thing that comes to my mind when I read that is Dubai. And actually that's not the (inaudible)....I don't think we are making progress.

I would say maybe healthcare.

They are trying real hard.

All the different programs that are out there, all the different healthcare grants.

I want to say that's only for...there are a lot of health programs that we have in New York that they don't have anywhere else.

MODERATOR—WHAT ABOUT PROGRESS ANYPLACE ELSE?

Even if there were progress, how can we gauge it?

MODERATOR—THAT'S WHAT I'M ASKING YOU. THIS IS IN TERMS OF YOUR PERCEPTION, IN TERMS OF YOUR LIVES, ARE YOU SEEING ANY PROGRESS?

No.

MODERATOR—WHY DO YOU THINK NO PROGRESS IS BEING MADE?

The leadership of the country. The leadership of the country is confused. How can it address the needs of the country?

Not only that, when I hear progress, I think of progress in...I think there is a progression in fear. I think there is more of a....I don't know....just kind of this....there is more of a progression and a confusion of making people feel that things are a certain way without having a clue of knowing why it's that way. I think there's a progression in that.

MODERATOR—AND WHERE IS THAT CONFUSION, AMONG THE PEOPLE, AMONG THE LEADERSHIP?

I think it's among the leadership.

The leadership.

The confusion is among the people. The leaders don't know what they are doing.

Right.

MODERATOR—SO WHAT DO YOU DO ABOUT THAT?

You do you.

MODERATOR—WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

I don't know, but I take it as I don't...be the person that does the change you want to see.

Exactly.

I was thinking about the education system. I know we all have problems with it, but attempts are being made by the government. Like with the No Child Left Behind, like they are trying things and we are a trigger-mechanism government, we don't know how to fix anything. We are kind of like, let's see if this works. Let's see if this works. So I think in education they are trying things, they are making teachers be certified and other stuff now.

After awhile, we've had how many elections in our generation....we've had three or two....

(many talking at once)

There have been two.

That would mean you are eight years old.

You mean since you were able to vote?

Yeah.

Alright.

(many talking at once)

Not since you were a boy.

No, since we've been able to vote. Since the moment we've been able to vote and since the moment we could understand what was going on as far as this country and elections, there has always been the same things that are talked about and it's on this list. And after awhile, doesn't it seem kind of....it's the same list. The new one is terrorism. That's new.

Right.

**MODERATOR—I'M GOING TO MOVE ON. I HEAR WHAT YOU ARE SAYING, SO NOT TO WORRY.**

Why do you think there is no progression and one of the reasons why I think there is no progression is that people are unwilling to yield their point of view. You have people with a point of view and they are so busy arguing instead of actually talking through what the issue is. I'm fighting you and you are fighting me, neither one of us is actually fighting the issue. I think that's one of the reasons why there is no progression.

**MODERATOR—AND WHAT DO YOU DO ABOUT THAT?**

There is a saying that I heard somebody say one time. You have to forgive me, I'm an idealist sometimes. The goal is to infiltrate the system and take it over. So as an individual I try to put

myself in the position to where I get to make some decisions or affect some of the decisions, so that's one of the ways to handle it.

MODERATOR—ALRIGHT. I WANT TO GO ONTO THE NEXT SECTION WHICH IS TALKING ABOUT HEALTHCARE. ONE OF THE STATEMENTS THEY ARE COMING UP WITH IS THAT COSTS ARE RISING, PEOPLE ARE GETTING LESS COVERAGE FROM THEIR EMPLOYERS, ETC. AND THE QUESTION IS, WHAT DO YOU DO ABOUT THIS PROBLEM. AND I HAVE A STATEMENT HERE THAT I'D LIKE TO READ AND THEN I WANT TO GET YOUR INITIAL REACTIONS TO IT.

EACH NEW GENERATION IS SUFFERING AN EPIDEMIC OF CHRONIC, PREVENTABLE DISEASES DUE TO A POLLUTED ENVIRONMENT, A LACK OF BASIC HEALTHCARE AND THE POISONS WE FEED THEM EVERY DAY. EVERY CHILD IN AMERICA, REGARDLESS OF RACE, CLASS OR INCOME, SHOULD HAVE FULL HEALTH COVERAGE AND PROPER NUTRITION. PARENTS MUST BE TAUGHT THE IMPACT THAT PREVENTIVE CARE AND PROPER NOURISHMENT WILL HAVE ON A CHILD. IF WE CONTINUE TO SPEND MORE AND MORE MONEY ON HEALTHCARE WITHOUT ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF THIS CRISIS WE WILL ONLY WEAKEN OUR ECONOMY AND CONDEMN MILLIONS MORE CHILDREN TO SUFFERING AND DISEASE.

DO YOU AGREE WITH THIS STATEMENT? DISAGREE? DOES IT MAKE SENSE?

I think parts of it make a lot of sense. If you don't take care of yourself and take the steps to bring awareness, then you are just going to keep making yourself sick.

You depend upon it. If you work to actually maintain a stable state of health, then your dependency upon it is not as drastic. At my job, I've got the lowest level because I don't go to the doctor that often.

It goes back to the old saying, prevention is better than the cure.

Yep.

We were just talking about that, especially with the nutrition for childhood obesity. You have these parents who let these kids scoff down anything. So, some parts of the statement definitely has truth to it.

Yeah.

MODERATOR—DOES ANYBODY TOTALLY REJECT THIS STATEMENT OR HAVE REAL PROBLEMS WITH WHAT THEY ARE SAYING HERE? OKAY. ANY OTHER THINGS THAT REALLY STOOD OUT OR HAD AN IMPACT ON YOU IN THIS STATEMENT?

Every child in America, regardless of race, class or income should have health coverage and proper nutrition. That stands out to me.

Addressing the root cause of this crisis.

**MODERATOR—WHAT CAN BE DONE AT YOUR LEVEL AT THIS POINT?**

That's the whole question of helping people where there's a guideline of how to do a lot of preventative measures so that you don't end up in a state where you need to now go into the hospital because whatever stress or pollutants you were exposed to now has your ulcer erupting or something like that. We are going to work hard on preventing you from becoming that ill. So as a whole, there are guidelines out there to....you can go on the Department of Health website. If you want to live by those words or engage your life, your family, your friends....just go for a walk or instead of stopping by McDonald's and spend that extra \$5 and buy a box of rice and some chicken. Make something at home. Just little things.

With that, but going back to what you said before about something in the paragraph that stuck out, it says parents must be taught the impact. It starts there. We are talking about of like the childhood obesity, but this is my industry. I am a personal trainer, nutrition specialist, I've been dancing my whole life. And my whole goal is to teach people to live a healthy lifestyle. Not just to take you in the gym for however many hours a day, but look at your diet, look at your nutrition and teach you ways to get you motivated to have that be your lifestyle for your family. I think it does start in the parents. What parents eat when their kids are in the womb affects the child. If that parent eats McDonald's, that kid is going to come out craving McDonald's. And so I think for me personally, I do what I think I should be doing to help and make awareness of it on my website and I body build and I compete. I'm kind of a walking advertisement for living a healthier lifestyle, but that's what this country kind of needs. Step up and have that be a bigger awareness.

One of the key things that she said, when she talked about parents, I used to work in a gym for a long time. And I said I don't mess with those machines unless I'm cleaning them. That was my mindset at the time. But the older I get, the more I start to think about staying healthy. Like she said, if you are influenced by your parents as a child then I'll grow up thinking healthy. So when I get to forty-years-old, I'm not trying to get rid of all the things that I did.

**MODERATOR—BUT GIVEN THE FACT THAT WE HAVE THIS PROBLEM NOW, WHAT DO YOU DO ABOUT IT?**

Awareness, that's one of the greatest things, just making people more aware.

**MODERATOR--ONCE YOU ARE AWARE OF IT, I THINK WE WOULD BE WILLING TO AGREE THAT PEOPLE ARE AWARE OF ALL OF THIS STUFF. NONE OF YOU SEEM SURPRISED LIKE, OH MY GOD, WE NEED HEALTHCARE FOR CHILDREN. WHAT DO YOU DO NOW?**

It needs to hit the masses.

MODERATOR—I DON'T WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE MASSES. WHAT DO YOU DO....

(many talking at once)

My brother teaches high school students and a lot of the kids come in and they drink soda and a bag of chips for breakfast. That's where the youth is. And maybe to start with the kids where the beginning youth is. Give them education on, no, don't eat Cheese Doodles for breakfast, this is what you should eat.

Give an example.

As a nurse, we come in contact with people everyday and we teach. That's the main part of what we do, we teach. You have to set an example. A lot of nurses do, you tell them not to smoke, the whole smoking cessation thing, but then you are outside talking with a cigarette on your break. But you do have to set a very good example for your patients or the public at large.

It seems like for every question you ask, what do you do, the only answer we can say is lead by example. Not only just lead by example because if you just say, I'm going to do this thing, if you see what I'm doing ....we also have to share knowledge, pass on as much knowledge to make people aware so that they can make healthy choices for themselves.

It's like an individual thing. That's one thing that my brother as a teacher does. He goes that's crazy. He's aware of that, that kids are eating Cheese Doodles or drinking soda in the morning. As an individual, not even as a teacher, that is not good for you. You are not my child and I don't have to tell you this, but you should...this is not the way to be. Parents are coming from all over, coming from different educations, different backgrounds. It's not the same. Everything is different and everybody is different.

It's harder too for the poor communities because being healthy is expensive. It's expensive to go to the gym. It's expensive to eat healthy. And it's more of your time. You can take your whole family to McDonald's for like \$20. They are all fed, they are all good, they can all go to sleep or whatever, rather than going to the health food store, going to the grocery store, getting the fresh produce....

It doesn't have to be that...I understand what you are saying. If you are in a poor community, there is no Korean produce store for you to go buy foods at. It is simple to boil water and cook some rice and bake some chicken.

(many talking at once)

And they say that organic is not always organic.

Right.

I'm not saying it's an excuse, I'm just saying it's not difficult at all. I just think that that needs to kind of be more of an awareness too. It needs to be put in the schools along with quality of education that we were talking about earlier.

MODERATOR—YOUR POINT IS THAT IT'S VERY EASY AND CONVENIENT TO EAT UNHEALTHY.

Yeah, it's cheaper.

Absolutely.

And it's faster.

Yeah.

(many talking at once)

The negative side of the coin is when you see the end result, it's amazing how people are motivated by fear. It's like my father-in-law just in the last year had surgery, had a transplant, had a very serious disease. And now (inaudible) that he operates in, they've changed some of the things that they do (inaudible).

(many talking at once)

I see a lot of things. I've seen open heart surgery. You see them clearing the crap out of the arteries. They now have those cigarette commercials where they show...

(many talking at once)

This is something that we might want to change before we end up like this.

Some people don't even wait till they see it. I like to learn from other people's experiences. I really do.

Yes.

I have a friend who has sugar. She was not taking it seriously. When I would get on her, I'll say don't do this and don't do that because I care and am a friend, and if I wasn't I would be saying go ahead. Last night she passed out on the toilet and did not know. Now she has learned. How I know she learned is that before she'll be listening and now she was like let me go make sure I drink my water, let me do this, let me do that. So sometimes something has to happen for you to realize....



Right.

MODERATOR—I WANT TO MOVE ONTO THE NEXT ONE, HANDOUT #3. THIS IS ABOUT DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN OIL AND FOSSIL FUELS. AGAIN I'M GOING TO READ THIS AND I WANT TO GET A QUICK READ ON THIS BECAUSE WE ARE RUNNING OUT OF TIME AND I'M BEHIND.

OUR DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN OIL AND FOSSIL FUELS IS THE GREATEST THREAT TO OUR NATIONAL SECURITY AND OUR QUALITY OF LIFE AND OUR ECONOMIC FUTURE. THAT'S WHY WE MUST LAUNCH A MASSIVE CONCERTED NATIONAL EFFORT, SIMILAR TO THE APOLLO PROGRAM THAT PUT A MAN ON THE MOON, WITH THE GOAL OF MOVING AMERICA BEYOND FOSSIL FUELS AND INVENTING THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENERGY BASED ON NEW TECHNOLOGIES SUCH AS HYDROGEN OR FUSION. THIS PLAN WOULD REQUIRE A HUGE NATIONAL INVESTMENT, BUT WOULD PRODUCE MILLIONS OF NEW JOBS, DRAMATICALLY REDUCE ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE AND FREE US FROM OUR DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN OIL THAT SUBSIDIZES REGIMES WHO SUPPORT THE TERRORISTS WHO ARE TARGETING US.

AGAIN, IT'S ....

(end of side)

And we don't have any money for this. We are broke. We are a broke nation. And I just...there are certain things in this that make sense, produce millions of new jobs. Okay, that's good for the economy, but how good is that for the economy when we have no money and we are borrowing and we have nothing?

I completely agree with what she is saying. One part of me, I feel like I've heard that we've been trying to do this for a long time. I also feel like it's irrelevant with the amount of debt that we have. We need to deal with that first before we start thinking about investing. We have oil, we have sources that are working right now. We need to take care of our own debt.

(many talking at once)

MODERATOR—OTHER THOUGHTS ON THIS? ANYTHING YOU CAN DO PERSONALLY AT THIS POINT TO MAKE ANY OF THIS HAPPEN?

Not this situation, not at all.

MODERATOR—HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS IN THE REALM OF THINGS THAT AFFECT YOU AND YOUR...

Gas prices keep going up if you have to depend on foreign oil.

Yeah.

And aren't like hybrid cars and all these new....more expensive?

Yeah.

Oh yeah.

**MODERATOR—HOW IS THIS AFFECTING YOU PERSONALLY?**

Gas prices.

Heating prices.

Heating oil.

If they decide to do this, they are going to do it whether we agree with it or not.

Our tax dollars.

Our tax dollars are wasted.

**MODERATOR—IS THIS A GOOD THING TO BE DONE IF THE MONEY WERE THERE?**

Yes.

Yes.

(many talking at once)

If the money is there, yeah.

**MODERATOR—I'M GOING TO MOVE ONTO THE NEXT ONE. THIS IS ABOUT THE NATIONAL DEBT. THE DEBT NOW IS OVER EIGHT TRILLION DOLLARS AND IS INCREASING AT A RECORD RATE. THE RESEARCH SAYS THAT THE GROWING PERCENT OF THAT DEBT IS OWED TO COUNTRIES, NOTABLY CHINA, THAT WILL BE OUR BIGGEST COMPETITORS AND POTENTIAL ADVERSARIES IN THE DECADES TO COME AND WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT THAT.**

**WE MUST STOP OUR ELECTED LEADERS FROM SPENDING MONEY THEY DON'T HAVE AND PASSING THEIR CRUSHING DEBT ONTO OUR GENERATION. WE CAN'T DIG OUT OF THIS HOLE SIMPLY BY CUTTING SPENDING HERE OR RAISING TAXES THERE. WE MUST REBUILD OUR ECONOMIC BASE BY RESTORING THE INDUSTRIAL INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDED TO PROVIDE THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS FOR OUR DEFENSE AND BASIC NEEDS AND REVERSING THE**

DECLINE OF OUR MIDDLE CLASS, WHICH HAS ALWAYS FUELED OUR GREATEST ECONOMIC EXPANSIONS. THIS WILL IN TURN ALLOW US TO END OUR HUGE STRUCTURAL TRADE IMBALANCES AND MORE EFFECTIVELY COMPETE WITH COUNTRIES WHO CURRENTLY EXPLOIT OUR GROWING NEED FOR BASIC GOODS.

AGAIN, ANYBODY HAVE ANY PROBLEMS WITH THIS STATEMENT?

My problem with this statement is, I don't think it's clear. I think it's very, very broad. Just reading it and hearing you reading it, I'm sitting there and I'm going, say that in layman's terms.

MODERATOR—SO YOU ARE DEALING WITH HOW IT'S WRITTEN. I WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE IDEA BEHIND IT. DOES ANYBODY FEEL THAT THIS IS NOT TRUE?

For some reason this statement tells me that the issue is beyond what we can do right now. That's what it tells me. And one thing that I looked at that I disagreed with, reversing the decline of our middle class. But this statement fails to realize the working class, that is what drives the economy and what drives us. And I think that's not being addressed here and that's a concern. And the last sentence that got me, countries who currently exploit our growing need for basic goods. Everything that we purchase, the majority of it, doesn't come from here, so we are constantly spending. That's the supply and demand. That tug and pull of supply and demand and we are constantly putting money into that. This country exploits countries financially and then we exploit countries for goods. And that's not being addressed, so we are always going to be broke until we figure out what the balance is. And there is no way to balance it that I can think of.

MODERATOR—OTHER THOUGHTS ON THIS? ANY ROLE FOR PEOPLE YOUR AGE TO ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM?

I don't think so.

Unfortunately, the way I look at it I don't really see anything currently in my personal position to be able to address this.

It's actually funny you say that. The U-Tube thing, I don't know if you watched the debates online, they are now using online a lot. And people were actually able to write in different questions. So this would be a good question to ask a potential candidate to see his...

MODERATOR—BUT I'M ASKING YOU GUYS...YOU KEEP PUTTING IT OUTSIDE OF THIS ROOM...I WANT TO KNOW IF THERE IS ANYTHING YOU GUYS CAN DO?

I know one thing. I know something we don't do, but it does work, write to our senators and representatives and say, you should address this. I know I interned for the senator of New York and one of our jobs as an intern was to read these letter, highlight these points, put them in stacks and then put them in a memo to her. So it's just kind of like, it works. It might not be a quick

thing, but write in your concerns. If they get 1,000 letters or more on a concern, they do try and address it. Okay, my constituents actually think this is a problem.

Right.

I agree with taking some kind of active role like that. In my neighborhood, there was a fire hydrant on during the summer and a lot of water was just being spilled out. I'm like that's a waste of water. I stopped and I called 411 and told them about it. They were asking what street it was on and I looked up and there wasn't a street sign. So now I'm like....you know what? Can I also call to report that you should probably put a street sign up? If something changes from this, that's going to give me some hope that I have some kind of say. And last week I walked by that same block and there was a sign on the street. I don't know if that was directly from my phone call, but it gives me motivation.

There was a pothole, my whole car fell into that damn hole. I called 411 and it was fixed in like two weeks.

**MODERATOR—SO THIS IS GOING BACK TO THE THING THAT YOU ALL WERE SAYING, LEADING FROM WHERE YOU ARE AND BEING WHAT YOU WANT TO BE AND MAKING THE WORLD BE THE WAY YOU ARE IF YOU DO THAT. OKAY, IN TERMS OF ....WE'VE TALKED ABOUT DIFFERENT CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS THAT HAVE BEEN GOING ON. YOUR GENERATION RIGHT NOW, GIVEN WHERE THE WORLD IS, IS AT A HIGH LEVEL OF RISK FOR ALL OF THESE THINGS THAT WE'VE TALKED ABOUT HERE. CURRENTLY YOU REPRESENT THE LARGEST GENERATION IN AMERICAN HISTORY IN TERMS OF SHEER SIZE AND NUMBERS. AND YOU HAVE THE UNIQUE EXPERIENCES AND BELIEFS. AND YOU ALSO HAVE EXPRESSED A KIND OF FRUSTRATION AND POWERLESSNESS IN TERMS OF HOW THE LEADERS OF THIS COUNTRY ARE HANDLING THE COUNTRY RIGHT NOW. CAN YOU SEE FOR YOURSELF OR YOUR GENERATION IN THE FUTURE A DIFFERENT WAY TO LEAD, A DIFFERENT WAY TO RUN THINGS THAT WOULD MAKE THINGS BETTER?**

I think one of the things that we can do is to take more consideration of what society as a whole feels. I think that's one of the things that you need....

**MODERATOR—WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?**

Okay, you have a lot of people protesting and saying they haven't got a voice for their opinions, but I don't think enough of our leadership are actually hearing them and taking those things into consideration. I think as our generation, when we get up there, we should look to the generation that is under us and say, okay, what do you think, let's hear your mind, and let me try to integrate that with our ideas.

**MODERATOR—HOW COULD YOUR GENERATION AFFECT CHANGE IN A WAY THAT THE OLDER GENERATIONS HAVE NOT?**

I think with the Jena Six March and everyone went out, marching isn't the same and petitions aren't the same. I think our generation, we just need to be a lot more creative. When I say creative, U-Tube is a big thing right now. You were able to post your opinion and the political person responded to you. I think there needs to be some sort of ... maybe we invest in some sort of television station, like a whole bunch of people get together and say, this is going to be a media outlet that we produce. We are in the technology age and we just have to find something that is so universal and it's not going to be limited to like TV1 where only certain cable stations get it. Something where we are able to produce an opinion. I don't know what it is that I saw one day, I think it's What I Like or something like that. Those things, they give a different opinion, so there has to be an outlet that we can create of our own. And it can just be so random because everyone has their own opinion. And just throw so many random ideas out there to get the thought going. And then people will grab onto it and someone will be the motivator. Me, personally, I know I'm not the motivator. I can talk all day, but I'm not that physical, let's get out there and go build a home.

It's basically I'm definitely going to agree with what she said. Use the technological advances that we have beyond for the idiocy that we use it for. Like she said, it's a new medium, it's a new way of thinking. 60's marches, they threw rocks, that era is over. If we do have these luxuries, use them. And as he mentioned, picking up a phone, it makes a difference. I think that creating an outlet between you and a senator or you and somebody in your community actually can make a difference. It can be made as opposed to our generation thinking that it's not going to work and they don't even know how to get in contact with these people.

Be creative. I think that our generation is popular for our creativity, our music, our entertainment, even in sports we bring something creative to the sport that wasn't there in previous generations. We have to find a way to sneak under the radar with our creativity and bring messages out to people in a way that is not really preaching to them, but is saying this is another way to do it. Through entertainment music, that is one of the easiest ways to get people.

I remember 911, Public Enemy. How many things do they say in that little rap and you go, oh yeah, that's true. And I think who started that... Jada Kiss and his song, Why. If we had more of those things that kind of said certain things that kids can pick up on it. Our generation might not be the go getters in terms of I'm going to lay my life on the line. But our next generation could be the ones....

(many talking at once)

MODERATOR—OKAY, ALRIGHT. ANY OTHER IDEAS?

One thing I think we could do is we have to make a conscious decision that we need to change. They say the first step to getting rid of a problem is recognizing that you have a problem. We need to say as a group to say, okay, this is an issue and before we decide to do this, let's recognize that this is an issue and let's make a decision that no matter what it is going to cost us, we are going to deal with this issue.

Dedication.

Money.

We are broke.

MODERATOR—I WANT TO MOVE ON AND I'M GOING TO GET YOU OUT OF HERE AS SOON AS I POSSIBLY CAN. I'M GOING TO RUSH THROUGH THESE LAST TWO THINGS. ON HANDOUT #5, I KEEP ASKING YOU WHAT CAN YOU DO, DON'T TALK ABOUT YOUR PARENTS, DON'T TALK ABOUT THE YOUNGER PEOPLE, WHAT CAN YOU DO OR WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING IN ORDER TO AFFECT SOME KIND OF CHANGE ON SOME KIND OF LEVEL. HERE IS A LIST OF ACTIONS THAT CAN BE DONE. GO THROUGH THESE AND IN THE FIRST COLUMN YOU MARK THINGS THAT YOU HAVE DONE ALREADY. IN THE SECOND COLUMN, THINGS THAT YOU MIGHT BE LIKELY TO DO BUT YOU HAVEN'T DONE YET. AND IN THE THIRD COLUMN, STEPS THAT YOU ARE UNLIKELY TO TAKE. VOTING IN FEDERAL, LOCAL ACTIONS, HAVES? 6. LIKELY? 1. UNLIKELY? 1. BLOGGING ABOUT POLITICAL, SOCIAL ISSUES, HAVES? 1. LIKELY? 5. UNLIKELY? 3. SIGNING PETITIONS OR SENDING LETTERS, HAVES? 7. LIKELY? 2. ATTENDING PUBLIC MEETINGS OR FORUMS, HAVES? 4. LIKELY? 4. UNLIKELY? 1. WRITING NEWSPAPER, MAGAZINE LETTERS OR ARTICLES, HAVES? 1. LIKELY? 4. UNLIKELY? 4. PARTICIPATING IN PUBLIC PROTESTS OR DEMONSTRATIONS, HAVES? 2. LIKELY? 2. UNLIKELY? 5. BASE PERSONAL PURCHASING DECISIONS ON POLITICAL OR SOCIAL BEHAVIOR, HAVES? 5. LIKELY? 1. UNLIKELY? 3. VOLUNTEER OR WORKING ON A POLITICAL CAMPAIGN, HAVES? 1. LIKELY? 6. UNLIKELY? 3. JOINING POLITICAL SOCIAL GROUPS, HAVES? 1. LIKELY? 4. UNLIKELY? 4. FOUNDING A BUSINESS OR OTHER ORGANIZATION WITH POLITICAL OR SOCIAL OBJECTIVES, HAVES? 1. LIKELY? 3. UNLIKELY? 5. RUNNING FOR OFFICE, HAVES? 0. LIKELY? 2. UNLIKELY? 7. OKAY. I JUST WANT TO QUICKLY GET A SENSE OF SIGNING PETITIONS OR SENDING LETTERS TO YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS, MOST OF YOU HAVE DONE THAT. WHAT GOT YOU MOTIVATED TO DO THAT?

Moral beliefs.

MODERATOR—BUT YOU BELIEVE IN A NUMBER OF THINGS AND YOU'VE SAID THAT YOU WOULDN'T DO THESE THINGS YET OR YOU WOULD DO THEM LATER, WHAT IS IT ABOUT THIS THAT YOU WERE ABLE TO GET THAT DONE NOW?

For me personally, we talked about it and a friend of mine started it and we all just signed. We all just added our names. I didn't actually put it together.

I think it was kind of a quick fix, it was easy. It was sent to me and all that I had to do was read it and if I agreed, I just had to sign my name. It was stupid simple, you know.

There was passion behind it or something that made me feel that it was important.

It was just easy. I'm going to pass it on.

**MODERATOR—AND WHAT ABOUT BASING PERSONAL PURCHASE DECISIONS ON POLITICAL/SOCIAL BEHAVIOR?**

Because like I said before, if you don't do something you can't be counted. Your opinion won't be counted. I've done it in two instances where...like black solidarity day. I was just raised in a community where that was something that was covered on November 6<sup>th</sup>, the first Monday in November. That's what you did. You withheld your economics, your money to show the community or whoever...I've done it recently on my own with the gas. They say don't purchase it on a particular day. If everyone is not purchasing gas on the same exact time on the same date it will make an impact. It will show that we do have power. We are the reason why you can run because we have to purchase your gas.

Fear. Just people saying that this is the thing to do. Don't purchase this because this company is biased or...okay, no problem, I won't buy this stuff. It was more being informed about a particular product.

Subconsciously we think about ....we all were taught about the Montgomery boycott and I'm thinking like he boycotted...when they decided to boycott and stand up for something that they believed in and it's the same thing. If I don't believe in something that a company is doing in their politics or in their treatment of their employees or what have you, then I'm not going to support it. If more people say, you know what, I don't like what they are doing. I'm going to boycott them, I'm not going to give them my money. Then they are going to see that they do have to make some change.

They'd be forced to change.

McDonald's was forced to....they have salads and stuff on their menu now because people spoke up.

I was wrong. I have done that. Because Shell, they blew up in Nigeria and ruined a village and they haven't cleaned it up and I'm protesting Shell gas. I will not go there.

**MODERATOR—WHAT IS MAKING YOU MAKE THAT DECISION OF ACTION?**

They just ruined a whole community and they are not cleaning it up.

**MODERATOR—AND WHAT IS YOUR FEELING?**



I'm like, if that happened in my neighborhood, it was filled with gas and we are getting sick and no one is coming to help out and it's coming from a foreign country, I would just be pissed. I just don't think it's fair.

**MODERATOR—AND I WANT TO ASK YOU ABOUT ONE OF THE ONES THAT CAME IN HIGH FOR SOMETHING THAT YOU'D BE UNLIKELY TO DO, PARTICIPATING IN PUBLIC PROTESTS OR DEMONSTRATIONS.**

The first thing I always think about is how busy I am. That's why I made sure I put likely to sign petitions and stuff like that because I'm always on the go. And to take time out to actually sit down and see the viewpoints of political leaders and stuff like that, the time for me is just an issue.

I haven't thought it out enough to really make sense.

I think it's a couple reasons for me. It wasn't really a political thing, but I did do this protest and I don't think it counts, that's why I didn't put it down, for a church related thing. And we all went and we had duct tape over our mouths and we were all dressed in black. And people said the most awful things to us and I never would want to go through that experience again. When you are out there voicing your opinion, even if it's in a silent way, you are protesting or marching or whatever, people are coming to your face and opposing you. And I'm not big on conflict. And so, I agree with Andrew. I don't like the time manner of it. I don't mind signing something because it's a quick read and I did my part. But having to take the time out of my day to go sit somewhere or stand somewhere or march in the rain or whatever it might be, and then have to come face to face with people's negative reactions to it, I support other people doing it and sometimes I don't even care what they are doing it for. I think it does take a lot to get out there and make that kind of effort, but that's why I personally wouldn't do it because I've just had some negative experiences.

I think with all the technology that's out there, there are easier ways to go about doing it. Like a lot of people said, back in the day that was the way because there was really no other means of making their voice known. People got 50,000 people deep and marched on Washington and that was a big voice. But now there are other ways to project our voices without us having to load up on fifteen busses.

**MODERATOR—SUCH AS....**

I mean computers, the internet. It changed the game. Even though I'm not into blogging, there are other ways to do it besides blogging. You get together with...I can connect with 25-30 people just on the internet. There are other ways to do it and project ourselves.

**MODERATOR—OKAY. QUICKLY, THE REASONS WHY YOU WOULDN'T RUN FOR OFFICE?**

I don't even know what I'm running for.

Not interested. I'm not much of a politician.

I try to stay away from politics with argument.

I probably won't say that because in the field that I'm in there are a lot of issues around healthcare. My new role is going to be that person to get up there and have a voice and pick different issues and fight for change and go to Albany. So right now I say no, but then once I'm in the field I think I might be forced to in a way. Right now it's really not an interest to me, but I think eventually I'm going to have to have that role.

**MODERATOR—LAST THING I'M GOING TO ASK YOU TO DO ON THE LAST PAGE HERE AND I'LL JUST READ THE INSTRUCTIONS HERE. CORPORATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS OFTEN HAVE A MISSION STATEMENT THAT SEEKS TO CAPTURE THE NATURE OF THE ORGANIZATION, THE VALUES THAT DRIVE IT, AND THE GOALS TOWARDS WHICH IT STRIVES. THINK FOR A MOMENT AND CRAFT A MISSION STATEMENT FOR YOUR GENERATION OF AMERICANS. THANKS FOR COMING.....**

**(end of session)**