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McCain: OK But it's very clear that I have disagreed with the Bush administration I have disagreed with leaders of my own party I've got the scars to prove it Whether it be bringing climate change to the floor of the Senate for the first time Whether it be opposition to spending and earmarks, whether it be the issue of torture, whether it be the conduct of the war in Iraq, which I vigorously opposed Whether it be on fighting the pharmaceutical companies on Medicare prescription drugs, importation Whether it be fighting for an HMO patient's bill of rights Whether it be the establishment of the 9/11 Commission I have a long record of reform and fighting through on the floor of the United States Senate

Schliefer: All right

McCain: Senator Obama, your argument for standing up to the leadership of your party isn't very convincing

Schliefer: All right We're going to move to another question and the topic is leadership in this campaign Both of you pledged to take the high road in this campaign yet it has turned very nasty to describe Senator McCain Your running mate said he palled around with terrorists Are each of you tonight willing to sit at this table and say to each other's face what your campaigns and the people in your campaigns have said about each other? And, Senator McCain, you're first

McCain: Well, this has been a tough campaign It's been a very tough campaign And I know from my experience in many campaigns that, if Senator Obama had asked – responded to my urgent request to sit down, and do town hall meetings, and come before the American people, we could have done at least 10 of them by now the way Barry Goldwater and Jack Kennedy agreed to do, before the intervention of the tragedy at Dallas So I think the tone of this campaign could have been very different And the fact is, it's gotten pretty tough And I regret some of the negative aspects of both campaigns But the fact is that it has taken many turns which I think are unacceptable One of them happened just the other day, when a man I admire and respect – I've written about him – Congressman John Lewis, an American hero, made allegations that Sarah Palin and I were somehow associated with the worst chapter in American h That, to me, was so hurtful And, Senator Obama, you didn't repudiate those remarks Every time there's been an out-of-bounds remark made by a Republican, no matter where they are, I have repudiated them I hope that Senator Obama will repudiate those remarks that were made by Congressman John Lewis, very unfair and totally inappropriate So I want to tell you, we will run a truthful campaign This is a tough campaign And it's a matter of fact that Senator Obama has spent more money on negative ads than any political campaign in history And I can prove it And, Senator Obama, when he said – and he signed a piece of paper that said he would take public financing for his campaign if I did – that was back when he was a long-shot candidate – you didn't keep your word you didn't tell the American people the truth because you didn't And that's – that's – that's an unfortunate part Now we have the highest spending by Senator Obama's campaign than any time since Watergate

Schliefer: Time's up All right

Obama: Well, look, you know, I think that we expect presidential campaigns to be tough I think that, if you look at the record and the impressions of the American people – Bob, your

network just did a poll, showing that two-thirds of the American people think that Senator McCain is running a negative campaign versus one-third of And 100 percent, John, of your ads – 100 percent of them have been negative

McCain: It's not true

Obama: It absolutely is true And, now, I think the American people are less interested in our hurt feelings during the course of the campaign than addressing the issues that matter to them so deeply And there is nothing wrong with us having a vigorous debate like we're having tonight about health care, about energy policy, about tax policy That's the stuff that campaigns should be made of The notion, though, that because we're not doing town hall meetings that justifies some of the ads that have been going up, not just from your own campaign directly, John, but 527s and other organizations that make some pretty tough accusations well, I don't mind being attacked for the next three weeks What the American people can't afford, though, is four more years of failed economic policies And what they deserve over the next four weeks is that we talk about what's most pressing to them: the economic crisis Senator McCain's own campaign said publicly last week that, if we keep on talking about the economic crisis, we lose, so we need to change the subject And I would love to see the next three weeks devoted to talking about the economy, devoted to talking about health care, devoted to talking about energy, and figuring out how the American people can send their kids to college And that is something that I would welcome But it requires, I think, a recognition that politics as usual, as been practiced over the last several years, is not solving the big problems here in America