user text

You know, Glenn, I've just been kind of hanging around.

Story Continued Below

You know, it's been an interesting couple of years, but it's all kind of running together now.

Yeah, it does.

It does. So, you know, I'm just hoping to have some new experiences in my life these days.

[Laughs]

Right. That is the answer to everything. When you're facing a difficult issue that you absolutely can do nothing about--in this case--

--I can't fly the plane; I can't change the weather--falling asleep, you'll either wake up and things will be fine or you won't.

[Laughter.]

Well, but fly on an airplane, the whole thing makes no sense to me. Does it make sense to you?

I mean, how it works, how the whole, you know, science of it, you know, aerodynamics, you know, actually manages to keep us afloat. I'm constantly amazed.

I wasn't by the time you and I were flying around together. Early on, back in Arkansas, we would fly on anything.

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OFF MESSAGE

Hillary Clinton has had enough of Bernie Sanders

I flew on crop dusters. I flew on planes that were so small they were just two-seaters and you felt like you were--

--putting on a pair of pants. So I've been on planes where doors have flown off. I've been on--

--planes where you land in a field. I've had some adventures some decades ago that I think set me up for just knowing that, once I put myself on the plane, I was just going to have to take a deep breath and hopefully enjoy it.

Right.

I find that very true for a lot of life--I really do--because--well, I'll give you just an example--

--that just happened right now. I was thanking the band. I was taking a picture of the high school band--

--that played with us, and I was shaking their hands, and there was one young man whose head was just down. He looked so depressed, and I thought, "Wow, you know, I guess he doesn't want to shake my hand." Then he kind of lifted his head, and his teacher was standing there, and the teacher said, "Don't worry about it. It wasn't that big a mistake." And I could tell this kid was devastated.

I'm sure it was a mistake that nobody other than the music teacher or maybe some of the other kids would have noticed. So I looked at him and I said, "Don't worry about things, that you can do better next time. Don't worry about stuff you can't control," because it's been my observation that so many people worry about things that they are either ruminating over the past--

--which doesn't help you get the focus and energy you need to get up every day and go forward, or they're worrying about stuff that they have absolutely no control over. So I have developed that kind of philosophy in my life over years.

Yes.

Right. Right.

I hope I'm a better candidate. I feel like I am. I mean, I have said, in this campaign, "Look, I'm not a natural politician."

I'm not somebody who, like my husband or Barack Obama, just--it's music, right?

I am someone who loves doing the job that I have. I would love having the job of president because I know how to do it. I know what the country needs. But the campaigning part is hard for me. I think I've gotten better--

Right.

Well, you know, and some of this may be personal to me--

--and some of it, from all the literature I've read, may be gender-linked.

Yes. So, for example, when I did my announcement with Daniel Patrick Moynihan on his farm--

--right?--

--it was incredibly hard for me to say the pronoun "I" instead of "we."

I had been a strong supporter not just of my husband but other people who I tried to get elected, tried to help in any way I could. I'm very comfortable saying, you know, "he," "she," "we." But when I had to stand up in front of people and basically say, "I'm asking for your vote,"--

--"I'm telling you what I want to do," that took years [laughs].

It absolutely took years. And it was funny because a lot of people picked up on it, mostly my friends and supporters who would say, "You know, you're not campaigning for somebody else. You're actually campaigning for yourself."

And I had to really work at that. And, even today, I have to remind myself, you know, I'm asking people to vote for me.

Well--

I don't think so, Glenn. I think it's like learning any new skill. You know, when I was younger, and I was a lawyer and I was learning how to litigate, some of the skills I learned were totally new and took some adjusting to, to feel comfortable with. When I worked on the variety of projects, everything from reforming education in Arkansas to serving on a Legal Services Corporation to--into the years in the White House, there were always new challenges, and I love a challenge, so getting up for it, doing it.

But I was much more comfortable advocating on improving education, advocating for people to get a lawyer.

[Laughs]

When you see someone like Senator Sanders talking to 18,500 people, is that a skill set, these larger crowds, that you wish you would possess? I mean, when you sort of see that, what are you looking at? Is that just something you realize that just isn't as much in your toolkit and you can only focus on the stuff that you're better at?

No. No. I don't think about it that way at all. You know, I started this campaign the same way I started the 2000 campaign--

--with literally a listening tour, and it has served me really well, because I have been able to hear what's on people's minds, hear about the challenges, and I've talked about this. There were things that I hadn't really thought about, like the opiate crisis--

--that it's only through being in those small groups.

I think that being in politics, being in leadership should be as much about listening as talking. That's how I think you can get the information and sort of pick up the nuance that will enable you to do the best possible job. So, not only am I comfortable with it, I think it really adds value to not only the campaign but how I envision the job I want to get.

Mm-hmm. I do.

Right.

Right.

Right.

Right.

It's the path that I prefer.

And it's the path that I think leads to a better outcome. So, example, earlier today, here in Syracuse, we had a roundtable discussion about my plan to improve manufacturing by investing and creating more incentives to bring jobs back, reshore jobs, create jobs here. And we were talking to about a half-a-dozen people who I had helped with their businesses when I was a senator, because, you see, I really believe part of what this campaign has to do is rebuild people's faith in our national mission.

How do we get the economy to work? How do we get the government to work? How do we get our political system to work? And I feel strongly that I owe people a clear set of ideas, and I want to lay those out.

And I know that sometimes I get criticized for, "Oh, my gosh, there she goes with another plan,"--

--you know, "forget the plan, just, you know, do the rhetorical flourish." I really believe that when this is all over--and I will have won, hopefully--in large measure it will be because I came out and told people, "Here's what I want to do, here's how I think I can do it, here are the results I believe I can get, and I want you to hold me accountable for it."

I think that's what politics should be about, so I'm very comfortable doing that.

[Laughing]

Yeah. [Laughs] I'm glad you caught the irony.

[Laughs] That's exactly right.

Right.

Mm-hmm.

Well, actually, I think that if you looked at all the national interviews we've done, for example, predominantly TV, but also radio, also online, we've done more than maybe is apparent, and I do think I have to keep doing more. And we do talk and have, obviously, tried to pay attention and support the traveling press as well. But I pay a lot of attention to local press, because what I find, in talking to local press, not only do I lots of times learn something, but there is an openness with the local press where, once you get to a national press position, like yours and the others that are traveling with me, you're really under, in my impression, a kind of pressure to produce a political story.

That's your job. A headline. Right? I totally get it. But what I get when I talk to the local press--and I've done countless local--

--TV interviews, print interviews is that they will actually say, "Well, you know, this is a problem that we're having. What do you think about it?" So there's actually a conversation that goes on, and I find that, you know, very helpful, because, especially in, you know, the early states and some of the states that we've already competed in, it was useful to pick up sort of a cue from somebody in the local press.

And so it's mutually kind of beneficial.

Well, I think there's that, but there's also, if you look at coverage, you know, the number of viewers in an area of a state who watch the nightly news still, I bet if you were to divide it up--I haven't done this exercise--

--but just hypothetically--if you were to divide it up, there's a higher per capita percentage watching than there is if you took the whole country, on, like, national interviews.

So you really get feedback almost immediately from people who are watching. So I think it's a useful way to communicate.

Yes. Right.

I did. I read it, and I also just read her piece in The Guardian.

Yeah. Well, I really appreciated it, and she actually pointed to PolitiFact, which has analyzed all of the candidates, and those of us remaining in this race on both sides, and, you know, by--you know, by a long shot I am--you know, I've been more straightforward, you know, more likely to try to explain things in a, you know, open and truthful way than my opponent, Senator Sanders, or any of the Republicans. So, you know, that is a--I think she referenced that in her second article--that's not an opinion. That is the way they add it all up and analyze it.

Look, I do think that I am somebody who is perhaps more private, more--not for bad reasons. It's just my personality. It's just my temperament.

Mm-hmm.

Right.

Right.

Well, I think I've understood that I have to do a better job of communicating with the press, understanding their imperatives, because clearly you guys have a job to do and I think the job has gotten--

--harder in the last--in the 25 years I've been involved in national politics. There certainly is a lot more competition coming from many different directions. But I have a hard time squaring the following

Even if they were governing or solving problems in consequential periods, like the Civil War--

--or the world wars or the Great Depression or the Cold War, they had a period of time and space to actually think, to be private--

--and you read their biographies, their autobiographies, you know, they had time to think about what was happening and how to respond. I don't think human nature has changed in the last 50--150 years, but the stresses, the demands on those of us in public life have just exploded.

[Laughter.]

Yeah, let's not romanticize the past.

I agree.

Well, the only way I know to do is to try to have some space and time of my own to actually consider and think and not be, you know, reactive all the time, because a lot of the problems--and I think President Obama does this.

I mean, your interview with him was, I thought, excellent. And, in addition to talking about all the issues and saying the nice things he said about me, which I deeply appreciate--

--you got the feeling that, look, he's a thoughtful man, he's highly intelligent. He wants to get it right by however he--

--defines getting it right, and so he knows he's got to have the time and space to think, to read, to consult, and that's really what I see as well.

Yeah, we do a lot of traveling.

Sure, and then you do something entirely different--take a walk, play with the dogs, go see my granddaughter, you know, sit in front of the TV and zone out. I mean, yeah, you've got to do all of that.

And I think that--you got to--that's just for mental health--right?--

--you know, to have that time and space.

But to get back to your question about how you sort of create the relationship with the press, which is so critical--you have a job to do, I respect the job--but sometimes I haven't thought through what I want to say.

I haven't thought through, or I haven't--I've asked for information from, you know, three or four different sources. I haven't had time to digest it. I can't answer the question to my satisfaction--

--but I know you guys are on deadline, you've got to write something--

--you've got to broadcast something. So I do think there's an inherent tension here. And--

I think some of the time, yeah. I think that's true for all of us who are, like, in this pinball machine right now, you know, it--

It is. It is, yeah.

Right, it was.

Well, let me say--

--that I was, as you know, recruited to run in New York because he was the candidate.

And so I knew what I was getting myself in, although I had refused to commit to doing it because I didn't think I would.

But I was worn down by my friends and emissaries from New York. So I knew I was walking right into the buzz saw. I knew that he took no prisoners, that he was a tough competitor and was going to come right at me. And I watched it. You know, I got into the race in July. He'd been in it already--

--for a period of months, and I watched how he was conducting himself and presenting his kind of political persona.

A tough, you know, can-do guy, you know, takes nothing from anybody.

Stands up to people.

Pushes through what he believes is right.

The typical--

--kinds of descriptors that I think Mayor Giuliani has received over the years. And, look, there's a lot of attributes to somebody who is decisive, who is, you know, tough-minded, who tries to, you know, get people to do what needs to be done. I respect that.

But he would go into being--from being a tough decision-maker into really being a bully.

And I remember back--I think it was in December of '99--he'd been, you know, coming at me and, you know, pushing me, and I think I said something like, "You know, I'm just not going to respond to his tantrums."

And I felt like that was the best way to deal with an opponent who would try to drag you onto his turf--

--and then use every advantage he had to, you know, really--

--knock you down. There certainly are similarities, if I'm the Democratic nominee and Trump is the Republican nominee.

Well, because I don't think it's good for our political system, our democracy, or our future, just a couple of things that I care a lot about. No, because--

But I have obviously thought about this.

I don't think that, you know, Ted Cruz is any better. I think he--

Oh, I think he is a very, you know, mean-spirited guy. You can see it from how the Republican Party responds to him. It's, you know, a difficult dilemma that they're in, trying to figure out what to do. I mean, some of the things he did, even in his primaries, to fellow candidates--

Well, look, I think that--certainly I wasn't the--you know, the object of it, but--

--the people who were were quite agitated about it. And I don't think that's good for a presidential campaign. We can have differences. Look, I'm well-aware that it's a contact sport.

I understand that. But when it gets right down to it, you've got to offer Americans your credentials, because it's a huge interviewing and hiring process--

--and people have to decide, "What do I know about this person? Is this the person I want in the Oval Office? Is this the person I want to be both President and Commander-in-Chief?" And that requires a level of dialog and debate that is civil, that does have a purpose to it other than just, you know, making a point.

So I feel very comfortable. You know, whoever I run against, if I am the nominee, I feel very comfortable about it.

You know, Glenn, I didn't know him that well.

But I was around him--

--like a lot of people in New York have been. He was always a--he was always somebody who, oh, liked attention, liked to express his opinion. But I was shocked when he came out the very first day and called Mexican immigrants rapists and criminals. That just shocked me. I was thinking to myself, "Where did that come from?"

And then what he has said about other people in the months since have been equally out of nowhere, based on my experience.

Yes.

Mm-hmm.

I couldn't say because I didn't know him that well--

--and I would have to let others speak to it, but I believe that what he is saying now is very destructive. It's not only offensive, it's dangerous. I believe it has repercussions for our relations with other countries, how we are viewed, because I learned, in depth, what I had suspected when I was secretary of state. The way that other nations, both people and leaders, follow our presidential election is intense. And so we think of a throw-away comment; they think it's a change in direction.

And what we've been seeing, in terms of response from the European countries, from the Middle East, from Muslim countries--

Well, I think it's fair to say there is a demagogic path that Europeans, South Americans, Asians have pursued, and we know where that leads. It uses xenophobia, it uses paranoia, it uses prejudice, it uses nationalism to really stir people up and to, you know, begin an us-versus-them contrast, which is dangerous--

--and is not something we've had in our politics-

--at a presidential level. We've had a few, you know, local and state leaders over the years who have tried to do that. But when you come to the people running for President, there's been a sense of both decorum and decency and dialog that I think has served us well, and I hate to see us--

I feel like it is.

It appears to me like it is.

Yes.

Right.

Mm-hmm.

Right.

Right.

I knew it was the moment, but I wasn't quite sure how the moment would be perceived.

Yes. Because I found it offensive and off-putting, but I often am surprised by how viewers of--

--any television show, not just debates, perceive things differently than I sometimes do.

And your description is right. I got out of that debate, and I do think that most of the men thought it was a real moment, where Lazio, you know, kind of overwhelmed me, and made me look like I was on the defense.

And I know Mandy and Ann Lewis, you know, were of a different opinion. I knew that Mandy and Ann Lewis were right the next day, because when I went to my events for the next day, all the women who I encountered were saying, "I couldn't believe he did that," "I found that horrible." They were just really worked up about what he had done.

Right.

Right.

No. I was watching him do it, and I did have the feeling that it had been rehearsed--

--that it was something that was supposed to be "the big moment," and I was more thinking that it would look artificial, it would look--

--kind of phony, and I didn't want to, in any way, interfere with a moment that I hoped would reflect badly on him.

Right? Yeah.

Yes. Yes, a good analogy.

Exactly.

And so that's what I thought.

And so when I got off, I thought, okay, it was a moment, but I thought, you know, he had to have looked kind of phony, right?

And then, you know, people were telling me, "Oh, my gosh, he looked strong," and all that, and I was waiting to see what the verdict was--

--and the verdict was, you know, first and foremost, that he looked aggressive--

--excessively aggressive, and that it did look kind of staged, and that I was responding appropriately by not, you know, acting back in kind, but, you know, just being calm and letting him--

--let him do what he was going to do, let him finish his performance and then we'll see where we went from there.

[Laughter.]

Yes, we do, and I'm not looking beyond them.

You know, Glenn, obviously we will have to see what happens--

--assuming I get the nomination, assuming he gets the nomination.

But I actually think that the Republicans who are left, they all agree with each other on issues.

They have all, you know, taken stands that I vehemently disagree with. I want to keep it on the issues. I want to keep it on the contrasts that exist between me and any one of the Republicans, and that's my preference.

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

That's right.

Well, first let me say I thought what Trump said was really telling, because he kind of broke the fourth wall for the Republicans. They are doing everything they can to make abortion, if not illegal, inaccessible, unaffordable; and, as they close Planned Parenthood clinics, as they keep imposing all kinds of restrictions, as they hold up a nominee to the Supreme Court because their ultimate goal is to, you know, have the Supreme Court dramatically erode Roe v. Wade, what Trump said was deeply offensive, but I keep reminding people, not so far off from what they all believe. You know--

My point about Cruz.

My point about Kasich.

Absolutely. So let's not just focus on Trump. We need to focus on Trump as the tribune, if you will, of the most extreme statements about limiting abortion, criminalizing it, punishing women and doctors. But the--he pulled the cover off of--

--the Republicans' efforts to kind of dampen that down during an election.

Absolutely not.

I don't think any--I don't think any right that we have is less important than any other issue. You know, I have said repeatedly, "I am going to attack income inequality and I think I have a pretty good plan to do so. I don't just tell you what I'm against. I tell you what I'm for and how I would do it." But there are other forms of inequality. There is desperate education inequality in America, and I think every kid deserves a good teacher and a good school regardless of the ZIP code that he or she lives in.

Racial inequality, sexual orientation inequality, gender inequality.

So when somebody says, "Yeah, yeah, it's important, but let's talk about the really important issues. Don't let us get distracted from hearing the same thing we've heard now, over and over again"--

--"about income inequality," that bothers me, and I did speak out about it, and, you know, it is one of the reasons why Planned Parenthood Action Fund and NARAL endorsed me, because I didn't just vote the right way when the time came to raise your hand.

I've been a leader in protecting women's rights to make our own decisions.

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

"Chippy" is a great word. I haven't heard that word--

--in a long time.

I think they're getting more negative.

I think that there is a persistent, organized effort to misrepresent my record, and I don't appreciate that, and I feel sorry for a lot of the young people who are fed this list of misrepresentations. Take climate change, which is what was raised yesterday. You know, I was a leader on it in the Senate, when I was there. I worked hard to make a difference when I was secretary of state, starting in 2009, with President Obama. I helped to lay the groundwork for the Paris Agreement, which was hard to get, which is so critical. I thought it was a singular accomplishment by President Obama. Bernie Sanders, you know, criticized it and rejected it before it was even finally produced. So there's a difference between what I did as secretary of state, starting the, you know, Clean Air and Climate Coalition to go after methane and black soot, to go after cook stoves, which is a major promoter of pollutants, by, you know, really upping the Alliance for Clean Cook Stoves. I have a long record of going after the polluters and the big oil interests. I voted against the 2005 energy bill. I've been trying to take the subsidies away from big oil. And when you have supporters of a campaign who are repeatedly given inaccurate information.

Absolutely. I have no--look, I've been endorsed by the League of Conservation Voters. You know, they are intimately familiar with both of our records.

[Laughs]

[Laughs] Yeah, but President Obama made the point--

--which I really appreciated, that, you know, they were pretty tough on me.

I understand that.

It was really touching to me, and, you know, especially his analogy that he understood. He and I kidded about this when I worked with him, as Secretary of State, that, you know, I had to do everything he did, just like Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire, only I had to do it, you know, backwards and in high heels after I'd had hair and makeup done.

So I loved the fact that, you know, he was so open and kind about pointing this out, because it is a difference, and it is a difference that a lot of men in politics either don't even notice or basically ride over. But, in this campaign, it is important to me that we stay on the issues. I'm proud that we have, largely, up until now, stayed on the issues, compared to the Republicans, who have descended into insults. And I want it to stay on the issues.

There are legitimate--

--contrasts, but those contrasts should be based on the facts, what we have done and what we are proposing to do, as opposed to feeding information that is, you know, really inaccurate.

Right.

Well, I can only tell you what we see, and I don't see it as much as my campaign and my supporters and friends around the country see, but there is, as you well know, a very negative, intense barrage of attacks on anybody who supports me.

I did not see that in '08. So, for the Sanders campaign to demean John Lewis, who has been my friend for more than four decades, and is supporting meâ€‘â€‘

And I totally understood that.

I called and told him, "Look, if I were facing the difficult choice you're facing, I don't know what I would do. So I--you know, God speed. Do what you feel you must." And so he's back, and he said, from his own perspective, that he knows my husband and me, he knows we've been on the front lines on civil rights fights and struggles and that he was supporting us. And, when people speak out like that, you can take their opinion, either believe it or discard it, but to engage in ad hominem attacks and harassment, which is what is going on, I just think is out of bounds.

[Laughs] No killing permitted.

Mm-hmm.

Look, I have a record when it comes to the financial industries market. I have a long history of opposing a lot of what they're doing, trying to change behaviors, I--and I never voted for a bill that unleashed swaps and derivatives, the way Sen. Sanders did. So my record is actually quite a contrast with his record, when you really look at what caused the collapse in '08, because it wasn't just the big banks. It was investment banks like Lehman Brothers. It was AIG, the big insurance company. It was Countrywide Mortgage.

So I think it's important to, you know, try to put what happened into context, and my plan to rein in Wall Street is far more comprehensive and actually focused on the problems of the future than what he's saying. You know, it took me a while, after hearing him in the campaign, to realize he was talking as though Dodd-Frank never passed. He was talking about "We need to, you know, break up the big banks" and he was saying things like "On my first day, that's what I'll do." And I stopped one day and I thought, "Dodd-Frank was passed, the toughest regulations since the Great Depression, and, in fact, there is now a process to break up the banks if that is what is called for."

So I found it a little bit bewildering that, based on my record and based on, you know, my proposals, that anybody would be raising questions about anything, because people who ask me to speak, whether they're auto dealers or cardiologists or banks, they know where I stand because I've been very transparent and open about that.

[Laughs]

Hm.

Well, let me say, I think it's very important because, from my first-hand knowledge, a President wants to get things done, and yes, you can work to reach consensus with the other party, but you're going to be wielding a stronger hand the more Democrats you have. And it's also important for your priorities to be implemented, that you have Democratic governors and Democratic state legislators.

Look at what happened with the expansion of Medicaid.

When the Supreme Court said Affordable Care Act, yes, it's constitutional and legal, but you can't require the expansion of Medicaid, Republican governors and Republican legislators, by and large--not completely but by and large--have resisted expanding Medicaid.

Kasich being an exception.

The Republican governor who followed the Democratic governor in Arkansas is working hard to keep the expansion of Medicaid that was extended. But you have huge states like Texas--

--which has the highest rate of uninsured people in America, still, even though we're at 90 percent universal coverage, refusing to do that. It's bad for people and it's bad for the health care systems, particularly in poor urban and rural areas.

So is it important that you have a strong leadership for your party? I think it's critical. And think of how much better my life would be, in terms of fulfilling my agenda, if we took back the Senate and my friend and former partner, Chuck Schumer, were the majority leader in the Senate.

So I don't understand how you wouldn't want to elect down-ballot Democrats, starting in this election, which is why I've been raising money for the Democratic Party, because I believe the more we build up our organization, the more prepared we are, it will not only help me in November, it will help lift up and elect other Democrats as well.

[Laughs] Well, I can't answer that, Glenn, because he's a relatively new Democrat, and, in fact, I'm not even sure he is one. He's running as one. So I don't know quite how to characterize him. I'll leave that to him. But I know there's a big difference between Democrats and Republicans, and I know that Senator Sanders spends a lot of time attacking my husband, attacking President Obama, you know, calling President Obama weak and disappointing, and actually making a move in 2012 to recruit somebody to run a primary against him. I rarely hear him say anything negative about George W. Bush, who I think wrecked our economy, just not to put too fine a point on it.

So I don't know where he is on the spectrum, but I can tell you where I am. I'm going to do everything I can to get myself elected, but that's not enough. I'm going to try to help move the Senate to be a Democratic majority. I'm going to try to help pick up House seats. I'm going to try to elect Democratic governors, Democratic legislators, and all the way down the line.

[Laughs]

That's good. I loved being a senator.

Great to talk to you, Glenn. Thank you.