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**“REAL TIME WITH BILL MAHER”**

**BILL MAHER**

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**(includes “OVERTIME” on HBO.com)**

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[OPENING CREDITS]

[applause] [cheers] [standing ovation]

BILL MAHER: Hey! How you doin'? Thank you very much. How are you? Oh, stop it. Thank you very much. Oh, thank you. Listen, I know, I know, I know. Please. Please, please. I don't even have to – I don't have to guess why you're happy tonight. [shouts continue] You heard the...I know, I'm as giddy as you are. [laughter] Always, when there's a new pope.

You heard the big...[laughter]... heard the big news. The cardinals in Rome found a guy to wear the white dress and it's...[laughter]...Pope Francis. The first pope from Latin America! How about that?! [applause] [cheers] Which...which works out perfectly, because the Vatican already has a statue of the Virgin Mary on their front lawn. [laughter] [applause] That guy has the right idea. [laughter] He's like, "I came here to have fun."

But, I love pope stats, I do. He's the first pope outside of Europe in 1,300 years. First Jesuit. First one to take a name that was never used before since Pope Lando in 913. Like I have to tell you. [laughter]

Do you know that in Italy, they actually make pope cards, like little baseball cards? Yeah. And when a boy sticks one in his back pocket, it whispers, "This is our little secret." [laughter] [applause]

And, were you watching the media coverage all week? Oh, my God, it was predictably ridiculous. They had – most of those days, they had a live feed of the chimney. [laughter] You know, where the black or the white smoke. They just...locked on that chimney. And, at one point, a bird landed on it. And they were all like, "Maybe this is a sign from God." [laughter]

And I think it was, because, at one point, the bird looked right into the camera and said, "You're staring at a chimney, you fuckin' morons." [laughter] [applause] The bird said that.

I mean...at least O.J.'s Bronco moved, you know? [laughter] Chimney...  
[laughter]

But...but, we're already hearing that the new pope, he's kind of already got an image. He's the "humble pope." Have you heard that? Because, for one thing, he – he refused to stand on the platform to elevate himself to the other cardinals when he took the job. And, also, he showed up wearing a simple string of pearls. I love that. [laughter] That's so classy. Just...

And, also, they said when he was archbishop in Buenos Aires, he could have taken, you know, the car they provide. He took the bus. That's right. An old guy on the bus mumbling about Jesus. When do you ever see that, huh? [laughter]

But, let's not be cynical. A new pope and a new hemisphere. This could change everything. And when I say, "change everything," I mean, "change nothing." [laughter] Nothing is going to change. [applause] We already know this guy's...Pope Francis' stance is he's strictly pro-life; he's absolutely against any sort of contraception. He thinks homosexuality is the work of Satan. Not if you do it right. [laughter]

He thinks adoption by gay parents is a form of discrimination against children. Or, as Republicans call him, "a progressive." [laughter]

So...I kid the Republicans. I shouldn't. They're having their big CPAC. Have you seen that? This is their big weekend. They're at their convention called CPAC, the Conservative Political Action Conference. And, guess who spoke today for the first time since the election? First speech. Mitt Romney was up there. And, I tell you something, Mitt Romney has not lost any of the warmth and charm... [laughter]...that we have come to know. He still sounds like the flight attendant who tells you, you can't use the bathroom in First Class. [laughter]

No, Mitt's big takeaway line today, he said, "It's fashionable in some circles to be pessimistic about America, and to be pessimistic about conservative solutions and the Republican Party." Oh, no, not Mitt. He is an optimist. He sees the president as "half-white"! [laughter]

I shouldn't make fun of them. They had a panel discussion there at CPAC, and I swear to God, this is the name of the panel discussion they had today. It was called, "Are You Sick and Tired of Being Called a Racist When You know You're Not One?" [laughter]

Let me save you guys a lot of trouble—[laughter]—and money spending on this seminar. If you get called a racist often enough to be sick and tired of it...

[laughter]...you might be a redneck. [laughter] Yes, you...you just might be a redneck. [applause] [cheers]

Yeah, they went...they went right from that panel back to their normal discussion about how the new Black Panthers – Eric Holder, Reverend Wright, Susan Rice, Al Sharpton and the “food stamp president” – are getting together to “take your money from thugs and give it to people in inner city.” But, no racism, ladies and gentlemen. [laughter]

Now, the other one who spoke today, Marc Rubio, I loved what his – what his statement was. He said, “Liberals say Republicans don’t have any new ideas.” Now, this is a quote from Marc Rubio. He said, “We don’t need a new idea. We have an idea. It’s called ‘America’ and it still works.” [laughter]

Really? How do you solve a complex, international problem like climate change? “America.” [laughter] [applause] Stagnant wages? “America.” [laughter]

Equal rights for women? “Saudi Arabia.” [laughter] [applause]

And, in a final note, I’m sure you heard, in New York City – have you been following the case of the “cannibal cop”? – well, the jury convicted him this week. Not only – this guy is in a lot of trouble – not only was he planning to kidnap, kill and eat women, he was going to wash them down with a 24-ounce soda. [laughter] And that is strictly forbidden in New York! [applause] [cheers]

All right, we’ve got a great show. Rachel Maddow is here! [cheers] Also, Tom Davis and Jared Bernstein, and a little later, I’ll be speaking with Chef Tom Colicchio.

But, first, she is the CEO and founder of Students First, and author of *Radical: Fighting to Put Students First*. Please welcome Michelle Rhee. [applause] [cheers] [Rhee joins Maher onstage] Hey, Michelle!

MICHELLE RHEE: Hi. How are you?

MAHER: How are you doin’? Pleasure to meet you.

RHEE: Nice to meet you.

MAHER: Thank you for coming. I met you – I first read about you in *Time* magazine. You became the face of education reform when you took over the Washington, D.C. school system. But, you rubbed some people the wrong way.

RHEE: I did, yes.

MAHER: And...and got your assed kicked out of there. Along with the mayor, too, right? You lost his job with yours. Oh, my.

RHEE: Yes, unfortunately.

MAHER: You must have rubbed a lot of people...[laughter]...What do you think it was that...that...that got them so upset?

RHEE: Well, you know, when we took over the school district, it was the lowest-performing and most dysfunctional school district in the entire nation. You know, eight percent of our eighth graders were operating on grade level in mathematics. And, so it was a really dire situation.

And, so I thought, well, okay, when you have – are facing a dire situation like this, you have to – you have to do really aggressive things. So, we started closing down low-performing schools and...you know, cutting the central office bureaucracy. That sort of thing.

MAHER: [overlapping] I'm sorry to interrupt you, but I hear that all the time: closing down schools.

RHEE: Yeah.

MAHER: Where do the kids go then?

RHEE: Well, because the district had done such a poor job of educating kids for a very long time, the kids were sort of fleeing the district. So, we were running the same number of schools, but just with fewer kids. So, you can close down the low-performing schools and then, hopefully, send the kids to at least, you know, somewhat higher performing schools.

MAHER: Now, I read in your book you said you saw a sign in a school that said, "Teachers cannot make up for what parents and students will not do."

RHEE: Yes.

MAHER: But, I kind of agree with that statement.

RHEE: So, the thing is that everyone has to take—

MAHER: [overlapping] That bad?

RHEE: [overlapping]—accountability, right? And responsibility for – for doing well in school. The kids do, the parents do, the teachers do as well. But, I think that the problem that I had with that statement is it really sort of said, “Well, as teachers, there’s nothing that we can do.” And, in fact, there’s a lot that teachers can do.

You know, I remember—

MAHER: [overlapping] But, that’s not what the statement says. It just says – they’re not miracle workers. There’s only one of those. [he points “heavenward”] [applause] [laughter]

RHEE: Well, I would actually – I would actually argue with you in saying that there are hundreds of thousands of teachers across this country who do – are doing absolutely heroic things. I mean...[applause]...I went into – so, I’ll give you a quick example. So, I went into a high school, one of our lowest-performing high schools in the entire city, one morning. And, you know, first classroom I go into, there’s five kids, second classroom, seven kids, nine kids, three kids. I’m thinking, where are all the children, right?

So, I go into one classroom, and there are 35 kids in this classroom. There are so many kids there aren’t enough desks. So, I go up to one of the kids who looks like one of the tougher kids, and I said, “So, what do you think about your teacher?”

He said, “This is my best teacher.” I said, “Really? Why?” He said, “Because, every day, he teaches us something new, and if you have a question about something, he always gives you an answer.”

I was like, “Okay.” So, you know, I finish my tour of the school. I’m walking out half an hour later, and that kid I was talking to, and two of his friends, are walking out of the building in front of me.

So, I said – you know, tap him on the shoulder – I said, “Excuse me, young man, where do you think you’re going?” And he said, “Oh, you saw our first-period teacher. He’s great, so we came to that. Our second-period teacher is not so good, so we’re going to roll.” [audience reacts]

Now, when the people out in D.C. see these guys on the street, they’re probably thinking, oh, you know, they’re not – they’re not engaged in school; they’re not doing their work. They’re not realizing that these kids are making the conscious decision to wake up early in the morning to go to first period because they’re

getting a lot out of that class, because the teacher is providing that for them. And, not so much for the next one.

So, I feel like the lesson in this is that teachers can make a huge difference.

MAHER: Well, I'm not a policy wonk. You know a lot more about it than I do. But, I have seen a lot of Hollywood movies...[laughter]...about schools. And I think what schools need is a very caring, white person. [laughter] Who goes to the inner city and...teaches them that math is cool. And they – they teach the teacher how to rap. [laughter] That's, I think, really the answer. [applause]

No, I mean, it's like...it's funny...I mean, they laugh, but, you know, you can picture all those movies we've seen where, you know—

RHEE: [overlapping] Yes.

MAHER: [overlapping]—there's that teacher, and then you can, you know, picture a bad teacher. We all saw “Bad Teacher,” right? That's a fuckin' funny movie. Come on. [laughter] Cameron Diaz is the “bad teacher.” That's who, you know, I think you're saying that person has to go. And we agree to that.

RHEE: [overlapping] Absolutely.

MAHER: [overlapping] But...but, I mean – that – those are all anecdotal. But, I – I would think – and my sister is a teacher—

RHEE: [overlapping] Yes.

MAHER: [overlapping]—and I hear from her, you know, and she said, “You know, you always hear from the bad parents about...they come in, you know, when the kid fails.”

RHEE: Right.

MAHER: [overlapping] “And they say, ‘What's going on here?’”

RHEE: Right.

MAHER: And the answer is, well, you're just showing up now. The answer is you. That's the problem.

RHEE: Right.

MAHER: The problem, I think, is poverty and parents, because, I mean, I have some statistics here on studies that they have done on schools and here in America.

RHEE: [overlapping] Right, right.

MAHER: [overlapping] And it doesn't – it doesn't really indicate that it's the schools that is the problem. I mean, we hear all the time that America is falling behind. But, in three major, international tests – there's the – there's the one, Progress in International Reading Literacy Study. I'll just give you two: The Trends in International Math and Science.

Students in U.S. schools where the poverty rate is less than 10 percent are first in reading and science in the world.

RHEE: Compared to the average kids in other – in other countries. You can't – you can't do an apples to oranges comparison. If you look at the top quartile of kids in our country by income level, right? So, the most privileged kids. And, you compare them to – internationally – to the top quartile of other countries, they rank 23<sup>rd</sup>.

So, that – that shows you that when you're – when you're looking at our high-income kids versus the other countries' high-income kids, our – ours are not performing well.

MAHER: But, I mean, if you take away the fact that minorities are now in the mix, I mean, when I took the SAT's in the early seventies, something like 13% of minorities took the SAT's.

RHEE: Right.

MAHER: Now it's up to 45%. That's a good thing.

RHEE: Yeah.

MAHER: But, it does take a while for progress to be made, with people who have to catch up.

RHEE: Absolutely. And that's why we have to make sure that we – whenever we're – we're measuring the progress of students in schools, we have to take into account where the kids are beginning, right? You can't sort of set a goal for all schools and all kids at the same level, you know, for a given year, without taking into consideration where they're starting.



But, what you also have to do is make sure that you are holding the same high standards for all kids in the long run.

MAHER: All right, let me ask you one more thing about tenure.

RHEE: [overlapping] Sure.

MAHER: [overlapping] Because I think what bothers a lot of people in America is, why do teachers get this – this perk that the rest of us don't have? We can all be fired.

But, let me give you an answer that I think might make sense. [laughter] [voices overlap]

MAHER: The Supreme Court has tenure, right? The Supreme Court. You can't fire a Supreme Court Justice, because they have to make very hard decisions, and you wouldn't want to hold them accountable; say, "Well, we didn't like that decision. You've got to go." It's kind of the same thing with teachers. I mean, a teacher has to be able to say to parents, "You kid is dumb."

RHEE: Yeah. [laughter] No, not that. [applause]

MAHER: Because – and not get fired for it – because that's very often the answer, is that – you know, because, to parents, it's never their precious child that's the problem. [laughter]

RHEE: Teachers do have to make hard calls. And they have to have protections to make sure that, you know, when – when they are making those tough calls, the ones that are right for kids, that, you know, they have what they need – the problem in public education is that tenure has become a job for life regardless of performances.

And, so we have a some people who are not doing the right things for kids, where a kid – you know, children are going into their classroom year in and year out and are sort of losing ground. Or, you even have, you know, here in Southern California, you know, sexual predators, and they cannot be fired.

MAHER: That's the Church. [laughter] [applause] You're mixing two up. All right, well, I've got to go. I could talk to you about this all night. It's a fascinating subject. Come back and talk to us.

RHEE: Absolutely. Thank you.

MAHER: [overlapping] Thank you very much. Michelle Rhee, everybody!  
[applause] [cheers]

All right, let's meet our panel. [Maher leaves Rhee and joins the panel] [applause]  
[cheers] Hey!

Okay, here they are! He is a senior fellow at the Center on Budget and Policy  
Priorities, and former chief economic advisor to Vice President Joe Biden – my  
old job. Jared Bernstein joins us. [applause]

JARED BERNSTEIN: Thank you.

MAHER: He is a former Republican U.S. Representative from Virginia: Tom  
Davis! Hey, Tom, great to see you again. [applause]

And she's the host of "The Rachel Maddow Show," whose documentary,  
"Hubris," is re-airing March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 9:00. And her book *Drift* is now in paperback.  
Rachel Maddow is over here! [applause] [cheers] Oh, a deafening round of  
applause.

All right, remember to follow me on Facebook and Twitter, and follow "Real  
Time" on Instagram, and submit your questions to HBO.com, so we can talk about  
them on "Overtime."

Let's start with the budget. It's "March Madness" in D.C. That is the time when  
they release the budgets. And I want to talk about three of them tonight. In the  
press, you only hear about two of them. You hear about Paul Ryan's budget from  
the Republicans, Patty Murray's from the Democrats. There's also one from the  
Progressive Caucus that you never hear about. We'll get to that in a minute.

But, let's start with Mr. Ryan. He calls for the repeal of Obamacare right off the  
bat. I don't know why this is in a budget.

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] Well—

MAHER: [overlapping] Because, I thought we decided this. The Supreme Court  
decided it. And then we had a little thing called an "election." [laughter] I get it  
that budgets are all a bit somewhat about fantasy. But, it seems like that is a little  
ballsy after you get your ass kicked and the Supreme Court says this is the law of  
the land. Why does this go in a budget, I would just ask.

TOM DAVIS: [overlapping] Well, because the Republicans didn't approve of this in the first place. They'd repeal it if they wanted, and they're putting out their marker in terms of where they think spending should be. And so—

MAHER: [overlapping] But, on an issue that has been decided by the courts and the electorate?

BERNSTEIN: It doesn't just—

MAHER: [overlapping] Can't you just move on from that? [applause]

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping]—it doesn't just...

DAVIS: [overlapping] It's going to cost a lot of money.

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping]—it's important – it doesn't just repeal healthcare reform. It repeals financial reform. It turns Medicare into a voucher program after ten years. It cuts taxes to the tune of trillions of dollars for those at the top of the scale, and offsets those costs by shredding the safety net for the those as the low end of the scale. And I'm talking about nutritional programs, medical programs, educational opportunity. The kind of things you were just talking about.

I mean, this isn't a budget that – I've been involved in this process for a long time, and the way it usually goes is, one groups starts out over here, one group starts out over here, and they do this thing called "compromise" where they meet in the middle.

But, what you have—

MADDOW: [she laughs] [laughter]

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping]—what you have now with this Ryan budget is a budget that's starting so far to the right – and, as you suggested, one that's already been rejected big time in a national election – that there's no way back. There's no way back to the middle.

DAVIS: Well, look, you say it's been rejected in national election. Republicans held the House. Members who voted for the Ryan budget last time—

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] Yeah.

DAVIS: [overlapping]—re-elected. They still have a majority. [voices overlap]

MADDOW: [overlapping] But eight Republican governors—

MAHER: [overlapping] No.

MADDOW: [overlapping]—have just signed onto it. They were all anti-Obamacare—

DAVIS: [overlapping] Well, that's the Medicaid piece of it.

MADDOW: [overlapping] Right.

DAVIS: [overlapping] They haven't signed on—[voices overlap]

MADDOW: [overlapping] Which is kind of a big part of it.

MAHER: [overlapping] And also – also, they didn't really hold the House. Because, let's remember, more people in America voted for Democrats in the House. [applause] [cheers] It was because of gerrymandering.

DAVIS: [overlapping] Well, Bill, it's also the Voting Rights—

MAHER: [overlapping] Let's just—

DAVIS: [overlapping]—it's also the Voting Rights Act, which packs Democrats.

MAHER: [overlapping] Okay, but...but, I'm just saying – all that – just remember, you said, "They held the House." I just want to know, I mean, it's really—

DAVIS: [overlapping] Well, this is the opening ante. And if the Republican Study Committee has a budget that is to the right of the Ryan Budget if you want to get there. And, the missing budget here is—

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] That's hard to imagine.

DAVIS: [overlapping]—is, where is the – where is the president's budget? It was due in February. It's going to be two months late this year. [voices overlap]

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] Well, wait—

DAVIS: [overlapping] This is the first year the Democrats didn't put a budget—

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping]—that – that’s just a Republican talking point. Because, you’ve got these – you’ve got these budgets—[applause]

DAVIS: [overlapping] The statute says February.

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] Yeah. You’ve got these budgets. These budgets are – they’re called budget resolutions – they’re not binding documents. The point is that each party comes out with their budget. They try to get together and resolve things. But, the reason that’s not going to happen, in my opinion, is not because of the votes. It’s because of what the Republicans are talking about cutting here.

If you ask people – and I’m including Tea Party members – what they think of Medicare; if you ask them what they think of Social Security, of retirement security, what they think of the kinds of programs that these budgets completely restructure, these are actually things that Americans want. [applause]

MAHER: Well, let me – let me give you the Progressive Caucus budget, because—

DAVIS: [overlapping] Bill—

MAHER: [overlapping]—this is – this is the one that you don’t hear about.

BERNSTEIN: Right.

MAHER: And I don’t know why, because the Tea Party has 49 members, and the Progressive Caucus has 78. But, apparently, in the media, what they propose is laughable. But, let’s give it some air.

\$2.1 trillion stimulus. That’s a big – that’s – it’s a liberal group, okay? – including \$875 billion for infrastructure. But, let’s remember, money has never been cheaper to borrow than now.

It still reduces the deficit by \$4.4 trillion, almost the exact same number that the Ryan budget reduces the deficit. It just does it by a different method.

It taxes people – it makes a differentiation between people who make over \$500,000 and people who are billionaires. Now they get taxed the same. They’re saying, the super-rich, the billionaires, are going to get taxed a lot more.

It has a carbon tax. It reduces defense spending to ’06 levels.

It negotiates bulk pricing for pharmaceutical drugs. I don't know why we don't do this now. It's common sense. [applause]

And it includes a public option. And if you think this is radical stuff, *Business Insider* did a study where they actually released this budget, almost exactly this budget, but they didn't label it as to whose budget it was. It was the budget that was favored by most people, including 47% of Republicans.

DAVIS: Well, Bill, let me just make a point. The electorate elects Democrats because they like these programs. And then they elect Republicans because they don't want to have to pay for them. So, they get the best kind of all worlds as you go through this. [voices overlap]

MADDOW: [overlapping] But, the – in the big picture—

MAHER: [overlapping] Yeah. Well—

MADDOW: [overlapping]—I mean, the Ryan budget is a document that says the big problems in America right now are that rich people do not have enough money. They need relief from confiscatory tax rates. And poor people—

MAHER: [overlapping] Well—

MADDOW: [overlapping]—have too much access to affordable healthcare. And those things must stop. [applause] And if we fix those things, America will be on a better path. [voices overlap]

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] It's also – it's also—

DAVIS: [overlapping] It says – it says we have a spending problem.

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] But, remember—

MADDOW: [overlapping] The Progressive Caucus – the Progressive Caucus—

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping]—remember—

MADDOW: [overlapping]—instead of saying, listen, we need to invest in things that are going to make us more competitive in the long run – as Bill said, money is really cheap – and we should maybe dial back some of the massive growth in the post-9/11 defense industry that we—

MAHER: [overlapping] That's the key. [applause] [voices overlap] Because, you know what?

MADDOW: [overlapping]—that we saw after 9/11.

MAHER: [overlapping] Rich people – rich people – I'm sure you would agree with this – actually do pay the freight in this country.

DAVIS: Sure, they do.

MAHER: I just saw these statistics. I mean, they – something like 70%. And, here in California, I just want to say, liberals, you could actually lose me. It's outrageous what we're paying. Over 50%. I'm willing to pay my share, but, yeah, I mean, it's ridiculous.

But, the problem is, yes, entitlements; but, let's not forget, neither one of these budgets – nobody's budget has the balls to put Social Security on the table. Obama did.

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] Right. Yeah, well, look, first of all—

MAHER: [overlapping] But, defense. What you said. That's what your book is about.

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping]—well, I don't want to lose this point that you made earlier. Right now, of all these budgets we're talking about, it's this Progressive Caucus budget that actually targets first the jobs deficit. And, I work in D.C., and everybody runs around that city with their hair on fire about the budget deficit. And, that is a – a long-term issue.

But, right now, the fact that this progressive budget targets jobs first is extremely important. And I think, very much missing from other – the other budgets.  
[applause]

DAVIS: Let me ask one question. Let me ask you a question. So, the argument is, because interest rates are so low, we can continue to borrow and put off to the long term what we're going to do about the budget deficit. What happens when interest rates rise?

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] I can explain that. I can explain that. The way—

DAVIS: [overlapping] Because most of our debt is short-term. Most of our debt is short-term.

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping]—right, now, I – I’m going to explain that. This is a great question. The way that works, it’s not the temporary measures that hurt you when it comes to your deficit and debt. Things that get into the economy and get out don’t add to the interest costs that you’re worried about.

The Recovery Act, the stimulus program: \$800 billion of stimulus spending, it got in, it got out—

DAVIS: [overlapping] One time. One time, agreed.

BERNSTEIN: And it now contributes about two-tenths of a percent to the budget deficit. The things that hurt you are the things that go in there and they last forever and you don’t pay for them.

DAVIS: [overlapping] Entitlements. Entitlements. Entitlements—

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] The Bush tax cuts, defense and—

DAVIS: [overlapping]—rising seven percent a year—

MAHER: [overlapping] Yes.

DAVIS: [overlapping]—fastest growing part of the budget. [voices overlap]

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] I agree that—

DAVIS: [overlapping] Ten thousand boomers a day retiring. That’s what you’ve got—

MAHER: [overlapping] Okay, but – but, let me – let me add the one part I didn’t mention.

DAVIS: [overlapping]—and the Ryan budget at least touches that.

MAHER: But, the Ryan budget – well, the Ryan budget mostly guts—

DAVIS: [overlapping] It’s an opening. It’s an opening.

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] It’s Medicare.

MAHER: Okay, all right, but also asks for \$500 billion more defense.



BERNSTEIN: Right.

MAHER: After we already are—

MADDOW: [overlapping] More. This is not 500 more in cuts. No, this is adding money to defense.

MAHER: Our defense budget is bigger than the next 13 countries combined. We're like a woman with big, giant, fake tits who does nothing but think about getting her tits done and getting them bigger. [applause]

DAVIS: [overlapping] Well, it does. But, Bill—

MAHER: [overlapping] That's all we – we have the biggest tits in the world, and all we want is somehow to have bigger tits.

DAVIS: You've got the sequestering coming in. Republicans have let the sequester come in. They – they didn't run when everybody yelled—

MAHER: [overlapping] Okay—

MADDOW: [overlapping] Yeah, but then the Ryan budget adds \$500 million back -- \$500 billion back. And—

DAVIS: [overlapping] It's an opening – it's an opening—

MAHER: [overlapping] Well, look – all right, well—

MADDOW: [overlapping]—and the one thing he wants to get rid of in the sequester is the defense cuts.

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] I guess—

MADDOW: [overlapping] After 9/11, we had the largest discretionary part of the budget is the defense budget, right? Bigger than 13 other countries or nearest rivals combined. What did we do after 9/11? We doubled it. What do we do after that? We doubled it again.

MAHER: [overlapping] Also, I just would like to add—

MADDOW: [overlapping] So, we – if that is going to be the path on which we are going to continue indefinitely, don't talk to me about fiscal responsibility. Talk to

me about other priorities. But, that's not about money. [applause] [cheers] That's not about money.

DAVIS: [overlapping] Just for the record, the Senate budget adds a trillion dollars in taxes. These are antes. These are opening – these are openings in—

MAHER: [overlapping] I just – I know—

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] It's not an opening bid when you start so far out to the right that you're not even in the same universe as the broad electorate. [laughter] [applause] [cheers]

MAHER: [overlapping] Also, you know what?

DAVIS: [overlapping] You've got – you've got the middle of the road down the left-hand gutter—

MAHER: [overlapping]—what's never – what's never seemed to be mentioned is that we've already had an amazing amount of deficit reduction.

BERNSTEIN: Right.

MAHER: Between the sequester, that's \$1.2 trillion; the debt ceiling deal; that was \$960 billion – almost a trillion; the fiscal cliff deal, \$860 billion, and a couple of others. We almost are up to that \$4 trillion that Simpson-Bowles had asked for.

DAVIS: [overlapping] Half way.

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] No, we're more than half way.

MAHER: [overlapping] So, this talking point that, you know, Obama is the big spender, there's been a lot of reduction already—

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] Bill, the budget deficit has fallen from 10% of GDP in 2009, to five percent now. Over the last – since 2009 to 2012, spending – all the Republicans say we're on a spending tear – spending between 2009 and 2012 has been – has gone up 0.6 percent, 0.6 percent.

So, if you actually look at the numbers, there's no support for this idea that – that we are being crushed by spending and budget deficits. Over the long term, we absolutely have to address—[voices overlap]—the Medicare pressures. No question about that.

MADDOW: And in the short run, we need jobs.

MAHER: Okay.

BERNSTEIN: Exactly. [applause] So, that's – that the sequester.

DAVIS: [overlapping] You look long term or short term—

MAHER: [overlapping] But—

DAVIS: Go ahead.

MAHER: I guess it's about who are the real “takers.” Because it's the tenth anniversary of the invasion of – well, the “liberation,” I meant—[laughter]—[he laughs] Did we invade or did we liberate? Let's just say we “libervaded.” [laughter] We “libervaded” Iraq ten years ago on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2003.

And Bruce Bowen, the Special Inspector General there, says that the \$60 billion we spent on reconstruction has really gotten us very, very little. Eight billion – at least eight billion, probably much more – has just disappeared. Just, you know, showed up in shrink-wrapped pallets of \$50 bills, and just gone.

DAVIS: No question.

MAHER: Eighty-two convictions so far, and they're not done yet, of contractors – contractors and government personnel. I know we're all mad at the “takers,” but it seems to me these are real “takers.” These are “takers” on a big scale. [applause]

DAVIS: [overlapping] A lot – a lot of these contractors were Iraqis. It was money distributed directly to Iraq instead of going through the regular—

MAHER: [overlapping] But, who – but, who did that? Whose fault is that?  
[voices overlap]

DAVIS: [overlapping] Well, the administration. Both administrations—[voices overlap]

MAHER: [overlapping] To pass out – to pass out cash to a guy named Achmed.  
[laughter]

MADDOW: [overlapping] You know, you – you were talking earlier about Mitt Romney—

DAVIS: [overlapping] Yeah, exactly. Huge mistake. Huge mistake.

MADDOW: [overlapping]—about Mitt Romney speaking today at CPAC. Mitt Romney did speak today at CPAC. Fox did not carry it, which is very interesting. MSNBC and CNN were all over it. Fox was interviewing Alan Colmes at the time. They could not break away. [laughter]

But...but, Mitt Romney gave this – gave this speech in which he talked about “our war for the liberation of Iraq.” I mean, he gave that speech today, talking about how we went in there to liberate those people. His top foreign policy advisor in the 2012 campaign was Dan Senor, who had been the advisor – the spokesman for the Iraq War in Baghdad. The big foreign policy speech at the Republican convention was Condoleezza “mushroom cloud” Rice. [laughter]

I mean, they still think Iraq was a good idea and are still trying to sell it; haven’t learned that—

DAVIS: [overlapping] But, Bill, they told us at the time – I mean, look, a lot of us – you know, looking at that vote, historically – they said the oil was going to pay for it.

MAHER: [overlapping] Oh, yeah.

DAVIS: [overlapping] And we’re two trillion into it.

MAHER: But, also, let me – let me just say this. I mean, we have ten years now; there’s somewhat perspective. But, that’s not a lot of perspective for any country.

DAVIS: Right.

MAHER: If you looked at America in 1786, it didn’t look that great, right? And I also must say, I’ve got to admit, it’s a country that’s standing. I thought it wouldn’t be.

MADDOW: Yeah.

MAHER: It’s actually doing better than I thought it would be. Is it a great country? No. Does it have a lot of problems? Yes. But, there actually is a country standing there called Iraq. And, I don’t know. Now—

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] But, I mean—

MAHER: [overlapping]—it’s never going to be worth what the cost was. But, is there some value in having created a country, Iraq, that’s not—

MADDOW: [overlapping] I mean, it is of great value to Iran. Iran has an ally that it never had before. It has bigger regional influence.

MAHER: [overlapping] That’s true.

MADDOW: The Shiites have – have influence there that’s cross-border in a way that it never would have been before.

MAHER: [overlapping] But, nothing—

MADDOW: [overlapping] So, we did, internationally, affect Iran’s sphere of influence. That’s—

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] To me, the hard – the reason why your question is so hard to answer is because I don’t think many Americans – I’d include myself – really ever understood what “victory” meant in this context. What – what would it look like if we were successful there?

I mean, this is a war that originally one of Bush’s economists said, “This could cost \$100-to-\$200 billion. And he got fired—

MAHER: [overlapping] Right.

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping]—for saying that, because they said it would cost \$50-\$60 billion and it might take a matter of months at the most. We’re now at \$3 trillion and climbing.

And, you know, while we can all have great disagreements about whether this war was a good or a bad idea, I think everyone who can hear my voice would agree that – that we have to have an unwavering commitment to the veterans who – many of who—[applause]

DAVIS: [overlapping] No question.

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping]—many of whom – many of whom are coming away wounded at far higher rates than any other conflict we’ve ever had. And, by the way, that takes you right back to that budget discussion. Because, the budgets that we were criticizing before fail to account for what – for those people’s needs going forward. [applause]

MAHER: I heard Jeb Bush this week say that history will treat his brother very kindly. [laughter] Well, you never know about history. I mean—

DAVIS: [overlapping] Truman has been rehabilitated through time. And he was one – you know, he left under—

MAHER: [overlapping] I will say this – I will say this nice thing about George Bush: so many of these people who made these comments about the war – Dick Cheney and Wolfowitz and Rumsfeld – and they were so wrong, they have continued to speak about the war, which I think is unconscionable, since they were so wrong. George Bush really did go quietly to this room and think about what he did. [laughter] [applause]

MADDOW: We think.

DAVIS: [overlapping] Well, I think—

MADDOW: [overlapping] The thing – just one point – I think – when we think about our responsibilities to veterans, we are failing in a big way there, particularly the V.A. with the backlogs on disability claims.

DAVIS: Right.

MADDOW: It's unconscionable, people waiting more than a year as an average now to get those claims filled. [applause] But, the other responsibility that we have to veterans and to future veterans, and to ourselves, is that we change as a country so that we don't ever do that again.

Iraq was to stop the “weapons of mass destruction” that Saddam was going to kill us with. It was a lie. It was a lie. And we – we failed as a country and as a political system to stop that lie from being used to justify a war that never should have happened. [applause] [cheers]

MAHER: [overlapping] But, yeah, Bill O'Reilly—

MADDOW: [overlapping] And until there's penance...we don't – we haven't done right by that issue.

DAVIS: Let me ask this: if we didn't – if we didn't know what victory in Iraq would look like, what does victory in Afghanistan look like?

MAHER: Oh, we can't – we don't have time to get into that. [laughter]

DAVIS: Same problem. I rest my case. [voices overlap]

MAHER: [overlapping] That's over. But, Bill O'Reilly – Bill O'Reilly did say, "If the Americans go in and overthrow Saddam and he has nothing, I will apologize to the nation." Yeah, still waiting for that. [laughter]

Okay, so, with the new pope, I have been thinking a lot about maybe going back to confession. [laughter] No, I haven't. And one of the reasons I haven't really entertained that notion is because I noticed that you don't really have to go to confession anymore, because they have confession on the Internet.

It's a phenomenon that started out with something called "Pet Shaming." Show a couple of these. [slides of "Pet Shaming"] Yeah, these – people put these signs— [laughter]—"I steal dirty socks, the smellier the better." "I hid meat in the couch." [laughter]

And then it caught on with people. And people started to give their own confessions. [slides of "human shaming" – people holding signs which Maher reads:]

"I pretend to be napping so I don't have to text people back." [laughter]

Some of them are funny, like this: "7 years, 4 kids, 3 diaper changes." [laughter]

Some of them are actually, kind of, you know, serious: "I've been acting like I'm okay, but I'm not."

And we noticed that now everybody is starting to do it. Look at some of the ones we found on the Internet just this week. [laughter]

Look at this: Mitch McConnell. "Every time I sneeze, I pee a little." [laughter] [applause]

John Boehner got in on the act: "I only cry because I'm always shitfaced." [laughter] [applause]

Pope Benedict: "Not actually sick, just hated that fucking job." [laughter] [applause] [cheers]

Dr. Cornel West: "When I say 'brother,' I'm thinking 'asshole.'" [laughter]

Sarah Palin: "Sometimes I close my eyes and pretend Todd is Kobe Bryant." [laughter] [cheers] [applause]

Marcus Bachmann: “Sometimes I close my eyes and pretend Michelle is Kobe Bryant.” [laughter] [applause]

Oh, here’s one from President Obama: “I’m about to cut some motherfuckers.” [laughter] [applause] [cheers]

Mitt Romney: “I hate the other 53 percent, too.” [laughter] [applause]

Oh, and look at this one. An orangutan we found: “I only slept with Donald Trump’s mother to win a bet.” [laughter] [applause] [cheers]

All right, let’s bring out Tom. He’s a chef and owner of Craft restaurants, and executive producer of the new documentary, “A Place at the Table.” Tom Colicchio is here! [applause] [cheers] [Colicchio joins the panel] Tom! How are you, sir?

TOM COLICCHIO: Great to meet you.

MAHER: Thank you so much for being here. I’ve really enjoyed your restaurants.

COLICCHIO: I really enjoy your show, so I’m happy to be here.

MAHER: And I’m not even a foodie, you know? I mean, I like a nice booth. That’s what matters to me in a restaurant. And you’re very comfortable at Craft.

COLICCHIO: Thank you. I appreciate that.

MAHER: And I also admire you because, you know, you’re a guy whose business is really serving fancy food to fancy people.

COLICCHIO: Mm-hmm. [affirmative]

MAHER: But, you know, since your thing is food, you decided to take it upon yourself to make this documentary—

COLICCHIO: [overlapping] Right.

MAHER: [overlapping]—about hunger in America for people who don’t eat fancy at all.

COLICCHIO: Right.



MAHER: Just start off by telling us how big the problem is with hunger in America.

COLICCHIO: Well, you're right, Bill, I'm comfortable, but I'm not comfortable with the fact that 50 million Americans are food insecure.

MAHER: That's the number?

COLICCHIO: That's the number. Fifty million Americans, 17 million children.

MAHER: [overlapping] Who don't know where their next meal is coming from.

COLICCHIO: [overlapping] They don't know where their next meal is coming from. You know – and I think it was important to change the face of hunger. I think in this country, we're conditioned to sort of think of hunger in terms of Third World hunger: starving children in Africa and things like that.

MAHER: Right.

COLICCHIO: And so we needed to put a different face on it. And you see in the film children, you see young mothers, you see clergy, you see a chief of police that is using food banks. And – and so this is a pervasive problem. And it's growing.

And what's really frustrating is that we can fix this. We fixed it – we fixed it back in the seventies. There was a film that came out in 1968 called “Hungry in America.”

MAHER: Right.

COLICCHIO: The response to that was massive. You had Senators Dole and McGovern, they got together, created a safety net, signed by Richard Nixon. And the eighties came in, and “A Thousand Points of Light” changed all that.

MAHER: So, we had – we had fixed that hunger problem.

COLICCHIO: Mm-hmm. [affirmative]

MAHER: That's what I learned in this movie—

COLICCHIO: [overlapping] Right.

MAHER: [overlapping]—that I guess I had forgotten. That's amazing. And then Reagan and the idea that—

COLICCHIO: [overlapping] Charities can take care of it.

MAHER: [overlapping] Charities—

COLICCHIO: [overlapping] Government shouldn't take of it.

MAHER: [overlapping]—churches. And there are 40,000 food banks in America.

COLICCHIO: Well, then, there were 400. Now there's 40,000. Exactly.

MAHER: And still not enough to do the job.

COLICCHIO: [overlapping] So the response of food banks, they just keep growing – not enough to do the job. We need a government response. Programs like WIC, SNAP, the school breakfast and lunch programs, they work. And they just need to be funded. [applause]

MAHER: Yeah, I mean, there's this idea that...this idea that if you are taking public assistance, somehow you are on the dole. And, you know, there was a very poignant part in the movie where you highlight this woman who got a job, and her situation was even worse.

COLICCHIO: Right.

MAHER: Because, the system works against you. And minimum wage is so low that you actually are hungrier when you have a job.

COLICCHIO: Well, you know, I think – that's called the "cliff effect." You fall off the cliff and you lose all your benefits. And there should be a gradual process to get people off public assistance.

But, if you look at the numbers, 85% of the families that receive SNAP benefits or food stamp benefits, have at least one member of the family working. And 70% of them are working full time.

So, this isn't – these aren't "takers."

MAHER: Right.

COLICCHIO: These are people that want to work. They want to – you know, they're fulfilling their end of the social contract. And yet they can't make it. And, you know, we can fix this. And I think a few things need to happen. Number one,

we need to fund the programs. I think we also need to change the language and stop looking at these programs as welfare programs, and look at them as investments. They're investments in the future. They're investments in our children. [applause]

You know, you can't...kids...kids who are hungry, showing up to school hungry, they can't learn. It's impossible for them to learn. So, we need to do that. And, also, I think that hunger issues need to become a voting issue. Just like Second Amendment issues are, and just like reproductive rights are, hunger needs to become a voting issue. And, quite frankly, if our elected officials aren't going to get behind this and fix it, they should be labeled "pro-hunger." [applause]

MAHER: And...oh, well...

COLICCHIO: And that's both sides. You know, hunger – hunger is bipartisan. This is both sides.

MAHER: [overlapping] That won't go over well. I once labeled the NRA the "assassins' lobby." They didn't like that, either. [laughter]

But...and another thing I learned in your movie I thought was really interesting, is that obesity and hunger can actually go together. I mean, it's sort of counter-intuitive when you see someone who is obese. You know, oh, well, how could they be hungry? But, Mississippi, as a state, is actually the – the state that's first in hunger and first in obesity. Because they're getting calories but not nutrition.

COLICCHIO: Right. And calories are cheap, and nutrition is expensive. If you look at – three dollars buys 3,000 calories of junk; it buys 300 calories of healthy food. And yet we demonize people by saying they make bad choices. They're feeding their kids soda—

MAHER: [overlapping] Right.

COLICCHIO: [overlapping]—as if they actually have a choice. Because—

MAHER: [overlapping] Right.

COLICCHIO: [overlapping]—healthy food is expensive and cheap food is inexpensive. And that kind of goes to the corn policies—

MAHER: [overlapping] Because we – because we subsidize it.

COLICCHIO: [overlapping]—exactly. So, there’s \$20 billion in subsidies, 85% goes to corn, wheat and soy, all the things that go into fast food. Fifteen percent go into cattle and dairy. One percent to fruit and vegetables. And so if we just moved some of that over and made fruits and vegetables more affordable, maybe then people who are on public assistance, they can afford that. [applause]

MAHER: Okay, I want to ask you about one other issue that I know is important to you. It’s always been important to me, which is the overuse of antibiotics.

COLICCHIO: Mm-hmm. [affirmative]

MAHER: We heard this week, this is – I can’t even pronounce the name of this new bacteria, but the short name is CRE.

COLICCHIO: Yeah, real – really bad shit.

MAHER: [overlapping] Apparently they’re calling it a “nightmare bug.” If you get this, just kiss your ass goodbye.

COLICCHIO: Yeah.

MAHER: [overlapping] Because there’s – they do not have a cure for this. There is no antibiotic. It is popping up in hospitals. It eats your – your colon. It is killing patients. And it is available at Taco Bell right now. [laughter] No, I’m just kidding. I kid Taco Bell. I love Taco Bell. [laughter]

But...but, this is – see, this is so interesting to me, that, you know, we are cutting budgets left and right – I mean, that’s what the sequester does. And I think for people who – who are thinking, oh, you know what? Our researchers have it. Well, I think something like three-fifths, is it, of government – of university research, is government-funded.

So, they’re not going to come up with a cure for this, because those budgets have been slashed.

COLICCHIO: Well, the cure for this is – 85% of the 25,000 pounds of antibiotics that are used in this country go into feeding livestock for non-therapeutic reasons.

MAHER: Right.

COLICCHIO: And so we just need to stop that. [applause] I mean, that’s – this has to—

MAHER: [overlapping] Right. They...

COLICCHIO: [overlapping] In fact, the—

MAHER: [overlapping] Because they keep the livestock in such horrid conditions that they would get sick.

COLICCHIO: Well, for two reasons, yes. To keep them alive.

MAHER: Right.

COLICCHIO: But, also, it prevents muscle growth – I mean, it promotes muscle growth.

MAHER: That's...that's sad. Okay, let me ask about the issue – and I want to turn this to the panel, too, that must be interesting to you. I mentioned it in the monologue. Mayor Bloomberg banned sodas over 16 ounces. And a judge this week, Milton Tingling, a brilliant judge – I think this man is a brilliant – not just because he has before the court “Maher v. Trump is a monkey”—[laughter]—but, you know...I am for overturning this ban.

You know, I think this is what makes liberals look bad. This is what makes liberals look like elitist bullies who think they know everything and tell – and can tell people what to do. Of course, child obesity and general obesity is a problem. But, this is a very lazy way to handle it, to ban sodas over 16 ounces. [applause]

Does anyone disagree with that?

BERNSTEIN: I don't – I agree that it's “Big Brother-ly.” It's too much in that direction. I basically – but, there is this thing – and I think it connects to what – what Tom was talking about, which is that, you know, if I smoke a cigarette, the second-hand smoke affects you. So people think, well, that's different than – than soda. Because if I drink a soda, you don't get fat.

But, in fact, the – when you have the obesity, the heart disease, the diabetes, that's very closely related to this, especially for disadvantaged folks. You know, that does raise the costs of healthcare throughout the society. And—

MAHER: [overlapping] But, everybody does something. This is what I object to. Yes, if you're a cigarette smoker, if you drink a lot of booze, those things are legal. People do coke; it's not legal, but they do it.

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] And we tax them.

MAHER: [overlapping] They ride motorcycles.

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] And we tax them.

MAHER: [overlapping] They have too much stress! You never get laid!  
[laughter] There's a lot of reasons why you could get sick. So we—

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] My point is that we tax them. And we should tax this. [voices overlap]

MAHER: [overlapping] We – we don't – we don't tax all of them.

MADDOW: [overlapping] And we make – we make the worst consequences—

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] Booze.

MADDOW: [overlapping]—of those behaviors inconvenient. So, you can't buy "loosey" cigarettes anymore. You can't buy a single cigarette anymore. You have to have enough money to buy a whole pack. Okay, that's annoying, but you know what that does? It keeps people from starting smoking because they can only afford one cigarette.

It's the same thing with, you know, not having cigarette smoking in restaurants and bars. I was so offended by that when they first did it. Not a smoker, but I thought it was outrageous that they would require that. Now, I'm so happy they did that, in part because I spent a lot of time working in restaurants and bars, and I'm not dying from emphysema because of it. [voices overlap] But, also because I go out more now. [applause]

COLICCHIO: [overlapping] And then, Bloomberg – Bloomberg did that.

MADDOW: [overlapping] Yeah.

COLICCHIO: He also got rid of trans fats.

BERNSTEIN: Yep.

COLICCHIO: And he also put labeling on fast food.

MAHER: [overlapping] Yeah, but there's some—

DAVIS: [overlapping] You've got more people dying of obesity this year for the first time on the planet, than of hunger.

COLICCHIO: [overlapping] Yes. Right.

DAVIS: [overlapping] But, you're going to see activities in this direction one way or the other. But—one program—

MAHER: [overlapping] There should be activities. But, there's something wrong about the seventh richest person in the world lying in bed at night saying, "You know what people shouldn't do? Drink too much Sprite! And I'm going to make that a law." [laughter] You know, it reminds me of Newt Gingrich and all his – you know, it's like – you know what would be great? If kids cleaned up the toilets themselves at the schools. [laughter]

You know where it would be fun to fuck your secretary? The moon! [laughter]

You know, people – and this is – again, what makes liberals look bad: they never met a regulation they didn't like. Of course we should do something about this problem. But, you know, what if I want to have just that one Big Gulp once a week? I—

MADDOW: [overlapping] Save the cup and then buy two and pour them in there. [laughter] I mean, it's not like we're banning soda. We're just making it more inconvenient—[applause]—to do the thing that's going to kill you fast.

MAHER: [overlapping] Well, you—

MADDOW: [overlapping] You can kill yourself just a little slower.

DAVIS: [overlapping] I love to see the liberals arguing on this. [he laughs]

MAHER: [overlapping] You shouldn't have to clear – you shouldn't have to clear what you eat with the municipal government.

COLICCHIO: [overlapping] But, listen, what – he started a conversation which is great. I think it's necessary. It's costing – it's costing the healthcare system, I think, \$160--\$170 billion a year. It's 20% of healthcare costs. So, the conversation is going in the right direction, but we still need a lot of education. And, quite frankly, I think we're going to start seeing people start talking about the advertising to kids, and how – how fast food and how soda is advertised.

MADDOW: Yeah.

COLICCHIO: I think that's what's going to change. But, I think you're right, Jared. I think taxing it – taxing it changes it.

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] I mean, Bill, it's just – the thing is, Bill, when we have things in society that have what economists call “negative externalities,” meaning that their costs, their price, doesn't – doesn't really reflect their social costs. And that's what we're talking about here. What Tom was saying, the costs of this to society are much higher. That's a great reason to try to discourage that kind of consumption. And one way to do that is through “sin tax” – cigarettes, booze—

DAVIS: [overlapping] Bill, let me make one—

MAHER: [overlapping] WRONG! Next issue. [laughter] Okay. Moving on.

DAVIS: [overlapping] I tried.

MAHER: [overlapping] I already answered that. Everybody does something.

MADDOW: [overlapping] [laughing] I'm going to start doing that on my show. “NO!”

MAHER: [overlapping] Okay. “WRONG!” I saw this guy on your network all week getting a long, sloppy blowjob from everybody. [laughter] Scott Prouty. He's the guy who did – who filmed Mitt Romney at the Boca Raton...[applause]...of course.

And, since Mitt is back in the news, I thought we would talk about this for a second, because I thought it was fascinating that this guy said that one reason – he's not a Democrat; he was an independent – one reason he was so pissed at Mitt Romney is that he served him before once, and he gave him his drink, and Mitt Romney didn't even acknowledge him, just took the drink, never said thank you.

And then I hear about Rob Portman. He is a Republican Senator from Ohio who made news this week because he now came out for gay marriage because his son is gay.

And, I'm going to ask two questions. One, is the – is the fundamental flaw of the Republican Party that they only feel empathy for people who are close to them, who are like them? They cannot feel for people who are not like them? [applause]

DAVIS: [overlapping] No, Bill—



MAHER: [overlapping] And then...and then I'll ask, is a corresponding Democratic flaw like that? But, is that a flaw with the Republican Party?

DAVIS: Well, I think, on the whole thing, putting – putting a face on – on this issue has changed it.

MAHER: [overlapping] Gay marriage, you mean?

DAVIS: [overlapping] With – yes, absolutely. With young people, as people are now out. A generation ago, they were, you know, they were quiet about it. [laughter] They were quiet about it. They were in the corners. They're out about it. This is a generational issue. This took considerable political risk for Rob Portman to speak out on this.

MAHER: I think it would take a lot more risk—

DAVIS: [overlapping] With his political base.

MAHER: [overlapping]—for someone to do it who didn't have a gay son. I mean—

MADDOW: [overlapping] And that's the question. I mean, I've got to say, I have a lot of respect for Rob Portman doing this. I wish him all the best. It took my parents a long time after I came out to them for them to be okay with it. And now they couldn't be more supportive. So, I get the sort of two-year delay.

But, two things: First of all – no, I mean, I think it's rational. It took them a while. But, in the interim, he thought he was going to be the vice president. And when he got asked about employment and non-discrimination and gay people, he already had a gay son who was out to him at that point, and he would not say that he was for it. So, he waited until he was clear of the vice presidential thing.

Okay. But, now – now, more – more importantly, I think now I want to try to arrange for every Republican who signed onto the Paul Ryan budget to wake up with a poor son—[laughter] [applause]—because then all of a sudden, you won't want to cut food stamps. [cheers] You won't want to cut child school nutrition.

DAVIS: Well—

MADDOW: If empathy only extends to your flesh and blood, we've got to start shoving people into those families.

BERNSTEIN: I mean, look, they're – I can't speak to the empathy question, but, I do think that there is a real – a real problem here in the following sense. When I – I'm now an economist. I work with numbers and statistics and – and data. But, when I started out, I was a social worker. And I worked with poor people in New York City. And the idea—

MAHER: [overlapping] [he mock scoffs] Where's the money in that? [laughter] [he laughs]

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] Yeah, exactly. So, every – every economist ought to be a social worker for a few years, and it's that kind of lack of contact with the other that leads you to believe that the best way to help poor people is to give rich people really big tax cuts, and it will trickle down and, you know, the stuff Rachel was saying earlier.

So, I do think that the different worlds, the bubbles, the inequality is what's so problematic.

MAHER: [overlapping] Okay. All right, I have to end it here. We didn't get to the Democratic part, but I'll say the Democratic flaw is that thing about the soda. That pisses me off. [laughter]

All right, thank you, panel. I'm sorry, Tom. [applause]

DAVIS: [overlapping] Okay.

MAHER: Next time. It's time for New Rules! [applause] [cheers]

All right, here we go! New Rule: No one who eats salt-and-vinegar potato chips gives a damn if they're made with sea salt. [laughter] It's not health food and they're not health-conscious consumers. "Sea salt potato chips! Look for them in the organic food section of your gas station." [laughter] [applause]

MADDOW: [laughing] "Chipsey Hussell." [play on Nipsey Russell]

MAHER: "Next to the gluten-free crack." [laughter]

New Rule: If you have things on your keychain that are bigger than the "smart car" ... [laughter] ... it's not really a car. [laughter] Yes, the smart car is light-weight, fuel-efficient and quiet. But, it also has its drawbacks like that awkward moment when you hit Chris Christie in a crosswalk, and he asks if you're okay. [laughter] [applause]

COLICCHIO: One less soda.

MAHER: New Rule: Christie Harris, the jailed Oklahoma woman discovered to have a loaded gun hidden in her vagina, and a bag of meth stuffed up her ass— [laughter]—has to get a purse. [laughter] [applause] It's a rule. These are rules.

COLICCHIO: Good rule.

MAHER: New Rule: Scientists have to develop a banana that doesn't go from perfectly ripe to a black, gooey mess in five minutes. [laughter] You just can't trust bananas. They're the fruit version of a bipolar girlfriend. [laughter]

One minute, they're like, "Eat me, eat me!" and the next, they're all, "Don't you dare touch me!" [laughter] [applause] Okay...[he laughs]

And all those bruises! I didn't make those. [laughter] I think whenever I leave a banana alone, it gets depressed and starts cutting itself. [laughter]

New Rule: Bed store owners must stop referring to mattress sales as "mattress events." Sorry, but a mattress event is what causes you to go out and buy a new mattress. [laughter] [applause]

And finally, New Rule: If your conservative advocacy group is demanding that Geico pull this ad because the depiction, as a joke, of course, of a woman on a date with a cartoon pig might encourage bestiality...[laughter]...while you're also demanding that Skittles remove this ad where a woman kisses a walrus... [laughter]...because it may – yes, you guessed it – encourage bestiality...you have to ask yourself this: aren't you thinking a little too much about bestiality? [laughter] [applause]

I mean, seriously, if I'm the depraved Hollywood liberal, how come when I see these ads, I don't think, "Oh, bestiality, you forbidden fruit, how you tempt me!?" [laughter] Not even a little.

But, you, wholesome Christian do-gooder, see this and think, "Please, Jesus, give me the strength to not fuck my cat." [laughter] [applause] [cheers]

Now...I only bring this up because the Christian pressure group responsible for protesting these ads is called "One Million Moms," and they are an example of a much larger problem we need to deal with, a problem I call "Shit-kicker inflation." [laughter] Which is the phenomenon of all things conservative being portrayed as way bigger than they really are.

To wit, I looked up “One Million Moms” on Twitter, and the number of followers they have is 2,258. [laughter] That’s how many my Aunt Marjorie has, and she’s got one post, and it says, “Is this thing working?” [laughter] [applause]

And “Million Moms” are not alone in pretending they’re not alone. The Catholic League is another group constantly in the news because they also love to get freaked out about nonsense that would make even Pat Robertson go, “Oh, for Christ’s sakes, relax!” [laughter]

But, just as there aren’t a million moms in “One Million Moms,” there is no “league” in the Catholic League. It’s one guy with a fax machine. [laughter]

Now, a recent study found that politicians in both parties consistently thought that their constituents were much more conservative than they actually were. And that’s because there’s a relatively small group of very shrill people devoted to and succeeding at convincing us that this is a much more conservative and religious nation than it is. [applause]

Americans... Americans, for example, don’t hate socialism. They just can’t define it. [laughter] Even though it’s kind of right in the name “Social Security.” [laughter] Kind of right in the name. Which even Tea Partiers do not want to cut.

Same thing with Obamacare. As an idea, it’s unpopular. But, ask voters about the elements in it, they’re all very popular. It’s like saying, “I hate pizza!...I love tomato sauce and melted cheese on dough, but, pizza, I hate that shit!” [laughter] [applause]

Same with guns! We found out this week that gun ownership is actually down in this country. Way down. [applause] And yet the NRA, with just four million members, has a stranglehold on the gun policies in a nation of 300 million.

This misreading of where the public really is explains why at this moment, a cross-section of Republican politicians are at CPAC delivering a simple message to the right-wingers who keep losing them elections. And that message is: “Whatever you do, don’t change.” [laughter] [applause]

Among the featured speakers at CPAC this year, include Mitt Romney, Paul Ryan, Rick Santorum, Wayne LaPierre, Donald Trump...[laughter]...and Sarah Palin. A virtual who’s-who of what-the-fuck. [laughter] [applause] [cheers]

And...the convention is still going on, so I won’t presume to know everything that’s going to be said at this open-mic from hell, but...[laughter]...Oh, screw it,

yes, I do know. I know exactly what'll be said, because it's exactly what they always say.

They will get up, one after another, and say that they speak for the vast majority of real Americans who hate socialism and own guns and feel their values are under attack.

Except they don't speak for the vast majority of Americans, or a majority at all. [applause] They're just...they're just so loud they haven't noticed that America has moved on without them. They're like a nasty, old man still bitching about the kids who keep hitting the ball into his yard...even though those kids have grown up and moved away. [laughter]

And he's still the senior senator from Arizona. [laughter] [applause] [cheers]

All right, that's our show! I'll be performing at the Koger Center in Columbia, South Carolina, April 6, at the Johnny Mercer Theatre in Savannah, Georgia, April 7, and at the Topeka Performing Arts Center in Topeka, April 13.

I want to thank my guests, Rachel Maddow, Tom Davis, Jared Bernstein, Tom Colicchio, Michelle Rhee. And don't forget to watch us now on "Overtime" by going to HBO.com. [applause]

Thank you, folks! [applause] [cheers]

[ROLL END CREDITS]

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### **"OVERTIME" on HBO.com**

BILL MAHER: Okay, now we're here on "Overtime." Rachel, in your recent *reddit* "Ask Me Anything," you confessed to having gun enthusiasm. What's up with that?

RACHEL MADDOW: I enjoy shooting guns. [applause] Recreationally. And, so...at gun ranges and stuff. My first date with Susan was at a gun range. Her sister is a lifetime NRA member, and she was hosting "Ladies' Day" on the range. [laughter] And our first date was shooting all sorts of stuff.

I just don't think you should be able to bring all that stuff home. [laughter]  
[applause]

MAHER: Then what good is it?

MADDOW: Well, I don't enjoy shooting at other people. I enjoy shooting at targets and stuff.

MAHER: Well, no one enjoys shooting – well, that's...

MADDOW: [overlapping] Well...

MAHER: [overlapping]...some people do enjoy shooting.

MADDOW: Yeah.

MAHER: But, you know, I mean, that's funny to hear you say that, because, you know, liberals are sometimes mad at me for saying that I'm not going to unilaterally disarm in a country full of gun nuts. I don't enjoy having a gun. I compare it to antibiotics. I say, you know, I have a gun like I have antibiotics. I hope I never have to use it, but I don't love my antibiotics.

MADDOW: [overlapping] But, is your gun—

MAHER: [overlapping] I don't polish my amoxicillin and put it on the shelf.  
[laughter] “Ooh.”

TOM COLICCHIO: But, you're not opposed to a background check or registering it?

MAHER: Absolutely not. Do all these things. But, it's all bullshit. You know that, too. Because we don't have an anti-gun party in this country. The Democrats love guns, too.

TOM DAVIS: Absolutely.

MAHER: Absolutely.

MADDOW: Although, we had an assault weapons ban from 1994 to 2004 that would have made it so the kid who shot up Sandy Hook Elementary, that he got those weapons from his mom. His mom bought them legally.

MAHER: [overlapping] Well—

DAVIS: [overlapping] And President Bush supported extending it. [voices overlap]

MAHER: [overlapping] Okay, but that—

MADDOW: [overlapping] But, it didn't get extended because of you guys. [laughter] [applause] [cheers]

MAHER: [overlapping] But, that kid would have brought one of the...

DAVIS: [overlapping] I...

MADDOW: [overlapping] There was...[voices overlap]...Democratic control of the Congress—

DAVIS: [overlapping] Well, but, the president – the president – the president supported supported it.

MAHER: [overlapping] But, that kid—

DAVIS: [overlapping] I will see what the Democratic Senate does this year on the guns.

MADDOW: Well, right now, the Democrats in the Judiciary Committee just passed background checks, just passed the assault weapons ban and all of these things.

DAVIS: [overlapping] Right, but to—

MADDOW: [overlapping] Had...had that law stayed in effect after 2004, and had the Republican Congress and George Bush not killed it, then she would not have been able to legally buy the 30-round magazines he used or the AR-15 he used.

MAHER: [overlapping] Then he would have brought one of the other 2,000 guns available in America that the Democrats love.

MADDOW: He fought – he fired 152 bullets in less than five minutes.

MAHER: [overlapping] Yes, great.

MADDOW: [overlapping] Had he had to reload 15 times instead of four times, he would not have been able to fire 150 bullets before he lost his nerve. [applause]

DAVIS: [overlapping] Right, and fewer—

MAHER: [overlapping] Absolutely. Great.

DAVIS: But, Bill, you're right. It's my party.

MAHER: Great. I'm all for – I'm all for that ban. But, if you think it really accomplishes a lot, you're kidding yourself.

MADDOW: It did. You can't – there's no – there's no “perfect” in gun rules.

MAHER: [overlapping] You're kidding yourself.

MADDOW: [overlapping] But, there are better rules than others. [applause]

MAHER: Yeah, there are. Great.

JARED BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] I have an idea. I have—

MAHER: [overlapping] I'm all for passing it. I'm with you.

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping]—here's my idea. And I don't think the technology is there yet, but I just wonder if somebody who's listening could develop this. You have – you put a chip in every gun, and there are certain places where that chip shuts off that gun's functioning. So, for example, in a school.

And, I don't know that the technology is that – it's not here yet – but I don't know that it's that far away. And that strikes me as a good solution. You can have all the guns you want, but they're essentially going to be dysfunctional when you take them into, say, a school or an airport or an airplane. [applause]

MAHER: Great.

DAVIS: Well, you may have fewer gun owners, but you have more guns than you've ever had. [voices overlap] You've got more guns per gun owner than you've ever had before.

MADDOW: [overlapping] Which is a weird pattern, that we've got 300 million guns, but fewer Americans owning them.

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] Yeah.



MADDOW: [overlapping] Which means that people are setting up armories.

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] Right. Stockpiling. Stockpiling them. Lot of guns.

MAHER: Right. It's the gun nuts.

MADDOW: Yeah.

MAHER: You know, I mean, look, there are people—

DAVIS: [overlapping] “Collectors.” Collectors, Bill. [laughter]

MAHER: “Collectors.” I mean, to me the difference is, you know, if you want to have your picture taken with your gun...you're a nut. [laughter] [applause] Okay, I mean, I have a gun. I've never taken a picture, like, “Here's my gun!”

BERNSTEIN: Rachel, any pictures with your gun ever?

MADDOW: I don't own a gun.

BERNSTEIN: Oh, I see. At the range.

MADDOW: [overlapping] I just – I do – I've shot guns at ranges and stuff.

BERNSTEIN: Right.

MADDOW: But, no, I did shoot a tank in Iraq once.

COLICCHIO: You shot a tank.

MAHER: Wow!

MADDOW: I got in the tank and I hit the trigger, and a big thing flew out of the tank.

MAHER: [overlapping] Wow!

MADDOW: [overlapping] And they were, like, “That was \$5,000.” And then I felt very bad. [laughter]

DAVIS: There's the defense budget. That's where it's gone.

MADDOW: [overlapping] Exactly. Exactly. Tank bullets are really big.

MAHER: Okay. Well, you know, speaking of this, I wanted to mention this on the show – we ran out of time – but the knives-on-planes issue. I – I – it kind of burned me because I thought the TSA actually made the right call. And it was one of those situations where I saw both the left and the right agree.

This is so stupid. How can they say that we can't bring water on a plane, but we can bring a knife? Because the TSA actually studies this issue, and you actually can bring down a plane if you brought on a water bottle but it really was something other than water. But, now that we've reinforced the cockpit doors, and there's probably an air marshal on the plane, they're not going to bring down the planes with a pen knife.

DAVIS: [overlapping] And it's an international standard. We're just conforming to what other countries are doing internationally.

BERNSTEIN: So, you're okay with knives on planes?

MAHER: I'm okay with knives on planes.

BERNSTEIN: I'm not. I just – I don't have any particularly good rationale, other than I don't want a bunch of people with knives. Why do you need a knife on a plane? You're going to – you're going to cut some... whittle or cut some cheese?  
[laughter]

MAHER: [overlapping] You know, it's – you're not bringing—

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] Good guy with the knife. [voices overlap]

MAHER: [overlapping]—you're not – no, no, Jared.

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] Good guy—

MAHER: [overlapping] You don't need it on the plane. Most people on the plane are traveling to another place.

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] So put it in your suitcase! Put it in your suitcase.  
[voices overlap]

MAHER: I don't – I don't like to check luggage. It takes a long time. They lose it. Yada-yada. I mean, you know, it's a way to give us back a little bit of just the normal life that we're all complaining—

COLICCHIO: [overlapping] I can see it – I can see it also as doing it because if there's a knife in the luggage in the carry-on, it slows everything down. And, so—

MAHER: [overlapping] Right.

COLICCHIO: [overlapping]—it'll speed up – speed up the process by, you know, taking a little knife. And it can't be a locking knife. Can't be a locking, but it has to be a folding knife. You can bring a corkscrew on now. Before, you couldn't. So, it's – it's just common sense. I think it's the smart thing to do.

MAHER: Okay. Will the use of drones be one of President Obama's lasting legacies, maybe even overshadowing healthcare reform? Oh, I don't think about – don't know about that. But, I mean—

DAVIS: [overlapping] Well, we need some protocols and procedures right now. I think that's—

MAHER: [overlapping] For the drones?

DAVIS: [overlapping]—absolutely. I think people need to know—

MAHER: [overlapping] Right.

DAVIS: [overlapping]—under what conditions you're going to use them. Is there any kind of judicial overview after the fact? You can't just have a government using these things willy-nilly. [applause]

MAHER: [overlapping] Did you have that position under Bush?

DAVIS: He wasn't – they weren't using them. [voices overlap]

BERNSTEIN: [overlapping] Weren't using them.

DAVIS: [overlapping] I mean—

MAHER: [overlapping] Weren't using drones under Bush? Yeah, they were.

DAVIS: [overlapping] Not to the extent – not to the extent now, not the extent now.

MAHER: [overlapping] Not to the – well, no, Obama has upped it, but they were certainly using them.

DAVIS: [overlapping] Which, I think, makes sense in a war, frankly. Saves lives.

MAHER: [overlapping] But, they were – but, wait, they were using them under Bush.

DAVIS: [overlapping] Of course I had that position under—

MAHER: [overlapping] You did?

DAVIS: Yeah.

MAHER: Oh, okay.

DAVIS: Yeah, absolutely.

MADDOW: One thing I think is important about the drone thing is that we're using the CIA as if the CIA is the military.

MAHER: Right.

MADDOW: And the downside of that is that the way the CIA operates—

MAHER: [overlapping] Yeah.

MADDOW: [overlapping]—under precedent and law, is that if you ask an elected official, “How about this thing the CIA did,” they can deny that it ever happened. Well, then, how do we have accountability for this war that we're fighting with the CIA?

MAHER: Oh, my God. [applause]

MADDOW: It should be under the military. Not under the CIA.

MAHER: We – we have 15 spy agencies.

MADDOW: Yeah.

MAHER: We have a budget for the defense that nobody could ever imagine. One thing Eisenhower got so right was that shit about, you know, the military-industrial complex – are going to take over this country. [applause] Boy, no prediction, I feel like, in politics, ever was more on the money than that.

BERNSTEIN: He was general, so he saw it coming.

MADDOW: [overlapping] Yeah.

DAVIS: [overlapping] He could see more.

MAHER: [overlapping] Saw it coming. Yeah. Okay, thank you, everybody.  
Thank you, panel. Thank you, audience. You were terrific! We'll see you next  
week. [applause] [cheers]

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