



Episode 1,437: Lew Rockwell and Tom Review the First Democratic Debate

Guest: Lew Rockwell

WOODS: Lew, I couldn't be happy to have you on, and I'm thrilled that you took the time to watch this ridiculous thing so that we could discuss it with me. [laughing].

ROCKWELL: Tom, I loved watching it, and of course it's great to be on your show. It's an honor to be on your show, as usual. But I thought the whole thing was hilarious. I thought it showed them up for what they are. And I love the poll, the Drudge poll up this morning, showing that Tulsi Gabbard won. And I think there's no question she won, the only antiwar candidate, or the only war-questioning candidate, maybe we should say. And Elizabeth Warren coming way behind. Elizabeth Warren, I must say, she reminded me of a chicken, kind of running around.

WOODS: [laughing] Yeah.

ROCKWELL: And I thought they've all hurt themselves, except Gabbard. They put Warren in the middle and gave her the most time, and I would guess they gave Cory Booker, the senator from New Jersey, almost as much time. And they didn't cut either one of them off, although they were happy to cut the other guys off. And I just thought the whole thing was very funny, was hilarious, and I'm going to watch, of course, tonight to see the next ones. But these are just very unimpressive people. I mean, I've never heard of Tim Ryan, for example.

WOODS: And thank goodness for that. I'm glad I hadn't.

ROCKWELL: [laughing]

WOODS: Yeah, me either. Yeah, we'll get to him later about his exchange with Tulsi. The poll, you're right about Drudge, that was very interesting. It was also interesting to read that Tulsi was the most searched-for name on Google during the debate.

ROCKWELL: Yeah, well, I thought she looked great. I thought her red jacket and her posture —

WOODS: That was smart.

ROCKWELL: — and her height, of course, was just very impressive. And little Elizabeth and little Amy, they just, none of them had it. We were supposed to think, of course, that Warren was the number-one candidate coming up fast, going to beat Sanders and so forth. She

certainly has the Sanderian kind of views. She wants to make everybody's private health insurance illegal. That's, by the way, something that has never happened in Europe, even though they've got socialized medicine in England and in Germany and in Austria, France, and so forth. None of these countries outlaw private care. If you want to pay for it, you have a right to have it. So I think it's very interesting and, in fact, totalitarian that she and these other people, and most of them agreed, would like to outlaw private insurance. I'm sure they'd like to outlaw a lot of other stuff too, of course. But nobody was calling her Pocahontas, which of course, she'll face in the unlikely event she's the nominee, or maybe she'll be the vice-presidential nominee. But I thought she just was extremely unimpressive, and it seemed like every question, *I have a plan for America to handle this*, and it was some gigantic, new government intervention.

WOODS: Well, I was reading somebody, it might have been somebody in my private Facebook group, saying how interesting it was that the questions for her ended with, "Do you have a plan for that?" like they're part of her marketing team. Because that's how she's marketing herself, as the woman who has a plan for something like that. That's not your job as the moderator, to market this woman. So that's one thing. The other thing was I read Caitlin Johnstone this morning, saying —

ROCKWELL: Oh, so funny.

WOODS: Yeah, she had a tweet about five things I learned in the debate. Number one was nothing.

ROCKWELL: [laughing]

WOODS: Number two is Elizabeth Warren is the establishment-preferred candidate, which as you say, came through loud and clear. This poll, though, that shows Tulsi Gabbard crushing everybody, I mean, obviously, you're not paying attention if that doesn't call to mind the Ron Paul post-debate polls, where he was above and beyond everybody, even though in the polls nationally, he was very, very low to start with. Yet he was crushing these internet polls. And to see her do the same, when the only thing they have in common, really — I mean, that's not quite the only thing, but the most high-profile issue they have in common is foreign policy, it just makes me wonder about, let's say, maybe the silent majority that's out there, for whom this stuff really, really resonates. It's very, very interesting.

ROCKWELL: I don't think any normal American wants a war. I mean, you have the warmongers and the people who think that this is in Israel's interest and that sort of thing. But regular people, I think they are not for another gigantic war. And Gabbard said, you know, no war in Iran, and she said that she was the anti-regime-war candidate, and she also said at the very end, when they were all asked to talk about America's biggest challenge, and most of them said China — what a ridiculous —

WOODS: Yeah, what kind of answer is that?

ROCKWELL: She said nuclear war and how this was, for the first time, a real danger. And she of course is exactly right. And I think that touches people on the left, the decent people on the left, as well as the Ron Paulians on the right.

WOODS: Yeah.

ROCKWELL: And the people who voted for Trump because they thought he was for these things, I think, maybe have been somewhat disappointed. Then there was of course the high point of the whole thing, when they had all the mic troubles. And you had these people, they had the previous set of moderators' mics still on when they were backstage.

WOODS: Their mics were still on, yeah.

ROCKWELL: And the moderators that were up there didn't have their mics on, and so they all got angry. And the whole thing was just hilarious. And I noticed that Trump tweeted, "So unprofessional," he said, "except for a fake news network."

WOODS: [laughing] I didn't see that. I didn't see his tweet in all caps, "BORING!" Which of course it was. It was a dreadful bore. But you're right, that microphone thing, I was sitting there thinking, I wonder if they're going to say anything backstage that they are really going to regret saying [laughing].

ROCKWELL: [laughing]

WOODS: I was dying to hear them denounce one of the people onstage or something.

ROCKWELL: Yeah.

WOODS: Yeah, didn't happen. Didn't happen, unfortunately. Let's see. I took a few notes about particular things. I mean, obviously, the only real exchange worth talking about was between that congressman, I guess it's Tim Ryan, and Tulsi, because he gave just the classic not just neocon response, but like dumb-guy neocon response, to why we need to be in country X, Y, and Z. They were talking about Afghanistan in particular, but the logic of what he was saying does not end in Afghanistan.

ROCKWELL: That's right.

WOODS: He says that when we're not "engaged" — he even used the word "engaged over there," which is a typical neocon obfuscation word. What does "engaged" mean? But we have to be engaged over there, because when we're not engaged, they fly planes into our buildings. I mean, it's like I — where would you even get —

ROCKWELL: And he said the Taliban attacked 9/11, and of course, she pointed out it wasn't the Taliban; it was al-Qaeda, although maybe that's not correct, either.

WOODS: But they wound up going back and forth on it, but because she went back and forth with him on it, she stands out as the antiwar person, even though I will say that, even though I don't like to give these creeps credit on anything, there was plenty of good, sensible stuff said about Iran.

ROCKWELL: That's true.

WOODS: When it was put to them, some of them said it was a good deal, that Trump shouldn't have left it, or at least it was a modifiable deal. And another one of them, I can't remember if it was Klobuchar, but one of them said that Trump promised that he was going to give us a better deal, and instead, we have no deal whatsoever. Correct. I mean, that's a legitimate complaint.

ROCKWELL: Yes.

WOODS: So that stuff was all good. And even de Blasio, who's — I mean, Lew, it's hard to come up with who's the first person.

ROCKWELL: Yeah.

WOODS: I mean, really, it's an embarrassment of riches on this. But even he, when he pointed out that his own father had fought in World War II, which of course is a sacred war you're not ever supposed to say anything about — and he didn't say anything bad about the war, but to talk about the experience of his father, who had physical and emotional scars when he returned to the point where he eventually took his own life, is still mildly sacrilegious from the regime point of view.

ROCKWELL: No, and it's true, and he said he didn't lose his life because of the wounds, but because of the war.

WOODS: Yeah, I mean, that, I give him credit for that.

ROCKWELL: Yeah. No, that's right.

WOODS: And then he gave sort of the weasel way out of, *Well, yes, we should be intervening in these different wars, but we need congressional authorization first.* All right, well then, according to you, we should be getting the congressional authorization, so what's the big deal? What's the difference?

ROCKWELL: Of course, that's always the ridiculous thing, but still, it's their way of just — it's just a little tiny bit antiwar. Just a speck.

WOODS: Right.

ROCKWELL: And by saying that the Congress should vote for it — but of course, they want the Congress to vote for it. As you say, they want the Congress to vote for it.

WOODS: Yeah, vote for it, yeah, so then it'll have the same effect. But it's better than nothing. I mean, it is funny to hear somebody have some sensible talking point.

ROCKWELL: No, and they all were saying that, or practically all of them.

WOODS: Yeah. Yeah, there's a slight chance they might be inconsistent on this principle. There appears to be a tiny chance it's not always carried through evenly [laughing].

Let's say a little something about the fact that several of the candidates spoke Spanish during the debate. Their initial response was in Spanish. Now, here's my take on that. I think, generally, most Americans are pretty fair-minded and generous and goodhearted people. I generally do think that. I think whatever their views are on a lot of issues, when they encounter people on a daily basis, they want to be kind and respectful. I think that is generally true. I don't think I'm being naive about that.

But I think at the same time, the only reason they were doing that is they knew they have no chance of winning. So this might give them a little shot in the arm in a Democratic primary. But in a national election debate, I think that would kill them, because I think the average person thinks, I am all for being accommodating toward people who come to our country to the extent that is reasonable, but if I went to France and sat around expecting them to hold a presidential debate in English, I think that would just – I mean, what kind of person acts that way? It's just self-centered. And I think the average American would be like, well, that's just kind of taking advantage of our general good-naturedness and hospitality. It's not right. I mean, aren't there at least some basic expectations when you join any community, that you don't expect the community you join to bend to your wishes, but you try to be as accommodating to them as possible, because you're living with them? It's just kind of basic things you were taught as a child, I think, and to see that, I think this would hurt them in a general election, which goes to show they know they have no chance of reaching it.

ROCKWELL: Well, the audience, which was of course a Miami audience, and I'm sure there were a lot of Hispanic people there, wildly applauded them doing it, but I also thought it was a mistake. I thought it hurt them, and I was thinking, it made me think of this becoming a bilingual country. And bilingual countries typically have horrible relations between the two language groups. Mises writes about this, and we can see it in Canada and other places where they're – So I thought, you know, this is a reminder to people to think about these kinds of things that are not immigration lovers, that this is becoming a bilingual country and it has unfortunate effects. But I just thought it was funny. I mean, I would say most of the people listening to this couldn't understand these guys, and I thought it hurt them. And I thought, yes, of course it would hurt them in a national debate. I think it hurt them in this debate, because of course we still have a majority English country, thank goodness. And I think most people can't speak Spanish. So you know, Julian Castro –

WOODS: It's strange and patronizing. It's really patronizing.

ROCKWELL: Well, for Beto O'Rourke or for the creepy senator from New Jersey, I think that's true.

WOODS: If there were a large Japanese minority in the US, there's no way anyone would patronize them by speaking in Japanese. There's just no way. It wouldn't happen. It's very much a patting-on-the-head, patronizing attitude in the guise of diversity. And I mean, if you're dumb enough to fall for it, I don't know what to tell you, but it is patronizing. Now, tonight's debate obviously has some of the heavier hitters in it, because it's got Biden, Bernie Sanders, and so-called Mayor Pete. And they say that the division into the two debates was entirely random, which is possible. But you may say, but on the other hand, Elizabeth Warren was in the one last night. But on the other hand, I think her more recent rise in the polls came after they placed her in this particular one. So this clearly seems like the underdog slate. Am I wrong?

ROCKWELL: No, you're exactly right. But I must say, I thought it was interesting. I mean, I'd never encountered Jay Inslee, who I think is the governor of Washington?

WOODS: Yes, right.

ROCKWELL: And he said the world's coming to an end, climate change is the only issue. It's number one, number two, number three, and I'm the only candidate who says that. Climate change is the number-one issue, and the beaches of Miami are flooding already from the oceans rising. They can of course say anything, make up any kind of baloney, but I thought that he was a very unpleasant guy, and if he'd had a chance, and I think he didn't have a chance, he ended it last night. So that was good. Same of course, de Blasio, I think in the polls is polling actually at zero.

WOODS: Yeah.

ROCKWELL: And maybe after last night, he'll move up to one or something. But and of course, they also talked about immigration. That was a big issue, and about how everybody had to come in and why crossing the border illegally should not be illegal but should be a civil offense, I guess like a parking ticket or something. And why we have to give all kinds of resources, we have to take care of everybody who wants to come in, especially people who are coming in with children. You know, horrible that the children are being separated from the adults, but of course, a lot of these adults are renting these children so they can come in as refugees. Maybe some of them have unfortunate motives worse than that.

But I think the idea that everybody should be coming in, welcome everybody, welcome the whole world, we can double the American population, everybody, they all go on welfare, and they all have dramatically different cultures, whether they're from Africa or Central America or Syria or wherever else they're coming from. If this all continues and Trump turns out to be like an open-borders guy too, at least in practical terms if not in terms of his speeches, if this all continues, it really could be the end of America as we know it.

Tucker Carlson has been broadcasting from Japan, where he probably was going to greet Trump when for the G20. And it's interesting, he said this is an unbelievably clean country. He said the streets of Tokyo are clean, and he was in the main train station in Tokyo, and he said, if you look at this place, he said, there's no trash, there's no dirt. He said the trains are shiny, the floors are clean. Nobody begging. He said it's quite extraordinary. He said, of course, there's no diversity. They don't allow immigration. And I thought that was interesting point. Also, I liked it when Ann Coulter yesterday was talking about this article about the ten most expensive cities to live in in the country, and she said, you notice that eight of these ten are Asian and they all are non-diverse. And she said that's why they're so desirable.

So we still have the people who are against open borders. I don't think any of the Democrats last night, by the way, use the phrase "open borders," so they may be slightly concerned about that. I know the Kochs, of course, are the big advocates of open borders, and they say so. And they must want all the refugees installed in Wichita and the Koch estate. No, I guess not. But anyway, this is a big issue. It's rightly a big issue. And they assume that all Americans want all these people coming in and going on welfare and radically changing our culture, with no American ever asked if they want this. And it's like they were all saying that horrible communist poem on the inside of the Statue of Liberty about, you know, give us all your poor

and your worst people in your culture. We want to take care of them. Well, maybe we don't want to take care of them.

WOODS: Well, in particular, Julian Castro kind of gave the game away when he said we need a Marshall Plan for Guatemala, Honduras, and wherever. It is always a shakedown. It's not just, *Oh, we just innocently want some people to be able to move freely*. Come on now. I mean, what do you think, I'm seven? Come on. It's always enlargement of the state. And so here it is, if you don't want people coming in whom we demand the subsidy of and special privileges for, then you're going to pay. You're going to pony up some money for these countries. And it might be too pedantic even to point out that the original Marshall Plan for Europe was totally overrated in its results.

ROCKWELL: That's right.

WOODS: Basically, it's countries that got no Marshall aid actually did better, and countries that got more, their recovery lagged. It's the opposite of what it should have been if it really worked. I actually talk about that in my *Politically Incorrect Guide to American History* book. I've got some stuff on that. So I don't even want that Marshall Plan even from a utilitarian standpoint, but also because I don't want a shake down. What, I'm going to bribe some other regime? And then how's that enforceable? I guess the idea is that the money will make them more prosperous and they won't want to leave. What is that worked? You give money to a regime and it makes the country more prosperous? Never. That is the opposite of how it works. I mean, that really is, as Peter Bauer showed, that really is the opposite of how it works.

ROCKWELL: But with the original Marshall Plan, there were a lot of bureaucrats and politicians and people who got contracts to supply the food and so forth. In this country, we made a lot of money out of the Marshall Plan.

WOODS: That is a good point. Those were the beneficiaries, the people who got the contracts. Absolutely. Of course, we got from Jay Inslee, we got: unions gave us the weekend. I mean, what would be a debate like this if it weren't for slogans like that? So maybe on my show notes page – I actually have an article on this, unions and the weekend. I mean, if that were true, then everybody in Bangladesh could get the weekend off by just introducing unions, right? Or the cavemen. The cavemen could have gotten the weekends off if they could just have introduced labor unions. Is there a teensy bit of a possibility that it might be more complicated than that? That if the society isn't wealthy enough to support people taking the weekends off, I don't care how much you unionize. It's totally irrelevant. It has nothing to do with it. But I have to say, Lew, just even that reminds me that there's one thing I can say about the Republican debates, is that they were slightly easier to endure than this thing. For some reason, maybe because –

ROCKWELL: Trump was the reason.

WOODS: – as somebody was telling me last night, don't forget, we had Donald Trump giving us comic relief, and so we did have that. But at least sometimes, Republicans would at least give lip service to stuff we knew they had no intention of doing. That was at least something, whereas this was just a constant assault of catastrophic suggestions all night long.

ROCKWELL: No, it's true [laughing]. And of course, they're all socialists, and they all want hugely bigger government. I noticed that nobody was asked a question about how much is this all going to cost and who's going to pay for it. And none of them, of course, volunteered that. It's just going to be like magic, where it's the sugar kingdom or something, where everything is so sweet and nice, right?

WOODS: Yeah. And I jotted down things, just the little throwaway lines they had, like Cory Booker talking about people working two jobs and can't make a living wage. And that's right out of the Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez playbook, because she tried to claim this, people are working 80 hours a week and they can't feed their families. First of all, who? Who's working 80 hours a week and you can't feed – you can't *feed* your family? That's crazy to me. But also, the statistics about people holding multiple jobs, it's actually at a pretty low point right now. It's basically moved between 4.7 and 5.2%, during the recovery from our great recession, and that's actually lower than where it was over the previous 15 to 20 years. In fact, it was the peak of the 1990s boom where the percentage of people working two jobs was at its highest. So this is just a throwaway, false line that no one gets called on, but it's not true.

And then they asked everybody, or at least they asked some candidates about the gender pay gap. How are you going to close that gender pay gap? And Tulsi, to her credit, more or less ignored the question and talked about militarism. But Julian Castro gives his story about his mother struggled, and she was a single mom, and moms are getting paid less because they're women, and we need to pass a law saying that women get paid the same for doing the same work. Yeah, they passed that law in 1963, the Equal Pay Act of 1963. It already exists, actually. And that's not what the gender pay gap is about. It's not about women and men getting paid differently for doing the same work. You're not allowed to do that. That has nothing to do with it. It's that they take what women earn; they add it up and you get a big number; and they take what men earn, and they add it up and get a big number; then they compare the numbers. That has nothing to do with the same work. They have different work. They work fewer hours. You're not even looking at the same amount of hours worked.

ROCKWELL: Less experience.

WOODS: And nobody calls them on this. Less experience, interruption by childbearing. I mean, all kinds of different factors. But of course, at a Democratic debate, absolutely nobody's going to call anybody on this, and there are no fact checkers around.

ROCKWELL: No, it's of course true.

WOODS: All right, so where do you think things stand after this debate? I mean, obviously, Tulsi is somewhat of a winner as a result of last night. I'm not even talking about in terms of the merits of their comments, but rather who emerges with pluses rather than minuses as a result of last night. I mean, Elizabeth Warren seemed very much like an irritating technocrat to me, but on the other hand, the fact that she looks like the anointed candidate doesn't hurt. I mean, it should.

You would think in American society, people would think, you know, the – I don't know why, Lew, this view isn't more common – the American establishment hasn't really delivered what I would like for my life, so I'm not necessarily going to automatically go for the people they recommend, because I'm not very impressed by that. I mean, I got wars for no reason. I got the housing bubble. I got all this stuff. All the things they complain about, well, they've

pretty much been in charge for a pretty long time, and they still couldn't prevent the very things they're all complaining about. I'm not really impressed by these people. I'm going to go for the people the establishment is against. I don't know why more Americans aren't that way, but apparently, for some reason, they're very impressed with how the establishment has treated them, I guess. So being anointed the establishment candidate is not a bad thing for Warren, so what do you think happens as a result of this debate?

ROCKWELL: Well, she was the establishment candidate last night on that stage, but isn't Bernie and Biden —

WOODS: Yeah.

ROCKWELL: And of course, they always include Kamala Harris as in the top ratings.

WOODS: Oh, that's true.

ROCKWELL: She's not.

WOODS: Yeah. No.

ROCKWELL: But I think Elizabeth Warren was hurt last night, even though she was on the center stage, even though she got the most time, she just was extremely irritating. And do people want a president that talks like this? I mean, that's a t minor point to make. But I don't think any of these — I mean, Tulsi Gabbard I think was the only one — at least the most dignified candidate. Elizabeth was just undignified and full of these gigantic socialist plans that you have to participate in. But I guess she came in second, and the rest of them were all lower. And I don't think de Blasio, Ryan, Klobuchar, Inslee, Castro, I mean, these are all people who were all losers and they showed themselves as losers last night.

WOODS: Yeah.

ROCKWELL: So I'll be interested to see how the polls show after the debate tonight. And my guess is that Biden — you know, I don't want to be unkind to poor Biden, but is he entirely there?

WOODS: You don't?

ROCKWELL: [laughing]

WOODS: I'm sorry. No, that's a good question. We're going to see that. Yeah, that's a good question.

ROCKWELL: Well, it seems to me that's maybe a problem for him. Bernie, of course, will never shut up. And it's going to be interesting tonight, so we'll just have to see. But I think last night, the media lost, not only because of their mic problems, but I think that the — I did notice the only negative question asked was asked for Tulsi Gabbard about why, when she was a kid, she wasn't pro-gay.

WOODS: Right.

ROCKWELL: So she said that that was no longer true and so forth.

WOODS: She's only 38. I mean, she's very impressive in that respect. And before I get all the angry emails, I know she's very bad on an awful lot of things. I'm not in any way denying that.

ROCKWELL: Oh, yes, of course. She's a Democrat.

WOODS: Right. But in this day and age, somebody who very, very forthrightly speaks the way she does and goes out of her way to talk foreign policy when no focus group data is telling you that that's the most important issue, you know, if you're not giving that credit, then I think there's something the matter with you. I mean, I think she's impressive.

Now, with regard to Biden, when he gave his opening speech to kick off his campaign, my friend Tom Elliott, who used to produce *The Peter Schiff Show*, he's since started a media service where he gathers clips that he then pitches to different media sources that they can use. And he basically condensed that speech into the parts where Biden was clearly slow or saying things that didn't make sense and stumbling all the time. And then combine that with the fact that he's been avoiding the media studiously – now, that could well be simply because he's clearly in first place. Why would he risk a gaffe unnecessarily? So he's going to avoid them. But that may not be the only reason he's avoiding them. And we're going to find that out in the debate tonight.

ROCKWELL: No, I think he's not going to be the nominee, even though he's the leader.

WOODS: Really? Wow, that's quite a prediction. You don't think he's going to get it?

ROCKWELL: No, I don't think so, and I think it's because of exactly what you're talking about: the slurring of the speech, the stumbling, losing his place, misspeaking. And of course, he's not that old [laughing], to me, anyway.

WOODS: Yeah.

ROCKWELL: But it may have affected him badly. And he still hasn't been brought up publicly about all the corruption in his family, his corrupt son. He's corrupt himself, of course, Biden. All these people are corrupt, but Biden's corruption seems to be a little bit more out in the open, maybe because it involves Ukraine. I don't know. But I look forward to people – they're not going to ask him that question, but he will get asked that question in other places. And I don't think he will be the nominee.

WOODS: Wow, that is very, very interesting. All right, well, we're just going to have to wait and see about that. But in the meantime, Lew, speaking for all Americans, thank you for your service. We appreciate you doing this. And I guess there's another one next month. I don't know the exact date. Do you know offhand?

ROCKWELL: I apologize. I don't.

WOODS: Yeah, but that's good. I'm glad you don't. That's actually good. It's a good thing. You're having a peaceful life. But we'll find out. I'm fairly certain there's one next month. And

if you're willing to put yourself through this again, I know we'd all love to hear from you again.

ROCKWELL: Sure. I'd be delighted.

WOODS: Thanks again, Lew.

ROCKWELL: Tom, thank you.