



Episode 1,515: Democrats Debate Again; Lew Rockwell and I Dismantle

Guest: Lew Rockwell

WOODS: We were saying just now before we started recording that maybe there really isn't a need to do one of these for every one of these Democratic debates, because it's like the same darn debate over and over and over again. So maybe we'll get a sense of the feedback from the public on social media or on my site or whatever, and see what they want us to do. Because I think we could do one of these every now and then, but instead, let's just have you on and we'll talk about what's really interesting in the news instead. Because also, frankly, Lew, you've been a friend for a long time, a benefactor, a real supporter of mine, and, frankly, I feel guilty doing this to you every single month [laughing].

ROCKWELL: [laughing] You know, there were some interesting things last night, but there weren't three hours' worth.

WOODS: No, no, that's for sure. All right, let's start with a basic overview, and then we'll get into a few specific issues that that jumped out at me. Who do you think comes out ahead? Well, actually, you know what? Before we do that, there is a one thing that stands out to me so much that I think we need to start with that. The question about whether Elizabeth Warren and her health care plan will involve a tax increase on the middle class. They cannot get that answer out of her. And they tried. I mean, one candidate after another. And they all favor taxes. They don't mind if she says yes.

ROCKWELL: I love it when she would start her answer, "Let's be clear." And then of course, she was never clear.

WOODS: She was opaque as possible. She would say, *I'm going to be lowering costs.* And "costs," of course, what she's trying to say is exactly what Bernie's saying, which is that your taxes may go up, but under my plan, because your health care costs will go down so much, on net, your individual household costs will go down. Now, whether that's true or not, that's not the point. That's what he's obviously saying. And that's obviously what she means, and she can't bring herself to be a human being and say it. It's bizarre.

ROCKWELL: Well, in fact, I thought she really looked slightly rattled last night when she was attacked so often by the other candidates.

WOODS: Indeed, and yet, surely you'd think somebody on her staff had to say to her: *Now, listen, as the increasingly presumptive front runner, you need to be prepared for this.*

ROCKWELL: Yeah.

WOODS: So that was crazy. But okay, so what did you think overall? Like who comes out ahead, who's a loser, if any? I mean, some of them just are going to stay right where they were, but anybody you think, either way?

ROCKWELL: Well, all the media is saying that Pete Buttigieg was the winner. I must say, I don't see that, although I thought he did well. I thought Andrew Yang did very well, and I think that was sort of planned, because they gave him so much time. I haven't seen the figures yet, but my guess is he had the second amount of time as compared to Elizabeth Warren. And he's very articulate, very smart, very dangerous, and he's interesting. Not all his positions are crazy. But I thought that he was a winner.

The losers, I thought Warren was the big loser. I thought she looked very bad. My guess is she's really going to drop in the polls. I think that she wasn't able to handle it. And so that's a good thing, because she's actually a communist. I thought Biden lost. Biden sort of, as Drudge put it, faded into the background. He really wasn't present in the debate. I thought that Kamala Harris, thank goodness, was a big loser. And she'll continue to drop it. What is she, about 4% now? She's going to continue to go down. She's not very smart, and she's thoroughly evil. All these people in one degree or another are evil. It would be a good thing if the regular Americans actually had watched this thing and paid attention to it, because these people are so awful. I mean, they really are despicable. And that's what the Democrats are going to put up one of these people – unless Hillary, of course, comes in, which is very, very possible.

WOODS: Oh, okay, yeah, I did want to ask you about that, because you'll see an article about this here and there, saying that if you add up the sorts of things she's been saying with the kinds of events she's been holding, then maybe a pattern emerges. But the kinds of people saying this are kind of on the fringes. Now, look, I'm on the fringes here. I don't want to put these people down. But I'm saying, it's not like CNN is saying she's on the verge of announcing. So I hardly know what to make of that.

ROCKWELL: Well, I think if she were to do it and she'd have many of these people running against her in the primaries, she might be able to win. I think that probably would be good for Trump if she were the nominee, and she is so awful. But if I had to bet, I would say she's not going to run. But I think there's a chance she'll run, and it would make everything a lot more fun.

WOODS: Yeah, it absolutely would.

ROCKWELL: She's fun to hate.

WOODS: Yeah, she definitely is. And it would be interesting to see how she positions herself in this pack, because obviously somebody like Bernie could point out the difference between the Hillary Clinton of 2016 and the Hillary Clinton of 2020. In 2016 when Bernie looked like some outlier, she could just parrot the establishment talking points, so then all of a sudden, she's going to try to sound like Bernie. You know, he lacks the charisma to point that out effectively, but that would be something worth saying.

ROCKWELL: I did think it was interesting the other day that her daughter, in answering a question, said, "Absolutely, a person with a beard and male genitals can be a woman." And Hillary said something like, "Maybe I'm just old fashioned, but I just can't see that."

WOODS: Okay, now, that's a politician answer in this day and age

ROCKWELL: Yes, it is.

WOODS: Yeah.

ROCKWELL: So I think this whole trans business, maybe people are sick of it. They ought to be sick of it. And my guess is that would help her if she were to take that position.

WOODS: Yeah, whether it's there or just a bunch of positions that the Democrats have committed themselves to, all Trump has to do – like the whole election could turn on these minor things, but he would pick one out and just hammer it home over and over. In fact, you know the *Babylon Bee* website, where it's just satire, but they're very funny satire? One of their recent headlines was something along the lines of "Trump 2020 Campaign Simply to Replay Unedited Portions of the Democratic Debates to Promote Trump." That's all they have to do, given the positions these people are committing themselves to.

And I think – Mayor Pete doesn't quite put it this way, but he'd be very effective if he did – there's a big difference between the people on that stage and the registered Democrats who live in Ohio, virtually none of whom are interested in those sorts of issues. I mean, just none. They don't wish people ill, but that's not their primary concern.

Yang I thought was effective, because he did not sound like the others at all in the points he made, in his knowledge. He just didn't sound like them.

ROCKWELL: Well, he's smarter than they are, for one thing.

WOODS: He definitely is. I mean, they all sounded like they've been memorizing passages from the same script. And he was saying things like, *Well, look, the following countries have tried a wealth tax, and it didn't raise the revenue they expected, and they had implementation problems.* Okay, I don't think anybody on that stage even knew that. Or he actually had arguments against Bernie's view that, *Well, if automation causes job loss, why, the federal government will just create jobs.* And Yang said, *Forgive me, but that doesn't really sound like what the 21st century economy ought to look like. Plus, what if you stink at your job? Like, how does this really work in practice?* So that was good.

ROCKWELL: No, I thought that he was very effective, very smart. He had a little math sign on his lapel, so I thought that was interesting, too. He's probably the only guy on that stage who knows math.

WOODS: Yeah, no kidding. No kidding. But then, last night you could hear a lot of the modern Democrats there, where they sound different, let's say, from how Bill Clinton sounded in the '90s. But at the same time, you heard plenty of throwback to the old Democrats, like, *We need more unions*, and stuff. In this day and age, look, it's over. Private sector unions, that's not coming back, especially in a global economy. That is dead on arrival. Nothing's going to happen with that. So you would hear stuff like that. Or it would be this or that problem that we can solve with some more money, without acknowledging that enormous sums have been spent on these problems in the past, and the result is that you still think the problem is so bad that you're complaining about it on a debate stage. I mean, that's really all they have to

say. It's shocking to me how little they have to say that's different or interesting or not predictable or could be easily scripted. I could script everything that's coming out of their mouth.

ROCKWELL: I did think it was interesting that they seem to have calmed down some – they all got their consultants' advice – so nobody talked about open borders. Nobody talked about providing every illegal alien with health care and welfare and similar kinds of things that in previous debates they've all endorsed. And of course, Trump will have the tapes of those for his campaign ads. So they tried to be more – is moderate the word? I don't know. But I don't think it really was successful, because I don't believe anybody was watching that thing, Tom, last night, except you and me. I don't believe any regular person watched that debate at all.

WOODS: Well, I think the entire *Tom Woods Show* listenership was not listening, because they knew that suckers like Lew and Tom would be doing it for them. So I know for a fact that that's the case. It might be worth saying a little something about Tulsi and foreign policy and stuff, so let's talk about foreign policy. It did come up just in the context of Syria and the Kurds and that whole thing.

And I did an episode on that with Scott Horton about what's the real story about the Kurds and Trump and all that. I did an episode on that. I'm linking to it at TomWoods.com/1515, which is the show notes page today, so people should definitely listen to that, because Scott is my go-to guy for all this stuff.

And I also have an episode on impeachment, and how strong is the case. And everybody on that stage was talking about, *Oh, yeah, he broke this law and* – well, okay. Well, I talked to Kevin Gutzman, and he has rather a different view. So I'll link to that episode also at TomWoods.com/1515.

But anyway, so that was the brief discussion of foreign policy that we got. What did you think about that discussion?

ROCKWELL: Well, of course, Buttigieg was wonderful. The entire media is praising him, salaaming him because he differed with Tulsi Gabbard and said that, *No, no, we have to keep the troops in Syria forever because of the Kurds, and it was irresponsible and terrible to be agreeing with Trump that they should be removed*. And of course, she's right, but none of these people believe that any of the troops should ever be removed from any of the 180 countries they're in. Just keep them there and maybe go up to 207 or something, whatever the full number would be.

And it's really horrific. Weren't the Democrats at one point allegedly the peace party? I mean, that's entirely gone. The candidates of the past who would talk about these issues, there's just Tulsi Gabbard now, and she got very little time. Maybe she got the least time of any of the candidates. I thought she did fine. I didn't, of course, agree with her about some of the things she was saying, but I thought she was articulate. And she was dressed well. She was the best looking, best dressed candidate on the stage. But is that enough to get her up in the polls enough so she will be in the next debate? My guess is unfortunately not.

WOODS: It was interesting to see her try in vain to get various candidates to commit to saying that, yes, we should bring an end to this intervention. And all she got were slippery

responses. And the thing is, we had just witnessed all night long, as I said at the beginning, Elizabeth Warren managing to evade whether she's going to raise taxes. You're not going to get any straight answer out of this woman. I mean, nice try, Tulsi. We appreciate that. But I think she'd be an interesting person, once this is all over, to talk to about, if she's willing to be honest about the Democratic party at that point, the same way Ron Paul was honest about the Republicans. Like, what did you learn about your party? I mean, I bet she didn't realize how bad it was, frankly, until she got involved in this process and saw the treatment that she was receiving, saw the slipperiness of the other candidates. I'd be very interested in her thoughts on that.

ROCKWELL: Now, when she mentioned, of course, that this was the *New York Times*-CNN debate and that *The New York Times* ran a vicious smear piece on her the other day. They said she's being supported by far-right Republicans and far-right whatevers, and therefore, she's entirely evil. Is that true? I guess there are right-wing people who like her. I'm one of them. But it was a very nasty piece. It was intended to hurt her, of course, and *The New York Times*, of course, is "*The Warmonger Times*," so I guess you can't be surprised that they hate anybody who's ever mentioned the word "peace" or thinks that we should ever take the troops out of any place. I'm not even for keeping the troops in Staten Island, myself, but, of course, I'm pretty unusual.

WOODS: The whole crazy "right-wingers are supporting Tulsi" thing, first of all, I don't really know of anybody who's enthusiastically supporting her as the whole package. Look, I know that it's nice to use the term "right-wing" as a boogeyman term to scare people, but obviously, whoever these people are – you described yourself as one of them, as having at least a rooting interest in this matter of Tulsi – it's just because you're antiwar. And they would never put it that way in the paper, because there are still some Americans for whom "antiwar" sounds kind of honorable and principled. So instead, it has to be this scary boogeyman term, "right-wingers." Well, even people you think of as boogeymen might occasionally be right about something. That's not impossible. The boogeyman sometimes is right about things. Boogeymen can be sound on the occasional issue.

Who do you think is the candidate Trump is rooting for, of the plausible ones? Who do you think he really wants?

ROCKWELL: I think he'd like Elizabeth Warren. He'd also like Bernie, so I think it's one of those two.

WOODS: Okay, now, see, I was thinking because Biden, I didn't find – he was kind of tripping over his words, and I think that's going to get worse, not better. So I thought there was a chance there. But okay, so what do you think it is about Warren that he would – I mean, obviously, he can go back to the Native American thing, if that still has any purchase.

ROCKWELL: And of course, she's told other lies. I mean, in all her campaign speeches up until recently, she said that when she was a teacher, she became visibly pregnant, and the principal of the school, as principals always did in those days, was to tell her to get out, you're gone, get out of here. And of course, it turns out that the school board extended her a contract and said that they were very disappointed when she didn't take it. And so this is just –

WOODS: Oh, geez, I didn't hear that.

ROCKWELL: Yeah, just another lie. And of course, these things are never publicized, her lies. And then, of course, there's all the Indian stuff, of which there's a rich lode. So I think that Trump would make mincemeat of her in that sense. But she's a communist. I mean, she wants to seize people's property. I mean, I think she's probably even more of a leftist than Bernie, although she calls herself a capitalist, although she uses various adjectives. I think that she just is a horrible, horrible leftist, and I think that Trump would take her down. And also because I think that he must feel that she's easily stimulated. I mean, he could make her sort of go off the rails by things he would say.

WOODS: Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

ROCKWELL: Maybe that's not true of Bernie.

WOODS: Well, because Bernie's constantly in a state of agitation, there'd be no way to tell that he was worked up. It's all the same persona. But with her, you're right; I could see her kind of losing it at one point. But also, the contrast, you can just imagine how the debates would turn. *Elizabeth Warren has a plan for that. She's got a plan for everything.* First of all, I guess it's just because I'm a libertarian that that creeps me out. I mean, I don't understand why that wouldn't creep somebody out, *I've got a plan.* Because a plan basically means: I'm going to order a lot of people around. I mean, that's what a plan is.

ROCKWELL: That's right.

WOODS: That creeps me out. But imagine her with her plans and her figures and her empirical examples and all that, and then Trump just making some remark about her being a Native American. It has nothing to do with anything she's saying. He derails the whole thing.

ROCKWELL: [laughing] Yeah, it's very funny.

WOODS: So is your prediction at this point that it is going to be Warren?

ROCKWELL: I think not. I think it could be Yang. Certainly, I think Yang is going to be on the ticket. He could be the vice presidential candidate –

WOODS: Really?

ROCKWELL: – and say Warren is the president. But I think –

WOODS: He would add real strength to that.

ROCKWELL: Oh, no, this would be a brilliant choice, unfortunately.

WOODS: I never would have thought of that until you mentioned it just now. That would be very strong. And I say that, again, not because I have a real fondness for him, but because he does not come across as rehearsed at all.

ROCKWELL: No.

WOODS: He's just a guy who knows stuff and he speaks. This is a novelty that we're observing here.

ROCKWELL: [laughing] Yeah, it's true.

WOODS: And by the way, on Bernie, it's got to be the case that at least a few percentage points have been lost to him because of his health.

ROCKWELL: Well, and I thought that he actually was sort of slightly toned down last night. That's hard to understand in Bernie terms, but he was slightly less of a yeller last night. And I thought his cheeks were sunken. I thought that, obviously, this is a very tough thing, to have a heart attack. I mean, there's nothing against him. And in fact, it speaks volumes for him that he was able to be in the debate, period.

WOODS: Yes.

ROCKWELL: But I think, you know, they asked him about his age. They asked Biden about his age. Interesting that they asked Elizabeth Warren about her age, pointing out that at 71, she would be the oldest president ever to be inaugurated for the first term. And, of course, everybody is dodging those questions. But she is older, and I thought last night, she looked older. And whether that was because everybody was attacking her or whether it was another reason, but she just didn't do well, and I think that she was hurt last night. So that was good.

WOODS: Was there a Drudge poll?

ROCKWELL: There was a Drudge poll, and it had Tulsi Gabbard winning, people like me voting for that [laughing].

WOODS: Right, but what about Yang?

ROCKWELL: Yang came in second. He was a massive second. And Warren and Biden and all the rest of them are way down in the low single digits.

WOODS: Okay, I mean, I know how unscientific that poll is, but it always generates an interesting result.

ROCKWELL: Yes, very interesting. And I think Yang, I mean, is the comer.

WOODS: Wow, this is going to be very interesting. I wonder how he's polling in New Hampshire.

ROCKWELL: You know, I have no idea about any of those questions, but he's an impressive guy, unfortunately.

WOODS: Yeah, yeah. All right, well, I think we'll just wrap things up there, because I would rather gouge my eyes out than continue to think about this episode of my life [laughing]. But I appreciate your joining me for this episode of the podcast, certainly, and we'll see what we're going to do in the future, but it doesn't mean we're going to have, I hope, less Lew than we

would have had before. It's just we'll talk about other things. We'll see what people want us to do. But thanks so much, Lew, for doing this.

ROCKWELL: Tom, thank you for asking me.