



Episode 1,745: Lew Rockwell and Tom on the First Trump/Biden Debate

Guest: Lew Rockwell

WOODS: One of my listeners said that we should just spend the half hour talking over each other to give people a feel of what the debate was like.

ROCKWELL: [laughing]

WOODS: So let me start with a couple of thoughts. I jotted a few things down, and then I want to get your input. I don't mind some interrupting, but I don't think Trump really helped himself by how much interrupting he did. It was just over the top. Like I think even his own supporters would start to say, I mean, come on now. You have to shut up for a little while. But secondly, though, I guess the balancing of that is watching Chris Wallace lose complete control of that couldn't have made me happier. It couldn't have happened to a better guy. I assume this means he'll never moderate another debate, and I guess that's a plus.

ROCKWELL: Well, I think Chris Wallace, of course, was Trump's actual opponent. I mean, he was —

WOODS: Yeah.

ROCKWELL: He was openly pro-Biden. I think that's no surprise to anyone. He's a left winger, and I hope he doesn't ever moderate a debate again. He's terrible. On the other hand, so are the other so-called moderators for the most part. But I thought Trump was terrible. I thought Biden was terrible. The whole thing was terrible. It was, I think, very unfortunate. Trump did interrupt too much, although he was interrupted by the moderator I think 76 times, who interrupted Biden 15 times. So that gives you an idea of just how biased the whole thing was.

Trump seemed to me to be angry the entire time. And if only he'd had the same persona he did in 2016 or at his rallies going on right now — you know, he's funny, he's relaxed, and even sometimes, as hard as it is to believe, self-deprecating. But last night, he just seemed to be a very angry guy. My guess is he expected to rattle Biden and make him make mistakes. That didn't happen. And Biden, whether it was because of the little device in his ear whispering to him the entire debate, or there's all kinds of rumors about various drugs he was given — methamphetamine and other things to make him sharper than normal, which apparently only lasts for a certain amount of time. And my guess is that the Biden people are going to say this debate was such a disaster, this is the only one they're going to do. And they're going to just leave it like this. And despite the Republicans protesting, my guess is there won't be a second and a third debate.

But Trump did many things wrong. He never got the COVID story right. And of course, I'm glad to see that he's pro opening everything now, but he locked down the economy. He did it, and the fact that everybody else except in Sweden did it is no excuse. He was responsible for the economic destructionism that took place, just a terrible thing.

And he's not going to make people feel better by saying *Oh, by the way, the military is going to give everybody an injection just right before the election* or whatever he was claiming last night. All the polls show that the vast majority of Americans don't trust the vaccine. They don't want to have a vaccine injected in them, and the idea that the military has got to do it seems to me a very alarming thing. Trump is saying it's a – well, he once said it was not going to be mandatory, but I must say, I'm very much afraid that they are going to make it mandatory. We'll just we'll just have to see.

I know that in Australia, it's going to be mandatory and they passed a law that said that the cops can remove all your clothes, including your underwear, in order to give you an injection, just to prevent people from resisting, I guess. So there's no question that there's COVID totalitarianism all over the world. Fauci is terrible. They're all terrible. Scott. Thank goodness for Scott Atlas, the first advisor on COVID that Trump has had who actually knows things and tells the truth. But is it too late? I don't know.

I think that just last night, he was great on law and order, and even Biden refusing to say it. He was good on a lot of environmental stuff. It was funny to hear Biden say, I'm opposed to the Green New Deal. I don't support the Green New Deal. Of course, he said he does. It's on his campaign page. And maybe he's not going to do it now, but I think he was just either confused or just lying. So Trump was good about that.

He was good on racial stuff. And despite the evil moderator saying, What's wrong with sensitivity training? Well, of course, what was going on in the federal government is not sensitivity training. I think that is a problem, by the way, by itself. But it's designed to humiliate and make every white person feel guilty for everything that's wrong with anything in the black community since 1619. So it's a vicious thing. As Trump said, it's racist.

And it was a great thing, his executive order to stop this, although my guess is it's not actually been stopped. I mean, this was going on all throughout the military, throughout every civil agency, and just a criminal thing that everything about America is racist, that every white person is a racist. They're teaching this to kindergarten kids. You're a racist and your parents are racist and all white people are racist, I guess except for probably your white teacher. And it's a criminal thing. And of course, Biden totally endorses it, called Trump a racist, called him a clown, just other unfortunate things in a presidential debate.

But I think – who won? My guess is it was slightly to Biden, if only because Trump had built him up as a total idiot who was going to make a fool of himself and that didn't happen. So I think the whole thing was very unfortunate. I found it very difficult to listen to, and I'll be interested to see what the stats show as to viewership. My guess is there are very few people who, like you and me, Tom, watched the entire thing. I think a lot of people just tuned it out, changed the channel, or read a book, which would be much better, of course, than watching television. So I think it has diminished – probably if they do hold more debates, the number of people who are going to tune in are going to be way down from this one.

WOODS: Yeah, probably. I mean, the thing is I was thinking that they could have a rule whereby you have X number of minutes, and then your mic gets turned off. But then we were thinking maybe Trump's campaign wouldn't agree to those terms. I don't know, but I genuinely wanted to hear the two sides. I figure I'm stuck doing this for the sake of the podcast; I at least want to hear what they're saying.

So all right, I've got a few things to say about what you just said. There's just so much to unpack here. The COVID thing: now, you're right. Trump is in an uncomfortable position, because as you say, he did go in for the Fauci shutdown and all that. But what he could say now is kind of how DeSantis is getting out of this, which is to say, look, we all agreed to 15 days to flatten the curve for the sake of making sure the hospitals were ready. And for that, maybe you can argue with me about it, but that was what I was told and so we agreed to that. And then DeSantis says that we were told we need 30 more days for that, so I was a good sport and we did that. But now, enough's enough.

So the problem is that Trump went to the extreme of also saying that Sweden was really in the wrong for not locking down. And that's very unfortunate, because now what's he supposed to say? At least now, if he hadn't said those things, he could position himself as the reopening guy. And what I would have done — I don't know if it's against the rules to bring a prop of some kind, but I would have brought a chart showing, let's say, six different countries with entirely different lockdown policies, different timings of lockdowns, maybe one of them with no lockdown. And of course, we all know the charts look exactly the same in terms of deaths and hospitalizations and whatever. And I would have challenged — again, you're probably not allowed to bring anything, but if I could have, I would have challenged Biden:

All right, Joe, I've taken the country names off just to make this fun for you. Which country is — tell me the hardest locked-down country looking at these charts, and then tell me the one that didn't lock down. Oh, wait a minute, Joe. You're having trouble figuring this out because they look exactly the same? So you mean maybe we ruined everybody's life for nothing, and you just want to keep doing that and keep bringing on the people who want to do that?

You've got to hit hard on this. But as you say, I think Trump compromised himself and made it hard to do that by having gone in for the hysteria at the start.

ROCKWELL: Very unfortunate. More than unfortunate, I mean, it may be the worst thing that's ever happened, these lockdowns, to the whole world economy.

WOODS: Yeah.

ROCKWELL: And of course, they're trying to get African countries to learn lockdown, which would mean mass starvation immediately. So these people, Bill Gates, Fauci and all the rest of them, actually want to decrease the human population. They think there are far too many people and they would love to decrease it. So is this all a coincidence that they got all these various countries to take these depopulation antics and put them into law? My guess is no. But President Trump has never gotten the COVID story straight. He didn't have a straight story last night. And in fact, he never said, "And by the way, here's why you should reelect me and not Mr. Biden." He never —

WOODS: Yeah, you've got to have a simple speech on that. You've got to.

ROCKWELL: Well, if you'd had an opening statement and a closing statement, which the moderator decided was not going to happen, that would have been taken care of. But I think the whole thing was just so badly run in every sense. And then President Trump, I don't think he necessarily lost the election, especially if there's a second and a third debate, but very unfortunate.

WOODS: He's got to pivot. He's got to pivot, because as you say, I do think that was the reason behind that strategy, was to rattle Biden and see what would happen. But since that didn't happen – I mean, Biden got tongue tied a few times, but nothing catastrophic.

ROCKWELL: That's right.

WOODS: Now you've got to shift to something else, because it's not attractive. So then some other things. I would have said, with the whole Antifa thing – *Antifa is just an idea* – well, I guess I would have said, "Well, that idea sure sets a lot of fires, Joe."

ROCKWELL: [laughing]

WOODS: "A lot of firemen have had to go out and put out fires started by that idea, so I'm not sure we're buying that."

But then the other thing. I would have said, with the whole are-you-going-to-hand-off-power-peacefully thing, and then just in general, Biden making it sound like *Oh, it's just generalized violence*, I would have said:

Joe, when's the last Republican riot you can remember? Because when things don't go our way, we try different things, but it never occurs to us. Anything goes wrong for your people, they burn a city down. Have you ever been afraid a Republican's going to burn the city down? Waiting. Last 20 years, any cities burned down by Republicans?

Just keep hammering away. But then the whole thing – I don't know why he's taking the position he is about the so-called peaceful transfer of power thing, but I will say that he could say:

Look, I don't know why you're asking me about peaceful transfers of power, when you know they're wink-wink, nod-nodding at people to riot if I win. You know that that's going on. You know that they're right at the drop of a hat, and you're talking to me about peace?

ROCKWELL: Well, no, you're exactly right. And there's so much Trump could have said that would have been diminishing and maybe even fatal to Biden, but he didn't do it. And I wonder just how much he prepared. I mean, it seemed he didn't –

WOODS: Yeah, not at all.

ROCKWELL: He didn't have all the facts and figures that would –

WOODS: Right.

ROCKWELL: For example, when Biden said that you've lost manufacturing jobs, whereas under President Obama and I, we had a massive increase in manufacturing jobs – neither one of those points is true. But Trump couldn't say, *Well, I've had 400,000 more manufacturing jobs as a result of my less than four years, whereas under you people, you lost whatever.* So he wasn't prepared. I mean, how could they let him go in there unprepared? Maybe he they tried to argue him into something and he wouldn't do it? I don't know. But very unfortunate.

WOODS: Yeah. And I think unfortunately, it's because of his personality. *I'm Donald Trump. I don't need any prep. I'm going in to argue against this senile old bastard.* I think that's his personality. It's very unfortunate, because he should be prepped by some of the top people out there, just to make sure that he hits home runs all night

ROCKWELL: Yeah.

WOODS: So all he has to do, I would say, all he has to do is call up Pat Buchanan, secretly drive him over to the White House, and have Pat spend the week there. Let him sleep in the Lincoln Bedroom or however it works, but give him the week, and he'll walk out – because you know, the coaching of Reagan – David Stockman told me about the coaching of Reagan, that he was transformed by the end of the week of coaching. At the beginning of the week, they'd ask him questions, and he'd turn to them and say, "All right, what's the answer?"

ROCKWELL: [laughing]

WOODS: And by the end, he knew every single answer inside and out. So that would help; I just don't know that he would do it.

Now, a few other things. He did not hit back on that – maybe he thinks it doesn't matter because his people don't care, but enough of the middle-of-the-road people care. He should have hit back on that "very fine people" hoax. Obviously, that's journalistic malpractice. He never said white supremacists are very fine people. That's a myth. All you have to do is go back and look at the transcript. He never said it, and that's just a myth that's developed. He didn't really defend himself against that, even though that was the premise of the question, was that, you know, *you've said these people are very fine people.*

One thing he did do well was repeatedly insisting that Joe Biden name a law enforcement endorsement he's gotten. That's not my favorite issue in the world, let's say, but it sure is a Biden weakness, and he couldn't come up with anything, which was unfortunate. And it was good that he kept emphasizing that: who's running these cities? It's your party running these cities. And then when it came to the race issue – *now, what have you done for black people?* – he could have very easily turned and said:

What has my opponent done for black people in 47 years? His party's been in charge of all the major cities for 47 years. If the Republicans had been in charge of all those cities for 47 years and had this result, you people would be up in arms. The Democrats are in charge for 47 years in all these cities, and the results are as horrific as you see right now. And it's crickets. It's like, oh, yeah, we don't even need to talk about that. It's your party that's been running the show, Joe. What have you been doing over there?

I mean, he could have hit and hit and hit. He could have said, *I'll tell you what I've done. I've given them the lowest unemployment rate in US history. How about that?* You know, it's something, and it was very, very weak, I thought very weak.

ROCKWELL: Yeah. Yeah.

WOODS: Or weaker than it could have been. Weaker than – he landed some blows, but much weaker than it could have been.

ROCKWELL: The whole thing was difficult to watch for a number of reasons. And Mr. Trump, he was just a disaster.

WOODS: Well, I feel like he should have been ready for things like systemic racism and white privilege. He should have had home-run answers to those. He should have looked into the camera, talked to the least well-off white voters out there and said:

This guy thinks you live a privileged existence. Let's talk about the sacrifices you make every day, and whatever. And then said, Look, every American wishes every other American. Almost all of us. This is ridiculous that you and I and everybody, we're all walking on eggshells because we're afraid this guy here and his crazy lunatics who follow him are going to call us names. You know it and I know it, and it goes on all the time. And enough's enough.

And this systemic racism thing that you're talking about, Joe? Look at Minneapolis. You had a left-wing Democratic mayor, left-wing Democratic city council, left-wing Democratic chief of police. What the hell more do you people need? What the hell more is it going to take? And then you're giving us speeches about how we're going to get rid of racism in America? All right, well, apparently you've got cities burning, when all you guys are in charge and have been in charge forever. What more do you need, Joe? Just what, four more years in the White House? What exactly do you need, given that it's all your people in all these cities? I mean, why is that?

How could they not have prompted him on this? And I think the answer is he just didn't want to be prepped. He didn't think he needed it.

ROCKWELL: I wish Trump had made a funny response, when Biden said we need a psychologist or a psychiatrist in every police car in order to make sure –

WOODS: Oh, geez, yeah.

ROCKWELL: – make sure that bad things don't happen.

WOODS: Yeah.

ROCKWELL: I guess that's the American Psychological Association dream. Every psychologist who ever existed would have a big job. But it was just insane. It's literally an insane proposal, like of course most of the Biden proposals are insane. And some of the Trump proposals are too, but the Biden ones are especially crazy. But Trump didn't pick up on it. And whether it was because he was so upset – otherwise, I don't know what happened.

WOODS: I think he wasn't fully briefed enough on exactly what critical race theory is and what's wrong with it. I mean, he flailed around a little saying, well, it says that everything about America is bad. Now, I would look right into the eyes of the parents in that camera, and I would say:

I bet your kids had to go to some kind of special training session where they had to say that they were terrible people, and they didn't even realize they were terrible people, but that they know that they are, and they'll always be terrible. If that's what you want, then by all means, elect Joe Biden. Or if you're black, and you want us all to treat you like that, like you're seven years old, then definitely vote for Joe Biden. But if we're all ready to be adults at this point, maybe I'm your guy.

I think the critical race theory stuff could have been hit a lot harder as to what exactly it's saying.

ROCKWELL: Right.

WOODS: Yeah. And the idea that Chris Wallace says, well, some – or no, Biden's saying that people just don't want to be insulted and made to feel bad and have their feelings hurt. This has absolutely zero to do with hurt feelings.

So then the other thing I thought he needed facts and figures and a real response was climate change. And what he should have said – I mean, he did start to say that Russia and China and they're all polluting and whatever. But to really ram the point home, he should have said, what is the benefit to us of being in this Paris Climate accord? He should have said something like:

Even if we just shut down production somehow in the US, it would be a blip on the radar in terms of climate change, because of China swamping US and China producing. So in other words, we're going to impoverish ourselves and basically wind up making no difference at all. That's his plan. We impoverish ourselves. If you're worried about climate change, you're worried about carbon emissions, and whatever, they're still going to go on almost as if we did nothing. So the only thing we get out of it is a nice feeling and impoverishment. That's the Biden plan: nice feelings and impoverishment. It's his plan for everything. It's his plan for the cities. We'll feel nice and talk about peaceful protests while the city burns down, and so we'll get impoverishment there. We'll feel nice that we're listening to certain scientists and not others by shutting the country down. We'll get impoverished –

[laughing] You know, there's so many opportunities here, Lew.

ROCKWELL: And of course, I wish Trump when he was asked about climate change science had taken a different view and said there is no such thing as global warming. This is just a made-up thing. This is just an attempt to shut down the economies of the West. They want to make us all poorer. That's exactly right. That's their goal, to make us all poorer, to get rid of energy, and have everybody be forced to buy an expensive electric car, which gets such a short distance you can drive in it before you have to recharge it for five hours. And this Green New Deal business is the most outstanding poverty program ever invented, pro-poverty program. And of course, when Joe would say, well, I don't endorse the Green New Deal, he would say:

You and Bernie Sanders, you co-endorsed it. You're being run by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez on these matters, and it's shameful. Joe, it's shameful that you want to impoverish Americans. And just like Hillary, you'd like to put all the coal miners out of business, all the guys who work in power plants out of business. You'd like to get rid, by the way, of nuclear power too. And you want to leave Americans cold and shivering in the dark. And that's not the right thing for an American president to do.

WOODS: Yeah, yeah, exactly. If Trump had had that moment in which he could have gathered his thoughts about why he should be reelected, if I were in his shoes, I would have looked into the camera and said:

I would say the headlines every day are pretty much telling it to you. Sometimes the headlines are misleading. They'll say mostly "peaceful protests" and such-and-such. But the thing is, we now have the internet, folks, and you can see what's going on. And sometimes the reporters are standing there with a fire in the background, saying to you these are mostly peaceful protests. Could you imagine if some of my followers were legitimately having a mostly peaceful protest, and one of them just shouted a bad name? Well, that would be called a fascist rally and whatever. We'd never hear the end of it. They've got literal fires going on, and the media is telling you, in defiance of what you're seeing with your own eyes, that everything is fine.

Meanwhile, we've got Joe over here who wants to keep this shutdown voodoo going on. I call it voodoo, because it doesn't seem to make any difference. Look at these countries around the world. Look at the different states around the country. You look at all the different approaches they took, and the virus took exactly the same path, and every single one of them laughing at us the whole way.

So your choice here is: is your kid going to be in the house for the next two years? Is your kid going to be deprived of Little League, of all the things that make a young person's life worth living? Is that going to go on indefinitely, regardless of how well we're doing? Or do you want to live again? Do you want your life? Do you want to be sensible, be a real human being? This is the most stark choice we've ever faced.

So I mean, it's not like that's a hard case to make. You've got violence erupting everywhere, and you've got a guy who would have no hesitation in shutting the whole country down, even after the peak has occurred, even after there's obviously no hospital strain, even after the only metric they can point to is "cases," which doesn't even mean anything, they still want to shut it down. How much clearer could this difference be?

ROCKWELL: No, of course. That might have reelected him if he'd said that, versus put him into a fight of his life. It's very unfortunate. The Democrats are being run by the Communist Party, in effect. It's quite something to see things move this far left this fast. After we thought that communism was dead and gone, here it is back. And of course, it's Satanist. This wonderful new book by Paul Kengo of Grove City College called *The Devil and Karl Marx*. And Karl Marx was a worshiper of the devil. He wrote hymns to the devil. And one of them says that, "My soul used to belong to God, but now it belongs to the devil." And isn't that great? This is a rise in Satanism. There was some woman on Huffington Post who said *I'm so glad to read about the principles of the Temple of Satan or the Church of Satan. These are all things I believe in. I'm going to join.*

WOODS: And she joined, because when Ginsburg died, she felt like, well, who's going to be around to defend "reproductive rights"? And so she decided that it was this particular group. So yeah, there's a lot of craziness here. So as you say, we'll have to see what happens with future debates, if they're going to take place or not.

But meanwhile, Lew, I'm not worried about what you say about the communists inspiring the Democratic Party, because I know Joe Biden will hold the line against the hard left wing of the party, just by sheer force of his overwhelming personality [laughing].

ROCKWELL: Well, as he said, I am the Democratic Party, in sort of a Louis XIV moment.

WOODS: Yeah, I was surprised at that.

ROCKWELL: But he can't, of course, call up any mayor and say, "Hey, you've got to stop these riots," because he's not the president. He can't do it, even though he *is* the Democratic Party. But of course, anybody can call up the mayor and say that, if they can get through. So that was just — and of course, he wouldn't admit that he wants to pack the Court, and the Democrats —

WOODS: Right, he wouldn't answer that question.

ROCKWELL: Right, he wouldn't say it because it would become a campaign issue. Oh, can't have that. So that of course means he is for it. And if the Democrats get in, they're going to add 3 or 5 or 7 or 29 justices to the Supreme Court. It'll be the size of the House of Representatives at some point.

WOODS: In terms of the violence in the cities, just one last thing. Biden was saying that Trump just constantly fans the flames, and they're blaming him for it. But he's the president. He doesn't have any authority over any of these cities or states, unless they ask him to come in. And some authoritarian he is, by the way. He would have just gone in. He would have just claimed some public safety rationale and just gone in. He said, *No, no, if you want to give me a call, I'll come on in.* But this is obviously mayors and governors who, for whatever reason, think that there's some benefit to letting this go on.

But I don't see how you — and I think, by the way, that's a move that he should — and again, if I were him and I wanted to win, I would say, "Look, Joe, all your Democratic mayors have to do just give me a call and I'll take care of that problem in no time flat." I mean, he came close. He said last night, "We can get this done in 30 minutes." I mean, the only way he wins is by positioning himself as the kind of man he is, which is the guy in charge who gets things done, the doer who, while everyone else is flailing and doesn't have the guts to do anything, he steps in and does the thing everybody knows needs to be done but they're too scared to ask for it. That's how he's got to position himself. And so that is the kind of issue he's got to hit on, that *I'll solve that problem tomorrow. You've got to just ask me. I think you guys are a little afraid to ask, but I think your people are getting a little tired of this, especially in Portland.*

ROCKWELL: Well, I love the fact that Biden implied in a way that Trump was fanning the flames by criticizing the rioting. Don't criticize rioting or you're an evil guy.

WOODS: Right.

ROCKWELL: You've got to praise it. These are all progressive activities, these are progressive activists, Black Lives Matter and the rest of them. And Trump could have mentioned, by the way, that Black Lives Matter is a Marxist group. *They want to abolish the family, among other Marxist goals that they've got. And the idea we're supposed to bow down to these people, raise our fist to them as they come into the restaurant and demand you do so, and just run our lives, run our schools, run our universities, run the big corporations, seems to me an unbelievable outrage, Mr. Biden, and I'm calling on you to say that you believe in the family and you don't want to have the family abolished like your pals at BLM.*

WOODS: Well, we'll see what debate number two is. But again, I would love to see him coached properly, because at least it would make it more fun for you and me, rather than last night was just not – you and I had a perfectly good episode right here, but we could have had a lot better one.

ROCKWELL: Tom, he actually needs you to coach him. You need to go to the White House for a weekend. I wouldn't put you in the Lincoln Bedroom. That would be terrible, but some nicer place.

WOODS: [laughing] Yeah. But really, anybody with some political savvy out there could do a good job, honestly, on this. So we'll see what the future holds. But for now, Lew, I appreciate the effort you put in actually sitting through that, as one of the handful of Americans who did do that, you and I together. And remember, last night I emailed you. I didn't even say anything about the debate; I just said, "Just reminding you about 10 in the morning tomorrow." [laughing] And that was the whole email. I just didn't have the heart to say anything. Anyway, thanks again, Lew. I appreciate it.

ROCKWELL: Tom, thank you.