



Episode 531: Lew and Tom Take Apart GOP Debate Number Four

Guest: Lew Rockwell

WOODS: Well, there is a lot to say about last night. At first I thought, well, it's going to be just another one of these, but there were some entertaining confrontations, and I definitely thought – I think this is a case where the conventional wisdom is correct. I thought Rand did much better last night. I thought this was by far the strongest I've seen him.

ROCKWELL: Tom, I don't know who was coaching him, but he certainly is doing a far better job than previous coaches. Rand seemed relaxed; he smiled; he wasn't yelling, and I thought he did very good. Also of course, far more important, he was channeling his dad.

WOODS: Yeah.

ROCKWELL: He was sounding like Ron, so this is – I had a friend recently make the point to me, a politically savvy friend, that Rand has got an indelible brand, as much as he would like to run away from it and has tried to run away from it, he's Ron Paul's son. Now, I happen to think that's a pretty great brand, but whether he thinks it's a great brand or he thinks it's an unfortunate brand, he's stuck with it.

WOODS: Yeah.

ROCKWELL: So all his running away from his dad, both in issue terms and in personal terms and refusing to discuss him and not involving him in the campaign, this has all had a very bad effect on the Ron Paulians. So will this – you know, my guess is people are going to wonder is this the real Rand. Is this the same guy who made great speeches in Ron's 2012 campaign. Very outspoken; I'll talk for just one example about Dick Cheney being a war criminal and personally corrupt. Absolutely true, of course.

So is it this guy last night, the guy in 2012, or is it the guy who right after he won the Senate nomination went and pledged his fealty to Bill Kristol, assuring him he's not like his dad on foreign policy, he'd always be loyal to Israel and similar things? Is it that guy, the guy who immediately hooked up with Mitch McConnell and has been joined at the hip with him ever since? Is it that guy, or is it this guy from last night? What are people going to think? I don't know. Are they going to send the money? Are they going

to be the volunteers? Are they going to vote for him? Are they going to be devoted to him? I don't know.

But this was I thought — I have to congratulate him on doing a great job last night; however, I thought the whole thing was very sad, because he could have been a contender. I don't mean he could have been elected president. That's a different subject. But he could have been an extraordinary senator. He could have helped build the Ron Paul movement into a Ron Paul-Rand Paul movement. He could have expanded libertarianism and brought new people in, carried the torch. It would have been a very different America maybe today if he'd done that.

WOODS: Well, indeed. And of course this is why initially I was all in favor of seeing him in the U.S. Senate and so on and on, and it's not to say that he hasn't been the best U.S. senator. I have no doubt that he is the best U.S. senator, but you're right. And of course —

ROCKWELL: Pretty low bar.

WOODS: Yeah, it is a pretty low bar, and the thing is there are so many other things that I don't even want to — I'm not even sure I should mention that really bolster what we're saying. We're not just nitpicking or looking for things to criticize or being libertarian purists. I mean, really. If that's a complaint — I got that complaint over and over again from our show last time, but not one specific was ever drawn out, because no one wants to argue with us on the specifics. They want to pretend that we're just in our ivory tower and looking down on everybody. I think both from a libertarian perspective and from a strategic perspective and from a pragmatic perspective, it made sense for Rand to focus on the issues that his father championed, and I think things would have been quite different. So last night showed that he can do this if wants to.

Now, there are still — there's always room for improvement, so we'll get to — I mean for instance, the confrontation with Rubio over military spending. All right, it's good that he points out that Rubio wants to spend too much on the military, because you don't hear that in a Republican debate, and that's very good. But I would definitely bolster that. I would have been ready with much more material than that, because a Republican audience will simply say, well, yeah, we are liberals on military spending, because as Cruz says, if we don't have a country, then we can't even worry about these issues, so we have to start there and then, as Cruz suggested, if I can just get rid of sugar subsidies then I'll be able to fund the military, that sort of thing.

I think he needed to say — I mean, there are a couple of ways you could have dealt with this. Trump mentioned Eisenhower, and you say, well look, Trump is mentioning Eisenhower as a great conservative. Well, whether he was or he wasn't, he sure cut back on the military. There's no question about that. The military budget was cut in the 1950s and nobody called Eisenhower a pinko commie. That was the height of the Cold War, for heaven's sake. I would have said that, and I also would have said there is no connection between the amount of military spending and -how so-called safe we

are and how stable the world is. The world was a lot more stable 12 years ago before you people started running amok everywhere, you and Hillary Clinton.

I would keep hammering away at that. You and Hillary Clinton going around and toppling so-called dictators everywhere around the world has led to a much worse world, and you want to keep doing more and more and more of that? Maybe you belong to the wrong party. You sound like Woodrow Wilson. Like, I would just hammer away at, you people, all you want to do is tinker, tinker, and remake the world and whatever. What in the world is — and I would have to say this is as a Republican — what in the world is conservative about that? What you're doing is the exact opposite of conservative, and we've got a world that's in flames; we've got refugees everywhere, and you want more money to do more of this? What are you, crazy? This audience isn't stupid — knowing in parentheses that maybe it is. But I would say that kind of thing.

ROCKWELL: Also Rand is lucky that Rubio didn't say, you know, you've made a proposal for a massive increase in military spending yourself, just not as big as mine, so the question is do we really want to have a great military or do we want a little semi-great military. And of course the crowd cheered every call for massive expenditures of the military.

WOODS: Right, right.

ROCKWELL: And the VA, which is of course, they all love the VA. I must say Rand didn't address it, but they all talk about how terrible it is; the VA's such a mess. The VA is a single-payer system. How come nobody makes that point? It's socialized medicine. Of course it's a disaster. So of course you have to love the VA just like you have to love the Pentagon, you have to love the CIA, all those other pieties of the Republican religion.

WOODS: Let's see, what else have I got here? I do want to stay on Rand for a minute, because he did do well, and I want to acknowledge that, and I want to offer —

ROCKWELL: By the way, he had his hair — something happened to his hair. His hair for the first time looked great last night.

WOODS: (laughing) I didn't even notice.

ROCKWELL: A very minor point, but —

WOODS: That's funny; I was doing dishes when I saw that, as you told me, Fox Business was streaming it, and in our living room/kitchen area we deliberately don't have a TV, but I was able to put my laptop right there on the counter and do the dishes while I was watching. (laughing) And I didn't notice that. But okay, let's see. Yeah, I would say again, he's got to talk about the consequences of this foreign policy, that all you people who were saying we need to have a no-fly zone here, we need to do this and that here, look at what the scorecard is. Everything you've done has turned into a

disaster. You'd think you'd have a little bit of humility after awhile. And then you might even appeal to Trump and say, look, Mr. Trump here that none of you will contradict comes out and says look, if the Russians want to take on ISIS, go ahead and let them. What's the matter with you? Or how come we have to be setting up no-fly zones or intervening in Ukraine? We have so many problems at home. That's such a great populous message, even for Republicans. You can hammer away at that.

ROCKWELL: And of course Ron Paul used to do that. He used to talk about we need to worry about the American people; we need to worry about America. In fact, he used the forbidden phrase: we need to put America first and not be making trouble all around the world — also murdering people en masse of course is another point. So yeah, Trump's interesting. Even though he beats his chest about the great military, a strong military, strongest military in the world and so forth, he's actually apparently not for using it. So that's an interesting compromise from a Republican standpoint. He gets them all cheering them about strengthening the military, we're the number one, we're the most powerful, but don't do anything with them. Don't intervene.

WOODS: But I saw the other day he was saying we've got to hit ISIS hard, so maybe he does want to use it.

ROCKWELL: Well, that's terrible.

WOODS: But on Nixon to China grounds, he could get away with not using it because of his bluster and because he loves the — he so often talks about how much he loves the veterans. People don't realize this is obviously perfunctory and done for political reasons, but they still clap anyway.

ROCKWELL: (laughing) Don't call them veterans; they're wounded warriors.

WOODS: Yeah, exactly, exactly, and here we are talking about this on Veterans Day.

ROCKWELL: Hey.

WOODS: Normally I would do some kind of war thingy today, but, well, a Republican debate is pretty close, right?

ROCKWELL: And as Butler Schaffer likes to remind us, this used to be Armistice Day; that is, the celebration of the end of World War I, which they turned into a celebration of present and future wars.

WOODS: Yeah. Let's see, let's do one more quick thing on Rand. He did mention the Fed in a negative light, and he mentioned how the Fed damages the standard of living. He said we need to look at the causes of the housing boom and bust. I wish he had spent less time on the standard of living and more time on the housing boom and bust and blame that on the Fed clearly, because the standard of living thing he's already being attacked today on Vox by some typical, frankly, idiot saying no, interest rates have been great for the poor, because, look —

ROCKWELL: (laughing)

WOODS: — and look, we have low inflation and so forth, and it opens him up — not that there aren't answers to that, but it opens himself up to that. Whereas, what are you going to say about, look, how did help the poor for there to be a housing boom and bust? Like, that didn't help anybody. But to see the Fed at least being mentioned? That's good.

ROCKWELL: That was good, although I thought he slightly choked at the idea of reforming the Fed, and in fact, I thought Cruz was a little more anti-Fed than Rand was done.

WOODS: Oh yeah, well, that's true. Cruz again focused on the sound money issue, which —

ROCKWELL: And mentioned gold.

WOODS: And mentioned gold, and people are saying, oh, that's just a crude political calculation. All right, but that's what every word in every debate is, right?

ROCKWELL: (laughing)

WOODS: Nothing unique about this. It shows that Cruz is good at it.

ROCKWELL: I mean, when Cruz mentioned sugar subsidies, for example, that was a needle at Rubio, because his big donor is the big sugar subsidy recipient, and that's one of the things that Rubio challenges is the sugar subsidies.

WOODS: That's funny. See? Cruz is even better at this than I thought. That one sailed right over my head. I didn't even realize the connection. Kevin Gutzman during the debate pointed out that when Cruz mentioned the five departments he'd get rid of, apparently he mentioned commerce twice.

ROCKWELL: Yes.

WOODS: I missed that.

ROCKWELL: It was sort of his Rick Perry moment.

WOODS: That's what Kevin called it.

ROCKWELL: And I was wondering what's the other department he's hoping to get rid of. I hope it's education, but we didn't get to find out.

WOODS: Yeah, that's right. I have a few things written down, but I will say quickly that in the Drudge poll, Rand did much better than he's been doing. He's been at the

bottom, the total basement of these Drudge polls after the debate, but he was a strong third in this one.

ROCKWELL: Yes, yeah, and I tend to think that the Drudge poll — there were about 250,000 participating last time I looked — does give you a reflection of what the Republican base think, so Trump is down, but he still is leading at 38%; Cruz number two at 23, then Rand at 15 — I'm rounding all these up. Rubio at 13 and Carson at 5; Carly at 4; the unbelievably irritating Kasich at 2, and Jeb, the hilarious, awful Jeb at 1%.

WOODS: Yeah. It's really, really terrible how Jeb is doing, so let's shift gears and talk about overall impressions. Like, who stands out in terms of effectiveness and boobishness?

ROCKWELL: Well, I thought Rand stood out in terms of effectiveness. I thought Cruz did as well. I must say I don't like the new Trump persona, which is, from what people who tell me who know him, the actual Trump. I mean, he's not the blustery *Apprentice* guy of the first debate, and when people deal with him in business or in personal terms, he's just like the guy last night. But I guess he thinks this is being presidential or something. It'd be nice to have something in between, not quite as blustery as the other guy, but maybe a little more zippy than last night. But he still won it.

Cruz, again, did very, very well. Everybody touts Rubio. I mean, all the media: yeah, Rubio won. And of course they love him because he's the neocon and he's the neocon choice, even though Cruz is a neocon too, but there's something about him that bugs the big time neocons, so maybe he's not all bad, Cruz. But Rubio, they're all saying he won the debate. I don't buy it.

And I was delighted to see Carson go way down. I must say and I have to admit I've never understood his appeal, so everything I may be saying may be balderdash, but it seemed to me he was even less impressive last night, less interesting, more, you know, the Sphinx or something.

Carly, who was competing with Kasich for the irritating prize, who kept going way over time just like Kasich, and Trump made a comment about it and he got booed, because of course as we know the rules are the sexes are entirely equal and must be treated entirely equally; however, a guy can't criticize a gal.

WOODS: Yeah, I was going to mention that. He mentioned that — he said, because she was in the middle of interrupting Rand Paul, and you know, Trump and Rand haven't been exactly best buddies, but Trump even interrupted to defend Rand. He said, she keeps interrupting everybody; it's terrible. (laughing) I laughed at that; I didn't boo; I was laughing.

ROCKWELL: (laughing) That was great. And of course Kasich, angry the whole time, yapping, he reminded me a little bit of Jindal — is this horrible? I watched the undercard for the first time.

WOODS: Oh, Lew, come on now.

ROCKWELL: I'll just mention that Jindal, I don't care what he's saying, what points he's saying; he's like a little, irritating, yapping dog. I mean, you just can't take him seriously. How he ever became governor of Louisiana, I don't know, but the idea that he's going to be president or anybody's going to like him on the national scene is just crazy. But I think Carly and Kasich did themselves harm. Carly, of course, a crazed warmonger, and by the way, it came out this morning, despite her claim that, well, I had a meeting with Putin unlike you, Mr. Trump, who met him in the green room, the only time she met him was in a green room.

WOODS: (laughing)

ROCKWELL: So she had either forgotten that or was lying or whatever. But she is a very, very unpleasant lady. There's a total makeover — I guess this is sexist. She has a total makeover every time. That helmet of hair — is that a wig? Is it that they put an entire carton of hairspray on it? I don't know, but it doesn't move. But no matter what they do to her, you know, she's herself, and it's made much worse by the fact that she's Cruella de Vil, so she's just longing for blood. And last night — and Trump was nice enough not to say anything — she kept saying, well, as a CEO, I did this and that. She of course ran every company she was in charge of into the ground — so maybe she is qualified to be president.

WOODS: Yeah, indeed, indeed. I'm looking over things I jotted down, and one of them was about Kasich, whom you mentioned. I wrote that he confirms Joe Sobran's definition of a moderate, because remember, you're a liberal if you favor domestic intervention and a conservative if you favor foreign intervention, and you're a moderate if you favor both domestic and foreign intervention. And when I was listening to Kasich's laundry list of foreign interventions he wanted, I thought that just confirms it. And of course, if you favor neither kind of intervention, that makes you an extremist.

ROCKWELL: Also I liked it when, of course, he's for subsidized mass migration, oh, and he got tears in his eyes over the idea that that might not continue. He's for subsidizing the big banks. I did love it when he had a sort humma humma humma moment, tried to explain why we should bail out the banks when they get in trouble again, he got booed. So that was nice. And Jeb was of course making that same point. Of course you have to bail out the banks; why, they're essential to everything. And of course both of these guys are in the pay of the banks personally, as well as maybe politically too, so I thought —

And of course Jeb was also getting tears in his eyes over the idea, the subsidized mass migration might somehow be slightly cut off as versus stepped up and we should all

love it. But whether it's in Western Europe or Eastern Europe for that matter or in this country, people don't like subsidized mass migration, government-planned, government-subsidized, government-directed, gigantic demographic changes for reasons of roiling and wrecking the current culture so they can control us more easily, not because they have charity towards anybody. Government — I don't want to shock anyone listening to us — the government is not a charitable institution. It's a killer institution. It's a thieving institution. Their motives are never good.

WOODS: Well, indeed, and that's why I think as soon as you realize that, it helps clarify your thoughts on pretty much everything. I'm curious to know, because as you mentioned Kasich and Bush on this particular issue and they're both in the basement polling-wise, I have not been following Intrade this time around. Do you know what the betting people are saying about the nomination?

ROCKWELL: You know, isn't it tragic that the federal government put Intrade out of business?

WOODS: Oh, did they shut that down?

ROCKWELL: Yes. So you have to go to the Irish betting parlors, and I must say I don't find them as interesting or as accurate as Intrade. Intrade I think was shut down because they were so accurate, and of course you have people like Sheldon Adelson and Steve Wynn and the other gambling moguls who want anything online — and they called this gambling — anything online gambling shut down, destroyed, crushed, and so forth.

WOODS: Yeah.

ROCKWELL: But I think the government didn't like people being able to make accurate predictions — far more accurate than any poll, by the way, Intrade, so the government shut them down.

WOODS: Yeah, I wanted to know that, because it is so accurate, and I'm wondering if it's still somehow plausible to think that Bush will somehow put things together because of his legacy name and make things work, because I just can't see, even with all his money, I just can't see a path to that.

ROCKWELL: No, and of course he keeps defending his brother. Everybody hates his brother, and of course, rightly so. Republicans hate his brother, and of course everybody else hates his brother. He was a total monster, a big FDR kind of big spender domestically, of course a horrendous spender and murderer internationally. A real creep; I mean, a creep of the first water, even worse than George H. W. Bush, although I know that's hard to imagine. And of course he's an open advocate of subsidized mass migration. Rubio has the brains — although he's of course Mr. Mass Migration with the Schumer-Rubio Bill and so forth, but he shuts up about it or he avoids answering the question. Whether he'll be able to continue to do that, I don't know. But Bush is very open about it, and I think it dramatically hurts him. It's like

these guys, Kasich and Bush especially, don't realize that Americans are sick of guys like Kasich and Bush —

WOODS: Yeah.

ROCKWELL: — with the establishment, they're for all the horrible policies you can imagine, and they pretend also of course to be our betters, and also we should follow them just because they're our betters. And, well, no thanks.

WOODS: Yeah, indeed. Going back to Rubio and foreign policy, he of course gave the classic, standard, third-grade-level, neocon line last night, and one of the points he made was he — I mean, he still did this: "They hate us because our girls go to school."

ROCKWELL: (laughing)

WOODS: And that reminds me; in 2004, bin Laden actually addressed this argument that they hate us for our freedom. Bin Laden actually said, okay, yeah? Then how come we're not attacking Sweden? He actually said that. (laughing) Good question, right? It's not a question that anybody wants to ask. And then Fiorina took on Trump and Rand, saying, you know, we have to speak from a position of strength. And a position of strength of course means more belligerent than any U.S. president maybe in history, based on what she wants to do. We're going to have exercises in the Baltic states and we're going to have a so-called missile defense system in Poland —

ROCKWELL: Put more troops in Germany. By the way, what do the Germans think about that? She doesn't care, of course.

WOODS: Makes no difference.

ROCKWELL: She's just going to put them there.

WOODS: Yeah. But that will make us strong — so blowing trillions of dollars and being involved in all these wars — you know, they say we have to be in a position of strength and we can't retreat, because if we're in a position of strength and we're engaged with the world, our enemies will be less likely to attack. But actually, it's precisely when you're bogged down in really expensive, manpower-draining wars that your enemy would be more likely to attack. So it seems to me that a good response to her would be, yeah, I want to be in a position of strength too. I'd like all our troops back home so they can defend this country. I'd like to be in a position of strength where we're not blowing trillions of bucks on stupid wars that any moron knew were going to have the results that they've had. I'd like to be strong — you know, that's the way I would respond to a Fiorina. How is it strong to be in five quagmires at once, basically, so that if there really were an actual crisis, what would we do?

ROCKWELL: She's got Paul Wolfowitz whispering in her ear, I guess. It's the craziest kind of neocon stuff, and my favorite was we have to speak from a position of strength and not speak to Putin. Oh, I see.

WOODS: Yeah, and that was a good point —

ROCKWELL: Rand was great on that.

WOODS: Yeah, even during the entire Cold War nobody said we're not going to talk to the Russians. And then Fiorina tried to bring up Reagan walking out at Reykjavik. Okay, but then one year later, didn't he sign the — now I can't remember the name of it — but he signed a treaty with the Russians that actually did reduce the absolute number of some class of nuclear weapons?

ROCKWELL: Also, it was a hilarious moment at Reykjavik, because the neocons in his entourage were absolutely flipping out because he was in a meeting alone with Gorbachev and just a translator, and they were terrified they were going to reach an agreement. So they were able to persuade him to call off the talk, very unfortunately, because of course while they all are cheering Reagan and Reagan foreign policy — you know, hard, tough, manly, wonderful — Reagan actually did a lot of bad stuff, Reagan, especially domestically. And foreign policy, he invaded Grenada. That was not a good thing — but on the other hand, it's not exactly the equivalent of invading Iraq.

WOODS: Right.

ROCKWELL: But of course they never want to talk about that. Also, when he pulled the troops out of Lebanon. They never should have been in Lebanon. So maybe he even realized from some of his diary entries that when you go and kill people, when you bomb people, there's a reaction. People don't like to be bombed. They don't like to have their children mutilated. They don't like to have their families killed. I know, it's very strange. Maybe it's because they're Muslims; I don't know. They don't like to have the U.S. killing their families.

WOODS: How about that? Now, I think — I really am inclined to believe the various sources that tell us that Reagan, especially toward the end of his presidency, was thinking in terms of his legacy in history and wanted to be remembered as a peacemaker —

ROCKWELL: I think that's correct.

WOODS: — and no doubt, that's why the neocons wouldn't want him alone with Gorbachev.

ROCKWELL: No, no, that's true, and they were always — you would never know it these days — they were always suspicious of him, even though he tragically, I guess George H. W. Bush, James Baker, all the evil guys that he allowed himself to be surrounded with, brought in these neocons. But they never trusted him. So if the neocons never entirely trust you, it means you're not all bad. The neocons, no matter what Rand did for them, they've never liked Rand; they've never trusted Rand. So why is he still catering to them sometimes, that's a mystery. They're never going to support you, Rand. Adelson is never going to write you the big check, so you might as well

follow in your father's footsteps, your father's magnificent footsteps, and do what's best for this country. Keep doing what you started last night, and maybe you can pull this out. At the very least you're going to have a good showing. You're going to have a historically significant showing. You're not just going to have to pull out with your tail between your legs.

WOODS: Yeah, yeah. I mean, I think at this point he's — well, I mean, I have no inside information, but he's got to be realizing that his only real successes come when he, as you say, he channels his father. Let's say a quick thing about Cruz and Rand on taxes. Now, I'll admit I haven't — the idea of looking through people's tax plans is just not very appealing, but I wonder if this is a case of Geico versus Esurance, because you know that for years and years Geico would say, you know, save 15% on car insurance in 15 minutes. But now in the age of the Internet, 15 minutes seems like an eternity. But unfortunately they're stuck with that slogan like an albatross around their necks, so Esurance is saying, what, I can get that in half the time. So they're exploiting that old slogan. So I'm wondering if Rand suffers in that way, if he's Geico, because his tax plan, the major plank is a 14.5% flat tax. But now Ted Cruz is Esurance and comes along and says, well, mine's a 10% tax plan. What does Rand do now?

ROCKWELL: Well, the worst thing about Rand's plan is also the worst thing about Cruz's plan. They're calling for a value-added tax.

WOODS: Even Cruz?

ROCKWELL: Oh yeah, Cruz has a VAT; so does Rand. That's how they can have the low figure on the front end. So this is extremely dangerous. Murray Rothbard wrote some great stuff about this, but once you have a value-added tax, which taxes absolutely everything at every stage of production, it takes just a minuscule increase in that tax to bring in vast revenues to the government. It's very dangerous, and of course the idea that "and we're going to get rid of the IRS" — you know what? There is going to be a collection force. Maybe they'll call it the Department of Protecting the Nation or whatever, or like one of the horrible secret police agencies in Germany: Office for the Protection of the Constitution. Oh, yeah right. So they'll call it something else. A value-added tax is horrendous, dangerous; it's even worse than Huckabee and his so-called fair tax.

So both of these guys, by the way, pretend to have nearly a revenue-neutral plan. Well, what the heck is that? The government is already bringing in more — we already have the richest, most powerful, most rotten government ever in the history of the human race, and we think that, oh, we've got to make sure they keep getting the same amount of dough. Why not cut them? Yes, we should worry about the deficit, which by the way, is not 19 trillion as Kotlikoff at Boston University shows; it's more like 226 trillion, not 19 trillion, if you include all of the liabilities of the U.S. government on pensions and federal pensions, veterans' pensions, congressional pensions and so forth.

So this is one thing Trump's plan does. It's a huge cut in government income, and we're supposed to think, [gasp], oh my gosh, well, you can't have that. And I noticed somebody last night kept saying, why, this president situation puts more — Bush — puts more demands on the government. Oh, poor government. None of these guys can even say the old Republican staple: the government has no money of its own; it only has what it takes from the people. Of course they can print it up, but that has deleterious effects too.

WOODS: Right.

ROCKWELL: You wish somebody would point that out, but a VAT tax is a very, very bad idea. Rand's plan was put together by Steve Forbes — excuse me, not Steve Forbes, by Steve Moore, excuse me.

WOODS: Oh yeah.

ROCKWELL: And you know, this is not a libertarian guy. This is, again, somebody focused on making sure the government's income isn't cut.

WOODS: Yeah.

ROCKWELL: The government's income must be cut, so I must say I like the Trump plan best.

WOODS: Well, I know of the people on the stage, the ones that I know for a fact are expressly not revenue neutral and they make that a selling point, are Cruz and Rand, and they even brought that up last night, that it's not revenue neutral. And it's interesting that when they raised this with Cruz and they said, well, how are you going to pay for it, he basically said, you know, my plan is going to basically lose 768 billion, even according to the official estimates, but I still want to do it, which is interesting. Like, he didn't even say, where are you going to get the money — I mean, it was an interesting response, that he even admitted, yeah, it is going to lose money, whereas normally they say, oh, we'll have 4% growth, you know, that'll cover all the shortfalls. And he didn't actually try to go down that road. I found that rather surprising. By the way, I just dug up the article — well, on the Internet, "dug up" is three seconds of typing —

ROCKWELL: (laughing)

WOODS: I found the value-added tax article by Rothbard, and I'm going to link to that so people can check that out. Rothbard on value-added tax will be linked at TomWoods.com/531, and it's so interesting; he wrote this the year I was born.

ROCKWELL: (laughing)

WOODS: (laughing) 1972, Rothbard has this article that has dealt with the value-added tax definitively, so we'll link to that. Any parting thoughts? Anything we neglected to mention you think?

ROCKWELL: Well, I do have to say that the debate was less interesting than the previous debates without the moderators attacking the candidates, so I must say I sort of missed that.

WOODS: I think they were cowed, right?

ROCKWELL: Yeah, they were cowed, and they were patting themselves on the back about just how great they were, and I did notice that the horrible Morton Kondracke, the horrible Morton Kondracke was saying, oh, you're great, you had a debate the way it should be held, and said, I don't know about your ratings — the heck with your ratings; nobody cares about your ratings. Well, they do care about their ratings; they're in business.

WOODS: Yeah, you don't say? Yeah.

ROCKWELL: So I don't know, it seems to me they're going to want — who knows? So the candidates of course want no trouble from the moderators like last night. The networks would like to give them trouble. We'll see in the future, but I think the fact that this is not going to have the interest or the ratings, my guess is there were a lot of people — I know a lot of people — who just tuned out part way through it, because they didn't find it as — the last time they were, you know, it was like a fist fight, and they were cheering on one side, the Republican side, unfortunately most of the time.

WOODS: But there was one, I mean that time that Rubio and Rand were going back and forth and the foreign policy discussion, but I think that may have been later on. But that definitely, I thought that was at least as engaging as anything in — I thought the economic debate, the one before this one was by far the most boring, because there they're all more or less agreeing with each other. We have to cut spending; we have to cut taxes. We probably don't have any intention of doing either one of these things. Everybody watching knows that, and yet we're still going through this.

ROCKWELL: Oh no, the only interesting thing in the previous debate was the moderator saying, "Now, why are you a creep?" or a similar question.

WOODS: (laughing) Oh yeah, that's right. And of course, you know, which is teeing up a softball for old Ted Cruz to smash out of the park. All right, well I think we'll wrap things up again, and at the end of these, Lew, I'm always asking you when the next one is. I just can't bring myself even to look. Do you know when the next one is? Is there one in December?

ROCKWELL: There is one in December; I think about December 15th, but don't quote me on that date. But I'm sure we'll both be blogging this, and we'll talk about when the next debate is.

WOODS: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, okay. So we'll — don't worry, everybody. This will happen. The Lew and Tom Show for the debates is like the defining event of our generation. It's like the moon landing was for people in the late '60s, so it's not going away.

ROCKWELL: (laughing) By the way, I'll never forget Richard Nixon, another terrible Republican president, who at the time of the moon landing referred to the U.S. as being the last best hope of man.

WOODS: Yeah.

ROCKWELL: And nobody said, wait a minute, isn't that blasphemous? But of course, it's the president, right? He can be blasphemous.

WOODS: Yeah, that's right, that's right. Which, by the way, I'll just say in parentheses, is why it was such a bad idea for a certain candidate to publish a book about presidential prayers.

ROCKWELL: Ugh, ugh.

WOODS: No, no.

ROCKWELL: The idea that we're supposed to look up to these creeps as religious leaders?

WOODS: Ugh, horrible. Very bad idea.

ROCKWELL: Sickening and also very dangerous, of course. Very dangerous. This is what when I talk about uniting of church and state, it's not that the Methodists are going to be getting money from the government, although that would be bad enough. It has to do with the state pretending to be the church, the state pretending to be God, because of course the state is always very jealous of God, would love to displace God in people's affections, works very hard to bring that about. And so the idea that you praise this bunch of killers and liars and monsters and creeps as religious leaders, I mean, come on.

WOODS: Well, no doubt. I just had to make a brief mention of that. All right, but that's it; that's it. Lew, thanks again. I always appreciate it, and everybody loves hearing from you, so thanks so much.

ROCKWELL: Thank you, Tom