



Episode 763: The Final Rockwell-Woods Debate Analysis Episode of 2016

Guest: Lew Rockwell

WOODS: All right, let's do what we usually do. Give me your overall impressions; then we'll get into the weeds.

ROCKWELL: Well, I think that Trump won on points. I fear he needed to have a knockout. There were I think a lot of opportunities that he didn't take. I noticed – by the way, I've noticed this before – this lighting always seems to be different for the two of them. There was one time when it turned out his mic was different and not as effective as her mic, but I thought last night that it was especially clear that her – she was bathed in sort of a heavenly light, and the light that he's always in in these debates makes him look pasty-faced and just slightly unhealthy, whereas any time you see him at one of his own rallies or at any other circumstance, he's got a ruddy, healthy complexion. So was that something intentional? Why, gosh, of course the media would never do anything like that. So I thought he looked a little bit off because of that. She had sort of a moon face, which I thought I'd not quite seen before. I mean, it seemed like maybe she was on massive steroids? I don't know. I thought she looked like Nurse Ratched from *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* in her white nurse's outfit, order you to the electroshock therapy or whatever she would like to do to Trump and the rest of us.

I thought that he had some good moments. I thought what he had to say – even though he didn't follow up enough. For example, when she was claiming to be in favor of the Second Amendment, of course that's just a lie. She doesn't believe that there's an individual right to bear arms. She doesn't think regular Americans should be able to carry guns. But she just lied. She lied – she always lied, but she lied in sort of a Trumpian, just sort of cut the distance between herself and Trump last night. He should have – he had some good comments I thought about abortion, especially partial-birth abortion, but he didn't go after her hard enough. You know, he didn't actually describe what partial-birth abortion is, that it's actually taking the baby, as he put it, just can be a couple hours before birth. He said ripping it out of the womb. Well, that's not it. It's killing the baby in the womb, and then removing the parts. Virtually nobody is for that.

I thought he was slightly weak on the question of what if the Supreme Court repealed the usurpation called *Roe v. Wade* and allowed this to return to the states. He said he was okay with that. I think that's, as Ron Paul always pointed out, that's the constitutional way. Something like abortion, if we're going to have government and we're going to have so-called law enforcement, these sorts of things need to be

handled by the state, and if you got rid of Roe v. Wade, then places like New York and California would of course have abortion on demand, and Alabama and Nebraska you probably wouldn't. But that's – these things can be fought out at the state level. But I think on these two issues, as in the rest of the time, he didn't really press her. There were times when he could have really gone after her more than he did.

On the other hand, she looked alive. She didn't look like she was going to fall over, except maybe right towards the end. But he didn't call her on the lies. When she's praising the greatness of the Clinton Foundation, and she said, why, 90% of our donations go to charitable purposes. It's actually 6%; it's not 90%. Unless you include her and Bill and Chelsea and so forth as part of the charitable programs. So Trump was right to say the Haitians can't stand them, can't stand the Clintons because of what they did in Haiti. But time and time again, he didn't follow through.

I liked the fact that he didn't agree to, recognize her if she "won the election." Al Gore, by the way, didn't recognize the Bush election until quite a while after, because no question I think the election was stolen from him in Florida by the Republicans. He eventually recognized it. Richard Nixon is praised even by his enemies as having recognized the election of Kennedy, even though Kennedy stole the election, or the Kennedy campaign stole the election with the help of Mayor Daley in Chicago. I think everybody agrees to that now, that Kennedy actually didn't win that election in 1960. So I wish – of course Trump had to know this question was coming. My own suggestion to him had I been in the room would have been to say, "Well, of course I accept the election's results, unless of course it's stolen."

WOODS: (laughing) Yeah.

ROCKWELL: Rather than saying, well, you know, he'll decide later, which I thought was a slightly weaker answer. But as you pointed out in your wonderful commentary last night, the entire media freaked out. It's almost as if they believe that in order for a candidate to win an election, the losing candidate has to concede. Of course that's not true. But you're supposed to salaam the system; there are certain pieties that you're supposed to go by in the civil religion, and this is one of them, and I think it'd be wonderful if he loses, and my guess, unfortunately, is that he is going to lose, that he will be a sort of government in exile, and that he won't – and I think the Trump movement, no question, which, just as the Goldwater movement was better than Goldwater or the Taft movement was better than Taft, so was the Trump movement far better than Donald Trump.

But certainly the Trump don't want him to accept her, and I think it would be very good for the country if there's real opposition to her by all the people who think she's a liar – rightly so – think she's an extreme leftist. She had all kinds of her crazy economic stuff, and Trump didn't seem quite on the ball. I mean, he kept referring to "our GDP is 1%." Well, what he meant was GDP growth was 1%. And then Chris Wallace, who I thought let her go on and blab and cut him off pretty handily, when he – and I don't remember the name of the organization – well, Mr. Trump, the wise men who look at the economy and the deficit organization says such and such about you and such and such about Hillary. He should have just said, you know, they're just a bunch of liberals. Why should I take their word about anything?

WOODS: Yeah.

ROCKWELL: But of course there were many times like that that he could have come back. It's not being rude, but it's a good question. I mean, a lot of good questions he could have been asking. So he didn't lose. His demeanor, if that's what they always tell us is so important, was "presidential," but therefore less effective, I think.

She didn't fall down, didn't fall asleep. She was clearly pumped up on something. They really took care of her face. She has a turkey neck, like a lot of people that age. What happened to that — it's gone. It was gone last night. So there are all kinds of Hollywood techniques where they tape back your throat and tape back your face and hide everything under your hair and so forth, and she had all that. She looked good, although extremely scary. I mean, a very repellent figure, I would say. I kept thinking she should have been in a black witch's costume, with a black hat and a black dress. She would have looked, again, Cruella de Vil as witch.

So her hysterical stuff about Russia, a country with a GDP the size of Italy, is somehow taking over the world. And of course she immediately, rather than deal with the contents of the Wikileaks leaks, she just immediately is going back to 1955 and the most crazy Cold War rhetoric. So did that work? I don't know. It did get said. She's for open borders. She told the Brazilian bankers group this was her dream: open borders from Tierra del Fuego to the Arctic Circle. So she said, oh no, she's not for open borders; she meant for electricity and other forms of energy. Oh, that has to be one of her weakest lies. Trump didn't come back. He didn't come back. You know, countries share electricity right now; that doesn't need to be your dream, about energy sharing. So that was I thought — you know, he did okay. He didn't do well enough to win the debate in a really convincing fashion.

Also, just as one last point, Tom, I noticed as in previous debates, she's reading off her podium. I mean, reading — and of course that's against the rules to bring anything written up to the podium. You can make notes, but she was reading long, long stretches of material from the podium. What was that? Some people think she had some kind of teleprompter the last time. I don't know, but I wish Trump had said, Mrs. Clinton or Hillary, are you reading something off your podium? Or what was going on there? She can't have had time to write in long-hand all the stuff she was reading. Once in a while you could see her making a note. That's a normal thing. So I think the fix was in. I think she had the questions ahead of time, just like she's had in the previous two debates. I thought Chris Wallace was biased against Trump, but perhaps not as biased as some of the others. You're grateful if you're not kicked in the face I guess these days with the media.

But I found the whole thing extremely annoying, frequently boring. It should have been scintillating. It should have been sizzling. Trump could have made it sizzle; once in a while he turned the heat up a little bit, but not enough.

WOODS: Yeah, let me jump in on a couple things you mentioned. Well, first of all, even if she didn't have anything at her disposal at the podium, what she did have was debate preparation. She knew at least the broad questions that were going to be asked the same way he did, but the fact is she has prepared responses. Now, they're canned; they're stupid: we need to invest in jobs by blowing money on projects no one

in his right mind would ever fund. You know, I grant you that those aren't good responses, but she was ready.

ROCKWELL: Yes.

WOODS: And as usual, he's bumbling around, and he's Donald Trump, so he can just speak off the cuff. He has an inflated sense of his own abilities. He can't speak off the cuff. He sounds terrible. He sounds unconvincing when he does that.

Secondly, what is the biggest weapon the state has against us? It's actually not its weaponry and its technology. It's legitimacy. It's the idea that people think it's okay for them to rip us off and blow up people in other countries and to do all these things because they're legitimate, that these people have been chosen by us and they have legitimacy. So it's great – even if Trump doesn't get Rothbardianism, if he's undermining the legitimacy of the regime by saying he's not so sure he'll accept the results, that is an absolutely unambiguously good thing from a libertarian point of view, so I was very disappointed to be flipping through my Facebook feed last night and to see libertarian saying it's terrible that he won't accept it. What? This is exactly what we're calling for.

ROCKWELL: (laughing)

WOODS: We want everybody to not accept anybody. So we're halfway there, you know? If they're not accepting rule by the Democrats, we're halfway there, as Ron Paul would say in another context. So that's not his problem. The problem is that too few people will take that view, that most people will just stand around and say, yeah, I guess we've got to accept it. Why? What is – there's nothing legitimate about any of these people in any sense, so if he's willing to say maybe some portion of the regime is illegitimate, then that means he's at least part of the way there.

And then finally on your point about he won't hit back, well, I agree, but in particular if there's an issue where Hillary is not responding to Trump's attacks, that means she's vulnerable. That's where you hit. And so for instance, he kept mentioning that the Democrats were the ones who were inciting violence, for example, in Chicago. And he kept hitting her with that: you're the ones who were behind the violence. You notice she didn't say a word. At that point when she doesn't say a word, you then turn and ask her a pointed question. You say, "Do you approve of the use of violence against my people, and why were the people who called for the violence, why are they so intimately related to you and Barack Obama? I want an answer to this question, and if she doesn't answer this question, I expect our impartial media to hound her with this between now and election day. And if they do, then I'll accept the results." You know? Nothing. He let her get away. Even though she wasn't answering, which meant he got her, ask her the question. Make her face that.

ROCKWELL: No, and also, I mean, thinking about legitimacy, David Gordon wrote a wonderful little essay that's on LewRockwell.com about – he always makes the point that nobody makes an argument for anything. But he says in all the political science literature, ancient and modern, there is no argument about why the majority should rule. Why should the majority be able to rule? Let's say even if Hillary gets the majority, why are they able to crush the minority? What is the argument for that? And

as David said, there is no good argument except that it's just self-evident, they would claim.

Well, of course it's not self-evident, and I urge everybody to look at de La Boétie's article and a great introduction by Murray Rothbard on the importance of legitimacy to the state. It can actually take down the state. The state – Mises made this point; Hume made this point; of course Rothbard made this point. The state requires the consent of the governed, at least the tacit consent. And successful states, which are successful of course in doing great evil, have the tacit – even Stalin and Hitler had the tacit consent of the people. If you can undermine that consent, that is such a huge blow against statism, against tyranny. So this, as you point out, this was actually the best thing.

On the other hand, I think he should have talked about it a little bit. Again, he could have talked about Al Gore, how the election was stolen from Al Gore. That would have been a shocking point for a Republican to make. But as you say, did he have any preparation whatsoever? I don't know. Of course he mentioned the Fed again, if we're talking about the economy. And I don't know; this whole thing is one big lost opportunity.

On the other hand, he came out of nowhere. He's had unprecedented official hatred from the very beginning. He won the primary, smashed all his opponents, and has done reasonably well against this vast machine. The sad thing is he could have done better. On the other hand, maybe we're better off with Clinton in power, especially if she's being undermined, because of course none of us can be entirely sure what Trump would do. Would he actually do the good things he's talked about, or would he not? So maybe I'm just putting lipstick on the pig, but –

WOODS: No, I thought the same thing, Lew, because for one thing, just as one small thing, they cannot, *cannot* by 2020, still be blaming Bush for the bad economy. And of course that was all bipartisan. There's nothing Bush did – I mean, the tax cuts were not that big of a deal – what? Four and a half percentage points on the top rates?

ROCKWELL: Oh, yeah, that's small, yeah.

WOODS: Yeah, like that led us to a recession? Makes no sense. But they all favored the stimulus to the housing market; they all favored the Fed's policies.

ROCKWELL: Yes.

WOODS: It had nothing to do with Bush in particular; it was all of them. But they can't continue to pretend that it has nothing to do with the Democrats after 12 years, so there is that. So I mean, there are some potential silver linings to a Hillary Clinton presidency from that point of view, from the point of view of a libertarian.

Let's go back and look from – I took some notes in order of the issues that were raised. One of the questions was – it ended with, "Where do you want to see the Supreme Court take the country?" And I thought, boy, does that beg the question. And I recently went on a tear about the meaning of the term "beg the question," and I had

trouble coming up with a good example of what the real meaning of "beg the question" is. That begs the question. That begs the question that the Supreme Court's supposed to take the country somewhere. I mean, the idea that you would have asked James Madison, "Where do you want to see the Supreme Court take the country?" He wouldn't even have understood the question. What are you talking about? The Supreme Court is not supposed to take the country anywhere. And then Clinton gives this "blah, blah, blah, the Supreme Court should represent all of us." The Supreme Court is not a representative body. It doesn't even make sense. "How should the Constitution be interpreted?" We didn't really get an answer from question other than, well, in light of my policy preferences. That's of course how it should be interpreted.

Now, Trump, you know, stumbled around and eventually got to, well, we should interpret it the way the Founders wanted it interpreted, which is something, but it was very inarticulate, took him forever. And his first answer was all about the Second Amendment, which, I get that he wants to rally the Republican base, but he focused so much on the Second Amendment; doesn't he have a judicial philosophy? Doesn't he have anything – it was way too much on that. Then he did pro-life, again, obviously signaling to the GOP. I get that he's got to do that, but he could have done that also by just saying, well, I don't believe the point of the Supreme Court is to implement Hillary Clinton's policy preferences when people vote them down. How about saying that? Nothing. No preparation.

And then when it got to the Second Amendment, he's basically got these, as usual, substance-free responses. "She was very upset about Heller," and so on and on. But why not have some statistics at your disposal? He did have Chicago. He said Chicago's a nightmare, and yet it's got very heavy gun regulations. But man, I mean, there is John Lott. There are people who have all these statistics that you could just rattle off. When she's talking about all the deaths from gun, you could talk about all the deaths that were prevented by guns. You've got to – for heaven's sake, you've got to have all this stuff prepared, especially when they're going to come at you with "you don't even want regulations on these terrible weapons." You've got to have that. You've got to know that's coming. You've got to have responses ready, and I just felt like he didn't have them.

ROCKWELL: No, no, and when Chris Wallace said you don't want to do anything about assault weapons, he could have said, "Look, assault weapon is just a name for a look of a gun. It's just a hunting rifle gussied up. An assault weapon is no more dangerous than just a regular deer-hunting rifle. This is just a myth of Hillary Clinton and similar people who want to outlaw gun ownership by regular Americans. They just want the government being the only one to have guns."

But you're right, I wondered how right you were the last time when you talked about his not being prepared, but boy, last night, Tom, showed your thesis exactly correct. What was he doing all this time? He could have been reading; he could have been – he didn't have to have mock debates, although if he didn't feel he needed them he should have been reading things; he should have been talking to people. Yeah, and he could have had a briefing book, and it doesn't have to be 900 pages, but just missed opportunity after missed opportunity once he became the nominee. And he did okay for a guy with no political experience and so forth, but – and I worry too. I think there's no question that the economy is going to be much worse, there's no question

that many, many things are going to be much worse after an additional four years of Obama Clinton, as he would put it.

I don't know, what about all the refugees? She's wanting to bring in — she's wanting to vastly up the number of refugees coming into this country and living off the fat of the land, by the way. When they come here they get all sorts of welfare, and I'm not for anybody getting welfare, but they get welfare that all sorts of regular Americans can never be eligible for. And I just wish once in a while when somebody says "We're a nation of immigrants," he says, you know, we're actually a nation of people born here. Yes, there are immigrants, but it's about time that somebody put the American people first. We're going to put America first; we're going to put the American people first. I don't have any ill feeling towards foreigners, but you know what? They come second. Americans come first. If you get Hillary Clinton she's going to have Syrian refugees first. She doesn't care about the people who were born in Minneapolis or New York City or Miami or in New Mexico or whatever.

She's — I mean, all this crazed immigrationism, xenophilia, sorosianism, whatever we want to call it, is in part about — and I think there are other darker reasons too, but it's in part to make sure that no decent candidate can ever win a presidential election again. There are already going to be many, many of these illegal aliens voting in this election. This is why they were bringing them all in, at least one reason. This is what they hope to achieve. Who knows what this country is going to be like after four years? Maybe we're going to be like Germany or France. We're bringing in all kinds of people, giving them affirmative action and welfare and all kinds of special benefits, special privileges, and really also making them immune in many ways from the laws that the rest of us are forced to comply with. It's doing terrible demographic things to this country. People want to change the American people; this is what this whole open borders business is about. It's backed by all the oligarchs, whether it's people like Soros or Charles Koch, they all have their reasons for doing this, I think very nasty, very evil reasons. But this of course should have been Trump's signature issue, sort of has been. He didn't drive it home last night.

WOODS: Yeah, I was just going to say if you're going to run a campaign based in large part on an issue, and then they take 15 minutes to talk about that issue, and you allow yourself to get sidetracked on other things, then you really are as undisciplined as they say. This is your issue, and this is one where the fact is the polls show he's more popular than she is. On that issue most people — in Japan, they have basically no immigration, and nobody reproaches themselves saying I'm an evil racist for not wanting it. These are just normal people. That's how basically normal people act.

All right, I want to get into a few more specifics and things where he may have actually landed a punch and things where he might have. Let's say a quick word of thanks to our sponsor.

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All right, I thought he did get a few things in. We can't continue to pay for the defense of country after country. And then she was saying our allies are wonderful, and then he basically translated that: yeah, that means you're going to let them continue to be

freeloaders. That doesn't help to just say how wonderful they are all the time. Doesn't help.

But then when the issue came to women, yeah, I know his handlers, even Trump's handlers are telling him you've got to be really careful here, but why doesn't he accuse – why doesn't he bring up her role in trying to destroy Bill's accusers? I mean, yeah, it's not her fault that Bill's a jerk. Maybe she should have known it when she married him, who knows? But that's not strictly her fault. But it is her fault that she tried to completely destroy these women. I mean, I can't believe – that should have been obvious.

ROCKWELL: Unbelievable. Unbelievable that he didn't do that.

WOODS: Yeah, I mean, he's got at least as an informal occasional advisor Roger Stone, who knows everything there is to know about everything ever done to these women. And nothing?

ROCKWELL: In fact, there was some new rape accuser of Clinton's who was there last night. Apologies; I'm not remembering her name, but somebody who had never mentioned this for all these years and talked about it. How about pointing out that she's in the audience?

WOODS: Or I would have taken some opportunity to point out that the president's half-brother was in the audience with a "Make America Great Again" hat, you know?

ROCKWELL: (laughing)

WOODS: Why would I not do that? And I read an article, a breathless article in the media trying to explain this, well, they have a rivalry, the two of them, and plus, Trump wouldn't want this guy to immigrate anyway, and all that. But I would have made an ad with this guy. Why not? At least one of his super PACs should make an ad with this guy.

ROCKWELL: Of course.

WOODS: I'm the president's brother, and I'm sorry it hasn't worked out, but I'll tell you how to make America great again. I'm telling you; that's what I would have done. I think that's crazy. It was good that when she accused Trump of inciting violence that he pointed out that, well, you're the one that actually paid people to go out there and be violent. There is something called glass houses and so on. The other thing where I thought he did hit her was, why don't you give the money back to Saudi Arabia and all these oppressive regimes that hurt all the official victim groups you claim to protect? And all she could do was smile through that. So what, it's funny that people get their heads chopped off? You find that funny? In fact, that's what I would have said. I would have said, wait a minute, hold on. Do you realize the horrific nature of these regimes and what's done to dissenters there? Do you find this funny? What on Earth is funny about that?

ROCKWELL: Tom, you should have been running.

WOODS: (laughing) I would have hated every second of it, Lew. I would have enjoyed the debates, and then I would have gone right back to hating every second of it. And then I thought he had a – obviously she had a canned closing statement, even though they had said there would be no closing statements. She's always got one. But again, that's because she's a good politician. I mean, let's give her her due. She's good at it. She's prepared for things like that. And he just meandered – his start to the closing statement made no sense –

ROCKWELL: Yeah.

WOODS: – and then he just meandered. And it was slogans, and that was it.

ROCKWELL: Yeah, it's –

WOODS: I mean, that's your moment to look into the camera and say, "If you're happy with how things are going, if you're happy with your job or your lack of job, if you're happy with this trend, that trend, that trend, that trend, lunatics in charge of everything, a party that thinks it can win by intimidation, a media – if you're happy being told how to vote by a completely corrupt media, then by all means, vote for her, vote for that smirking grandma next to me. Vote for her. Yeah, vote for the woman who collapsed into her van and think that she's going to be able to accomplish anything. You vote for her. But if you want to give a middle finger to the whole establishment, yeah, don't tell the pollsters you're going to do it; don't tell your family you're going to do it. But when you get into that voting booth, you know what to do." Now that would have been a great closing statement.

ROCKWELL: (laughing) That might have won him the election.

WOODS: I wish, you know? I mean, come on. Just for the fun of it. Somebody's got to say something like this, just for the – somebody take notes here. Like, just for my amusement I want to see something like this. But man, man, man, I don't know why we are – and on the other hand, if it had been Ted Cruz, he is a more technically skilled debater, but yet he has, I don't know, I just feel like he has kind of the creep factor that she has, and that slightly neutralizes him. He doesn't seem real. He seems like he rehearsed every five-second, much-too-long pause, he rehearsed everything, and that kind of ruins it also.

ROCKWELL: You know, you remind me that there are some good things. We haven't heard from Ted Cruz in a long time.

WOODS: Yeah, that's true. Yeah, no, we sure haven't, and I think he's not been quite sure what to do. He knows that he had to endorse Trump, because he made a mistake by not endorsing him, and then Trump got in trouble, and he's thinking maybe I made a mistake by endorsing him after not endorsing him. Ugh. I'm glad I'm not involved in any of this; I can just sit back and watch.

ROCKWELL: Although of course his father had said he was anointed by Jesus Christ to be the president.

WOODS: Well, yeah, we do get that. There is that. I was mentioning on yesterday's episode that with the debates over there goes our fun, but with your blog you keep up with current events more than — I mean, I'm able to keep up with current events thanks to you, basically. Thanks to you, Matt Drudge, and a few other people — I have to take Drudge with a grain of salt sometimes, but I'm able to more or less keep up with current events. But maybe we could regularly just discuss what's going on in the world, do like a podcast episode of your Political Theatre from time to time.

ROCKWELL: No, I would love to do it, and I think whatever happens — and I'm not by the way 100% sure Trump is going to lose. But I've got a great article today by Chris Manion on how Hillary can steal the election if Trump wins it.

WOODS: Oh, I read that and —

ROCKWELL: Talking about things that could be done with the electoral college and so forth.

WOODS: Yeah, that sounded entirely plausible. All they need to do is get some so-called experts on TV; all they need to do is get a certain — I mean, it's the same way —

ROCKWELL: If he wins she's not just going to accept it and say, oh, it's just the will, there we go.

WOODS: Yeah, exactly. But it'll just be by over and over and over again emphasizing, well, you know, the electors can vote their consciences or whatever. They just say it over and over and over, the same way — this is my favorite example of this. How in the world did Elizabeth Dole ever get viewed as an interesting candidate for the Republican nomination? No one — I mean, Bob Dole was bad enough. How did she ever get — ? And the answer was her name kept getting floated by major people on the Sunday talk shows. It's wasn't because there was a ground swell of support for Elizabeth Dole. There was nothing, which is why she never went anywhere. But they just keep hammering home at something, and before you know it people are saying, well, I hear that Elizabeth Dole has a lot to be said for. Or I hear that Saddam Hussein sure is a dangerous fellow. These things just pick up a life of their own. I could easily see that happening, what Chris Manion was saying. So yeah, check out LewRockwell.com. Read Chris Manion for what could be in store if Trump wins. Anyway, regardless of what's in store, you and I will be talking about it, and that will be my favorite part.

ROCKWELL: Tom, thanks a million for having me on, and thanks so much for all our debate autopsies, and it's been a huge amount of fun.

WOODS: I feel like there should be a YouTube montage, you know, with sad music in the background, people crying, you know? We'll see what people can do with that. Thanks, Lew.

ROCKWELL: Thank you, Tom.