

Center for Strategic and International Studies

**Bob Schieffer's "About the News" with H. Andrew Schwartz
Podcast**

Subject: "Hugh Hewitt on the Wildest Election Ever"

**Speaker:
Hugh Hewitt,
Host,
The Hugh Hewitt Show**

**Hosts:
H. Andrew Schwartz,
Senior Vice President for External Relations,
CSIS**

**Bob Schieffer,
CBS Political News Contributor;
Former Host, "Face the Nation," CBS News**

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(Music plays.)

BOB SCHIEFFER: I'm Bob Schieffer.

H. ANDREW SCHWARTZ: And I'm Andrew Schwartz.

MR. SCHIEFFER: And these are conversations about the news. We are in the midst of a communications revolution. We have access to more information than any people in history. But are we more informed, or just overwhelmed by so much information we can't process it?

MR. SCHWARTZ: These conversations are a year-long collaboration of the Bob Schieffer College of Communication at Texas Christian University and the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

(Music plays.)

MR. SCHIEFFER: Today with us is Hugh Hewitt, the renowned broadcast journalist, radio host, lawyer, professor. His radio show is one of the most popular in America. It is syndicated across 120 cities and reaches an estimated 2 million people a week. Hugh has been called the most influential conservative you ever – or maybe never – heard of. He provides commentary on Fox, CNN, MSNBC, and writes for The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, the Los Angeles Times. He has a weekly column for The Hill and the Washington Examiner. He has written numerous books, including two New York Times bestsellers, hosted series on PBS, and manages his own very popular daily blog. He began his career as a ghostwriter for Richard Nixon, then served in a variety of posts under Ronald Reagan.

Hugh, we are absolutely excited and delighted to have you with us here today. After, you know, kind of going through your resume and what you do, what do you do in your spare time? (Laughs.)

HUGH HEWITT: Well, I do stay – I stay busy. David Axelrod once called me Zelig because I'd kind of shown up in the right places at all the right times as an observer of history. Bob, thank you for having me. Great to be at CSIS and to be with you and Andrew. Great fun.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, let's just start right in on topic A, this election. The three debates are over. According to most polls it looks like Hillary Clinton is increasing her lead. Trump, as well, is continuing to be Trump. I am not one of those who thinks the election is over, though. I think the path for Donald Trump is getting narrower and narrower. But what are your general observations at this point?

MR. HEWITT: John Heilemann and I, from Bloomberg, had a discussion last night. And I pointed out that I understand the Real Clear Politics average is 6.2-plus to Secretary Clinton, and that some, like The New York Times analyst, have Donald Trump at an 8 percent chance of winning. And it was pointed out on a blog today that that's equivalent to missing a 27-yard field goal in the NFL. And I pointed out that the Browns, in fact, missed a 27-yard field

goal against the Dolphins two weeks ago. (Laughter.) And that therefore, keep your eye on that spot.

It is very difficult to see Mr. Trump winning. But it has been a volatile year. As you know, there have been other volatile years. And in fact, Bob, I always turn interviews around. So I'm going to ask you – because I don't remember it as well as you will – it was my first presidential campaign, 1976, I was running around Massachusetts with Gerald Ford signs, in charge of their state youth effort – which was a completely doomed effort. But Ford closed every day, I think for the last three weeks, and always said if it had been a week longer he'd have won.

Now, I expect that we had peak Hillary, we're talking about the day after the Alfred Smith Dinner, which was a bad patch for Mr. Trump, again, after a bad debate, only because he knocked himself out on the accepting the results of the election. I thought otherwise he won 14 out of 15 rounds on points. But it's at peak Hillary. And I expect now Republicans will come home, the chamber is up with ads, there are lot of third party groups out trying to save the Senate.

And the residual effect will be that a strong Toomey campaign will bring him close in Pennsylvania. A strong Portman campaign will probably win him Ohio. A strong Rubio campaign may get him over the top in Florida. A strong Richard Burr campaign in North Carolina. And so it's a very strange year that I see a Ford-like close, but driven by the undercard being strong, as opposed to the president having coattails.

MR. SCHIEFFER: So you think there is actually a chance?

MR. HEWITT: There's a hope. It is – I think it's more than 10 percent. I think if you ran this election, it's like, in the next 17 days 20 times, he would win not two but three or four times. So things have to break his way. And these WikiLeaks – and I want to be clear, it's a Russian intelligence operation run by the FSB against Secretary Clinton. So we have to be seriously concerned with a cyberattack on the United States. But journalists don't turn their eyes away from material. They're very damaging to her.

And the Obamacare premium hikes, which are rolling out – I did some research last night. In the state of Pennsylvania, 450,000 people are on the exchange. They face premium increases that average 20 percent. Now, that meant – one listener last night send me a note: My son has to pay \$500 more a month, \$6,000 a year. And if you're making \$600,000 a year you're not going to blink. And if you're making \$60,000 a year you're going to say, that's 10 percent of my income. So I expect Obamacare will have some significant impact on turnout, on anger versus the secretary.

And President Obama, who is out on the trail today in an unusual way, made a joke – it was a joke, but it was one the Republicans will pick up saying: You know, if your cellphone doesn't work and you've got some glitches you fix them. Unless it's the Android Galaxy 7, in which case you throw it away and it blows up. And a lot of people said, are you talking about Obamacare being the Android 7? And so it was – you can step in it. You never know.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Now, correct me if I'm wrong, you did suggest that it would have been better had he stepped down.

MR. HEWITT: I wanted him to withdraw – I still think he could withdraw and Mike Pence could win – after the video arrived. And I had been out campaigning for him. I've had an up-and-down relationship. I was neutral. I was trying to do the Bob Schieffer thing through all those debates, right through the last debate. Because I did four debates this year. And you know, from having done three big-stage debates, that even the little-stage debates, the primary debates, you have to be fair to everyone. You have to ask – so I didn't declare for anyone or against anyone.

At the end of that, they were down to two or three. I guess the last debate was Rubio, Kasich, Cruz, and Trump, were the last four guys standing. And I didn't declare for anyone. I waited. I'm a California voter, so I didn't have to decide until June. And then Donald Trump locked it up in May, so I'll support the nominee. When he got in trouble with Judge Curiel, I almost pulled my support, but he backed away from that – ceased and desist, as we say in the law. And so I got back on the effort to – as I have – the Republican nominee effort. But after the videotape came out, I thought it would be in the best interests of the country, the party, his family, and himself to withdraw. And as with all of my advice this cycle, it was not taken. (Laughs.)

MR. SCHIEFFER: Why do you think he has wound up where he is right now? Is it – can he simply not control himself?

MR. HEWITT: I've had nothing but wonderful exchanges with him, Bob Schieffer. Nothing but wonderful talks with him. Now, he gets mad at me on the air between breaks in a debate, but he's a very cyclical fellow in regards to his personal relationships with journalists. They're up and down. Chuck Todd and I joke about this. I got a couple of Trump tattoos here. I wear them with pride when he gets mad at you.

But I nevertheless feel as though he doesn't hold grudges, but he lives in a very different world than I have lived in and that any political actor – as you mentioned, I started my career with Richard Nixon and David Eisenhower out in San Clemente, first with David then with RN. And so I've been around a lot of political people for a long time. He's unlike anything I've ever – he's not a political character. He's mercurial. And mercurial people are probably not cut out for politics. You have to be predictable, not mercurial.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, I mean, I'm thinking about the Al Smith Dinner. I mean, it – as I've watched him on television, it made me wonder, had he never been to that dinner? Did he not kind of understand what that dinner is about? I mean, it's very much like the Gridiron here in Washington or the Alfalfa Club. People get up, they make jokes about themselves, they – as they say at the Gridiron, they try to singe not burn. I wonder, did he not understand what he had stepped into when he got up to that podium?

MR. HEWITT: It's a great question, because I've never been to any of these dinners.

I've never gone to a correspondent's dinner, to Alfalfa, out to the Grove. I'm not one of those kind of people that enjoy that. But I know about them, and I always watch the Alfred Smith Dinner toasts. In fact, last night after that debacle, I went back and read Richard Nixon's 1960 toast, when Jack Kennedy was sitting on the other side of Cardinal Spellman. And what did Richard Nixon do in 1960? He made fun of himself, of his poor debate performance, of looking like Sal "The Barber" Maglie for having not shaved, and then he said, and religion will have no role in this race – using the occasion to make a public-spirited declaration in the defense of his opponent, with whom he had had a long-standing relationship. It was sort of a classic Al Smith Dinner moment.

Mitt Romney, appearing in white tie and tails, and I don't own those, made a joke about it's so good to be able to relax in the clothes that Ann and I usually wear. You know, you joke. (Laughter.) And I thought to myself, as a ghostwriter for a few years, I could have written him an Al Smith Dinner speech in about 10 minutes.

Well, Cardinal Dolan, I wanted to come here to talk to you about St. Patrick's. A little small. Not so good. We could make that bigger. We could – not so big. Not as high as you go. But bigger. And the wine. Now, I'm a Presbyterian. We don't have to go much. I haven't been there in a while. I know you go every week. But the wine. I went back, I got one of your monsignors, we got some of the non-consecrated wine – none of the good stuff. We got the – Trump wine would be better.

You could do that. It's so easy to do. But to be angry is not Al Smith.

MR. SCHIEFFER: He is now begun talking about these international conspiracies. And let me just say here up front, because I'm always comfortable when they finally get back and blame it all on the media. (Laughter.) I mean, we – you know, that's our –

MR. HEWITT: They've been doing that for years.

MR. SCHIEFFER: That's where we are. It's always the fault of the media in the eye of the – of the losing person. But I must say, to be a member of the media and to be connected to some sort of international conspiracy with international bankers, this is a new place for me.

MR. HEWITT: Yeah.

MR. SCHIEFFER: And I mean, he has come up with these conspiracies that seem to involve everyone except Putin. It's kind of – and maybe that's – maybe that's his conspiracy, everyone but Putin. Where does all that come from?

MR. HEWITT: Well, I believe Mr. Trump has tapped into an enormously potent force in American history, American populism. Richard Hofstadter called it the paranoid impulse in American politics, but I think it's just actually basic populism. Nobody hears me. Nobody cares about me. Donald Trump arrives, and though he's a billionaire and builds the enormously successful hotels and buildings, he understands the little guy because he's around working men – working men and women. That's what I think the basic mindset is.

As his campaign has not prospered post-May, he's gone about looking for why is that? And he is a developer – and I'm a lawyer, Bob. And I've been representing developers for 35 years at the same time I've been doing journalism. They're all the same. They're single-minded. They're driven to the end. And if they don't get the density they want, or they can't build their project, they blame somebody. It's the lawyer. It's the city council. It's the city manager. It's the engineer. Somebody gets blamed. That's the developer way. So who is he going to blame?

He's not going to blame Putin because everybody wants him to blame Putin. And that's not the developer way. So he's going to blame – unfortunately, there are some folks in our business who live out on the fringes of the theory of how things work. And it's hard to maintain. I've been living in California for 30 years, so I'm not really of the Beltway anymore. But I was here with Reagan. And it takes about a day in the White House to realize you can't run a conspiracy in Washington, D.C., because nothing's organized. And you can't really – Chuck Colson used to say: We tried to cover up Watergate and it lasted 48 hours.

And so you can't really do it. He needs something, a narrative. There are some people with narratives that are off the shelf that fit into his developer mentality of not blaming their own structure. Somebody else – and it turns out to be the media. But, like you just said, that's an old song. That's been sung a lot of time. And if you play the cover tune every night at the wedding you need something else. And so he'd come up with a new song, and it's international.

MR. SCHIEFFER: (Laughs.) Let's talk about a couple of things. Let's look beyond the election, and talk about, first, what if he wins? What does that mean for the Republican Party? Does that mean the Trump party has won, or has the Republican Party won?

MR. HEWITT: I'm a Republican. Have been my whole life. I've never voted for a Democrat. In fact, my grandfather lived to be 101, was an FDR Democrat and a fireman, so he – I got to live to 101 and only vote for Republicans to even that score. So I know the Republican Party deep. I've known most of the leaders of them. I've worked for Reagan, worked with Nixon, admired W. W. had us back on the last Wednesday of his presidency. So I know Republicans. And Mr. Trump is an unusual sort of Republican.

I believe the leaders of the party are Paul Ryan and Mitch McConnell. I believe they represent the enduring free-market, strong defense, religious liberty triple-legged stool, and that they will reemerge – despite polls showing that more than a majority of American say – of Republicans right now say Donald Trump is the leader. He's certainly the nominee. But once you lose, if you lose, Mitt Romney famously said – and I have enormous respect and friendship with Governor Romney – they put a big L on your forehead and you're out of the game.

And so he said, I can't run again, you know, because I wanted him to run again. And one of his comments in public was, you know, you're wearing that L – and I'm making the hand sign here on radio; I remember to do that and explain what I'm doing – on your forehead. You can't run again once you're the loser. And once Donald Trump is the loser, the grip on the party slips. It doesn't mean he won't have his support. It will be strong, adamant, animated, passionate,

among 10 to 15 percent of the population, from which he might build a media empire and an enduring vein of influence.

But the party will revert to being the party of Ryan and McConnell. And I noted that Mark Meadows of North Carolina said he was going to mount a challenge. He was thinking about mounting a challenge against Speaker Ryan. I hope so. It'd be nice to bat that down. Tim Huelskamp has retired because he went after Paul Ryan. And the Freedom Caucus is full of people like Jim Jordan, a great Ohio man. I'm an Ohio man. And Jim Jordan is sane. And the Freedom Caucus knows that Paul Ryan is the best thing to happen to the House of Representatives on the Republican side ever.

MR. SCHIEFFER: So I guess then I want to bring Andrew into this. But so you're – what you sense is that win or lose the Republican Party will survive. You don't see it coming apart. You don't see it breaking in two?

MR. HEWITT: No, because my first election was 1974. I was a freshman at Harvard. I got on a bus and I went out and worked for a guy named Paul Cronin, who you may or may not remember. He didn't last here very long. He lost to a young Democrat from Massachusetts by the name of Tsongas – Paul Tsongas. And it was the Watergate baby year, where the Republicans were wiped out. It was a big what we would call blue wave now – back then we didn't have blue and red. And the Republicans were just decimated in the aftermath of the Richard resignation and the Ford pardon – decimated.

They bounced back to competitiveness by '76, they won by '80. Then they won the House in '94, and then they got shellacked by Bill Clinton in '96. And then they won in 2000 narrowly – some would say they didn't win, that Bush was selected not elected. They won in 2002. They won in 2004. They had bad cycles in '06 and '08. They had great cycles in '10 and '14. Close cycle in '08. You know, it's a cyclical thing because American politics is fundamentally center-right. And I believe that it will remain center-right for a long time. And the collapse of Obamacare is actually accelerating that pendulum back.

Mr. Trump is an interesting aberration. Williams Jennings Bryan was the same aberration. Father Coughlin was the same aberration – not their politics, not their – (coughs) – excuse me – agendas, but their populist, giving a voice to people who are voiceless, the forgotten man.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Andrew.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Thank you, Bob. Hugh, I'd like to talk a little bit about building audiences and mass communication in today's media.

MR. HEWITT: Interesting.

MR. SCHWARTZ: But before I ask a more general question, I want to ask a specific question about Trump. Trump really knows something about building mass audiences. He's built a tremendous brand. He was tremendously popular on TV. He's liked by – he was liked

before this election by a cross section of people. Why didn't he run as that guy?

MR. HEWITT: He may not have understood the number of landmines that lie outside the guardrails of American politics. I don't know. We'll be studying this for a long time. I've spent five hours in conversation with him. I'm posting them all over HughHewitt.com now, because people are interested and they want the quotes. And I said, I'll just put all the tapes in one place. You listen. I'm not going to listen to them. I'm not going to index them. But that's 15 interviews on the radio, four debates. I've spent a lot of time talking to him as a journalist not as a friend. I've never met him in Trump Tower. I've never done a social meeting with him. Some journalists have played golf with him and tell me he's such a wonderful guy on the golf course.

He built an enormous brand on the basis of publicity that was earned in any form at any time, no matter what the subject matter was. A rule that work well in almost any branding exercise, unless you're CSIS or a major media network or a presidential candidate. Then you have to say inside certain guardrails, otherwise you unsettle. And so when he would go outside those guardrails – and I think the two big ones for me, Judge Curiel and the “Access Hollywood.” There were others for others.

My friends in the military, and I have many, were undone by the Captain Khan appearance. I did not – I understood that. As a civilian who has often done – I do a semi-annual, twice a year, the Semper Fi Fund, we give them the whole show to raise money for wounded and injured Marines and other members of the – and I always get ranks wrong. I always get the protocol – I'm just a civilian. I'm a dummy. And so I – and they forgive me. So understand his not understanding the protocol of how one deals with a gold star family, because it may be the hardest interview to do, is a gold star family – spouse, child, parent. Hardest interview to do.

So he screwed that up. I kind of said, OK, I get that. Didn't get the McCain thing at all. You know, didn't get that. Get into a fight with Megyn Kelly, just kind of revert to your ordinary mode, but was early. But the learning stopped when he won. That was probably the worst thing to happen to him, was not to have to contest the convention, where he would have stayed inside the guardrails. And then overconfidence, he thought he'd get the Bernie people. But mostly, that developer thing I talked about earlier, it used to be if you were building a building, get as much attention to that building as possible, regardless of what you do. And it doesn't work in politics.

MR. SCHWARTZ: It's astonishing. You know, but you know a lot about building audiences. What does it take to build a significant audience in today's media landscape?

MR. HEWITT: You have at-bats. I'm in awe of Mr. Schieffer here, because his career – what year did it begin, Bob?

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, I came to CBS in 1969. But I'd been a newspaper reporter before that. I've probably been doing this more than 50 years.

MR. HEWITT: OK. So I started in 1989. And at-bats matter. And so if you're going to build a brand –

MR. SCHWARTZ: And Bob's been hitting 400 for a long time.

MR. HEWITT: I know. It's remarkable. I said – they said, would you like to come down and do an interview with Bob Schieffer? I said, I'll get the cab and I'll drive over. The fact is that you get better – the classic cliché is now 10,000 reps. If you do something 10,000 times you're adequate at it, 20,000 times. So I think I've done 25,000 interviews. Talk radio in 1989 to '92, PBS for 10 years with nightly news in LA, back to syndicated radio in July 2000, into television with PBS at a national level, then over to the networks doing commentary for CNN for a while, now I'm with NBC and MSNBC.

And my daily radio show is three hours a day, four to five interviews a day, and that just adds up so that you're able to – right now I'm answering questions, but normally I ask questions. And so building a brand in broadcasting and building a brand in everything and building an audience means repetition. Do the same thing over and over again every day and they will find you. And "Face the Nation" was the highest-rated show on the weekends. And it's because, Bob, you've been doing it for however long – many years – you started in 1996?

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, yeah, 20-something.

MR. HEWITT: Yeah, 20 years. Hey, it's Sunday morning, "Face the Nation." And now the new guys – and I've been on all of them now – they're all doing it – the transition's been seamless, and good for broadcasting that we have a new generation of Sunday morning host, who will have to spend years doing the same thing so that they can come to rely on style and the delivery of a product. And I hope it never goes away. It's an American institution.

We invented the Sunday show – you invented the Sunday show. I just watched it when I was growing up as a journalist. And that delivery – when we say a Sunday show everybody knows what it means. It's got a brand. Whether it's Bob Schieffer on "Face the Nation" or Tim Russert on "Meet the Press," or the new generation, everybody knows what it means and they go there – George Stephanopoulos on ABC, Chuck, Jake, John. And that's a great institution. Repetition, repetition, repetition – at a good level of quality.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Well, there's also a debate today about how to best present news and information in the digital age. Some think short, bite-sized content is all that we have attention for. You're talking about doing three, four hours of radio a day. I think Americans have plenty of time for long-form news and other content, when it's great content. I'd be interested to know what you think about that.

MR. HEWITT: I'm like American energy policy – all of the above. And what I do is – I have 15 shows a day, five segments in an hour, three hours a day. Today I had David Axelrod on for two segments, which was 13 minutes and five minutes, so a total of 18 minutes. We post the 18 minutes as one audio block. So it's available on the radio for the drive in, in two audiences, one in 18. And then the Trump thing will be repurposed into five hours. I happen to believe that the average workout time – I have no science behind this – the average workout time is 35 to 45 minutes, based upon lunch. So I think the ideal podcast is 35-40 minutes so that

people can get it, get their clothes on, get on a Stairmaster, workout and listen to a podcast, get off and be done. That's my view.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, that's what we do. (Laughs.)

MR. HEWITT: Is that what you shoot for, 40 minutes?

MR. SCHIEFFER: Yeah.

MR. HEWITT: I didn't know that.

MR. SCHIEFFER: That's what – and for that very reason.

MR. HEWITT: That's what I believe, yeah.

MR. SCHIEFFER: It's people's workout time.

I want to get back to asking you – because one of the questions I'm asked over and over and over this year is how did it come down to these two? How did we – and is that – what does that say about our whole electoral infrastructure that people are saying, you know, we wound up with two people that a majority of the – in every survey suggests that people don't like them, and furthermore don't trust them. What do you think? How did we come to be where we are right now?

MR. HEWITT: Let me do Secretary Clinton first. And full disclosure, Mark Gearan, who was Bill Clinton's deputy chief of staff and head of the Peace Corps, is my closest friend in the world. Dan Poneman, who's President Obama's deputy energy secretary, was the other one. Three Harvard roommates. So I know a lot about Democrats. Secretary Clinton is the George H.W. Bush of the Democratic Party. She is inheriting a third term by virtue of her having been there through most of the first two terms and having been around. It's her – I think her seventh run for the presidency in one capacity or another. This is her second as leader of the ticket.

So she's been around runs for the presidency forever, and experience matters there too. And if she gets to the White House, she's not going to do anything stupid. She'll do a lot of things I disagree with, but she's not going to make any major errors. Some errors may follow her. Some past misjudgments may follow her into her presidency. But she was the natural heir of the Democratic coalition. There was nobody else. And Senator Sanders, who walked into the middle of the populist moment, was the beneficiary. But she's been the inevitable nominee, I think, since she decided to run.

On the Republican side, they have to rewrite the rules. I may write a book about this. You cannot let people onto the debate stage who do not have 5 percent in the popular polls. Now, Donald Trump would still have made it onto the debate stage. I don't know that he would have survived 12 debates with four or five people. The last debate, in which I participated and the lack debate in the cycle was in Miami, four people on the stage. It was his worst debate. He had to participate for the most in that debate.

When you had nine, 10, 11 people on the stage, you have to perform for seven or eight minutes. And so while you stand there the whole time, you're not actually on. With the three debates with Secretary Clinton he's been on 40 of the 90 minutes – or 45 of the 95 minutes. He doesn't last well, because his delivery is staccato. It's very effective to a large crowd. But it doesn't last well. His policy depth on matters of international affairs is just being learned. You know, I don't know how to build a skyscraper.

You want to ask me about – his best testimony, by the way, if you ever go back and listen, is when he testified on the U.N. remodeling before a subcommittee of the Senate. He was brilliant, because he knows developing. And he said this U.N. remodel is a nightmare. And he started running through it. I was laughing, I was informed, I was entertained. He's a developer. He's a builder. He knows this stuff. Talked to him about Hamas and Hezbollah and he told me up front, on the radio show, I don't know the difference. It doesn't matter. I'll learn it on the first day in the office. Well, no, you really don't learn on the first day in the office.

And so how did it happen? The Republican Party in 2012 allowed – and God bless Herman Cain, and God bless Michele Bachmann – had no more business being on the debate stage than I did. And if you recall even before that, Alan Keyes, who I've known since 1974, was on the debate stage with John McCain and George W. Bush because people at the RNC were afraid to pull the trigger and say no. You're not legit. You're not going to be in the finals. And this would not have affected Mr. Trump, but it would have kept out a number of people who hadn't reached 5 percent. And that would have saved time and focused journalistic energy.

Part two of my critique – I have to ask my friend Mike Murphy about this, I have to ask my friends on team Rubio – these Howard Stern tapes are not secret. Every minute of every one of my audio broadcasts are out there. Jeb's team had \$120 million. You can't hire an opposition research firm? Ted Cruz's team had \$75 million. Very smart people. You can't hire an oppo firm? How can you not find the Howard Stern tapes? The answer is, they expected him to implode.

And the ongoing, enduring lesson of this campaign is nobody takes themselves out of the game. If you're going to take somebody out, you have to do it. And that's, as someone said, the dirty little secret of politics, that isn't a secret, is that everybody does it. And the best ones do it without fingerprints. And nobody did it to Donald Trump.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Do you think – do you think that Jeb Bush just waited too long to declare? He – you know, he kept – you know, he kept going out and making speeches. He was trying to raise this money for his – for his super PAC. And finally, by that time, Trump – I think the great, you know, secret to Trump's success was he realized what I think is now obvious – as Sherlock Holmes once said most things are obvious in retrospect – but he – while the rest of them were out there doing these old-fashioned kinds of things, he just made himself available to television.

And he realized if you make yourself available to a certain number of television broadcasts, you're going to get on some of them. And he did. And I don't think he got a free

pass. I think some of the times that – sometimes, you know, people went easy on him just to get him. But I think he was challenged. But he was just getting all this exposure while the others were doing all these old fashioned things, like raising money.

MR. HEWITT: That's exactly 100 percent correct. And I share the analysis. The era of flooding the zone of imagery matters a great deal. Donald Trump would do my show about once a month for half an hour, which is a lot of time. I had to chase the other guys – not Carly. Carly would come on often, because she was looking for exposure.

Governor Bush is by far the best-informed of those candidates who began. He knows everything. And in an intimate setting – and you know this, in a broadcast world radio is the most intimate setting. In television there are more people around. Right now we have 10 people around. No lights. No one in our ears. No plugs. Just three microphones. It's very intimate. You talk to them. Governor Bush came to my studio in California and sat down. So did Marco Rubio. A lot of people have been in that. It's a very intimate setting.

Jeb Bush knows everything. He just does. He failed to disclose that to the American people effectively. (Laughs.) He hid that by hiding himself because I believe, again, his advisors said this is yours, it's locked away. Here's the old playbook from 2008. Here's the playbook from 2004 and the playbook from 2000. And what has changed is that hunger for information about politics – there's analysts, podcasts like this have audiences, people love the game as much as they love baseball. And they want to know inside baseball. They want sabermetrics. And so the more you can give them the more they want.

And so cable changed everything. Ailes figured that out. And Donald Trump came out and he was – as I said many times, he's the best interview in America. And I reserved the domain name TrumpTheMusical.com, because I think he is a musical. That's what he is. He's a showman.

MR. SCHWARTZ: It really is extraordinary. And he probably will have a Trump musical.

MR. HEWITT: He won't have the domain name unless he drills a deal with me. (Laughs.)

MR. SCHWARTZ: Hey, you were there first. (Laughter.)

MR. HEWITT: I did a deal on the radio with him, Andrew. On the interview. I said reserved this. I said, how about \$3 million? He said, that's fair. That's fair. And so I think I've got him – I already got him –

MR. SCHWARTZ: (Laughs.) That's not a bad deal.

MR. HEWITT: No, not a bad deal.

MR. SCHWARTZ: That's not a bad deal for –

MR. HEWITT: (Inaudible) – bucks –

MR. SCHWARTZ: Yeah, for either one of you. Why do you think, though, that radio is so popular and podcasts are popular? It's relatively low-tech compared to, you know, everything we have available now. But podcasts are more popular than ever, radio's more popular than ever.

MR. HEWITT: Right here. I'm holding up my iPhone. And it goes with me everywhere. And I carry around books on tape, my favorite podcasts, it's instantly accessible to me. I was on Southwest Airline coming back from Vegas debate yesterday for four and a half hours. We were an hour late leaving, and able to upload, click in, and learn, listen, entertainment. Some people just listen to music. I mean, I think that's dull. And so podcasting is exploding because now quality rises to the top.

You can listen to some kids. And I love kids in journalism. But I – nobody cared what I thought till I was 35, and then they didn't care much. And so I listen to them – someone like Robert Costa of The Washington Post who works all the time – he works harder than anyone I know. I listen to Robert, Tim Alberta with National Review. You know, Mike Allen is peripatetic and everywhere. I listen to the hardworking people, regardless of age. But I don't listen to the opiners opine. I listen to young reporters, but opiners, I want to know that you've been in the room a few times before I listen to you opine. So I'm glad you guys are doing this, because I think it's one of those things good to have on my playlist.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Let me just ask you this: One of the questions we're trying to answer in these podcasts is we have all this information – you know, we're bombarded with information from all sides, more information than any humans in the history of the world have had access to. But are we more informed? Or are we simply overwhelmed with so much information we can't process it?

MR. HEWITT: We're dividing into two groups, those who are selective in their editorial function and understand what is worth listening, and those who don't know how to deal with the bombardment. Sadly, the latter group is susceptible to cancer quackery, to conspiracy theories. If you're smart and you're interested and you're on the internet you can land on anything. And you can end up completely misinformed about something.

And therefore the curating of information, the editorial function is going to be very important to drive. And I think – and I'm not shrining you on, Bob – people who have been there and done that doing podcasting – you and Axelrod and a few others who are starting this – that bring a brand of experience are going to bring an audience as soon as they find about it because they're going to want to be able to rely.

And America is aging well. I like to point that out. It's the biggest demographic change. We're getting older, we're getting older, but not in the way my parents got older, who were born in 1923. They became infirm as opposed to well. They became less mobile as opposed to more mobile. They became more concerned about money as opposed to more confident of their asset

base. And as America ages they're not just going to play golf. They're going to want to stay smart.

And they're going to be – you know, the kids don't think we use these devices. And I'm 60 years old and I'm pretty nimble on this stuff, because it takes about five minutes to learn. I'm not not learning anymore. So I think the market is enormous for people even to come out retirement, people we haven't heard from in 15 or 20 years. And I don't mean to say that Al Hunt hasn't been heard from in 15 or 20 years, but I ran into him in Cleveland at the convention. Al Hunt knows everything. I mean, he just knows everything about politics.

And I sat in the basement of the Bloomberg with David Eisenhower, President Eisenhower's son and my first employer right before I went to work for Nixon, I was working on a book with David, "Eisenhower at War." And we sat down and we talked for an hour. And I thought, Al Hunt, you just have to start doing this, because he knows everything.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Let's talk about niche media. You know, I believe following this election we're going to see media on both the far right and the far left thriving in terms of putting up some pretty big numbers of viewers and reaching a broader audience. What do you think about that?

MR. HEWITT: I do if it doesn't cost money. People like free. People like free a lot. And one of the reasons I don't think terrestrial radio combined with satellite radio now will ever go away is it's free. And some people will never pay for radio because they've been getting it free since KDKA went on the air in Pittsburgh in 1927. And so they're not going to start paying for radio shows, except a small number.

Glenn Beck, the experiment that was – that remain Mercury Broadcasting and the Glenn Beck empire was subscription based and lasted for a while, but the moment he tried to build that to a technology-heavy industry like television, the numbers don't pencil unless you attract advertising. Advertising does not want to be near white-hot controversy. As my friends in various networks have said I'm the most acceptable because I'm the most conservative, but yet acceptable, voice on the radio, because I'm not crazy. (Laughs.) And so that's why I get all the invitations on the TV.

There's a no-buy list in radio. You know, there's some companies that will not buy some radio shows, because they don't want to lose audience. You got to stay off the no-buy list. So as people go into niche, they're going to want brand as well if they want advertiser, or those advertisers will not touch you.

MR. SCHWARTZ: So you don't think Trump could start his own network and go far to the right with the network, and go to the right of where Fox News has been, to the right of where everybody – maybe even where Breitbart's been, and sell subscriptions or sell ads or monetize it some way?

MR. HEWITT: You can monetize a subscription-based network, as Glenn did. There's a limit to that. And I do not believe you can go to the right of Breitbart and exist. I don't know

that – I haven't seen Breitbart's financials. Andrew was a very close friend of mine. His last interview was on my radio show. When he spoke at the CPAC he declared me to be the public intellectually most respected. So I knew Andrew pretty doggone well. This Breitbart is not that Breitbart, very, very different.

And there are radio shows and other formats out there which are to the right of Breitbart which survive on preppers and marginal advertising. They can't grow. You can't grow beyond that advertising base. And everything's a bell curve. Three hundred and thirty million Americans. The far one percent is 3 million. The far left is 3 million. Those 3 million people have some money, but if you're going to be big, if you're going to be CBS and be Tiffany, if you're going to be NBC or ABC or you're even going to be a cable network like CNN or ESPN, you've got to pay for infrastructure with the advertising with the people who are selling soap.

MR. SCHWARTZ: So these guys stay niche, I mean Young Turks, even? It's capped?

MR. HEWITT: Oh, I know The Young – I saw – oh, yeah. Very niche.

MR. SCHWARTZ: It's capped where it is? Not going to grow?

MR. HEWITT: Yeah. Only if the population grows. You know, the population growth on the extreme is always going to be the extreme. It's always going to – there's a parabola in everything. The bell curve applies to everything. And most everything is within that 80 percent. And that's where America sells. And where America sells, where the free market sells, is where you make money. Where you make money is where you build.

MR. SCHIEFFER: So what do you think is the future of traditional media, especially newspapers? The Washington Post, they figured out – they have a plan, they have a strategy, and they're doing very well. The New York Times is still The New York Times. But what I worry about are the medium-level newspapers around the country. I mean, what I'm worried about is if we don't find some entity that does what we expect of the local newspapers – and that is to keep an eye on the local government – I think we're in big trouble in this country.

MR. HEWITT: That is in trouble. I think there are lot of zombie newspapers that are walking around dead. Orange County Register, from my home county, is one of them, walking around dead, knocking on bankruptcy's door. It was 30 years ago that the newspaper masthead was the brand – the Post, the Times, The Wall Street Journal, the L.A. Times – the bigs. And here in town, The Washington Star for a while, and to a lesser extent The Washington Times. Then the byline became the brand in the era of blogging, which lasted for 10 years, where Hugh Hewitt or Glenn Reynolds or somebody else had a powerline blog, blogger of the year, the individual columnist, George Will – the byline became the brand.

Well, now what's going to happen is the masthead plus the byline. So I know who The New York Times is. It's Michael Scherer. It's Maureen Dowd. It's Nicholas Kristof. It's wonderful people like John Fisher Burns, the world's greatest foreign correspondent ever, who's now retired – but I do a podcast with John Fisher Burns tomorrow. The Washington Post has assembled the murder's row of political reporters. I mean, every day I can have – Dan Balz is

their senior statesman, but they are – it is so deep. Steve Ginsburg manages that bullpen the way that Mickey Callaway runs the Indians and Tito Francona runs the Indians. They're terrific. And Politico and Jim VandeHei's going to start a new one.

The byline with a bunch of brands is the future model, but the medium-sized newspaper is doomed. A micro-coverage that is supported by local restaurants, local purveyors of goods, local catering services, local bars, local auto dealerships – like the radio station – becomes good. There's actually a healthy future for local radio. That's why everyone in my station has a local show. In Washington, I'm on AM 1260. They don't have a syndicated – they don't have a local show. I'm up against my very good friend Larry O'Connor on WMAL. If you're listening to this Larry, retire. But in any event, it's probably like the Sunday show deal with you guys. You're constantly competing. But I think that the medium-sized market newspaper is in a world of hurt.

MR. SCHIEFFER: So who takes its place?

MR. HEWITT: Disaggregation. I read in the morning in order: The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, and occasionally I will make it – I start with The Times of London to see what happened in Europe, because they have a little bit ahead on the news cycle than we do, and then if I can get to it, the LA Times. I don't read any local newspapers. And I go in search of my branded – what's Mike Allen saying today – what's over here? And I go looking for my branded stuff.

And then I do my show and people are driving in on the basis of those sound clips. Grabien exists as a service to bring in sound clips, that produces sound for my producer. And we have a show. And we do that with about an hour and a half of prep before we go on the air at 6:00 a.m. Nothing involves a medium-sized newspaper. I just think they're dinosaurs in the La Brea tar pit. They're the saber-tooth tigers of the last age.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Are you a fan of newsletters?

MR. HEWITT: I'm a fan of bylines. I get Jonah Goldberg's every Friday because I like to laugh. I get Jim Geraghty's every day. I read Playbook from Politico. So yes, I am. I have to know the brand. I have to believe that the person is working their rear end off because there's a lot of – I don't need any more opinion. And I get so much opinion. Give me some facts. Tell me what the inside polling is in the Richard Burr race in North Carolina. What's he really thinking?

And that's the old Hotline. And people don't even remember Hotline. It cost \$4,000 a year, when \$4,000 a year was a lot of money. And I paid for it, because to do a radio show in the morning in 1989 you needed Hotline. It was the only body that gave you the juice. And not surprisingly, Chuck Todd was a Hotline editor. And he knew stuff.

MR. SCHWARTZ: Tell our listeners what the Hotline was. I'm not sure everybody knows what that is.

MR. HEWITT: OK, you're absolutely right. Facts not in evidence, as we lawyers like to say. Hotline was a daily delivered early in the morning compendium of everything that happened in politics, and to a little extent national affairs. I'm sure Bob read it every morning –

MR. SCHIEFFER: Oh, my daughter – my younger daughter worked there.

MR. HEWITT: Oh, I didn't know that.

MR. SCHIEFFER: It was her first job out of college when she graduated from Penn.

MR. HEWITT: What a great first job. And so, you know, you learn – it's like baseball. You learn verticals very well. Now, they called them verticals and everybody thinks it's a new term. Well, Hotline was the first vertical. But they faxed it to you. So cuchia, cuchia, cuchia.

MR. SCHWARTZ: This thing was faxed and it was a big stack and you'd have to make Xerox copies to pass out all throughout the newsroom. And if you didn't read it, you didn't know what was going on.

MR. HEWITT: You didn't know what was going on. And the equivalent on Friday was the Friday Follies at the White House. They took every political cartoon in America and Friday afternoon about 4:00 the Friday Follies was delivered to – this was the Reagan White House, '85-'86. And then chief justice and I are sharing an office. And you know, you wait. Even if you wanted to go home on Friday, you wait for the Friday Follies, because you could read every kind of comic book.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, Hugh Hewitt, I think this is the point where most people have finished their workout, they're getting ready to go take a shower and go back to work.

MR. HEWITT: Maybe we got them five extra minutes today, huh?

MR. SCHIEFFER: We got them. And I can't tell you how much I've enjoyed just chatting with you. This has really been a lot of fun. For Andrew Schwartz, this is Bob Schieffer.

MR. SCHWARTZ: But that's not all, Bob. At the top of this podcast we gave you just a tease of the great music from my friend Aaron Neville's new record, Apache. Let's hear some more from Aaron Neville. I just know this record's going to win a Grammy.

(Music plays.)

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