

# FULL TRANSCRIPT: MSNBC Town Hall with Donald Trump Moderated By Chris Matthews

Wed Mar 30, 2016 5:10 PM EDT



Timothy Hiatt for MSNBC

MSNBC's Chris Matthews moderated an hour-long town hall with Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump today in Green Bay, Wisconsin. The event also featured questions from the audience. The full town hall will air tonight on MSNBC at 8 p.m. ET.

Photos will be available [here](#). Usage guidelines and rush transcript of the town hall are below.

## MANDATORY CREDIT: MSNBC

\*\*\*

## USAGE GUIDELINES

After the town hall has concluded, non-NBC News and MSNBC, media and individuals, including Internet media, may use unlimited excerpts (up to 3:00 minutes at a time) with appropriate credit outlined below. Media outlets may not rebroadcast the town hall in its entirety unless granted permission by MSNBC.

- Mandatory onscreen and verbal credit to MSNBC on first reference.
- The onscreen "MSNBC" credit must be clearly visible and unobstructed at all times in any image, video clip, or other form of media.
- Embedded web video must stream from the MSNBC.com media player with the unobstructed credit as described above.
- Excerpts may only be used for the purpose of analyzing, reporting on, or commenting on the town hall.

No use of the audio or video of NBC News, or MSNBC journalists in a town hall is permitted for the purpose of advertising for any cause or candidate. No NBC News or MSNBC town hall may be used in any medium where the primary purpose is to retransmit the event or excerpts of the event for Commercial Use. Commercial Use shall be interpreted as any use for which the primary intent is to procure a commercial advantage or private compensation. Without limitation, examples of Commercial Use include: charges for downloads or streaming; using town hall video or audio to promote a website or product; or advertising preceding or during video or audio of the town hall. # # #

\*\*\*

**FULL TRANSCRIPT**

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

TRUMP: In the history of politics in this country, there has never been anything like what's happening here.

ANNOUNCER: The Donald Trump phenomenon rolls on.

TRUMP: Believe me, that's why I'm going to be elected president.

ANNOUNCER: The exchanges have been heated.

TRUMP: If you disenfranchise those people, I think you'd have riots.

(UNKNOWN): That's an incendiary comment.

FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON, DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: That is not leadership, that is political arson.

SEN. BERNARD SANDERS, I-VT., DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: Donald Trump is literally inciting violence with his supports.

ANNOUNCER: Now, they've become personal.

SEN. TED CRUZ, R-TEXAS, REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: Donald, you're a sniveling coward. Leave Heidi the hell alone.

TRUMP: I'm just responding to what he does. I didn't start this; he did.

ANNOUNCER: Is the damage irreparable, or can the discord among the Republicans be overcome?

TRUMP: We're going to be smart, we're going to be vigilant, we're going to be proud of our country again.

ANNOUNCER: This is an MSNBC exclusive town hall with Donald Trump (inaudible).

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(APPLAUSE)

MATTHEWS: Welcome to this town hall for a full hour of (inaudible), who is the front-runner for the Republican presidential nomination, Donald Trump. (Inaudible)

(APPLAUSE)

TRUMP: Thank you.

MATTHEWS: Donald Trump, (inaudible) situation here. We're up here in Green Bay, and my -- and my calculations say, that if you're going to win the general election, you have got to win up here, states like Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania.

NFL places.

(LAUGHTER)

Right?

TRUMP: I think -- you know, it would certainly be helpful. We're doing very well, and we're leading by a lot, we're leading everybody by a lot. And in votes, in terms of votes, we're millions of votes up on Cruz and millions of votes up on Kasich.

But we'll have to see what we do. I mean, all you can do is do your best. Right, folks? We do our best.

(APPLAUSE)

MATTHEWS: But let's talk about -- before you go to the general election, you've got to win the Republican nomination. What is -- what is your leverage there?

You've talked about North -- North Asia, North Atlantic Treaty, the Middle East, Mexico, they're going to walk, they're going to say, no more trade. They're going to say, we're not going to buy your oil.

It's always leverage, it's always, "I'm going to walk."

What is your leverage with Republican bosses (ph) when you get to Cleveland and they try to keep you from winning the nomination on the first ballot?

TRUMP: Well, one thing -- the voters. I have millions more votes than anybody else. It's not even close. You know, because you have reported on it. We're setting records in terms of Republican primaries.

If you look at New Hampshire, if you look at South Carolina, no matter where you look, we're setting records.

MATTHEWS: Right.

TRUMP: And that is my leverage. And these are people that are really -- they really like Donald Trump, they really like what I'm saying. And people -- we're going to make America great again, that's what it is.

MATTHEWS: Right.

TRUMP: And that's what my leverage is.

Now, without me, they lose millions of -- I think millions of people, and nobody is going to have a chance. I will beat Hillary Clinton. And I haven't started that process yet.

I have two people left. We started off with actually 18 people.

MATTHEWS: Right.

TRUMP: And now, there is two left.

MATTHEWS: You're counting Jim Gilmore?

TRUMP: I'm counting Jim. Sort of counting, sort of counting.

MATTHEWS: OK, let me ask you about the steps you've got. Cleveland is going to be in July. If you could win there short of 1230 -- if you get to 1237, you've got it.

TRUMP: Right.

MATTHEWS: If you come in short, and they try something on the first ballot -- now, I've been watching, listening. Mitt Romney is up to something, he wants it, you can tell he wants it.

Paul Ryan is making himself very clearly available with the statement he made last week. What do you do, if they deny you the first ballot victory?

TRUMP: Well, we're going to see what happens. I can say this, Chris. We're so far up above everybody else. We're hundreds of -- I mean, hundreds of delegates above Cruz.

We just -- you probably heard last night, Missouri was just certified, so I won Missouri in addition to everything else.

MATTHEWS: Yeah.

TRUMP: We're way, way up in votes, way, way up -- if we're a little bit short, I think it's a very unfair process. Let me just explain...

MATTHEWS: Well, what's the jimmy? Six inches, two feet?

TRUMP: Well, let me just explain something. Well, let me explain. Normally, you talk about running, and you don't have 17 people.

MATTHEWS: Yeah.

TRUMP: We had 17 people, we actually had 18 people, again, including Gilmore, OK?

So, we have 18 people. And during a long period of time, we'd have 14 people, 13 people, 12 people, you know, in primaries. We had a lot of people in the primaries.

So, I'd get 25 percent, 28 percent -- those are phenomenal numbers when you have that many people running. So, in those early states -- which I won, but you can't get 50 percent when you have that many people running. There has never been so many people running.

I'm going to come very close to the 1237. I think I'm going to beat the 1237. We're doing phenomenally in New York.

MATTHEWS: Yeah.

TRUMP: You probably saw the poll that just came out in New York, Emerson College, which is a -- you know, I'm up by...

MATTHEWS: Yeah, but it's all about you're not getting the 1237. They'll deny it to you.

TRUMP: Yeah, I know, I know, I know. We just -- all you can do...

MATTHEWS: What are you going to do -- are you going to be Teddy Roosevelt?

You mentioned a couple of days ago, you liked Teddy Roosevelt. In 1912, he didn't get the nomination. He walked out, split the party, beat the Republican party in November, but lost the general to Wilson.

TRUMP: Yeah. I can't tell you what I'm going to yet, because I'm not sure I know. I have to see. I hope they're going to be fair. If they're going to be fair, they're going to be very happy.

How can they give up millions of people that really feel disenfranchised, except for...

MATTHEWS: Because they don't like you, they don't want you to be the nominee.

TRUMP: Well, that's true. But then, they're going to lose and then you're going to have four Supreme Court justices that they're not going to like.

MATTHEWS: OK. You said last night on CNN you're not going to stick to this pledge to back the nominee. Is that -- are you sticking to that?

TRUMP: Well, no. I have not been treated properly. People understand. They haven't stuck to the pledge. I don't want an endorsement from somebody that doesn't feel like, oh, I love Trump. If he wins, he's going to be the guy. I don't want that endorsement, I'm not looking for that endorsement.

So when they ask me about Cruz and the endorsement, I said, no, no. Just put -- no pressure on Cruz, tell him he doesn't have to endorse me. Please don't endorse me.

MATTHEWS: Right.

TRUMP: It doesn't matter. The endorsements don't mean very much. You know, I have great endorsements, I have some phenomenal endorsements.

MATTHEWS: Yeah.

TRUMP: I have Senator Sessions, Jeff Sessions, endorse me, everybody thought he was going to endorse Cruz. He endorsed me because he knows I'm much better on security, I'm better on a lot of things.

MATTHEWS: I watched you, Mr. Trump, on every issue, and you always talk about leverage. You always talk we can walk away from a deal with the Saudis on oil, we can walk away with the Chinese, we don't have to buy their stuff anymore, we don't have to pay for our troops in Europe if they don't want to do it.

You always say your leverage is the ability to walk. Do you have the ability to walk with the Republican nomination?

TRUMP: I think...

MATTHEWS: Can you walk?

TRUMP: Of course. I can always do that. I can always walk. I don't want to -- I don't want to let people down. I have millions of people more than Cruz has, I have millions of people...

Now, the system is not a good system. When you take Louisiana -- I went to Louisiana, I campaigned -- I campaigned there. I won the state. Now, the numbers come out and I have less delegates than Cruz. That's not the American way. I went out -- as you know, I won Louisiana. Big victory, everything great. But because of arcane rules and a lot of nonsense, frankly, I get -- I end up getting a few less delegates than Cruz. That's not the way the system is supposed to work. It's not the way...

MATTHEWS: Well, three-fifths of the American people in the latest poll we got at NBC say that you're right, if you have the most votes, you should be the nominee. I'm still trying to figure out what your alternative is if you don't get it. What do you do?

TRUMP: Look, look. I don't think I'd want to tell you as much as I respect you. You know, I did an interview with -- Chris, at the University of Pennsylvania many, many years ago. We had...

MATTHEWS: This stuff doesn't work with me. If you got -- it came out...

TRUMP: But is that a true thing? In fact...

(CROSSTALK)

MATTHEWS: It's all true, and you were a celebrity even then.

TRUMP: I was a celebrity, yeah.

MATTHEWS: Let's talk about something, the 800-pound gorilla.

TRUMP: I mean, we have to -- I do like your question on leverage. My leverage is the voters, Chris, just to end it. My leverage is the voters. I have millions more votes than anybody else.

MATTHEWS: Was Teddy Roosevelt right to walk?

TRUMP: I studied well. I think possibly he was, but boy, did that cause a problem.

]

MATTHEWS: It sure did. Let me ask you about this thing the other day with your campaign manager. Do you think you could have handled it differently from our -- from the start with maybe an apology to the young women reporter, something like that? Maybe give her an interview?

TRUMP: Yeah. Personally...

MATTHEWS: Something to de-escalate the issue and show respect for her. Could you have done that more?

TRUMP: No, I don't think so. I think if she called up to apologize, I think you'd be in the exact same place, and people that have seen that tape are going, give me a break. You have to be kidding.

MATTHEWS: But there was contact.

TRUMP: What contact? I mean, there's contact every time...

MATTHEWS: Well, that's what this law says. It's unwanted touching, unwanted...

TRUMP: Hey look. I'm walking with reporters -- I'm walking and she contacted me.

MATTHEWS: Yeah, but it's simple battery.

TRUMP: Excuse me. She grabbed my arm twice. You see the picture of me looking like, who is this person, and getting her off.

MATTHEWS: What do you make of the bruises on the picture?

TRUMP: I don't know who crated those bruises. I really don't know. I mean, you know, two days later, she comes in and she said she had some bruises. I don't...

MATTHEWS: But this kind of argument just infuriates her and a lot of women because you're not showing belief in her credibility.

TRUMP: I just gave...

MATTHEWS: Why would she make up a story about bruises? Why would anybody do that?

TRUMP: You know what? Fifteen minutes away, in front of a very large crowd, I gave a speech, and we talked about that. And I said who saw the tape, and everybody raised -- almost -- a lot of people raised their hand. I'd say three-quarters raised their hands. Big audience. I said who thinks he did something really wrong? I said stand up please, or raise your hand if you don't want to stand up. Not one person in the room -- your cameras were there -- not one person in the room raised their hand.

We're getting -- it's out of control, political correctness, whatever you want to call it, it's totally out of control.

MATTHEWS: What's the right approach, though? If you -- if you accidentally bump into somebody, accidentally trip them, you say I'm sorry. Don't you show some apology and respect for the other person?

TRUMP: Yeah, I think that's fine. I mean, I think that's fine.

MATTHEWS: Wouldn't that be appropriate here?

TRUMP: I'm not sure he didn't maybe even say it there. What he was doing is -- in my opinion just in watching the tape, because nobody even remembers the incident because it was so minor, it's not like the -- you...

MATTHEWS: The Jupiter Police remember it.



TRUMP: That -- excuse me. I think that they are -- what they've done is, I think, outrageous. They're destroying a very good person. He's a good person. Forget about politics, he's a good person with a wonderful family, four beautiful kids, and they're destroying that man over nothing.

You take a look at that tape, and she's grabbing me. Now maybe I should press charges against her; she's not supposed to be grabbing me. She's touching me, she's grabbing my arm and I'm going like this, I'm saying who is it. You know, the news conference was over, she wasn't supposed to be asking questions. She pushed her way through, came through the Secret Service, grabs my arm, and I think maybe this was just -- and let me tell you something, just so you understand. If she went down -- you know, she made the statement that she went down or essentially almost went down...

MATTHEWS: Almost went down.

TRUMP: ...nothing -- there was nothing there. She didn't even have -- if I give you a little shot on the arm, you're going to go "Oww!" I'm a strong guy. You're going to go, "Oh!" You're going to have some kind of a facial -- she didn't even have facial movement.

MATTHEWS: But she did say in real time that it hurt and she wanted to know who did it.

TRUMP: I don't know when was a real time. When did they record that. I don't know. When did they record that?

MATTHEWS: Well, you're really skeptical about her.

TRUMP: I'm a very skeptical person about her, yes.

MATTHEWS: And why don't you have any sympathy for her?

TRUMP: I don't think that -- look, for...

MATTHEWS: She's doing her job.

TRUMP: First of all, it was my tape. You know I was the one that did the tape.

MATTHEWS: I know it's -- that was your tape.

TRUMP: And I looked at that tape, and we have heads being cut off in -- all over the world, frankly, but we have people's heads being cut off in the Middle East, people's heads being cut off. We have people drowning in steel cages. Here's a woman -- and it didn't even look like there was physical touch, and that was almost like he was just blocking her away from me, and he's supposed to be a criminal for that?

MATTHEWS: Yeah. But we're -- but Western society claims that we're better with women.

TRUMP: Look, nobody respects women more than I do, that I can tell you.

MATTHEWS: You don't respect her, though.

TRUMP: And nobody -- well, you know, she's somebody that -- yeah, I would say I don't have great respect for her. I think for her to do what she did to this man over what he did is outrageous, is outrageous.

MATTHEWS: Well, she quit her job over it, she must believe in her story.

TRUMP: Did she quit or did she get fired?

MATTHEWS: Well, I don't know. Let me -- I think she quit. I think she quit.

TRUMP: OK. Well, you think -- you do? I think maybe the other way. You'll find that, we'll find out in court.

MATTHEWS: Let's talk about the larger...

TRUMP: Chris, you know what? We'll find out in court. The easiest thing for me to do, you fired. That's so easy, that's a very easy (inaudible)

(LAUGHTER)

MATTHEWS: Yeah.

TRUMP: And then everybody's happy...

(APPLAUSE)

-- everybody's happy...

MATTHEWS: Well, there's a middle group, but that...

TRUMP: But you know what? I can't -- I can't do that because I'm loyal to people. And you know, when they went to Cruz and Kasich, oh, you should fire him, they didn't even see the tape I don't think. You should fire him, you should fire him. I don't do that.

If somebody is being -- really, I just thought it was a very unfair situation. This is not good for me, OK?

MATTHEWS: How do you think women react when they see this?

TRUMP: I think a lot of...

MATTHEWS: The numbers aren't good.

TRUMP: ...I think a lot of women would say give me a break. I don't -- I don't understand why. I mean, the numbers aren't good, the numbers were good, the numbers aren't as good with women as they were. But nobody respects women more than I do.

MATTHEWS: Let's talk about ISIS. It's the number one concern of a lot of people since last week.

TRUMP: Right.

MATTHEWS: How do you beat people -- now, when we fought the Germans or the Italians and, you know, the army puts their hands up at the end because they know it's hopeless.

TRUMP: Right.

MATTHEWS: How do you fight...

TRUMP: It's called uniforms.

MATTHEWS: And how do you fight people who wrap themselves in dynamite? They get up, brush their teeth in the morning, shave I suppose in some cases, they go off to the airport with the idea of blowing themselves up, killing themselves that day, that morning. How do you beat an army like that, because this gets down to something that we haven't dealt with before in our history. How do we beat that kind of mentality?

TRUMP: We have to be so tough and so vigilant, and we have to do things, frankly, that we've never done before.

MATTHEWS: But they want to die for their cause.

TRUMP: Maybe they do, and some of them do. And I -- you know, a lot of people are trying to figure out why they do this, how they do this...

MATTHEWS: They're recruited.

TRUMP: ...are they drugged out. Tell me.

MATTHEWS: They're recruited.

TRUMP: Are they drugged out when they do it? What's going on when they walk in and they blow themselves up? Are they all drugged out? Is somebody drugging them? There's a lot of things going on.

And you know, when I talked about we have to be very careful because we have people coming into this country, it's a very bad situation. We have thousands and thousands of people coming into our country. We have no idea where they come from, who they are.

MATTHEWS: But oftentimes, it's the second or first generation. It's not the first wave of immigrants. These people in Belgium had been living there. They were born there. They're Belgians.

And so, how do you deal with that situation?

TRUMP: Well, look at the guys in Boston, the Boston bombers, they came here as young kids...

MATTHEWS: They were here -- they were -- so what do you with -- OK. OK.

TRUMP: ... and they became radicalized.

MATTHEWS: Does banning their entry into the country, even temporarily, encourage them to be on our side against the terrorists or encourages them to be on the other side?

TRUMP: I think banning -- I think banning until we figure out what's going on is an important thing. And I take a lot of heat for it and a lot of people like me for it, to be honest with you.

But, Chris, there's something going on. (inaudible)

MATTHEWS: But there's 1.6 billion Muslims in the world. And they're all getting the message from Donald Trump, who's leading the fight for the Republican nomination for president, saying, "Stay out of my country."

How does that encourage them to fight ISIS?

TRUMP: Chris (inaudible).

MATTHEWS: How does that encourage them to fight the bad guys?

TRUMP: OK, let me explain (inaudible).

They have a problem too. They have a big problem.

MATTHEWS: But if we say "Go away..."

TRUMP: I have been told by more (inaudible) who are saying, "What are you doing is a great thing, not a bad thing."

The two people in San Bernardino...

MATTHEWS: Are any Muslims telling you that?

TRUMP: I have actually -- believe it or not, I have a lot of friends that are Muslim and they call me.

MATTHEWS: Right.

TRUMP: In most cases, they're very rich Muslims, OK?

(LAUGHTER)

MATTHEWS: But do they get in the country?

TRUMP: But they do call me.

They'll come in.

MATTHEWS: How do you let them in?

TRUMP: They'll come in. And you'll have exceptions.

MATTHEWS: But you...

TRUMP: Wait, wait, wait.

Look, Chris, Chris, with the San Bernardino situation...

MATTHEWS: Right.

TRUMP: ... many people saw that apartment with bombs all over the apartment...

MATTHEWS: Yeah, I agree with that.

TRUMP: ... bombs on table.

MATTHEWS: You see something, say something.

TRUMP: Not one person...

MATTHEWS: I know.

TRUMP: ... with all the people that said -- they said it's racial profiling. That's why they didn't call.

You know why they said that? Because some lawyer said, "You know, you saw this, you better come up with a good excuse." They said it's racial profiling.

A lot of people saw what was going on in that apartment. Not one Muslim, OK?

MATTHEWS: I'm with you on this. Of course I'm with you.

But that's not the question.

TRUMP: OK. Why didn't they report 'em?

MATTHEWS: Look, look, you're saying ban...

TRUMP: In other words, why -- but Chris, why don't they report 'em?

MATTHEWS: OK. You say ban them from entering the country. They get the message. Everyone in the world -- over 1.6 -- in Indonesia, Pakistan, everywhere. In Albania. Anywhere there's Muslims, you know, they know you don't want them. So they get the message.

They're a little more ill-disposed to fight ISIS, a little bit more after that once they say, "The Americans don't even like us," don't you think?

TRUMP: I don't know, maybe they'll be more disposed to fight ISIS. Maybe they'll say, "We want to come back into America, we've got to solve this problem."

MATTHEWS: OK.

TRUMP: I'm serious about that. Maybe they'll be...

MATTHEWS: OK. Cruz, your guy.

Do you know what Cruz is pushing (inaudible)? He wants patrol cars driving up neighborhoods that he thinks are Islam -- Muslim people living there, looking into windows for plotting. I mean, it's an insane idea. These aren't street criminals. They're plotting bombings, if they are. And they're getting -- "Oh, we're going to go up and down the street." That'll make them more militant against us.

TRUMP: Well, he's toughening up his stance because my stance has been very tough and...

MATTHEWS: What do you think of his stance? Patrol cars.

TRUMP: I think we have to look at the mosques. I think we have to be extremely careful. We have to look at mosques.

MATTHEWS: We're making enemies here.

TRUMP: A lot of things -- we're making enemies by doing nothing. I mean, we're knocking down World Trade Centers, we're shooting planes into the Pentagon.

MATTHEWS: Yes.

TRUMP: Probably the other plane was going towards the White House. You have some very brave people.

MATTHEWS: All right.

TRUMP: But, you know, what are we going to do, just sit back and say we want to be nice to everybody? We can't be so nice.

MATTHEWS: Yes, but sometimes we create more trouble than we went into. Do you think it was smart to go into Iraq?

TRUMP: A very complicated...

MATTHEWS: Was that smart to put our troops in the Holy Land of Mecca?

TRUMP: I thought it was one of the -- I thought it was one of the worst decisions in the history of our country. And I was against it from the beginning.

MATTHEWS: I know.

Are you more hawkish than Hillary or less hawkish?

TRUMP: I'm probably more intelligent than Hillary.

MATTHEWS: Oh come on...

(LAUGHTER)

... answer the question. Are you more hawkish?

(APPLAUSE)

TRUMP: I want to...

MATTHEWS: Are you more likely to engage militarily than Hillary?

TRUMP: Here's what I want to do.

I would never want to make a blanket statement like that, because, you know, you have different -- I would have never gone into Iraq. And I said from a very early date -- and you saw that.

MATTHEWS: I know.

TRUMP: From the earliest date, "I don't want to go into Iraq. Don't go into Iraq."

Now, I was a real estate guy, I was a business guy, so nobody really cared that much. But there were articles long time ago. I said, "You're going to destabilize the Middle East." That happened.

Now, when we got out of Iraq, we got out the wrong way. We set a date, which was terrible. We should have left some soldiers back. And I always said, "Take the oil," because you know who has the oil right now?

MATTHEWS: You need ground troops to do that.

TRUMP: First of all, Iran is getting the oil.



MATTHEWS: You need ground troops to take the oil.

TRUMP: I said, "Take the oil."

MATTHEWS: Ground troops...

TRUMP: Now, Libya -- well, I said, "Keep the oil." We -- we already had the troops there. When we were leaving, I said, "Don't leave. Keep the oil."

MATTHEWS: OK.

Your most controversial suggestion was don't take nuclear weapons -- I mean, you may have been hooked into this by (inaudible).

TRUMP: Don't take what?

MATTHEWS: Nuclear weapons off the table.

I have been trying to think of how we could conceivably use a nuclear weapon in the Middle East or in Europe in fighting ISIS. Where can you -- and why put it on the table or leave it on the table if you can't imagine where to use it?

TRUMP: Well, I didn't say, "Don't take it." I said I would be very, very slow and hesitant to pull that trigger.

MATTHEWS: Well, why would you -- why wouldn't you just say, "I don't want to talk about it. I don't want to talk about nuclear weapons. Presidents don't talk about use of nuclear weapons"?

TRUMP: The question was asked -- we were talking about NATO -- which, by the way, I say is obsolete and we pay a disproport...

MATTHEWS: But you got hooked into something you shouldn't've talked about.

TRUMP: I don't think I -- well, someday, maybe.

MATTHEWS: When? Maybe?

TRUMP: Of course. If somebody...

MATTHEWS: Where would we drop -- where would we drop a nuclear weapon in the Middle East?

TRUMP: Let me explain. Let me explain.

Somebody hits us within ISIS, you wouldn't fight back with a nuke?

MATTHEWS: No. To drop a nuclear weapon on a community of people that are...

TRUMP: No, no, but you can't say -- first of all, you don't want to say, "Take everything off the table..."

MATTHEWS: No, just nuclear.

TRUMP: ... because you'd be a bad negotiator if you do that.

MATTHEWS: Just nuclear.

TRUMP: Look, nuclear should be off the table. But would there be a time when it could be used, possibly, possibly?

MATTHEWS: OK. The trouble is, when you said that, the whole world heard it. David Cameron in Britain heard it. The Japanese, where we bombed them in '45, heard it. They're hearing a guy running for president of the United States talking of maybe using nuclear weapons. Nobody wants to hear that about an American president.

TRUMP: Then why are we making them? Why do we make them? We had (inaudible).

MATTHEWS: Because of the old mutual assured destruction, which Reagan hated and tried to get rid of.

TRUMP: (inaudible) I was against Iraq. I'd be the last one to use the nuclear weapon.

MATTHEWS: So can you take it off the table now?

TRUMP: Because that's sort of like the end of the ball game.

MATTHEWS: Can you tell the Middle East we're not using a nuclear weapon on anybody?

TRUMP: I would never say that. I would never take any of my cards off the table.

MATTHEWS: How about Europe? We won't use it in Europe?

TRUMP: I -- I'm not going to take it off the table.

MATTHEWS: You might use it in Europe?

(LAUGHTER)

TRUMP: No, I don't think so. But I'm not taking...

MATTHEWS: Well, just say it. "I will never use a nuclear weapon in Europe."

TRUMP: I am not -- I am not taking cards off the table.

MATTHEWS: OK.

TRUMP: I'm not going to use nuclear, but I'm not taking any cards off the table.

MATTHEWS: OK.

The trouble is, the sane people hear you and the insane people are not affected by your threats. That's the trouble. The real fanatics say, "Good. Keep it up."

TRUMP: I think -- I think they're more affected than you might think.

MATTHEWS: OK. Your call.

Much more from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay and our MSNBC exclusive town hall with Donald Trump. Coming back.

(APPLAUSE)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MATTHEWS: We're back from Green Bay, Wisconsin, the home of Green Bay (inaudible) -- Wisconsin, Green Bay, with the front-runner for the Republican nomination, Donald Trump. And we have our first question from the people here.

Go ahead.

QUESTION: Hi.

TRUMP: Hi.

QUESTION: My name is Quinn (ph) (inaudible), and my question for you was regarding your immigration reform.

I was wondering if you could offer a little bit more insight and specific as to what you really hope to change if given the presidency?

TRUMP: OK. A very good question, and I think it's a very strong question for me, because from the beginning, I have been very strong on immigration, on stopping illegal immigration.

Just so you understand, I want people to come into this country, I want a lot of people to come into the country, but they have to go through a process, they have to do it legally. We have to have a strong southern border, drugs are pouring across the border, tremendous problems -- we're having tremendous problems with crime.

You understand that, everybody understands it. We're going to have very, very strong borders, we're going to have a wall, it's going to happen. Mexico is going to pay for the wall. And Chris will say, "How are they going to pay? How are they go to pay?" And I'll tell you...

MATTHEWS: No, I just don't think they will, but that's all right.

(LAUGHTER)

TRUMP: OK, they will. You know, when we -- when we lose the...

MATTHEWS: How high is this wall going to be lately (ph)? How high is it...

TRUMP: I think a good 35 feet. It's getting higher all the time.

(LAUGHTER)

But -- but...

MATTHEWS: I don't think so.

TRUMP: ... we either have a country and we have borders, or we don't at all. But people will come into the country -- a lot of people are going to come into the country, but they're going to come in legally (inaudible).

MATTHEWS: Can I ask you about one question and follow up with that, because it only seems to me you can build a pretty high wall, they'll build a tunnel or whatever, they'll take a boat or get a plane ride, they'll get here.

If you had to get here to get a job, you'd get here. And my question is this, what are we going to do about illegal hiring? Because the Republicans joined the Democrats and said -- in that bill a couple of years ago, we're going to stop illegal hiring. If that's the magnet...

TRUMP: You can do that with e-verify and with...

MATTHEWS: Oh, are you for it?

TRUMP: I'm for it. I use it.

MATTHEWS: What should be the punishment for hiring some...

TRUMP: You know (inaudible).

MATTHEWS: What should be the punishment for be, really...

TRUMP: Well (inaudible).

MATTHEWS: You're collaborating with illegal immigrants.

TRUMP: Yeah, sure, sure. You can be very, very strong, it can be a huge financial penalty, it could be beyond a financial penalty.

MATTHEWS: Why haven't these guys in your party pass it? Why would they ever pass something like that?

TRUMP: They don't want to -- well...

MATTHEWS: They don't believe in it.

TRUMP: Well, now -- no, no, some of them do, some of them believe in it very strongly, others don't.

You know, I'm using e-verify on just about every job. At Doral, I'm using it.

MATTHEWS: Yeah.

TRUMP: But I'm using it on -- they're building the old post office on Pennsylvania Avenue.

MATTHEWS: Yeah. Good job.

TRUMP: That I'm building into, what will soon be a phenomenal hotel.

MATTHEWS: But isn't -- isn't the...

TRUMP: And I'm using e-verify, and I'm telling you, it works.

MATTHEWS: But in principle, the person who hires someone illegally -- I'm not talking about leaf-raking out in front of the house or helping to push the snow out of the way. I'm talking about somebody who hires them to save money on labor.

You bring in somebody into the country, you give them a free -- you're basically encouraging illegal immigration, because that's why this guy or woman is coming here, right? Isn't that right?

TRUMP: You can -- yes, and you can solve the problem with e-verify. And other systems...

MATTHEWS: Well, why doesn't your party and you back that?

TRUMP: Well, I back it, and my party backs it.

MATTHEWS: No, they don't.

TRUMP: Many -- well, many people...

MATTHEWS: Ryan won't even bring it up on the floor.

TRUMP: Well, but many people in the party do that.

MATTHEWS: Ryan's not -- they're not trustworthy. They're not bringing it up. They talk a line about illegal immigration, they want to play these games.

TRUMP: Like I said, there are many people...

MATTHEWS: They like the cheap labor.

TRUMP: And there are many people...

MATTHEWS: Don't they?

TRUMP: Well, they -- they do in one way, but many people don't, they don't want it.

You know, what, labor -- labor is one thing.

MATTHEWS: The regular working guy doesn't want it, but the business guys, the corporate leaders want the cheap labor.

TRUMP: Chris, we need borders. We need -- we have a country, we have borders.

MATTHEWS: I'm with you.

TRUMP: People are walking across the border like...

MATTHEWS: I like your line, either we have a country or we don't, I'm with you.

TRUMP: That's it.

MATTHEWS: But the way to stop illegal immigration is to stop illegal hiring. It makes economic sense.

TRUMP: You can do that, you can do that. And I do that on every single job I have.

MATTHEWS: OK, let's go to the next question, sir.

QUESTION: Good evening, Mr. Trump.

TRUMP: Hi.

QUESTION: I'm Chris Parker (ph). My question for you is, given recent events with minority protesters at your campaign rallies, can you give me some reasons why a minority voter such as myself would vote for you?

TRUMP: Because I'm going to bring back jobs to this country and people are going to have jobs. People right now don't have it.

You look at African-American youth, 59 percent unemployment. You go to various places -- you go to Baltimore, you go to all of the -  
- Oakland, Detroit. You look that the kind of numbers -- I'm going to bring jobs back. I'm taking them back from China, I'll bring them  
back from Mexico -- which, by the way, is eating our lunch, both at the border and with economic development, Chris.

I mean, what they're doing...

MATTHEWS: I know.

TRUMP: ... Ford is going there, Nabisco is going there. Carrier Air Conditioner just announced they're moving to Mexico.

I will bring back jobs and I'm not going to let people go. I will make it so that they're going to want to stay here.

Nobody -- nobody contacts Ford, nobody contacts Nabisco or Carrier. They leave, they leave. That's the end of it. We don't fight to keep these companies here.

We're going to fight. It's going to be jobs. OK? Thank you for your question.

MATTHEWS: Why do you go to China and you see the cranes on a Friday night, they're working, they're building.

TRUMP: Yeah.

MATTHEWS: There cities have seven million people we have never heard of, Hangzhou, Guangxi -- Guangzhou (sic), I forget the pronunciation, but I've been there. They're unbelievable.

When -- how are we going to rebuild our cities. You talk about Penn Station in New York being a dump, LaGuardia being a dumb.

The train -- I took the train a couple of months ago. It takes three days, OK? When are we going to rebuild our country like Europe does, or Japan, or Germany?

TRUMP: You're right (inaudible), you're right.

MATTHEWS: The countries we beat in World War II all have state of the art stuff, and we're back 70 years.

TRUMP: Right. And you know why? Because they are killing us with monetary devaluation, with currency devaluation.

MATTHEWS: No.

TRUMP: It's true. It's true.

MATTHEWS: Our government -- we are not building here.

TRUMP: But the reason is, our jobs are being taken out, and they're doing it with devaluation.

If you look at what China has done with the devaluation of their currency, they're killing us.



MATTHEWS: Right. But can you stop it?

TRUMP: So, it's...

MATTHEWS: How much paper do they got?

TRUMP: You know how you stop it? You stop it by being tough, by saying, you can't do what you're doing.

China is the grand master, they're like a chess master. They...

MATTHEWS: All right. Why are they getting away with it? Why are they getting away with it -- they're holding about (inaudible) trillion dollars of our paper.

TRUMP: Honestly, because their leaders are smarter than ours.

MATTHEWS: And they're paying -- they've got our paper.

TRUMP: And they have a -- and on top of that, we don't...

MATTHEWS: What are they going to do if they dump all of that paper on the world market tomorrow morning?

TRUMP: You know, we owe them right now \$1.7 trillion.

MATTHEWS: Right. What if they don't...

TRUMP: But on top of...

MATTHEWS: Suppose they dump all those funds?

TRUMP: We're going to be just fine.

MATTHEWS: Oh, really? We're going...

TRUMP: You know what? No, no. We're going to be just fine. Look...

MATTHEWS: So, our number one creditor is going to dump us a debtor, and we're going to be just fine.

TRUMP: Chris, they're making -- we are going to be absolutely just fine, unless we continue with the program we have right now.

MATTHEWS: Yeah.

TRUMP: Do you know, we have a high dollar. You take a look at what's happening in this country right now.

MATTHEWS: Right.

TRUMP: People aren't coming here, our high dollar -- which sounds good to people. Everyone says, oh, that's great. We have a strong dollar. We're getting killed worldwide.

MATTHEWS: OK.

TRUMP: Manufacturing and even -- you look at tourism and everything else coming into this country, it's not happening. We're getting absolutely outmaneuvered by devaluation.

MATTHEWS: OK. Yeah, I know (inaudible). But you take your approach and your -- seeing all this everywhere, and NATO, make it - those guys have got to pay their dues, or we're going to get out of there with 60 point (ph) (inaudible) if we had to.

You say in North -- in North Asia, you say about Japan and South Korea, if they don't start paying more, we're pulling out.

You say in the Middle East, the Saudis and the Jordanians and the Emirates got to start paying, we'll pull out. Or basically -- and then Mexico, if you don't build the wall, blah, blah, blah, we'll cut off your trade.

This bargaining technique of yours is always based on, I don't need this deal, I don't need it.

TRUMP: Right.

MATTHEWS: But these existing deals we have with the Middle East, with Israel.

TRUMP: You don't need them, you don't need them.

MATTHEWS: These existing deals we have with the Middle East...

TRUMP: You don't need them. Do you think...

MATTHEWS: You don't need those deals?

TRUMP: Do you think we have to protect Saudi Arabia?

MATTHEWS: We don't need NATO?

TRUMP: Do you think -- no, we don't really need NATO in its current form.

NATO is obsolete, and we're spending disproportionately...

MATTHEWS: How about the Middle East?

TRUMP: We are spending so much money -- well, you know what, we're fracking, and with all of the things that are taking place...

MATTHEWS: Yeah.

TRUMP: And with all of the oil that Canada has -- Canada has more than almost anybody.

MATTHEWS: Yeah.

TRUMP: When you look at what we have, we aren't dependent on that anymore, and we very certainly...

MATTHEWS: We don't need Jordan, or the Saudis or the Emirates? We don't need those countries?

TRUMP: Look -- look, people have to pay their fair share.

A year ago when oil prices were high -- now it's lower, but they're still making a fortune. Saudi Arabia was making \$1 billion a day.

MATTHEWS: I know.

TRUMP: And we're defending them and we're getting almost nothing.

MATTHEWS: But you act like you're the only one that can cut a deal, that nobody else would be able to cut a deal.

TRUMP: They don't cut deals like I cut deals. That I can tell you.

MATTHEWS: And you're willing walk on all these deals, because that's where you win in our deals? You walk.

TRUMP: You always have to be able to walk. You have to be able.

MATTHEWS: How do you walk from NATO, The Middle East, North Asia, China, all these relationships? Just drop them all?

TRUMP: Look, NATO is...

MATTHEWS: We have old deals we have to stick with.

TRUMP: ... is 68 years old.

MATTHEWS: Yes.

TRUMP: OK, you have countries that are getting a free ride. You have countries that benefit from NATO much more than we do. We don't benefit that much from NATO.

MATTHEWS: Yeah, yeah. I just -- I think you can turn down new deals, but all these deals we've had for years, like NATO and relationships with Japan -- Japan doesn't want a nuclear weapon.

TRUMP: Chris -- Chris, we defend -- of course, why should they, when we give free protection?

MATTHEWS: You want them to have a nuclear weapon?

TRUMP: Wait a minute. We -- before -- and I'll answer that question.

But we defend -- a lot of people don't even know this. We spend a fortune on defending Japan. We spend a fortune on defending Germany, right?

MATTHEWS: Right.

TRUMP: We spend a fortune on defending South Korea.

Now I order thousands and -- thousands of television sets here, they come from South Korea.

MATTHEWS: I know.

TRUMP: They make so much. They're making a fortune. They're a behemoth. So is Germany. Why are we defending them?

MATTHEWS: Because it's in our interest.

TRUMP: Yes, but why aren't they reimbursing us? Why aren't they paying a good portion of the costs?

MATTHEWS: Well, that's fine. It's a good argument if you can get it. But if the alternative is we walk...

TRUMP: And we'll get it, I'll get it, I'll get it. I'm the messenger.

MATTHEWS: If the alternative is we walk...

TRUMP: I'll get it.

MATTHEWS: OK.

TRUMP: Another messenger won't get that.

MATTHEWS: They're going to do it because they like you, or they fear we'll walk?

TRUMP: No, they're going to get it -- no, they're going to get it because it's in their best interest.

MATTHEWS: You went -- by the way, you said the other day...

TRUMP: If we have to walk, we have to walk.

MATTHEWS: ... about South Korea and Japan maybe having to develop their own nuclear weapons capabilities?

TRUMP: No, what I said is, "I'll keep it the way it is but they have to pay their fair share."

MATTHEWS: Yeah.

TRUMP: Just so you understand, South Korea is a behemoth.

MATTHEWS: I know.

TRUMP: They make so much. The ships of the world, the great ships of the world -- you can't buy televisions anymore unless you go to South Korea -- other than Sony which is in Japan.

2/4/2017

FULL TRANSCRIPT: MSNBC Town Hall with Donald Trump Moderated By Chris Matthews - Msnbc Info

MATTHEWS: Yeah. But you know what, the last time we pulled troops of the 38th parallel, we had a problem, it's the Korean War. So I really want to -- we shouldn't be pulling troops.

TRUMP: I'll tell you -- I'll tell you -- I'll tell what -- the Korean War. OK, so we compete with South Korea -- I have buildings in South Korea, I get along great with the people in South Korea. Do you know that the top...

MATTHEWS: Yeah. You won't if you pull the troops.

TRUMP: The top people cannot believe -- of course, they didn't know I was going to be running for president -- they used to tell me -- they don't tell me that anymore -- they cannot believe they get away with what they get away with.

You know who else? China.

MATTHEWS: Yeah.

TRUMP: I had the largest bank in the world in my building pay me lots of rent -- largest in the world.

I know China. I have the Bank of America building in San Francisco. I got through China, 1290 over there.

MATTHEWS: I know.

TRUMP: I've made a lot of money, condos all over the place with China. I know the Chinese better than anybody.

MATTHEWS: OK.

TRUMP: Let me tell you, they can't believe they get away with what they get away with.

MATTHEWS: Well, they get away with it because we owe them a couple of trillion dollars.

TRUMP: No, they get away with it, because our leaders don't know what they're doing

MATTHEWS: OK, look, I'm monopolizing here.

Let's go, young lady?

TRUMP: Hello.

QUESTION: Hello. I am (inaudible) and have a question on, what is your stance on women's rights and their rights to choose in their own reproductive health?

TRUMP: OK, well look, I mean, as you know, I'm pro-life. Right, I think you know that, and I -- with exceptions, with the three exceptions. But pretty much, that's my stance. Is that OK? You understand?

MATTHEWS: What should the law be on abortion?

TRUMP: Well, I have been pro-life.

MATTHEWS: I know, what should the law -- I know your principle, that's a good value. But what should be the law?

TRUMP: Well, you know, they've set the law and frankly the judges -- I mean, you're going to have a very big election coming up for that reason, because you have judges where it's a real tipping point.

MATTHEWS: I know.

TRUMP: And with the loss the Scalia, who was a very strong conservative...

MATTHEWS: I understand.

TRUMP: ... this presidential election is going to be very important, because when you say, "what's the law, nobody knows what's the law going to be. It depends on who gets elected, because somebody is going to appoint conservative judges and somebody is going to appoint liberal judges, depending on who wins.

MATTHEWS: I know. I never understood the pro-life position.

TRUMP: Well, a lot of people do understand.

MATTHEWS: I never understood it. Because I understand the principle, it's human life as people see it.

TRUMP: Which it is.

MATTHEWS: But what crime is it?

TRUMP: Well, it's human life.

MATTHEWS: No, should the woman be punished for having an abortion?

TRUMP: Look...

MATTHEWS: This is not something you can dodge.

TRUMP: It's a -- no, no...

MATTHEWS: If you say abortion is a crime or abortion is murder, you have to deal with it under law. Should abortion be punished?

TRUMP: Well, people in certain parts of the Republican Party and Conservative Republicans would say, "yes, they should be punished."

MATTHEWS: How about you?

TRUMP: I would say that it's a very serious problem. And it's a problem that we have to decide on. It's very hard.

MATTHEWS: But you're for banning it?

TRUMP: I'm going to say -- well, wait. Are you going to say, put them in jail? Are you -- is that the (inaudible) you're talking about?

MATTHEWS: Well, no, I'm asking you because you say you want to ban it. What does that mean?

TRUMP: I would -- I am against -- I am pro-life, yes.

MATTHEWS: What is ban -- how do you ban abortion? How do you actually do it?

TRUMP: Well, you know, you will go back to a position like they had where people will perhaps go to illegal places.

MATTHEWS: Yes?

TRUMP: But you have to ban it.

MATTHEWS: You banning, they go to somebody who flunked out of medical school.

TRUMP: Are you Catholic?

MATTHEWS: Yes, I think...



TRUMP: And how do you feel about the Catholic Church's position?

MATTHEWS: Well, I accept the teaching authority of my Church on moral issues.

TRUMP: I know, but do you know their position on abortion?

MATTHEWS: Yes, I do.

TRUMP: And do you concur with the position?

MATTHEWS: I concur with their moral position but legally, I get to the question -- here's my problem with it...

(LAUGHTER)

TRUMP: No, no, but let me ask you, but what do you say about your Church?

MATTHEWS: It's not funny.

TRUMP: Yes, it's really not funny.

What do you say about your church? They're very, very strong.

MATTHEWS: They're allowed to -- but the churches make their moral judgments, but you running for president of the United States will be chief executive of the United States. Do you believe...

TRUMP: No, but...

MATTHEWS: Do you believe in punishment for abortion, yes or no as a principle?

TRUMP: The answer is that there has to be some form of punishment.

MATTHEWS: For the woman?

TRUMP: Yes, there has to be some form.

MATTHEWS: Ten cents? Ten years? What?

TRUMP: Let me just tell you -- I don't know. That I don't know. That I don't know.

MATTHEWS: Why not?

TRUMP: I don't know.

MATTHEWS: You take positions on everything else.

TRUMP: Because I don't want to -- I frankly, I do take positions on everything else. It's a very complicated position.

MATTHEWS: But you say, one, that you're pro-life meaning that you want to ban it.

TRUMP: But wait a minute, wait a minute. But the Catholic Church is pro-life.

MATTHEWS: I'm not talking about my religion.

TRUMP: No, no, I am talking about your religion. Your religion -- I mean, you say that you're a very good Catholic. Your religion is your life. Let me ask you this...

MATTHEWS: I didn't say very good. I said I'm Catholic.

(LAUGHTER)

And secondly, I'm asking -- you're running for President.

TRUMP: No, no...

MATTHEWS: I'm not.

TRUMP: Chris -- Chris.

MATTHEWS: I'm asking you, what should a woman face if she chooses to have an abortion?

TRUMP: I'm not going to do that.

MATTHEWS: Why not?

TRUMP: I'm not going to play that game.

MATTHEWS: Game?

TRUMP: You have...

MATTHEWS: You said you're pro-life.

TRUMP: I am pro-life.

MATTHEWS: That means banning abortion.

TRUMP: And so is the Catholic Church pro-life.

MATTHEWS: But they don't control the -- this isn't Spain, the Church doesn't control the government.

TRUMP: What is the punishment under the Catholic Church? What is the...

MATTHEWS: Let me give something from the New Testament, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." Don't ask me about my religion.

TRUMP: No, no...

MATTHEWS: I'm asking you. You want to be president of the United States.

TRUMP: You told me that...

MATTHEWS: You tell me what the law should be.

TRUMP: I have -- I have not determined...

MATTHEWS: Just tell me what the law should be. You say you're pro-life.

TRUMP: I am pro-life.

MATTHEWS: What does that mean?

TRUMP: With exceptions. I am pro-life.

I have not determined what the punishment would be.

MATTHEWS: Why not?

TRUMP: Because I haven't determined it.

MATTHEWS: When you decide to be pro-life, you should have thought of it. Because...

TRUMP: No, you could ask anybody who is pro-life...

MATTHEWS: OK, here's the problem -- here's my problem with this, if you don't have a punishment for abortion -- I don't believe in it, of course -- people are going to find a way to have an abortion.

TRUMP: You don't believe in what?

MATTHEWS: I don't believe in punishing anybody for having an abortion.

TRUMP: OK, fine. OK, (inaudible).

MATTHEWS: Of course not. I think it's a woman's choice.

TRUMP: So you're against the teachings of your Church?

MATTHEWS: I have a view -- a moral view -- but I believe we live in a free country, and I don't want to live in a country so fascistic that it could stop a person from making that decision.

TRUMP: But then you are...

MATTHEWS: That would be so invasive.

TRUMP: I know but I've heard you speaking...

MATTHEWS: So determined of a society that I wouldn't be able -- one we are familiar with. And Donald Trump, you wouldn't be familiar with.

TRUMP: But I've heard you speaking so highly about your religion and your Church.

MATTHEWS: Yes.

TRUMP: Your Church is very, very strongly as you know, pro-life.

MATTHEWS: I know.

TRUMP: What do you say to your Church?

MATTHEWS: I say, I accept your moral authority. In the United States, the people make the decision, the courts rule on what's in the Constitution, and we live by that. That's why I say.

TRUMP: Yes, but you don't live by it because you don't accept it. You can't accept it. You can't accept it. You can't accept it.

MATTHEWS: Can we go back to matters of the law and running for president because matters of law, what I'm talking about, and this is the difficult situation you've placed yourself in.

By saying you're pro-life, you mean you want to ban abortion. How do you ban abortion without some kind of sanction? Then you get in that very tricky question of a sanction, a fine on human life which you call murder?

TRUMP: It will have to be determined.

MATTHEWS: A fine, imprisonment for a young woman who finds herself pregnant?

TRUMP: It will have to be determined.

MATTHEWS: What about the guy that gets her pregnant? Is he responsible under the law for these abortions? Or is he not responsible for an abortion?

TRUMP: Well, it hasn't -- it hasn't -- different feelings, different people. I would say no.

MATTHEWS: Well, they're usually involved. Anyway, much more from the audience here at the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay. We'll be right back.

(APPLAUSE)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MATTHEWS: Welcome back to Green Bay, Wisconsin for our exclusive town hall with Donald Trump. We're here at the University of Wisconsin Green Bay. More now from our audience.

Congratulations, Grandpa.

TRUMP: Thank you.

MATTHEWS: Theodore right?

TRUMP: Theodore. Theodore James.

MATTHEWS: Speaking of being pro-life...

TRUMP: Right.

MATTHEWS: ... go ahead. First question.

QUESTION: Mr. Trump, I'm Dana Strom (ph), and my question for you is, could you provide us a little bit of your position on the right to marry for gays and lesbians as well as if you'll continue the fight for equality for those individuals.

TRUMP: Well, the courts have decided so that's really not a subject that's come up. But the courts have decided. I would have preferred states making the decision. But the courts have decided.

QUESTION: Just a quick furthermore, could you maybe talk about how you might increase equality for people of the transgender community?

TRUMP: I would say that I'm going to go by the laws of the courts and the courts said -- really, it's very much up in flux right now, but I'll go by the laws.

MATTHEWS: Next question. Go ahead.

TRUMP: Hi.

QUESTION: Hi, Mr. Trump. My name is Kris Coulter (ph). I'm wondering what your plan is for addressing rising college tuition costs and student loan debt. Would you support something as aggressive as, say, student loan forgiveness?

TRUMP: I get this question more than any other question when I'm with young college students. And they are absolutely up to their neck in debt and they can't get jobs when they graduate, even if they're good students in many cases, and they don't know what to do. They're really stuck and we're going to work on a plan where it's going to be extensions, where it's going to be very low interest.

We're going to work on it because something has to be done.

Chris, I get that question...

MATTHEWS: I know.

TRUMP: ... more than any other question is what are we going to do about student debt. It's an enormous problem in this country. And the biggest part of the problem is they graduate from college, good colleges, and they can't get jobs. So we're going to work on it.

MATTHEWS: Yeah.

TRUMP: Yes?

QUESTION: My name is Elana Colt (ph). And I'm a retired veteran.

TRUMP: Good.

QUESTION: And I'm just wondering who your top military advisers are and who your top veteran's affairs adviser is?

TRUMP: Well, I really announced and I'm going to be announcing some at the end of this week. I have announced a whole list. I gave it out last week. And we have Waleed Faris and some tremendous people. And frankly, as far as the vets as concerned, I thought when you started saying vet, I thought you were going to ask me another question because the vets in this country are being treated horribly.

QUESTION: I agree.

TRUMP: When you talk about illegal immigration, you're talking about they're being treated worse in many cases than illegal immigrants. And we are going to straighten that out. We're going to straighten it out fast. What's going on, it's corrupt, the Veteran's Administration and it's incompetently run.

So I can tell you, as a vet, you're going to be very, very happy with Trump.

QUESTION: Thank you very much.

TRUMP: OK, thank you.

MATTHEWS: We're going to keep up the questions here at the town hall with Donald Trump after this.

(APPLAUSE)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(APPLAUSE)

MATTHEWS: We're back (inaudible). It's time for Donald Trump (inaudible) questions. The mayor of this city, James Schmitt, you're honored (ph).

QUESTION: Mr. Trump, welcome to Green Bay and Chris (ph).

TRUMP: Thank you.

QUESTION: As a fellow politician, we're -- some of us are embarrassed about the decorum of this campaign and just the attitudes and the flavor that this has taken. So I'm wondering what you can do, as the front-runner of the Republican Party, to really elevate the issues and get away from some of this pettiness we've been experiencing?

TRUMP: Well, first of all, congratulations. Fourteen years as mayor of Green Bay, that's a great honor. But I -- I will tell you, I think that generally speaking, I agree. We have some very hard issues. We talk about them. I would much rather talk about the issues than the kind of things that are brought up, but things get brought up. And sometimes, they get brought up because it's me, and sometimes, they get brought up for a lot of other reasons.

But I think it's very important that we elevate the conversation and I agree with you 100 percent. I would much rather be discussing nuclear and all of the other issues that we're discussing than the kind of things that you're referring to.

MATTHEWS: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

QUESTION: Hello.

MATTHEWS: How are you?

QUESTION: Good. My name is Shuana Fraylick (ph). I'm a professor here at the Communication Department.

TRUMP: Good.

QUESTION: So my question for you is around prison reform. What do you see needs to be reformed with our prison system? And with that, what do you think about drug legalization playing into the reform?



TRUMP: I think that as far as drug legalization, we talk about marijuana, and in terms of medical, I think I am basically for that. I've heard some wonderful things in terms of medical. I'm watching Colorado very carefully to see what's happening out there. I'm getting some very negative reports, I'm getting some OK reports. But I'm getting some very negative reports coming out of Colorado as to what's happening, so we'll see what happens.

I think a lot of people are really looking at Colorado (ph) for prison reform. I think our -- as you know, our prison system is a disaster, it's complete disaster all over the country. Almost everything we have, Chris, if you want to know the truth, is a disaster.

MATTHEWS: Really?

(APPLAUSE)

(inaudible) has done great.

TRUMP: If you take a look, our military has been depleted, our rights are not being taken care of. I mean, we have a lot of problems. OK. but as far as...

MATTHEWS: Why does everybody want to come here if we're not great? Everybody in the world wants to come here and everybody does better in this country than where they came from. Everybody.

TRUMP: Other people -- other people have problems, too. By the way, with prisons...

MATTHEWS: I think we're better than that.

TRUMP: ... I do think we can do a lot of privatizations and private prisons. It seems to work a lot better.

MATTHEWS: What are the problems you've heard about Colorado? Because a lot of people wonder about who do you want smoking dope. I mean, do you want your train conductor, the bus driver, the airplane pilot? No. What do you want? Maybe the guy who teaches philosophy might be OK.

(LAUGHTER)

I mean -- I mean does anybody trust anybody that's high to do anything? I mean, I'm serious about this.

TRUMP: Well, I mean, I hear the same problem...

MATTHEWS: It's not -- recreational drugs. What's that mean?

TRUMP: I hear the same problems. There's a -- there's a lasting negative impact. I mean, you do too much of it...

MATTHEWS: The loss of ambition...

TRUMP: Yes. I mean, it's a loss...

MATTHEWS: ... that I think is there.

TRUMP: There's a loss of something. So that book has not been written yet, but it's going to be written pretty soon and I'm not hearing very positive things.

QUESTION: Hi, Mr. Trump.

TRUMP: Yes, hi.

QUESTION: My name is Michael -- my name is Michael Rector (ph). My question is you're on the record saying that there might be riots in the event that -- that you're not the Republican Party nominee...

TRUMP: You know, I -- by the way, I hope not.

QUESTION: No, I -- I hope not too. My -- my -- I'm asking about that, in fact...

TRUMP: They won't be led by me, but there will be a lot of unhappy people.

QUESTION: So -- so in the event that a brokered convention doesn't award the nomination to you, does your campaign have any programs or plans to mitigate violence among your supporters?

TRUMP: Well, we'll have definitely the largest number of votes no matter what happens. We'll have definitely the largest number of votes and we'll also have definitely the number of delegates by far. Nobody's even going to be close. Will we get to 1237? I think so. I do believe we will and I hope we will because it'll be very nice. I'll do a very good job. But I think we will. If we don't, I can't really tell you what happens.

Look, people are being disenfranchised in this country. They looked at me as somebody and they look at me as somebody that's going to bring them back. We haven't had -- you haven't had a real salary increase, if you're a blue-collar worker, in over 12 years. They're getting -- it's getting worse and worse and worse. These are smart people. These are people that have always had good jobs. Their jobs have been taken away. They've been sent over to China, Mexico and many other countries and they're not doing as well as they were doing 12 and 15 years ago.

I will bring that back and they know I will bring that back and I'm the only one that's going to bring it back. I'm the only one that understands the subject, and frankly, I'm the only one that really even talks about the subject. And I think you're going to have some people that are going to be very, very upset if I'm leading. Now, if I'm not leading, somebody else has more votes, somebody else has more delegates, that's a different thing.

But if I'm leading by a lot, and let's say I'm a little bit short of that number, and I told you before, that number's a little bit fictitious because I'm not running against one or two people. Right now I am. But for the last six months, we've been running against many, many people. So it's really a very unfair standard. But if I'm a little bit short but I'm millions of votes and hundreds of delegates ahead of other people, I think you're going to have some very unhappy people. I hope nothing bad happens, but I think you're going to have some very, very angry and unhappy people.

MATTHEWS: What will you be?

TRUMP: I think the...

MATTHEWS: What will you say to the American people who voted for you...

TRUMP: Well, I...

MATTHEWS: ... at that moment?

TRUMP: I can't say yet because that's a very emotional situation that you're talking about. So I can't really tell you what I will do or what I'll say. I can say this. If I'm way ahead in all -- by all accounts, if I'm way ahead, I would be very disappointed. You know, we're supposed to be a democracy. And I -- the Louisiana thing is a terrible thing. I told you before. I won and I end up with less delegates than somebody that...

MATTHEWS: Who do you trust in the Republican leadership? Suppose you come in around 1150 and you think that's a gimme, they say it's not a gimme. It's far from the cuff (ph). OK, fine. So who do you go to? You go to Kasich and say, "Look, John, I need a V.P., I need your delegates?" Would you think of doing that?

TRUMP: Well, I don't to...

MATTHEWS: It would get you over the top.

TRUMP: I don't want to reveal what I may do. I mean, I may do some things...

MATTHEWS: But you said...

TRUMP: I may. I don't know.

MATTHEWS: You said you may use nuclear weapons, but you can't tell me how you're going to...

TRUMP: No. No I didn't say I...

MATTHEWS: ... operate the convention?

(LAUGHTER)

TRUMP: I didn't say -- I never rule -- you don't want a -- from a negotiating standpoint...

MATTHEWS: OK.

TRUMP: ... you don't want to say, "I will never..."

MATTHEWS: Do you trust anybody? Do you trust Frank Grevious (ph) to play it fair?

TRUMP: Do I trust anybody? Let's put it that way...

MATTHEWS: Do you trust Mitt Romney not trying to give (inaudible) backs...

TRUMP: No, I don't trust Mitt Romney. Mitt Romney was disgraced. He should have won that election.

MATTHEWS: Well, he's trying to get it out here.

TRUMP: Well, he's not going to get it. He should have won that election. Mitt Romney let us down. That was an election that should have been won, he failed. Do you know what he did? He choked. He went away, he choked just like a dog. He choked. It was a very sad -- that's what it is.

MATTHEWS: You're good at this, but I'm asking you a question.

TRUMP: No, no. I'm not good at it, I'm just telling you the facts.

MATTHEWS: Were you the guy that gave people nicknames in high school?

TRUMP: No, but I give some nicknames right now when I'm running for president.

MATTHEWS: Big ears, I mean, little hands. I'm sorry -- that was you, I'm sorry. We'll be right back with more of Donald Trump in just a minute.

(APPLAUSE)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(APPLAUSE)

MATTHEWS: We're back. We're with Donald Trump for just a couple of more minutes.

I want to give you a chance here because a couple of things in this campaign you said have grabbed me and I thought were powerful. And I want you to take a minute -- I'll give you a break here just to do it. Either we have a country or we don't.

TRUMP: Right.

MATTHEWS: What did you mean by that?

TRUMP: I mean, we have borders, we have to have borders. We can't let people just walk in and out of our country like we do right now. We don't have borders. People are pouring into the country, the Border Patrol just today endorsed me, and that's a big endorsement.

MATTHEWS: What do they think of this wall idea?

TRUMP: They like the wall and they like to be given their strength back. They want to be able to do the job...

MATTHEWS: Well, you're...

TRUMP: These are great people, these are people that can do the job but they're not allowed to do it.

MATTHEWS: You're asking the Mexican government to put a wall up to keep its own people in.

TRUMP: No, no, no, no. We are putting the wall up...

MATTHEWS: They're paying for it.

TRUMP: ... and they're going to pay for the wall.

MATTHEWS: So they're going to pay for our wall to keep their people in their country. This is going to be like the Berlin Wall...

(CROSSTALK)

MATTHEWS: ... wall to keep your own people in.

TRUMP: One way or the other.

MATTHEWS: Why would any country pay to keep its own people in?

TRUMP: Let me tell you something.

MATTHEWS: It's never happened.

TRUMP: We have right now a trade...

MATTHEWS: Except the Berlin Wall.

TRUMP: We have a trade deficit with Mexico, \$58 billion a year. The wall is going to cost approximately \$10 billion. Believe me, they will pay in one form or another...

MATTHEWS: If not -- or else what?

TRUMP: And you know what -- you know what? They could stop a lot of the problem. You know, if you want to become a citizen of Mexico, you want to get into Mexico...

MATTHEWS: Yeah.

TRUMP: ... it is impossible, OK?

MATTHEWS: I know. I'm not saying they're not hypocritical.

TRUMP: They could -- let me just tell you, they could...

MATTHEWS: I know that.

TRUMP: ... stop a lot of the problems that we're having by themselves, they don't choose to do it. Not right. And we have a trade deficit, \$58 billion...

MATTHEWS: So we cut off Japan, we cut off -- this is the -- this is your strategy in every case. We could walk, no more trade...

TRUMP: You have to always...

MATTHEWS: ... with Mexico.

TRUMP: Oh, absolutely.

MATTHEWS: No more troops in Europe.

TRUMP: And by the way, when I say no more trade, once you -- once they know that you are really willing to go that extra length, there will always be trade, but we'll make good deals. We're making the worst trade deals...

MATTHEWS: Yeah, but the bottom line is always we walk.

TRUMP: You have to be able to walk, yes. It's unlikely that you'll have to, but you have to be able to walk.

MATTHEWS: OK. These or (inaudible) could be very tricky. Anyway, thank you, Mr. Trump.

TRUMP: Thank you. Thank you very much.

MATTHEWS: This argument will continue. Thank you, Donald Trump, and thank you to the University of Wisconsin Green Bay. And coming up next, the big night of politics continues on MSNBC with Rachel Maddow and both Democratic candidates, Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders, tonight from Green Bay.

(APPLAUSE)

###

**Permalink**

**Back To Top | Front Page**

## **Follow us on Twitter**

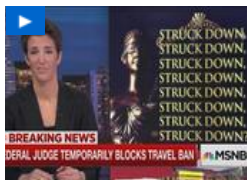
For the latest news on MSNBC, follow our PR team on Twitter:

MSNBC PR @msnbcpr

**Click here for more on msnbc.com.**

To contact us with inquiries or comments, send an email **here**. Or call 212 664 6605.

**Best of MSNBC**



**Rachel Maddow**  
2/3/17



**Last Word 2/3/17**



**Last Word 2/3/17**



**What's next for  
Trump's travel ban?**

**Recent posts**

**JANUARY 2017 RATINGS – MSNBC RACKS UP HIGHER TOTAL VIEWER GROWTH THAN CNN AND FOX NEWS ACROSS KEY DAYPARTS**

**GRETA VAN SUSTEREN JOINS MSNBC**

**MEGYN KELLY JOINS NBC NEWS**

**MSNBC DELIVERS MOST-WATCHED YEAR EVER**

**MSNBC'S "MORNING JOE" RANKED #3 IN GOOGLE'S 2016 YEAR IN SEARCH TOP TRENDING TV NEWS SHOWS**

**TRANSCRIPT: Chris Matthews Is Joined By Cast of the New Film "Hidden Figures" Including Taraji P. Henson, Octavia Spencer, Janelle Monáe, Kevin Costner, Pharrell Williams and Director Ted Melfi**

**MSNBC POSTS GREATER TOTAL DAY GROWTH THAN CNN AND FOX NEWS IN NOVEMBER 2016**

**"SPLIT SECOND DECISION" PREMIERES SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12**

**MSNBC SURGES TO ALL-TIME HIGHS IN OCTOBER 2016; BEATS CNN IN WEEKDAY PRIME FOR THIRD STRAIGHT MONTH**

**NBC NEWS AND MSNBC TOGETHER BEAT ALL OTHER NETWORKS FOR FINAL PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE WITH NEARLY 16 MILLION TOTAL VIEWERS**