

Robert Kennedy Jr. Announces 2024 Presidential Campaign

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., the son of former attorney general and 1968 presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy, announced his 2024 Democratic presidential campaign at a rally in Boston. Mr. Kennedy said he was running for president because he wanted to challenge the connection between government and corporate power, press for greater economic equality, and heal the nation's political divides. He also talked extensively about his vaccine skepticism and criticisms of handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

THANK YOU. THANK YOU, ALL THE PEOPLE WHO WORKED SO HARD TO MAKE THIS A REALLY GREAT EVENT. I WANTED TO DO THIS EVENT IN BOSTON BECAUSE THIS IS A TOWN THAT I HAVE STRONG ROOTS IN. I GRADUATED HIGH SCHOOL HERE. I WENT TO COLLEGE HERE. MORE IMPORTANTLY, ALL OF MY KENNEDY GRANDPARENT, KENNEDY AND FITZGERALD GRAND PARENTS, LANDED HERE IN 1848, FLEEING BRITISH OPPRESSION AND THE POTATO FAMINE BACK AT HOME. AND ARRIVED HERE FROM AN AGENT WHERE FOR 800 YEARS THERE WAS LEGALIZED OPPRESSION AGAINST IRISH CATHOLICS, NOT ABLE TO VOTE TO EXERCISE THEIR FRANCHISE. IT WAS ILLEGAL FOR A CATHOLIC TO HOLD POLITICAL OFFICE. TO BECOME -- TO ENTER A PROFESSION, A DOCTOR, ATTORNEY. IT WAS -- ONE OF MY ANCESTORS AS A PRIEST WAS HANGED FOR TEACHING MY ANCESTORS HOW TO READ AND WRITE. IT WAS ILLEGAL TO TEACH A CATHOLIC AT THAT POINT. AND THEY LANDED HERE AND THEY TOOK TO POLITICS LIKE A STARVING MAN TO FOOD. MY GRANDFATHER, MY GREAT-GRANDFATHER WAS THE FIRST IRISH MAYOR OF BOSTON. HIS DAUGHTER, ROSE FITZGERALD KENNEDY, WAS MY GRANDMOTHER. AND SHE LOVED THIS COUNTRY BECAUSE SHE UNDERSTOOD THAT THIS COUNTRY FOR THE FIRST TIME HAD GIVEN HER PEOPLE THE CAPACITY AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THEIR OWN POLITICAL DESTINY AND SHE LOVED EVERY -- SHE MADE HER FREEDOM TAKE THE FREEDOM WALK HERE IN BOSTON. SHE TOOK THEM TO WALDBLE POND ON -- WALDEN PONDS ON WEEKENDS. SHE TOOK THEM TO THE BATTLES OF THE REVOLUTION. THEY WANTED THEM TO KNOW THEIR HISTORY AND TO LOVE THEIR COUNTRY. SHE MADE ALL OF US, ALL 29 OF HER GRANDCHILDREN, MEMORIZE LONGFELLOW'S POEM. LISTEN, MY CHILDREN, AND YOU SHALL HEAR OF THE MIDNIGHT RIDE OF PAUL REVERE ON THE 18TH OF APRIL IN 1975, HARDLY A MAN IS NOW ALIVE THAT REMEMBERS THAT FATEFUL DAY. AND PAUL REVERE TOOK OFF 242 YEARS AGO LAST NIGHT FROM THE OLD NORTH CHURCH, THE NORTH END WHERE SHE WAS BORN, MY GRANDMOTHER WAS BORN. AND HE RODE OUT TO CONCORD, TO ALERT THE COUNTRYSIDE AND

PARTICULARLY THE MINUTEMEN. THAT A BRITISH TROOP OF 800 MEN WAS COMING TO CONFISCATE THEIR ARSENAL AND THEIR POWDER DUMP AND THOSE MEN MET THE BRITISH ARMY, THE LARGEST AND MOST POWERFUL EMPIRE IN HISTORY ON THE OLD NORTH BRIDGE 242 YEARS AGO TODAY AND THEY DROVE THEM BACK AND THEY CHASED THEM IN RETREAT THROUGH CONCORD, THROUGH LEXINGTON, THROUGH LINCOLN, THROUGH ARLINGTON, INTO CAMBRIDGE, INFLECTING TERRIBLE CASUALTIES. AND THAT WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION. BUT REALLY THE REVOLUTION HAD STARTED TWO YEARS BEFORE. AND IT STARTED WHEN BRITISH HAD PASSED AN OPPRESSIVE LAW RAISING THE TAXES ON TEA. IN NEW ENGLAND. AND THEY RAISED -- THIS WAS A -- A BRITISH CROWN MADE IN COLLUSION WITH THE BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY, WHICH HIS MINISTER OWNED SHARES IN, THE KING OWNED SHARES IN AND MOST OF THE AIR ARISTOCRACY OWNED SHARES IN. IT WAS THEIR PLAN TO IMPOSE THE TAX ON NEW ENGLAND MEASURE CHANTS, BUT EXEMPT THE BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY FROM A TAX. SO THAT THEY COULD UNDERSSELL EVERYBODY AND THAT THEY WOULD MAKE A PROFIT FOR THEIR SHAREHOLDERS. AND OF COURSE THE AMERICANS RESPONDED BY DRESSING LIKE INDIANS AND BOARDING THE EAST BRITISH INDIA COMPANY'S SHIPS AND DUMPING THE TEA INTO THE HARBOR AND THAT'S WHEN THE BRITISH SENT THAT TROOP OVER HERE TO QUELL THE REBELLION. SO THAT REBELLION WAS IN PART BECAUSE EMPIRE. BUT THE SPEAR TIP OF THAT WAS A FURY THAT THE COLONISTS HAD AGAINST THE MERGER, THE CORRUPT MERGER OF STATE AND CORPORATE POWER. / [APPLAUSE] I'VE COME HERE TODAY TO ANNOUNCE MY CANDIDACY FOR THE DEMOCRATIC NOMINATION FOR PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] MY PHOEUFGRS THE NEXT 18 -- MY MISSION OVER THE NEXT 18 MONTHS OF THIS CAMPAIGN AND OVER MY - - THROUGHOUT MY PRESIDENCY WILL BE TO END THE CORRUPT MERGER OF STATE AND CORPORATE POWER THAT IS -- [INDISCERNIBLE] -- [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] -- A NEW CORPORATE FOUGHT TOALISM IN OUR COUNTRY -- FUTILISM IN OUR COUNTRY, TO POISON OUR CHILDREN AND OUR PEOPLE WITH CHEMICALS AND PHARMACEUTICAL DRUGS, TO STRIP OUR ASSET, TO HOLLOW THE MIDDLE CLASS AND KEEP US IN A CONSTANT STATE OF WAR. [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] NOW, I WANT TO START BY FIRST OF ALL -- I CAN'T UNDERSTAND THAT SIGN LANGUAGE. [LAUGHTER] I WANT TO START BY THANKING MY WIFE,, CHERYL HEINTZ. [APPLAUSE] I WOULD NOT BE HERE WITHOUT CHERYL. AND I CANNOT DESCRIBE IN WORDS WHAT SHE HAS BROUGHT TO MY LIFE. SHE IS THE WISEST PERSON THAT I KNOW. SHE'S ALSO ONE OF THE FUNNIEST PEOPLE

I KNOW. AND I THINK THE AMERICAN PEOPLE GET TO KNOW HER, THAT THEY ARE GOING TO BE MORE EXCITED ABOUT HAVING A REALLY FUNNY FIRST LADY IN THE WHITE HOUSE THAN THEY ARE ABOUT ME. [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] I ALSO WANT TO THANK ALL MY FAMILY MEMBERS WHO SHOWED UP TODAY. MY CHILDREN, BOBBY, KICK, AMARILIS, CONOR, AIDEN. DID I LEAVE ANY OUT? [LAUGHTER] I TOLD THEM TO WEAR NAME TAGS AND I CAN'T SEE FROM HERE. AND CAT. SO THAT'S -- MY GRANDCHILDREN, ZOE AND CASSIUS AND BOBCAT. MY BROTHER, DOUGLAS, MY SISTER, COURTNEY. MY NEPHEWS, BO AND BILLY BIRD AND RILEY AND GEORGE AND -- [LAUGHTER] -- ANTHONY SHRIVER. I AM SO GRATEFUL FOR YOU COMING HERE. AND GOTTO. I SAID GOTTO. [APPLAUSE] OK. I'M VERY, VERY GRATEFUL TO ALL OF YOU FOR COMING. THERE ARE OTHER MEMBERS OF MY FAMILY WHO ARE NOT HERE TODAY. [LAUGHTER] I'M GOING TO MAKE A CONFESSION BECAUSE I KNOW MOST AMERICAN FAMILIES, THEY NEVER HAVE ANY DIFFERENCES WITH EACH OTHER. [LAUGHTER] [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] WHEN THAT HAPPENS IN A FAMILY, IT'S REALLY HUGE NEWS. LIKE EVERYWHERE. AND -- BUT, YOU KNOW, I WANT TO JUST SAY THIS. I'M VERY GRATEFUL THAT MANY OF THE FAMILIES WHO DISAGREE WITH WHAT I'M DOING TODAY, MANY OF THE FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE TAKEN THE TIME TO WRITE ME BEAUTIFUL LETTERS OF LOVE THIS WEEK, SENT ME EMAILS, MADE TELEPHONE CALLS TO ME. AND I BEAR NO ILL WILL OR ANY KIND OF DISAPPOINTMENT TO ANY OF THEM, THEY HAVE DIFFERENT VIEWS OF THE POLITICS IN THIS COUNTRY. MY WHOLE FAMILY, INCLUDING MYSELF, HAVE LONG PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH PRESIDENT BIDEN. MANY OF MY FAMILY MEMBERS ARE WORKING IN THE ADMINISTRATION. MANY OF THEM ALSO PLAIN DISAGREE WITH ME ON ISSUES LIKE CENSORSHIP, ON WAR, ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND THEY ARE ENTITLED TO THEIR BELIEFS AND I RESPECT THEIR OPINIONS ON THEM. AND I LOVE THEM BACK. [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] AND IS IT TOO MUCH TO HOPE THAT WE COULD HAVE THE SAME THING FOR OUR COUNTRY? WE HAVE A POLARIZATION IN THIS COUNTRY TODAY THAT IS SO TOXIC AND SO DANGEROUS AND ANY TIME SINCE THE CIVIL -- THAN ANY TIME SINCE THE CIVIL WAR. IN THE CIVIL WAR, ABRAHAM LINCOLN SAID, A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF CANNOT STAND. WHEN I TALK TO BOTH REPUBLICAN FRIENDS AND DEMOCRATIC FRIENDS, THEY TALK ABOUT THIS DIVISION IN ALMOST ATHE APOBG HREUPT CAL TERMS. NO ONE CAN SAY A SAFE WAY OR GOOD WAY OUT OF IT. PEOPLE ARE PREPARING FOR SORT OF A DISTAUIAN FUTURE -- DYSTOPIAN FUTURE. ONE OF THE PRINCIPLE MISSIONS OF MY CAMPAIGN AND OF MY PRESIDENCY IS GOING TO BE TO END THAT DIVISION. [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] I'M GOING TO TRY TO DO THAT. BY

ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO TALK ABOUT THE VALUES THAT WE HAVE IN COMMON RATHER THAN THE ISSUES THAT KEEP US APART. AND ALSO, ALSO, AND THIS I THINK IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING, I'M GOING TO DO THAT BY TELLING THE TRUTH TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] BECAUSE THAT IS THE CORE, THAT IS THE CORE OF THIS DIVISION, OF COURSE. WHEN WE FIGHT EACH OTHER, WHEN BLACKS FIGHT WHITES AND REPUBLICANS FIGHT DEMOCRATS AND RURAL FIGHTS URBAN, THE PEOPLE THAT -- MERGER OF CORPORATE POWER THAT SITS AT THE TOP IS LOVING THE FIGHTING BETWEEN US, AMONG US, SO THAT THEY CAN STRIPMINE OUR COUNTRY -- STRIP MINE OUR COUNTRY. AND THE THING THAT KEEPS US -- [APPLAUSE] THE REASON TRUTH IS SO IMPORTANT, WHEN I WAS A LITTLE BOY, NOBODY IN THIS COUNTRY WOULD DREAM THAT OUR GOVERNMENT WOULD EVER LIE TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. IN FACT, THAT'S NOT A JOKE. NOBODY BELIEVED IT BACK THEN. [LAUGHTER] IN MAY OF 1960, THAT CHANGED A LITTLE WHEN GARY POWERS CRASHES INTO RUSSIA AND THE EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION DENIED WE HAD A PROGRAM BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T KNOW AT THE TIME THE RUSSIANS HAD CAPTURED GARY POWERS. AND WHEN THE RUSSIANS PRODUCED HIM, IT WAS A SHOCK TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE THAT THEIR GOVERNMENT HAD LIED TO THEM. AND THEN IN 1970, DURING THE VIETNAM WAR, OF COURSE, WE ALL BEGAN TO SUSPECT THAT WE WERE BEING LIED TO. IN 1971, WHEN THE PENTAGON PAPERS CAME OUT, WE REALIZED OH, THIS IS WHAT THEY DO. MY FATHER JUST BEFORE HE DIED TOLD ME VERY SADLY, PEOPLE IN AUTHORITY LIE. AND THE GOVERNMENT NOW LIES TO US, WE ALL KNOW IT. WE TAKE IT FOR GRANTED. WHEN MY UNCLE LEFT OFFICE IN 19 -- WHEN HE DIED IN 1963, ABOUT 80% OF AMERICANS SAID THEY TRUSTED THEIR GOVERNMENT. TODAY 22% TRUST THEIR GOVERNMENT AND 22% TRUST THE PRESS. THE LOWEST LEVEL EVER. THE MEDIA IS AT THE LOWEST BECAUSE WE KNOWS THE MEDIA LIES TO US KNOW AND EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT. [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] THE PROBLEM IS THAT WHEN THERE'S SOURCES OF INFORMATION THAT WERE ALWAYS USED AND THAT WE NEED TO RELY ON IN DEMOCRACY, WHEN THEY START LYING TO US, AMERICANS LOOK FOR OTHER SOURCES BECAUSE THEY KNOW THEY'RE BEING LIED TO. AND THEY LOOK FOR OTHER SOURCES OF THE TRUTH. AND WHEN THE MEDIA AND THE CORPORATE MEDIA AND THE CORPORATE CAPTIVING GOVERNMENT SEES OTHERS' VOICES OF TRUTH, THEY HAVE TO BRAND THOSE MISINFORMATION. BECAUSE THEY THREATEN THEIR PARADIGM. THEY THREATEN THAT ORTHODOXY. [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] AND OF COURSE THERE IS A LOT OF GENUINE MISINFORMATION BUT AS WE KNOW, A LOT OF THE

MISINFORMATION IS JUST STATEMENTS THAT DEPART FROM GOVERNMENT ORTHODOXY SO THEY HAVE TO EITHER SENSOR US -- CENSOR US OR THEY HAVE TO LIE ABOUT WHAT'S TRUE AND WHAT'S NOT TRUE. AND THAT AMPLIFIES THE POLARIZATION. IT AMPLIFIES THE HATRED, THE FEAR, THE INSECURITY. BECAUSE YOU KNOW YOU'RE BEING LIED TO AND THEN YOU'RE BEING SILENCED. THE CENSORSHIP DOESN'T WORK FROM ANY POINT OF VIEW. AND IT'S VERY, VERY DANGEROUS. MY FATHER 55 YEARS AGO LAST MONTH, I SAT AT A 14-YEAR-OLD BOY BEHIND MY FATHER AS HE ANNOUNCED IN THE SENATE CAUCUS ROOM IN WASHINGTON, D.C., HIS CAMPAIGN FOR PRESIDENCY OF THE UNITED STATES. AND MY FATHER AT THAT TIME WAS IN MANY WAYS IN THE SAME POSITION I'M IN TODAY. HE WAS RUNNING AGAINST A PRESIDENT OF HIS OWN PARTY. HE WAS RUNNING AGAINST A WAR. HE WAS RUNNING AGAINST -- IS RUNNING AT A TIME OF UNPRECEDENTED POLARIZATION IN OUR COUNTRY. AND HE HAD NO CHANCE OF WINNING. MY FATHER, WHEN HE DECLARED, HAD NOT A SINGLE KPHAOUL IN HIM THAT -- MOLECULE IN HIM THAT HE BELIEVED HE COULD WIN THE DEMOCRATIC NOMINATION. WHY IS THAT? HE HAD RUN HIS BROTHER'S CAMPAIGN IN 1960, EIGHT YEARS BEFORE. BUT NOW ALL THE UNIONS WERE AGAINST HIM, WITH TWO EXCEPTIONS. THE UNITED AUTO WORKERS AND CESAR CHAVEZ'S UNITED FARM WORKERS. THE LIBERAL PRESS WAS 100% AGAINST HIM, FROM "THE NEW YORK TIMES" TO THE VILLAGE BOYS. THE LABOR UNION, THE BIG CITY MAYORS WERE AGAINST HIM. INCLUDING MAYOR DALEY WHO HAD PLAYED A CRITICAL ROLE IN PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S NOMINATION. ALL OF THE PEOPLE IN THE NEW FRONTIER WHO WERE HIS CLOSEST FRIENDS WERE NOW WORKING FOR THE JOHNSON WHITE HOUSE. SO THEY WERE AGAINST HIM. THE ONLY PEOPLE THAT HE HAD WITH HIM, EVEN THE UNIVERSITIES WERE AGAINST HIM, BECAUSE THEY WERE WITH MCCARTHY, THE GROUP OF HOLLYWOOD LIKE JO ANN WOODWARD, PAUL NEWMAN, WHO HAD BEEN VERY CLOSE TO HIM, WORKED VERY HARD FOR MY UNCLE IN 1960, WERE NOW WORKING FOR MCCARTHY. AND MY FATHER AND THE UNIVERSITIES, MY FATHER USED TO SAY THAT MCCARTHY HAD ALL THE A STUDENTS AND HE HAD THE B AND C STUDENTS. [LAUGHTER] AND SO THE ONLY PEOPLE HE HAD WERE PEOPLE, POOR WHITE PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS, LIKE APPALACHIA. POOR BLACKS IN THE DELTA AND UJAR LEM IN THE CITY -- AND IN THE CITIES, HARLEM. AND EAST L.A. AND INDIANS ON THE INDIAN RESERVATIONS. AND THAT WAS KIND OF IT. BUT THAT HOPELESSNESS IN HIS CAMPAIGN, FREEDOM TO TELL THE TRUTH TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. SO WHEN HE WENT INTO INDIANA UNIVERSITY AND THE MEDICAL STUDENTS SAID TO HIM, WHO IS GOING TO PAY FOR YOUR

HEALTH CARE PROGRAM, HE SAID, YOU ARE. [LAUGHTER] AND WHEN HE WENT TO CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY -- CAB OTT UNIVERSITY IN OMAHA AND THEY ASKED HIM WHETHER HE WOULD SUPPORT THEIR DEFERMENTS, HE SAID NO. DEFERMENTS WERE THE REASON MOST OF THEM WERE IN COLLEGE. BECAUSE THAT WAS THE ONLY WAY YOU COULD GET OUT OF VIETNAM. AND HE SAID, NO. AND THEY BOOED HIM. AND HE SAID, DO YOU THINK IT'S FAIR THAT 45% OF PARATROOPERS IN VIETNAM ARE BLACK? DO YOU THINK IT'S FAIR THAT WE ARE SENDING BLACK CHILDREN TO FIGHT THIS WAR BECAUSE THEY CAN'T GET THEIR KIDS INTO COLLEGE? [APPLAUSE] HE SAID, I CAN SEND MY KIDS TO COLLEGE AND GET THEM OUT OF THE WAR IF I WANT TO. BUT DO YOU THINK THAT THAT IS CONSISTENT WITH YOUR CATHOLIC VALUES AT THIS UNIVERSITY? AND WHEN HE ENDED, THEY GAVE HIM A STANDING OVATION. WHEN HE WENT TO WATTS AND HE TALKED ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY OF ABIDING WITH THE LAW, THEY APPLAUDED HIM. WHEN HE WENT TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA, WHICH HE HAD FORCIBLY INTEGRATED BY FEDERALIZING THE NATIONAL -- THE UNITED STATES TROOPS FIVE YEARS BEFORE, HE TALKED TO THEM ABOUT THE ENDURING IMPORTANCE OF CIVIL RIGHTS, THEY APPLAUDED HIM. WHEN HE WENT TO THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS AND GAVE A SPEECH TO 20,000 PEOPLE, KIDS IN THE AUDITORIUM, WHORP ALL -- WHO WERE ALL CORN-FED MIDWESTERN, PRO-MILITARY, PRO-VIETNAM, AND HE TALKED TO THEM FOR AN HOUR ABOUT HIS EVOLUTION AND THE PROGRESSION OF THE VIETNAM WAR, AND AT THE END OF THAT, THE APPLAUSE WAS SO THUNDERSTORM ROUSE THAT -- THUNDEROUS THAT ONE OF THE REPORTERS WITH THEM THAT TIME SAID IT FELT LIKE THE ROOF WAS COMING OFF OF THE AUDITORIUM. THE STUDENTS RUSHED THE STAGE, THEY WERE THROWING CHAIRS. THEY JUST WANTED TO HEAR THE TRUTH. THAT'S IT. AND THE DAY HE DIED, HE WON THE CALIFORNIA PRIMARY, THE MOST URBAN STATE IN THIS COUNTRY, AND THE SAME DAY THE SOUTH DAKOTA PRIMARY. THE MOST RURAL. HE HAD SUCCEEDED IN UNITING AMERICA. AND BUILDING THAT BRIDGE JUST BY TELLING PEOPLE THE TRUTH. [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] I WAS WITH MY DAD WHEN HE DIED IN LOS ANGELES. AND WE BROUGHT HIM BACK TO NEW YORK ON VICE PRESIDENT HEM FRY'S PLANE -- HUMPHREY'S PLANE, THEN WE BROUGHT HIM FROM PENTAGON STATION -- PE IN, N STATION IN NEW YORK TO WASHINGTON STATION IN TK FPBLGT NORMALLY THAT'S A 2 1/2 HOUR TRAIN RIDE. IT TOOK US 7 1/2 HOURS BECAUSE THERE WERE TWO MILLION PEOPLE ON THE TRACKS. AND THAT, I WILL NEVER FORGET AS A 14-YEAR-OLD BOY, WHAT I SAW FROM THE WINDOWS OF THAT TRAIN THAT DAY. AND ALL OF THE URBAN

TRAIN STATIONS IN TRENTON AND NEWARK AND PHILADELPHIA AND BALTIMORE, THERE, THEY WERE CROWDED WITH BLACK AND WHITE MEN SINGING THE BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC. IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, THERE WERE WHITE PEOPLE IN MILITARY UNIFORMS, THERE WERE BLACKS, THERE WERE RABBIS AND PRIESTS. I REMEMBER IN DELAWARE THERE WERE SEVEN -- DELAWARE THERE WERE SEVEN NUNS STANDING IN THE BACK OF A YELLOW PICKUP TRUCK, WAVING HAND KERCHIEFS AT US WHETHER WE PASSED. I REMEMBER PASSING A LITTLE LEAGUE GAME WHERE ALL OF THE KIDS ON BOTH SIDES, BOTH TEAMS, THE COACHES AND ALL THE SPECTATORS IN THE STANDS, WERE STANDING WITH THEIR HANDS AT THEIR HEARTS IN SALUTE. WE SAW BOY SCOUT TROOPS SALUTING, MILITARY OFFICERS AND PERSONNEL, HIPPIES IN TIE-DYE T-SHIRTS. MOTHERS HOLDING UP BABIES. MANY OF THEM HAD AMERICAN FLAGS. MANY OF THEM HAD SIGNS THAT SAID, GOOD-BYE, BOBBY. OR PRAY FOR US, BOBBY. AND WE GOT TO UNION STATION IN WASHINGTON AND PRESIDENT JOHNSON MET US THERE. AND WE DROVE MY FATHER'S BODY UP PAST THE MALL IN WASHINGTON AND THREE MONTHS EARLIER MY FATHER HAD COMMUNICATED WITH MARTIN LUTHER KING AND THEY DECIDED TO PARTNER WITH MARION WRIGHT EDMAN TO ORGANIZE. THEY SAW THAT THE VIETNAM WAR WAS DESTROYING THE WAR ON POVERTY. IT WAS SUCKING ALL THE MONEY AND JOHNSON ESSENTIALLY HAD TO PULL THE PLUG ON THE WAR ON POVERTY. AND MY FATHER TOLD MARTIN, THE POOR ARE NEVER GOING TO GET RIGHTS IN THIS COUNTRY UNTIL THEY START POLITICALLY PARTICIPATING. LET'S DO A POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN LIKE WE DID TWO YEARS BEFORE OR FIVE YEARS BEFORE WITH THE CIVIL RIGHTS CAMPAIGN. BRING THEM ALL TO WASHINGTON. SO ALL OF THESE MEN, THOUSANDS OF MEN, WERE ENCAMPED ON THE MALL AND WE DROVE UP PAST THEM. MARTIN HAD DIED A MONTH OR A MONTH AND A HALF EARLIER. NOW MY FATHER WAS DEAD. AND WE DROVE UP PAST THEM. THEY ALL CAME DOWN THE SIDEWALK AND THEY HELD THEIR HATS AGAINST THEIR CHEST IN A SALUTE AND BOWED THEIR HEADS, AS WE TOOK MY FATHER UP THE HILL ACROSS THE BRIDGE TO ARLINGTON TO BURY HIM. UNDER A SIMPLE STONE NEXT TO HIS BROTHER. FOUR YEARS LATER I WAS STUDYING HERE AT COLLEGE, AMERICAN HISTORY, AND I CAME ACROSS A DEMOGRAPHIC DATA THAT SHOWED THAT MOST OF THOSE WHITE PEOPLE THAT LINED THAT TRAIN TRACK AND WHO SUPPORTED MY FATHER IN THE PRIMARY IN 1968, FOUR YEARS LATER IN 1972 THEY VOTED NOT FOR GEORGE MCGOVERN, WHO WAS VERY CLOSELY ALIGNED WITH MY DAD, BUT THEY VOTED FOR GEORGE WALLACE WHO WAS AN ARDENT SEGREGATIONIST, WHO WAS ANTITHETICAL TO EVERYTHING MY FATHER BELIEVED IN. IT

OCCURRED TO ME AND THEN IT STRUCK ME MANY TIMES SINCE THAT EVERY NATION, LIKE EVERY NATION, LIKE EVERY INDIVIDUAL, HAS A DARKER SIDE AND A LIGHTER SIDE. AND THAT THE EASIEST THING FOR A POLITICIAN TO DO IS TO APPEAL TO OUR ANGER AND OUR BIGOTRY AND OUR HATRED AND OUR GREED AND ALL THE LOWER ANGELS, THE DARKER ANGELS OF OUR CHARACTER. AND THAT ONCE IN A WHILE WE GET A POLITICAL LEADER WHO TRIES TO, SUCCESSFULLY, WELL, MY DAD DID, WHICH IS TO TALK TO PEOPLE IN A WAY THAT GETS THEM TO TRANSCEND THEIR NARROW SELF SELF-INTEREST. GETS THEM TO TRANSCEND THEIR FEAR AND THEIR BIGOTRY AND THEIR ANGER AND SEE THEMSELVES AS PART OF A COMMUNITY. SEES THEMSELVES AS PART OF A NOBLE EXPERIMENT AND HELPS THEM TO FIND THE HERO THAT WE ALL HAVE IN EACH OF US. AND MY FATHER TRIED TO PERSUADE PEOPLE THAT WE HAVE TO AVOID THE IS HE TK UBGs OF THE NOTION THAT -- SEDUCTION OF THE NOTION THAT WE CAN ADVANCE OURSELVES AS A PEOPLE BY LEAVING OUR POOR BEHIND, TOKER OR -- OR THAT THE ONLY WAY WE CAN GET SECURITY IS TO GET RID OF OUR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS, AND HE TRIED TO REMIND AMERICANS THAT WE EACH NEED TO BE A HERO AND HE SUCCEEDED IN DOING THAT. AND HIS TRAIL UNFORTUNATELY WAS CUT SHORT. ISWHEN I -- I'M GOING TO TELL YOU A LITTLE BIT ABOUT MY CAREER AND WHAT BROUGHT ME HERE. I STARTED OUT AS -- I SPENT 35 YEARS AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATE. AT THE BEGINNING OF MY ENVIRONMENTAL CAREER, 1983, THE BEGINNING OF 1984, A MAN WHO WAS A MENTOR OF MINE OFFERED ME A JOB DOING HIGH-LEVEL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY IN WASHINGTON OR NEW YORK OR ANOTHER JOB THAT WAS KIND OF DOING LARGE PURCHASES OF CONSERVATION LAND. AND I DIDN'T WANT TO DO THAT KIND OF ENVIRONMENTALISM. I WANTED TO BE IN THE TRENCHES WORKING WITH PEOPLE AND ENGAGED IN HAND TO HAND COMBAT AGAINST THE BIG POLLUTERS AND I WANTED TO PARTICULARLY WORK WITH PEOPLE WHO WERE MOST HARMED BY ENVIRONMENTAL INJURY, BUT ALSO WERE ALIENATED OR MARGINALIZED FROM THE MAINSTREAM ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY. MY FIRST CASE AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL LAWYER WAS REPRESENTING THE NAACP IN A LAWSUIT AGAINST NEW YORK FOR TRYING TO PUT A WASTE TRANSFER STATION IN THE OLDEST BLACK NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE HUDSON VALLEY. AND I FOUND OUT DURING THAT LAWSUIT THAT FOUR OUT OF EVERY FIVE TOXIC WASTE DUMPS IN OUR COUNTRY IS IN A BLACK NEIGHBORHOOD. THE HIGHEST - - THE LARGEST TOXIC WASTE DUMP IN THIS COUNTRY IS AMILE, ALABAMA, WHICH IS 85% BLACK. THE HIGHEST CONCENTRATION OF TOXIC WASTE DUMPS IN THIS COUNTRY IS THE SOUTH SIDE OF CHICAGO.

THE MOST CONTAMINATED ZIP CODE IN CALIFORNIA IS EAST L.A. AND BLACK YOUTH, PROBABLY THE LARGEST AT THAT TIME, PROBLEM WITH BLACK YOUTH WAS THAT 48% OF THEM HAD DANGEROUS LEVELS OF LEAD IN THEIR BLOOD. AND THAT LEAD DRAMATICALLY REDUCED I.Q. AND CAUSES SEVERE BARELY PROBLEMS -- BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS. AND I RECOGNIZE, I SPENT A LOT OF MY TIME OVER THE NEXT 30 YEARS FIGHTING ON THOSE KIND OF ISSUES. I SPENT SUMMER VACATION IN JAIL IN MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON IN PUERTO RICO IN 2001 BECAUSE I HAD SUCCESSFULLY SUED THE NAVY TO STOP THE POOREST COMMUNITY IN OUR COUNTRY, THEY ARE AMERICAN CITIZENS BUT THEY ARE NOT TREATED THAT WAY. [APPLAUSE] THE OTHER GROUP THAT I SPENT THE REST OF MY TIME WITH, THE MAJORITY OF MY TIME, I WANTED TO WORK WITH RURAL AMERICANS AND WORKING CLASS AMERICANS, AND PARTICULARLY HUNTERS AND FISHERMEN -- FISHERMEN, THE HOOK AND BULLET PEOPLE, WHO CARED DEEPLY, AS MUCH AS ANY OTHER AMERICAN PW-RBGTS ENVIRONMENT, AND -- AMERICAN, ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT, AND YET THEY FELT COMPLETELY ALIENATED FROM THE MAINSTREAM ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY. I SPENT MY CAREER WORKING FOR A BLUE COLLAR COALITION OF COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL FISHERMEN WHO MOBILIZED ON THE HUDSON RIVER IN 1966 TO RECLAIM THE REUFBGER FROM ITS POLLUTERS -- THE REUFPBER FROM ITS POLLUTERS. WE HAVE THE OLDEST COMMERCIAL FISHERY IN NORTH AMERICA. IT'S 350 YEARS OLD. MANY OF THE PEOPLE I REPRESENT COME FROM FAMILIES THAT HAVE BEEN FISHING THE RIVER CONTINUOUSLY SINCE COLONIAL TIMES. IT'S A TRADITIONAL GEAR FISHERY. THEY USE THE SAME FISHING METHODS USED BY THE INDIANS TO THE ORIGINAL DUTCH SHELTERS PASSED DOWN THROUGH GENERATIONS. ONE OF THE ENKHRAEUFBS OF THE COMMERCIAL FISHERY ON THE HUDSON IS A LITTLE VILLAGE IN NEW YORK, IT'S 30 MILES NORTH OF NEW YORK CITY ON THE EAST BANK OF THE RIVER. AND THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED THERE IN 1966 WERE NOT YOUR PROTOTYPICAL, YOU KNOW, MAINSTREAM ENVIRONMENTALISTS. THEY WERE NOT AFFLUENT, THEY WERE THE OPPOSITE OF THAT. THEY WERE CARPENTERS, HRAEUGTERS -- LATHERS, FACTORY WORKERS, ELECTRICIANS. HALF THE PEOPLE THERE MADE THEIR LIVING OR AT LEAST SOME PART OF IT FISHING OR CRABBING THE HUDSON. PIECE WERE PEOPLE WITH LITTLE EXPECTATIONS THAT THEY'D EVER SEEN YELLOWSTONE OREO CENTRALITY OR THE -- OR YOSEMITE OR THE NARC PARKS -- THE NATIONAL PARKS. TO THEM THE ENVIRONMENTAL WAS THE BASKET YARD. IT WAS THE SWIMMING HOLE, THE FISHING HOLES OF THE HUDSON. THAT WAS THEIR LIVELIHOOD. IT WAS THEIR RECREATION. IT

WAS THEIR FOOD. AND RITCHIE, THE FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE RIVER KEEPER FISCHERMEN'S -- FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION USED TO SAY, IT WAS OUR MONTE CARLO. HE WAS A GRAVE DIGGER. HE USED TO TELL HIS NEW FOLLOWERS, I'LL BE THE LAST TO LET YOU DOWN. [LAUGHTER] IN 1966, PENN CENTRAL RAILROAD BEGAN VOMITING A RAILROAD FROM THE PIPE. THE OIL WENT UP THE RIVER AND IT BLACKENED THE BEACHES AND IT MADE THE DIESEL. SO THEY COULDN'T BE SOLD IN THE FISH MARKET IN NEW YORK CITY. AND ALL THE PEOPLE CAME TOGETHER AND THE ONLY PUBLIC -- IN THE ONLY PUBLIC BUILDING IN THE TOWN WHICH WAS THE AMERICAN LEGION HALL, THIS IS A VERY PATRIOTIC COMMUNITY, THE NEIGHBORING VILLAGE HAD ONE OF THE HIGHEST ENLISTMENT AND MORTALITY RATES OF WORLD WAR II AND ALMOST ALL OF THE ORIGINAL RIVER KEEPER OFFICERS AND MEMBERS WERE FORMER MARINES. THEY WERE COMBAT VETERANS FROM WORLD WAR II AND KOREA. RITCHIE GARRETT WAS A FORM MARINE. THESE WEREN'T RADICALS. THEY WEREN'T MILITANTS. THEY WERE PEOPLE WHOSE PATRIOTISM WAS ROOTED IN THE BEDRAHM OF YOU ARE -- BEDROCK OF OUR COUNTRY. BUT THAT NIGHT THEY STARTED TALKING ABOUT VIOLENCE. BECAUSE THEY SAW SOMETHING THAT THEY THOUGHT THEY OWNED, WHICH WALZ THE ABUNDANCE OF EAST FISHERIES AND THE PURITY AND RICHNESS OF THE HUDSON RIVER'S WATERS AND IT WAS BEING ROBBED FROM THEM AND THEY'D BEEN TO THE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES THAT ARE SUPPOSED TO PROTECT AMERICANS FROM POLLUTION, THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS, THE CONSERVATION, THE COAST GUARD, AND THEY WERE GIVEN THE BUM'S RUSH. RITCHIE GARRETT MADE MORE THAN A DOZEN SEPARATE VISITS TO THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS' OFFICE IN MANHATTAN BEGGING THE CORPS COLONEL TO DO HIS JOB AND SHUT DOWN THE PIPE AND THE COLONEL FINALLY TOLD HIM IN EXASPERATION, THESE ARE IMPORTANT PEOPLE. SPEAKING OF THE PENN CENTRAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS, WE CAN'T TREAT THEM THAT WAY. IN OTHER WORDS, WE CAN'T FORCE THEM TO COMPLY WITH THE LAW. SO THIS WAS CLASSIC AGENCY CAPTURE. THESE AGENCIES, THESE REGULATORY AGENCIES, HAD BECOME THE SOCK PUPPETS FOR THE INDUSTRY THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO BE REGULATING. AND BY THIS EVENING IN MARCH OF 1966, P00 MEN -- 300 MEN AND WOMEN CAME TOGETHER IN THAT AMERICAN LEGION HALL AND ALL OF THEM HAD COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT GOVERNMENT WAS IN CAHOOTS WITH THE POLLUTERS AND THE ONLY WAY THEY WERE GOING TO RECLAIM THE RIVER FOR THEMSELVES IS IF THEY CONFRONTED THE POLLUTERS DIRECTLY. AND SOMEBODY SUGGESTED THEY PUT A MATCH TO THE OIL SLICK COMING OUT OF THE PIPE AND BURN IT UP.

SOMEBODY ELSE SAID THEY SHOULD ROLL A MATTRESS UP AND JAM IT UP THE PIPE AND FLOOD THE RAIL YARD WITH ITS OWN WASTE. SOMEBODY ELSE SAID THEY SHOULD FLOAT DYNAMITE INTO THE INTAKE OF THE POWER PLANT, WHICH AT THAT TIME WAS KILLING A MILLION FISH A DAY ON ITS INTAKE SCREENS. AND TAKING FOOD OFF THEIR FAMILY TABLES. AND THEN A GUY STOOD UP, BOB, HE WAS A FIRST LIEUTENANT, COMBAT VETERAN, KOREA, HE WAS ALSO BY THEN A AN OUTDOOR EDITOR OF SPORTS ILLUSTRATED. TWO YEARS EARLIER HE'D WRITTEN AN ARTICLE ABOUT ANGLING IN THE HUDSON FOR "SPORTS ILLUSTRATED" AND RESEARCHING IT HE HAD COME ACROSS AN ANCIENT NAVIGATIONAL STATUTE CALLED THE 1888 RIVERS ACT AND THAT STATUTE SAID IT WAS ILLEGAL TO POLLUTE ANY WATERWAY IN THE UNITED STATES, YOU HAD TO PAY A BIG PENALTY IF YOU GOT CAUGHT. BUT ALSO THERE WAS A BOUNTY PROVISION THAT SAID, ANYBODY WHO TURNED IN THE POLLUTER GOT TO KEEP HALF THE FINE. [APPLAUSE] HE CHECKED IT OUT WITH LAWYERS. THE LAW HAD NEVER BEEN ENFORCED IN 80 YEARS BUT IT WAS STILL ON THE BOOKS AND THAT EVEN HE STOOD IN FRONT OF THIS GROUP AND HE SAID, WE SHOULDN'T BE TALKING ABOUT BREAKING THE LAW. WE SHOULD BE TALKING ABOUT ENFORCING IT. AND THEY RESOLVINGED THAT EVENING -- [APPLAUSE] -- GO OUT AND TRACK DOWN AND PROSECUTE EVERY POLLUTER IN THE HUDSON. 18 MONTHS LATER THEY SHUT DOWN THE PIPE. THEY GOT TO KEEP \$2,000. THERE WAS TWO WEEKS OF WILD CELEBRATION IN THE TOWN. THEY USED THE MONEY THAT WAS LEFT OVER TO GO AFTER THE BIG OF THE CORPORATION IN AMERICA AND WINNING IN 1973 THEY COLLECTED THE HIGHEST PENALTY IN THE UNITED STATES HISTORY AGAINST A CORPORATE POLLUTER. THEY GOT 2 DZ00,000 -- \$200,000 FROM A COMPANY FOR DUMPING TOXINS IN HASTINGS, NEW YORK THEY. USED THAT MONEY TO FROM A BOAT. THEY HIRED A FULL-TIME RIVER KEEPER, THEY HIRED ME USING BOUNTY MONEY AS THEIR ATTORNEY. AND OVER THE NEXT COUPLE OF DECADES, WE BOUGHT OVER 500 SUCCESSFUL LEGAL ACTIONS AGAINST HUDSON RIVER POLLUTERS. [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] AND TODAY THE HUDSON RIVER IS AN INTERNATIONAL MODEL FOR ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION. IT'S A REUFBG THAT ARE CAUGHT FIRE -- IT WAS A RIVER THAT CAUGHT FIRE, IT WAS DEAD FOR 20-MILE STRETCHES NORTH OF NEW YORK CITY, SOUTH ALBANY, IT TURNED COLORS DEPENDING ON WHAT COLOR THEY WERE PAINTING THE TARRYTOWN G.M. PLANT. TODAY IT'S THE RICHEST WATERWAY IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC. IT PRODUCES MORE POUNDS OF FISH PER ACRE -- [APPLAUSE] AND MORE MILES PER HOUR PER GALLON THAN ANY OTHER WATERWAY IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN NORTH OF THE EQUATOR. THE

MIRACULOUS RESURRECTION OF THE HUDSON HAS INSPIRED THE CREATION OF RIVER KEEPERS, WATER KEEPERS, NOW, 350 OF THEM IN 46 COUNTRIES, WE'RE NOW THE BIGGEST WATER PROTECTION GROUP IN THE WORLD. [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] THE STORY OF THE HUDSON ALSO HAS A SAD ENDING BECAUSE GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY DUMPED STUFF IN THE HUDSON TO SAVE MONEYNALITY THE PLANTS. THERE'S ANOTHER 3 1/2 BILLION THAT NOBODY'S EVER GOING TO PAY. THE COMMERCIAL FISH ARE -- MANY OF THE SPECIES ARE TOO TOXIC TO EAT AND THE COMMERCIAL FISHERY HAS BEEN ALMOST ALTOGETHER CLOSED. 2,000 FAMILIES THAT I REPRESENTED, NOW THERE'S PROBABLY TWO LEFT. AND THOSE ARE FAMILIES THAT ENRICH THE HISTORY AND THE CULTURE OF NEW YORK FOR 3 1/2 CENTURIES. AND THEY'RE GONE NOT BECAUSE THEIR BUSINESS PLAN DIDN'T WORK. BECAUSE IT DID WORK FOR 3 1/2 CENTURIES. THE THING THAT DIDN'T WORK, FREE MARKET CAPITALISM WORKED PERFECTLY FOR THEM. WHAT DIDN'T WORK WAS CORPORATE CRONY CAPITALISM. WAS THE GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY -- [APPLAUSE] -- AND THEIR LOBBYISTS, GENERAL ELECTRIC STKR-PBT A BETTER BUSINESS PLAN, IT JUST HAD BETTER LOBBYISTS SO IT WAS ABLE TO ESCAPE THE DISCIPLINE OF THE FREE MARKET, CORRUPT PUBLIC OFFICIALS, DUMP ITS P.C.P.'S IN THE RIVER, PUT MY FISCHERMAN -- FISHERMEN OUT OF WORK AND EVERYBODY IN THE HUDSON VALLEY NOW HAS GENERAL ELECTRIC'S P.C.P.'S. AND THAT'S, YOU KNOW, THAT'S WHAT CORPORATE CRONY CAPITALISM DOES. ONE OF THE THINGS THAT I LEARNED FROM THE FISHERMEN IS THAT THERE'S NO DAYLIGHT BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTAL GOOD POLICY AND GOOD ECONOMIC POLICY. AND YOU'LL HEAR THIS MANTRA, THIS TROPE FROM THE BIG POLLUTERS AND THEIR INDENTURED SERVANTS ON CAPITOL HILL AND, YOU KNOW, AND ELSEWHERE. THAT WE HAVE TO -- THAT WE HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION. AND THAT'S A FALSE CHOICE. 100% OF THE SITUATION. GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY IS IDENTICAL TO GOOD ECONOMIC POLICY. [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] IF WE WANT TO MEASURE OUR ECONOMY, THIS IS HOW WE OUGHT TO BE MEASURING IT BASED UPON HOW IT PRODUCES JOBS AND THE DIGNITY OF JOBS OVER THE GENERATIONS AND HOW IT PRESERVES THE VALUE OF THE ASSETS OF OUR COMMUNITY. IF ON THE OTHER HAND WE WANT TO DO WHAT THE BIG POLLUTERS ARE URGING US TO DO, WHICH IS TO TREAT THE PLANET AS IF IT WAS A BUSINESS AND LIQUIDATION, CONVERT OUR NATURAL RESOURCES TO CASH AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, A FEW YEARS OF POLLUTION-BASED PROSPERITY, WE CAN GENERATE AN INSTANTANEOUS CASH FLOW AND THE ILLUSION OF A PROSPEROUS

ECONOMY AND WE CAN MAKE A FEW PEOPLE BILLIONAIRES BY IMPROVE RISCING THE REST OF US -- IMPOVERISHING THE REST OF US BUT OUR CHILDREN ARE GOING TO PAY FOR OUR JOYRIDE AND THEY'RE GOING TO PAY FOR IT WITH POOR HEALTH, HUGE CLEANUP COSTS THAT ARE GOING TO AMPLIFY OVER TIME AND THAT THEY'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO PAY. ENVIRONMENTAL INJURY IS DEFICIT SPENDING. IT'S A WAY OF LOADING THE COSTS OF OUR GENERATION'S PROSPERITY ONTO THE BACKS OF OUR CHILDREN. [APPLAUSE] AND ONE OF THE THINGS THAT I'VE DONE OVER THE PAST 30 YEARS IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATE IS TO CONSTANTLY GO AROUND AND CONFRONT THIS ARGUMENT THAT AN INVESTMENT IN OUR ENVIRONMENT IS DIMINISHMENT OF OUR NATION'S WEALTH. IT DOESN'T DIMINISH OUR WEALTH. IT'S AN INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE. THE SAME AS INVESTING IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS OR ROAD CONSTRUCTION. IT'S AN INVESTMENT WE HAVE TO MAKE IF WE'RE GOING TO ENSURE THE ECONOMIC VITALITY OF OUR GENERATION AND FUTURE GENERATIONS. AND BY THE WAY, YOU KNOW, WE'RE NOT PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT JUST FOR THE SAKE OF THE FISH AND THE BIRDS. WE'RE PROTECTING IT FOR OUR OWN SAKE BECAUSE THOSE THINGS ENRICH US. THEY ENRICH US ECONOMICALLY, SPIRITUALLY, CULTURALLY AND ALL THESE OTHER WAYS. [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] IF WE WANT TO MEET OUR OBLIGATION AS A GENERATION, AS A CIVILIZATION, AS A NATION, WHICH IS TO CREATE COMMUNITIES FOR OUR CHILDREN THAT PROVIDE THEM WITH THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIGNITY AND ENRICHMENT AND PROSPERITY AND GOOD HEALTH AS THE COMMUNITIES THAT OUR PARENTS GAVE US, WE HAVE TO START BY PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURE, AIR WE BREATHE, THE WATER WE DRINK. THE WILDLIFE. [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] THE FISHERIES. THE PUBLIC LANDS. THOSE THINGS THAT ARE NOT REDUCIBLE TO PRIVATE PROPERTY BUT BY THEIR NATURE ARE THE PROPERTY OF ALL OF US. THE COMMONWEALTH. THE PUBLIC TRUST ACCESS. THE LANDSCAPES, THE WATERWAYS THAT CONNECT US TO THE 10,000 GENERATIONS OF HUMAN BEINGS THAT LIVED BEFORE THERE WERE LAPTOPS. AND THAT ULTIMATELY CONNECT US TO GOD. [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] GOD TALKS TO HUMAN BEINGS THROUGH MANY VECTORS. THROUGH EACH OTHER, THROUGH ORGANIZED RELIGION, THROUGH THE ARE GREAT BOOKS OF THOSE RELIGIONS, THROUGH WISE PEOPLE, THROUGH ART AND MUSIC AND LITERATURE AND POETRY. BUT NOWHERE WITH SUCH DETAIL AND GRACE AND COLOR AND JOY AS THROUGH CREATION. [APPLAUSE] AND WHEN WE DESTROY A SPECIES, WHEN WE DESTROY A SPECIAL PLACE, WE'RE DIMINISHING OUR CAPACITY TO SENSE THE

DIVINE. UNDERSTAND WHO GOD IS. [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] AND WHAT OUR OWN POTENTIAL IS. AS HUMAN BEINGS. FATHER MARTIN ONCE TOLD ME THE DEFINITION OF SIN IS AN INJURY TO ANOTHER HUMAN BEING OR TO GOD, TO OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. AND WHEN WE ELIMINATE -- MY CHILDREN ARE GOING TO GROW UP IN A WORLD WHERE THEY WILL NEVER SEE THE KIND OF EXPLOSIONS OF COLORS FROM BUTTERFLIES THAT I SAW EVERY TIME I WALKED INTO MY GARDEN. BECAUSE 80% OR 90% OF THE BUTTERFLIES ARE GONE. THE FLYING INSECTS. THEY'LL NEVER HEAR THE SONGBIRDS THAT I HEARD BECAUSE 80% OF THEM ARE GONE. THEY'LL NEVER SEE THE PUDDLES THAT I SAW AS A BOY, BUBBLING LIKE CALENDAR RONES FROM TAD POLES AND SALAMANDERS AND FROGS. THEY'RE UNAWARE OF IT. AND IT'S LIKE GOD IS A TAPESTRY AND HE'S TALKING TO US FROM ALL OF THESE DIFFERENT VECTORS AND WE'RE PULLING THREADS OUT OF THAT CAPACITY AND IT IS SUCH A CRIME AGAINST OUR CHILDREN. AND I THINK -- [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] AND I THINK WE DESERVE A PRESIDENT IN THIS COUNTRY WHO CARES ABOUT THESE THINGS AND WHO TALKS ABOUT THESE THINGS TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] I WANT TO SAY ONE OTHER THING. NATURE'S THE SOCIAL SAFETY NET. WHEN WE HAD THE GREAT DEPRESSION, 10,000 MEN WHO LOST THEIR JOBS WENT DOWN TO THE HUDSON RIVER TO FIND OYSTERS AND BLUE CRABS AND STURGEON AND HERRING AND THEY FED THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILY AND SOME MADE MONEY. AND THAT WAS -- NATURE'S OUR SOCIAL SAFETY NET. IT'S INFRASTRUCTURE. THEY CAN'T DO THAT IF THERE'S ANOTHER DEPRESSION. YOU KNOW, WE'RE WE LYING ON THE GOVERNMENT -- RELYING ON THE GOVERNMENT TO GIVE US MONEY BUT IT'S -- THAT'S NOT RELIABLE. NATURE WAS ALWAYS RELIABLE. IF YOU LIVE IN A SWELTERING HOME IN NEW YORK AND YOU HAVE NO ACCESS TO BEACHES, YOU CAN JUMP ON THE TRAIN AND GO RIGHT UP TO A PARK AND BATHE IN THE RIVER AND GET AWAY FROM THAT FOR A DAY AND EXPERIENCE NATURE AND ENRICH YOURSELF. YOU CAN'T DO THAT IF THE HUDSON IS POLLUTED. MY CHILDREN HAVE ASTHMA. ONE OUT OF EVERY FOUR BLACK CHILDREN IN URBAN AREAS HAS ASTHMA. THAT'S TRIGGERED BY BAD AIR, BY OZONE PAR TICK LATES. IT'S COMING FROM POWER PLANTS. SO THAT'S PLANTS, GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY PRIVATEIZED THE FISH IN THE HUDSON RIVER. THEY PRIVATIZED THE REUFBER TO MAKE PROFITS FOR THEMSELVES. THROUGH CORRUPTION. THOSE COAL GENERATORS ARE PRIVATIZING THE AIR AND MY CHILDREN'S LUNGS. AND WE HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS AN ACT OF THEFT. POLLUTION IS A SUBSIDY AND AN ACT OF THEFT. I WANT TO MOVE ON TO ANOTHER ISSUE THAT NOBODY'S GOING TO REALLY WANT

TO TALK ABOUT. BUT I NEED TO. [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] I HAVE TO TELL YOU RIGHT NOW, I'M ABOUT HALFWAY DONE WITH THIS SPEECH. [LAUGHTER] OH, AND THIS IS WHAT -- THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU CENSOR SOMEBODY FOR 18 YEARS. [LAUGHTER] I GOT A LOT TO TALK ABOUT. THEY SHOULDN'T HAVE SHUT ME UP THAT LONG. NOW I'M GOING TO REALLY LET LOOSE ON THEM FOR THE NEXT 18 MONTHS. THEY'RE GOING TO HEAR A LOT FROM ME. I'M GOING TO TALK ABOUT LOCKDOWNS. NOBODY WANTS TO TALK ABOUT IT. BUT WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND, YOU KNOW, I GREW UP AT A TIME, MOST OF MY LIFE WAS AT A TIME WHEN EXPLICIT'S CALLED GREAT PROSPERITY. WHEN THE AMERICAN MIDDLE CLASS GREW TO BE THE BIGGEST ECONOMIC ENGINE ON THE FACE OF THE GLOBE. I MEAN, WE WERE THE ECONOMY IN THE GLOBE. WE MADE EVERYTHING AND EVERYBODY LOOKED TO US. NOT ONLY FOR GOODS BUT FOR MORAL LEADERSHIP AND WE BECAME THE MOST POWERFUL COUNTRY IN THE WORLD, UNRIVALED, AND IT WAS BECAUSE -- AND WE HAD A STABLE DEMOCRACY WITH INSTITUTIONS THAT PEOPLE TRUSTED. A PRESS THAT TOLD US THE TRUTH. AND EVERYBODY KNOWS IT'S AN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ECONOMIC RULE, YOU CANNOT HAVE DEMOCRACY IN A SOCIETY WHERE THERE IS HIGH CONCENTRATIONS OF WEALTH AND WIDESPREAD POVERTY. YOU NEED A MIDDLE CLASS. OR YOU DON'T GET DEMOCRACY. [APPLAUSE] THAT IS A LAW. THAT IS A LAW. THAT IS A LAW, YOU CANNOT DO THAT IN LESS YOU HAVE A BIG MIDDLE CLASS AND WE HAVE THAT. THE COUP DE GRACE WAS THE LOCKDOWN. THE LOCKDOWN WAS THE BIGGEST SHIFT IN WEALTH IN HUMAN HISTORY. I BLAME PRESIDENT TRUMP FOR THE LOCKDOWN. A LOT OF PEOPLE WILL SAY, AND PRESIDENT TRUMP THAT'S BLAMED FOR A LOT OF THINGS THAT HE DIDN'T DO. HE GETS BLAMED FOR SOME THINGS THAT HE DID DO. BUT THE WORST THING THAT HE DID TO THIS COUNTRY, TO OUR CIVIL RIGHTS, ECONOMY AND MIDDLE CLASS IN THIS COUNTRY IS THE LOCKDOWN. PRESIDENT TRUMP, IN FAIRNESS -- LET ME MAKE THIS POINT. PRESIDENT TRUMP, WILL SAY THAT THE LOCKDOWN WASN'T MY IDEA, THE BEURRE KATZ ROLLED ME ON IT. I SAID WE SHOULDN'T DO IT. BUT THAT'S NOT A GOOD EXCUSE. HE WAS THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. [APPLAUSE] AND AS HARRY TRUMAN SAID, THE BUCK STOPS HERE. ON MAY, 2020, DOCTORS BEGGED TRUMP NOT TO ALLOW THE LOCKDOWNS. BECAUSE, AT THAT TIME, ALL OF THE PANDEMIC PROTOCOLS IN THE WORLD, THE WHO, CDC, THE EUROPEAN HEALTH AGENCY SAID NEVER DO NASA LOCKDOWNS. IT CAUSES MUCH WORSE HAVE IT, DEATH AND -- HAVOC DEV -- DEATH AND INJURIES. YOU PROTECT THE VULNERABLE AND LET EVERYONE ELSE ACT TO WORK OR ELSE YOU WILL WREAK HAVOC. [APPLAUSE] I WROTE ABOUT

IT ON INSTAGRAM. I WAS WRITING EVERY DAY. I WAS CITING THESE ECONOMIC STUDIES THAT SHOWED EVERY POINT ON UNEMPLOYMENT YOU GET EXCESS DEATHS FOR HEART ATTACKS, SUICIDES, I WAS WRITING ABOUT THAT. AND THEY CUT ME FROM SOCIALS. THEY SAID IT WAS MISINFORMATION. IT WAS NOT. PEOPLE WERE SAYING IT, IT WASN'T JUST ME. AND NOW WE KNOW, OF COURSE THAT IT'S TRUE. THERE IS STUDY AFTER STUDY OF ANY COMPARISON BETWEEN THIS STATES THAT THE LOCKDOWN COMPARED TO THOSE THAT DIDN'T. THE MORE YOU LOCKDOWN, THE WORST IT GOT. MARK COVID DEATHS, MORE EXCESS DEATHS. SWEDEN WAS THE ONLY COUNTRY THAT DIDN'T LOCKDOWN AND IT WAS THE ONLY COUNTRY WITH LOWER ACCESS DEATHS IN EUROPE. THE NATION THAT LED LOCKDOWNS, WAS US, AND WE HAD THE HIGHEST AUDIT COUNT OF COVID DEATH ON EARTH. WE HAD 16% OF COVID DEATHS AS A 47% OF THE POPULATION. AT SOME POINT, EVEN THE MEDIA IS GOING TO HAVE TO STOP SAYING THAT THIS WAS A SUCCESS TORRY. -- A SUCCESS STORY. [APPLAUSE] THE HEALTH ISSUES WERE ALMOST DWARFED BY THE ECONOMIC CATACLYSM THAT THE FELLER COUNTRY -- THAT BEFELL OUR COUNTRY. THE IMF STUDY BY LARRY SOME NURSE, SAID -- BY LARRY SUMMERS -- COST \$16 TRILLION. WE SHIFTED 4 TRILLION DOLLARS FROM THE MIDDLE CLASS IN THIS COUNTRY TO THE SUPER RICH. WE CREATED 500 NEW BILLIONAIRES. THE EXISTING BILLIONAIRES INCREASED THEIR WEALTH ACCORDING TO A STUDY THAT CAME OUT THREE DAYS AGO BY 3%. THIS WAS A GIFT IT TO THE RICH. AND, THE ONE -- THE PEOPLE WHO GOT RICH AS WERE THE SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANIES, FACEBOOK, MICROSOFT, THAT WERE CONSPIRING WITH PRESIDENT TRUMP'S WHITE HOUSE TO CENSOR PEOPLE LIKE ME. SO THE VERY PEOPLE WHO ARE PROFITING ON THE LOCKDOWNS WERE STRIPMINING THE WEALTH FROM THE MIDDLE CLASS IN THIS COUNTRY. AMAZON CLOSED DOWN ALL OF ITS COMPETITORS. 3.3 MILLION BUSINESSES SHUT DOWN I'M IN A LAWSUIT INVOLVING AMAZON, FOR CENSORING ONE OF MY POSTS. THEY WERE CENSORING CRITICISM OF THE LOCKDOWNS WHILE THEY WERE BREAKING IN MONEY FROM THE LOCKDOWNS. UNFORTUNATELY, WE ARE TOLD THAT PRESIDENTS -- THAT PRESIDENT TRUMP'S WHITE HOUSE -- 40% OF BLACK BUSINESSES SHUT DOWN, SOME OF THEM PERMANENTLY. THIS IS ANTHONY CALDWELL. CAN YOU JUST WAIVED PEOPLE? [APPLAUSE] -- WAVE TWO PEOPLE. [APPLAUSE] Show Less Text

BOBBY!] THE CHINESE BY BEING NICE GUYS HAVE A EARNED GOODWILL IN THESE COUNTRIES. BRAZIL AND PAKISTAN ARE NOW SWITCHING TO CHINESE CURRENCY AWAY FROM THE DOLLAR. DO YOU KNOW WHAT

THAT WILL CAUSE -- COST ARE COUNTRY IF WE ARE NOT THE DOMINATED CURRENCY, 750 BILLION DOLLARS A YEAR. THAT'S ONE OF THE COST OF THESE CONTINUAL BOARDS THAT WE NEED TO -- CONTINUAL WARS THAT WE NEED TO EXAMINE. LAST MONTH SAUDI ARABIA ASSIGNED A PEACE DEAL WITH THE RAM. WHICH IS GREAT. BUT THEY ARE OUR NUMBER ONE ALLY. THE SHIA CRESCENT WAS KEY TO OUR STRATEGY. WE WOULD HAVE LEBANON ALL THE WAY UP TO SYRIA ON BOTH SIDES. INDIRECT, -- AND A RACK, -- AND IRAQ. GUESS WHAT, THE CHINESE JUST BROKERED A PEACE DEAL BETWEEN IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA. OUR ENTIRE POLICY COLLAPSE. WE NO LONGER HAVE COHERENT FOREIGN POLICY. IRAQ, MOHAMMAD BIN SALMAN SAID , NOT ONLY TWO WEEKS AGO, THAT HE LOWERED OIL PRODUCTION DURING THE U.S. RECESSION. IT WAS LIKE A SLAP IN THE UNITED STATES. AND THEN HE SAID FREE DAYS AGO, WE DON'T CARE WHAT THE UNITED STATES THINKS ANYMORE. WE HAVE PUT TRILLIONS AND TRILLIONS OF DOLLARS INTO THOSE NATIONS WITH THIS STRATEGY AND THE ENTIRE AMERICAN EMPIRE JUST FOLDED. IT RACK IS NOW A PROXY STATE OF KOREA. -- IRAQ IS NOW A PROXY STATE OF IRAN. WE NEED TO WORK FAST. I'M GOING TO BRING THE TROOPS HOME. [APPLAUSE] I AM GOING TO START INVESTING IN THE UNITED STATES MIDDLE-CLASS, OUR COUNTRY. I'M GOING TO MAKE US AN EXEMPLARY DEMOCRACY AGAIN. AND I WANT TO SAY ONE FINAL, FINAL THING. I'M GOING TO PUT MY CARDS ON THE TABLE. I AM NOT AN IDEAL PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE IN NORMAL TIMES. I AM NOT ONE OF THESE PEOPLE WHO EXPECT -- IN THEIR LIFE THAT THEY NEED TO BE VERY CAREFUL BECAUSE ONE DAY THEY WILL BE IN THE WHITE HOUSE. [LAUGHTER] I ACTUALLY DID THE OPPOSITE OF THAT. I AM AT A VERY HIGH RISK -- I HAD A LOT OF FUN, BUT IT WASN'T CAREFUL. EVEN THE ISSUES THAT I'VE ATTACHED MYSELF TO, ANYONE WHO LOOKS AT THOSE ISSUES WON'T SAY THIS GUY IS TRYING TO GET INTO THE WHITE HOUSE. TRYING TO GET OUT OF ALL OF MY FRIENDSHIPS AND MY POLITICAL PARTY AND EVERYTHING ELSE. I HAD A RAMBUNCTIOUS USE AND IT LASTED UNTIL MY EARLY 60'S. -- YOUTH AND IT LASTED TO MY EARLY 60'S. I TOLD MY WIFE THAT I HAVE SO MANY SKELETONS IN MY CLOSET THAT IF THEY COULD VOTE I WOULD BE KING OF THE WORLD. IN NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES I WOULD NOT DO THIS. THIS IS NOT NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES I AM WATCHING MY COUNTRY BEAT BE STOLEN FROM ME. I DON'T WANT THE PARTY OF FEAR, AND WAR AND CENSORSHIP. [APPLAUSE] WE NEED TO BE MORE THAN NEOCONS WITH WOKE BOBBLEHEADS. WE NEED TO STAND UP TO REPARATIONS WE NEED TO STAND AGAINST WAR. WE NEED TO PUT OUR CHILDREN FIRST. WE NEED TO STOP LISTENING TO THE LARGE CORPORATIONS. IN MANY

WAYS, THAT'S WHAT A KENNEDY DEMOCRAT IS. WE NEED TO BRING THE PARTY BACK AS THE PARTY OF FDR, AND MARTIN LUTHER KING AND THOSE VALUES. [APPLAUSE] IN MANY WAYS, I HAVE SPENT MY LIFETIME PREPARING FOR THIS OFFICE BECAUSE, I'VE SPENT SO MUCH TIME LEARNING THESE AGENCIES. I KNOW HOW NIH WORKS, CDC WORKS, EPA, AND MY LAW PARTNER SITTING IN THE FRONT ROW WAS ONE OF THE LEAD ATTORNEYS WITH BRENT WISNER ON OUR MONSANTO CASE. WHEN WE GOT THEM ON SANTA PAPERS, WE REALIZED THAT WE FOUND EMAILS THAT SHOWED THAT THE HEAD OF THE PESTICIDE DIVISION AT EPA WAS SECRETLY WORKING FOR MONSANTO FOREVER. THAT IS TRUE IN ALL OF THESE AGENCIES. MOST POLITICIANS, WHEN THEY COME IN THEY SINCERELY WANT TO FIX THE AGENCIES AND DRAIN THE SWAMP. THEY GET IN THEIR -- THERE AND THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH THE SPRAWLING DEMOCRACIES AND THE CULTURE. IT'S HARD FOR THEM TO CHANGE THAT. RATHER THAN DO THAT THEY CONCENTRATE ON ANOTHER AGENDA AND THEY PUT SOMEBODY SAFE TO RUN THAT AGENCY. PRESIDENT TRUMP. PRESIDENT TRUMP TOOK \$1 MILLION FROM PFIZER AND APPOINTED A GUY WHO WAS ESSENTIALLY A PFIZER LOBBYIST. HE WAS A BUSINESS PARTNER AT PFIZER TO RUN THE AGENCY. HE OF COURSE MADE \$88 BILLION FOR PFIZER ON ONE VACCINE AND THEN LEFT TO JOIN PFIZER'S BOARD. THAT'S NOT DRAINING THE SWAMP. THAT IS THE SWAMP. [APPLAUSE] PRESIDENT BIDEN DID THE SAME THING. I KNOW PETE BUTTIGIEG, I LIKE KEEP THE JUDGE, -- I LIKE PETE BUTTIGIEG, MY SON CAMPAIGNED FOR HIM AND WAS PART OF HIS CAMPAIGN LAST TIME AROUND. I LIKE HIM. BUT I CAN TELL YOU WITH ALMOST CERTAINTY THAT HE DID NOT GO TO D.O.T. SAYING I'M GOING TO FIX THE RAILROADS AND I'M GOING AND THE CORRUPTION. MOST OF THESE PEOPLE GO IN BECAUSE THEY ARE SAFE AND THEY WILL BE GOOD ON TALK SHOWS ON SUNDAY MORNING BUT THEY DON'T WANT TO GO IN AND THEY DON'T KNOW HOW TO REALLY GO IN AND MAKE THOSE CHANGES IN THE AGENCIES THAT COULD MAKE WAVES AND CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR THE PRESIDENT. THEY GET SOMEONE SAFE. RALPH REED USED TO DESCRIBE THOSE PEOPLE, HE SAID THEY WERE PEOPLE THAT KEPT THE JOKE. -- THAT GET THE JOKE. I GET THE JOKE, BUT I DON'T THINK IT'S FUNNY. [APPLAUSE] I'M NOT SAFE. THE VESTED INTEREST ARE NOT SAFE. MY JOB IS TO KEEP YOU SAFE. [APPLAUSE] WHENEVER WE TRAVEL, MY FATHER WOULD TAKE US TO TWO -- TWO THE INDIAN RESERVATIONS WHEREVER WE LANDED. WE WOULD GO TO STANDING ROCK SIOUX OR ARAPAHOE RESERVATION OR IN UPSTATE NEW YORK THE MOHAWK RESERVATION. NEVER WE GOT OUT OF THE AIRPORT HE WOULD WANT TO GO THERE. HE LOVES GOING TO APPALACHIA, HIS

FAVORITE PLACE IN THE WORLD, I WAS IN RESTORATION ON THE BOARD FOR 20 YEARS. HE WOULD TAKE US. WHEN WE WERE LITTLE KIDS, HE WOULD PUT US -- FOR THE WHITE MINING COMMUNITIES AND APPELLATION HE WOULD PUT US IN THE BACK OF A STATION -- IN APPALACHIA, HE WOULD IT IS IN THE BACK OF A STATION WAGON AND WE WOULD TALK TO PEOPLE. MY FATHER, WHEN HE CAME BACK ONE TIME, THE DELTA. WE WERE AT THE DINNER TABLE WHEN HE CAME IN. HE SAID HE WAS IN A TARPAPER SHACK TODAY THAT WAS SMALLER THAN THIS DINING ROOM AND THERE WERE TWO FAMILIES LIVING THERE AND THE CHILDREN GET ONE MEAL A DAY. WHEN YOU GET OLDER I WANT YOU TO HELP THOSE PEOPLE. WHEN WE WOULD GO INTO SOUTHEAST WASHINGTON OR APPALACHIA, HE WOULD SAY THESE ARE YOUR PEOPLE, KENNEDY PEOPLE. OTHER PEOPLE, THE BIG SHOTS, THE CORPORATIONS, THE MILLIONAIRES THEY DO NOT NEED THE KENNEDYS. THEY HAVE LOBBYIST'S, PR FIRMS, AND THESE ARE YOUR PEOPLE. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE YOU NEED TO SPEND YOUR LIFE HELPING. AND I WILL BE PRESIDENT TO THOSE PEOPLE. WE ARE GOING TO TAKE BACK THE COUNTRY. YOU GIVE ME A PIECE OF GROUND AND A SWORD I WILL TAKE BACK THIS COUNTRY, WITH YOUR HELP, WE WILL GO AMERICANS FIRST. THANK YOU. [APPLAUSE] Show Less Text