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JOE BIDEN INTERVIEW
JOHN MCCAIN: FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

JOE BIDEN
Former Vice President
November 09, 2017
Interviewed by Teddy Kunhardt
Total Running Time: 44 Minutes

START TC:
QT: 01;00;00;00

QT: 01;00;00;07

TEDDY KUNHARDT:
Say—tell me when you're good.

QT: 01;00;01;12

CREW:
(Cross talk) Got it.

QT: 01;00;07;18

TITLE
McCain as a POW and their friendship

QT: 01;00;13;03

JOE BIDEN:
No, it's my honor. I mean, anything for John, for real.

QT: 01;00;16;03

JOE BIDEN:
I first knew of John when he was a prisoner of war before I got to the Senate. And then I remember vividly watching television, John getting off the plane and saluting with a bad arm, and thinking to myself, "What an incredible ordeal these men went through." Then I ended up

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in the United State Senate in 1973. John later came, shortly thereafter, as what they called a Navy Liaison, there's a military office in the basement of the Russell Building.

QT: 01;00;47;07

JOE BIDEN:

And so when you travel abroad, you have a military escort with you just to make sure everything logistically is moving, whomever travels. And—but I'm on the Foreign Relations Committee so I was doing a lot of traveling, and every time I traveled I tried to make sure I had John, and I think John did the same thing.

QT: 01;01;06;03

JOE BIDEN:

And we traveled all over the world together, and we became friends. I got to know his family, they came up to visit us up here for a picnic at their house. But, I just, you know, John was—John hasn't changed, in terms of his decency, his honesty, his friendship, his—the thing that I like about John, John never walks by a man or a woman, whether it's a shoe shine guy at an airport, or whether it's a CEO of a company, he treats them all the same exact way. That's how I was raised, that's what connected me with John.

QT: 01;01;46;11

TITLE

Traveling with John

QT: 01;01;50;22

JOE BIDEN:

Oh, it was fun, it was always fun. I mean, here I—I was by far and away, the youngest member of the Foreign Relations Committee, with one exception. And the next one was I think 63 years old, I was 32 years old, or 33, and John and I just hit it off. And John became very good friends with my wife Jill, because in those days, we were encouraged to have, Senators were encouraged to have their spouses

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travel, to interact with one another and also interact when we were in the country we were visiting.

QT: 01;02;19;20

JOE BIDEN:

And so John and Jill became really good friends, and they both have the same sense of humor. They both are the kind of folks who would put a bucket of water on the door in your college dorm, and watch it fall on your head, kind of thing, ya know. They both have that sense of humor. And they just became great friends, and we traveled as a—kind of a threesome, and it was just great fun.

QT: 01;02;44;02

TITLE

John once said he used to carry Biden's bags on their trips

QT: 01;02;48;05

JOE BIDEN:

Like hell he carried my bags, but no. Technically what it—what happens is that, whoever the liaison is then is wor—is responsible for all the logistics. So all the baggage or material that's on the plane, going to whatever event is. That person's responsible, but I don't remember, although I may have carried a couple of John's bags helping him get the rest of the stuff out but—but he—we've just been great friends.

QT: 01;03;12;06

TITLE

Biden learned from McCain and supported him running for Senate and President

QT: 01;03;16;03

JOE BIDEN:

What John and I would talk about when we'd travel is, he would—he—I learned a lot from John about the military, for real. And John and I would talk substance about when I—whether I was going to meet [Inaudible name], or I was going to, you know, to China to—with Don Cho—wherever it was, John and I would talk about the substance of it. And I—when John showed an interest in maybe running, I strongly encouraged John to run. I had no doubt in my mind that John McCain would be running for president someday. I don't think he thought it that way, but I had no doubt in my mind.

QT: 01;03;53;08

JOE BIDEN:

So when he went to the Congress—he stood out in the house, he was in the house first, as you know. And when he came to the Senate, he was already a well-known commodity. He was already respected. A guy like me coming to the Senate at age 30, I didn't know anybody, I'm the first Senator I ever new, you know? But John knew a lot of people, and John was embraced. And John—and John embrace—was embraced by and embraced both sides of the aisle. I mean, I don't think John missed a beat coming over to the Senate. I don't think, there were—wasn't anything like, "Well, he's junior." or he—nobody ever that I could recall, thought those terms with John.

QT: 01;04;31;01

TITLE

John is the quintessential patriot, a traditional Republican willing to compromise for the greater good

QT: 01;04;37;06

JOE BIDEN:

I was trying to explain someone—John to someone, after the medal ceremony up at, up in Philadelphia. And I said, "You know, if you're

gonna draw a picture of what constituted a patriot, John is a patriot." John is all—I mean that sounds corny, but everything with John is about the country.

QT: 01;04;59;22

JOE BIDEN:

Everything with John. And John understands that politics is all personal. You have to know the person, you have to—and even when you—when you disagree with someone vehemently, if you know they have a son or daughter who has a drug problem, or their wife has breast cancer, or they are—had financial troubles, or if they had difficulty in school, it's hard when you get to know them. It's hard to dislike them.

QT: 01;05;27;17

JOE BIDEN:

And so, instead of—today, it's all about attacking motive. "Yeah, the reason you're this, is you're not a good Christian. The reason you're that, you're in the pocket of—the re—" that's not John. It's all about differences of view and opinion. And so when John came over, there were a lot of things we worked on together. I was trying to think of the things knowing this interview was coming up over where we disagreed. We disagreed on some foreign policy things, we disagreed on Afghanistan, and mostly of late, I mean the last 10 years. But, you know, I strongly supported John's effort for financing elections. Hell, I introduced the proposal for public financing of the elections.

QT: 01;06;08;09

JOE BIDEN:

I strong—John strongly supported my efforts on violence against women and dealing with abuse. There were so many things we worked on together so, John is a Conservative but, you know, John's a traditional Republican, the Republican Party that came up from Eisenhower. That's John, and there's nothing narrow about John. John—John is not one of these guys that is unwilling to help people in need. John supports, you know—I mean, look at what John and I worked together on immigration, you know.

QT: 01;06;43;18

JOE BIDEN:

John worked on healthcare. I mean, so John is not an ideologue; John is mainstream Conservative Republican that can stay out of people's lives as much as you can. But John carries that across the board. You know, there's a lot of people who say that the government stay out of your life if you're in trouble, but the government should enter your bedroom and tell you what your conduct can be. You know, so it's—John's consistent.

QT: 01;07;08;06

TITLE

John has been consistent

QT: 01;07;12;11

JOE BIDEN:

I've not gone back and flyspecked his record but, John has been—been consistent. I mean for example, it didn't surprise me a little bit that John voted against the Republican proposal on healthcare.

QT: 01;07;26;11

JOE BIDEN:

Well John said—John said, "Look, the way this place is supposed to work, is it's supposed to work where you actually have hearings." You air this; the public has a right to know what the debate is about. The public has a right to know what the issues are, and what the elements of the issues are. And--and so that's what he calls 'regular order.' I kid him, he's become too much of a Senate guy, talks like a Senate guy now. Regular order. But regular—all regular order means is you—is you introduce a bill, you have hearings, you let the public see what's going on, you show the press, you have witnesses, and you make—you have amendments, and you make up your mind, that's how democracy's supposed to work. So it didn't surprise me at all when John walked in.

QT: 01;08;09;03

TITLE

John has a genuine sense of empathy

QT: 01;08;12;13

JOE BIDEN:

Well, you know, look. I never try to convince John—I laid out, he asked me what I thought. I laid out what I thought the stakes were. And the one thing John has that a lot of folks—I shouldn't say a lot—not as many folks have, John has a genuine sense of empathy. When you've suffered physically, mentally, when you've had really hard times, it's not hard to have empathy for other people. Bob Dole, very conservative Republican, author of The American's With Disabilities Act because he knows. He knows. John knows. And what John and I talk—anyway, it's personal what we talked about, but—but—

QT: 01;09;01;07

JOE BIDEN:

I was calling John as I always do, I was calling at—the conversation was about his physical condition because my son had the exact same diagnosis as John, and has the same kind of sense of duty, and honor, and determination John does. And so—But you know, the measure of a man is how he responds under significant adversity, and look at John. Look at him. I mean, he—he's a good friend. And he's a—he's giving people hope.

QT: 01;10;01;07

TITLE

On John's work to normalize relations with Vietnam

QT: 01;10;06;15

JOE BIDEN:

Number one, first and foremost again, John the patriot. It's in the interest of the United States of America, for our national security, that there be normalization of relations with a country that physically, brutally beat him, abused him, nearly killed him, and this is a guy who walks in—talk about a patriot, and says, "No. Here's my hand. Time to shake hands." Why? Because it is the interest of the United States of America. John always puts the country before himself, all the time.

QT: 01;10;46;02

JOE BIDEN:

So it was also morally profound what he did. It set such an incredible example, and John Kerry as well. But the idea that these two men, both decorated—thank God John Kerry wasn't wounded like—like—beaten like—like John was but you know, these guys they act in the interest of the United States of America. They put their country before themselves. That's probably the best description I can give of John and his whole life.

QT: 01;

TITLE

On partisanship

QT: 01;11;25;09

JOE BIDEN:

When we got—when I got to the Senate, and John got there to the House—and I—I got there way before John. I got there in '72, you had people who had violent disagreement almost. You still had the old segregationists there, James [inaudible] from Mississippi, and [inaudible] from Georgia and all those good ole boys. And yet the political system worked because it wasn't—they weren't constantly personally vindictive, and personal attacks constantly. And a lot of that has changed today. It's changed in a way that is not—it's not at all healthy.

QT: 01;12;03;06

JOE BIDEN:

And so, one of the things that with John—John and I—I'll give you an example. Around the mid '90s, John and I used to sit in the floor together when there was a debate. I'd go over to his side of the aisle, it'd be—you know, half the time the Senate Chambers empty, I mean, there's only four or five people in it until we get to vote. And so when we're have something we're both working on, whether we're for or against each other, I'd go over and sit next to John at his desk, and he'd come over and sit next to me. And it was in the late '90s, Carter was President, and coincidentally on the same day, we had what we called "Caucuses" where the Democrats eat together and Republicans eat together and they talk about policy.

QT: 01;12;46;18

JOE BIDEN:

I walked into my caucus and some senior—some serious Senators said, "Why are you sittin' with McCain?" I said, "He's my friend." "Well, it doesn't look good." McCain got the same thing from his caucus. "Why are you and Biden on the floor together sitting there, chatting, talking, hanging out?" I mean, my God, it began to change and I can almost—I wish I can remember the year, but it—it was—it was in probably '96, '97, '98 in that range. And it was like, "Man, what's going on here, man?" By the way, we didn't listen to them.

QT: 01;13;24;03

JOE BIDEN:

But—but think about that. And before that was—that was standard proced—a lot of—a lot of men and women in the Senate did that. We were told, each of us by our respected parties, it didn't look good. You're not my enemy. They ran for the same reason that I did because they really believe they can make the country better. We disagree how. This is not the enemy, but that's how it's being portrayed these days. And it's dangerous; it's eating away at the moral fabric of society.

QT: 01;13;58;07

TITLE

On bipartisanship and the power of Millennials to create change

QT: 01;14;02;20

JOE BIDEN:

John and I this year, jointly on two bigger, three big organizations that give the Bipartisanship of the Year Award. John and I for two of them—got two of them together. And we looked at each other like, "Isn't this what we're supposed to do?" I really mean it, and it was almost—almost embarrassing to get an award for being bipartisan, and you know why it's gonna change? Because of you.

QT: 01;14;27;22

JOE BIDEN:

I'm not being facetious. Because of the Millennial Generation. They've had it to here, and they're finally realizing how dangerous this is to continue. They really are. And there's a—I think the vast majority of Republicans and Democrats know better, they gotta start to stand up and as John would say, "Get back to regular order."

QT: 01;14;51;15

TITLE

The 2008 Presidential Election and Biden's commitment to 'no personal attacks'

QT: 01;14;57;02

JOE BIDEN:

First of all, I have never run a campaign where I've done that to anybody. But everybody was kind of—some of the people, not Barack, not the president, but some of the people were a little concerned, "Well, he's really tight with McCain. I mean, is he gonna really be able to go in there and, you know, duke it out?" And—and I just wanna make it real clear, if anybody came to me with something like the attack that he got in South Carolina in the campaign with—with

George W. Bush a few years earlier, I'd say, "I'm not in, man." I'm not in. 'Cause when he got attacked in that campaign, I picked the phone and called him. I said, "John, where do you want me? Where do you want me? I would testify to your character before anyone in the country. You just tell me, pal." And he started laughing, "Well, you'd hurt me more than you'd help, Joe, by testifying."

QT: 01;15;48;21

JOE BIDEN:

But—but—but—but—but for real, I would—I would never, never, never, never do that. And I know Barack knew I wouldn't do that anyway. But I wanted some of the sharp shooters and you know, all these campaigns—every campaign—both sides have these sharp shooters, you know, they're out there. No, make it clear, not me. Matter of fact, they might have even said that if there is, I'm not, oh no, I'm not gonna do it, I'll say something. Just—just not—you can't do that to a friend—I can—again, it goes back to disagreeing. We can disagree, God. And John and I disagree in Afghanistan. We disagree on some foreign policy things, and John can holler, man. As you know. But it's—this man has an incredible character.

QT: 01;16;37;13

TITLE

On the 2008 presidential election and the financial crisis

QT: 01;16;44;03

JOE BIDEN:

John was—it was a much more competitive campaign til—til it was clear the market fell. I mean, John was carrying an 800-pound rock up a hill. I mean, on his watch as a candidate in September, Lehman went under and everything began to nose dive. And I just think, talk about good year/bad year. It was a bad year. I think—I've not seen a candidate more qual—more talented than Barack Obama. I think Barack would have won anyway, but I just, you know, John had really drew a bad hand, man.

QT: 01;17;25;11

TITLE

On Sarah Palin

QT: 01;17;29;11

JOE BIDEN:

It's easy to second guess at the time, remember—everyone forgets how popular she was at the time. I mean, she was like a lightning bolt, and she was generating enormous enthusiasm among Republicans, some who thought John was a little too liberal or too progre—or whatever phrase you want to use. And so I can see how it could come about and happened, I don't think it was the best judgment on John's part. But I—I don't think he knew—I don't know what he knew or didn't know. But I was a little surprised.

QT: 01;18;05;00

TITLE

On the Keating Five and how difficult accusations can be

QT: 01;18;09;10

JOE BIDEN:

And by-the-way, The Keating Five because I've been through an accusation and it turned out not to be true five years earlier that I lifted somebody's speech and I never quoted them and all this stuff, it was—it was—it was horrible for me because I'd never had my honor questioned before. And so John would come over to my office in The Keating Five, and we'd sit in there and talk. And I'd say, "John look, you're a hero, man. You've—you—you—you've just gotta—you just gotta—everybody's gonna understand and just tough it out here. Tough it out."

QT: 01;18;45;18

JOE BIDEN:

But it killed John because it was attacking his honor, it was attacking his integrity, and just like me, never before or since [inaudible] ever been attacked, which was back in the '87 with me, you know, John's hadn't been either. I would think that was the roughest time in John's career, and it was—turned out, he was fine. But it was just—I really felt badly for him having to go through it, watching the—the pain of having to deal with that.

QT: 01;19;19;10

JOE BIDEN:

He came out more than all right. He came—he came out more than all right, but when you're in the middle of it, it looks awful dark. That's what I kept—anyway.

QT: 01;19;29;00

TITLE

On McCain's concession speech in 2008

QT: 01;19;34;05

JOE BIDEN:

That should be not a joke. That speech should be required reading for every government class in high school, and every Political Science course on American Politics.

QT: 01;19;47;22

JOE BIDEN:

John's concession speech literally, not figuratively, should be required reading in every single government course taught in high school, and every political science course relating to the American political system. 'Cause John did what every American should be doing—it's so hard when you lose. John wasn't begrudgingly congratulating Barack Obama. He not only congratulated, he went further. He said, and this is historic, "A black man is now President of the United States of America, we have to hel—let—help him succeed.

QT: 01;20;29;17

JOE BIDEN:

This is what we're going to do. I don't have a single regret in this campaign." And then classic John he said, "And our loss, my supporters you couldn't have done anything more for me, any fall in the loss lies with me." That's John. I mean, it is—It was gracious. It was futuristic. It was about a country. He was saying, "Come on now. Come on. Everybody get in here, man. Help this man. I'm gonna help him. I'm here. I'm here." I mean, my Lord, I mean, but if we had another 50 John McCain's.

QT: 01;21;13;02

TITLE

On their sons

QT: 01;21;17;08

JOE BIDEN:

John used to kid me when he—when my Beau was elected as a young man to—as Attorney General and was—and had enormous opportunities. And I remember John talking about like his other son, how proud he was that Beau volunteered to go to Iraq for a year and gave up his seat as Attorney General for a year to do it. And his son was a combat guy, I mean, it's just, you know—My mom used to have an expression she said, "Be careful what you say, they're listening." (Laughs) So—

QT: 01;21;53;03

TITLE

On hearing about McCain's diagnosis

QT: 01;21;56;22

JOE BIDEN:

Well, I was getting off a plane. I came in, and my secretary immediately said, "Did you hear about Senator McCain?" I immediately called. I put a call in to his daughter, put a call into my friend and John's, Lindsey Graham, to see what he knew. And then I ended up being able to speak to John. And I spoke to a senior staffer doing healthcare stuff that was advising John, and then I sat down with my—I called my son's doctors. Two of whom are dealing with John and—and so I kept touch with John and—on a regular basis and giving him, "I'm not a doctor" but when you go through this, you—I turned up every possible stone I could to see what there was as a possibility.

QT: 01;22;52;02

JOE BIDEN:

And but like—like—li—like Beau, my son, John has never given up. John is punching away. John is—is you know, there's hope. There's hope. It's a tough, tough, tough, ugly disease. But, you know, John's a—it'd be so trite to say, "Doing it like a man" the old expression. But John is just a—and John's like my son Beau, you know. Beau kept saying to me, "Dad, no matter what happens, I'm going to be okay. Are you going to be okay dad? Promise me, dad." John's telling people, "I'm going to be okay. No matter what happens. But take care—I want you to stay engaged. Be okay. Be okay." I mean it's always about the other guy with John. It was always about the other guy with my son. And—but the exact same precise diagnosis.

QT: 01;23;54;07

TITLE

On Teddy Kennedy and Biden's son Beau who suffered from the same illness as McCain

QT: 01;24;01;00

JOE BIDEN:

Teddy was Beau's guide. I mean, these—these are incredible men. I mean, I know I sound so—so—so trite, but how many people you know who are handed a judgment that at best is really, really, really, really tough to overcome and get up every single day, put one foot in front of the other, does their job? Ask John how he is, "I'm fine. Good. Good. Everything's good. Luckiest man in the world. Luckiest man in the world. I've had a great life, Joe. I've had a great life."

QT: 01;24;47;21

JOE BIDEN:

You know, my son Beau talking to my son Hunter, "Hunt, you've been my backbone my whole life. You're there for me all the time Hunt. Hunt. Hunt." I mean instead of, you know—anyway. John looks at people in my view like my son did and sees the pain they feel in their eyes for him. He tries to make it go away. A lot of other people would be curled up in a fetal position, or be damning their circumstance. Not John. Not Beau. Not Teddy.

QT: 01;25;27;17

TITLE

On moral leadership and McCain's stepping down speech

QT: 01;25;33;07

JOE BIDEN:

It's classic John. I mean, we haven't had a circumstance and it's so badly needed at the moment he gave it. Not about the issue per se, but at the state of our politics how it's become so mean and petty and debilitating, and it's eating away at the moral fabric of this society. What—you know, what holds the whole system up is—are the basic customs and decency and there's as—as David Brooks said, "There's this—there's this thin moral fabric that runs through society." It matters how you talk about the other person.

QT: 01;26;14;00

JOE BIDEN:

It matters whether or not there's common purpose. It mat—I mean, we're the most—one of the most heterogeneous democracies in the world. There has to be these unspoken rules. And what you read through what John's been saying, he says, "It's time. It's time. Let's remember who we are as Americans. What makes us different? We're not organized by tribe or religion, we're organized by ideals" as David Brooks said. That's the organizing principle for America. We have some now on the Alt-right and others who'd rather us organize by tribe, divide us.

QT: 01;26;57;05

JOE BIDEN:

John's speech up at the Constitution Center was brilliant. No, I really mean it. It's gonna be one of those speeches people are going to be reading for the next 35, 40 years. Because John talked about how can we have this Machiavellian, this Hobbesian view of the world? You win, I lose. I win, you lose. That's it. That's never been America foreign policy. We had been a party and a country where it's not just the exercise of our power that gets people to follow us; it's the power of our example. Not the example of a power, and John gets that. I mean, you know—And it's also very much in our interests.

QT: 01;27;46;03

JOE BIDEN:

We should be encouraging, leaning in, pushing Democratic opportunities, standing up for human rights. These are the things that are—are not only the right, morally right thing to do, but they're the thing that in fact makes America more secure. But these guys are out there trying to shred that liberal world order that was set up after World War II that prevents the abuse of power and diminishes the prospects of it. And John talking at this—whatever his phrase was is, this "Half-baked nationalism" was—it's a brilliant substance of a totally brilliant speech.

QT: 01;28;23;20

JOE BIDEN:

And the one thing about John that gets underestimated is how smart he is; I mean, just pure gray matter, how smart he is. He not only does the right thing, he's able to articulate. Some of John's speeches are—are real masterpieces and they almost always come at times of crisis and they're clarifying. John is clarifying what the issues are here, and they go well beyond whether you're for or against a particular bill. They go to, who are we as Americans? Are we going to remain that shining city on the hill or are we going to devolve into this Machiavellian notion of—anyway. John's—You ought to read that, you probably have. Read that speech. It's brilliant.

QT: 01;29;17;02

TITLE

Despite political disagreements, Biden could always count on McCain

QT: 01;29;22;06

JOE BIDEN:

I think it's when—when you have real deep disagreements. And by the way, we had more—we talk about our disagreements, but I don't want to hurt his reputation. But we agreed more on basic social policy and a lot of foreign policy than—like for example, when I went over and laid out the American—the administration's foreign policy in Munich in the first year, John was highly complementary of the speech. But I think Afghanistan is a big mistake for a lot of reasons I won't bore you with, John thinks we should double-down there, and I'm oversimplifying it.

QT: 01;30;04;10

JOE BIDEN:

But no matter what our disagreements, I've always known, I mean, for real, if I picked up the phone in the middle of the night and said, "John, I need your help. I'm out at Seventh and Tatnole in St. Louis, Missouri. I can't tell you why, can you come?" I know he would get in a plane and come, and I would for him. I've always known that about John, even when John has appropriately commented on some gaffe I've

made, or some mistake I've made, or in a debate, or a political issue, I just have always known. Always, always known, and he knows that about me.

QT: 01;30;49;22

TITLE

On McCain's temper

QT: 01;30;55;14

JOE BIDEN:

(Laughs) Yeah, I've seen—Not lately, but I've seen John lose his temper. And every once in a while, he'll kid you, he'll—you ask him, I get a call from Bob Dole saying, "Can you come over and talk to John?" 'Cause he's getting in a real—a real debate even with his own guys or somebody else. And—and I'd come in and you know, I'd go—I—I remember when he was running and he said—I wished him luck, and he said, "Yeah," he said, "I say a prayer every day, don't lose my temper." because I had the same kind of temper that—so we understand each other. But sure, I've seen him lose his temper, but I've never seen him even when he's lost it and said something he wished he hadn't said, and not go and say, "Hey, sorry."

QT: 01;31;41;06

TITLE

On campaign finance reform

QT: 01;31;45;02

JOE BIDEN:

I mean, John knew that the first bill I introduced as a kid in the Senate was to have public financing of elections. He wasn't calling for public financing; he was talking for much more disclosure, limitations, etcetera. So John knew how strongly I felt about what he and Russ were doing. I would even try to go further, but the truth was this

was—this was going would have been a significant benefit to the country had it occurred and—So we talked about it, I constantly encouraged him. I'd go on the floor and, you know, speak for him and, you know, and go and listen and be—I mean—no, John knew how strongly I felt about McCain–Feingold.

QT: 01;32;30;06

TITLE

McCain's feelings on American torture

QT: 01;32;36;11

JOE BIDEN:

The Bush administration, their legal council's judgment about what constituted appropriate treatment of a war crimin—excuse me, a prisoner of war, drove John over the edge. And most of us felt very strongly and said it was a recruiting tool for ISIS or for then Al-Qaeda that we continue this, having these prisons.

QT: 01;33;04;09

JOE BIDEN:

And—but John, I mean, no one can speak with greater authority than John. He was on the other end of that and he knows how barbaric it is. He also knows that it doesn't produce much. It doesn't produce much. And the idea that we have not been willing to come forward and say—I mean look, the great thing about America has been, when we've made a mistake, we've basically said, not always immediately, "We're wrong. We're changing. This is who we are."

QT: 01;33;37;13

JOE BIDEN:

And so John feels extremely strong because it goes to the essence of what it is to be an American. What we Americans believe about the sanctity of people who are alive, who are in trouble. The idea there's certain behavior no matter what the other team does, is totally inappropriate. Wrong. Wrong. But the thing John understands better

than anyone else, it's not only wrong, it also is damaging. Damaging to our national security. Like I said, we have led the world and put together the most incredible alliances in the history of the world, it's not hyperbole, in history of the world because the world's repared to who we are.

QT: 01;34;29;05

JOE BIDEN:

We are a product of our values, and when we in the face of a crisis, yield like every other—not—most every other country does to expediency, then we lose our standing. We lose our swat(?). We lose our ability to move and cajole and pace things. And anyway, John is, you know—and—and only John could—could pull that off. I mean, I talk about it, I've talked about it at length when I was in the Senate and as—one of the first things we did as Vice President and President, was eliminate and say, "Torture is no longer appropriate. We're not going to allow that to happen." We've been trying from the very beginning to close down Guantanamo, you know, I mean. But—but John's voice is—it's almost like the voice of God on this one.

QT: 01;35;23;06

TITLE

Millennials and an appeal for basic decency

QT: 01;35;28;20

JOE BIDEN:

What we can do is first of all, understand that you cannot have a democracy function when the leaders of the country speak in such crass and demeaning ways about their “enemies” quote unquote; from their perspective, they're opponents. But also how they—they soil the coin of the realm, just basic decency. It's almost as simple as, you know, this—this—this moral fabric is so thin that it matters that for example, you know, to be able to have common purpose.

QT: 01;36;20;11

JOE BIDEN:

To actually as a society to be able to get together to have common purpose in what you want to get done, be able to actually in a society, you know, acknowledge the dignity of all people. To not—I mean, did you ever think, and you're a young man, did you ever think—I never thought I'd live to see the day when a group of people coming literally out of the fields and out—from under rocks carrying swastikas, chanting the same exact Anti-Semitic bile, that had happened in the '30s. The same bile. I mean, the same words.

QT: 01;37;00;09

JOE BIDEN:

And then these white supremacists for God's sake? And then when people come to protest them and confront them, there's a moral equivalence? My God! My God! What are we doing? That's not America. America does not tolerate hate and you know—like my mother—my mom said, "Children are listening." Our children are listening. The example being set is devastating. Devastating. And your generation is the most progressive, in the broad sense. It is the most open-minded.

QT: 01;37;46;15

JOE BIDEN:

It is the most accepting of differences of people's race and religion of any generation in American history. That's why I am confident America's best days are—I am absolutely confident this bile will not prev—this—this phony populism and this—this—this—th—this crazy nationalism. There's two strains that I'd never thought I'd see rise up in America. They've risen up in the 18th and 19th and 20th century in Europe, and they brought down democracies. There's no guarantee for democracy. It rests on this—on this undercarriage of decency. Treating one another with decency. And it cannot stand. But your generation is so far ahead on this.

QT: 01;38;35;04

JOE BIDEN:

The only thing I worried about 'til now is that you gotta wake up and go out and fight. You gotta wake up and say, "No. No. No. Not here in my America." I mean, for real. Not here. Not here. I don't care what call it. Not here. And that's—and John's sort of the clarion call to that. That's in its essence. It's about who we are as Americans. Look, you can't possibly define for me what—who an American is based on race, religion, and ethnicity, economic background.

QT: 01;39;10;20

JOE BIDEN:

America's an idea. And the most educated—the least educated American, when ask them would you ever have the right to speak that way or say you have the right to free speech, I mean, and they'll say, "Yeah" and I'll say, "Why?" The Constitution. The thing that binds us together, and even though they don't articulate it in detail, it's this notion, that's what America is.

QT: 01;39;35;04

JOE BIDEN:

It's the elements. "We hold these Truths self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights." Americans believe that. They translated it 50 different ways to help quote the Constitution. You were raised I expect the same way I was. You can be anything. You can be anything you want to be in America. What, you know, ordinary people can do and have done extraordinary things.

QT: 01;40;06;17

JOE BIDEN:

Extraordinary things given half a chance. But it's like today, we're walking around with our head down. I mean, we're a better position than any country in the world to own the 21st Century. Not just because you have the most powerful military in the history of mankind, we also have the most productive workforce. I mean, the most significant venture capitalist in the world, they're agile.

QT: 01;40;31;00

JOE BIDEN:

We have the greatest research universities in the world, greater than—We have more great research universities in America than all the rest of the world combined. Not hyperbole, literally because of Dwight Eisenhower. Every innovative idea in the last 25 years, 99% have come out of the United States of America. I mean, and—and—and—and—and—and—we—we walk around now like, you know, we're in trouble and we have to—it's us against them, it's you know, non-inclusive, I mean—Your generation's gonna make us stand up.

QT: 01;41;08;06

TITLE

The alt right and an appeal for moral leadership

QT: 01;41;13;06

JOE BIDEN:

We've gotta stand up and lead again. I mean, we've gotta be vocal again. And that's why John's such a rallying cry for Democrats and Republicans because the American pub—the American public knows better. They've been so turned off by the nature of our politics for the last 10 years, it's not—not brand new, that now they're realizing, "Wait a minute, man. I can't—I can't stand the sidelines any more, I gotta—I gotta make my case known." And—and I think they're rallying. I mean, I'm showing up to make speeches in places, I'm going around the country where ordinarily there'd be three, four-hundred people, there's 3,000 people.

QT: 01;42;00;18

JOE BIDEN:

I mean, time and time again. I mean it's like—and—but people are worried with good reason. So now, take it back now. We're gonna—we're gonna do this, and I'm absolutely confident. But the confidence is not because I think there are—you know, we've always had some version of the Alt-right in America and extreme, extreme

left. It's always been there, but it's that big. It's not the rest of the American people. And we just have to have enough leadership now to fight back, and it's not going to be hard. It's like pushing on an open door in my view because of your generation.

QT: 01;42;50;11

TITLE

McCain is a lot of fun

QT: 01;42;54;16

JOE BIDEN:

John is—the one thing people don't—I mean I guess they do talk about it, John's a lot of fun. And he's mischievous. Back in the days when he was Navy Liaison, I remember I had to go see I think it was Karamanlis in Greece, the Prime Minister and there was a dinner I had to go to, and so—and Jill didn't want to go to the dinner. Next thing I read—I hear about, he and Jill are on top of a cement table down in a wharf, you know, dancing to Zorba the Greek (laughs)—or whatever. I mean John is just constantly engaging and he, you know—it's easy to like John.

QT: 01;43;40;07

JOE BIDEN:

And when you like somebody, you're more inclined to listen to, and this guy's got it all. But the thing that—the thing about John is that I've known no man I've worked with, more—more valor, a greater sense of duty, an absolute courage. I said this before, but I really mean it. My mom used to say to me all the time as a kid, "Remember Joey, you're defined by your courage, and you're redeemed by your loyalty." That was my mother's credo. That's John McCain.

END TC:

QT: 01;44;19;05