March 25, 1994

Dear Governor Leavitt:

I am writing on behalf of all of us at "This Week With David Brinkley," not only to thank you for joining us in Las Vegas, but also to let you know how much we enjoyed your interview.

It was good of you to travel at such short notice, and your remarks greatly contributed to the success of the program. We all look forward to your next interview on "This Week."

Again, our thanks.

Sincerely,

Veronique Rodman
Producer
"This Week With David Brinkley"

The Honorable
Mike Leavitt
Governor of Utah
210 State Capitol
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114
TOPIC: "Gambling in America"

GUESTS:

STEVE WYNN
Chairman of the Board, President and CEO of Mirage Resorts, Inc.

JAN JONES (D)
Mayor of Las Vegas

MIKE LEAVITT (R)
Governor of Utah

INTERVIEWED BY: David Brinkley - ABC News
George F. Will - ABC News
Sam Donaldson - ABC News

ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANT: Cokie Roberts - ABC News

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: David Goldt

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ANNOUNCER: From ABC News, this is a special edition of "This Week with David Brinkley." Now from Las Vegas, David Brinkley.

MR. BRINKLEY: Gambling in America. It has gone from crap games in back alleys while somebody watched for the police to the flash and glitter of Las Vegas, with its 10,000 new hotel rooms in five months and every one of them occupied. Legal gambling started here and is spreading over the country, coast to coast. Not quite 50 states now have gambling in some form.

Why? Because the face of gambling is now turned toward family entertainment, and casinos like this one appeal to mom and pop and the kids. Gambling here for adults, games and spectacles for children. The states have mostly changed their laws against gambling for the usual familiar reason -- money, and because collecting taxes is like pulling teeth. Gambling money is handed over voluntarily.

In this town devoted to gambling, the slot machines run from a nickel to $500 for one pull. What a way to make a bet? We’ll ask our guests.

Steve Wynn, chairman and CEO of Mirage Resorts; Mike Leavitt, the governor of Utah; and Jan Jones, the mayor of Las Vegas. Some background from our man Jack Smith; and our discussion here with George Will, Sam Donaldson, and Cokie Roberts. Here on our program from Las Vegas.

(Announcements.)

ANNOUNCER: Now again from Las Vegas, David Brinkley.

MR. BRINKLEY: First a little news since the Sunday morning papers, and there isn’t much. The first pretty much normal bit of news out of Sarajevo in months. The city’s own soccer team playing a team from the U.N. peacekeeping forces. The crowds in the streets were excited to be doing something normal, marched to the stadium behind the brass band. There were the sound of trumpets rather than gunfire.

Is gambling sinful, as many Americans have believed for generations? Yes and no, depending on whom you ask.

Ask the American Indians on their tribal lands in Connecticut where they’re immune to some of the American laws. The courts have ruled that they are free to run gambling casinos if they want to. Well, they do want to. And one of their gambling operations is the most profitable of any in this country, and they see nothing sinful. But others say if it is not sinful, it certainly can be destructive.

Jack Smith has crossed the country exploring this question. Jack.

MR. SMITH: David, gambling used to be a crime, some thought a sin. Now it’s sweeping the country, legal in all but two states.

This man won $300.
How does that feel?

GAMBLER: (From videotape.) Oh, it feels nice. I just lost 300 playing poker. I'm even.

GAMBLER: (From videotape.) Let it ride.

MR. SMITH: Americans today spend more gambling than they do on reading, movies and music combined. It's one of the fastest growing industries around and very controversial.

In the middle of the Northern Woods, Connecticut's Pequot Indian tribe just built the most profitable casino in the Western hemisphere. It pulls in $600 million a year, one of the dozens of tax-exempt casinos on Indian land across the country.

BRUCE KIRCHNER (Foxwoods Casino): (From videotape.) On a really good weekend, we'll have 40,000 people come through here in a day. An average weekday, we'll have close to 17,000 come through.

MR. SMITH: It's brought new roads, schools and homes for the tribe's 300 members and 8,000 jobs to a region hard-hit by defense cutbacks.

JOHN HOLDER (Pequot Tribe): (From videotape.) If you look at for every person that's working here, it's keeping somebody else employed outside somewhere else.

MR. SMITH: Cocktail waitress Cindy Hardwick, a single mom with two children.

CINDY HARDWICK (Cocktail Waitress): (From videotape.) I mean I couldn't ask for anything better. They treat us really well.

HOLLY POPA (Casino Executive): (From videotape.) It promoted business, it brought in more employee -- more people to work, and it offered us better benefits than anywhere out there.

MR. SMITH: The same positive things can be seen in the old South. Six Mississippi River states, right in the old Bible Belt, now permit dockside river boat gambling. And here in Tunica County, Mississippi, alone, there are six casinos today and eight more on the way where just a year and a half ago, there were none.

Although gambling jobs are low skill, low pay, that doesn't matter much here in what used to be the poorest county in the nation and where 27 percent unemployment has dropped to 3 percent.

GLADYS JACKSON (Casino Employee): (From videotape.) Anybody that wants a job should be working now. If they ain't working now, then they don't want to work.

MR. SMITH: But there's a dark side to gambling here, too. The drunks are free, the slots programmed with experimental data derived from laboratory rats, and the losers often locals who can't afford it.

GAMBLER: (From videotape.) I need a new dress, new pair of shoes, and I want to go out Friday night.
MR. SMITH: Therapist Jim Jungleward has seen a sharp increase in problem gambling.

JIM JUNGLERWARD (Therapist): (From videotape.) They ruin their credit. They get way over their head in debt. They may even lose their job because of the compulsivity. It just simply takes over their lives.

VALERIE LORENZ (Compulsive Gambling Center): (From videotape.) We're turning our nation into a nation of gamblers, and unfortunately, many of those people will become gambling addicts.

MR. SMITH: But the biggest addict of all is perhaps state and local government. Chicago, like an increasing number of cities, is seeking to break an old taboo by building a multi-billion dollar gambling complex right in the middle of town.

MAYOR RICHARD DALEY (Chicago, IL): (From videotape.) The revenue to the city and to the state is enormous. People coming in, restaurants, retail business, purchasing power, revenue of tax revenue to the city and state is enormous.

ANNOUNCER: (From videotape.) The official drawing of the Illinois lottery --

MR. SMITH: Local governments came to rely on lottery receipts but these never generated enough, so they're turning to casinos and promoting what they once banned.

WILLIAM THOMPSON (Professor, University of Nevada-Las Vegas): (From videotape.) I think governments are like the compulsive gambler. They're hooked and they think they need more and more and more, and they think they're going to get a big hit like we got in Las Vegas.

MR. SMITH: Which brings us to Las Vegas, the capital of kitsch, where gambling does help the economy. Why? Because most of the money spent here is from out of state, in contrast to other places where gambling is heavily local and cannibalizes the economy.

ROBERT GOODMAN (Professor, University of Mass-Amherst): (From videotape.) What you're doing is you're sucking money out of some of the existing businesses in that area, and so instead of people buying furniture or clothing or automobiles or going to movies, they're using that kind of disposable income for gambling.

MR. SMITH: The gangster Bugsy Siegel's vision of a Nevada gambling oasis has been wildly successful. Big business, which runs things now, is changing with the times.

CLYDE TURNER (Chairman, Circus Circus ENT): (From videotape.) There are people that like to be together, have fun together, eat together, travel together, that don't all like gambling.

MR. SMITH: So the new mega casinos opening up on the strip contain the elements of a Disney theme park.

ACTOR: (From videotape.) Fire number four and five. It's set for a broadside!

MR. SMITH: One hotel even has a sea battle between mechanized galleons, all to attract the family and
broaden the casino's appeal, and in the end expose more Americans to the mixed blessings of gambling.

GAMBLER: (From videotape.) I've been a liar, a cheat, a thief. I had my credit cards all maxed out. I had 35 credit cards going -- you know, going at a time. I did anything I could to keep gambling.

CASINO EMPLOYEE: (From videotape.) Just like there are alcoholics, there are people that aren't going to be able to handle a gambling habit.

MR. SMITH: The glitz of Las Vegas is rapidly coming to Americans' front doors, not because the public sought it, but because business and government did.

Questions about how accessible gambling ought to be and about its costs -- none has been addressed as the U.S. rushes headlong toward becoming one of the gambling capitals of the world. David.

MR. BRINKLEY: Jack, thank you. We'll be back with the mayor of Las Vegas and the governor of Utah, two political leaders, one pro and one con, in a moment.

(MM. BRINKLEY: Mayor Jones of Las Vegas and Governor Leavitt of Utah, thank you both for coming, pleased to have you.

GOV. LEAVITT: Pleased to be here.

MR. BRINKLEY: Here in the studio with us are George Will and Sam Donaldson, both of ABC News. One of you is in favor of gaming or gambling, choose your own word, and one of you is not. Governor, I believe you are not. Aren't you swimming against a sort of tide in Utah? You're one of two states without gambling, any form of gambling.

GOV. LEAVITT: Well, I -- there's no question that gambling is sweeping the country and that we are standing at this point alone. I'm not sure that that will always be the case.

Gambling is something that every person has to make a personal decision on and I think every community and ultimately every state. In our state we've made the decision we simply don't want it. As recently as our last general election, we had a statewide referendum on the question of whether or not we wanted to have something as simple as a county option parimutuel betting.

Our state -- our citizens resoundingly concluded they did not want to do that. Many of them felt that the long-term social costs were just too great. Others felt that the threat of Indian gaming and the fact that we would have no control over what happened with the tribal nations in our state would change the character of our communities. Other people, I think, have other feelings about it as well.

MR. BRINKLEY: Mayor Jones, a popular perception, right or wrong, is that Las Vegas, with all of the gambling going on here over a long period of time now, is swimming in money; it solved all your problems, everything is wonderful, everybody's rich. Is that true?
MAYOR JONES: No. (Laughs.)

MR. BRINKLEY: I didn't think so.

MAYOR JONES: Succinctly. It's certainly been a benefit to the state, you know, for — there's no question with the 21 million tourists coming in, that it's contributed largely to our economy, but it's also — it's an unstable base when you look at gaming, when we have, you know, very positive years, we have tremendous money, but about four years ago, we didn't meet projections and we had to make significant cuts. Plus with the growth it's put a great impact on infrastructure, trying to catch up the needs of the community. We're sort of right now facing becoming a community beyond gaming, which gives a whole new world of challenges.

MR. BRINKLEY: George?

MR. WILL: Mayor, your city is booming. The state is booming. But so is Utah, and some people say they're booming for much the same reason. It has nothing to do with gambling. It has to do with low taxes, small government, a kind of open, Western entrepreneurial atmosphere, that you could do without gaming at this point, and still prosper. Is that true?

MAYOR JONES: Not at the present time. If we really look forward and begin to aggressively diversify the economic base, I would say that 5, 10 years from now, that would be true. The gaming could then play a role, not the major role. But we're not there yet.

MR. WILL: Governor, you talked about the long-term social costs. And I want you to say what they are because a lot of the people look at gambling and they say it's a victimless activity, it's voluntary, and when the state can raise money voluntarily, why not?

GOV. LEAVITT: Well, there's a clear pattern. When gambling goes into a particular area, the social costs go up. I'm speaking of things such as the crime rate, such as drunk driving, such as other kinds of matters, the cost of food stamps, so forth. It's a very clear pattern.

And I think that's because gambling is based on an untrue principle, and that is that you get — it's a something for nothing attitude. Government — you know, our society has a lot of things that move us in that direction. And in our state we've concluded that government's voice ought not to be added to that chorus.

MR. WILL: Has it had that effect? A lot of people say what the governor says, that gambling teaches a bad moral point, which is that the allocation of rewards in life are random, that therefore thrift and industriousness and studiousness and all the other virtues don't count so much any more.

MAYOR JONES: Well, maybe not surprisingly, I don't really agree with that. The gaming to me, and particularly in Las Vegas, it's an element of entertainment. You know, people come, they take advantage of great restaurants, golf, entertainment, shows, and gaming is just one of the options that's available to them.

MR. DONALDSON: Well, an element of entertainment. But who is it that's paying the tab here? Who are the gamblers who are putting all this money in Las Vegas? When we came to the airport, McCarran Field, yes, there were some private jets lined up there, but I suspect it's not the high rollers, the millionaires, who are
contributing here. It's people who can't afford it, really. It's a regressive thing like the sales tax, isn't it?

MAYOR JONES: No, I don't believe that's true as well. That certainly there is -- certain coming entities target high rollers. Others really target Middle America. But that's the entire metamorphosis of Las Vegas, where you can come, relatively low room rates, you can still come in and for $49 -- or a package weekend, come for five days. It's fairly inexpensive, and gambling -- you know, whether you spend $100 playing slot machines or $100 going out to a show or some other form of entertainment, I think it's a question of choice. People are having fun.

MR. DONALDSON: Choice. But when people allocate money to go to a show, take a trip, they know what the airline's going to cost them, they know what the rooms are, that's an allocation. I take it, that they're going to make freely, but they know what the end result is.

When people come into a casino like this, unless they're far different from me, they say, I'll drop $20, and they drop 40. They say $100 is my limit, they want to get it back, so they drop $200. Gambling is not just like $7.50 for the movies.

MAYOR JONES: Well, I think in some ways that it is, that people keep -- the average stay of the Las Vegas visitor today is almost five days. They're bringing their families. I mean, look at the luxury. You can go to the motion rides, you can go to virtual reality, you can have a great buffet, and that people are aware of what they're going to spend on a vacation. And if they were always losing, then they wouldn't keep coming back.

MR. DONALDSON: Governor, I was struck when you began by saying you thought gambling was a personal decision. And I know this is playing, I suppose, right into your position, but is it not also a societal decision? Is gambling just another activity that each one of us really makes a decision on? Or does society have a stake in this?

GOV. LEAVITT: I think both individuals have to make decisions, but also communities and states. Our state's made the decision we would like not to have gaming. And frankly, it's working quite well for us. We have an economy that's booming. We're the number one job creation state in the country. We're number two in personal income growth.

Interesting point here. We started off in the early '30s -- Utah looked a lot like the rest of the country. And Nevada had a niche, it was the only place that legal gaming could be done. Over the course of time, that has reversed. Now the rest of the country looks a lot more like Las Vegas and a state like Utah tends to be more of a niche.

And there are a lot of people, frankly, that would like to move to a state where there is no gaming, where in fact you can have a safe place, clean place to live, where recognizing that --

MAYOR JONES: You used two key words here, "safe place, clean place," as if Nevada isn't a safe place and a clean place. And one of the little known facts is that per capita, Las Vegas has more churches, more schools, more Little League, more football, Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, that just because you have gaming --

MR. DONALDSON: We are told that the mob no longer controls this town. Is the mob still here?

MAYOR JONES: No. If --

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MR. DONALDSON: It's not here?

MAYOR JONES: If you look at gaming corporations, they're some of the largest publicly traded companies in the country. This is corporate America who runs Las Vegas today. And the one area I agree with the governor is that there's two kinds of gaming. There's convenience gambling and specialty. Specialty brings new people into an area; it benefits the existing retail, the existing businesses; it uplifts your economic base. Convenience feeds on your local market itself and I don't think that is in anyone's best interest.

MR. BRINKLEY: Governor, I'll give you the last word. You have crime, homelessness, jobless, so on. Wouldn't gambling income help you with it?

GOV. LEAVITT: Well, we don't want gambling income.

MR. BRINKLEY: I know.

GOV. LEAVITT: We have made the decision that we will finance our state in another way. We think that what it does to our -- you may ask the question -- Sam asked the question earlier about whether or not it was a positive thing. We fundamentally believe that we're creating a culture in our state that is what we want it to be and that's one of the reasons we've -- we have rejected gambling.

MR. BRINKLEY: Governor and Mayor, thank you both very much for coming.

MAYOR JONES: Thank you.

MR. BRINKLEY: Pleased to have you. We hope it all works out well for you one way or the other.

Coming next, Steve Wynn, who built and owns two or three of these gargantuan hotels.

(Announcements.)

MR. WYNN: (Begins in progress following announcements.) Well, I think we saw where the market wanted to go, perhaps, five minutes ahead of our neighbors. But, as far as the children part goes -- this use of the word family -- I've tried, whenever I've had the chance, to make the point that our businesses are pitched at and are designed to attract mom and dad. They're sensitive to the fact that families travel together. But I don't think a casino is a place for children, and we build our places to delight the adults and, as Walt Disney said, "The child in each of us." At least that's my own point of view, you know.

MR. BRINKLEY: Well, you have built swimming pools and all kinds of things outside of the casino to entertain the kids, while mom and pop play.

MR. WYNN: Right. And our shows are never topless. They appeal to a broad spectrum of the audience. But the reason that we have beautiful pools is because that's a wonderful thing to have on a vacation. The reason our shows aren't topless is because I thought that, in the case of our entertainment, we're better served with a different approach. But again, I -- you know, I can only answer subjectively. I think in terms of mother and father. I've never consciously tried to appeal to children in the things that we build. It's turned out that way.
because we make -- you know, families do travel together -- so we make the pools and everything fun -- but they're fun for everybody.

**MR. BRINKLEY:** George.

**MR. WILL:** Some opponents of gambling -- hearing you say a casino is not a place for children will say, "Ha, why not? What is the matter with children seeing this if it's all right?"

**MR. WYNN:** Well, I think they can see it all right, but I don't think anybody who's not earning a living should be gambling with their allowance. And I don't think that a bar is a place for a kid either. You know, I just think that we've established age limits for these things -- and, by and large, that's probably a good idea.

**MR. WILL:** The governor of Utah, just a moment ago, was saying that there's something about the moral ethos and the moral lesson communicated by gambling that Utah, at least, doesn't want -- and that is, that it does suggest something for nothing, that it disconnects wealth and earnings from honest productive investment, and that therefore, the tide of gambling around the country is a sign of national decadence. Could you respond to that?

**MR. WYNN:** Well, Governor Leavitt is a friend of mine and a delightful man. I think, in this particular point, we obviously don't agree. And it's not by job to be the defender of gaming. I don't -- I'm not comfortable in that role. But this is a service industry and it provides entertainment for people. The mentality of our business is overwhelmingly entertainment.

If you asked people -- there are 20,000 people a day or so in the Mirage -- if you asked them, "Are you a gambler?" They'll say, "No." And they're not covering up. They're not defensive about it. They don't think of themselves as gamblers. They're in Las Vegas, by and large, for the entertainment and excitement of the city -- a promise that this place has been keeping at least for 55 years that I know of. And when they come here, they say: "We go to the shows. We do all the things. And gambling is fun, too." Who's to say that there's something immoral or decadent about spending $100 playing a slot machine, when you go out and buy a French wine or a fancy dinner for $150, or you pay $150 to a scalper for a football game or a rock concert? I think that it's a dangerous thing -- ethically, morally, and I think philosophically -- to be judgmental about how people dispose of their disposable income. I think anything taken to an excess is not a good idea.

**MR. WILL:** It is the case that a very small percentage -- perhaps 2 percent of those who gamble -- are accurately called compulsive gamblers.

**MR. WYNN:** That's right.

**MR. WILL:** The American Psychiatric Association has defined this as a disorder of impulse control.

**MR. WYNN:** My father was such a person.

**MR. WILL:** Such people are identifiable.

**MR. WYNN:** Clearly.
MR. WILL: Do the casinos have and should the casinos have a policy for identifying and dealing with the clearly compulsive patron?

MR. WYNN: Oh, yes. And most of the casinos do. They don’t like to discuss it very often because it’s a thing that gets more publicity than it’s worth, in many cases. But compulsive gamblers are very easy to spot. They’re relentless. They stay forever. They need credit. And we recognize that that’s usually the beginning of a problem for us. It’s very easy to discourage those people and refuse to give them credit. Once you refuse to give them credit, you’ve dealt with 90 percent of the problem on a practical level.

MR. DONALDSON: I was interested in the examples you gave. I suppose, if you buy a fine wine or you have a meal, you get some nourishment, you get something for your money. If you go to a football game and pay a scalper’s ticket, you at least know what the finite price is -- even if it’s $500. That’s it. But when someone walks in your casino -- and they may say, “Well, I’ll set $100 as a limit --”

MR. WYNN: They do.

MR. DONALDSON: -- you’re father, who left you and your mother $200,000 in debt, you just said was a compulsive gambler. You know that they’re not going to stop there.

MR. WYNN: But they do, though, Sam. I mean, you know, you --

MR. DONALDSON: They do?

MR. WYNN: Yes. People don’t come into a casino and get swept away in the grips of some kind of narcotic uncontrollable urge. The overwhelming majority of people that gamble everywhere in the world -- interview them and find out, while you’re here in Las Vegas. They come with a certain amount of money. They have a good time. They spend it and they leave.

MR. DONALDSON: How much money do you make -- do your enterprises make here?

MR. WYNN: Cash flow in our companies are a couple of hundred million dollars, two-fifty -- before depreciation and interest $300 million.

MR. DONALDSON: Does that come mainly from out-of-staters?

MR. WYNN: Yes.

MR. DONALDSON: Well, what are you going to do if other states now build casinos -- not just the Indians, but everybody else?

MR. WYNN: That’s a good question.

MR. DONALDSON: If you try to live off yourself here, do you have the resources?

MR. WYNN: I don’t think any community has the resources to live off itself. They definition of a good
business -- whether it's casino or otherwise, in this jurisdiction or any other -- is whether the project is value added. That is, does it bring people from outside the region? Is the whole -- does the whole exceed the sum of the parts? The payroll that these places create is a marvelous boom to communities. Like in Ledyard, I saw on the monitor that you were interviewing people up in Connecticut -- it's revitalized all of eastern Connecticut.

The definition of a value added business in any community is one that has to be examined technically. But basically Las Vegas at least -- and that's the only place with which I have any real experience, and some in Atlantic City -- has benefited from the fact that the balance of payments comes into Las Vegas.

MR. DONALDSON: It's a transfer tax, though. You're bringing from out of state, and you're taking money from these other states.

MR. WYNN: I guess that's true.

MR. DONALDSON: So, they have to do what? Emulate you?

MR. WYNN: Well, that's the question. Emulating Las Vegas is a little bit more complicated than it seems. This is a place where the free enterprise system or entrepreneurial spirit has been allowed to flourish -- unlike Washington and other place like that. That's why this place is doing so well.

MR. BRINKLEY: Speak --

MR. WYNN: And in order to compete -- I'm sorry.

MR. BRINKLEY: Speaking of that, of government, as gambling or gaming -- your choice -- has spread, produced a great deal of money, government has become increasingly interested, taking quite a lot of it. Aren't you letting an elephant into the tent by bringing government in as a partner in your business?

MR. WYNN: Like most people with a tent that have an elephant that wants to come in, you have very little to say about it --

MR. BRINKLEY: Well --

MR. WYNN: -- I guess, in the last minute. And I think that probably -- the description fits us.

MR. WILL: But actually -- to build on David's question -- perhaps the governments who are running the lotteries and spending $200 million, $250 million a year advertising their own lotteries, aren't they helping you --

MR. WYNN: I think so.

MR. WILL: -- by saying, gambling is an activity, an entertainment.

MR. WYNN: Oh, absolutely. I think that the activities of government have primarily been responsible for the desensitization of the public towards the legitimacy of gaming. You can't have billboards up and down the New Jersey Turnpike and the Pennsylvania Turnpike that say, "Take a chance. You got to play to win. Become an instant millionaire." And then, in the next minute say, "Gambling is immoral," or, "A slot machine is a bad

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thing." Pretty soon, people just are so disgusted with that kind of hypocrisy from the public pulpit that they turn their back on it.

MR. WILL: In the last few years, three hotels have opened here, the smallest of which has a, what, I guess, 2,500 rooms, 5,000 rooms.

MR. WYNN: This one. (Laughter.)

MR. WILL: What's the saturation of Clark County, Nevada, in terms of attracting people?

MR. WYNN: Good question. I'm not sure I know. We're watching that very -- we're trying to watch the results of that, of those new hotels, very carefully. We're keeping track of what's going on.

MR. WILL: It is said --

MR. WYNN: It's fascinating, isn't it?

MR. WILL: It is said that, within, say, the end of this decade, that four out of five Americans will live within a tree or four hour drive of casino gambling -- not just lotteries, casino gambling. Do you think that's accurate? Do you think that Miami, Detroit, Chicago -- cities of this sort -- will have casino gambling at the end of this century?

MR. WYNN: Yes.

MR. DONALDSON: Is there mob still in the town?

MR. WYNN: No.

MR. DONALDSON: Why? What happened to it?

MR. WYNN: I think it started in the early '60s with the Kennedy administration and Bobby Kennedy's crusade against organized crime, the expansion of federal wiretapping and law enforcement devices and techniques that -- and the aging of that group, the mob. I mean -- (chuckling) -- by the time they put all the fellows in New York in jail, they were in their 80s. Times just have changed. I think the idea that the public is less permissive about that sort of thing now -- with the exception of drugs.

MR. DONALDSON: I hate to return to the same theme, but I'm struck -- in a way, your personal story is kind of the old Horatio Alger story. I mean, you didn't start out looking for something for nothing. You took, what, $45,000. You made an investment. You risked your capital. You worked hard. And yet, you're making this $250 million by saying to people, "Come on, play that slot machine; you, too, can be a winner." when you know only the house wins.

MR. WYNN: I sure am. I admit it on national television. (Laughter.) I'm shamelessly promoting my business for money, Sam. That's what we're doing it for. (Laughter.)
MR. DONALDSON: Well, what do you give people?

MR. WYNN: And it's such fun.

MR. DONALDSON: I mean, what do you really give people? You know the house --

MR. WYNN: Fun.

MR. DONALDSON: What -- is it not a win, saying, "If you want to make money in a casino, own one."

MR. WYNN: You do an interview of anybody in this town today and try and find a victim -- that is to say, someone who's come to Las Vegas to make money. Can't do it.

MR. DONALDSON: The city prides itself by saying, "We give free bus tickets, if necessary, to people, if they don't have any money.

MR. WYNN: You bet.

MR. DONALDSON: Who are all these people?

MR. WYNN: Making it easier for people to come here and take advantage of what's being sold. And what's being sold here -- loudly, unceremoniously, without any subtlety whatsoever -- is a party and fun.

MR. DONALDSON: By the way, is it true that you're a guy who used to, you know, really support the Democrats and now are pouring lots of money into the Republican coffers because you don't like the Clinton tax plan?

MR. WYNN: The tax plan doesn't bother me so much as the whole attitude in Washington that government can do it better than people. I don't believe that's true. I don't think that's true at all. And I don't think Mrs. Clinton can help me insure my 18,000 employees better than we are doing ourselves. I appreciate the interest, but thanks, but no thanks. I'd just as soon -- I mean, we didn't get where we are today because government did it for us. And I think the American people know that they don't get anything for nothing.

MR. WILL: Let's come back for a moment to the demographics of the Las Vegas entertainment patron, if that's what we want to call it. Most, in terms of the sheer numbers, are clearly middle Americans pulling slot machines, playing the small numbers. But what percentage of the take of this city comes from what you'd call high rollers? I mean, 10 percent of your gamblers provide what percent of the general take?

MR. WYNN: I have a theory about that. We're not exactly sure, but I think that 10 percent of the customers here provide at least twice the percentage of the revenue.

MR. WILL: That's all?

MR. WYNN: That's quite a bit, you know, when you think about it. But it's one of my favorite questions. It's very hard to get at that answer. We can quantify things like international baccarat business, which
is $400 million to $500 million, but we can't quantify, you know, what percentage of revenue at the blackjack and crap and slot -- I mean, even at the slot machines, at any level of this activity, there are people with a lot more energy to do it than the bulk of the guests.

MR. WILL: Are the high rollers or are --

MR. WYNN: It's a great question, though.

MR. WILL: -- or are the patrons, in general, leading or lagging economic indicators? I mean, what can we tell about America that -- I guess Las Vegas powered right through the recession, didn't it?

MR. WYNN: Yes. And for a very specific reason -- it's hard to answer the question about economic indicators in this town, because the secret of this place's longevity has been that its market has broadened to Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America, every strata of ethnic and social description that we can come up with. And so, when one of them is having a problem, we experience a balancing in the other sectors. So, this town is such a cross-section, it's hard, George, to tell exactly what's going on.

MR. WILL: Yes, the stories abound of Las Vegas recycling petro-dollars that come from Kuwait and all the rest.

MR. WYNN: They're exaggerated.

MR. WILL: They are an approximation.

MR. WYNN: This has never been a big Arab place. It is a giant Asian place. Arab play in Las Vegas, I can tell you for sure, has always been relatively small.

MR. WILL: Since we talk constantly about our Asian trade deficit -- and this is a serious question -- do you have a way of telling us to what extent Las Vegas's take is a net balance from abroad?

MR. WYNN: Yes. And I've talked about this before -- it's fascinating. It's at least a billion dollars.

MR. WILL: A billion?

MR. WYNN: A billion. That offsets a lot of Toyotas and Sony Walkmen -- but at least a billion. (Laughter.)

MR. BRINKLEY: Sam, I'll give you the last --

MR. DONALDSON: Let's talk --

MR. BRINKLEY: -- give you the last question.

MR. DONALDSON: Let's talk -- before our time is up. Help all the people out who are going to come to the Mirage or other places here.
MR. WYNN: Okay.

MR. DONALDSON: All right. What are the odds -- what are the best games to play to try to actually take a little money out of your pocket rather than put it in?

MR. BRINKLEY: Craps.

MR. WYNN: Most of the mainline games -- blackjack if you're a basic strategy player, craps, baccarat, and the quarter and dollar slot machine all hold about the same per spin -- 1 to 3 percent. That is, they give back about 97 percent. All of those games --

MR. DONALDSON: Not Roulette?

MR. WYNN: Not Roulette. I didn't say Roulette.

MR. BRINKLEY: All right.

MR. WYNN: I said baccarat, craps, blackjack, basic strategy.

MR. DONALDSON: All right. But the Roulette's higher.

MR. WYNN: Roulette's higher, and nickel slot machines are higher, and the Big 6 Wheel -- the one that spins vertically.

MR. DONALDSON: Yes.

MR. WYNN: That's higher.

MR. DONALDSON: Craps used to be the best odds.

MR. WYNN: Craps is 1.4, baccarat is 1.2. A basic strategy player is paying about 1 or 2 percent per hand.

MR. BRINKLEY: What about blackjack? I saw a list, but it didn't include blackjack. What's the odds there?

MR. WYNN: If you're a good basic strategy player --

MR. BRINKLEY: I'm a good basic strategy --

MR. WYNN: You are?

MR. BRINKLEY: Yes.

MR. WYNN: You're giving up about 1 percent of it. I would say, per hand.

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MR. BRINKLEY: Pretty good deal.

MR. WYNN: Pretty -- like craps.

MR. BRINKLEY: George --

MR. WYNN: Pretty much like craps.

MR. BRINKLEY: George, I'll give you the last question.

MR. WILL: Just one more question. Speaking of the government, of which your views are somewhat jaundiced --

MR. WYNN: Very jaundiced.

MR. WILL: -- the government makes us put truth in labeling laws on milk and cigarettes and alcohol and bread, for all I know. What if they said, "You have to have a truth in labeling law on the craps table and on the slot machines," saying just what you said.

MR. WYNN: I'd like it.

MR. WILL: You would.

MR. WYNN: Yes. We're doing it. They have billboards that say, "We guarantee 97 percent of the money back on our slots." Everybody that shoots craps knows what the house percentage is.

MR. WILL: But eventually --

MR. WYNN: I think we're there already, is what I'm saying.

MR. DONALDSON: I mean, if they stay long enough, they give it all to you, though, because the percentage inexorably takes it away.

MR. WYNN: Probably true.

MR. BRINKLEY: Well, with those words --

MR. DONALDSON: Probably? (Laughter.)

MR. WYNN: Yes, but, you know, they don't stay long enough. People have winning trips and losing trips. That's how it works.

MR. BRINKLEY: Okay. With those words of wisdom, Sam, we have to wind it up.
Mr. Wynn, thank you very much for coming.
MR. WYNN: It’s been a pleasure.

MR. BRINKLEY: It’s been a real pleasure to have you here. Good luck to you.

MR. WYNN: Thank you.

MR. BRINKLEY: Coming next, our discussion here, ranging from the card tables or the dice tables and so on and so on, and what is happening in Washington and the rest of the world. In a moment.

(Announcements.)

MR. BRINKLEY: Elsewhere in the news and in the world -- a question for all three of you -- how would you describe President Clinton’s recent trial by fire, this endless series of bad news? What would you call it? How would you describe it, George?

MR. WILL: Well, I was struck earlier this week, he had that literally podium pounding speech in which he said the Republicans say, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, et cetera. And one gets to thinking, the Democrats control the executive branch of government, they control both halves of the legislative branch. The only people who can say no to him and matter are Democrats, which brings us to a second point. His great achievement of his first 13 months was the passage of NAFTA, which was passed over the resistance of Democrats with the yes, yes, yes, yes, yes votes of a great many Republicans. The health care plan is in trouble in the House not primarily because of Republicans, but because less than a majority of Democrats support the Clinton bill.

And finally, as to the carnivorous nature of Washington, which he also blames for some of his hard times, Mr. Hubble left not because of the carnivorous nature of Washington, but because his law partners at the Rose firm -- the people who knew him best and used to work with him back in Arkansas -- are unhappy. So, it’s carnivorous Little Rock. (Laughter.)

MR. BRINKLEY: Well, they turned on him. Sam?

MR. DONALDSON: I’m tempted to say that Bill Clinton is like someone here in Las Vegas. I mean, he’s playing against the house. And the house has the odds now. Occasionally the slots will give him about five nickels. But this Whitewater business, which got so out of hand without anyone knowing whether there was anything really there, is now consuming him. And we have stories like "The New York Times" story the other day -- with all due respect to the editors of "The New York Times," they had a story on the front page saying that Hillary Clinton made $100,000 from commodity trading, I think back in 1979 or ’80, with tips from the head of Tyson’s Foods. Yet the story, in my quick reading, did not disclose any wrongdoing. It didn’t accuse her of inside trading. And I’m tempted to say: "Well, so what? Congratulations, Hillary."

MS. ROBERTS: Well, it is -- you’re right. What some say happens is --

MR. DONALDSON: Yes, but the story is there as if this is another smelly thing.

MR. BRINKLEY: Most people --
MS. ROBERTS: You're quite right. Once it goes south, it really does go south. I mean, Webb Hubbell, as you said, George, is accused by his law firm. And it has nothing to do with Whitewater. It has to do with billing clients in the law firm.

MR. BRINKLEY: He's accused of over-billing clients.

MS. ROBERTS: Right.

MR. BRINKLEY: When did that get to be a crime? (Laughter.)

MS. ROBERTS: Well, clients don't much like it. And the law firm -- he apparently billed them. And they really didn't like it. But the expenses --

MR. DONALDSON: Yes, he was using -- he was charging his expenses apparently against the partners. That's what they're angry about.

MS. ROBERTS: They didn't like that. But you know, this business of no, no, no, no, no, the reason that the president is doing that is because the Democratic polling is showing that it's working. The Republicans are perceived in the country as being very negative. That, even though people are beginning to raise questions about Whitewater and in the last "Time" magazine poll, the people said that -- only 35 percent of the people said they could trust the president. That's disaster. But, at the same time, they still believe that it's the Republicans ginning it up, that it's the Republicans being negative. They're not gaining points on this. The president is losing.

MR. WILL: I'd like to go back to what Sam was talking about, and that is the curious idea that there's something wrong with Hillary Clinton making money. I'll tell you why I think it hurts the Clintons that they made money. The Clintons set out to capture the '90s by discrediting the '80s. And discrediting a decade in which you have 93 consecutive months of economic growth and 19 million new jobs and all the rest.

MR. DONALDSON: And you triple the national debt, but go ahead, George. (Chuckling.)

MR. WILL: But they found that statistically it was hard to fault. So, they decided to stigmatize it morally. They said the problem with the 1980s was there were a lot of grasping, greedy, go-go money getters.

MR. DONALDSON: Right. Right. Exactly right.

MR. WILL: Well, now it turns out that the Clintons were shorting stocks, that they were speculating in land. They were behaving in the way that sort of fits their caricature of the 1980s.

MS. ROBERTS: Well, actually, their stockbroker says that that was not quite the case. But --

MR. WILL: It was quite the case.

MS. ROBERTS: But I do think that you're making a good point, that when you get into a situation where you hold yourself up as one thing, and then get criticized for not being that thing, that it's fair criticism. And the other place that we're seeing this is the question of Hillary Clinton as a woman. There are a lot of women now...
saying that she's getting criticized because she's an uppity woman and that it's just that people can't handle that.

MR. DONALDSON: Uppity? No, no, no. I don't think that's right.

MS. ROBERTS: I agree with you. I don't think it's right either.

MR. BRINKLEY: Is that word still used in this country?

MS. ROBERTS: Oh, yes. Very definitely.

MR. WILL: A world that has gotten used to Indira Gandhi and Margaret Thatcher --

MR. DONALDSON: Eleanor Roosevelt.

MR. WILL: Exactly, Eleanor Roosevelt. I mean the world is quite used to --

MR. DONALDSON: Cokie --

MR. WILL: -- strong women.

MR. DONALDSON: -- men have to come into the era, if they haven't already, to understand that women are not only equal in a de jure way, but a de facto way. But, having said that then, a woman, when criticized on a policy, cannot say, "Oh, wait, you're jumping on me because I'm a woman."

MS. ROBERTS: I agree with you completely. I think that -- and I --

MR. DONALDSON: Let me just tell you something about Hillary Clinton.

MS. ROBERTS: -- think that it does a disservice to say that.

MR. DONALDSON: Hillary is also -- Mrs. Clinton is also making a mistake -- the classic mistake in these kinds of scandals. She said last week -- I think it was in "Newsweek" or "Time" -- "I made mistakes" without defining what they were. It's the old, "Mistakes were made."

MR. BRINKLEY: Didn't she say, "Mistakes were made?"

MR. DONALDSON: No, I think she said I made some mistakes.

MS. ROBERTS: She actually spoke in the active voice.

MR. BRINKLEY: She did?

MR. DONALDSON: But the point is, when you don't define it, you imply that the mistakes were one of technique. In other words, "I made a mistake by not controlling my people or by not doing this." We want to know whether, hey, did you murder someone, or just jaywalk? (Laughter.) The mistakes we want to hear about
are the business that they appear to still be trying to cover up.

MS. ROBERTS: Well, she says the initial investment was a mistake in the first place.

MR. DONALDSON: Well, that's like saying it was a mistake dropping $100 in Las Vegas.

MR. WILL: Coming back to what --

MR. BRINKLEY: George, go now.

MR. WILL: -- Cokie said a moment ago. I think she's absolutely right about the perception the country has right now of the Republicans that the president is exploiting. And I think by now Whitewater is hurting Republicans. Because the issues in the country today -- crime and taxes and welfare reform -- are natural Republican issues. And, as long as the argument is on those issues, the Republicans ought to gain. Because the country today is --

MS. ROBERTS: But they've lost on those issues, George. I mean --

MR. WILL: I don't think they have. The country today is so much more conservative --

MR. DONALDSON: No. Not on health care, Cokie.

MR. WILL: -- than it was ten years ago.

MR. DONALDSON: Not on health care, for instance.

MR. BRINKLEY: Hold on, one minute.

MR. DONALDSON: I mean, I used to think George was just pushing the Republican line -- several weeks ago when you said, the more people learn about the Clinton health care plan, the more they apparently dislike it. But it's quite true.

I noticed that last night at the Gridiron --

MS. ROBERTS: Yes, but they dislike the Republicans more on health care. They, you know, when you say to them --

MR. DONALDSON: Well, they want the Republicans to come up with an alternative rather than just say no.

MS. ROBERTS: They say Republicans are hurting when it comes to solving the health care problem.

MR. DONALDSON: Last night in Washington at the Gridiron Dinner, I understand that Mrs. Clinton and the president tried to parody the Harry and Louise commercials. You know, the health --
Mr. Brinkley: First -- go ahead.

Mr. Donaldson: And it -- well, I started to say Thelma and Louise. (Laughter.) But that wouldn't work right. (Laughter.) It fell down because the parody was no good. They talked about, "What, it says people will die under the plan?"

Mr. Will: They sure will.

Mr. Donaldson: Well, I've only seen one or two comedians in my life who could talk about death and make it funny. And they weren't them.

Ms. Roberts: Well, we weren't there. With many jokes you had to be there.

Mr. Brinkley: So, what was it; a good idea badly done?

Mr. Donaldson: What the --

Mr. Brinkley: This thing at the Gridiron.

Mr. Donaldson: Everybody comes to the Gridiron -- folks -- it's one of these off-the-record dinners, which is immediately in "The Washington Post" the next day. And now you see it on the air.

Mr. Brinkley: They're off-the-record for 15 seconds.

Mr. Donaldson: And it works for some politicians. Remember when Nixon and Agnew came and they sang about the Southern strategy.

Ms. Roberts: Or when Nancy Reagan --

Mr. Donaldson: Nancy Reagan and Ronald -- Nancy came and sang "Secondhand Clothes."

Ms. Roberts: "Rose."

Mr. Brinkley: That was pretty good.

Mr. Donaldson: And it dissipated the whole idea that she'd, you know, had all these dresses.

Mr. Brinkley: "Secondhand Rose."

Ms. Roberts: Right.

Mr. Donaldson: Yes, "Secondhand Rose."

Mr. Brinkley: Rose.
MR. DONALDSON: But she was talking about her clothes. I think the Clintons didn’t make it, from what I hear.

MR. BRINKLEY: All right. Before we go on to something else, I would like to briefly – does Whitewater really mean anything to the American people?

MR. DONALDSON: Yes.

MR. BRINKLEY: Is there anything to it, in your best judgment.

MS. ROBERTS: I think --

MR. DONALDSON: Yes. At the moment it now means that there’s another thing about the Clintons to add to other things on the so-called character issue. They don’t know what’s there. I don’t know what’s there, let’s say --

MR. BRINKLEY: Well, no one does. At least no one outside the --

MR. DONALDSON: David, if someone runs in the door tomorrow and says, "You know, Bill Clinton does not know the details of the GATT treaty," you wouldn’t believe that. Mr. Clinton is a policy wonk. He knows all those things. But when someone runs in and says, "Hey, another thing that looks slick," people tend to believe it about him.

MS. ROBERTS: Well, it does play in. That’s right. It plays into pre-conceived notions about him. And it also plays into the notion that everybody in Washington is a bunch of bums that’s all out to benefit themselves. It plays into George’s term limitation theme.

MR. BRINKLEY: We all live there. How could they say a thing like that?

MS. ROBERTS: And I think that it makes it much harder for them to get policies achieved, because those things require trust in government.

MR. WILL: There is --

MR. BRINKLEY: George, go ahead.

MR. WILL: -- there is a kind of scorched-earth conservatism that really wants to not have a brick standing on brick in Washington. And this does play into that. But most important, I think, David, Whitewater will demoralize the Clintons. That is, it will take away some of the preposterous moral vanity that is the legacy of the 1960s and perhaps of the baby boom generation in particular.

MR. BRINKLEY: All right. Before we go. Oliver North running for the United States Senate. Oliver North.

MS. ROBERTS: And Ronald Reagan has written a letter saying that he’s steamed that Oliver North has
gone around making claims that Reagan knew everything and ordered all of the Iran-contra debacle. I think that North has got a lot of problems in his own party. And people are desperately trying to separate him from the Republican Party.

MR. DONALDSON: Cokie, the truth is, Oliver North does not tell the truth. I mean, he has admitted it. Am I making a slur on him? He says: "I'm a liar. I lied to Congress. I'm proud of it. Hooray." He does not tell the truth. And he has not been -- I don't know whether he is telling the truth about Ronald Reagan. But he has been saying -- he wrote in his book that Mr. Reagan knew everything.

MR. BRINKLEY: Not telling the truth. Does that disqualify him as a candidate for the Senate?

MR. DONALDSON: Well, it may not disqualify people in any form of life, David. But when you get onto it, you don't want to elect someone like that, I don't think.

MR. BRINKLEY: George.

MR. WILL: I think Ronald Reagan had personal anxiety, which was to look down the road and see that Oliver North might be in the Senate -- he says for only two terms, he's a term-limits man --

MS. ROBERTS: (Chuckling.) One of yours.

MR. WILL: Well, up to a point. And Reagan had to have anxieties about whether this man would come to be a definer of the Reagan legacy. And that's kind of dangerous. But, you know what we're missing in all of this is there's another candidate out there. There's Jim Miller, who worked for Ronald Reagan as head of the OMB -- perfectly impeccable conservative -- and I believe that by June -- by the time Virginians come to go to their convention to nominate their candidate -- the polls are going to show that North is a loser, and therefore Miller is going to look awfully good.

MS. ROBERTS: But this convention is likely to be very stacked with North supporters. Because what's happened is the Republican Party in Virginia has, by and large, been taken over by people of the far right. And that is farther right than Jim Miller.

MR. DONALDSON: And if North --

MS. ROBERTS: And that becomes a problem for him and for the Republican Party all over the country.

MR. BRINKLEY: Sam.

MR. DONALDSON: And if North then runs against Chuck Robb -- the incumbent senator, who has terrible problems -- character problems of his own -- it's going to be a classic contest. Here's Oliver North, who -- you don't know whether he's telling the truth or not -- and here's Senator Robb who wrote this extraordinary letter the other day which he published, inviting us to decide which sex acts he had committed and which he had not, if we could only read against the lines.

MS. ROBERTS: (Laughter.) It's not good for the Marines, clearly. Semper Fi is running into trouble
in Virginia.

MR. BRINKLEY: So -- 

MR. WILL: It really is quite astonishing that the state of Virginia -- Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, John Randolph, George Washington, Robert E. Lee -- has come down to this choice. I mean, again, if you wanted to feed the national dyspepsia about government. I can't think of anything more perfectly calculated to do it than this.

MR. DONALDSON: You know, I wonder, if Oliver North got in the United States Senate, and was in a committee hearing and a Clinton Administration official came up and lied to the Senate, would North say, "That's my boy." I think Oliver North would be outraged. He would thunder. He would complain.

MS. ROBERTS: There's a part of me that does feel that the Senate deserves Oliver North. If I must say, though, it would do them good.

MR. DONALDSON: I'll tell you this --

MR. BRINKLEY: Cokie, I'm sorry. Sorry, folks. We've run out of time. Thank you all very much.

MR. BRINKLEY: We'll be home tomorrow. We'll be back with a few words about love and marriage and other great events, about the cards and the dice, in a moment.

(Announcements.)

MR. BRINKLEY: Finally, Las Vegas has created a new and perhaps more wholesome atmosphere for gambling -- formerly regarded as a crime, but now seen as a respectable way to raise money. Even state governments that used to throw gamblers in jail, now have their hands out, eager to take their money. Here in Vegas, the eternal verities are not necessarily eternal. For example, I see in the Yellow Pages of the telephone book, they've even worked out some new ideas on love and marriage, such as a wedding chapel where, on short notice or no notice, you can be married any time, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Now, there's more. One wedding chapel here offers drive-through marriages. You don't even have to get out of your car. And -- still more -- its advertising says you can have a drive-through wedding in a car, truck, motorcycle, van, horse-drawn buggy, bicycle, tractor-trailer, bus, or even a taxi.

Now, for all of us here, our thanks to the Luxor Hotel here for being so helpful to us in arranging all of this and getting it on the air all in one piece. You have been great. And we thank you.

For all of us, until next week. Thank you.