

## **Full Transcript**

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BLITZER: And joining us now, Donald Trump.

Donald Trump, thanks for coming in.

TRUMP: Thank you.

BLITZER: Actually, we should thank you for allowing us to come into your office.

TRUMP: Well, I'm a fan, Wolf, and it's my honor. Thank you.

BLITZER: Thank you very much.

Let's talk politics. All right? A lot of people thinking about politics right now. I'm going to mention some names: give me your thoughts right away.

Hillary Clinton.

TRUMP: Very talented, very smart. She's a friend of mine, so I'm a little bit prejudiced. She's a very, very capable person and I think she'll probably be the nominee. We'll see, but I think she'll probably be the nominee.

BLITZER: Is she ready to be commander-in-chief?

TRUMP: I think she is. I think she's a very, very brilliant person, and as a senator in New York, she has done a great job. Everybody loves her. She just won an election with a tremendous majority and she really -- she's become very, very popular in New York. And it wasn't easy.

BLITZER: Barack Obama.

TRUMP: Well, he's a star. I mean, he's really done an amazing job in a very short period of time. The question is experience, and do people want to have somebody get in that doesn't have the great experience? But certainly he's made an impact.

BLITZER: What do you think? Is he qualified? Is he ready to be president?

TRUMP: I think he's young, I think he's probably -- it's a little bit soon. I think his time might come, but I think it's too soon.

BLITZER: John Edwards.

TRUMP: I don't know him. People like him. I know people that like him very much, but I really don't know.

BLITZER: Even though he was the vice presidential nominee last time around.

TRUMP: Well, I think that's a huge negative, because that was a shame that that race was lost, because look what we have right now. It's a disaster. So, you know, I would probably be inclined not to like him on the basis that he lost an election that should have been won. That election should have been won.

BLITZER: Well, do you blame him or John Kerry?

TRUMP: Well, I guess you have to say it's a combination of both. Now obviously the second man on the ticket doesn't have too much of an impact, in comparison to the first, but -- and I like John Kerry a lot, he's a wonderful guy, he's somebody I know and I have -- he's a friend of mine -- but I'm so upset that he blew it.

BLITZER: You're upset because you dislike the current --

TRUMP: Well, I think Bush is probably the worst president in the history of the United States, and I just don't understand how they could have lost that election.

BLITZER: Let's get back to that in a moment.

Let's talk about Rudy Giuliani, the former mayor of New York.

TRUMP: Very, very talented, smart, tough, very formidable in every way. And I think, if it's him and Hillary, it's going to be a hell of a tough race.

BLITZER: Can he get the Republican nomination, given his views on some of the social issues, like abortion rights for women?

TRUMP: Well, based on the polls, he's doing fantastically. I mean, I saw a poll today, he's up 25 percent. So based on the polls, he's really doing fantastically well. He's a very good guy. He's a very tough person, which I think the country needs. He's got a lot of fantastic qualities.

BLITZER: John McCain.

TRUMP: I don't know him well. I respect him. I like him. He doesn't seem to have picked up like I would have assumed, because if you would have asked me this question a year ago, it looked like he was going to walk into the nomination, and now Rudy is doing so well in the polls that it's really amazing.

BLITZER: So what happened?

TRUMP: I don't know what happened. I think probably the fact that he said, I want more troops going over to Iraq. Anybody that wants more troops going over to Iraq, I think, can't win an election.

BLITZER: But Rudy Giuliani supports that position.

TRUMP: Well, he's supporting it, but he's supporting it in a much weaker way. I mean, if you listen to both of them, Rudy is not supporting it with the same vigor that John is.

BLITZER: Mitt Romney.

TRUMP: I know him, I like him -- very attractive guy. I think he's probably, you know, up against two people that are way ahead. But he's certainly an attractive candidate. He's a very smart guy.

BLITZER: You have a lot of New Yorkers toying with this right now, including maybe even the current mayor of New York, Michael Bloomberg. What do you think of the possibility that he could throw his hat in the ring?

TRUMP: Well, I think he's a fantastic person. He's somebody that I know and respect. He's been a wonderful mayor of this city; he's done a great job. And I think he'd be formidable and he can spend the money that it takes to get elected. I think he'd be very formidable.

BLITZER: Let's talk about the New Yorkers for a second, because you know these people, up close and personal.

TRUMP: I know every one of them well.

BLITZER: All right. So if I had to press you, who is, in your mind right now, the most qualified, the most ready, the person you want to lead this country?

TRUMP: Well, I don't want to say, because I know Hillary and I have great respect, and I know Rudy and I have great respect, and I know Michael Bloomberg -- now he -- I don't think we have to talk about him because he hasn't said he's going to do anything -- and I have great respect.

So, you know, it's really interesting that in a whole country, three of the very, very prominent people being mentioned -- and two of them are leading in the polls -- are from New York.

BLITZER: So it sounds like, if the contest turned out to be Rudy Giuliani versus Hillary Clinton, you, Donald Trump, would be torn.

TRUMP: I'd make a decision, because I believe in that. I don't believe in supporting two people. You know I have friends, they support fifteen different candidates for the same office. I don't believe in that; that's almost like prostitution. And I just feel that there are two great candidates and I would make a decision. But I'm not going to make it now because there's no reason to.

BLITZER: But is your instinct more attuned with the Republicans or the Democrats?

TRUMP: I'm very much independent in that way; I go for the person, not necessarily for the party. I mean, I vote for Republicans and I vote for Democrats. Look, Hillary's a Democrat, Rudy's a Republican, I think they're both fantastic. I really am much more attuned to the people, as opposed to the party.

BLITZER: Last time we spoke in this room, you were thinking of running for the presidency -- remember that?

TRUMP: No, I was never thinking of running. I was -- I think -- by the way, I think I'd do a very good job. You wouldn't be in the mess that you're in right now. But I was never thinking of running.

BLITZER: You were toying with the idea.

TRUMP: Years ago, they said I ran for president -- I never ran for president.

BLITZER: You never ran, but you were considering it. Roger Snow was one of your --

TRUMP: People wanted me --

BLITZER: -- political advisors, and he was floating that idea.

TRUMP: People wanted me very much to run. The Independent party wanted me to run, and the Independent party turned out to be a total catastrophe, in terms of they ended up with fistfights and fighting and everything else. But I was never seriously considering running.

But you know, it's something that people, because I get good ratings on television, because your show now will get good ratings, because "The

Apprentice" has always been so strong, et cetera, et cetera. People have always wanted me to run, and I just have always decided not to do it.

BLITZER: And are you ruling it out now?

TRUMP: Pretty much, yes. I mean, I would say this: it would certainly be fun, it would certainly be interesting. I think I could do a very good job. But the answer is, I'm just not interested in running. I'm building buildings all over the world right now -- all over the world. I'm probably the largest real estate developer there is and I'm having a lot of fun doing it.

So I really -- and I'm loving it, I'm just loving it. So I think I have to rule myself out.

BLITZER: The war is hovering over politics right now, as it should -- this is the dominant issue, at least right now, of our time. Give us your assessment. Is there a way out?

TRUMP: The war is a total disaster. It's a catastrophe, nothing less. It is such a shame that this took place. In fact, I gained a lot of respect for our current president's father by the fact that he had the sense not to go into Iraq. He won the war and then said, Let's not go the rest of the way. And he turned out to be right.

And Saddam Hussein, whether they liked him or didn't like him, he hated terrorists. He'd shoot and kill terrorists. When terrorists came into his country, which he did control and he did dominate, he would kill terrorists. Now it's a breeding ground for terrorists.

So, look, the war is a total catastrophe.

BLITZER: Who do you blame?

TRUMP: And they have a civil war going over there.

BLITZER: Who do you blame?

TRUMP: Well, there's only one person you can blame, and that's our current president. I mean, obviously Rumsfeld was a disaster, and other people that are giving him advice have been a disaster. And Condoleezza Rice, who's a lovely woman but she never makes a deal -- she doesn't make deals, she waves. She gets off the plane, she waves, she sits down with some dictator -- 45 degree angle, they do the camera shot. She waves again, she gets back on the plane, she waves -- no deal ever happens.

So, I mean --

BLITZER: You got to close the deal at some point.

TRUMP: Got to make deals. The world is dying to make deals. And we don't have the right people doing it.

BLITZER: The vice president, Dick Cheney.

TRUMP: Well, he's obviously a very hawkish guy on the war. He said the war was going fantastically, just a few months ago. And you know, it's just very sad. I don't know if they're bad people, I don't know what's going on, I just know that they got us into a mess, the likes of which this country has probably never seen. It's one of the great catastrophes of all time.

And perhaps even worse, the rest of the world hates us. You go throughout Europe -- I travel, I do deals all over the world -- the Europeans hate us. You go to Germany, you go to England, you go to places that, you know, we didn't have problems with, they all hate the Americans because of what's happened. We had a chance, after September 11, to be the most popular -- for the first time ever -- to be the most popular nation on earth, and we blew it.

Everybody -- for the first time, people felt sympathy. I'm not saying it's a great thing, to have sympathy, in terms of yourself, but for the first time they felt a sympathy and a love for this country because of what happened. And we blew it.

BLITZER: How does the United States get out of this situation? Is there a way out?

TRUMP: You know how they get out? They get out. That's how they get out. Declare victory and leave. Because I'll tell you, this country is just going to get further bogged down. They're in a civil war over there, Wolf. There's nothing that we're going to be able to do with a civil war.

They are in a major civil war, and it's going to go to Iran, and it's going to go to other countries. They are in the midst of a major civil war, and there's nothing -- and by the way, we're keeping the lid on, a little bit. But the day we leave anyway, it's all going to blow up.

And Saddam Hussein will be a nice person, compared to the man -- and it will be a man, it will not be a woman, that we understand. People say, Oh, gee, you didn't give the women a chance -- it will be a man. Compared to the person that takes over for Saddam Hussein, he will be considered a nice person. This guy will be the meanest, the worst guy, and he'll have one thing -- one thing -- he will hate America, and he'll use that to flame.

So, I mean, this is a total catastrophe, and you might as well get out now because you're just wasting time, and lives. You know, nobody talks about the soldiers that are coming back with no arms and no legs. And I saw at Maralago (ph) -- on Mondays, I make Maralago (ph), my club that you know about --

BLITZER: In Palm Beach.

TRUMP: I make that, twice now, on a Monday, I let returning Iraq injured soldiers come to the premises. The most beautiful people I've ever seen, but they're missing arms and legs. They're with their wives, sometimes they're with their girlfriends, and the tears are coming down the faces of these people. I mean, the thousands and maybe hundreds of thousands, and the Iraqis that have been just maimed and killed -- this war is a horrible thing.

Now, President Bush says he's religious, and yet 400,000 people, the way I count it, have died, and probably millions have been badly maimed and injured. What's going on? What's going on? And the day we pull out, it's going to explode. We're keeping the lid on a little bit; it's still a catastrophe. But the day we pull out, because they're in a civil war -- whether we want to admit it or not, they are in a civil war.

BLITZER: What do you think of some of these scandals that are unfolding in Washington? As we speak, the attorney general is under fire, Alberto Gonzales -- what do you make of this, as an executive, trying to watch an administration?

TRUMP: Look, everything in Washington has been a lie: weapons of mass destruction -- that was a total lie. It was a way of attacking Iraq, which he thought was going to be easy and it turned out to be the exact opposite of easy. He reads 60 books a year, he reads a book a week -- that's -- do you think that's -- do you think the president reads a book a week? I don't think so. He doesn't watch television. Now, one thing I know is that, when I'm on television, I watch, or I try. Because you do -- your own ego says, you know, Let's watch, let's see, whether it's good or bad, you want to watch, right? He doesn't watch television. So he's on television, being interviewed by you or somebody else, he doesn't watch. Does anybody really believe that?

Now they're doing this whole scandal with the U.S. attorneys. Now they're finding e-mails, and it's proven to be a lie. Everything's a lie. It's all a big lie.

BLITZER: So what's going to happen?

TRUMP: Well, it depends. If the Democrats get their act together, they're going to have a big victory in a couple of years, and it's going to be interesting to see what happens with this whole thing with the attorney general. It's a very sad situation.

BLITZER: What was your reading of the whole Scooter Libby situation?

TRUMP: Well, I think he probably took a bullet for the administration, but so far the administration hasn't been so loyal to him.

BLITZER: Do you think the president will pardon him?

TRUMP: I think he probably will, because otherwise he's going to see some horrible books written by Scooter Libby.

BLITZER: Scooter Libby could wind up in jail, too.

I want to get your sense on the economy -- the real estate market, specifically. This is a subject you really know well. There are a lot of nervous investors out there, homeowners worried about their mortgages, stock markets going up and down. What is your assessment of the U.S. economy right now?

TRUMP: Well, the U.S. economy is okay, but very, very fragile. Interest rates have to start being lowered. I think that Alan Greenspan, who is a friend of mine and a great guy, came out last week and he made the statement. But I believe interest rates are getting too high, and if they are not lowered, your housing markets will really start crashing pretty big. And I think they will be lowered.

Now, as far as the housing market, I think it's okay. It's not terrible, it's not great -- it's okay. It was great two years ago; now it's fine, it's solid. It's not like in 1990, which was a disaster. I mean, if somebody came in and even looked at a house, it was like considered a major -- forget about buying, it was considered a major victory.

But I think that the interest rates have to be lowered fairly quickly, and I hope our chairman does that.

BLITZER: We're almost out of time, but I want to button up two issues: the whole Donald Trump and wrestling situation -- what is that all about?

TRUMP: Well, Vince McMahon, who is a tremendous guy, owns the World



Wrestling Entertainment, and about six months ago he called me and said, Would you get into a fight with me, and would you this and that, and I'm going to shave your head if you lose, et cetera, et cetera. But -- and it's really -- I mean, it's been amazing, the way it's caught on. It's gotten tremendous ratings, tremendous everything -- everything's talking about it. I mean, here you are, talking about it.

And if my wrestler loses -- I have a great wrestler, he has a great wrestler, my guy's big and strong, his guy's big and strong. They wrestle on the First of April --

BLITZER: (INAUDIBLE). Professional (INAUDIBLE).

TRUMP: I never comment about that, but I will tell you this: I don't want to have my hair shaved. I don't want to have my head shaved.

BLITZER: So you're not going to lose -- your wrestler is not going to lose.

TRUMP: I hope I don't lose. I don't know; maybe I'll lose.

BLITZER: (INAUDIBLE).

TRUMP: If I lose -- but here's the thing, the bottom line, because somebody said, Why did you do it -- although everyone loves it, they said, Why did you do it? Because millions of dollars are going to charity, and when I heard that, what am I going to do, say No, I'm not going to chose a wrestler and stand there for a little while and have millions of dollars not go to charity? So millions of dollars are going to be paid to charity because of what I've done.

So, you know, I'm really very happy about it, and it's been fun. For me, it's been fun.

BLITZER: What next for Donald Trump?

TRUMP: Well, I just want to keep doing what I'm doing. I'm having a great time. I'm building all over the world, I'm having a really great time. And it's been a lot of fun, and it's always fun to be interviewed by you.

BLITZER: Thanks for doing it.

TRUMP: Thank you.

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