



ANDY BOROWITZ

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PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: Hello. Hello. Hello. Brothers and sisters, good evening!

This is Paul Holdengräber here, I'm the Director of Public Programs here at the New York Public Library, now known as LIVE from the New York Public Library. As you all know, it used to be called PEP, Public Education Programs, before I arrived, but I figured that that name was something that sounded—PEP sounded like something you might take if you had some stomach problems. So I changed it. I'm going to try to be funny tonight. It's really hard **(laughter)** because I have someone who's going to compete very much with me. But you know, I always have at least my accent, which I think is quite funny. **(laughter)** People always ask me where my accent comes from, and I tell them it's affected. **(laughter)**

See, I knew I could get one laugh at least before Andy Borowitz came on stage. It is affected. I spent many years living in so many different countries, grew up speaking four or five languages. I remember when I was about seven or eight years old, my father was called into school—I was quite impish and quite a bad boy—and he was called into

school and he said, “What did he do this time?” and the principal said, “Well, we had a counselor or psychologist or psychiatrist or psychoanalyst, someone who examines the mind, **(laughter)** and he was quite surprised that your son really doesn’t have a mother tongue.” And my father probably said, “My son probably has many father tongues, I don’t really see what the problem is,” And he said, “Well, he doesn’t have a mother tongue and this later on in life will create problems, your son will have problems,” and my father said, “But of course he will have problems, he is my son, **(laughter)** what else is new?” The principal continued, and said, “Well, you know, it’s really important to have a base in life, and to be grounded in some form or fashion, and he’s just going to have a lot of psychological problems, he will have problems expressing himself,” and my father said, “Well, yes, he will have problems expressing himself, but he’ll have many languages in which to do it.”

At any rate, this being said, tonight it is a great pleasure to have Andy Borowitz here for a very serious evening, where he is going to talk about a subject that I think is rather cumbersome and that probably behooves us all to think about, which is the future. What will happen in the future? And tonight it’s all about you and me—no it’s all about you, the public. You, the public, tonight, are going to ask Andy Borowitz to tell you what the future holds. And quite magically, and without failing, he will tell you what the future holds. **(laughter)** You might ask him a very personal question, you know, somebody you may be courting or desiring, and with whom you want to engage in some anatomically impossible things. And he may very well be able to counsel you on these matters. **(laughter)** But you might also want to ask him if he really thinks that Cheney will become the next president, and I’m sure he will have something to say about that.

The great thing about Andy Borowitz is that he is—and I’m sure this is the main reason all of you are here today—I mean, I know some of you are here today for my introduction **(laughter)**—but the main reason, I think, many of you are here today is because Andy Borowitz is the recipient of the 2004 Angele Gingras Humor Award—I know, it’s really not funny—the first award given to a humorist by the National Press Club—can you imagine the National Press Club giving humor awards?

Anyway, that being said, I would encourage all of you to join our e-mail list, which is growing by two or three hundred names a week, so that you can find out the other wonderful events we're doing—what else are we doing? I can't remember. Oh, yes, on Monday I will be interviewing a wonderful, wonderful writer named Alberto Manguel. He will be talking about the "Library at Night," what happens when all of you go away and librarians stay in this building, as you can imagine, if any of you know librarians, it's very exciting (**laughter**) and then—Oh, now, I mean, this is all respect for my librarian friends here, they're wonderful people. And also on Friday, we will be celebrating the twentieth anniversary of *Spy* magazine. It's kind of a strange and impish celebration, since *Spy* magazine no longer exists, so we're throwing a birthday party for someone who's dead. And it's "*Spy*: The Funny Years," Graydon Carter, Kurt Andersen, David Karr, and a few others will be talking about *Spy* magazine. We hope to have Donald Trump in the audience, all the people *Spy* magazine made fun of. A bit later in the month, on November 16th, we have Kati Marton coming and she will be in conversation with Samantha Power. Our former President of this venerable institution, the New York Public Library, where I am presently employed, Vartan Gregorian will come and discuss the legacy of Andrew Carnegie with David Nasow, and that's on the 10th of November.

Also, as a way of increasing or at least maintaining some of the book purchases we have here at the Library I invite you to come to a benefit for the Library, not an event I am doing, but I hope I benefit from it, David Sedaris will be in conversation with David Remnick, on November 6th. There are flyers outside, it's part of a benefit for the General Book Fund. Now it is my great pleasure to introduce to you—who is it tonight? To introduce to you Andy Borowitz, who will be speaking for about twenty minutes.

(applause)

ANDY BOROWITZ: Thank you. Let's hear it for Paul Holdengräber, ladies and gentlemen. **(applause)** I think I have a little time left to speak after Paul has concluded his remarks. Thanks for coming out here tonight. It is such an honor to be here at the New

York Public Library. I've done a few shows here before. It's always a little bit intimidating, though, for me, because I guess whenever I come in the library, I always feel, sort of, I'm surrounded by—what's the word I'm looking for?—books, I guess. Books, there are so many books here, and I don't consider myself terribly well-read as a person. I don't know if any of you have that problem.

I'm going to make a little confession tonight, I just don't want it to go outside this room. But I have never read *Madame Bovary*, this is true. **(laughter)** Has anyone else? Is anyone else with me in that, any of you? Yes, thank you, we have some solidarity. Well, let me just tell you, it was hard for me to deal with this for a long time, because it turns out most people *have* read *Madame Bovary*, but later in life I've discovered it's a tremendous asset, because people will be at a cocktail party, a sort of literary cocktail party, and they'll say something like, "Have you read *The Lovely Bones*?" And I'll be like, "Dude, I haven't even read *Madame Bovary* yet." **(laughter)** So, all I can say is, I never intend to read *Madame Bovary*, because it is the bulwark that keeps me from reading anything else I don't want to read. **(laughter)** So, even if you have read *Madame Bovary*, I urge you, don't admit it. Just say you haven't read it. It's a very helpful thing.

I've actually written a new book. I'm on a book tour, right now. I've been traveling the country, and I don't know if any of you have done that recently. The airport security thing is a nightmare. Have you—anybody been traveling the country recently? Do we have any—I think the people who are really getting it hard are liquid and gel salespeople. **(laughter)** That it's gotta be hard with their sample cases, and stuff like that. It's really tough on them. I've actually found for me it's been troublesome because—I don't know if you're aware of this, but the Department of Homeland Security is now profiling for comedians. This is something—no, this is not some paranoid fantasy of mine, like when you go through, like, the conveyer belt, you know, the x-ray machine, they have that sign up there, and it says, "No firearms. No explosives. No jokes." You know what I'm saying? All right. **(laughter)** So invariably, you know, they like pull me out of the line and they take me over to that table for the special search, and I've got to be like so careful

not just to cooperate but not to say anything that remotely resembles a joke or else I'm like going straight to Guantanamo, you know? **(laughter)**

So this happened, I was on a flight to L.A. last week, and you know, they pull me out of the line, and they bring me over to that table, and there are two T.S.A. people, and there's like, you know, they've got the wands, they're going to search me. And there's like this big, sort of burly guy with the wand and then there's this rather attractive woman with a wand, and I very innocently said, "I want *her* to search me." **(laughter)** And the guy said, "Well, she can't search you, sir," and I said, "Well, why not?" and he said, "Well, she just does the women." And I said, "Well, maybe she could do a woman and I could watch." **(laughter)** So they strip-searched me, **(laughter)** which was unfortunate. Unfortunately I had a lot of liquids and gels on my person, so it was a horrible, horrible situation.

But I have been—I've been traveling around the country on this book tour, and it's been great, although I'm beginning to think that I've been traveling too much, and here's why I say that. I've found that I've started reading *Skymall*. **(laughter)** And you really know that you've been traveling too much when you see an item in *Skymall* that you think might enhance your life in some way. **(laughter)** This happened. I was on a flight to Chicago, I was reading *Skymall*, and I saw this item called "Waterproof Inspirational Shower Cards." **(laughter)** Now, this is *exactly* what it sounds like. These are waterproof cards and they affix to the wall of your shower, and every one of them has an affirmation on it, like "I choose to be happy," something like that. Now, I don't know about you, but I wake up on most mornings, I'm sort of grumpy, a little grouchy, a little bit depressed, and it occurred to me, maybe it's because of a lack of inspirational reading material in my shower, so I called the good people at *Skymall* and I said, "I'd like to order a set of the waterproof inspirational shower cards," and the guy said, "They're backordered." **(laughter)** So, apparently, like, I'm the last one in this country on this particular bandwagon, you know, everybody else is like lathering up, getting affirmed, **(laughter)** and I've just been missing out, so I said, "When will you get them in stock?" and they said, "It'll be a couple of weeks," I said, "Fine."

Two weeks go by, I'm checking my mailbox every day, no waterproof inspirational shower cards. I finally call up *Skymall* again, and I said, "Two weeks ago, I ordered the waterproof inspirational shower cards, where are they?" And the guy said, "Well, sir, they're still backordered, but we have something in stock, we can get it to you right away, we can overnight it to you." And I said, "Well, what's that?" And he said, "It is the talking pedometer," and I said, "What is that?" And he said, "Well, it's this little thing and you put it on your belt and you walk and periodically a little voice tells you how far you've gone." Now, I actually heard myself say these words. I said, "I want waterproof inspirational shower cards. I don't want something I don't need." **(laughter)** Yes, I've been traveling too much.

So what are we going to talk about tonight? Well, I'll tell you one thing I am *not* going to talk about tonight. I don't want to disappoint anybody but I am not going to talk about the news, because I don't know about you, but I've found the news so depressing lately I've actually stopped watching the news. Now I just watch Fox News, it's great. **(laughter)** It's true, because you're hearing a lot about the chaos, and about the explosions in Iraq and everything. You turn over to Fox, it is going a *whole* lot better over there. **(laughter)** I mean, the way they talk about Iraq on Fox, you would want to *move* there. You'd be like, "Fuck Tribeca, you know, I'm getting me a place in Baghdad, man, schools are great, the shopping, easy to get around." The only thing about it is like, if you've never watched Fox before, you have to get used to the language they use over there, because they use a whole different language than they do on CNN. Like on CNN, they say "Iraqi insurgents," and on Fox, they'll say, "Sunni terrorists." And on CNN, they'll say, like, "The economy is bad." And on Fox the term they use is "good." Get used to that. **(laughter)**

But I love Fox, I love the entire, you know, Rupert Murdoch family of news products. Do we have any *New York Post* readers out here tonight? Yeah, we have a few. More *Madame Bovary* readers, I've gotta say than *New York Post* readers **(laughter)** —that's weird, that's very strange. I love the *New York Post*, though, I think the *New York Post* is

the paper of record in this country, it's so great, and the headlines alone are like haiku, I sort of think, like, um—I'll give you three of my all-time favorites. Right after we invaded Afghanistan, and we were dropping bombs on Kabul, does anyone remember that headline that morning in the *Post*? That would be "KABULLSEYE." Yes.

(laughter) Clever and tasteful, yes, a rare combination. I liked about a couple months ago they did a story about the first Hasidic member of the New York police force, does anyone remember that one? Yes, "NYPD JEW." Yes, that was also another great one.

(laughter) That gentlemen knew it, yes.

But I think my all-time favorite was right before the last U.S. presidential election, I don't know if you remember this, but Osama bin Laden did this tape where he came out and said he was basically an undecided voter, he thought both guys sucked. And the New York Post did a poll that showed that Americans weren't going to be swayed by Osama's tape, and so their headline that morning was "BIN LOSER." **(laughter)** Real mature, right? That's why I love that. And what I love about that headline is, you know, you don't usually think about it this way but in addition to being a terrorist, Osama is a boss, right? I mean, he's got other terrorists working for him. And you know that some of these guys are probably pissed off at him because maybe he's been snippy to them in a meeting or something like that. So you know that the whole morning that that came out that these guys were behind his back going, "bin Loser." **(laughter)** It was probably out by the coffee machine in the al-Qaeda lunchroom, you know, "bin Loser."

I guess we will talk a little bit about the news tonight, because Paul said we're going to talk about the future, so that means I'm going to take your questions about politics, current events, pop culture, and all that, but I want to make a few remarks about sort of where I think we are, because we're two weeks away from this election, and there's a lot of talk about what's going on in the White House. People are sort of saying, I guess, right now that President Bush is a *disaster*, which I think is just a *massive* understatement, I think. **(laughter)** I think that would be like calling Paris Hilton a whore or something like that, **(laughter)** I really do. I actually, I read in the paper recently that Bush's approval rating is now down to 32 percent. Just to put that in some perspective, he is now less

popular than bird flu, actually. **(laughter)** The public has more confidence in the job that bird flu is doing as a pandemic **(laughter)** than he is doing as president.

But a lot of Democrats now are getting very giddy, they think that they're going to win the House and the Senate, and I guess I have a little bit of inside information, I don't think that's necessarily the case, because of this thing that Republicans have that Democrats don't have, which is this thing called the Republican Playbook. And we've heard a lot about this. I have actually intimate knowledge of this because I actually stole the Republican Playbook from the White House. Let me tell you how I did this. I went into the White House, I went into President Bush's office, I saw it on the desk, I put it in my pocket, and I left with it totally undetected. Now people wonder how'd I manage to pull this off? And the answer is, I went in August. **(laughter)** And I immediately got the book and took it to Hyperion, which, you know, just out of a sense of public service, decided to publish it for \$16.95, it's available afterwards. **(laughter)**

And it has some shocking things in it, I've gotta say—this is why you can't count eh Republicans out, some of the stuff that they have in this book. For example, they have the first fundraising letter ever written directly by God, which is going to be very powerful for their evangelical base. They also have some scare tactics. They have a Photoshopped image of a Democratic-controlled Supreme Court, with Supreme Court justices like Alec Baldwin, Michael Moore, Sean Penn, Barbra Streisand, and all three Dixie Chicks, so that's a very scary thing. **(laughter)** And there are other things, too. There are some October surprises, which are a little bit startling. For example, I think this is going to come out I think in the next week or so—President Bush is going to announce an exit strategy from Iraq. He is going to withdraw all the troops through Iran. **(laughter)** So stay tuned for that.

Well, Paul and I are going to talk for a few minutes in a second, but before we have that conversation, I just wanted to say, I think that I've already started by doing a little bit of Bush-bashing, and that's a very easy thing to do, you hear it a lot, but I actually thought it would be interesting and maybe fair to defend the president a little bit, because nobody is

defending him, at all, well, like, Pat Robertson, but that's like being defended by a Teletubby or something, he has no credibility whatsoever. And since I have a lot of credibility, I thought I would actually dig up three good things to say about President Bush and run them all for you tonight. Can I just do that? Can I run down three good things?

Okay, the first good thing is: I think the War on Terror is awesome. I just think it is so ambitious, because think about this. He didn't declare war on *terrorism* or *terrorists*. He declared war on a human emotion. **(laughter)** So if we get rid of terror, what's next? Shyness? I think shyness is going down next. **(laughter)** All right, number two. I think he has done so many great executive orders he has not gotten credit for. For example, the day he took office, he canceled the agreement between nouns and verbs. **(laughter)** And I think that took courage. Took real courage. Okay, and last but not least, and then we'll bring Paul back onstage. I just think this law, No Child Left Behind, is so awesome. Let me explain how this works. Our children nowadays are tested relentlessly in school, they get all of these standardized tests, and if they don't pass the test, they don't advance to the next grade. Now the reason I think this is awesome is that if we had had this law back when President Bush was in school, **(laughter)** he would still be in fourth grade and we wouldn't be in Iraq. **(laughter)** So, thank you very much. **(applause)** Paul, come back up.

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: One more positive thing about Bush.

ANDY BOROWITZ: One more positive thing? Only two more years of him. That's pretty good. That's pretty good, right?

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: This passage in your book, which I highly recommend you get, it's only \$16.95 plus tax. "Dirty trick: Claim the Democrats are French." **(laughter)** I—I—I, you know, I took some offense reading this. **(laughter)** Let me read the first paragraph to give you a flavor of President Bush's prose—no Andy Borowitz's prose. "Of the many things that Americans hate, a list that includes exercising, reading, and

waiting, nothing makes our blood boil more than the people, culture, and annoying accent of the French. Our hatred of the French may have reached its apex”—apex? is that right? or ah-pex? Apex?—“in 2003 when Jacques Chirac and his Froggy Pauls—pals—**(laughter)** refused to join our coalition of the willing for the invasion of Iraq, preferring to stay at home, sipping lattes and smoking smelly cigarettes in their overpriced cafes. Yes, these Gallic cowards failed to stand by their American allies in a time of need, unlike the brave kingdom of Tonga, who sent forty troops, or Moldava, who sent twelve.” **(laughter)** So, this hatred of the French.

ANDY BOROWITZ: Well, there is something to it because when John Kerry ran, I don’t know if anyone remembers, in 2004, I think Karl Rove made some comments about how John Kerry *looks* French, and that was supposed to raise our suspicions, you know, about him. We’re still, you know, very—

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: And the freedom fries, all of that, yeah.

ANDY BOROWITZ: So there is, actually—is this where the bookmark is?

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: It’s the only page I read.

(laughter)

ANDY BOROWITZ: Yes, this is useful. They show how you can tar your opponents by claiming they’re French, and there’s a “Democrat-to-French” conversion chart, **(laughter)**, which is Howard Dean’s real name is Howard de la Dean. **(laughter)** Bill Clinton, of course is Guillaume Clintonne, Joseph Biden is Giscard Boudin, and Barack Obama is Jacques Gitano. **(laughter)**

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: It says it all.

ANDY BOROWITZ: It says it all.

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: There's a great French philosopher/poet, who I'm sure you have read, named Paul Valéry, who—

ANDY BOROWITZ: Dude, I haven't even read *Madame Bovary*.

(laughter)

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: You keep saying Madame Ovary, but there's a great poet, Paul Valéry, I'm sure you're well aware of him. Paul Valéry once said that "the future isn't what it used to be." How do you feel about that?

ANDY BOROWITZ: Yeah, I think there's some truth about that. I mean, we're going to talk about the future tonight, so we'll, I think we're going to let *them* make that assessment. I mean, I think there are a lot of—I'm a very optimistic, positive person, so I think whatever questions we get tonight, I think you're all going to leave much happier than you came in. You're going to, first of all, just be happy to be leaving, so that will be good. **(laughter)**

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: So did you ever get those stickers for your curtain shower?

ANDY BOROWITZ: The waterproof inspirational shower cards?

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: Yeah.

ANDY BOROWITZ: No, you know, I think that *Skymall* is just this big massive shell game. They don't have anything in stock. I mean, I did call them back later, and they say, "No, they're still not in, but we do have the world's largest crossword puzzle." You know, I think they have one item, one copy of each item in stock. I'm blowing the lid off this whole *Skymall* thing. You guys had all these illusions about *Skymall*, but no more.

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: Some people have stocks in that company. But I'm just wondering how did you get started with the Borowitz Report? As some of you know, you can subscribe to it online, I get it about four or five times a day. **(laughter)** I just wonder how did you get started on doing this and *why* do you do it?

ANDY BOROWITZ: Why do I do it? Well, do we have any Borowitz Reports readers in the audience tonight? Okay.

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: Many more than read *Madame Bovary*.

ANDY BOROWITZ: More than *Madame Bovary*. Fuck you, Flaubert. **(laughter)**

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: There is something *wrong* about that, you know, really. This is the New York Public Library, it's quite amazing, but anyway, you read Andy Borowitz and why not?

ANDY BOROWITZ: For those of you who are not familiar with it, I basically write a fake news story every day. Sort of like—You know, I'm sort of like Judith Miller, I guess is the way I would describe **(laughter)** sort of my mission statement. And, you know, it's funny. I started when I first—I was very late to go online, I started going online, I think in around '97, and I just started, I think I started by cutting and pasting AP stories and things like that and just maybe changing one word to make them sound ridiculous, and then I started playing around with them, and then I started writing fake news stories and sending them to friends. And that was all it was really intended to be, and now there are actually millions of readers around the world, which is kind of an amazing thing, and the weirdest thing is that now it's published in newspapers. So it's sort of migrated from being a fake news site that makes fun of newspapers, to being fake news that's in newspapers, which many people often assume to be real when they're reading them in newspapers.

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: So some of your readers assume the stories are real.

ANDY BOROWITZ: I actually—I brought a few examples of news stories that appeared on the Borowitz Report that people thought were true when they read them, I got a lot of mail about them. I'd like to just share some of them with you and see if there are any, like, telltale signs in the stories that they might be a joke, and you be the judge, but these were ones that everybody—you know, I got, you know, *dozens* of letters.

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: Share it with us, would you?

ANDY BOROWITZ: Okay, I'll give you one. This one was actually, this was about O.J. Simpson. I—a few years ago when he was still alive, Johnnie Cochran, O.J.'s lawyer, made the rounds of the talk shows when he was promoting a book, and I guess he delivered this bombshell, which was that Dan Abrams on *The Abrams Report* asked him if he still thought O.J. was innocent. And he said, "You know, I've had some time to look at the evidence, and I would have to say I'm 99 percent sure he's innocent." I thought that was a huge bombshell, because I thought that was him sort of admitting that *maybe* O.J. was guilty. So this was the headline. People totally believed that this was a true story. "O.J. No Longer 100 percent Sure He Is Innocent." **(laughter)** "Calls Johnnie Cochran's recent statements thought-provoking." **(laughter)** Let me just read you a little bit of this. "Days after former O.J. Simpson defense attorney Johnnie Cochran admitted that he is no longer 100 percent certain that his client was innocent, Mr. Simpson today said that his attorney had planted fresh seeds of doubt in his own mind. 'For years, I've been pretty sure that I did not murder my wife,' Mr. Simpson said today at a golf course in Boca Raton, Florida, where he was taking a rare break from searching for the real killers of his wife, **(laughter)** 'but if Johnnie's not one hundred percent sure, I'm like, hey, maybe I'd better take another look at this.'" **(laughter)** People are buying that this is true. Okay, let's go on to another one. Let's see.

Okay, this one was about Teresa Heinz Kerry, who I'm a little bit nostalgic for, she would have been a great First Lady, certainly great for me and my purposes. **(laughter)** She had kind of a salty mouth during the 2004 campaign. This headline, people totally

believed this was true. The headline was “Teresa defends ‘Blow it out your ass’ remark.” **(laughter)** “Says Girl Scout was ‘asking for it.’” **(laughter)** Let me read the story and see if there are any telltale signs that this might be made up. “Teresa Heinz Kerry, wife of Democratic Presidential nominee John Kerry, refused to apologize today for telling a Girl Scout in Iowa yesterday to ‘blow it out your ass.’” **(laughter)** Even though Mrs. Kerry’s remarks appear to be unprecedented in the annals of national politics, especially for a campaign rally attended by Girl Scouts, Mrs. Kerry defended her comment today, telling reporters, ‘That little bitch was asking for it.’ **(laughter)** Mrs. Kerry stopped short of divulging exactly what the Girl Scout had done to incur her wrath, but sources who attended the rally said the nine year old had attempted unsuccessfully to sell her a box of Girl Scout cookies just prior to Mrs. Kerry’s outburst. ‘Oh, so you want my *money*,’ Mrs. Kerry hissed at the Scout before gesturing towards her husband, ‘Well, get in line behind *this* guy, sister.’” **(laughter)** People had no problem.

Something that also happens when I do a story like that is I invariably get some letters from readers saying, “I have not seen this story reported anywhere else.” **(laughter)** “Could you please send me the transcript of the rally?” And sometimes there are those “gotcha” letters where people say, “I’m pretty sure that that didn’t happen because I’ve not seen that elsewhere on the Internet,” and then I want to say, “Touché, yes, you’ve found me out.”

All right, this is the last one and then I want to read a letter from a reader. This is another one. I sometimes feel like the ones that people believe are about people that they sort of already have *bad* preconceptions of, like O.J. Simpson. And there are lot of people that really hate the Clintons, and so some of my Republican readers tend to believe—if I write something horrible about the Clintons, they’ll believe that. So this headline was, “Lincoln Bedroom Found in Clinton Library” **(laughter)** “Historic room moved piece by piece to Arkansas.” **(laughter)** See if there are any clues that this might be made up. “Visitors who turned out to see Bill Clinton’s presidential library on its opening day were stunned to find that the Lincoln Bedroom had been moved piece by piece from the White House to the Little Rock, Arkansas, shrine. Beaming with pride, the former president revealed

that he and his wife dismantled the Lincoln Bedroom shortly before leaving the White House in January of 2001, placing the pieces in suitcases with the intention of reassembling the historic room in Mr. Clinton's presidential library. While admission to the Clinton library is seven dollars, tourists will be allowed to spend a night in the newly reconstituted Lincoln Bedroom for an additional ten thousand dollars, **(laughter)** Mr. Clinton said. Controversy aside, the opening day at the Clinton Library was a big hit with visitors, many of whom enjoyed the educational exhibits, including one which explores what the meaning of the word 'is' is. **(laughter)** In addition to the former president's papers and memorabilia, the library contains over eighty million objects, many of them sperm." **(laughter)** Okay, so *no* problem believing that.

All right, now, we'll go on to questions in a minute, but I just want to close with this. Another person that people, if you write anything about them, that people will believe it is Mel Gibson, of course, because Mel Gibson has shown himself capable of doing almost anything. Recently, this is true, Mel Gibson was promoting his new movie, which is all about the doomed Mayan civilization, and he compared the United States to the doomed Mayans. And I did a story the next day, which was "Mel Gibson Apologizes to Doomed Mayans for Remarks," **(laughter)** and apparently doomed Mayans are very powerful in Hollywood **(laughter)** and he didn't mean to offend them, and so there was this long story about that. And I got this letter, this outraged letter, from a reader, not outraged at me, but outraged at Mr. Gibson. Let me just read this to you. "Hi, Andy. So Mel apologized to the Mayans. What about his remarks to the U.S.A.? I heard no apology to us. I take his remarks as offensive, and he's not even a citizen. I will no longer watch any of his or Tom Cruise's movies." **(laughter)** I just love that! So fucking gratuitous. Tom Cruise wasn't even *in* my made-up quotes. **(laughter)** "These stars have let it go to their heads and they believe they have all the answers even if they are from another country. **(laughter)** This country has made him lots of money, but as far as I'm concerned, he's a loudmouthed fool predicting our doom. Who the hell does he think he is? Jesus?" **(laughter)**

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: And this letter we are supposed to believe you got, right?

ANDY BOROWITZ: I did. I did not make that up. That is a real letter.

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: No telltale signs there? Now, just one question about the future, and then I'll let our esteemed reading public ask you some questions. Do you think God is trendy now, in the future? I think God comes up everywhere.

ANDY BOROWITZ: God is trendy. God's hot. I think you know the way—we did a story about this, because we do news from religion on the Borowitz Report and we found—

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: “We” meaning—

ANDY BOROWITZ: My incredible staff of people around the world.

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: I was just wondering if you were talking about “we” as—

ANDY BOROWITZ: No, no, no, we have many fake news bureaus around the world. We're very, very—our reach is enormous. But we did a story showing that we Googled God and proved that he existed, because God has something like 97 million websites. **(laughter)** And it's like, it was an incredible thing, because I think Lindsay Lohan has like 108 million, but God is right under Lindsay Lohan. **(laughter)** So, you know, I'm not a theologian, but if Lindsay Lohan exists, God *probably* does, just based on that.

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: Andy Borowitz.

(applause)

ANDY BOROWITZ: All right, we're going—

PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: So go for it—ask him questions!

ANDY BOROWITZ: Yeah, now, this is just—it doesn't just have to be about the future, it can also be about the present and the past, because I know so much about so many things. **(laughter)** No questions about *Madame Bovary*, though, please I don't want to know. Yes, sir.

Q: I have a question about Karl Rove.

ANDY BOROWITZ: Okay.

Q: If you had Karl Rove for breakfast one morning, what would you serve him and what do you think you would talk about?

ANDY BOROWITZ: If I had Karl Rove for—that was such a distasteful question at first. **(laughter)** I was like, I have all kinds of dietary requirements that would really make it impossible for me to have—what would I talk to Karl Rove about? That's such a great thought. You know, I've had a little run-in with Karl Rove recently, which I should probably—this is probably what would come up. Because one of the places where my column is carried is a paper called the *St. Petersburg Times*—I don't know if anybody's from the Tampa, St. Petersburg—you are?

Q: My daughter writes for it.

ANDY BOROWITZ: Really? She writes for it? That's great, that's great, that's fantastic. Well, they also publish The Borowitz Report. And they—most newspapers, when they publish these stories indicate that it's satire, or humor, or something like that, or wacky, they'll do something like that. But the *St. Petersburg Times* decided to just run one of my stories as if it were just a regular news story, I guess in the news section. And the headline was "Rove, Satan Plot GOP Strategy," and it was about a joint press conference between Karl Rove and Satan and, which again, I guess, didn't really raise any eyebrows. **(laughter)** "This is news?" people were saying. **(laughter)** But he actually

contacted the paper's editor and said that he thought it was really funny, which was so devastating **(laughter)** to me to hear that, so I'm still sort of trying to build my way back after that. Yes, sir.

Q: There's a new Robin Williams film that's been released, "Man of the Year," about a political comedian who runs for President. I think it's no secret this movie was based on yourself, and that you'll be running for President in the next election. Who are you going to choose as your running mate?

(laughter)

ANDY BOROWITZ: Well, first of all, I get this question, as you can imagine, constantly. **(laughter)** I mean, because people obviously see my incredible grasp on world events and think that I could do a really good job as leader of the free world. I just want to make it really clear I am *not* running for president. I really am going to concentrate on my job as senator from New York **(laughter)** and that's really where I am. No, but, you know, I do want to say the whole thing about running for office. People do honestly pose that question to me. Like, "Well, wouldn't you do a good job because you understand what's going on and everything?" I just really want to, like, clarify my role. I am part of the problem, **(laughter)** okay—we're going to keep it—I'm *not* part of the solution, we're just going to keep it that way. And in terms of my running mate, I think it's really important to have somebody, you know, so odious that I won't get assassinated, I think that's the key. **(laughter)** I think that's the key. So I think it's going to be Cheney, I think. **(laughter)** Yes.

Q: Back to Karl Rove. I thought his drive to register the amnesia victims was absolute genius. What can the Democrats do to counter something like that?

ANDY BOROWITZ: Well, yeah, you're referring to the Borowitz Report report of this, that, you know, there's this dude in Denver who woke up and had no memory of anything, so Karl Rove targeted him as the ideal GOP voter because he doesn't remember

Mark Foley or Jack Abramoff, Iraq, things like that, so they're now collecting a national database of amnesia victims, and making sure that they remember to vote, which is going to be kind of challenging. How can the Democrats counter—you see, I just don't think that the Democrats can counter anything that the Republicans do, because I don't think the Democrats have a playbook. I think that, I mean, right now, I just think that right now what is really concerning the Democrats is this whole Barack Obama phenomenon, that he might destroy their losing tradition, that they've worked so many years to build up. So I think, I'm beginning to see a groundswell of Kucinich in '08 that the Democrats are working on. **(laughter)** Just to make sure that the party of Mondale and Dukakis remains intact.

Q: So, how does the war in Iraq end? Is it the Sunnis, the Shiites, and the Kurds, or is it NASCAR, or is it helicopters taking the Americans out?

ANDY BOROWITZ: Well, those are two of the more rosy scenarios that have been—**(laughter)**. How does the war in Iraq end? You know, I don't know, I mean, I think, it doesn't necessarily have to end, I mean I think that—I'm just trying to be positive here, but, you know, here's the way I see it, which is, you know, we have all kinds of problem. I know we have some seniors here tonight and there's a lot of concerns about Social Security. President Bush has been, you know, talking about how Social Security's in trouble and needs a bailout. I think President Bush, as an October Surprise, is going to offer all seniors the opportunity to serve in Iraq. **(laughter)** I think that's what he's going to say. Because you know what? Social Security may be bankrupt in a year or two, but the war in Iraq is going to be here for years and years and years, so I think that's—I think—that was sort of a depressing answer, wasn't it? Everyone wants to kill themselves. Okay, next, we'll move on, next question, who's next?

Q: John Kerry—when will he realize that he shouldn't run again, or will he ever realize it?

ANDY BOROWITZ: The question is what about John Kerry? When is he going to realize that he shouldn't run again or will he ever realize? I think we all in this room should stage an intervention, actually, I think, if we all feel that way. Is anyone among you still getting e-mails from John Kerry? Yes! How do we stop that? It's like a bad MySpace friend. How do we stop that? I want to like, write back to him and say, "Dude, I'm seeing other people now." **(laughter)** I mean, it's just, it's horrible, it's horrible.

Q: What's your take on David Brooks?

ANDY BOROWITZ: What's my take on David Brooks? You know, I like David. I think he's a smart guy, I don't always agree with what he has to say. I mean, I think he's a smart guy, I'm not going to trash David Brooks. What's your take on David Brooks? Do you like him? Do have problems with him?

Q: I am suspicious of David Brooks.

ANDY BOROWITZ: Ladies and gentlemen, David Brooks! **(laughter)** Ahha, Gotcha! I just was dying to do that, all night. Gotcha, you just fell right into my trap. Who's next? Somebody—right here.

Q: Will peak oil and global warming cancel each other out?

ANDY BOROWITZ: Will—what's the first part?

Q: Peak oil—running out of oil.

ANDY BOROWITZ: Oh, peak oil, that's like some hip term. Does everyone know what peak oil means? Will running out of oil and global warming cancel each other out? You know, I don't know. I'm concerned. I saw that film this summer about global warming. Did you all see that, *X-Men 3*? **(laughter)** That was like—and I know Gore was involved in it somehow, but I just thought that some of the claims—I don't believe that global

warming could result in mutants moving the Golden Gate Bridge. I just don't think that could ever happen, so I wouldn't worry about it. I wouldn't worry about it. Yes.

Q: Who would you favor running for the Democratic Party in '08?

ANDY BOROWITZ: Who would I favor? Um, well, I think we have a bunch of choices. I think Barack Obama sounds like a winner to me, so he doesn't have a chance, so I think we just put him off to the side. We'll find some reason why he can't run. I think he would be great. I think it does look like Hillary is going to definitely run. Because I saw this poll, I think it was in *Newsweek* last week, that now 50 percent of Democrats want Hillary to run for President and 100 percent of Republicans do. **(laughter)** So I think she's in, I think she's in, looks like a winner. You know Bill Clinton is dying to get back in the Oval Office, too, because those were some good times. **(laughter)** All right. Yes.

Q: One of my friends wants to see Al Gore run with Bill Clinton as his Vice-President.

ANDY BOROWITZ: One of your friends? Is this like when you say, "Like, one of my friends smokes marijuana," or is this, this is you, you would like, no, a friend of yours wants to see Al Gore run for president with Bill Clinton in the Dick Cheney role. Well, that's interesting. How many of you would vote for, like, a Gore/Clinton ticket? Man, if he's not doing better at the New York Public Library, Gore is—Gore is fucked. **(laughter)** I'm sorry, sorry, that doesn't look good, doesn't look good. All right, who's next? Yes?

Q: Is there anything we can do about Rumsfeld?

ANDY BOROWITZ: Is there anything we can do about Rumsfeld? God, if we could accomplish one thing tonight. . . **(laughter)** I don't know. You know, it's like I just think Rumsfeld, when he leaves office, should be teaching a class in the Learning Annex about how not to get fired. **(laughter)** Because if Rumsfeld has somehow managed to stay in

power—I just was wondering like, Rumsfeld, like how did he even get that job? I mean, Rumsfeld was like, defense secretary what, eighty years ago or so, I think during the XYZ Affair or something. And he wasn't particularly good the first time around. That would be like saying, "You know what we should do? Let's get Latrell Sprewell back on the Knicks. That would really turn that team around." Terrible idea. I don't know what to do about Rumsfeld. I'm gonna be honest. I really don't know. I mean, there's gotta be some way to bring that guy down. You know, maybe we could marry him off to Heather Mills. **(laughter)** That might do it. Yes.

Q: Do you think that Condi will ever get married?

ANDY BOROWITZ: That's a terribly personal question. **(laughter)** Do I think that Condi will ever get married? This has now just turned into a dating show. **(laughter)** When did this happen? When did this happen? I don't know, do you think Condi will run for President? I think that's a more interesting question. How many of you would vote for Condi for President? **(laughter)** One. How many of you would *marry* her? **(laughter)** You would? You would marry Condi? Okay, well, then I think the answer is yes. I think a call to 1-800-Flowers is in order, right after tonight's show, let me know how it works out. **(laughter)** Yes. Right by you and then we'll get to you—you and then you. Sorry.

Q: My question is about these new computerized voting systems with no paper trail, is this the end of democracy as we know it?

ANDY BOROWITZ: These new computerized voting machines that can be now hacked and are we looking at the end of democracy as we know it? Democracy is alive and well—in *Iraq*. **(laughter)** As for here, I think in 2000 it kind of ended, but—the voting machines again, the Republicans are instituting a lot of these new ones, they have the Diebold company, which is very good and they're introducing all these new voting machines. Some of them are in *The Republican Playbook*. They have one that I think is so efficient, which is a combination voting machine/ATM, so they can just buy the votes

directly there, just transfer the money, so I think it's just—I don't think the voting machines are a problem *at all*. No problem.

Q: Have you seen any good movies and do you think the Academy Awards are just year in and year out?

ANDY BOROWITZ: Have I seen any good movies lately and do I think the Academy Awards are just year in and year out. I don't think the Academy Awards are that fair, I've gotta say. Like I think *Passion of the Christ* should have won. **(laughter)** But I think it's interesting, I mean no Best Picture nominee has ever won that's been in Aramaic, and I think that that should be turned around. But I have actually seen, speaking of this, I saw an awesome movie recently, hasn't been released yet, but I saw it in Malibu, actually, it's Mel Gibson's sequel, which is *Passion of the Christ II: The Revenge*, **(laughter)** and it pretty much covers the next two thousand years and it's pretty, it's a great, great film.

What else have I—there are other movies coming out. There's like, um, Scorsese is doing this sequel, this is true, this is maybe the worst idea I've ever heard, I read this like on E! Online or something, he's going to do a sequel to *Taxi Driver*, and it's now, like Travis Bickle, it's like Robert DeNiro like thirty years later and he's still the taxi driver and it's where he is now. Is that the *worst* idea for a movie? I mean, instead of like, “Are you talking to me?” He'll be like, “Can you say that again, I didn't . . . “ **(laughter)** But I am a movie fan. I love Scorsese. Has anyone seen *The Departed*? That's a great film, that's a good one. Also, I caught up recently with *The Aviator*, which I didn't see when it came out. And that's—I learned *so* much about Howard Hughes's life from that film. For example, I didn't know that Howard Hughes's life was so *long* **(laughter)**—it was like, almost endless. I mean, it was just amazing. **(laughter)** Who's next? Yes.

Q: What do you envision Bush doing after his presidency ends?

ANDY BOROWITZ: What do I envision? What's next up for Bush? *Dancing with the Stars*, **(laughter)** that's where they all go. We've got time for a couple more. Let's do a couple more. We already did—yes, sir.

Q: What's your opinion of North Korea becoming a nuclear power?

ANDY BOROWITZ: Well, I'm glad that you pronounced it “nuclear,” because—**(laughter)**. Yes, North Korea becoming a nuclear power. Well, I mean, I think we've managed that situation brilliantly, I must say, because North Korea didn't have nuclear weapons, and Iran didn't have a nuclear program, and Iraq wasn't in civil war, and so we named all three of them to Axis of Evil status, and they're doing such a good job of living up to that, I think, all three of them. So, I don't know how we turn that around. I think perhaps President Bush needs to give a new speech and name all three nations to the Axis of Nice, and I think that might turn them around, somehow. But I don't—you know, North Korea and nuclear weapons—you know, I think that he is not necessarily somebody to be trusted, Kim Jong Il, because I think the fact that he is already taking so many fashion risks **(laughter)** suggests to me that like, nuking a country would be nothing for him. So I don't know. Yes, yes!

Q: After the American empire has been doomed, who is the next superpower?

ANDY BOROWITZ: After the American empire has been doomed? Well, that's a very, that's sort of a sad note to leave on, the American empire is doomed. Who are you? Mel Gibson? What are we? A bunch of Mayans, is that what you're suggesting? Who will take over after the American empire is doomed? YouTube, I think. **(laughter)** I think that's safe to say. All right, I'll take one more question, and then I want to leave everybody with, all right, two more questions, and then I'm going to leave everybody with some *positive* thoughts about our country. Yes, sir.

Q: Yes, can you give us a preview of your 2010 monologue at the New York Public Library?

(laughter)

ANDY BOROWITZ: No, but I mean, I think it will probably include ridiculing Paul Holdengräber, I think part of it will be that, but I'm not, I don't really know what I will be talking about in 2010, or whether or not I will even be asked, they may just have a robot of me at that point, **(laughter)** because that's the way this is going, so I really don't know what I will be talking about, but it will probably—I'm sure I'll still be joking about Iraq, I'm sure that's true. And one more question, yes.

Q: Can you just comment briefly on the apparent closeness of Henry Kissinger to the Bush Administration?

ANDY BOROWITZ: Shall I comment on the apparent closeness of Henry Kissinger to the Bush Administration? Do you know that he's very close to them, is that, do you have some information about that?

Q: Apparently, it's been coming out.

ANDY BOROWITZ: Well, apparently, it's been coming out, that's just what I want to say about it, they're very close, and apparently it's been coming out, **(laughter)** and other than that I have no comment. **(laughter)** I've been studying the work of Tony Snow very carefully and—all right, you've been a fantastic audience. Before we go, I just want to leave everybody with some positive thoughts about our country, because, you know, I have been traveling on this book tour, and I guess I should point, since my editor and publisher from Hyperion are here, that we will be selling books afterwards, I'll mention that one more time.

But I've been on this book tour, and you know, you hear a lot about this country being very divided, red states and blue states, and I've found that that's actually not the case. I've actually found that there are five issues that pretty much everybody in this country

agrees with. So I would like to run those five issues down for you right now and just leave everybody in a really good state of mind about our country. Can I do that, would that be a good thing to do?

Okay. Let's just start with this. Issue Number One: McDonald's is out of control in this country, **(laughter)** and here's why I say that. I was in Denver recently and I was walking down the street, and I saw this restaurant called McDonald's Express. Now, let's see if we can wrap our brains around this concept for a minute. **(laughter)** This is a McDonald's, only *faster*, so obviously the McDonald's Corporation believes that there are people out there saying to themselves, "God, I'd love to go to McDonald's, but who has the time?" **(laughter)** And how would you possibly make McDonald's faster, like shoot the food out of a cannon, would that be? **(laughter)** And while we're on this, do any of you happen to know what Boston Market's new slogan is? It's "We're always cooking." And I'm like, "What, you want a medal? You're a restaurant." **(laughter)** Of course you're always cooking, I bet cooking makes up a pretty big part of Applebee's day as well, actually. You know what Denny's new motto is? "We're cooking now." **(laughter)** And I'm like, "I'm not impressed. Boston Market's *always* cooking, you know." **(laughter)**

All right. Second issue. I think that these reality shows like *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* are sending a really dangerous message. I think these shows are saying that a TV show is the appropriate place to meet the person that you're going to spend the rest of your *life* with. Now, call me old-fashioned, but I think the place to do that is the Internet. **(laughter)** I actually have an idea for a reality show I would really like to do. It's called *Trading Medications*. **(laughter)** And basically the way this would work is like, you take one guy who has acne and another guy who's bipolar and just—**(laughter)**. Awesome. Must-see TV, right?

Issue number 3. This is a little bit controversial, whenever I bring this up, I always, I invariably offend some people, so I just want to apologize in advance. I've just got to put this out there. I think we've reached this point in our culture where we have too many

spin-offs of *Law and Order* on TV. **(laughter)** And here's why I say that. I was watching TV the other day, it was *Law and Order*, started like a typical episode. The cops got a call, there was a murder, they rushed to the crime scene, and there were already cops from another *Law and Order* spin-off. **(laughter)**

Okay, two more. Issue number 4. This is the whole issue of hotel room porn. Now, I'm not saying I'm *against* it, I think on the whole I'm *for* it. But I think they should change the way the ordering instructions are written on screen because right now what it always says is "Movie titles will not appear on your bill." Now personally, I think it's sad enough that I'm sitting alone in my hotel room watching porn, they really don't need to introduce that whole element of *shame* into it. **(laughter)** I mean, they might as well just say, "Movie titles will not appear on your bill, you sick, sick fuck." You know, because— **(laughter)**

All right, you've been a phenomenal audience and I'll leave you with this. This is the last issue and I'm sure some of you have wrestled with this. There's this whole issue of telemarketers. A lot of people are going on these "do not call" lists, but I would personally never do that, because when the telemarketers call me, that's pretty much the high point of my day, **(laughter)** because I get to sort of play with them, play mind games on them, and that's sort of free entertainment. Let me give you a good example. A couple weeks ago I got a call, a typical telemarketer call, and he said, "Are you happy with your long-distance service?" And I said, "Now, *this* is an insane coincidence." **(laughter)** And he said, "What?" And I said, "I also work for a long-distance phone company." He was like, "Really?" And I was like, "Yeah," and we laughed and we laughed about what a coincidence that was. And I said, "Well, look, while I've got you on the phone, **(laughter)** are you happy with *your* long-distance service? Because I've got a calling plan that could just shave dollars off your monthly bill," and I just ran through this totally fictitious calling plan with him, and then I said, "Well, look, I'm really at my computer *right now*, so if you just give me your home phone number, **(laughter)** we can do the switchover right now." And he was like, "Uh, look, I gotta go."

Goodbye,” and he hung up on me. **(laughter)** And all I can say is, A day you can get a telemarketer to hang up on you is a sweet, sweet day, so thank you very much!

(applause)