



TRANSCRIPT

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The Year in Review with:

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**(HEAD-
LINES)**

MR. ROLAND MARTIN: At the top of our agenda this week: a look back on the stories that made 2010 a political year to remember. We’re revisiting everything from the landmark healthcare reform passage to the “shellacking” of the Democrats. Joining me for that roundtable discussion [are]: Joseph Williams, deputy White House editor for Politico.com; Armstrong Williams, host of “The Right Side”; Alex Wagner, White House correspondent for PoliticsDaily.com; and April Ryan, White House correspondent for American Urban Radio Networks. And the spotlight wasn’t just on our nation’s capital this year. There were scandals, setbacks and rebounds from the pulpit to the gridiron. More on those stories with Sophia Nelson, columnist for “Jet” magazine; Jonathan Capehart, editorial writer for “The Washington Post” and MSNBC contributor; Wilmer Leon, political scientist and radio talk show host on Sirius XM Radio; and “The Black Eagle,” Joe Madison, also a radio talk show host on Sirius XM Radio. And News One’s Smokey Fontaine recaps the stories you couldn’t keep from watching on the Web this year. All that and more today, on “Washington Watch.”

**(SEG-
MENT 1)**

MR. MARTIN: The ‘Party of No’ caves in on a tax compromise, Pres. Barack Obama battles his own party, and the voters send lawmakers a message. This was not a dull year for political stories, and joining me today to discuss some of the headlines

[are]: Joseph Williams, deputy White House editor for Politico.com; Armstrong Williams, host of “The Right Side”; Alex Wagner, White House correspondent for poli- -- PoliticsDaily.com; and April Ryan, White House correspondent for American Urban Radio Networks.

All right, folks. What w- -- what for you – each one of you – what did you see as the top political story of 2010?

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: Well, for me, it was obviously the midterms. The midterm elections, the President has the so-called “shellacking.” It’s a moment that’s going to be quoted probably throughout his presidency, until things get back on track. It laid out his agenda for the next, coming year and definitely put a jolt in the political system.

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: I think the – surprisingly, the collapse of Greece, I think, is a harbinger of what’s to come in the United States, if we don’t get our fiscal house in order. If you look at the riots and the protests in France and London, I think it’s only a matter of time that this could happen in America, if we don’t do something to stem the debt and get our spending under control.

MR. MARTIN: In fact, you’re seeing this all across Europe. You’re talking about Spain. You’re talking about Ireland. I mean it’s a *huge* –

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: Yeah.

MR. MARTIN: -- financial issue all across the –

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: Yes.

MR. MARTIN: -- continent.

MS. ALEX WAGNER: It's a -- it wa- -- has been a long year. I'm saying healthcare. It w- -- that was this year, in fact. I think we've all --

MR. MARTIN: It was --

MS. WAGNER: -- forgotten it --

MR. MARTIN: -- last year *and* this --

MS. WAGNER: -- but -- exactly --

MR. MARTIN: -- year.

MS. WAGNER: -- exa- -- it's a kee- -- it's a gift that keeps on giving, both because the President's going to have to relitigate that in 2011. The -- the GOP's going to try and dismantle that. I think he's going to use a lot of his executive powers to sort of make changes to the law and make sure it gets enacted, and I think in 2014 -- I mean it's -- we have several years of it forthcoming.

MS. APRIL RYAN: I'm going to say elections, and I'm going to start off with the election in Massachusetts, when the Ted Kennedy seat -- Sen. Ted Kennedy's seat went to a Republican, and the White House did not grasp on that this was a sign of things to come.

MR. MARTIN: Whe- -- when you look at the rise, the emergence of the Tea Party, coupled with all of those losses, and it was just one thing after another that, for some reason, Democrats and the White House, they simply were not paying attention to what was going on in term- -- terms of loss after loss. But you also saw -- it was u- --

u- -- unbelievable, the BP oil spill – even how they even dealt with that. And so I mean – you know, the – this White House has been under duress. I was talking to several officials, and they said, “*Man!* It seemed to be one thing after another after another after *another*,” that, frankly, has been unlike we’ve seen any president in the last 20 or 30 years in terms of the kinds of issues they’ve had to confront.

And so with – wi- -- with that said, going into 2011, what jumps out? What’s the one thing that you think, from a political standpoint – party or the administration – that will be on the radar, that they must confront, that could be a challenge in the next year?

MS. WAGNER: I – I think it’s narrative. I think he needs to establish what kind of president he is. I think we’ve spent the last two years being confused w- -- as to where Barack Obama stands on –

MR. MARTIN: He came –

MS. WAGNER: -- things.

MR. MARTIN: -- in talking about hope and change, but –

MS. WAGNER: Exactly.

MR. MARTIN: -- I think the Republicans provided the narrative of what that actually means –

MS. WAGNER: *Yeah*, and I –

MR. MARTIN: -- and now he has to grab it back?

MS. WAGNER: -- well – and I think, if you look at what’s happened on the tax cut deal, it sort of reveals some version of his true colors, if you can call it that. I mean

he's going to be – it looks like he's going to be more centrist than, I think, a lot of the liberal wing of the party thought or hoped he *would* be. And I think there was a lot of projection. He was a blank slate when he came in, and now he's actually started legislating and leading, and I think he needs to show the American people, "Thi-“ – "This is the story, this is the arc of my presidency." You knew what – you knew what it was with Clinton. You knew what it was with Bush I and II. You knew what it was with Reagan. What is it with Barack Obama? And I think that's what he needs to do for 2011.

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: And I think that's probably what, I think, liberals were hoping – that he wouldn't change once he got into office, but anybody who listened fairly carefully to what he was saying on the campaign trail, you got the impression that centrism was where he was at – that he was talking a – a – in grand visions, but the policies were very, very pragmatic. I mean even in healthcare, the public option was a big deal, and it was a big deal for him to sort of give it up for his liberal base; but you *knew* – you – you – you could sort of tell almost from the instant the negotiations were starting that this was not going to go that far. You know, Republicans said that, "We're going to not go with the healthcare thing."

MR. MARTIN: Um-hum?

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: "Okay, fine. We don't have to do healthcare."

And everybody said, "*What?*" You know, "Oh, my God!" You know, "You" – "You're" – "You're giving up one of the things that we want really the most."

And that, I think, is what's gotten people so irritated and so frustrated, because he really hasn't changed, if you've been listening carefully. He's just sort of executing in a different way, and gone is the prose. Gone are the sweeping pronouncements. Gone are the – the – the – the gestures that made people feel good and made them want to – want to work for him and see him in office.

MR. MARTIN: I – when I – I look at 2011, I – I believe the one group that we have to pay particular attention to is, how will the Tea Party respond to having people now in office?

MS. WAGNER: Um-hum.

MR. MARTIN: If they don't deliver – the people who they sent – I wonder if they're going to then rebel against the very same party they supported, rebel against the very same people, and could that fracture this budding movement and pave the way for a Democratic victory and a victory for Pres. Obama in 2012?

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: But you know, it's al- -- it's always easy to be against something. It's quite different when you have to govern. I think we get so hyped up about these elections and midterms, but I[ve] got to tell you something. Pres. Barack Obama is a formidable candidate, and he's already shown us in 2010 that he's willing to cross the aisle with Republicans, whether it offended Nancy Pelosi, whether it offended Harry Reid, or his own party. I think there's hope for the President. I don't think there's a candidate that exists with the Rep- -- in the Republican Party right now that can defeat the President. It's his to lose.

MR. MARTIN: Armstrong made a point about – in terms of no particular candidate, let's confront the Kim Kardashian of politics, Sarah Palin.

[CHUCKLING.]

MR. MARTIN: And so in terms –

MS. RYAN: Is she as –

MR. MARTIN: -- o- --

MS. RYAN: -- cute as Kim Kardashian?

MR. MARTIN: -- no. No, no. No. I – I call her the “Kim Kardashian of politics,” because Kardashian all of a sudden became a celebrity *for no reason whatsoever*.

[CROSSTALK.]

MS. WAGNER: Reality –

MR. MARTIN: You know.

MS. WAGNER: -- TV show.

MR. MARTIN: And so – right. Famous for being famous, and so now you have the big celebrity in terms of Sarah Palin.

And so w- -- what is her move? Who act- – I don't believe she's going to run for president. Who believes that she will actually put her hat in the ring for president and really position herself in 2011 for that run?

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: I – I do. I mean –

MS. WAGNER: I – I think –

MR. MARTIN: You think she's going to run?

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: -- I think she's going to run. I don't know if it will be successful. And I don't know if it's anything more than just fulfilling a -- a -- a -- a -- a move -- or, making a move in order to prolong her moment on [sic] the spotlight. She doesn't run, she's out of the spotlight.

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: I -- I -- I think the jury's still out on Sarah Palin. If Sarah Palin becomes the nominee, then the Republican Party has no chance of recovering the White House in 2012.

MR. MARTIN: I will agree with that.

Alex?

MS. WAGNER: She's in, man. She's in. There's -- I think she has cultivated a political ego the size of Alaska.

MS. RYAN: Whoo! [Chuckles.]

MS. WAGNER: She has all the energy and enthusiasm of her base, and she's a[n] incredibly captivating political figure, no matter what you think of her b- -- actual politics.

MS. RYAN: Strategic posturing to bolster her visibility. If she's going to do it, I don't know, but I think many people feel like former First Lady Barbara Bush when she said, you know --

MS. WAGNER: [Chuckles.]

MR. MARTIN: "Stay in Alaska." [Chuckles.]

MS. RYAN: -- yeah -- [chuckles] -- basically. "I think she likes Alaska. Stay

there.” So –

MR. MARTIN: Immigration reform – Hispanics were saying, “Democrats, you[‘d] better confront this issue, or we’re going to have problems in 2012.” Republicans are saying, “We don’t want to touch this sucker, because if we do, we will lose the very same Hispanic voters.” And so will Congress, will this president, touch immigration reform in 2011?

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: I tell you if I were advising the President, I’d tell him to stay away f- -- as far away from immigration as he is from Russia right –

MR. MARTIN: I want –

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: -- now.

MR. MARTIN: -- the rest of the panel to hold tight. I want to get your responses to that question when we come back.

Folks, back with our roundtable in a moment.

[END OF SEGMENT.]

**(SEG-
MENT 2)**

MR. MARTIN: We’re back with Joseph, Armstrong, Alex and April; and we’re talking about the top political stories of 2010 and our projections for 2011. Before we went to the break, I talked about immigration reform. Armstrong says [to] the President, “Stay away from it.”

I just don’t believe Democrats can afford to stay away from immigration reform, because with the changing map in 2012 – in terms of the Electoral College votes, in

terms of the Census, a lot of those votes that he won in 20- -- in 2008, they're shifting from the Northeast and the Midwest to the South, [a] Republican stronghold. They desperately need Hispanic voters to win especially those western states. I just think they have to make a strong run at immigration reform. Even if it doesn't passes [sic], but to show the attempt on the issue.

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: And you – ask Harry Reid. You know, “Should we take a” – you know, “Should the Congress tackle immigration reform?” “Should the” – “the White House tackle it?” *Yes!* [Chuckles.] Look at his poll numbers. Look at how he managed to squeak by Sharron Angle. It had to do with the Latino vote. They turned out for Harry Reid. They need to be rewarded.

MS. WAGNER: I think this is what we call “political football.” I think that there's no way they're not going to *talk* about immigration reform. You look at the [fact that the] President had a meeting with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, said, “Oh, yeah. Dream Act,” “Dream Act,” “Dream Act.” *And?* I think the same thing's going to happen in 2011-2012. There's going to be a lot of posturing, a lot of sort of t- -- talking about, talking about immigration reform, but not a lot of action.

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: No.

MS. RYAN: If the- -- *if* they decide to tackle it – whether it be the White House, or Congress, or all of the above – tackle it in 2011, it will definitely be a deciding factor in 2012, as the panelists have said.

MR. MARTIN: One of the things we talked about this year: deficit, deficit,

deficit. Everybody was talking about that. And then it seems after November 2nd, “Oh, okay. That little deficit thing.”

So, we have a Deficit Commission that talked about how we make drastic changes. The reality is our budget [is] more than \$3 trillion. The biggest three pieces of the budget: Medicare, Social Security, as well as defense. Republicans do *not* want to touch defense. They want to brand Democrats as being weak on defense. Democrats want *no* touches to Social Security and Medicare, because they use those to hammer Republicans. So, when it comes to the deficit, do we have a president, do we have a Congress with the guts to actually touch the three biggest issues, knowing full well it could lead to their demise at the ballot box?

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: The President, yes; Congress, no. [Chuckles.] I mean –

MS. WAGNER: Yeah.

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: -- you have a Deficit Commission that has put the addit- -- who has put the issues squarely on the table. All right? They’ve – they’ve had a high-profile report –

MR. MARTIN: And commissions are very well known in Washington, D.C., that mean nothing – but I –

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: Absolutely, but –

MR. MARTIN: -- got you.

MS. WAGNER: [Chuckles.]

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: -- but -- but even given that -- even given that, consider that now you have people actually *talking* about it, where a couple of years before, even as late as si- -- even as late as six months ago, [it was a] total off-the-record subject.

MR. MARTIN: But, Armstrong, when you talk about those cuts -- I get Congress, but it's the people who say, "We're concerned ab-" -- "concerned about the deficit," but when you start making cuts, they start saying, "Not in my backyard. Cut somebody else's stuff."

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: You know what? I think Alaska is a classic example --

MS. WAGNER: [Chuckles.]

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: -- of what you're discussing now. On the one hand, they wanted to be conservative. They wanted less government, did not want to be on the gover- -- ha- -- h- -- the government. But when Sen. Murkowsky, who ran as a write-in, started talking about all the pork and what is going to really happen in your life when you don't have to pay taxes, when you don't get this stipend every month, people all of a sudden, went through a --

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: Amen.

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: -- metamorphosis --

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: Amen.

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: -- and --

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: [Chuckles.]

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: -- were reminded and said, "Wait a minute."

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: "How do you spell" --

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: -- we *do* --

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: -- "Murkowsky again?"

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: -- yeah, "How do you spell it again?"

MS. WAGNER: It's no- --

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: And they *spelled* it.

MS. WAGNER: -- it --

MR. MARTIN: Right.

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: And they reelected her. And I think that Alaska is a micros- -- -cosm of what the United States [is]. And I think that's where the conflict comes in.

MR. MARTIN: Right.

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: While Americans may demand one thing --

MR. MARTIN: Right.

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: -- when the reality sets in, they become bigger hypocrites than the people they elect in Congress.

MS. WAGNER: Well, look at what the -- *look at the Tea Party!* I mean the -- or, just look at the Republican stance: "Deficit," "Deficit," "Deficit -- except \$700 billion in tax cuts for the wealthy." I mean the- -- there is -- it's completely at odds with the real- --

the economic reality of things, and I think, you know, to the point of entitlement c- --
program cuts –

MR. MARTIN: S- -- s- --

MS. WAGNER: -- there's – there's – the- -- there's no way that's going to –

MR. MARTIN: -- so –

MS. WAGNER: -- happen.

MR. MARTIN: -- do you believe that – like I believe, that the only way this
country will ever touch the major issues is when – where we are in crisis mode?

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: Greece.

MS. WAGNER: Well –

MR. MARTIN: Catastrophe?

MS. WAGNER: -- you could argue –

[CHUCKLING.]

MS. WAGNER: -- that's now. I mean –

MR. MARTIN: No, I –

MS. WAGNER: -- you could argue –

MR. MARTIN: -- I –

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: I think –

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: It's close.

MR. MARTIN: -- I – I'll give you an example.

[CROSSTALK.]

MS. WAGNER: We're –

MR. MARTIN: I – [crosstalk] – NASA knew –

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: It's close.

MR. MARTIN: -- there were –

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: It's close.

MR. MARTIN: -- problems with O-rings. All of a –

MS. WAGNER: Right.

MR. MARTIN: -- sudden, they – Challenger had to blow up before they said, “We might wanna go ahead and confront that.” Columbia, with the foam coming off – it seems that we wait for the tragedy. Look at 9-11.

MS. WAGNER: *Financial reform!*

MR. MARTIN: Right.

MS. WAGNER: We had to wait until we had a complete meltdown in the markets before anybody said, “We need to revisit the way we do business here in the U.S.”

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: But I – I'll tell you – I'll tell you what's coming – is the fact that Bernanke, and his Fed Reserve, has become the fourth rail of politics in this country. They decide which industries in the economy will be saved and *when* they will be saved. When they infused the \$600 billion into the economy and monetized it – you know, the economy has its own biological advantage. It clears itself, and it heals itself through its own cycles. You cannot go in, in the short term and manipulate that

cycle – which they did. They may have done something good in the short term, but in the long run, hyperinflation is creeping in, and this housing situation that we have in America right now – it’s going to catapult.

MR. MARTIN: It’ll be interesting to see, I think, a big story in 2011: will the American consumer stay on this austerity piece, or does it get a little better, and we go back to –

MS. RYAN: They can’t help –

MR. MARTIN: -- what we used to do?

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: You know what?

MS. RYAN: -- *but* to –

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: The prob- --

MS. RYAN: -- do that.

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: -- part of the problem, though, is that we’re a consumer nation. I mean the – the – the – the – the – the –

MR. MARTIN: The notion –

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: -- foundation of –

MR. MARTIN: -- of “consumer confidence.”

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: -- yes! Consumer –

MR. MARTIN: So, you[’ve] got to keep buyin’ stuff! [Chuckles.]

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: -- you’ve got to keep buying stuff. You’ve got to keep

–

MS. RYAN: But how are –

MS. WAGNER: *The American* –

MS. RYAN: -- you gonna buy stuff –

MS. WAGNER: -- *dream!*

MS. RYAN: -- when the credit companies are cutting your – your accounts off because you're not paying your bills, or because your debt-to-income ratio is off? So, the –

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: But there are –

MS. RYAN: -- the –

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: -- plenty of other predatory people that are out there that are willing to take care – willing to – to – to try to convince people that –

MR. MARTIN: So –

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: -- this is the way to go.

MR. MARTIN: -- that's –

MS. WAGNER: But –

MR. MARTIN: -- what –

MS. WAGNER: -- and it's -- I think it's – it's the bedrock of – part of this country – is the American dream of owning your home and aspirational living. I mean that's part of who we *are*. It's part of our cultural iden- --

MR. MARTIN: -- and –

MS. WAGNER: -- -tity.

MR. MARTIN: -- I think that's changed, though. I think that what we've learned now is that -- and I'll -- th- -- I understand -- I under- -- I understood that concept in 1950, but I think what has happened, because we've become a more mobile society -- for instance, it used to also be known, "Get you a nice job and benefits. Stay at that job and retire." Now, all of a sudden, it's, "Oh, no. You don't even have to come into work. Get you a mobile -- laptop, broadband. Don't need to be here."

So, I think the mobility argument has also changed. We used to -- we were told you have to watch a show at a particular time. Now you can watch it whenever you want to watch it. So, I think that notion of the American dream of owning a home -- I think people are like, "No. Renting is not too bad."

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: But the problem is owning a home is not a right; it's whether you can *afford* it or not.

MS. RYAN: Yes.

MS. WAGNER: Right.

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: And so we believe people -- make people believe they have a right. You shouldn't have a credit card unless you can afford it. And at *some* point, just like the -- these unemployment benefits that have s- -- been extended for another 13 me- -- months, when are we going to get to the point where we're going to say, "Enough is" --

MR. MARTIN: A- --

MR. ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS: -- "enough!"?

MR. MARTIN: -- and that's why I believe that -- that the -- the big thing to watch out for, for 2011 will be, as -- as we mentioned earlier, will the American people actually say to Congress, "Okay. [The] deficit is huge. I'm willing to forgo some of this stuff" --

MS. WAGNER: Right, sacrifice.

MR. MARTIN: -- "s-" -- "and sacrifice"? I'm just not necessarily sure, when -- when push come[s] to shove -- 'cause remember with General Motors they said, "You're too big. Cut dealerships"? They whacked a bunch of 'em. The same members of Congress said, "Wait a minute. But these are business owners. They have people who work here." And they said --

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: [Crosstalk] --

MR. MARTIN: -- one thing, but did --

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: -- [crosstalk].

MR. MARTIN: -- another. So --

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: Well -- and also, the -- the notion of sacrifice has sort of been lost here, because we also are talking about a country that wants potholes filled, schools to be as -- as good as they can be, airports safe --

MR. MARTIN: "But" --

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: -- for --

MR. MARTIN: -- "But don't tax me!"

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: -- "No" --

MR. MARTIN: [Laughs.]

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: -- “don’t tax me.”

MR. MARTIN: Right.

MR. JOSEPH WILLIAMS: And I think that also speaks to the – to the – to the – to the problem that the Tea Partiers are going to face once they’re in office. I mean you’ve got stuff that you want. You’ve got to pay for it somehow. That “somehow” is taxes. “We’re against taxes.” You can’t be for the bo- -- for them both.

MR. MARTIN: Well, I guarantee you this. We’ll – in 2011, we’ll have all of you back, and I’ll be quick to say how wrong all of you were, and I was –

MS. WAGNER: [Laughs.]

MR. MARTIN: -- right.

MS. RYAN: You sure –

MR. MARTIN: All right.

MS. RYAN: -- will, if you are –

MR. MARTIN: I’ll --

MS. RYAN: -- *if* you are right.

MR. MARTIN: -- and you *know* I’ll be sayin’ –

MS. RYAN: *If* you –

MR. MARTIN: -- baby, I’m a hundred percent right. Don’t even --

MS. RYAN AND MS. WAGNER: Oh!

MR. MARTIN: -- just g- -- just go ahead and take it to the bank.

MS. WAGNER: [Mutters.]

MS. RYAN: *Whatever.*

MR. MARTIN: [Laughs.]

[CROSSTALK.]

MS. RYAN: And that check –

MR. MARTIN: Joseph –

MS. RYAN: -- will *bounce!*

MR. MARTIN: -- Armstrong – [chuckles] –

MS. RYAN: -- will *bounce!*

MR. MARTIN: -- Alex, April –

MS. RYAN: [Laughs.]

MR. MARTIN: -- thanks a bunch.

Folks, we'll be back in a moment.

[END OF SEGMENT.]

**(SEG-
MENT 3)**

MR. MARTIN: The Internet played a *huge* role this year when it comes to the top stories, and here to talk about some of those in 2010 is NewsOne.com's Smokey Fontaine.

Smokey, *man!* Major year. Let's talk about top viral videos. Who can forget "The rent is too damn high!"?

MR. SMOKEY FONTAINE: No one's going to forget Jimmy McMillan. He ran for governor in New York State, got no votes, but that video upstaged Gov. Cuomo

when it went viral. Just him speaking his mind. It was a slogan Pres. Obama probably should have used.

MR. MARTIN: Good point. Folks, if you forgot about it, here it is.

[INSERT VIDEO CLIP.]

MR. JIMMY McMILLAN: I represent the Rent Is Too Damn High Party. People are working eight hours a day and 40 hours a week and some a third job.

Women can't afford to take care of their children – feed their children breakfast, lunch and dinner. My main job is to provide a roof over your head, food on the table and money in your pocket. This is politics as usual. Playin' the silly game

– it's just not gon' happen. The Rent [Is] Too Damn High movement – the people I'm here to represent can't afford to pay their rent. They're being laid off right now as I speak. They can't eat breakfast, lunch and dinner. Listen!

Someone's stomach chil- -- child's stomach just growled. *Did you hear it?* Gotta listen like me.

[END OF CLIP.]

MR. MARTIN: Okay. That's Jimmy in "The rent is too damn high."

Antoine Dodson.

MR. FONTAINE: [Chuckles.]

MR. MARTIN: First of all, a cat who needs haircut – but go ahead. [Chuckles.]

MR. FONTAINE: [Chuckles.] He needs a haircut –

MR. MARTIN: [Chuckles.]

MR. FONTAINE: -- but you know what? He's gotten wealthy off this thing. Unfortunately, someone climbed in his sister's window and attempted to rape her. He went out and gave a statement to the local news and said, "You know what? Go hide your wife. Hide your kids. They're comin' to get us." He was emotional. He was honest. This is a young brother living in the projects. He went viral, because they remixed his quotes into a song that ended up being one of the top 100 songs downloaded on iTunes.

MR. MARTIN: Here's Antoine.

[INSERT CLIP OF "THE BED INTRUDER SONG" VIDEO.]

MR. ANTOINE DODSON: He's climbin' in your windows. He's snatchin' your people up, tryin' to rape 'em, so y'all need to hide your kids. Hide your wife. Hide your kids. Hide your wife. Hide your kids. Hide your wife – and hide your husband, 'cause they're rapin' e'er'body out here. You don't have to come and confess. We lookin' for you. We gon' find you. We gon' find you. So, you can run an' tell *that*. Run an' tell *that*. Run an' tell *that*, homeboy. Home, home, homeboy. We got your t-shirt. You left fingerprints. You know, you are so dumb. You are really dumb. For real. You are really, really, really, really so dumb.

KELLY DODSON: I was attacked by some idiot in the projects.

MR. DODSON: So dumb, so dumb.

[END OF CLIP.]

MR. MARTIN: Now, Smokey, we just saw Antoine, but – what? *Reality show?* I mean it's wha- -- i- -- it's *crazy* now, all these job offers he's now getting *because of this video*.

MR. FONTAINE: Look. He's getting job offers. He ended up on the stage on BET like he was a celebrity and a superstar. The good thing is he moved him and his family out of the projects, so he's got a better life –

MR. MARTIN: But –

MR. FONTAINE: -- now.

MR. MARTIN: -- it also shows you, really, how crazy this world is, where you can all of a sudden just make a comment; it gets on You Tube, and then you turn into a star.

MR. FONTAINE: Well –

MR. MARTIN: Speaking of folks who also – when it comes to video and then when it comes to the Internet and losing some of your luster – big story – Bishop Eddie L. Long.

[CUT TO PHOTO OF BISHOP LONG IN HIS BATHROOM WEARING SPANDEX BIKE SHORTS AND A SLEEVELESS MUSCLE SHIRT.]

MR. FONTAINE: -- I think we will never, ever take a photograph in your bathroom again. I think muscle shirts have gone a – *completely* out of style. Eddie Long's –

[CUT TO PHOTO OF BISHOP LONG IN A RED MUSCLE SHIRT AND TIGHT JEANS.]

MR. FONTAINE: -- picture that, allegedly, he sent to other male members of his congregation – young – young men in his flock – went viral, caused a huge scandal, which is essentially not over yet. We really do not have the truth of what happened in those relationships, but we know that it was something that brought up the issue of homophobia; brought up the issue of abuse, especially within the Church.

MR. MARTIN: And led to significant discussion online. I mean when that story broke, I mean it was talked about *every* e- -- you know, all over the place – television, but really on message boards – you name it – when it came of the issue of the Church, sexuality. And so, again, the Internet played a huge role.

Obviously, you had some major stories this year that have gotten massive coverage online. No doubt, [the] BP oil spill.

MR. FONTAINE: Look, the BP oil spill dominated our clicks for almost 45 days straight. There was not another top story that could – that could beat that.

MR. MARTIN: Well, you know, the camera that was focused on this – this – the leakage –

MR. FONTAINE: Yeah.

MR. MARTIN: -- from this well, and so all day, every day, all you saw was this plume of oil coming out –

MR. FONTAINE: Yeah.

MR. MARTIN: -- because the camera was on it the whole time.

MR. FONTAINE: 24/7. And, actually, it changed the politics of it, because BP

couldn't deny that it was leaking, because we had 24/7 video of it. You went to the front line in Louisiana. I went down there as well, to meet the folks who were most affected. We know our community was most affected. Look. It seems like that crisis is solved. Obama made the oil disappear.

MR. MARTIN: Huge, huge debate: the Ground Zero mosque.

MR. FONTAINE: Yes. I mean this was something – there were many moments this year that inflamed anti-Muslim rhetoric online. The Ground Zero mosque was one of them. This was a community center that was already there, close to Ground Zero. Huge fury over whether it should be allowed to remain there and expand. That inflamed *lots* of anti-Muslim comments, blogs, websites came up – only second to the whole idea of Pastor Terry Jones in Florida, who had the Burn the Koran Day. Between those two online incidents, there was so much rhetoric that exposed the racism that we have in our country.

MR. MARTIN: 2009, we saw how social media played a critical role in terms of the protests taking place in Iran, when they were shutting off the broadcasts, and folks were still communicating via social media. [We] saw the same thing with the earthquake in Haiti.

MR. FONTAINE: Yes, we did. And you know what? This is a *good* story. This is how the Web effected positive change. Micro giving became something that every young person and older person could do via their phone. You remember you and I sent in a Tweet about a do- -- for a donation to help the f- -- the victims in Haiti. That worked

– micro giving. They raised millions and millions of dollars utilizing the Web. It’s something that we can do over and over again.

MR. MARTIN: One story that – last year – we’ll talk about, that got lots of attention in terms of the Internet, that took place in Atlanta: [a] White sorority from Arkansas wins a step-off contest sponsored by Sprite, and – *man* – Black sororities were upset!

MR. FONTAINE: I call it “30 clicks of fame.” Zeta Tau Alpha sorority, they had their moment. They were – they were decided to be the winner, fair and square, by Sprite, on the ground, by the judges. And then, suddenly, the Web erupted and said, “There’s no way that this White sorority can win a step show. Are you *kidding* me?”

MR. MARTIN: And here’s actually some of the video of the sorority in the step contest.

[INSERT VIDEO CLIP OF ZETA TAU ALPHA STEP PERFORMANCE.]

MR. MARTIN: And, Smokey, what’s interesting about this [is] I talked to Judge Vanessa Gilmore, a federal judge in Houston. She told me that the late E. Lynn Harris actually was an advisor to these young women and actually introduced the notion of stepping *to* them.

MR. FONTAINE: He *did*, and there was a Unity Day that E. Lynn Harris kind of promoted on campus, where the White sororities can meet the Black ones and learn from one another. So, no diss on the White sorority for – for winning the step show, but it does allow us to have conversations about race. Especially online, everyone’s as

honest as they want to be.

MR. MARTIN: All right, folks. We're out of time on this topic. If you want to follow Smokey on Twitter, go to?

MR. FONTAINE: 'S twitter.com/smokeyfontaine.

MR. MARTIN: And, of course, I'm s- -- twitter.com/rolandsmartin.

Smokey, thanks a bunch.

MR. FONTAINE: Thank *you*.

MR. MARTIN: All right, folks. We'll be back in a moment.

[END OF SEGMENT.]

**(SEG-
MENT 4)**

MR. MARTIN: While lawmakers had their share of the spotlight this year, they were not alone. Sports figures, a spiritual leader and a historic settlement made headlines, toppling other stories. Joining me now to discuss the winners, losers and scandals of 2010: Sophia Nelson, columnist for "Jet" magazine; Jonathan Capehart, editorial writer for "The Washington Post" and MSNBC contributor; William Leon, political scientist and radio talk show host on Sirius XM Radio; and "The Black Eagle," Joe Madison, also radio talk show host on Sirius XM Radio.

All right. Let's start with scandals. Biggest scandal of the year. Political, s- -- sports, spiritual – you name it. What you got, Joe?

MR. JOE MADISON: Desirée Rogers – [laughs.]

OFF-CAMERA CHORUS: *Oh!*

MR. MARTIN: *Oh! Oh! Really?*

MS. SOPHIA NELSON: *O-o-oh* – [chuckles] – *Joe!*

MR. MADISON: Well, I just thought I'd lighten it up a little bit.

MR. MARTIN: [Laughs.]

MS. NELSON: Whoo!

MR. MADISON: She got outta Dodge real quick. I think she really blew that one.

No – no, I – I – I think the – the real – the real winner, in – in – in the end, is Pres. Obama. I think he *really* handled this tax thing masterfully. I don't *agree* with it, but anytime you tick off the extreme right *and* the extreme left, and then you come up a winner, I think it's a sign of a very interesting politician that he's turned out to be.

MR. MARTIN: Okay. I'll come back as – to scandals in a moment. And so let's

–

MR. MADISON: [Crosstalk.]

MR. MARTIN: -- let's stick with winners. How 'bout John Boyd – Black farmers?

MS. NELSON: Absolutely a winner.

MR. MARTIN: I mean he's been fighting that whole deal for – for all –

MR. MADISON: Ten years.

MR. MARTIN: -- these years, and they –

MS. NELSON: Actually[?] –

MR. MARTIN: -- finally got the deal – settlement.

Who else [was] a winner this year?

MS. NELSON: The President, hands down. I agree with Joe wholeheartedly. H- -- what he did was sheer brilliance, and the Democrats tried to derail him from his left. The Republicans were unhappy, probably, about the unemployment extension; but they worked it out, and the President comes out of this – and I think he's headed towards a second term.

MR. WILLIAM LEON: Well, I don't know if I'm ready to declare the President a winner. I don't think we'll know the answer to that question until we get closer to 2012, because I think what the Republicans have done very strategically is set him up for a big argument in 2012 as it relates not only to – to the tax issue and having to go back and revisit that issue, but then also in terms of the – of the payroll tax. One of the Republicans' greatest goals is to defund, if not take over, Social S- -- privatize Social Security. And starting this defunding of – of Social Security could prove to be a huge problem.

MR. MARTIN: Jonathan –

MR. LEON: So, I'm not –

MR. MARTIN: -- [was] -- the Tea Party –

MR. LEON: -- not ready to –

MR. MARTIN: -- a big winner this –

MR. LEON: -- declare victory yet.

MR. MARTIN: -- year, in 2010?

MR. CAPEHART: The Tea Party is a – a big winner in that they've got some people running around the halls of Congress.

MR. MARTIN: [Chuckles.]

MR. CAPEHART: But, clearly – but, *clearly*, the hands-down winner of the year is the President – not just because of the tax – the tax bill, and not just because of the extension of unemployment benefits, but because from January *right* through now, the President's approval ratings have stayed steady in the mid to high 40s. With *all* the things that have been going on, *all* the controversy swirling around him, he has stayed relatively steady. And, you know, the “shellacking” that he went through in the midterm elections – that knocked him around a bit, but what we've seen since then has been a president and, perhaps, a White House, that is let's say more focused on doing the – more – as I say, more focused on the politics, not trying to change the way politics is done here in the – in – in Washington, but more so playing the game to get their – to get their goals done.

MR. MARTIN: I think Michael Vick was a big winner this year.

MR. CAPEHART: Oh, yeah.

MR. LEON: Huge winner.

MS. NELSON: Yeah.

MR. MARTIN: I mean here was somebody at the beginning of the year they said flat-out, “Look, we don't even want you in the NFL.” All of a sudden, [an] MVP-like season, leading his guys to the – leading the Eagles to the playoffs. I think Michael

Vick's certainly a big winner [in] 20- --

MR. MADISON: I did --

MR. MARTIN: -- -10.

MR. MADISON: -- want to mention one other winner, and that's Shirley Sherrard [sic - Sherrod] gate. I think *she* won big-time also, and we shouldn't forget that. I mean here's a woman who was told to mo- -- "Pull over, " "Submit your resignation," you know, deliberately attempted to be made a scapegoat, and she came through with such grace. She's a *big winner* --

MR. MARTIN: Secretary Vilsack --

MR. MADISON: -- this year.

MR. MARTIN: -- actually said on the show that she's actually consulting with the Department of Agriculture --

[CROSSTALK.]

MR. CAPEHART: It was a --

MR. MARTIN: -- as well.

MR. CAPEHART: -- failure of every institution that we can *possibly* think of. It was a failure --

MS. NELSON: She's a Black --

MR. CAPEHART: -- on the media's --

MS. NELSON: -- *woman*. *That's why*.

MR. CAPEHART: -- part. It was a failure on the government's part. It was a

failure on the White House's part. Everybody who should've been a check or a balance along the way failed.

MR. MARTIN: Of all the stories in 2010, who are the big losers?

MR. MADISON: Oh!

MS. NELSON: Democrats – House Democrats, Nancy Pelosi, hands down, big

–

MR. MADISON: Haitians.

MS. NELSON: -- losers.

MR. MADISON: Big losers. Haitians are the big losers this year in – in more ways than one, and all of them – we – we're all familiar with, but that country is still devastated. I mean they haven't even removed the rubble yet. I would say they're the *big* losers right now.

MR. CAPEHART: The big loser of this year? Cong. Rangel. The man had the – the j- -- the job that he's always wanted, chairman of Ways and Means, and messed it up.

MR. MARTIN: Umph! Good point.

You also had, of course, RNC chairman Michael Steele – big wins in Congress. They won, of course, Massachusetts. They won the Virginia governor's race. Republicans won the New Jersey governor's race, and you swea- -- and – and you listen to Republicans, "Oh, he had nothing to do with it." They want to throw him out. We'll see what happens with the election in January. Was he a big –

MR. MADISON: [Crosstalk]- --

MR. MARTIN: -- loser in 2010?

MS. NELSON: I tell you what. I go- --

MR. CAPEHART: Yes.

MS. NELSON: -- but I got the first interview with Mike the night of the call, and he did it, and it was up on MSNBC's "The Griot." I don't know if I could say that on this station, but the bottom line is --

MR. MARTIN: You just *said* it.

MS. NELSON: -- you --

[CHUCKLING.]

MR. MARTIN: [Laughs.]

MS. NELSON: -- you -- you -- you -- you -- you -- I would recommend that --

MR. MARTIN: Go ahead.

MS. NELSON: -- folks read that, because I think that when you look at how *he* sees this versus how people like Haley Barbour and others see this, I think January is going to be very interesting. And I say don't count him out yet for winning reelection to

--

MR. CAPEHART: Look. I --

MS. NELSON: -- RNC chair.

MR. CAPEHART: -- I -- I think the s- -- the New Jersey, Massachusetts, Virginia -- those all happened *earlier* this year. W- -- folks in the --

MR. LEON: *And* he had nothing –

MR. CAPEHART: -- Repub- --

MR. LEON: -- to *do* with it.

MR. CAPEHART: -- well – and the folks in the –

MR. LEON: [Chuckles.]

MS. NELSON: [Crosstalk.]

MR. CAPEHART: -- Republican Party s- -- started up all of their own fundraising operations –

MR. LEON: Right.

MR. CAPEHART: -- around him and around the RNC.

MS. NELSON: That's never happened –

MR. CAPEHART: He –

MS. NELSON: -- before –

MR. CAPEHART: -- and he –

MS. NELSON: -- by the way.

MR. CAPEHART: -- can't claim any of th- -- their activities as wins.

MR. LEON: He *will* claim it. He *has* claimed it. Unfortunately, it – he really can't lay claim to it. He had nothing to do with Virginia. That was a terrible race run by the Democrat. Y- -- the Democrats rolled over in Massachusetts. He can't claim New Jersey. I mean, uh – yeah, he can't cl- -- he can't claim New Jersey. He *did* raise – he *did* raise money for the *party*.

MR. MARTIN: But here's the whole –

MS. NELSON: [Crosstalk.]

MR. MARTIN: -- point. Here's – h- -- bu- -- but this is the way I look at it. When you're running the ch- -- running the – the party – okay –

OFF CAMERA: You get to claim it?

MR. MARTIN: -- when you win or lose –

OFF CAMERA: It's you!

MR. MARTIN: -- you either will accept the victory [or?] –

MR. LEON: That's right.

MR. MARTIN: -- accept the defeat. I just find it amazing when you actually *do* win, “Oh, no, no. You can't get any of it.”

So, again – so, are we saying that with Michael Steele, that now the rules now actually have changed?

MS. NELSON: Absolutely[?].

MR. MARTIN: Because if – 'cause, trust me, they were all saying, “If we lose, buddy, it's on you.”

MR. LEON: Well, he was an A- – he was an Affirmative Ha- -- Action hire, to begin with. And I think now, that – I think, he has served his purpose, and I'll be very surprised if he wins reelection.

MR. MARTIN: Now, in terms of scandals this year, Bishop Eddie L. Long.

MS. NELSON: Yeah – [crosstalk] –

[CROSSTALK.]

MR. MARTIN: -- *huge* scandal.

MS. NELSON: And it got settled quietly, so –

MR. MARTIN: But, no. No, no. It actually hasn't been settled.

MS. NELSON: Oh.

MR. MARTIN: So – no, they actually chose to go into private mediation –

MS. NELSON: Mediation –

MR. MARTIN: -- dis- --

MS. NELSON: -- right.

MR. MARTIN: -- discussions, which means all the testimony will not be i- -- you know, in an actual courtroom. So, that's still going on.

But, still, who to watch in 2011? What political person to watch?

MR. MADISON: I would –

MR. MARTIN: What –

MR. MADISON: -- watch the two –

MR. MARTIN: -- major figure to watch?

MR. MADISON: -- I'll tell you one that's going to be interesting is West out of Florida.

MS. NELSON: Yeah.

MR. MARTIN: Allen –

MS. NELSON: I did –

MR. MARTIN: -- West?

MS. NELSON: -- an interview --

MR. MADISON: He j- --

MS. NELSON: -- with him. [Crosstalk] --

MR. MADISON: -- has just ripped his -- [chuckles] -- drawers, man.

MS. NELSON: [Laughs.]

MR. MADISON: I mean to send a letter to Eric --

MR. MARTIN: [Chuckles.]

MR. MADISON: -- Cantor and say, you know, "January -- we shouldn't be working ten days" -- he's going to find himself on some subcommittee counting beavers. You just don't take on, as a *freshman* congressman -- he's really going to learn what -- how Washington really --

MR. MARTIN: But -- but the Republicans --

MS. NELSON: -- I dis- --

MR. MADISON: -- works -- [crosstalk].

MR. MARTIN: -- but the R- --

MS. NELSON: -- -agree.

MR. MARTIN: -- but when there're -- but there're two Black members of Congress who're Republicans. They want to *use* them --

MS. NELSON: That's exactly --

MR. MARTIN: -- as much as they can --

MS. NELSON: -- what I was going to --

MR. MARTIN: -- as well.

MS. NELSON: -- say.

MR. MARTIN: So --

MS. NELSON: They're afraid --

MR. MADISON: And -- and --

MS. NELSON: -- of that -- [crosstalk].

MR. MADISON: -- when they use them, they will use them *up*.

MR. CAPEHART: In terms of the freshman class, Cong. --

MR. MARTIN: Or anybody. Go ahead.

MR. CAPEHART: -- Cong. Karen Bass, the former speaker of the se- -- of the assembly in --

MR. MARTIN: Um-hum.

MR. CAPEHART: -- California, she's --

MR. MARTIN: Oh, yeah.

MR. CAPEHART: -- now here in Washington, and, you know, she is dynamic. She is smart. She is strategic and focused. This is her first term. It won't be her last term.

MR. MARTIN: All right. Sophia, Capehart, Wilmer, Black Eagle, appreciate it.

[CHUCKLE.]

MR. MARTIN: [Laughs.] Had it mixed up there.

Coming up next, a new author says you don't have to think like a man to *get* a man. Her story up next.

[END OF SEGMENT.]

**(SEG-
MENT 5)**

MR. MARTIN: It takes a pretty confident woman to take on a popular personality like Steve Harvey, but Shanae Hall, former wife of NFL player Corey Hall, author and radio personality on Sirius Satellite Radio – well, she's not scared. In her new book *Why Do I Have to Think Like a Man?*, she confronts the comedian's relationship philosophy head-on. And welcome Hall to "Washington Watch."

What's happening?

MS. SHANAE HALL: Thank you very much, Roland.

MR. MARTIN: All right, then. So, *Why Do I Have to Think Like a Man?* obviously is a retort to Steve's book. Why'd you write it?

MS. HALL: Well, several reasons. One, there were things that he said in the book that shouldn't have been said and that someone needed to clear up and let him know that it was inappropriate.

MR. MARTIN: Like what?

MS. HALL: Like page 106. He says the primary reason women – or, men cheat is because there're so many desperate women out there willing to give themselves to a man that doesn't belong to them. And the reality is [a] man cheat[s] because a man wants to *cheat*. It's not anybody else's fault for his actions.

MR. MARTIN: Just like a – like if a woman wants to cheat, she wants –

MS. HALL: She's a *cheat*.

MR. MARTIN: -- to cheat. Her – her –

MS. HALL: I can't blame –

MR. MARTIN: -- her choice.

MS. HALL: -- that on her husband. [Chuckles.] So – other things he – to dispel: he said that the primary reason that women are – are mainly focused in life is to have the ring. That's all we want at the end of the day. And I said, "Well, you know, I've *been* married" – 8½ years – married my high school sweetheart, and at the end of the day, that's not what makes people happy. Happiness is not from getting a ring. All women don't want to get married. All women don't want to have kids. All women don't look forward to the things that we've had to deal with, that I've had to deal with, that Eva Longoria's dealing with, Brett Farb's wife. So, there's more to life for a woman than just getting the ring. It's a very antiquated thought that that's all we want. So –

MR. MARTIN: Well, what's –

MS. HALL: -- we address – [crosstalk].

MR. MARTIN: -- interesting to me w- -- when you look at, I mean, any number of relationship – [unintelligible] – relationship books, I think so many people are trying to find this Holy Grail, this one thing that has all the answers to really solve what their dilemma is –

MS. HALL: Right.

MR. MARTIN: -- to finding the right man or the right woman.

MS. HALL: Right. And that doesn't exist. There is no Holy Grail. What it is in our book that makes us different from any other book that's out there is finding yourself. We have so many women running around with baggage and issues – *and men* – that want to go into a relationship and find someone to complete them. You can't go into a relationship looking for someone to *complete* you. You need to complete yourself. And we have a lot of spiritual teaching, Marianne Williamson, Edgar Tolle; a lot of research – over 300 interviews – that we did to come up with this book. This is just not Shanae and Rhonda coming up with these great ideas. What it is if you complete yourself, if you find and set your standards – whatever they may be – every relationship that you go in will be fulfilling to some extent. And when it's no longer fulfilling to you, you have the right to leave that relationship and find something that makes you whole.

MR. MARTIN: And you co-wrote the book. You said "Rhonda."

MS. HALL: Is my *mother*.

MR. MARTIN: Okay. So, you've got to talk about writing a book with yo' momma, 'cause, clearly –

MS. HALL: [Laughs.]

MR. MARTIN: -- there was some stuff you maybe –

MS. HALL: Yeah.

MR. MARTIN: -- [did?] not want to get into –

MS. HALL: Right.

MR. MARTIN: -- 'cause you're writing it with ya momma.

MS. HALL: Correct. [Chuckles.] There were days where she would send me chapters, and I'm sending her chapters. I'm like, "Mom, I didn't need to know that." Like, "You should've said, 'Don't read from paragraph three on down.'"

MR. MARTIN: [Laughs.]

MS. HALL: [Chuckles.] *Definitely*, 'cause –

MR. MARTIN: And –

MS. HALL: -- there's a lot of intimate stories in there; and, obviously, my mom has a few more years on me. And some of the things that I read about, I didn't want to *read* about. You don't want to picture your mom in some of those lights. So –

MR. MARTIN: -- yeah. Bu- -- but ho- -- wasn't it –

MS. HALL: -- [chuckles].

MR. MARTIN: -- vice versa, though?

MS. HALL: It was. We had our days, 'cause my mom didn't know I w- -- experienced any domestic violence in my relationship. I never talked about it. And so I would send her, you know, a chapter; and she'd call me almost in tears. "I didn't know you were going through this." "How come you didn't tell me about this?"

And I'm like, "I" – "I am writing a book. Now you're disturbing my flow. I['ve] got"

–

MR. MARTIN: [Chuckles.]

MS. HALL: -- "something going on right here."

So, it was – it was back and forth. And like I said, we both learned a lot about each other through e-mail – more so than anything else – and then we would talk about it.

MR. MARTIN: Fo- -- one of the things that also jumps out when you – when you talk about this book here – and I go back to this whole notion of the Holy Grail. That is, people think there's some perfect individual out there. With your experience, not what did you learn about *him*, but what did you learn about yourself that you said, "You know what? I thought this going in, but this is really what the truth is – about myself"?

MS. HALL: Well, what I thought I wanted was the house on the hill, the cars, the white picket fence, the cute kids and the dog.

MR. MARTIN: Perfect.

MS. HALL: And I thought if I –

MR. MARTIN: The whole no- --

MS. HALL: -- had that, I would be *happy*. That would make my life complete.

And I got the house on the hill – [chuckles] – the white, picket fence; the cute kids and the dog. And I thought, "I cry every day. This can't be what life is about."

And when I stepped out of that relationship, when I said, "Okay. Whatever this is, I'm not happy. I can't take this anymore," and I moved into a little two-bedroom apartment, and I downgraded my car, and I went back to school, and I completed the things – I wrote a book – I found myself in a place of joy and a place of peace that I had never been in. And so what I learned about me is – and for *all* women – is that when

you find i- -- what it is that you need to do – not what your husband, not what society, not what everybody else says that you need to do, or need to be – that’s when you come to a place where you can say, “This is what makes me happy, and anyone I bring in my life is just an accent to what already” – “to what I already” –

MR. MARTIN: But –

MS. HALL: -- “have.”

MR. MARTIN: -- you have people who are sitting here, saying, “Yeah, girl, but you were married to a baller” – a[n] NFL player. And it’s very interesting how a lot of folks – men and women – they really look at that whole issue of material possessions –

MS. HALL: Right.

MR. MARTIN: -- and what that person can provide, and say, “Well, look. I don’t understand why you’re not happy. You have all of this *stuff*.”

MS. HALL: Right. “Let them” – and I actually had a girlfriend call me who – her husband is a celebrity – as I was going through my divorce and said, “Girl, don’t leave him! Do you understand what you’re giving up?”

And I thought to myself, “*Yeah*. I’m giving up *craziness*. I’m giving up *hell* to go find *peace*.”

But that’s not how everyone looks at it. And I’m not trying to project my views and my opinions on any[one]. All I can say is this is what I lived, this is what I’ve been through, and this is where I’m at. And my life is so much better now.” And I have great people in my life, of great quality, of great value; but there’re certain things that I know

now I would never tolerate again. I'll never tolerate the physical abuse, the – the verbal abuse, the – whatever may come, just so the – the – the – you know, adultery, or whatever, so that I could have a nice house; because guess what? I'm buying my nice house myself. I'm buying my nice car myself. So, there's – what I've learned is Shanae is strong enough to say, "But there's nothing I can't buy, materialistic[ally], for myself. Now, bring me" – "When you come in, come with peace. Come with something I can grow from, something I can learn from; being a leader – someone that I would want to follow, my kids would want to follow. Come in my house and allow me to be your helper and not a crutch" – or your punching bag, or whatever it is that men have decided that women, as their wife, should be.

MR. MARTIN: You talked about, again, co-authoring this book with your mother. And you talked about, "Well, *man!* I really wish I didn't know those particular things," that you talked about. But do you also think that's part of the problem when it comes to relationships – that we don't have real, frank, conversations to understand what mothers and fathers have gone through, brothers and sisters, to then understand and learn from their experiences? Because whe- -- whenever folks seem to get in trouble, it's, "Oh, I" – "I found out after the fact" –

MS. HALL: Right.

MR. MARTIN: -- as opposed to saying, "*Man!* Had I known that, I would have a better understanding of how to deal with that situation."

MS. HALL: Right. Not only that. We – we're so dysfunctional. Like, growing

up, if my mom and dad were fighting, they just didn't *talk*. And you knew they were fighting, 'cause they didn't *talk* for a week. And then when I grew up, if I had a problem, I just won't *talk* to you. Even now, if I don't like you, I just won't – you know, I'll cut that off. So, learning how to communicate is such a key factor, especially in African-American homes, that we don't do. Either we show our aggression through violence. We show it through not speaking. We show it through other ways: gambling, drinking – whatever it may be. But learning how to *talk* to people – and like you said, learning how to talk to your mom – I'm doing this through *e-mail* -- [chuckles] – and then we're having these conversations. But it's brought me and my mom so much closer, because now there're things that I went through that she can relate to, that she didn't tell me about, things that I went through that I didn't tell *her* about. But now, opening these doors, it's like, "Okay. Well, if you had said that eight years ago, I'd have *known* better."

But it's all a learning experience, and it's all part of our journey. So, you never know what you needed to know. Obviously, whatever you need to know, you'll know it at that time. And that's how I look at that.

MR. MARTIN: And I- -- last question: this whole issue of – of marriage is extremely sensitive in the African-American community. When you look at a recent study, overall, 4 out of 10 people say marriage really isn't necessary. African-Americans are getting married at a lower rate than *anybody else*. I probably have advised more people not to get married than to get married – not because I don't believe in marriage; I'm on my second marriage, but because I think a lot of people

don't want to confront the reality of what it takes to actually have a successful marriage.

And so on the book tour, out here talking to d- – talking to people, have you been surprised by some of the questions and the reaction from people when they really understand what is required to have a strong marriage – that it's actual work?

MS. HALL: Well – [chuckles] – one, it's work; but, two, we come in with these fairy tale visions. And so if you just want – “Oh, I just want a guy that's going to pay half of the bills,” and he's like, “Well, what if *this* happens? Now, *you* should” –

MR. MARTIN: Which is –

MS. HALL: -- “pay half” – [crosstalk] –

MR. MARTIN: -- which is not a – a spouse; it's a *roommate*.

MS. HALL: -- right. That's what –

MR. MARTIN: [Chuckles.]

MS. HALL: -- Roland, you hit the nail on the head, because we just had this huge argument in New York at the book signing. And the guy was like, “No, no, no. You should pay half the bills, and if I take you out to dinner, you should take *me* out to dinner.”

And I'm like, “That's not a marriage. That's not a relationship.”

So, once we get past the – we take it back to the old days, where you have to have a certain level of stability before you could even *think* about having a wife and having kids. And then – let's – I mean money is a *huge* issue, so let's take that out of the picture. Let's both get our stuff together, so when we come in, that's not our issue.

'Cause we're going to have our own problems – whether you like to party, and I don't; whether you like to drink, and I don't. There're so many other things that come along with being married, that people are rushing in.

And I – one of the things that bothered me is I had a lady say, “You know, I got married for healthcare.” And it's like if these are the reasons we're getting married – for financial stability, for healthcare, for all these other things, and – there's no – that's why the divorce rate is so high. You're not getting married for *love*. This wasn't our soulmate. When's the last time you heard somebody to say, “This is my soulmate”?

So, that's why I think that there's a huge problem in the African-American community. We don't communicate. We don't know how to say, “This is what I want.” And we really don't *know* what we want, 'cause what are we looking – what are we basing that off of? Our parents being together for 35 years?

MR. MARTIN: Well, f- -- folks, again, the book is *Why Do I Have to Think Like a Man?: How to Think Like a Lady and Still Get the Man*. Shanae Hall, co-author of the book with her momma –

MS. HALL: [Chuckles.]

MR. MARTIN: -- Rhonda. Should've had her on the set as well. No, she's in the Green Room, but we'll – we'll hoo- -- we'll hook up a chat with her next time. Shanae, I appreciate it. Thanks a bunch.

MS. HALL: Thank you so much, Roland, for having me on.

MR. MARTIN: Folks, the book *Why Do I Have to Think Like a Man?* in

bookstores now. Be sure to pick it up.

Back in a moment.

[END OF SEGMENT.]

**(SEG-
MENT 6)**

MR. MARTIN: Folks, we're out of time. That's it for this edition of TV One's
"Washington Watch."

I'm Roland Martin. Goodbye. Have a blessed, safe and prosperous new year.

[END.]