

Third Saturday Seminar 2011-2012

Humanity at a Crossroads

Session 08

19 May 2012

“Creativity”

Unleashing Your Wisdom in the Brave New World of Tomorrow may be a Challenge

Curt Gibby

Presentation

ALL Program, Lone Star College – Montgomery

Conroe, Texas

Questions

- Who can predict what will start to happen on the day after Tuesday, November 6, 2012? Will we have a two term president or a brand new one?
- How long does it take to pay off a 15 \$trillion debt? Does someone have a secret business plan on a spreadsheet that has it all figured out?
- Will the world economy miraculously multiply itself by 10?
- Will the sequestration monster be allowed to kick in, end the Bush Tax cuts, enforce austerity on all departments of government? (Sequestration = In U.S. law, a procedure by which an automatic spending cut is triggered, introduced to the federal budget in 1985 by the [Gramm–Rudman–Hollings Balanced Budget Act](#) , most recently implemented in the [Budget Control Act of 2011](#))
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sequestration>

Options

- What options will the people have? What could lighten the load of a debt brought on by 12 or more years fiscal and political irresponsibility on the part of our political and economic leadership and consumers alike?
- Will the dynamic of “top down” pipe dream leadership be continuing? That is, all those entities who have real control of the minds of our elected politicians, continue to flood us with their ideologies and ideologically driven ideas which they will continue to force on to the people whether its more bailouts paid for by the victims for banks and corporations or an “Affordable” health care plan, that is not affordable to a large chunk of the population and preserves all the prerogatives of the medical industry, insurance companies and pharmaceuticals, that are driving the cost of health care through the roof.?
- Will our savings accounts and money market ever start to pay us interest?

We are the 25 %

Approx. 1 in 4 are wage earners in the USA. 310 million people living here and only 77,500,000 are actually earning a wage or have a reportable income!

You and I who are working are paying all the bills, taxes, national debt, or any and all expenses incurred by the Government and or any other entity spending money, including our own needs!!!

http://wiki.answers.com/Q/How_many_wage_earners_are_there_in_the_US

Creative Solutions to some Very Complex Problems

We The People of the United States may need to start seriously and cooperatively looking for Creative Solutions to some Very Complex Problems, because we will not see any promise from those who have been promising us Grandiose Schemes of World Power and Leadership for as long as we can remember, yet they cannot or will not figure out how to pay our bills, nor will they rein in those who see the American worker as a beast of burden ...

If Destiny Calls ...

Being realistic, none of us has serious delusions of starting a revolution. On the other hand, I don't believe Rosa Parks was planning a revolution either, but when destiny called, she responded. She was ready. I wonder if she was surprised when she realized just how many other people were as hungry (or hungrier) as she was for it to happen. Did she consciously give herself permission? (Or, like other American heroes, just took the appropriate action ...)

In 1965, L.B.J. told M.L.K. to "make me do it."

An anecdote from a former member of the LBJ administration.

ROGER WILKINS, April 28, 2008:

http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health_cast/uploaded_files/6671%20-%2020042808_commonwealth_past_transcript.pdf

Now, let me just make two observations about presidents and getting things done. There is an old story that maybe some of you have heard. Sidney Hillman was a big labor leader. He had helped Roosevelt when Roosevelt was the governor and he helped him in the '32 campaign. So he went to the White House and he was welcomed as he should have been. He said, here is what you have to do Mr. President, da, da, da, da, da, da. And the story goes that President Roosevelt said, Sidney I agree with everything in your proposal, it is all exactly right, now you just go back home and make me do it.

In 1965, L.B.J. told M.L.K. to "make me do it."

And the same thing happened with Lyndon Johnson and the Voting Rights Act. He wanted to do the Voting Rights Act, he had used up a lot of chits on the Civil Rights Act and he just engaged in a very long romancing of Martin Luther King, Jr., to make sure that King put his people on the streets and kept the people's feet to the fire and move along and move along and he essentially said to King - - make me do it.

And King put the people on the street, and then there was pressure from inside the government on the president - - with which I was associated - - and it happened.

- Roger Wilkins

<http://letters.mobile.salon.com/opinion/greenwald/2009/01/13/obama/permalink/51eb83f63f62212c4ef3c07c9b8111ec.html>

Why Won't We be Happy

For some time you have heard me casually predict: It doesn't matter how the upcoming Presidential and Congressional Elections come out, very few people will be will be happy.

It's kind of a four part problem.

There are two major parties Republicans and Democratic. If one says, "Yes," the other says "No!" (It's not a matter of reason or belief, just who spoke first.)

Last election's winner was determined by the "winner take-all rules" of most states. The popular vote gave the winner only a small plurality.

Again, neither party's base is showing an overwhelming enthusiasm for their candidates presumptive (at this writing neither party has an "official" candidate) It seemed the real enthusiasm came from the "self-identified independents." (Some say 40% of those who voted were independent) Many voting for the first time, or finally (bravely) reengaging with the political process.

Manicheans Rule

It's turned into a war between good and evil. By definition one side is pure and the other side is impure. It's OK to fabricate the accusations to be venomously heaved at the other side, to totally disrespect them and their concerns. Reality, common sense, intelligence are not in the equation, only the party line.

Each side has its own media processing resources which with feigned “Church Lady” superficiality seems able to keep advertisers and viewers, listeners and readers motivated and inspired(?)

Who is: Jonah Lehrer

Jonah Lehrer (born June 25, 1981) is an American author and journalist who writes on the topics of psychology, neuroscience, and the relationship between science and the humanities. He has published three books. Simon Ings has written, "Lehrer fancies himself – and not without reason – as a sort of one-man third culture, healing the rift between sciences and humanities by communicating and contrasting their values in a way that renders them comprehensible to partisans of either camp." [1]

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonah_Lehrer

Life

Lehrer graduated from [Columbia University](#) in 2003 with a major in neuroscience; while an undergraduate, he examined the biological process of memory in Professor [Eric Kandel's](#) Lab.^[2] He was also editor of the Columbia Review for two years.^[2] He then studied 20th century literature and philosophy at [Oxford University](#) as a [Rhodes Scholar](#).^[3] He is a contributing editor at [Wired](#), [Scientific American Mind](#), [National Public Radio's Radiolab](#), and has written for [The New Yorker](#), [Nature](#), [Seed](#), [The Washington Post](#), [The Wall Street Journal](#), and [The Boston Globe](#).^[4] Jonah Lehrer is also featured in brief informational sessions on the television show "Brink", on the science channel. He currently writes the "Head Case" column for The Wall Street Journal.

Books

Jonah Lehrer is the author of three books: [*Proust Was a Neuroscientist*](#) (2007), [*How We Decide*](#) (2009), and [*Imagine: How Creativity Works*](#) (2012).

Proust Was a Neuroscientist was Lehrer's debut book; it is a collection of biographical essays on creative figures such as [Paul Cezanne](#), [Walt Whitman](#), [Auguste Escoffier](#), and [Marcel Proust](#).^[5] Lehrer argues for an intimate relationship with science and the humanities, and he holds that many discoveries of neuroscience are actually rediscoveries of insights made much earlier by various artists.^[1]

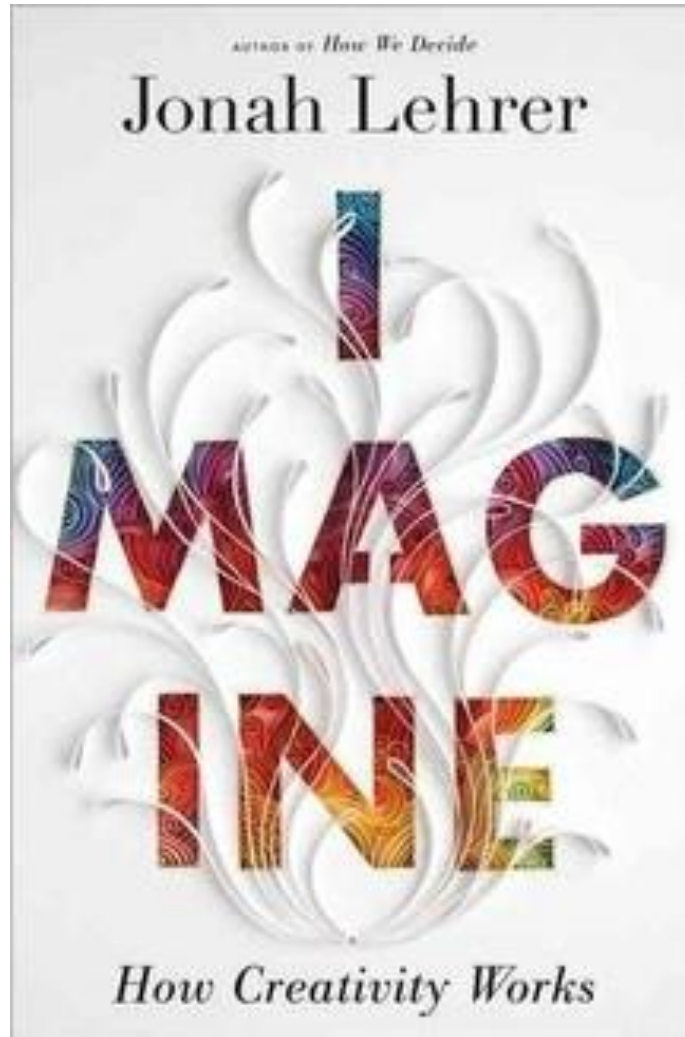
In *How We Decide*, Lehrer argues there are two main parts of the brain involved in decision-making, the rational and the emotional.^[6] His thesis has been called into question based on current understanding of neuroscience.^[7] On 5 February 2009, he appeared on [*The Colbert Report*](#) to discuss the book.^[8] Lehrer appeared a second time on 17 April 2012 to promote his newest book "Imagine: How Creativity works".

Imagine

How Creativity Works

by [Jonah Lehrer](#)

Hardcover, 256 pages, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, List Price: \$26 | [purchase](#)



Imagine: How Creativity Works by Jonah Lehrer



The screenshot shows a YouTube video player for the video "Imagine: How Creativity Works by Jonah Lehrer". The video player displays a drawing of a person with a rainbow for a head. The video has 6,721 views and is from the channel "hmhbooks". The video player includes a progress bar, volume control, and a "Like" button.

YouTube

Imagine: How Creativity Works by Jonah Lehrer

hmhbooks + Subscribe 187 videos

0:20 / 3:42

6,721

Like Share

The Secret to Investing? Outwit Your by ForaTv 6,695 4:07 FEATURED VIDEO

The Science of Insight Creation by scribemia 3,523 views 39:38

Jonah Lehrer: How We Decide 1/5 by worldinformant 11,496 views 14:56

Jonah Lehrer: Creative Insights by PopTechMedia 8,394 views 10:04

The Creative Brain (ep. 12) - Charlie Rose: The by xknowledgeistree 4,350 views 54:00

JONAH LEHRER: How to Have an Aha!

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4v2O3Cc_q0Q

How we decide



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smz5r7yStlo&feature=related>

Interview Highlights

From: <http://www.npr.org/2012/03/21/148607182/fostering-creativity-and-imagination-in-the-workplace>

On outsider knowledge

"In many cases, when you're trying to solve a technical problem, our assumption is that we should give it to the guy who knows the most – the ultimate insider, the expert in that field. But what various studies and real-world studies have show, is that it's often the outsiders who do better: people on the fringes of that field — people who know enough to understand the question but don't know enough that they're going to run into the same stumbling blocks as the people on the inside who have already tried to solve it."

On hard work

"It would be wonderful if the recipe for all kinds of creativity was to take showers and play ping-pong and go on vacation and go for walks on the beach, but when you really talk to people in the creative business, they want to tell their romantic stories about the epiphanies but then if you push them, they say even that epiphany had to go through lots of edits on it and iterations and lots of hard work after we have the big idea. And that's a big part of the creative process too, and it is not as fun. In fact, there's evidence that it makes us melancholy and a little bit depressed. But it's a crucial part in creating something interesting and worthwhile. If creativity were always easy or about these blinding flashes, Picasso would not be so famous."

On the link between depression and creativity

“One of the surprising things that's emerged from the study of moods in recent moods is that putting them in a bad mood — making them a little bit sad or melancholy — comes with some cognitive benefits.”

- Jonah Lehrer

On the link between depression and creativity

"One of the surprising things that's emerged from the study of moods in recent moods is that putting them in a bad mood — making them a little bit sad or melancholy — comes with some cognitive benefits. ... So sadness, although it is not fun and is not pleasant, it does sharpen the mind a little bit. And one of the long-standing mysteries in the field of creativity is this correlation — and this was first identified by Kay Redfield Jamison and others — is people suffering from various kinds of depression and creative output.

On the link between depression and creativity

People who are successful creators — especially writers — are anywhere between 8 and 40 times more likely to suffer from bipolar depression than the general public. And no one's known what to make of this. It's tough to associate creativity with mental illness because obviously if you're very ill, it gets in the way. ... But one of the theories now is that the terrible swings of the mental illness – of bipolar depression – you get these manic highs, these euphorias, where the ideas just pour out of you. And you need to write them down. That's followed by this dismal low period when maybe you're a better editor. Maybe it's easier for you to focus and refine those epiphanies into a perfect form. ... The thinking is maybe the correlation exists because the swings of mental illness echo the natural swings of the creative process."

On Yo-Yo Ma and Julia Child

"For Yo-Yo, it's about learning how to relax. He told me this great story where before he goes out on stage, he often thinks about Julia Child. And at first, I was like, 'Why Julia Child?' And he tells this great story about Julia Child making a roast chicken and it looked beautiful and she was talking to the camera and the chicken would just fall off the plate, onto the floor. And he said, 'Did she make this look of horror? Did she scream? No, the smile never left her face. She picked up the chicken, dusted it off and just went on with the show.' And he said that's an inspiring story to think about when you're in the middle of performance, because you're going to make a mistake and your attitude has to be, 'I welcome that first mistake because now I'm free.'

On young people and creativity

"[The school of thought was] different fields have different peak ages. If you're a **physicist or a poet**, your peak age of creativity is going to be pretty young – maybe in your **late 20s or early 30s**. If you're a **biologist**, it's going to be in your **late 30s**. If you're a **historian**, it may be in your **late 40s**. ...

...peak at the age of 35 (???)

[The **school of thought was also**] after we peak at the age of 35, let's say — depending on the field — the imagination begins to fall apart. The memory declines with age, maybe the imagination was the same way. This is kind of a depressing idea. There's nothing you can do to stop this dismal, downward trend. **But now the thinking is there's nothing inevitable about this loss, which is why some creative people can maintain their imaginative output for their entire career.** Instead, the **decline of creativity is what psychologists refer to as 'inculturation.'** That as we get older, as **we get tenure in a field, we become invested in the status quo.** We develop habitual ways of thinking, routines, we develop customs in terms of how we solve problems. Those make our lives a little bit easier, they make it easier to apply for grants. They make our days a little more efficient but they also make it harder to think outside the box."

Basic Wilderness Survival Skills

From: **British Columbia Outdoor Wilderness Guide**

Fear - For anyone faced with a wilderness emergency survival situation, fear is a normal reaction. Unless an emergency situation has been anticipated, fear is generally followed by panic then pain, cold, thirst, hunger, fatigue, boredom and loneliness. It is extremely important to calmly assess the situation and not allow these seven enemies to interfere with your survival.

Pain - Pain may often be ignored in a panic situation. Remember to deal with injuries immediately before they become even more serious.

Cold - Cold lowers the ability to think, numbing the body and reducing the will to survive. Never allow yourself to stop moving or to fall asleep unless adequately sheltered.

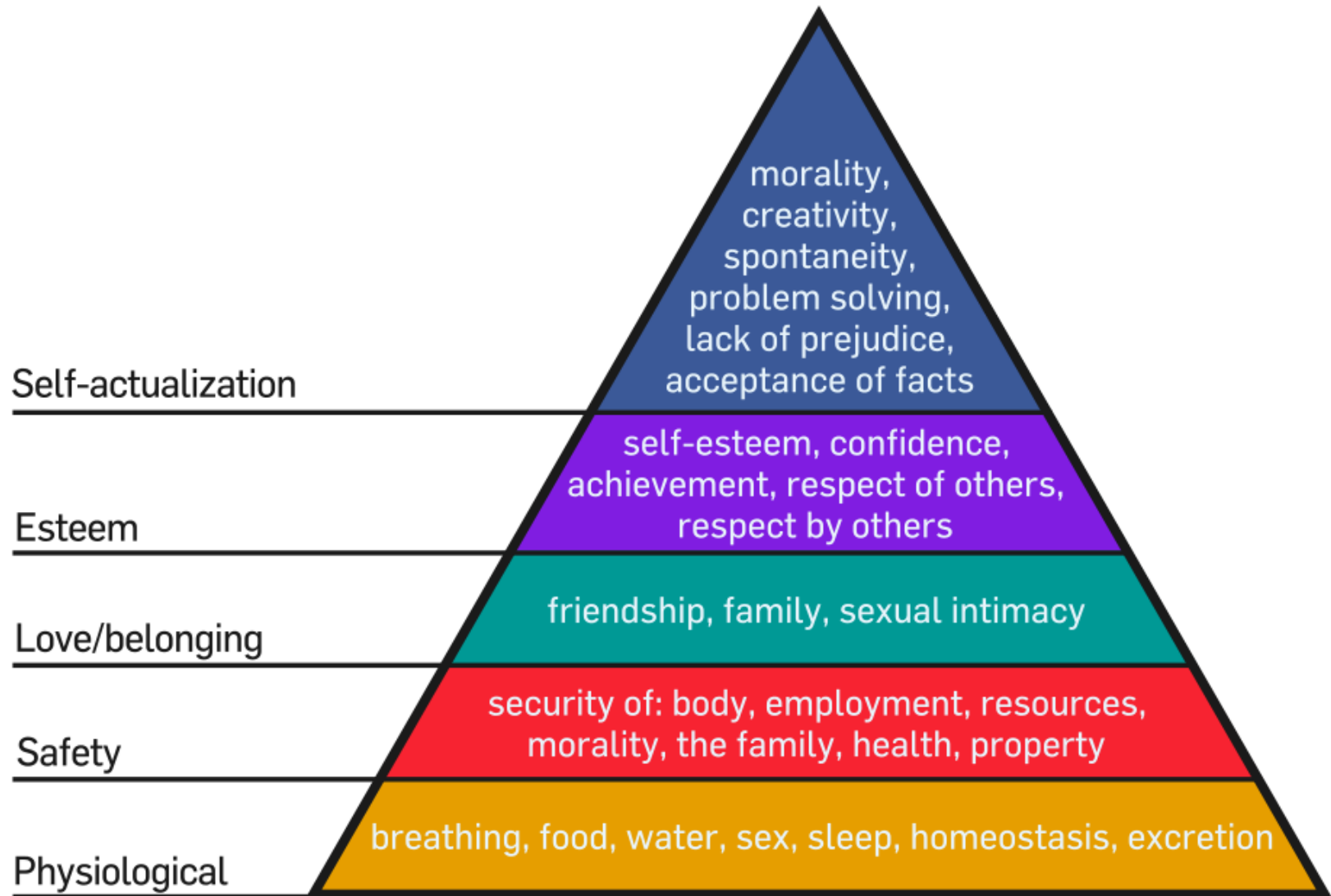
Thirst - Dehydration is a common enemy in an emergency situation and must not be ignored. It can dull your mind, causing you to overlook important survival information.

Hunger - Hunger is dangerous but seldom deadly. It may reduce your ability to think logically and increase your susceptibility to the effects of cold, pain and fear.

Fatigue - Fatigue is unavoidable in any situation so it is best to keep in mind that it can and will lower your mental ability. Remember that in an emergency situation this is often the body's way of escaping a difficult situation.

Boredom & Loneliness - These enemies are quite often unanticipated and may lower mind's ability to deal with the situation.

Mazlow's Hierachy of Needs



**“...we are the leaders we've
been looking for.”**

Grace Lee Boggs

DON'T PANIC!

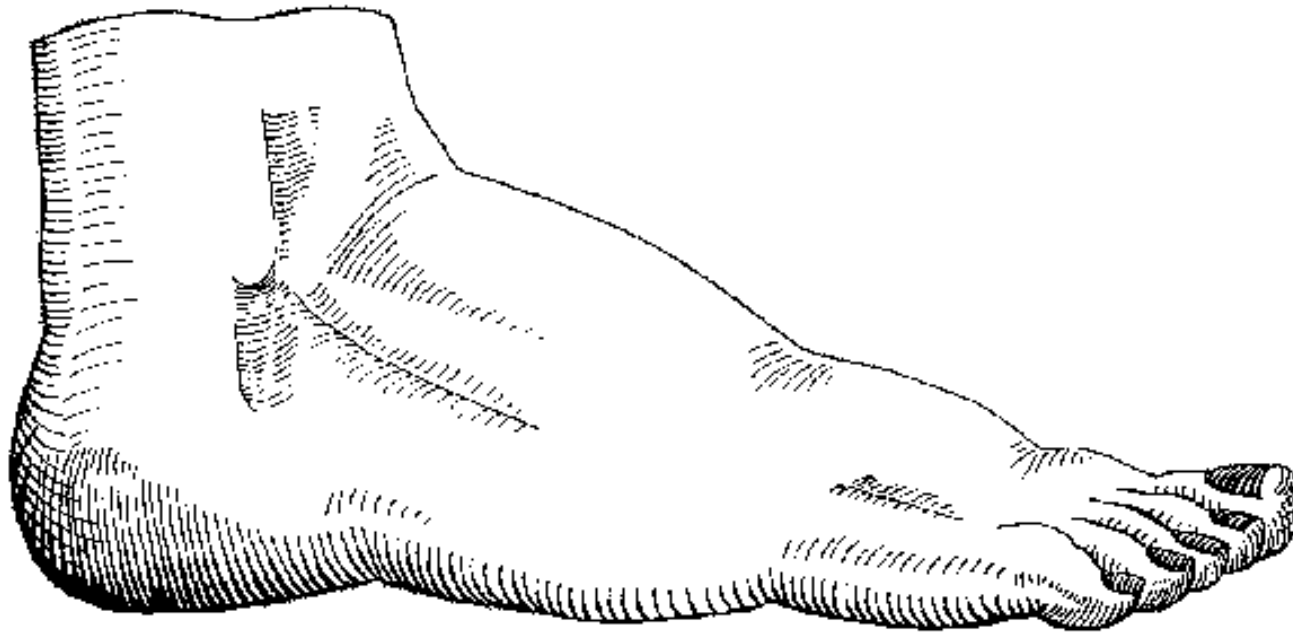
DON'T (be) PANIC(ked)!

Welcome back to interesting times !



See You 17 May 2012

The Monty Python Foot, a convenient way to end something that would seem to go on for ever accomplishing nothing.... (*See deus ex machina*)



The famous Python Foot can here be seen in its original format in the bottom left corner of "An Allegory of Venus and Cupid" by [Bronzino](#) (~1545)

When Monty Python had no ending for a skit, this foot would appear out of the sky and squash whatever was on screen with a rude noise. Allowing the show to move on.

Elizabeth Warren – Pt 1

24 Apr 12

The Daily Show with Jon Stewart



Tuesday April 26, 2011

Exclusive - Elizabeth Warren Extended Interview Pt. 1

In this unedited, extended interview, Elizabeth Warren discusses Congress' fight to kill the consumer agency before it helps middle-class families.

Tags: Elizabeth Warren, interviews, exclusives, extended interviews, Obama administration, government, economy, Wall Street, business, money, laws, Congress, lobbyists

<http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/tue-april-26-2011/exclusive---elizabeth-warren-extended-interview-pt--1>

Elizabeth Warren – Pt 2

24 Apr 12 – 6:52

The Daily Show with Jon Stewart

Facebook Twitter Link Embed StumbleUpon



Tuesday April 26, 2011

Exclusive - Elizabeth Warren Extended Interview Pt. 2

Elizabeth Warren exposes the attempts to kill the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau in this unedited, extended interview.

<http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/tue-april-26-2011/exclusive---elizabeth-warren-extended-interview-pt--2>

Elizabeth Warren – Pt 3

24 Apr 12 – 3:58

The Daily Show with Jon Stewart

Facebook Twitter Link Embed StumbleUpon



Exclusive - Elizabeth Warren Extended Interview Pt. 3
In this unedited, extended interview, Elizabeth Warren believes that getting rid of the fine print in financial contracts is basic and sensible.

Tags: Elizabeth Warren, interviews, exclusives, extended interviews, Obama administration, government, economy, Wall Street, business, money, laws, Congress, lobbyists

<http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/tue-april-26-2011/exclusive---elizabeth-warren-extended-interview-pt--3>