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TELEVISION PROGRAM TO "CBS NEWS' FACE THE NATION."



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TRANSCRIPT

BOB SCHIEFFER: Today on FACE THE NATION, an exclusive interview with the new Massachusetts Senator Scott Brown. When Republican Scott Brown drove his truck across Massachusetts and stunned the political world by winning Ted Kennedy's Senate seat, it sent a thunderbolt through politics across the nation.

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN (R-Massachusetts): It's not Ted Kennedy's seat. It's not the Democrats' seat. It's the people's seat.

BOB SCHIEFFER: There were immediate comparisons to Jimmy Stewart in Mr. Smith Goes to Washington. The Tea Party took credit for his win. Democrats and Republicans shivered. What did it mean to both parties? Today, we'll ask Brown what he thinks the message was in his victory. Where does he go from here on issues like reforming Wall Street and Afghanistan?

Then we'll bring in the new Pulitzer Prize winning columnist Kathleen Parker for analysis.

And I'll have a final thought on--dare I say it--how that volcano has reminded us that life before jet planes was not all bad.

But first, Senator Scott Brown on FACE THE NATION.

ANNOUNCER: FACE THE NATION with CBS News chief Washington correspondent Bob Schieffer. And now from CBS News in Washington, Bob Schieffer.

BOB SCHIEFFER: And, good morning again. Well, we welcome Senator Brown for his first Sunday morning interview since being sworn in as a United States Senator. And, welcome, Senator. I want to say every day, including yesterday, seems to ring news of some new outrage on Wall Street. But your Republican Leader Mitch McConnell came out flatly against the financial reforms that the Democrats are going to bring to the Senate floor next week or this week, maybe. It sounded like the Republican response to health care reform--just we're against it. President Obama pushed back about as hard as we've heard him lately. He accused McConnell of taking that stance after a meeting with big Wall Street bankers. Listen to this.

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA (Yesterday): Lo and behold, when he returned to Washington, the Senate Republican Leader came out against common sense reforms that we've proposed. In doing so, he made the cynical and deceptive assertion that reform would somehow enable future bailouts, when he knows that it would do exactly the opposite.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Now, you have already said you're against this reform. You're with Senator McConnell. But what about that statement by the President?

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN (R-Massachusetts): Well, I think the President's political arm is now taking over this debate. And it's unfortunate because I, like many others in my state and throughout the country, want banks to be banks. They don't want them to be casinos. They don't want them to take risky bets on our money. And, I think that this is an issue that we can clearly come to common ground and just solve the problem. Where there're problems, we should fix them. But the regulation and the-- the bill that's being proposed by the banking chairman dramatically affects businesses-- mutual-- for example, Liberty Mutual, MassMutual. These folks

are-- are caught in that-- that-- that regulation as well. It's going to cost potentially twenty-five to thirty-five thousand jobs. And--

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): Well, now, wait a minute, Senator. How-- how can you say that?

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN: Well, I-- I can say it very clearly because the-- the regulations that are-- they're trying to reel in with some of the risky he-- hedging-- that bets are doing also affects companies like-- like I just described in Massachusetts. It's-- it's very clear. And-- and speaking with Secretary Geithner the other day I-- I certainly noted the-- the President's comments. But, Secretary Geithner has some of the same criticisms of the bill. In that, it doesn't end the bailout mentality of the big bank--the too-big-to-fail concept. And, in addition, there are a lot of things in the Dodd bill that-- that are just bad for business, small businesses in particular. And we should do better. And, I've-- I called the President out the other day and the administration to do better and stop politicizing these issues and just start solving problems.

BOB SCHIEFFER: But don't you think that Senator McConnell might be a little bit guilty of politicizing when he-- he comes out and just says flatly, "No, we're against it?"

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN: He's not saying-- he's not saying no to financial reform unless I'm mistaken because that's never the impression I've gotten in the seventy-three days since I've been there. Throughout our caucuses, that issue has been in the forefront with the teams that are negotiating with the banking chairman to try to find common sense reforms and-- and address situations like the one that I just pointed out with-- where companies are-- are caught in the big web. And, when you have government interfering in-- in-- in businesses-- small businesses' lives and just throwing-- like a-- a one-size-fits-all approach just to score political points, it's-- it's sad. We should be looking at real issues-- I'm sorry, real solutions to these problems. And, to politicize, it is clear what they're with, you know, trying to score points and he should do better.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well, I have to say, though, when you look at what's coming out of Wall Street, I mean, every day tells us--

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN (overlapping): Listen. Bob, I agree-- I agree with you.

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): --the headlines tell us of some outrage. I mean, just yesterday, the SEC claims that Goldman Sachs, which has been sort of the gold standard for Wall Street that they defrauded customers that brought risky-- bought risky investments tied to some subprime mortgages. Even worse, risky investments packages that had been put together by hedge fund managers who were planning to bet against them and reap huge profits. That's got to tell you--

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN (overlapping): And that's-- absolutely.

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): --that something has got to be done here.

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN: Absolutely. And I said we want banks to be banks. We don't want them to be casinos. And I'm glad the SEC is doing their job. And they should bring those charges, because it's wrong and we should do something about it. But that's not what the bill does. The bill actually captures a lot of other things that-- that really in other institutions that have had played no role in what we're talking about. So if we're going to do some realistic

reforms, let's do it and let's stop playing games and let's stop politicizing it and let's get back down to business.

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right. Are you prepared to work with the administration? You have said you're against this bill.

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN: Yeah.

BOB SCHIEFFER: But are you prepared to support some kind of reforms if, in fact, you have to go against the majority of your party?

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN: Well, I've-- I've done that before. I-- I look at each bill in an independent manner and-- and vote accordingly. I did it in the first jobs bill. I-- I look at each and every proposal and read it and make sure I understand it, make sure it's good for Massachusetts, and ultimately good for the country. But we absolutely need to fix certain areas in-- in financial reform. And I've said very publicly that we should do that. But this isn't-- this should-- issue shouldn't be politicized. This should be something that we all come together and just say, "Let's just get it done, folks." And-- and when the-- when the President politicizes this and just to try to score points and spot people, it's wrong. And I-- I'm ready to move and-- and work as I always have been on each and every issue.

BOB SCHIEFFER: So-- so, what should be done here? What's-- what's the next step?

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN: Well, the next step is to bring people, put in a room and start solving problems. And-- and as evidenced by what I've tried to do, which is to vote with the Democrats and be the sixtieth vote and-- or be the forty-first vote. Washington is broken. People are hurting. And they want us to do better. And we should do better.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Would you be prepared to filibuster this bill rather than let it come to the floor--

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN (overlapping): Well, the present-- the present bill--

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): --for debate.

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN: --the present bill is not-- is not a good bill, period. I-- I've have reviewed it. We've analyzed it. There-- there're so many things that-- that are--

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): So, the answer is yes.

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN: In this particular instance, yes.

BOB SCHIEFFER: But you're also ready to work on something else?

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN: I-- I made that very clear to the chairman the other day.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Senator, you came to town to change things. You came to the Senate a couple of months. You've been there a while now. What do you think of the place?

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN: Well, certainly, I-- I-- I'm honored to represent the people in Massachusetts. And it's been a humbling experience. And I-- I was-- it will be, gosh, three--

three months tomorrow that I was-- I was elected. Seventy-three days I've been in, and I've tried to-- certainly miss the-- my wife and my kids and the dogs. But, there-- there are certain things that we're very proud of. And that's getting an office up and running, getting our constituent services up and running, and bigger buildings, bigger numbers, same issues. And I'm just looking forward to, you know, start to get Washington moving again.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well, you weren't very complimentary to Washington and how it was working before you got here.

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN: Right.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Have you changed your mind about anything, anything surprised you, anything that pleased you or displeased you?

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN: Well, I've enjoyed meeting everybody. I'm honored to be here with you. I never thought I'd be here, certainly on this show. But Washington is broken. The perception is-- is correct. There is too much partisan politics involved. And-- and as I've said before I'll be the forty-first vote when it's appropriate and when it-- it deals with this-- issues affecting my state and this country. And I'll be the sixtieth vote, because we need to get things moving. People are-- are hurting. They're angry. And they want us to solve problems. And we need to get our fiscal house in order. We need to deal with-- with the-- the taxes and spending issues and we need to focus on terrorism and how we are going to keep our people safe and secure.

BOB SCHIEFFER: You got elected and the Tea Party took a lot of credit for your election, but you passed up the chance to appear at their rally in Boston with Sarah Palin. You had a good excuse. The Senate was in session. But I notice you didn't show up at any of the rallies around Washington here. What is your relationship to the Tea Party? Do you consider yourself a tea partier as it were?

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN: Well-- well, I consider somebody who's a member of the Tea Party being a citizen, a concerned citizen who's concerned about the economic stability of our country. That's-- in my definition that's what a Tea Party member is. And those people-- Democrats, Republicans, Independents, young, old, happy, sad, rich, poor--they're very concerned about where our country is going financially. I am very thankful for the Tea Party's support I-- I received. And I'm also thankful for the 1.1 million votes I received and all the support from every walk of life and every branch. And, I'm a Republican, Bob, as you'd remember from Massachusetts--thirteen percent enrollment. And if I didn't have the support of all different types of groups I never would have been elected. So, I respect what they're doing. You're right. I was voting. I had-- we're dealing with nuclear pro-- proliferation in Iran. The next day, when you-- the Washington rally, I was the subcommittee chair on dealing with the Afghan police forces and the six billion dollars we've spent on trying to uplift that program. And where is the money? Why isn't the program working? In addition to that, you know, I had votes. I was sent here by the Tea Party members and everybody else to do my job.

BOB SCHIEFFER: well, would you have, for example, gone to the rally in Boston and appeared with Sarah Palin had the Senate not been in session?

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN: Well, I've been to rallies before. I spoke a couple of years-- last year at two rallies in Worcester, before I was elected. And, you know, my role now is, as an elected official, is to do my job. And that's not-- that wasn't-- those weren't the circumstances.

And I have great respect for-- for Sarah and what she's doing. She's got a lot on her plate. And, she's plays a role in-- in-- in that movement, and-- and-- and just the-- the-- the Republican Party. And-- and--

BOB SCHIEFFER: Do you-- do you agree with-- you know, our poll last week of the-- the CBS in it's poll showed that most people, a large group of people in the Tea Party think the President is pushing the country towards socialism. Do you believe that?

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN: I know that the President should start to focus on jobs and job creation and-- and-- and-- and-- and that hasn't been done. Since I've been here we've done health care, which they obviously rammed through by using a parliamentary procedure that has never been used for something this big ever. And then the bill as we're finding out is-- is flawed, seriously flawed. It's going to cost medical device companies in my state, you know, thousands of jobs. But then, we're taking-- we're talking now about regulation reform. We're politicizing that. Maybe-- I've heard illegal immigration is going to come forth. When we're in Pakistan and Afghanistan, the only thing they talked about from the Presidents all the way down to the poorest farmer were jobs. Since I've been here, I've heard zero talk about jobs. So, I'll let-- leave that up to the political pundits, but I know from what I've seen that we need to focus on jobs and the President should start to do so.

BOB SCHIEFFER: But, do you decline to answer my question: is he pushing the country towards socialism?

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN: I don't think he's making proper choices when it comes to dealing with the-- the free market and free enterprise and allowing businesses to-- to really run themselves and create jobs. And as a result, larger government is happening and we're creating jobs but they're all government jobs. And the private sector is definitely-- definitely suffering.

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): Do you think the President shares American values?

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN: I-- I think the President is a good man. He's-- has a good family. He has two wonderful daughters. And I recognize that challenge what-- what that can hold and-- and I respect the office of President. And I've always said that, you know, he is an American. I know he cares deeply about our country. But it-- it's just different priorities. And my priority is to keep-- is to deal with the taxes and spending issues to get our economy moving again and to, also, keep us safe so when we tran-- transport ourselves throughout the country and the world, we know that our loved ones are going to be coming home.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Let's talk about Afghanistan. You chose as your first overseas trip as a Senator to go to Afghanistan. You met with the troops, but you also talked to the leader over there, Mister Karzai--

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN: Sure.

BOB SCHIEFFER: --who's been saying some, frankly, pretty weird things, like at one point saying, he might join the Taliban, at another point seeming to suggest that all the corruption that's going on over there is somehow the fault of foreigners, i.e., us.

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN: Yeah.

BOB SCHIEFFER: How did you find this man?

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN: Well, I-- I sat right here, very similar. I asked him those tough questions. What about his comments about the Taliban? What about his-- is he a true ally? Are-- are we friends, are we enemies? What-- what's the relationship? And don't forget, his father got killed by the Taliban. He-- he hates the Taliban. There's no way that he's going to--

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): Why would he say that?

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN: I think he's under a lot of stress, his-- daily assassination attempts, obviously dealing with forty-plus coalition partners, dealing with the corruption and other political issues that his country faces, the challenges that are there. And after our meeting, I was-- I was convinced that he was sincere. He-- he recognizes and appreciates the-- the sacrifice and support our men and women have given his country. The financial assistance that we provided and the-- I-- I left Afghanistan hopeful that General McChrystal's plan in working hand in hand with the coalition forces, the tribal leaders, and the individuals in Afghanistan that that's the best chance we have of success.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Let me add finally, your daughter. How does she say her name, Ayla?

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN: Ayla.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Ayla Brown--

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN: Yes.

BOB SCHIEFFER: --has joined CBS News as the correspondent on--

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN (overlapping): That's right.

BOB SCHIEFFER: --THE EARLY SHOW. So, how do you feel about that?

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN: Well, she's a broadcast journalism major. And she's been dealing with TV ever since her time on Idol. And, I've watched her-- her segments. They're very professional and she works very, very hard, that she's always-- even Simon said she was the-- the hardest worker on the show. So, she's going to have to stand on her own two feet. And, I'm very excited for that opportunity. And, I hope she takes advantage of it.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Senator, thank you for coming by. And, we hope to see you many times down the road.

SENATOR SCOTT BROWN (overlapping): Great. I-- I'm looking forward to it. Thank you.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Glad to have you. And, we'll be back in one minute with some analysis.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

BOB SCHIEFFER: And we are back now with brand-new Pulitzer Prize winner Kathleen Parker. So, now that you're a regular on FACE THE NATION, so we can now say that FACE THE NATION has won a Pulitzer.

KATHLEEN PARKER (Syndicated Columnist): I owe it all to you, Bob.

BOB SCHIEFFER: (LAUGHING) We will be the first broadcast outlet to win one, since broadcasters are not eligible but--

KATHLEEN PARKER: That's right.

BOB SCHIEFFER: --I'm just teasing. And congratulations. That's a--

KATHLEEN PARKER: Thank you.

BOB SCHIEFFER: --a well-deserved honor. You're a conservative columnist by nature and yet you were one of the first to, sort of, talk about Sarah Palin. And you write this morning about some of the rhetoric that's coming out from the--

KATHLEEN PARKER: From the--

BOB SCHIEFFER: Right side.

KATHLEEN PARKER: --right, right.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Especially from the Tea Party. And, you-- you point out that you think it may be dangerous.

KATHLEEN PARKER: Well, I think we have to be cautious. And, by the way, as to my being a conservative and having these things to say, I-- I always like to quote George Will, who famously said, "Being a conservative does not mean we have to take a leap into the darkness." And, I think-- you know, I want to make clear that I'm not saying the Tea Party people are violent or racist or any of that. I think there are some people who attach themselves to any crowd scene and can-- can-- can tarnish, you know, our perception of the organization or its-- or the-- the movement, in this case. So, I'm-- I'm not saying that the tea partiers are-- are bad people or dangerous. But I think the-- the-- the Zeitgeist now, the-- with all these heated rhetoric and some of these-- these words that-- that carry-- that are pretty loaded: reload, targeting, all that sort of thing. You know, there's-- there's a danger there. I think we have to be very vigilant. And, when someone does say something that's-- that incites volatility, I think we have to call them on it. If-- if it's a politician or a pundit or just someone in the crowd, and we have to self-police and be-- and be extremely careful because I do think there is a lot of anger and it could become something else.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Someone made an interesting point to me recently in talking about how, you know, some of this really nasty rhetoric that shows up on the internet.

KATHLEEN PARKER: Yeah.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Where you don't know who said it. There really is no accountability. The internet being the only place, the only vehicle to deliver news that has no editor.

KATHLEEN PARKER: Right.

BOB SCHIEFFER: You don't know where this stuff comes from, whether it's true or false. And this person said to me, you know, we've always had opinion that comes from various places,

like during Lincoln's day, every newspaper had an editorial point of view. But this person said the difference was in those days you knew which paper it was coming from.

KATHLEEN PARKER: Right.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Now you don't know where some of this is coming from. And-- and that is the added factor to the volatility of this stuff and-- and where it goes.

KATHLEEN PARKER: Yeah. It's interesting. People will say anything when they have the-- the-- the cloak of anonymity. It's sort of like terrorism. You know, we don't know where to aim our bomb. So we can't go after a country because there are-- you know, there's no one place to focus on it. And it's the same thing with the-- with the internet. You can't really-- you don't know who to go after. And you and I-- I'm sure you've shared some of the-- the wonderful experiences I've had of-- of being attacked and threatened and what not. And it's-- it's sort of-- it-- it feeds on itself, you know, builds and-- and people who are not well grounded and who may have these-- these more violent tendencies suddenly find a place where they can convene and find validation and even find company. And I don't know where that all leads. But it's-- it's kind of scary.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Where do you think the Tea Party is right now? Does it pose a greater danger to the Republican Party per se because if it becomes a third party you have a Ross Perot kind of movement, and we know when Ross Perot got into it, Bill Clinton got elected--

KATHLEEN PARKER: Yeah.

BOB SCHIEFFER: --because you had three people out there competing for the votes, or does it pose a greater threat to Democratic office holders?

KATHLEEN PARKER: Oh, well, (LAUGHING) I think Democratic office holders are-- are in big trouble come November. The Tea Party movement, it's-- it's hard to-- to settle on who they are, what they are, what they believe. But the-- the-- I think essentially it is-- it's anti-big government. It's anti-more taxes. And that's why they claim Scott Brown, of course, is because his platform happens to coincide with what-- what they believe. But if you are-- I think, you know, some Republicans may be in danger, but mostly it'll be-- it'll be the Democrats.

BOB SCHIEFFER: It is most of all, if you look at the results of our CBS News poll last week.

KATHLEEN PARKER: Right.

BOB SCHIEFFER: It is the anti-Obama party. This is really the core of the opposition to Barack Obama. This-- this is a party that is wealthier than most Americans. The people are more educated it turns out than the average American is--

KATHLEEN PARKER: Right.

BOB SCHIEFFER: --and they-- they have a greater dislike of Obama than even those in the mainstream Republican Party.

KATHLEEN PARKER (overlapping): Right. I don't-- I don't think that helps them. And I don't think it helps the Republican Party because being anti-ba-- Obama some of these-- a larger percentage of tea partiers than anyone else also believes he was not born in this country. And so they get-- they get associated with this sort of birther attitude. I know a lot of people who are

actually-- who would identify with the-- the Tea Party or who, in fact, are sympathetic to the Tea Party--fiscal constraint philosophy, but these sort of fringy elements are-- are going to undermine their credibility. And I think ultimately hurt them as-- as long as the Republicans are associated with them.

BOB SCHIEFFER: I know, when you win the Pulitzer they submit a body of work. And I guess you sub-- not you but your editors picked out a number of columns that you wrote and one of them was about Scott Brown. What do you make of Scott Brown?

KATHLEEN PARKER: Well, I think Scott Brown, I think what you see is what you get. You know, he is just a-- a-- he is a very independent fellow. And he's going to tick off somebody every time. You know, the-- the tea partiers like to claim him. And then, you know, the Republican Party wants to claim him. But he is-- he is-- he votes, I-- I think he said to you, he votes according to each issue and he approaches on each issue as independently. And I think he w-- he is that. He's a very straight shooter and a regular guy. He's-- he's-- he's a good guy, but he's going to make people mad.

BOB SCHIEFFER: We have about twenty seconds. Do you think it is politically risky for Republicans now to be identifying with the Wall Street bankers in light of these outrages that keep coming to light?

KATHLEEN PARKER: I think so. I think they're going to-- I think they're going to have to-- you know, the banks have become even bigger and more powerful. And I think that's-- that's certainly a part of what the Republicans are going to have to confront. And I think that's-- that's-- they're on the other side of that.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Kathleen Parker, thank you so much. And, again, congratulations on a very well-deserved honor.

KATHLEEN PARKER (overlapping): Thank you. Thanks for having me.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Back in a moment with some final thoughts.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

BOB SCHIEFFER: Finally today, we have a rule at our house that goes like this: if everything else is going fine, the toilet breaks--the meaning being that the things we take most for granted seem to fail only when we least expect it.

So when that Icelandic volcano shut down air travel across Europe, it was not just the last thing we would have expected; it caused those of us of a certain age--me--to reflect on life before jet planes. And, frankly, the memories were not all bad.

In today's mania for instant gratification, fast food, fast travel, and news as it happens, we don't just over-schedule, we get results too fast to process.

When it took us longer to get there, at least we had time to think about why we went.

My grandkids believe everything in America is about an hour or so away. Earlier generations appreciated how broad and diverse our country is because they had to travel through it, not glance at it from thirty thousand feet.

Before jet planes made it possible for politicians to fly home every week to raise money, campaigns were a lot cheaper. And when they had to stay in Washington, they actually got to know each other, and--you may not believe this part--they got to know what was in the legislation they were voting on.

And besides, there are alternatives to air travel.

I saw in The New York Times that Monty Python actor John Cleese hired a taxi in Oslo to drive him nine hundred miles to Brussels, where he caught a train home to London. The taxi cost five thousand dollars but there was no charge for carry-on luggage.

Back in a minute.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

BOB SCHIEFFER: And that's it for this week. Thanks for watching and I hope you'll be here next week when we'll again be with FACE THE NATION.