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3 **Alexander M. Sanders**

4 **London: Judge Sanders I want to thank you for having us today. You**
5 **come here with all sorts of experiences as a teacher, as an**
6 **environmentalist, as a college president, as a judge, as a conservationist.**

7 **Sanders:** I've had many jobs that is true. Never kept a job for longer than 8
8 years, which is probably why I never amounted to much.

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10 **London: I want to hear about your vision for state of South Carolina. What**
11 **it is that you think we could become.**

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13 **Sanders:** My vision is 20/20, but it is corrected, you understand. It is not a
14 natural vision of 20/20. I am like most South Carolinians. I am in favor of
15 progress but I can't stand change and that is the attitude that sweeps across
16 South Carolina and always has at least in my lifetime. We have got to
17 accommodate change though. If we don't, the price we will have to pay is we are
18 going to waste this 21st century like we largely wasted the 20th century. The
19 burden of the 20th century was, of course, racism, segregation and all that goes
20 with trying to repress and hold back, denigrate fear in a third of the population.
21 That was our great burden for at least the 20th century and the last half of the 18th
22 or 19th for that matter. We are making progress toward overcoming that today
23 and along with that we welcome into full participation in society another group of
24 people and that is women. At least 50% of our population now has the
25 opportunities that were foreclosed to them for so long. It was a price that we as a
26 whole paid. It was a price that was a high price. Progress was thwarted and it
27 was expensive. It was a burden that a state like South Carolina, that doesn't
28 have overwhelming financial resources, was ill-equipped to pay. For example,
29 maintaining two school systems when we could scarcely afford to maintain one
30 school system that wasn't even adequate to our needs. We hope all of that has
31 been put behind us. We know it hasn't quite been put behind us, but we hope it
32 has.

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34 So now we face this brand new century - strange name 21st century - and what is
35 that going to be like? Well, I would suggest that we have to overcome two things
36 if we are going to indeed make progress where progress has been so sorely
37 lacking in this state. One of them is we are going to have to figure out a way to
38 preserve our natural resources. What it is that makes South Carolina unique?
39 What it is that makes South Carolina a place where many of us would prefer to
40 live in the face of the pressures of development? Now we know we are going to
41 have development. It is going to be residential to accommodate the people who
42 are moving here. It is going to be industrial to provide jobs and sources of income
43 for our citizens. But at the same time, we are going to have to make sure we
44 don't turn South Carolina into a carbon copy of New Jersey, for example. Many
45 parts of New Jersey, I realize, are beautiful but I am speaking of the Turn Pike,
46 which we all are familiar with. That is going to be hard to do because the lure of

1 the dollar is a powerful one. We in South Carolina are sort of a schizophrenic lot.
2 We love our natural resources, our woods and water, fields and forests, wildlife
3 and so forth, but we seem all too willing at times to sell it out. If we can achieve
4 that balance of progress through development and at the same time preserve the
5 quality of life that makes this place different and better, then we will have done
6 wonders for future generations.

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8 The second thing we have to do is figure out a way to educate our citizens. That
9 largely means spending the money necessary to provide a quality education.
10 Along with that goes a very onerous task and that is convincing ourselves to pay
11 for it. We've got to learn to forgo what I call the politics of selflessness. We got
12 to learn to embrace leaders, by that I mean political leaders, people we cast our
13 votes for, who do more than just promise us material wealth for ourselves, cut
14 our taxes, leave more money in our pockets and give us all of the things that we
15 would like to have but mainly maintain the status quo for us against imagined
16 enemies. We have got to be big enough and visionary enough to embrace
17 politicians who will call on us to make the sacrifices necessary to provide so
18 many things, but mainly the education of the next generation. So far, those kinds
19 of leaders are scarce as they always have been scarce. They used to threaten
20 us with black people, now they threaten us with gay people who are the enemy
21 and they are going to take us over if we don't be careful. While at the same time
22 promising us nothing, but less sacrifice on our part, fewer taxes and so forth.

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24 So if we could learn to do that we will conquer that half of the problem and we will
25 have a brave new world tomorrow.

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27 **London: Have you any thoughts about how we might accomplish this**
28 **vision in terms of addressing the education issues and addressing the**
29 **environment?**

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31 **Sanders:** Well first, we have to adopt an attitude of unselfishness. That is the
32 key to the whole thing and the willingness to sacrifice for the greater good. We
33 can't accomplish that by paying less taxes, by calling on our collective efforts to
34 be diminished, and we can't accomplish that if we vote for people who call on us
35 to do that.

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37 **London: Two questions for you. Do you think that South Carolina has the**
38 **tools to do what is necessary and do you think that South Carolina has a**
39 **whole has the desire to do what is necessary?**

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41 **Sanders:** Tools yes. Desire remains to be seen. We have everything at our
42 fingertips. It is all God given. We have natural resources in great abundance.
43 We have physical beauty and we have really essentially very decent people in
44 this state for the most part. Now whether we have the will is another question.
45 You know it is really not so much the question of what to do, as it is the will to do
46 it.

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London: Making some tough decisions or tough decisions in light of the surroundings.

Sanders: Oh, they are really not so tough. You know, we all have managed to convince ourselves that we pay more taxes than anybody else. Actually, our tax base is very low. It is far below the average in America, but we've convinced ourselves that it is too much. Maybe it is too much. Certainly, it is too much for some people.

London: Well there are also some ways to deal with people that are really hurting. I am wondering if you can give us a sense of what you think South Carolina leaders responsibilities are to future generations of South Carolina.

Sanders: The main requirement of leadership today, if it is going to be successful leadership, not just self-serving, is to inspire us. To give us that vision. To make us understand what is at stake and our responsibility to embrace it.

London: In terms of the level of urgency in dealing with education and in dealing with the environment, what would you say that is?

Sanders: Well the urgency is this - the education urgency is generational. We can lose another generation. We have already lost much, but there is much to be persevered. I have twin grandchildren now - 3 years old. I look at them as the future of South Carolina. They are going to be educated, but they are especially privileged. The question is whether their confreres will be educated. So we can lose generation after generation just like we always have.

In terms of the natural resources, I feel that is a permanent loss. When we lose a natural resource, we are never able to reclaim it.

London: I know you are on your way to another meeting, but I wanted to get this one last question in. That is during the time that you heard the ivory-billed woodpecker, tell me about your vision for what South Carolina might have been if that was found or if it wasn't found.

Sanders: Do you mean the woodpecker?

London: Right.

Sanders: Well I don't know if the woodpecker was more than a footnote in the whole movement. We used the woodpecker sort of as a vehicle to ignite public opinion in favor of that one particular part of South Carolina, which is the Santee Congaree Swamp. He worked out pretty good for us even though we never

1 found him. Just the idea of it all worked out pretty well. That's really not much
2 though in terms of progress. If I had a regret, it would be that I regret I didn't do
3 more and that I didn't find more ivory-billed woodpeckers.

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5 **London: Well there is still time.**

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7 **Sanders:** Still time? Not much, but some.

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9 **London: I think we need more people like that.**

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11 **Sanders:** I thoroughly enjoyed myself, too. I always felt like among other things,
12 that politicians had the obligation to entertain the public, too.

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14 **London: You did much more than that. But you did that as well. It has**
15 **been a pleasure talking to you and I want to thank you.**

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17 **Sanders:** Thank you for letting me talk. I love to be on TV.

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