We need to talk.

Look, I understand your political affiliation. You've made it loud and clear. I understand you are unwavering in your support for said party, and that you despise everything about the other party. I understand the hot-button issues which are important to you, and in full gory detail why you hate the other guys and why they are so wrong and stupid.

So for the sake of my sanity, can you please stop talking about it?

You see, your party is wrong. I know, nobody can change your mind, that's clear, but please hear me out. Everything you say about the other party is completely misinformed, and in reality what you believe of your party is pretty misinformed too. You've been caught up in a whirlwind of bandwaggoning hate and rhetoric that would make Vince McMahon blush at the utter shamefulness of it all, and you are nothing more than a mindless parrot squawking for a cracker as your mind-controlling master has instructed you to do.

Let me tell you a little secret: everyone in America who is involved in the political process, on

both sides of the aisle, really wants what is best for this country, and really wants our government to protect the freedoms of our citizens as defined in the constitution. Every person on both sides of the aisle wants America to be as prosperous as possible, wants to eliminate poverty and hunger, wants to educate our children to be strong and capable leaders in the next generation, wants American businesses and products to thrive in the world, and wants to stop crime at every level. Every one of them. Your mischaracterization, villainization, and dehumanization of the other party as people with a sinister agenda that is anything but what I wrote above is flat out wrong. And you look like an idiot professing such nonsense.

You see, right wingers, the Democrats don't want to steal the hard-earned fruits of your labor. They don't want to make it illegal for you to worship as you choose, they don't want to tax everyone back to the stone age to form a monolithic government that turns us into a socialist state, and they don't want to weaken our national defenses to the point where someone as puny as Cuba can invade and conquer us. You create an irrational fear among your parties that such nonsense is the true mission of the Democratic party, and provide evidence so thin to support your allegations that even hardened conspiracy theorists will scratch their head and say "what the fuck?". Yet you right wingers continue your fear-mongering and vitriol with a foundation in this baseless nonsense.

Ah, but rest assured, Republicans, the left is equally as guilty of mischaracterizing your intents and beliefs. Republicans don't hate women and minorities, they don't want to hoard all the wealth among the super-wealthy while subjugating the rest of America to some sort of feudal serfdom, they don't want to bomb the crap out of the world, and they don't want to force you to worship their God. Yet you, lefty, persist on making the baseless populist class warfare rhetoric the foundation of your fear and loathing of the Republicans, even though everybody knows it ot be patently false.

And I'm sick of all of it.

You may ask, then, who do I vote for? Both parties characterize the Libertarian party as a bunch of dangerous anarchist nutjobs who have such a poor grasp on economics and the political balance of the world at large, and the importance of America in maintaining balance, that their policies and rhetoric would cause a catastrophic global meltdown of finance and lawlessness. And both parties happen to be right here. When a certifiably crazy nutjob like Ron Paul becomes the face and soul of your cause, you really need to investigate why you're at the party in the first place, why you decided to drink the kool aid, and why you're not wearing pants anymore.

So what's the solution? It's really quite easy. Vote for me, Lars Hancock. Write me in for everything.

Here's my platform: both the left and the right have some good ideas and some immensely talented economists and legal scholars on their side. But moreso, there is some great talent that is just sickened by the whole process and chooses to stay out of the political limelight, as they are more evolved than the rabble-rousing screech owls who are the mouthpieces of the party. So I would get the parties to put aside their differences, as only a true neutral could do, and use their talents to drive this country truly forward. Yeah, I know, then I'd pass the joint around and everyone would sing Kumbaya and get in the Volkswagen van to go to Woodstock, and you know what? As I would legalize it, that's not half a bad suggestion. But I digress.

This country is a mess and the hate and vitriol is largely to blame. Be smarter, rise above it, and vote for Lars. Or at the very least, shut your pie hole, your facebook hole, or your tweet hole about the ignorant crap your party puts in your head. Because it really makes you look stupid.

And hey! Football season is here!

All the stupidity of the ESPN-fueled media surrounding the NFL is about to be quelled, as we can watch actual plays and see actually what is in store for us. Let's face it, the populist rhetoric around the Browns is that we will continue to suck from now until the end of time. It's an easy position to take, with actual history behind you that will substantiate the claim. And very few people think for themselves and question the popular conventional wisdom. If Merril Hoge and John Clayton say we will blow, that must mean we'll blow, right?

Like political parrots, if you catch yourself squawking ESPN-driven NFL wisdom, you really should slap yourself. Conventional wisdom says the Eagles are going to tar and feather the Browns on Sunday. They have too much speed, Weeden is a slow and immobile rookie, Vick is awesome, blah blah blah. But let's be smarter and think for ourselves for a second.

The Eagles run a wide 9 defense. That bets all kinds of crazy pressure on the QB to be sure, but it also leaves you extremely vulnerable to the run. Their linebackers are okay at best, and

they have had demonstrated problems with the run last year which kept them from being a good team. The Browns on the other hand are built to be a power running team. This is a significant mismatch in our favor, and this mismatch will be exposed on Sunday – mark my words. If we control the ball on the ground, we can control the game.

And what of Vick? He's a horribly inaccurate passer, although he is lightning quick and ridiculously strong. He plays behind a sieve of a line, and he takes a lot of sacks. He can be contained – Leon freaking Williams personally shut Vick down the last time the Browns played him – and if we can get through their terrible offensive line, we can shut down the running game and Vick. Don't believe the hype, the Eagles are a fundamentally flawed team, and the Browns are a lot better than ESPN wants you to believe.

Browns 27, Eagles 19. Believe it, it can and will happen.

Anyway, off to the questions.

Lars, I'm assuming you have a son (I know you have children), so if your son could be the greatest at anything in the world, what would you wish it to be? –FUDU

I've got two sons actually, so I've got two shots at this coming to fruition.

Interesting question. Do I want my sons to achieve greatness which would honor my dreams in some manner? That would certainly be a dick move on my part, who am I to live my life through them? Todd Marinovich's dad wanted him to be a QB in the worst possible way, and instead Todd became a drug addict, because his dad pushed him where he didn't want to be. No way I want that fate for my kids, so whatever they accomplish, it has to be for them.

Do I want them to achieve personal glory? That too has its pitfalls. When you become untouchable, you lose perspective. If my kid was Lebron James, I'd be fully ashamed of him for how arrogant, entitled, and generally awful a human being he has become. If the world kisses your ass, you expect the world to kiss your ass, and you become a monumental douchebag. Do I really want him to be that vile of a human, and lead an empty lie of a life where he is

worshiped falsely? As attractive as that seems, no, fame and glory is probably not the best thing for anyone.

So I guess I'd really like to see my son be the best at something that truly matters to society. If you can sell anything, you can make an exceptional living, but is that really the best thing for the world? Maybe he can be the world's foremost cancer researcher, but that doesn't guarantee success in that often Quixotic battle, only a life of constantly fighting for funds. Politician? Did you not read anything above the line?

You know, as trite as it sounds, if I really wanted anything out of my kid, I'd want him to be the best dad in the world. Seriously. Because if I look at my priorities, it is about giving my kids the resources, the education, the support, and the freedom to be the best possible person they could be. It requires success in your job, success in your love life, and an ability to communicate with, relate to, and have patience with people, all with a foundation of faith, strength, and courage. You balance all those life factors, you have a great life, raise some fantastic kids, and have a beautiful and fulfilling relationship with them.

And that will pay you a lot more than selling your soul for a duplicitous ring ever will.

How is that that one chicken carcass can produce 1,000 McNuggets ? -ty-pod

Three words: mechanically separated chicken.

What is mechanically separated chicken, you ask? It is the process of taking an essentially meatless chicken carcass, throwing it into a blender, and pulverizing the fuck out of it until you get a product called "white slime". White slime is an animal product, but it isn't meat. It's what is left over after meat is harvested.

In one sense, the existence of white slime is good news for society. We laud the Native Americans for how they used to use every element of the buffalo in building their society – the sinew was thread, their hides became clothes and housing, and the meat was, of course, meat. But Chief Wahoo never mechanically separated his bison, so now we've taken the whole animal

use thing to perverse extremes, and we don't get nearly enough credit as a society for how efficient we are in using all the proteins we farm.

On the other hand, ew, that's nasty. The chicken nugget is a bunch of what is essentially trash combined with corn starch, other fillers, breading, deep frying, and a slew of vile crimes against nature. Chicken McNuggets are like Jagermeister shots – the more of them you do, the worse you feel, and the more you hate yourself tomorrow.

Like Shelley's Frankenstein, it's hard to determine if a Chicken McNugget is an abomination against humanity, or a wondrous work of science. And do we really need to label it as either?

Is it entirely necessary for each network, during a hurricane, warn people to flee or stay in their homes, yet outfit their own reporters in identical jackets and hats and ask them to report on the story, outside, in the exact elements they warned their viewers about? Do I need to see Al Roker standing out on Bourbon Street with his hand held wind gauge, telling me the winds are picking up? I could see the same thing on YouTube from someone shooting video from inside their home of the Fiat being blown down their street. –Larvell

At some point, one of these poor bastards is going to die, and I'm not going to feel a bit sorry for them.

News has become a contest of who can be more extreme than the next guy. Sure, we all know a hurricane brings big winds and angry surf. It blows shit around. Things break, damage is done, and stuff gets wet.

If you stick to the facts, yawn, excuse me while I switch over to the Indians' latest loss. But wait, there's Roker dressed as the Gorton's guy! He's in the wind, getting battered by the wind and rain, barely able to stand! Is a stop sign going to embed itself in his skull? Is Roker going to blow across the screen and wind up lodged up a cow's ass? Because that would be some EXCELLENT television.

People watch NASCAR to see the cars wreck, and it gets huge ratings. Since the days of the gladiators, we've loved watching people fight for their lives, because people are by nature sick and twisted. Facts are boring, the news is only interesting if it is sensational and dangerous. Fox News doesn't send Geraldo into war zones hoping he gets shot (a theory I waver on), no, they want that idiot there sensationalizing the danger of war by being in semi-dangerous situations. That crap sells!

As I pointed out a few weeks ago, human lives have a cost, and that cost is somewhere below the value of being #1 and #3 in nightly news ratings. As such, buy stock in Yellow Raincoat and Hat Conglomerated, because the nightly news dork is going to the eye of the hurricane. For your pleasure, er, information.

My son is coming to dinner next week. It has been a while and I wanted to do something special. His favorite dinner is ribs. Instead of coping out and buying frozen Montgomery Inn ribs, I want to cook them from scratch. Soooooo many options though. Beef or Pork? Wet or Dry? Oven or Grill? Yikes! I need your help. –Sabre

Barbecue is the art of taking inedible food and turning it into deliciousness. While similar in concept to 'mechanically separated chicken" it is in fact the polar opposite of such, an almost magical process in which gristly inedible meat is turned into haute cuisine. Ribs are the penultimate example of this philosophy of cooking.

The irony of barbecue is that, executed properly, you can create the most delicious food on the planet. Something about slowly melting embedded fat and sinew tenderizes the proteins to a point where they are tender, juicy, and full of flavor. The art of barbecue, and the genius of cooking ribs, is that you must melt those fats slowly to create that flavor profile, while still promoting the high-heat cooking on the surface to create the Maillard reaction (aka "browning") which creates the delicious and complex flavor profiles you crave. As such, in order to cook your ribs properly, you need to prepare them in such a way that both chemical reactions are respected and promoted.

First, let's answer the protein question. Beef or pork, the answer is clearly "yes". Beef ribs have all the flavors of a delicate, perfectly prepared prime rib, with all the subtle smokiness, texture, and flavor of a traditional barbecue. The giant "dinosaur bones" are one of my favorite caveman-like sinful pleasures, but they are fairly hard to come by, especially in Ohio. So let's focus on the more traditional pork ribs for today's exercise.

The first thing you need to do is push as much flavor as possible into the rib, which requires a 24-hour marinade in the rub. Slather the ribs with Bertram's Mustard, and then coat them in a spice mixture of salt, brown sugar, paprika, pepper, onion powder, garlic powder, smoked salt, ancho pepper, cayenne pepper (to taste), coriander, cardamom (my secret pork ingredient, sparingly), allspice, and pulverized juniper berry. Mix and match your spice rub to your choosing, or use a commercial one, but in any case make sure it gets on your ribs well in advance so it can get inside them.

We are going to do our ribs dry because that's the only way to ensure the Maillard browning occurs properly, and we get an awesome crust that way. But first, we must low and slow the ribs to get that internal fat melted and make them edible.

Note it is impossible to overcook them, but it is entirely possible to burn them. You could sous vide them at 185 degrees for 48 hours or so, but I'm going to assume we need to use normal cooking equipment and techniques to execute this dish. You could boil them, but you'd risk me coming over to your house and raping you with a saguaro cactus, because that is a sin against the animal who gave its life for your meal. The best method is to low and slow them at 200 degrees on a smoker, which allows a slow licking of smoke over a long period of time in a controlled temperature environment. Let's assume that you don't have any fancy equipment, though, and need to make them with a basic kitchen and a gas grill. Not to worry, you'll still outdo Chili's by a country mile.

First step is the oven. You want to tent your dry-rubbed ribs inside a sealed chamber, like on a cookie sheet tented with aluminum foil. On the bottom of the sheet, you have about a half a cup of bourbon to steam the ribs and drive flavor into them. Six hours later, minimum, your ribs will be tender, the fats melted, and they will be delicious. But ready to serve? Not so fast my friend.

You still need that browning, and for that I recommend cranking the grill up to 500 degrees or so. Throw the ribs on top of the grill, sear, and flip – about two minutes a side just to brown and crisp. From there, it's plating time, to be served with a side of sauce. Delicious.

As for the sauce, I recommend adding some of the dry rub to a mixture of ketchup or chili sauce and vinegar (cider). That way the same flavors come through throughout in a balanced manner. Note you could, and should, also add the sauce right before removing the ribs from the grill,

allowing it to candy to the outside while still maintaining a dry-rubbed quality and consistency on the inside.

In conclusion, ribs rule.

Please email questions to lars.hancock@yahoo.com , tweet them @ReasonsImADrunk, or DM them to me in the forae to LarsHancock