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The biggest lie wasn't told by Trump

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5–6 minutes

The disappointment, the head-slapping, the wringing of hands and gnashing of teeth — such are the predictable reactions among pundits, prognosticators and political strategists when the guy who surely couldn't win surely did.

So it's been for the past few days since [Donald Trump](#) grabbed the wheel from overnight sensation [Kamala Harris](#) — who, it must be said, performed miraculously given her abrupt campaign of just 103 days. Trump has enjoyed decades of name recognition. And despite his multiple, familiar offenses, including the “[big lie](#),” he is [likely to win](#) even the popular vote, the first Republican in 20 years to do so.

But how?

This question gets dusted off every few presidential election cycles. In 2004, when George W. Bush won reelection despite the disastrous Iraq War, the usual suspects — Hollywood, New York and the media — couldn't believe it. I recall an actor exclaiming that she knew no one who voted for the incumbent. Precisely. MSNBC's Chris Matthews, recognizing the disconnect between coastal elites and flyover country, suggested exchange programs for Americans to learn about each other.

He wasn't off his rocker. As someone who has lived most of her life among everyday Americans, I never doubted that Bush would win a second term. I was similarly certain that Trump would win in 2016, not because he was my guy but because I regularly talk to people beyond the D.C. bubble. I used to tell friends, “I go to Washington to get my battery charged; I go home to South Carolina to get grounded.”





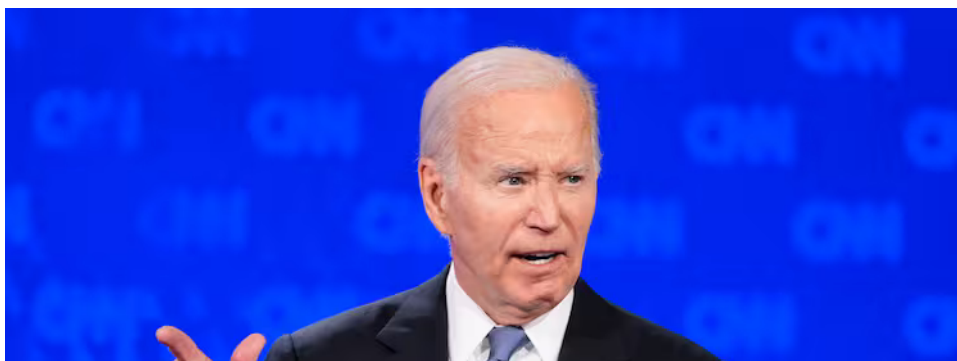
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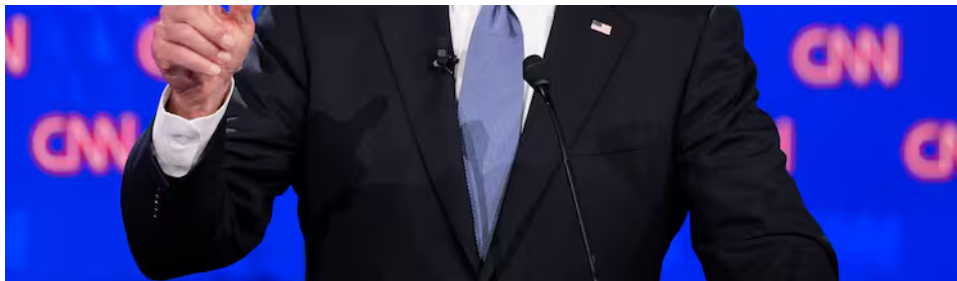
This time, I grudgingly assured my Republican friends that Trump would win, despite Harris's sudden popularity and the tight race this election became. My insight was nothing more than an understanding of human nature. Also, we've seen it before in the so-called [Bradley Effect](#). People might say they're voting for Harris (because who would want to admit to voting for Trump?), but they'd check his name in the privacy of the polling booth.

Harris and the DNC put on a good show, but without understanding what was on people's minds. Most voters were not primarily concerned with reproductive rights. By making them central to her message, Harris made her campaign seem women-centric, even if men, too, have an interest in [abortion](#) and related issues. We can be reasonably certain that a sizable proportion of men who supported Trump [are weary](#), if only subconsciously, of being treated like a public enemy.

Beyond abortion, Harris spoke little about the issues that most bother working-class Americans: the economy, inflation, the cost of living, education (wokeness) and, of course, immigration. Few people like the prospect of mass deportations, but most would surely like an end to the uncontrolled siphoning of taxpayer resources to house, feed and fund transgender surgeries for illegal migrants (as Harris once guaranteed).

Opinions on the 2024 elections





What seems irrefutable is that Democrats — and especially President Joe Biden — handed us another four years of Trump. Biden should never have run for a second term. He [indicated he wouldn't](#), and then he did. He was already faltering by the end of the first one and everyone knew it. Not only his staff and the Democratic Party leadership but also most sentient Americans.

Once Biden's reelection campaign commenced, his age-related deficits and “cognitive irregularities,” to borrow Ezra Klein's phrasing, became glaringly obvious. By waiting too long to step aside, he created a problem that couldn't be fixed.

Back in March, I wrote that [Harris should step down](#) from the vice presidency to allow Biden to pick someone more seasoned whom voters could trust to step in if necessary. She was never that person, notwithstanding her enthusiasm and likability. The man with the worst personality in the world won, despite himself, largely because Trump voters felt he could handle the big issues, including foreign wars, more ably than Harris or her knuckleheaded running mate, as Tim Walz once [described himself](#).

Which brings us to the Democrats' “big lie” — that Joe Biden was just fine. He was not. Yet he was encouraged to run again. When

the party's big guns (Bill Clinton, Nancy Pelosi and Barack Obama) finally hustled him off the stage, it was too late. Harris barely had a chance to leave the gate before it was over. Despite [spending \\$1.4 billion](#), she was bound to lose.

By lying about Biden's mental acuity and scrambling to turn an unpopular vice president into a hot ticket, Democratic Party leaders left voters dissatisfied with a last resort. How sad for President Biden that his legacy is President Trump.