

# [***Jon Stewart's return to 'The Daily Show' could shake up 2024 politics***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B5Y-SRP1-JBSS-S015-00000-00&context=1516831)

CNN Wire

January 25, 2024 Thursday 12:08 PM GMT

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**Length:** 703 words

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**Dateline:** (CNN)

**Body**

New York (CNN) &#8212; Editor's Note: A version of this article first appeared in the "Reliable Sources" newsletter. [*Sign up for the daily digest chronicling the evolving media landscape here*](https://www.cnn.com/newsletters/reliable-sources).

Jon Stewart is returning to his old home at "The Daily Show" - but the neighborhood in which the comedic house resides has dramatically changed since he last signed off from host chair.

Stewart, who hosted the iconic program for 16 years, decamped Comedy Central in 2015 - just as Donald Trump ascended to power and as the seams of American ***politics*** tore apart. While there is never a shortage of material pouring out of Washington for comedians to use as punchlines, Stewart returns to the cable lineup in an environment battered by an ill-tempered information monsoon.

Misinformation, conspiracy theories, and outright lies saturate the 2024 public discourse in a way that stands in stark contrast to the pre-Trump era in which Stewart previously operated. Trump and his stable of MAGA political allies have at their disposal a powerful media machine that pumps propaganda into the national conversation and sends it viral on a daily basis.

Back when Stewart helmed "The Daily Show," he was needling much more establishment figures, such as conservative news personality Bill O'Reilly or Republican President George W. Bush. When he returns to Comedy Central after the Super Bowl next month to begin hosting the network's signature show each Monday, Stewart will be confronted with a new, far more insidious breed of media and political figures, such as the radicalized Tucker Carlson and the twice-impeached, four time-indicted, election-denying, insurrection-inciting Trump.

That means that not only is Stewart going to have plenty of fodder to work with, but his voice may very well be more important than ever.

While the cable platform he once helmed, and its massive audience reach, is a mere shadow of its former glory, the show still carries significant weight. That is perhaps evidenced by the fact that when Stewart launched an Apple TV+ show - "The Problem with Jon Stewart" - in 2021, it failed to gain a foothold in the public consciousness and establish the cultural cachet he enjoyed from his more accessible cable perch.

Stewart's talent has always been using humor to disarm dishonest politicians and expose the absurdities of their arguments in a highly entertaining way. He is uniquely talented at drawing on his sharp comedic wit to cut through the political noise and separate fact from fiction for audiences. And during the 2024 election year, that work will be vital.

Stewart also reenters the scene at a time when traditional newsrooms are being pummeled by layoffs and contracting at an alarming pace. The number of journalists and media figures holding the morally bankrupt accountable has slimmed considerably - a service much of the country is thirsting for.

Meanwhile, the mechanisms in which media are distributed have also undergone a revolution. Far fewer people are reading ever-shrinking newspapers and watching the decaying linear television lineups. Instead, they're being algorithmically-fed information that conforms to their existing viewpoints, regardless if such viewpoints are consistent with the facts.

Stewart has the potential to break through these digital barriers. His stinging political monologues appeal not only to D.C. politicos, but to mass audiences. It's without a doubt that in the months ahead, social media feeds will be rife with clips of his tongue-in-cheek, truth-based narration of the circus that is American ***politics***.

Of course, Stewart's comedy returns in a far more challenging environment with a smaller direct audience on cable. He will have an impact, unquestionably, but also won't single handedly keep the dark forces at bay.

But at this particular moment in American society, when antidemocratic forces are actively poisoning the public information well in their bids to seize power, not only does the reality-dwelling public hunger for spine-possessing, clear-eyed soldiers like Stewart, it arguably demands it.

Analysis by Oliver Darcy, CNN

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**Load-Date:** February 23, 2024

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