

# [***David Pecker's Image Suddenly Being Loved By The Mainstream Media For Testifying In The Court That Could Potentially Damage Donald Trump; The Supreme Court Delays The Argument In Former President Trump's Appeal For Absolute Presidential Immunity; School Activities Have Been Disrupted As Anti-Semitic Protests Spreads Like Wildfire In Different Campuses; SiriusXM Host Howard Stern Interviewed President Biden And Painted The President's Achievements As Saintly Deeds In His Eyes; President Biden Took Some Mild Jabs At Last Night's White House Correspondents' Dinner While Former President Trump Became The Usual Punching Bag***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BX5-7M81-F072-X3T9-00000-00&context=1516831)

Fox News MEDIA BUZZ 11:00 AM EST

April 28, 2024 Sunday

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**Section:** NEWS; Domestic

**Length:** 7435 words

**Byline:** Howard Kurtz, Leslie Marshall, Andy McCarthy

**Guests:** Robby Soave, Rich Lowry, Shelby Talcott

**Body**

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

HOWARD KURTZ, FOX NEWS HOST: Just ahead, how the media are covering the explosion of anti-Semitic protests and harassment of Jewish students at college campuses across the country.

David Pecker is no saint. The former National Enquirer publisher testified at Donald Trump's trial under a grant of immunity that he willingly used his tabloid empire to help the campaign including the outright manufacturing of fake news. And while he tied Trump and his then fixer Michael Cohn to these unsavory schemes, Pecker was eager to play along. Cohen he said, would ask for a negative piece on an opponent such as Ted Cruz and the Enquirer would embellish it.

Look at this. Ted Cruz sex scandal, five secret mistresses, a totally bogus story. And this ludicrous piece tying Cruz's father to Lee Harvey Oswald and the JFK assassination done by photo manipulation.

Most of the media praised Pecker's performance while others trashed D.A. Alvin Bragg's case.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

JAKE TAPPER, HOST, CNN: Trump's relationship with the National Enquirer was even sleazier than it looked in 2016.

JEANINE PIRRO, FOX NEWS HOST: David Pecker was not a significant witness for the prosecution and I'll tell you why, because there is no crime.

KARA SCANNELL, CORRESPONDENT, CNN: David Pecker is very composed, you know, think a credible witness. He was being specific in his testimony.

JESSE WATTERS, FOX NEWS HOST: So, it was the star witnesses of the case that wanted to catch and kill to protect Trump not Trump. Got it.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: Now to the catch-and-kill the Enquirer paid a Trump doorman $30,000 for a tale about the former president fathering an out-of-wedlock child, which turned out to be totally false. The Enquirer paid $150,000 to Karen McDougal, former Playboy playmate to stay quiet about an alleged 10-month affair, which Trump denies, ostensibly for ghost-ridden fitness columns. Trump opposed the payment saying such things always come out but Pecker insisted. Yet let the publisher said he balked at paying off Stormy Daniels because he didn't want the tabloid involved with a porn star.

Another factor perhaps Pecker hadn't been reimbursed for the K -- a payment to Karen McDougal so Michael Cohen had to give Stormy the $130,000. None of this is illegal, but it sets the stage for the alleged falsification of expense records to reimburse Cohen.

Now that's usually a misdemeanor except Alvin Bragg wants to tie it to a larger conspiracy and Trump hasn't actually been charged with conspiracy.

I'm Howard Kurtz, and this is Media Buzz.

Joining us now to analyze the coverage Robby Soave, a senior editor at Reason magazine, and in Los Angeles, Leslie Marshall the radio talk show host and Fox News contributor.

Robby, why do the media keep praising David Pecker whose testimony clearly damaged Trump when he voluntarily and eagerly was buying and suppressing these women's stories, publishing fictitious stories about Trump's rivals. Not exactly a boy scout.

ROBBY SOAVE, SENIOR EDITOR, REASON.COM: Well, for the mainstream media anyone is a hero if they are providing any sort of information that in any way looks unfavorable to Donald Trump. So, he'll be the hero of the day, even though the actions he's describing are they are sleazy. I think anyone can recognize that.

(CROSSTALK)

KURTZ: No, no one is defending that.

SOAVE: There's no way around that. But the question becomes, well, can they prove that that was actually directed by Trump and then can they prove that that is actually part of an election, campaign violation. You know, we've seen so much bad behavior from the media. Over the years, the media, mainstream media being in the tank for Democrats contributing the suppression of stories unfair to conservatives and to Trump. Maybe some of the American people are saying well the other side did it so much. How is this any different?

KURTZ: Leslie, nobody thought obviously that David Pecker was a paragon of journalism. That JFK cover alone was just appalling. But he's testifying under immunity and so he has to tell the truth or face perjury charges. So does that make him a hero, as Robby questions?

LESLIE MARSHALL, FOX NEWS CONTRIBUTOR: Well, I think there's a couple of things here. First, I think it's kind of funny that we talk about the National Inquirer and sleazy in the same sentence as if we never thought that before. Sorry.

KURTZ: That was news.

MARSHALL: And then secondly, I think, yes, then secondly when, you know, I think that a lot of people have the opinion especially on my side of the aisle. That if you were in bed, if you will, with Donald Trump, if you were all in for Donald Trump, which Pecker certainly was, you know as he admits. That you're not going to throw him under the bus.

And I think because this testimony was damaging, and it definitely starts to put, you know, the pieces of bread on the ground, you know for the trail that the prosecution is leading the jury to watch and to follow, I think that's what they're praising.

And I understand, I hear you, you know, when you have a deal like that you have no choice in a sense people would say backs against the wall. Heck we all should tell the truth all the time, but especially under oath. But that's where I think the praise comes in because --

(CROSSTALK)

KURTZ: And especially on the show.

MARSHALL: -- he's not praising his buddy and looking out for himself --

KURTZ: It's actually on the show, we have to tell the truth.

MARSHALL: -- just putting it out there.

KURTZ: Robby, despite the saturation media coverage.

MARSHALL: Yes.

KURTZ: I mean it's on all day when there's a trial. What is Bragg's office accomplished by playing up not just Stormy Daniels, but Karen McDougal and a doorman who made up a story, when the heart of the case is these falsified expense records.

SOAVE: Well, what they're really accomplishing is keeping him from campaigning. He's in the, I mean he's in court all day. That is the real blow. And why many probably conservatives out there watching this are going to say, was this, you know, is the main issue here not some actual criminal matter? We're all trying to understand what the actual criminal case is. But to distract Donald Trump every day he's in court, he's not --

(CROSSTALK)

KURTZ: But he still makes news. He still -- he uses as that part of his campaign.

SOAVE: But frankly he's not making news. I don't think on ground that is favorable to him. His ardent supporters, yes, they are. They're going to vote for him a thousand percent there. But they can't. They can only cast one vote for him.

Those people love this kind of stuff, and they're going to -- going to back for Donald Trump. But the undecided, the moderate voters, the people in swing states who don't like Biden, are frustrated with the last four years but not sure if they want to give Donald Trump another chance. They need to hear what he's going to do for the working class, for the economy, on the border, foreign policy.

And the more he's talking about these criminal cases even if he's the victim.

KURTZ: Right.

SOAVE: Even if he's right.

KURTZ: Right.

SOAVE: I don't think it's good for the campaign. That's the frustrating thing.

KURTZ: Well, Trump did come out and talk about the sort of anemic growth rate in the last three years. In other words, he's got a platform after each session of court.

Leslie, here's the quote from David Becker. "I am not purchasing this story. I am not going to be involved with a porn star." Now a Manhattan jury not apparently likely to be sympathetic to Donald Trump. But how many people are going to be shocked eight years later that Trump wanted his tabloid pal and his fixer to use money to suppress this salacious story with the former president denies from Stormy Daniels?

MARSHALL: That's not surprising, but what it does and why the prosecution is doing this, it's not to keep them from campaigning. You want to take your time presenting to the jury especially when you have a trial that is very going to be paper trail heavy.

That is hard to keep a jury's attention on. It's sort of all of us like having statistical analysis and data all the time. So, they start out with this, you might say the sexier part of this. And you -- and no pun intended, and then you start out with this because you show a pattern of behavior. That you know, if they do A, ergo they could do B.

And to Robby's point, I would agree with him, that this is actually hurting the people they're going to vote for him. I love them. They're going to the people that aren't going to vote for him, they're going to vote for Biden, you know, aren't going to vote for him.

But there are people out there especially people who supported Nikki Haley there are people that are undecided that say, I don't want to go back to the circus that some of them remember the four years when Trump was president as and this trial highlights more circus.

KURTZ: I think you're lying about the sexy part. The pun was intended. But anyway, Robby, look, in my view, this is the weakest and most openly partisan of the four criminal cases. Even some media liberals say that it's too bad this case is going first, is probably going well be done before the election.

But Pecker testified that Trump and Cohen asked him to use his empire. He had a lot of magazines beside the Enquirer, to catch and kill these bogus stories. Two months after the campaign launched and once elected in 2017 and just days before the inauguration, or this may have been a week or two before the inauguration, Trump called and thanked David Pecker for taking care of both Karen McDougal and the doorman story.

So, I can't say leaving aside the legality because it's a criminal trial, but none of that is going to help out Donald Trump.

SOAVE: Well, yes, if the jury decides that this figure who talked about, you know, maligning Ted Cruz's origins as the zodiac killer --

KURTZ: Yes.

SOAVE: -- and all the other crazy stories and his sex scandals. If they find that to be a credible person, if they find Michael Cohen who has, you know, repeatedly I think confirmed to have misled the public on variety of issues, who Michael Avenatti thinks it's not a credible person, then the jury gets to make that decision.

But the question is, you know, they get to make the -- it's a criminal case, so the jury makes that decision. But the broader case of whether Trump is fit for office again is a question the American people will get to decide in November. And some of this does feel, I'm sure it feels like this to Trump supporters and conservative voters that this is all an effort.

They feel like they can't beat him. Democrats feel like they can't beat him in November. So, they have a jury of, you know, Manhattan liberals who are going to reach a decision different from what the American people would reach.

KURTZ: Yes, but keep in mind it only takes one juror to produce a mistrial and it depends on the strength of the defense's case.

So, Leslie, Trump was angry about this Wall Street Journal story, I went back and looked at it, on Karen McDougal. It ran just days before the election. He accused Pecker of leaking it, which I don't see why he would do that. He hung up without saying goodbye. But it didn't get much pickup because in the last three days before an election, there were a million things are going on.

So, it's interesting that after all the efforts to suppress the story that it came out anyway, at least in the journal.

MARSHALL: Everything comes out in the end. I always tell my kids you will always get caught I will always find out. And you know, I think for the most part that -- I think I think for that the most part that is true.

And I also would agree with you, Howie, being one of those liberals on the left that thinks this is the weakest of the four cases and certainly not wanting this to go forward.

But to your point, Robby, it really irritates me that everybody thinks we Democrats have so much control over the criminal justice system whether in New York or somewhere else and that we would misuse that power specifically, you know, try -- to try to push an opponent off.

Joe Biden beat Donald Trump before very, very tight race. I believe he can do it again. We don't need to have these trials. There are four trials. You don't you don't get to this point. You don't get this number --

KURTZ: Yes.

MARSHALL: -- of indictments without evidence --

KURTZ: Well, --

MARSHALL: -- going forward. And honestly, it helps him with his base if, you know, at least you know those that feel that he's been victimized as the former president --

KURTZ: Right.

MARSHALL: -- often, you know, on this case.

KURTZ: Just briefly, Robby, just briefly. It is weird watching this because all we have is the reporters feed and they put him up on the screen and then the anchor says it. It's kind of like I don't know. It's kind of like watching letter -- it's kind of like watching Jimmy Fallon, Jimmy Kimmel, and Stephen Colbert and you can see the cue cards. It's all secondhand because of no cameras in the court room.

SOAVE: Yes, so we have to rely on, you know, third-hand information about like whether he's falling asleep in court. Remember, there was a whole new cycle of that was that this week or last week. I don't even remember. But Trump is certainly good for the ratings of mainstream media and you know, the diminishing audience of people --

KURTZ: Yes.

SOAVE: -- who just hang in there for every new revelation. So I'm sure this is good TV for people watching on the other side as much as it infuriates so many conservatives in this country.

KURTZ: Right. Well, you know on cross-examination Trump's lawyer brought out that Pecker had been courting celebrities and paying sources for years before Donald Trump even got into ***politics***.

Ahead, are the media exacerbating the anti-Jewish protests at Columbia and other major schools. But when we come back, the judge, the former president, and the gag order.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KURTZ: The gag order in the hush money trial triggered a heated media debate as Manhattan prosecutors argued Donald Trump should be fined $10,000 for 10 instances of violating the ban on attacking witnesses.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

WATTERS: You have one president who acts like he's gagged, never talks, and you have another president who, let's face it, a little gagging sometimes wouldn't hurt him but it's unconstitutional.

LAWRENCE O'DONNELL, HOST, MSNBC: That gag order wording could not be more clear. Donald Trump's criminal defense lawyer insulted the intelligence of the judge and everyone else in the courtroom.

DONALD TRUMP, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: So, I (inaudible) somebody's name is mentioned someone did with the art, but the night end up in violation of a gag order. I think it's a disgrace, it's troubling, unconstitutional.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: So, Robby, why is the gag order such a heated media issue when Trump has attacked two witnesses, Michael Cohen and Stormy, and the judge is weighing a grand total of $10,000, which is not exactly going to bankrupt the former president.

SOAVE: Look, he is running for president.

KURTZ: That's right.

SOAVE: He has a first amendment right --

KURTZ: Good answer.

SOAVE: -- to do that and he should be able to discuss the case broadly enough. Now I agree he shouldn't be giving personal information about the judge or other people involved in the court's whereabouts or specific information about jurors.

Now, of course liberal media journalists have been doing that all week. You see I saw all the tweets about describing them very specifically. So, it's like everyone (Inaudible) on Donald Trump.

KURTZ: And got scold -- hold on, hold on. Got scolded by the judge --

SOAVE: Yes.

KURTZ: -- for providing too much information and therefore undermining anemone of the jurors.

SOAVE: Yes, everybody gets to do it except Donald Trump so I understand the frustration. And frankly, the gag order was more -- was more ridiculous in the federal case where he was not going to be allowed to even describe or criticize Mike Pence who was running against him at the time for the nomination.

Even the ACLU thought that one did imperil his first amendment rights. In this case, you know, it's a little bit more ambiguous and maybe he has to pay those $10,000 fines.

KURTZ: Leslie, I think it's pretty clear what the judge is going to do. And in fact, would -- when Judge Juan Merchan expressed his frustration with Trump lawyer Todd Blanche for not providing specifics, he raised his voice and he said, you're losing all credibility. You've provided nothing. Not a great moment for the Trump side.

MARSHALL: No, not a great moment at all. And look, we do have a first amendment right. But a judge also has a right to impose a gag order. And there is a fine line, it's a very gray area and he would say an unchartered area.

You can talk about the media all you want as Robby just, you know, mentioned. None of us are running for president and none of us are under indictment. That's a big difference. Also, it's a big difference if you, in a political campaign as he is, and I feel every right that he has every right on social media and whatnot to talk about the political campaign, you know, to keep saying he's victimized, you know, to take out his violin.

The problem is when you get into talking about, which he has, the judge, the jurors, and the witnesses, that is a line that is crossed. I'm sorry, that's law school 101 if you're looking to be a criminal attorney.

SOAVE: I think a lot of what he said though is editorial kind of this is unfair, I'm not going to get a fair trial here. The judge is against to me not, you know my mob should do something about this judge at this specific time and this is where he lived. That obviously is not something that should take place.

A lot of what I'm hearing from him sounds like editorial complaints. That is part of his reelection effort and I -- do we want to go down the direction the road of that being something he's not allowed to say as he runs for president. I think a lot of Americans feel that's not the case.

Now, of course, the judge gets to do what he wants. It is a criminal matter as Leslie points out. But we should be very wary about throwing away our climate of free speech around elections.

KURTZ: Well, you know, Trump says it's unfair and unconstitutional for people like involved in the case, Michael Cohen goes on TV, Stormy Daniels goes on TV and attack him and he can't fight back. But he's the defendant.

Leslie, Trump's argument as you know, because he repeats it a lot, crooked judge, crooked D.A. trying to silence him in the middle of the campaign, but it's not like he can't defend himself at all. There are just certain restrictions on who he can talk about and how we can talk about them.

MARSHALL: Exactly. To my point, you cannot talk about witnesses because then you get into that blurry gray dangerous area of witness tampering or endangering a witness. Because you do have some people that, you know, are on the fringe of the MAGA fringe, if you will, that could be very dangerous when you hear about some of the rhetoric and reason things they're saying online.

You cannot be saying things about the judge. You cannot be saying things about the jurors. You know, that's the bottom line. There is a line in the sand. You know, honestly, I have to say I have two teens, OK. One of them doesn't come up to the line, one of them puts his toe over the line almost on a daily basis. And I have to tell you, Donald Trump reminds me of him.

And that's what he's doing with the judge. He's putting his toe over that line on a daily basis.

KURTZ: Well.

MARSHALL: And that's -- then the judge has rules and he is the judge and he is allowed to do that. It is within his scope to do that. And you know, Donald Trump may be doing this because he thinks it helps him. I don't know with those voters that look at him --

KURTZ: Well --

MARSHALL: -- are you a leader for the free world.

KURTZ: Look, he may also be doing it to have something to deal with in an appeal, if in the event that he is convicted. And meanwhile, if there were cameras in the courtroom the ratings would be 10 times higher than the setup we have now.

Leslie Marshall, Robby Soave, thanks so much for joining us.

Up next, Andy McCarthy on the Supreme Court sending mixed signals on presidential immunity. And later, House Speaker Mike Johnson gets heckled at Columbia.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KURTZ: The cable networks carried the audio live as the Supreme Court heard oral arguments on Donald Trump's claims of absolute presidential immunity. And justices on the left and right challenged the notion.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ELENA KAGAN, ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE U.S. SUPREME COURT: How about if a president orders the military to stage a coup. If the president decides that his rival is a corrupt person and he orders the military or order someone to assassinate him, is that within his official acts that for which he can get immunity?

JOHN SAUER, DONALD TRUMP'S LAWYER: It would depend on the hypothetical.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: But when Chief Justice Roberts who had raised question about bribery suggested setting the case back to the appeals court, the outcome seemed clear.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

LAURA INGRAHAM, FOX NEWS HOST: Given how things went today at the Supreme Court, the regime media is in total despair.

JULIA MANCHESTER, REPORTER, THE HILL: Look, this is a delay for former President Trump. He wants to keep delaying and delaying and delaying until after the election.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: Joining us now from Chicago, Andy McCarthy, the former federal prosecutor, Fox News contributor and National Review writer.

Andy, the justices seem to agree no president can have a total immunity and certainly not for a hit by SEAL Team 6 as one of them suggested. So why do the conservative members seem to favor kicking the case back to the appeals court which would be a huge delay for any January 6th prosecution?

ANDY MCCARTHY, FOX NEWS CONTRIBUTOR: Well, I think the court is not all that concerned about the campaign calendar and I don't think that's just the conservative justices, Howie. The fact that this is a, you know, a mad rush to get this done by the election is not a rule of law thing. That's a political objective. It's really not in the court's realm of concerns.

I actually thought the oral argument was one of the court's finest hours because it seemed clear to me that what the justices were concerned about was the future of the presidency. They're not really particularly concerned about Trump. I don't think there are a lot of good cues for Trump in the argument.

And I do think there's a way that they can send it back to the lower court to the trial court where it will be up to judge -- to Jack Smith in the way that he structures the case whether the case can go forward or not.

KURTZ: Yes, there was all this argument about official acts versus private acts.

MCCARTHY: Right.

KURTZ: Private acts being wrongdoing. So, but some of the justices actually said they were more concerned, and I understand your point about it's not just about this case but this case is being appealed.

MCCARTHY: Right.

KURTZ: Rogue prosecutors or payback indictments by the next president, they try to appear even-handed because I was surprised at the emphasis that was placed on that.

MCCARTHY: Well, it's kind of "Alice in Wonderland" though, isn't it? You have the Mike Dreeben who was arguing the case with the special counsel, is they're telling the court that look, you don't have to worry about any politicized prosecutions.

And by the way, we need to get this resolved before election day. And Trump can't be there because he's on trial in Manhattan in a case that brought by a progressive elected Democratic district attorney which is charging a crime that isn't even in the indictment.

So, the thought that you can't have an abusive prosecution under those circumstances was peculiar.

KURTZ: That's a new legal term for me, "Alice in Wonderland." I like that. In the hush money case, is Donald Trump's lawyer helping or hurting the case by the way, that he cross-examined the Enquirer's David Pecker, especially on the hush money payments to the former Playboy model Karen McDougal?

MCCARTHY: Well, I think Trump's lawyer is in a hard spot because of a lot of rulings that the court has made. But I also think that if you're going to take the position that the hush money payments which are really non- disclosure agreements that are a staple of civil litigation and settlements in the United States.

If your position is that those are lawful, it doesn't make sense to me to cross-examine Pecker in a way that tries to distance Trump from those agreements. I think you shouldn't worry about them if they're lawful. And the other thing that's happening in there, Howie, that is very disturbing is the judge is letting a lot of evidence in about the belief of Pecker, and I'm sure this will be with Michael Cohen as well.

KURTZ: Yes.

MCCARTHY: That they violated the federal campaign laws. Because the state has teamed this up as a conspiracy to violate those laws, even though that's not the charge of the indictment.

KURTZ: So, you make it sound bad and you take it seriously, but maybe that's not such a good idea.

Well, I always appreciate your insights, Andy McCarthy, thanks for joining us.

MCCARTHY: Thank you, Howie.

KURTZ: Next on Media Buzz, Columbia's campus shut down arrested NYU, Yale, USC. How did these pro-Hamas protests get out of control?

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KURTZ: As anti-Semitic and anti-Israel protests spread from Columbia University to major colleges across the country, President Biden did not step before the cameras. Instead, he tersely responded to a reporter's shouted question and was hard to hear.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNKNOWN: Do you condemn the anti-Semitic protests on college campuses?

JOE BIDEN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: I condemn the anti- Semitic protests that's why I've set up a program to deal with that. I also condemn those who don't understand what's going on with the Palestinians.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: House Speaker Mike Johnson met with Jewish students at Columbia and called for its president, Minouche Shafik, to resign.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

MIKE JOHNSON, U.S. SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: They place a target on the backs of Jewish students in the United States and here on this campus. A growing number of students have chanted in support of terrorists. They have chased down Jewish students. They have mocked them and reviled them.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: After the NYPD arrested more than 100 pro-Palestinian protesters at Columbia last week, they set up the illegal tents again, as we see there, and the school has been negotiating with them, switching to hybrid classes as most Jewish students have fled.

There have been other arrests at other schools, including USC, we see there, which has canceled graduation, and the demonstrators have been harassing those who support Israel.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNKNOWN: Never forget the 7th of October! Never forget the 7th of October! Not one more time! Not five more times! Not ten more times! Not a hundred more times! Not a thousand more times! Ten thousand times!

(CROWD CHANTING)

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: Joining us now from New York, Rich Lowry, editor-in-chief of National Review. And here with me, Shelby Talcott, a reporter for Semafor.

Rich, why after last week's arrests at Columbia, where I went to journalism school, has the university just been unable to regain control after even pro-Gaza protesters, including some faculty members, were either demonstrating or setting up all these tents in the middle of a private space at a private university?

RICH LOWRY, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, THE NATIONAL REVIEW: Yes, it's a real failure, Howie. It makes no sense, excuse me, to clear them out and then let them come right back. Either don't clear them out in the first place, --

KURTZ: Yes.

LOWRY: -- which would have been the wrong thing to do, or clear them out and keep clearing them out. And clearly, the president there, she just feels as though she's caught betwixt in between, because there's the right thing to do, making them go, and there's what the faculty wants her to do, which is to let them stay. So, she's just stuck in this horrible position.

And look, I'm a free speech guy, but this isn't a free speech question, it's trespassing. And two, if you're in favor of free speech, that includes viewpoint neutrality. So, there's no way, there's no way in a million years, if these were white supremacist kids, hypothetically, that she'd be negotiating them. They would have been cleared out in one minute, never to come back to Columbia ever again.

KURTZ: Yes, I'm also for free speech and peaceful protest, but you take over a chunk of a campus.

LOWRY: Right.

KURTZ: We're talking here about a university that has basically surrendered, gone to hybrid classes. For the rest of the semester, most students have fled to school.

Shelby, is the constant presence of TV cameras at places like Columbia helping to inflame the situation by drawing more anti-Israel protesters because they are seizing the moment to get attention?

SHELBY TALCOTT, REPORTER, SEMAFOR: Yes, I think, and I covered all of the protests and riots back in 2020 on the ground extensively. And one of the things I noticed was, you know, A, there was this massive media focus, but for portions at a time.

And I think in order to really accurately report on something like this, you have to have these, you know, you have to have cameras there from five o'clock in the afternoon when it's peaceful until three o'clock in the morning when oftentimes it becomes less peaceful. And so that's something that I'm seeing occur again this time around where that's not happening.

And if you talk to Biden officials, they've argued that the media is blowing this up into a bigger deal than it actually is. And they say that their internal, you know, polling and data suggests that young voters are concerned about this, but they're more concerned about other issues.

KURTZ: Well, maybe you could argue that a couple weeks ago. Right now, I think this is the hottest issue in America. And I think that the tide is starting to turn with these arrests.

Let me play a video that's gotten a lot of attention by Columbia student Khymani Jones talking to Columbia officials. And here's what he said.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

KHYMANI JAMES, STUDENT PROTESTER, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY: Zionists don't deserve to live the same way we're very comfortable accepting that Nazis don't deserve to live. And so, yes, I feel very comfortable, very comfortable calling for those people to die.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: It's Kamani James. I apologize for the error. And a Columbia statement says that this is extremely alarming and upsetting and that calls of violence, depending on ethnicity or religion, et cetera, are unacceptable and violate university policy. Rich.

LOWRY: Yes, shocking that one of the leaders of these student protests would be saying this sort of stuff on video. You know, he wants to kill Zionists.

And part of that, Howie, was a private video after he had this interview with school officials about some violent things he had said. But a lot of it, he said to one or, I believe, two Columbia officials. So why are we only learning about it now? Or is it becoming an issue now? That doesn't make any sense either. And what --

(CROSSTALK)

KURTZ: That's really a good point. Let me just stop you there.

LOWRY: Yes.

KURTZ: I mean, back in January, he said all these things. I didn't see any, you know, suspension or expulsion or outrage. But now that it's become public, suddenly Columbia is really worried about it. And there are lots of other people who agree with this guy.

LOWRY: Yes. Again, if this is a white supremacist saying, I want to kill Zionists, he's gone the next day. But he's pro-Hamas and says he wants to kill Zionists or is at least interested in the idea. And he's still there.

And in terms of the images and the media coverage spreading this, I think it's worked on both sides of the equation, Howie, because, yes, it's created more protests all around the country. But the other thing is administrations have learned from what's happened at Columbia.

And a lot of them, the lesson they're taking is clear it out immediately and be really forceful about it. And then the problem is taken care of. So that's why we've seen some really, like in Princeton, they cleared out the encampment, I think, in literally five minutes.

KURTZ: Yes. So, you're saying there's basically a double standard when your students are the target. I'll come back to you with that.

But let me, you know, when I see some of these Jewish students interviewed, those who are still trying to go to campus, those who are not, you can just hear the pain and frustration. And here's a woman named Katie was interviewed on Fox who said that, you know, I watch videos of people being screamed at because people condone their rape and murder, as we saw from Khymani James.

TALCOTT: Yes. And it's that sort of rhetoric that -- one of the things with that sort of rhetoric is that once one person says it, it becomes far easier for more people to say it again, as I saw in 2020 in very different circumstances. But the same thing, that sort of violent speech can spread quite quickly.

And so understandably, Jewish students across the country are incredibly concerned and upset. And it's really unfortunate, right? It's ruining a lot of college experiences, not to mention it's dangerous.

KURTZ: Rich, you seem to say in something you've written that the anti- Semitic right gets criticized, but the anti-Semitic left gets a pass.

LOWRY: Yes.

KURTZ: I wonder if you would address that, and also the parallel you draw to the very violent 1968 anti-Vietnam War protests at Columbia.

LOWRY: Yes. So, Columbia has history of this very notable protest in 1968. They were bigger. You know, these are really kind of small-scale actions. I think most places, 100 students or less.

Columbia, they, in '68, they took over four or five buildings and held an administrator hostage for at least 24 hours.

KURTZ: Yes.

LOWRY: So not that that position yet. But this double standard, I think, is very notable. I mean, Joe Biden said that he ran for president because of Charlottesville and because of Trump's supposed inadequate response. And I think he tells falsehoods about what Trump said in the wake of Charlottesville.

But Charlottesville is horrible. And it was terrible. And there was a murder and there were violent clashes. But even, you know, these tiki -- tark -- tech, these marchers with the tiki torches who, you know, didn't kill anyone. They were just menacing. Right. And they're saying anti- Semitic slogans. And this was a national crisis. And I just I think the same standard should apply here.

KURTZ: Well, there were more arrests yesterday and even more schools, about 200. And let's look at some of the earlier footage. There were arrests at Yale. What I want to put up. Which school is that? OK, University of Texas at Austin. Governor Greg Abbott called out state troopers. We see that.

And also, at NYU a few days ago, a lot of the police came out and made these arrests. And this is why I say the tide is turning because they've done this right away. I think it might have come as a shock to the system. I think people now want some semblance of order returned to these college campuses.

And, you know, I mentioned I went to Columbia. It's kind of more embarrassing to talk about now. But I think, again, that the tide is turning.

Let me get a break. Joe Biden, Howard Stern and the friendliest interview ever.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KURTZ: Joe Biden is still avoiding interviews with serious journalists. But he did spend more than an hour with a huge fan, Howard Stern.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

HOWARD STERN, HOST, SIRIUSXM: If you're a good father to your family, which you are, I know you'd be a good father to the country. I can't imagine you're going to lose, but.

BIDEN: Well, look, he's promised if he doesn't win, there's going to be a bloodbath.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: The Sirius XM host teed up chances for Biden to attack Donald Trump, such as his conduct on January 6th.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BIDEN: It was derelict. It was almost criminal. He did nothing. He just sat there and watched what was happening.

STERN: You're the kind of leader I love because we're lucky to have you in the Oval Office.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: Rich Lowry, Howard Stern, the one-time shock jock, has evolved into a great interviewer of rock stars and journalists. But he made clear he is totally in the tank for Joe Biden and despises Trump politically. Smart move for Joe?

LOWRY: Totally smart move. You have to tip your hat to the White House communications shop. This is a wise thing to do. Just an hour of a lapdog type interview from someone who used to be a cultural touchstone. I don't know whether he is anymore, but certainly a big name.

And it was friendlier than an interview he could have gotten anywhere else. Friendlier than CNN, because even if Stern wanted to challenge him, of course he didn't. I'm not sure he knew enough to challenge him on a number of Biden's calls.

KURTZ: Right. And Howard Stern was so enamored of Joe Biden, at one point he read off a list of his accomplishments. But, you know, the irony is he used to do locker room talk interviews with Donald Trump well before he got into ***politics***. They would rate women, but as a politician, he's made clear that he is completely and totally opposed.

TALCOTT: Yes, and again, I would just reiterate that this was intentionally, that this interview was intentional, right? When I talked to Biden campaign officials over the past few months, they've argued that they want to put forward the image of Biden that is a family guy and everyday Joe. And you can see how those sorts of questions that he got from Howard Stern get at that image.

And what they want to avoid, it seems, is interviews with, for example, the New York Times, which, as we know, has caused this massive controversy over why the president hasn't interviewed with the New York Times.

KURTZ: Yes. I know it's fascinating. And other newspapers as well. You know, Biden did say when asked by Howard that he is ready to debate Donald Trump. But Trump says he doesn't really believe it. And I'm not so sure he intended. I think he was just deflecting the question. We'll see.

So, the president knows how to make news on camera when he wants to. So, he gave a televised speech this week, Rich, about winning, finally, military aid for Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan. But he also, you know, the White House orchestrated briefings for Mike Johnson, and he couldn't have done it without Johnson bucking his own party.

LOWRY: Yes. So, the media loves bipartisan accomplishments and the coverage of this has been pretty favorable. It's a bipartisan deal that I actually happened to support myself.

I'm not sure Mike Johnson has gotten enough credit. I mean, he changed his mind on this. A different attitude from being a backbencher to being the speaker of the House has a huge role in whether it's going to happen or not. And decided it was really important and really put his job on the line. You know, and we'll learn how serious the threat is.

But, you know, he has a one vote majority and three members of his own party saying they wanted to depose him.

KURTZ: Right.

LOWRY: So, this is the kind of courage that usually is applauded. And there were some, but I think there would have been more if you were a Democrat.

KURTZ: Yes, of course, he did hold it up for six months, but then he listened and he changed his mind, really. A lot of conservatives now beating up on Marjorie Taylor Greene because she introduced this motion to vacate, although she hasn't made it official yet. There's even a New York Post cover calling her Moscow Marjorie because she's so opposed to aid for Ukraine. Do you think this is a serious divide?

TALCOTT: Right now, I would say no, particularly because Republicans have already gone through those Republicans and chaos headlines time and time and time again.

KURTZ: Yes.

TALCOTT: And that is not something that they want to do again, particularly in an election year. So, you've seen this sort of significant hold off of repeating what we saw with McCarthy.

With that being said, Speaker Johnson could do one or two things more that --

KURTZ: Yes.

TALCOTT: -- a faction of Republicans dislike, and it could snowball very quickly.

KURTZ: Yes. No, I mean, look, the guy risked his job. That's why he is getting some media praise.

Richard, I got this last one for you. It's a short soundbite that's gotten a lot of attention. Let's roll it.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BIDEN: Imagine what we can do next. Four more years. Four more years.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: And then everybody started chanting four more years.

LOWRY: Yes.

KURTZ: That kind of bailed him out. So what do you think about this prompter reading?

LOWRY: It's a lot like a lot of stuff with Biden. Once anyone could do it right, you make a make a stupid mistake. But he does it over and over again, which clearly is a symptom of his age and his decline. And it's why no matter what they do, this issue is never going away and they're never going to be able to alleviate it.

KURTZ: Brief comment from you. I've made my share of prompter flubs.

TALCOTT: Yes, I think this just underscores how big of an age is in this election, particularly with Joe Biden. And it will likely continue to be an issue.

KURTZ: Yes. And which is why I would like to see the 81-year-old and the 77-year-old debate. But I'm not sure that's going to happen.

Rich Lowry, Shelby Talcott, thanks for stopping by this Sunday.

LOWRY: Thanks, Howie.

KURTZ: Still to come, the secret strategy calls with some big-time anti- Trump lawyers and pundits.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KURTZ: Every Friday, big name former prosecutors and pundits join a secret off-the-record Zoom call to debate and strategize about Donald Trump's legal woes. What unites them, reports Politico, is that nearly all can't stand Trump.

We're talking about MSNBC legal analyst Joyce Vance and Barbara McQuade and Andrew Weissmann, who investigated Trump for supposed Russian collusion.

Bill Kristol, Harvard scholar Laurence Tribe, Watergate figure John Dean, George Conway, an MSNBC fixture, and ex-DOJ official Mary McCord. Not to mention CNN legal analyst Jeffrey Toobin, Elliot Williams, and the founder Norman Eisen.

Now, this looks awful, even if they're not collaborating on talking points, because it's exactly what Trump and conservatives have been saying, that the media are part of an organized resistance dedicated to getting him.

There were the usual jokes and jabs at last night's White House correspondents dinner, some of them, thanks to SNL's Colin Jost, aimed rather mildly at President Biden.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

COLIN JOST, CAST MEMBER, SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE: I have to admit, it's not easy following President Biden. I mean, it's not always easy following what he's saying.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: As for Biden and his joke writing team, Donald Trump was a prime target.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BIDEN: Donald's had a few tough days lately. You might call it stormy weather. What the hell? Trump's so desperate, he started reading those bibles he's selling.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: And, of course, there were shots at the media.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BIDEN: To all my friends in the press, and Fox News, some of you complain that I don't take enough of your questions. No comment. Of course, the New York Times issued a statement blasting me for, quote, "active and effectively avoiding independent journalists." Hey, if that's what it takes to get the New York Times to say I'm active and effective, I'm for it.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: When the president turned serious, he said he didn't expect the media to be on his side, but.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BIDEN: I'm asking you to rise up to the seriousness of the moment. Move past the horse race numbers and the gotcha moments. And the distractions, the sideshows that have come to dominate and sensationalize our ***politics***.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: But I'm disappointed in Colin Jost, who took lots of hard shots at Trump and played patty cake with the president sitting right there. But it doesn't matter. Everyone spent their time looking at his wife, Scarlett Johansson.

That's it for this edition of Media Buzz. I'm Howard Kurtz. Hey, you can subscribe to my daily podcast, Media Buzz Meter. We riff on the day's top five stories and some funny items and headlines. We do that here, too.

Thanks for watching. We're back here next Sunday with the only media analysis show on national television.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

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