

# [***Howard Kurtz Discusses Media Approach To Trump's Victory In Hampshire; Howard Kurtz Discusses President Biden And Vice President Kamala Harris Popularity; Kurtz Discusses The E. Jean Carroll Defamation Case***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B6S-4R41-JCS1-6001-00000-00&context=1516831)

Fox News MEDIA BUZZ 11:00 AM EST

January 28, 2024 Sunday

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**Section:** NEWS; Domestic

**Length:** 7663 words

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**Guests:** Caroline Downey, Tim Hogan

**Body**

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

HOWARD KURTZ, FOX HOST: It's been a wild ride for the media from the moment Ron DeSantis dropped out a couple of hours after last week's program, after canceling interviews with me and other Sunday shows. And then pundits pressing Nikki Haley on why she was still running in New Hampshire.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

NIKKI HALEY, REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: Look at the media saying, oh, this is Donald Trump's to have. Look at the political class all coalescing and saying everybody needs to get out.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: As if they wanted the Republican race over this minute. MSNBC looking at exit polls, kept talking up Haley's chances.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

RACHEL MADDOW, MSNBC HOST: Fantastic news for Nikki Haley's campaign and what she's thinking about in terms of her chances tonight.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: That night, it took just 13 minutes after the polls closed for Fox and NBC, followed by CNN, to declare Donald Trump the winner. Now, on Iowa caucus night, Rachel Maddow boasted that MSNBC would not air one word of Trump's victory speech because there's a cost to us as a news organization, she said, for airing untrue things. But MSNBC flip-flopped after critics, including me, called this blatant censorship and did take part of Trump's New Hampshire speech.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

MADDOW: We'll see how it goes. Again, this is a decision that is one that we consider to be an open-ended, live decision.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: MSNBC and CNN both cut away when Trump handed the mic to Vivek Ramaswamy before returning. The dueling speeches with Hailey rushing out first were highly unusual.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

HALEY: What a great night. God is so good. Thank you, New Hampshire, for the love, the kindness, the support. And today we got close to half of the vote.

DONALD TRUMP, FORMER U.S. PRESIDENT: Who the hell was the imposter that went up on the stage before and, like, claimed a victory? She did very poorly, actually. If you want to play it straight, we also won in 2020. But I don't get too angry. I get even.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: Question now is whether the media, while loving the Trump ratings, will try to get even with him. I'm Howard Kurtz, and this is "Media Buzz". Despite Donald Trump's big win in New Hampshire, some commentators downplayed the results and the outlook for November.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BRIT HUME, FOX NEWS CHIEF POLITICAL ANALYST: If you think of him as an incumbent, this showing tonight's weak, right?

JOE SCARBOROUGH, MSNBC "MORNING JOE" CO-HOST: You can't win in a general election if you can't get 40 percent of independent voters.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: Others question the former president's state of mind.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

JON KARL, ABC NEWS CHIEF WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT: There have been several moments on the campaign trail where he has seemed quite frankly out of it.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: But few in the media give Haley much of a chance a month from now in her home state.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

CHARLIE HURT, FOX NEWS CONTRIBUTOR: No matter how the media tries to spin it, if you want to talk about comebacks in New Hampshire, you have to actually win to have a comeback in New Hampshire.

MADDOW: She can't win in South Carolina. So, the question is, how does she move forward?

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: Joining us now to analyze the coverage, Molly Hemingway, Editor-in- Chief of The Federalist and in Los Angeles. Leslie Marshall, the radio talk show host. both our Fox News contributors. Molly, do you agree that most of the media have tried to minimize Donald Trump's victories in New Hampshire and Iowa by pivoting to his general election chances or otherwise changing the subject?

MOLLIE HEMINGWAY, FOX NEWS CONTRIBUTOR: Well, it always seems that the media do not want to give Donald Trump credit for various victories. But it is also just important to note that Nikki Haley will not be the Republican nominee, so the amount of coverage they're giving her is very generous.

She won't nominee because of how easily she acquiesces to left-wing media narratives, her support of wars without a way to win them. And so she is getting a lot of help from corporate media. But I think people do understand that Donald Trump is the likely nominee.

KURTZ: Right. Well, Nikki Haley is the last woman standing. And so, anyone who wants a semblance of a campaign. At the same time, Leslie, media outlets, including CNN, including MSNBC, are basically projecting Trump as the nominee by insisting over and over again that Nikki Haley can't win South Carolina.

LESLIE MARSHALL, FOX NEWS CHANNEL CONTRIBUTOR: Well, if you just look at the numbers, I mean, I would agree with Mollie, not for the reasons that Nikki Haley won't be the GOP nominee. It's just the numbers, and ***politics*** is a numbers game. She's between 35 and 40 percentage points behind Donald Trump in her home state.

I had said, look, if I were Nikki Haley, I would have taken, you know, a victory lap, if that's what she's calling it, in New Hampshire, when you're in a two-person race and you come in second, you've come in last. But when you want to go to your home state and lose, that doesn't make you look good.

If she's hanging on for Super Tuesday, I kind of understand that, but the numbers just don't show a pathway to the crown for her that she is seeking to be the nominee for the GOP.

KURTZ: Only queens get crowns. So, Donald Trump on Truth Social put up this, "Anybody who makes a contribution to Bird Brain, he's bringing back the nickname, from this moment forth, will be permanently barred from the MAGA camp. We don't want them and will not accept them." Now, Mollie, the press is calling that a threat.

HEMINGWAY: Well, I think the bigger picture here is that, as Nikki Haley won't be the nominee, her continuing in the race is viewed by a lot of Republican voters as a way to hurt Trump over the long term in the general election.

And so people are really looking at her decisions now, particularly with no path to winning the nomination, to why is she staying in? Is it just to hurt Donald Trump in the general? Because if so, that also constrains her future in the Republican Party. And I think that kind of comment from Donald Trump speaks to that.

KURTZ: Leslie, why don't you briefly respond to that. And then also, the question is, would it have been sustainable for MSNBC to stay on its high horse and keep refusing to air Trump's remarks, even at the convention, even if he's in the White House?

MARSHALL: I'm going to answer them in reverse order.

KURTZ: Why? No, I don't think so. I don't think so. I mean, you know, all media outlets are businesses and they need to make money and ratings make money and you need people to tune in. And you know, there were a lot of people pushing back.

But remember, MSNBC and everybody else got in trouble in Iowa for calling it too early. So, you know, this seems to be a very slippery slope and there's a lot of distrust in the media and in ***politics*** and in elections right now.

You know, talking about the threat, and it was a threat, you know, and really, anybody who is a former President and wants to be President again shouldn't be talking that way. Because the last time I checked, you want everybody's votes, whether they like you or not, whether they were on board with you in the beginning or they just end up with you in the end.

Forty-three percent of Iowa voters that voted for Nikki Haley said they would vote for Joe Biden. Seventy percent of Nikki Haley voters in New Hampshire do not identify as Republican.

So, we, the Democrats will take those votes for Biden, which some of those people will vote for Biden, especially if they're threatened and they're told they're not wanted and their vote isn't wanted. I don't think it's a smart choice to make as a politician running who wants to win and become President again.

KURTZ: Well, those figures are partially the reason that New Hampshire was the best possible state for Nikki Haley. Mollie, why don't you respond to that? And also, what was your take on Haley coming out and acting as if she had won? She did congratulate Trump and then Trump spending most of his speech slamming her. You can do it in any order.

HEMINGWAY: Yeah, well, this refusal to show Donald Trump speaking is a really horrific journalism problem. These media outlets that are not showing the Republican front-runner, likely nominee, and currently, probably the next President, not showing what he has to say, that is not journalistic in any way.

What it shows is that corporate media are not just a business, that they are actually activists and that they want to make sure the American people can't hear what Donald Trump has to say. And presumably, they don't want to hear -- they don't want to let people hear what he has to say because they know that it's very popular with the American people.

They also know that the current Democrat nominee, likely nominee, Joe Biden, is not popular, least popular President since Herbert Hoover. The policies are unpopular. And so they don't want to let people just make a decision between what they think of the Biden presidency versus what they thought of the Trump presidency. They want to censor and obstruct people's ability to make good decisions.

KURTZ: Leslie, why don't you weigh in on that, and maybe you want to take this one first. When the media shift into this, when are you going to drop out mode? And they did it to DeSantis, and now they're doing it to Nikki Haley, including on "Meet the Press" today. Who anointed them to demand that a candidate quit? It just seems like it's become this obsession if anyone's well behind in the polls.

MARSHALL: Well, I mean, you know, the media, it's economics, isn't it? Supply and demand. If the public is demanding that you ask that question or that you push the front-runner to the front and get rid of number two, then, you know, maybe they're weighing into that.

So, I guess it's what came first, the chicken or the egg. And I think we've seen this for a number of election cycles, you know, across the board. I think it's the impatience, if you will, of Americans, like, you know, let's just get to it. You know, we know he's going to be the nominee. When is she going to drop out? You know, that kind of thing.

You know, speaking of to the lack of popularity of my President, nearly seventy of New Hampshire voted for Joe Biden. He wasn't there and he wasn't even on the ballot that was written in. That seems pretty popular to me. And, you know, and those are -- and those good numbers, and that doesn't show a lack of enthusiasm. I know it's one state and one primary, but I'm confident there'll be more.

And speaking of those, you know but not likable or not you know approving of him that's going to change as we get closer to the election not only because it's going to be like okay these are guys, but also, the economy isn't improving. I mean, even when you have Biden critics going, he should take a victory lap on this. Oh, yes, Bidenomics. I don't know if you're going to see those numbers change.

HEMINGWAY: Well, another way that the media not covering this race properly is by not covering the Democrat primary itself. You had a no-name Democrat Congressman who got 20 percent of the vote in New Hampshire.

And when you look at, I mean, even something as silly as the betting markets, there is more certainty about Donald Trump winning the Republican nomination than Joe Biden. Donald Trump is around 90 percent in those markets, whereas Joe Biden is only at like 60 percent or so.

KURTZ: But there was no real primary in New Hampshire. The DNC got rid of it so it was a write-in for the President.

HEMINGWAY: Sure. I mean, one of the reasons why there's no primaries is because the media are not treating it like there's a primary.

KURTZ: I see.

HEMINGWAY: They're not applying pressure to have the Democrats allow their voters to vote for a variety of candidates. You have never had such lack of support for a nominee, an incumbent nominee, like you have for Joe Biden. And Democrat voters themselves are not being well served by the media, not, you know, treating that as a legitimate news story as it is.

KURTZ: Well, we'll see if it ever heats up. Meanwhile, Nikki Haley went on "Meet the Press" this morning and was asked repeatedly, will you drop out if you lose South Carolina, where she, of course, was governor. And she said, I have to do better than I did in New Hampshire. But she wouldn't say she would drop out. She didn't win. That's 43 percent. So, she set that benchmark. Let me play a little bit more of the Haley attacking the former President on "Meet the Press" and then I'll ask questions on the other side.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

HALEY: He was totally unhinged went on a rampage election night talking about revenge.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: Let me come back to you on that, Mollie.

HEMINGWAY: I mean, it's a tough primary battle. So people are going to fight with each other. Nikki Haley is going to say mean things about Donald Trump. He's going to say mean things about her. But the Republican voters themselves -- those voters themselves, they need to get more attention from the media about what they are looking for.

And the future of the Republican Party does not seem to be with Nikki Haley. It does not seem to be with someone who gets the support of Democrats, moderate independents who would vote moderate or would vote Democrat that is just not where things are going in the Republican.

KURTZ: Leslie, these attacks, and the sudden media focus on the general election whether Trump can't win because they doesn't have enough independence, we will see. But is that a moving of the goalposts?

MARSHALL: Look, if you have if you have -- if you have your leaders attacking people, voters, and not just their opponents, then isn't the media just, you know, holding up a mirror to the society that they are broadcasting to? You know, I'm sorry, but you know, if the bar is lowered, the bar is lowered across the board, and I feel that the bar has been lowered. I would like to see the bar raised.

KURTZ: Okay.

MARSHALL: All of us as civilians, as voters, politicians, yes, attack each other in policies, but don't attack each other personally. To me, that's acting like five-year-olds.

KURTZ: All right, I have a half a minute, Mollie. The RNC moved to declare Trump the nominee -- that Truth controversial. He pulled the plug on the effort. Wouldn't that have fueled the coronation narrative?

HEMINGWAY: Well, I mean, it does seem like it's not happening. But there is a truth that parties that want to win, they solidify the, they unify as quickly as possible. And that's why Nikki Haley continuing after placing third and declaring victory in Iowa, after placing second and declaring victory in New Hampshire and having no shot at winning her home state of South Carolina. You know, people think that they should unify and move on.

KURTZ: Now, on primary night, the foreign president took a shot at Nikki Haley's dress, calling it fancy, maybe not so fancy. So, "The New York Times" fashion critic, if you put this up, looked into this as a designer dress, cost $580. I had the showdown over the border. But when we come back, how the media are turning this contest into a mental fitness campaign.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KURTZ: The media have long been grappling with the speech and stamina of the 81-year-old President. Does Joe Biden have the mental acuity for a second term? Now, the pundits are suddenly pouncing on 77-year-old Donald Trump, especially since he was discussing January 6th and mixed up Nikki Haley and Nancy Pelosi.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

TRUMP: Nikki Haley is in charge of security. We offered her 10,000 people.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: Mollie, there's no question that President Biden mental acuity has been a major issue, especially since the media stopped ignoring it, and acknowledged that most Democrats don't want him to run again, partially because of the age issue. So, are they now trying to balance the scales somehow by playing up Donald Trump's perceived stumbles?

HEMINGWAY: I don't think the media are in the business of balancing the scales at all when it comes to Donald Trump. You remember during his presidency, they kept saying he didn't have the mental fitness. You have Joe Biden being President, having just stumbles, you can't understand what he's saying, he makes no sense. He loses track.

There's also just the policy failures. And they're so gentle and nice to him. Everyone can see that while these are two older men, Donald Trump has energy and vigor that Joe Biden doesn't have. For the media and other Democrats to make this a campaign issue, will go very poorly for them.

KURTZ: Leslie, one thing media polls are clear on is that most people didn't want this rematch, in part because they view both candidates as too old.

MARSHALL: Yeah, absolutely. So, you know, when Mollie says, you know, most people, most Democrats didn't want Joe Biden, most Republicans didn't want Donald Trump, most Americans didn't want this rematch, that is accurate. They're both older. Pot, meat, cattle.

I mean, if you're going to attack somebody who is a senior and you say that they're declining, well, then you're opening yourself up to that as well, especially when you're not like a 45-year-old guy, you know, standing there. And I'm not an M.D. I'm not going to make, you know, such, you know, calls.

And I don't, you know, certainly voters, this is not number one through five ten or even twenty for voters when it comes down to it, it comes down to policies. And, you know, certainly people have opinions but like i said, you know, I get really frustrated when I see a lot of people making, you know, medical analyses and they never went to med school.

So, you know, people have their opinions, I certainly make mistakes. I'm not the age of those people. Again, this just plays into the, you know, level of criticism we have in attacking each other personally.

KURTZ: Yeah, I would disagree on one point. I think it is in the top five, and for some people, maybe higher. But let me play clips of both candidates, President and former President. Also, the viewers can make up their minds. Some of these tend to go viral. Let's take a look.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

TRUMP: We have become a drug-infested, crime-ridden nation which is incapable of solving even the smallest, smallest problem. We can't do anything. We are an institute and a powerful death penalty.

JOE BIDEN, U.S. PRESIDENT: By the way, used to make beer brew here. It is used to make the -- brew beer here. Oh, Earth Rider, thanks for the Great Lakes. I wonder what it's like.

BIDEN: Don't mess with the mineral air (ph) unless you want them to get the benefit.

(END VIDEO CLIP) KURTZ: Your eyes open wide. So, Mollie, is a simple slurring of the words or mixing things up -- look, if you're on the air a lot, you do make these mistakes, including me, enough to justify a clip going viral online and everybody yacking about it.

HEMINGWAY: Well, I mean, in the first case, the, the Trump situation, clearly a typo on the teleprompter or a misread of the teleprompter, he says, we are an institute when the proper understanding would be, we will institute a death penalty.

The second one, I don't even know what to say because it's so hard for me to understand him. I don't, you know, we're frequently asked to respond to things that President Biden is saying and I truly cannot understand the words coming out of his mouth.

And even when I, you know, when we try to make sense of them, it's not just the speaking though, it's also the wandering off stage, not knowing where to go, seeming very confused and having little glitches where he doesn't seem to know where he is. That is an embarrassment to a lot of Americans regardless of political persuasion and it is also a national security issue given that he is the President.

KURTZ: Well, Leslie, I want to get your thoughts. Yesterday in South Carolina, President Biden spoke of Trump's confusion. So, clearly there's an effort to divert attention from the President's own problems.

MARSHALL: Yeah, you know, I said before, I think, you know, a self- deprecation with age and making fun of it would actually benefit both candidates. Unlike Mollie, I'm not going to make excuses for, you know, Joe Biden and say that one slur is, you know, a typo and the other. You know, sorry, no. Everybody makes mistakes. Howie, like you said, you know, I certainly do it.

The three of us are not the age of these people, and they're speaking a lot. And, you know, we do know that there are certain levels, and this is medically proven, you know, of our brain that, you know, decline with age. But we do decline at different rates, you know. I've said this before. I'll say it again.

KURTZ: Yeah, quickly.

MARSHALL: I've seen my husband have patients that 90-year-olds that are in wheelchairs and 90-year-olds that play tennis and golf every day and travel the world. We all age differently.

KURTZ: Well, ultimately, the voters will decide. Mollie Hemingway, Leslie Marshall, thanks very much for joining us this Sunday. Up next, media conservatives and liberals clashing over an increasingly remote border deal on The Hill with many blaming a certain former President.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KURTZ: The media have been covering these seemingly endless Senate talks about cracking down on the border, which many lawmakers are trying to link to military aid for Ukraine and Israel. But the negotiations were basically blown up after Donald Trump said on Truth Social, "We are better off not making a deal, even if that pushes our country to temporarily close up for a while." And that's triggered an emotional debate.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

CHRIS HAYES, "ALL IN" HOST: Why is Trump telling his party members to sink an Immigration Bill that basically gives them everything they want?

GREG GUTFELD, "THE FIVE" CO-HOST: If he didn't want Trump to run on this, why didn't you solve the damn problem three years ago? To come back and go like, oh my God, they're not solving this problem because they want to run on it. You guys have been playing ***politics*** with this longer than anybody.

SCARBOROUGH: The big issue is whether the Republicans are going to stab, you keep stabbing Ukraine in the back, stabbing Israel in the back, and calling for open borders until Donald Trump is the President of the United States.

LAURA INGRAHAM, "THE INGRAHAM ANGLE" HOST: The whole notion that Donald Trump or Republicans want chaos at the border to use as an issue against Biden is, of course, both fatuous and untrue.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: Joining us now, Jackie Heinrich, who covers the White House for Fox News. Jackie, right now, this is a huge journalistic issue and a political albatross for President Biden. But I've seen senators from both parties all over TV saying, we should continue. We should not make a deal because Trump says it's not a perfect deal. Does this change the media narrative?

JACQUI HEINRICH, FOX NEWS WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT: Well, you know, I think that you don't have to necessarily listen to the pundits to get a, you know, solid feel of how emotionally charged this is. Just listen to the members --

KURTZ: You don't have to listen to the pundits?

HEINRICH: -- listen to the members of Congress.

KURTZ: Okay.

HEINRICH: I mean, they're the ones who are saying that this is, you know, derailing a significant piece of legislation. You can't unring the bell of Lindsey Graham going out and saying, hey, to all my Republican colleagues who think you'll get a better deal under President Trump, you won't.

Democrats are going to want certain concessions to do the things that we're doing now. This makes substantive changes to things like asylum laws, gives the next President a lot of tools. You can't erase that from people's memories.

And so when Trump goes out and says on Truth Social, we're better off without a deal, or this would be a giant gift to Democrats, it does give the White House and Democrats who've been saying that Republicans don't want to solve this issue, it gives them something to say that for.

KURTZ: It gives them a loud talking point. Now, this really heated up after Mitch McConnell, who does want a deal, who's very much supportive of aid to Ukraine unlike some in his party said, well, this is a real setback, not that he was changing his position.

"Wall Street Journal" editorial -- this would be a self-inflicted wound -- would be cynical and Biden would claim with cause that Republicans want border chaos as an election issue rather than solving the problem. This is not a left-wing outfit.

HEINRICH: Right. Right. Well, it's -- it almost, you know, begs the question -- is Trump asking all these down ballot Republicans who, you know, are going to be up for re-election as this year. Basically, not to legislate until he's in office and then, of course, what happens if he doesn't win.

All of these members who are running for re-election are going to face the same angst from their constituencies that, you know, you've got immigration surpassing the economy as a top voter concern and if they've got an opportunity to do something about it and they don't -- how do you -- you know, how do you excuse yourself from that? It's a tough position that you'd be putting them in by saying, hey, pull this back, don't do anything.

KURTZ: Yeah, perfect deal. Well, there are no perfect deals in Washington. Look, the White House has said to have made big concessions on things like parole and asylum that Republicans have been asking for. Doesn't this hand the White House, as you were saying earlier, the argument that the former President and his party would rather let illegal migrants come in and fentanyl surge across the border to boost Donald Trump's re-election?

HEINRICH: It does, you know, give them credence to say that. And they've been saying this all along remember, making claims about, you know, Republicans wanted to eliminate 2000 border patrol agents and you know they don't want to solve this issue. That was just plainly not true. "Washington Post" gave him three Pinocchios for it this happens, there won't be any Pinocchios. It will be legitimate.

KURTZ: Yeah.

HEINRICH: But at the same time, you know, you do have conservatives saying you don't need new money to do this. Ted Cruz saying, Biden could, you know, re-impose the three Trump-era policies that he removed and we could fix this issue tomorrow.

And there is some truth to that. But also, Biden's not going to do that. He's going to need the cover of Congress to legislate some of these changes.

KURTZ: Yeah.

HEINRICH: And you're looking at asylum laws and parole authority, specifically, and you've got Democrats in Congress willing to do it.

KURTZ: Yeah.

HEINRICH: - I mean, that's kind of that a significant time to be and you don't know where we're going to be in, you know, after November.

KURTZ: Yeah, well here, we have Biden saying that he would shut down the border when it gets overrun and I don't understand why he doesn't just declare national emergency and do it now on their own authority, although it maybe reduces the leverage that he has.

Thanks for walking us through this Jackie Heinrich. Great to see you.

HEINRICH: Thanks, Howie.

KURTZ: Next on "Media Buzz", the White House having Kamala Harris work the TV circuit on the abortion issue despite her passed unpopularity. And later, Jon Stewart and his semi come back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KURTZ: The media are more than happy to play up the Democrats' campaign on abortion rights -- we know where they stand. President Biden and his Vice President just made a joint appearance on the issue, and it's Kamala Harris who's being booked on top shows as the chief advocate.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

KAMALA HARRIS, U.S. VICE PRESIDENT: A person running to enter back into the White House, who is proud that he stripped Americans, women, of the right to make decisions about their own body. These extremist so-called leaders are basically saying to a survivor of a crime of violence to their body -- a violation of their body, saying to these survivors, and you don't have the authority or right to make a decision about what happens to your body next. That's immoral.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: Joining us now to analyze the coverage in New York, Caroline Downey, a reporter for "National Review". And here in the studio, Tim Hogan, a Democratic strategist. Caroline, There are obvious reasons why you'd put Kamala Harris on TV on this issue. But in the past, the President's people shied away from that because she had been, in many media appearances, fairly awkward.

CAROLINE DOWNEY, "NATIONAL REVIEW" REPORTER: Right. I mean, the Biden administration is clearly grasping its straws by deploying Harris. This is a last-ditch effort. But it's kind of an embarrassment because she's been the joke of the administration up until this point. She's fumbled every project she's been assigned to, especially the border. Although to a lesser extent than Biden, she's kind of been in hibernation.

So, now she's supposed to energize youth voters with this fear mongering. Her usual way of appealing to Gen Z is to cackle uncontrollably or to speak in stupid slogans. So, the impression among most young people, I think, is that she's inauthentic.

KURTZ: Well, it may be that since Joe Biden himself has very few TV appearances, very few news conferences like none, really, that Harris has to take over. So, Tim, I am sure, but I have no inside information, that the Vice President has had media trading. So, whether you agree or disagree with her stance on abortion, has she gotten better?

TIM HOGAN, DEMOCRATIC STRATEGIST: I think she has and I think she is at key principle to deliver this message. It's about keeping it front and center if you want the media to talk about something you need to have a surrogate out there talking about it and I think she shows some real care about it. And look, everyday there are local headlines about this. There's a woman who has had a miscarriage in Ohio charged with a felony and when she was in Milwaukee when Vice President Harris was in Milwaukee, the state assembly was debating a fourteen week abortion banning you have those state assemblyman saying things like trust me on this. I'm a veterinarian.

I know fetal mammalian development or don't worry about the age issue, because when Mary gave birth to Jesus, she was 14 years old. Or when Elizabeth gave birth to John the Baptist, she was 88 years old. It's crazy, and you need someone out there to be highlighting this.

KURTZ: Well, I would question whether it makes enough news if it's not Joe Biden himself. Obviously, the President is a bigger newsmaker. Caroline, so looking back at the New Hampshire primary, the headlines say Biden won. But there was no primary on the Democratic side. The Dems got rid of it. South Carolina will be the first contest. But there was this write-in vote for the president. What do you make of the coverage of that?

DOWNEY: Look, the fact that Dean Phillips had any momentum in New Hampshire spells trouble for the Biden campaign. It's impressive when one fifth of Democrats in New Hampshire go out for not the incumbent for President, but this newcomer that's relatively obscure.

And what he's preaching is effectively mimicking the Trump platform, which is America is dying. And here's how we re-energize all the things that matter, you know, the economy. Americans' wallets are hurting.

So, he's focusing on the real priorities where Biden is asleep at the wheel. But I'll be honest, it's still more noteworthy at the end of the day that Biden got the bulk of the percentage without even campaigning. He didn't show up and he still came out on top.

KURTZ: Right, but again, it's a non-primary, no delegates. And since you mentioned Congressman Dean Phillips, he has really ticked off at the media. Take a look.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DEAN PHILLIPS (D-MN): No one's asking about this stuff. We're just frustrated. I hope you understand why I'm getting tired of it. If you're doing your jobs but you're not asking the questions that Americans give a (BEEP) about.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: So, Tim, he did get twenty percent of the vote but that's twenty five hundred votes. Not a lot of people voted because it wasn't a real primary. Should journalists take this guy seriously?

HOGAN: No, you can make the decision to run for President, but you're not entitled to people's attention and you're not entitled to their votes. You need to have a case, you need to have an opening. The reality is Democrats like Joe Biden, he did not run a super robust campaign in New Hampshire, ran as a write-in.

KURTZ: He didn't run any campaign.

HOGAN: He wasn't on the ballot. People ran it on his behalf. And yet he still won in the landslide. So, there's no path for Dean Phillips. He's the eighth most popular Minnesota politician on a good day. And for Minnesota, there's no path forward there.

KURTZ: Let me turn to the economy, Caroline, because lots of headlines about 3.3 percent growth last quarter. Biden, Janet Yellen, obviously talking this up, what happened to all the people who predicted a recession. But that doesn't mean that millions of people don't feel financially insecure.

DOWNEY: Right, the numbers may be what they are. They may spell some green, some positivity. But I do think that most Americans, it takes a while for those numbers to translate to real results in their everyday lives, to real improvement in their quality of life. And so, I mean, you could say all you want.

Look, look at our amazing record. Look at Bidenomics is finally, you know, kicking in and working for people, but there's still a lot of struggle. There's still a lot of, you know, suffocation at the gas pump and the grocery store. So, if it doesn't, you know, convert to real outcomes for real people, quickly, the Biden administration's legacy on the economy is still going to be very poor.

KURTZ: Well, I don't think the Biden people would even dispute the last thing you said about inflation and gas prices and so forth, although they say it's come down. Tim, you'll probably mention the stock market record, Dow 38,000, but many voters, unlike the media, not giving Joe Biden credit.

HOGAN: But I do think we're turning the corner on the vibe session. It's all about timing. You had Larry Kudlow --

KURTZ: The vibe session.

HOGAN: The vibe session is over.

KURTZ: Larry Kudlow on Fox News?

HOGAN: Larry Kudlow is saying that he was the Director of National Economic Council for Trump, and he's saying, I would be out there bragging about this, too, because you have consumer sentiment surging 29 percent more than it has in 30 years over a two-month period. You have 14.7 million jobs. There's a lot to run on. There's a lot to brag about. Things are getting better, and that's what the Biden campaign has to run on.

KURTZ: Well, as a snapshot that might be true. At the same time inflation could reignite so, nine months to go to the general election. We'll talk to you guys a little later. After the break, how much will Jon Stewart use his part-time daily show hosting job to go after Republicans.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KURTZ: He was a rather liberal force in TV news, at TV News, for 16 years. And now, Jon Stewart is back. Well, sort of. He's becoming executive producer of The Struggling Daily Show and will sit in the host chair, but only on Mondays. What an entrance!

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

JON STEWART, "DAILY SHOW" FORMER HOST: What an entrance. An escalator down. I haven't seen an entrance that majestic since my friend met me at the Gap after grabbing an Orange Julius. Thank you, Donald Trump, for making my last six weeks. My best six weeks.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: Joining us now from New York, Kat Timp, a co-host of the "Gut Fell Show" and Author of "You Can't Joke About That", but we will. What's with the once a week hosting? Jon Stewart couldn't find a better job, so he says, okay, I'll drop by Mondays. He couldn't manage twice a week?

KAT TIMPF, FOX NEWS CONTRIBUTOR: Yeah, I think it's the way of sort of getting back in without getting back in. I mean. Eight years -- a lot can happen in eight years, and things have definitely changed since the last time he was on TV. There was a piece in "Business Insider" that put it this way, saying, "The Daily Show's" audience is now, quote, "small and old".

So, it's one of those things where, you know, he's an icon, of course. He's a bit of a legend, I would say, actually. But to go out on such a great note and want to come back, it's a scary thing with the expectations being as high as they are and the landscape being so different.

KURTZ: Well, you know, Stewart's obviously a lefty. I've been on "The Daily Show". He and I have since mixed it up a few times. But I have to say, I respect him for helping get that Veterans Bill passed aid to veterans who exposed to toxic substances. But he left the program just as Trump started running for President in 2015. Do you expect this now to become "The Daily Anti-Trump Show?"

TIMPF: Look, I'm going to watch it. I'm going to give him a chance. I think that if he wants to set himself apart, it'll have to be a little bit more than that. Definitely poke fun at Trump. But there's a lot of other late night shows that are mainly doing that right now.

So, one thing that I have liked about Jon Stewart is, and I'm talking years ago when he was on The Daily Show, he would poke fun at liberals, as well. And I think that if he could really be hitting both sides, that would be something that'd be a lot more interesting.

We'll have to just wait and see what he does, because, yeah, he hasn't really also had that much of a chance to crack at Trump, certainly not in this format really, so he might be tempted to go all in on that, too, so we'll just have to wait and see.

KURTZ: Well, your point about the audience having changed, I mean, when Trevor Noah took over the host chair, he lost 70 percent of the audience, and then this new thing with the rotating comedians, I don't think has really worked. So, the question is, especially with a lot of late night comedy shows being canceled, whether Stewart can revive this franchise.

TIMPF: Yeah, even a MSNBC piece pointed out, he can only really rely on nostalgia for so long. I'm sure that a lot of people like me are going to, want to watch the first one and want to see what he does with it. But can he hold people's attention beyond that? That's the question.

KURTZ: All right, now here's a burning question. The media have really come down on the Oscars for snubbing Margot Robbie, who plays Barbie, biggest blockbuster film of last year, and Greta Gerwig, who is the Director, without whom the, you know, the thing wouldn't have taken place but giving an Oscar to the only man who was Ryan Gosling who plays Ken.

TIMPF: Yeah, I actually almost kind of feel for Ryan Gosling in this situation because he doesn't really get to enjoy it because of all the backlash as you mentioned. I would say the same for America Ferrera who was nominated. Just because Margot Robbie and Greta Gerwig weren't nominated -- they were nominated but not in the main category.

KURTZ: Yes.

TIMPF: There's all this backlash And then we saw kind of backlash to the backlash. There was a piece in "The New York Times" that even said, I'll say it, "Barbie" is bad. I thought the movie was great. I'm not somebody who gets all fired up about Oscar nominations one way or another.

KURTZ: Yeah, I understand that. And ultimately, it's a game, and who cares? But it was a lot of fodder for the media, the fact that the Ken gets it, Barbie doesn't get it.

TIMPF: Yeah.

KURTZ: The woman who made the show happen doesn't get it.

TIMPF: Right, and Hillary Clinton weighing in, especially.

KURTZ: That was my next question. So, Hillary Clinton says Greta and Margot, "While it can sting to win the box office, but not take home the gold, your millions of fans love you." Now, what might she be alluding to there?

TIMPF: Yeah, she's obviously alluding to winning the popular vote, but not winning the presidential election.

KURTZ: Yeah.

TIMPF: I -- just when you think she said all she can possibly say about it, there's something else.

KURTZ: It got her back in the news. Kat --

TIMPF: Yes, Sir. Sure did.

KURTZ: Always great to see you. Thanks so much for making us laugh here a little bit.

TIMPF: Thanks for having me.

KURTZ: Still to come, Donald Trump back in court or was it a campaign stop and gets hit with a whopping verdict?

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KURTZ: Donald Trump briefly testified in the E. Jean Carroll defamation trial as a New York judge severely limited what the former President could say and struck a couple of answers from the record.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DONALD TRUMP, FORMER U.S. PRESIDENT, REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: I have no idea who she is, where she came from. This is another scam. It's a political witch hunt.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: That was a video of the jury delivering a staggering $83 million verdict against the former President. Caroline. Wall-to-wall coverage of this on the other channels, Thursday and Friday, leading up to that massive verdict. And my question is, well, much of the media coverage seemed to suggest, imply, or just outright say, he got what he deserved.

DOWNEY: I mean, like you said, Howie, it was a gargantuan damages. And from a P.R. standpoint, the judge played right into Trump's hands, okay? I mean, these damages, they look like political persecution to most of Trump's loyalists. And I mean, you're right, the media did have a heyday with this.

But I'll be honest, I think most viewers saw this and they saw that the judge, for instance, refused to allow Trump the opportunity to take a day off from the trial to attend Melania's mother's funeral. Melania is very popular, so that was bad optics.

And the media also, I think, showed pretty clear that Trump was also denied the opportunity to contest the old defamation claims in the new case. So, he was effectively disqualified from defending himself.

KURTZ: Right.

DOWNEY: So, I think the net result was bad optics, good for Trump, and this will amplify him.

KURTZ: Right. This was the second defamation trial. His liability had been established at the first one. And I have very little doubt that this gargantuan number will be knocked down on appeal.

Tim, weigh in on the $83 million and also what did you make of Judge Louis Kaplan severely restricting what Trump could say and telling the jury to disregard a couple of his answers when it was a trial about damages.

HOGAN: I mean it's a gargantuan number and I think the judges reacting to tantrums and threats that Donald Trump throws when he's in these settings.

KURTZ: So, that drove it up even more? Well, I don't think that drove it up. I think it's a question though for his political campaign. It's about decency. The end of the day he was found liable of sexually abusing and defaming E. Jean Carroll and that is a huge question.

Now, he might be able to make his voters pledge fealty to him and say they're after me, but for the large part for independent voters, for the general populace, for the general election, it is once again a question of do you want someone this chaotic running the country?

KURTZ: Yeah, that's the word that Nikki Hale uses as she declined to criticize him on this case. Caroline, the judge also told Trump lawyer Alina Habba that she was on the brink of being locked up, which raises the question of whether Donald Trump wanted to be tossed out of the courtroom because it would help him with the appeal.

DOWNEY: Well, I that Trump, for instance, in the Carroll case -- sorry, the judge in the Carroll case actually did say, you know, it sounds like you want to be ousted from this courtroom. And I think that suggests that the judge knows that this plays into the political calculus for 2024. The timing of escalating this trial is very curious, especially when there's outstanding claims.

So, I do think viewers watching the media can read through the lines. They can digest this and figure out that something's a little bit off with how the judicial system is going full steam ahead on Trump and even denying him the chance to attend his wife's mother's funeral, which is a very reasonable request.

KURTZ: Yeah, for one day, I thought that did not look good at all. Tim, there was emotional testimony from E. Jean Carroll, who won $5 million in damages at the first trial. But Trump still vehemently denies the alleged incident back in the 1990s in the department store and says he doesn't even know her.

HOGAN: Yeah and he's going to continue to do that. I think at the end of the day this is not about weaponization of the legal system. These are juries of his peers -- grand juries deciding that he is liable or guilty in certain cases and he -- he's running a courtroom campaign because he has to, not because he wants to.

KURTZ: But he doesn't have to show up at some of these cases but he's not - - civil court trial. So, why is he doing that?

HOGAN: Now, he's choosing to, because I think he senses that it is a liability for him to not even be there. And the best punch back he can do is to show up and do what he's doing. It's not a good position, maybe the best position you can get.

KURTZ: Making the best of a bad situation. All right, Caroline Downey and Tim Hogan, thanks very much for joining us. I do think we haven't heard the last of this case. And we'd all have a better view if these things were televised. But different court systems have different rules.

That is it for this edition of "Media Buzz". I'm Howard Kurtz. You can subscribe to my daily podcast, "Media Buzzmeter". We have a nice crowd and we riff on the day's top five stories and then I squeeze in a few more of things that are a lot of fun. We have tried to cover a lot of ground here. It's amazing how much has happened just since the New Hampshire primary on Tuesday.

And that's the way ***politics*** is. A week is a lifetime. We're back here next Sunday, 11 Eastern. Hope to see you then with the only media analysis show on national television.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

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