

# [***Donald Trump Talks About Religion; Trump Criticizes The Daughter Of Judge Juan Merchan In The Hush Money Trial; World Central Kitchen Founder Chef Jose Andres Insists Airstrikes Aid Workers In Gaza Were Intentional; Trump Calls Illegal Migrants Animals; Caitlin Clark Denies She Wanted Revenge Against LSU After Last Season's Championship Loss.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BRR-D7W1-F072-X001-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Guests:** Mary Katharine Ham, Karoline Leavitt; Clay Travis; Frank Luntz

**Body**

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

HOWARD KURTZ, FOX NEWS HOST, "MEDIA BUZZ": Donald Trump is increasingly talking about religion, and that, just by itself, has triggered a media backlash. It's not that politicians haven't done this since the founding of the republic almost 60 years ago. Jimmy Carter, who taught Sunday school at his Baptist church, campaigned openly about his faith. But now that the Republican presidential nominee is infusing his rallies with this kind of talk --

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DONALD TRUMP, REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: We've lost religion in our country. Christians are under siege. We must make America pray again.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: Many in his audience tend to pray as he winds up the events.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

TRUMP: We are one movement, one people, one family, and one glorious nation under God.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: Now, "The New York Times" is openly questioning this approach -- Reporter Michael Bender.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

MICHAEL BENDER, REPORTER: We see this impassioned loyalty from Trump fans. The net effect here is Trump has turned the Republican Party into something resembling the Church of Trump.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: The Church of Trump? And that criticism echoed across the cable landscape.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

JOE SCARBOROUGH, MSNBC "MORNING JOE" CO-HOST: When Donald Trump says, I've never done anything wrong, no reason to be forgiven, they still fall right in line and say, oh, he's the second coming of Christ. I mean, they idolize him, and it's really, it's twisted.

JESSE WATTERS, "JESSE WATTERS PRIMETIME" HOST: Revering Obama as a messiah was gleefully embraced. But Republicans praying at a Trump rally, now a dangerous religious cult. And the media is acting like it's tacky for Trump to promote the word of God.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: Trump has also drawn some media mockery for taking royalties for selling Bibles for $59.99.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

KAT TIMPF, FOX NEWS ANALYST: You look at white evangelicals, like 80 percent of them vote for Donald Trump. No matter what, how many times people have pointed out, oh, well, Trump did this and Trump did that, clearly they don't care. He has said before the Bible is his favorite book.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: What the journalists and the pundits are desperately trying to figure out is how evangelical voters can remain so loyal to the former president, given his personal life.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

MANU RAJU, "INSIDE ***POLITICS*** SUNDAY" HOST: Despite all of his criminal charges, divorces, and hush money payments, the religious right, and particularly white evangelicals, continue to back the former president in droves.

JOY REID, "THE REIDOUT" HOST: That Donald Trump was never particularly religious or churchgoing is news to absolutely no one. But now Trump is using his own brand of positive thinking and prosperity gospel to dupe his self-proclaimed Christian supporters into believing that he is the second coming of Jesus himself.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: But are they being duped, or just deciding that whatever his personal failings, Trump is fighting for what they believe in? I'm Howard Kurtz, and this is "Media Buzz". Joining us now to analyze the coverage, Mary Katharine Hamm, columnist for "OutKick" and co-host of the podcast "Getting Hammered" and Kevin Corke, Fox's Senior National Correspondent.

Mary Katharine, why are they acting shocked and appalled that Donald Trump wants to talk about religion? What is this Church of Trump stuff?

MARY KATAHARINE HAM, "OUTKICK" COLUMNIST: Well, I think the question is like how you evaluate whether it's gone too far. The problem for the press is the press is sort of allergic to Christianity -- allergic. They are overwhelmingly secular people.

And so, I think what they end up doing is they end up conflating all of Christian observance with Christian nationalism, which is this thing they're worried about. And frankly, I think you should have some concern about the melding of the American vision with a Christian vision solely, right? Like our Constitution allows for a multitude of religions with great purpose.

There was one, look, I think it is tacky for him to hawk Bibles during Holy Week. At one point, he says, I have many in my home, since it's my favorite book. And I'm like, is that because the Gideons put them there in the hotels, or what's the deal? But I think the press ends up overplaying this because they are hostile to religion. He ends up appealing to it because he has this ability to know a political opening.

If you, President Biden, are going to make Easter overwhelmingly about trans visibility, I'm going to make my Easter proclamations about Easter, because I know there's a lot of Christians out there who are reacting to that. There's some polling that shows there's only 10 percent of the public that is Christian nationalist, if you're worried about that part. So maybe deal with that, not the entire Christian population.

KURTZ: Well, I would just quickly add that the Transgender Visibility Day was always on March 31st. It wasn't single out for Easter.

HAM: Yes, I was just talking about the amount of emphasis.

KURTZ: Yes, okay. Kevin, is this really about mainstream pundits being frustrated and bewildered that this guy still gets so much support from the vast majority of evangelicals, despite what the press sees as his long list of sins?

KEVIN CORKE, FOX NEWS SENIOR NATIONAL CORRESPONDENT: Yeah, show me, you don't know the Bible without telling me you don't know the Bible. The fact is, if it's grace, if that's your perspective, they're going to give him a break. They're going to give him grace, because they recognize everyone has fallen short.

Now, that said, there's a little method to this madness, Howie. Remember, this is sort of, if you use this football analogy, the second quarter of the presidential year. That means it's time to reach out to specific groups. We see this every four years. First quarter, tell them why you're running and why you're going to make a difference.

Second quarter, reach out to individual groups. By the way, Democrats do this too, with environmental groups and student groups. Second quarter is about galvanizing support, getting them fired up so that in the third quarter --

KURTZ: Yeah.

CORKE: -- they can get out there and help you make it happen. Fourth quarter, all hands on deck. I'm not surprised he's doing this right now.

KURTZ: It's pretty clear that Trump is less of a regular church goer than our Catholic President Joe Biden.

CORKE: Yeah.

KURTZ: But religious voters, Mary Katharine, may feel that Trump delivered on getting rid of Roe v. Wade, and that even his emerging compromise stance on abortion is preferable to the President's pro-choice position.

HAM: Yeah, no, I think they've sort of cut a deal on this, right? He's an Elmer Gantry-like figure, but he's fairly open about it. We kind of know that's what they're getting, I think, is part of the deal. And like I said, they're feeling hostility from the other side. So, right, they don't feel like they have an option on that front, and so they're happy to make this deal. And by the way, the press needs to be honest about how Democrats operate in this field, right?

KURTZ: They're happy, Democrats are happy to go to a church in South Carolina and be as charismatic as they come, but it's just for the right kind of voters, and that's deemed okay.

And as Jesse pointed out, outright worship of Obama in a secular way was fairly common in the press and in the Democratic Party for a while.

KURTZ: But you said earlier that the press is hostile to religion and allergic, I think you said, to Christianity.

HAM: Ignorance and things, yes.

KURTZ: So, is that a giant blind spot in terms of this coverage, particularly about Donald Trump saying America must pray again?

HAM: Yes, I think, look, I think they disregard Democrats using this same sort of rhetoric because they think, oh, well, we understand this transaction that's going on here, and they don't allow for it on the right because they immediately conflate it with Christian nationalism and make it something scary. I think they would do themselves a lot of good by having a couple of actual believers in their newsrooms who they can bounce ideas off of.

KURTZ: So, diversity is more than just racial and ethnic?

HAM: There aren't that many of them.

KURTZ: Yes, all right.

CORKE: And if I could add to that, by the way, they run into a black church, trust me, every four years, and they sing, "We shall overcome," and they're swaying and they're doing all that. Then it's cool. But now if he's sort of leaning into this --

KURTZ: Yeah.

CORKE: -- it's considered gauche at every level.

KURTZ: Now, the former president, Kevin, doesn't completely shy away from this talk. During Easter week, he reposted a column from "The Washington Times" titled, "The Crucifixion of Donald Trump."

CORKE: Here's the problem with that. You can use some language and get away with it. And I might even understand why he's trying to sort of play in that lane. The problem with it, from my perspective, is I think if you are an actual believer, that might be a bridge too far.

In fact, I would dare say it is a bridge too far. He probably should not have done that. In fact, if I were on his team, I would never have let him do something like that. But the problem is when you have someone who's a bit of a bull in a China shop, you never know what you're going to get, which is exactly why a lot of independents have shied away from supporting him. Although now with the economy being where it is, maybe he's reeling some of those folks back in.

KURTZ: Well, you know, it's easy to poke fun at Trump for taking moralities on peddling Bibles.

CORKE: Yeah.

HAM: The only Bible endorsed by Donald Trump.

CORKE: Yeah.

KURTZ: But if his supporters want to buy them, is it that much different than selling mugs or t-shirts?

HAM: No, people actually, and there are many people who have devotional Bible editions that go out in their name who are maybe religious leaders. I would suggest when it's Trump, maybe if you can get it somewhere else for cheaper, go ahead and do that.

But it's not the end of the world. I just think it's, uh, you know, it is a little gauche and the word of God can have power in many ways. So, if it gets in the right hands, if it gets in his hands, maybe crack that, that would be a great idea.

Well, you know, even "The New York Times" story and, of course, there's a religious devotion to "The New York Times" by many, particularly on left- leaning cable networks and other organizations, acknowledges that Trump himself doesn't make direct messianic appeals, but that was sort of way down in the story.

CORKE: Yeah, it was way down in the story and they know exactly what they're doing. For them, this is about, calling out hypocrisy as they see it. The problem with, on the one hand they're saying this is hypocritical, but if other people do it, particularly on the left, then suddenly they're --they're casting a blind eye to what we've seen.

And we've seen this repeatedly by the way, but I think if you're the president, it's good to do this in the second quarter, lean in as heavily as you can, get those folks energized and get ready for the third quarter.

So, they're out there in vans and knocking on doors, getting ready for the fourth quarter of this year when it's all hands on deck. \Do it now, get it out of the way before people really get dialed into the convention.

HAM: Well, and as you note, who's the left reaching out to?

CORKE: Yeah,

HAM: It's the climate activists, it's the pro-Palestinian groups.

CORKE: Exactly right.

HAM: Those are their secular religionists. Like that -- they are just as devoted --

CORKE: Bingo.

HAM: -- in many of the similar ways.

KURTZ: Yeah. Well, people, particularly younger Democrats on the left seem to be pretty anti-Israel right now. But media opponents of Trump say that he is trying to turn this into a Christian nation. Is that a real concern or is it just anti-Trump animus?

HAM: I mean, like I said, I think there's this real danger of overplaying it because many in the press, even if there is this strain, will look at, will conflate it with almost all of Christian observance.

KURTZ: Right.

HAM: And I think that's the real problem because you're not rationally assessing a threat. What you're doing is smearing a bunch of people who are just regular Christians. And so, that's the part where Donald Trump notices, oh, these people just believe normal things like that the constitution was inspired by a sort of theism, that our rights do come from our creator. And the press doesn't really recognize that anymore. And the left doesn't really recognize that anymore. So, I'm going to.

CORKE: And you know what? It's easy to pick on Christians. The press knows that they're not usually going to get back out there and make a lot of noise. They're not going to get out there and, and protest and break glass and, and march around and pull down statues.

They have been the picked on group in this country by the left for a long, long time. And I think the president picked up on that in 2016. He's continuing to sort of play that hand again early in the year, get them fired up. And I think that's what's happening again.

KURTZ: Well, also, you know, Donald Trump has been a friend of Israel and, you know, he also thinks all Jewish voters --

CORKE: Absolutely.

KURTZ: -- should vote Republican or vote for him.

CORKE: But when he says, as in the clip we saw, Christians are under siege, is that exaggerated? Is that something that a lot of Christian people worry about?

HAM: I think Christians do worry about it. And here's, here's the thing. "The New York Times" sort of hand waves that says it's implausible that they're being persecuted at all. But then you see folks like this pro-life activist who gets the DOJ coming down very, very hard on him and taken out of his home in an armed raid. And you go, well, it does feel like they're using a lot of energy to go after this particular group. So, people see that.

CORKE: That's a rational reaction to targeting Catholics, too.

KURTZ: Yeah. They may also feel under siege by the culture. Let me get a break. When we come back, the coverage of the judge in the hush money trial hitting Donald Trump with a tougher gag order.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KURTZ: In Donald Trump's hush money trial, the former president criticized the daughter of Judge Juan Merchan, who works for Democratic candidates, prompting the judge to expand a gag order to include his family members and those of Manhattan D.A. Alvin Bragg. Is the media criticism warranted?

WATTERS: Trump isn't allowed to say that the judge's daughter is a Democrat consultant whose clients, the Biden campaign, Adam Schiff, are fundraising off Trump's indictment.

LAURA INGRAHAM, "THE INGRAHAM ANGLE": This comes after Trump complained about what sure looks like an apparent conflict of interest that the judge's daughter has. She's the president of something called Authentic Campaigns. That's a Democrat consulting firm.

ANDERSON COOPER, CNN ANCHOR: "Everybody's using the term gag order, but I mean, that implies he can't say what he's feeling. This is about witnesses. It's about jurors. Now, it's about the judge's daughter.

MICHAEL STEELE, MSNBC POLITICAL ANALYST: Put his behind in jail because that'll shut him up.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: Mary Katharine, Trump posted this week, I should mention, a $175 million bond that had been slashed by the appeals court from nearly half a billion. So, he has a history going after judges, going after prosecutors. We all know the examples. Is it out of bounds to go after a judge's adult daughter?

HAM: Well, one, I think it might help him because he probably should keep his mouth shut and that would be legally beneficial to him. However, I think particularly the Bragg case is like nonsense on stilts and he should have the right to speak about how it is.

So, I would like him to have some leeway in that area. Honestly, it does seem like a bit of a conflict of interest that she's working with these folks, but maybe there's a better way to communicate that. Maybe not through your Truth Social and to plant that story somewhere or have that discussion. But like, it does seem like he has pretty significant leeway to talk within the case without going after certain outside characters.

KURTZ: What does he get out of doing this, Kevin? Because he's not going to get Judge Merchan to recuse himself. He did win one delay. This thing is starting next week. So, is there a strategy here?

CORKE: The strategy if you're the former president is to make sure that you are winning the public over, which is to say, make sure that your supporters understand that you're being persecuted. Again, you talked about this earlier, Howard, this idea about they're coming after me. And by proxy, that means they're coming after you. He really loves this. And by the way, I find it rich.

On the one hand, they're saying, well, don't blame the judge because his daughter is in this group that supports Democrats or takes lots of Democratic money. These are the very same people, Howie, that were out there saying that Justice Thomas should be off the bench --

KURTZ: Yes.

CORKE: -- because of his wife's political affiliations and interests.

KURTZ: Right. So, sometimes relatives matter. Sometimes they don't.

CORKE: Exactly right.

KURTZ: But I would just say that, you know, there are many professionals who can't control what their adult kids do. They may not even agree with them. But this is like the mirror image of the religion controversy.

Trump supporters, especially in the media, see this as a blatantly partisan case by a Democratic prosecutor, even though it involves hush money payments to Stormy Daniels in 2016. And they say this certainly should not be a felony case.

HAM: Yeah, I mean, I mean, I tend to agree with that criticism. And like, here's the thing. The people running these cases, if indeed you do think this is the key to saving democracy from this figure, maybe keep your nose clean, including of the appearance of impropriety, which is actually what I should have termed it earlier.

KURTZ: Yeah.

HAM: Not necessarily a conflict of interest --

KURTZ: Right.

HAM: -- but something that appears to be. Fulton County, of course, and Fani Willis suffer from the same issue on steroids. And --

KURTZ: Trump's appealing that to her, non-disqualification.

CORKE: Exactly.

HAM: And part of the process should be being as ethical as possible and removing all appearances of issues so that you can do this in the most ethical way possible.

KURTZ: Yeah.

HAM: But I'm not sure that's actually the motivation.

KURTZ: But, you know, even with the gag order, Trump can attack the case - -

HAM: Yes.

KURTZ: -- and even attack the judge. But, you know, his media detractors, of which there are a few zillion, say, look, he falsified business records to reimburse his then lawyer, Michael Cohen, who will testify, who has also, you know, been convicted for lying, for $130,000 to keep pornstar at the end of the campaign. Trump denies that there was any liaison between them.

KURTZ: Yeah, he does. And look, Michael Cohen's convicted liar. So, you believe or disbelieve his testimony as he comes back and says, oh, I was paid this and I did that. This seems like well-trod ground to me. I'm surprised we're even having this conversation.

KURTZ: It's eight years ago.

CORKE: Yeah, it's many years ago. And does it really matter? Does it get to the heart of what happened?

HAM: And if it's a violation, I have always argued it's probably like a low-level campaign finance violation.

CORKE: Exactly.

HAM: It is not many felonies piled on top of each other or however Bragg has found a creative way to structure it. And I just think that is a specific use of the legal system to target this person. It's fairly obvious if you haven't used it before that that's what is happening.

CORKE: Gee, we haven't seen that before.

KURTZ: I think there was a lot of dismissive coverage that certainly this is the least important of the four criminal cases --

CORKE: Yeah.

KURTZ: -- but now it looks like it's the only one that will actually be completed before the election. And so, I guess my question is, is the press now going to, I mean, of course, it's going to get a monster amount of coverage despite no cameras in the courtroom, but is the press now going to say, oh, no, no, this is serious stuff because you've got payments and adult film actresses.

CORKE: Yeah. I think the salacious nature of this particular case --

KURTZ: -- is what they're going to love. It'll be out there all summer long, and they'll want to contrast that with this, hi, I'm the president, reelect me and look at our convention, but I have news for you. This summer, Howie, I'm making a prediction, it's going to be raucous.

A lot's going to happen at the conventions and so on. Cases like this will pale in comparison to what's coming down the pike.

KURTZ: Right. So, you're saying it's a sexy story --

CORKE: -- Yeah.

KURTZ: --but not necessarily an important story --

CORKE: Exactly.

KURTZ: and may eventually be overshadowed.

CORKE: Couldn't have said it better.

KURTZ: I guess the only outstanding question, of course, is whether or not, as he started to talk about, he gets sentenced to jail if he is convicted. Mary Katharine Ham, Kevin Corke, great to see you. Up next, The American media getting extremely tough on Israel after the tragic airstrikes that killed some of Jose Andres' humanitarian aid workers in Gaza.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KURTZ: Chef Jose Andres, founder of the World Central Kitchen, insists the airstrikes that killed seven of his aid workers in Gaza, for which Israel eventually apologized and fired two officers, were intentional.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

JOSE ANDRES, WORLD CENTRAL KITCHEN FOUNDER: This was not just a bad luck situation where, oops, we dropped the bomb in the wrong place or, or no. This was over 1.5, 1.8 kilometers with a very defined humanitarian convoy that had signs in the top, in the roof. What I know is that we were targeted deliberately, non-stop until everybody was dead in this convoy.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: That's led to some tough interviews with Israeli spokesmen.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DAN ABRAMS, "DAN ABRAMS LIVE" HOST: Whatever transpired, it's Israel's fault.

TAL HEINRICH, ISRAELI GOVERNMENT SPOKESWOMAN: But you see, tragedies do happen during wars. That's my point. It happened, tragedies happen in Kabul, in Fallujah, you know, in Mosul.

ABRAMS: I would have thought Israel, from moment one, would have been out there saying, we're sorry, we're sorry.

WILLIE GEIST, MSNBC "MORNING JOE" CO-HOST: The women and children who are suffering, who don't have a choice but to live in Gaza. Why do you put that in quotes?

UNKNOWN: Because we saw who came in.

GEIST: And talk about the families, the women and children, are they not innocent?

UNKNOWN: Generally, we don't want to hurt innocent people.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: Joining us now from Israel is Fox News Correspondent Trey Yingst. And Trey, it's understandable that Jose Andres is utterly heartbroken, but does he have a point? The Israeli military kept bombing this convoy because somebody mistook a bag for a gun and thought it was Hamas?

TREY YINGST, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT: Yeah, Howie, good morning. Chef Jose Andres does have a point when he talks about the killing of the seven World Central Kitchen workers inside Gaza. And the tragedy speaks to a larger issue in the Israeli military.

And that issue is that the hand is not always attached to the head. You often have troops inside Gaza who are operating at will and they are targeting different areas along the strip, including close to humanitarian convoys and also close to areas where they've told Palestinian civilians to go.

The Israelis have bombarded both northern and southern Gaza. This incident taking place in the central part of the strip. And it's very clear by the findings of this investigation that Israel deliberately targeted these vehicles. The question at hand, though, is whether or not they knew aid workers were inside them.

Now, the Israelis say, of course, they did not know those on the ground, including the aid workers who have been there since the beginning of this conflict, say this was not a one off incident. There have been close to 200 aid workers killed --

KURTZ: Right.

YINGST: -- since the war in Gaza erupted with the October 7th massacre.

KURTZ: I have not seen such aggressive questioning of Israeli officials and spokesmen since Hamas started this war with the brutal massacre of 1200 Israelis. Is there really just a growing sense of frustration and anger, even among those sympathetic to Israel that it's damaging it from the eyes of the world?

YINGST: Absolutely, because the Israeli line from the beginning of this conflict has been that they operate with precision strikes using top level intelligence. And the reality is that is not true. And while there is an investigation ongoing to find more of the details of what took place with the killing of these seven aid workers, the investigation is extensive because these are foreigners.

It would be extensive if it was a friendly fire incident involving Israeli troops. It is not extensive when it involves Palestinian civilians. And that is the reality of how lives in Gaza are valued during this conflict. Now, when we step back from this incident and we look at the six month mark of this war, the Israelis set out with two objectives.

That was to bring the hostages home and to destroy Hamas. Today, the Israelis announced that they are pulling all troops out of southern Gaza, leaving just one brigade inside the strip. And they have not achieved either of those objectives. Howie.

KURTZ: Well, with Donald Trump saying Israel needs to wrap up this war quickly, he told that to me. And, of course, President Biden saying we may condition USA in the future to Bibi Netanyahu. Some of the coverage says that Biden is abandoning Israel, but the U.S. is still backing the Jewish state.

YINST: Yeah, absolutely. And we saw a shift in tone this week from the Biden administration. Officials from John Kirby to Secretary Blinken, to the President himself, basically saying the aid to Israel will be conditioned on their actions on the ground.

And while that's interesting to hear from Washington, the reality behind the scenes is that the Americans are still providing weapons, bombs and fighter jets to the Israelis, understanding that the war in Gaza is just a small piece of a larger picture.

KURTZ: Right.

YINGST: And the real threat is coming from Iran itself and its larger proxies across the region.

KURTZ: All right. We always appreciate your insights. Stay safe. Trey Yingst, thank you. Ahead, how Iowa's Caitlin Clark became the biggest female basketball star ever. But next on "Media Buzz," is the press misrepresenting what Donald Trump is saying about migrants?

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KURTZ: Donald Trump doesn't shy away from incendiary language, but many mainstream media outlets are claiming he went too far in describing illegal migrants.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

CHRIS HAYES, "ALL IN" HOST: At Donald Trump's rallies, he doesn't even try to hide the vile racism.

JIM ACOSTA, "CNN NEWSROOM" HOST: Trump once again using hateful language associated with Nazi Germany. Take a look.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DONALD TRUMP, REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: They're not humans. They're not humans. They're animals. I'll use the word animal because that's what they are.

WOLF BLITZER, "THE SITUATION ROOM" HOST: When he says these are -- these immigrants are animals, they're not humans, what does that suggest? I mean, isn't that brutal? Shouldn't people be condemning that?

SCOTT JENNINGS, CNN POLITICAL COMMENTATOR: I listened to the entire tape. He was specifically talking about the person who murdered Lakin Riley in Georgia. And to be honest with you, Wolf, if somebody murders another human being, I think they deserve to be called animals.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BLITZER: Joining us now from Palm Beach is Caroline Lovett, the Trump Campaign's National Press Secretary. Do you believe that major media outlets -- we saw CNN, Scott Jennings pushed back there, deliberately distorted what the former president said?

KAROLINE LEAVITT, TRUMP CAMPAIGN NATIONAL PRES SECRETARY: Trump Campaign's National Press Secretary: Yes, absolutely. They did, Howard. And this is the mainstream media's game. They are complicit in the Joe Biden White House's lies about the border bloodbath that is taking place on our Southern border.

Here's how it works. Joe Biden's team takes President Trump's words out of context, clips them, posts them on social media, and then the mainstream media runs with it as truth. If Americans took 30 extra seconds to watch the president's full remarks in their full context, they would realize that he was very clearly talking about illegal immigrants that are murderers --

KURTZ: We are --

LEAVITT: -- like the one who brutally killed Lakin Riley. Exactly. Thank you for --thank you.

KURTZ: We're going to take that 30 seconds, because I want people to see the full context of what Donald Trump --

LEAVITT: Yes.

KURTZ: -- actually said. Roll it.

LEAVITT: Thank you.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

TRUMP: The 22-year-old nursing student in Georgia who was barbarically murdered by an illegal alien animal. The Democrats said, please don't call them animals. They're humans. I said, no, they're not humans. They're not humans. They're animals.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: This is not a close call. Fox News, I have to say, repeatedly clarified what he was saying. And we can debate whether vermin or animals goes too far, but you can't just rip out the context. I do want to mention that in Palm Beach, where you are, the Trump campaign raised $50 million last night at an event hosted by a hedge fund billionaire. That's twice as much money as the Biden-Obama-Clinton fundraiser.

Now, the foreign president recently talked to conservative radio host Hugh Hewitt about Israel. Let's take a listen.

(BEGIN AUDIO CLIP)

TRUMP: Every night, they're releasing tapes of a building falling down. They shouldn't be releasing tapes like that. They're doing -- that's why they're losing the P.R. war. Israel is absolutely losing the P.R. war.

(END AUDIO CLIP)

KURTZ: Losing the P.R. war? That's certainly not what Bibi Netanyahu wants to hear. But is it having an effect?

LEVITT: Well, first, I would like to mention, and thank you for mentioning it, the historic fundraiser last night, President Trump hauling in $50 million. As you noted, it is a historic fundraiser, the most ever for a single fundraising event in political history, double what Biden, Obama, and Clinton took in in New York City last week. Our team is well-equipped, well-funded, well-organized to secure victory for Donald Trump and Republicans up and down the ballot on November the 5th.

KURTZ: Can we move on to the question?

LEAVITT: And that is why, yes, and that's why the Democrats are taking his words out of context. As for your question on Israel, President Trump has been very clear that he wants to see Israel obliterate Hamas as efficiently and effectively as possible, and they should do that so that all Israelis can live in peace.

President Trump is a peacemaker, and no one has done more for Israel than President Trump did as president. Seven presidents promised to move the embassy to Jerusalem. President Trump was the only one who got it done. President Trump signed the historic Abraham Accords. He brought four countries to the table to negotiate peace deals with Israel that never even spoke to each other before he was the negotiator.

And President Trump also had his neck on the foot of the Iranian regime, who Joe Biden has enabled. Joe Biden reversed President Trump's very effective sanctions on the Iranians. Joe Biden, one month before the October 7th attack, unfroze $6 billion to the Iranian regime.

KURTZ: Yes.

LEAVITT: And then a week later, after the attack, he gave $100 million in aid to the Gaza Strip, where these Iranian-backed terrorists came from.

KURTZ: Okay.

LEVITT: And so, when President Trump --

KURTZ: Let me move on.

LEAVITT: -- is back in the White House, Iran will be broke again, and bloodthirsty terrorists in the Middle East will be gunned down.

KURTZ: Let me touch on the question of abortion. In our interview, Donald Trump told me that he thinks there needs to be a compromise position, maybe 15 weeks, maybe 16 weeks. But you just had courts in Florida uphold Ron DeSantis' six-week ban in Florida. Is the foreign president going to take that on as too harsh?

LEAVITT: Well, the president will make a statement on this issue of abortion this week, and I won't get ahead of him on what that will entail. I encourage your audience to tune in and hear the president himself. What I will say is that thus far, President Trump has been very consistent in where he stands on this issue.

He has long said that the Dobbs decision was correct in returning this issue back to the states, returning the power to make decisions on this issue back to those closest to we the people, and that is in our state legislatures. President Trump has also long supported the three exceptions on this issue --

KURTZ: Yes.

LEAVITT: -- of life, of rape, and of incest, and life of the mother. And you know what? I'd like to see the media ask questions of the Democrats and of Joe Biden on where they stand, because many Democrats in their party support abortion up until the moment of birth.

Joe Biden's budget actually stripped the long-withstanding bipartisan Hyde Amendment, which would now force taxpayers to fund abortion. Those are radical positions that the majority of Americans disagree with. President Trump supports common-sense measures on this issue, and the American people will hear more from him on it this week.

KURTZ: I'm a little short on time, but let me ask you about Trump writing this about Judge Juan Merchan in the hush money trial. If this partisan hack wants to put me in the clink for speaking the open, obvious truth, I will gladly become a modern-day Nelson Mandela. It will be my great honor.

So, why is he comparing himself to Mandela, and is he now worried about going to jail in this case?

LEAVITT: No, not at all. Truth will ultimately prevail in this case and in all of the cases. The Democrats want President Trump confined to a courtroom. Unfortunately, he'll have to be on trial in a dirty New York City courtroom because Alvin Bragg is a far-left district attorney who has spent more time persecuting President Trump than prosecuting real violent criminals on the streets of New York.

President Trump is exposing the truth in all of these Biden-led witch hunts, and that's exactly why you see these gag orders coming down. Not only are they prosecuting him, but they want to silence him. It's a complete violation of his First Amendment rights.

KURTZ: Right. Well, he can still talk about the case, but I'm glad to have your response on that. Karoline Leavitt, thanks so much. Thank you. For joining us.

LEAVITT: Thank you.

KURTZ: After the break, is coverage of the constant presidential polls more confusing than clarifying?

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KURTZ: Presidential poll numbers are constantly bouncing around. Joining us now to sort it out is Frank Luntz, the veteran pollster. So, the media were playing up some Bloomberg polls that show Joe Biden catching up in three swing states. Then came a Wall Street Journal poll, Trump up by four or five, six points in six out of seven battleground states.

And then to a headline, Shock poll, Biden up by 10 in Pennsylvania. I'm getting whiplash. How do you sort them?

FRANK LUNTZ, POLLSTER: I'm getting whiplash, too. The fact is, I know it's my profession and I know I make money every time that they focus on polling. They should stop. We're very early in the process. We got seven months to go. And in the end, there's only five percent who are undecided and it only matters in seven states.

KURTZ: Right.

LUNTZ: So, all these national polling, it doesn't have any impact whatsoever. And in these swing states, so often these surveys are 300 or 400 people. That's a margin of error of five percent, six, even seven percent. So, the polling isn't meant to be specific. It's meant to gather headlines and it needs to stop.

KURTZ: Two-word answer. If the election were held tomorrow, who would win?

LUNTZ: Donald Trump.

KURTZ: No question.

LUNTZ: Tremendous question.

Kurtz: Yeah.

LUNTZ: But I'm watching the key votes -- Latino, Hispanics. They're voting. It's tied now between Trump and Biden. And in some surveys, Trump even has a narrow lead and they're frustrated. They feel ignored, forgotten, even betrayed.

KURTZ: Is that being sufficiently covered? Because what you often read about is, well, Trump is in trouble with suburban women and that sort of thing.

LUNTZ: It absolutely is not being covered. There's another group, African- American young men. I'm doing a focus group this week. I'm in the process of recruiting right now. I am shocked at how many male African-Americans under age 40 are voting for Donald Trump or at least considering voting for him. And again, part of it is anti-Biden and some of it is pro-Trump. And then the third group --

KURTZ: And some of them may stay home rather than vote for President Biden.

LUNTZ: And they were voting for Joe Biden by 90-10. The other group is organized labor, union members. Once again, Trump is close to that 50 percent mark. When you lose those three groups, I don't know how you lose the, I don't know how you win the election. I don't know how Biden comes back.

KURTZ: So, Gallup poll says that Trump has held steady on various qualities. Who do you believe is doing a better job? Biden has dropped nine or 10 points on effectively managing the government, likable, decisive leader, honest and trustworthy. Obviously bad news for the President. What's that really about?

LUNTZ: It's about his age. And it's about his age. It's about his age. And it's about his age. And his age. In the end, you can't spin that. Donald Trump has legal challenges that are going to have a tremendous impact as you go through the election cycle if he is found guilty. That's a big if.

Joe Biden is not going to be able to get around the fact that he's the oldest president ever. He shows it in his in his communication. And right now, if I'm Donald Trump's campaign, the thing I'm focused on is forcing Joe Biden into a debate. That's when you'll see the comparison between the two individuals. I'd be talking about that every single day. Debate me.

KURTZ: Yeah. We know who's going to be the nominees.

KURTZ: Right.

LUNTZ: Let's get to the debates.

KURTZ: Yeah. I asked Donald Trump about that and he said, well, I may have skipped the Republican primary debates. But this has there has to be a debate. And I think there should be. When Biden blips up in these zillion polls, I see the analysts say, well, Americans are getting more optimistic about the economy now that it's getting better. When he slips, I read that Americans are still anxious about the economy. So, it seems contradictory.

LUNTZ: Well, the analysis is contradictory. Americans are anxious about inflation. It's not the economy. I want to be specific.

KURTZ: Okay.

LUNTZ: It's not even inflation. It's affordability. It's food and fuel, housing and health care. The two F's, two H's. And the American people think Joe Biden has made that situation worse. And by about 10, maybe even 15 points, they think Donald Trump can do a better job.

The second biggest issue, and you've talked about it -- immigration. They believe that Joe Biden to a great degree caused the problem and that Donald Trump to a great degree had fixed the problem. The GOP now has somewhere between a 15 and 20 percent margin on immigration. The one issue where Republicans are weak on is abortion. And that's a case where more Americans support Biden's position than support Trump's position.

KURTZ: Now, these polls show Trump maintaining the same lead, even with RFK in the race. You say it's anti-democratic for Biden forces to try to keep him off state ballots. Isn't that pretty standard when you have a third party candidate?

LUNTZ: But this is a democracy. And in the end, there are things that are actually more important than a simple election. The idea that the DNC, the Democratic National Committee, is spending millions to keep RFK off the ballot is anti-democratic.

And it shows that even the name of the party is hypocritical. However, RFK will hurt the Democrats by a percent or two more than the Republicans. So, I understand why they're doing it, but that doesn't make it right.

KURTZ: I have time for one sentence, and that is, you seem very pessimistic that Joe Biden, who can't do anything about his age, can come back in this election.

LUNTZ: I believe he can, but it will be dependent on a Trump slip. As things are right now, and you saw the $50 million fundraiser.

KURTZ: Yeah.

LUNTZ: Trump is hitting on all cylinders. If Trump fails, if Trump does a bad speech, that's how Joe Biden comes back.

KURTZ: Frank Luntz, very good to see you. Thank you. Still to come, a totally scripted ESPN interview with Joe Biden, and how Caitlin Clark produced the two most-watched women's basketball games of all time.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KURTZ: It was the most-watched women's basketball game ever. Over 12 million viewers for ESPN, with Iowa's phenomenal Caitlin Clark hitting 41 points, including a record-tying nine three-pointers, and denying she wanted revenge against LSU after last season's championship loss.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

CAITLIN CLARK, UNIVERSITY OF IOW BASKETBALL PLAYER: It's not about last year. You worry too much about the past. You know, you're going to get caught up in that. It's about being present.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: Joining us now from Nashville, Clay Travis, the founder of "OutKick" and a nationally syndicated radio guy. So, the game Friday night, where Caitlin Clark had a rare off-night, 14 million viewers, leading Iowa to a nail-biting two-point win, playing for the national championship against South Carolina this afternoon. Are these games transforming how we see women's basketball?

CLAY TRAVIS, "OUTKICK" FOUNDER: No, it's a great question. And I think it really comes down to, is there another Caitlin Clark in the wings that is going to captivate America? Because if Iowa's women had lost, remember they played a close game --

KURTZ: yeah.

TRAVIS: -- against West Virginia, for instance, early in the tournament. If they had lost that game, they'd probably be half, maybe two-thirds of this audience not showing up. So, the question I have, Howie, is you remember Ronda Rousey? You remember how everybody cared about Ronda Rousey --

KURTZ: Yeah.

TRAVIS: in the UFC, and then Ronda Rousey lost and suddenly the interest evaporated? Is that what's going on with women's basketball right now? Do we have a transcendent, elite star power of Caitlin Clark and nobody else in the wings? Or is someone else going to take the baton and continue to grow the sport? Another way example, Jordan. Look, Michael Jordan, the most people to ever watch a basketball game, Howie, was 1996.

KURTZ: I remember.

TRAVIS: The Jordan game six against the Utah Jazz.

KURTZ: Yeah, right.

TRAVIS: No one else has ever come close to that number. There were other stars, but none of them of the Jordan level. So, how do you assess the future beyond Caitlin Clark? I think that's the question to know --

KURTZ: All right.

TRAVIS: --where the audience goes from here.

KURTZ: I mean, I think she's phenomenal. I think she's Steph Curry in a ponytail, and her passing is incredible. But you know, there was some back and forth, certainly last year, with LSU's Angel Reese, who had this to say after the loss this week.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ANGEL REESE, LSU BASKETBALL PLAYER: I've been through so much. I've seen so much. I've been attacked so many times, death threats. I've been sexualized. I've been threatened. I've been so many things, and I've stood strong.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: Clay, some commentators have just come out and said it, that she gets a rougher time because she's black. I don't buy that. I think anybody on the internet who is as outspoken as she is gets a rough time. I bet if you go into your mentions sometimes, they look a little rough.

KURTZ: Well, you had to bring that up.

TRAVIS: I know mind-do (ph), as well. I actually thought before he walked it back, Emanuel Acho on FS1 had a really good take about Angel Reese. He said, look, if you want to be the villain, you can't then cry when you lose. And she was the villain, and she made millions of dollars off of being the villain.

Nobody wants -- the analogy I made was, nobody wants to see Thanos cry after he snaps his fingers and half the world disappears, right? If you're going to be the bad guy or the bad gal --

KURTZ: Yeah.

TRAVIS: -- then you're going to have a rough go when you actually lose.

KURTZ: All right. I just need a brief answer on this, because I know LSU Coach Kim Mulkey didn't intentionally or didn't deliberately march her team off the court to avoid the national anthem.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

KURTZ: She said, look, this is routine. But this is the biggest game that she's ever coached, and couldn't it have occurred to her that it would seem that way, that she was blowing off the national anthem? Yeah, and I think that's why both women's teams stood and all of them did at the Final Four on Friday, and I think both of them will on Sunday, as well.

KURTZ: Okay.

TRAVIS: It is true that college sometimes makes a mess there.

KURTZ: Let me get to this, because former ESPN host Sage Steele interviewed President Biden three years ago. Now, she tells Fox News Digital her bosses orchestrated the whole thing.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SAGE STEELE, FORMER ESPN HOST: Every single question was scripted, gone over dozens of times by many executives, editors and executives. Absolutely. I was on script and was told not to deviate. It was very much, this is what you will ask, this is how you will say it. No follow-ups. No follow-ups.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: Clay, I've got 20 seconds. How do you tell a seasoned anchor no follow-ups with the president?

TRAVIS: Yeah, I think it's a huge story. And the other question I would have, Howard, is did ESPN provide all the questions to Joe Biden in advance? Outkick asked whether they would, whether her story was true, and also did they provide all the questions that they were going to ask Joe Biden in advance? ESPN declined comment on that.

KURTZ: Yeah.

TRAVIS: To me, it's a huge story.

KURTZ: All right. Clay Travis, thanks for coming off the bench for us. And that's this edition of "Media Buzz." I'm Howard Kurtz. You can subscribe to my daily podcast, "Media Buzzmeter." Join the millions who are downloading it. By the way, all of that coverage of that New York earthquake, nothing really happened. We're back here next Sunday. We'll see you then. We're the only media analysis show on national television.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

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