

# [***Taylor Swift Conspiracy Proves Tribalism Is Driving Conservatives Crazy | Opinion***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B8Y-7101-JBR6-90KY-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** Taylor Swift has the ability to turn votes not because she's a curated political actor, but because for millions of people, she comes across as a normal, relatable person.

**Body**

"Out of the blue, suddenly, [*Taylor Swift*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/taylor-swift?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) is the most famous person on earth," right-wing influencer Benny Johnson [*told*](https://twitter.com/JasonSCampbell/status/1752410575575904261) his audience, clinching a podium finish in the Living-Under-A-Rock [*Olympics*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/olympics?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships). Johnson's point? Taylor Swift's popularity and that of her boyfriend, Kansas City Chiefs tight end [*Travis Kelce*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/travis-kelce?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), are nothing more than a calculated psy-op: a carefully manufactured plot to "save [*Joe Biden*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/joe-biden?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)" in his bid to retain the presidency in 2024.

Johnson's hardly alone—his diagnosis of Taylor Swift is shared by figures like [*Fox*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/fox?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) host Jesse Watters, who [*branded*](https://www.politico.com/news/2024/01/10/pentagon-taylor-swift-fox-00134866) the international superstar a [*Pentagon*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/pentagon?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) asset, and [*Laura Loomer*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/laura-loomer?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), who [*considers*](https://thehill.com/media/4437923-taylor-swift-conspiracy-theories-engulf-conservative-social-media/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThe%20Democrats'%20Taylor%20Swift%20election,Taylor%20Swift%20and%20Travis%20Kelce.) Swift's expression of left-leaning ***politics*** tantamount to "election interference."

As strange as it may sound to the lucky folk who spend their time in better places than right-wing social media and [*Fox News*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/fox-news?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), a surprising number of those who make up the public face of conservative political commentary are 100 percent on board with the idea that the highest-grossing female musical artist of all time is actually part of a vast conspiracy to give President Biden an electoral boost.

To the true believers, the fact that Swift's ongoing Eras tour has grossed more than a billion dollars is immaterial—her musical career and business savvy couldn't possibly be the reason that Swift's a household name, almost universally recognizable, or that she was named *Time*'s Person of the Year.

How did we even get here? How is it that some of the Right's most prominent and listened-to voices have completely forgotten that famous musicians exist largely outside of the political universe? And how is it that some on the Right are more willing to believe that Taylor Swift is a political psyop than that she's, y'know, a famous musician who shares the liberal political and social outlook of most famous musicians? Conservatives really have trouble understanding famous people—even the ones that are supposedly "on our side."

"We have a popularity contest to see who becomes president," podcaster and MMA commentator [*Joe Rogan*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/joe-rogan?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) [*opined*](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1927140693990017) in 2018. "And [Donald Trump] was the very first ever popular person to enter the popularity contest." This diagnosis lays out the tactic of celebrities in ***politics*** quite succinctly—most people only see (and react to) the celebrity part. This can get into some profoundly stupid territory as our political tribes try and grab celebrities to prop up their cause, from Kid Rock and [*Kanye West*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/kanye-west?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) on the Right to the Rock and Oprah on the Left. Taylor Swift is only the latest in a long line of celebrities whose endorsement makes perfect political fodder for people who don't think very much before they vote.

Yet, that's exactly why the right-wing psyop hysteria falls apart. Taylor Swift has the ability to turn votes not because she's a curated political actor, but precisely because she isn't—because for millions of people in America, she comes across as a normal, relatable person (who's also dating a star athlete and has 14 Grammys). Her support for Joe Biden isn't an indication of anything more nefarious than supporting Joe Biden—and, were her political loyalties to fall on the other side of the aisle, the Right's cultural loudmouths would be fawning over their newfound ally.

In the modern world of conspiracy theory conservatism, where the personal, cultural, and musical have all become political, there's no room for the idea that some celebrities are famous because their content actually appeals to a wide variety of people, or that a pop star dating a football star is just going to be a popular story. Such rational explanations are discarded in favor of the kind of hyper-paranoia that only desperate, bad blood tribalism can provide: a world in which music and football aren't actually popular, and only grand conspiracy can possibly explain the existence of people who think differently than us. Tribalism is making conservatives stupid—and it took Tayvis to show just how stupid.

*Isaac Willour is an award-winning journalist focusing on race, culture, and American conservatism, as well as a corporate relations analyst at Bowyer Research. He is in his senior year at Grove City College, and has been featured at outlets including National Review, the Wall Street Journal Opinion, and the New York Times Opinion. He is a member of the Young Voices contributor program, and can be found on Twitter @IsaacWillour.*

*The views expressed in this article are the writer's own.*

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2346143/taylor-swift-travis-kelce.jpg)

**Graphic**

Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce

Patrick Smith/Getty Images

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND - JANUARY 28: Travis Kelce #87 of the Kansas City Chiefs (L) celebrates with Taylor Swift after defeating the Baltimore Ravens in the AFC Championship Game at M&T Bank Stadium on January 28, 2024 in Baltimore, Maryland.

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