

# [***Trump's 43-Year-Old Presidency Comments Go Viral***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BH5-BTH1-JBR6-945N-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** "I would dedicate my life to this country, but I see it as being a mean life," Trump said of running for office in the resurfaced clip.

**Body**

Donald Trump once said that he could never see himself running for president, as he found public office to be a "very mean life."

The interview, which was conducted in 1980, aired in 1981 as part of the [*NBC*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/nbc?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) special *Rona Barrett Looks at Today's $uperRich*. A clip of the interview resurfaced this week on X, formerly [*Twitter*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/twitter?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), where it has garnered more than 19 million views in the days since it was uploaded.

More than 36 years before he would be voted in as the 45th president of the U.S., onetime property magnate Trump sat down for his interview with legendary gossip columnist Barrett, who questioned him on his political ambitions.

"For some people, the ultimate goal in life has been becoming the president of the United States. Would you like to be the president of the United States?" Barrett asked in [*the clip*](https://twitter.com/historyinmemes/status/1765432405429543224), which was shared on X by the account @historyinmemes.

"I really don't believe I would, Rona," Trump responded, "but I would like to see somebody as the president who could do the job, and there are very capable in this country."

"Most people who are capable are not running for office," Barrett told Trump. "Most men are frightened of ***politics*** today."

"It is a shame, isn't it?" Trump remarked. "The most capable people are not necessarily running for political office and that is a very sad commentary on the country. They head major corporations and they head this and that, but they are not running for political office."

"Why wouldn't someone like yourself run for political office?" Barrett persisted. "You have all the money that you possibly need, you've accomplished a great deal even though you are only 34. I know there's a lot of things that you possibly can do in the years ahead. Why wouldn't you dedicate yourself to public service?"

"Because I think it's a very mean life," Trump told his interviewer. "I would love and I would dedicate my life to this country, but I see it as being a mean life."

The future Republican leader also shared his belief that "somebody with strong views, and somebody with the kind of views that are maybe a little bit unpopular—which may be right, but may be unpopular—wouldn't necessarily have a chance of getting elected against somebody with no great brain but a big smile. And that's a sad commentary for the political process."

"Television, in a strange way, has ruined that process, hasn't it?" Barrett suggested, demonstrating the changing media landscape at the time.

"It's hurt the process very much," Trump agreed. "I mean, the Abraham Lincolns of the world... Abraham Lincoln would probably not be electable today because of television. He was not a handsome man and he did not smile at all. He would not be considered to be a prime candidate for the presidency, and that's a shame, isn't it?"

Trump said elsewhere in the interview that rather than become president, one area he would "like to be involved in is trying to help choose somebody, or working with a group of people whereby they put up a candidate who would be acceptable to be a presidential, you know, to be the president.

"The country, if we have the one man, and it's really not that big a situation. You know people say, 'Well, what could anybody do as president?' One man could turn this country around. The one proper president could turn this country around. I firmly believe that."

"You think there is one man?" Barrett asked, prompting Trump to respond: "There is one man that can turn this country around. I could tell you, I know a number of people that would be excellent presidents. I will not tell you who they are, but I know a number of people that could be excellent presidents of this country.

"But they are not running for political office. They are not in political office. They are extraordinarily brilliant. They are very, very confident. They are leaders. They have the respect of everybody, and they would be fabulous presidents. But they're not running for political office, and I think that's very sad, and I think you said it. Maybe television is a thing that most hurt the political process in this country."

At the time of the interview, Democrat [*Jimmy Carter*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/jimmy-carter?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) was president of the U.S. He was succeeded by Republican Ronald Reagan, who took office in 1981. In November of last year, [*Trump insulted Carter*](https://www.newsweek.com/jimmy-carters-grandson-responds-trumps-attacks-1845429?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) during a campaign speech, one night before the former president's wife, Rosalynn Carter, died.

As his interview neared its conclusion, Trump quipped that he would consider running for president if he lost all of his money.

"If you lost your fortune today, what would you do tomorrow?" Barrett asked.

"Maybe I'd run for president. I don't know," Trump responded.

"You mean you think you have to be bankrupt, with not a dime in your pocket in order to be a good president?" Barrett enquired.

"No, I'm only kidding," said Trump. "You know when I say that of course I'm being somewhat [facetious]. But I have to tell you a lot of people would vote for you if you were in that position because they feel sorry for you, and again I think that's a very sad commentary. I think that's a very sad commentary."

Trump is currently vying for a second term in office. He is expected to face off against President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/joe-biden?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) after losing to the Democrat in 2020.

Preliminary polling shows Trump and Biden neck-and-neck ahead of November. Prior to Super Tuesday's vote, where both men dominated their respective parties' primary races, Biden was [*barely leading Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/donald-trump-joe-biden-polls-2024-eleciton-1875871?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) in two of the last six major national surveys, while Trump led the president in three of the polls evaluated by FiveThirtyEight.

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2359539/donald-trump.jpg)

**Graphic**

Donald Trump

CHANDAN KHANNA/AFP via Getty Images

Donald Trump is pictured on March 5, 2024 in Palm Beach, Florida. The former president said in an interview more than 40 years ago that he couldn't see himself running for office because he found the politician realm to be "very mean."

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