



Written by [Salena Zito](#) on July 16, 2024

Trump Rewrites Republican Convention Speech to Focus on Unity, Not Biden

WORLD EXCLUSIVE — Former President Donald Trump has completely rewritten his convention speech in light of the assassination attempt against him on Saturday and will call on Thursday for a new effort at national unity.

In an exclusive interview with the Washington Examiner a day after being hit by a sniper's bullet, Trump said he wanted to take advantage of a historic moment and draw the country together.

"The speech I was going to give on Thursday was going to be a humdinger," Trump said. "Had this not happened, this would've been one of the most incredible speeches," aimed mostly at the policies of President Joe Biden. "Honestly, it's going to be a whole different speech now."

He has switched, he said, from a speech meant to excite his voter base to one that demonstrates his belief that the attack on him at a rally in Pennsylvania has changed the election campaign entirely. Both Republicans and Democrats have acknowledged this in the aftermath of Saturday's shocking incident. Trump said people all across the country from different walks of life and different political views have called him, and he noted that he was saved from death because he turned from the crowd to look at a screen showing data he was using in his speech.

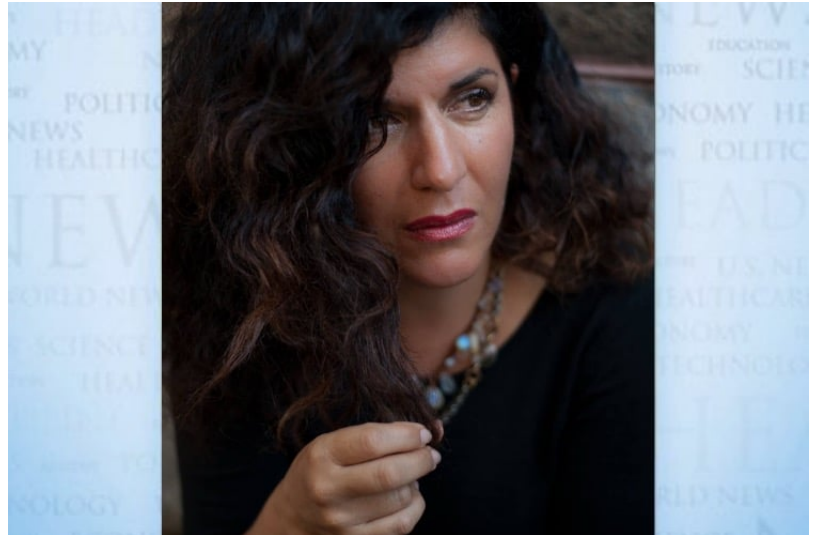
"That reality is just setting in," he said. "I rarely look away from the crowd. Had I not done that in that moment, well, we would not be talking today, would we?"

Talking as he boarded his plane in Bedminster, New Jersey, for Milwaukee, where the Republican National Convention started Monday and lasts through Thursday, Trump said his speech will meet the moment that history demands. "It is a chance to bring the country together," he said. "I was given that chance."

Early Sunday morning, Trump posted on Truth Social that it was "God alone who prevented the unthinkable from happening" and that he would "fear not." Again, in talking to the Washington Examiner, he invoked "God" for his deliverance.

"This is a chance to bring the whole country, even the whole world, together," he said. "The speech will be a lot different, a lot different than it would've been two days ago."

The Washington Examiner's interview with Trump had been due to take place on his airplane on the return flight from the rally to Bedminster. That arrangement put this reporter just feet from Trump when he was shot.



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Trump hailed Corey Comperatore, the former fire chief who was shot and killed at the rally, and two other supporters, David Dutch and James Copenhaver, who were wounded and are recovering in stable condition at a local hospital.

Trump said his decision to raise his hand when the Secret Service was leading him offstage was to let the people there know he was OK “and that America goes on, we go forward, that we are strong,” he said.

The photograph of him holding his fist in the air, blood streaming across his face as the agents surrounded him, has already become the iconic image of the 2024 election.

If he speaks in Milwaukee of uniting the country, it would echo President Ronald Reagan, who, in 1981, projected strength as he, too, recovered from wounds (far graver than Trump’s) inflicted by a would-be assassin in Washington, D.C.

Trump said when he stood up and saw the crowd had not moved, he needed to tell them that he and the country were going to be OK: “The energy coming from the people there in that moment, they just stood there. It’s hard to describe what that felt like, but I knew the world was looking. I knew that history would judge this, and I knew I had to let them know we are OK.”

Salena Zito is a CNN political analyst, and a staff reporter and columnist for the Washington Examiner. She reaches the Everyman and Everywoman through shoe-leather journalism, traveling from Main Street to the beltway and all places in between. To find out more about Salena and read her past columns, please visit the Creators Syndicate webpage at www.creators.com.

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