



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on September 27, 2016

1st Debate: Clinton-Holt Tag Team vs. Trump

The “Debate of the Century,” the first face-to-face matchup between presidential contenders Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, quickly turned into a three-way affair, with NBC “moderator” Lester Holt (shown at left) repeatedly taking sides with Clinton and badgering Trump. The hour-and-a-half debate, broadcast live Monday night on all the major networks from the Hofstra University campus in Hempstead, New York, was expected to attract 100 million viewers, a new record for a political event, and second only to the Super Bowl. From tabulations now available, it appears the final viewer count may come close to those predicted numbers. Another even more important prediction also proved to be accurate: that debate moderator Lester Holt would follow the familiar path of liberal media moderators in previous debates and throw support to the liberal-left Democrat.



At the start of the event, Holt announced that the planned six 15-minute segments would be directed at exploring three topic areas: “Achieving Prosperity,” “America’s Direction” and “Securing America.” The debate, he explained, was being sponsored by the Commission on Presidential Debates, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization. The commission had drafted the debate’s format, and the rules had been agreed to by the campaigns.

“The questions are mine and have not been shared with the commission or the campaigns,” Holt said. “The audience here in the room has agreed to remain silent so that we can focus on what the candidates are saying.”

Going into the debate there was ample cause for questioning the NBC anchor’s ability to be genuinely impartial. Like virtually all of his [colleagues in the establishment media](#), Lester Holt tilts to the Left. Holt took over as anchor of NBC Nightly News last year, after Brian Williams was fired for misrepresenting his Iraq War reporting experiences. Following the September 2 announcement that Holt had been selected as the first debate moderator, the Media Research Center compiled an archive of video segments showing [his bias](#) regarding Clinton and Trump, as well as statements showing his bias on issues ranging from ObamaCare to Syrian refugees to “Climate refugees” to illegal alien amnesty, etc.

The question in the minds of many critics was whether Holt’s partiality would result in a reprise of the infamous episode of the 2012 presidential debate cycle, in which CNN’s [Candy Crowley stepped out of her official moderator role to help President Obama](#) against his debate opponent, Governor Mitt Romney, on the issue of Benghazi and terrorism.



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Lester Holt comes across as a much cooler, calmer, less jarringly partisan moderator than Candy Crowley, which lends an air of legitimacy to claims that he is objective and fair. However, after viewing the debate and reviewing the [transcript](#), it is clear that Holt favored Clinton and leaned on Trump. He stepped over the line into the Clinton camp to challenge Trump on releasing his income taxes, on the issue of stop-and-frisk policing, on race relations, on his opposition to the Iraq War, and on [Barack Obama's birth certificate](#).

He did not show any similar interest in asking Hillary Clinton about any of the many issues that are important to millions of American voters: her colossal Benghazi failure and coverup; the millions of dollars, scandalous deals, and conflicts of interest involved with the [Clinton Foundation](#); the national security perils from her "lost" e-mails; her bailouts and sellout to Wall Street; her role (with husband Bill) in [selling off America's uranium to Russia](#); the [cover-up of her medical problems](#); and much more. Holt's adversarial probing of Trump would have been legitimate if he had shown a balanced inclination to do the same with Clinton. As it was, his one-sided hammering seemed to throw Trump off balance and help Hillary keep him on the defensive.

Many commentators and even many Trump supporters who were interviewed expressed the perception that Trump "failed to control the fight" and was always responding with counterpunches to a more aggressive, in-control Clinton.

Clinton undoubtedly surprised a great many viewers (including this one) by not only lasting the full 90 minutes, but doing so without any major faux pas or meltdown. For weeks [her health had become a major issue](#) — and it still is. But, barring another collapsing/fainting, major-coughing attack, or neurological headbobbing incident, her performance on the stage last night will probably help to take the edge off that concern to some degree.

Who Won?

A [CNBC online poll](#) of nearly one million respondents (960,300) found 67 percent saying Trump won vs. 33 percent for Clinton. A *TIME* Internet poll with 1.6 million respondents came out at 55 percent for Trump, 45 percent for Clinton. In fact, except for CNN — which is often called the Clinton News Network, due to obvious bias — most snap polls taken after the debate came out with Trump handily on top. The CNN poll, a survey of 521 registered voters — which [CNN admits was top-heavy with Democrats](#) — came out with Clinton winning the debate 62 percent to 27 percent.

The next debate, to be held at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri on October 9, will be co-hosted by CNN's Anderson Cooper and ABC's Martha Raddatz, both of whom are at least as liberal-left and pro-Clinton as Lester Holt. Judging from the just-concluded debate, as well as the history of recent political debates, we can expect that the next matchup will be a three-against-one tag team affair.

Photo of Lester Holt, Hillary Clinton, and Donald Trump at the first debate: AP Images

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