



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on September 11, 2024

## Critics: ABC News, Moderators Rigged Debate for Harris. Greenwald: They Never Once Challenged Her.

The verdict is in on last night's ABC News presidential debate between former President Donald Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris.

It was fixed. It was biased. It was a joke. Moderators Linsey Davis and David Muir asked loaded, hostile questions of Trump, but tossed Harris one slow pitch after another. They "fact-checked" Trump's accuracy repeatedly, but let Harris slide, not once "fact-checking" [her repeated lies](#).

But that's not surprising, particularly given what the Media Research Center's NewsBusters website revealed: Almost 100 percent of ABC's coverage of Trump, particularly that by Muir, is negative. And a full 100 percent of its coverage of Harris is positive.



AP Images  
David Muir

### Experts Agree on Bias

Two experts who appeared with Dr. Phil on his [post-debate town hall](#) said that the body language and questions asked were biased.

"Just look at body language," expert Greg Hartley told the television headshrinker:

Look at the facial expressions of people when they're looking at Trump. There was clearly a bias against Trump in their faces.

Hartley also said the moderators asked easy questions of Harris and hostile ones of Trump.

"That feels like bias to me," he said. "I would challenge them to tell me why that's not a biased situation."

Expert Scott Rouse noted that the moderators frequently spoke over Trump so he couldn't finish his answers, and that his microphone was louder, which made him sound more aggressive.

"He sounded a little bit louder to me," Rouse said. "So whether that was on purpose to make him sound more aggressive, I don't know, but he was pretty loud in there."

Dr. Phil read a list of questions that showed their obvious bias.

### Glenn Greenwald's Take

In his [post-debate System Update](#), Glenn Greenwald said that "the way in which this debate was



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structured and moderated ... shocked me ... because my understanding of the structure was that it was going to be identical to the first CNN debate.”

### **Fact-checking ... or Not**

Greenwald thought the CNN debate with Joe Biden was fairly done because the candidates had equal time and the network didn't try to fact-check the two in real time. He said ABC's moderators should have checked *every* assertion the candidates made or *none*, because “you get driven by your own biases, your own preconceptions of issues and candidates.”

The only fact-checking involved Davis and Muir “arguing directly” with Trump, he said. They were “constantly saying after Donald Trump was finished speaking, “That is not true, what you said is inaccurate, what you said is false.”

When Trump responded, the moderators argued more. On the other hand, Harris had more than an easy time. The moderators never questioned a thing she said, Greenwald continued:

Never once, not a single time, did the moderators ever tell Kamala Harris that anything she said was out of context, was misleading, was deceitful, was exaggerated, or was false. And it's not because Kamala Harris spoke for 90 minutes without uttering false statements. She had an endless number of false statements that she uttered that could easily and should easily have been subject to fact-checking.

Greenwald observed that Harris lied about Trump's position on in vitro fertilization; what Trump said about the Unite the Right Rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017; and the claim that Trump left Biden with the highest unemployment rate since the Great Depression.

### **Bickering With Trump, Letting Harris Skate**

The moderators were “blatant” about it, he said. They were “bickering” with the former president:

Whenever Trump would say anything they would just kind of make asides about how he didn't answer the question, or how something that he said was out of context. They never, ever once did that with Kamala Harris, despite the fact that for the vast majority of the occasions when she was asked a direct question, she refused to answer.

On that count, he noted, they let her skate on a question about the Biden administration's [disastrous withdrawal](#) from Afghanistan. That operation left 13 Americans dead.

Other questions, notably those on abortion, came from a leftist perspective. That made sense, he said, because “they hate Donald Trump and his version of conservatism. His anti-establishment populism is what they feel threatened by.”

Given that ABC's figurehead is former Clinton Mafia soldier George Stephanopoulos, Greenwald continued, “it was very predictable what was going to happen.”

But “the debate structure was ... blatantly designed to favor her, how the questions were posed,” he said:

It was as if they knew what Trump was going to say even on things like immigration and inflation, and every question was designed to preempt his response, to sort of negate it, and



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then asked. ... It was often, like, “Why should women trust you President Trump?” and then they would turn to Kamala Harris and they would say, “Do you have anything to say on that?”

## Hugh Hewitt

Commentator Hugh Hewitt said likewise.

Trump lost the debate but “won the war,” he said. And ABC News “lost the most. They were so biased. Perhaps the worst presidential debate in history.”

The moderators “framed every question to help Kamala Harris,” he said:

It is as though the head of Disney, which owns ABC, Bob Iger, sent a memo to the head of ABC or called the head of ABC, and the same thing happened from ABC to ABC News, right down to David Muir and Linsey Davis. Tank it. Throw it to Harris. Kill Trump. Stop Trump. And that’s what it was for a solid hour and a half.

## Muir’s Trump Hate

The day before the debate, NewsBusters accurately predicted how ABC News and its moderators would handle the debate.

Harris “could not have chosen a friendlier forum for their first encounter,” the [website reported](#).

Of the three major networks,

ABC’s *World News Tonight* — run by debate moderator David Muir — has been the most positive towards Harris and the most hostile to Trump.



The “news” program’s reports about Harris were 100 percent favorable, and those about Trump 93 percent negative:

[W]hile viewers of ABC’s *World News Tonight* certainly heard negative comments about Harris during these past six-and-a-half weeks, all of them were from Trump, his campaign team, or other Republicans — never from reporters or nonpartisan sources.



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At the same time, while our spin score similarly excludes all Democratic soundbites about the Republican nominee, ABC's reporters and anchors either jumped in to criticize Trump themselves, or broadcast negative comments from non-partisan sources to impart a heavily negative spin to the former President's coverage.

Knowing all this raises an obvious question. Why did Trump and his handlers agree to the debate they had to know would be rigged?



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