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Will Biden's History of Plagiarizing and Lying Be an Issue in 2020?

Unless something quite unforeseen happens between now and the Democratic National Convention in late August, former Vice President Joe Biden is expected to be the Democratic nominee to challenge President Donald Trump. As such, Biden's past political history should become an issue, even if the media seems content to let him run a basement campaign.



Biden has run for president twice before, once in 1988, and again in 2008, when he was among Democrats who lost the nomination to Senator Barack Obama of Illinois. Unlike 2008, when Biden's campaign was never able to gain much traction, for a time in 1988 it appeared that Biden might very well be the Democratic nominee, instead of Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis.

Biden's problems, which ultimately cost him the nomination in 1988, began in a campaign stop in New Hampshire when he responded testily to a heckler who questioned his academic credentials: "I went to law school on a full academic scholarship, the one in my class to have a full academic scholarship, went back to law school, and, in fact, ended up in the top half of my class."

Biden added, "I was the outstanding student in the political science department at the end of the year. I graduated with three degrees from undergraduate school."

The problem with Biden's glowing resume was that his assertions were not true. He only had *one* degree, not three; he was *not* named the outstanding political science student; and rather than a *full* scholarship, he had only a *half* scholarship. Rather than finishing in the top half of Syracuse Law School, he actually finished 76th in a class of 85! Biden later admitted he was wrong on his claims, saying that his memory had failed him.

But that was not the only problem with the truth Biden had during the 1988 campaign. At the Iowa State Fair, Biden used phrases that were intended to convey that he was of a hardscrabble background. It is true that his father was a used-car salesman, but what Biden did wrong was that he used phrases from a speech given by British Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock in his losing campaign to British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Biden said, "Why is my wife sitting out there in the audience as the first in her family to ever go to college?" Kinnock's statement was similar, only he called his wife "the first woman in a thousand generations" to go to college. Biden continued, claiming that his ancestors worked in the coal mines of northeastern Pennsylvania (which was not true). Kinnock said that his ancestors worked 12 hours a day



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in a coal mine, then emerged to “play football.” Biden changed that to eight hours in the coal mines, with his fictitious ancestors also emerging to play football.

Finally, Biden said his ancestors did not have a platform “on which to stand,” while Kinnock earlier said “there was no platform on which to stand.”

Maureen Dowd, a liberal writer with the *New York Times*, said that Biden had not just borrowed Kinnock’s words, “what he borrowed was Kinnock’s life.”

Another liberal commentator at the time, Eleanor Clift of *Newsweek*, said that he looked like a “wind-up doll, with someone else’s words coming out.”

Biden tried to defend his lifting of Kinnock’s words for his presidential campaign by saying, “I should have said to paraphrase Neil Kinnock,” arguing that it was “the only time I didn’t in all the times I used it.” Unfortunately for Biden, another video emerged of Biden saying the same things. Unfortunately for us, videos do not exist of each and every time Biden lifted the words of the British socialist.

CBS News then found a tape of Robert Kennedy (who was assassinated 20 years before Biden’s ‘88 campaign) saying that the gross national product cannot measure the health of our children, the quality of their education, and the “joy” of their play. Biden said the same thing during his 1988 campaign, but gave Kennedy no credit. Others noted that Biden had lifted remarks by Vice President Hubert Humphrey and President John F. Kennedy.

In law school, Biden was caught plagiarizing *five pages* from another student. Biden received an “F” for the assignment, and admitted he had made a “mistake.” Biden added, “I’ve done some dumb things and I’ll do dumb things again.” *That* is definitely one thing Biden has said that’s true.

Voters should keep that in mind when they cast their ballots this November.

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