



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on August 4, 2020

CNN's Stelter Blows It Again. Wrongly Says Conservatives Are Pushing Biden Not to Debate Trump

CNN talker Brian Stelter has beclowned himself yet again.

Last week, he inadvertently and possibly wrongly retweeted speculation about CNN's settlement with Nicholas Sandmann, who sued the network for defamation over its nationwide smear of the boy after [last year's famous encounter](#) with a "Native American elder" and fake war hero at the Lincoln Memorial.



That tweet might invite yet another lawsuit against CNN for breaching the settlement's confidentiality clause.

This week, Stelter claimed that the leftist push for probable Democrat presidential nominee Joe Biden to skip debating President Trump is really a right-wing idea.

But the latest tweet will merely invite gales of laughter. And not *with* Stelter, either. *At* him.

Wrong Again, Stelter

As Brian Flood and Joseph Wulfsohn [reported at Fox News](#), Stelter's embarrassing troubles began with an op-ed from leftist Elizabeth Drew in the *New York Times*. "Let's Scrap the Presidential Debates," [ran the headline](#) over Drew's piece. "They've become unrevealing quip contests."

Fox News contributor [Guy Benson answered this way](#) on Twitter: "This 'Biden shouldn't debate' boomlet is just a media tempest, right? Right?"

[Stelter took](#) the bait. "It is mostly a right-wing media tempest, fueled by hour after hour of Fox commentary (not reporting), far removed from campaign reality," the [TV talker tweeted](#).

[Benson replied](#) with a collage of headlines from the leftist media, all of them encouraging Biden not to debate. Along with with Drew's column, Benson posted Peter Lucas' "Biden better walk back any offers to debate Trump" [in the Boston Herald](#) and [Newsweek's offering](#), "Supporters Urge Joe Biden Not to Debate Trump, Applaud Hosts for Canceling Over COVID-19 Concerns."

Better yet, though, [was this one](#): "Political analyst makes plea for Biden not to debate Trump."

That was the headline over a CNN video of the network's own analyst, Joe Lockhart, President Bill Clinton's secretary.

"Whatever you do, don't debate Trump," [Lockhart wrote](#) July 28. "Trump has now made more than 20,000 misleading or false statements according to the *Washington Post*. It's a fool's errand to enter the ring with someone who can't follow the rules or the truth. Biden will undoubtedly take heat from Republicans and the media for skipping the debates. But it's worth the risk as trying to debate someone incapable of telling the truth is an impossible contest to win."

[Stelter was unmoved](#): "i'm well aware. but it's a mistake to spend lots of precious time yakking about what leftie columnists are suggesting in this case. obviously Biden will debate. why imply otherwise to



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viewers, hour after hour?”

[Hilarity ensued](#) with these tweets:

- Zero chance he debates!
- “A right-wing media tempest” lol. Yeah, that’s it dude.
- Great journalisming tater!
- Mostly, Brian? Ya mean like “mostly peaceful” protests?

Loose Lips

Last week’s unwise remark was Stelter’s retweet of leftist lawyer Mark Zaid’s comments on the Sandmann settlement in January. “Those with zero legal experience (as far as I can tell) should not be conjecturing on lawsuits they know nothing about,” [Zaid wrote](#). “What kind of journalism is that? I’ve litigated defamation cases. Sandman was undoubtedly paid nuisance value settlement & nothing more.”

Stelter retweeted Zaid’s speculation, which provoked Sandmann’s attorney Lin Wood: “This retweet by @brianstelter may have cost him his job at @CNN,” [Wood wrote](#). “It is called breach of confidentiality agreement. Brian Stelter is a liar. I know how to deal with liars.”

Another CNN yakker, Asha Rangappa, chimed in and actually cited a possible settlement figure: \$25,000.

George Washington law professor Jonathan Turley [offered two opinions](#) about the matter. “I find it astonishing and frankly disgraceful that media figures continue to downplay what happened to this 16-year-old boy in false accounts that ran nationally on his encounter,” he wrote. “Neither he nor his lawsuit should be described as nuisances or improper. It was chilling to see a kid treated to such an abusive media frenzy.”

But that’s not all, wrote the liberal law professor, [who took](#) a hurricane of abuse for opposing the impeachment of President Trump. Whether Stelter and Rangappa violated the confidentiality agreement with Sandmann comes down to the language of the settlement, [he wrote](#).

Still, “the attorneys for CNN may be the most miffed. Media lawyers are often the ones pushing for confidentiality because they do not want to encourage future lawsuits by stories of settlement payments. If these CNN employees are covered in the agreement, it could permit the filing of a new action for breach and a demand for damages.”

Image of Brian Stelter: [Screenshot of CNN video](#)



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