



Words With Joe

*As He Prepares For Another White House Run, Biden's Way With Words
Continues To Haunt Him*

**TODAY IN 1987, BIDEN WAS CAUGHT PLAGIARIZING ROBERT KENNEDY DURING HIS
FIRST PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN**



On February 3rd 1987, Joe Biden Plagiarized Four Sentences From Robert Kennedy That Were Nearly Identical To The Original. BIDEN: “We cannot measure the health of our children, the quality of their education, the joy of their play. It doesn't measure the beauty of our poetry, the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate, the integrity of our public officials. It counts neither our wit nor our wisdom, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country. That bottom line can tell us everything about our lives except that which makes life worthwhile, and it can tell us everything about America except that which makes us proud to be Americans.” (Senator Joe Biden, [Remarks At The 1987 California State Democratic Convention](#), 2/3/1987)

- **Robert Kennedy Gave Nearly Identical Remarks In 1968 While Campaigning For President.** KENNEDY: “Yet the gross national product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public

officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country, it measures everything in short, except that which makes life worthwhile. And it can tell us everything about America except why we are proud that we are Americans.” (Senator Robert F. Kennedy, [Remarks At The University Of Kansas](#), Lawrence, KS, 3/18/68)

Biden’s Theme Of “Bend History” Was Originally Given By Robert Kennedy During An Address At Fordham University In June 1967. BIDEN: “Well, few of us have the greatness to bend history itself. But each of us can act to affect a small portion of events, and in the totality of these acts will be written the history of this generation.” (Senator Joe Biden, [Remarks At The 1987 California State Democratic Convention](#), 2/3/1987)

- **Kennedy: “Few Will Have The Greatness To Bend History Itself.. But Each Of Us Can Work To Change A Small Portion Of Events, And In The Total Of All Those Acts Will Be Written The History Of This Generation.”** (Maureen Dowd, “Biden Is Facing Growing Debate On His Speeches,” [The New York Times](#), 9/16/87)

Democrats In The Audience “Noticed, With Surprise,” The Similarities To Kennedy’s Speech And A White House Aide Watching On CSPAN Was Able To Finish “Sentences Before He [Biden] Was.” “Mr. Biden's echo of Mr. Kennedy was noticed, with surprise, by many Democratic regulars in the audience at the California convention. It was also noticed elsewhere around the country by some who caught the Biden performance live on the C-SPAN cable television network. Notice at the White House At the White House, ... As Senator Biden spoke, Mr. Lord found himself suddenly reciting the words along with him. 'I was finishing sentences before he was,' said Mr. Lord, who called The New York Times to point out the similarities.” (Maureen Dowd, “Biden Is Facing Growing Debate On His Speeches,” [The New York Times](#), 9/16/87)

The Biden Campaign Later Admitted To Copying Sections Of A Robert F. Kennedy Speech Without Crediting Kennedy. “Meanwhile, Biden campaign officials acknowledged Tuesday that during a California campaign stop earlier this year, Biden also copied sections of old speeches made by Robert F. Kennedy without publicly crediting Kennedy. They confirmed a report in the San Jose Mercury News on Tuesday that, in addressing the state convention of the California Democratic Party in February, Biden quoted or closely paraphrased speeches Kennedy made in the 1960s without crediting Kennedy.” (James Risen and Robert Shogan, “Differing Versions Cited On Source Of Passages: Biden Facing New Flap Over Speeches,” [Los Angeles Times](#), 9/16/87)

During His 1988 Presidential Campaign, Biden Also Plagiarized A British Political Leader And Made Unsubstantiated Claims About His Academic Record

Biden Was Accused Of Plagiarizing A Speech Originally Given By A British Political Leader On At Least Two Occasions. “Biden was criticized in recent days for failing to credit Kinnock during a speech at a presidential debate at the Iowa State Fair on Aug. 23... Biden has defended his unattributed use of the Kinnock passages and has insisted that he neglected to credit Kinnock only once, during the Democratic debate at the Iowa State Fair Yet three days later, in an Aug. 26 interview taped by the National Education Assn., Biden again failed to credit Kinnock.” (James Risen and Robert Shogan, “Differing Versions Cited On Source Of Passages: Biden Facing New Flap Over Speeches,” [Los Angeles Times](#), 9/16/87)

Facing Accusations, Biden Admitted To Plagiarizing A Law Review Article During His First Year Of Law School. “Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr., fighting to salvage his Presidential campaign, today acknowledged ‘a mistake’ in his youth, when he plagiarized a law review article for a paper he wrote in his first year at law school... The file distributed by the Senator included a law school faculty report, dated Dec. 1, 1965, that concluded that Mr. Biden had ‘used five pages from a published law review article without quotation or attribution’ and that he ought to be failed in the legal methods course for which he had submitted the 15-page paper.” (E. J. Dionne Jr., “Biden Admits Plagiarism In School But Says It Was Not ‘Malevolent,’” [The New York Times](#), 9/18/87)

When Questioned On His Academic Career, Biden Claimed He Graduated In The Top Half Of His Class, Earned Three Degrees, And Received A Full Scholarship To Law School – All Of Which Were Admitted Or Proved False. “Most of Mr. Biden's statement was in response to a report in this week's issue of Newsweek magazine on a tape recording made by the C-SPAN network of an appearance by Mr. Biden at a home in Claremont, N.H., on April 3. ... He then went on to say that he ‘went to law school on a full academic scholarship - the only one in my class to have a full academic scholarship,’ Mr. Biden said. He also said that he ‘ended up in the top half’ of his class and won a prize in an international moot court competition. In college, Mr. Biden said in the appearance, he was ‘the outstanding student in the political science department’ and ‘graduated with three degrees from college.’ In his statement today, Mr. Biden, who attended the Syracuse College of Law and graduated 76th in a class of 85... Mr. Biden received a single B.A. in history and political science... Newsweek said Mr. Biden had gone to Syracuse ‘on half scholarship based on financial need.’” (E. J. Dionne Jr., “Biden Admits Errors And Criticizes Latest Report,” [The New York Times](#), 9/22/87)

Biden's Plagiarism Undercut A Selling Point Of His Candidacy And Was Widely Derided As An Embarrassment

Biden's Plagiarism Was “Embarrassing For A Candidate Who Has Built His Political Reputation In Large Part On His Skills As An Orator.” “Still, the revelations are at least embarrassing for a candidate who has built his political reputation in large part on his skills as an orator, and who has consciously sought to define his vision of a Biden presidency as one in which he would use his rhetorical powers to inspire and lead.” (James Risen and Robert Shogan, “Differing Versions Cited On Source of Passages: Biden Facing New Flap Over Speeches,” [The Los Angeles Times](#), 9/16/87)

The Philadelphia Inquirer's Editorial Headline: “Biden's Embarrassing Words.” (Editorial, “Biden's Embarrassing Words,” [The Philadelphia Inquirer](#), 9/18/87)

- **Biden's Plagiarism “Does Not Reflect Well On A Presidential Candidate Who Has Stressed His Talent For Words.”** “But Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s carelessness about borrowing from the speeches and writings of others does not reflect well on a presidential candidate who has stressed his talent for words.” (Editorial, “Biden's Embarrassing Words,” [The Philadelphia Inquirer](#), 9/18/87)

The Chicago Tribune's Jon Margolis: “But Biden Has Seemed To Go Farther Than Most Other Politicians In His Liberal Use Of Other People's Words.” (Jon Margolis, “Biden Threatened by Accusations Of Plagiarism In His Speeches,” [The Chicago Tribune](#), 9/17/87)

Even Sympathetic Democrats Likened Biden's Plagiarism To Inventing “A New Set Of Roots For Himself.” “‘It's as though he invented a new set of roots for himself,’ said one Democrat who has been sympathetic to Biden's candidacy.” (Jon Margolis, “Biden Threatened by Accusations Of Plagiarism In His Speeches,” [The Chicago Tribune](#), 9/17/87)

- **A Democrat Strategist Said The Accusations Bolsters “The Feeling That Joe Biden Is A Contrivance.”** “One neutral Democratic strategist said of the revelations of borrowed rhetoric: ‘It hurts because it goes straight to the heart of his perceived weakness, the feeling that Joe Biden is a contrivance.’” (Jon Margolis, “Biden Threatened by Accusations Of Plagiarism In His Speeches,” [The Chicago Tribune](#), 9/17/87)

Biden Ended His 1988 Presidential Campaign By Blaming The Political Environment Instead Of His Mistakes

Biden Said He Was “Frustrated At The Environment Of Presidential Politics” For Preventing The American People From Seeing “The Whole Joe Biden.” BIDEN: “And I am no less frustrated at the environment of presidential politics that makes it so difficult to let the American people measure the whole Joe Biden and not just misstatements that I have made. But, folks, be that as it may, I concluded

that I will stop being a candidate for president of the United States.” (Doreen Carvajal, “Biden Ends His Bid For Presidency,” [The Philadelphia Inquirer](#), 9/24/87)

DECADES LATER, BIDEN IS STILL STRUGGLING WITH HIS WORDS AS VICE PRESIDENT AND A VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

Biden, Touring A Japanese Firm In An Attempt To Promote Their Embrace Of Women In The Workforce, Asked “Do Your Husbands Like You Working Full-Time?” “During a tour of a Japanese Internet company Tuesday, Vice President Biden asked a group of women, ‘Do your husbands like you working full-time?’ Biden asked the question of five women while sitting with them in the DeNa cafeteria, according to a White House pool report. Biden visited the firm in an attempt to promote the company’s embrace of women in the workforce. Japan has lagged behind other countries in integrating more women into the workforce because of problems with its aging population, the report noted.” (Rebecca Shabad, “Biden To Japanese Women: ‘Do Your Husbands Like You Working Full-Time?’,” [The Hill](#), 12/3/13)

Campaigning In 2012, Biden Claimed Republicans Would “Put Y’all Back In Chains.” BIDEN: “Romney wants to let the—he said in the first 100 days, he’s going to let the big banks once again write their own rules—unchain Wall Street. They’re going to put ya’ll back in chains.” (Vice President Joe Biden, [Remarks By Vice President Joe Biden](#), Danville, VA, 8/14/12)

Biden Heckled A Crowd Of Supporters Calling Them “The Dullest Audience I Have Spoken To” And Pleaded With Them To “Pretend You Like Me.” “But the audience apparently didn’t find Biden’s remarks — on foreign policy, on the Obama administration’s economic and social policy record — all that riveting, prompting the VP to deploy some of his trademark humor to rouse the crowd midway through the speech. ‘I guess what I’m trying to say without boring you too long at breakfast – and you all look dull as hell, I might add,’ Biden joked. ‘The dullest audience I have ever spoken to. Just sitting there, staring at me. Pretend you like me!’ he exclaimed, drawing laughter from the crowd, according to a print pool reporter on scene.” (Devin Dwyer, “Biden To Donors: ‘You All Look Dull As Hell,’” [ABC News](#), 4/27/12)

In 2010, Biden “Slipped Into Excited Profanity” At The Signing Of ObamaCare And Was Caught Saying The Law “Is A Big [Expletive] Deal.” “That list included Vice President Biden, who introduced Obama, then leaned toward him amid a storm of applause and slipped into excited profanity. ‘This,’ Biden whispered, louder than he thought, ‘is a big [expletive] deal.’” (Scott Wilson, “Obama Signs Health Care Reform Bill,” [The Washington Post](#), 3/24/10)

In 2009, Biden Admitted To The House Democratic Caucus Retreat There Was A “30-Percent Chance We’re Going To Get It Wrong.” “But a few days ago, the Vice President nudged us to reconsider. ‘The president and I were talking about something yesterday in the Oval Office — which, to the press here, I’ll not suggest what it was — but the response was to the folks that were in the office with us — was, you know, if we do everything right, if we do it with absolute certainty, we stand up there and we make really tough decisions, there’s still a 30-percent chance we’re going to get it wrong,’ Mr. Biden told attendees of a House Democratic retreat.” (Caitlin Taylor, “Oh, That Joe! (No. 47 In A Series) – The Veep lays Out The Odds,” [ABC News](#), 2/10/09)

- **Obama: “I Don’t Remember Exactly What Joe Was Referring To, Not Surprisingly.”** (Caitlin Taylor, “Oh, That Joe! (No. 47 In A Series) – The Veep lays Out The Odds,” [ABC News](#), 2/10/09)

Days After Taking Office In 2009, Biden “Joked About Chief Justice John Robert’s Faulty Memory, Provoking President Obama To Give Him A Stern Nudge To Stop.” “The flurry of activity follows a first week marked by gaffes. At a swearing-in ceremony of White House staff, Mr. Biden joked about Chief Justice John Roberts’s faulty memory, provoking President Obama to give him a stern nudge to stop. During the taping of ‘The Oprah Winfrey Show’ the day before the inauguration, his wife, Jill Biden, said

her husband was given the choice of being vice president or secretary of state, which was quickly refuted by the White House.” (Monica Langley, “After Jabs At Cheney, Biden Pursues An Activist Role,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 1/30/09)

“A Day On The Campaign Trail Without Some Cringe-Inducing Gaffe” Was A “Rare Blessing” For Biden As Obama’s 2008 Running Mate. “Senator Joseph Biden Jr., the Democratic vice-presidential nominee, is an experienced, serious and smart man. But he does say some curious things. A day on the campaign trail without some cringe-inducing gaffe is a rare blessing.” (John M. Broder, “Biden Living Up To His Gaffe-Prone Reputation,” [The New York Times](#), 9/11/08)

As Obama’s Running Mate In 2008, Biden Told A Fundraiser To “Gird Their Loins” And That A “Generated Crisis” Would Test Obama In The First Six Months In Office. “‘Mark my words,’ the Democratic vice presidential nominee warned at the second of his two Seattle fundraisers Sunday. ‘It will not be six months before the world tests Barack Obama like they did John Kennedy. The world is looking. We’re about to elect a brilliant 47-year-old senator president of the United States of America. Remember I said it standing here if you don’t remember anything else I said. Watch, we’re gonna have an international crisis, a generated crisis, to test the mettle of this guy.’” (Kate Barrett, “Biden To Supporters: ‘Gird Your Loins’, For The Next President ‘It’s Like Cleaning Augean Stables,’” [ABC News](#), 10/20/08)

- **“‘I Think Joe Sometimes Engages In Rhetorical Flourishes,’ Mr. Obama Said, Gently Chiding The Vice-Presidential Nominee...”** “‘I think Joe sometimes engages in rhetorical flourishes,’ Mr. Obama said, gently chiding the vice-presidential nominee as he sought to sweep aside a dustup Mr. Biden touched off when he predicted that a world crisis would test Mr. Obama during his first six months in office.” (Jeff Zeleny, “Obama Chides Biden Over Remark About A World Crisis Testing His Presidency,” [The New York Times](#), 10/22/08)

During The 2008 Obama-Biden Campaign, Biden “Urged A Paraplegic State Official To Stand Up To Be Recognized.” “Earlier in the week, in Columbia, Missouri, Biden urged a paraplegic state official to stand up to be recognized. ‘Chuck, stand up, let the people see you,’ Biden shouted to State Senator Chuck Graham, before realizing, to his horror, that Graham uses a wheelchair. ‘Oh, God love ya,” Biden said. “What am I talking about?’” (John M. Broder, “Biden Living Up To His Gaffe-Prone Reputation,” [The New York Times](#), 9/11/08)