



Biden Back Off The Bench

After Being Sidelined On Issue After Issue, The Probable 2016 Candidate Reemerges Amidst Questions About His Waning Influence

Today, Biden Will Visit Ohio To Promote The Obama Administration's Infrastructure Plan. "As the Obama Administration re-enters the battle with Republicans over potential budget cuts, Vice President Joe Biden will visit North Baltimore on Wednesday to promote infrastructure investment. He is expected to make the case that infrastructure spending invests in the economy and middle class." ("Biden Scheduled To Visit N. Baltimore Next Week," [The Toledo Blade](#), 11/2/13)

AS 2016 LOOMS, OBAMA HAS INCREASINGLY KEPT JOE ON THE BENCH

During October, Biden Was "Uncharacteristically Low Profile." "Vice President Joe Biden helped usher in the Obamacare era with a now-famous expression that, while commonly used, cannot be printed here in full. But the voluble veep has had an uncharacteristically low profile for the past three weeks as Obama's signature domestic achievement has labored through a thoroughly botched rollout." (Olivier Knox, "A Biden 'Comeback'? He Never Left," [Yahoo News](#), 10/25/13)

- **"When Obama Pushed Thursday For Immigration Reform, There Was Biden — Standing And Smiling Next To Obama But Not Speaking."** (Olivier Knox, "A Biden 'Comeback'? He Never Left," [Yahoo News](#), 10/25/13)

Politico Headline: "Joe Biden On Sidelines In Gun Control Talks." (Reid J. Epstein, "Joe Biden On Sidelines In Gun Control Talks," [Politico](#), 10/28/13)

- **"Obama's Behind-The-Scenes Plans For Gun Control Go On But Without Vice President Joe Biden."** "President Barack Obama's behind-the-scenes plans for gun control go on but without Vice President Joe Biden. Biden, the White House's public face of and private force behind the push for new gun control laws, and his chief of staff, Bruce Reed, are no longer involved in the long-term planning between the White House and major gun violence prevention groups, officials from several organizations tell POLITICO." (Reid J. Epstein, "Joe Biden On Sidelines In Gun Control Talks," [Politico](#), 10/28/13)

The New Republic Headline: "Thank God Joe Biden Has Been Marginalized In The Shutdown Standoff." (Noam Scheiber, "Thank God Joe Biden Has Been Marginalized In The Shutdown Standoff," [The New Republic](#), 10/8/13)

Politico Headline: "Power Play: Harry Reid Sidelined Joe Biden." (Jonathan Allen and Carrie Budoff Brown, "Power Play: Harry Reid Sidelined Joe Biden," [Politico](#), 10/8/13)

- **"When President Barack Obama Laid Out His Strategy For The Current Debt-Limit Fight In A Private Meeting With Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid This Past Summer, Reid Stipulated One Condition: No Joe Biden."** "When President Barack Obama laid out his strategy for the current debt-limit fight in a private meeting with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid this past

summer, Reid stipulated one condition: No Joe Biden. And while Biden attended the White House dog-and-pony show meeting last week with congressional leaders, Reid has effectively barred him from the backrooms, according to sources familiar with the situation.” (Jonathan Allen and Carrie Budoff Brown, “Power Play: Harry Reid Sidelined Joe Biden,” [Politico](#), 10/8/13)

- **Biden Remained “Almost Entirely Out Of The Picture” During The Budget Impasse.** “Biden has been almost entirely out of the picture. While touring flood damage a couple of weeks ago, he told Coloradans that Washington’s budget talks were ‘probably going to scare the living devil out of you,’ but sought to assure his audience that federal emergency efforts would continue regardless.” (Jonathan Allen and Carrie Budoff Brown, “Power Play: Harry Reid Sidelined Joe Biden,” [Politico](#), 10/8/13)

***The Huffington Post* Headline: “Joe Biden Had Nothing Nice To Say About Obama At Virginia Rally.”**

(Howard Fineman, “Joe Biden Had Nothing Nice To Say About Obama At Virginia Rally,” [The Huffington Post](#), 11/4/13)

- **“Biden, Whom White House Aides Considered Dumping From The Ticket In 2012, Returned The Favor At A Campaign Event Here On Monday, Supporting The Election Of Virginia Gubernatorial Candidate Terry McAuliffe Without Ever Mentioning Barack Obama Or Any Of The President's Achievements In Office.”** “Vice President Joe Biden, whom White House aides considered dumping from the ticket in 2012, returned the favor at a campaign event here on Monday, supporting the election of Virginia gubernatorial candidate Terry McAuliffe without ever mentioning Barack Obama or any of the president's achievements in office. The omission was all the more noticeable because Obama himself had campaigned in the state the day before. The president won Virginia in both 2008 and 2012, signal Southern victories that changed the Electoral College map in the Democrats' favor.” (Howard Fineman, “Joe Biden Had Nothing Nice To Say About Obama At Virginia Rally,” [The Huffington Post](#), 11/4/13)

A NEW BOOK DETAILS THE OBAMA-BIDEN DIVIDE IN THE RUN-UP TO THE 2012 ELECTION, WITH THE WHITE HOUSE GOING SO FAR AS TO ENTERTAIN REPLACING JOE WITH HILLARY

Out Of “Due Diligence,” Obama’s Then-Chief Of Staff Bill Daley Conducted A Focus Group In The Run Up To 2012 On How Replacing Biden With Hillary As The VP Would Impact The Election.

“Daley had no innate desire to see his friend dumped from the ticket, nor did the Davids and Messina – the tiny coterie of Obamans involved in the discussions. And all of them suspected that even the notion of a swap might be a nonstarter with Obama. But the president’s political difficulties were severe, and plenty of sensible Democrats were arguing that switching in Hillary could be a game changer. To not perform due diligence on the option, the Obamans believed, would be a dereliction of duty. They polled and focus-grouped every topic under the sun. Testing this one might have seemed hard-hearted, but refusing to do so out of affection for Joe would have been soft-headed – which in Obamaworld was the far more grievous crime. When the research came back near the end of the year, it suggested that adding Clinton to the ticket wouldn’t materially improve Obama’s odds. Biden had dodged a bullet he never saw coming – and never would know anything about, if the Obamans could keep a secret.” (John Heilemann and Mark Halperin, *Double Down: Game Change 2012*, 2013)

Throughout The Campaign, Biden Was Made “Slightly Mental” By Press Reports Of His Being Replaced On The Ticket By Hillary Clinton. “There were coffee and rolls on the dining room table and a lot on Biden’s mind. The stories in the press about the possibility of his being replaced on the ticket by Hillary Clinton were heating up again, making Joe slightly mental.” (John Heilemann and Mark Halperin, *Double Down: Game Change 2012*, 2013)

- **Biden Thought That The White House Reaction To Rumors That He Was Going To Be Replaced By Hillary On 2012 Ticket Was Inadequate, Thus Feeding “Uncle Joe Syndrome.”** “The fall of 2010 also brought the first flotation of the rumor that Hillary might take Biden’s job, with him assuming hers at Foggy Bottom in the bargain. Giving the gossip a dash of credibility and a hefty dose of buzz was that it was first conveyed by Bob Woodward, who declared flatly on CNN that the idea was ‘on the table.’ The White House immediately denied that any such notion was on any table (or any bench, bureau, or buffet). And Biden didn’t credit the speculation for a minute. But as the JRB-HRC swap rumor popped up again and again all through 2011, it preyed on him nonetheless. Biden and his people all believed the hearsay was emanating from Hillary’s orbit – not from her personally, but from her staff, outside advisers, or the denizens of Greater Clintonia. It was clearly designed to undermine the president (Obama is failing), undercut Biden (he isn’t helping), and elevate Hillary (only she can save the day). But Biden also found the White House’s reaction annoying. Sure, they denied the story, but they never took the extra step and explained that no swap was needed because the vice president was, well, so awesome. And by not doing so, Biden believed, they were feeding the Uncle Joe Syndrome.” (John Heilemann and Mark Halperin, *Double Down: Game Change 2012*, 2013)

In The Run Up To The 2012 Campaign, “Biden Worried That It Was Going To Be A Solo Act: The Barack Obama Show.” “But what was eating at him even more was the way he was being neglected by the Obamans. The new year was just around the corner, and no one had bothered to lay out his campaign role and responsibilities. Biden was raring to hit the hustings, rile up the base, hassle the Republicans. He knew that the president would be the star of the reelection, but he wanted it to be a joint production: Obama-Biden 2012. The way things were shaping up, however, Biden worried that it was going to be a solo act: The Barack Obama Show.” (John Heilemann and Mark Halperin, *Double Down: Game Change 2012*, 2013)

- **“Biden’s Part In The 2008 Fall Campaign Was Less That Of A Supporting Actor Than Of A Lowly Extra.”** “That was how it had been for years earlier, as Biden well remembered. By historical standards had been selected as Obama’s running mate very late, at the end of August. With his working-class appeal, foreign policy credentials, and thirty-six years in the Senate, Biden was a smart pick for Obama. But the truth was that the Davids would have preferred their boss not to have an understudy at all. On a glide path to history, they quailed at having to introduce an unpredictable variable. For the next two months, Biden and Obama rarely stumped together and barely spoke by phone, with the former shut out of Chicago’s nightly conference calls with the latter. Apart from his debate with Sarah Palin, Biden’s part in the 2008 fall campaign was less that of a supporting actor than of a lowly extra.” (John Heilemann and Mark Halperin, *Double Down: Game Change 2012*, 2013)
- **Obama “Was Guided By The Members Of His Brain Trust, Who Liked Biden Fine But Still Viewed Him As A Sideshow.”** “And yet for all the personal peachiness between them, Biden’s insecurities about 2012 continued to fester. In Joe’s mind, it shouldn’t have been so. For him, the personal and the political were inextricably entwined – but for Obama they were at once separable and separate. And in the political arena, the president was guided by the members of his brain trust, who liked Biden fine but still viewed him as a sideshow.” (John Heilemann and Mark Halperin, *Double Down: Game Change 2012*, 2013)

“Biden Had Warned Daley From The Outset About The Ferocious Insularity Of Obamaworld.” “Biden had warned Daley from the outset about the ferocious insularity of Obamaworld. He felt sorry for his pal Bill. ‘You’re either on the way up or you’re on the way down’ was a favorite Biden adage, and Daley was clearly not ascendant.” (John Heilemann and Mark Halperin, *Double Down: Game Change 2012*, 2013)

Biden's 2012 Campaign Idea To Print Out Pamphlets That Defended Obama's Record And Distribute Them To Voters Was Shot Down By Axelrod. "What was needed, therefore, was a full-throated defense of Obama's record – of the stimulus, the Detroit bailout, and even health care. What Biden wanted was to draft a pamphlet (yes, a pamphlet) laying out the case, print up millions (yes, millions) of copies, and have them sent to targeted voters across the country. In this cause, he enlisted a potent ally: Bill Clinton. Soon enough, the two of them were talking daily by phone, facing drafts back and forth, refining the argument, marshaling the data. Here's the latest version from Clinton, Biden would tell Klain. You think it's good? I think it's good. Well, maybe one more tweak. When Biden was finally satisfied, he raised the concept with Obama, who told him, 'Work with Axe.' But Axelrod's affection for Biden did not extend to this cockamamie plan. (*A brochure is gonna change the election?* He thought. *Right.*) But Biden wouldn't desist, pressing the matter until Axelrod snapped. 'We're not printing a couple million of *anything* and dropping it at people's houses – *okay?*'" (John Heilemann and Mark Halperin, *Double Down: Game Change 2012*, 2013)

"How Many Times Is Biden Going To Say Something Stupid,' Obama Growled" Soon After Their 2008 Election. "Things were rocky between him and Obama right out of the chute. During the campaign, the nominee had been frustrated by his running mate's routine gaffes. ('How many times is Biden going to say something stupid,' Obama growled.)" (John Heilemann and Mark Halperin, *Double Down: Game Change 2012*, 2013)

- **"The Day After The Inauguration, When Biden Ribbed Chief Justice John Roberts For Botching The Oath Of Office, Obama Threw A Sharp STFU Look At The VP."** (John Heilemann and Mark Halperin, *Double Down: Game Change 2012*, 2013)

At The Start Of Obama's First Term, Biden Even Complained That Obama "Doesn't Even Know How To Swear Right." "Biden and Daley talked all the time about their alienation from their colleagues. They didn't use the term 'alienation,' though – that was a ten-cent word. The COS's office was across the hall from the VP's, and Daley would often go in there and close the door and the two of them would let loose. Plouffe they considered as sharp as a scalpel but just as sterile, a guy incapable of glad-hand bullshititting, which was Joe and Bill's avocation. They cackled about the fact that Emanuel referred to Jarrett and Rouse as Uday and Qusay, after Saddam Hussein's power-mad sons, and over the nickname others had bestowed on Jarrett: the Night Stalker, for the way she would visit the Obamas in the residence after hours and eviscerate her rivals. They admired the president, but marveled at his lack of bonhomie. ('He doesn't even know how to swear right,' Biden complained.)" (John Heilemann and Mark Halperin, *Double Down: Game Change 2012*, 2013)