



## Hasta La VP, Baby

***Biden, After His Failed Presidential Campaign, 26 Years Ago Today:  
"I'll Be Back"***

### **AS 2016 LOOMS, AN ANNIVERSARY JOE BIDEN WOULD PREFER TO FORGET: HIS FAILED 1988 CAMPAIGN**

**26 Years Ago This Week, Joe Biden Withdrew His Name From The 1988 Presidential Race, Telling His Supporters "I'll Be Back" At A Farewell Event On September 26, 1987.** "Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr. came to New York on Saturday to thank the people who helped raise money for his aborted bid for the White House and to say it may not be his last. The Delaware Democrat, who dropped out of the race last week after questions arose about plagiarism and misstatements about his academic record [sic], said he wouldn't rule out another run at some future time. 'I'll be back,' he said. 'There's plenty of time.'" (Neil MacFarquhar, "Biden: 'There's Plenty Of Time' For Another Campaign," *The Associated Press*, 9/26/87)

- **Biden's Proclamation Came Only Days After He Was Officially Forced Out Of The Race Because Of The Self-Proclaimed "Exaggerated Shadow" Of His Mistakes, Which Included "His Lifting Of Sections From The Speeches Of Others."** "Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr., declaring that his candidacy had been overwhelmed by 'the exaggerated shadow' of his mistakes, dropped out of the race for the Democratic Presidential nomination today. The 44-year-old legislator from Delaware betrayed little bitterness but some sadness as he stood behind a forest of microphones at a crowded news conference. In sharp contrast with former Senator Gary Hart, who withdrew from the Democratic contest in a blur of invective against the news media, Mr. Biden chose to swallow most of his private anger and place the burden for the end of his candidacy on himself. 'I made some mistakes,' said Mr. Biden, who has faced 10 days of news reports on his lifting of sections from the speeches of others and on his record in college and law school." (E.J. Dionne Jr., "Biden Withdraws Bid For President In Wake Of Furor," *The New York Times*, 9/24/87)

**When Biden Called His First Presidential Campaign Quits, Then-Biden-Staffer Jeff Connaughton Writes, He "Entered The Popular Imagination Not For His Political Achievements But For His Gaffes."** "Later that week, Biden came to the Wilmington headquarters. 'I've never quit anything in my life,' he said, 'when people were looking.' That was mildly amusing, but it didn't temper my feeling that my hero had been exposed as a phony. Biden – like Spiro Agnew, Earl Butz, and Alexander Haig before him – had entered the popular imagination not for his political achievements but for his gaffes." (Jeff Connaughton, *The Payoff*, 2012, p. 60)

***Biden's 1988 Campaign – Which Ended In 1987 – Was Plagued By Embarrassments***

**Biden Plagiarized British Labor Party Leader Neil Kinnock To A Degree That “Would Qualify Any Student For Failure, If Not Expulsion From School.”** “Biden's downfall began when his aides alerted him to a videotape of the British Labor Party leader Neil Kinnock, who had run unsuccessfully against Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. The tape showed Kinnock delivering a powerful speech about his rise from humble roots. Taken by the performance, Biden adapted it for his own stump speech. ... Biden lifted Kinnock's precise turns of phrase and his sequences of ideas—a degree of plagiarism that would qualify any student for failure, if not expulsion from school. But the even greater sin was to borrow biographical facts from Kinnock that, although true about Kinnock, didn't apply to Biden. Unlike Kinnock, Biden wasn't the first person in his family history to attend college, as he asserted; nor were his ancestors coal miners, as he claimed when he used Kinnock's words.” (David Greenberg, “The Write Stuff?,” [Slate](#), 8/25/08)

**The Campaign's “Coup De Grace” Was When Biden “Snapped” At A Voter Because He “Interpreted A Dig About His Law-School Grades As An Attack On His IQ.”** “The result of all this coverage was that every word Biden said publicly, or had said in the past, was being scrutinized for plagiarism or exaggeration. A particularly damaging example – indeed, the campaign's coup de grâce – was found in a four-month-old C-SPAN video that showed Biden speaking in a kitchen in a New Hampshire home. During the Q&A session, someone asked what Biden's grades had been like in law school. The correct answer was: not very good. It was a sore subject with Biden, and he snapped at the questioner: ‘I'll put my IQ up against yours any day.’ He then went on to claim that he'd graduated in the ‘top half’ of his law class (he hadn't); attended law school on a full scholarship (he'd received a half scholarship based on financial need with some additional assistance based in part on academics); had three degrees (he has only two; he was counting his B.A. with a double major in history and political science as two degrees); and won an international moot-court competition (the competition had been in Toronto, so that claim, at least, was true). Eleanor Clift, at the time a reporter for *Newsweek*, found the video (she hadn't seen it when it originally ran) and wrote a story about it. Of all Biden's screw-ups, this one concerned me most. Biden graduated seventy-sixth out of eighty-five – in other words, just outside the bottom tenth – at Syracuse University Law School. ... Biden had interpreted a dig about his law-school grades as an attack on his IQ.” (Jeff Connaughton, *The Payoff*, 2012, pp. 57-58)

- **Biden Overreacted And Heavily Embellished His Academic Credentials: “I Think I Probably Have A Much Higher IQ Than You Do, I Suspect. ... I'd Be Delighted To Sit Down And Compare My IQ To Yours...”** VOTER: “What law School did you attend and where did you place in that class? And the other question is could you quickly...” SEN. JOE BIDEN: “I think I probably have a much higher IQ than you do, I suspect. I went to Law School on a full academic scholarship, the only one in my class to have a full academic scholarship. And the first year in law school I decided I didn't want to be in law school and ended up in the bottom two thirds of my class, And then decided I wanted to stay, wanted to stay, and in fact ended up in the top half of my class. I won the international moot court competition, I was the outstanding student in the political science department at the end of my year. I graduated with three degrees from undergraduate school and 163 credits, you only need 123 credits and I'd be delighted to sit down and compare my IQ to yours, if you would like, Frank.” (Sen. Joe Biden, [Remarks At A Campaign Speech](#), Claremont, NH, 4/3/87)
- [Click Here To Watch Biden's Exchange With The Voter](#)

**After The Release Of The Heated Exchange Precipitated Another Round Of Unwelcome Press, Biden Officially Withdrew From The Race On September 23, 1987.** “For all these disclosures, Biden remained unbowed. ‘I'm in the race to stay, I'm in the race to win, and here I come,’ he declared. That meant, of course, that his days were numbered. *Newsweek* soon reported on a C-SPAN videotape from the previous April that showed Biden berating a heckler at a campaign stop. While lashing out at the

audience member, Biden defended his academic credentials by inflating them, in a fashion that was notably unbecoming and petty for a presidential candidate. ‘I think I probably have a much higher IQ than you do, I suspect,’ Biden sniped at the voter. ‘I went to law school on a full academic scholarship.’ That claim was false, as was another claim, made in the same rant, that he graduated in the top half of his law-school class. Biden wrongly stated, too, that he had earned three undergraduate degrees, when in fact he had earned one—a double major in history and political science. Another round of press inquiries followed, and Biden finally withdrew from the race on Sept. 23.” (David Greenberg, “The Write Stuff?,” [Slate](#), 8/25/08)

**Connaughton, On Biden’s Gaffe That Destroyed His Presidential Campaign: “The Telling Part Is That His Sense Of Inadequacy Compelled Him To Fabricate Credentials That Better Suited The Self-Image Of His Intellectual Abilities.”** “This suggested that he had an intellectual inferiority complex, and I can only conjecture that it’s because he didn’t have the accepted credentials of a brainiac: Biden wasn’t a Harvard straight-A student, and Washington is filled with them. The telling part is that his sense of inadequacy compelled him to fabricate credentials that better suited the self-image of his intellectual abilities. The man I’d worshipped from afar was turning out to be all too human. Not fully happy with himself as he was, he tried – in little ways that had big consequences for his campaign – to be someone else.” (Jeff Connaughton, *The Payoff*, 2012, pp. 58-59)

## **BIDEN, TRUE TO HIS WORD AND UNFAZED, IS GEARING UP FOR HIS SECOND COMEBACK ATTEMPT IN 2016**

**A Full 26 Years After Ending His First Presidential Run With “I’ll Be Back,” Biden Is “Intoxicated” By The Thought Of Running In 2016.** “Biden, according to a number of advisers and Democrats who have spoken to him in recent months, wants to run, or at least be well positioned to run, if and when he decides to pull the trigger. Biden has expressed a clear sense of urgency, convinced the Democratic field will be defined quickly — and that it might very well come down to a private chat with Hillary Clinton about who should finish what Barack Obama started. ‘He’s intoxicated by the idea, and it’s impossible not to be intoxicated by the idea,’ said a Democrat close to the White House. And the intoxication is hardly new.” (Mike Allen, Jonathan Martin, and Jim Vandehei, “Joe Biden ‘Intoxicated’ By 2016 Run,” [Politico’s Behind The Curtain](#), 1/23/13)

**Earlier This Month, Biden Was At Sen. Tom Harkin’s Annual Fundraiser, Which “Has A Long History Of Attracting Presidential Hopefuls.”** “U.S. Secret Service agents are already staking out the Iowa Cubs’ ballpark in Des Moines. Vice President Joe Biden will be a guest at an invitation-only gathering with U.S. Sen. Tom Harkin on the mezzanine at Principal Park Sunday morning. The private event, a fundraiser for Harkin’s political action committee, is scheduled to take place before the big steak fry half an hour south in Indianola later Sunday. The 36-year-old steak fry is one of the signature political events of the year in Iowa and has a long history of attracting presidential hopefuls.” (Jennifer Jacobs, “In Iowa Sunday, Biden Will Hit A Ballpark Reception Before Steak Fry,” [Des Moines Register](#), 9/11/13)

- **Sen. Harkin’s Steak Fry Is A “Marquee Event On The Iowa Democratic Calendar And A Magnet For White House Hopefuls Looking To Curry Favor With Donors And Party Bigwigs In Iowa, Which Kicks Off The Primary Calendar With Its First-In-The-Nation Caucuses.”** “Iowa Sen. Tom Harkin’s annual steak fry, to be held this year in Indianola in mid-September, is a marquee event on the Iowa Democratic calendar and a magnet for White House hopefuls looking to curry favor with donors and party bigwigs in Iowa, which kicks off the primary calendar with its first-in-the-nation caucuses.” (Josh Lederman, “Biden Keeps His Name In The Game For 2016,” [The Associated Press](#), 8/12/13)
- **“The Iowa Swing Is The Latest In A String Of Biden Appearances That Further His Ties To Key Primary States.”** “Biden’s office sought to play down the trip, telling reporters that Biden

had committed previously to attending Harkin's event, but couldn't attend in 2012 and took a rain check. But the Iowa swing is the latest in a string of Biden appearances that further his ties to key primary states - starting in Washington on the weekend Obama was inaugurated for his second term." (Josh Lederman, "Biden Keeps His Name In The Game For 2016," [The Associated Press](#), 8/12/13)

**"That Biden, 70, Is Still Interested In The Top Job Is Far From A Secret, And In His Current Office, The Writing Is On The Wall."** "But Democratic activists and donors say the signals are all too clear when a two-time presidential candidate who is openly entertaining a third run makes the trek to early primary states. 'He's doing the smart thing. He's moving around. He's going to the early states. He's letting folks know he's interested,' said Dick Harpootlian, who chaired the South Carolina Democratic Party until earlier this year. He described the stops as a chance to 'meet all the major players in the Democratic primary process, in one room, in one night.' That Biden, 70, is still interested in the top job is far from a secret, and in his current office, the writing is on the wall." (Josh Lederman, "Biden Keeps His Name In The Game For 2016," [The Associated Press](#), 8/12/13)