

We Need to Talk about Joe Biden

By Kevin D. Williamson, National Review, September 1, 2019

There are two possible explanations of Joe Biden's inability to tell the truth about things: One is that his mind is failing him, the other is that his honor is. In neither case is Biden fit to hold the office of president of the United States of America, and Democrats would discredit themselves and endanger the nation to nominate him.

Yes, yes, go ahead — “But, Trump!” etc. — and continue when you've completed the ritual of equivocation, and don't think too hard about how far and in what direction that line of moral self-justification has carried the Republican party.

Joe Biden is a plagiarist and a liar, among other things. In the most recent example, detailed by the Washington Post, Biden made up a story in which he as vice president displayed personal courage and heroism in traveling to a dangerous war zone in order to recognize the service of an American soldier who had distinguished himself in a particularly dramatic way. It was a moving story. “This is the God's truth,” he concluded. “My word as a Biden.”

But his word as a Biden isn't worth squat, as the Post showed, reporting that “Biden got the time period, the location, the heroic act, the type of medal, the military branch and the rank of the recipient wrong, as well as his own role in the ceremony.” Which is a nice way of saying: Biden lied about an act of military heroism in order to aggrandize his own role in the story. Like Hillary Rodham Clinton under fictitious sniper fire, Biden highlighted his own supposed courage in the face of physical danger: “We can lose a vice president. We can't lose many more of these kids.”

If Biden here is lying with malice aforethought, then he ought to be considered morally disqualified for the office. If he is senescent, then he obviously is unable to perform the duties associated with the presidency, and asking him to do so would be indecent, dangerous, and unpatriotic.

The evidence points more toward moral disability than mental disability, inasmuch as Biden has a long career of lying about precisely this sort of thing.

The most dramatic instance of that is Biden's continued insistence on lying about the circumstances surrounding the horrifying deaths of his wife and daughter in a terrible car accident. It is not the case, as Biden has said on many occasions, that they were killed by a drunk driver, an irresponsible trucker who “drank his lunch,” as Biden put it. That is a pure fabrication, and a slander on the man who was behind the wheel of that truck and who was haunted by the episode until the end of his days. Imagine yourself in the position of that man's

family, whose natural sympathy for Biden's loss must be complicated by outrage at his persistent lying about the relevant events.

Why would Biden lie about the death of his wife and daughter? Why would he lie about the already-heroic efforts of American soldiers? In both cases, to make the story more dramatic, to give himself a bigger and more impressive narrative arc. That he would subordinate other people — real people, living and dead — to his own political ambition in such a callous and demeaning way counsels strongly against entrusting him with any more political power than that which he already has wielded.

Biden lies about matters great and small. He lies about his trip to Afghanistan. He lies about the death of his wife and daughter. He is wildly dishonest about his role in the Iraq War and the 1994 crime bill, landmark moments in his legislative career that later became political liabilities. And whatever the state of his brain today, he was not senile back in 1987, when he plagiarized the words of Margaret Thatcher and Neil Kinnock for his own speeches. Like his lies, his plagiarism is part of a lifelong habit: As recently as this year, he was filling out his policy papers with uncredited — stolen — material from advocacy groups.

The United States has become an empire of lies. We are governed by liars chosen on the basis of lies, and the worst partisans have begun openly to admire the lies, so long as they are skillfully constructed and delivered. The lowest among us enjoy being lied to and celebrate it. Entire political careers are based on lies — and policy initiatives, too.

But if not the serial liar Joe Biden, then whom will the Democrats choose? Elizabeth Warren, who has misrepresented her supposed Native American ancestry? Kamala Harris, who has lied about murder in order to serve her own political ends? Robert Francis O'Rourke, who cannot tell the truth for five minutes about basic and fundamental questions of public policy? The Democrats are ready to go into November with nothing better to say for themselves than, "Our liar is better than their liar!" It is doubtful they will even be morally conflicted about that. But the nation will be worse off for it, inasmuch as democratic assumptions built on a foundation of lies must necessarily be unstable.

Joe Biden has exhausted whatever presumption of goodwill or benefit of the doubt we might have extended to him for the past 46 years. He has had his chance to show that he is a man capable of honor, integrity, and honesty — and he has failed that test at every turn. If there ever was a time for him, that time has passed. The last thing this country needs is another pathological liar in its highest office. He is unfit for the presidency in every way, and Democrats owe the country better than to nominate him in the pursuit of their own selfish partisan interests.