

# Fifteen Years A Deplorable

A WHITE HOUSE MEMOIR



By Mike McCormick

*My job was to record and type the public words spoken by presidents and vice presidents and senior officials for the official White House record, without opinion, embellishment, or omission.*

*One time just before deplaning off a C-17 into a hot zone, my transcription equipment caught the attention of a Secret Service Counter Assault Teamer. “What’s that for?” he asked.*

*“To protect his words,” I replied.*

*“Roger that,” he said with a taut nod.*

*...my transcription had to be as fast and accurate as humanly possible. Accomplishing that day in and day out, with demanding deadlines — “The President wants that transcript ASAP. How much longer?” — required not only me, but a team of five other stenographers, six of us in all.*

*Whether he was going to Peoria or Paris, one of us accompanied the President on every trip outside of Washington, D.C.*

# Fifteen Years A Deplorable:

## A White House Memoir

By Mike McCormick

Excerpted passage from the book

It was a terrible error. I was alerted to it immediately by the Vice President's ever vigilant military aide. Realizing my mistake and the potential danger, I took responsibility and apologized. Fortunately, it was such an early hour back in Washington that no one read my inadvertent email until hours after it was sent, by which time we were wheels down in Baghdad. And once there, the press had permission to lift the embargo with a pool report. My mistake fortunately, was soon swallowed up by events on the ground.

Take my word for it, it is a crappy feeling to endanger people you work with, especially when one of them is the Vice President of the United States. To this day I feel bad about it, so once again, to those I put at risk, I'm sorry for my error.

We all make mistakes, some worse than others.

And I learned that day when you make a grave mistake in a dangerous

environment, you just put your head down, work hard and do the good job you can do that got you there in the first place, and don't make any more mistakes.

The rest of our time in Baghdad was a blur of helmets, body armor, big guns, heavily armored motorcade vans and being asleep on my feet. There was a closed-press meeting in the Green Zone with Prime Minister Abadi. The Vice President made some heartfelt remarks to our brave embassy staffers who were living with deadly danger day in, day out. Sometimes I get emotional at a great speech. Joe Biden got me with that one. As discretely as I could I was wiping tears from my eyes so no one would see.

And we were off for his meeting with the Kurds in Erbil.

As I walked across the embassy compound to the helo lift, I realized the scene before me was not the orderly movement I had been told to expect.

It was a dirty Baghdad dusk. Staffers were zigzagging across the LZ, scrambling to load into the waiting Black Hawks. Noise, whirring rotors, flying dust, no one seemed to know which helicopter they were assigned to. And then a tall, broad-shouldered Marine sergeant walked up wearing rumpled camo fatigues, helmet cam, and his assault rifle slung at the ready.

“Sir,” he barked, probably noting I was a bit disoriented, “you need to load.”

I told him which helicopter I was assigned to — information I thought important— but which he immediately ignored.

“Sir,” he yelled over the rotor noise, “I will get you to an aircraft.”

“I will follow you,” I replied, deeply relieved a Marine sergeant had my back. And follow him I did, right to a half-empty Black Hawk, which in the end was exactly where I was supposed to be.

The next stop was in Erbil, home of the Iraqi Kurds who were then battling ISIS for their survival. The danger waiting for us there was a palpable contrast to the Erbil I visited with Biden in 2011.

If it hadn't been for a last-second scramble of U.S. military assistance in summer 2014, ISIS would have overrun Erbil and decimated the Kurds. To this day I'm not sure why the terrifying truth of that story has yet to be fully told. Team Obama bragged incessantly about being the most transparent administration in history. Not on that topic. And the advocacy media let that story trickle out with an indifferent shrug.

And that meant in 2016, Vice President Biden's brief visit with the Kurds demanded the highest security environment I have ever seen in 15 years of White House travel.

All our movements were shadowed by Special Ops teams. They flew with us on the helos, rode in the motorcade — hard-eyed men, big guns, security eight layers deep. At one point, the Special Forces guys held us back in the helo, not allowing us to board Air Force Two, while they checked out the deep grass at the edge of the runway.

I've been in and out of combat zones for years. This time I felt as if, long after the war “ended,” the enemy was right there in our laps.

Obama called ISIS a JV Team. But then they were in Mosul, Ramadi, Fallujah, Basra, Tikrit, and it was disgusting that so many places so many Americans had sacrificed so much for were now back in the hands of an enemy our president clearly did not understand. Disgusting.

It was disgusting to follow Joe Biden into Iraq for another White House publicity tour promoting preparations for another U.S.-led military campaign. Disgusting.

I felt it, and Americans who had personal connections to sacrifices in Iraq And Afghanistan felt it too.

As we left Erbil, Josh Lederman, a smart, hardworking, and unbiased reporter, like all the great Associated Press reporters I've worked with over the years, captured Team Obama's Iraq mismanagement in a quote he attributed to a senior administration official who was briefing on background to the Air Force Two press contingent. It was a quote he could have ignored and left out of his story, as others did, but his integrity compelled him to include it. That's journalism.

Josh's widely published AP story, as well as the transcript I produced for the White House, quoted the senior administration official as saying: "We have to be realistic; we are at the end of April. Once we get into July and August, it starts to get pretty hot in Iraq and things start to slow down."

Well, I was there right beside Josh as the background briefer, Colin Kahl, then Vice President Biden's National Security Adviser, continued with a knowing smirk. "But we want to make as much progress as possible before the summer heat really rages," he added.

Josh, operating on the journalists' agreement with the White House, would never reveal Colin Kahl as the briefer. But I am no longer a White House employee and no longer bound by that agreement, which I upheld at the time.

Wire service reporters, like AP and Reuters, write into tight time and space deadlines and mostly forego descriptive details. Josh had the full

quote in his story, but nothing of the smirk.

Colin Kahl's smirk related to the "necessity" of the operation delaying till fall, which was very telling, and not in a good way.

I took it as meaning the Iraqis weren't very motivated to rid themselves of ISIS. As if despite all the horrific attacks against their citizens, their military couldn't be bothered to fight to secure their people's safety because it was too hot.

I can't imagine a White House official saying that about our military. Ever.

For years our men and women fought terrorists in heat, in the cold, in the rain, in sandstorms, and suddenly, when it was the Iraqis leading the charge, a summer campaign against those same vicious terrorists would be (smirk) too hot?

Another interpretation was the political angle. Obviously, a fall offensive — garnering positive election season coverage — would be more politically advantageous for Hillary's presidential campaign than a summer campaign. Didn't it make sense (smirk) for Team Obama to delay till fall?

Either interpretation or the combination of both, spoke volumes about how Team Obama viewed Iraq. Their priorities, it seems, were politics first; national security, second.

From where I and a lot of other Deplorables sat, Obama didn't end that war. And Trump was right to lambaste our disastrous foreign policy there — including when he criticized President Bush for getting us into that war in the first place.

Too many Americans died there. Too many Americans were wounded

there. Good people, loved people, strong people. Families, friends, and neighbors lost the loves of their lives. Some Americans still are risking their lives there and in Afghanistan.



*Personal recognition by President George W. Bush for Joe Mornini, the heart and soul of warrior support organization Team River Runner, August, 2007. (Chris Greenberg, Courtesy of the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum)*

I'll never forget my volunteer work at Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) from 2004 to 2007.

With the permission of WRAMC leadership, a few kayaking friends and I put together a warrior support program: Team River Runner.

We would carry our kayaks into Walter Reed's therapy pool and teach recovering service members — men and women — to see beyond their injuries. We welcomed all, but those service members dealing with lower

body wounds, found kayaking especially rewarding. They could leave their prosthetics and wheelchairs behind, get in a kayak, and paddle down the river as part of a group in which, from the waist up, everyone was identical.

We started in the therapy pool, moved to the easy rapids of the Potomac River, and then, if a student was gung-ho, on to rivers across the country.

We thought we were showing them something important: how to extend their battlefield courage into their recovery. But, really, they showed us something even more important: what strength of character really means.

We'd help a wounded vet to the river's edge, assist him or her into a specially outfitted adaptive kayak, and then carry their prosthetic — sometimes more than one — back to our van for safekeeping. Then we'd all go kayaking down the river for a bit of fun. Simple. Supportive. They knew we were there for them.

Joe Mornini, especially, has been their hero. With his leadership, Team River Runner has encouraged many, many recovering veterans and their families.

Joe Mornini and I are the co-founders. So many others joined in, and with Joe's example, they continue to volunteer. He is the heart and soul of TRR and has grown it into national program boasting chapters across the country.

In the Bush years, we had a lot of high-profile White House support, which I helped engineer through informal channels. Rob Portman, now Senator Rob Portman, an avid kayaker from his Dartmouth days, came to one of our pool sessions at WRAMC while he was the Office of Management and Budget Director. And President Bush came to a pool session led by Joe in August 2007.

Their attention helped Joe land a series of grants from the Disabled American Veterans and the Veterans Administration that, along with fundraising, has kept TRR, its volunteers, and its vets on the river ever since.



*Mike McCormick Aboard USS John C. Stennis, 2016. (Mike McCormick)*

My free time right now is devoted to my family, but I look forward to getting back on the river with TRR and Joe Mornini. Check them out on their website [teamriverrunner.org](http://teamriverrunner.org). Prepare to be amazed.

Our American military men and women encircle the globe, and all of humanity is better for it. No one should forget President Obama's leadership and our SEAL Team's expertise as they ended Osama bin Laden's reign of terror. Ever.

It's not just fighting terrorists. It's relief efforts for earthquakes, tsunamis, and hurricanes. It's drug interdiction and border security. The U.S. military saved entire communities in Japan during the Fukushima tsunami crisis in 2011, as did the U.S. Army Medical Corps in West Africa from the Ebola outbreak in 2014. By all means, credit Team Obama for that.

I don't for a second doubt that our great military is keeping our world at peace day in, day out. Every American should take pride in their efforts.

I've watched our Air Force jets take off from Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan and our Navy jets take off from the USS John C. Stennis in the Pacific. Awesome.

I've flown in V-22 Ospreys with Marines, Black Hawks with the Army, and Air Force One with the Air Force. Awesome.

I've seen our frontline Army and Marines in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the DMZ in South Korea, and all over Europe. And I've watched the Coasties graduate at New London, which meant a lot to me since my Dad was a Coastie. So awesome.

One time as I was entering the West Wing by the West Executive Drive side door, Marine Corps General Peter Pace paused as he exited and held the door for me. He was a four-star general, and within a couple years,

he would be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I was a lower level White House staffer. And yet, he graciously held the door for me. In that moment, he set an example as an officer, a gentleman, and representative of our military for which I and all Americans should always be thankful: No matter what, our military is there for all of us in ways little and large. Always.

My best White House moments were out in the field with our military. They do their duty every day. And when I was the White House guy out there with them, they helped me do mine, and we were on the same team. We had each other's backs, and I always gave them my heartfelt thanks. Always.

The attitude that drives our military is the spirit that made America the country we all know and love. It's the America that cares about the world and all the people in it.

It's the America that Donald Trump fights for, that Barack Obama and George W. Bush fought for, each in their own way.

Trump, I think, is doing it best.

After I returned from Iraq the atmosphere around the White House grew even more tense as Candidate Trump continued to hammer away at the lame Obama economy. This was right around the time the pathetic GDP numbers were finalized for 2016 first quarter — 1.1 percent growth. Talk about dropping the baton in the relay race. No wonder Hillary's crowds were so sparse. Team Obama's economic policies were — as Trump so accurately described — “a disaster.”

Don't tell me the Obama economy was the launchpad for Trumponomics. No way.

And still, everyone around me continued ridiculing Trump and his voters. Finally, though, I'd had enough of their thoughtless hostility. And one day as my office mates were parroting yet another trendy person's ridicule of Trump's campaign, I blurted out: I would love it if Donald Trump won.

Wow. That stopped the conversation in its tracks. Based on the looks I received, you would have thought I had clubbed a baby seal to death right there in front of them.

I merely voiced my support for the Republican candidate for president. Nothing more. Nothing derogatory about Hillary or Obama. Not like I'd been hearing about Trump.

Nothing derogatory about liberals or progressives. Not like I'd been hearing about Republicans.

Some of my friends and members of my family are progressives. Insult them over politics? I would never do that. But I was no longer going to stand for the hateful ridicule directed at Donald Trump and his supporters, including me.

So, on top of being an "old white guy", I was an out-in-the-open Trump supporter. And as I would find out, from that moment on, unspoken waves of hate were headed my way with no warning whatsoever from my colleagues, particularly Dominique.

And as it seems every office these days has a @MeToo story, here's ours.

Early in her first year in the office, before Caitlin and Beck came aboard, Dominique walked into the office one day complaining about a guy harassing her whenever they rode the elevator together. Her description of him matched a fellow contractor who worked down the hall from us.

Quite angry and not tearful, she indicated the he would leer at her and make what she felt were inappropriate comments.

CD comforted her and we discussed it and agreed that something should be done.

Shortly after I learned of Dominique's complaint, I found myself in an elevator with that same young man. Just the two of us.

I told him what Dominique said. I was not confrontational or judgmental. I simply told him who she was, what she had said about him, and explained my relationship to her.

His eyes grew wide and he was visibly shaken. An accusation like that in the White House will be investigated by the Secret Service and could cost you your job.

Immediately he apologized, saying he was only being friendly and hoped she hadn't misinterpreted his greetings. Turns out he had a low, gravelly voice. Nothing inappropriate about that. He apologized profusely if he had caused her any discomfort, adding that he was sorry for the misunderstanding.

I reported back what I had done and about the young man's profuse apologies. CD was relieved and grateful for a resolution. She understood the gravity of such a situation from both sides — Dominique's and the man she accused — and thanked me for opening that communication.

There was a bit of awkwardness between our office and this young man for a few months, but whenever I saw him around the building, I would always greet him respectfully.

He apologized. I respected that. And he kept doing the good things he

had done that had gotten him into the White House in the first place; to the point where everyone in our office came to value his good-natured professionalism. That good will lasted over the course of several years.

We all worked our way past a misunderstanding. Not hard to do if you have an open mind and a capacity for trust.

To this day I'm not sure how Dominique felt about me standing up for her. She certainly never thanked me, I can say that. In my mind, I was backing up a colleague who had the courage to identify an uncomfortable situation. We're a team, we should stick together and back each other up. That's how it had always been in our office and that's how I thought it would always be.

Boy, was I wrong.

By July, it was all over for the Democrats in Ohio. They just didn't know it.

I knew it because Joe Biden told me so. Not directly, but indirectly.

I've learned from Washington's daily war of words to hear the important message in what's not being said. And in the late summer, when Joe Biden was out stumping for former Ohio Governor Ted Strickland, who was out to wrest Senator Rob Portman's seat away from him, he wasn't bragging about a great economy and Obamacare. He wasn't bragging about ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. No, our sitting Vice President, who described himself repeatedly as "the White House optimist," was decidedly pessimistic as he spoke of the overwhelming effects outside big money had already had on Strickland's Senate race. Strickland, I recall, mumbled glumly in the background. Old politicians like Joe never speak like that in public that far ahead Election Day unless things are especially dire.

And this was critical Ohio.

Joe had reason to be pessimistic. Like Hillary, throughout the spring and summer, he was speaking to small, unenthusiastic crowds. Which wasn't surprising given that the stump speech he gave in 2016 was nearly identical to the one he used in 2012, and 2014. It was a broken record, and by 2016, it was about a lousy record.

He talked about how manufacturing was coming back to the U.S. from China — with the tag line: you'll be hearing about insourcing, not outsourcing — and cited statistics from the exact same Boston Consulting Group study year in and year out from 2012 to 2016. Could he not have had the basic respect for the voters to at least update his statistics for the present year?

Ohio voters weren't dumb or gullible in 2016. They never are. Their applause for Joe's optimism was justifiably tepid. Where were the jobs, Joe? Where were these insourced manufacturing jobs?

People knew better than to clap. Not in Ohio. After eight years of Democratic Party rah-rah, the economy was flat, Team Obama's words were hollow, and Hillary was more of the same.

Joe Biden was out stumping for "Retread Ted" with retread economic arguments based on retread facts. Ohio voters wanted something that would work for them. Now with the closing of the GM plant in Lordstown, Trump has to really come through for Ohio, but if anybody can, he can.

From what I heard through summer of 2016, Ohioans knew they needed Trump. Russian interference had nothing to do with his big win there.

To this day, I cannot understand why the advocacy press refused to report the race I saw. Laziness, maybe. Bias, yes, definitely. Mostly I think it was

arrogance. They just thought they were so right they couldn't possibly be wrong.

As a stenographer in the Obama White House, I was immersed in their narrative. I noticed unusual occurrences as data points in a time line — sometimes in unexpected places. The 2016 Palisades Neighborhood Fourth of July Parade was one I thoroughly enjoyed.

Nothing says democracy louder than a Fourth of July parade, so, of course, we wrap ours up in politics. The parade I attended with my family on MacArthur Boulevard, Northwest, was mostly about local D.C. politics — the mayor, the council members, local youth organizations. But I'll never forget when the Hillary for President marchers came by with a big banner. There were a lot of them, 30 or so, rather businesslike, walking and waving, though not very animated. Probably because the crowd wasn't as welcoming as they'd expected.

Onlookers were shoulder-to-shoulder on both sides of the street. No one cheered. This was deep blue Hillary country; these were her biggest fans and probably a few donors, and no one clapped. It got so bad one of the marchers called out to the onlookers, "Come on, you guys. Come on!"

Finally, a smattering of applause.

Then the Trump marchers came by. Maybe half a dozen of them, mostly older folks, all them waving and smiling as though they didn't have a care in the world. They were the fun bunch.

One of the guys carrying the banner looked to be 80-something, white-haired, thick glasses, grinning from ear to ear. I'll never forget the bounce in his step, like he was the high school kid going up his prom date's front walk with a corsage in a box and a condom in his wallet. Happy and hopeful.

Faint applause, but no one booed. How could they? It was the Fourth of July, birthday of our democracy. When we celebrate our country, we celebrate each other.

The Trump convention in Cleveland was in mid-July. The oppo goon/advocacy media warned of violence and confrontation. There was none.

The Hillary convention in Philadelphia was in late July. The advocacy media promoted continued hope and change from a firm, feminine hand. There was none.

A few weeks later, during a Joe Biden trip to Latvia, Turkey, and Sweden, one reporter/advocate in the Air Force Two press contingent, I don't recall her name, gushed effusively about the "star power" at Hillary's convention, which she had attended. She sounded as giddy as a '60s schoolgirl screaming at Beatles' concert. Of course, she was referring to all the Hollywood heavyweights who were backing Hillary. But as they all so bitterly discovered, star power does not define democracy.

One oddity of the 2016 conventions was how early in the election calendar they fell. Traditionally, conventions wrap up mid-August, giving the candidates a short breather before the post-Labor Day sprint down the homestretch.

For the first time in recent memory, each candidate had an open calendar for the entire month of August. Hillary went on vacation; Trump went to work.

Coming out of the convention, Hillary had a whopping lead. If the 2016 Election was held on August 8th, she was the clear winner. By November 8th, she was the clear loser.

I remember a conversation I had with CD about Trump's wild August —

tweeting against the parents of the Muslim soldier and a beauty pageant contestant, firing his second campaign manager, Paul Manafort — in which she ridiculed his campaigning in places like Maine, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Michigan where she insisted he had no chance of winning.

CD has seen a lot of campaigns in her time, dating back to Reagan's 1984 re-election. She was convinced Trump was wasting time and money. She was, of course, repeating progressive dogma. But, the Democrats/progressives by then were so smart, they were dumb. They did not understand how badly they were doing, because their advocacy press friends weren't telling them.

The fact is Trump outfoxed Hillary in all those states — winning full delegates in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Michigan and one in Maine.

Hillary, vacationing in Martha's Vineyard, couldn't be bothered to get out and talk to the voters pining to hear from her. Was that what put them off for Election Day? Maybe. Was that what prompted Obama Democrats to flip to Trump? Maybe.

But it wasn't Russia.

By September 9th, when she made her "Deplorables" comments, her lead had disappeared. They were tied. And don't forget the Silent Majority. No one was even counting or polling them. Yet.

Then Hillary had her September 11th health scare and had to take a few days off. After all that Martha's Vineyard rest. Really?

From that point on her pace lightened and she rested way more than either Bush or Obama did in their successful re-election campaigns in 2004 and 2012. I know that because I worked on both.

By my estimate, Trump outworked Hillary three to one in August and two to one from Labor Day to Election Day. American voters aren't dumb. They saw that. The advocacy media ignored it, but voters didn't. If you're a hardworking American who doesn't take a lot of days off, you vote for a hardworking American who doesn't take a lot of days off.

Russian meddling wasn't flipping Democrats into Trumpers; it was lame policies, poor messaging, and lack of effort.

On September 19th, I had a revelation: This whole damn election was on YouTube. I could bypass the advocacy media and see for myself how things stood for Trump.

That day, Hillary offered a Speech to Millennials in Philadelphia at Temple University. It's still on YouTube. Pay attention as the camera accidentally pans the crowd in the first few seconds and then in the final seconds.

If you were a Hillary supporter and glimpsed that video, your heart would freeze. That event was so sparsely attended, it looked like a high school pep rally for the It's Academic Team.

This was her must-win constituency in her must-win region, and no one was there. Not only that, but YouTube's log-in count for live video watchers — for potentially America's first woman president — was embarrassingly low. Hillary had no sizzle to sell.

To this day I wonder: What could she have been thinking when she walked out and saw that micro-crowd? She must have understood no one was there for her. Wasn't there anyone capable of telling her the truth?

All that money she was raising from all those donors, only to drop it in the pockets of clueless oppo goons.

And once again, where was the accurate reporting? The public had a right to know about her micro crowds. Heck, her donors had a right to know. Where was journalism?

Trump on that same day held a rally in Fort Myers, Florida, before a massive, wildly enthusiastic crowd — probably 10 times the size of Hillary's, and the YouTube log-ins were in the hundreds of thousands.

America was enthralled with his candidacy. His crowds were the face of our great American democracy. They were the same faces I'd seen cheering for George W. Bush and Barack Obama.

With all due respect to John Brennan and his deep-state suspicions, I defy him to show me the Russians in those crowds. I defy him to show me the voters in Trump's crowds who were there because of Russian meddling.

I saw Americans cheering for an unorthodox American candidate because they wanted an unorthodox candidate. It was democracy in action, and I had been seeing it for months, long before Team Obama raised suspicions about Russian influence. I will trust my eyes over Team Obama's machinations and John Brennan's intelligence any day.

It does not speak well of John Brennan and Team Obama that they are so willing to grant so much power to Vladimir Putin and his minions in the degradation of our democracy. He's a grubby, shirtless president of a grubby, mafia-infested country. Russia can't even get to the starting line against the United States of America. The only harm that country can do to us is the harm we let them do to us.

Russia had nothing to do with the enthusiasm of Donald Trump's voters. Trump did that. And John Brennan's and Team Obama's willingness to credit Russian interference to taint Donald Trump's success is un-

American.

From that day forward, when I was in the office late at night or on weekends working on Joe Biden stuff, meaning I was alone, I would log onto YouTube and watch Trump's rallies. It was the only way I could get through Joe Biden's dreadful speeches.

I like Joe Biden and believe he is a true humanist and certainly deserving of the Presidential Medal of Freedom Obama gave him — especially given all that he's endured in his life. But man, does he ever give long, rambling speeches.

There is always an October surprise, and the first one was how thoroughly then-Governor Mike Pence schooled Senator Tim Kaine in the art of debate. He won so decisively that, Hillary's oppo goons hit the panic button and deployed the "Access Hollywood" video clip a week early.

Politics is a dirty business, and that was probably Team Hillary's best chance to knock Trump out. Given the offensive video clip's age, it was no doubt in some oppo goon's possession well in advance of the actual leak to the Washington Post on October 7th. But that, obviously, was a week too soon. Trump had two more debates and a month of campaigning yet to go.

Donald Trump did the right thing after the leak: He apologized and continued doing the good things he'd done that got him to the point of being the leading presidential contender. And people believed him. His results spoke for themselves.

But, as the ugliness of the 2016 presidential campaign became even uglier, I saw, courtesy of Chuck Todd, advocacy journalist extraordinaire, the real story of the Trump surge.

Unfortunately for his progressive pals, Chuck Todd didn't have the guts to report it that way.

I'd worked with Chuck Todd tangentially when he covered the White House in the early Obama years. He was a pleasant, "Home on the Range" kind of reporter, intelligent but "never a discouraging word," and deeply in the bag for Team Obama.

As the host of NBC's "Meet the Press," he interviewed Vice President Biden in Las Vegas a week after the "Access Hollywood" story broke. The air date was October 16th.

What I heard clarified for me why Donald Trump would win decisively on November 8th. It also, I'm sure, sent emergency emails to the deepest levels of the Democratic Party. Not that it did them any good.

After spending a lot of time on the women accusing Trump of inappropriate behavior, Todd with real urgency in his tone, tipped Joe Biden the critical information that Pennsylvania had already swung to Trump. He just didn't say it that way.

It was almost as if he was covering up this bit of crucial information the way he slipped it in after a deep dive on salacious stuff. My guess is he didn't want his swamp buddies to know the truth.

Good thing he's a "journalist".

The White House transcript I typed of the interview and the NBC News transcript viewable on their website has Todd asking it as: "The people you speak to, Biden voters. We just look — you just look at Pennsylvania right now. The 15 counties that make up northeast Pennsylvania, you and the president won it by three points. Right now she trails by eight points. It's clear there is something — a lack of connectivity there or something

with Trump. What's your diagnosis?"

Biden was clueless. These were his people, and they were deserting his party. He had seen it for months in shrinking crowds, but now the polling data his pal Chuck Todd was sharing with him was disastrous.

Joe did what he does best: He gave a long-winded answer that absolutely had nothing to do with the real question, telling Chuck Todd about how he could cry, and Hillary couldn't.

Todd, always the Obama advocate, pulled ever so gently on the thread that the Democrats were losing their stalwart voters in the heart of their "Blue Wall".

This was the biggest story of the election: Pennsylvania Democrats were flocking to Donald Trump in droves.

Biden knew better than anyone those poll numbers were a stake in Hillary's heart. Over the years on numerous occasions he'd boasted how the results of the counties around his hometown of Scranton, Pennsylvania were the best bellwether for a Democratic president's win on Election Night. Chuck Todd was giving him hard numbers that told him Trump had stolen those voters right out from under Hillary's ineffective nose.

Todd continued, asking our Pennsylvania-born Vice President why Pennsylvania voters were "gravitating" towards Trump.

Biden backpedaled to the same lame economic arguments he had been using since 2010 — whining the economic malaise still with us in 2016 was the Republicans' fault.

Todd then asked about Hillary. What did Biden think she could do to repair the rift her Deplorable remark was causing. Wow, did Joe Biden

ever make that answer about himself.

Dutifully, Todd switched topics.

Chuck Todd and NBC News are the reason all those Hillary voters stayed home on Election Day. They are the reason overconfident Hillary voters didn't turn out. They are the reason why the Democratic Party's reliance on advocacy journalists cost Hillary Clinton the presidency.

The polling he referred to was accurate. How long had Chuck Todd and NBC News been sitting on it before he eked it out to Joe Biden?

All he had to do was trust the polling and do what a real journalist would do — follow the story to its logical conclusion and report it accurately: Donald Trump's shockingly strong poll numbers in key Pennsylvania counties indicated an upset in the making.

He could have interviewed Hillary about it. Heck, he could have been unbiased and interviewed Trump about the momentum he was building in Pennsylvania and elsewhere. Trump would have loved to talk about that.

No, wait a minute, he'd better not. Chuck Todd would be a real journalist if he did that.

In fact, he had Mike Pence on for an interview the second half of his show that day — a very contentious interview compared to the Joe Biden lovefest — and Pence crushed him. Chuck Todd peppered him with questions on salacious stuff, and Pence waved him off like a little league outfielder swatting away gnats.

Why didn't Chuck Todd ask Mike Pence about the Pennsylvania polling data? Does he want to report the news? Or does he want to influence the news?

Not a real journalist.

Imagine if a headline pointing to a potential Trump upset in Pennsylvania had blazed across NBC News websites and evening reports in mid-October. Maybe Rachel Maddow wouldn't have been so humiliated on Election Night. Heck, maybe the progressives would have had enough warning — there were still three weeks left till Election Day — that they could have poured more troops into the breach. Not just there, but in Michigan and Wisconsin, too.

Progressives and Democrats should understand had Chuck Todd done his job they could have stopped Trump cold — no Pennsylvania, no Wisconsin, no Michigan. Hillary is in and their world view is secure.

But, no, he blew it. It was the story of a lifetime, biggest scoop a political journalist will ever have. Chuck Todd had it in his clutches and then dropped it like an icky bug.

Chuck Todd couldn't handle the truth.

I had referred earlier to the Democrats panicking down the homestretch. Chuck Todd's interview started it, and it snowballed from there.

Joe Biden's schedule was more fluid than Obama's, so he led the White House mad dash to shore up the "Blue Wall". Obviously, it failed miserably.

The next weekend he bolted for Scranton, the epicenter of the Chuck Todd Tip-off. The results were sadly predictable. His event was sparsely attended — maybe 300 people. At that time, at that place, in the heart of Joe Biden country, the meager turnout was a dead giveaway.

Joe improvised to drum up attention — intimating that if Trump were in his high school, he'd have taken him out behind the gym. This was the

same Joe Biden who had five minutes earlier lectured sanctimoniously about how Democrats needed to forge a better working relationship with Republicans. Same speech, then he's talking getting physical with Trump.

Trump did a rally in Scranton about a week later. His crowd was 10 times the size of Joe's.

Halloween was on a Tuesday, one week out from Election Day. More Joe Biden panic. He added a last-minute dinner with Philly unions, and because of this I missed trick or treating with the kids. I stopped by my friend Johnnie's for a Halloween nightcap and stunned the neighbors when I declared Trump would win.

By the way, days after the election, I checked Hillary's schedule on Halloween. She did two events at colleges in Ohio and was done with public events by early afternoon. I was working on her behalf Halloween night. Where was she?

She could have stopped in Pittsburgh. She could have stopped in Detroit. She could have even hit Milwaukee. She didn't.

Comey reopening the FBI investigation because of Carlos Danger was hilariously ironic but insignificant. The electorate had deserted the Democrats over a matter of months, not days. The voters wanted to hear from Hillary herself, and she wasn't out there. Her "surrogates" were only adding insult to injury.

No, Democrats, it wasn't the Russians.

But wait, there's more . . . Obama White House panic. A last-minute Biden trip to Madison, Wisconsin was added on November 4th so he could shore up Democrat Russ Feingold for Senate in that progressive stronghold with another long, boring speech mostly about himself. Fortunately for Hillary,

Joe squeezed in a few remarks on her, too.

My best friend Mike just happened to be out there visiting his daughter at UW Madison and saw a marquee advertising Biden's event. He texted, asking if I was there.

Not there, I texted back. Big crowd? I asked. I was in the office, watching yet another massive Trump rally.

No, Mike texted, not many people there.

And he was right. Yet another micro event in a critical area at a critical time.

In 2012, Bruce Springsteen hosted a rally for Obama in downtown Madison in the waning days of his "last" campaign. There were at least 20,000 people there. Most voted.

Four years later, there may have been 400 in attendance for the Biden-Feingold event.

I texted Mike to tell him that he was at ground zero of the progressive meltdown. And I was right. At that point, both Hillary and Feingold were done in Wisconsin.

Finally, it was Election Day.

Late returns extended Election Day into Wednesday. I was watching Fox, reading Drudge, and texting back and forth with my brother Chris. We were giddy when they finally called Pennsylvania.

Since I wasn't watching NBC's Election Night coverage with Chuck Todd, I don't know if he ever revisited the northeast Pennsylvania polling he'd

discussed with Joe Biden.

It certainly was the kind of prescient polling journalists like to brag about. But with Chuck Todd, I wonder if he even referred to it on Election Night.

I mean, if he was proud of it, he would tell his viewers. Wouldn't he?

But really, with Chuck Todd, I do have to wonder.

Hour by hour as the magnitude of Trump's win grew, and the enormity of what he'd done sunk in, I realized how the truly historical part his life — and our country's life — was just about to start.

I loved his victory speech. He thanked his family and recalled his deceased parents and brother. He thanked his inner circle, his supporters, and he thanked the Secret Service. I liked that. They never get thanks, and they deserve it.

And in a strangely Trumpian way, he laid out his future almost like he was negotiating with time itself:

“I look very much forward to being your president, and hopefully at the end of two years or three years or four years or maybe even eight years you will say — so many of you worked so hard for us. With you, you will say that — you will say that was something that you were — really were very proud to do and I can — thank you very much.”

He's a different kind of president, the strong medicine our country and the world badly need.

I stayed home the day after the election to avoid the mass grieve-in. The Obama White House needed time to process their defeat. They were and are good people, but the solutions they offered were smaller than the

problems they faced. You can't pump fake world leadership.

Our American democracy had risen to the occasion. Most voters in three out of five states voted for Trump. Sixty percent is a big number in politics. This was a decisive win.

In our office, of course, I was delighted with the outcome. But it was not for another eight months that I understood how hated I, as the lone fan of our president-elect, had become. And the scary thing is, I'm sure my fellow stenos' deepening hatred — all except CD — has been repeated in ways large and small across our country since Trump's win. The progressive-millennial hatred of Trump-supporting, old white guys like me is poisoning our politics and our democracy.

The Obama White House press were dumbstruck. Not only had they missed the single biggest story of their careers — and missed it badly — but their collective hatred of Trump and his supporters was palpable.

He had made biased press coverage a campaign issue and the voters had turned out in agreement. Battle lines were being drawn.

Nor were their longtime Republican contacts of much use with Team Trump.

Talk about change.

It was in this atmosphere that I witnessed the ugliest example of press bias and hatred I've ever seen in my 15 years.

Until January 2017, I had never been asked to be a media source, and I had never offered to be one. In all my White House years, I held fast to neutral ground as an unbiased observer — both in duty and demeanor.

But then in mid-January, CNN's Jake Tapper and a crew came to the EEOB to do an interview with Joe Biden. Staffers were heading for the exits, so I was alone with the crew, which is highly unusual. Ordinarily, there is always a press office wrangler with a TV crew for the entire time they are setting up. This time, I was there for my stenographer duties and covering for the absent wrangler, as well.

I knew some of the crew from my early Bush years. And as they set up, we talked about how Trump might change things for the White House press. They were especially fearful of getting kicked off the grounds. I didn't tell them I liked Trump because they were so worked up over him.

Tapper, who was mostly reading emails, needed to go to the men's room, so I had to escort him there. Visitors, especially press, must always be accompanied by a staffer in the EEOB.

As we walked, I introduced myself as recalling him from the Briefing Room. We small-talked, and then he said, "Hey, let me give you my number in case you see anything bad going on around here."

I was a bit surprised, but as there were still two weeks to go in the Obama administration, I agreed. He wanted an inside line for when Trump arrived, but I was loyal to Trump and would not leak to CNN about him. But if I saw something weird in the tail end of Obama's tenure, I might have passed it on. Given the uncertainty of those days, it seemed prudent.

I took his number, called his phone, then texted to confirm. It was the first time I'd ever done that.

Back from the bathroom, it was still just me and the CNN crew in the room, when Tapper, scanning his emails, blurted out what I've come to think of as the ugliest thing I've ever heard from a reporter.

No. I'm not going to put it here. I'm not the hate-filled bully he is. I will not repeat what he said.

Suffice it to say he announced quite loudly and proudly — almost like he was boasting — some personal information about a member of President Trump's family who had nothing to do with politics or the administration. This person had never done anything in the public realm and was totally undeserving of being ridiculed by CNN's Jake Tapper.

The rest of us in the room were speechless. I dropped my eyes to the floor, shocked at this arrogant bully's actions. The crew continued with their set up in total silence. To a man, the rest of us had too much self-respect to even acknowledge Jake Tapper's existence, let alone what he had shared, which was something he'd garnered from a highly "respected" Washington institution. From the sounds of it, someone in that institution breached a trust of confidentiality between it and President-elect Trump's family.

Tapper must have realized that he'd gone too far, because he then mumbled a qualifying statement while peering intently at his phone. I won't repeat what that was either.

Still, no one acknowledged him.

In 15 years at the White House, Jake Tapper's boastful bullying was the lowest, most hateful thing I'd ever seen out of a "journalist". Well, out of anyone. No one I've ever interacted with at the White House has ever — ever — been so sleazy.

Not even the Chinese spies acting as "journalists" were that sleazy. They at least were polite when they were eavesdropping.

That's how low CNN has fallen. No class. No judgment. No integrity. Sleazy tactics.

Viewers who expect honest, unbiased journalism should tune in to other channels. They will not get it from CNN.

Jake Tapper should not be trusted to report on our democracy. The company that puts him on television needs a long look in the mirror to see its hand in his sleaze.

I'm a dad. I would never talk about someone's child like that. Anyone who would needs an intervention.

So here it is: Jake, what an amazing insight you provided us with. What an incredible reporter you were to try to leak that out through me. Sorry to disappoint, but you must spread your hate for President Trump where you can take full responsibility for it.

Jake, you owe President Trump and the Trump family an apology, and you owe me and the others in that room an apology for thinking we would be the least bit interested in your hatred masquerading as "news".

Do it on the air Jake. If you're man enough.

Joe Biden arrived. Tapper did his interview. I went back to my office and typed up the transcript. I never told a soul. Until now. I'll leave it to others to ascertain as to whether there is a corporation-wide conspiracy at CNN to actively undermine the Trump presidency.

In my opinion, yes, there is. CNN should no longer be trusted as the public face of American journalism. Even their founder, Ted Turner, acknowledges they have lost their way.

There is nothing journalists love more than getting White House or high government officials fired. No matter the size or significance of their mistake, misspeak, or miscommunication, journalists demand their jobs.

That formula should apply to journalists, too. They have too important a function in our democracy. We need journalists we can trust to be fair, accurate, and respectful. Right now, in Washington, they are in short supply.

But hate, unfortunately, is not.



*Mike McCormick Deplanes from Air Force One, 2011 (Mike McCormick)*

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