

After Tucker, Say No to Fox Hosting Republican Primary Debates



by Roger L. Simon

The leak of an email from Republican National Committee Chair Ronna McDaniel to GOP insiders that Fox News will be hosting the first GOP presidential primary debate in Milwaukee sometime in August 2023 is not good news now that the network has disgracefully fired Tucker Carlson.

It wasn't really good news before that because this is the same network that was, to a large degree, responsible for the defeat of Republican 2020 candidate President Donald Trump.

Their then-Sunday anchor Chris Wallace quite deliberately

interrupted Trump numerous times during the debate and actually put a halt to his discussion of the Hunter Biden laptop, an act of extraordinary bias that looks worse now in light of new information about President Joe Biden's secretary of state, Anthony Blinken.

Blinken was apparently the person who triggered a document signed by 51 present and past major U.S. intelligence operatives alleging the laptop was likely a Russian disinformation plot. This was a lie of epic proportions.

In this way, Fox was rather like the corrupt Twitter in its censorship of information that, according to polls, could have flipped the election.

Wallace is no longer with Fox, essentially banished to the journalistic Siberia of CNN. But who can have confidence his replacement or replacements will be any better?

Evidently, Ronna McDaniel and her cohorts. This is the RINO old guard of the Republican Party at work with sops to the "deplorables" by adding Rumble into the mix. But the main host remains Fox, which is increasingly old guard itself, if not on its way to being a CNN and MSNBC clone of its own.

Recently, one of those campaign brouhahas that keep popping up has broken out over Trump's implication that he might not make it to one or more debates. John Haughey [wrote here](#) at The Epoch Times on April 25:

"Former President Donald Trump on Tuesday said no one asked him or his campaign about organizing and participating in debates with 2024 GOP primary rivals, saying he likely won't attend the two thus far scheduled by the Republican National Committee (RNC)."

Although I would have no way of knowing, my best guess is that the moment Trump heard about the initial debate his reaction was some version of "Fox again?! Wallace! Are they kidding?!"

I doubt Trump, about as garrulous a politician as we have ever had, is afraid of debating anyone. In fact, he just said in a speech in Manchester, New Hampshire, on April 27, he is looking forward to debating “crooked Joe.” (Biden seems to have inherited the epithet “crooked” from Hillary.)

He probably also thought that Fox is favoring Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, to which recent events lend credence.

It is odd, though, the RNC wouldn't contact Trump, who has been leading the Republican race by close to 30 points over his nearest rival, DeSantis, for months now. Indeed, the most recent poll by Emerson shows him up by a staggering 46 percent.

The RNC didn't consult Trump's competitors for that matter either, as far as I know. There is something peremptory about this institution that to many illustrates that gaping divide between the Republican rank-and-file and their leadership.

You would think McDaniel, having overseen so many GOP losses, would have wanted to make such consultations, but apparently not.

Nevertheless, several rightwing pundit luminaries, Miranda Devine, Clay Travis, and Buck Sexton, jumped on the criticize-Donald bandwagon as if he were ducking debating the likes of former U.N. ambassador Nikki Haley, who is at this point in the low single digits and only narrowly ahead of newcomer entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy, who appears to be gaining on her, in the RealClearPolitics averages.

As of now, there are but five fully announced Republican candidates—Trump, Haley, Ramaswamy, talk show host Larry Elder, and former Arkansas governor Asa Hutchinson, who is barely registering in what seems to be a vanity campaign. DeSantis and South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott appear to be all but running with former vice president Mike Pence also likely.

For this field, with only DeSantis making it into double digits, the RNC wants to schedule all of 10 debates. To what end? Making the nation die of boredom?

But, for fun anyway, let's look at which of the candidates might profit from Trump's absence, if that happens, which is far from clear at this point. I will base this on having seen all of them on television and even interviewed a few personally. I will ignore the question of who will or will not make the stage due to whatever cutoff point McDaniel and her team announce.

Ramaswamy, who evidently has a natural gift for it, and Elder, for years one of America's most popular conservative radio hosts, definitely have the edge here. They are also the ones most likely to offer original, controversial ideas that will garner attention. This can go either way, but in a large field, it's better to stand out by saying something noteworthy.

Pence has also been a radio host and has plenty of camera experience, but almost never says anything unpredictable.

DeSantis, with the second-highest poll numbers, would have the advantage of center position that Trump held and the opportunity to bash Trump for his absence. You have to weigh this, however, against the long-run interest in the debates without Trump. Who watches a show without its star?

Actually, since it's hard to envision Trump losing the primary outside of health or legal issues, this could end up a competition for the vice-presidential nomination with, at this moment, DeSantis (assuming peace could be made) and Ramaswamy (surprisingly) being the most likely possibilities of those with their hats in the ring. Scott might also be in there.

Considering the age of the leading candidates—Biden 80 going on 94, Trump seemingly vigorous but still 75—the choice of vice presidents is more important than ever.

Trump would be well-advised to select a smart, youthful person as an obvious, winning comparison to Kamala Harris, who many, even Democrats, fear would be catastrophic leading our country.

But the action, the real surprise at this juncture is, astonishingly, on the Democratic side that previously looked to be a (shuffling) walk in the park for the incumbent.

Robert F. Kennedy Jr. came in from left field (well, not exactly left but more center or independent) to make a sudden challenge to Biden that looks to be rapidly gaining momentum.

Immediate polls showed RFK Jr. at 14 percent. Today, just days later, he was at 19. Where will he be next week?

Could rank-and-file Democrats be coming to their senses? Who knew?

The Democratic National Committee (DNC), manipulative cowards that they are, shamelessly foreclosed all debates even while the RNC was positing 10.

Heaven forbid Biden should have to defend himself against anyone, let alone an author of 800-page books who might have a few facts at his fingertips.

You will note that I have omitted California Gov. Gavin Newsom from my tour d'horizon. That's because it's highly unlikely that America would elect the top official from a state whose population is fleeing in droves.

Perhaps Newsom could replace the traditional campaign slogan "A chicken in every pot!" with "A homeless tent in every backyard!"

But you never know. It's, as the song goes, "a long, long way from May to December" and the frail Biden could withdraw at any moment.

Then it might be Newsom versus Kennedy.

All this, and we're still nearly 18 months out from the election.

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