# Kamala Harris criticises scrutiny over Biden amid internal party doubts revealed in new book



In a turbulent political landscape, Vice President Kamala Harris found herself at the centre of controversy following a tense exchange with CNN's Anderson Cooper that laid bare the growing concerns within the Democratic Party regarding President Joe Biden’s capabilities. A new book, "Original Sin: President Biden's Decline, Its Cover-up, and His Disastrous Choice to Run Again" by Jake Tapper and Alex Thompson, highlights this incident, wherein Harris took umbrage at Cooper's probing about Biden's performance during a crucial debate against Donald Trump.

During the interview, Cooper pressed Harris on whether Biden should consider stepping aside due to what many perceived as a 'train wreck' of a performance, leading her to respond fiercely. "This motherf\*\*\*er doesn't treat me like the damn Vice President of the United States," she reportedly exclaimed to her aides immediately after the conversation. Despite her frustration, Harris defended Biden's record, arguing the importance of his performance over the longer span of his presidential tenure rather than a single debate.

The book reveals that many in Biden's inner circle were concerned about his performance leading up to the debate, highlighting a broader narrative of unease regarding his cognitive abilities as he approached an age where many begin to slow down. Previous to Harris's heated remarks, Biden's preparation for the debate had faced scrutiny, with advisers noting that he struggled with vocal clarity and coherence, receiving advice to improve his delivery prior to the event. Critics have since referred to his performance as "self-immolation,” with Tapper himself admitting during an interview that he felt the debate was potentially the worst in history, marking a turning point for the Biden campaign.

Moreover, the book sheds light on significant internal tensions within the Democratic Party. Signs of Biden’s declining health had reportedly been noted as early as 2023, with certain lawmakers expressing concern at a White House Christmas party. Behind the scenes, some prominent Democrats began to question Biden's decision to run again after witnessing the fallout from his debate performance. This anxiety reportedly led to calls for a shift in leadership and, in some cases, consideration of Harris as a potential successor—a move that comes with its own mixed reviews, given her earlier challenges as Biden's running mate.

Despite Biden's public assertions that his age and health would not hinder his performance, the revelations within Tapper's book paint a stark picture of a campaign defined by attempts to manage a difficult narrative. The complicated dynamics of being a supporter while facing scepticism reflect the ongoing struggle within the party: how to uphold Biden's legacy while potentially preparing for the future.

As Harris navigates her role amidst rising concerns and heightened expectations, it remains to be seen how the public will respond to her evolving leadership narrative. The heightened scrutiny of Biden's capabilities is only likely to amplify as the party approaches another election cycle under the shadow of these pressing concerns.

While the book has incited backlash against Tapper for his portrayal of events, calling into question the implications of his own past coverage, the findings underscore a restless Democratic Party grappling with uncertainty as it looks towards the next election. As focus shifts towards the upcoming electoral battle against formidable opponents, the ramifications of Biden's and Harris's roles will be closely monitored, influencing not just the current cycle but the party's future direction as well.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/media/article-14746579/Kamala-Harris-Anderson-Cooper-rant-interview.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.axios.com/2025/05/21/biden-town-hall-event-new-book-original-sin)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/media/article-14746579/Kamala-Harris-Anderson-Cooper-rant-interview.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.axios.com/2025/05/20/biden-house-democrats-age-book-original-sin)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.axios.com/2025/05/20/biden-aide-mike-donilon-campaign-salary), [[6]](https://www.ft.com/content/74419849-76eb-4613-90a9-e3e22a6e6215)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://www.axios.com/2025/05/21/biden-town-hall-event-new-book-original-sin), [[5]](https://www.axios.com/2025/02/26/joe-biden-age-decline-2024-election-trump-new-book)
* Paragraph 5 – [[3]](https://www.axios.com/2025/05/20/biden-house-democrats-age-book-original-sin), [[6]](https://www.ft.com/content/74419849-76eb-4613-90a9-e3e22a6e6215)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/media/article-14746579/Kamala-Harris-Anderson-Cooper-rant-interview.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.axios.com/2025/05/21/biden-town-hall-event-new-book-original-sin> - A new book titled 'Original Sin: President Biden's Decline, its Cover-Up, and His Disastrous Choice to Run Again' by Jake Tapper and Alex Thompson reveals behind-the-scenes difficulties in President Joe Biden's 2024 re-election campaign. A key episode described is a closed, staged town hall in Delaware aimed at producing campaign material where Biden appeared to answer voter questions spontaneously. However, the footage turned out unusable due to Biden's verbal struggles, underscoring the challenges in portraying him as a dynamic candidate at age 81. The book highlights broader concerns among campaign staffers about the president's reliance on multiple camera setups and heavy editing to create usable content. Some footage had to be discarded due to noticeable edits, causing internal frustration. Despite public denials from Biden and former First Lady Jill Biden, asserting his age did not hinder his presidential performance, the book details extensive efforts by campaign staff to manage his image. The revelations are based on over 200 interviews with Democratic insiders conducted after the 2024 election.
3. <https://www.axios.com/2025/05/20/biden-house-democrats-age-book-original-sin> - A new book titled 'Original Sin: President Biden's Decline, Its Cover-Up, and His Disastrous Choice to Run Again' by CNN's Jake Tapper and Axios' Alex Thompson reveals that several House Democrats were concerned about President Biden’s cognitive decline as early as 2023. The book cites a 2023 White House Christmas party as a pivotal moment that alerted many lawmakers to Biden's deterioration, though Rep. Mike Quigley (D-Ill.) had earlier suspicions. Despite visible signs, many Washington insiders—including White House officials, donors, and lawmakers—either ignored or stayed silent about the issue. The authors report that this unaddressed concern led some prominent Democrats, such as Smith, Moulton, and Quigley, to ultimately call for Biden to step down following a poor debate performance against Trump in June 2024. A Biden spokesperson dismissed the book’s premise, asserting there is no evidence Biden failed in his duties or that any cover-up occurred. The internal party anxiety highlighted by the book underlines the tension that arose as Biden pursued reelection amid doubts about his mental acuity.
4. <https://www.axios.com/2025/05/20/biden-aide-mike-donilon-campaign-salary> - According to the new book 'Original Sin: President Biden's Decline, Its Cover-Up, and His Disastrous Choice to Run Again' by CNN's Jake Tapper and Axios' Alex Thompson, Mike Donilon, a top adviser to President Joe Biden, earned approximately $4 million for his role in Biden's unsuccessful 2024 re-election campaign. This figure significantly exceeds the salaries of other senior campaign aides, such as campaign chair Jen O'Malley Dillon, who earned $300,000. Donilon's compensation highlights the high regard and influence of Biden's closest advisers. The decision to pay Donilon such a large sum reportedly created tension and resentment among other campaign staffers. Donilon transitioned from the White House to Biden’s campaign in early 2024, standing firm on his salary demands. The book is based on interviews with over 200 individuals, primarily Democratic insiders, and sheds light on internal dynamics and controversies during the last two years of Biden’s presidency. A Biden spokesperson has not commented on the revelations.
5. <https://www.axios.com/2025/02/26/joe-biden-age-decline-2024-election-trump-new-book> - Axios' Alex Thompson and CNN's Jake Tapper are set to release a new book titled 'Original Sin' on May 20, which explores former President Joe Biden's decision to run for re-election and the subsequent cover-up of his decline. The book will provide an in-depth look at the campaign of 'gaslighting and denial' that followed Biden's original decision, and how this led to the election of President Trump. The authors promise to reveal private conversations and the extent of the problem, highlighting both the human and political aspects of the story. The publisher, Penguin Press, indicates the book will expose the significant awareness and acknowledgment of Biden's issues among prominent figures.
6. <https://www.ft.com/content/74419849-76eb-4613-90a9-e3e22a6e6215> - With Joe Biden's recent debate performance causing alarm within the Democratic party, Vice President Kamala Harris is emerging as a prominent candidate to replace him in the upcoming presidential election. Influential party members and donors display mixed feelings about Harris’s potential elevation, with some applauding her capability and others expressing skepticism due to her past performances as vice-president. The sudden shift in support is partly attributed to her strong defense of Biden post-debate and her ability to address critical issues like Trump's record on abortion. Her historical significance as the first woman of color to hold the vice-presidency makes her an essential figure for maintaining core Democratic voter support. While some party insiders and donors express concern, others, including Jim Clyburn and prominent operatives, suggest backing Harris could avoid party chaos and cater to the party’s base. Harris’s recent public engagements indicate her stepping into a more assertive role, shedding earlier insecurities associated with her vice-presidency.
7. <https://time.com/5620970/joe-biden-kamala-harris-desegregaton-busing-debates/> - Joe Biden defended his civil rights record after being criticized by Kamala Harris during the first round of the 2020 Democratic primary debates. Harris confronted Biden on his past stance on busing and school desegregation, bringing up her personal experience with busing. Biden admitted he wasn't prepared for Harris's attack, especially since they shared a personal connection through his late son Beau Biden. Harris's performance in the debate led to a surge in her poll numbers, while Biden's support declined. In an interview with CNN, Biden claimed his position on busing was misunderstood and defended his record by asserting that busing was ineffective and lacked support from the African American community in Delaware. Overall, the exchange between Harris and Biden was a significant moment in the debates, impacting their standings in the polls.