

# Kamala's outfoxed in TV grilling

KAMALA HARRIS floundered during a fiery interview on Fox News as she sought to appeal to Donald Trump's voter base.

Harris, who is the Democrat presidential candidate, had her first ever sit-down with the Right-wing network three weeks before the election.

But the Vice-President was put on the back foot by interviewer Bret Baier who grilled her about immigration, gender surgery for prisoners and Joe Biden's mental faculties, forcing Harris to parry his questions. They frequently talked over each other with Harris repeatedly saying: 'Let me finish.'

It was a high-stakes gamble by Harris to reach Republican voters on America's most watched cable television channel.

Baier tore into her about the nation's borders, which is seen as the strongest issue for Donald Trump, the Republican nominee. He asked her how many illegal

From **Daniel Bates**  
in New York

immigrants had entered the US since Biden took office in 2021 – was it one million or three million? But Harris replied: 'We have a broken immigration system.'

When Baier tried to cut in, Harris said 'I'm not finished', before blaming Trump for tanking a bipartisan immigration bill.

## 'Vice-President was put on the back foot'

As the two shouted over each other, Harris said: 'I'm in the middle of responding to the point you're raising and I'd like to finish.'

Baier then asked her if she owed an apology to the families of two women, as well as 12-year-old Jocelyn Nungaray, who were killed by illegal migrants. Harris

said they were 'tragic cases' and she 'can't imagine the pain that the families of those victims have experienced'.

Baier showed a clip of Jocelyn's mother Alexis telling Congress last month that the Biden administration was to blame for her daughter's death, and asked if she owed Alexis an apology. Harris said she was 'sorry for her loss', but pivoted to blaming Trump as an 'individual who doesn't want to participate in solutions'.

Baier asked how she could claim to be a change candidate when she had been in power for three years. A visibly irate Harris added that a president has to be 'able to handle criticism without saying you'd lock people up for doing it'.

She deflected once again when Baier asked when she first noticed Biden's mental ability was diminished. She said: 'Joe Biden is not on the ballot and Donald Trump is.'

The interview ended abruptly with Mr Baier saying on air he was being told to bring it to an end.



Under pressure: Harris on Fox News

**A**SK American voters what is on their mind as election day looms, and you soon learn what to expect: rising prices, chaos on the border, Israel and Iran, healthcare and college costs, homelessness, jobs, tariffs, crime, taxes and climate change will probably all feature.

But for many women, one issue – abortion, or 'reproductive rights' as the issue is usually referred to here – is likely to top the list. It is perhaps the biggest obstacle between Donald Trump and the White House.

Though he hardly embodied their values, Trump was able to win the support of evangelical voters in 2016 by pledging to appoint conservative judges to the Supreme Court. He kept his promise, and two years ago the court overturned the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision, ruling that the US Constitution does not confer a right to abortion. Since then, in the absence of a

*'There's more fire under her tail. She's spicy'*

national law, the issue has been a matter for state governments.

Republicans have paid a heavy political price for achieving what was for many a long-cherished ambition: the issue helped account for their failure to take control of Congress in the 2022 midterms. But since it's now down to the states, what difference does it make what the president thinks?

One answer is that, with more judges nearing retirement, whoever succeeds President Biden will probably get to make new appointments to the court, which could be asked to make further momentous rulings. 'We've already lost so much, we're trying not to lose any more. If they can change that, what else can they change?' asked one worried voter in my recent focus groups in Nevada, which could go either way in November.

Another is that the president helps set the direction, whatever their formal power: 'You're putting up someone to represent us,' a woman told us in Wisconsin, another swing state. 'If you're put-

# Harris's public performances have left many doubting what she stands for



by **LORD ASHCROFT**

ting up someone who is for getting rid of women's rights, we'll never go in the right direction.'

But more than that, they want to show how they feel about the politicians who have brought the situation about – it's not just about progress, in other words, but payback. 'It's making a statement that that's what people want,' said a once-Republican woman who would now vote for Kamala Harris, speaking for many others we have heard from on our swing-state tour.

Many tell us they find Kamala Harris refreshing, and a much more exciting prospect than another term of Joe Biden – let alone Trump. Though she will be 60 on Sunday, she has what some describe as youthful energy: 'There's more fire under her tail. She's a little spicy,' as one put it. But despite policy nuggets like

\$25,000 in downpayment support for first-time buyers and matching Trump's popular pledge of no tax on restaurant tips, there are still doubts as to where she really stands. 'I feel like she doesn't speak with authority,' one wavering voter in Las Vegas told us. 'You can ask her a question and she's like, "Well, I'm middle class, I worked at McDonald's." There's no substance in it.'

Some of her public performances have also prompted doubts. 'She falls apart when the teleprompter goes down,' one noted. 'She gets into these word salads where you read them back and think, "What did she just say?"'

One example is a recent interview on the CBS show 60 Minutes in which, when asked why Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu seemed not to be listening to the US, early clips show her replying

'Well, Bill, the work that we have done has resulted in a number of movements in that region by Israel that were very much prompted by, or a result of, many things, including our advocacy for what needs to happen in the region' – whatever that means.

When broadcast in primetime, this was replaced with the snapper: 'We are not going to stop pursuing what is necessary for the United States to be clear about where we stand on the need for this war to end' – a prime example of mainstream media bias, according to the Trump campaign.

Some also wonder how tough she is, especially in world affairs. 'I don't know that she's strong enough to stand up to Putin or to Xi in China,' a man in Milwaukee told us. 'I don't know if she'd be good if Iran gets more aggressive. She might be too soft in that kind

of confrontation.' While polling shows Trump ahead on foreign policy, the economy and other crunch issues like border control, this leaves many voters in a dilemma. Unhappy with the Democrats though they may be, can they stomach a return to what one called the 'pony show' of a Trump presidency?

'The way he was acting, the things he did, I just lost any respect for him,' said a man in Wisconsin. 'I think he's funny and I think he's entertaining,' added another. 'I just don't think he's right to be president.'

But some have reconciled themselves to backing Trump again, even if they didn't in 2020: 'He had a big mouth, but gas was cheap, taxes were low, and we were living a lot better,' a Vegas bartender mused. 'I'm leaning towards Trump because now I can do a better job of separating his personality from his results.'

The Harris campaign is trying to stop people doing exactly that, reasoning that the more the elec-

*'I feel like she doesn't speak with authority'*

tion is about Trump himself, the better her chances. His mental acuity is the latest line of attack. 'Hope he's OK,' the Vice-President tweeted this week alongside bizarre footage of Trump swaying serenely to music on stage at a campaign event. 'Trump appears lost, confused and frozen.' She has challenged him to follow her by releasing his medical records.

While most think the former president has hardly changed since 2016, some detect a mellowed persona. 'He's toned down the rhetoric. He's become more professional,' one observed.

While some say they find this more attractive, could this be a hint that some also find him less exciting than the insurgent outsider who rallied discontented Americans by promising to drain the Washington swamp?

■ **LORD ASHCROFT** is a businessman, philanthropist, author and pollster. His research is at [LordAshcroftPolls.com](http://LordAshcroftPolls.com).