

Lies, damned lies and the truth about Joe Biden

By Liz Peek, Opinion Contributor, "The Hill"

[Nancy Pelosi](#) dismissed [Tara Reade](#)'s accusations of sexual assault against [Joe Biden](#). "I know him," said the House Speaker authoritatively, and that was that.

Does Biden's record warrant such confidence? Not really. In fact, Biden has a long history of lying — about himself, about his past and about events that never took place.

Democrats want the 2020 campaign to be a referendum on President [Trump](#). Fine, but if this is to be a contest of characters, it is only appropriate that Joe Biden's history of fabrication and deceit — often intended to bolster his intellectual credentials — also be fair game.

Over the past year, Biden thundered that the Obama administration "didn't lock people up in cages." He also claimed that, "Immediately, the moment [the Iraq War] started, I came out against it." And... "I was always labeled one of the most liberal members of Congress." [Politico's rating](#) of all three assertions? False.

No one should be surprised. Lest we forget...

A video is making the rounds in which Biden boasts at a 1987 rally, "I went to law school on a full academic scholarship...[and] ended up in the top half of my class."

Biden also maintained that he "graduated with three degrees from undergraduate school" and was the "outstanding student in the political science department."

[Not one of those claims was true](#), as newscasters at the time affirmed. In fact, Biden graduated 76th of 85 students in his law school class, had only a partial scholarship and did not win top honors in his undergraduate discipline.

Biden explained in his 2007 autobiography "Promises to Keep" that he had been angry at that rally since "it sounded to me that one of my own supporters doubted my intelligence."

According to a [1987 Newsweek piece](#), a supporter had "politely" asked Biden what law school he attended and how well he had done.

Biden bristled, saying "I think I have a much higher IQ than you do," reeled off his fabricated accomplishments and concluded "I'd be delighted to sit down and compare my IQ to yours if you'd like, Frank."

The episode reminds us of Biden recently snapping “You’re full of sh*t” [at an auto worker](#) who dared to challenge Biden’s stance on guns; or [calling an Iowa voter a “damn liar”](#) for insinuating that Biden had helped his son gain access in Ukraine.

The Newsweek reporter wrote that Biden appears “hyper, glib and intellectually insecure,” and says the 1987 encounter was critical to understanding why Biden’s first run at higher office flopped. “The clip...reflects a view of Biden's character widely shared in the community. Reporters and political consultants long ago concluded that Biden's chief character flaw was his tendency to wing it. He seems to lack a crucial synapse between brain and tongue, the one that makes the do-I-really-want-to-say-this decision.”

That commentary holds up well, as today more than ever Biden blunders into conversational crevasses, with no way out. (Think: "If they believe Tara Reade, they probably shouldn't vote for me." A new Harvard-Harris poll shows [55 percent of the country](#) believes Tara Reade. Game. Set. Match.)

Biden’s 1987 campaign foundered also because he was caught lifting passages of a speech given by Neil Kinnock. Biden echoed (falsely) the British Labor leader’s history that he was the first "in a thousand generations" to graduate from college and repeated virtually verbatim the same story about his wife, just as [Kinnock](#) had.

More shocking, Biden claimed: “My ancestors...worked in the coal mines of Northeast Pennsylvania and would come up after 12 hours and play football for four hours,” even though no one in Biden’s family tree ever worked underground. [That was Kinnock’s family.](#)

It wasn’t the first time; Biden had also been caught plagiarizing during law school. He “borrowed” an entire five pages from a published law review article without attribution and had to beg not to be expelled.

Interestingly, just last summer complaints arose about Biden “borrowing” the work of others, in putting together his climate plan. As Vox [reported](#), Biden’s plan “contains a number of passages that seem to have been copied and pasted, at times with very superficial changes” from a variety of sources.

Biden supporters will dismiss these episodes as being in the distant past. But Biden’s tendency to mislead did not expire in 1988. More recently, the former vice president has told audiences that after his stint in the White House, “I became a teacher. I became a professor.” While it is true that he took a lofty salary to make a handful of speeches for the University of Pennsylvania, [Biden has never taught students.](#)

Then there was the inspiring tale of visiting Afghanistan to honor a heroic naval officer. Biden described the officer’s actions in detail, adding, “This is God’s truth, my word as a Biden.” But according to a review in the Washington Post, [no such incident occurred.](#) Biden was lucky not to be hit by lightning.

There were also Biden's claims of having been [arrested in the 1970s](#) because he tried to visit Nelson Mandela in prison. Nope, didn't happen. He has also [cast himself](#) as a civil rights activist and co-sponsor of the Endangered Species Act; those things aren't true either.

Character does not change. Biden's winning smile and genial nature have granted him license to mislead. But as Biden denies alleged misdeeds related to General Flynn, to his son Hunter's involvement in Ukraine or to Tara Reade, his history of bending the truth is informative.

Democrats will counter that President Trump frequently exaggerates and embellishes, which is true. But we know Trump; he has been on the griddle for nearly four years, and been continually stripped and flayed by a hostile press.

Many of us are just getting to know Joe Biden.

Liz Peek is a former partner of major bracket Wall Street firm Wertheim & Company.