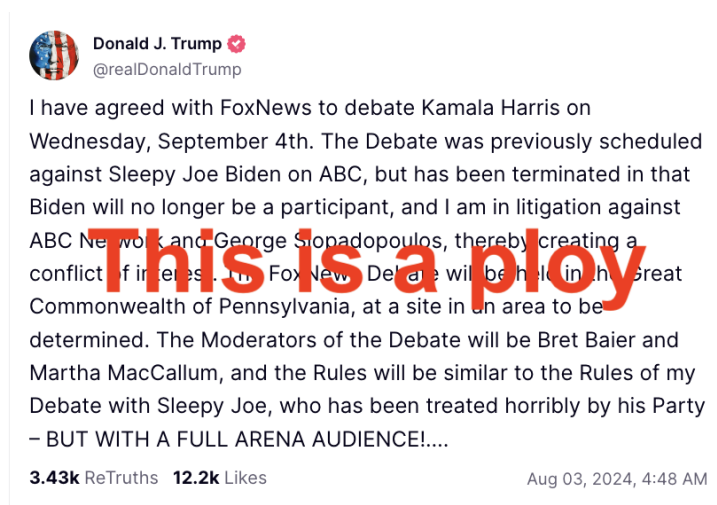


AFTER CNN AND NYT GET PUNKED BY TRUMP, THEY PRIORITIZE FREE DICK STORIES OVER BRIBERY

I spent the weekend with family, so was a bit distracted as the US media had an epically stupid weekend (and today is a bank holiday, so). Twice, multiple outlets, including CNN and the NYT displayed the least competence to serve as a guardian for democracy.

It started when Trump, just hours after telling Fox's Maria Bartiromo that he didn't need to debate Kamala Harris because the Vice President was already known, tweeted on his social media site that he had "agreed" to a debate on Fox News.



There were lots of Irish outlets who might not know better. CNN should, but their first instinct was to publish a claim that the debate had been switched; by the end of the day they figured out the ploy.

NYT kept trying – as Margaret Sullivan and others noted, at first and second, they were struggling more than Drudge to understand what happened.

Headlines in the New York Times – probably the most influential mainstream news organization in the nation – matter even more. They make their way into the news ecosystem and can pollute the waters.

That's why it's so confounding when such headlines are either wrong or misleading. Consider this one in this past week's New York Times:

Trump Agrees to a Fox News Debate with Harris on Sept. 4



Donald Trump speaks with Rachel Scott of ABC News at the National Association of Black Journalists conference on July 31 in Chicago. Trump's comments during the event spawned poor headline choices / Getty

Reading this, a headline-grazer might think that the former president's agreement was all that was necessary to make a Fox debate a reality. That Kamala Harris was on board. And that Donald Trump is ready for a fine, public-spirited exchange of views.

But that, of course, is not the case. In fact, Trump had backed out of a planned debate on Sept. 10th on ABC. He then came up with a new date, unilaterally changed the venue to Fox and decided it

would be in an arena with a big audience, not in a studio with no audience.

Consider the Drudge Report's headline, which – though not expressed in restrained journalistic language – does manage to get the truth across.

RATTLED TRUMP ONLY WANTS FOX DEBATE

[snip]

The Times, probably responding to the criticism, changed the headline online – twice!

Round 2: Trump Proposes a Fox News Debate

Round 3: Trump Backs Out of ABC Debate and Proposes One on Fox.

Then they faceplanted again, decided that Daily Mail was their assignment editor. They decided to chase the story of an affair Doug Emhoff had years before he even met Kamala Harris that – unlike some of Trump's, did not involve sexual assault or dozens of felonies to cover up the affair. Then the NYT decided to join in the toddler chase, assigning two journalists to the story that *still* did not remotely involve any actions that could impact Harris' fitness to be President (and adopted a double standard with Melania and any dalliances she has had).

Neither of these outlets have yet matched WaPo's report on the suspect \$10M payment via Egypt that kept Trump in his first race (even though CNN had led on the story prior to the WaPo's recent story).

Indeed, when CNN did a story purporting to describe how Trump's campaign has stumbled in the last two weeks, they didn't mention the damning new evidence that Trump has been working for foreign countries all along.

American democracy has almost entirely spun free

of any substance. And Trump is exploiting that situation to avoid any accountability.