

Family ambition is steering Biden's ship towards the rocks

● Far from doing 'the right thing', the president's wife and son are egging him on



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You don't have to be a believer in the cult of youth to think that someone in their early 80s with obvious cognitive problems is not best equipped to take on four more years of what is, arguably, the most challenging political job in the world.

Joe Biden's failing physical and mental health has been a problem for US voters for some time.

In July last year, I wrote here that, among the critical cohort of independent voters, 71pc say they have doubts about Joe Biden's mental fitness to run for a second term. And I concluded an article last October with the following: "A significant number of US voters are sending a clear message to the Democratic Party: either you replace Joe Biden in this election or we will — with Donald Trump."

Yet the Democratic party and its

many cheerleaders in the mainstream media continued to deny reality.

Biden, they insisted, was "sharp as a tack". In effect, the Democrats were asking the US public the Groucho Marx question: "Who you gonna believe — me or your lying eyes?"

It was gaslighting on a grand scale. Then two weeks ago, on the most watched programme in CNN's history, that mendacious house of cards came crashing down on live television in front of over 50 million viewers.

Faced with the incontrovertible evidence of the debate debacle and quicker than you could say "dump Biden", the media did an about turn.

The day after the debate, a *New York Times* editorial described Biden as "a shadow of a great public servant". More significantly, and presumably without even blushing, the editorial board argued: "The clearest path for Democrats to defeat a candidate defined by his lies is to deal truthfully with the American public."

“Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake

In the immediate aftermath of the debate, the extended Biden family headed to Camp David to assess the political damage and regroup.

According to media reports, there was a unanimous conclusion to the weekend family huddle — Biden should defy the naysayers and stay in the race. Family ambition confronted party electoral interests.

In this contestation of wills, two figures emerged on the family side — one surprising, the other not so much.

Few, if any, could name the son of any past American president. That is not the case with Joe Biden's son Hunter. Though the story of Hunter's notorious laptop was originally dismissed as "Russian disinformation", it is now accepted as authentic. And because of its emails and pornographic video content, Hunter Biden became a household name. As presidential family political liabilities go, it doesn't get much worse than Hunter Biden.

And yet Hunter — a man with a conspicuous inability to make good decisions about his own life — was one of the most ardent Camp David attendees advising his father to continue with the campaign.

Far less surprisingly, Jill Biden has emerged as the most passionate and indefatigable champion of her hus-



band's overarching ambition to continue in the race. You can argue with the wisdom of her choice, but you cannot argue with her willingness to fight vigorously for her convictions.

Doughty but anonymous "Democratic sources familiar with the situation" had long suggested that Jill would do the right thing — and persuade her husband to stand down, if it became necessary.

They misjudged her.

Jill Biden is made of sterner stuff. Despite not being a medical doctor and not having a PhD (she has a doctorate of education), she persuaded the White House to refer to her as Dr Jill Biden in all official communications — and it still does.

Even Oprah Winfrey was taken in and tweeted that Dr Jill should be made surgeon general. She deleted the tweet when the doctor status of Mrs Biden was clarified for her.

Out on the campaign trail recently, a group of vegan protesters invaded the stage while Biden was speaking. No shrinking violet, Mrs Biden immediately interposed herself between the president and the protesters.

She grabbed the first protester and forcefully ejected her from the stage. The vegans should be grateful that the president's security detail intervened at that point — because from the photos of the incident that I've seen, Mrs Biden did not look like someone who was about to take any prisoners.

● Almost every public utterance of Joe Biden is boosting the standing of Donald Trump in the polls

Eerily echoing Donald Trump, Biden argues that it's the elites of the Democratic Party that are seeking to undermine him.

In thrall to the absurdity that "democracy is in danger", Democrats have cleaved to an obviously failing candidate for years. Now Biden is turning the democracy argument against them. He makes the case that he won the Democratic primaries fair and square and to step down would disenfranchise these voters.

Writing to the Democratic members of the US Congress last week, the 81-year-old president asked: "How can we stand for democracy in our nation, if we ignore it in our own party?"

Despite some obvious effects of the ravages of time, in a one-hour press conference after the Nato summit last Thursday, Joe Biden still insisted: "I'm in this to complete the job I started."

But he failed to quell the growing Democratic clamour for his withdrawal from the race.

Meanwhile, there's an unnatural quiet emanating from Trump.

For a politician with a singular ability to damage his own campaign most times he opens his mouth, this is indeed a turn for the books.

Against all expectations, Trump seems to have taken on board Napoleon's advice: "Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake."

How this high-stakes saga unfolds is impossible to know at this stage — but the battle lines have been clearly drawn. This struggle pits Biden family ambitions against the political interests of the Democratic Party, with the leadership of the free world at stake.

For us bystanders, the best we can hope for is that this riveting political drama does not come with a tragic ending.