

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Headline:**

**Can Trump Even Survive An October Surprise?: Taking The Conversation Further Syndicated Column For Release September 21, 2024**

### **Subheadline:**

A better Question May Be, “Can America Survive another Trump Surprise In October?”

**[Little Rock, Arkansas]** — The October Surprise is a wonderfully chaotic, unpredictable element that emerges when we think we've seen everything in a U.S. presidential election. Political junkies, journalists, and campaign strategists alike hold their breath as the final days before Election Day approaches, wondering if this will be the year when an unforeseen scandal, revelation, or twist blows up the race. With 2024 shaping up to be one of the most intense political years in recent memory, you can't help but wonder: Is there an October Surprise looming? And more intriguingly, if such a surprise does drop, how will it impact the campaigns of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris?

Let's start this week's column with a recap of the many blips that have punctuated Donald Trump's campaign in the last few months. The debate with Joe Biden aired on June 27, 2024. It was a highly anticipated showdown, especially after months of Biden wobbling in the polls. The debate didn't produce fireworks, but it became the opening act for an insane summer.

Just weeks later, on July 13, the first assassination attempt on Trump took place. Thankfully, he emerged unscathed, but the incident thrust him into the role of the embattled candidate—a victim of political violence. The goodwill he garnered was astonishing, but he quickly squandered it. During the Republican National Convention on July 18, Trump, in classic form, began his acceptance speech with 20 minutes of newfound thanks and appreciation, then went on on an hour of his standard doom and gloom playbook, alienating much of the goodwill he had gained with a promise of a friendlier Trump. His off-script remarks and inflammatory rhetoric turned what could have been a triumph into a PR disaster.

Days later, on July 21, Joe Biden officially dropped out of the race, handing the Democratic nomination to Kamala Harris. This shifted the dynamics of the election, but even with Biden out of the picture, the race was still a virtual coin flip. Then came September 10, when Trump debated Harris, a contest many hoped would add clarity to the race. What happened instead? Trump's performance was a dud, and Harris's campaign received a modest, though fleeting, boost from her showing. But just five days later, on September 15, the second assassination attempt on Trump occurred, rattling the political landscape again.

By this point, Trump had dealt with more scandals and incidents than most politicians face in a lifetime, let alone a single summer (we will not even bother with the criminal trials). But somehow, his campaign chugged along, controversy be damned.

But here's the thing: as we wrap up September, political insiders everywhere are starting to hold their collective breath. We all know what's coming. It's the time-honored tradition of the October Surprise, that last-minute revelation that can sink a candidate's campaign when it's far too late to recover.

Could it be something related to Trump? Well, if you've been following his campaign since June, you'd think he's bulletproof by now. Assassination attempts, gaffes, and even endorsements of controversial figures like North Carolina gubernatorial candidate Mark Robinson (who, by the way, has recently made headlines for his bizarre love for pornography and Nazis) haven't derailed him yet. Despite these blips, Trump's support base remains remarkably loyal.

But Trump's 2024 campaign is not immune to the potential devastation of an October Surprise. While he has shown an uncanny ability to survive scandal after scandal, an October bombshell could hit differently. The key difference? Timing. If a late-breaking story arrives within the final 30 days, it's much harder to spin or bury. The public's memory is short, but when the election is mere days away, there's little time to recover, especially if the media latches onto the story.

The idea of an October Surprise isn't just a fun political trope—it's grounded in history. Let's take a quick tour of some of the more famous examples that actually impacted elections. In 1972, just before the election, President Nixon's National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger, announced that "Peace is at hand," referring to the Vietnam War. This news helped Nixon solidify his re-election bid.

In 1980, there were whispers of a secret deal between Ronald Reagan's campaign and Iran to delay the release of American hostages until after the election. While never proven, the mere suggestion of this altered public perception. Then, in 1992, revelations about President George H.W. Bush's involvement in the Iran-Contra scandal tainted his re-election campaign.

One of the more memorable October Surprises occurred in 2000 when news broke just days before the election that George W. Bush had been arrested for drunk driving in 1976. While Bush still won, the revelation shaved points off his lead. And finally, there's the big one in 2016—FBI Director James Comey's letter to Congress reopening the investigation into Hillary Clinton's emails. That letter, landing just days before the election, is widely believed to have tipped the scales in Trump's favor.

As we turn the corner into October, both campaigns should be wary, but the Harris-Walz ticket has more to lose. Trump has already weathered storms that would have destroyed most political careers. There's a case to be made that his base has grown desensitized to scandal. Unless there's a genuinely catastrophic revelation, it's hard to imagine anything sticking to Trump that hasn't already.

Harris, however, should be more concerned. If an October bombshell hits her campaign, it could very well tilt the race in Trump's favor. The fact that the race is still so close after all the mishaps of June, July, and September suggests that voters are still undecided on Harris. One wrong move or one scandalous revelation could be enough to push them toward Trump.

Historically, we've seen October Surprises take down giants and shift the course of presidential elections. In 2024, the Harris-Walz and Trump-Vance campaigns are vulnerable for different reasons. While Trump seems to have nine political lives, Harris's campaign feels more delicate, more prone to the kind of last-minute scandal that could seal her fate.

Everyone loves an October Surprise—except the candidate caught in the crosshairs. Let's see who, if anyone, gets blindsided this time around.

**About More Better Media, LLC & The Conversation Project:**

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