

Drop-out candidate Biden born wrong side of border

Pity poor Joe Biden. First, the Democratic senator had to drop out of the presidential race after revelations that he plagiarized in law school, has been telling inflated tales about his academic career, and cribbed a campaign speech from British Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock.

And now (irony of ironies) it turns out that his big mistake was being born on the wrong side of the border — had he been born in Canada, he might well be prime minister today.

This is the gist of a remarkable analysis by the Rev. Colin Campbell, a political science professor at Georgetown University. If Sen. Biden had been running for office in Canada, says the professor, his transgressions would never have been paraded on the front pages, since "Canada is still a society where fair play is upheld."

For instance, the professor adds, it is extremely unlikely that the Canadian press would begin digging up Ed Broadbent's old university transcripts just because his party is riding high in the polls.

This is a fascinating pronouncement. And let's leave

aside the fact that it virtually guarantees that 14 Canadian reporters will immediately begin digging up Ed's old university transcripts, just to prove that they have as little respect for fair play as the next fellow.

(News flash: "University transcripts reveal that Ed Broadbent once received a B-minus on a political science paper on the grounds that it was a bit bland and went to tortuous lengths to avoid using the word 'socialist.'" Hmm. No, it lacks that delectable whiff of genuine scandal, somehow.)

If you wanted to be blunt and uncharitable, of course, you could argue that Sen. Biden got exactly the comeuppance he deserved.

Perhaps a man can be excused for having plagiarized back in law school, but you have to have serious doubts about a politician who cribbs a campaign speech from Neil Kinnock.

This was one of the speeches Kinnock delivered en route to being trounced by Maggie Thatcher. Pinching one of Neil Kinnock's campaign speeches seems a bit like pinching one of John Turner's. The larceny may be deft but the judgement is untable.



Weir's View

By Ian Weir

...most unforgivable of all are the tales that Sen. Biden told about his academic career.

He claimed that he earned three degrees (he has one), that he attended law school on a full scholarship (he didn't), and that he graduated in the top half of his class (he graduated 76th out of 85).

When you see it in black and white like this, the point is witheringly clear. The plain fact is that Sen. Biden... well, the fact is that he did more or less what everyone else does.

You and I — it goes without saying — are honest people. But I think it's fair to say that we also have personal experience with the manner in which having played the Seventh Elf in the Grade Six Christmas pageant can become magnified, over the years, into a once-blossoming career on the stage.

Granted, most of us don't exaggerate quite as enthusiastically as Sen. Biden. We don't actually invent academic degrees. Still, would we really want some reporter to double-check everything we've ever said about

ourselves?

This is the point at which you begin to think terribly fond thoughts about the good old Canadian spirit of fair play.

Just imagine the sort of resume-of-life that the average Canadian might wish to present to the world, with the appropriate translations in brackets.

"Herbert Success spent several happy years at high school (in fact, a year more than everyone else did) and briefly considered a career in investment banking (until he failed Math).

"After graduation, he attended university (well, mostly he didn't attend — this is why they asked him to leave), and later took up the offer of a managerial position (well, almost) with a long-established firm (his father has owned the business for 20 years).

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