

Trump survives assassination attempt

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Defiant: "The bloodied former President, his fist raised, flanked by an American flag, is already an indelible portrait of our era of political crisis and conflict," said The New Yorker.

Is the use of violent language to blame? After an attempt on Donald Trump's life, supporters blamed Joe Biden for calling him a threat to democracy. Opponents called this pure hypocrisy.

What's happening?

Every so often something happens for which nobody can plan, an event that changes everything.

We have just witnessed one of those events. The defining picture of this presidential campaign will now be Donald Trump, his face bloody, fist in the air, mouthing the words "fight, fight".

It was taken after Trump escaped death by millimetres when a gunman opened fire at a rally in Pennsylvania.

The shooter, named as Thomas Matthew Crooks, was shot dead at the scene and his motive remains unknown.

Find out more

Experts say it is likely Trump will get a boost in the polls. After **Ronald Reagan** survived an assassination attempt in 1981, he shot up eight points and went on to win the 1984 presidential election in a landslide.

He now has the perfect conspiracy theory: he can imply his enemies in the government got desperate enough to take him out for good.

Others blamed Trump opponents for inciting violence against him. Senator **JD Vance** said that Biden calling Trump a threat to democracy, had "led directly" to the assassination attempt.

Biden allies counter that Trump himself has frequently used violent rhetoric against his foes.

But the assassination attempt, experts say, is a turning point. Before, each side was just trading words. They may now feel they have an excuse to turn to violence.

Is the use of violent language to blame?

Some say

Yes! Both campaigns have been irresponsible, presenting each other as an **existential threat**.

Others think

No! Every political campaign involves **intemperate** language. In a healthy democracy party leaders make up afterwards.

Some people say

"The best government is a benevolent tyranny tempered by an occasional assassination."

Voltaire (1694 – 1778), French writer

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What do you think?

Six steps to discovery

1. Connect

How do you feel about this story? - Has this incident made you more or less worried about the future?

2. Wonder

What questions do you have? - For example: How do we stop the spiral of violence?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - Go back through the article above and pick out one hard fact and one opinion.

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - You are Biden's campaign manager. How do you respond to the attempted assassination of Donald Trump?

5. Express

What do others believe? - Get in a small group and work together to research one example of a democracy becoming a dictatorship.

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - It is the day after the presidential election in November. Write a newspaper article to inform your readers who won and what role the assassination attempt played in the outcome.

Glossary

Ronald Reagan - The 40th US President.

JD Vance - James David Vance is a Republican senator.

Existential - Relating to the state of human existence. Existential dread can refer to grappling with your own experiences of responsibility and death.

Intemperate - Excessive in behaviour, or showing a lack of control over yourself.