



**COMMENTARY**  
By Lord  
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# My tour of the swing states that reveals where the election will be won and lost

**F**OUR days to go in America and we're down to the closing arguments. Donald Trump's message is 'Kamala broke it; I'll fix it'. But true to form, that's been obscured by the huge row over a joke about Puerto Rico – risqué or disgraceful, depending on how you see things – made by a comedian at his weekend rally at Madison Square Garden.

It's debatable how many still on the Trump train will be compelled to jump off by the latest in a long line of such incidents. But with things as tight as they are, any distraction is unwelcome. This will also be the view in Kamala HQ after President Biden responded to the rally by calling Trump supporters 'garbage'. The White House insists he was talking about the comedian, not the voters, but the words are out there.

This in turn overshadows Harris's own final pitch, made on the spot where the former president spoke before the storming of the Capitol on January 6, 2021: don't return to the chaos of Trump. Her negative final focus is a stark reversal of the vibes of hope and 'joy' of her early campaign. (In fact, there's been a sometimes contradictory mixture of the two approaches. On Sunday she told a church in Philadelphia she was 'determined to turn the page on hatred and division' – a few days after using a CNN interview to label her opponent 'a fascist').

It's frustrating for some voters who still have only a hazy idea of

*'Some are still hazy on what she stands for'*

what she stands for. 'They were asking her a question on Fox News about the border and she said, "Wait, let's talk about what Trump did". It's like, no, tell us what you're going to do,' one exasperated voter told us in Charlotte, North Carolina, in our final round of swing-state focus groups.

Opinions differ as to whether Harris is keeping things vague to keep her electoral tent as wide as possible, or because there are few firm plans to be specific about.

Another explanation for her putting the spectre of Trump front and centre is that the Democrats are worried about turning out their base, not least the minority voters who traditionally form the bedrock of the party's support.

Barack Obama's recent appeal to black men to vote for Harris – in which he controversially suggested they 'just aren't feeling the idea of having a woman as president' – adds weight to this theory, as does Michelle Obama's call for men to support their women by voting for her.

But it's clear from our conversations there are many reasons why Trump is polling more strongly among minorities than any



In the spotlight: A campaign advert for Kamala Harris on the giant Sphere venue in Las Vegas

Republican since Nixon. One is that party loyalties are loosening.

'The Democrats are expecting us to vote for them,' one African-American man told us in Atlanta, Georgia. 'They're not really listening to what it is black people are saying and what we want at the end of the day. It's about my security and my money. Border control, wars that we're in. My dollar doesn't go as far as it went four years ago.'

Many also identify with the entrepreneurship and ambition Trump embodies: 'Now more than ever, black and brown men are investors, they're business owners,' another added. 'They want their money, like everyone else.'

If they have reservations –

including the racial climate during another Trump term and the suggestion he'll give police officers immunity from prosecution – many find plenty to put them off the Democrats, including their record on border control and stance on transgender rights.

There are also concerns about Harris herself. 'She plays identity politics,' said another man in Atlanta. 'When it's important to get the black vote, she tries to trump up her blackness and pretend like she knows what the black experience is.'

Some feel that as a woman of Jamaican and Indian heritage, she overplays her black identity. A discussion of cooking tips with a chef in Savannah, Georgia, struck

many as a particularly egregious example. She claimed she washed her collard greens – a cabbage-like vegetable that's a staple of Southern cuisine – in her bathtub. 'No black person is putting greens in the tub,' retorted an incredulous man in Charlotte. 'That's the stupidest thing I ever heard. Saying things that are so outlandish to connect with black people is so pandering.'

Some were also unimpressed by the celebrities with whom she's taken the stage. 'Was that supposed to be empowering?' asked a woman of Harris's appearance with Megan Thee Stallion, a US rapper whose exuberant twerking at a Democrat rally in Atlanta raised eyebrows.

'It was just unclassy.' Her record as District Attorney in California is also a worry. 'She prosecuted a lot of African-American men more harshly than she did others,' claims one voter. 'She wasn't an advocate for the black man, but now she needs the vote, it's "I'm going to help you".'

With polls in decisive states still suggesting the race is too close to call, everything hinges on persuading such sceptical Americans to turn out. Those who haven't done so already, that is. Already, 57million Americans have cast their ballots. The question is, who will run out of voters first?

This is where money can really

*'The Harris machine is formidable'*

talk. Getting out the vote is expensive, and the Democrats have raised over \$1billion – nearly three times as much as their opponents. Philadelphia, Detroit and other big cities in swing states are festooned with Harris posters and teeming with campaigners.

Trump's team points out that his polling numbers are better than at this stage in previous elections. However, he does best among those who are less interested in the election and less certain they'll bother. If they all show up, they could well put him back in the White House, but the Harris machine is formidable. Tuesday's result will come down to one thing: which side wants it more.

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## Musk win over \$1m handouts

ELON Musk's controversial \$1million (£775,000) daily handouts to voters continued yesterday after he won a court victory against Democrats who claim they are illegal.

He has been giving \$1million cheques to randomly selected people who sign a petition backing

free speech and gun rights – issues prioritised by Republicans.

Pennsylvania District Attorney Larry Krasner, a Democrat, alleged a breach of lottery laws to influence voters. But the case was moved to a federal court – delaying it and so allowing the handouts to continue.



## Jennifer, Friends with Kamala

JENNIFER Aniston has cast her ballot for Kamala Harris – one of nearly 60million Americans to vote early.

The Friends actress, 55, posted a selfie, left, and urged others to back Ms Harris to 'end this era of fear, chaos and the attacks on our democracy'.

'Today not only did I vote for access to health care, for reproductive free-

dom, for equal rights, for safe schools, and for a fair economy, but also for sanity and human decency,' she wrote.

Data showed more than 58.2million Americans have already voted. States set their own rules for early voting. Actress Lily Collins – who was born in the UK but also has US citizenship – and Madonna also backed Ms Harris.