



# Taking Out The

November 1, 2024

At last Sunday’s Trump Rally in Madison Square Garden, Tony Hinchcliffe, a reputed comedian, told a very unfunny joke, referring to Puerto Rico as a “floating island of garbage.”

The outcry was understandably loud, so noisy in fact that it apparently awakened Sleepy Joe Biden. “The only garbage I see floating out there is his supporters,” declared the man who is—remember?—currently still president of the United States.

Mr. Biden has since clarified that he did not mean what he said. That’s good.

Though, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre [sounded](#) a different note: “So, just to clarify, he was not calling Trump supporters garbage, which is why he put out ... a statement that clarified what he meant and what he was trying to say.”

But Mr. Biden did say what he said. That’s not in dispute

—it’s on [videotape](#).

Yet ... the reporting seems fuzzier now about whether President Biden uttered what our ears heard.

On *NBC Nightly News*, anchor Lester Holt began a [segment](#) by referring to Biden’s “*apparent* reference to Trump supporters as garbage.”

At *Vox*, Eric Levitz [defends](#) the president, arguing that he “ended up spouting a garbled stream of words,” sure, but those words “may or may not have dehumanized all Trump supporters as ‘garbage.’”

How could Levitz know for certain? He’s not an etymologist, after all.

A *Washington Post* analysis also [found](#) the president’s lack of noticeable cognition to absolve him of any ill intent. “Biden’s increasing tendency to stumble over his words, which marred these very comments,” the paper explains, “makes it entirely plausible that he didn’t intend to tar large numbers of Trump supporters.”

At best, we have a commander-in-chief who can no longer communicate coherently. With his finger on the nuclear button.

What—me worry?

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.