

The Vance-Carlson-Trump nexus | Columbia Journalism Review

By Jon Allsop

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“Cultural heroin.” In July 2016, J.D. Vance used those words, in an *Atlantic* op-ed, to explain, and ultimately dismiss, the appeal of Donald Trump in “broken communities” across America. It was a weighty charge coming from a man whose just-published memoir, *Hillbilly Elegy*, had discussed the scourge of opioids in the Ohio town where he grew up; his own mother was addicted to prescription narcotics and, later, used heroin. Fast-forward six years, and the same Donald Trump endorsed the same J.D. Vance to be the Republican candidate for US Senate in Ohio, though he struggled to remember his name. (“We’ve endorsed J.P., right? J.D. Mandel,” Trump said at a rally on Sunday, confusing Vance with his opponent Josh Mandel.) The primary was yesterday, and Vance won it by a clear margin. Predictably, given the media obsession over Trump’s endorsements, major outlets glued “Trump backed” to Vance’s name in their headlines.

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