

POLITICS

Republican candidates wore red ties at the first GOP debate. A stylist called it the 'Trump look-alike effect.'

By [Talía Lakritz](#)



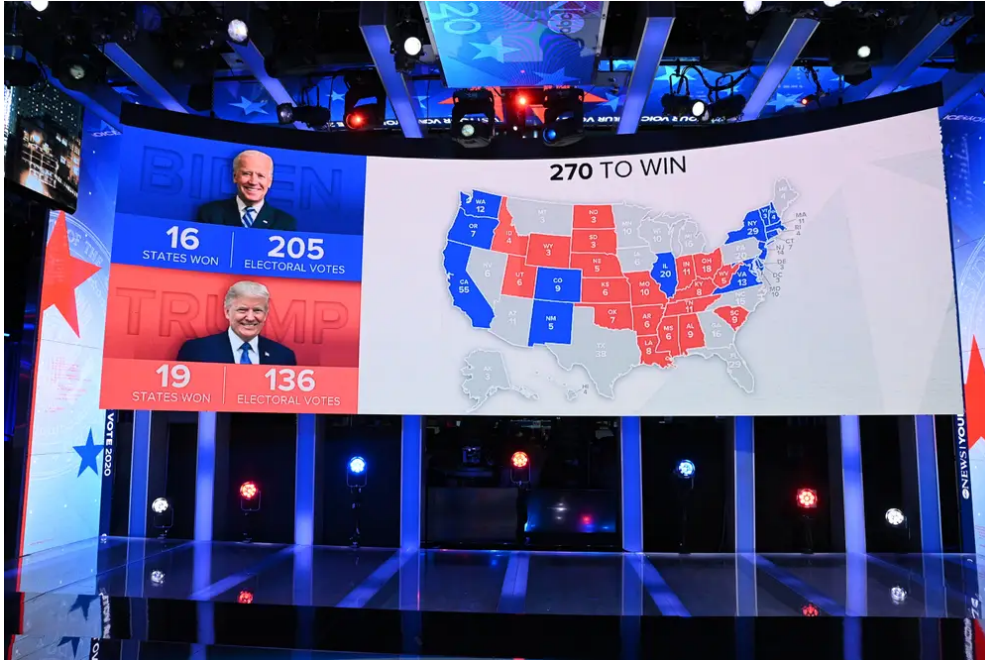
Republican candidates at the first GOP presidential debate wore red ties, appearing to channel Donald Trump's signature style. PEDRO UGARTE/AFP via Getty Images ;

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- At Wednesday's Republican presidential debate, every male candidate wore a red tie.
- Lauren Rothman, a political and corporate stylist, called it the "Trump look-alike effect."
- Trump skipped the debate, but candidates were asked if they would support him if he were

convicted.

In recent years, the color red has become a symbol of the Republican party.



An electoral college map on ABC News during the 2020 presidential election. Lorenzo Bevilaqua/ABC via Getty Images

The color red became associated with the Republican party during the 2000 election, when newspapers such as USA TODAY printed full-color election maps for the first time. The terms "red state" and "blue state" also became part of the lexicon that year to describe states won by Republican and Democratic candidates, according to Smithsonian magazine.

Former President Donald Trump

made red ties his signature look.



President Donald Trump wears a red tie in the Oval Office in 2020. Doug Mills-Pool/Getty Images

Parodies of Trump often feature the character in a red tie. The official Trump store also sells red silk ties for \$125.

Lauren Rothman, a corporate and political fashion stylist, image expert, and author of "Style Bible: What to Wear to Work," told Insider that while many politicians have gravitated towards red as a camera-friendly color, Trump made it his brand.

"If we can come to rely on your look, we see you before we see you, and we hear you on mute," Rothman said.

"Trump really embodied that formula, which has been in place for a long time for politicians."

At the first Republican debate of the 2024 presidential election, which Trump did not attend, every single male candidate wore a red tie.



Republican presidential candidates (from left to right), former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson, former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, former Vice President Mike Pence, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, Vivek Ramaswamy, former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley, U.S. Sen. Tim Scott (R-SC) and North Dakota governor Doug Burgum participate in the first debate of the GOP primary season hosted by FOX News at the Fiserv Forum on August 23, 2023 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Win McNamee/Getty Images

Republican presidential candidates Asa Hutchinson, Chris Christie, Mike Pence, Ron DeSantis, Vivek Ramaswamy, Tim Scott, and Doug Burgum attended

Kamasswamy, Tim Scott, and Doug Burgum attended the first debate of the GOP primary season wearing matching red ties. Nikki Haley, the only woman onstage, was also the only candidate not wearing the look since she was not wearing a suit.

"They got the memo of what works on a Fox screen and the power of those visual cues when a lot of people are watching you, whether it's from a bar stool on a big screen or at home over teenagers talking," Rothman said. "You saw it last night if it was on mute or not."

The uniform style was a departure from past Republican debates, when candidates wore ties of different colors.



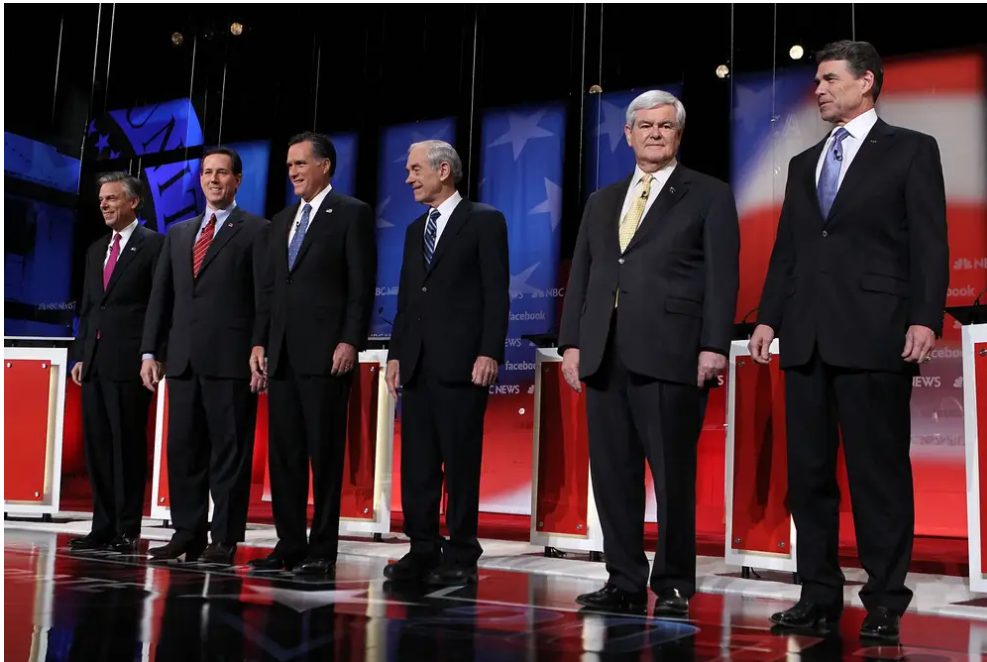
Republican presidential candidates (from left to right) New Jersey Gov.

Chris Christie, Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL), Ben Carson, Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, Donald Trump, Jeb Bush, Mike Huckabee, Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX), Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) and John Kasich take the stage for the first prime-time presidential debate hosted by FOX News and Facebook at the Quicken Loans Arena August 6, 2015 in Cleveland, Ohio. Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

In August 2015, the top 10 GOP candidates appeared for their first prime-time debate in Cleveland, Ohio.

Trump wore his usual red tie, as did Marco Rubio and Rand Paul. Ben Carson and Jeb Bush wore a more muted red, while Chris Christie, Scott Walker, Mike Huckabee, Ted Cruz, and John Kasich went with cobalt blue.

In 2012, only a few candidates wore red ties to a GOP debate on "Meet the Press."



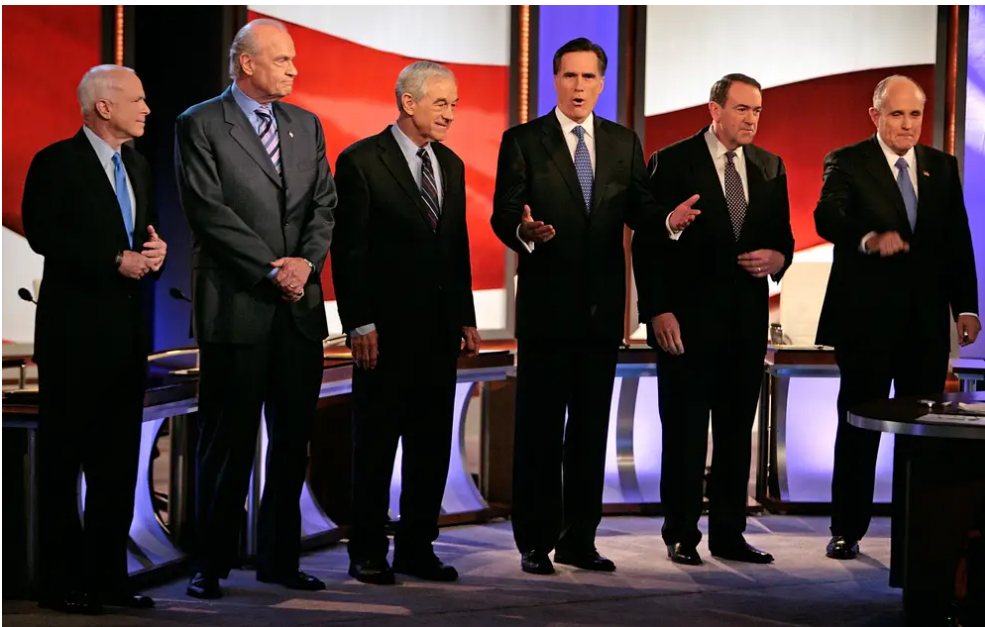
Republican presidential candidates (from left to right) former Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman, former U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum, former Massachusetts

Gov. Mitt Romney, U.S. Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX), former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, and Texas Gov. Rick Perry gather on the stage prior to the NBC News Facebook Debate on "Meet the Press" on January 8, 2012 at the Capitol Center for the Arts in Concord, New Hampshire. Alex Wong/Getty Images

John Huntsman and Rick Santorum wore red ties. Mitt Romney, Ron Paul, and Rick Perry wore blue. Newt Gingrich stood out in yellow.

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In 2008, none of the candidates wore red, at all.



Republican presidential candidates (from left to right) Sen. John McCain (R-AZ), former U.S. Senator Fred Thompson (R-TN), Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX), former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, and former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani participate in a televised debate at Saint Anselm College January 5, 2008 in Manchester, New Hampshire. Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

John McCain, Fred Thompson, Ron Paul, Mitt Romney, Mike Huckabee, and Rudy Giuliani wore muted blue and taupe tones.

Rothman called the prevalence of red ties at Wednesday's GOP debate the "Trump look-alike effect."



Former US Vice President Mike Pence, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, and entrepreneur and author Vivek Ramaswamy arrive on stage for the first Republican Presidential primary debate at the Fiserv Forum in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on August 23, 2023. ALEX WROBLEWSKI/AFP via Getty Images

Trump did not participate in Wednesday's debate. Instead, he sat for a pre-recorded interview with former Fox News host Tucker Carlson that aired at the same time. Nevertheless, moderator Martha MacCallum

asked the candidates questions about the absent

candidate, such as whether they would continue to support him if he were convicted in court — most said they would.

"As far as I know, there is not a ton of behind-the-scenes consulting about what other candidates are going to be wearing," Rothman said. "My sense is that each one of them came to this separately, not with the intention of a 'squad style.' Nonetheless, that's what we saw, because this is what's being created, right? This is the Trump look-alike effect."