

Did He or Didn't He? Ted Cruz's Tale of Tape

Presidential politics can, at times, get ugly, as any observer of the current race would likely agree. But some candidates attempt to keep the ugliness out of the public view.

That's what *The New York Times* has charged Republican presidential hopeful U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) with doing this week, saying U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) criticized two of his competitors during a closed-door fundraising event. The criticisms, according to the *Times*, were leveled against front-runners Donald Trump and Dr. Ben Carson.

And despite the Cruz campaign's best efforts to say he didn't criticize his opponents, the *Times* released an audio recording from the event in which he appears to do exactly that.

"Both of them I like and respect, but I don't believe either one of them is going to be our president," he said. "You look at Paris, you look at San Bernardino, it's given a seriousness to this race, that people are looking for: Who is prepared to be a commander in chief? Who understands the threats we face?"

"Who am I comfortable having their finger on the button?" he continued. "Now that's a question of strength, but it's also a question of judgment. And I think that is a question that is a challenging question for both of them."

"So my approach, much to the frustration of the media, has been to bear hug both of them, and smother them with love," he added. "People run as who they are. I believe gravity will bring both of those campaigns down. I think the lion's share of their supporters come to us."

Later in the day, the Cruz campaign released a statement refuting the *Times* article. In it, the campaign repeated a

statement the candidate made at a campaign rally earlier in the day:

“In the course of a presidential election, the voters are going to make a decision about every candidate. And ultimately the decision is, who has the right judgment—experience and judgment—to serve as commander in chief? And every one of us who is running is being assessed by the voters under that metric. And that is exactly why we have a democratic election to make that determination.”

The statement received a standing ovation at the campaign event. It got mixed reviews from supporters who saw the campaign’s release without the context of where it came from, leaving them scratching their heads.

For his part, Trump seemed eager to take on Cruz. He took to social media Friday morning to say, “Looks like [Cruz] is getting ready to attack. I am leading by so much he must. I hope so, he will fall like all others. Will be easy!”

A few minutes later, he added, “[Cruz] should not make statements behind closed doors to his bosses, he should bring them out into the open—more fun that way!”