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Williams: “I Never Engage in Opinions” ...

“As Mrs. Roosevelt famously said during World War II, this is no ordinary time.... The division, the hatred, the venom over a policy of something close to universal health care for citizens — I would sooner jab my hand into a food processor than take a side (in my line of work I never engage in opinions anyway) — but this has proven one of those catch-all issues.”

— *NBC Nightly News* anchor Brian Williams to presenter Matt Frei during the BBC’s *Americana* podcast, March 28.



...As He Praises the “Great Quality” “Nuanced” “Intellect” of a Liberal “Lion”

“He leaves the court approaching his 90th birthday here, with one of the great quality minds, 90 or not, on the Supreme Court. Always had a kind of finely-tuned intellect and nuanced opinions.... No one in 1975 would have believed you if you’d said someday this man, President Ford’s appointment, would be known as the lion of the liberal wing of the court in 2010.”

— Brian Williams talking about retiring Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens, *MSNBC Live*, April 9.

Moran Worries: Can Obama “Even Hold the Ground?”

“In the end, Diane, whoever the President chooses, she or he isn’t likely to tip the balance of the court, given how much of a liberal stalwart Justice Stevens had become. The real question for President Obama is: Can he even hold that ground? Could a nominee with positions as liberal as Justice Stevens on abortion, gay rights, presidential power — could that nominee even get confirmed in today’s bitter political climate?”

— ABC’s Terry Moran on *World News*, April 9.



Past Nominees: “Ideological” Conservatives vs. “Pragmatic Liberals”

“President Reagan and the first President Bush used their second Supreme Court nominations to make bold choices that strongly advanced their ideological interests.... In 1986, he [Reagan] opted for someone who embodied his agenda with conservative jurist [Antonin] Scalia.... [Bush’s] second appointment, in 1991, went to appeals judge [Clarence] Thomas, now one of the court’s most conservative justices.... [Clinton’s] first pick was pragmatic liberal judge Ruth Bader Ginsburg, in 1993. His second pick, [Stephen] Breyer, in 1994, was in the same mode.”

— Sidebar item by *USA Today* Supreme Court reporter Joan Biskupic, April 12.

Commiserating with Obama About Talk Radio’s “Enmity”

“I’ve been spending time out and about, listening to talk radio. The kindest of terms you’re sometimes referred to, out in America, is a ‘socialist.’ The worst of which I’ve heard is called a ‘Nazi.’ Are you aware of the level of enmity that crosses the airwaves and that people have made part of their daily conversation about you?”

— CBS’s Harry Smith to President Obama in an interview excerpt shown on *The Early Show*, April 2.

“Let’s Be Honest” — Conservatives More Hateful than Liberals

“We’re talking about violence and the name-calling and that sort of thing.... We have seen it on the Republican and the conservative side much, much more than on the Democratic side. The name-calling in groups, with signs, calling people, you know, epithets, comparing them to Hitler. We’ve seen it much more from the conservatives, from the Tea Party movement. And listen, I believe in free speech and the right to protest and the right to express yourself. But let’s be honest here, it’s coming mostly, mainly from one side.”

— CNN’s Don Lemon filling in as anchor of *Rick’s List*, April 9.

Couric Cheers for Obama: “Mission Accomplished”

“Tonight, a call to action from the President brings a pledge of cooperation from dozens of nations to keep nuclear weapons out of the hands of terrorists.... Good evening, everyone. President Obama framed the world conference on nuclear security today in the starkest of terms. He quoted a warning from Albert Einstein at the dawn of the nuclear age: ‘We are drifting towards a catastrophe beyond comparison, and it will require a new manner of thinking if mankind is to survive.’ By the time the conference was over, the President won a pledge from the leaders of 46 other nations to safeguard nuclear materials so terrorists cannot get ahold of them. Chip Reid is at the White House tonight. And Chip, is it safe to say, ‘Mission Accomplished?’”

— Katie Couric opening the April 13 *CBS Evening News*.



America “Finally Catching Up with History”

“The Cold War ended more than two decades ago, and today American nuclear strategy finally caught up with history.... For the first time ever, the new policy limits the circumstances under which the U.S. would resort to nuclear weapons, assuring nations which do not have them and do not try to get them they have nothing to worry about.”

— Pentagon correspondent David Martin on the *CBS Evening News*, April 6, discussing Obama’s pledge not to use nukes against non-nuclear states even if they attack the U.S. with chemical or biological weapons.

Three Cheers for “Super-Cop” Imposing Price Controls

“There is a showdown taking place back here tonight between insurance companies trying to raise premiums on hard-hit policy holders, and some state officials who are determined to stop them. Bill Weir introduces us to a woman in Maine who is acting as a super-cop, and telling the insurance companies ‘no.’... She doesn’t look like a gladiator, but everybody is watching her and the results of this case.”

— ABC’s Diane Sawyer first introducing and then wrapping up a story about Maine’s Superintendent of Insurance reducing a company’s planned rate increase, April 2 *World News*.

Giddy Matthews Touts DNC T-Shirt, “Far Right Gone Mad”

“The Democratic National Committee has turned a lemon into lemonade. They’ve taken the catch phrase, slapped it on a T-shirt and are now selling it online. You, too, can get your BFD shirt with a donation of \$25. It reads: ‘Health Reform, a BFD.’ Just \$25 for a piece of delightfully unscripted history. Tonight’s ‘Big Number.’ And by the way, the shirts have temporarily sold out, but I’ve got my own right here. If you had to ask, extra large. There it is. ‘Health care reform, BFD.’ There it is. Up next, the latest example of the far right gone mad. Three dozen governors across the country have received identical threatening letters urging them to resign....”

— MSNBC’s Chris Matthews referring to Joe Biden’s comment that ObamaCare is “a big f***ing deal,” April 2 *Hardball*.



Wouldn’t Abraham Lincoln Be an Obama Democrat?

“When we return, which party would Abraham Lincoln join today? Would he still be a Republican after all the talk about states’ rights and honoring the Confederacy?... Who do you think represents the spirit of Lincoln in today’s politics and who doesn’t, not a bit? You call it. The Democratic Party of Barack Obama or the one that’s talking up secession, putting down General Grant, singing about states’ rights and pining for them good old days?”

— Chris Matthews on MSNBC’s *Hardball*, April 8.

Opposing ObamaCare Makes Cokie Think of Pre-Civil War “Nullification”

“You have these 14 states attorneys general saying that they want to have the [Supreme] Court overturn the recently passed health care law. I must say, I was just with my grandkids at Fort Sumter, and the notion of nullification made me extremely nervous because it was, of course, the first step toward the Civil War. But that is going to be a huge question before the Court this fall.”

— ABC’s Cokie Roberts on *This Week*, April 11.

Never Fear, ObamaCare Is Here

“On to the Washington Nationals game to continue the tradition President Taft started a century ago, throwing out the ceremonial first pitch. Whoops....If there had been a batter he might have been hit, but we are assured by the White House he would have been covered by the new health care reform law.”

— Fill-in anchor Harry Smith analyzing President Obama’s off-the-mark pitch on the *CBS Evening News*, April 5.



Barack Obama = America’s Nelson Mandela

“The man who went into prison in 1964, Nelson Mandela, was 48-years-old and his temperament then — he was tempestuous, he was passionate, he was a revolutionary. Prison tempered him. Prison was his great teacher. Prison changed that temperament to that man that we know, who got out, who is self-controlled, who never loses his calm. And the thing about Obama is, he seems to have that temperament without having had to spend 27 years in prison....I don’t how to explain it. It’s DNA, it’s genetics. I don’t really know. But of course he went through his own travails. I mean his own search for identity, you know, as a young man. He had to forge his own identity in a kind of racial cauldron in America.”

— *Time* editor Richard Stengel on MSNBC’s *Hardball*, April 6.

Other MSNBCers Scoff at Lame Attempt to Play Race Card

Clip of Newt Gingrich: “Shooting three-point shots may be clever, but it doesn’t put anybody to work. And what we need is a President, not an athlete. We need somebody who actually focuses on getting people back to work.”...

NBC/MSNBC correspondent Norah O’Donnell: “I’m not sure what he means by this particular soundbite, and I think it’s open to some criticism because it suggests that the President is an athlete and some people may suggest, you know, because all black people are good athletes — I mean that’s what it sort of sounds like to me.”

NBC/MSNBC’s Savannah Guthrie: “Oh, I didn’t see that at all.”

MSNBC’s Mike Barnicle: “Oh, I didn’t get that.”

Guthrie: “Yeah, I didn’t hear that!”

MSNBC’s Pat Buchanan: “That went right by me!”

— Exchange on MSNBC’s *Morning Joe*, April 9.



Palin & Bachmann = “MILFs – Morons I’d Like to Forget”

“They’re attractive, especially to the Republican Party, which is not known as a party that really does well with the opposite sex. Usually they’re doughy white men, and I think they look on Michele Bachmann and Sarah Palin, as you know, MILFs. And I agree — they’re morons I’d like to forget.”

— Bill Maher on MSNBC’s *Hardball*, April 14.

Opposing ObamaCare Like Hating Martin Luther King

“You know, I feel sorry for the people that were against it [ObamaCare]. That’s going to be a tough one to explain to your grandkids. ‘I just didn’t think everyone should be healthy. I was just against it....’ I’m sure it was the same thing with, like, civil rights, you know. People that were against it, now they gotta explain this to their grandkids. It’s like, ‘Granddaddy, is this your ‘I Hate Martin Luther King’ hat?’”

— Comedian and actor Chris Rock on CBS’s *Late Show with David Letterman*, April 7.



Notable Quotables

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