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The 2013 Budget Battle: Let the Vicious Smearing Begin

MSNBC political analyst Jonathan Alter: “It’s like negotiating with terrorists....”

Host Alex Wagner: “Hostage takers, sure.”

Alter: “...They [Republicans] must understand that they will pay a price with patriotic Americans who understand that shutting down the government, which is what the Republicans are talking about, is an unpatriotic act....They have to feel the heat over and over again that they are acting against the best interests of the United States. That’s not happening, yet.”

MSNBC contributor Joy Reid: “To put it another way, when somebody is threatening to bomb the stadium, you don’t go out and make a speech about how you’re willing to dismantle the stadium in order to appease them.”

— Panel discussion on MSNBC’s *Now with Alex Wagner*, July 25.



“They are political terrorists, and like all terrorists, including those who use bombs, their number one goal — their only goal — is to blow things up. [Senators Ted] Cruz, [Rand] Paul and Mike Lee are on a mission to destroy, shut down the American government, destroy ObamaCare, drive the country into default, destroy the U.S. credit rating. Terrorists with one purpose: To bring down, not just this administration but, let’s face it, the American government.”

— Host Chris Matthews on MSNBC’s *Hardball*, July 31.

Spending Restraint = “Glee in Inflicting Suffering...Pathological Mean-Spiritedness”

“Something terrible has happened to the soul of the Republican Party. We’ve gone beyond bad economic doctrine. We’ve even gone beyond selfishness and special interests. At this point we’re talking about a state of mind that takes positive glee in inflicting further suffering on the already miserable....Somehow, one of our nation’s two great parties has become infected by an almost pathological meanspiritedness, a contempt for what CNBC’s Rick Santelli, in the famous rant that launched the Tea Party, called ‘losers.’ If you’re an American, and you’re down on your luck, these people don’t want to help; they want to give you an extra kick. I don’t fully understand it, but it’s a terrible thing to behold.”

— *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman July 15, writing about the defeat of a \$940 billion, 10-year farm bill.

Berating Boehner for “Least Productive” Congress

Host Bob Schieffer: “Any way you cut it, and whoever’s fault it is, you have presided over what is perhaps the least productive, and certainly one of the least popular, Congresses in history. How do you feel about that?...But it’s not the case, Mr. Speaker, of just passing or not passing new laws. You’ve got the government in gridlock. You’re laying off people in the Defense Department. They’re working four days a week. You’ve got the sequester that is the creation of Congress. This is not something that was foisted upon Washington by somebody from Mars.”

House Speaker John Boehner: “Who insisted upon the sequester? The President of the United States.”

— CBS’s *Face the Nation*, July 21.



Opposition to Obama Is All About Hate (and Racism)

“There are too many people on the American right who hate the very notion of Barack Obama in the White House....They hate not just his politics, but him....You can say it’s not about race....[But] think about this man’s life, about how hard he has worked, how he has achieved so highly at school, how he has married so well and so faithfully, how he has fathered two great daughters and kept them protected, protected them, been a truly great father to them, been a true partner in his marriage, treated his office with such respect and dignity, has never once let us down with his personal behavior, and yet they hate him. They really do.”

— Host Chris Matthews concluding MSNBC’s *Hardball*, July 25.

CNN Skips IRS “Bombshell” to Spotlight “Partisan Slugfest”

Anchor Wolf Blitzer: “There were also some fireworks up on Capitol Hill today. A daylong hearing about the IRS, what’s the latest?”

Correspondent Dana Bash: “It was a very long day. And it was really less about trying to get to the bottom of why some groups waited for about three years for IRS tax-exempt status and a lot more about a partisan slugfest.”

— CNN’s *The Situation Room*, July 18.



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“The IRS scandal was connected this week not just to the Washington office — that had been established — but to the office of the chief counsel. That is a bombshell...What the IRS originally claimed was a rogue operation now reaches up not only to the Washington office, but into the office of the IRS chief counsel himself.”

— *Wall Street Journal* columnist Peggy Noonan writing about the same hearing, July 19. CNN’s report made no mention of the revelation applications were routed to the chief counsel’s office, and CNN aired no other coverage of that July 18 hearing (a hearing that ABC, CBS and NBC also skipped when it occurred).

Detroit Democrats Spent Their Way Into Bankruptcy, So Where’s Their Bailout?

“Is there a federal bailout for Detroit?...We bailed out big banks, we bailed out the auto industry, we bailed out speculative home builders. And here is a major American city where, by the way, the minority population is overwhelmingly the majority population, and there’s no help from the federal government?”

— CNN *State of the Union* host Candy Crowley to Treasury Secretary Jack Lew, July 28.

If Weiner Wins, Credit Hillary “the Master” for How She Coached Huma

Co-host Savannah Guthrie: “Mika, do you think there’s any chance he [disgraced ex-Congressman Anthony Weiner] can win?”

MSNBC’s Mika Brzezinski: “I do. I think his wife is the key here and his wife has learned from the master, Hillary Clinton, her boss.”

— Exchange on NBC’s *Today*, July 24.

Looking Forward to the Day America Is No Longer on Top

Host Chris Matthews: “Andrew, are we going to be — being we Americans, you included — are we going to be the great, are we still going to use that word, ‘superpower’ — I don’t even like it very much — the lone superpower? Are we going to be that 20 years from now?”

Journalist Andrew Sullivan: “With any luck we won’t be....I think the transition to a post-imperial America is coming. I think it’s overdue and I welcome it.”

— Exchange on the final episode of *The Chris Matthews Show*, July 21.



Can’t Fathom Why More People in Prison = Less Crime

“What I find most frustrating is what we have seen is incarceration go up at the same time that crime is going down, and yet the fear level is still stoked, even though what we have objectively is less murders every year, we have less crime, we are living in a safer society, and we are putting more people in prison.”

— MSNBC *All In* host Chris Hayes, July 26.

Voter ID Laws = Racist Apartheid Laws

“It does look like it’s almost like South Africa to this extent: You have a white — what’s the word — feeble minority. It’s losing its majority status. And it says, the Republican Party, ‘We can only get so many white votes. So, we got to reduce the votes of others.’ It does look that way. Only the — maybe you’re non-partisan, but only Republicans have pushed this in these 31 states. No Democratic legislature. You gotta look at the pattern here. You talk about profiling. I’m sorry, Republicans do this stuff.”

— Chris Matthews on MSNBC’s *Hardball*, July 29, talking about laws requiring voters to show identification. In fact, Democratically-controlled Rhode Island passed a voter ID law in 2011.



Using Zimmerman Verdict to Slam America as Racist

“This, for many Americans, George, is just another piece of evidence of the incontrovertible contempt that this nation often shows and displays for black men.”

— PBS host Tavis Smiley on ABC’s *This Week*, July 14.



“In too many ways, we still live in the same America that Emmett Till lived in, an America where blacks are often judged to be a threat to order and citizens are able to destroy their bodies.”

— Co-host Touré on MSNBC’s *The Cycle*, July 15, talking about a 14-year-old killed by racists in the 1950s.

But Obama’s Post-Verdict Remarks a “Symphony”

“I thought this speech was one of the highlights of the presidency. I thought it was a symphony of indignation, professionalism, executive responsibility, personal feeling. It had all these different things woven together, I thought beautifully. But it’s important to remember, race is how he thinks.”

— *New York Times* columnist David Brooks on NBC’s *Meet the Press*, July 21.

“Everything about the Obama presidency, race has been a subtext to all of it. From the Tea Party which saw differently the Obama bailout of the auto industry from George W. Bush’s and suddenly became a movement, to him being called a liar in the well of the Congress to him having to show his birth certificate, there has been a subtext around this President that’s made it difficult for him to directly address race issues....So I think for this President it is brave to step out and the fact that it was extemporaneous and deeply personal, it was an important moment for him and the country.”

— Joy Reid, an MSNBC contributor and managing editor of the NBC-owned *TheGrio.com*, on the July 19 *NBC Nightly News*.

MSNBC, Where the Hosts Hang Tampons From Their Ears

“I just have to show these. My producer Lorena made for me last week some tampon earrings [takes off her earrings and puts on the tampon earrings], because of course you’ll remember that the Texas state legislature said that you couldn’t bring tampons in when they were going — these women, to in fact stand up for their own reproductive rights — you weren’t allowed initially to bring tampons. So, just in case that ever happens again ladies, you can just bring them on your earrings.”

— Host Melissa Harris-Perry during her 10am ET weekend MSNBC show, *Melissa Harris-Perry*, July 21.



To Get Viewers, “No Doubt” Fox News Would Be Anti-Semitic or Pro-Segregation

“If Fox News were around years ago when anti-Semitism was part of the mainstream, I have no doubt they would be anti-Semitic to get viewers. I have no doubt they would be pro-segregation to get viewers in the times of the civil rights movement. They just feed to the worst element of our society and thankfully their viewers are dying off.”

— Comedian and frequent CNN guest Dean Obeidallah on the Stephanie Miller radio show, July 31.

Nostalgia for the Days When Dildos Roamed the Earth

“Now, extinctions — I don’t have to tell you — have been part of the natural history of the world for millennia. And, man-made extinctions have even happened before. I guess we hunted the dildo into extinction.”

— CNN International anchor Jonathan Mann interviewing a climate expert on July 20. Moments later, Mann recognized his error: “The dodo, rather. Forgive me, I’m having trouble with my words today.”

Notable Quotables

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