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Obama the Compromiser vs. Pig-Headed Republicans

“Since the midterm elections, you made an effort at bipartisanship. It hasn’t worked out that way... You gave up a lot. You said you wanted a balanced approach. You didn’t get it. You cut a trillion dollars and set up the framework to cut another trillion plus, and the Republicans gave up nothing. I mean, there are people in your own party who think that you were outmaneuvered, that you were stared down by John Boehner and Grover Norquist and capitulated... It seems to be all the compromising is being done by you...”

— CBS’s Steve Kroft to President Obama in an interview shown on the December 11 *60 Minutes*.



vs.

Correspondent Lesley Stahl: “2011 will be remembered as a year of perpetual gridlock in Washington.... Driving much of the gridlock is the large Republican freshmen class in the House. Eric Cantor was the one who went out in 2010 and recruited most of the freshmen who are conservative and backed by the Tea Party. [to Cantor] Where is the compromise?”

House Majority Leader Eric Cantor: “There’s plenty of compromise....”

Stahl: “Okay, but what about revenues? A compromise. You wanted the spending cuts, they wanted revenues.... Everybody says they want to preserve the tax cuts for the middle class. The disagreement’s over the millionaires. So, why not keep the rates down for the middle class and worry about the millionaires later?... You know, your idol — as I’ve read anyway — was Ronald Reagan. And he compromised... He raised taxes and it was one of his principles not to raise taxes.”

— CBS’s *60 Minutes*, January 1.

GOP Starving for Someone as “Smart and Mellifluous as the President”

“I think Newt’s rise is speaking to us. And what it says to me is, is that I think there’s a lot of Republicans who are starved for a candidate for their party who would be able to debate Obama head-to-head, they think is as smart and mellifluous as the President. I think that’s a lot of what is driving it from, from outside.”

— *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman on NBC’s *Meet the Press*, December 25.

NBC Host Bristles at Accurate Account of Obama’s Record

Representative Michele Bachmann: “It’s absolutely irresponsible what President Obama is doing to get behind measures to, to increase spending to such a level that we’re going into debt \$1.5 trillion every year. This compares to President George Bush. Back in 2007, our debt for the entire year was \$160 billion.”

Moderator David Gregory: “Congresswoman, that just misstates the record.”

Bachmann: “Well, we topped that just in the month of November alone.”

Gregory: “I mean, the Bush presidency, the-”

Bachmann: “There’s no comparison. We’re talking-”

Gregory: “-the, the debt — wait a minute, Congresswoman.”

Bachmann: “David, let me just finish.”

Gregory: “No, wait a minute. I just want to stop you for accuracy.”

Bachmann: “Let me just finish. We’re talking-”

Gregory: “For accuracy, Congresswoman.”

Bachmann: “-we’re talking 10 times.”

Gregory: “For accuracy, the debt exploded under the Bush administration.”

— NBC’s *Meet the Press*, December 18. In fact, the federal budget deficit for fiscal year 2007 was \$162.8 billion; the annual deficit for the just-completed fiscal year 2011 was \$1.299 trillion, an eight-fold increase over four years.



MSNBC's "Irresponsible and Incendiary" KKK Smear

"Plus, what Mitt Romney has in common with the KKK. Details on a rare Romney campaign blunder ahead.... So you might not hear Mitt Romney say 'keep America American' anymore. That's because it was a central theme of the KKK in the 1920s. It was a rallying cry for the group's campaign of violence and intimidation against blacks, gays and Jews. The progressive blog Americablog was the first to catch onto that."

— Anchor Thomas Roberts on *MSNBC Live*, December 14. He apologized the next morning, admitting his item was "irresponsible and incendiary" and "showed an appalling lack of judgment."



Won't Your Extremism Repel Women Voters?

"You make no exception for abortion in the case of rape or incest. Other Republican candidates have now adopted that view. But somewhat lesser known are your views on contraception. You have said it is not okay, that it's dangerous.... The general election will come down to those middle of the road voters — moderate, persuadable, independent voters. Many of them are women. Should Republicans sizing up your candidate today be concerned about this issue of electability should you be the nominee against Barack Obama?"

— Fill-in co-host Savannah Guthrie to Rick Santorum on NBC's *Today*, December 29.

Please — Don't Stop Your "Eminently Sensible...Jabbing at the Base"

"It appears that you're reversing some of your own eminently sensible positions, for instance on climate change. You in August tweeted that 'to be clear, I believe in evolution, and I trust scientists on global warming. Call me crazy.' You have been tweeting about this sort of rightward swing, you've been jabbing at the base. And yet last week, you sort of rolled that bit back on climate change. You sort of said there isn't enough science. I mean, what are you doing?"

— Host Christiane Amanpour to Republican presidential candidate Jon Huntsman on ABC's *This Week*, December 11.

Picking Gingrich Just Like Nominating Satan for President

"The Republican Party is about to seal a Faustian deal with the devil.... They're about to begin the nomination for President of a figure who represents the Mephistopheles of what they preach. He is nasty, brutal, ready to fight and kill politically, a man of no discernible commitments or values, who has nothing to offer but a sharp-as-hell intellect and a wicked rapier of words.... Why are they on the verge of enlisting in the army of Newt? Because he voices in cold, nasty, deadly tones the words of their contempt, because he's an opportunist ready to seek any route to his opponent's heart and thereby kill it. He's a political killer, a gun for hire.... That's why they're offering up their partisan souls, why they're ready to bow down before this false god of hatred."

— Chris Matthews on MSNBC's *Hardball*, December 12.

Today's GOP Built on Democrats' "Droppings"

"The Republican Party has, unfortunately for it, built itself over the droppings of the Democratic Party for about 50 years.... The neo-cons have closed down their mind just like the segregationists closed down their mind about civil rights and the Moral Majority closed down their minds about social issues. The party is dying of this intake, effluent from the Democratic Party. That's my thought."

— MSNBC's Chris Matthews during live coverage of the Iowa caucuses, January 3.



Opposition to Obama Is "Racist," *New York Times* Declares

"There has been a racist undertone to many of the Republican attacks leveled against President Obama for the last three years, and in this dawning presidential campaign. You can detect this undertone in the level of disrespect for this President that would be unthinkable were he not an African-American. Some earlier examples include: Rep. Joe Wilson shouting 'you lie' at one of Mr. Obama's first appearances before Congress, and House Speaker John Boehner rejecting Mr. Obama's request to speak to a joint session of Congress — the first such denial in the history of our republic."

— *New York Times* editorial page editor Andrew Rosenthal writing on his NYTimes.com blog, January 3. Boehner did not "reject" Obama's request, but merely suggested an alternative date, which the White House accepted.

ABC Gloms On to Silly Pro-Tax Hike Gimmick

“First it was Warren Buffett, and now it is reality TV star Kim Kardashian. What could they have in common? Both center stage on the question of fairness in the way the country taxes the rich versus the middle class.”

— Diane Sawyer on the January 4 *World News*, setting up a story about Kardashian’s Web video for a union group pushing to raise the top California income tax rate.



Iowa Voters: Drug Addicts and Old People “Waiting to Die”

Correspondent Willie Geist: “There’s one passage in your piece that’s come to summarize, for your critics, the disdain they say you have for the state of Iowa. It reads this way, ‘Those who stay in rural Iowa are often the elderly waiting to die. Those too timid or lacking in education to peer around the bend for better opportunities. An assortment of waste-toids and meth addicts with pale skin and rotted teeth or those who quixotically believe, like Little Orphan Annie, that the sun will come out tomorrow.’ Are you really surprised that Iowans are upset when they read something like that?”

Professor Stephen Bloom: “Yes. You know what? It’s important to say those things....”

Anchor Brian Williams, to Geist at end of piece: “It’s an explosive article and we urge you to read it. We’ve linked to it tonight on our website.”

— NBC’s *Rock Center*, January 2, talking about Bloom’s piece in *The Atlantic*, “Observations From 20 Years of Iowa Life; Thoughts from a University Professor on the Iowa Hamlets That Will Shape the Contours of the GOP Contest.”

Maddow Makes a Funny: No “Political Objective” at MSNBC

“I think the thing that is underappreciated about MSNBC is that we don’t really do anything as a company, that we all sorta get to do our own thing. There may be liberals on TV at MSNBC, but the network is not operating with a political objective.”

— MSNBC 9pm ET host Rachel Maddow in a December 21 interview posted at Slate.com.

Republicans: “The Party of the Emotionally Unstable”

“When did the Republican Party become the party of the emotionally unstable? You know what I mean? We’re talking about the party of Lincoln, for God’s sake. Ronald Reagan now looks like the greatest statesman that ever lived. And we got a guy running around named Newt.”

— Host David Letterman to NBC *Nightly News* anchor Brian Williams, January 4 *Late Show*.

“On Paper” Communism “Makes Perfect Sense”

“You know, this is what happens with communism. It’s a great concept. On paper it makes perfect sense. But once you put a human being in power, it shifts. We saw it in Russia, we’ve seen it all around the world. It’s nuts. But, I keep my fingers crossed.”

— Co-host Whoopi Goldberg talking about North Korea on ABC’s *The View*, Dec. 20.



Another Day, Another Grueling Interview

ABC’s Barbara Walters: “I know that you answer people’s letters all the time. And what we thought that we might do, we asked middle school and high school students to throw a few questions. I’d like to read their questions: ‘If you were a superhero and you could have one super power, what would it be?’”

President Obama: “You know, I’ve talked to Malia about this. We both agree that flying seems like it would be a pretty good thing to be able to do.”

— Clip of interview played on ABC’s *Good Morning America*, December 23.

Notable Quotables

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