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Sudden Respect for John Roberts, “The Man of the Hour”

“Few expected this result from the staunchly conservative Roberts, who was appointed by George W. Bush.... This opinion did give heart to many Court watchers who’ve been concerned that this institution of government was at risk of becoming just another hyper-partisan place in American politics. By joining the liberals, Chief Justice Roberts seemed to have stopped that.”

— ABC’s Terry Moran on *World News*, June 28.



Correspondent Wyatt Andrews: “There’s already no question this one case changes the John Roberts legacy, Scott. Yesterday, he was widely seen as another partisan on the court. Today, in the most dramatic case of the John Roberts career, he changes, he breaks the mold.”

Anchor Scott Pelley: “The man of the hour.”

— Exchange on the *CBS Evening News*, June 28.

“Today, Lawrence Tribe, the Harvard professor, who can say he taught Barack Obama and John Roberts at Harvard Law School said that with this decision, crossing over to join the liberals, Roberts might have saved the institution....”

— Brian Williams on the June 28 *NBC Nightly News*.

A “Virtuoso Performance” Worthy of King Solomon

“You don’t have to love classical music to be amazed that Beethoven wrote his Ninth Symphony while deaf, or be a fan of the old New York Giants to marvel at Willie Mays’ catch in Game 1 of the 1954 World Series. For legal buffs, the virtuoso performance of Chief Justice John Roberts in deciding the biggest case of his career was just that sort of jaw dropper, no matter how they might feel about ObamaCare. Not since King Solomon offered to split the baby has a judge engineered a slicker solution to a bitterly divisive dispute.”

— *Time*’s David von Drehle starting off his July 16 cover story, “Roberts Rules.”



Blaming Conservatives’ “Breathtaking Radicalism”

“I doubt there was a single reason for the Chief Justice’s evolution (I know, conservatives hate that word in the context of Supreme Court Justices’ ideological trajectories), but let me suggest one: the breathtaking radicalism of the other four conservative Justices. The opinion pointedly signed individually by Justices Kennedy, Thomas, Antonin Scalia and Samuel A. Alito Jr. would have invalidated the entire Affordable Care Act, finding no one part of it severable from the rest. This astonishing act of judicial activism has received insufficient attention, because it ultimately didn’t happen, but it surely got the Chief Justice’s attention as a warning that his ostensible allies were about to drive the Supreme Court over the cliff and into the abyss.”

— Longtime *New York Times* Supreme Court reporter Linda Greenhouse writing at *NYTimes.com*, July 11.

Mocking Republicans As a Bunch of Sore Losers

“ObamaCare lives. Republicans did everything they could to chip away at the law in the two years since it was passed, and many were confident the Court would strike down the individual mandate. So for them, today’s ruling kind of has to sting. Senator Roy Blunt is one of those Republicans who was rooting for ObamaCare to fall. Senator, welcome. You lost in 2010 when this law was passed, you lost again today. Yet you are still pushing for the repeal of this law. Doesn’t that make you look kind of like a sore loser?”

— Anchor Brooke Baldwin on CNN’s *Newsroom*, June 28.

Five-to-Four Decisions: “Nightmare Scenario” or “Big Step”

“What happens if it is struck down in part or in whole by a 5-to-4 decision? Would that not underscore how dysfunctional our government is, the major institutions of our government are? That is a real nightmare scenario, I think, for the political class in this country.”

— NBC’s David Gregory on *Today*, June 28, hours before the Supreme Court ruling.

vs.

“[John Roberts] has spoken publicly about how on big controversial decisions, he thinks a 5-4 majority on the Court, over time, undermines the Supreme Court and only fuels the view that our major political institutions are too polarized. He’s taken a big step here. He’s going to be cheered for that by some on the Right and the Left, criticized I’m sure, as well, by some on Right.”

— Gregory during live coverage later that morning, after the Chief Justice led a 5-4 majority to uphold ObamaCare.



From Pro-Slavery Villain to “Bold, Grand Hero” in 24 Hours

“A friend of mine, who is a fellow Roman Catholic said, he [John Roberts] doesn’t want to be the second Roger Taney. Roger Taney, of course, was a Roman Catholic who upheld the Fugitive Slave Law back before the Civil War and was villainized throughout history because of that. That he doesn’t want to do something so egregious as to strike down something that’s passed with 60 Senate votes, with a majority in the House and signed by the President with the full mandate of the American people reflected in the election of 2008. To strike down something like that really does seem radical.”

— Host Chris Matthews on MSNBC’s *Hardball*, June 27.

vs.

“Let me start with one of the great days in this country’s history. Today, the United States Supreme Court, led by the Chief Justice himself, decided that President Barack Obama’s health care act squares with the American Constitution.... Today’s hero: Chief Justice John Roberts, who walked to the forefront of history and who said ‘yes’ to progress and ‘no’ to the role prescribed for him by the Right.... Let’s start today by standing back and looking back at this bold, defiant, grand decision by Mr. Roberts and his Supreme Court.”

— Matthews on *Hardball* the next night.



Freaking Out Over ObamaCare’s Possible Demise

“Do you remember a couple of years ago when the health care law was teetering in the Senate and the Democrats lost Ted Kennedy’s seat in Massachusetts? We were conversing then and I was in a hotel somewhere. Don’t remember the location but I do remember that I was typing while curled on the floor in a fetal position. Once again, I’m in a hotel. This one’s in Houston, where I’m waiting for the health care decision and prepared to resume the fetal position. If this law is thrown out it will be a disaster socially, politically and economically.”

— *New York Times* columnist and former editorial page editor Gail Collins in an online chat at NYTimes.com, June 27.

“Unfortunately,” GOP Pays No Price for Opposing Government Health Care

“Well, look, unfortunately — because I think we shouldn’t be the only industrialized democracy that doesn’t have universal health care — it is not a politically dangerous place to be where Mitch McConnell is. To say, you know what, we should do things to make health — access to health care easier and more likely, but not guaranteed. That’s the position the Republican Party has pretty much had throughout its history and they don’t seem to pay much of a price for it.”

— *Time*’s Mark Halperin on MSNBC’s *Hardball*, July 2.

Soulless Romney’s Not Even a Person, Just a Nasty Robot

“This is the kind of man that Mitt Romney is. This man does not have a soul. If you opened up, you know, his chest, there’s probably a gold ticking watch in there and not even a heart. This is not a person. This is just a robot who will do whatever it takes, whatever he’s told to do, to make it to the White House. And he will take whatever push in the back from whatever nasty person is pushing him and move him further in that direction.”

— *New York Times* columnist Charles Blow on MSNBC’s *The Last Word*, July 17.

Romney Sought NAACP Boos to Impress Racist Conservatives

“Romney aides would have you believe this is his ‘Sister Souljah moment’.... He wanted the boos. He’s taking those boos to his fund-raiser with Dick Cheney in Wyoming. He put the boos in the overhead bin, carrying them out there. He’s so proud of them.”

— Bloomberg’s Margaret Carlson talking about Romney’s NAACP speech on *Inside Washington*, July 13.



“What he was saying to the base is that he was talking to a room full of Willie Hortons, that that was what he was trying to do, in the same way that this Willie Horton imagery was used, as you know, earlier in our political history, our troubled political history, as evidenced by the fact that his, the immediate reaction from the Grand Dragon of radio, by whom I mean Rush Limbaugh, tracked that....He does speak for the people among the conservatives who wish for a return to the good old days of Jim Crow. That is what he was doing, and he was doing it, I think, in a very passive aggressive way.”

— Former CNN correspondent Bob Franken on MSNBC’s *Melissa Harris-Perry*, July 15.

Mitt the “Attack Dog,” Rush the “Werewolf”

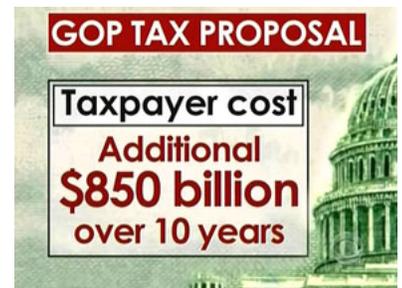
“Mitt Romney was at one point, and to some extent still is, an establishment Republican, and yet he has run a campaign from the very beginning that’s been for the most part all attack. It was that way in the primaries. It’s that way now. So, if you have an establishment Republican behaving like an attack dog, you’re going to have the Rush Limbaughs of the world behaving like werewolves. Mitt Romney has dragged the center of the gravity of the discussion over to the nasty realm....”

— Former *Newsweek* political correspondent Howard Fineman on MSNBC’s *Hardball*, July 16.

CBS Bizarrely Claims Tax Cuts Will “Cost Taxpayers” Billions

“President Obama is calling on Congress to pass a one-year extension of the Bush-era tax cuts for households earning less than \$250,000 a year and individuals earning less than \$200,000. Those tax cuts expire at the end of December and the cost to taxpayers for the year: \$150 billion....But Republicans — including Mitt Romney — want to make permanent all of the Bush-era tax cuts, including those for households earning over \$250,000. The cost to taxpayers? An additional \$850 billion over the next ten years.”

— White House correspondent Norah O’Donnell on the *CBS Evening News*, July 9.



“Let’s Be Honest” — Obama Is “Cutting Taxes Like Crazy”

“We’ve had tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans for ten years now. Ten years now, and it hasn’t created this boom of jobs.... Well, this President has been cutting taxes like crazy. I mean, let’s be honest, right?”

— Fill-in host Christine Romans sparring with conservative Republican Representative Kevin Brady on CNN’s *Starting Point*, July 9.

How Dare Anyone Criticize “Clean as a Whistle... Perfect American” Obama

“This guy’s done everything right. He’s raised his family right. He’s fought his way all the way to the top of the *Harvard Law Review*, in a blind test becomes head of the *Review*, the top editor there. Everything he’s done is clean as a whistle. He’s never not only broken any law, he’s never done anything wrong. He’s the perfect father, the perfect husband, the perfect American. And all they do is trash the guy.”

— MSNBC’s Chris Matthews talking about President Obama on *Hardball*, July 17.

Cue Laugh Track: “The Media Would Love to Have an Obama Scandal to Cover”

“The Obama administration was continuing something [Fast and Furious] basically that was going on under the Bush administration. You know, did they try to cover up some embarrassing things afterwards? There’s just — there’s nothing conceivable that would bring this into a major political scandal here. And I think that’s why people have been slow to get on board. It’s not an ideological thing. I think the media would love to have an Obama scandal to cover.”

— *The Washington Post*’s Dana Milbank on CNN’s *Reliable Sources*, June 24.

Happy Independence Day, MSNBC-Style

“The land on which they [the Founders] formed this Union was stolen. The hands with which they built this nation were enslaved. The women who birthed the citizens of the nation are second class.... This is the imperfect fabric of our nation, at times we’ve torn and stained it, and at other moments, we mend and repair it. But it’s ours, all of it. The imperialism, the genocide, the slavery, also the liberation and the hope and the deeply American belief that our best days still lie ahead of us.”

— MSNBC host Melissa Harris-Perry on her eponymous July 1 program, delivering what she called “my footnote for the Fourth of July.”



ABC Touts “Fear” and “Danger” of Arizona’s Supreme Court Win

Diane Sawyer: “Tonight on *World News*: Show your papers. The Supreme Court gives an okay to the most inflammatory part of the Arizona immigration law. Tonight, team coverage, including Jorge Ramos of Univision....”

Univision anchor Jorge Ramos: “I think it’s very disappointing and very dangerous. This a very sad day for the Hispanic community, when the Supreme Court allows a state like Arizona to use racial profiling as a rule.... The last hope is gone. Many people were expecting a positive decision from the Supreme Court. And it’s gone.... What I’m listening to from e-mails and phone calls and from talking to people in Arizona, it’s fear, and fear of persecution in the future.”

— ABC’s *World News*, June 25.

Delusional Reporter Claims Media Have Beaten Up Obama Over Past Four Years

Host Howard Kurtz: “The subject is fair game. Romney’s running on his record as a businessman. But what I think a lot of people in our business miss is that the sheer tonnage here, the 24/7 nature of it, makes the media look like it is only pounding one candidate and, perhaps, is carrying the Obama message....”

RealClearPolitics political reporter Erin McPike: “President Obama also has taken a beating throughout the entirety of his first term by the media, almost four years.”

— CNN’s *Reliable Sources*, July 15.

It’s Simple: Republicans Are Against People

“To me, the Democrats — and I’m not a professional politician, so forgive me if it’s very simplistic — but to me, the Democrats are always going to be about what the people need. And the Republicans are much more serving big business, and I don’t think we can afford to serve big business for another four years with Mr. Romney.”

— Actress Sigourney Weaver on NBC’s *Meet the Press* “Press Pass” segment, July 15.



Re-Elect Obama, or Go Back to the 1950s

“Right now I’m just thinking about the war on women and equal rights for all people. And getting Obama elected, so we can move into the future and not into the ’50s. ... It’s like a horror movie.”

— Actress/comedian Sarah Silverman, as quoted in the July 1 *Boston Herald*.

Thanks to My Racist Granny, “I Figured Out the Tea Party”

“I think I figured out the Tea Party. I think I — I do understand racism because I was taught to be one by my grandmother.... She hated everybody.”

— Actor James Earl Jones on Public Radio International’s *Smiley & West*, July 8.

Notable Quotables

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