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Blame Budget Impasse on Extremists Holding GOP “Hostage”

“Do you all feel that your party is somehow being held hostage? The President has talked about kind of a ‘common sense caucus,’ and we hear reports this morning that he started calling around, calling some Republicans to see what can be done. Are people on the extreme ends of your party holding the rest of you hostage here?”

— Host Bob Schieffer to Republican Senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham on CBS’s *Face the Nation*, March 3.



“Painful and Stupid” Budget Cuts Usher in “New Round of Austerity”

“On Friday, \$85 billion in spending cuts intended to be so painful and stupid that they would never come into effect started to come into effect.”

— *New York Times* economics reporter Annie Lowrey, March 2.

“The latest budget impasse ushered in a new round of austerity on Saturday, with the nation facing reduced federal services, canceled contracts, job furloughs and layoffs.”

— *New York Times* reporter Jackie Calmes, March 3.

MSNBC’s Rachel Maddow: “In Prohibition, the government came up with the brilliant idea that to stop people from drinking, they would put poison in industrial alcohol. They didn’t do anything to stop the underlying problem of people wanting to drink, and so what they did was poison a lot of people. This [the sequester] is the same kind of thing. It’s supposed to be aversion therapy. It’s supposed to be so awful we won’t do it. But we’ve gone and done it anyway. It’s self-imposed crisis.”

Co-host Savannah Guthrie: “And part of the effect though is this poison, to borrow your metaphor, it’s not a poison that kills you overnight. Apparently it’s a slow, rolling poison.”

— Exchange on NBC’s *Today*, March 5.

“Surprised” and “Sad” Over Lack of Sequester Outrage

“The cuts went into effect Friday night, although they roll out over a long period of time. And yet, I’m surprised there hasn’t been more outrage on the part of the general public.”

— NBC’s Matt Lauer to ex-Florida Governor Jeb Bush on *Today*, March 4.



Co-host George Stephanopoulos: “Bianna, [stock market] investors seem to be shrugging off any economic impact from the stalemate in Washington, those across-the-board spending cuts.”

Correspondent Bianna Golodryga: “Yeah, isn’t that kind of sad?”

— Exchange on ABC’s *Good Morning America*, March 5.

Give Public Time to Notice “Radical,” “Fanatical” Side of GOP

Host Tavis Smiley: “I take from your comment now that the American people have not been sufficiently outraged as yet. Which raises two questions: why not and when?”

***New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman:** “Well, okay, I think the answer is that the public hasn’t really seen the full impact....In general, I think the public hasn’t really fully appreciated just how radical the Republican agenda is and that may take longer....This is a much more fanatical Republican party than most people have yet seemed to realize. So give it some time.”

— PBS’s *Tavis Smiley*, March 11.

Media Champion Obama’s Cynical “Charm Offensive”

“Will Obama’s charm offensive revive the grand bargain, and finally break a budget stalemate?”

— Host George Stephanopoulos opening ABC’s *This Week*, March 10.

“It’s almost been Washington in black and white this week, a flashback to a by-gone era, when Democrats and Republicans used to sit down and talk to each other and tried to solve the nation’s problems. And the President was trying to do just that with this charm offensive.”

— CNN’s Jim Acosta on *The Situation Room*, March 9.

“I think what is to me is sort of brilliant about the charm offensive at this particular moment, is if the President can get a long-term deal out of this, then he is on his way to that kind of transformational presidency that he wanted.”

— CNN’s Candy Crowley on *The Situation Room*, March 9.

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“‘This is a joke. We’re wasting the President’s time and ours,’ complained a senior White House official who was promised anonymity so he could speak frankly. ‘I hope you all (in the media) are happy because we’re doing it for you.’”

— Anonymous White House aide quoted by the *National Journal*’s Ron Fournier, March 12.

Would GOP Reject “Liberal” Ronald Reagan?

“You’re sitting at the Reagan Library as we talk today, and yet the President you speak of, and so many conservatives do, raised taxes, was for immigration reform, that a lot of modern-day conservatives would find quite distasteful. Could he exist? Could he get elected in today’s Republican Party? Or would he be seen as a liberal?”

— *Meet the Press* host David Gregory to former Florida Governor Jeb Bush during an online “Press Pass” segment, March 10.

Only a Racist Would Oppose “Perfect” Obama

“I look at Obama as a perfect American. I don’t mean politically. We can disagree left and right on him. You can argue about the drones. Argue about the fiscal policy, all that stuff. But as a citizen. The guy went to school, he never broke a law. He did everything right. He raised a wonderful family. He’s a good husband, a good father. My God I don’t think he’s ever gotten a speeding ticket. The guy does everything right and these right-wingers — and he’s really been pretty moderate on guns until the horror of Newtown — and I don’t know what they’re so afraid of, except that he happens to be black.”

— Host Chris Matthews on MSNBC’s *Hardball*, March 6.

Nasty Chris: Extremist Hate Groups “Must Love Ted Cruz”

Host Chris Matthews: “Let me go to you Brian. The way I’m chalking this up, this right wing hysteria, if you will — maybe it’s logical on their point of view, the way they’re thinking about demographic change — but guns, immigration and gays. Is that your reading, that those are the stimuli to these people when they organize these hate groups?... Who do they root for? Who do they root for?”

Brian Levin, Center for Study of Hate & Extremism: “They don’t root for anybody now.”

Matthews: “They don’t root for Rand Paul? Pat Buchanan? I mean who? They must like this new guy Ted Cruz. They must love Ted Cruz, c’mon!”

— Talking about white supremacists, militias and other extremist groups on *Hardball*, March 6.

Volunteering for Nanny Bloomberg’s Food Police

“I’ve been a long supporter of it. I actually think it’s a good idea.”

— CNN anchor Soledad O’Brien on *Starting Point*, March 12, talking about New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s proposed ban on large-sized sugary drinks that was voided by a state Supreme Court judge.



Hugo Chavez, Right Up There With Jesus Christ?

“This feels less like a funeral and more like a celebration of immortality... Immortality is the rarest of compliments, and for this crowd, Chavez has joined the top three. What they are saying is that the three most important people in their lives, all dead, are Jesus Christ, Simon Bolivar, and now Hugo Chavez.”

— ITN correspondent Matt Frei in a story on Venezuelan strongman Hugo Chavez’s funeral for the *PBS NewsHour*, March 8.



Enjoying the Humor of “Quick Witted” Hugo

“He’s very quick-witted. He — it was a visit he made to Washington shortly after he became president, and I remember he came to the Washington Post and there were several of us waiting to greet him. He — I didn’t know if he spoke English at the time, so I introduced myself to him in Spanish when he got to me in the line, and he shook my hand and looked up at me and kind of grinned and said, ‘Hello, my name is Hugh.’ It just kind of cracked everybody up.”

— *The Washington Post*’s Eugene Robinson recalling Hugo Chavez on MSNBC’s *Hardball*, March 5.

Vatican City as Repressive as Saudi Arabia?

Anchor Brianna Keilar: “While people around the world wait for that decision [of a new pope], our Ben Wedeman reports on what many people see as a ‘men’s club’ in the Catholic Church.”

CNN correspondent Ben Wedeman: “To outsiders, the upper echelons of the Vatican appear to be an exclusive men’s club. Vatican City joined Saudi Arabia as one of the few states left on earth where women have no vote... Women’s voices may be louder than before, but, for now, the doors to this men’s club remain firmly shut.”

— *CNN Newsroom*, March 5.



CNN Host Gets Lecture on “Egotistical” and “Self-Absorbed” News Anchors

Actress Olivia Munn: “I like seeing my news anchors just be my news anchors. And now you turn on CNN and now people are putting themselves into a story... I think people, and especially journalists, they make themselves too much a part of the story, when journalism is really about other people’s stories... Have your opinion on news stories, on situations, but to make yourself newsworthy is so egotistical and it’s so self-absorbed that I think that’s the problem with - there’s just so many news organizations, so many people trying to make themselves a celebrity, and-”

Moderator Piers Morgan, joking: “Well, fortunately, you’d never get me doing that, so we can move on.”

— Exchange during a March 3 conversation with the cast and crew of HBO’s *The Newsroom* hosted by the Paley Center for Media in California.

Brian Williams: My Work Has Been “Cleansed” of Opinions

NBC News anchor Brian Williams: “My work has been so cleansed, as I see it, and as I’ve tried, of political opinions over 27 years.”

Liberal actor/host Alec Baldwin: “How do you do it? Do you have political opinions?”

Williams: “I sometimes don’t know... No one needs another blowhard yelling at them. No one gives a rat’s patootie about my opinion. So that’s nice that I don’t have to share it. I’d have to form one first on half of these issues, and people, and I can try to call it down the middle, and try to be fair about it, and do a ‘just the facts,’ with a little fun around the margins.”

— Exchange on Baldwin’s “Here’s the Thing” New York City radio show, March 4.

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