

Behind the NBC hiring and firing of Ronna McDaniel

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The hiring and now firing by NBC News of Ronna McDaniel, former chair of the Republican National Committee and longtime apologist for Donald Trump, is an episode that gives a glimpse of the incestuous and politically filthy world in which two major instruments of the financial aristocracy—the corporate media and the twin parties of the capitalist state—overlap.

McDaniel was forced out as RNC chair last week by Trump, after he had won enough delegates in the primaries to clinch the Republican presidential nomination. She was replaced by two Trump loyalists, one of them his daughter-in-law, Lara Trump. McDaniel's removal was only the beginning of a purge that has seen dozens of RNC staffers removed, with their replacements required, as a condition of employment, to embrace Trump's claim that the 2020 presidential election was stolen by the Democrats.

The opposite condition was apparently imposed on McDaniel, as she was interviewed by Kristen Welker on "Meet the Press" Sunday and badgered until she conceded that President Joe Biden had won the 2020 election "fair and square." This meant effectively retracting her previous claims that there were sufficient "problems" with the voting and tabulation in key states like Pennsylvania to raise questions about the legitimacy of Biden's victory.

What followed, with a panel of media commentators reacting to McDaniel's appearance, was an extraordinary barrage, spearheaded by NBC's chief political correspondent, Chuck Todd, the former host of "Meet the Press." He attacked the network for hiring McDaniel because during her seven years at the RNC she had repeatedly lied in the service of Trump, as well as attacking reporters, including those at NBC, in line with Trump's declarations that the media was "the enemy of the people."

The others on the panel chimed in, with what appeared

to be a coordinated, prearranged attack. Similar statements were made Monday morning by Joe Scarborough and Mika Brzezinski, co-hosts of the Morning Joe program on MSNBC, and Monday night by Rachel Maddow, who devoted 30 minutes—half her entire program—to a diatribe against McDaniel.

By Tuesday, executives at NBC and its parent company, NBC-Universal, announced they were canceling McDaniel's contract, reportedly worth \$300,000 a year for two years. McDaniel is expected to sue for breach of contract and could collect the full amount for a single interview—her 20 minutes on "Meet the Press" with Welker.

Todd and Welker are hardly engaged in a rebellion against the corporate bosses who pay their lavish salaries (reportedly \$8 million for Todd and \$3 million for Welker). According to several press reports, the "Meet the Press" producers knew what Todd was going to say and made no effort to stop him. It is not clear whether top NBC executives were informed ahead of time, or whether they actually used Todd to create the conditions for rescinding a contract they had decided was a mistake.

There is no question that McDaniel has no qualifications as a journalist or independent commentator. She is a longtime liar-for-hire, as chair of the Michigan Republican Party, then for seven years as chair of the RNC. More than that, she is deeply implicated in Trump's effort to overturn the 2020 elections and maintain himself in office as a president-dictator, in defiance of the votes of the American people.

McDaniel participated actively in Trump's effort to block certification of Biden's victory in Michigan, joining him on a phone call to Republican election officials in Wayne County (Detroit), and even advising these officials that if their actions to block the certification of the vote led to the filing of criminal charges, the RNC and the Trump campaign would supply them with

lawyers.

In 2022, McDaniel supported and voted for a resolution of the RNC which described the violent January 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol, carried out by Trump supporters to block certification of the Electoral College vote, as “legitimate public discourse.”

Originally installed in 2017 as Trump’s choice to head the RNC, McDaniel only fell afoul of him last year, when she went ahead with the holding of debates among the other candidates for the Republican presidential nomination, despite Trump’s opposition. The ex-president refused to participate in the debates and was said to be furious with the RNC.

It is in the course of the debates, one of them hosted by NBC, that McDaniel reportedly became friendly with the top executives who eventually offered her a lucrative landing spot after Trump forced her out of the RNC.

Ronna McDaniel is hardly alone in her shift from political operative to network commentator. Her predecessor as RNC chair Reince Priebus, who became Trump’s first White House chief of staff, was hired by CBS News as a political analyst. Several aides in the Biden White House now work for MSNBC, including Jen Psaki, former White House press secretary, and Symone Sanders-Townsend, previously chief of staff to Vice President Kamala Harris.

One commentator on the media compiled a list of more than three dozen politicians, aides, speechwriters and advisers who were now working for the broadcast and cable TV networks. Some, like former Clinton White House aide George Stephanopoulos, have become the principal representatives of their networks (in his case ABC).

There is no firewall that prevents the political liars paid by the White House or the Democratic and Republican parties from becoming political liars paid by NBC, ABC and Fox. The main difference is that the paychecks of the second group have more zeros. And this description applies not just to the pundits and commentators, but to the so-called journalists who allegedly report the facts rather than voicing their political opinions.

The entire corporate media is a machine for concealing the truth from the American people and pumping out the propaganda required by the financial oligarchy and the military-intelligence apparatus. This propaganda reinforces an array of supposed “truths” which cannot be challenged: US foreign policy is motivated by the desire for peace and human welfare; the US government does not murder its opponents; America is a democracy in

which the people make the final decision through voting; America is the strongest, richest and freest country in the world; the COVID-19 pandemic is over; most Americans are religious, patriotic and support capitalism as an economic system; poverty, hunger and homelessness are minor problems, affecting only a small number of people. This list goes on.

Perhaps the most pernicious role of the corporate media is its effort to legitimize the crimes of American imperialism overseas. That is why, amid the uproar over Ronna McDaniel, not a peep was heard about the persecution and impending extradition of Julian Assange, a genuine journalist, who has shown the world what a real effort to uncover the truth entails.

Nor did those NBC media “stars” who balked at McDaniel as an insult to their “journalistic integrity” make any protest when the network hired former CIA Director John Brennan as an analyst of foreign and national security policy.

Brennan, who headed the drone missile assassination program in the Obama White House before running the murder machine that is the CIA, is only the most odious of a slew of former generals, spies and assassins hired by the television networks in what amounts to a lucrative retirement program for the military-intelligence apparatus.

Others include former CIA Director Michael Morell and Generals Barry McCaffrey, Jack Keane, Mark Hertling and Montgomery Meigs, former FBI Associate Director Frank Figliuzzi, former FBI Chief of Staff Chuck Rosenberg and countless others.

As it happens, Brennan made his first appearance as a senior national security and intelligence analyst for NBC on “Meet the Press” on Sunday, February 4, 2018, where the host was ... Chuck Todd.



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