

VANITY FAIR

Republican Senator Suggests Biden's Black Female Scotus Pick Won't Know "A Law Book From A J.Crew Catalog"

John Kennedy Managed to Combine Racism, Sexism, And WTFism In One Fell Swoop.

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Since **Joe Biden** reiterated his campaign pledge to nominate the first Black woman to the Supreme Court, conservatives have engaged in a daily battle to determine who can offer the most sexist, racist, and generally offensive commentary in response to this long-overdue, historic moment. **Tucker Carlson** has obviously been a reliable source of mouth sewage. Former Cato Institute vice president **Ilya Shapiro** told his followers in a since-deleted tweet: "Objectively best pick for Biden is **Sri Srinivasan**, who is solid prog and v smart. Even has identity politics benefit of being first Asian (Indian) American. But alas doesn't fit into last intersectionality hierarchy so we'll get lesser black woman." **Ted Cruz** insisted that, despite the long history of the Supreme Court being exclusively a club for white men, Biden's pledge tells the majority of Americans, "I don't give a damn about you," and is somehow "an insult to Black women." Mississippi Republican **Roger Wicker** claimed Biden's ultimate pick will be a "beneficiary" of affirmative action.

Apparently not wanting to be left out, GOP Senator **John Kennedy**, a member of the Judiciary Committee, said on Tuesday, according to Politico: "No. 1, I want a nominee who knows a law book from a J.Crew catalog. No. 2, I want a nominee who's not going to try to rewrite the Constitution every other Thursday to try to advance a 'woke agenda.'"

While conservatives, who will still control the Supreme Court regardless of whom Biden picks, are undoubtedly concerned about the president nominating someone whose "agenda" doesn't involve obliterating voting rights, sending children to prison for life with no chance of parole, and probably destroying Roe v. Wade, it's the first part of Kennedy's statement—the one that seemingly suggests a Black woman would be so unqualified that she would not know the difference between a "law book" and a clothing catalog—that's clearly the most offensive.

Like his fellow Republicans, it does not appear that Kennedy had any issue with Trump pledging to nominate a woman to replace Ruth Bader Ginsburg in 2020. (Though he did ask the woman who ultimately got the nod, **Amy Coney Barrett**, "who does the laundry in your house?" during her confirmation hearing.) Cruz actually called Barrett a "role model for little girls," a glaring bit

of hypocrisy White House press secretary **Jen Psaki** seized on Tuesday. “There is no outcry around that,” Psaki said during her daily briefing with the press. “The president’s view is that after 230 years of the Supreme Court being in existence, the fact that not a single Black woman has served on the Supreme Court is a failure in the process.”

And while conservatives hide behind the argument that they simply care about Biden nominating the most qualified person to the bench, it’s clear to anyone with even a passing familiarity with the modern Republican Party that something else—some people might even call it racism!—is going on here. As *The Atlantic*’s **Adam Serwer** wrote on Wednesday: “These attacks are meant to reiterate the narrative that liberals elevate unqualified Black Americans at the expense of others who are truly deserving, as part of a larger backlash narrative, one that echoes past eras in American history, in which advocacy for equal rights is turning white conservatives into an oppressed class. Republicans will likely be unable to block the nominee, but they can extract a political price, motivate their own voters, and dull the historic significance of Biden’s choice by orienting the political conversation around the idea that another shiftless Negro is getting free stuff at others’ expense.”