

CBS Mornings

05/31/24

8:05:54 a.m. [TEASE]

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[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Ahead; Political Impact of Trump Verdict]

MICHELLE MILLER: Well ahead, what does this felony conviction of former President Trump mean politically? Who better to answer that question than our very own, John Dickerson. He'll join us in a moment.

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8:13:14 a.m.

5 minutes and 28 seconds

VLADIMIR DUTHIERS: You're looking at Trump Tower in New York as we continue to track the fallout from the historic verdict against former President Donald Trump. Former President Trump was found guilty on all 34 charges in the so-called hush money trial. This unprecedented moment could have major implications for the upcoming presidential election, so here to help make sense of it all is CBS News chief political analyst, John Dickerson. John, good morning. Good to see you.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Trump on Trial; The Verdict; Historic Verdict; John Dickerson on What This Moment Means for America & the Election]

JOHN DICKERSON: Good morning, Vlad. Good to see you.

DUTHIERS: So before we came on air, I asked you if I could ask you a big picture about Watergate where 50 years since Richard Nixon resigned from the presidency, Republicans then led by Barry Goldwater went to President Nixon and said, you do not have the votes in the Senate to survive an impeachment, you have to resign. Now, we've got what Bob Costa is calling red tie Republicans in lockstep with whatever happens to President — former President Trump from now this conviction to his early impeachments. What does this mean for the country?

DICKERSON: Well —

DUTHIERS: It's a big, big question.

DICKERSON: — yeah — yeah cause politics has changed so much, since those — since the Nixon era. You have — I mean, we could be here till dinner to go through all of the different changes, but I think the most important thing is that we now have — we saw a test to the electoral system after 2020 when the loser of that race lied, and then some amount of the party rallied behind him. It led to an attack on the Capitol and his party pushed him away. And — and you thought the gravity of politics had been reasserted. The norms that you talked about that were

operative when Goldwater and Hugh Scott and other publicans went to Nixon and said, you — you have breached something. Those were in place after January 6. They're not in place anymore. A lot of those people who condemned Donald Trump after January 6 are now supporting him, so that same kind of test is now happening with the legal system, and you have politics mixing in and in your interview with Senator Cotton, you saw some of it, which is people who support the president are now running down the legal system for the purpose as a way to protect the president and that can be very dangerous. That isn't to say, you're not allowed to appeal. That isn't to say, you're not allowed to complain about the judge and the jury and everything else. But when you say things like Joe Biden is behind this, for which there is no evidence, that sows doubt, and we have a really, really recent example of what happens when you sow doubt in the system, people take matters into their own hands. We saw that with the election in January 6. That's what's being set up now in the legal system after this verdict by those who would undermine the system as a way of defending the party nominee.

MILLER: The fact that so many people in Congress, those red tie Republicans support Donald Trump is because he has such a strong base, such a supportive community behind him. I wanna — I wanna talk about the base and their absolute inability to see him in the “do no wrong” category, because he takes — they take no measure to say that he has committed any crimes, that he has done anything wrong, he's a really nice guy and I'm curious, where — where does that — that almost cultish behavior come from?

DICKERSON: Well, they see him fighting for them. They see their — when you — when we see this in political science, when you lock in on a candidate, you feel it intensely and personally. So an attack on the candidate is an attack on you, personally and they also see evidence of conspiracy from those forces on the other side of politics, which they don't just disagree with, but which they think are evil. And we've seen both parties, though, there's more of it in the Republican camp, see the other side, not just as wrong, but evil. So, if you think evil forces are coming after your guy, you will excuse his behavior, because the big thing to keep your eye on for his supporters is the evil being done to your guy, and you don't want those evil forces to prevail.

TONY DOKOUPIL: John, Donald Trump says the real verdict is going to be November 5 in the election, it really feels like we're heading toward an election where to vote for Donald Trump is to vote to keep him out of prison and off of probation and away from consequences, and a vote against him is to say you must face the consequences and the music and potentially prison.

DICKERSON: This is the most important question coming out of this entire trial is to remember what we're talking about here in a presidential election. It's a job interview for a very serious job and even if you believe he was wronged in court, that doesn't mean he's right for the presidency. And one of the things that this trial does, like all these legal proceedings, is they are a window into the character of Donald Trump, because people are under oath talking about his character, does he tell the truth? Does he honor his commitments? Is he fair in his dealings? They have to talk about this under oath and facts matter. And so, what does this window into his character show you from this case and from all of these other legal proceedings? And why does character matter in the presidency? Because it's a job of enormous power, enormous responsibilities, and

temptations and if you don't have character, you succumb to all of that. And why does that matter? Because when you succumb, the stakes are high — in a pandemic, in a national security crisis, and the rest of the country pays the price. So, character is key to the job and this is a window into Donald Trump's character and the jury decided that he lied, that he did not honor his commitments. Now that may, you may decide as a legal matter is not reason to convict him, but it's not a reason to elect him to be president of the United States.

MILLER: John Dickerson, facts matter.

DOKOUPIL: Yeah. That's good.

DUTHIERS: Wow. Brilliant analysis, as always, John.

MILLER: And thank you.

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8:51:08 a.m. Central [via Houston's KHOU]
2 minutes and 7 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Trump on Trial; The Verdict; Historic Verdict; John Dickerson on What This Moment Means for America & the Election]

DOKOUPIL: It is maybe the least ordinary morning of this century, at least politically speaking. We've got a former president now, Donald Trump convicted of felony charges, 34 of them, so John Dickerson is back with us to help close out the show. How should we be feeling, John?

DICKERSON: Well, every time I get in one of these moments of sea, I think what does the presidency tell us? Because we're in the middle of a presidential election. So, what's the presidential question? Well, we talked about it earlier, this is a window into the character of Donald Trump. So what do you learn about his character? And is that character consistent with the job he wants? How serious is that job? It was reported in *The Times* yesterday that Joe Biden has now said Ukraine can hit missile sites inside Russia. That's a presidential decision. A president needs to have the character, temperament to make those kinds of decisions every day. The second thing I would say is imagine if we spent the energy we're going to spend talking about this case on economic opportunity in America. That's what campaigns are supposed to be about, which is a full, national fight over whether people have a chance in this country, what they need from their government to help them — help lift them. What happened to the American Dream? What is America's role in the world? Now, this sounds — like like stupid sort of goody-two-shoes stuff, but this is vital because people's lives are at stake here and the country needs this conversation to take place so that it can put its future in the hands of the right person and the right administration and so, don't let the election be stolen by these moments as serious as they are and as vital to the character of the people who want the job, don't let them get hijacked for its entirety for this campaign.

DUTHIERS: Because at the end of the day, people will still need to put food on the table, people still need to pay for groceries, put gas in their car —

MILLER: Yeah.

DUTHIERS: — and pay for education and healthcare, and those are difficult questions to answer.

MILLER: And people still need to look at their neighbor and still like them —

DOKOUPIL: Yeah.

MILLER: — or at least deal with them.

DOKOUPIL: And live with one another. We have to live with one another.

MILLER: Yeah, we definitely.

DOKOUPIL: We can't expel anyone at this point and the — the bottom line is, it is a test for our country.

DICKERSON: Yep.

DOKOUPIL: If we pass, we hope we end up stronger. John Dickerson, thank you very much. That'll do it for us. We will see you Monday on *CBS Mornings*. That's a look at the White House, what this all this is about.