

WHY AND HOW TO HOLD JOHN ROBERTS ACCOUNTABLE

I want to explain why and how to hold John Roberts accountable for Trump's corruption. It is based on the following presumptions.

- Blaming Merrick Garland for Trump's reelection has required inventing facts about the timeline, which is why I argue it is conspiratorial thinking.
- Because of how SCOTUS rewrote the Constitution, no counterfactual gets Trump disqualified before the election, and probably doesn't get him to trial.
- This was a political failure that started well before January 6.

So one reason I advocate focusing on accountability for John Roberts is because he and his colleagues, in fact, are responsible. They intervened to ensure the leader of their party would evade accountability. And so they enabled everything that comes next.

And Trump has responded by flouting all concern about legal accountability.

- He set up a kickback system for his inauguration, the proceeds of which will go to his own pocket.
- Trump boasted of his expanded business deals with

the Saudis.

- He hailed \$20 billion in investments from the same guys whose payments Alexander Smirnov was hiding on his taxes.

This is corruption in plain sight. The corruption is the obvious result of Roberts' grant of immunity. So I propose to track it, name it, make John Roberts own it.

I'm not arguing that doing so will immediately make John Roberts regret what he has done. While Roberts has shown the ability to moderate off his prior shitty decisions, he's pretty wedded to making corruption legal.

But one of the only short-term guardrails on Trump will be the things the Senate and SCOTUS choose to place on him. They've failed every other time they could reverse Trump's damage, but in his first term, they did push back on his worst instincts. So by at least making the effects of the immunity ruling visible, you increase the chance that Roberts might do so.

The same is true of the violence that Trump will stoke. Roberts doesn't want to own that. He does.

There's good reason to go through this exercise, repetitively, insistently, that doesn't invest hope that it'll somehow convince Roberts.

MAGAt has spent years building their villain: migrants and trans people.

Defenders of democracy have done a far poorer job of doing the same – so much so that MAGAts have also projected a false claim of corruption onto the Bidens, transferring it from themselves.

But it's time that we made corruption – and the Republican-picked judges that enabled it – the villain. We need to explain the world, and the explanation really is corruption, not migrants.

And if we do so from the start, with discipline, with repetition, then when Trump's corruption ends up breaking things, causing catastrophe, that explanation will be ready at hand. I can't tell you which of Trump's corrupt schemes will do catastrophic damage first. Possibly his embrace of crypto currency, or maybe the dodgy types who set up his personal piggy banks will do something so shocking that even Pam Bondi's DOJ can't look the other way. But when Trump's corruption causes catastrophe – and it's a matter of when, not if – we need to be ready to name it, rather than let them scapegoat migrants for Trump's doing.

There's one more reason I advocate this approach. As I tried to lay out here, polarization is Trump's most useful weapon. Every time you present an issue in terms of loyalty to Trump or opposition to him, a great many people will choose Trump, even if only symbolically, because it's the price of admission to GOP politics. So I advocate, as often as possible, to make someone else the figurehead for the problem.

Even in much of the conspiracy theorizing targeting Garland as the villain, I've seen people – smart people!! – who don't understand the full shocking import of the immunity ruling. Reversing that oversight is a necessary step in reclaiming democracy.