

Notable Quotables

August 21, 2000 (Vol. Thirteen; No. 17)

A bi-weekly compilation of the latest outrageous, sometimes humorous, quotes in the liberal media.



Bringing Political Balance
to the Media

Rather's Erroneous "Leak" Rant

"Al Gore must stand and deliver here tonight as the Democratic Party's presidential nominee. And now Gore must do so against the backdrop of a potentially damaging, carefully orchestrated story leak about President Clinton. The story is that Republican-backed special prosecutor Robert Ray, Ken Starr's successor, has a new grand jury looking into possible criminal charges against the President growing out of Mr. Clinton's sex life."

— Dan Rather opening the August 17 *CBS Evening News* from Los Angeles. A federal judge appointed by President Carter admitted he inadvertently leaked the news.

Don't Let Gumbel Be Gumbel

"Do you fully expect Republicans, however quietly, however strategically, to try to make it an issue?"

— Bryant Gumbel to Mario Cuomo on Lieberman's Judaism, August 8 *Early Show*.

"In a macro-political sense, do you think the Gore preoccupation with morality is a frightening turn for the party?"

— Bryant Gumbel to Hugh Hefner, host of a fundraiser moved to another location, August 15 *The Early Show*.

"I ask the question because this ticket has put a premium on what's called 'family values,' which for a long time, as you know, was a code word for intolerance. Need people be concerned about a hard turn to the social right in the Democratic Party?"

— Gumbel asking Hadassah Lieberman if she agrees with her husband's Hollywood critiques, Aug. 16 *Early Show*.

Bryant Gumbel: "What about this turn towards what's called family values? The right turn doesn't seem to concern you?"

Whoopi Goldberg: "What's wrong with family values?"

Gumbel: "It's generally been a code word for less inclusion."

— Exchange on *The Early Show*, August 17.

You're Not Pro-Life, Are You?

"Another issue question. Your husband is seen as a centrist on a number of issues, including abortion rights. You have done volunteer work with an organization in Washington called the Best Friends Foundation which promotes abstinence for adolescent girls. Where are you on the question of a woman's right to choose?"

— CNN's Judy Woodruff to Hadassah Lieberman, Aug. 16. Lieberman has a 100 percent pro-abortion voting record.

Mislabeled Lieberman

"Lieberman is noted for his moderate voting record and high moral standards."

— *CBS Evening News* anchor Steve Kroft, August 7.

"Lieberman is a true centrist, a moderate who can build coalitions. You know how the Republicans in Philadelphia kept trying to show how moderate they were? Well, this trumps anything the Republicans had to say."

— CNN analyst Bill Schneider, August 7 *Inside Politics*.

"He's known as a moderate Democrat, who had demonstrated fiscal conservatism in the Senate and a kind of hawkishness in foreign policy."

— Terry Moran, August 7 *Good Morning America*.

"Labor might not be happy. He is a conservative Democrat and they probably don't agree with everything he supports, but, you know, Gore is a pretty conservative Democrat."

— NBC's Claire Shipman on MSNBC's *Imus in the Morning*, August 7.

Reality Check:

Lieberman's 1999 ratings. Americans for Democratic Action: 95 percent; American Conservative Union: 0 percent; National Taxpayers Union: 8 percent.

Lieberman's Too Conservative

"You worry that he might be too conservative? There was concern in the Black Caucus that he had spoken out against affirmative action in the past. That perhaps he's not as embracing as the more liberal wing of the party."

— NBC's Andrea Mitchell to Energy Secretary Bill Richardson during MSNBC convention coverage, August 15.

"Today Joe Lieberman had to go before the Black Caucus because there were members of that caucus, the Congressional Caucus, who had some reservations about his social conservatism. Did he persuade you and the others that he's the right kind of vice presidential running mate for this ticket?"

"But in fact Congressman you don't hear Al Gore talking very much about the hot button issues for the liberal wing of the party anymore. There's not very much talk about poverty in America. Not very much talk about affirmative action, not very much talk about the homeless problem."

— Tom Brokaw's questions to Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. during MSNBC's Democratic convention coverage, Aug. 15.

Delegate Differences

“Dan, the main difference is this is the least liberal collection of Democrats that’s been assembled in almost a quarter of a century. CBS News/*New York Times* started polling these delegates back in 1976. Well, for the first time, a clear majority — 56 percent — call themselves moderates. Only 36 percent call themselves liberals — that’s the smallest number ever.”

— CBS reporter Bob Schieffer, August 13 *Evening News*.

vs.

“Much more liberal than the average American...These are very liberal activists, Matt. Half the group are women, more than a third minority. They are very much anti-death penalty, anti-voucher schools. It’s a very liberal constituency.”

— NBC News VP Tim Russert on *Today*, August 14.

Case Study in Rather Bias 1

“Starting here tomorrow it’s the Democrats’ turn to present their version of a tightly scripted convention television show. Al Gore says it will be long on specifics, including in-depth proposals on health care and other help targeted to mainstream middle income Americans. Today’s pre-convention script also had a big speaking role for running mate Senator Joseph Lieberman.”

— Dan Rather opening *CBS Evening News* the Sunday before the Democratic convention began, August 13.

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“The stage is set down below and right behind me for a well-orchestrated, pre-scripted, week-long infomercial designed to sell the Republican presidential ticket and get corporate donors to pony up more for the fall campaign. Expect much the same from the Democrats later in August. But as George Bush’s running mate Richard Cheney arrived here today, he still was dogged by questions about what Newt Gingrich says is his very conservative voting record in the Congress. Cheney says he might vote differently today on some issues. Abortion rights is not among them. Republican delegates here and George Bush himself out on the road, are playing from the same script: accentuate warm and fuzzy. No ad-libbing please and no controversy.”

— Rather opening the *CBS Evening News* on the Sunday before the GOP conclave, July 30.

Or What If He’s Partying On?

“He’s leaving the greatest thing in his life, and you are about to meet the challenge of the biggest thing, certainly, in your political life. What if he needs you?”

— Peter Jennings to Hillary Clinton, August 15 *Good Morning America*.

Historic Right-Wing Ticket

“This is the most conservative Democratic ticket in at least 50 years.”

— CNN political analyst William Schneider, August 15.

Not A Hint of Gore Scandal?

“At the same time, he will have to find a way to disassociate himself from the President’s extremely low personal approval ratings. It shouldn’t be that difficult. Al Gore has been perhaps the most active Vice President in American history, and there’s not a hint of scandal associated with Gore’s personal behavior. So much for logic.”

— ABC *Nightline* host Ted Koppel, August 16.

Case Study in Rather Bias 2

“[T]he official announcement and first photo-op today of Republican George Bush and his running mate Richard Cheney. Democrats were quick to portray the ticket as quote ‘two Texas oilmen’ because Cheney was chief of a big Dallas-based oil supply conglomerate. They also blast Cheney’s voting record in Congress as again quote, ‘outside the American mainstream’ because of Cheney’s votes against the Equal Rights for Women Amendment, against a woman’s right to choose abortion — against abortion as Cheney prefers to put it — and Cheney’s votes against gun control. Republicans see it all differently, most of them hailing Bush’s choice and Cheney’s experience.”

— Dan Rather on the July 25 *CBS Evening News* introducing that night’s story on the Bush-Cheney debut.

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“Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore officially introduced his history-making running mate today, Senator Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut. History-making because Lieberman is of Jewish heritage and faith. The two started running right away. In their first joint appearance they gave a preview of the Gore-Lieberman fight-back, come-back strategy. Their message: They represent the future, not the past, and they are the ticket of high moral standards most in tune with real mainstream America.”

— Rather introducing the Gore-Lieberman ticket, Aug. 8.

Pomposity Without a Purpose

“Conventions no longer make decisions, and what we witness in public now is less a naked act of history than a flagrant act of hyperbole. Popeil Politics, as in Ron Popeil, king of the TV infomercial. He invented the infomercial to sell his household gadgets. The Republicans and the Democrats have made it their own to sell their candidates.”

— Dan Rather ending CBS convention coverage, Aug. 17.

Notable Quotables

PUBLISHER: L. Brent Bozell

EDITORS: Brent H. Baker, Tim Graham

MEDIA ANALYSTS: Jessica Anderson, Brian Boyd, Geoffrey Dickens, Ted King, Paul Smith, Brad Wilmoth

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE: Kristina Sewell

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR: Liz Swasey

INTERN: Ken Shepherd

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