

Notable Quotables

October 16, 2000 (Vol. Thirteen; No. 21)

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



Bringing Political Balance
to the Media

Excusing Gore Whoppers

"This is one of those areas where I really think Gore does suffer from Clinton. I don't actually think Gore has told any whoppers at all. They are the minor-est kind of factual, teeny-weeny exaggerations, if that. Very human things that we wouldn't jump on people normally for, but we've just had a President who looked right in the camera and lied to us and he was his Vice President for eight years and I think this really does rub off in doubts about him."

— NPR's Nina Totenberg on *Inside Washington*, Sept. 30.

"Let me play devil's advocate for a second, though. I mean, he is under the heat of a huge national audience. He maybe exaggerated, maybe a slip of the tongue. Are those things reason enough to keep him out of the White House?"

— *Today* co-host Matt Lauer to Bill Bennett, October 6.

"These other two examples are really picayune, but he really erred in being confronted with the question did he ever question Bush's experience. Why didn't he just say he had and address it or say 'I don't want to discuss it tonight, I want to focus on his proposals'? He seems to have this need to sort of win every point. I mean, he is overly competitive and maybe that's what we want in a President frankly, but sometimes it's unattractive in debating."

— *Newsweek's* Eleanor Clift, Oct. 7 *McLaughlin Group*.

Bush Bombed on Character?

"The one place where I think Governor Bush might want to have some words back was the very end when he said the man has no credibility on the issue."

— CNN's Jeff Greenfield after the first debate, October 3.

"I think George Bush's weakest moment, when he turned on Bush's [*sic*, he meant Gore's] character, it just gave Al Gore a chance to say, look I'm going to attack the problems in this country, I'm not going to attack character."

— CBS's Bob Schieffer, same night.

Speaking of Bumlbers...

"Almost everyone who's an authority in this area says that both you and the Vice President are way too optimistic when we talk about this \$25 trillion surplus, that there is a very good possibility we'll never get to that number."

— NBC's Tom Brokaw confusing the \$4.6 trillion surplus estimate and the \$25 trillion spending estimate in a question to George W. Bush, October 4 *Today*.

Stephanopoulos: Still Al's Ally

"Gore dominated the debate, Peter...It was even the way that he would interrupt Jim Lehrer and say, 'Listen, I want one more word.' He looked like he was dominating, and then again, the issues that the time was spent on: prescription drugs, education, Social Security, even the RU-486 and abortion issue. All of those favor Gore."

— ABC political analyst George Stephanopoulos, October 3 post-debate coverage.

"There wasn't a single issue, with perhaps the exception of the energy question, where Gore lost on points over the course of the 90 minutes. He was strong, he was detailed, he was specific and he posed questions to Bush that Bush left on the table. My guess is also on the issue of foreign policy, Bush was quite shaky, particularly when he was talking about military readiness, when he was talking about the situation in Serbia right now. Gore actually corrected him. Yes, Gore was too much of a know-it-all, a little too arrogant, but I think that people in the end were looking at the substance and the specifics, and on that, Gore won."

— Stephanopoulos on *Nightline*, same night.

If This Was Gore At His Best...

"But when you look at the Al Gore of last night he was much more disciplined, much better behaved, if you will, in terms of staying on message and avoiding any kind of condescension or in any way being impolite to his opponent. Quite the contrary. It is the most positive I have seen Al Gore in any debate setting, certainly during this campaign debate cycle."

— NBC's Tim Russert, October 4 *Today*.

Cheney: "Against Education"

Katie Couric: "Dick Cheney's past voting record, his congressional voting record, which is quite conservative, is likely to come under fire as well."

Tim Russert: "Absolutely. His votes against Head Start, his votes against education, against Medicare, against gun control."

Couric: "ERA."

Russert: "ERA, equal rights for women. You'll see Joe Lieberman very delicately insert those all through the course of the debate because Dick Cheney was an extremely conservative Congressman, there's no doubt about it."

— October 5 *Today*.

Bernard's Liberal Questions

"Gentlemen, this is the 21st century. Yet on average an American working woman in our great nation earns 75 cents for each dollar earned by a working male. What do you males propose to do about it?"

"Dick Cheney, Joe Lieberman: You are black for this question. Imagine yourself an African-American. You become the target of racial profiling either while walking or driving. African-American Joseph Lieberman, what would you do about it?"

— Questions from VP debate moderator Bernard Shaw, October 4 debate.

Improper Use of "Pro-Life" Label

"Lehrer committed another blunder when he said to Bush, 'You're pro-life.' Generally, reputable journalistic organizations do not use this term to refer to those opposed to abortion. Would Lehrer have turned to Gore and said, 'You're anti-life'? He should know better."

— *Washington Post* TV critic Tom Shales reviewing the debate, October 4.

Tax Cuts Trash Tots

"Tax Cuts Before Tots: Candidate Bush is pushing his compassion, but poor kids in Texas have not seen much of it."

— **Headline over October 9 *Time* story by Michael Weisskopf. In a sidebar box under the heading "Bush and Poor Kids," *Time* asserted: "He helped secure tax cuts by underfunding Medicaid, causing a \$400 million shortfall in the program."**

Tax Cuts Deprive Government

"Mr. Bush believes in a universal tax cut, which would mean a very large chunk of money not available for government programs. Mr. Gore believes that those who make the most money do not need to get as much back."

— Peter Jennings, October 4 *World News Tonight*.

Iron Curtain Ridicule

"Yet the star-making machinery is oddly out of touch, with huge streaks of lingering Cold War mentality and sexism. The American swimmer Lenny Krayzelburg is one of the most appealing personalities, low-key and modest. One of the many features about him — born in Odessa, moved to California — began, 'He's known life behind the Iron Curtain and in the land of opportunity.' When is the last time you heard the term Iron Curtain used with a straight face?"

— *New York Times* television critic Caryn James, September 27 review of Olympic coverage.

Winnie Skinner, Media Heroine

"It was one of those rare moments when an ordinary citizen can convey the importance of an election year issue better than any candidate ever could....This was just another campaign event, until Winnie Skinner stopped the room cold by explaining how she can afford her prescription drugs and still eat, by wandering Iowa's highways looking for cans."

— CBS reporter John Roberts, Sept. 27 *Evening News*.

"This is the way campaigns are supposed to work. A candidate, a voter and a big issue."

— ABC's Terry Moran, Sept. 27 *World News Tonight*.

"This one was spontaneous and wow, is it resonating. It was a very powerful moment in that room and if you thought Tipper got the kiss treatment from the Vice President at the convention, she got five from the Vice President! And it wasn't just political. I think most of us in the room thought that he and the entire room really were moved by her very compelling story. There have been a lot of people we've seen out there who really struggle to pay for their prescription drugs, but her story really resonates."

— NBC's Chip Reid on MSNBC's *The News with Brian Williams*, September 27.

"A simple, sweet story, driving home what for seniors is shaping up as a cornerstone issue. A woman of dignity, walking her Midwest town to survive....Winnie Skinner, too proud for handouts. Embraced by her country's Vice President and now a symbol of what many seniors say is wrong with America's health system."

— NBC reporter Jim Avila, September 28 *Today*.

Reality Check:

Skinner's son, Earl King, Jr.: "She doesn't want to take money. She doesn't want to be a burden, as she puts it. The only form of income that is acceptable for her because of her health, because of her age, is going on these can tours."

FNC's John Du Pre: "King says his mother collects cans more to assert her independence than to make ends meet. He says she has refused his offers of money and his invitations to live in the small apartment on his 85-acre estate, choosing instead to live alone and provide for herself."

— *FNC's Special Report with Brit Hume*, October 5.

Diane Has Chutzpah

"But should you be using the national airwaves to promote your opinions?"

— Diane Sawyer to Fox News Channel show host Bill O'Reilly, October 10 *Good Morning America*.

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