

# Notable Quotables

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



Bringing Political Balance  
to the Media

## Touting a Terrorist's Denials...

"It is Hezbollah, which means 'The Party of God,' that gets credit for liberating Lebanon from the long Israeli occupation. Yesterday, I went to see its 38-year-old leader, Hassan Nasrallah. He is a popular member of the political establishment. The Bush administration says Hezbollah is a terrorist organization. 'Hezbollah was proud to resist the Israeli occupation,' he says. 'We gave our lives. We are not terrorists.'"

— ABC's Peter Jennings in a report from Beirut, Lebanon, for the March 27 *World News Tonight*.

## ...While Hiding Terrorists' Guilt

"Today [the site of the former American embassy in Lebanon] is an empty lot. This is where the U.S. experienced the first suicide bomber. In 1983 a man simply drove his truck to the front door and blew himself up. Sixty-three people died. Later that year, the Marine barracks here were destroyed in much the same way; 241 Marines died."

— Jennings later in the same report, failing to state that Hezbollah was responsible for both anti-American attacks.

## Unwise to Side with Terror Victims

"President Bush is spending his Easter Sunday morning at his ranch in Crawford, Texas. His administration's response to this latest upsurge in violence has been hesitant, confused and contradictory....The administration is now engaged in feverish diplomacy to get a hold of this situation, but its mixed messages and the President's personal endorsement of Prime Minister Sharon's tough tactics raises a question if the United States can continue to play its traditional role of honest broker in this conflict, a role that reached its apex under President Clinton."

— ABC White House correspondent Terry Moran in a report for *This Week*, March 31.

## Anxious For Afghan Quagmire

**CNN Pentagon reporter Bob Franken:** "Sir, as you know, for months, critics have worried about...the possibility that the United States is going to get into — you know the word — a quagmire, similar to Vietnam, where they're never going to really wipe out the enemy, so to speak. They're going to conduct guerrilla situations; they're going to escape; they're going to go to other countries, et cetera, et cetera. What makes this different?"

**General Tommy Franks:** "I respect the question, but in my view, what makes it different is — everything."

— Exchange at March 29 Pentagon briefing shown live on MSNBC.

## Eager For Bin Laden Interview

"Absolutely I would like to interview Osama bin Laden. There's no one I would not want to interview. I always am interested in hearing points of view, conveying those points of view. I always find it sad that people think by being the messenger you're somehow branded as actually believing in the message yourself. It's not the case. I'd be fascinated by anything Osama bin Laden would have to say."

— MSNBC's Ashleigh Banfield on the March 28 *Region in Conflict*. The previous evening she had challenged another journalist's desire to interview bin Laden: "You would not see this as a platform for a maniac?"

## Rationalizing Terrorist Murderers

"Ari, does the President think that the Palestinians have a right to resist 35 years of brutal military occupation and suppression?"

— Helen Thomas's question to White House press secretary Ari Fleischer, April 1.

## Ashcroft's Terrifying Tactics

"Attorney General John Ashcroft today talked about the foreign nationals who have been questioned by law enforcement in many parts of the country since November. The Justice Department planned to interview 5,000 foreigners, most of them Arabs or Arab-Americans. Now Mr. Ashcroft says he wants another 3,000 interviews. Many of those already questioned say it was terrifying that they were, in their words, 'victims of ethnic profiling.'"

— Peter Jennings on ABC's *World News Tonight*, March 20.

## Paying Ransom = Imperialism

**Jeffrey Birnbaum, *Fortune*:** "There is a question about this, the broader question, which is the U.S. is getting much more involved in so many foreign countries now. Now, they're using, as we say, technicalities. That maybe it's not taxpayer money here, but they helped organize the ransom. That's at least what the Fox News report is, that we are training the people on the ground to go in. I mean, where exactly does this line, I think the question of imperialism, I know that's a strong word, it is a strong word—"

**Fred Barnes, *The Weekly Standard*:** "A very strong word."

**Birnbaum:** "—but I think it's the kind of question that should be raised."

— Exchange on the March 25 edition of FNC's *Special Report with Brit Hume*, prompted by a report that the U.S. had indirectly paid a ransom on two Americans held hostage in the Philippines. They were not released.

## Cheering Anti-Free Speech Law

“On Capitol Hill, it took seven years, but the shame of Enron finally got Congress to pass a campaign finance reform bill today. The legislation bans soft money, the unregulated special interest donations to national political parties. But it doubles the allowable hard money with donations to individual candidates now to be capped at \$2,000. Let’s get the real deal on what this means from CBS’s Bob Schieffer. Bob, is the fight finally really over?”

— Dan Rather on the March 20 *CBS Evening News*.

## Phony “Influence Peddling” Fears

“The White House and its connection with the energy business was a hot issue before any of us knew much about that Houston company called Enron. Critics want to know just how much energy companies, most of them big campaign contributors, helped shape energy policy. That policy was drafted last year by a task force headed by Vice President Dick Cheney. Well, thousands of [Energy Department] documents released last evening are only making a hot issue hotter....Tell me, do these documents confirm the worst suspicions of influence peddling?”

— Connie Chung’s lead-in and first question to *Washington Post* reporter Dana Milbank, CNN’s *NewsNight*, March 26.

## Ignorant & Unjust Texas Verdict

“Andrew, you know as well as I do, many have said that Texas justice is an oxymoron. Just how much did the narrow nature of this statute doom Andrea Yates?”

— CBS’s Bryant Gumbel discussing Yates’s murder conviction with analyst Andrew Cohen, March 13 *Early Show*.

“You’re the prosecutor here. I spoke to someone this evening by telephone after the verdict who offered their opinion saying this shows perhaps a regional tough mindset on the part of the jurors and it might just show an ignorance of mental health issues. What do you think?”

— MSNBC’s Brian Williams to former Denver District Attorney Norm Early on *The News with Brian Williams*, March 12.

## Media’s Favorite “Conservative”

“It is scandalous to think we are indulging ourselves at the expense of the elderly....How can we look at ourselves in the mirror if we keep shoving tax cuts into our pockets while letting poor, elderly people go without doctors and medicine?”

— Editor-at-Large David Gergen, who is often used to balance liberal pundits because he worked in the Nixon and Reagan White Houses, in a back-page editorial for the April 1 issue of *U.S. News & World Report*.

## Happily Aiding Brock’s Vendetta

“His specialty was character assassination and throughout the 1990s he made a living as a right-wing hatchet man. But after years of lies and, some would say, malicious journalism, this Washington insider wants to clear his conscience. In his new book, *Blinded by the Right*, best-selling author and ex-conservative David Brock, exposes how he says the GOP tried to destroy the Clinton presidency through a series of well-plotted smear campaigns.”

— NBC’s Matt Lauer setting up a March 14 *Today* interview.

“He helped trash Anita Hill, went looking for the illegitimate children of Bill Clinton, took money from conservative patrons, and made things up if it made Mr. Clinton look bad. And then he says he saw the light, the errors of his ways, he says. He’s written a book called *Blinded by the Right*.”

— CNN’s Aaron Brown introducing a March 14 *NewsNight* interview with David Brock.

## Missing Bill’s “Unmatched Ability”

“The ex-President’s existential predicament remains. What to do? Where to focus? How to channel the legendary energies and appetites?....Clinton’s policy fluency — and unmatched ability to explain a complex world — are already missed in some quarters. But he still must confront the perception that he’s a little ‘September 10th.’ Not a relic; too young and forward-thinking for that, but less relevant than he once seemed.”

— Senior Editor Jonathan Alter in *Newsweek’s* April 8 cover story on former President Bill Clinton.

## SUVs’ Win Is Environment’s Loss

“Gas-guzzling SUVs and light trucks were big winners on Capitol Hill today, but there’s concern tonight the environment could be the big loser here. The Senate rejected a tough new proposal to force the auto industry to make the popular vehicles more fuel efficient.”

— MSNBC’s Brian Williams on *The News with Brian Williams*, March 13.

## Good Thing We’re So Unbiased

“We all have baggage, but one of the good things about journalists is that they recognize bias and work hard to keep it out of their coverage....You can have all sorts of people who voted for Bill Clinton, but the media gave Clinton one hell of a time. Now we hear a lot from people who complain that we don’t give George Bush as hard a time as we gave Bill Clinton.”

— ABC anchor Peter Jennings as quoted by *Miami Herald* reporter Glenn Garvin, March 17.

### Notable Quotables

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