

Notable Quotables



Bringing Political
Balance to the Media

April 12, 2004 (Vol. Seventeen; No. 8)

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

Casualties of Bush's Recession

"What drives American civilians to risk death in Iraq? In this economy it may be, for some, the only job they can find."

— Dan Rather teasing a report on the *CBS Evening News* on March 31, the day four American civilians were killed in Fallujah, Iraq.

"Referee" Saddam Saved Lives

"Senator McCain, are you concerned that if the transfer of power does take place on June 30th that a huge vacuum will be created and it will be an invitation to civil war? Because no matter how deplorable Saddam Hussein was considered, he was the ultimate referee who kept the Sunnis and the Shiites apart from killing each other."

— NBC's Katie Couric to John McCain on *Today*, April 5.

Sees Humiliation, Not Liberation

"I must say that from here this notion of having been liberated is also shared by Iraqis as something of a campaign of humiliation, and as you know, if you've been watching or listening to the news in the last several days, American civilians have been killed out here in some number in the last few days, [and] American soldiers and Marines continue to die."

— ABC's Peter Jennings in Baghdad on March 19, wrapping up live coverage of President Bush's speech on the first anniversary of the start of the Iraq war.

Wowed by "Electrifying" Clarke

"It is on rare occasion that one could describe a hearing on Capitol Hill as electrifying, but today's was that and more. It was day two of public hearings by the commission investigating the September 11th attacks on America. And what Richard Clarke had to say captivated all who heard it...."

— John Roberts on the *CBS Evening News*, March 24.

"His critique is devastating. He said essentially that September 11th could have been prevented, that President Bush did not care about terrorism before September 11th and didn't do the right things after September 11th. This undermines the whole Bush administration."

— *Washington Post* White House reporter Dana Milbank appearing on MSNBC's *Hardball with Chris Matthews*, March 24.

"Lethal Blow" to Bush's Election

"Of course, it was a very effective charge, or otherwise you wouldn't have seen this hysterical scorched-earth reaction.... Clarke dealt a lethal blow against what is the central rationale for George Bush's re-election, as Kate [O'Beirne] said, 'I'm tough on terrorism.' And it came from a guy who was widely respected by people from both parties, as former colleagues in the Bush and Clinton administration have attested. His main sin was he was a zealot against terrorism. Unfortunately, he was right."

— *Wall Street Journal* Executive Washington Editor Al Hunt on CNN's *Capital Gang*, March 27.

TV Loved Post's "Cheap Shot"

"On Sept. 11, 2001, national security adviser Condoleezza Rice was scheduled to outline a Bush administration policy that would address 'the threats and problems of today and the day after, not the world of yesterday' — but the focus was largely on missile defense, not terrorism from Islamic radicals. The speech provides telling insight into the administration's thinking on the very day that the United States suffered the most devastating attack since the 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor."

— Opening sentences of an April 1 front-page *Washington Post* story by Robin Wright. CBS, NBC and CNN all carried stories that night insinuating Rice's speech somehow proved the administration's disinterest in terrorism.

Host Gordon Peterson: "According to the *Washington Post*, the speech Condoleezza Rice was scheduled to deliver on September 11th had to do with missile defense and not terrorism."

Columnist Charles Krauthammer: "...That is the cheapest shot that I can imagine."

Washington Post Dep. Editorial Page Editor Colbert King: "I must rise to Robin Wright's defense who wrote that."

Krauthammer: "Go ahead and I'll rebut it."

King: "Okay. It goes this way [waves hand toward Krauthammer as if giving up]. And then go [pauses, starts to laugh]. I can't. I really can't. It was not the strongest story, although it got a lot of play."

Peterson: "...Are you...rebutting your own argument?"

King: "Yeah. I cannot with a straight face make this case. I resign from the *Washington Post*!"

— Exchange on *Inside Washington*, April 3.

See the Back Page for the Winners of the MRC's 2004 DisHonors Awards

Most Vengeful White House Ever?

Charles Gibson: "George, have you ever seen an administration put on a sort of full-court press against one individual as they did yesterday?"

George Stephanopoulos: "On a book? No, never, it's never happened before. You would have thought yesterday that Richard Clarke was John Kerry."

— *ABC's Good Morning America*, March 23.

Flashback:

"Someone should have to pass a bare threshold of credibility before they're put on the air to millions of viewers. You know, his [Gary Aldrich's] story couldn't get past the fact-checker at the *National Enquirer*....A 30-year record in the FBI in and of itself is no proof of credibility."

— **Then-Clinton advisor George Stephanopoulos on ABC's *This Week* on June 30, 1996, attacking FBI agent Gary Aldrich for writing a book critical of the White House.**

They Won't Let McCain Dream Die

Charles Gibson: "A lot of Democrats say a dream ticket would be if John Kerry would reach across the aisle, take you as a vice presidential candidate. Are you going to say no? No how, no way, won't do it?"

Senator John McCain: "Charlie, it's impossible to imagine the Democratic Party seeking a pro-life, free-trading, non-protectionist deficit hawk...."

Gibson: "But let me, let me imagine it...."

— *ABC's Good Morning America*, March 10.

Senator McCain: "I don't want to be Vice President of the United States, I do not want to leave the Republican Party, I would not be Vice President of the United States on either ticket....I cannot categorically more state, answer, no."

Hannah Storm: "Okay, so just to clarify, yes, if he asked your answer would be a big N-O, right?"

McCain: "N-O."

Storm: "Seems like we ask you this every few months."

— *CBS's The Early Show*, March 18.

Matt Lauer: "There was an article in the *Boston Globe* this week that says privately and quietly Senator Kerry's aides are saying that you would be the best and most potent choice as a vice presidential candidate. You and I have talked about it before. You've said you're not interested. Let me just ask you pointedly: Are you in discussions with Senator Kerry or any of his aides about that position?"

Senator McCain: "I am not and I will not be a candidate for Vice President of the United States and I will not leave the Republican Party. Please, please, believe me."

— *NBC's Today*, April 7.

Kerry, the Pro-Tax Cut Candidate

"Mr. Bush argues it was 9/11, the war on terrorism that's hurt the U.S. economy, not his tax cuts....Truth be told, both men [Bush and Kerry] favor tax cuts. The choice for American voters next fall: How much to cut taxes and for whom?"

— **Byron Pitts on the March 26 *CBS Evening News*.**

Kerry, Champion of Free Markets?

"Fiscal responsibility and deficit reduction, hallmarks of the Clinton years, are bedrock orthodoxy in the Kerry camp. So is faith in the private sector's powers to generate prosperity. Job creation will come from corporate America, not government, once the right incentives and subsidies are in place, the war room says. In fact, the Clinton-era god of deficit reduction and private-sector supremacy is also worshiped in the Kerry camp."

— ***New York Times* economics reporter Louis Uchitelle in a March 28 story.**

Post: Kerry's Really a Centrist...

"He has one of the most liberal voting records in the Senate, but on some key votes in the 1990s and in statements in the years before launching his candidacy, Kerry edged toward the centrist policies of the Democratic Leadership Council. In the heat of the Democratic nomination battle, when anger toward President Bush and opposition to the war in Iraq were dominant attitudes among activists, his rhetoric often tilted to the left, but not always his positions....Kerry has emerged from the primaries at the philosophical center of the party if not the country."

— **Reporter Dan Balz in a front-page "news analysis" piece for the March 28 *Washington Post*.**

...Oh, Wait, He's Clearly a Liberal

"Kerry's voting record is a very liberal one, according to both rating systems....If you were to take the numbers shown here, cover up Kerry's name and then ask a sample of American political scientists, 'I have here a Senator who in the past 10 years has had an average [liberal] ADA score of 92 and an average [conservative] ACU score of 6. Is he a liberal, a moderate or a conservative?' they would have no difficulty in classifying the 2004 Democratic candidate as, for better or worse, a liberal."

— **Northeastern University political science professor William G. Mayer detailing Kerry's Senate voting record in an op-ed for the Outlook section of the *Washington Post* the same day.**

Walter Cronkite Advises Kerry: Be Proud of Your Liberalism

"When the *National Journal* said your Senate record makes you one of the most liberal members of the Senate, you called that 'a laughable characterization' and 'the most ridiculous thing I've ever seen in my life.' Wow!...What are you ashamed of? Are you afflicted with the Dukakis syndrome — that loss of nerve that has allowed conservatives both to define and to demonize liberalism for the past decade and more?...If 1988 taught us anything, it is that a candidate [like Dukakis] who lacks the courage of his convictions cannot hope to convince the nation that he should be given its leadership....Take my advice and lay it all out, before it's too late."

— **Former *CBS Evening News* anchor Walter Cronkite in a syndicated column fashioned as an open letter to the presumed Democratic nominee, titled "Dear Senator Kerry...", published in the March 21 *Denver Post*.**

Andrea Prefers Kerry's Spin

NBC's Andrea Mitchell: "Now that [Bush ad, attacking Kerry for voting against body armor, higher combat pay and better health care for U.S. troops in Iraq] is a complete distortion, Kerry would say. And anybody who really covered the \$87 billion supplemental [appropriations bill] has to agree. A complete distortion."

MSNBC's Chris Matthews: "Were those items in there?"

Mitchell: "They were in there, but he was voting against one part of the bill."

Matthews: "But didn't he vote against the final? Didn't he vote against final?"

Mitchell: "No, no, he did vote against final."

Matthews: "Then he voted against all those elements."

Mitchell: "He voted against those elements in the supplemental, but he was voting against it as a protest, he said, you know, again-"

Matthews: "Well, that's what he says. That's his spin. But he's nailed here, I think. I think it's devastating."

— Exchange on MSNBC's *Hardball*, March 16.

No Liberals Fighting Media War?

"I think that what you've got here is the start of a media war. And the media war is this: I was talking to Mary Beth Cahill, who's Kerry's campaign manager, this week, and she was saying, you know, the right wing, she believes, and the supporters of President Bush, have the ability to start a rumor on the Internet. It gets then into the right-wing radio and to Rush Limbaugh, and the like. And then it suddenly gets repeated all over the TV discussions shows, and suddenly, then it's taken as legitimate by mainstream media, mainstream press.

"And she said the left wing doesn't have that capacity. So what you get is, on everything from weapons of mass destruction to all the other problems that might afflict the President, nothing. Everything, though, that's critical about the Democrats."

— National Public Radio senior correspondent Juan Williams on *Fox News Sunday*, March 14.

Bush: Worse than Nixon, Turning America Into Orwellian Nightmare

"John Dean, who was at the center of the greatest political scandal in this nation's history, has produced a book with perspective. And that perspective is simply terrifying. The bottom line: George Bush has done more damage to this nation than his old boss, Richard Nixon, ever dreamt of. The former White House Counsel to President Nixon, John Dean, joining us here in the studio...."

"The feeling that I had been left after reading *Worse Than Watergate* was that this could have been the historical, essentially, prequel to George Orwell's novel *1984*, that if you wanted to see what the very first step out of maybe 50 steps towards this totalitarian state that Orwell wrote about in his novel, this [President Bush's policies] would be the kind of thing that you would see...."

— Keith Olbermann to former Nixon aide John Dean on MSNBC's *Countdown*, April 5.

Another Angry Moyers' Rant

"Even if Mr. Bush wins re-election this November, he, too, will eventually be dragged down by the powerful undertow that inevitably accompanies public deception. The public will grow intolerant of partisan predators and crony capitalists indulging in a frenzy of feeding at the troughs in Baghdad and Washington. And there will come a time when the President will have no one to rely on except his most rabid allies in the right wing media. He will discover too late that you cannot win the hearts and minds of the public at large in a nation polarized and pulverized by endless propaganda in defiance of reality...."

"Even now the privates patrolling the mean streets of Baghdad and the wilds of Afghanistan make less than \$16,000 a year in base pay, their lives and limbs are constantly at risk, while here at home the rich get their tax cuts — what Vice President Cheney calls 'their due.' Favored corporations get their contracts, subsidies and offshore loopholes. And even as he praises sacrifice, the President happily passes the huge bills that are piling up on to children not yet born...."

— PBS's Bill Moyers on his weekly newsmagazine *Now*, March 26.

Rumsfeld, American Al Jazeera

"In Mr. Rumsfeld's view, presented in several news clips, Al Jazeera, the most widely viewed source of television news in the Arab world, and one that operates independent of any government, is little more than an instrument of anti-American propaganda. 'We are dealing with people who are willing to lie to the world to make their case,' he declares, brandishing a rhetorical stone inside his glass house."

— *New York Times* movie critic A.O. Scott in an April 2 review of "Control Room," a documentary about the Middle East satellite news service Al Jazeera.

A (Little) Self-Awareness at CNN

Jack Cafferty: "Can you say liberal? And the liberal talk radio station Air America debuts today....The question is, does America need additional 'liberal' media outlets?..."

Bill Hemmer: "I think it's a good question....Why hasn't a liberal radio station or TV network never taken off before?"

Cafferty: "We have them. Are you, did you just get off a vegetable truck from the South Bronx? They're everywhere....What do they call this joint? The Clinton News Network?"

— Exchange on CNN's *American Morning*, March 31.

U.S. Deserved World's Wrath

"This country has been pushing the world around and exploiting people of the world for a long, long time. And sometime you have to pay the piper, and that's what happened to us. We now have gotten enough people really angry and we have sold enough weapons and we've developed enough technology for them to have them now and they're being used against us."

— Comedian George Carlin appearing on HBO's *Real Time with Bill Maher*, March 12.

Winners of the MRC's 2004 DisHonors Awards

On March 18, 2004 at the Omni Shoreham hotel in Washington, D.C., the Media Research Center presented its annual "DisHonors Awards" for the most outrageously biased liberal reporting of 2003. **Cal Thomas** served as the Master of Ceremonies; **Joe Scarborough**, **Michelle Malkin** and **Jonah Goldberg** presented the awards. The winners were chosen by a panel of 13 distinguished media observers listed below. In place of the journalist who "won" each award, a conservative accepted it in jest. Following the awards ceremony, **Sam Donaldson** and **Rush Limbaugh** delighted the audience with surprise appearances. To watch the presentations and Rush Limbaugh's speech via RealPlayer, please visit www.mrc.org.

Ozzy Osbourne Award (for the Wackiest Comment)

"If she had lived, Mary Jo Kopechne would be 62 years old. Through his tireless work as a legislator, Edward Kennedy would have brought comfort to her in her old age."

— **Charles Pierce** in a **January 5, 2003 *Boston Globe Magazine*** article. **Kopechne drowned in Kennedy's submerged car off Chappaquiddick Island in July 1969, an accident Kennedy did not report for several hours.**

Accepting for Charles Pierce....Laura Ingraham

Media Know It All Award

"Our greatest accomplishment as a profession is the development since World War II of a news reporting craft that is truly non-partisan, and non-ideological, and that strives to be independent of undue commercial or governmental influence....But we don't wear the political collar of our owners or the government or any political party. It is that legacy we must protect with our diligent stewardship. To do so means we must be aware of the energetic effort that is now underway to convince our readers that we are ideologues. It is an exercise of, in disinformation, of alarming proportions, this attempt to convince the audience of the world's most ideology-free newspapers that they're being subjected to agenda-driven news reflecting a liberal bias."

— **Then-New York Times Executive Editor Howell Raines** at a **National Press Foundation dinner, February 20, 2003.**

Accepting for Howell Raines....Al Regnery

Baghdad Bob Award (for Parrotting Enemy Propaganda)

Diane Sawyer: "[Saddam Hussein has] also said the love that the Iraqis have for him is so much greater than anything Americans feel for their President because he's been loved for 35 years, he says, the whole 35 years."

Dan Harris in Baghdad: "He is one to point out quite frequently that he is part of a historical trend in this country of restoring Iraq to its greatness, its historical greatness. He points out frequently that he was elected with a hundred percent margin recently."

— **ABC's Good Morning America, March 7, 2003.**

Accepting for Sawyer and Harris....Jeane Kirkpatrick

The "I'm Not a Geopolitical Genius, but I Play One on TV" Award

MSNBC's Mike Barnicle: "Who do you regard as a bigger threat to world peace: George Bush, or Saddam Hussein?"

Comedienne/Activist Janeane Garofalo: "I say at this point, for different reasons, they are both very threatening to world peace, and to deny that is to be incredibly naive. Right now, we are on the brink of global catastrophe....This is a manufactured war at this point. There has been a war on the people of Iraq since 1990."

— **Exchange on MSNBC's *Nachman*, February 20, 2003.**

Accepting for Janeane Garofalo....Bill Donohue

I Hate You Conservatives Award

"I decided to put on my flag pin tonight...I put it on to take it back. The flag's been hijacked and turned into a logo — the trademark of a monopoly on patriotism. On those Sunday morning talk shows, official chests appear adorned with the flag as if it is the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval, and during the State of the Union did you notice Bush and Cheney wearing the flag?...More galling than anything are all those moralistic ideologues in Washington sporting the flag in their lapels while writing books and running Web sites and publishing magazines attacking dissenters as un-American....I put it on to remind myself that not every patriot thinks we should do to the people of Baghdad what bin Laden did to us."

— **Bill Moyers on PBS's *Now*, February 28, 2003.**

Accepting for Bill Moyers....Richard Viguerie

The Judges:

- L. Brent Bozell III**, President of the Media Research Center
- Ann Coulter**, syndicated columnist and author of *Treason*
- Steve Forbes**, CEO and Editor-in-Chief, *Forbes* magazine
- John Fund**, columnist for *OpinionJournal.com*
- Lucianne Goldberg**, radio host & publisher, *Lucianne.com*
- Michelle Malkin**, syndicated columnist, FNC contributor
- Kate O'Beirne**, *National Review* and CNN's *Capital Gang*
- Al Regnery**, Publisher of *The American Spectator*
- William Rusher**, Distinguished Fellow, Claremont Institute
- Cal Thomas**, columnist and host of FNC's *After Hours*
- R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr.**, Editor-in-Chief, *American Spectator*
- Walter E. Williams**, George Mason University professor
- Thomas Winter**, Editor-in-Chief, *Human Events*

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