

Notable Quotables

April 26, 2004 (Vol. Seventeen; No. 9)

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



Bringing Political
Balance to the Media

Mocking Bush's Freedom Push

Bob Woodward: "The President still believes, with some conviction, that this [the Iraq war] was absolutely the right thing, that he has the duty to free people, to liberate people, and this was his moment."

Mike Wallace: "Who gave George Bush the duty to free people around the world?"

Woodward: "That's a really good question. The Constitution doesn't say that's part of the Commander-in-Chief's duties."

Wallace: "The President of the United States, without a great deal of background in foreign policy, makes up his mind and believes he was sent by somebody to free the people — not just in Iraq, but around the world?"

Woodward: "That's his stated purpose. It is far-reaching, and ambitious, and I think will cause many people to tremble."

— Exchange on CBS's *60 Minutes*, April 18.

Kerry's Loyal Media Servants

"How do you explain to Americans how you got that so wrong, and how do you answer your opponents who say that you took this nation to war on the basis of what have turned out to be a series of false premises?"

— ABC's Terry Moran to President Bush at his prime time news conference on April 13.

"Two and a half years later, do you feel any sense of personal responsibility for September 11th?"

— *New York Times* reporter Elisabeth Bumiller to Bush.

"Two weeks ago, a former counter-terrorism official at the NSC, Richard Clarke, offered an unequivocal apology to the American people for failing them prior to 9/11. Do you believe the American people deserve a similar apology from you, and would you be prepared to give them one?"

— CBS's John Roberts to Bush.

"One of the biggest criticisms of you is that whether it's WMD in Iraq, post-war planning in Iraq, or even the question of whether this administration did enough to ward off 9/11, you never admit a mistake. Is that a fair criticism? And do you believe that there were any errors in judgment that you made related to any of those topics I brought up?"

— NBC's David Gregory to Bush.

"With public support for your policies in Iraq falling off... quite significantly over the past couple of months, I'd like to know if you feel that you've failed as a communicator?"

— National Public Radio's Don Gonyea to Bush.

Bush Ducked My Great Question

"This isn't the Monica Lewinsky scandal or Social Security reform. These are matters of life and death....I think it yields information if you ask the President whether on any of these matters he feels that he's made a mistake or any errors in judgment, and I think he really didn't answer the question."

— NBC's David Gregory discussing the President's news conference on MSNBC's *Imus in the Morning*, April 14.

Anticipating "Another Vietnam"

"Senator Ted Kennedy said Iraq is, 'George Bush's Vietnam.' Given the fact that, that U.S. forces are committed there for the long haul, what steps do we need to take, Ambassador Bremer, to make sure that Iraq does not turn into another Vietnam?"

— NBC's Matt Lauer to Ambassador Paul Bremer, the chief U.S. administrator in Iraq, on *Today*, April 6.

"You say commit more troops. But that's the same thing LBJ did in Vietnam. Do you worry that this is another Vietnam?"

— Katie Couric to Hillary Clinton on *Dateline*, April 16.

Retired Major General William Nash: "It's an insurgency against a public security mission that the soldiers are trying to perform for the people of Iraq. And so they are not able to engage regular military forces using the strengths that we have to attack their weaknesses."

Peter Jennings: "Well, that sounds like Vietnam."

— ABC's *World News Tonight*, April 7.

"In Najaf, the militant Shiite cleric Al-Sadr echoed the refrain Iraq could become quote, 'another Vietnam' for America."

— Dan Rather on the April 7 *CBS Evening News*.

ABC: Inflame First, Verify Later

"Arab language TV channels reporting from the battle zone, and local residents who witnessed the fighting, say the 40 killed in one mosque included people taking part in afternoon prayers. The main hospital is overflowing. The casualties appear to include many civilians. 'Why do they have to do this?' said this boy from his hospital bed. 'So many dead and I can't walk anymore. Why?' The Marines have sealed off Fallujah completely. Even the phone lines are down. There's no way to independently verify the facts."

— ABC's David Wright reporting over matching video from al-Jazeera, on the April 7 *World News Tonight*.

Ashcroft's McCarthyesque Smear

"The CIA came out as a loser in this week's hearing, but the real loser was [Attorney General] John Ashcroft, with that Joe McCarthy-type appearance this week. He was the only witness, Mark, who refused to give the committee his testimony ahead of time....And then he tried to spring this so-called Gorelick document, and he lied about its meaning and its contents."

— *Wall Street Journal Executive Washington Editor Al Hunt on CNN's Capital Gang, April 17.*

The PDB: "A Deafening Alarm"

"It was a public relations gamble the President hoped would pay off big time, releasing the super-secret memo he was briefed on a month before the 9/11 attacks....While there was nothing specific as to time and place, counter-terrorism experts say it should have raised a deafening alarm at the White House."

— CBS's John Roberts reporting on the release of an August 6, 2001 Presidential Daily Briefing that summarized what was known about Osama bin Laden's desire to attack the U.S. homeland, on the April 12 *Evening News*.

...Or "Sketchy" and Thin?

Terry Moran: "A 28-year veteran of the FBI, who was one of the bureau's lead investigators of al-Qaeda, says Mr. Bush was poorly served by the sketchy briefing."

Jack Cloonan, former FBI agent: "There was a great deal more information out there. I know personally that there was a great deal more factual information that should have been reported."

— A story about the same briefing on ABC's *World News Tonight*, April 12.

Our Soldiers "Victims, Not Heroes"

"Treating soldiers fighting their war as brave heroes is an old civilian trick designed to keep the soldiers at it. But you can be sure our soldiers in Iraq are not all brave heroes gladly risking their lives....During the last few years, when millions of jobs disappeared, many young people, desperate for some income, enlisted in the Army. About 40 percent of our soldiers in Iraq enlisted in the National Guard or the Army Reserve to pick up some extra money and never thought they'd be called on to fight. They want to come home....We must support our soldiers in Iraq because it's our fault they're risking their lives there. However, we should not bestow the mantle of heroism on all of them for simply being where we sent them. Most are victims, not heroes."

— CBS's Andy Rooney in a syndicated column published in the April 12 *Buffalo News*.

Why Report? Just Deride

"The President [said again] today there was nothing in the daily briefing he received on August 6, 2001, that told him, quote, 'Oh, by the way, we've got intelligence that says something is about to happen in America.' His administration thus seemingly on the verge of resembling the old joke about the man who loses his wallet on a city street at night. A policeman finds him searching for it under a street lamp and asks, 'Is this where you lost it?' And the man replies, 'No, I lost it over there in the dark.' The policeman says, 'Then, why are you looking under the street lamp?' And the man answers, 'Because it's not so dark over here.'"

— MSNBC's Keith Olbermann on the April 12 edition of *Countdown*.

Applauding "Rock Star" Hillary

"Whatever her aspirations, these days she seems to be the life of the party — the Democratic Party. And at times she's received like a rock star. She works on economic development in upstate New York, gives foreign policy and civil rights speeches, shakes hand after hand, signs book after book."

— NBC's Katie Couric talking about the popularity of New York Senator Hillary Clinton during an interview shown on *Dateline*, April 16.

NY Times Just Not Liberal Enough

"Another disturbing development, for which I was unprepared, was that a small enclave of neoconservative editors was making accusations of 'political correctness' in order to block stories or slant them against minorities and traditional social welfare programs."

— Former *New York Times* Executive Editor Howell Raines in "My Times," a 21,000-word article about the obstacles he faced at the *Times*, published in the May 2004 edition of *The Atlantic*.

Diane: Changing Presidents Is Okay

Diane Sawyer: "Bruce Willis flew into war-torn Iraq not long ago to thank the troops."

Actor Bruce Willis: "They are doing really great things in Iraq. They're opening schools, they're getting the power turned back on. It may take some time, but it would be a terrible sin to abandon the Iraqi people now. I think it would be a drastic mistake to change administrations now while we're still at war."

Sawyer: "Well, somebody might argue that changing American presidents doesn't mean abandoning the Iraqi people."

— Exchange on ABC's *Good Morning America*, April 7.

Notable Quotables

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April 26, 2004 (Volume 17; No. 9)

Published bi-weekly by the
Media Research Center
325 South Patrick Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Subscriptions: \$29 annually. Call (800) 672-1423

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