

Notable Quotables

February 28, 2005 (Vol. Eighteen; No. 5)

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



Bringing Political
Balance to the Media

Dan Rather's Legacy of Outrageous Liberal Bias

Damn Those Conservatives...

"The new Republican majority in Congress took a big step today on its legislative agenda to demolish or damage government aid programs, many of them designed to help children and the poor."

— **Leading off the March 16, 1995 CBS Evening News.**

"Republicans kill the bill to clean up sleazy political fundraising. The business of dirty campaign money will stay business as usual."

— **CBS Evening News, February 26, 1998.**

"There was no doubt Republicans in the House had enough votes tonight to pass another key item in their agenda to rip up or re-write government programs going back to the Franklin Roosevelt era. It is a bill making it harder, much harder, to protect health, safety, and the environment."

— **CBS Evening News, February 28, 1995.**

"On Capitol Hill, the Republican-controlled House voted mostly along party lines tonight to pass President Bush's federal budget blueprint. This includes his big tax cut plan, partly bankrolled, critics say, through cuts in many federal aid programs for children and education."

— **CBS Evening News, March 28, 2001.**

"President Bush tonight outlines his cut-federal-programs-to-get-a-tax-cut plan to Congress and the nation."

— **CBS Evening News, February 27, 2001.**

"President Bush insisted today that he was not caving in to big money contributors, big-time lobbyists, and overall industry pressure when he broke a campaign promise to regulate carbon dioxide emissions from power plants. But the air was thick today with accusations from people who believe that's exactly what happened."

— **CBS Evening News, March 14, 2001.**

...And Damn CBS's Competition

"It is not just Congress that is taking a sharp turn to the right. The surge to the right on Capitol Hill is making waves all over the country on openly politically partisan, and sometimes racist, radio."

— **CBS Evening News, January 4, 1995.**

: Bush Was Selected, Not Elected

"Good evening. Texas Governor George Bush tonight will assume the mantle and the honor of President-elect. This comes 24 hours after a sharply split and, some say, politically and ideologically motivated U.S. Supreme Court ended Vice President Gore's contest of the Florida election and, in effect, handed the presidency to Bush."

— **Beginning the December 13, 2000 CBS Evening News.**

: As Dan Sees and Decrees

"Nineteen days after the presidential election, Florida's Republican Secretary of State is about to announce the winner — as she sees it and she decrees it — of the state's potentially decisive 25 electoral votes. Katherine Harris will officially certify the state's election returns....The believed certification — as the Republican Secretary of State sees it — is coming just hours after a court ordered deadline.... The certification — as the Florida Secretary of State sees it and decrees it — is being signed."

— **During CBS News live coverage, November 26, 2000.**

: Empathizing with Victimized Hero

"Have you ever had any anger about President Bush — who spent his time during the Vietnam War in the National Guard — running, in effect, a campaign that does its best to diminish your service in Vietnam? You have to be at least irritated by that, or have you been?"

— **To Senator John Kerry in an interview shown on the July 22, 2004 CBS Evening News.**

: Memo to Voters: Don't Buy It

"The Republican convention opens in New York to re-nominate George W. Bush and showcase the party's, quote, 'moderate side.' Will voters buy it?"

— **Opening the August 30, 2004 CBS Evening News.**

: Killed by Bush's Recession

"Tonight, savagery in the streets of Iraq. Ten Americans die in a single day, four of them civilians murdered, mutilated and dragged through the streets....What drives American civilians to risk death in Iraq? In this economy it may be, for some, the only job they can find."

— **Leading off the March 31, 2004 CBS Evening News.**

To watch, via RealPlayer, many of the broadcast quotes in this issue, please visit: www.mrc.org.

King of the Clinton Fan Club

"If we could be one-hundredth as great as you and Hillary Rodham Clinton have been in the White House, we'd take it right now and walk away winners....Tell Mrs. Clinton we respect her and we're pulling for her."

— **To President Clinton, via satellite, at a May 27, 1993 CBS affiliates meeting, referencing his new *CBS Evening News* co-anchor Connie Chung.**

"I hear you talking and, as I have before on this subject, I don't know of anybody, friend or foe, who isn't impressed by your grasp of the details of this [health care] plan. I'm not surprised, because you have been working on it so long and listened to so many people."

— **Interview with Hillary Clinton, *48 Hours*, Sept. 22, 1993.**

"Once a political lightning rod, today she [Hillary Clinton] is political lightning. A crowd pleaser and first-class fundraiser, a person under enormous pressure to step into the arena, this time on her own."

— **Profiling Hillary Clinton on *60 Minutes II*, May 26, 1999.**

Are Voters Just Stupid?

"Mr. Vice President, you've been part of an administration that one can argue has presided over the greatest economic, sustained economic boom in the history of the country. But here you are in the last week of the presidential campaign, in which even by your own estimate you're locked neck and neck with the other guy. Why is that?"

— **In a taped interview with Al and Tipper Gore shown on the November 1, 2000 *CBS Evening News*.**

Bill Clinton "An Honest Man"

Bill O'Reilly: "I want to ask you flat out, do you think President Clinton's an honest man?"

Dan Rather: "Yes, I think he's an honest man."

O'Reilly: "Do you, really?"

Rather: "I do."

O'Reilly: "Even though he lied to Jim Lehrer's face about the Lewinsky case?"

Rather: "Who among us has not lied about something?"

O'Reilly: "Well, I didn't lie to anybody's face on national television. I don't think you have, have you?"

Rather: "I don't think I ever have. I hope I never have. But, look, it's one thing —"

O'Reilly: "How can you say he's an honest guy then?"

Rather: "Well, because I think he is. I think at core he's an honest person. I know that you have a different view. I know that you consider it sort of astonishing anybody would say so, but I think you can be an honest person and lie about any number of things."

— **Exchange on FNC's *The O'Reilly Factor*, May 15, 2001.**

Fractured Fairy Tales

"I read the book [*My Life* by Bill Clinton] completely. And I think it compares very favorably with Ulysses S. Grant's gold standard of presidential autobiographies."

— **Dan Rather on CNN's *Larry King Live*, June 18, 2004.**

Impeachment = GOP Coup D'Etat

"Is or is there not some concern of the public perception, in some quarters, not all of them Democratic, that this is, in fact, a kind of effort at a, quote, 'coup,' that is you have a twice elected, popularly elected President of the United States, and so those that you mention in the Republican Party who dislike him and what he stands for, having been unable to beat him at the polls, have found another way to get him out of office?"

— **Interviewing former GOP Senator Warren Rudman during CBS's live coverage of the start of President Clinton's impeachment trial, January 7, 1999.**

Dumping All Over Successful Bill

"Ken Starr drops another load on President Clinton....Good evening. Just as President Clinton was enjoying a day talking up the economy, officially announcing the first U.S. budget surplus in three decades, Ken Starr hit him again."

— **Opening the May 26, 1998 *CBS Evening News*, after Starr's office asked Monica Lewinsky to submit voice, writing and fingerprint samples.**

Far-Right Republican "Haters"

"On another front, there could be trouble for the Ken Starr Whitewater investigation. Reports continue to surface that this key witness for the prosecution, David Hale, may have been secretly bankrolled by political activists widely regarded as Clinton opponents, people that Clinton supporters call Republican haters from the far right."

— ***CBS Evening News*, April 2, 1998.**

Trumpeting Bogus "Leak" Claims

"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 the 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."

— **Opening the *CBS Evening News*, August 17, 2000, the final day of the Democratic convention. The next day, a Carter-appointed federal judge revealed he had inadvertently revealed the news. Rather has never apologized.**

No Doubting Liberal Clichés

"Everyone knows the rich got richer in the 1980s."

— ***CBS Evening News*, October 29, 1992.**

Bush & Clinton Both "Hard Right"

"Now to Bill Whitaker covering George W. Bush's talking the right talk, as in Republican hard right, to try to take out Steve Forbes in Iowa and focus on eliminating John McCain in New Hampshire."

— ***CBS Evening News*, January 23, 2000.**

"Bill Clinton's been running pretty hard to the right, so far that some Democrats now call him a 'Republicrat.'"

— **To Jesse Jackson during CBS's coverage of the Democratic convention, August 26, 1996.**

Happy to Be Communist Slaves

“Despite what many Americans think, most Soviets do not yearn for capitalism or Western-style democracy.”

— *CBS Evening News*, June 17, 1987.

Impressive Gorby, Caring Castro

“He [Mikhail Gorbachev] has, as many great leaders have, impressive eyes....There’s a kind of laser-beam stare, a forced quality, you get from Gorbachev that does not come across as something peaceful within himself. It’s the look of a kind of human volcano, or he’d probably like to describe it as a human nuclear energy plant.”

— Rather quoted in the May 10, 1990 *Seattle Times*.

“While Fidel Castro, and certainly justified on his record, is widely criticized for a lot of things, there is no question that Castro feels a very deep and abiding connection to those Cubans who are still in Cuba and, I recognize this might be controversial, but there’s little doubt in my mind that Fidel Castro was sincere when he said, ‘Listen, we really want this child back here.’”

— During live coverage of the Elian raid, April 22, 2000.

Ruing Right-Wing “Hatemongers”

“Gays and lesbians are beaten to death in the streets with increasing frequency — in part due to irrational fear of AIDS but also because hatemongers, from comedians to the worst of the Christian Right, send the message that homosexuals have no value in our society....In the post-Cold-War era, gays have been drafted to replace communists as the new menace to the American Way.”

— Writing in *The Nation*, April 11, 1994.

Demanding Immediate Gun Control

“It’s been a week since a six-year-old Michigan girl was shot dead by another six-year-old. As CBS’s Diana Olick reports, the little girl’s death has many wondering what, if anything, more can be done and asking why Congress hasn’t done anything for months.”

— *CBS Evening News*, March 7, 2000.

Castigating the Failure to Spend

“Senior Americans who saw retirement savings evaporate in the Wall Street meltdown have another financial headache now. It turns out it was all talk and no action with the President and Congress again today on passing any version of Medicare prescription drug coverage.”

— *CBS Evening News*, July 23, 2002.

Reform = Poor Kids on the Street

“You said this morning that the party’s message will focus on the needs and cares of the people. Now, how do you reconcile that with a President who has just signed a, quote, ‘welfare reform bill’ which by general agreement is going to put a lot of poor children on the street?”

— Interviewing Democratic Senator Chris Dodd on the *CBS Evening News*, August 25, 1996.

Walter Mondale’s Rightward March

“This Democratic platform calls for not a single new domestic spending program. In other words, the party continues to march toward what some would call the center, others would say the right.”

— CBS’s Democratic convention coverage, July 19, 1984.

The Ambush that Failed

“You and the President were being party to sending missiles to the Ayatollah of Iran. Can you explain how — you were supposed to be the — you are — you’re an anti-terrorist expert! Iran was officially a terrorist state....The question is — but — you made us hypocrites in the face of the world!...How could you sign on to such a policy?!”

— During a live interview with Vice President George H.W. Bush on the *CBS Evening News*, January 25, 1988.

Sticking by a Fraudulent Hit Piece

“Today, on the Internet and elsewhere, some people, including many who are partisan political operatives, concentrated not on the key questions of the overall story, but on the documents that were part of the support of the story. They allege that the documents are fake....The *60 Minutes* report was based not solely on the recovered documents, but on a preponderance of the evidence, including documents that were provided by what we consider to be solid sources....If any definitive evidence to the contrary of our story is found, we will report it. So far, there is none.”

— *CBS Evening News*, September 10, 2004, two days after his *60 Minutes* reporting alleging President George W. Bush failed to fulfill his National Guard service.

Smearing the Document Doubters

“Powerful and extremely well-financed forces are concentrating on questions about the documents because they can’t deny the fundamental truth of the story. If you can’t deny the information, then attack and seek to destroy the credibility of the messenger....I think over the long haul, this will be consistent with our history and our traditions and reputation. We took heat during the McCarthy time, during Vietnam, during civil rights, during Watergate. We haven’t always been right, but our record is damn good.”

— Rather quoted in the *New York Observer*, Sept. 15, 2004.

“I don’t back down. I don’t cave when the pressure gets too great from these partisan political ideological forces.”

— Rather quoted in the Sept. 16, 2004 *Washington Post*.

“Anybody who knows me knows that I am not politically motivated, not politically active for Democrats or Republicans, and that I’m independent. People who are so passionately partisan politically or ideologically committed basically say, ‘Because he won’t report it our way, we’re going to hang something bad around his neck and choke him with it, check him out of existence if we can, if not make him feel great pain.’ They know that I’m fiercely independent and that’s what drives them up a wall.”

— Rather quoted in *USA Today*, September 17, 2004.

Both Sides Hit with Liberal Spin

“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.”
— **Reporting on Bush’s selection of Dick Cheney as his running mate, July 25, 2000 CBS Evening News.**

vs.

“Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore officially introduced his history-making running mate today, Senator Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut....In their first joint appearance they gave a preview of the Gore-Lieberman fight-back, comeback 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.”
— **Reporting on Lieberman’s selection exactly two weeks later, August 8, 2000 CBS Evening News.**

What, Me Biased?

“I’m all news, all the time. Full power, tall tower. I want to break in when news breaks out. That’s my agenda. Now, respectfully, when you start talking about a liberal agenda and all the, quote, ‘liberal bias’ in the media, I quite frankly, and I say this respectfully but candidly to you, I don’t know what you’re talking about.”
— **To Denver radio host Mike Rosen, November 28, 1995.**

“I’m in favor of strong defense, tight money, and clean water. I don’t know what that makes me. Whatever that makes me, that’s what I am.”
— **On the July 19, 2001 Imus in the Morning radio program simulcast on MSNBC.**

“The test is not the names people call you or accusations by political activists inside or outside your own organization. The test is what goes up on the screen and what comes out of the speaker. I think the public understands that those people are trying to create such a perception because they’re trying to force you to report the news the way they want you to report it. I am not going to do it. I will put up billboard space on 42nd Street. I will wear a sandwich board. I will do whatever is necessary to say I am not going to be cowed by anybody’s special political agenda, inside, outside, upside, downside.”
— **Rejecting CBS reporter Bernard Goldberg’s charge that CBS exhibits a liberal bias, March 6, 1996 New York Post.**

Rather’s Ridiculous Ratherisms

- “This presidential race is hotter than the Devil’s anvil.”
- “This presidential race, you know, it’s been crackling like a hickory fire for at least the last hour and a half.”
- “Situation in Ohio would give an aspirin a headache.”
- “John Kerry, his lead is as thin as turnip soup.”
- — **CBS’s election coverage, November 2, 2004.**
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- “Bush has had a lead since the very start, but his lead is now shakier than cafeteria Jell-O.”
- “If you’re in the kitchen, Mabel, come back in the front room: 145 for Gore, 130 for Bush, 270 needed to win.”
- “The presidential race, still hotter than a Laredo parking lot.”
- — **During CBS News coverage of election night 2000.**
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- “In New Hampshire, closest Senate race in the country, this race between Dick Swett and Bob Smith is as hot and tight as a too small bathing suit on a too long car ride back from the beach.”
- — **During CBS News 1996 election night coverage.**
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- “A lot of tight Senate races out there. Let’s hit those chips with another dash of salsa, Ed Bradley.”
- — **During CBS News 1994 election night coverage.**
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- “I think you’re more likely to see the Pope ride through this room on a giraffe.”
- — **On the possibility of a CBS News cable channel, to the Philadelphia Inquirer’s Gail Shister, February 18, 1997.**
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- “Mr. Clinton was about as relaxed as a pound of liver.”
- — **Referring to his earlier interview with Bill Clinton, January 20, 1993 CBS This Morning.**
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- “Stay with CBS now for more news, including: Is there a pall over the mall as holiday shoppers think small?”
- — **Previewing an upcoming segment on the CBS Evening News, December 2, 1991.**
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- **“A Dumb-Ass All My Life”**
- “Look, we’ve made mistakes in the past. Somebody wrote in the paper the other day that I was, quote, ‘boneheaded.’ Well, of course, it’s a matter of record I’m boneheaded, said, ‘well, this is bizarre.’ Well, of course I’m bizarre, you know, we’ve known that for a long time...Somebody, I don’t know if he put it exactly this way, but he said, ‘well, you know, it’s a dumb-ass thing he’s doing.’ Well, you know, I’ve been a dumb-ass all my life.”
- — **On the July 19, 2001 Imus in the Morning discussing the CBS Evening News’s near-blackout of the scandal surrounding Democratic Congressman Gary Condit.**

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