

Notable Quotables

December 22, 2003 (Vol. Sixteen; No. 26)

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



Bringing Political Balance
to the Media

THE BEST *NOTABLE QUOTABLES* OF 2003

The Sixteenth Annual Awards for the Year's Worst Reporting

Welcome to the Media Research Center's annual awards issue, a compilation of the most outrageous and/or humorous news media quotes from 2003 (December 2002 through November 2003). To determine this year's winners, a panel of 46 radio talk show hosts, magazine editors, columnists, editorial writers and media observers each selected their choices for the first, second and third best quote from a slate of five to eight quotes in each category. First place selections were awarded three points, second place choices two points, with one point for the third place selections. Point totals are listed in the brackets at the end of the attribution for each quote. Each judge was also asked to choose a "Quote of the Year" denoting the most outrageous quote of 2003. The winner and the two top runners-up appear on page eight.

A list of the judges, who were extremely generous with their time, appears on the back page. The MRC's Kristina Sewell distributed and counted the ballots. Brent Baker and Rich Noyes assembled this issue and Mez Djouadi posted the complete issue, along with video clips, on the MRC's Web site: www.mrc.org.

Join us in Washington, D.C., on March 18 for the *Dishonors Awards of 2004: Roasting the Most Outrageously Biased Liberal Reporters*. For more information or to purchase tickets, please contact the MRC's Director of Special Events Sue Engle at 1-800-672-1423 or by e-mail at sengle@mediaresearch.org.

Damn Those Conservatives Award

✓ "Attorney General John Ashcroft has earned himself a remarkable distinction as the Torquemada of American law. Tomás de Torquemada...was largely responsible for... [the] torture and the burning of heretics — Muslims in particular. Now, of course, I am not accusing the Attorney General of pulling out anyone's fingernails or burning people at the stake (at least I don't know of any such cases). But one does get the sense these days that the old Spaniard's spirit is comfortably at home in Ashcroft's Department of Justice."

— Former *CBS Evening News* anchor **Walter Cronkite** in his syndicated column published in the September 22 *Philadelphia Inquirer*. [65 points]

Runners-up:

■ "Andrea Yates gained national attention when she drowned her five children in a bathtub. Deanna Laney told investigators she beat her three sons with rocks, killing two of them. Both mothers home schooled....It's hard to know how widespread abuse might be because the government doesn't keep track. It doesn't even know how many children are taught at home in this country. In eight states, parents don't have to tell anyone they're home schooling....Not one state requires criminal background checks to see if parents have abuse convictions."

— CBS's **Vince Gonzales** in a report on the "dark side" of home schooling, October 14 *Evening News*. [39]

- **Former Reagan speechwriter Peggy Noonan**: "I think the media and the Democratic Party spent the 1990s saying, 'None of this matters. You can do anything to women. We'll beat 'em up, we'll put private eyes on them....'"
- **Time columnist Joe Klein**: "Wait a second!...You can beat 'em up?"
- **Noonan**: "As a matter of fact Bill Clinton was literally charged with that. He was charged with worse things than, than Arnold [Schwarzenegger]."
- **Klein**: "He was charged with those things by lunatics. He was never legally charged with that."
- **Noonan**: "Whoa! He was charged by Juanita Broaddrick. I don't think that it's fair to call her a lunatic."
- **Klein**: "That? Yes, I do think that she was an extremist."
- — **Exchange on the Oct. 12 *Chris Matthews Show***. [36]
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- **National Public Radio correspondent Nina Totenberg**: "Now they've got this guy [General Jerry Boykin], who's head of the intelligence section in the Defense Department, who's being quoted as telling various groups, while he's in uniform, that this [war] is a Christian crusade against Muslims....I mean, this is terrible, this is seriously bad stuff....I hope he's not long for this world."
- **Host Gordon Peterson**: "You putting a hit out on this guy or what?...What is this, *The Sopranos*?"
- **Totenberg**: "No, no, no....In his job, in his job, please, please, in his job."
- — **Exchange on *Inside Washington*, October 18**. [35]

To watch, via RealPlayer, many of the broadcast quotes in this issue, go to: www.mediaresearch.org

Baghdad Bob Award for Parroting Enemy Propaganda

✓ **Diane Sawyer:** "I read this morning that he's [Saddam Hussein] 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. [52 points]

Runners-up:

■ **Tom Brokaw:** "NBC News 'In Depth' tonight. In the aftermath of the war on Iraq, new anxieties for some of the country's educated, successful women. Although many may be glad to be rid of Saddam Hussein, many are also worried that a new government could set them back...."

■ **Mike Taibbi in Baghdad:** "While the end to the Saddam regime means a return to long-denied freedoms for all Iraqis, it may also mean at least a temporary rollback of some hard-won freedoms for millions of Iraqi women.... While Saddam's regime brutalized women — rape, torture, even beheadings — his secular government also gave women more rights than their counterparts in many other Islamic countries."

— *NBC Nightly News*, April 22. [47]

■ "Iraqis are growing increasingly enraged by the mounting damage to civilian sites — including this maternity hospital, smashed up by a bomb that exploded nearby. Several people were killed, even though patients had been evacuated at the start of the war. Walking through the streets of Baghdad today, it's clear that this war is not popular. I asked this man if he thinks the war is about liberating him from Saddam's brutal regime. 'Liberation?' he asked me. 'Who asked for America to liberate us?'"

— **Freelancer Richard Engel reporting from Saddam-controlled Baghdad, ABC's World News Tonight, April 2.** [31]

Dominique de Villepin Snottiness Award for Whining About the War

✓ "I want to speak to you today about war and empire.... We are embarking on an occupation that, if history is any guide, will be as damaging to our souls as it will be to our prestige and power and security.... We have forfeited the goodwill, the empathy the world felt for us after 9/11, we have folded in on ourselves.... We are far less secure today than we were before we bumbled into Iraq. We will pay for this, but what saddens me most is that those who will by and large pay the highest price are poor kids from Mississippi or Alabama or Texas who could not get a decent job or health insurance and joined the army because it was all we offered them."

— **New York Times reporter Chris Hedges in a May 17 commencement address at Rockford College in Illinois, as quoted by the Rockford Register Star. The graduates booed Hedges off the stage.** [82 points]

Runners-up:

■ "In the past several weeks, your policy on Iraq has generated opposition from the governments of France, Russia, China, Germany, Turkey, the Arab League, and many other countries; opened a rift at NATO and at the UN; and drawn millions of ordinary citizens around the world into the streets in anti-war protests. May I ask what went wrong that so many governments and peoples around the world now not only disagree with you very strongly, but see the U.S. under your leadership as an arrogant power?"

— **ABC White House correspondent Terry Moran to President Bush at a prime-time press conference, March 6.** [43]

■ **Lesley Stahl:** "The Powell Doctrine in military terms is that you throw a massive force, if you're going to go to war, make it huge. There are now criticisms, we're beginning to hear, that this force isn't massive enough."

■ **Colin Powell:** "It's nonsense.... The United States armed forces, with our coalition partners — the British, principally, and the Australians — have gone 300 miles deep into Iraq in a period of five days. That is a heck of an achievement."

■ **Stahl:** "Yeah, but our, the rear is exposed."

■ **Powell:** "It's not. Exposed to what? Exposed to small—"

■ **Stahl:** "Exposed to Fedayeen, exposed—"

■ **Powell:** "Fine. So? We'll get them in due course...."

■ **Stahl:** "Are you saying you're not worried or concerned about guerilla warfare?"

■ **Powell:** "Of course we are and that, and we're trained to handle this.... They're not threatening the advance."

■ **Stahl:** "But you can't get your supplies, well you can't—"

■ **Powell:** "Who says?"

■ **Stahl:** "—can't get the humanitarian—"

■ **Powell:** "Who says?"

■ **Stahl:** "—well you can't get the humanitarian aid in there."

■ **Powell:** "Only because the minefields haven't been cleared at the port of Umm Qasr.... The situation will change rapidly."

— **Exchange on CBS's 48 Hours, March 25, the 6th day of the war.** [38]

■ "We should change our attitude toward the United Nations. There has to be some power in the world superior to our own.... We should not have attacked Iraq without the okay of the United Nations.... Now we have to live with that mistake. We're living with it, and too many of our guys are dying with it."

— **CBS's Andy Rooney in what correspondent Mike Wallace billed as a "serious" commentary at the conclusion of the October 12 60 Minutes.** [38]

The Invisible Liberal Award for Camouflaging Ideology

✓ "The rap on Dean is that he's like Dukakis and Mondale and McGovern. Well, McGovern was a liberal, but we had an issue and that was the war. Dukakis was no liberal and neither was Mondale. Both of them had several people to the left in those primaries. It was what the Republicans did to them once they got the nomination that made them seem to be liberals in both cases."

— **Former NBC and CNN reporter Ken Bode on the syndicated Chris Matthews Show, August 10.** [72 points]

Runners-up:

■ “When the word gets out that Dean isn’t liberal — and in fact is quite conservative — on fiscal issues, he’ll pick up more McCain support....On fiscal issues, he’s far to the right of [Ted] Kennedy.”

— **Senior Editor Jonathan Alter in an August 6 online chat at the *Newsweek* Web site.** [49]

■ “Ever since the George McGovern disaster of 1972, the party has routinely chosen technocratic moderates for standard-bearers.”

— ***Time*’s Joe Klein in the magazine’s May 19 cover story, “Why They Don’t Make Democrats Like They Used To (And How to Fix It).”** [41]

■ **Judy Woodruff:** “The rap on Dean is that the Burlington Birkenstock crowd, people who put Dean signs in bars called the Red Square, can’t take their man to the White House, that he’s just too far left.”

Vermont political reporter Peter Freyne: “His entire time in Vermont politics, going back to his days in the legislature, as Lieutenant Governor and as Governor in the ‘90s, there was never a sentence in any newspaper in the state of Vermont that contained the word ‘liberal’ and ‘Howard Dean.’”

— ***CNN’s Inside Politics*, July 11.** [28]

Media Suck-Up Award

✓ “You became First Lady like no other First Lady before you. You had your own interests, you got involved in public policy. No First Lady had done that without being severely criticized. Did you realize what you were getting into?”

“I don’t think people realize how strong your faith is.”

— **Barbara Walters to Hillary Clinton in a June 8 ABC special promoting her book, *Living History*.** [34 points]

Runners-up:

■ “Senator Hillary Clinton is at Ground Zero this morning to attend the September 11th anniversary ceremony, and she joins us now. Good morning, Senator Clinton.... You’ve fought so much for the heroes of 9/11. You have sought money for firefighters, you’ve taken the EPA to task for toning down their report on air quality at Ground Zero. Has enough been done for the heroes, the people who fought so bravely on that day?”

— **CBS’s Hannah Storm to New York Senator Hillary Clinton on *The Early Show*, September 11.** [27]

■ **HBO’s Bob Costas:** “How, from where you sit, have you maintained your dignity, and how can you be so controlled under circumstances that would be trying for the best of us?... If you became President, what kind of First Gentleman would Bill Clinton be?... What are your best and worst qualities as a politician?”

Senator Hillary Clinton: “Probably my worst quality is that I get very passionate about what I think is right.”

— **Exchange on HBO’s *On the Record with Bob Costas*, July 18.** [26]

■ **John Cochran:** “Remember the \$8 million advance Hillary Clinton’s publisher gave her? Turns out it was a bargain. She has earned every penny — and then some. Her book is a best-seller in eight countries.... She has not only signed 20,000 copies of her book, she has also put her name on more legislation than any other Senator in this Congress, sponsoring or co-sponsoring 396 bills, ranging from resolutions on Girl Scouts Week to funds for rebuilding Iraq and—”

Senator Hillary Clinton: “—to help them improve our homeland defense.”

— **ABC’s *World News Tonight*, July 31.** [24]

Pompous Peter Award for Jennings’ Arrogant Condescension

✓ “This week we were surprised to see several hundred artists and writers walking through the streets of Baghdad to say thank you to Saddam Hussein. He had just increased their monthly financial support. Cynical, you could argue at this particular time, but the state has always supported the arts, and some of the most creative people in the Arab world have always been Iraqis. And whatever they think about Saddam Hussein in the privacy of their homes, on this occasion they were praising his defense of the homeland in the face of American threats.”

— **ABC’s Peter Jennings in Baghdad, concluding the January 21 *World News Tonight*.** [67 points]

Runners-up:

■ “The country has been a living archive of man’s earliest history, where real connections can be made between then and now, which is why the Pentagon is being so widely criticized for not protecting the history when it captured the capital city.... The Pentagon has said, in reply, look, this is war, and stuff happens, the U.S. was fired on from the museum grounds. Not a satisfactory answer for people who say that if the U.S. managed to protect the Ministry of Oil, why not this repository of civilization? Why, they ask, is neglect forgivable?”

— **Jennings on ABC’s *World News Tonight*, April 18.** [48]

■ “By the way, ‘No blood for oil,’ from many people who are opposed to the war is, is not complicated at all. They believe the United States wishes to occupy Iraq in the long term to have the oil. Just so we understand why they wear those little buttons, ‘No blood for oil.’”

— **Jennings on *World News Tonight*, March 20.** [33]

■ “Saddam Hussein may have been, or may be, a vain man, but he has allowed himself to be sculpted heavy and thin, overweight and in shape, in every imaginable costume — both national, in historic terms, in Iraqi historic terms — in contemporary, in every imaginable uniform, on every noble horse. The sculpting of Saddam Hussein, which has been a growth industry for 20 years, may well be a dying art.”

— **Jennings during ABC’s live coverage at about 10:45am EDT on April 9, shortly before U.S. Marines helped cheering Iraqis topple their former dictator’s statue.** [32]

Romanticizing the Rabble Award for Glorifying Protesters

✓ “The size of the demonstrators, at least here, at least in Europe, seems to underscore, Chris, that there are now perhaps two world superpowers. There’s the United States and then there are those millions of people who took to the streets opposing U.S. policy.”

— **MSNBC’s David Shuster to *Hardball* host Chris Matthews, February 17. [81 points]**

Runners-up:

■ “Across the country, citizens have been coming out to voice their opposition, all calling for the same things. They want government accountability, they want environmental justice, and most of all, they’re calling for peace....While protesters like today are a statistical minority, in American history protests like this have been prescient indicators of the national mood. So the government may do well to listen to what’s said today.”

— **ABC correspondent Chris Cuomo previewing an afternoon protest rally planned for Times Square, on a special five-hour Saturday edition of *Good Morning America*, March 22, three days after the war began. [70]**

■ “It was a party a hundred thousand strong, flowing haltingly below the slated mansard roofs of Paris’s stately avenues, accompanied by balloons and banners and vendors selling foot-long hot dogs and fries. If there is one thing the French know how to do, it is how to conduct a demonstration.

“Ladies in stiletto heels and fur-fringed jackets, fathers pushing strollers trailing McDonald’s balloons, drably dressed union members, students in face paint and carnival clothes — all turned out to make some noise. Yet despite the gay atmosphere beneath a brilliant blue sky, the message was stark, even dark.

“‘The United States is a barbarian country,’ shouted some. ‘Bush, let’s murder,’ shouted others. One group chanted, ‘Bush, Blair, Sharon, Putin, Chirac: Justice in Palestine, don’t touch Iraq.’”

— **Introduction of Craig Smith’s February 16 *New York Times* story, about anti-war protests in Paris, headlined, “Throwing a Party With a Purpose.” [56]**

Barbra Streisand Political IQ Award for Celebrity Vapidity

✓ **Left-wing filmmaker Michael Moore:** “What happened to the search for Osama bin Laden?...You don’t think they [the U.S. government] know where he is?”

Bob Costas (astonished): “You think they know where Osama bin Laden is and it’s hands off?”

Moore: “Absolutely, absolutely.”

Costas: “Why?”

Moore: “Because he’s funded by their friends in Saudi Arabia! He’s back living with his sponsors, his benefactors. Do you think that Osama bin Laden planned 9/11 from a cave in Afghanistan? I can’t get a cell signal from here to Queens! I mean, come on, let’s get real about this. The guy has been on dialysis for two years. He’s got failing

kidneys....I think the United States, I think our government knows where he is and I don’t think we’re going to be capturing him or killing him any time soon.”

— **Exchange on HBO’s *On the Record with Bob Costas*, May 9. [81 points]**

Runners-up:

■ “The lie that brought us into war was that Iraq was a threat to us....It was an attempt at a corporate takeover. This was about oil. It wasn’t about human rights. It’s not about human rights....It is the Bush/Cheney cartel’s fault....Team Bush is more radically corrupt than Richard Nixon ever tried to be....It is, in fact, a conspiracy of the 43rd Reich.”

— **Left-wing activist/comedienne Janeane Garofalo on CNN’s *Crossfire* August 20, halfway through her week as the show’s guest co-host. [59]**

■ “Being a man, I’ve got to say that we’ve got this guy in the White House who thinks he is a man, you know, who projects himself as a man because he has a certain masculinity, and he’s a good old boy, and he used to drink, and he knows how to shoot a gun and how to drive a pickup truck, et cetera, like that. That’s not the definition of a man, God dammit!”

— **Actor Ed Harris speaking at a January 21 NARAL Pro-Choice America banquet televised on C-SPAN. [43]**

■ **Craig Kilborn:** “Use the words ‘compassionate’ and ‘conservative’ in the same sentence while being neither ironic nor scornful.”

Actor/activist Tim Robbins: “That’s a tough one. Neither ironic nor scornful?”

Kilborn: “Yeah.”

Robbins: “Alright. F*** compassionate conservatives!”

— **Exchange in “5 Questions” segment on CBS’s *Late Late Show*, October 30. CBS bleeped the F-word. [38]**

Begala & Carville Prize for Demonizing George W. Bush

✓ “This is the worst President ever. He [George W. Bush] is the worst President in all of American history.”

— **Hearst White House columnist Helen Thomas at a Society for Professional Journalism banquet, as quoted by the Torrance, California *Daily Breeze*’s John Bogert in a January 19 story. [80 points]**

Runners-up:

■ “A friend of mine here at CNN has a theory about the Bush administration. They’re convinced that everything Bill Clinton ever did was wicked, bad and awful, and so they want to do the opposite....Clinton wanted to save all that wilderness area in Alaska; and Mr. Bush wants to drill for oil there. Clinton fussed about clean air; this President wants to ease new restrictions on coal-burning power plants.... Clinton, my friend noted, had surpluses. Obviously, the Bush administration thinks those are evil, because what they want is deficits — big ones, maybe the biggest ever.”

— **CNN’s Bruce Morton on *Late Edition*, February 9. [51]**

■ “Is it fair to say that the White House...at the end of the day thought that to make progress, the benefit for these 11.9 million children should go in order to, in part, save the dividend benefit for investors?...I just want to make sure that you are saying that the White House agreed to make the choice to leave these children behind.”

— **ABC’s Terry Moran to White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer, referring to efforts to extend the child tax credit to non-income taxpayers, at a May 29 press briefing. [39]**

■ “Bush promised a foreign policy of humility and a domestic policy of compassion. He has given us a foreign policy of arrogance and a domestic policy that is cynical, myopic and cruel.”

— **Joe Klein in a column in the June 9 *Time* magazine. [35]**

Fruitless Plains of Poverty Award

✓ “We are about to show you bread lines in America that you may find hard to believe. With the recession there has been a sudden leap in the number of people on emergency food assistance. The lines we found looked like they’d been taken from the pages of the Great Depression. It’s not just the unemployed. We found plenty of people working full-time, but still not able to earn enough to keep hunger out of the house. If you think you have a good idea of who’s hungry in America today, come join the line. You’d never guess who you’d meet there....Almost half the people fed by these lines are kids. The Agriculture Department figures one out of six children in America faces hunger; that’s more than 12 million kids. Nationwide, children have the highest poverty rate. Preschoolers come here with their parents and play in boxes as empty as the day’s want ads.”

— **CBS’s Scott Pelley’s report from a food line in Marietta, Ohio, on the January 8 *60 Minutes II*. [74 points]**

Runners-up:

■ **Carole Simpson:** “Even though the U.S. spends twice as much per person as any other developed country on health care, the U.S. is the only developed country that fails to provide universal coverage for all its citizens....”

Medical Editor Tim Johnson: “We have a country that wants to believe it is the best in everything, but until all of us embrace the idea that health care should be a right, not a privilege, our system cannot be glibly described as, quote, ‘the best in the world.’”

— **ABC’s *World News Tonight/Sunday*, October 19. [58]**

■ “Today in San Diego, the supercarrier USS Abraham Lincoln finally docked after nearly 10 months at sea. We’ll have more on the reunion with eager loved ones in just a moment, but these soldiers, of course, are coming home to a sober reality as well: an economy that, if anything, is struggling more than it was when they set sail. The government said today the unemployment rate is up to six percent. More than half a million jobs were lost in the last three months.”

— **ABC’s Claire Shipman anchoring *World News Tonight* on May 2. [46]**

■ “Tonight, we’re going to show you a new true face of homelessness in America. Today’s homeless are families, and the families you will meet have done everything right and yet there’s no place for them. Still, they struggle to find a home....There are more families homeless in New York City now than at any in the last 20 years....in numbers, it’s estimated, not seen since the Great Depression.”

— **NBC’s John Hockenberry on the July 4 *Dateline*. [31]**

Bill Moyers Sanctimony Award

✓ “I decided to put on my flag pin tonight — first time. Until now I haven’t thought it necessary to display a little metallic icon of patriotism for everyone to see....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....”

“When I see flags sprouting on official lapels, I think of the time in China when I saw Mao’s *Little Red Book* on every official’s desk, omnipresent and unread. But 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 this on as a modest riposte to men with flags in their lapels who shoot missiles from the safety of Washington think tanks, or argue that sacrifice is good as long as they don’t have to make it....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. [83 points]**

Runners-up:

■ “The failure of Democratic politicians and public thinkers to respond to popular discontents...allowed a resurgent conservatism to convert public concern and hostility into a crusade to resurrect social Darwinism as a moral philosophy, multinational corporations as a governing class, and the theology of markets as a transcendental belief system....Their stated and open aim is to change how America is governed — to strip from government all its functions except those that reward the rich and privileged benefactors....It is the most radical assault on the notion of one nation, indivisible, that has occurred in our lifetime. I’ll be frank with you: I simply don’t understand it — or the malice in which it is steeped....And I don’t know how to reconfigure democratic politics to fit into an age of sound bites and polling dominated by a media oligarchy whose corporate journalists are neutered and whose right-wing publicists have no shame.”

— **Moyers in a June 4 speech at a conference sponsored by the Campaign for America’s Future, according to a text version posted on commondreams.org. [58]**

■ “It’s the richest Americans — the top one percent — who get the lion’s share of the tax cuts, people like Secretary of the Treasury John Snow, [and] Vice President Dick Cheney....Eleven million children in families with incomes roughly between \$10,000 and \$26,000 a year will not be getting the check that was supposed to be in the mail this summer. Eleven million children punished for being poor, even as the rich are rewarded for being rich.”

— **Moyers on his PBS newsmagazine *Now*, May 30. [54]**

Media Millionaires for Higher Taxes Award

✓ “While these arguments we’re having here in Washington over tax cuts may look sort of abstract to most people in America, it is not abstract when your kid’s teacher gets laid off....Libraries are closing, teachers are getting laid off. Gray Davis is in the position of having to decide whether he should deny prosthetic limbs to poor people.”

— *Time’s* Karen Tumulty on CBS’s *Face the Nation*, May 11. The Cato Institute found California’s state spending grew from \$39.5 billion in fiscal year 1994 to \$78.1 billion in fiscal year 2001, a 98 percent increase. [50 points]

Runners-up:

■ **Peter Jennings:** “The President’s tax cut is beginning to show up. Will three extra dollars stimulate the national economy?...”

Dean Reynolds: “Lisa Burke, a law librarian from California, who makes \$35,000 a year, is getting just \$3 more every two weeks....[Scott Linnborn] may use some of his windfall to restore that ‘57 Chevy in his garage. And at 15 bucks a week, he figures the job would be done in about 20 years.”

— ABC’s *World News Tonight*, July 8. A \$15 per week tax cut would save Linnborn \$780 each year. [43]

■ “Something got screwed up in terms of your priorities if you think it’s more important to get rid of the dividend tax than it is to take care of 11 million kids.”

— *Washington Post* reporter and columnist David Broder on NBC’s *Meet the Press*, June 1, referring to conservative resistance to extending the larger child tax credit to parents who don’t pay any income tax. [41]

■ “It seems to me that instead of cutting taxes, we ought to be increasing the taxes to pay off the deficit, rather than let that thing build up to the point where our grandchildren’s grandchildren are going to be paying for our period of time and our years at the helm.”

— Former CBS *Evening News* anchor Walter Cronkite on CNN’s *NewsNight with Aaron Brown*, June 18. [36]

■ “He [Treasury Secretary-designate John Snow] is said to be in favor of further tax cuts but against deficits. Doesn’t one lead to the other?”

— ABC’s Peter Jennings to George Stephanopoulos on *World News Tonight*, December 9, 2002. [35]

Politics of Meaninglessness Award for the Silliest Analysis

✓ “To many New Yorkers, the scenes of a city under siege were achingly familiar. New Yorkers watching the televised bombing of Baghdad yesterday said they were riveted by the raw and uninterrupted display of American military might. But for some, the bombing brought back particularly visceral and chilling memories. They could not help thinking about Sept. 11, and how New York, too, was once under assault from the skies.”

— *New York Times* reporter David Chen in a March 22 news story headlined “Baghdad Bombing Brings Back Memories of 9/11.” [58 points]

Runners-up:

■ “I’d say the chances are about 50-50 that humanity will be extinct or nearly extinct within 50 years. Weapons of mass destruction, disease, I mean this global warming is scaring the living daylights out of me.”

— CNN founder Ted Turner at an Associated Press Managing Editors seminar Sept. 27, according to an AP story in the September 29 *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. [49]

■ “Once upon a time, a scientist named Galileo said the Earth was round, and the political leaders of the time said, ‘No, no, Galileo it’s flat,’ and Galileo got life under house arrest for his little theory. Today, the vast majority of scientists will tell you the Earth is getting warmer and most would agree that industry is at least in part to blame. So far nobody’s gone to jail for saying that, which doesn’t mean the idea isn’t squarely at the center of a political dust up — and not an insignificant one at that because, if the charges leveled against the White House are true, an important environmental question is being twisted or ignored for the sake of politics.”

— CNN’s Aaron Brown on *NewsNight*, June 19. Galileo was actually punished by the Catholic Church for saying the Earth revolves around the sun. [39]

■ “If you see a whole monkfish at the market, you’ll find its massive mouth scarier than a shark’s. Apparently it sits on the bottom of the ocean, opens its Godzilla jaws and waits for poor unsuspecting fishies to swim right into it, not unlike the latest recipients of W’s capital-gains cuts.”

— Food writer Jonathan Reynolds in a July 27 *New York Times Magazine* article about Norway’s seafood. [38]

Good Morning Morons Award

✓ “There’s an article in the Style section of the *Washington Post* this morning. It says you’ve logged 26 years of personal minutiae, filling 4,400 two-by-three inch notebooks, color-coded by season. An example: ‘12:17’ — this is when you made the announcement — ‘Ascend stage, stumble, regain balance; 12:18: Applause, ‘Where the Streets Have No Name,’ plays (U2); 12:19: Clap, wave; 12:20: Adjust tie (red, white stripes); 12:21: Double thumbs up; 12:22: Sing along with National Anthem, right hand on heart.’ What, what do you do this for?!”

— Katie Couric to Senator Bob Graham on *Today*, May 7, apparently unaware the article she quoted from was a spoof of the presidential candidate’s diary. [61 points]

Runners-up:

■ **Bob Schieffer:** “I’ve seen some estimates that it may cost up to \$50 billion to fix this. Who’s going to pay that?”

Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham: “....ratepayers, obviously, will pay the bill because they’re the ones who benefit....”

Schieffer: “Wait, wait, wait. Let’s back up. Ratepayers — that means people who pay in their electric bills. So you’re saying the customers are going to have to pay for this?...Excuse me for asking, but, I mean, aren’t the companies going to have to bear some of this cost?”

— Exchange on CBS’s *Face the Nation*, August 17. [44]

■ “Is your SUV a weapon of terrorism? Some people think so. They’re taking out ads to tell you why.”

“Coming up in our next half-hour, is your SUV a weapon of mass destruction?”

— **Substitute *Today* co-host Lester Holt plugging a story on claims buying oil aids terrorism, Dec. 17, 2002.** [40]

■ “What would you advise the United States to do today to fight al-Qaeda?...What would be the wise course for the United States to follow now in Iraq?”

— **George Stephanopoulos on ABC’s *This Week*, Aug. 3, interviewing Libyan dictator Moammar Qaddafi, sponsor of anti-American terrorist attacks in the 1980s.** [40]

Al Franken Cheap Shot Award (for Lambasting Rush Limbaugh)

✓ “What must it be like to live in Rush Limbaugh’s world? A world where when anyone other than conservative, white men attempts to do anything or enter any profession, be it business, politics, art or sports, the only reason they’re allowed entry or, incredibly, attain excellence is because the standard was lowered. Be they liberals, people of color, women, the poor or anyone with an accent.... Edgy, controversial, brilliant. What a way to shake up intelligent sports commentary. Hitler would have killed in talk radio. He was edgy, too.”

— **CBS *Sunday Morning* contributor Nancy Giles on October 5.** [82 points]

Runners-up:

■ “The man behind the curtain is not the God of Family Values but a childless, twice-divorced, thrice-married schlub whose idea of a good time is to lie on his couch and watch football endlessly. When Rush Limbaugh declared to his radio audience that he was ‘your epitome of morality of virtue, a man you could totally trust with your wife, your daughter, and even your son in a Motel 6 overnight,’ he was *acting*....Granted, Limbaugh’s act has won over, or fooled, a lot of people. With his heartland pieties and scorn for ‘feminazis’ and ‘commie-sympy’ like *West Wing* President Martin Sheen (‘Martin Sheenski’ to Limbaugh), he is the darling of Red State, Fly-Over America.”

— ***Newsweek* Assistant Managing Editor Evan Thomas in the October 20 cover story, “The Real Rush.”** [56]

■ “Rush Limbaugh has been more than a bit unkind to me more than once. He’s also been unkind to Al Franken, who in turn has been unkind to him. He’s taken shots at Michael Wolff, *New York* magazine’s media critic and Michael is hardly the retiring sort. So, here we all are, Al, Michael, and me, and the subject is Rush — made worse, no doubt, by the permanent smirk that seems to be attached to my face.”

— **CNN’s Aaron Brown on the October 10 *NewsNight* after Limbaugh announced he was seeking treatment for an addiction to prescription pain medicine.** [46]

■ “Derrick Jackson, who’s a columnist for the *Boston Globe*, Tim, back in July when ESPN hired Rush Limbaugh, he wrote a column about some of the comments that Mr. Limbaugh has made in the past. In the 1970s, according to this column, Limbaugh told an African-Ameri-

can caller, ‘take that bone out of your nose and call me back.’ He goes on to say Limbaugh has always had crime and black people on the brain. He once said, ‘have you ever noticed how all composite pictures of wanted criminals resemble Jesse Jackson?’...Given the fact that Rush Limbaugh has made these kind of inflammatory comments in the past, was it appropriate for ESPN to hire him in this capacity?”

— **NBC’s Katie Couric to Tim Russert on the October 2 *Today*. Couric did not identify Jackson as a left-wing columnist or note that his source was a book published by a far-left group more than 10 years ago.** [34]

What Liberal Media? Award

✓ **CBS’s Lesley Stahl:** “Today you have broadcast journalists who are avowedly conservative....The voices that are being heard in broadcast media today, are far more — the ones who are being heard — are far more likely to be on the right and avowedly so, and therefore, more — almost stridently so, than what you’re talking about.”

Host Cal Thomas: “Can you name a conservative journalist at CBS News?”

Stahl: “I don’t know of anybody’s political bias at CBS News....We try very hard to get any opinion that we have out of our stories, and most of our stories are balanced.”

— **Exchange on Fox News Channel’s *After Hours with Cal Thomas*, January 18.** [51 points]

Runners-up:

■ “I don’t think anybody who looks carefully at us thinks that we are a left-wing or a right-wing organization.”

— **Peter Jennings, as quoted by *USA Today*’s Peter Johnson in a September 9 article on Jennings’ 20 years as sole anchor of ABC’s *World News Tonight*.** [42]

■ “I think the press was muzzled, and I think the press self-muzzled. I’m sorry to say, but certainly television and, perhaps, to a certain extent, my station was intimidated by the administration and its foot soldiers at Fox News. And it did, in fact, put a climate of fear and self-censorship, in my view, in terms of the kind of broadcast work we did....The entire body politic...did not ask enough questions, for instance, about weapons of mass destruction. I mean, it looks like this was disinformation at the highest levels.”

— **CNN’s Christiane Amanpour on CNBC’s *Topic A with Tina Brown*, September 10.** [40]

■ “It took conservatives a lot of hard and steady work to push the media rightward. It dishonors that work to continue to presume that — except for a few liberal columnists — there is any such thing as the big liberal media. The media world now includes (1) talk radio, (2) cable television and (3) the traditional news sources (newspapers, news-magazines and the old broadcast networks). Two of these three major institutions tilt well to the right, and the third is under constant pressure to avoid even the pale hint of liberalism....What it adds up to is a media heavily biased toward conservative politics and conservative politicians.”

— **Former *Washington Post* and *New York Times* reporter E.J. Dionne in a Dec. 6, 2002 *Washington Post* op-ed.** [33]

Quote of the Year

✓ "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 *Boston Globe Magazine* article. Kopechne drowned while trapped in Kennedy's submerged car off Chappaquiddick Island in July 1969, an accident Kennedy did not report for several hours.**

Runners-up:

■ "Within the United States, there is growing challenge to President Bush about the conduct of the war and also opposition to the war. So our reports about civilian casualties here....help those who oppose the war.

"Clearly, the American war planners misjudged the determination of the Iraqi forces....And I personally do not understand how that happened, because I've been here many times and in my commentaries on television I would tell the Americans about the determination of the Iraqi forces, the determination of the government, and the willingness to fight for their country. But me, and others who felt the same way, were not listened to by the Bush administration.

"Now America is re-appraising the battlefield, delaying the war, maybe a week, and re-writing the war plan. The first

2003 Award Judges

Lee Anderson, Editorial Page Editor, *Chattanooga Free Press*
Chuck Asay, editorial cartoonist, *The Gazette* in Colorado Springs
Brent Baker, MRC VP; Editor of *CyberAlert* and *Notable Quotables*
Mark Belling, talk show host, WISN in Milwaukee
Neal Boortz, nationally syndicated radio talk show host
L. Brent Bozell III, President of the Media Research Center
David Brudnoy, radio talk show host, WBZ in Boston; journalism professor at Boston University; film critic
Priscilla Buckley, Contributing Editor of *National Review*
William R. Cotterell, Political Editor, *Tallahassee Democrat*
Blanquita Cullum, syndicated talk show host for Radio America
Midge Decter, author, *Rumsfeld: A Personal Portrait*
Bob Dutko, talk show host, WMUZ in Detroit
Eric Fettmann, columnist & Associate Editorial Page Editor, *NY Post*
Ryan Frazier, editorial writer, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*
Mike Gallagher, syndicated talk show host for the Salem Radio Network; Fox News Channel contributor
Tim Graham, Director of Media Analysis for the MRC
Karen Grant, talk show host, KION in Monterey/Salinas/Santa Cruz
Betsy Hart, columnist, Scripps Howard News Service
Stephen Hayes, staff writer for *The Weekly Standard*
Kirk Healy, Executive Producer, WDBO Radio in Orlando
Matthew Hill, talk show host, WPWT in the Tri-Cities of Tenn/Va
Quin Hillyer, editorial writer for the *Mobile Register*
Jeff Jacoby, columnist for the *Boston Globe*

For links to each judge's Web page, check the posted version of this issue at www.mediaresearch.org

• war plan has failed because of Iraqi resistance; now they are
• trying to write another war plan."
• — **Then-NBC/MSNBC/*National Geographic Explorer* correspondent Peter Arnett's comments on Iraq's state-controlled television network, March 30, shown by C-SPAN.**

• ■ "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....

• "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. I don't believe our viewers and readers
• will be, in the long-run, misled by those who advocate
• biased journalism."

• — **Then-*New York Times* Executive Editor Howell Raines accepting the "George Beveridge Editor of the Year Award" at a National Press Foundation dinner shown live on C-SPAN2, February 20.**

Marie Kaigler, radio talk show host and media consultant, Detroit
Cliff Kincaid, Editor of the *AIM Report*
Mark Larson, talk show host, KCBQ in San Diego
Kathryn Jean Lopez, Editor of *National Review Online*
Patrick B. McGuigan, Contributing Editor of *Tulsa Today*
Joe McQuaid, Publisher, *The Union Leader* in Manchester, NH
Robert D. Novak, CNN commentator; *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist
Rich Noyes, Director of Research for the Media Research Center
Kate O'Beirne, Washington Editor of *National Review*
Marvin Olasky, Editor-in-Chief of *World* magazine and professor of journalism at the University of Texas-Austin
Janet Parshall, nationally syndicated radio talk show host
Henry Payne, editorial cartoonist, *The Detroit News*
Wladyslaw Pleszczynski, Executive Editor of *The American Spectator*
Michael Reagan, nationally syndicated radio talk show host
Mike Rosen, talk show host, KOA in Denver; columnist, *Denver Rocky Mountain News*
William A. Rusher, Distinguished Fellow, Claremont Institute
Ted J. Smith III, Professor of journalism, Virginia Commonwealth U.
Tom Sullivan, talk show host, KFBK in Sacramento
Cal Thomas, syndicated columnist and host of *After Hours with Cal Thomas* on the Fox News Channel
R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., Editor-in-Chief of *The American Spectator*
Dick Williams, columnist; host of Atlanta's *Georgia Gang*
Walter E. Williams, economics professor, George Mason University
Thomas Winter, Editor-in-Chief of *Human Events*

Notable Quotables

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