

# Notable Quotables

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



Bringing Political  
Balance to the Media

## THE BEST NOTABLE QUOTABLES OF 2004 The Seventeenth 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 2004 (December 2003 through November 2004). To determine this year's winners, a panel of 43 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 six to nine 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 2004. The winner and top runners-up appear on page eight.

A list of the judges, who were generous with their time, appears on the back page. The MRC's Kristina Sewell and Michelle Humphrey 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](http://www.mrc.org).

And please save this date: Thursday, April 21, 2005. At a banquet that night in Washington, DC, the MRC will announce the winners of its *DisHonors Awards of 2005: Roasting the Most Outrageously Biased Liberal Reporters*. Check [www.mrc.org](http://www.mrc.org) in early 2005 for ticket information.

### Blue State Brigade Award (for Campaign Coverage)

✓ "He [John Kerry] also could make a virtue, it seems to me, of the so-called flip-flopping. The greatest flip-flop in American history is Lincoln, [who] in his first Inaugural was not for emancipation and then two years later he was. Is that statesmanship or is that a flip-flop?"

— *Newsweek* Managing Editor Jon Meacham during live pre-debate coverage on MSNBC, September 30. [66 points]

#### Runners-Up:

■ "Kerry Presidency Seen a Boon for U.S. Markets."  
"If John Kerry wins the Democratic nomination and goes on to be the next U.S. President, experts say it would be good for Wall Street, which likes the way he talks up balancing the budget."

— **Headline and first paragraph of Reuters reporter Chris Sanders' February 6 article, which was touted as "Recommended Reading" on the news agency's Web site.** [49]

■ "It was the all important and perfectly choreographed first glimpse of the Democratic Party's new dream team. The Kerry and Edwards families posing for pictures, a nervous first date with the American public....Humor from the boss, humanity from his running mate....Team Kerry touched and tickled their way to Ohio, the first stop in a six-state, five-day swing through battleground

- states....Both partners in this political marriage hope it's
- a winning formula....At the moment, star-struck Demo-
- crats are willing to believe."
- — **CBS's Byron Pitts on the July 7 *Evening News*.** [45]
- 
- ■ "Senator Kerry, the gap between rich and poor is
- growing wider. More people are dropping into poverty.
- Yet the minimum wage has been stuck at, what, \$5.15 an
- hour now for about seven years. Is it time to raise it?"
- "Mr. President,...you said that if Congress would vote to
- extend the ban on assault weapons, that you'd sign the
- legislation. But you did nothing to encourage the Con-
- gress to extend it. Why not?"
- — **Questions from CBS's Bob Schieffer to Kerry and then**
- **Bush at the October 13 presidential debate.** [32]
- 
- ■ "How, why, as a fiscal conservative as you like to call
- yourself, would you allow a \$500 billion deficit and this
- kind of deficit disaster?...Every President since the Civil War
- who has gone to war has raised taxes, not cut them....
- Why not say, 'I will not cut taxes any more until we have
- balanced the budget'? If our situation is so precious and
- delicate because of the war, why do you keep cutting tax-
- es and draining money from the Treasury?...How about no
- more tax cuts until the budget is balanced?"
- — **NBC's Tim Russert to President Bush on *Meet the***
- ***Press*, February 8.** [31]

To watch, via RealPlayer, many of the broadcast quotes in this issue, go to: [www.mediaresearch.org](http://www.mediaresearch.org)

## GI John Award (for Saluting John Kerry's Vietnam Record)

✓ "Okay, time to do morning papers....*Stars and Stripes* starts it off: 'U.S. Troops Control Most of Fallujah,' the headline. 'U.S. Officials Believe Most Insurgents Have Fled the City.' Look at this picture here, if you can. 'Troops' Bravery Honored in Iraq.' These are all Purple Heart winners. Someday, one of them will run for President and someone will say they didn't earn the Purple Heart. Welcome to America."

— CNN's Aaron Brown on the November 10 *NewsNight* displaying a front-page photo of a line of U.S. troops in Iraq receiving their medals. [63 points]

### Runners-up:

■ "Do you think this is a stupid argument that's been going on from the other side, attacking you for throwing away what you said, or implied, or allowed the people to imply were medals when in fact they were ribbons?"

"Do you think the people around the President have hoisted themselves on their own petard by bringing up this issue of your service?"

"Do you think this administration and its political handlers like Karl Rove are capable of recognizing they can't beat you on the jobs issue, they can't beat you on foreign policy, so they're gonna drop this nonsensical stuff [on you]?"

— Some of Chris Matthews' questions to Senator John Kerry on MSNBC's *Hardball*, April 27. [53]

■ "Speaking of angry, 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?"

— Dan Rather to Kerry, July 22 *CBS Evening News*. [48]

■ "Veterans haven't been a big force in past campaigns... but the Vietnam vets may feel bound together more strongly....It may be too early to know how influential they'll be in Kerry's campaign, but they've already done one thing: If the Republicans had any hope of casting Kerry as some Michael Dukakis-style effete Eastern liberal, that's over. The band of brothers stands in his way."

— CNN's Bruce Morton on *Inside Politics*, January 30. [38]

## Darth Vader vs. "The Sunshine Boy" Award

✓ "One of the obstacles for Dick Cheney tonight is the fact that he has become a dark figure....There are those who believe that Dick Cheney has led this administration and this President down a path of recklessness, that maybe his approach, his dark approach to this constant battle against another civilization, is actually the wrong approach for ultimately keeping America safe."

— NBC White House reporter David Gregory during live convention coverage on MSNBC about 8:30pm EDT on September 1, about two hours before Cheney spoke at the Republican convention. [53 points]

### Runners-up:

■ "I read you once took a psychological profile test, and it said the position you're most suited for is undertaker."

— ABC's Claire Shipman to Vice President Cheney in an interview on the August 31 *Good Morning America*. [50]

■ "In politics, self-made men seem to fall into two categories: sunny and dark....In the 2004 election, Dick Cheney projects the bleakness of a Wyoming winter, while John Edwards always appears to be strolling in the Carolina sunshine."

— Story by *Newsweek's* Evan Thomas, Susannah Meadows and Arian Campo-Flores as part of a July 19 cover package on Kerry and Edwards, "The Sunshine Boys?" [45]

■ "Republican [Vice President Dick] Cheney, portrayed by critics as the dark architect of the Iraq war, and Democrat [Senator John] Edwards, the sunny Southerner with the homespun style, meet in a 90-minute televised encounter....Cheney and Edwards are polar opposites as politicians. The bald, bespectacled Cheney, 63, is a dour campaigner with a lengthy government and national security resume, who not too long ago swore at a Democratic Senator on the Senate floor. The energetic and articulate Edwards, 51, is a first-term Senator who was once named *People* magazine's sexiest politician and is known for his optimism and populist rhetoric."

— Reuters political correspondent John Whitesides in an October 4 dispatch previewing the next day's debate. [45]

## The Madness of King George Award (for Bush Bashing)

✓ "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 onto children not yet born...."

— PBS's Bill Moyers on his weekly newsmagazine *Now*, March 26. [73 points]

### Runners-up:

■ "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 at an April 13 news conference. [56]

■ “What happens when you go in the Oval Office is you start living in a bubble, you know....David Kay, for instance, comes out with a report and says Iraq never had weapons of mass destruction. What does George W. Bush say? ‘Well, I still think they had them.’ That’s not just spin. That’s dementia.”

— **MSNBC contributor Ron Reagan, Jr., during live coverage of the January 27 New Hampshire primary.** [50]

■ **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.** [32 points]

## Bedazzled in Beantown Award (for Democratic Convention Coverage)

✓ “John Kerry working himself literally into a sweat. Or as my high school English teacher would prefer, into a high state of perspiration. An almost literal thunder inside the hall, shaking the Fleet Center in a way that it seldom shakes, if ever, even during a Celtics basketball playoff game or a Bruins hockey playoff game. These Democrats, as the speech built, having what amounted to maybe a three-thousand-gallon attack about every three minutes, united in a way the Democratic Party has not been for about half a century.”

— **CBS’s Dan Rather moments after John Kerry’s speech to the Democratic convention, July 29.** [72 points]

### Runners-up:

■ “It was four years ago during the Democratic convention, not far from where we stand tonight, that John Kerry stood near his father on his deathbed. Earlier, as the family was preparing to leave John Kerry’s home in Boston, I’m told he whispered to his sister, ‘Remember the words of our mother on her deathbed when she said, ‘John,’ knowing he would run for President some day, ‘remember, John, integrity, that’s what matters.’ Tonight, John Kerry tried to show that integrity.”

— **CBS’s Byron Pitts during live coverage of John Kerry’s speech to the Democratic convention, July 29.** [47]

■ “For Massachusetts Senator John Kerry, tonight’s acceptance of the Democratic nomination is more than merely a day, it’s his destiny....A gifted athlete and captain of the debate team at Yale, Kerry followed his idol’s [John

F. Kennedy’s] lead and enlisted in the Navy in 1966. In Vietnam, Lieutenant John F. Kerry rescued a comrade in combat, killed an enemy soldier, won three Purple Hearts and one Bronze Star....The day before his speech, Kerry crossed Boston Harbor with some of his crewmates from Vietnam, his band of brothers. They have one battle left. But tonight the loner will stand alone here in his hometown one more time and look to do what John F. Kerry has nearly always done — find a way to win.”

— **Pitts on CBS’s *The Early Show*, July 29.** [41]

■ “People who served with him [Kerry] in Vietnam said, ‘You can’t believe what he’s like in battle. He just changes. He gets this look over him.’ And when I saw him walking down the aisle tonight on the way into the speech, I said, ‘Oh yeah, there’s that look.’ And I just knew at that point that he’s going to nail this, and he did. I have never seen the man speak so well.”

— **Time’s Joe Klein on CNN’s *NewsNight*, July 29.** [33]

## Bitter in the Big Apple Award (for Republican Convention Coverage)

✓ “You and Olympia Snowe, the other Senator from Maine, are known as moderate Republican women. You have no place in this convention. The [Republican Party] platform does not seem to speak to a lot of women in this country. It’s anti-abortion, it does not expand stem cell research, another social issues in which women have some interest, for example, gay unions, is formally opposed to that. Do you think that this platform and this party is doing enough to reach out to moderate women across the country?”

— **Tom Brokaw to Senator Susan Collins on his 4pm EDT MSNBC show *Brokaw in New York*, August 31.** [47 points]

### Runners-up:

■ “The President’s team knows that it can’t get back to the White House by taking only hard right turns, so it has, as three of its featured speakers, Republicans who have been successful by navigating the middle of the road as well the right-hand side: Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, Rudy Giuliani and Senator John McCain who often calls himself John Kerry’s best friend in the U.S. Senate. Streetwise New Yorkers may call that the political equivalent of a popular con game in this tough town — three-card monte. But then, that’s a game in which the dealer almost always wins.”

— **Tom Brokaw on the August 29 *NBC Nightly News*.** [37]

■ “They’re having all these moderate speakers, but the moderate speakers, we discussed last night, aren’t giving moderate speeches, they’re giving speeches in which they’re echoing a lot of this red meat. This is a very angry convention, it’s a very belligerent convention. I mean, I’ve covered 16 conventions....I’ve never heard such an angry speech [as Zell Miller’s].”

— **CNN political analyst Bill Schneider on *NewsNight with Aaron Brown* following the third night of the Republican convention, September 1.** [35]

## Captain Dan the Forgery Man Award

✓ “The story is true. The story is true....I appreciate the sources who took risks to authenticate our story. So, one, there is no internal investigation. Two, somebody may be shell-shocked, but it is not I, and it is not anybody at CBS News. Now, you can tell who is shell-shocked by the ferocity of the people who are spreading these rumors.”

— Dan Rather in a September 10 sidewalk exchange with reporters, denying rumors that CBS would investigate whether or not the “memos” were forged. [62 points]

### Runners-up:

■ “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 as quoted by *USA Today*’s Peter Johnson and Jim Drinkard in a September 16 article. [55]

■ “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 and interviews with former officials of the Texas National Guard. If any definitive evidence to the contrary of our story is found, we will report it. So far, there is none.”

— Dan Rather on the *CBS Evening News*, Sept. 10. [35]

## Damn Those Conservatives Award

✓ “You have made so many offensive comments over the years. Do you regret any of them?”

“You seem indifferent to suffering. Have you ever suffered yourself?”

— Two of the questions posed to *National Review* founder William F. Buckley by the *New York Times Magazine*’s Deborah Solomon, July 11. [83 points]

### Runners-up:

■ “I heard from God just the other night. God always seems to call at night. ‘Andrew,’ God said to me. He always calls me ‘Andrew.’ I like that. ‘Andrew, you have the eyes and ears of a lot of people. I wish you’d tell your viewers that both Pat Robertson and Mel Gibson strike me as wackos. I believe that’s one of your current words. They’re crazy as bedbugs....Mel is a real nut case. What in the world was I thinking when I created him?’”

— Commentator Andy Rooney on the February 22 edition of CBS’s *60 Minutes*. [74]

■ “The Only Superbad Power: Three years into the presidency of George W. Bush, many people here and abroad fear and loathe our country, its power, its policies, its pride. Is America an evil empire? Seven new books seem ready to think so.”

— Cover headline and subheadline of the *New York Times Book Review*, January 25. [36 points]

## Kooky Keith Award (for Keith Olbermann’s Conspiratorial Rants)

✓ “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....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....”

— MSNBC’s Keith Olbermann to former Nixon aide John Dean on his *Countdown* program, April 5. [56 points]

### Runners-up:

■ “Intimidation, harassment, fabrication, doctoring, spinning, de-contextualizing and actual truth-telling have all been facets of the continuing firestorm over the probity of the elections on the Internet. The latest dueling weapons: scholarly analyses from researchers at major universities. One suggests that the actual statistical odds that the exit polling was wrong — that wrong — were 250 million to one.”

— Olbermann on the November 12 *Countdown*. [38]

■ “Since 9/11, it has been a dangerous thing, even career-jeopardizing, to question warnings about prospective terror attacks....[But] from the anti-Catholic Know Nothing Party of the 1850s to the Palmer Raids of the 1920s, from Joe McCarthy to Lyndon Johnson’s manipulation of the Gulf of Tonkin, our politics have been filled with politicians who have created a kind of evil twin to FDR’s famous phrase, ‘We have nothing to fear but fear itself.’ All of that seems particularly relevant when the Secretary of Homeland Security changes the threat level three days after his boss’s challenger accepts the nomination of the rival party.”

— Olbermann on the August 2 *Countdown* discussing new terror warnings. [38]

■ “The book you mentioned, [*Unfit for Command*] and we mentioned it here before, it is, in essence, a book-length version of this commercial coming out next week. And just to ratchet up the stakes, it’s from Regnery Press [sic], which is supported in some way by Richard Mellon Scaife of the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, and you now bring in the whole mystical right-wing conspiracy jazz.”

— Olbermann on *Countdown*, August 6. Regnery is actually owned by Eagle Publishing, not Scaife. [38]

## Media Hero Award

✓ “The best reaction shots were those of Ted Kennedy, whose stature seems to grow right along with his nose year after year after year. Kennedy has now reached a grand moment in the life of a Senator; he looks like Hollywood itself cast him in the role. Seriously....Kennedy looked great, like he was ready to take his place next to Jefferson on Mount Rushmore. He gives off the kind of venerable vibes that some of us got from an Everett Dirksen way back when.”

— **Washington Post TV critic Tom Shales in a January 21 Style section review of the State of the Union address. [69 points]**

### Runners-up:

■ “Somewhere along the way, the redneck son of a mill worker from rural North Carolina morphed into an almost-perfect candidate....The America that [John] Edwards dreams of is a place where there’s no crime, no poverty and no pushing. That place, of course, just happens to be John Kerry’s America....It’s as if Edwards’s main message is his positivity. He loves the crowd, and the crowd loves him. He smiles at the crowd, and they smile at him. He speaks to the crowd, and they speak to him.”

— **Newsweek reporter Richard Wolffe in a “Web-exclusive commentary” posted on July 14. [57]**

■ “Hillary Clinton, who has presidential ambitions obviously as a Senator from New York, is the first Senator from New York to seek a position on the Armed Services Committee....She’s done it effectively. I’ve got to tell you, the rank-and-file military are really happy with her.”

— **NBC reporter Andrea Mitchell during MSNBC’s live coverage of the Republican convention, August 30. [40]**

■ “There’s a good chance that Fidel Castro, who marks his 78th birthday today, could keep going for another 40 years, the Cuban leader’s personal physician says....Cuban officials say the same revolutionary zeal that has driven nearly five decades of socialism can overcome the ravages of time....At least 40 different Cuban research groups are said to be at work unlocking the secrets of aging. The research ranges from studying special diets to basic research on genetics.”

— **Reporter Eric Sabo in an August 13 USA Today story headlined, “Cuba pursues a 120-year-old future.” [33]**

## Bring Back Saddam Award

✓ “The Sami sisters, ages 17, 15 and 11, listen to Madonna and Britney Spears. They read Agatha Christie novels and watch movies starring Russell Crowe. They also rarely venture outside their upscale home in central Baghdad out of fear of explosions and violence....Their teenage world was simpler when Saddam Hussein was in power. Back then, they said, they hung out with friends at the Pharmacists Club, a swanky place with a swimming pool to which their father, the vice president of Iraq’s Pharmacists Union, belonged....Iraq’s new freedom — or chaos, depending on your point of view — has imprisoned the girls.”

— **Chicago Tribune’s Deborah Horan, May 24. [59 points]**

### Runners-up:

■ “The tyrant has fallen. But for some, he’s a fallen hero.... Iraqis are much like abused children: scarred by the man who was both father figure and enforcer. His rules were simple. Obey, and he would provide jobs, food rations, electricity and security. Rebel, and punishment was merciless. But Saddam Hussein also gave Iraqis dignity and pride. He became a symbol of defiance across the Arab world, never backing down from a fight....Those who loved him and those who hated him still can’t separate the man from the country in their minds. For many, his humiliation is their own.”

— **Kimberly Dozier in a December 16, 2003 CBS Evening News story about Iraqi reaction to Saddam’s capture. [57]**

■ “There’s not a good deal for Iraqis to be happy about at the moment. Life is still very chaotic, beset by violence in many cases, huge shortages. In some respects, Iraqis keep telling us, life is not as stable for them as it was when Saddam Hussein was in power.”

— **ABC’s Peter Jennings on December 14, 2003, the day that Saddam’s capture was announced. [45]**

■ “This is not, in my estimation, a good war....I don’t know how we got into a position where our present Commander-in-Chief and the people around him had the guts to take our kids and send them on what seems to be — it sure is not a noble enterprise.”

— **CBS’s Mike Wallace at a May 28 “National World War II Reunion” event shown later that day on C-SPAN. [41]**

## Real Reagan Legacy Award

✓ “Before Reagan, people sleeping in the street were so rare that, outside of skid rows, they were almost a curiosity. After eight years of Reaganomics — and the slashes in low-income housing and social welfare programs that went along with it — they were seemingly everywhere. And America had a new household term: ‘The homeless.’”

— **Reporter Kevin Fagan in the San Francisco Chronicle on June 10, five days after Reagan’s death. [69 points]**

### Runners-up:

■ “I used to say I thought if you were down on your luck and you got through the Secret Service, got in the Oval Office and said, ‘Mr. President, I’m down on my luck,’ he would literally give you the shirt off his back. And then he’d sit down in his undershirt and he’d sign legislation throwing your kids off school lunch program, maybe your parents off Social Security, and of course the Welfare Queen off of welfare.”

— **Sam Donaldson, ABC’s White House reporter during the 1980s, on Good Morning America, June 11. [47]**

■ “Most of those who are physically, economically or otherwise disadvantaged, deeply resented and still resent his insistence that government is the problem, not the solution. Severe and continuing cutbacks in government services to the poor and vulnerable resulted, and the gulf dividing rich from poor widened.”

— **Former New York Times Washington Bureau Chief R. W. “Johnny” Apple in a June 11 “news analysis.” [30]**

## Debbie Downer Award (for Economic Doom & Gloom)

✓ **NBC's Carl Quintanilla:** "They're calling it the middle-class blues....the feeling that happy days aren't quite here yet..."

**Woman:** "I've never been in a, like, depression, but I think this is pretty close to it."

**Quintanilla:** "The numbers, of course, say different. A million new jobs added since February, gas prices back below \$2, the cheapest in a month. Enough to give comfort to some....But overall, the price of life in America is up from last year, everything from hospital visits to tuition. Last month alone, milk prices made their single biggest jump since World War II."

— **Report aired on NBC's Today, June 16. [35 points]**

### Runners-up:

■ **John Roberts:** "What the President didn't say was that the employment numbers in August again fell short of expectations, and it is now certain he will end his first term as the first President since the Great Depression to lose jobs on his watch....The situation is worse than it seems. While the President touts the results of his economic recovery plan—"

**President Bush:** "We have added 1.7 million jobs."

**Roberts:** "-job creation hasn't kept up with population growth. By that measure, experts say, he is several million more jobs in the hole."

— **September 3 CBS Evening News story on the unemployment rate falling to 5.4 percent. [34]**

■ "Not a va-room, but a putt, putt, putt. Tonight, America's economic engine creates some new jobs, but not nearly enough to replace the thousands lost."

— **Dan Rather at the top of the February 6 CBS Evening News, teasing a story on 112,000 new private-sector jobs created in January, the most in three years. [31]**

## Barbra Streisand Political IQ Award (for Celebrity Vapidity)

✓ "People don't realize that by voting Republican, they voted against themselves....I worry that some people are entertained by the idea of this war. They don't know anything about the Iraqis, but they're angry and frustrated in their own lives. It's like Germany, before Hitler took over. The economy was bad and people felt kicked around. They looked for a scapegoat. Now we've got a new bunch of Hitlers."

— **Singer Linda Ronstadt, as quoted by USA Today reporter Elysa Gardner in a November 17 profile. [64 points]**

### Runners-up:

■ "I wondered to myself during 'Shock and Awe,' I wondered which of the megaton bombs Jesus, our President's personal savior, would have personally dropped on the sleeping families of Baghdad?"

— **Actress Meryl Streep at a July 8 Kerry-Edwards fundraiser held at Radio City Music Hall, as quoted by the July 9 Boston Globe. [54]**

■ "I've always been amazed that the very people forced to live in the worst parts of town, go to the worst schools, and who have it the hardest, are always the first to step up....They serve so that we don't have to. They offer to give up their lives so that we can be free. It is remarkable, their gift to us. And all they ask for in return is that we never send them into harm's way unless it's absolutely necessary. Will they ever trust us again?..."

"The war is not meant to be won, it is meant to be continuous. A hierarchical society is only possible on the basis of poverty and ignorance. This new version is the past, and no different past can ever have existed. In principle, the war effort is always planned to keep society on the brink of starvation. The war is waged by the ruling group against its own subjects. And its object is not a victory over either Eurasia or East Asia, but to keep the very structure of society intact."

— **Michael Moore's voiceover at the conclusion of his movie, Fahrenheit 9/11, released October 5 on DVD. [37]**

■ "He's [John Kerry] running against the worst President in the history of the United States! [audience applause] And that's not hyperbole. That's not hyperbole. The environment, the demonization of gays, the repression of black voters, the favoritism of Halliburton, this unending war....We can't consume everybody's life with this fear when we've been attacked twice in twenty years."

— **Actor/comedian Richard Belzer, who plays "Detective John Munch" on NBC's Law & Order: Special Victims Unit, on HBO's Real Time with Bill Maher, October 29. [30]**

## Politics of Meaninglessness Award (for the Silliest Analysis)

✓ "When you tell me, 'Let the states decide,' that scares me, okay? I've got a little map here of [the] pre-Civil War [United States], free versus slave states. I wish you could see it in color and large. But if you look at it, the red states are all down in the South, and you have the Nebraska Territories, the New Mexico Territories, and the Kansas Territories. But the Pacific Northwest and California were not slave states. The Northeast was not. It looks like the [Electoral College] map of 2004."

— **Former World News Tonight/Sunday anchor Carole Simpson, who travels the country for ABC News to talk to high schoolers about how to consume news, at a November 8 National Press Club forum shown on C-SPAN. [62 points]**

### Runners-up:

■ "I have a feeling that it [bin Laden's new videotape] could tilt the election a bit. In fact, I'm a little inclined to think that Karl Rove, the political manager at the White House, who is a very clever man, that he probably set up bin Laden to this thing. The advantage to the Republican side is to get rid of, as a principal subject of the campaign right now, get rid of the whole problem of the al Qaeda dump, explosive dump. Right now that, the last couple of days, has, I think, upset the Republican campaign."

— **Former CBS Evening News anchor Walter Cronkite on CNN's Larry King Live, October 29. [56]**

■ "I do think one of the factors was we were of different sexes. That doesn't mean I wouldn't have been happy to be married to several friends I had of the same sex. It just never came up in our particular relations."

— **Walter Cronkite**, when asked why his marriage to **Betsy Cronkite** had lasted so long, as quoted in the March 2 *San Francisco Chronicle*. [47]

■ "Today the government said that America's prison population grew 2.9 percent last year to nearly 2.1 million. That's a record number of people in jail and prison. One out of every 75 American men was incarcerated. The number went up even though the crime rate continued to fall."

— **ABC's Peter Jennings** on the May 27 *World News Tonight*. [35]

## Good Morning Morons Award

✓ **Katie Couric**: "*Time* magazine's Person of the Year issue hits news stands today and this year it honors the American soldier. Jim Kelly is *Time*'s Managing Editor and veteran war photographer James Nachtwey was embedded with the Army's First Armored Division in Baghdad and took the remarkable images in this week's issue. He was also wounded while on assignment. Gentlemen, welcome, good morning, nice to have you both. I was so, I have to say, just personally, I was so pleased to see this.... Tell me why you all decided to honor the American soldier? Wondering why there's no woman on the cover, too?"

**Time's Jim Kelly, pointing to cover**: "This is a woman."

**Couric**: "Oh, there you go, oh sorry.... I couldn't tell because of her helmet."

— **Discussing a *Time* cover showing three U.S. soldiers in combat gear**, NBC's *Today*, December 22, 2003. [65 points]

### Runners-up:

■ **Matt Lauer**: "Let me talk about this idea that a rag-tag group — not well-fed, not well-clothed, completely under-equipped as compared to this great British army and the Hessians — could accomplish this. And let me ask you to think about what is going on in Iraq today, where the insurgents — not well equipped, smaller in numbers — the greatest army in the world is their opposition. What's the lesson here?"

**Lynne Cheney**: "Well, the difference, of course, is who's fighting on the side of freedom."

— **Exchange on the November 9 *Today* show, where Mrs. Cheney was promoting her new children's book on General George Washington's crossing of the Delaware River during the Revolutionary War**. [57]

■ "Whether you agree with him or disagree with him, you now know where John Kerry stands on what has happened in Iraq."

— **CBS's Bob Schieffer discussing Kerry's performance in the first debate, October 1 *Early Show***. [37]

■ **Rene Syler**: "Let's start [with] this CBS poll of uncommitted voters. Thirty-nine percent said they thought Kerry won the debate, 25 percent said they thought the President won and 36 percent thought it was a dead heat...."

• **CBS political analyst Craig Crawford**: "Rene, even before these polls came out, you could feel the presidency slipping away from George Bush."

• — **Exchange on the October 14 *Early Show***. [34]

## Admitting the Obvious Award (for Acknowledging Liberal Bias)

✓ "Let's talk a little media bias here. The media, I think, wants Kerry to win. And I think they're going to portray Kerry and Edwards — I'm talking about the establishment media, not Fox — but they're going to portray Kerry and Edwards as being young and dynamic and optimistic and all. There's going to be this glow about them that some, is going to be worth, collectively, the two of them, that's going to be worth maybe 15 points."

• — **Newsweek Assistant Managing Editor Evan Thomas on the July 10 *Inside Washington***. [67 points]

### Runners-up:

• ■ "Of course it is.... These are the social issues: gay rights, gun control, abortion and environmental regulation, among others. And if you think *The Times* plays it down the middle on any of them, you've been reading the paper with your eyes closed."

• — **New York Times Public Editor Daniel Okrent in a July 25 column which appeared under a headline asking, "Is *The New York Times* a Liberal Newspaper?"** [61]

• ■ "Like every other institution, the Washington and political press corps operate with a good number of biases and predilections. They include, but are not limited to, a near-universal shared sense that liberal political positions on social issues like gun control, homosexuality, abortion, and religion are the default, while more conservative positions are 'conservative positions.'..."

• "The press, by and large, does not accept President Bush's justifications for the Iraq war.... It does not accept the proposition that the Bush tax cuts helped the economy.... It remains fixated on the unemployment rate...."

• "The worldview of the dominant media can be seen in every frame of video and every print word choice that is currently being produced about the presidential race.... On the strength of all the negative coverage of the President and all his own positive coverage, Senator Kerry heads into today's twin primaries on a roll."

• — **From the February 10 edition of ABCNews.com's "The Note," a daily political memo assembled by ABC News political director Mark Halperin and his staff**. [50]

• ■ **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**. [37]

## Quote of the Year

✓ "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 and mutilated in Fallujah, Iraq.

### Runners-up:

■ "I don't think history has any reason to be kind to him."

— CBS *60 Minutes* correspondent Morley Safer recalling Ronald Reagan on CNN's *Larry King Live*, June 14.

■ "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, the bearer of the information. And in this case, it's change the subject from the truth of the information to the truth of the documents. This is your basic fogging machine, which is set

up to cloud the issue, to obscure the truth....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."

— Dan Rather discussing CBS's forged memo scandal, as quoted by the *New York Observer's* Joe Hagan, Sept. 15.

■ "Zell Miller's speech was a speech of hate, it was a speech of venom. This is a man who started his political career with Lester Maddox and last night he imitated Lester Maddox. Lester Maddox, as we all know, was a segregationist, but he was a man of hate. Zell Miller is not a segregationist, not that at all....[But] I grew up in the South, I've seen the face of anger, I've seen the face of hatred....There are lines in politics and that speech went over the line."

— U.S. News & World Report Editor-at-Large David Gergen during MSNBC's live coverage following Miller's speech to the Republican National convention, September 2.

## 2004 Award Judges

**Lee Anderson**, Associate Publisher, *Chattanooga Times Free Press*  
**Chuck Asay**, editorial cartoonist, *The Gazette* in Colorado Springs  
**Brent H. Baker**, MRC's Vice President for Research and Publications; Editor of *CyberAlert* and *Notable Quotables*

**Mark Belling**, radio talk show host, WISN in Milwaukee  
**L. Brent Bozell III**, President of the Media Research Center  
**Priscilla Buckley**, retired *National Review* Managing Editor  
**Blanquita Cullum**, syndicated talk show host for Radio America; Governor, Broadcasting Board of Governors

**Mark Davis**, radio talk show host, WBAP in Dallas-Ft. Worth; columnist for the *Dallas Morning News*

**Midge Decter**, President, The Philadelphia Society

**Bob Dutko**, radio talk show host, WMUZ in Detroit

**Jim Eason**, San Francisco radio talk show host emeritus

**Barry Farber**, national radio talk host on the Talk Radio Network

**Don Feder**, media consultant and free-lance writer

**Eric Fettmann**, Associate Editorial Page Editor, *New York Post*

**Ryan Frazier**, editorial writer and associate editor at the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*

**Mike Gallagher**, syndicated radio talk show host; FNC contributor

**Tim Graham**, Director of Media Analysis, Media Research Center

**Kirk Healy**, Executive Producer, WDBO Radio in Orlando

**Quin Hillyer**, editorial writer for the *Mobile Register*

**Jeff Jacoby**, columnist for the *Boston Globe*

**Marie Kaigler**, radio talk show host and mass media consultant

**Cliff Kincaid**, Editor, Accuracy in Media

**Mark Larson**, radio talk show host, KOGO in San Diego

**Jason Lewis**, radio talk show host, WBT in Charlotte

**Kathryn Jean Lopez**, Editor of *National Review Online*

**Bernadette Malone**, editor, Penguin Group USA and columnist for *The Union Leader* (Manchester, NH)

**Patrick B. McGuigan**, Contributing editor, *Tulsa Today* and *The MidCity Advocate* (Oklahoma City, OK)

**Joe McQuaid**, Publisher, *The Union Leader* (Manchester, NH)

**Jan Mickelson**, radio talk show host, WHO/WMT in Des Moines

**Wes Minter**, radio talk show host, WTMJ in Milwaukee

**Robert D. Novak**, syndicated columnist for the *Chicago Sun-Times*, co-host of CNN's *Crossfire*

**Rich Noyes**, Director of Research, Media Research Center

**Marvin Olasky**, visiting professor of politics, Princeton University

**Henry Payne**, editorial cartoonist, *The Detroit News*

**Wladyslaw Pleszczynski**, Editorial Director, *The American Spectator*

**Mike Rosen**, radio talk show host, KOA in Denver; columnist for the *Denver Rocky Mountain News*

**William A. Rusher**, Distinguished Fellow, Claremont Institute

**James Taranto**, Editor, OpinionJournal.com

**Cal Thomas**, syndicated columnist; host of FNC's *After Hours*

**R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.**, Editor-in-Chief, *The American Spectator*

**Clay Waters**, Editor of the MRC's TimesWatch.org

**Dick Williams**, host of Fox Atlanta's *Georgia Gang*; columnist

**Thomas S. Winter**, Editor-in-Chief of *Human Events*

### In Memoriam:

During 2004 we lost two dedicated judges who loyally completed their ballots each year. On January 4, **Dr. Ted J. Smith III**, a journalism professor at the Virginia Commonwealth University, died at age 58. On December 9, **David Brudnoy**, a talk radio host on WBZ-AM in Boston and professor at Boston University, passed away at age 64.

For links to each judge's Web page, check the posted version of this issue at [www.mediaresearch.org](http://www.mediaresearch.org)

## Notable Quotables

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