

Notable Quotables

December 29, 2008 (Vol. 21; No. 26)

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



America's
Media Watchdog

THE BEST NOTABLE QUOTABLES OF 2008

The 21st 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 2008 (December 2007 through November 2008). To determine this year's winners, a panel of 44 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 2008. 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 Michelle Humphrey and Kristine Lawrence distributed and counted the ballots, then produced the numerous audio and video clips that accompany the Web-posted version. Rich Noyes and Brent Baker assembled this issue and Stuart James posted the entire package on the MRC's Web site: www.MRC.org.

For video and audio clips of the broadcast quotes in this issue, go to: www.MRC.org

And please save this date: Thursday, March 19, 2009. At the Media Research Center's annual gala celebration that night in Washington, DC, the MRC will announce the winners of the *DisHonors Awards of 2009: Roasting the Most Outrageously Biased Liberal Reporters*. Check www.MRC.org in early 2009 for additional information.

The Obamagasm Award

✓ "Some princes are born in palaces. Some are born in manglers. But a few are born in the imagination, out of scraps of history and hope....Barack Hussein Obama did not win because of the color of his skin. Nor did he win in spite of it. He won because at a very dangerous moment in the life of a still young country, more people than have ever spoken before came together to try to save it. And that was a victory all its own."

— *Time's* Nancy Gibbs, Nov. 17 cover story. [65 points]

Runners-up:

■ "In many ways, it was less a speech than a symphony. It moved quickly, it had high tempo, at times inspiring, then it became more intimate, slower, all along sort of interweaving a main theme about America's promise, echoes of Lincoln, of King, even of Reagan and of Kennedy....It was a masterpiece."

— CNN's David Gergen during live coverage following Obama's convention speech, August 28. [49]

■ "There is no getting around it, this man who emerged triumphant from the Iowa caucuses is something unusual in American politics. He has that close-cropped hair and the high-school-smooth face with that deep saxophone of

• a voice. His borrowings, rhetorical and intellectual, are
• dizzying. One minute he recalls the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther
• King Jr. in his pacing and aching, staccato repetitions.
• The next minute he is updating John F. Kennedy with his
• 'Ask not what America can do for you' riff on idealism and
• hope....Such words mine a vein of American history that
• leaves more than a few listeners misty-eyed."
• — *New York Times* reporter Michael Powell in a January 5
• news story about Barack Obama campaigning in New
• Hampshire. [35]

• ■ "You've seen those videotapes of Walter Cronkite the
• night that man landed on the moon for the first time,
• when Neil Armstrong stepped out and he could just bare-
• ly get out monosyllables. Politically, that's what this is.
• This is man on the moon."

• — MSNBC's Keith Olbermann during live election night
• coverage, November 4. [33]

• ■ "When was the last time our nation cheered this
• much?... 'We the people of the United States, in order to
• form a more perfect union' — that's what the Constitution
• says. Last night, all across America, for so many people,
• that's how it felt. A more perfect union."

• — Correspondent Byron Pitts on the November 5 CBS
• *Evening News*. [26]

Attention! Starting January 12, *Notable Quotables* will be switching to an e-mail format. Don't miss an issue! To sign up today, go to: www.MRC.org/subscriptions.

The Half-Baked Alaska Award for Pummeling Palin

✓ “The fact of the matter is, the comparison between her [Sarah Palin] and Hillary Clinton is the comparison between an igloo and the Empire State Building!”

— Host **Chris Matthews** on **MSNBC’s *Hardball***, **October 14**. [50 points]

Runners-up:

■ “If Sarah Palin becomes Vice President, will she be shortchanging her kids or will she be shortchanging the country?”

— **NBC reporter Amy Robach** on ***Today***, **September 3**. [42]

■ “You know, the one thing that I don’t think anybody’s said yet is that she’s very mean to animals, this woman. Why does she have it in for these poor polar bear and the caribou and she aerial kills wolves? That’s a very mean thing to do. I think that that’s an important point.”

— **ABC *The View* co-host Joy Behar** explaining her opposition to Palin, **CNN’s *Larry King Live***, **September 9**. [41]

■ “Is this [vice presidential debate] about her brain power?... Do you think cute will beat brains?...Do you think she’d do better on the questions on *Jeopardy*, or the interview they do during a half-time?...My suspicion is that she has the same lack of intellectual curiosity that the President of the United States has right now, and that is scary!”

— **MSNBC’s Chris Matthews** during the **7pm EDT *Hardball*** on **October 2**, a couple of hours before the vice presidential debate. [35]

■ “A campaign that’s turned down and dirty: Down in the polls, the McCain campaign has found a new attack dog... Yesterday she [Sarah Palin] took after Barack Obama in a style reminiscent of Spiro Agnew when he was Richard Nixon’s running mate.”

— **CBS’s Bob Schieffer** opening the **October 5 *Face the Nation***. [31]

Let Us Fluff Your Pillow Award for Soft & Cuddly Interviews

✓ “What of the attacks has busted through to you? What makes you angriest at John McCain, the Republicans? What’s being said about your husband that you want to shout from the mountain tops is not true?”

— **NBC’s Brian Williams** to **Michelle Obama** in an interview shown on the **August 27 *Nightly News***. [60 points]

Runners-up:

■ “When an American politician comes to Berlin, we’ve had some iconic utterances in the past. We’ve had ‘Ich bin ein.’ We’ve had, ‘Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall’....Is the phraseology that you would like remembered: ‘People of Berlin, people of the world, this is our moment, this is our time?’”

— **Anchor Brian Williams** interviewing **Obama** in Berlin for the **July 24 *NBC Nightly News***. [42]

■ “Many of the attacks that have come from John McCain’s campaign have been, quite frankly, condescending. Are you surprised by that? Does it anger you?”

— **CBS’s Harry Smith** to **Democratic candidate Barack Obama** on ***The Early Show***, **August 22**. [33]

■ “Have you stopped to think what the Obama version of Swift Boating might be in this campaign cycle if you get to the general election? What they did to John Kerry, what’s that version going to be with Barack Obama?”

— **NBC’s Matt Lauer** to **Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama** on ***Today***, **February 19**. [33]

■ **Anchor Brian Williams**: “Last time we were together, I handed you a copy of *Newsweek*, it was the first time you’d held it in your hands with you on the cover. Have you yet held this [*Time* magazine cover declaring Obama the primary winner] in your hands?”

Senator Barack Obama: “No, I don’t want to. Because the last time it was in New Hampshire and I ended up losing. So, I’m not sure whether it’s the magazine or you, Brian, that’s the jinx, but I’m not taking any chances.”

Williams: “Last time, you looked at it and you thought instantly of your mom.”

Obama: “She’d like that picture. She always encouraged me to smile more.”

— ***NBC Nightly News***, **May 8**. [29]

Damn Those Conservatives Award

✓ **Reporter Deborah Solomon**: “You helped re-elect Bush in ’04 when you gave \$3 million to the Swift Boat campaign to discredit John Kerry’s Vietnam service. Do you regret your involvement?”

Businessman T. Boone Pickens: “Why would I?”

Solomon: “Because it’s such an ugly chapter in American political history.”

Pickens: “Oh, I see. Well, it was true. Everything that went into those ads was the truth.”

Solomon: “Really? I thought it was all invented.”

— **From a “Q&A” exchange published in the *New York Times Magazine*** on **Sunday, August 3**. [72 points]

Runners-up:

■ “[For Obama] the real test is yet to come. The Republican Party has been successfully scaring voters since 1968, when Richard Nixon built a Silent Majority out of lower- and middle-class folks frightened or disturbed by hippies and student radicals and blacks rioting in the inner cities....It is a sure bet that the GOP will try to paint Obama as ‘the other’ — as a haughty black intellectual who has Muslim roots (Obama is a Christian) and hangs around with America-haters....The real question is whether he [McCain] can — or really wants to — rein in the merchants of slime and sellers of hate who populate the Internet and fund the ‘independent expenditure’ groups who exercise their freedom in ways that give a bad name to free speech.”

— **Richard Wolffe and Evan Thomas** in an eight-page cover package touting “The O Team,” **May 19 *Newsweek***. [64]

■ "I'm sorry it's necessary to say this, and I wanted to separate myself from the others on the air about this. If, at this late date, any television network had of its own accord showed that much videotape, and that much graphic videotape of 9/11, and I speak as somebody who lost a few friends there, it, we, would be rightly eviscerated at all quarters, perhaps by the Republican Party itself, for exploiting the memories of the dead and perhaps even for trying to evoke that pain again. If you reacted to that videotape the way I did, I apologize. It is a subject of great pain for many of us still and was probably not appropriate to be shown."

— **MSNBC's Keith Olbermann on September 4 after his network aired a less than three minute 9/11 tribute video shown at the GOP convention. A week later, MSNBC aired more than three hours of 9/11 news coverage as it originally aired on NBC back on September 11, 2001.** [42]

■ "[F]rom John McCain and Sarah Palin....attacks that stoked the anger at Republican rallies, where there have been reports of attendees yelling things like 'terrorist' and 'kill him.' [to Biden] Are you at all concerned in this home stretch for Senator Obama's safety?"

— **Co-anchor Terry Moran profiling Democratic vice presidential nominee Joe Biden on ABC's *Nightline*, October 13.** [34]

The Irrelevant Reverend Wright Award

✓ "To see his [Jeremiah Wright's] career completely destroyed by three 20-second soundbites, all of the work he has done, his entire legacy gone down the drain, has been absolutely devastating to me — to him, sorry....We are still a racist country....I think that so many white people who had never been inside a black church were absolutely shocked by the tone and language that they heard [from Wright]....I think it brought out a lot of latent racism."

— **Washington Post writer Sally Quinn on PBS's *Charlie Rose*, April 30.** [76 points]

Runners-up:

■ "He was assassinated by soundbites....His whole career was being summed up in soundbites that added up to no more than 20 seconds, endlessly played through the media grinder of our national press. He was angry about that....He was like a man who goes out and picks up the morning newspaper and gets hit by a cyclone!"

— **PBS's Bill Moyers talking about Jeremiah Wright on Comedy Central's *The Daily Show* on May 13.** [49]

■ "At issue now, a video of a sermon given by Barack Obama's minister at the Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago....We're running it because — like it or not, legitimate or not — it has become an issue....All this seems to have nothing to do with actual issues that the country is facing, which these candidates should be talking about and we probably should be talking about."

— **CNN's Anderson Cooper introducing a story about inflammatory comments made by Rev. Jeremiah Wright, *Anderson Cooper 360*, March 13.** [39]

■ "I don't even know how these candidates can talk about policy, because it seems like every day someone's asking them to apologize for the comments of their supporters. Rush Limbaugh went nuts today on his program about this [Jeremiah Wright] story. John McCain is talking about this particular story. How do we get away from this?"

— **MSNBC's Norah O'Donnell to *The New Republic's* Michael Crowley during live coverage, March 14.** [27]

■ "Every time he [Reverend Jeremiah Wright] appears, he just gives legitimacy and a hunger by those who oppose Barack Obama to re-run those tapes, to keep him at the center of controversy, to let this overhang and define Barack Obama, when it has, you know — it has very, very little to do — it's a very marginal piece of who Barack Obama is and what he stands for. And it takes attention away — we have huge, huge problems facing this country....I think it's time for him to get off the stage and frankly, for the media, I suggest, to move on."

— **CNN's David Gergen during live coverage following Wright's speech to the National Press Club, April 28.** [24]

Madness of King George Award

✓ "As a final crash of self-indulgent nonsense, when the incontrovertible truth of your panoramic and murderous deceit has even begun to cost your political party seemingly perpetual congressional seats....When somebody asks you, sir, about the cooked books and faked threats you foisted on a sincere and frightened nation; when somebody asks you, sir, about your gallant, noble, self-abnegating sacrifice of your golf game so as to soothe the families of the war dead; this advice, Mr. Bush: Shut the hell up! Good night and good luck."

— **MSNBC's Keith Olbermann in a "Special Comment" on *Countdown*, May 14.** [80 points]

Runners-up:

■ "If you believe in the seamless mutuality of government and big business, come out and say it! There is a dictionary definition, one word that describes that toxic blend. You're a fascist! Get them to print you a T-shirt with fascist on it!...You, sir, have no place in a government of the people, by the people, for the people. The lot of you are the symbolic descendants of the despotic middle managers of some banana republic to whom 'freedom' is an ironic brand name, a word you reach for when you want to get away with its opposite."

— **MSNBC's Keith Olbermann addressing Bush in a "Special Comment" on *Countdown*, February 14.** [63]

■ "So, besides urinating on the Constitution and the rights and freedoms every American soldier has ever fought to win and protect, the Bush administration has now decided that when its victims have actually served their sentences, doled out under its own medieval, quote, 'justice,' unquote, system, it still might not choose to set them free, thereby giving that Constitution and our country a second pass on the way out."

— **MSNBC's Keith Olbermann, August 7 *Countdown*.** [55]

From Camelot to Obamalot Award

✓ "Today, the audacity of hope had its rendezvous with destiny. No mere endorsement this, more like a political anointment from the Kennedys, merging ideals from two different eras....Obama is now an adopted son of Camelot. His candidacy blessed not just by the Lion of the Senate, patriarch of the clan, but by JFK's daughter."

— ABC's David Wright on *Nightline*, Jan. 28. [55 points]

Runners-up:

■ "They come in droves, by the tens of thousands at times, to hear Barack Obama speak....With soaring rhetoric, Obama is moving his audiences not just politically, but emotionally. Even some political commentators who've seen it all can't help but gush....The stoic eloquence channels John F. Kennedy."

— Correspondent Tracy Smith on CBS's *The Early Show*, February 14. [50]

■ "Today we got a glimpse of the early 1960s when politics was alive, so here and now in Washington D.C. The era of serious commitment, of short hair, white shirts, narrow ties and the Peace Corps. Today, for a brief, shining hour the young got to see what we saw. Not the gauzy images of Camelot, but the living spirit of the New Frontier."

— MSNBC's Chris Matthews, January 28 *Hardball*. [50]

■ "Today they gathered by the thousands at American University, sensing a moment of history. John F. Kennedy gave the commencement address here five months before he was shot. And today, the audacity of hope had its rendezvous with destiny. The Kennedy clan anointed Barack Obama a son of Camelot."

— ABC's David Wright on the January 28 *World News*, reporting on Ted Kennedy's endorsement of Obama. [49]

"Pay Up You Patriots" Award

✓ "It's early April, which means these are the few days of the year when Americans of almost every political stripe unite in a perennial ritual: complaining about taxes. Count me out. I'm happy to pay my fair share to the government. It's part of my patriotic duty — and it's a heckuva bargain.... There seems to be an inconsistency about people who insist on wearing flag pins in their lapels, but who grumble about paying taxes....Genuine patriots don't complain about their patriotic obligations....Pay up and be grateful!"

— Former ABC and CNN reporter Walter Rodgers writing in the *Christian Science Monitor*, April 2. [109 points]

Runners-up:

■ "There was a statistic that came out this week from the Congressional Budget Office which was just stunning to me. It said that in the last two years — from 2003 to 2005 — the increase in income for the top one percent exceeded the total income of the bottom 20 percent. Given that, what would be wrong with letting the tax cuts for the top one percent expire and plowing that money into education?"

— Host George Stephanopoulos to Alan Greenspan on ABC's *This Week*, December 16, 2007. [63]

■ "Republicans have taken taxes off the fiscal table, no matter how sensible they might be. That makes compromise difficult and it could be bad policy, too. In addition to raising revenue, the small gasoline tax increase that conservative Republicans were able to purge from the final 1990 deal 'might have been good energy and environmental policy,' [former OMB Director Richard] Darman said in a talk last March."

— *Washington Post* reporter Steven Mufson's January 26 "appreciation" of Darman, who died January 25. [34]

Politics of Meaninglessness Award for the Silliest Analysis

✓ "Not doing it [fighting global warming] will be catastrophic. We'll be eight degrees hotter in ten, not ten but 30 or 40 years, and basically none of the crops will grow. Most of the people will have died and the rest of us will be cannibals. Civilization will have broken down."

— CNN founder Ted Turner on PBS's *Charlie Rose*, April 1. [56 points]

Runners-up:

■ "East Germany Had Its Charms, Crushed by Capitalism" — Headline over an October 29 *New York Times* review of a book bemoaning the introduction of Western capitalism to the former Warsaw Pact country. [41]

■ "The black people in France are very proud and very hopeful for their future. They also live, many of them, in poor situations. And you know, you've had your own riots here and protests and disturbances in the Banlieue — in the city. At one point, when we were covering those riots, when you were Interior Minister, you called the rioters 'scum.' And I'm wondering whether you feel, today, when you stand next to someone you clearly admire so much, and who has broken so many barriers, that you regret that term or that you wish you hadn't said it?"

— CNN correspondent Christiane Amanpour to French President Nicolas Sarkozy during a July 25 press conference with Barack Obama shown live on CNN. [37]

■ "This has been one of the most active, deadly tornado seasons in a long time....I talked to three people, casual conversation today, all of them smart, saying, 'I don't know, we must be doing something to our Earth.' So once and for all, what's going on?"

— *NBC Nightly News* anchor Brian Williams to NBC WeatherPlus meteorologist Bill Karins, May 12. Karins discounted global warming as a cause. [21]

Media Hero Award

✓ "As we know this morning, there is another groundbreaking, crossroads moment. That is for Senator Hillary Clinton, who ran her campaign on her own terms. This woman, as we said, forged into determination and purpose her whole life. As someone said, 'No thorns, no throne; no gall, no glory; no cross, no crown.'"

— ABC's Diane Sawyer on *Good Morning America*, June 4, quoting a 17th century discourse about Jesus Christ. [66 points]

Runners-up:

■ **Co-host Robin Roberts:** "Some would say it's a team of rivals, a la President Lincoln, or is a better comparison a team of geniuses as FDR did?"...

ABC's George Stephanopoulos: "We have not seen this kind of combination of star power and brain power and political muscle this early in a cabinet in our lifetimes."

— **ABC's *Good Morning America*, Nov. 24. [47 points]**

■ **Hillary Clinton:** "You know, I don't really care about any of the hits that people make on me. It's, that's fine. I can't control it. They can say whatever they want."

Correspondent Cynthia McFadden: "There's never a night, when you go back to whatever hotel room, whatever city you're in that night, and crawl in a ball and say, 'I just, this just hurts too much?'"

— **ABC's Cynthia McFadden interviewing Hillary Clinton on *Nightline*, December 19, 2007. [40]**

■ "Agree with him or not, he [John Edwards] deserves credit for pushing tough issues off the back burner. He encouraged his fellow Democrats to speak out for the disenfranchised and under-served. He was the first to raise issues like poverty, universal health care and climate change, proposing big ideas — sometimes controversial ideas — to meet big challenges. He bucked the conventional wisdom and took political risks, speaking honestly about why he wanted to raise taxes, for example. That took courage."

— **CBS anchor Katie Couric in a January 30 "Katie Couric's Notebook" video posted to CBSNews.com a few hours after Edwards quit the presidential race. [34]**

Good Morning Morons Award

✓ **Co-host Harry Smith:** "In which ocean are the South Sandwich Islands located? A sixth grader from Nebraska answered that question. It's in the — is it in the Atlantic? I thought the Sandwich Islands were actually named after the Earl of — it's Hawaii. That's not right. I'm so sorry. Other — you know what, let's—"

Co-host Julie Chen: "No, it's in which ocean, so that is right. So it's the Atlantic Ocean."

Smith: "Hawaii is not in the Atlantic Ocean."

Chen: "Oh, it's in the Pacific."

— **Discussing *National Geographic's* geography bee on CBS's *The Early Show*, May 22. [51 points]**

Runners-up:

■ **Co-host John Roberts:** "I want to just stipulate at the beginning of this interview, we are declaring a Reverend Wright-free zone today. So, no questions about Reverend Wright. Our viewers want us to move on, so this morning we're going to move on. Is that okay with you?"

Barack Obama: "Fair enough. That sounds just fine."

— **CNN's *American Morning*, May 5. [47]**

■ **Reporter Jeff Glor:** "In addition to enjoying basketball and cycling during down time, Obama loves to play Scrabble....Obama's job as a teenager was at a Baskin-Robbins, and to this day he does not like ice cream...."

• **Co-host Julie Chen:** "Okay, so after doing this story, what's the takeaway?"

• **Glor:** "I mean, I think this is a man who plays to win. No matter what it is, whether it's the woman he wants to date or elected office or board games, there is an ambition there. There is a determination."

• **Chen:** "Sounds like presidential qualities."

• — **From "The Five Things You Should Know" about Barack Obama on CBS's *The Early Show*, June 18. [38]**

• ■ "People have called you 'The Savior,' 'The Messiah,' 'The Messenger of Change.' The expectations have been raised to such a level....If you are, as you just say, lucky enough to be elected the next president, are you going to have to consciously manage expectations during the first several months of your administration?"

• — **NBC's Matt Lauer to Barack Obama on *Today*, October 20. [30 points]**

The John Murtha Award for Painting America as Racist

• ✓ "What do you think the bigger obstacle is for you in becoming president, the Clinton campaign machine or America's inherent racism?"

• — **ABC's Chris Cuomo to Barack Obama in a December 20, 2007 interview on *Good Morning America*. [89 points]**

Runners-up:

• ■ "Her attack was unsubstantiated and carried a racially tinged subtext that John McCain himself may come to regret....Palin's words avoid repulsing voters with overt racism. But is there another subtext for creating the false image of a black presidential nominee 'palling around' with terrorists while assuring a predominantly white audience that he doesn't see their America?"

• — **Associated Press writer Douglass K. Daniel, October 5. Palin was referring to Bill Ayers, who is white. [50]**

• ■ "When we did our very first interview, and I asked you, I said, 'Do you think the country's ready for a black president?' You said that you didn't think it would hold you back....I know, for a fact, that there are a lot of people out there, there are a lot of people right here in Elko [Nevada], who won't vote for you because you're black. I mean, there's not much you can do. But how do you deal with it?"

• — **CBS's Steve Kroft to Senator Barack Obama on *60 Minutes*, September 21. [36]**

• ■ "There's a phrase I wonder about, 'community organizers.'...Is this the new 'welfare queen'? Is this a new symbol, that we're talking about here?...I think what they're getting is urban, downtown, trouble, tough neighborhoods.

• 'Community organizer' is not a winning phrase for a place like Scranton....It seems to me that the use of the word, 'community organizer,' is almost like a bullwhip.... Are they saying that, that Barack Obama is Al Sharpton? Is that what they're saying?"

• — **MSNBC's Chris Matthews to various guests on *Hardball*, September 8. [36]**

The Great Goracle Award

✓ “Since he lost the election, Al Gore has become a certified celebrity, a popular prophet of global warming.... When Al Gore ran for President in 2000, he was often ridiculed as inauthentic and wooden. Today, he is passionate and animated, a man transformed....What about the idea of the honest broker who goes to the two candidates [Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton] and helps push one or the other of them off to the side?...He’s not ruling it out, but he says he already has a job — as he puts it, ‘PR agent for the planet.’”

— CBS’s Lesley Stahl on *60 Minutes*, March 30. [48 points]

Runners-up:

■ “For Uma Thurman, whose credentials on the subject of sexy are impeccable, there was no question that ‘the man’s adorable.’ ‘Of course he’s sexy,’ she said. ‘He seems to be flourishing and following his calling. It’s just the most enviable thing in the world, like watching a beautiful racehorse run.’ Al Gore, sexy man. The thinking girl’s thoroughbred.” — *The Washington Post’s* Mary Jordan and Kevin Sullivan in a December 12, 2007 Style section item about Gore’s Nobel Prize. [46 points]

■ “How can you, given the passion that you feel about this issue and the enormity of the dimensions that we’re dealing with here, turn down the idea that you could be in the administration as a Vice President or as an energy czar or as both?...There is no power like 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue for setting the agenda, for drawing attention to it, for moving the country, and for moving Congress. Mr. Vice President, no one knows that better than you do.”

— NBC’s Tom Brokaw to Al Gore, July 20 *Meet the Press*. [43 points]

■ “The most important reason [Al] Gore should be Vice President is that he’s suffered and learned. He has the temperament some of us reach on our death beds....If there’s anything we need to rescue us from the last eight years, it’s brains, good judgment and experience. Obama has the first two. Gore has all three.”

— Former *Time* correspondent Margaret Carlson in a column posted June 19 on Bloomberg.com. [35]

MSNBC = Maudlin Sycophantic Nutty Blathering Chris Award

✓ **Keith Olbermann:** “For 42 minutes, not a sour note and spellbinding throughout in a way usually reserved for the creations of fiction. An extraordinary political statement. Almost a fully realized, tough, crisp, insistent speech in tone and in the sense of cutting through the clutter....I’d love to find something to criticize about it. You got anything?”

Chris Matthews: “No. You know, I’ve been criticized for saying he inspires me, and to hell with my critics!...You know, in the Bible they talk about Jesus serving the good wine last, I think the Democrats did the same.”

— MSNBC live coverage of Obama’s Democratic convention speech, August 28. [35]

Runners-up:

■ “He’s come from a white family and a black family, and he’s married to a black woman, and they’re cool people. They are really cool. They are Jack and Jackie Kennedy when you see them together. They are cool. And they’re great-looking, and they’re cool and they’re young, and they’re — everything seems to be great....He may not win this thing because everybody in America is not going to be in a room with him somewhere....[But] if you’re in [a room] with Obama, you feel the spirit. Moving.”

— MSNBC’s Chris Matthews talking about Democratic candidate Barack Obama and his wife on NBC’s *Tonight Show*, January 16. [31]

■ **MSNBC’s Chris Matthews:** “You know what? I want to do everything I can to make this thing work, this new presidency work, and I think that-”

Host Joe Scarborough: “Is that your job? You just talked about being a journalist.”

Matthews: “Yeah, it is my job. My job is to help this country....This country needs a successful presidency more than anything right now.”

— MSNBC’s *Morning Joe*, November 6. [29]

■ “A speech worthy of Abraham Lincoln....What I personally view as the best speech ever given on race in this country....I think this is the kind of speech I think first graders should see, people in the last year of college should see before they go out in the world. This should be, to me, an American tract. Something that you just check in with, now and then, like reading *Great Gatsby* and *Huckleberry Finn*....One of the great speeches in American history.”

— MSNBC’s Chris Matthews talking about Obama’s speech on race relations, March 18 *Hardball*. [27]

■ **Chris Matthews:** “What are you looking for tonight?”

Unidentified college student: “I’d like, I’d like a display of knowledge and expertise.”

Matthews: “So you’re on the Obama side, right?”

— MSNBC’s *Hardball*, before the October 2 vice presidential debate. [19]

The Crush Rush Award for Loathing Limbaugh

✓ **Author/humorist P.J. O’Rourke:** “It’s the twilight of the radio loud-mouth, you know? I knew it from the moment the fat guy-”

Host Bill Maher: “You mean Rush Limbaugh and Sean-”

O’Rourke: “-from the moment the fat guy refused to share his drugs....”

Maher: “You mean the OxyContin that he was on?...Why couldn’t he have croaked from it instead of Heath Ledger?”

— HBO’s *Real Time with Bill Maher*, Feb. 8. [80 points]

Runners-up:

■ “Let me ask you about this Limbaugh factor. If Hillary Clinton wins this squeaker in Indiana...many could say that the margin of error...was generated by mischief-making by a radio talk show host, a talk jock....Anyone who voted to

screw up the political system of this country with the purpose of mischief should carry that with them the rest of their lives. What a ridiculous way to use the vote for which people fought and died, to use that vote to make mischief. I hope you're proud of yourself."

— **MSNBC's Chris Matthews during live primary coverage May 6, talking about Rush Limbaugh urging listeners to vote for Clinton to keep the Democrats in chaos.** [45]

■ "Along with Rush, uses race-baiting to score ratings. Now that's hating America."

— **Newsweek's "Conventional Wisdom" giving a down arrow to radio host Sean Hannity, March 31.** [40]

■ "He [Rush Limbaugh] was upset that I said he was perverting the process by encouraging Republicans to vote for Hillary Clinton in open primaries in an effort to quote, 'bloody up' Obama....When you encourage someone to vote for a candidate that they don't want as President, I believe it is actually un-American....It is shameful."

— **MSNBC's Dan Abrams reacting to Limbaugh pointing out that many Democrats had voted in GOP primaries, Live with Dan Abrams, March 5.** [35]

Barbra Streisand Political IQ Award for Celebrity Vapidity

✓ "I'd like to tip off law enforcement to an even larger child-abusing religious cult. Its leader also has a compound, and this guy not only operates outside the bounds of the law, but he used to be a Nazi and he wears funny hats. That's right, the Pope is coming to America....If you have a few hundred followers, and you let some of them molest children, they call you a cult leader. If you have a billion, they call you 'Pope.' It's like, if you can't pay your mortgage, you're a deadbeat. But if you can't pay a million mortgages, you're Bear Stearns and we bail you out. And that is who the Catholic Church is: the Bear Stearns of organized pedophilia....The Church's attitude: 'We're here, we're queer, get used to it,' which is fine. Far be it for me to criticize religion."

— **Bill Maher on HBO's Real Time, April 11.** [59]

Runners-up:

■ "Is Cheney a goon? I don't mean that to be like a smart ass, but he seems like he might be a goon....My feeling about Cheney — and also Bush, but especially Cheney — is that he just couldn't care less about Americans. And the same is true of George Bush. And all they really want to do is somehow kiss up to the oil people....Is there any humanity in either of these guys?"

— **CBS Late Show host David Letterman interviewing former White House press secretary Scott McClellan, June 11.** [43]

■ "If you can read, you can walk into a job later on. If you don't, then you've got the Army, Iraq, I don't know, something like that. It's not as bright."

— **Novelist Stephen King at an April 4 Library of Congress event for students, later shown on C-SPAN2.** [29]

■ "We've been redefined for seven years now as a war-mongering, far-right, intolerant nation who's raping our own atmosphere and demonizing the poor and letting the banks rob us blind. I think if — any incremental move away from that would be a godsend. And I think Obama will, at the very least, put the brakes on this madness and in some ways heal it....I think the rest of the world, if they see that America elects a man of color, I think they'll breathe a big sigh of relief and not think that we're this war-mongering, rich white guy country."

— **Actor/comedian Richard Belzer on FNC's Geraldo At Large, March 2.** [19]

Admitting the Obvious Award

✓ "When NBC News first assigned me to the Barack Obama campaign, I must confess my knees quaked a bit....I wondered if I was up to the job. I wondered if I could do the campaign justice."

— **NBC reporter Lee Cowan in an article for "The Peacock," an NBC advertising supplement included in the March 23-29 edition of the American Profile magazine newspaper insert.** [59 points]

Runners-up:

■ "I think there is a problem, though, with the media gushing over him [Barack Obama] too much. I don't think he thinks that he's all that, but the media does. I mean, the coverage after, that I was watching, from MSNBC, I mean these guys were ready to have sex with him."

— **HBO's Bill Maher on Real Time, August 29, the night after the end of the Democratic convention.** [55]

■ **Host Howard Kurtz:** "Are journalists rooting for the Obama story?"

The Politico's John Harris, referring to the Washington Post: "It wouldn't surprise me that there's some of that.... A couple years ago, you would send a reporter out with Obama, and it was like they needed to go through detox when they came back — 'Oh, he's so impressive, he's so charismatic,' and we're kind of like, 'Down, boy.'"

— **Exchange on CNN's Reliable Sources, January 13.** [45]

■ "If you were going to events during the primaries, what you saw was that the executive editors and the top people at the networks were all rushing to Obama events, bringing their children, celebrating it, saying they were, there's this part of history....The American people are smart, they can see this. That's why Obama's on every magazine cover....There's no question in my mind the media has been more supportive of Senator Obama."

— **National Public Radio's Juan Williams on Fox News Sunday, October 26.** [33]

■ "Even in the conversations we have as colleagues, there is a sense of trying especially hard not to drink the Kool-Aid. It's so rapturous, everything around him [Barack Obama]. All these huge rallies."

— **Correspondent Lee Cowan, who covers Obama for NBC News, as quoted by New York Times reporter Jacques Steinberg in a March 1 story.** [22]

Quote of the Year

✓ **Co-anchor Chris Matthews:** "I have to tell you, you know, it's part of reporting this case, this election, the feeling most people get when they hear Barack Obama's speech. My — I felt this thrill going up my leg. I mean, I don't have that too often."

Co-anchor Keith Olbermann: "Steady."

Matthews: "No, seriously. It's a dramatic event. He speaks about America in a way that has nothing to do with politics. It has to do with the feeling we have about our country. And that is an objective assessment."

— **Exchange during MSNBC's coverage of the Virginia, Maryland and Washington D.C. primaries, February 12.**

Runners-up:

■ "Media bias largely unseen in U.S. presidential race"

— **Headline over November 6 Reuters dispatch claiming no liberal tilt in favor of Barack Obama.**

2008 Award Judges

Lee Anderson, Associate Publisher, *Chattanooga Times Free Press*

Chuck Asay, syndicated editorial cartoonist

Brent H. Baker, MRC's Vice President for Research & Publications; Editor of *CyberAlert* and MRC's NewsBusters blog

Mark Belling, radio talk show host, WISN-AM in Milwaukee

Robert Bluey, Director of the Center for Media and Public Policy at The Heritage Foundation

Neal Boortz, nationally syndicated radio talk show host

L. Brent Bozell III, President of the Media Research Center

Priscilla L. Buckley, retired senior editor, *National Review*

Bill Cunningham, radio talk show host, WLW in Cincinnati; nationally syndicated by Premiere on Sunday nights

Mark Davis, talk show host, WBAP Radio in Dallas; columnist for the *Dallas Morning News*

Midge Decter, author; Heritage Foundation Board of Trustees

Bob Dutko, radio talk show host, WMUZ-FM in Detroit

Jim Eason, retired radio talk show host

Barry Farber, radio talk show host

Don Feder, writer and consultant at Don Feder & Associates

Tim Graham, Director of Media Analysis, Media Research Center

Steven Greenhut, columnist, *Orange County Register*

Kirk Healy, radio talk show host, WDBO Radio in Orlando

Quin Hillyer, Associate Editor, *The Washington Examiner*

Cliff Kincaid, Editor, Accuracy in Media

Mark Larson, radio talk show host, 1700 AM in San Diego

Jason Lewis, radio talk show host, KTLK in Minneapolis

Kathryn Jean Lopez, Editor of *National Review Online*

Brian Maloney, radio analyst, creator of The RadioEqualizer blog

Patrick McGuigan, Managing Editor of *The City Sentinel* in Oklahoma City; contributing editor for *Tulsa Today*

Jan Mickelson, radio talk show host, WHO in Des Moines

Rich Noyes, Director of Research, Media Research Center

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

Notable Quotables

PUBLISHER: L. Brent Bozell III

EDITORS: Brent H. Baker, Rich Noyes, Tim Graham

MEDIA ANALYSTS: Geoffrey Dickens, Brad Wilmoth, Scott Whitlock, Matthew Balan, Kyle Drennen and Justin McCarthy

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE: Michelle Humphrey

MEDIA CONTACT: Colleen O'Boyle (703) 683-5004

• ■ "I'm not that convinced that that's her baby....The daughter — who we know is fertile because she's knocked up again, or maybe for the first time...she did like take a five-month leave from high school because she had [uses fingers to indicate quote marks] 'mononucleosis' right around the time the baby was being born. And the mother, the so-called, you know, okay, maybe it is the mother, but, you know, she was back to work three days later. You don't smell something?...It's not like they're not willing to lie about everything else."

• — **HBO's Bill Maher on *Real Time*, September 5, promoting the left-wing conspiracy theory that Sarah Palin's infant son is actually her daughter Bristol's baby.**

• ■ "Could global warming one day force us into space to live?"

• — **ABC's Sam Champion teasing an upcoming segment on *Good Morning America*, February 8.**

Kate O'Beirne, President, the National Review Institute

Marvin Olasky, Editor-in-Chief of *World* magazine; senior fellow at the Acton Institute

Janet Parshall, nationally syndicated radio talk show host

Henry Payne, editorial cartoonist for *The Detroit News*

Wladyslaw Pleszczynski, Editorial Director, *The American Spectator*

Dan Rea, host of *Nightside* on WBZ Radio in Boston

Chris Reed, editorial writer, *San Diego Union-Tribune*

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

William A. Rusher, Distinguished Fellow, The Claremont Institute

Matthew Sheffield, Executive Editor of MRC's NewsBusters blog

James Taranto, Editor of OpinionJournal.com

Cal Thomas, syndicated columnist; panelist on FNC's *News Watch*

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

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

Walter E. Williams, economics professor, George Mason University

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

Martha Zoller, talk radio host for WDUN/Georgia News Network

Attention:

Starting with our January 12 issue, the MRC will begin publishing *Notable Quotables* as a free e-mail newsletter, combining the latest outrageous quotes in the liberal media with numerous audio and video clips as well. The print edition will be discontinued at that time.

Don't miss an issue! Sign up now on our Web site:

www.MRC.org/subscriptions

Or, send an e-mail to **NQsubscriptions@MRC.org**, and include your e-mail address and whether you prefer to receive *Notable Quotables* in plain text or HTML format.

December 29, 2008 (Volume 21; No. 26)

Published bi-weekly by the
Media Research Center
325 South Patrick Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Telephone: (800) 672-1423

For daily bias updates and the latest from the MRC, please visit our Web site: **www.MRC.org**

