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A Day When Even the Seagulls Were Awed

“We know that wind can make a cold day feel colder, but can national pride make a freezing day feel warmer? It seems to be the case because regardless of the final crowd number estimates, never have so many people shivered so long with such joy. From above, even the seagulls must have been awed by the blanket of humanity.”

– ABC’s Bill Weir on *World News*, January 20.



“What a day it was. It may take days or years to really absorb the significance of what happened to America today....When he [Barack Obama] finally emerged, he seemed, even in this throng, so solitary, somber, perhaps already feeling the weight of the world, even before he was transformed into the leader of the free world....The mass flickering of cell phone cameras on the mall seemed like stars shining back at him.”

– NBC’s Andrea Mitchell on the *January 20 Nightly News*.

“A new day is dawning here in the nation’s capital on the eve of the inauguration of Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States...Does it get any better, or more beautiful, or more spectacular, than this?”

– Co-anchor Maggie Rodriguez opening CBS’s *Early Show*, January 19.

“America the Beautiful: The nation and the world pause to witness an extraordinary milestone as nearly two million people come together to hail the new chief and celebrate an era of change.”

– ABC’s Terry Moran opening *Nightline*, January 20.



After Eight Years of Bush, Finally Some Smart People in Charge

“Brains are in the ascendancy now, absolutely. They’re such a brainy Cabinet.”

– *Vanity Fair* writer Maureen Orth during NBC’s live coverage, January 20.

A Great Day for Objectivity

NBC’s Al Roker: “You know, Brian, I gotta tell ya, it was a very emotional trip....I had tears in my eyes....”

Anchor Brian Williams: “Al, I’d love to tell you that I have no idea what you’re talking about, that everybody here kept their emotions thoroughly in check during the ceremony, but I’d be lying to you, my friend.”

– Exchange during NBC’s live coverage January 20 following Obama’s swearing-in.

Matthews: It’s an “Honor” to Cover Obama; We’ve Opened Our Hearts to Change

“This is one of the great opportunities in journalism to cover history in the face. We’re going to see history in the face and when you get up tomorrow morning I recommend you stay tuned all day because I don’t think you’re going to stop seeing history being made....It’s going to be the honor of our lifetimes to be here on the Washington Mall.”

– MSNBC’s Chris Matthews previewing his network’s inauguration coverage, January 19 *Hardball*.

“I have never seen so many teeth in my life. Everybody is smiling....It’s radiant, the happiness....It sure as hell helps to be on MSNBC, let’s talk straight here. This is the network that has opened its heart to change – to change and its possibilities. Let’s be honest about it. These – these people [the crowds at the Inaugural] watch this network out here....This is the network of the 21st century, MSNBC....We’re not crotchety about change – stuffy.”

– Chris Matthews during MSNBC’s live coverage of Obama’s inauguration, January 20.

Cheney Exiting Like “Dr. Strangelove”

“It’s unfortunate for Vice President Cheney to have had this accident....There will be those who don’t like him, who will be writing tomorrow that he had a Dr. Strangelove appearance as he appeared today in his wheelchair. It’s not something he’ll be happy about.”

– NBC’s Tom Brokaw during live coverage, January 20.



Farewell to the Unpopular Dictator

“You know what it [Obama’s inauguration] reminds me of? It reminds me of the Velvet Revolution. I was in Prague when that happened. And Václav Havel was a generational leader and was in the square in Prague and the streets were filled with joy. And we’re not overthrowing a communist regime here, obviously, but an unpopular President is leaving and people have been waiting for this moment.”

– NBC’s Tom Brokaw during live coverage prior to Obama’s inauguration, January 20.

Bush In “Retreat,” Like Executed Russian Czar

MSNBC’s Chris Matthews: “Two or three hours from now, we’ll have a brand new President. He will really be the President. Bush will not be President....It’s going to be like the Romanovs, too, and I mean that. There’s a sense here that they are fallen from grace, that they’re not popular, that the whole family will now go into retreat. You have a sense that the former President Bush already-”

Washington Post columnist Eugene Robinson: “[It won’t] happen exactly like the Romanovs-”

Matthews: “It’s not like the Romanovs in the end, but there’s a sense of retreat here.”

– Exchange on MSNBC on January 20 about an hour before Obama took the oath of office, referring to the Russian Czar Nicholas II and his family, who were executed after the communist revolution of 1917.

First on Obama’s Agenda: Arrest the War Criminal Bush

“The most popular question on your own website is related to this. On change.gov, it comes from Bob Fertik of New York City and he asks, ‘Will you appoint a special prosecutor (ideally Patrick Fitzgerald) to independently investigate the greatest [on-screen graphic says “gravest”] crimes of the Bush administration, including torture and warrantless wiretapping?’...No 9/11 commission with independent subpoena power?...Let me just press that one more time. You’re not ruling out prosecution, but will you tell your Justice Department to investigate these cases and follow the evidence wherever it leads?”

– ABC’s George Stephanopoulos to Obama on *This Week*, January 11.



“This country has never succeeded in moving forward without first cleansing itself of its mistaken past....We compromised with slavery in the Declaration of Independence, and, fourscore and nine years later, we had buried 600,000 of our sons and brothers in a civil war....What we have to focus on is getting things right in the future, as opposed to looking at what we got wrong in the past. And that means prosecuting all those involved in the Bush administration’s torture of prisoners, and starting at the top.”

– MSNBC’s Keith Olbermann in a “Special Comment” on *Countdown*, January 19.

Chris Scolds “Hermit Crab” Bush for “Not True” Belief in Freedom

“He was a rich kid driving his father’s car. He got to be President because of his father, let’s face it, the same way he got into school and everything else....The scary thing about Bush is he picked up on – almost in the way that a hermit crab does – another identity in becoming President....He became this new scholar of freedom, and he’s going to spend the rest of his life selling this stuff. This stuff cost the lives of 100,000 Iraqis, it cost the lives of 4,000 U.S. service people....The idea that we have some brand new neo-conservative ideology of freedom that’s going to bring peace over in that part of the world is not true, and he’s still selling it, and that’s the tragedy of the last eight years.”

– MSNBC’s Chris Matthews immediately following President Bush’s farewell speech, January 15.

Press Gets Intimate with Obama

“I’ve been reading the pool reports that have been filed by reporters on the train and they refer to Barack Obama as ‘PEBO,’ which is short for ‘President-elect Barack Obama’ and there’s an intimacy and a familiarity on that train, a down-home folksiness, that belies the tremendous hopes that not only the country, but the whole world, have for him.”

– *Newsweek*’s Howard Fineman during live MSNBC coverage of Obama’s January 17 arrival in Washington, D.C.

CNN Expected an Inaugural Speech “For the Ages”

“Barack Obama has some big shoes to fill, roughly the size of the ones up on the Lincoln Memorial....Obama’s inaugural address may be more than the speech of his lifetime. Historians and speechwriters say it could be one for the ages.”

– CNN’s Jim Acosta on *American Morning*, January 13.



Bush’s “Lavish” Inaugural Scolded, But “Go for Glitz” with Obama

“So you’re attending an inaugural ball saluting the historic election of Barack Obama in the worst economic climate in three generations. Can you get away with glitzing it up and still be appropriate, not to mention comfortable and financially viable? To quote the man of the hour: Yes, you can. Veteran ballgoers say you should. And fashionistas insist that you must....And if anyone does raise an eyebrow at those sequins, remind them that optimism is good for times like these. ‘Just say you’re doing it to help the economy,’ chuckled good manners guru Letitia Baldrige.”

– AP writer Laurie Kellman in a January 13 dispatch, “For Inaugural Balls, Go for Glitz, Forget Economy.”

vs.

“President Bush’s second inauguration will cost tens of millions of dollars – \$40 million alone in private donations for the balls, parade and other invitation-only parties. With that kind of money, what could you buy?

- 200 armored Humvees with the best armor for troops in Iraq.
- Vaccinations and preventive health care for 22 million children in regions devastated by the tsunami.
- A down payment on the nation’s deficit, which hit a record-breaking \$412 billion last year....

“The questions have come from Bush supporters and opponents: Do we need to spend this money on what seems so extravagant?”

– AP writer Will Lester in a January 13, 2005 dispatch, “Some Now Question Cost of Inauguration.”

As Obama Ascends, Horn Honking Ends

“So many of the streets are closed, those that are open are clogged. But there were no car horns, no shouting. Instead, the San Francisco Boys and Girls choruses practicing for their Inaugural moment on the steps of the Capitol.”

– ABC’s David Muir talking about traffic tie-ups associated with Obama’s inauguration, January 19 *World News*.

Take That, You Rednecks!

“I just want to say one thing. Having been in the South in the ’60s and Los Angeles, in Watts and northern urban areas, when we were evolving as a country, I’m thinking of all the bigots and rednecks and people I met along the way. I’m saying to them, ‘Take this.’ You know?”

– NBC’s Tom Brokaw talking about Obama’s inauguration on MSNBC’s *Morning Joe*, January 20.

Slamming War Criminal Bush’s “Profoundly Un-American Administration”

“It [signing a memorandum affirming that the Geneva Convention does not apply to al-Qaeda terrorists] was his single most callous and despicable act. It stands at the heart of the national embarrassment that was his presidency....It would be interesting, just for the fun and justice of it, to subject [ex-Defense Secretary Donald] Rumsfeld to four hours in a stress position – standing stock still with his arms extended, naked, in a cold room after maybe two hours’ sleep. But that’s not going to happen. Indeed, it seems probable that nothing much is going to happen to the Bush Administration officials who perpetrated what many legal scholars consider to be war crimes.”

– *Time*’s Joe Klein in “The Bush Administration’s Most Despicable Act,” January 19 issue.

“I think this has been a profoundly un-American administration....[But] it’s going to be very hard to prosecute these people. The Obama folks don’t want to do it, because they want to focus on the big problems we have going forward. It might happen overseas, you know, I raised the possibility of Cheney being snatched mid-stream while, you know, fly fishing in Norway, as Augusto Pinochet, the dictator in Chile, was.”

– Klein on MSNBC’s *1600 Pennsylvania Avenue*, January 8, after anchor David Shuster named him “Muckraker of the Day” for his anti-Bush column cited above.



To Fix Problems, Let's "Dial Down" Talk Radio & Blogosphere

"We have never in my lifetime faced economic crises such as these, and opportunities....I think this is an extraordinary moment. I guess my passion is for something to happen to fix these problems, and for dialing down of all of the sharp criticism that we have on cable talk, on talk radio...the blogosphere. I just wish that we could find something in the center that would be bipartisan and would be productive and constructive."

— NBC's Andrea Mitchell on PBS's *Charlie Rose*, January 7.



Ordinary Demonstrators vs. "Hardline" Demonstrators

"Demonstrators burn an effigy of U.S. President George W. Bush during a demonstration outside the U.S. Embassy in Kuala Lumpur...."

— Reuters photo caption accompanying picture of protest against Israel's move into Gaza, January 9.

"Hardline demonstrators burn posters of U.S. President-elect Barack Obama, during a demonstration in support of the people of Gaza...."

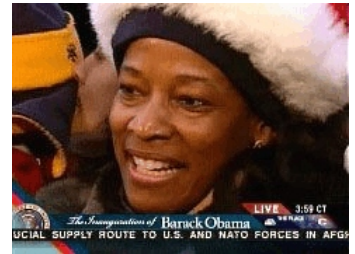
— Reuters photo caption, January 13.

Santa Claus Loves Obama

MSNBC's Tamron Hall: "What do you think this next administration brings to the country?"

Obama supporter: "I think they bring diversity. I think they bring a spirit of excellence. I think they bring unity and they bring love. Santa Claus loves them."

— MSNBC live coverage, January 19.



After Eight Years of Hell, Celebrating Soulful, Brilliant Obama

"It's a once-in-a-lifetime situation. The last eight years have been such hell. We're all so excited about the hope of things to come. I really think that's part of it. People are so ready to rejoice and celebrate what is hopefully the return of the foundation of the United States."

— Actress Gloria Reuben, as quoted in a January 15 *USA Today* article.

"I've been around him and shook his hand. He's a truly scholarly man. I'm very excited that we have this powerful, intelligent, constitutionally brilliant President. I find him very soulful in private."

— Actor Josh Lucas, same article.

"I'm calm for the first time in eight years, that somebody is in charge that has such intelligence and grace and is so thoughtful. I feel calm that the country is falling apart, but really that he's in charge now. There's a relief that I feel. After this past administration, I feel really lucky."

— Actress Maura Tierney, as quoted in a January 16 *USA Today* article.

"[Barack Obama's] presence is so larger-than-life. I'm so happy my children have a real hero to look up to....For a man as intelligent and charismatic to come along and unite this country....that's really what America is."

— Actress Kim Raver, as quoted in the same article.

"Nightmare" of Bush Ruined Thousands of Lives

"We've lived through a nightmare...in the past eight years....We're going through something that we haven't gone through in my life. Foreign policy, domestic policy — driven to its breaking point. Everything got broken. And the philosophy that was at the base of the last administration has ruined many, many people's lives. The deregulation, the idea of the unfettered, free market, the blind foreign policy. This was a very radical group of people who pushed things in a very radical direction, had great success at moving things in that direction, and we are suffering the consequences."

— Singer Bruce Springsteen in an interview with producer Mark Hagen published January 18 in Britain's *The Observer*.

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