

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

Special Edition: The Media — John Kerry's Base

D.C. Reporters: 12-to-1 for Kerry

"As John Kerry celebrates his nomination with a coast-to-coast bus trip...conservatives are complaining about his good press. They say that journalists' liberal bias has colored the reviews of the Democratic convention and his speech....When asked who would be a better President, the journalists [at the Democratic convention] from outside the Beltway picked Mr. Kerry 3-to-1, and the ones from Washington favored him 12-to-1. Those results jibe with previous surveys over the past two decades showing that journalists tend to be Democrats, especially the ones based in Washington. Some surveys have found that more than 80 percent of the Beltway press corps votes Democratic."

— *New York Times* reporter John Tierney, in his August 1 "Political Points" compendium, on what he found when he surveyed 153 journalists at a press party in Boston.

Thrilled By a "Blistering Attack"

"He delivered a blistering attack on President Bush on Iraq. He said that we were 'misled into war,' that we went into war 'because we wanted to, not because we had to,' and 'we went into war without a plan to win the peace.' That was a very, very tough attack. And he says that he will wage the war with the lessons he learned in war. That's going to be tough for the Republicans to respond to."

— ABC's George Stephanopoulos during live coverage right after John Kerry's speech to the Democratic convention, July 29.

"I was standing next to the young speechwriter who worked with Kerry on this speech, a young man named John Ghotheim (sp?). The look on his face: rhapsody throughout. I don't know how this was perceived at home. But here in the Massachusetts delegation, where I was standing, it was perceived very well."

— ABC's Dan Harris during live coverage, July 29.

"People who served with him 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.

Kerry at His Sweaty Best

"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."

— Dan Rather during CBS's live coverage of the Democratic convention, July 29.

"This is the best speech I have ever heard John Kerry make. I listened to a lot of speeches back there in the primary. This was the best. This was a very deft critique of policy."

— Bob Schieffer during CBS's live coverage, July 29.

"Turning Toward Enemy Fire"

"For those who doubted John Kerry could pull off a stirring speech, doubts dispelled. For those who doubted John Kerry could unite a traditionally fractious party, doubts dispelled."

— ABC's Charles Gibson, *Good Morning America*, July 30.

Charles Gibson: "If you're a Republican operative, a close advisor to President Bush, you're hoping John Kerry last night lays an egg."

George Stephanopoulos: "And he doesn't."

Gibson: "Boy, he did not."

Stephanopoulos: "Not at all. I mean, John Kerry went out there and he went right into the teeth of Republican issues. I mean, it was the political equivalent of turning toward enemy fire and charging the hill."

— Exchange on *Good Morning America*, July 30.

"When he stood up and said, 'John Kerry, reporting for duty,' you could feel the whole room say, 'Yes!' Because they realize that in the post-September 11th world, the Democrats cannot yield on the issue of defense or terrorism or values. They have to be embraced and articulated and fought from different perspectives, and I think that John Kerry laid that out last night."

— NBC's Tim Russert on the July 30 *Today*.

Byron Pitts, Kerry's TV Toady

"Senator Kerry is a very superstitious man. Just before he steps into the hall, he will do what he has always done before a major moment in his life. He will make a sign of the cross, then kiss the St. Christopher's medallion his mother gave him as a child. As he walks in, notice his left pocket. Inside his left jacket pocket are two things Senator Kerry always keeps with him: The Vietnam dog tags he wore in Vietnam, still wrapped in the black gaffers tape he used in Vietnam to keep those dog tags quiet as he went on patrol. And a four-leaf clover that a voter in Iowa gave him in January when he was trailing badly in the polls. To those who know Senator Kerry, they say both those items are reminders this evening that often in his life John Kerry has been down, but he always finds a way to get up. Tonight, he has to be up."

— Reporter Byron Pitts during CBS News live coverage just before John Kerry's speech, July 29.

"Integrity, That's What Matters"

"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."

— Pitts a few moments after Kerry finished his speech.

Touting Kerry's Day of Destiny

"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.

Kerry Gives the Party Its "Soul"

"Dan, based on the crowd's reaction, John Edwards has done what he came here to do. He took this massive convention center and turned it into a courtroom, some 15,000 people into 12 jurors, and he spoke to each one. Tonight, if John Edwards put the face on the Democratic Party, youthful and hopeful, it will be Senator John Kerry's job tomorrow night to give it its soul."

— Pitts during CBS's live coverage after John Edwards spoke to the convention, July 28.

No Bashing, Just Scorn & Insults

"No Bush-bashing in this speech tonight, but lots of lines that brought the crowd to its feet, especially when he took on the President, the Defense Secretary and the Attorney General, who will honor the Constitution, he said, in his Cabinet."

— NBC's Tom Brokaw during live coverage a few moments after John Kerry spoke before the Democratic convention, July 29.

Falling in Love with John Edwards

"The personality that Edwards exudes when he comes to these events is something that's pretty infectious with these delegates. And I talked to one delegate yesterday who says, 'You know, I'm coming to like John Kerry, but I haven't yet fallen in love with him. But I will tell you this, I have fallen in love with John Edwards.' It's obvious the charisma out there gets to everybody here in the Fleet Center."

— CBS's John Roberts during live coverage shortly after John Edwards finished his convention speech, July 28.

Edwards Another Ronald Reagan?

"He [John Edwards] talks about the best and the bravest who won't be left behind. He talks about this 'great shining light.' He says, 'Tomorrow is better than today.' Those are all Ronald Reagan's lines."

— *Newsweek* Managing Editor Jon Meacham during MSNBC's live convention coverage on July 28.

Teresa: Sexy and Spectacular

"I thought it went fantastic, frankly. I mean, this is the week that started with the news that she had told a reporter to 'Shove it,' which made all the rounds of the Internet, and yet she stood at that podium, and I thought she came off as the finest European actress really. I mean, she was likable, she's gorgeous, she was kind of warm and earthy, and for people who don't know her — and this was your first introduction to her — I thought she did spectacular."

— *Boston Globe* reporter Nina Easton on CNN's *NewsNight with Aaron Brown* following the second night of the Democratic convention, July 27.

"People talk about John Edwards being the sexiest politician in America. I think Teresa Heinz may be the sexiest spouse of a national candidate in my memory. She comes across pretty strong, soulful, tender even, in a way. So I think she had an effective performance."

— *Wall Street Journal* reporter John Harwood on CNN's *NewsNight* a few minutes later.

But Who'll Destroy Dick Cheney?

"A tactical question for you. If John Edwards is going to go around the country talking enthusiastically, optimistically even blithely about the Democratic Party, who's going to attack the President and Vice President Cheney?"

— Peter Jennings to ABC News Political Director Mark Halperin during live coverage on July 28 after Edwards' convention speech.

“The First Black President”

“I think the real breakout tonight is [Illinois Senate candidate Barack] Obama. I mean, Teresa is a fascinating story, but Obama is a rock star!”

— **NBC’s Andrea Mitchell** during **MSNBC’s live convention coverage, July 27.**

“Maybe I’m a romantic and I was rooting for, for Colin Powell who turned out to be a little less important politically than I thought he might be in his career — more of a soldier in the last situation we all know about. But I’ve just seen the first black President there. The reason I say that is because, because I think the immigrant experience combined with the, with the African background combined with the incredible education, combined with his beautiful speech. Not every politician gets help from a speech, but that speech was a piece of work!”

— **MSNBC’s Chris Matthews** during **live coverage of the Democratic convention, July 27.**

Obama’s “Conservative Themes”

“He’s the Tiger Woods of the Democratic Party right now, not just because of his blended background, but because of his ease. He’s such a natural politician and because he’s got crossover appeal....Conservative themes on top of some liberal policy.”

— **ABC’s George Stephanopoulos** on **Good Morning America, July 28.**

Gingrich the Barbarian

“A post-script: When I asked Governor Weld about the state of civility of politics today versus a decade ago, he told me, quoting here, ‘It’s a different world now. Civility,’ he said, ‘started to go out the window in ‘94.’ Which, we noted, was the year of the Gingrich Revolution.”

— **CNN’s Judy Woodruff** after showing a **taped interview with former Massachusetts Governor William Weld** on **Inside Politics, July 29.**

The GOP’s Musical Intolerance

“It’s silly to make too much of convention tunes, but some years they do provide a fitting soundtrack to a bigger story. Take the 1992 Republican Convention, the one that came to symbolize closed-door intolerance. That show in Houston was all country all the time, hardly a portrait of musical diversity.”

— **CNN’s Judy Woodruff** on **Inside Politics, July 27.**

Michael Moore, Left-Wing Star

“Michael Moore is not a delegate here at the convention. He’s not a speaker. He’s a guest of the Congressional Black Caucus, and Democrats can’t seem to get enough of him. Forget the flags, forget the balloons, the one thing you can’t avoid at this convention sits under a green Michigan State baseball cap. Michael Moore is everywhere: Addressing the Congressional Black Caucus, mobbed by reporters, interviewed by Ron Reagan.”

— **NBC’s Carl Quintanilla** on the **July 28 Today.**

Smearing Anti-Kerry Veterans

“A harsh new television ad that attacks John Kerry is being denounced as, quote, ‘dishonest and dishonorable’ by a Bush supporter, Republican Senator John McCain. The ad features Vietnam veterans who question Kerry’s war record, patriotism, and fitness to lead. McCain, himself a Vietnam POW, said the White House should condemn the ad put out by a veterans’ group.”

— **CBS’s John Roberts** on the **August 5 CBS Evening News, reading a short item about an anti-Kerry ad produced by Swift Boat Veterans for Truth, a group of former naval officers who served with Kerry in Vietnam.**

“The ads of Campaign 2004 just stepped up to a new level today — or down to one — with the release of an anti-John Kerry commercial that immediately brought the condemnation not merely of the Kerry campaign, but also of Republican Senator John McCain, and even generally and at a distance, the White House. Our fifth story on the *Countdown*: Swift Boat Veterans for Bush.”

— **Keith Olbermann** at the start of his **MSNBC Countdown program on August 5. The actual name of the group is Swift Boat Veterans for Truth.**

Andrea Mitchell: “This particular ad...is grossly distorting the record, according to anybody who knows anything about Kerry’s record, and McCain has come to their defense. It’s exactly the same people — in fact, it may be literally the same people — who did the number on him in South Carolina.”

Don Imus: “Yeah. I wonder what McCain is thinking.”

Mitchell: “It must be very hard for him. He’s trying to prove his loyalty as a Republican, but clearly, his heart isn’t in it.”

— **Exchange on Imus in the Morning, MSNBC, August 6.**

Hunt: Vet a “Liar, Pawn of Colson”

The Wall Street Journal’s Al Hunt: “I think this is one of the sleaziest lies I’ve ever seen in politics. John O’Neill, one of the principal authors, has been a Republican functionary for over 30 years—”

Conservative columnist Robert Novak: “That’s not true! That’s a lie!”

Hunt: “Could I please finish?”

Novak: “That is a lie!”

Hunt: “That’s not a lie....He’s a liar. He started with [Nixon aide] Chuck Colson. He was a pawn of Chuck Colson.”

— **Exchange on CNN’s Capital Gang, August 7.**

Awful Vets “May Get Away With It”

“They [Swift Boat Veterans for Truth] think that they’re going to be able to undercut a central theme of John Kerry’s campaign. This is the kind of negative advertising which comes without a label....So they may get away with it and, you know, Keith, this could have a big impact for people who are not really closely following the campaign, or they may see it as that, ‘Hey, John Kerry wasn’t really a war hero after all,’ and that may be the lasting impact.”

— **NBC’s Andrea Mitchell** on **MSNBC’s Countdown with Keith Olbermann, August 6.**

Decrying Free Speech “Loophole”

“Up next, NBC News ‘In Depth’ tonight: The latest campaign ad from an independent political group. Harsh attacks. Are these ads totally out of control?”

— **NBC Nightly News anchor Tom Brokaw previewing an August 6 story about the Vietnam veterans’ anti-Kerry ad.**

Tom Brokaw: “A harsh political ad attacking Senator John Kerry’s Vietnam War record is putting the spotlight back on the independent organizations which are called 527s....The campaign finance law supposed to fix the system left this very big loophole....”

Andrea Mitchell: “Republicans are challenging Kerry’s war record with a TV ad featuring other Vietnam veterans, none of whom served on Kerry’s boat, claiming Kerry did not earn his medals. The ad is paid for by Bush contributors using a loophole in the McCain-Feingold law....Some of the same players organized anonymous attack ads against John McCain four years ago, when he was running against George Bush....At a campaign picnic today, the President refused to disavow it.”

— **NBC Nightly News, August 6.**

Keith’s Imagined Conspiracy

“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.”

— **Keith Olbermann to Andrea Mitchell on MSNBC’s *Countdown*, August 6. Regnery Publishing, Inc. is actually owned by Eagle Publishing, not Scaife.**

Tom Ridge’s Gulf of Tonkin?

“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.”

— **MSNBC’s Keith Olbermann on the August 2 *Countdown* discussing new terror warnings issued by the Homeland Security Department the previous day.**

Right Policies, Wrong Image

“George McGovern is 82, but undaunted by age. His new book is a ringing defense of the liberal ideas that have always driven his political beliefs. In 1972, that meant strident opposition to the war in Vietnam....Today, he believes history vindicates him....Unlike John Kerry, whose decorated service in Vietnam is a constant theme of his campaign, McGovern seldom mentioned his service in World War II....McGovern was highly decorated for his 35 missions, for bringing home a crippled bomber. Yet few voters knew it....Democrats have paid a price for that mistake ever since.”

— **ABC’s Bob Jamieson, *World News Tonight*, August 8.**

Seeing Into Kerry’s Soul

“Before the speech a lot of delegates were wondering whether you could pull it off. Did you beat your own expectations?”

“And did you have fun while you were doing it?”

“Before the convention, I was talking to Senator Kennedy, and he reminded me of the first conversation he had with you back in 1971, and he said he saw into your soul. Did the American people see into your soul last night?”

— **George Stephanopoulos to John Kerry as they sat in a Scranton, Penn. park, *World News Tonight*, July 30.**

CNN Seeks Truth, Fox Is “Crazy”

“Fox News....[is] a sort of chat place where people kind of come and sit down for an hour or two to listen to crazy people, you know, exchange views....CNN, I think, is viewed as liberal because, I think, this is my own personal perspective, I think journalists are generally viewed as being liberal....[Since] we don’t give a slant, we don’t give a corporate slant to the journalism, that bias towards both discovery and revealing the truth that is inherent in journalism comes through in CNN, and they get characterized as being a liberal network.”

— **Time Warner Chairman and CEO Richard Parsons, whose company owns CNN, at the UNITY: Journalists of Color conference in Washington, DC on August 6 and shown live on C-SPAN.**

We Get Under Tom’s Skin

“There are organized interest groups out there. There’s a guy by the name of Brent Bozell, who makes a living at, you know, taking us on every night. He’s well-organized, he’s got a constituency, he’s got a newsletter. He can hit a button and we’ll hear from him.”

— **NBC Nightly News anchor Tom Brokaw speaking at a July 25 forum at Harvard University’s JFK School of Government televised on C-SPAN.**

Notable Quotables

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