

Notable Quotables



Bringing Political
Balance to the Media

January 17, 2005 (Vol. Eighteen; No. 2)

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

No Liberal Bias at CBS News?

Wyatt Andrews: "The independent panel slams CBS News and *60 Minutes* Wednesday for what it called 'fundamental deficiencies in reporting,' accusing the network not of political bias, but of being in a competitive rush....Despite a controversial phone call [producer Mary] Mapes made to the Kerry campaign, the panel found no political agenda."

Richard Thornburgh, CBS Review Panel: "In terms of rock-solid evidence that there was such, we didn't find it. We didn't find any actual bias."

— January 10 *CBS Evening News* story on the investigation into a September 8 *60 Minutes* report that relied on forged "memos" to question whether President Bush fulfilled his National Guard duties.

vs.

"Does anybody really think there wouldn't have been more scrutiny if this had been about John Kerry?"

— Former *60 Minutes* Executive Producer Don Hewitt at a January 10 meeting at CBS News, as quoted later that day by Chris Matthews on MSNBC's *Hardball*.

Real Crime = Airing Swift Vets

"If you look at the Swift Boat ads last summer — full of distortions, some demonstrably untrue content in there — yet they were run as gospel by many news outlets even though they were by definition designed to influence the election. But you're not going to see Fox News appointing an independent investigation into its own journalistic ethics or lack thereof for those ads."

— MSNBC's Keith Olbermann on *Countdown* January 10.

So Where's Dan Rather's Medal?

Bill Carter, *New York Times*: "If Dan [Rather] were to go away and not be on TV anymore, it would be a real loss."

Host Chris Matthews: "You know, I wonder, because you know I've been a skeptic...about the justification for this war with Iraq....When we found there was no case for the war in terms of weapons of mass destruction, nobody pounded down the door and said don't give us that malarkey. There was no sense of outrage....How many people have been fired at the White House for failure to get the facts right on weapons of mass destruction and taking us into war under false pretenses?"

Carter: "I think they got Medals of Freedom!"

Matthews: "They got Medals of Freedom! So while you can also complain about this, you got to wonder."

— Discussing the report on CBS's forged memo scandal January 10 on MSNBC's *Hardball*.

Media: Bush Too Slow on Tsunami

"Foreign policy analysts say the President's delay in speaking publicly has sent the wrong message....Analysts also say Mr. Bush may have missed a golden opportunity to mend fences with Muslims — not just in Asia, but around the world — who are unhappy with U.S. policies."

— Reporter John Yang on ABC's *World News Tonight*, December 29.

"Here we have a monumental disaster affecting some nine or eleven countries, an entire region of the world and the President waits three days to make an appearance and talk about it. Was it a political fumble?"

"Have we blown it, at least in the early stages?"

— Matt Lauer's questions to *Newsweek's* Howard Fineman and the BBC's Katty Kay on NBC's *Today*, Dec. 30.

Diane Sawyer: "As you know, there's all kinds of second guessing going on that America missed a great opportunity, particularly in an intensely Muslim area to show good faith in the beginning."

Secretary of State Colin Powell: "Hang on, hang on. A little while ago the Thai foreign minister and I gave a press conference and what he said was the first person to call him, the first person to call the Thai government was me, last Sunday night. And I said to him, 'What do you need?'"

Sawyer: "But other countries were giving more."

— Exchange on ABC's *Good Morning America*, January 4.

"You cannot defend the administration's laggard response. The aircraft carrier was in the Indian Ocean. It could have been diverted a lot earlier....The administration was basically out to lunch. They were on holiday and they didn't see U.S. strategic interests really threatened and they just took their damn time."

— *Newsweek's* Eleanor Clift on the *McLaughlin Group*, January 8.

...But Reporters Were No Swifter

"This is one of those stories nobody quite understood in the first couple of days exactly what this was going to be. The White House didn't understand it, journalists didn't understand it, and aid organizations didn't understand it. Now, more and more reporters are wandering into the story. But everyone was slow to completely grasp the significance."

— ABC's Bob Woodruff, who covered the Asian tsunami, as quoted by *USA Today's* Peter Johnson, January 4.

George Castigates Colin...

"You say you spoke to the President on Monday. Why did it take so long for him to come out publicly?"

"But you've heard what the President's critics have said. They said that this was a missed opportunity to show compassion."

— **Two of George Stephanopoulos's questions to Secretary of State Colin Powell in an interview shown on ABC's *Nightline*, December 30.**

...But Kisses Up to Kofi

"Are you confident now that everyone in the core group, that all the industrialized nations recognize the leadership role of the United Nations here?"

"Could this crisis, as horrible as it is, become an opportunity for the UN to prove to the world what it can do?"

— **Two of Stephanopoulos's questions to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan on ABC's *This Week*, January 2.**

Patriot Act Made Tsunami Worse?

"In the oil-rich countries of the Persian Gulf, citizens are being urged to do more. Indonesia is a largely Muslim nation. Ironically, the controls on Muslim charities after 9/11 may be keeping contributions down."

— **Peter Jennings on *World News Tonight*, January 5.**

"Partisan" Bush Snubbed Jimmy

MSNBC's Chris Matthews: "Do you find it odd that the President, the former President, who's had the most role to play in the last 20 years in terms of helping poor nations with disease and problems of, like this, smaller versions of it, Jimmy Carter was not asked to participate? Do you find that interesting?"

Former Democratic candidate Wesley Clark: "Well, I think it's a terrible thing that he wasn't asked to participate...."

Matthews: "Do you think it was partisan knocking Carter off the list?"

— **MSNBC's *Hardball*, January 4. Bush did ask former President Bill Clinton, a Democrat, to help raise funds.**

Where the Hell Has She Been?

"Imagine a Democratic presidential candidate and his allies assailing the character of the Republican nominee in ads and speeches every day for eight months. Having trouble? That's because Democrats generally don't have the stomach or the discipline to do it. Often they don't even effectively fight back when under attack themselves."

— **USA Today political reporter Jill Lawrence in a "news analysis" published January 10.**

Bringing Back the "Death Squads"

"What to do about the deepening quagmire of Iraq?...*Newsweek* has learned the Pentagon is intensively debating an option that dates back to a still-secret strategy in the Reagan administration's battle against the leftist guerrilla insurgency in El Salvador in the early 1980s. Then, faced with a losing war against Salvadoran rebels, the U.S. government funded or supported 'nationalist' forces that allegedly included so-called death squads directed to hunt down and kill rebel leaders and sympathizers. Eventually the insurgency was quelled, and many U.S. conservatives consider the policy to have been a success — despite the deaths of innocent civilians and the subsequent Iran-Contra arms-for-hostages scandal."

— ***Newsweek's* Michael Hirsh and John Barry in a "Web exclusive" posted on the magazine's Web site January 8.**

"Is this a clear sign though that U.S. forces are losing the war with these insurgents? That they are even more difficult to, to deal with than once imagined?"

"But in El Salvador many innocent civilians were killed when these kind of tactics were employed. Are you concerned about that, or the possibility this will increase anti-American sentiment in the general Iraqi population?"

— **NBC's Katie Couric to retired General Wayne Downing on the January 10 *Today*. A graphic reading "Iraqi Death Squads?" remained onscreen throughout the interview.**

Who'll Thwart Bush Now?

"Some people are saying that as you leave, the last dissenting voice will leave this administration....How much did your dissenting opinions contribute to your decision to leave the position of Secretary of State; and are you worried that in your absence there will be, what some call, a 'group think' on major and serious policy issues?...Are you comfortable with the mix of opinions that there'll be enough strong voices to do the same in your absence?"

— **Questions from NBC's Matt Lauer to outgoing Secretary of State Colin Powell, December 28 *Today*.**

The Gospel According to Moore

"[Michael] Moore...says that his film, too, resonates with Christ's message. *The Passion of the Christ* emphasized Christ's final hours and, for the most part, left out scenes of his ministry. 'But my film dovetails with the rest of Jesus' life,' Moore told *Time* last week. 'It connects to his message about questioning those in authority, of being a man of peace, of loving your neighbor.'"

— ***Time's* Richard Lacayo in the magazine's December 27/January 3 year-end double issue, juxtaposing the left-wing Moore with actor/director Mel Gibson as runners-up for *Time's* "Person of the Year" award.**

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