

# Notable Quotables

July 3, 2006 (Vol. Nineteen; No. 14)

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



Bringing Political  
Balance to the Media

## “Weapons of Minor Discomfort”

**Host Keith Olbermann:** “What is Senator Rick Santorum trying to shovel past the American people? And why is the Secretary of Defense agreeing with him?”

**Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld:** “They are weapons of mass destruction. They’re harmful to human beings.”

**Olbermann:** “Correct. You might get a burn if you rub these weapons directly onto your skin. They are WMD: Weapons of Minor Discomfort.... Good evening from New York. We have found weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, 15-year-old weapons of mass destruction that could give you the equivalent of a serious rug burn.”

— **MSNBC’s Keith Olbermann beginning his June 22 Countdown, referring to news that U.S. forces have found 500 chemical weapon warheads in Iraq since 2003.**

**Keith Olbermann:** “We’ve all seen political three-card monte tricks before by politicians at all levels, all parties, but is this mere spinning, or have Senator Santorum and Congressman Hoekstra moved directly into the league of Joe McCarthy waving the blank page [waves blank paper] that’s supposed to contain the list of communists in the ‘50s?”

**Newsweek Senior Editor Jonathan Alter:** “Well, I don’t know if I’d go that far, but it’s, to use a happy football metaphor, it’s a sort of a pathetic Hail Mary pass....”

— **Exchange later on the same program.**

## Bully Bush Beats Up on the Press

**Fill-in host David Gregory:** “The President is slamming the *New York Times* for publishing details about a secret program to monitor millions of financial transactions in the hunt for suspected terrorists. Is the White House attacking the press for political gain, or is the press really hurting the war on terror?... Do you think the administration has earned the right, has any administration earned the right in this kind of war to protect that kind of secret?”

**MSNBC’s Chris Matthews:** “Well, not this one.”

— **Gregory introducing the segment and later questioning Matthews on NBC’s Today, June 27.**

“Let’s talk about the President and Vice President, mad as heck at the *New York Times*. There are other papers, including the *Wall Street Journal*, that published this story as well, though, about revealing the bank surveillance system. Is this just a way to attack the evil media or does he have a legitimate beef here?”

— **Co-host Harry Smith to political analyst Amy Walter on CBS’s The Early Show, June 27.**

## • **NY Times: Victims of a GOP Trap**

• **Host Keith Olbermann:** “You were well ahead of the curve on this Bush administration war against the media. Give us a report from the front, Craig. Did the attack on the *New York Times* succeed, or did the administration sustain heavy casualties?”

• **Congressional Quarterly’s Craig Crawford:** “I think it goes back to the midterm campaign strategy. This is another way for Republicans to stoke the base, to burn in effigy the elite news media, and this is what they’re up to. I really don’t take it at face value there are real concerns.... I think this is just classic attack the messenger, you know, to get those conservatives who hate the news media worked up again just like flag burning and everything else so that they, it all goes on the brochures in November.”

• — **MSNBC’s Countdown with Keith Olbermann, June 27.**

## • **Do You Ever Think Like a Reporter?**

• “Do you ever have a moment where you feel this just won’t end well, that no matter how many Zarqawis are killed, the insurgents are just never going to give up?”

• — **CBS White House correspondent Jim Axelrod to President Bush at his June 14 televised press conference.**

• “Do you see, as some of your critics do, a parallel between what’s going on in Iraq now and Vietnam?”

• — **ABC’s Ann Compton to Bush at his press conference.**

## • **Bush’s “Excessive” Iraq Security**

• “I know it was a — you’re flying into a war zone, so these precautions are necessary. But I wonder to what degree anybody in the White House thought maybe it might undermine our point if we have to take such excessive security precautions in order to go claim victory, or whatever it was the President was trying to accomplish?”

• — **PBS’s Gwen Ifill on the June 16 Washington Week discussing Bush’s trip to Baghdad earlier in the week.**

## • **Don’t Criticize (Liberal) War Vets**

• “Do you subscribe to what Karl Rove is saying about Democrats, that they may be with you at the first shots, but they are not going to be with you for the last tough battle? Now, he’s talking about two men [John Murtha and John Kerry] who were wounded in combat when he says that. Is that really, is that really fair?”

• — **Host Bob Schieffer to Republican Senator Lindsey Graham on CBS’s Face the Nation, June 18.**

## “Swift-Boating” Victim Murtha...

“The politics behind the war debate. Jack Murtha unleashes his thoughts about Karl Rove and the other partisan attackers trying to squash the discussion about Iraq....Using personal attacks to make ideological points won’t win you any friends, but it will win you elections. Just ask Karl Rove. Our fourth story on the *Countdown*, the Swift-Boating of the 2006 election has begun....Congressman Jack Murtha, no stranger to vicious personal attacks since he started speaking out against the war in Iraq.”

— **Fill-in host Brian Unger teasing an upcoming interview segment with Democratic Congressman Jack Murtha on MSNBC’s *Countdown*, June 16.**

## ...Invited to Insult Karl Rove

**Brian Unger:** “Congressman, the charges repeated again this week by Karl Rove, many are scratching their heads, some are looking at their history books, but it’s about the charge that Democrats are cutting and running. Who cut and ran? Who is, you know, is actually advocating the strategy to cut and run? That’s the question no one seems to be able to really answer. Who’s cutting and running?”

**Rep. Jack Murtha (D-PA):** “Well, it’s just a slogan. That’s all. Here’s a guy sitting on his fat backside in an air conditioned office talking about the troops. He doesn’t have a clue what’s going on in Iraq.”

— **Exchange later on MSNBC’s *Countdown*, June 16.**

## Still Fans of “Class Act” Dan

“When a story broke, he wanted to be there. He thought that was the only way to report a story. That is the mark of all great reporters, that is what I most admired and will always remember about him. Dan Rather was one of the great reporters of his time. Good luck, Dan. All the best. I’m Bob Schieffer, good night.”

— **Bob Schieffer ending the June 20 *CBS Evening News*.**

“Unlike his network, onetime anchor king is class act. CW can’t wait for Gunga Dan in high def.”

— ***Newsweek’s* Conventional Wisdom box awarding Dan Rather an “up arrow” in the July 3-10 double issue.**

## Take It From Unbiased Bob

“I’ve known Katie Couric since she broke into journalism and she’s going to be a great addition to the CBS News team. She’s tough, she’s fair, she’s a straight-shooter.... She’ll be terrific. Just watch.”

— **Outgoing *CBS Evening News* anchor Bob Schieffer touting his successor, ex-*Today* co-host Katie Couric, in TV ads that began airing June 21.**

## Dan’s Liberal Bias “So Obvious”

“My problem with Dan was always that you knew where he stood politically. And the fact that he stood on my side didn’t have anything to do with it. I thought he was a bad representative of the liberal side because he was so obvious with his opinions. There were just little words he used when he was on the air that made it apparent to everyone that he was a liberal Democrat. And Cronkite, for instance, was just, had just the same liberal Democratic opinions as Dan had, but you would never know it. No one knew it during all the time Cronkite was on the air.”

— **CBS’s Andy Rooney commenting on Dan Rather’s departure, MSNBC’s *Imus in the Morning*, June 22.**

## Human Beings = Earth Destroyers

“Today, life on earth is disappearing faster than the days when dinosaurs breathed their last, but for a very different reason....*Us homo sapiens* are turning out to be as destructive a force as any asteroid. Earth’s intricate web of ecosystems thrived for millions of years as natural paradises, until we came along, paved paradise, and put up a parking lot. Our assault on nature is killing off the very things we depend on for our own lives....The stark reality is that there are simply too many of us, and we consume way too much, especially here at home....It will take a massive global effort to make things right, but the solutions are not a secret: control population, recycle, reduce consumption, develop green technologies.”

— **NBC’s Matt Lauer hosting *Countdown to Doomsday*, a 2-hour June 14 Sci-Fi Channel special.**

## Western Fires = Gore’s Vindication

“Many scientists say that it [the Western wildfires] fits exactly into the pattern predicted for global warming....[San Bernadino Fire Chief Mat Fratus] told me he also worries about how all the carbon from the fires only contributes to global warming. That fact about forest fires is something that Al Gore also points out in his new book, and that book is now near the top of the bestseller list. It seems that people are really starting to pay attention to global warming.”

— **ABC’s Bill Blakemore, *Good Morning America*, June 20.**

## Same Old Snarky Gumbel

“Finally tonight, a few words about World Cup soccer. Please spare me the stifled yawns....Yes, I know that in soccer they score about as often as Ann Coulter makes sense....But if you haven’t watched any of the World Cup matches from Germany you should try it. You won’t be disappointed.”

— **Bryant Gumbel’s closing commentary at the end of the June 20 edition of his HBO program, *Real Sports*.**

## Notable Quotables

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July 3, 2006 (Volume 19; No. 14)

Published bi-weekly by the  
Media Research Center  
325 South Patrick Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Subscriptions: \$29 annually. Call (800) 672-1423

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