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## Ha, Ha, We Only Joke About Being Tough on Obama

**CBS's Harry Smith:** "People in the mainstream media have been accused of being afraid to speak truth to power, and I've got — I've got some truth to power for you right now."

**President Barack Obama:** "Okay, go ahead."

**Smith:** "I've been observing, your dog looks like he's out of control."

— Interview shown on CBS's *The Early Show*, June 23.



## Obama's "Tender Moment" with the AMA

**ABC's Dr. Tim Johnson:** "It was a very tender moment. I have to say, George, the vast majority of physicians I know, and have worked with over the years, would much rather be healers than bean counters, or as he put it, 'paper pushers.' And so I think he struck a raw nerve with those words and he got an extended ovation during those words, and I think he was right on target at reaching out to the heart of most physicians."

**Fill-in anchor George Stephanopoulos:** "We'll see if it brings them around."

— Discussing President Obama's speech before the American Medical Association, most of whom oppose a government takeover of health care, on *World News with Charles Gibson*, June 15.

## "Demonizing" Gov't Health Care "Out of Touch with Reality"

"Germany, Switzerland and France all have a mixture of public and private plans. None of those countries are trying to roll back on a public plan. In Britain we have a purely public plan and even the Conservative Party calls it one of our great national treasures. So the countries that have some sort of a public plan actually, you know what, they seem to like it. It seems to actually work pretty well and no one wants to get rid of it. So, this idea of demonizing this as some sort of step toward socialism — it just seems to me so out of touch with reality."

— BBC Washington correspondent Katty Kay on HBO's *Real Time*, June 19.



## Papers Paint Spies for Cuba as Endearing Elderly Couple

"He was a courtly State Department intelligence analyst from a prominent family who loved to sail and peruse the *London Review of Books*. Occasionally, he would voice frustration with U.S. policies, but to his liberal neighbors in Northwest D.C. it was nothing out of the ordinary. 'We were all appalled by the Bush years,' one said. What Walter Kendall Myers kept hidden, according to documents unsealed in court Friday, was a deep and long-standing anger toward his country, an anger that allegedly made him willing to spy for Cuba for three decades.... Larry MacDonald, who lives at the marina in Anne Arundel County where the Myerses docked their 38-foot sloop, said the couple were admired for their intelligence and graciousness: 'When I heard they were arrested, I felt like they had arrested Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny.'"

— June 7 *Washington Post* front-page profile of Walter and Gwendolyn Myers, charged with spying against the United States on behalf of Castro's Cuban dictatorship.

"She was twice divorced and fresh out of South Dakota when she fell for his worldly sophistication. He came from one of this city's most privileged families, and admired her work helping ordinary people. Together, Gwendolyn and Kendall Myers set out to give the second half of their lives new meaning.... The authorities said that other than being reimbursed for equipment, the couple were not paid for spying. On the contrary, according to the statements cited in the complaint, which one federal magistrate said made the case against the couple 'insuperable,' the couple felt disdain for America's foreign policy — Mr. Myers's diary described watching the television news as a 'radicalizing experience' — and a romanticized view of Cuba's Communist government...."

— Correspondent Ginger Thompson in her June 19 *New York Times* front-page profile of the couple.

## TV Anchors Awed that Obama Can Swat a Fly

**Correspondent John Harwood:** “He had this fly that was persistently buzzing around him....He swatted his hand and he said, ‘I got the sucker.’ He threw it onto the ground. It was a, you know, *Dirty Harry* ‘make my day’ moment.”...

**MSNBC anchor David Shuster:** “Amazing...An amazing interview...It never fails — great weather, rainbows, incredible speeches, and three-point basket. A fly and he nails it. Unbelievable. Unbelievable.”

— Exchange on MSNBC shortly after Harwood’s CNBC interview with President Obama concluded, June 16.



**Co-anchor Meredith Vieira:** “Some may question his policies but no one can question President Obama’s precision....Don’t mess with him. Jeez! Look how neat he is though, the President. Takes his fly and left.

**Fill-in co-anchor David Gregory:** “They left it there for the balance of the interview. Just as, it’s like a scene from *Goodfellas*! You know? It’s like ‘You’re not so tough now, are you little fly?...”

**Vieira:** “It’s like a subtle, subtle warning to the Republicans.”

**Gregory:** “It would have taken me four days to kill that fly, you know? I mean, it’s, that’s not easy.”

— NBC’s *Today*, June 17.

“He’s looking. He raises his hand....He stares at the fly. How many times have each of us tried to do this? Look at the hand coming up. The poise. The cupping. And the quick slap....He’s very quick....The President has cat-like quickness.”

— ABC’s Chris Cuomo on the June 17 *Good Morning America*, using a Telestrator to show how Obama swatted the fly.

“We’ve also just confirmed the President is a Ninja.”

— CBS news anchor Chris Wragge on *The Early Show*, June 17.

## Clarification: “I Was Not Being Literal” When I Said Obama Was “Like God”

“Appearing on *Hardball* with Chris Matthews on June 5, I compared President Obama with God. Or at least that’s how it seemed to some bloggers and talk-show hosts, who made me a poster child for the argument that the liberal press is hopelessly in love with Obama....What I said was: ‘In a way, Obama’s standing above the country, above—above the world, a sort of god.’ I was not being literal.”

— *Newsweek*’s Evan Thomas in “The Perils of Punditry,” June 22 issue.

## MSNBC’s Advice to GOP: Time to Dump “Morals and Values”

**Daytime anchor Contessa Brewer:** “We’re talking about these personalities and who can be the leader of the Republican Party. What about their policies? Until they change policies — I mean, that’s what it took for conservatives in Great Britain to win — is a real change in focus away from morals and values into things that affect people’s daily lives.”

**New York Times/CNBC correspondent John Harwood:** “Well, bingo, Contessa, that’s exactly right.”

— Exchange on MSNBC *Live*, June 15.



## Calling Obama a “Socialist” = “Right-Wing Idiot Talk,” “Old-School Insult”

“Where Obama exudes the new Washington equanimity, [former House Speaker Newt] Gingrich exalts in the old-school insult. He is ruthless in caricaturing anyone who gets in his way as a ‘pagan’ or ‘statist’ or ‘socialist’ or ‘racist’ — all words Newt has hurled in recent days....It is hard to shake the feeling that Gingrich’s new prominence is more a sign of the GOP’s desperation than faith in its future....”

— *Newsweek*’s Howard Fineman writing in the magazine’s June 22 edition.

“There’s become this new ‘idiot button’ on the right, where you have to punch this button in order to be considered a real conservative now: ‘Obama is a socialist on health care. He’s a socialist. All his fiscal programs are insanely socialistic.’ You have to punch that button....If you don’t talk in that, that right-wing, idiot talk you’re not considered a conservative any more.”

— MSNBC’s Chris Matthews on *Hardball*, June 16.

## Blaming Museum Murder on Radio Criticism of Obama?

“Was there a tone in this country that was actually started with the election of our first black president that is bringing the crazies out of the woodwork, and are they being motivated to move by right-wing pronouncements, like he’s dangerous, he’s a socialist, he’s a Muslim, and he isn’t even a U.S. citizen? This is what we hear on some TV and radio outlets, which, by the way, according to our Constitution, they are entitled to what they believe and even propagate.”

— *CNN Newsroom* anchor Rick Sanchez setting up a segment suggesting “hateful talk” can be blamed for the Holocaust museum shooting, June 11.



## Regressive America Lets Free Market Determine Benefits

“There are only three countries in the world, according to many study groups, that have [government-mandated paid maternity leave] policies equal to the United States: Swaziland, Liberia and Papua New Guinea. Even in Iraq, women get one year of leave, six months at full pay, and six months of half pay. And so many other countries, particularly industrialized nations, offer similarly generous benefits for women who are taking maternity leave. But ‘the new normal’ in America finds some American women afraid of taking any leave at all.”

— ABC’s Diane Sawyer on *Good Morning America*, June 16.

## NYT Editor Insists: We’ve Been Tough on Obama

“Don’t confuse attention with love. I mean, here is a new President who has promulgated one, huge, ambitious program after another. So, of course, he gets a lot of big, page-one headlines. But I don’t think, at least up until now, it’s been unskeptical or uncritical. Read our business columnists on his approach to the deficit, his quasi-nationalization of the auto industry. He’s getting examined pretty microscopically.”

— *New York Times* Executive Editor Bill Keller on ABC’s *This Week*, June 21.



## Hostile Media Impede Progress By Painting Real Liberals as “Buffoons”

“Barack Obama is not a socialist. He’s not even a liberal. That’s the point I’m trying to make, is that this country needs a left wing. It doesn’t have it, and part of the reason is the media. Part of the reason is because Newt Gingrich — I have to look at his fat face on television every day — he represents, I don’t know what, that far-right of kooky-town. And yet, where’s the left wing? You know, Ralph Nader, Dennis Kucinich — these are left-wing people, although their ideas are not really that radical. But they’re presented as radical in the media. They’re seen as buffoons.”

— HBO *Real Time* host Bill Maher on CNN’s *The Situation Room*, June 16.

## Can’t Resist Lefty Cliches in Piece on Diving Rehab

“These waters guard a secret: some of the finest coral reefs on Earth.... These waters are home to something else unique: The most infamous military base in the world. These are the waters of Guantanamo Bay.... The heat here, this month, will reach a hundred degrees. The glare of world criticism is even hotter. Gitmo is notorious for the detention camps put here after 9/11.... In Gitmo’s core are several hundred men accused of being some of the most violently anti-American on Earth, put here by the Bush administration on the notion that this place is not America after all and thus not under the purview of U.S. law. The result: Hostile detainees on the inside and international anger from without.”

— Former CBS, ABC and NBC correspondent Jon Frankel in a story ostensibly on a therapeutic program for wounded soldiers that lets them go diving, June 23 *Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel* on HBO.



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