

Notable Quotables

March 18, 2002 (Vol. Fifteen; No. 6)

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



Bringing Political Balance
to the Media

Clinton Undermined by "Berserk" 1990s "Conspiracy" by the Right

Joe Klein: "The '90s will be remembered more for the ferocity of their prosecutions than for the severity of their crimes. I think we all went a little bit berserk during that time. I think that there really was a conspiracy against Bill Clinton on the right, and I think that he did some terrible things. But there is such a thing as balance and...James Carville said to me, 'All you have to do is say one sentence in favor of Bill Clinton and you're an apologist.' It shouldn't be like that. It shouldn't be like that. We should be able to acknowledge the fact that he made life a lot better for a lot of people in this country."

Tim Russert: "And yet many people will say, if he's the President of the United States, the chief law enforcement officer, and he breaks the law he should be penalized."

Klein: "So Franklin Roosevelt too, huh? You think he should have been penalized for lying about lend-lease?"

— Discussion with Klein, a *New Yorker* columnist and former *Newsweek* Senior Writer, about his book, *The Natural: The Misunderstood Presidency of Bill Clinton*, on CNBC's *Tim Russert*, March 9.

"Unpatriotic" GOP "Extremists" Would Have Condemned Clinton

"The Democrats last fall gave Bush weeks and weeks to prepare his plan and to execute it. Bill Clinton would have never gotten that space from the Republicans. The next day [after September 11], two days later, they would have been screaming, 'Mr. President, why aren't we attacking in Afghanistan? Why aren't we going after Osama bin Laden?' And he would have responded, I think, too quickly and in a not-well-thought-through way...I hate to say this because you and I both know very many honorable Republicans, but the behavior of the Republican extremists in the '90s, who did not accept his legitimacy from day one, borders on being unpatriotic. You cannot run a country in a circumstance like that, you just can't. Democracy suffers. And therefore Clinton's ability to move us through a war or a crisis would have been crippled by that kind of unrelenting opposition."

— Joe Klein on CNBC's *Tim Russert*, March 9.

Sounds "Very Balanced" to CNN

"Joe Klein has written an interesting and very balanced book on the former President, one of those books that will make everyone happy, or perhaps unhappy. We'll see."

— CNN's Aaron Brown promoting an upcoming interview with Klein on the March 6 *NewsNight*.

If They Hate Us, Blame Bush

"On average, only 24 percent of Muslims polled in each of the countries had a favorable opinion of the U.S. More disturbing, only an average of 23 percent in six of the countries believe news reports that Arabs carried out the September 11th attacks. As for the U.S. response to September 11th, 76 percent of those polled [by Gallup], on average, say the American mission in Afghanistan is not morally justified. President Bush acknowledged today that the U.S. faces a major long-term problem....But many Arab-Americans say it's not just perceptions at issue but U.S. policies, especially in the Middle East....Other analysts say Mr. Bush's bellicose language may be exacerbating the problem."

— ABC's Terry Moran on the Feb. 27 *World News Tonight*. Moran's report failed to cite any analysts who disagreed with the premise that U.S. policies are at fault.

Conservative = "Anti-Everything"

"Gray Davis, the governor, spent \$10 million in ads attacking Dick Riordan, who was the moderate in the race. He lost to the surprise of the White House, to the surprise of even Gray Davis himself, who told me...he didn't think that this would be as successful as it was. So now they're left, the Republicans, with a candidate who is a political neophyte, Bill Simon, never run for office before, has no political experience, and is very conservative. And Gray Davis is just salivating at the opportunity to paint him as anti-abortion, anti-environment, anti-gun control, anti-everything, which just doesn't sit well with the California electorate."

— *New York Times* reporter Rick Berke discussing California primary results on PBS's *Washington Week*, March 8.

A "Conservative Republican" vs. "Human Rights" Groups

Judge Charles Pickering: "I have a record of standing up for equal protection, respecting the rule of law."

Carole Simpson: "But critics of the conservative Republican strongly disagree. Among them, the NAACP...Judge Pickering's black supporters say that the judge is part of the new South. He has changed over the past 40 years, just as the town of Laurel has changed...."

Larry Thomas, pharmacist: "I still view Charles Pickering as a right-wing Republican. But then on the other hand, I saw him open his arms to try to embrace change palatable to both races in south Mississippi."

Simpson: "But for a coalition of 50 civil rights, human rights and women's groups, that is not enough."

— ABC's *World News Tonight/Sunday*, February 24.

PBS's Fears: Media "Jingoism"...

"One of the controversies after September 11th has been the suggestion of jingoism in the press, people wearing flag pins in their lapels, using language very supportive of the war effort and that sort of thing, and you had a memo that was published about balance. Tell me what you think about that, whether you think the news media went overboard and what you were trying to accomplish with that memo."

"When you looked at the media generally, did you see jingoism and flag waving that offended you or influenced you one way or the other?"

— **PBS media reporter Terence Smith's questions to CNN Chairman Walter Isaacson in a Jan. 28 interview posted on PBS's Web site as a sidebar to a March 5 *NewsHour* segment on the three major cable news channels.**

...And Conservative Media Bias

"You referenced polls that have shown a public perception — whether it's true or not is another matter — of a liberal or left-of-center tilt in television news. Do they then perceive a conservative or right-of-center tilt in Fox?"

"Why don't you accept that view?"

"Ideologically, does Fox have to be careful? Is there a danger of being perceived as too much to the right?"

— **Smith's questions to Fox News Channel's Brit Hume in a January 31 interview posted on PBS's Web site.**

Principled, "Non-Political" Attack

"The Environmental Protection Agency's chief cop, the enforcement officer charged with going after companies that pollute, quits his job after 12 years today, charging that instead of cracking down on polluters, the White House is working to weaken rules against dirty air....Eric Schaeffer insists his charges are accurate and non-political, points out he began work under a Republican administration 12 years ago, actually the first Bush administration."

— **NBC's Robert Hager on the February 28 *Nightly News*. Schaeffer was not a political appointee.**

"Principled resignations are pretty rare in American politics. Do you think you're going to make any difference?"

— **George Stephanopoulos's question to Schaeffer on ABC's *This Week*, March 3.**

"Huge" Tax Cuts Slowed Progress

"Congress is finally near agreement on an economic stimulus package to get the economy going again and help the unemployed. Until now, House Republicans insisted on coupling unemployment benefits with huge tax cuts for business."

— **Bob Schieffer on the March 7 *CBS Evening News*.**

Reagan's "Social Darwinism" vs. Clinton's "Great Ideals"

"President Reagan turned the country to the right. There was a Reagan revolution, a very conservative revolution, and it was social Darwinism. If you can't make it, tough. I mean, he did not believe in social welfare and, but at the same time, he did build up our military. He had a secret plan to spend one trillion dollars on new arms when he came in...."

"Clinton, I think his heart was in the right place. He certainly built up a great prosperity and surplus, balanced the budget, I think that he had great ideals, but, of course, he tarnished the White House with his liaisons and, but eventually, you know, every President, time is the great healer, and every President looks better in retrospect, so I think that he has a legacy that will be worthwhile."

— **Hearst columnist Helen Thomas speaking at a March 3 Newseum session shown by C-SPAN on March 4.**

Here We Go Again

"Tom, not long ago, we were practically declaring victory. How did we suddenly end up with troops on the ground, and are we stuck there? Is this, dare I mention, Vietnam?"

— ***New York Times* reporter Rick Berke's question to NPR's Tom Gjelton on PBS's *Washington Week*, March 8.**

Jennings, Rather & Brokaw: Fair

"The author himself was a second-string (some say second-rate) newsman at CBS for 20 years....[Bernard] Goldberg's depiction of the three biggies as biased bad guys is fiction. Based on my longtime acquaintance with each, here's what they're really like:

• Jennings, born in Toronto and still a citizen of Canada, may come across as a bit uppity in Peoria. But he's fair.

• Rather, a patriotic product of Texas, sometimes wears his emotions on his sleeve. But he's fair.

• Brokaw airs some of the prairie populism of his native South Dakota. But he's fair....

"My beef with *Bias*: The book is what it calls others. Blatantly biased, from cover to cover."

— ***USA Today* founder Al Neuharth in a Feb. 8 column.**

ABC News Not Liberal Enough

"I believe the work of FAIR is, indeed, extremely fair...I say this as an ABC correspondent (based in Los Angeles for *World News Tonight* and *Nightline*) whose network is often skewered by this organization. Often (too often!) I agree with their criticism."

— **Judy Muller's endorsement of the far-left Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting on its Web site. FAIR criticizes network news as heavily slanted against the Left.**

Notable Quotables

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