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## Slamming Rush as Villainous “Vat of Vitriol”

“If you didn’t know better this past week, you’d think Rush Limbaugh was more important than the guys in Washington.... Two facts are clear about this human vat of vitriol. He relishes the attention and he sells anger as a weapon.... Limbaugh’s high-handed, melodramatic, off with their heads oratory reminds me of those over-the-top movie villains. You know, the ones who issue ludicrous commands to snuff out the good guys, like James Bond’s archnemesis who wanted the supremely confident Bond — gone.”

— Chris Matthews on his syndicated *The Chris Matthews Show*, March 8.



## Limbaugh: “Sweaty, Swollen” “Monster” Who Is Destroying the GOP

“Rush Limbaugh, the man who did more than anyone else to create the modern Republican brand in the 1990s, is now destroying it. Everyone knows he has ‘jumped the shark’ culturally — become a black-shirted joke even as he dominates the headlines.... The truth... is that Rush’s rhetoric is ‘ugly’ and that he was wrong to say he hoped President Obama would fail. The monster the GOP collectively created — Rush’s ‘dittohead’ army of conservative listeners — makes life miserable for anyone who dares criticize the Great Bloviator.”

— *Newsweek* senior editor Jonathan Alter in a Web-exclusive column posted March 4.

“[What Republicans] need to do is to kill some sacred cows here.... Taking on Rush Limbaugh would have been an impressive statement of where the party now stands. I mean, you know, for President Clinton, it was Sister Souljah. For President Obama, he had to confront Reverend Wright. This is their Reverend Wright. And unless they deal with extreme voices within their own party, within their own movement, they’re not going to reach those independent voters who put President Obama over the top.”

— *Newsweek*’s Richard Wolffe on MSNBC’s *Countdown with Keith Olbermann*, March 5.

“As someone who spends a lot of time on the road, I used to find Limbaugh to be an obnoxious but entertaining companion, his eruptions more reliable than Old Faithful. But now that Limbaugh has become something else — the face of the Republican Party, by a White House that has played him brilliantly — he has been transformed into car-wreck-quality spectacle, at once scary and sad.... The sweaty, swollen man in the black, half-buttoned shirt who ranted for nearly 90 minutes Saturday at the Conservative Political Action Conference.”

— *New York Times* writer Timothy Egan in a posting to the *Times*’ “Outposts” blog, March 4.

## MSNBC Desperate for a Republican to Validate Liberal Spin

“Is any Republican willing to criticize Limbaugh on anything? Perhaps Congressman Ron Paul. We’ll talk to him live.... (to Paul) When Rush Limbaugh says that every Republican wants President Obama to fail, are you willing to take this opportunity to say on that point, and even that very narrow point if you want, Rush Limbaugh is wrong?... Why can’t Republicans say, Rush Limbaugh is wrong when he says that?... It just seems, Congressman, like so many Republicans are terrified of Rush Limbaugh.”

— MSNBC’s David Shuster on *1600 Pennsylvania Avenue*, March 3.



“Ari, first of all, when Rush says that all Republicans want the President to fail, Limbaugh’s wrong, right?... Why are so many Republicans already kowtowing to him?... Why can’t Republicans say, ‘You know what, this is childish, ridiculous, Rush Limbaugh is wrong when he says Republicans want the President to fail. And we need to isolate Rush Limbaugh because we do have important issues to talk about?’”

— Shuster to former White House press secretary Ari Fleischer on *1600 Pennsylvania Avenue*, March 4.

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## CBS's Infomercial for Obama's Big Spending Plan

**Anchor Katie Couric:** "Tonight, the President calls it 'astounding.' The recession has now cost nearly four-and-a-half million Americans their jobs. We'll show you the new jobs his stimulus plan is creating...."

**Reporter Anthony Mason:** "It's the government that's going to have to pull us out of this recession...."

**Reporter Jeff Glor:** "For blue collar workers, the checks can't come quickly enough...."

**Reporter Ben Tracy:** "These overwhelmed doctors have already seen 5,000 more patients in just the past year. The stimulus money will give them what they need most: more co-workers."

— Series of reports on the March 6 *CBS Evening News*.



## Applauding Obama's "Whirlwind" of Activity

"The President's first seven weeks have been a whirlwind with often dramatic movement in all directions, on all fronts. The economy, health care, two wars and today education reform — which raises the question, talked about on cable all day long: Is it all too much for any one administration?"

— NBC's Brian Williams on the March 10 *Nightly News*.

## "Blown Away" By Obama's Smarts on Health Care

**Anchor Charles Gibson:** "Our medical editor, Dr. Tim Johnson, was one of those attending today's White House health care forum...."

**Dr. Tim Johnson:** "I have to tell you, Charlie, I was blown away by President Obama's grasp of the subject, how he connected the dots, how he answered the questions without any script."

— ABC's *World News*, March 5.

## Teddy Gives Health Care "Knute Rockne-Like Boost"

**Reporter Chuck Todd:** "Drawing on a lesson from Hillary Clinton's failed attempt to deal with health care in the early '90s, which was criticized for its secrecy, President Obama opened up the process, inviting doctors, patients, business and labor leaders, even live streaming discussion groups on a new Web site, healthreform.gov... The President's drive to pass health care got a Knute Rockne-like boost with a surprise appearance."

**President Obama:** "To Sir Edward Kennedy."

**Senator Ted Kennedy:** "I'm looking forward to being a foot soldier in this undertaking. And this time, we will not fail."

— NBC *Nightly News*, March 5.



## Like a Latter Day FDR

"Seventy-six years ago today, President Franklin Roosevelt summoned radio news microphones to a desk next to a fireplace in the Oval Room of the White House, and the fireside chat was born. He wanted to talk to the nation about the economy and the banks. And here we are 76 years later, in the midst of another deep and wide economic crisis. For President Obama, it remains job one in this different era."

— NBC's Brian Williams on the March 12 *Nightly News*.

## Mindlessly Repeating Democratic Spin About "Ban" on Embryo Research

**Co-host Julie Chen:** "Reversing course. President Obama lifts the ban on embryonic stem cell research today."

**Unidentified woman:** "This is something huge. This is going to affect lives."

**Chen:** "But is the President going far enough?"

— Opening CBS's *Early Show*, March 9.

"We should say, this under President Bush was not banned or illegal, except now we're getting federal funding."

— Co-host Maggie Rodriguez a few minutes later on the same show, accurately reporting the Bush administration's policy on embryonic stem cell research.

## Sounding Like Robert Gibbs' Puppet

"The other big headline today involves the former Vice President Dick Cheney, who gave an interview yesterday saying, 'Don't blame the Bush administration for our troubles.'... The unemployment rate during the Bush administration rose from 4.2% to 7.6%. Poverty jumped from 32.9 million individuals to 37.3 million. The number of uninsured jumped from 41.2 million to 45.7 million, and the budget — the inherited budget surplus of \$120 billion and now it's a \$1.3 trillion deficit.... Does the Vice President have any credibility left when he says don't blame the Bush administration, with numbers like that?"

—NBC's Norah O'Donnell anchoring the 3pm ET hour of *MSNBC Live*, March 16.



## Worst Part of AIG Bonuses: It Creates "Tough Dilemma" for Poor Obama

**Anchor Charles Gibson:** "George, the administration's been very adamant they were watching how the money was spent. And now the one company [AIG] that took the most has done the one thing that angers the public the most and that is to pay out these big bonuses...."

**George Stephanopoulos:** "Charlie, it is just a killer.... Going forward, Charlie, they feel caught in a bind. When they respond to this populist anger, they feel they get a very negative reaction from the business community and the stock market. When they try to appease the business community and the stock market, the public rises up. It's a tough dilemma."

—ABC's *World News*, March 16.

## MSNBC Anchor Demands "Standards" At Other Networks

"Later, the conservative fearmongering over President Obama. [Graphic headline: "Stoking Hatred"]... The inflammatory rhetoric from the wing nuts. Is it merely entertaining or seriously dangerous?"

"So how far is too far? Isn't there a danger when the rhetoric goes off the charts?... Rush Limbaugh, it appears his ratings are up. Glenn Beck's ratings are through the roof.... Shouldn't there be some standards at some of these other networks? That's a problem, isn't it? There's no standards."

—Anchor David Shuster on MSNBC's *1600 Pennsylvania Avenue*, March 16.



## Touting "Power Duo" of Hillary and Michelle

"Leading ladies. A power duo in Washington today teaming up to honor women of courage around the world.... President Obama won the presidency promising change. There was more evidence of that in Washington today. His wife, now First Lady, Michelle Obama, and his former rival, now Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, a former First Lady herself, joining arms, joining forces. A study in style, substance and power, really."

—NBC's Brian Williams on the March 11 *Nightly News*.

## Michelle Obama: Buff, Sexy Celebrity of a New Generation

**ABC's Yunji de Nies:** "From the moment Michelle Obama took the stage at the Inaugural Neighborhood Ball, America just can't seem to get enough of the new First Lady.... A rock star who even got Oprah to break the rules. In a first, the media maven will share the cover of her signature magazine...."

**Washington Post reporter Sally Quinn:** "I think she's a sexual person. The pictures are attractive. They're womanly. They're sexy, but not in an overt way. I mean, there's nothing tacky or unseemly about the way she dresses. But she's very much a woman and I think for so long in Washington any woman in a position of power has really tried to downplay her sexuality."

—ABC's *Nightline*, March 10.

### Notable Quotables

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