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Our “Visionary Leader” Demoted to Mere President

“I like to say that, in some ways, Barack Obama is the first President since George Washington to be taking a step down into the Oval Office. I mean, from visionary leader of a giant movement, now he’s got an executive position that he has to perform in, in a way.”

— ABC *Nightline* co-anchor Terry Moran to Media Bistro’s Steve Krakauer in a February 20 “Morning Media Menu” podcast.



Wow! “We Have a President Again!”

“It was his debut and he wowed us. That’s the running headline from last night’s presidential address to Congress.”

— MSNBC’s Chris Matthews opening *Hardball*, February 25.

“It made me feel pretty good. I thought it was a great speech.... You know, a friend of mine said, ‘Oh my God, we have a President again!’ Now, in some ways, that’s not fair to Bush, but that’s the way you felt. You felt this was a guy who was totally in charge.”

— NPR’s Nina Totenberg discussing President Obama’s address to Congress, February 27 *Inside Washington*.

Applauding Obama’s “Start at Inspiring Hope”

“[President Obama] came right out of the box and said, ‘make no mistake about it, we are going to recover.’ That’s the most important thing he wanted the country to hear last night. He began on hope. He ended on hope. Now, in between, there’s a lot of hard things to be done.... But I think he made a start at inspiring hope out in the country.”

— ABC’s George Stephanopoulos on *Good Morning America*, February 25.



Right-Wing Jindal vs. Obama, the “Excellent” Centrist

MSNBC’s Keith Olbermann: “What can the Republican response be?... How do you come out against recovering the nation’s sense of self and its optimism? How do you come out against words like ‘boldly,’ ‘wisely,’ ‘swiftly,’ and ‘aggressively?’”

Co-anchor Chris Matthews: “[Bobby Jindal].... is running for the outside rail of the Republican Party, the right-wing rail.... That’s all the room that’s left on that side because Barack has grabbed the center with the charm he showed tonight in his excellent rhetoric.”

— MSNBC’s live coverage following Obama’s speech to Congress, February 24.

“Big and Bold” Obama vs. “Hard Core Conservative” Bush

“It was a big and bold speech by a new President facing deep challenges and huge expectations, delivered at a crucial moment when the country has been battered by talk of bailouts and the reality, the harsh reality of recession. And while President Barack Obama didn’t sugarcoat it — he found bad guys on Wall Street and in Washington — he did try to strike an optimistic tone and a hopeful note that with patience and personal responsibility and by working together, the country can prevail and thrive.”

— ABC’s Terry Moran on *Nightline*, February 24. Moran offered no “liberal” label of Obama’s agenda.

vs.

“Although he talked a lot about Democratic priorities — education, the entitlements, racial profiling — the core of this speech was hard core conservatism: fiscal restraint; deep, across-the-board spending and tax cuts; the privatization of part of Social Security.”

— Moran during ABC News live coverage following President Bush’s first speech to Congress, February 27, 2001.

Pressuring Republicans to Join Obama's Revolution

"A recent CBS News poll shows that 53 percent of the American people fully backs the stimulus package, 63 percent of people we polled thought the Republican opposition to the stimulus package was for political reasons. So, are you out of touch with the American people?...Do you think the Republicans are digging themselves in a hole by not being more supportive of the President's proposals?"
— CBS's Katie Couric interviewing Republican House Leader John Boehner on the February 24 *Evening News*.



Obama Will Fix "National Shame" of Health Care

"I think there's going to be an intense, partisan debate. But ultimately, David, there is just one fact I want to let everybody hear: We spend more than twice as much, per person, on health care in this country as the average of all other industrialized countries, yet we're the only one that doesn't have universal coverage. That's a national shame and I think, ultimately, that's what's going to unite Democrats and Republicans."
— ABC medical editor Dr. Tim Johnson to anchor David Muir on *World News Sunday*, March 1.

Katie Touts Comfort of "Uncle Sam's Big Arms" Seizing Banks

"In Britain, a government takeover of a bank last year helped to temporarily calm fears in the financial markets there. Nationalization may have a psychological impact as well, and Uncle Sam wrapping his arms around failing banks in this country might provide a big dose of confidence for the American consumer."
— Katie Couric on the February 19 *CBS Evening News*, talking about the Obama administration possibly taking over American banks.

Obama Nominee vs. Pro-Life "Terrorism"

"[Kansas Governor and new HHS nominee] Kathleen Sebelius, very likeable, very impressive. I think of the woman who becomes the governor in *Mr. Holland's Opus* — remember the one who comes back? Who becomes the governor, the woman governor. She looks like her, in fact. Is she gonna get through the, the terrorism of the anti-abortion people?...I mean verbal terrorism."
— MSNBC's Chris Matthews on *Hardball*, March 2.



"Toss" Book on Media's Pro-Obama Bias

"As a conservative media critic writing for a conservative publishing house addressing a conservative audience, Bernard Goldberg, a former CBS journalist and the author of the media-bashing memoir *Bias*, doesn't have to do much to notch a best seller....Because of their fawning over Obama, the 'mainstream media' — if the author removed that modifier, this book would be a pamphlet — have left their credibility 'in tatters,' Goldberg writes. Of course, just saying something doesn't make it so. But that won't matter to Goldberg's readers, who will devour his latest with gusto."
— *Time* book critic Gilbert Cruz panning Bernard Goldberg's book on the media's 2008 bias, *A Slobbering Love Affair*, which he listed as a book to "toss" (as opposed to "read" or "skim"), March 2 edition.

Bobby Jindal = Charles Manson

"I found his Manson eyes disturbing."
— *Washington Post* gossip columnist Amy Argetsinger in a February 25 live chat, talking about Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal's response to Obama's speech.

Another Reason to Hate Big Oil

MSNBC's Norah O'Donnell: "Is oil behind sexism in the Middle East? It's a provocative new theory out there today, suggesting the real culprit of the lower status of women in the Middle East is because of the region's oil wealth....Do you believe that oil is behind sexism in the Middle East?"
Washington Post's Sally Quinn: "Well, I do think that it has a lot to do with it...."
— Exchange during the 3pm ET hour of *MSNBC Live*, February 20.



Rush Limbaugh = A “Troll Under the Bridge”

“Trolls under the bridge — is that what Washington Republicans have become? Gremlins hiding along the pathway, nipping at the Democrats?”

— Chris Matthews on his syndicated *The Chris Matthews Show* on February 22, teasing a segment about Rush Limbaugh criticisms of President Obama’s policies.



Media’s Advice to GOP: “Stand Up” to Limbaugh

“I’m really surprised about the Steele apology, because there’s nothing he said in there that I found particularly outrageous. Rush Limbaugh’s on the radio, he’s an entertainer. Some of the things he said are ugly and incendiary. Exhibit A is ‘Barack the Magic Negro’ that got air time on Limbaugh’s radio station. And you know, it almost seems like the Republican Party needs a Sister Souljah moment, you know, when Bill Clinton was able to stand up and break with the far left of the Democratic Party by criticizing rap music on Sister Souljah. It seems like the Republicans need somebody who’s willing to stand up and say Rush doesn’t represent all of the views of the Republican Party and then not rush and apologize to him....I’ll bet you whoever does that could end up as the, you know, the nominee of the party.”

— *Washington Post* reporter Keith Richburg on MSNBC live coverage, March 3.

Women Fans of Limbaugh Like Hitler’s Girlfriend

“The type of female that does like Rush is the same type of woman that falls in love with prisoners. You know what I mean? They like Richard Ramirez or — Squeaky Fromme is a good example. I think Charles Manson’s — Eva Braun, Hitler’s girlfriend. That is exactly the type of woman that responds really well to Rush. And there will be some Eva Brauns, Squeaky Frommes out there that will respond really well to this cattle call right now.”

— Actress and left wing activist Janeane Garofalo on MSNBC’s *Countdown with Keith Olbermann*, February 26.

Rush Limbaugh = “Bonehead Gangster”

Host David Letterman: “What about this bonehead Rush Limbaugh?...He gets up in Washington and he’s the keynote speaker at some function, and he comes up, he looks like an Eastern European gangster. You know, he’s got the black jacket on, the black silk shirt and it’s unbuttoned, like, oh yeah, you think Rush Limbaugh, when you think, ‘Ooh, let’s see a little flesh.’ [audience laughter] Honestly, you know, what is he doing?”

CBS *Evening News* anchor Katie Couric: “...Although I’m thrown by the Rush Limbaugh flesh in one sentence, but I think it’s sort of indicative of this power vacuum that exists right now in the Republican Party.”

— Exchange on CBS’s *Late Show with David Letterman*, March 2.



Republican National Convention “Literally Looks Like Nazi Germany”

“The tenets of the Republican Party are amazing and they seem warm and welcome. But when I watch it be applied — like you didn’t have to go much further than the Republican National Convention....It literally look[s] like Nazi Germany.”

— CNN host/comedian D.L. Hughley to RNC Chairman Michael Steele on *D.L. Hughley Breaks the News*, February 28.

“Dreaming About Sex with the President”

“The other night I dreamt of Barack Obama. He was taking a shower right when I needed to get into the bathroom to shave my legs....I launched an e-mail inquiry....Many women — not too surprisingly — were dreaming about sex with the President.”

— *New York Times* “Domestic Disturbances” blogger Judith Warner in a February 5 posting.

Notable Quotables

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