

Notable Quotables

November 3, 2008 (Vol. 21; No. 22)

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



America's
Media Watchdog

Not Easy Being "The Messiah"

"People have called you 'The Savior,' 'The Messiah,' 'The Messenger of Change.' The expectations have been raised to such a level....If you are, as you just say, lucky enough to be elected the next President, are you going to have to consciously manage expectations during the first several months of your administration?"

— NBC's Matt Lauer to Barack Obama on *Today*, Oct. 20.

Obama Wins "Seal of Approval"

"This morning, Senator Obama's banner weekend: Record breaking crowds, cash and the endorsement heard around the world....Senator Obama got a booster rocket from none other than Republican former Secretary of State Colin Powell this weekend, a Republican and a friend of John McCain."

— ABC's Diane Sawyer, Oct. 20 *Good Morning America*.

"Having Colin Powell endorse the Democratic nominee for President is like having the seal of approval from the most important military figure of the age."

— *Newsweek* editor Jon Meacham on NBC's *Meet the Press*, October 19.

McCain's Mistake: Moving Right

"Instead of moving to the center, he [John McCain] moved to the right. He put Sarah Palin on the ticket, which pleased the right but, as we're now seeing in these polls, her appeal does not go much beyond that."

— CBS's Bob Schieffer on the October 24 *Evening News*.

"I think he's abandoned the principles of his campaign in 2000, and that's probably why he's in the difficulty he's in....He's really become a captive of the right wing of his party and its agenda and it shows, particularly through the pick of Sarah Palin."

— Author and former *Washington Post* and *Time* reporter Carl Bernstein, on CBS's *Late Late Show*, October 27.

Admit It — She's a Disaster

"A lot of Republican pundits in the last couple of weeks have said that your choice of a vice presidential candidate of Sarah Palin has been a disaster. If, in fact, you found out that her candidacy cost you the election, would you still say it was the right choice?"

— Harry Smith to McCain on CBS's *Early Show*, Oct. 21.

Ice Hut vs. Architectural Marvel

"The fact of the matter is, the comparison between her [Sarah Palin] and Hillary Clinton is the comparison between an igloo and the Empire State Building!"

— MSNBC's Chris Matthews on *Hardball*, October 14.

CNN's Mea Culpa

"The press has been pretty hard on you. The Democrats have been pretty hard on you, but also some conservatives have been pretty hard on you as well. The *National Review* had a story saying that, you know, 'I can't tell if Sarah Palin is incompetent, stupid, unqualified, corrupt, or all of the above.'"

— CNN correspondent Drew Griffin to Sarah Palin in an interview shown on *The Situation Room*, October 22.

vs.

"Watching press coverage of the Republican candidate for Vice President, it's sometimes hard to decide whether Sarah Palin is incompetent, stupid, unqualified, corrupt, backward or — well, all of the above."

— Actual quote from the article by *National Review's* Byron York, October 20 issue. Two days later, Griffin apologized to York on the air: "I botched it."

"Fear and Loathing" Strategy

"McCain's fear and loathing strategy seems to be working among some voters....Tonight, at a town hall meeting here in Minnesota, at least half a dozen supporters urged him to attack even harder."

— ABC's David Wright on *Nightline*, October 10.

World Hates Us, Loves Obama

"Much of the world deeply distrusts, even dislikes, the United States....After Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay, the U.S. is perceived by many as a violator rather than an upholder of human rights....If the world had a vote, Barack Obama would win in a landslide."

— NBC's Dawna Friesen, October 17 *Nightly News*.

"For most Europeans, it [Guantanamo Bay] is a sickening example of how the war against terror is being lost, shaming the defenders of democracy by using torture and imprisonment without trial....Many Europeans see U.S. voters as a trigger-happy bunch with a Bible in one hand and a rifle in the other."

— CNN's Robin Oakley on *Newsroom*, October 13.

Well, At Least He Admits It

“John McCain represents the best of America’s past, and Barack Obama the hope of the future — the hope of a country that can make big changes and live out one of its greatest promises, of equal opportunities for all Americans, of every caste, creed and color. And America has always been a country that looks forward. So, I will be voting for Barack Obama on election day this year.”

— *Newsweek* international editor **Fareed Zakaria** at the end of his *Fareed Zakaria: GPS* on CNN, October 19.

If Obama Loses, Blame Racists

“At the start of the campaign season *Newsweek* asked, ‘Is America Ready’ for a black president? The answer: only if Obama proved close to a flawless candidate....That doesn’t mean Obama lost because all, or even most, McCain voters allowed race to be a factor. But enough did to change the outcome....The GOP has now completed a sorry transition from the party of Lincoln to the party of cynicism.”

— *Newsweek* senior editor **Jonathan Alter** in a column speculating “Why McCain Won,” November 3.

Confirming Everything You Thought

“If you were going to events during the primaries, what you saw was that the executive editors and the top people at the networks were all rushing to Obama events, bringing their children, celebrating it, saying they were, there’s this part of history....The American people are smart, they can see this. That’s why Obama’s on every magazine cover.... There’s no question in my mind the media has been more supportive of Senator Obama.”

— NPR’s **Juan Williams** on *Fox News Sunday*, October 26.

Stolen Election Paranoia

“They’re doing a lot of dirty tricks out there to eliminate a lot of voters....When you have a fraudulent agenda and you don’t have the truth on your side, you’re going to try to disenfranchise as many voters as you can....I don’t think this thing is over. I do think there is a chance of another stolen election, so don’t get too confident, folks. Get out and vote, because this could be very close.”

— Actor/activist **Tim Robbins** on HBO’s *Real Time with Bill Maher*, October 24.

Campaign 2008 Review: Barack Obama’s Media Groupies

Love at First Sight

“I think the real breakout tonight is [Illinois Senate candidate Barack] Obama. I mean, Teresa [Heinz-Kerry] is a fascinating story, but Obama is a rock star!”

— NBC’s **Andrea Mitchell** during MSNBC’s live coverage of the Democratic convention, July 27, 2004.

“I have to tell ya — a little chill in my, in my legs now. That is an amazing moment in history right there. It is really an amazing moment. A keynoter like I’ve never heard....I’ve just seen the first black president there!”

— MSNBC’s **Chris Matthews** following Obama’s speech before the Democratic convention, July 27, 2004.

Run, Barack, Run!

“Obama’s personal appeal is made manifest when he steps down from the podium and is swarmed by well-wishers of all ages and hues....Obama seemed the political equivalent of a rainbow — a sudden preternatural event inspiring awe and ecstasy....He transcends the racial divide so effortlessly that it seems reasonable to expect that he can bridge all the other divisions — and answer all the impossible questions — plaguing American public life.”

— *Time*’s **Joe Klein**, October 23, 2006 cover story, “Why Barack Obama Could Be the Next President.”

“Many people, afterwards [after Obama’s 2004 convention speech], they weren’t sure how to pronounce your name but they were moved by you. People were crying. You tapped into something. You touched people....If your party says to you, ‘We need you,’ and, and there’s already a drumbeat out there, will you respond?”

— Co-host **Meredith Vieira** to Obama on NBC’s *Today*, October 19, 2006.

Is He “The One?”

“You can see it in the crowds. The thrill, the hope. How they surge toward him. You’re looking at an American political phenomenon....He inspires the party faithful and many others, like no one else on the scene today....And the question you can sense on everyone’s mind, as they listen so intently to him: Is he the one? Is Barack Obama the man, the black man, who could lead the Democrats back to the White House and maybe even unite the country?...Everywhere he goes, people want him to run for President, especially in Iowa, cradle of presidential contenders. Around here, they’re even naming babies after him.”

— ABC *Nightline* co-anchor **Terry Moran**, Nov. 6, 2006.

Mesmerized by “Stoic Eloquence”

“Now to Barack Obama. When I spent the day with him in Iowa over the weekend, you could sense the excitement he nearly always generates....Whatever he’s eating, it is working for Obama....Here as elsewhere, the crowd listens closely to Barack Obama’s real argument, that he is tomorrow, a fresh face who represents a real change from our bitter polarized politics....When you talk to Iowa voters who come to hear Obama, you get the sense they know they might be part of something big here, something historic.”

— ABC’s **Terry Moran** on *Nightline*, November 26, 2007.

“They come in droves, by the tens of thousands at times, to hear Barack Obama speak....With soaring rhetoric, Obama is moving his audiences not just politically, but emotionally. Even some political commentators who’ve seen it all can’t help but gush....The stoic eloquence channels John F. Kennedy.”

— CBS’s **Tracy Smith** on the *The Early Show*, February 14.

Swept Up by the Dream Machine

“Inside Obama’s Dream Machine; An icon of hope, he won’t ‘kneecap’ his foes. But Obama knows what it takes, and how to win.”

— **Headline and subheadline of *Newsweek*’s January 14 cover story on Obama.**

“It’s almost hard to remain objective because it’s infectious, the energy, I think. It sort of goes against your core to say that as a reporter, but the crowds have gotten so much bigger, his energy has gotten stronger. He feeds off that.”

— **NBC reporter Lee Cowan in an MSNBC.com video about the Obama campaign posted January 7.**

The Ultimate Obama Fan

Senator Barack Obama: “Let’s roll back the Bush tax cuts on the wealthiest Americans, let’s make certain that those resources go to the people who need it...We’re not going to solve it by pretending that issues of poverty and struggle among working families are just going to go away magically because the stock market is going up.”

Moderator Chris Matthews: “So much of what you say just grabs people like me, because it sounds like Bobby Kennedy. It sounds like the ‘60s at its absolute best.”

— **Exchange at AFSCME Democratic candidates forum shown live on MSNBC, June 19, 2007.**

“He’s come from a white family and a black family, and he’s married to a black woman, and they’re cool people. They are really cool. They are Jack and Jackie Kennedy when you see them together. They are cool. And they’re great-looking, and they’re cool and they’re young.”

— **MSNBC’s Chris Matthews talking about the Obamas on NBC’s *Tonight Show*, January 16.**

Co-anchor Chris Matthews: “I have to tell you, you know, it’s part of reporting this case, this election, the feeling most people get when they hear Barack Obama’s speech. My — I felt this thrill going up my leg. I mean, I don’t have that too often.”

Co-anchor Keith Olbermann: “Steady.”

Matthews: “No, seriously. It’s a dramatic event. He speaks about America in a way that has nothing to do with politics. It has to do with the feeling we have about our country. And that is an objective assessment.”

— **Exchange during MSNBC’s coverage of the Virginia, Maryland and Washington D.C. primaries, February 12.**

Obama’s Publicists at CBS

Reporter Jeff Glor: “In addition to enjoying basketball and cycling during down time, Obama loves to play Scrabble....Obama’s job as a teenager was at a Baskin-Robbins, and to this day he does not like ice cream....This is a man who plays to win. No matter what it is, whether it’s the woman he wants to date or elected office or board games, there is an ambition there. There is a determination.”

Co-host Julie Chen: “Sounds like presidential qualities.”

— **Running down “Five Things You Should Know” about Barack Obama on CBS’s *The Early Show*, June 18.**

Holding Obama’s Feet to the Fire

“On the bus ride along the snowy road to Lebanon, New Hampshire, I showed him this week’s *Newsweek*, hot off the presses. [to Obama] How does this feel, of all the honors that have come your way, all the publicity?...Who does it make you think of? Is there, is there a loved one?”

— **NBC’s Brian Williams on the January 7 *Nightly News*.**

Anchor Brian Williams: “Last time we were together, I handed you a copy of *Newsweek*. It was the first time you’d held it in your hands with you on the cover. Have you yet held this [*Time* magazine cover declaring Obama the winner of the primaries] in your hands?”

Senator Barack Obama: “No, I don’t want to. Because the last time it was in New Hampshire and I ended up losing. So...I’m not taking any chances.”

Williams: “Last time, you looked at it and you thought instantly of your mom.”

Obama: “She’d like that picture. She always encouraged me to smile more.”

— **NBC *Nightly News*, May 8.**

Gushing Over “Son of Camelot”

“Today they gathered by the thousands at American University, sensing a moment of history. John F. Kennedy gave the commencement address here five months before he was shot. And today, the audacity of hope had its rendezvous with destiny. The Kennedy clan anointed Barack Obama a son of Camelot.”

— **ABC’s David Wright on the January 28 *World News*, reporting on Ted Kennedy’s endorsement of Obama.**

“The endorsement brought the Kennedy mystique to this campaign, not in a whisper, but a roar.”

— **NBC’s Lee Cowan on the January 28 *Nightly News*.**

Beware of Nasty Republicans

“Have you stopped to think what the Obama version of Swift Boating might be in this campaign cycle if you get to the general election? What they did to John Kerry, what’s that version going to be with Barack Obama?”

— **NBC’s Matt Lauer to Obama on *Today*, February 19.**

For Barack’s Sake, Ignore Wright

“Every time he [Reverend Jeremiah Wright] appears, he just gives legitimacy and a hunger by those who oppose Barack Obama to re-run those tapes, to keep him at the center of controversy, to let this overhang and define Barack Obama....I think it’s time for him to get off the stage and frankly, for the media, I suggest, to move on.”

— **CNN’s David Gergen during live coverage, April 28.**

Co-host John Roberts: “I want to just stipulate at the beginning of this interview, we are declaring a Reverend Wright-free zone today. So, no questions about Reverend Wright....Is that okay with you?”

Barack Obama: “Fair enough. That sounds just fine.”

— **CNN’s *American Morning*, May 5.**

Hailing “Extraordinary” Eloquence

“Welcome to *World News*. Tonight, Barack Obama delivers a major speech confronting the race issue head on....It may turn out to be the seminal speech of his presidential campaign....Obama challenged Americans to confront the country’s racial divide. An extraordinary speech.”

— **Charles Gibson opening ABC’s *World News*, March 18.**

“It was without question a defining moment in American political history.”

— **Co-host Maggie Rodriguez, CBS’s *Early Show*, Mar. 19.**

“A speech worthy of Abraham Lincoln....I think this is the kind of speech I think first graders should see, people in the last year of college should see before they go out in the world. This should be, to me, an American tract. Something that you just check in with, now and then, like reading *Great Gatsby* and *Huckleberry Finn*....One of the great speeches in American history.”

— **MSNBC’s Chris Matthews talking about Barack Obama’s speech on race relations, March 18 *Hardball*.**

Obama’s Magical Media Tour

“In this city where John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton all made famous speeches, Obama will find himself stepping into perhaps another iconic moment Thursday as his superstar charisma meets German adoration live in shadows of the Reichstag and the Brandenburg Gate....It’s not only Obama’s youth, eloquence and energy that have stolen hearts across the Atlantic....Obama has raised expectations of a chance for the nation to redeem itself in the role that — at various times through history — Europe has loved, respected and relied upon.”

— **Associated Press writers Matt Moore and Melissa Eddy in a July 22 dispatch.**

Anchor Brian Williams: “Here in Berlin today, not far from where the wall once stood, the man from Chicago, Illinois, the first ever African-American running as presumptive nominee of the Democratic Party, brought throngs of people into the center of Berlin, streaming into this city, surging to get close to him, to hear his message....I heard one American reporter tonight say it’s hard to come up with a list of others who could draw such a crowd, but then again it’s hard to know what we witnessed here today.”

Correspondent Andrea Mitchell: “It’s hard to figure out what the comparison is....It was his largest crowd ever, more than 200,000 people. And before this group he promised Europe that he would repair its strained relationship with the United States.”

— **NBC *Nightly News*, July 24.**

Obama Is “Something Special”

“Presidential campaigns have destroyed many bright and capable politicians. But there’s ample evidence that [Senator Barack] Obama is something special, a man who makes difficult tasks look easy, who seems to touch millions of diverse people with a message of hope that somehow doesn’t sound Pollyannaish.”

— **AP writer Charles Babington in a May 10 dispatch.**

Journalists Hooked on Obama

Host Howard Kurtz: “Are journalists rooting for the Obama story?”

The *Politico*’s John Harris, referring to the *Washington Post*: “It wouldn’t surprise me that there’s some of that....A couple years ago, you would send a reporter out with Obama, and it was like they needed to go through detox when they came back — ‘Oh, he’s so impressive, he’s so charismatic,’ and we’re kind of like, ‘Down, boy.’”

— **Exchange on CNN’s *Reliable Sources*, January 13.**

Impressing His Base

“In many ways it was less a speech than a symphony. It moved quickly, it had high tempo, at times inspiring, then it became more intimate, slower, all along sort of interweaving a main theme about America’s promise, echoes of Lincoln, of King, even of Reagan and of Kennedy....It was a masterpiece.”

— **CNN analyst David Gergen during live coverage following Obama’s convention speech, August 28.**

Keith Olbermann: “For 42 minutes, not a sour note and spellbinding throughout in a way usually reserved for the creations of fiction. An extraordinary political statement. Almost a fully realized, tough, crisp, insistent speech in tone and in the sense of cutting through the clutter....I’d love to find something to criticize about it. You got anything?”

Chris Matthews: “No. You know I’ve been criticized for saying he inspires me, and to hell with my critics!...You know in the Bible they talk about Jesus serving the good wine last, I think the Democrats did the same.”

— **MSNBC live convention coverage, August 28.**

Mocking Obama’s Media Groupies

“I think there is a problem, though, with the media gushing over him too much. I don’t think he thinks that he’s all that, but the media does. I mean, the [Democratic convention] coverage after, that I was watching, from MSNBC, I mean these guys were ready to have sex with him.”

— **HBO’s Bill Maher on *Real Time*, August 29.**

Notable Quotables

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