



SPECIAL REPORT

AN IN-DEPTH STUDY, ANALYSIS OR REVIEW EXPLORING THE MEDIA

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Meet the Real Katie Couric

CBS's New Star Adores Liberals, Scolds Conservatives — And Thinks America Should Be More Like France

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In TV ads promoting Couric's arrival, outgoing interim anchor Bob Schieffer claimed: "She's tough, she's fair, she's a straight-shooter....Just watch." But meeting with TV critics in early July, Couric suggested a desire to supplant journalistic objectivity with activism. "There are cases where we can be more solution-oriented," Couric proposed.

If her track record is a reliable guide, any policy "solutions" promoted by the *CBS Evening News with Katie Couric* will likely consist of tiresome liberal clichés: greater burdens on private business, more spending, more taxes and a bigger role for government. Media Research Center analysts have documented Couric's liberal slant since the day she started on *Today* back in 1991. Over the years, Couric has embraced liberal politicians, admired Europe's nanny states, and harshly castigated conservatives in general and the religious right in particular.

Couric's years on *Today* have seen her liberal skew on full display. This report presents a detailed accounting of the kind of bias that's likely to greet viewers of the *CBS Evening News* starting in September.

Meet the Real Katie Couric

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After more than two decades in which Dan Rather used his *CBS Evening News* anchor desk as a soapbox to punish conservatives and promote liberals — years in which the *Evening News* tumbled from the undisputed ratings leader to a poor third place among the nightly newscasts — CBS has elevated Katie Couric, the longtime co-host of NBC's *Today*, to sit as Rather's permanent replacement.

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If her track record is a reliable guide, any policy "solutions" promoted by the *CBS Evening News with Katie Couric* will likely consist of tiresome liberal clichés: greater burdens on private business, more spending, more taxes and a bigger role for government. Media Research Center analysts have documented Couric's liberal slant since the day she started on *Today* back in 1991. Over the years, Couric has embraced liberal politicians, admired Europe's nanny states, and harshly castigated conservatives in general and the religious right in particular.

Hillary Clinton has long been a Couric favorite. Back in 1992, Couric tossed these softballs Hillary's way: "Do you think the American people are ready for a First Lady who is that involved at a policy making level at the White House?" As for the public's negative view of Hillary's overreaching, Couric asked the then-future First Lady: "Do you think those kinds of reactions, Mrs. Clinton, are the result of good old-fashioned sexism?"

Eleven years later, after Hillary had moved from the White House to the U.S. Senate, Couric was still banging the same drum. Referring to Hillary's critics, Couric in 2003

presented Mrs. Clinton as unfairly victimized: "Were you surprised at the backlash, the really vitriolic, violent backlash against you in many ways? Do you think it was good old-fashioned sexism?"

Katie Couric's feminism is rarely far from the surface. Hearing that the liberal Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi had won the race to become the Democrats' House Leader, Couric cheered on air: "You go, girl!" In 2005, she fretted that the women's movement had not accomplished more: "Working mothers still struggle with inadequate, costly child care, and workplaces that are far from family friendly."

Couric has often argued that the government should play a greater role in raising America's children. Last year, she told a guest, "This country is pretty far behind in providing really superior child care for working parents, right?" In 1995, she touted France's government-subsidized child care centers. "The system works because the French make it work. Child care is a national priority and is neither debated nor questioned," she enthused. "Sounds like America could learn a lot from the way the French do things in terms of day care."

Six years later, she smiled on France's economically ill-advised attempt to force a mandatory 35-hour work week. "So great, that young mother being able to come home at 3:00 every day and spend time with her child. Isn't that nice? The French, they've got it right, don't they?"

As Couric saw it, Cuba's communist tyranny has been a success. Profiling Cuba's "charismatic" dictator Fidel Castro in 1992, Couric naively gushed: "His revolution delivered. Campaigns stamped out illiteracy and even today, Cuba has one of the lowest infant mortality rates in the world."

She absurdly described ex-Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein as someone whose regime saved lives, rather than took them by the tens of thousands. "No matter how deplorable Saddam Hussein was considered," she lectured Senator John McCain in 2004, "he was the ultimate referee who kept the Sunnis and the Shiites apart from killing each other."

In her years on *Today*, Couric echoed liberal attack ads targeting conservatives as "rigid" and "intolerant." At the 1992 GOP convention, she confronted Vice President Dan Quayle: "Abortion rights have been totally ignored in this platform; gay rights not acknowledged.... Do you think the Republican Party has grown, or become, too exclusionary, too intolerant, and that this kind of rhetoric is divisive and counterproductive?"

After Republicans swept the congressional races two years later, Couric blamed it on "angry" voters: "What do you think is behind the so-called surliness of the voters," she asked newly-elected GOP Senator Olympia Snowe. "Why do you think they're so angry?"

Couric was quick to finger the religious right for the murder of gay college student Matthew Shepard in 1998, touting left-wing activists' claims of "a climate of anti-gay hate that's been fostered by the political right." She told NRA President Charlton Heston he

should push for “greater restrictions” on guns after a spate of school shootings. She disparaged conservative talk radio, asserting that “as a matter of fact, they tend to be quite divisive and sort of have a bad, a negative impact on the country.”

In 1999, Couric decided to begin the *Today* show by insulting Ronald Reagan: “Good morning. The Gipper was an airhead!” Two days later, the author of the Reagan biography she was supposedly summarizing told Couric she’d gotten it exactly backwards: “Oh, good God, no!” author Edmund Morris upbraided Couric. “He was a very bright man.”

But Couric took other opportunities to bash the Gipper. She suggested to William F. Buckley that the Reagan-Bush years had left a “negative deposit” on the country, noting how “people on the other side of the political spectrum....might say that greed and materialism was the norm then, and that social ills were largely ignored, and therefore only worsened as a result of that neglect.”

And in 2003, after conservatives succeeded in getting CBS to scrap plans to air a derogatory mini-series on the 40th President, Couric seemed alarmed: “Some are wondering if the former President is totally off-limits to criticism these days.” She fretted: “Is Ronald Reagan untouchable?”

While Reagan’s critics were not to be suppressed, those who criticized Bill Clinton often felt Couric’s wrath. At the height of the Lewinsky scandal, Couric disparaged the President’s accusers. “Are there a bunch of self-righteous hypocrites on Capitol Hill?” she asked commentator Pat Buchanan. A few months later, Couric introduced a profile of Linda Tripp: “Many people think of her as the ultimate betrayer.” And when former aide George Stephanopoulos wrote about his years with the Clintons, Couric scolded him for revealing too much about their marriage: “Is nothing sacred?”

Couric’s years on *Today* have seen her liberal skew on full display. The next pages present a detailed accounting of the kind of bias that’s likely to greet viewers of the *CBS Evening News* starting in September.

Hardworking Hillary vs. Sexist America

■ “Do you think the American people are ready for a First Lady who is that involved at a policy making level in the White House?...Some people say some not so flattering things about you. They say you’re the ‘power behind the throne,’ ‘overly ambitious.’ What’s your reaction to comments such as those?...Do you think those kinds of reactions, Mrs. Clinton, are the result of good, good old-fashioned sexism?”

— **Questioning Hillary Clinton on *Today*, April 2, 1992.**

■ “Do you think the American people are not ready for someone who is as accomplished and career-oriented as Hillary Clinton?”

— **Interviewing Hillary Clinton on *Today*, August 24, 1992.**

■ “Giving Senator Clinton her due, though we talk about her feminine wiles, she has also won a great deal of respect by working very, very hard, and by not pulling any kind of prima donna act....It’s been quite remarkable. Because she is so disliked and, and the conservative Republicans speak of her in such vitriolic terms, that they’re like putty in her hands up there! I mean many of them said, ‘Oh, my constituents will kill me, but I really like her.’”

— **Observation made to Gail Sheehy, discussing a gushing profile of Hillary Clinton that Sheehy wrote for the August issue of *Vanity Fair*, on NBC’s *Today*, July 16, 2001.**

■ “Clearly, you felt uncomfortable with the traditional role, or some aspects of the traditional role, alone, of First Lady. But clearly some people didn’t cotton to the notion of a co-presidency.... Were you surprised at the backlash, the really vitriolic, violent backlash against you in many ways? Do you think it was good old-fashioned sexism?”

— **To Hillary Clinton on *Today*, June 10, 2003.**

Katie Plays Hardball with Hillary

Katie Couric: “Let’s play complete the sentence. If I weren’t a politician, I would be-?”

Hillary Clinton: “A teacher.”

Couric: “The thing I hate the most about myself is-?”

Clinton: “Hmmm. Probably my impatience from, you know, time to time. I just think I have to take some deep breaths, and just accept things the way they are.”

Couric: “My guiltiest pleasure is-?”

Clinton: “Chocolate. Any kind, any time, anywhere.”

Couric: “I’m proudest that-?”

Clinton: “I’m proudest that I raised a wonderful daughter, that you know, I got to be a mother. And had such an extraordinary experience doing that.”

Couric: “I would like my tombstone to say-?”

Clinton: “I hope no time soon. ‘She did her best to live every day, to the fullest.’”

— **NBC’s *Dateline*, April 19, 2004.**

Feeling Her Feminism

■ “We decided to take a look at just how far the women’s movement has come in the past 30 years....Is feminism dead? By the looks of this March in Washington D.C. last April, more than a million strong, it’s alive and well and attracting a whole new following....New people, new energy, new attitudes....[But] while nearly as many women are now in the workforce as men, they are still paid less — about 76 cents for every dollar a man makes, up from 59 cents in the seventies. For poorer women stuck in lower income jobs the gap is even wider....And working mothers still struggle with inadequate, costly child care, and workplaces that are far from family friendly....In a culture that sometimes celebrates women more for their breasts than their brains, it’s important to recognize the doors that have been opened.”

— ***Today*, February 8, 2005.**

■ **Ann Curry:** “Today House Democrats are poised to pick Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi as Minority Leader. The California Democrat would be the first woman ever elected a party leader in Congress. It is now 7:07 a.m. You are now up to date from the news desk. Let’s now turn back to Matt, Katie and Al.”

Katie Couric: “Is it okay to say, ‘You go girl!’?”

Curry: “I think it’s okay. It’s gonna happen in either case.”

— **NBC’s *Today*, November 14, 2002.**

■ **Katie Couric:** "Our next guest is best known as Dr. Lilith Crane on NBC's hit comedy *Cheers* and *Frasier*. But in her new film *Tadpole* she plays a sexy 40 year-old chiropractor who beds a 15 year-old boy....I loved the movie, and it seems very French to me for some reason in its sensibilities....You know, a lot of people, including the *Today* show, have glommed onto this whole notion of older women, younger men. It's sort of like, you know, the older woman—" **Actress Bebe Neuwirth:** "Not a bad way to go by the way." **Couric:** "I was gonna say, 'The older woman's revenge,' finally!" — **NBC's *Today*, August 1, 2002.**

The Whore Next Door?

"Most of us don't think of hookers as sisters, mothers, daughters, or the girls next door, but of course, that's who they are."
— ***Today*, July 26, 1993.**

■ "Thomas Jefferson was the very first Secretary of State and 62 men followed after him until 1997 and the selection of Madeleine Albright....Madeleine Albright's new book, *Madam Secretary, A Memoir*, goes on sale today. Madam Secretary, good morning. Nice to have you....At the time that you were selected to be Secretary of State, there was lots of speculation that might be you, or it might be someone like Senator George Mitchell. And there were published stories at the time that listed you as a second-tier candidate. Do you think that was because you're a woman?" — **To Madeleine Albright on *Today*, September 16, 2003.**

Katie Outed As Abortion Activist?

■ **Katie Couric:** "So you write about choice meaning what?" **Actress/comedian Whoopi Goldberg:** "Well because, you know, when you get out there and you march, because we've marched together." **Couric, giggling:** "Nooo. I'm not allowed to do that." **Goldberg, staring upward:** "Oh, no, that's right. We have not marched together. It was somebody that looked like you. Uh, I forget where I am sometimes." **Couric:** "You were talking about, want me to remind you? About the pro-choice movement and what pro-choice means to you?" — **Exchange on *Today* during interview about Goldberg's new book, September 29, 1997.**

Hell Hath No Fury...

■ "You know you, you angered a lot of feminists when you accused Anita Hill. In fact, you detailed how she changed her testimony during questioning, during the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings. And you accused of her publicly, quote, 'Flat out perjury.' Any regrets?" — **To Senator Arlen Specter, March 6, 2001 *Today*.**

■ "You talked, Anita, about some of the very supportive letters you've gotten, and some of the letters that have touched you. Have you received any hate mail?...They find you offensive, most of all, because you are a black woman?...Twenty years from now, fifty years from now, when people look back at these hearings, how do you want them to think of you?" — **Questions to Anita Hill, October 7, 1992 *Today*.**

Envyng Europe's Nanny States

■ “Ninety percent of France’s three- to five-year-olds attend government subsidized centers like this one....The system works because the French make it work. Child care is a national priority and is neither debated nor questioned....Sounds like Americans could learn a lot from the way the French do things in terms of day care.”

— *Today*, May 5, 1995.

■ **Keith Miller:** “Break out the band, bring on the drinks. The French are calling it a miracle. A government-mandated 35-hour work week is changing the French way of life. Two years ago, in an effort to create more jobs, the government imposed a shorter work week on large companies, forcing them to hire more workers....These American women, all working in France, have time for lunch and a life.”

Avivah Wittenberg-Cox: “More Americans should be more aware that an economy as successful as the French one managed to be successful without giving up everything else in life.”

Katie Couric, following the end of Miller’s taped piece: “So great that young mother being able to come home at three every day and spend that time with her child. Isn’t that nice? The French, they’ve got it right, don’t they?”

— *NBC’s Today*, August 1, 2001.

■ “You know the U.S. is the only industrialized nation, I didn’t know this until today, that doesn’t spend federal money promoting tourism. Do you think it should?”

— **Question to Maryland Governor Parris Glendening on the October 1, 2001 *Today*. Glendening, a liberal Democrat, said no.**

■ **Katie Couric:** “So many Americans feel overworked, and I have a statistic — 30 percent do not take their full vacation. I mean, is there something wrong with this picture? Are we too obsessed with work, because the Europeans sure have a very different attitude don’t they?”

Former GE Chairman Jack Welch: “And their economy is some trouble.”

— *Today*, April 4, 2005.

■ **Katie Couric:** “This country is pretty far behind in providing really superior child care for working parents, right?”

Diane Debrovner, *Parents* magazine: “For a country that says that we believe in family values, there’s a lot that we can do....Every mother in Europe is guaranteed 14 weeks paid maternity leave. Women in this country get 12 weeks of unpaid leave only if they work for a company that has more than 50 employees.”

— *NBC’s Today*, October 4, 2005.

Bill Clinton Deserved Even More Fawning Coverage

■ “Why do you think that he doesn’t get credit for the good news that’s going on? And if Reagan was the ‘Teflon President,’ it seems like Bill Clinton is the ‘Velcro President’ — every bad piece of news just sticks to him.”

— **Questioning new Democratic National Committee adviser Tony Coelho on *NBC’s Today*, August 18, 1994.**

Distressed by Clinton Under Fire

■ “I also read in the many things that have been written about your son and his childhood that he used to walk to church alone with a Bible under his arm....[During the campaign] he, of course, has been the target of a lot of controversy involving allegations of marital infidelity, draft dodging, not inhaling. Are these legitimate campaign issues, in your view?...How tough has it been for you, Ms. Kelley, to witness this, to see these in many ways, character assassinations, and negative comments made about your son?”

— **Questions to Bill Clinton’s mother Virginia Kelley on the July 16, 1992 *Today*.**

■ “The woman who started it all. For the past year or so, four words have described Linda Tripp’s relationship with Monica Lewinsky — perhaps those four words are, ‘With friends like these....’ Well, Linda Tripp knows full well that her reputation proceeds her, that many people think of her as the ultimate betrayer, so she’s, in an effort to rehabilitate her image, is speaking out and she’s done so with our national correspondent Jamie Gangel.”

— **Introducing a story on Tripp on *Today*, February 12, 1999.**

■ “A lot of people, George, think that this is just kinda creepy, that you’ve done this. They see you as a turncoat, a Linda Tripp type, if you will, who sort of ingratiated himself with the people inside the White House. They made you who you became and now all of a sudden, you’re telling, you’re airing all the dirty laundry, and some people just think that’s sorta gross.”

“But aren’t some situations off limits? I mean, you talk very candidly about the President’s relationship with Mrs. Clinton. You had entree to situations that most people wouldn’t. I mean you were sitting there — or standing there — once when the President was in his boxer shorts and Hillary came in and they kissed and you witnessed conversations. I mean, is nothing sacred?”

— **First two questions to former Clinton advisor George Stephanopoulos, author of *All Too Human*, March 12, 1999 *Today*.**

■ “With the exception of the pardon of Marc Rich and some other moves that probably were somewhat questionable, would you concede this morning that it’s gotten to the point where there is a bit of piling on going on here? I mean, it seems to me that he has done some things that other Presidents have done in the past. I mean, you look at other presidential libraries, they are filled with things that those Presidents got during their years at the White House. And yet somehow it’s become a high crime for Bill Clinton to take some of these things with him to put in his presidential library.”

— **To Chris Matthews and Mike Barnicle, referring to the Clintons’ removal of furniture donated to the White House, not them personally, February 20, 2001 *Today*.**

■ “Is it disappointing for both you and your husband that his detractors and critics continue to pursue him?”

— **To Senator Hillary Clinton on NBC’s *Today*, November 18, 2004.**

Selling Both Clintons as “Candid”

“Hillary’s heartache: Senator Clinton reveals how she learned the painful truth about her husband and Monica Lewinsky....She’s very candid about a very personal matter.”

— ***Today*, June 4, 2003.**

“True confessions. A candid President Clinton talks about his political accomplishments and personal demons.”

— **Opening the June 21, 2004 *Today*.**

“Many people have remarked how open and candid you’ve been in the book.”

— **Interviewing former President Bill Clinton on *Today*, June 23, 2004.**

Clinton's Impeachment Orchestrated by Self-Righteous Hypocrites

■ “We’ve been hearing though, in recent days, Pat, [Congressman] Dan Burton say that he fathered a child out of wedlock. Congresswoman Helen Chenoweth say that, even despite the fact she campaigned on family values and won as a result of that campaign, admit that she had an affair with a married man for several years. I mean, are there a bunch of self-righteous hypocrites on Capitol Hill?”

– *Today* co-host **Katie Couric to Pat Buchanan, September 14, 1998.**

■ **Katie Couric:** “Most people in this country, according to the polls, do not believe impeachment hearings should go forward. Are you afraid of a backlash against the GOP?”

Rep. Asa Hutchinson (R-AR): “Well, the greatest concern for a backlash would be that the American people perceive that we’re being unfair, overly partisan in this battle and trying to be vindictive.”

Couric: “Don’t you think they perceive that right now?”

– *NBC’s Today, October 5, 1998.*

Bill Clinton, Ethics Expert

■ “President Clinton, as you well know, President Bush has been under fire recently because Karl Rove allegedly released the identity of a CIA agent to reporters. President Bush has said it’s a fireable offense now if a crime was committed, but in your view is the ethical violation enough to warrant dismissal?”

– *Interviewing former President Bill Clinton on NBC’s Today, July 21, 2005.*

Deploring Ronald Reagan

■ “When you talk about leaving a deposit, many people say that the Reagan-Bush administration, people on the other side of the political spectrum, did leave a negative deposit, or really, the opposite of a deposit. The federal budget quadrupled under that administration. They might say that greed and materialism was the norm then, and that social ills were largely ignored, and therefore only worsened as a result of that neglect.”

– *Interviewing William F. Buckley Jr., on the September 20, 1993 Today.*

■ “All this week you all have made much of Al Gore’s exaggerations but the same things were often said about Ronald Reagan who would pass off as true stories things he had seen in the movies. You know Republicans brushed that off as part of Ronald Reagan’s charms or charm but now you cite it as a major character flaw when it comes to Al Gore. Why was it charming then and not presidential now?”

– *To Bush campaign spokeswoman Karen Hughes, October 11, 2000 NBC Today.*

■ “I can’t think of anyone more qualified to write another book about Ronald Reagan. The question is, do we need another book about Ronald Reagan?”

– *First question to former Washington Post reporter and Reagan biographer Lou Cannon on the November 26, 2001 Today.*

"The Gipper Was an Airhead!"

■ "Good morning. The Gipper was an airhead! That's one of the conclusions of a new biography of Ronald Reagan that's drawing a tremendous amount of interest and fire today, Monday, September the 27th, 1999....We're going to see why [author Edmund] Morris thinks Reagan was an airhead, but still a great President."

— **Opening *Today*, September 27, 1999.**

■ **Katie Couric:** "There has been a lot of outrage expressed by President Reagan's friends and associates about your use of the word 'airhead' to describe him. George Bush says it's brutal, grossly unfair, untrue. Ed Meese, former attorney general, said it's not fair, not true. Marlin Fitzwater, former press secretary, says it's totally inappropriate to describe the former President that way."

Reagan biographer Edmund Morris: "I agree with every single one of those. It's brutal and grossly unfair. I did not call him an 'airhead.'...What I said in the book, that appears plainly on the page, is I found him at first, 'an apparent airhead,' and the whole course of the book makes quite obvious that that first impression was wrong."

Couric: "So you do not believe today that Ronald Reagan was an airhead?"

Morris: "Oh, good God, no! He was a very bright man."

— **NBC's *Today*, September 29, 1999.**

Katie Re-Writes History

Katie Couric: "You talk about the media bias against Ronald Reagan and you use a quote in an opening from the *Today* show where we say, 'An airhead, Ronald Reagan is an airhead.' And we're quoting Edmund Morris. But, frankly, in the book you make it sound as if I was saying that, rather than Edmund Morris....I really conducted an extremely challenging interview with him [Morris] because he did eviscerate Ronald Reagan in his book. It was a very, very unflattering portrayal. The Reagans were very unhappy with it, conservatives were very unhappy with it. Afterwards Edmund Morris was unhappy with the interview and Nancy Reagan called to thank me for my line of questioning. So I'm just wondering how that jibes with your contention that somehow I'm a Ronald Reagan basher?"

Slander author Ann Coulter: "Well, I didn't call you a 'Ronald Reagan basher'....What I said was, which is true, is that the *Today* show opened, I believe it was three days in a row, with the announcement: 'Ronald Reagan was an airhead, that's the conclusion of this new book by Edmund Morris.' When Edmund Morris came on for that interview with you, he described that as a grossly unfair characterization....He said he described him as 'an apparent airhead' on a very first meeting and that the entire course of the rest of his book was contradicting that. So for the *Today* show to be opening three days in a row, 'Ronald Reagan was an airhead,' I'm sorry, that's dishonest."

— **June 26, 2002 *Today* show.**

Criticizing Reagan Bashers = Censorship

■ "While he was in office he was known as the Teflon President, Ronald Reagan. Now that CBS has pulled a controversial miniseries about him some are wondering if the former President is totally off-limits to criticism these days. We'll have more on that....Still to come this morning on *Today*, the heated debate over what can and can't be said about this country's 40th President. Is Ronald Reagan untouchable?"

— **Promoting an upcoming *Today* segment about CBS's cancellation of their anti-Reagan mini-series, November 6, 2003.**

■ "Does [it] bother you at all that one group in America, or many Americans...can basically exert this kind of political pressure and create an environment where, perhaps, free speech is not exercised?"

— **To former Reagan campaign manager Ed Rollins later on the same show.**

Chiding "Right-Wing" Cheneys

■ "I'm just curious, do you have any problems with the fact that he [Republican VP nominee Dick Cheney] did vote against Head Start — because you care so deeply about education — and against a resolution that would have allowed Nelson Mandela to be released from prison?"

— **To Colin Powell, August 1, 2000 *Today*.**

■ "Many people have described you as the true right-wing warrior of the family. You're a staunch conservative, you've spoken out against feminism, multiculturalism, you oppose trigger locks for guns....You have been described by Ken Adelman, a former arms control individual, as 'thinking all of Western civilization is in danger from the left and she has no levity about that.'"

— **Couric to Lynne Cheney, August 2, 2000 *Today*.**

"One Frosty, Two Straws?"

Katie Couric: "I know you'll be celebrating your 27th wedding anniversary, and I understand you go through a romantic ritual every year to commemorate that date. Share it with us, will you?"

Democratic VP candidate John Edwards:

"Wendy's. We go to Wendy's for our anniversary."

Couric: "That is so weird, I'm sorry....What do you say, 'One Frosty, two straws?'"

— **Interview on the July 15, 2004 *Today*.**

"Let me ask you, when your husband was voted Sexiest Politician by *People* magazine, were you, like, 'blech'? Or were you like, 'Hey! That's my man!'"

— **To Elizabeth Edwards, same interview.**

Republicans: "Rigid," "Exclusionary," "Divisive" and "Draconian"

■ "Your speech at the 1992 Republican Convention where you talked about a religious war was considered by many to be very polarizing, a real turn off, self-righteous, superior, exclusionary. Do you regret giving this speech?"

— **To Pat Buchanan on *Today*, August 14, 1996.**

■ "Do you think that he [GOP nominee Bob Dole] is in some ways paying the price for a Republican Congress that enacted, or tried to enact, measures, in the views of many were simply too harsh or too draconian?"

— **Couric to Elizabeth Dole, October 8, 1996 *Today*.**

■ "What about the abortion issue? Do you think the [Republican] party should remain as rigid vis a vis abortion to be successful in 1996?"

— **To Pat Buchanan on *Today*, February 1, 1992.**

■ "So you don't think the right wing should be so narrow-minded or rigid when it comes to abortion?"

— **To Republican National Committee chairman Haley Barbour, same show.**

■ "Abortion rights have been totally ignored in the platform; gay rights not acknowledged...Do you think the Republican Party has grown, or become, too exclusionary, too intolerant, and that this kind of rhetoric is divisive and counterproductive?"

— **Interviewing Vice President Dan Quayle on *Today*, August 19, 1992.**

Christian Conservatives Created Murderous Climate

■ “Then the fallout from the death of Matthew Shepard. The tragic beating of the college student in Wyoming has some activists in this country saying there is a climate of anti-gay hate that’s been fostered by a provocative advertising campaign by the political right in this country. We’re going to get into that debate after news and weather.”

— **Katie Couric opening the October 13, 1998 *Today*.**

■ “Some gay rights activists have said that some conservative political organizations like the Christian Coalition, the Family Research Council and Focus on Family are contributing to this anti-homosexual atmosphere by having an ad campaign saying if you are a homosexual you can change your orientation. That prompts people to say, if I meet someone who’s homosexual, I’m going to take action and try to convince them, or try to harm them. Do you believe that such groups are contributing to this climate?”

— **Interviewing Wyoming Governor Jim Geringer on the October 12, 1998 *Today*.**

■ “Let’s talk a little bit more about the right wing because I know that’s something you feel very strongly about. But this is actually not necessarily about the right wing, but perhaps a climate that some say has been established by religious zealots or Christian conservatives. There have been two recent incidents in the news I think that upset most people in this country, that is the dragging death of James Byrd, Jr., and the beating death of Matthew Shepard. I just would like you to reflect on whether you feel people in this country are increasingly intolerant, mean-spirited, etc., and what, if anything, can be done about that.”

— **Questioning former Texas Governor Ann Richards at a 92nd Street Y appearance in New York City on March 3, 1999 and shown by C-SPAN a month later.**

Don’t Forget Those Dangerous Conservative Catholics

■ “Cardinal Ratzinger’s past includes a brief membership in the Hitler Youth movement, service in the German army in World War II, which was mandatory. But given his past associations do you think that will create a rift between Christians and Jews, and what can he do to fix that?”

— **To liberal priest Father Andrew Greeley on *Today*, April 20, 2005, the day after Cardinal Ratzinger became Pope Benedict XVI. Greeley, a Ratzinger critic, dismissed her concern.**

■ “Some of the values, depending on your perspective... may be deemed wholesome, but in other ways, I think, people will see this community as eschewing diversity and promoting intolerance....Do you think the tenets of the community might result in de facto segregation as a result of some of the beliefs that are being espoused by the majority of the residents there?...You can understand how people would hear some of these things and be like, wow, this is really infringing on civil liberties and freedom of speech and right to privacy and all sorts of basic tenets that this country was founded on. Right?”

— **March 3, 2006 *Today*, questioning Domino’s Pizza founder Tom Monaghan and real-estate developer Paul Marinelli, who are building a community based on Catholic values in Ave Maria, Florida.**

GOP Win = Voters' Temper Tantrum

- "What do you think is behind the so-called surliness of the voters?...Why do you think they're so angry?"
— **Questions to Republican Senator-elect Olympia Snowe after the GOP won control of both the House and Senate, November 9, 1994 *Today*.**

Applauding a Tax-Raiser's "Courage"

- "Just last night on television I saw your opponent for Governor complaining about your record, saying how you had raised taxes, how it had cost 300,000 jobs. Are you afraid your politically courageous moves are in fact going to cost you the election?"
— **To New Jersey's Democratic Governor Jim Florio, May 24, 1993 *Today*.**

"Rejected" Contract with America?

"Speaker Gingrich and company's Contract with America was ultimately rejected by the majority of Americans and few people believe it was really behind the GOP sweep of the congressional elections in 1994. So why are Democrats trying the same approach?"

— **Katie Couric to House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt on *Today*, June 24, 1996.**

vs.

"The new Democratic agenda echoes a successful GOP strategy. In 1994, Republicans unveiled the Contract with America, which framed their national agenda in the weeks before the elections."

— **NBC's Joe Johns about 45 minutes later.**

Despairing Tax Cuts That Leave Government With "Almost No Money"

- "The bitter reality is that [with the Bush tax cuts] there's now almost no money for either party's priorities, and that complicates everything. So aren't all these discussions almost moot points?"
— **To *Newsweek's* Howard Fineman, September 5, 2001 *Today*. At the time, the U.S. government was taking in more than \$2 trillion annually.**

- "The economy was thriving when you were Treasury Secretary and during the, the Clinton administration. It was even called 'Rubin-nomics' for awhile there, right?...Since then the tax cuts of 2001 and 2003 — which you have been an outspoken critic of, P.S. — have taken effect. We've gone from what was a projected 10-year surplus of over \$5 trillion to a projected 10-year deficit of over \$5 trillion."
— **To Robert Rubin, Secretary of the Treasury during the Clinton administration, November 19, 2003 *Today*.**

"Right Wing Conservatives" Desire Dirty Air

- "A lot of people, though, have been highly critical of the Bush administration on the environment. They say that you came to the EPA with incredibly strong environmentalist credentials. And yet, you know, every proposal that you've tried to put forward has gotten a kibosh by right-wing conservatives within the administration....The bottom line is do you, Christie Whitman, feel comfortable with the Bush administration's environmental policies?"
— **To EPA Administrator Christine Todd Whitman on the December 2, 2002 *Today*.**

Eeek! Katie Can't Stand Those Scary, Dirty SUVs

■ **Katie Couric:** "I see a lot of SUVs on the road, and I don't drive one — they scare me a little bit because I feel like they could squash me like a bug in the event of an accident....Before we go, what about the environmental impact of these cars? They're huge gas guzzlers, they're not particularly good for the environment. How come you're not emphasizing that as well?"

Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal: "Well we will. Stay tuned."

— *Today*, February 1, 2005, after Blumenthal outlined how he would use money from a settlement with Ford to pay for an advertising campaign encouraging safe SUV driving.

Let's Take Up a Collection

■ **Co-host Matt Lauer:** "Pain at the pump. Gas prices are going sky high. I paid \$2.94 a gallon over the weekend to fill up the car."

Katie Couric: "It's ridiculous. I had to take out a loan to fill up my minivan. It's crazy."

— Exchange at the top of NBC's *Today*, August 15, 2005. Couric makes about \$15,000,000 a year.

Scolding NRA For Supporting Gun Rights

■ "Speaking of gun safety and children, Mr. Heston, as you well know, and in fact as everyone in this country knows, there has been a spate of school shootings recently that have been quite disturbing to all Americans. Given the fact that these seem to be happening with greater frequency has it caused you to rethink your philosophy about children and guns and the accessibility of guns for children?"

— Interviewing the NRA's new President, actor Charlton Heston, June 8, 1998 *Today*.

■ **Katie Couric:** "Getting back to kids and guns, if you will indulge me for a moment. You cannot think of any other position the NRA could take in terms of trying to decrease the number of school shootings? You feel like this is not your bailiwick, this is not your problem?"

Charlton Heston: "Not at all. As I told you the NRA spends more money, more time..."

Couric, cutting him off: "Other than education."

Heston: "Well, what would you suppose? What would you suggest?"

Couric: "I don't know, perhaps greater restrictions."

— More from the same interview on the June 8, 1998 *Today*.

Activist Anti-Gun Mom Aiding "All of Mankind"

■ "With Mother's Day coming up this Sunday, we wanted to salute the hard work, integrity and love moms show us every day, so this morning we invited three women who have made their own special contribution to motherhood and, as I said earlier, to all of mankind, in fact. Donna Dees-Thomases founded the Million Mom March...Donna, you organized the Million Mom March, and it really was such a grassroots movement of stroller moms, right? Tell me how it came about."

— Introduction and question to activist Donna Dees-Thomases, NBC's *Today*, May 11, 2001.

Fawning Over Jimmy the Great

■ “President Carter, you are now considered one of the world’s foremost statesmen. You’ve been called the best ex-President this country has ever had. Your reputation has been bolstered tremendously since you left office. How does that make you feel?”

— **To Jimmy Carter on *Today*, November 13, 1991.**

■ “I mean, it’s so wonderful...and so well-deserved.”

— **Reacting to news that former President Carter had been given the Nobel Peace Prize, October 11, 2002 *Today*.**

■ “President Carter’s crowning achievement, of course, the Camp David Accords, designed to forge peace in the Middle East. Unfortunately, that seems like a distant memory, but it’s so nice to see former President Jimmy Carter honored this way [with a Nobel Peace Prize]....It’s a terrific honor for him for all the work he did while he was President and, of course, he is considered by many as one of the finest former Presidents this country has ever seen. Once again, we send our heartfelt congratulations to President Jimmy Carter.”

— **December 10, 2002 *Today*.**

■ “I know it really bugs you when people say what a great ex-President you have been....You once said of your years post-White House, ‘I feel truer to myself. I’m more a missionary than a politician. I’m really where I belong. I don’t have anything to fear now.’ ...Is there anything you don’t do?”

— **To Jimmy Carter on *Today*, October 1, 2004.**

Touting the Wonders of Jumping Jim Jeffords

■ “Jim Jeffords is the personification of one man, one vote, and his story a classic of American politics. What Jim Jeffords did simply was turn Washington on its ear. In the months following President Bush’s inauguration in January, the 67-year-old Jeffords found himself increasingly at odds with the GOP on Capitol Hill and the White House over issues ranging from education, to the environment, to the size of the tax cut, all of which forced him to examine his core beliefs....Jeffords knew and agonized that a political switch at this time in his career would affect not only him, but Republican colleagues, and his staff and family....But flying to Vermont in May, Jeffords knew he’d made the right decision....Today, Jeffords is a man at peace with himself, enjoying work on his Vermont farm, splitting logs, saving a few pennies with some inventive repair work on a wheelbarrow.”

— **Introducing a December 15, 2001 *Today* show interview with Jeffords.**

Pope Dies, Katie Frets About Jimmy’s Absence

“As President Bush travels to Rome this morning along with the First Lady, Condoleezza Rice and former Presidents Bush and Clinton, the question some people are asking is where’s President Carter in all this? Are the Bushes and the Carters the modern day version of the Hatfields and the McCoys?”

— **Opening the April 6, 2005 *Today*.**

“Were you surprised, Archbishop Foley, that President Carter was not a part of the delegation given the fact that the Pope visited President Carter at the White House?”

— **Questioning a Vatican official on *Today*, April 7, 2005.**

"Charismatic" Castro's Cuba vs...

■ "Considered one of the most charismatic leaders of the 20th century....[Fidel] Castro traveled the country cultivating his image, and his revolution delivered. Campaigns stamped out illiteracy and even today, Cuba has one of the lowest infant mortality rates in the world."

— **Reporting on Cuba's communist dictator on *Today*, February 13, 1992.**

The "Banana Republic" of Miami

■ "Some suggested over the weekend that it's wrong to expect Elian Gonzalez to live in a place that tolerates no dissent or freedom of political expression. They were talking about Miami. All eyes on south Florida and its image this morning. Another writer this weekend called it 'an out of control banana republic within America.' What effect is the Elian Gonzalez story having on perception of Miami? We will talk with a well-known columnist for the *Miami Herald*."

— **Opening the April 3, 2000 *Today*.**

Ugh, the Last Thing We Want Is a Bunch of Flag-Waving Americans

"Obviously, the opening ceremony, the games themselves will be very patriotic in feel. And yet sometimes the international community can interpret that as arrogant nationalism. Obviously, you've gotta balance those two things. Are you all, clearly you're mindful of that. How are you, how are you going to do that?"

— **Interviewing Salt Lake Olympic Committee Creative Director Scott Givens on *Today*, February 8, 2002.**

Saddam Hussein: Mass-Murdering Dictator or a "Referee" Who Saved Lives

■ "Senator McCain, are you concerned that if the transfer of power does take place on June 30th that a huge vacuum will be created and it will be an invitation to civil war? Because no matter how deplorable Saddam Hussein was considered, he was the ultimate referee who kept the Sunnis and the Shiites apart from killing each other."

— **To Senator John McCain on *Today*, April 5, 2004.**

Softballs for Kofi Annan, Hardballs for His Critics

■ "Is your call for the Secretary's, Secretary General's resignation politically motivated in any way, and is this payback for the fact that Kofi Annan criticized the war in Iraq before the election?"

— **To Republican Senator Norm Coleman, who was investigating the UN's Oil for Food scandal, on the December 2, 2004 *Today*.**

■ "Does John Bolton have your support?...Do you wish it were someone else who had been nominated?...What do you hope your legacy will be?...You literally have the weight of the world on your shoulders."

— **To UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in an interview shown on NBC's *Today*, June 7, 2005.**

■ "Are you angry that the United States has not been more supportive of the UN?"

— **Couric to Annan in an excerpt from the same interview shown on the June 6, 2005 *NBC Nightly News*.**

President Bush "Could Have Prevented" 9/11 Plot?

- "Good morning. What did he know and when did he know it? The Bush administration admits the President was warned in an intelligence briefing last summer of the possibility that Osama bin Laden's terrorist network might hijack American planes, raising more questions about whether the attacks on America could have been prevented."
- **Couric introducing the May 16, 2002 *Today*.**

Iraq, a Debacle Worse than Vietnam

- "What are your impressions of the situation in Iraq? How bad is it, in your view?"
- **To New York Senator Hillary Clinton on the December 1, 2003 *Today*.**

- "You say commit more troops. But that's the same thing LBJ did in Vietnam. Do you worry that this is another Vietnam?"
- **To Hillary Clinton on *Dateline*, April 16, 2004.**

- "According to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld the insurgency could last another 12 years....I think most Americans say, 'Oh my goodness!' And they gasp because that seems like such an extended period of time for these very powerful, very tenacious insurgents to have control of the situation....It must be very frustrating at times to see things unraveling so."
- **To Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on *Today*, June 28, 2005.**

Touting the Influential Michael Moore

- "Love him or hate him, there's no denying Michael Moore's influence. His highly critical film of the Bush administration, *Fahrenheit 9/11*, is the highest-grossing documentary of all time. Now Michael Moore is out with a new book, *Will They Ever Trust Us Again?* It's a compilation of letters from soldiers in Iraq and their families and it is currently on many bestseller lists. Michael Moore, welcome back."
- **Couric to Moore on the January 6, 2005 *Today*. At the time, Moore's book ranked #1,547 on Amazon.com.**

Bemoaning "Ridiculous" Lack of "Campaign Finance Reform"

- "In fact, Senator Specter, as Senator Torricelli mentioned, two votes have left campaign finance reform legislation pretty much DOA. Do you think that prompts the American people to wonder about the sincerity of Congress to really enact change and suspect that perhaps this is an intentional effort to embarrass the Democratic Party?"
- "But it's so ridiculous, you know, people watching this just think that reform is necessary. They can't understand why you guys can't get your acts together!"
- **To Senator Arlen Specter, October 8, 1997 *Today*.**

Let Big Government Fix Our Woes

■ “It is clear that day care in this country is inaccessible to many, cost prohibitive for others, substandard in many situations. What can the government actually do to alleviate some of these problems?”

“Regulations for at-home day care vary so much from state to state...do you think there should be some kind of overall federal regulations?”

— **To Hillary Clinton, October 23, 1997 *Today*.**

■ “Seventy-four percent of the respondents in a recent poll think young Americans without education or job prospects is the greatest threat facing the country. If that’s the case, if that many people think this is such a serious problem, shouldn’t government be increasing its role rather than decreasing it? Many people think that your signing the welfare bill only exacerbated the situation of poor kids at risk.”

— **To President Clinton, April 28, 1997 *Today*.**

■ “It sounds like a no-brainer. Seniors spend billions of dollars on prescription drugs every year, often putting them in terrible financial situations. So what’s wrong with this plan?”

“While I appreciate your concern about medical research, certainly I feel passionately about that as well, it’s important for people who are sick now and who are experiencing problems to be able to get affordable drugs, isn’t it?”

— **Asking pharmaceutical industry spokesman Alan Holmer about President Clinton’s plan to create a new Medicare prescription drug entitlement, June 29, 1999 *Today*.**

Let’s Ban Killer Carts

■ “The safety of car seats, cribs, and toys are the concerns of all you conscientious parents. Well, now you can add shopping carts to your list. According to a recent study, shopping cart related injuries account for 25,000 trips to the emergency room every year. At least two deaths have occurred in related incidents. In the last three years, 2,000 children were hospitalized from shopping cart injuries such as skull fractures, concussions, cuts, and bruises.”

— ***Today*, March 20, 1996.**

Environmentalist Crusader Al Gore: “Hardcore Centrist”

■ “In his endorsement Tuesday Al Gore said, ‘We need to remake the Democratic party.’ You’re considered, Governor Dean, more, more left-leaning and Al Gore is considered sort of a hardcore centrist, if you will. The two of you, specifically, what do you think needs to be done to remake the Democratic party?”

— **To Howard Dean on the December 10, 2003 *Today*.**

Justice O’Connor Crossed the Line

Katie Couric: “*Bush v. Gore*. I know you don’t want to get into details at all but you did join the 5-4 vote to stop the Florida recount and that in essence delivered the White House to George Bush. Can you describe the atmosphere at all, Justice O’Connor?”

Justice Sandra Day O’Connor: “I just think that’s inappropriate.”

Couric: “That’s exactly the word some critics used to describe the decision. Critics who charged the Court had succumbed to politics, forever tarnishing its image and reputation for impartiality.”

— **NBC’s *Dateline*, January 25, 2002.**

Touting Gore's "Very Real Threat"

■ "Still to come this morning on *Today*, former President, Vice President rather — he thought he might be President — Al Gore on the very real threat of global warming, warming and his political future."

— Katie Couric on *Today*, May 24, 2006, previewing her upcoming interview with Gore about his global warming movie, *An Inconvenient Truth*.

■ **Katie Couric:** "In this movie at different turns you're funny, vulnerable, disarming, self-effacing and someone said after watching it, quote, 'If only he was like this before, maybe things would've turned out differently in 2000.'"

Al Gore: "Well, I benefit from low expectations...."

Couric: "What do you see happening in say 15 to 20 years or even 50 years if nothing changes?"

Gore: "...Sea-level increases of 20 feet or more worldwide. Of course Florida and Louisiana and Texas are particularly vulnerable. The San Francisco Bay area, Manila. And we have seen the impact of a couple hundred thousand refugees from an environmental crisis. [Footage of Hurricane Katrina] Imagine 100 million or 200 million."

Couric: "Even Manhattan would be in deep water, right?"

Gore: "Yes, in fact the World Trade Center Memorial site would be underwater....Unfortunately Mother Nature is weighing in very powerfully and very loudly."

— NBC's *Today*, May 24, 2006.

7:15: Katie Shows She's Clueless

"There's an article in the Style section of the *Washington Post* this morning. It says you've logged 26 years of personal minutiae, filling 4,400 two-by-three inch notebooks, color-coded by season. An example: '12:17' — this is when you made the announcement — 'Ascend stage, stumble, regain balance; 12:18: Applause, 'Where the Streets Have No Name,' plays (U2); 12:19: Clap, wave; 12:20: Adjust tie (red, white stripes); 12:21: Double thumbs up; 12:22: Sing along with National Anthem, right hand on heart.' What, what do you do this for?!"

— Interviewing Senator Bob Graham on *Today*, May 7, 2003, unaware the article she was quoting from was a spoof of the presidential candidate's diary.

vs.

"Last Wednesday, *Washington Post* Style writer Mark Leibovich wrote a takeoff of Sen. Bob Graham's eccentric habit of recording mundane details of his life in color-coded notebooks. It was — let's say this in capital letters — A PARODY. But the joke apparently was lost on NBC's Katie Couric, who read the notations that morning to the newly declared presidential candidate on *Today*....Graham said it was 'absurd' and that he hadn't yet made the previous day's entries. An NBC statement said only that 'Katie followed up on a story in the *Washington Post* regarding the Senator's daily log.' Yes, that's true."

— *Washington Post* media reporter Howard Kurtz in a May 12 article explaining Couric's goof.

But Scolded the Gores' Campaign for Media Responsibility

■ "It seems to be the latest rage to blame the media for almost all of society's ills. Do you think the media is shouldering a disproportionate amount of the blame for the destruction of values in today's society, when there's also the demise of social programs and the dissolution of the nuclear family and other possible explanations?"

— Interviewing Al and Tipper Gore, July 10, 1995 *Today*.

Denigrating "Divisive" Talk Radio

■ "Some people are very concerned about talk shows, radio talk shows in general, of course. Most of them around the country have a decidedly conservative bent. The rap that some people give them is that they reflect the views of a very vocal minority, the extremists in this country, and don't really reflect the true nature of political debate in the United States. And, as a matter of fact, they tend to be quite divisive and sort of have a bad, a negative impact on the country."

— To Oliver North, March 13, 1995 *Today*.

Real Bias Lies With Viewers

■ **Matt Lauer:** "You will get a lot of e-mails that'll say, 'You were too light on that conservative.' You'll go and file down your e-mails, you'll find people who say, 'You were too hard on that conservative.' It's all in your point of view. It's much less, I think, our point of view than it is the point of view of the person watching the interview."

Katie Couric: "That's true. I think really that it is sort of a Rorschach test....I think that people really see...what they want to see from their particular frame of mind, or the prism from which they're watching the program, or the interview. And I think actually, that's an excellent point, Matt."

— NBC's *Today* co-hosts during an appearance on MSNBC's *Donahue*, September 18, 2002.

One Is Bedtime Reading, the Other Is Fish Wrap

■ "Ever since the Civil War...Americans have been reading a magazine called *The Nation*. It's always been a platform for speakers who have been ahead of their time. This morning we'll look at a new book that reminds us how important that platform has been."

— Previewing a segment on the far-left publication on *Today*, October 22, 1990.

■ "Since 1865, the magazine *The Nation* has billed itself as an independent publication of politics and culture. What it has really been all these years is a safe haven for writers, activists and journalists whose thoughts and ideas in their time were anything but safe....The editor of *The Nation*, Victor Navasky is here this morning to celebrate [*The Nation's* 125th anniversary]. Good morning and congratulations....The themes through the years have remained fairly consistent. Tell us about the kind of causes that the magazine has championed....There's such an impressive roster of literary figures. Why do you think they found this format so appealing?...Victor Navasky, thank you very much. We hope the magazine will be around another 125 years."

— NBC's *Today*, October 22, 1990.

vs.

■ "You do, though, Mr. Brock, have some innate biases, don't you? I mean, *The American Spectator* is an ultra-conservative magazine. And it seems as if you are an advocate for Justice Thomas in the book. Is it really fair to call yourself an objective journalist?"

— To then-*American Spectator* contributor David Brock who was on the May 3, 1993 *Today* to promote *The Real Anita Hill*, his book undermining the sexual harassment charge made by Hill against Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas.

She's Very PC, but Katie Can't See

■ **Katie Couric:** "*Time* magazine's Person of the Year issue hits news stands today and this year it honors the American soldier. Jim Kelly is *Time*'s Managing Editor and veteran war photographer James Nachtwey was embedded with the Army's First Armored Division in Baghdad and took the remarkable images in this week's issue. He was also wounded while on assignment. Gentlemen, welcome, good morning, nice to have you both. I was so, I have to say, just personally, I was so pleased to see this....Tell me why you all decided to honor the American soldier? Wondering why there's no woman on the cover, too?"

***Time's* Jim Kelly, pointing to cover:** "This is a woman."

Couric: "Oh, there you go. Oh, sorry....I couldn't tell because of her helmet."

— Exchange on NBC's *Today*, December 22, 2003.

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