

Notable Quotables

September 30, 2002 (Vol. Fifteen; No. 20)

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



Bringing Political Balance
to the Media

Washington Beating War Drums...

"Wherever you live in the world today, the sound of war drums being beaten in Washington has become unmistakable. With the first anniversary of the September 11th attacks behind us...the administration's preoccupation with Saddam Hussein and weapons of mass destruction has rapidly become the number one issue in international affairs."

— ABC's Peter Jennings during a live report before President Bush's United Nations speech on September 12.

...to the "Detriment of Democracy"

"It is 215 years ago that the Constitution was signed. And on Capitol Hill today, historians delivered a petition to Congress saying Congress must vote on whether or not to declare war against Iraq, not just authorize military action. The petition, signed by more than 1200 historians, says by not acting Congress has left the President solely in control of war powers to the detriment of democracy and in clear violation of the Constitution."

— ABC's Peter Jennings on *World News Tonight*, Sept. 17.

Saddam Outsmarts Dubya

"We begin with that moment when Wile E. Coyote looks back and sees the Road Runner standing at the edge of the cliff — which means he isn't standing on anything but thin air. Seems a bit like where the Bush administration is tonight, scrambling to get back onto solid ground after the Iraqi offer to let UN weapons inspectors come back into the country. The President is trying to shift the spotlight back to Iraqi misbehavior. The Secretary of State, meantime, is in New York trying to keep members of the Security Council from taking an Iraqi 'yes' for an answer, but momentum is gathering."

— Aaron Brown on CNN's *NewsNight*, September 17.

Our "World View" Led to 9/11

Brian Williams: "The situation hasn't been this lopsided in terms of one breakout superpower on the planet in quite some time."

Newsweek International Editor Fareed Zakaria: "It hasn't been like this since the Roman Empire two millennia ago."

Williams: "I was going to say we'd have to go back to the days of the Empire, and that gives the U.S. obvious military swagger. Does it give them any kind of moral courage above anyone else and anyone's world, and isn't that world view part of what got the United States in trouble September 11th?"

— CNBC's *The News with Brian Williams*, September 18.

Collapse of American Justice

Tom Brokaw: "That brings us to America's growing Arab and Muslim communities. For many, this has been the year — as one observer put it — that the American dream for them descended into nightmares."

Jim Avila: "This is Jenin Ahman, an American of Palestinian descent, born 42 years ago in suburban Chicago, now worried everything she learned as an American about justice and civil rights collapsed along with New York's Twin Towers."

— *NBC Nightly News*, September 11.

Dissenters "Scared" to Disagree

Washington Post reporter Ceci Connolly: "Especially through last fall, it was a bit awkward for the media, because we certainly did not want to seem unpatriotic — and there were times when people like the White House spokesman Ari Fleischer or Attorney General John Ashcroft absolutely said, 'If you're not with us, then you're with them.'"

Washington Post reporter Juliet Eilperin: "I think it's difficult when there's less dissent in the country....At a period when politicians are unwilling to criticize the President or certain people, what's your role as a reporter? Do you seek out a tiny minority and court them and encourage them to speak out? Or do you simply reflect the fact that there's someone who will tell you off the record, 'I'm too scared to say anything because I know it might cost me my re-election?'"

— Responses to moderator Gwen Ifill's question about whether reporters' jobs are more difficult since last September 11, on PBS's *Washington Week*, September 13.

NBC's Finger on the Pulse of Iraq

"Many Iraqis believe America's true motive is to remove Saddam Hussein from power, install a puppet government and seize Iraq's vast oil wealth. On the streets, many see Hussein's offer to allow the inspectors back as a wise, brave decision showing strength."

— NBC's Ron Allen reporting from Baghdad for the September 17 *Nightly News*.

No Labels for German Leftists

Carole Simpson: "In Germany, U.S. policy on Iraq has played a key role in the extremely tight race between Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and his conservative challenger."

Richard Gizbert: "Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder was far behind in the polls as recently as last month, trailing his conservative challenger Edmund Stoiber...."

— ABC's *World News Tonight/Sunday*, September 22.

Cheering New Burden on Business

Peter Jennings: "A groundbreaking plan for family leave. For the first time, fathers as well as mothers will be able to stay home with a newborn baby and be paid for it...."

Judy Muller: "The United States is one of the few industrialized nations that doesn't offer workers paid family leave. The federal government has enacted unpaid leave, but that doesn't really help families who have no way to pay the bills. As of now, 28 states are considering some form of family leave legislation. Proponents hope the California example will lead the way."

— Jennings's tease at the start of the newscast and Muller's report on California's new paid-leave law funded via a new tax, September 23 *World News Tonight*.

Inviting Liberals to Bash Tax Cut

"Can we afford a war in Afghanistan or in Iraq and the Bush tax cut? Back in 2001 on this program you said we should repeal the Bush tax cut. Do you believe that is now necessary in order to have the money to fight wars?"

— Tim Russert's question to Senator Hillary Clinton on NBC's *Meet the Press*, September 15.

"Mr. Strickland, would you be supportive of freezing or postponing the Bush tax cut in order to raise revenues to help fight the war in Iraq?"

— Russert to Ted Strickland, Colorado's Democratic Senate candidate, on the September 22 *Meet the Press*.

"Hard-Line" Pete

"What Made a Hard-Line Conservative Into a Mental-Health Crusader....When Politics is Personal: Pete Domenici is a social and fiscal conservative. So how did he become the Senate's leading advocate for the mentally ill?"

— *New York Times* magazine cover text and the headline and subheadline accompanying the September 15 story. Only six of the 49 Senate Republicans have lifetime ACU conservative ratings lower than Domenici's 73.

Belated Admission

"I never intended to go to Vietnam. I was hitchhiking illegally on the interstate and I was picked up by a doctor and we fell in love, and two months after graduating from college we went to Vietnam. I had been very much involved with the anti-war movement. I never expected to go to Vietnam. I protested the war. I went to every anti-war march in Washington. I chanted, 'Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh, NLF is gonna win!' And two months later there I was."

— Former NBC reporter Laura Palmer on *Today*, Sept 18, recalling the anti-war views she brought to Vietnam where she covered the war for NBC for about a year.

Vehicles Bad, Drivers Are Worse

"They tend to be people who are insecure and vain. They are frequently nervous about their marriages and uncomfortable about parenthood. They often lack confidence in their driving skills. Above all, they are apt to be self-centered and self-absorbed, with little interest in their neighbors or communities."

— *New York Times* reporter Keith Bradsher's description of sport-utility vehicle drivers in a new book, *High and Mighty*, as quoted by *Detroit Free Press* columnist Tom Walsh in an online review posted September 17.

Bias? How Silly!

Larry King: "How do you react...to some of the controversy that surrounds you. Brent Bozell, a columnist, has criticized you as being, kind of, pro-Arab. And I've heard this for years."

Jennings: "I think it's silly."

King: "Where do you think that comes from?"

Jennings: "Well, I lived in the Middle East for a long time, and I covered the Arab world for a long time, and you know, I believe Arabs are people. I mean, I'm anti-prejudice, I'm anti-bias in a very strong way and I go out of my way — as, by the way, as I must tell you the President did so brilliantly on 9/11 — to speak volumes to the bigots in the country."

— Exchange on CNN's *Larry King Live*, September 13.

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 a joint appearance on MSNBC's *Donahue*, September 18.

Barbara's Plea: Stop Mocking Bill!

Joy Behar: "I want to ask the audience: Clap if you would have your daughter be an intern for Bill Clinton."

Barbara Walters: "I think that's so unfair. That's so unfair."

Behar: "Why?"

Walters: "Because the man was the President. He does need people to work in that office and come on, I mean, let it go already."

— Exchange on ABC's *The View* on September 13.

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PUBLISHER: L. Brent Bozell III

EDITORS: Brent H. Baker, Rich Noyes

NEWS ANALYSTS: Geoffrey Dickens, Jessica Anderson
Brian Boyd, Brad Wilmouth, Ken Shepherd, Patrick Gregory

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE: Kristina Sewell

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR: Liz Swasey

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Donna Gould

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