

Notable Quotables

December 10, 2001 (Vol. Fourteen; No. 25)

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



Bringing Political Balance
to the Media

Poorly Kept Secret

"Look, Bernie, of course there's a liberal bias in the news. All the networks tilt left....If you repeat any of this, I'll deny it."

— CBS News President Andrew Heyward in 1993, as quoted in former CBS reporter Bernard Goldberg's new book, *Bias: A CBS Insider Exposes How the Media Distort the News*.

Painting Israel as the Aggressor

"We're going to begin in the Middle East tonight, where the U.S. has so much at stake. The Israelis have been on the attack again against the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. The Israelis say they're trying to force Mr. Arafat to stop Palestinian terrorists who are killing Israelis. The Palestinians say they're making it impossible for him to do anything while his government is being attacked."

— Peter Jennings on ABC's *World News Tonight*, Dec. 4.

Never Mind Suicide Bombers — Sharon Is Real Obstacle to Peace

"Is it realistic to think that the Palestinians, whoever is in charge, would ever reach some kind of agreement with [Israeli Prime Minister] Ariel Sharon, a man who has done so much to oppose peace efforts in the Middle East?"

— Bryant Gumbel's question to former Democratic Senator George Mitchell on CBS's *Early Show*, December 3.

"Speaking of restraint, there is considerable question about whether these Israeli, this Israeli response is excessive. How do you interpret the Bush administration's apparent unwillingness to restrain Sharon?"

— Gumbel to Middle East expert Shibley Telhami on the December 4 *Early Show*.

Needed: Anti-Ashcroft Education

"If you ask the person on the street whether they think a terrorist should be tried by a military tribunal, it sounds very good, which is why we need a debate. Because I don't think most people understand what we are giving up when we say that blanket, across the broad swath of people who are being picked up, that they are subject to being essentially tried before a court where the evidence is secret, where the Secretary of Defense makes the rules, where a death penalty can be ordered without any grounds for appeal, and I think, you know, we need to educate the public about what's going on."

— *Newsweek's* Eleanor Clift on the Fox News Channel's weeknight *War on Terror* program, November 29.

Why Not Blame Rumsfeld?

"Any resentment toward the Pentagon for not allowing American journalists and photographers more front-line access to U.S. troops, thereby prompting people like you to take these kinds of risks in order to get into Afghanistan?"

— *The Washington Post's* Howard Kurtz to National Geographic TV producer Gary Scurka, who was wounded in the chest and leg by a Taliban tank shell, on CNN's *Reliable Sources*, Nov. 24. Scurka expressed no resentment.

Zeroing In On Allied Behavior

"A three-day prison revolt against their Northern Alliance captors was over, a bloody, suicidal battle, but one that already raises questions of Northern Alliance atrocities against their Taliban prisoners, mostly Chechnyans and Pakistanis. They got what they deserved says this Northern Alliance fighter. But dozens of Taliban corpses were seen today with their hands tied behind their backs, suggesting an execution, Amnesty International calling for a UN investigation."

— NBC's Jim Maceda on the Nov. 28 *Nightly News*.

"One other item about the prison: The human rights organization Amnesty International wants a formal investigation into the prison rebellion. They want to know how it started, and whether the response, part of which you see, was proportionate. Hundreds of Taliban died. Many of the dead were reportedly found with their hands tied behind their backs."

— ABC's Peter Jennings on *World News Tonight*, Nov. 28. **Rebellious Taliban prisoners killed many alliance troops and an American CIA operative inside the prison.**

Bush's "Perversion" of Justice

"Chasing bad guys is one thing, but critics have raised hell about Ashcroft's initiative to have local police interview some 5,000 men and women in Arab-American and Muslim communities....Many other aspects of the Bush administration's new legal landscape will and should provoke even fiercer debate. At the top of the list is military tribunals, which civil libertarians regard as a perversion of the American justice system."

— *Time* Senior Writer Adam Cohen in the Dec. 10 issue.

Homegrown Few = Al Qaeda

"Since September 11, the word 'terrorist' has come to mean someone who is radical, Islamic and foreign. But many believe we have as much to fear from a homegrown group of anti-abortion crusaders."

— Reporter Jami Floyd on ABC's *20/20*, November 28.

Blind to Moral Differences

"On the subject of the 'responsible cooperator' program that the Attorney General announced today, does it not make the administration uncomfortable to be promulgating a program that bears at least passing similarity to what totalitarian societies like East Germany and the Soviet Union used to do, which is to say to people: 'Turn informant, and you'll get rewarded?'"

— Question from *Newsday's* Ken Fireman to White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer, November 29.

Bush, Unelected Thug

"It is difficult for the canaries of the 2000 election to be heard in the current crescendo of patriotism. Until they are, Bush is disingenuous when he asks Americans to 'reaffirm their devotion to the aspirations of all people for freedom and democracy.' The methane surrounding Bush's election asphyxiated the aspirations of too many black voters. It should not be lost to history that Bush is going after the Taliban in the name of democracy when he worked so hard a year ago to ban the tally."

— *Boston Globe* columnist Derrick Jackson, Nov. 28.

Real Threat: Tax Cuts

"President Bush gambled on a tax cut that largely rewards better-off people in this country...and that is responsible for a lot of the absence of money as we look ten years out. He is going to finance this war on terrorism the same way Ronald Reagan got to finance the Cold War, and it worked for Ronald Reagan. But it's incredibly cynical because it passes a tax onto generations X, Y and Z. And the administration compounds the error by now not wanting to spend the money it's going to take to stockpile vaccines, to do the kind of security measures that we need in this country."

— *Newsweek's* Eleanor Clift on the *McLaughlin Group*, December 1.

Advice From Coach Cokie

"[The Democrats] have ads out to attack 'The Bush Recession.' I personally think it's a big mistake for them to have announced these ads. They should have taken a lesson from Bill Clinton's book, which was in the year 1995, after the Republicans took the Congress, he went out under the radar screen, had ads out promoting him in cities where we weren't, in the national press, paying much attention. The Democrats could be doing that; this way they're just attracting attention to themselves and the Republicans are going to fall all over them."

— Cokie Roberts on ABC's *This Week*, December 2.

No Dissent From Clinton Policies

"In the case of President Clinton, whom I'd known since the late '70s, we'd editorially supported virtually every aspect of his program and were particularly evangelical, I would say, about his medical care reform package."

— *The New York Times's* Howell Raines, discussing the slant on his paper's editorial pages which he ran from 1993 until he became Executive Editor in September 2001, on C-SPAN's *Washington Journal* November 30.

Less Reagan, More Harry Potter

"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?"

— Katie Couric's first question to former *Washington Post* reporter and Reagan biographer Lou Cannon on the November 26 *Today*.

Not the Answer Bryant Wanted

Bryant Gumbel: "They [executives of the bankrupt energy company Enron] were George Bush's biggest campaign contributor. Does any of this reflect on the President at all?"

BusinessWeek's Peter Coy: "No."

Gumbel: "No way, none, none whatsoever?"

Coy: "He bears no responsibility."

— Exchange on CBS's *The Early Show*, November 30.

On the Bright Side...

"Unlike some news organizations, we don't worry that some people might view terrorists as freedom fighters; we call them terrorists. When we report on the damage to civilians and civilian structures from American bombing, we try to include the context of the civilians killed and threatened by the targeted forces, and the purpose of the U.S. attack. We also make clear the difference between these unsought deaths and the calculated targeting of civilians, as in the September 11 attacks."

— *Wall Street Journal* Managing Editor Paul Steiger in a speech posted November 27 on his paper's Web site.

Imagine How They'd Feel

"I raised the question, What's going on here? I didn't come over to do Fox...I just wanted to make sure I wasn't walking into a Fox sewer. If I ran into O'Reilly or Hannity there, I would have had to shower three or four times before I could come home."

— Defense attorney and ubiquitous media talking head Alan Dershowitz after detecting a Fox News sign in a broadcast facility also used by CNN and other news media, as quoted by the *Boston Herald's* Gayle Fee and Laura Raposa in their Nov. 21 "Inside Track" column.

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PUBLISHER: L. Brent Bozell

EDITORS: Brent H. Baker, Rich Noyes

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

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE: Kristina Sewell

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR: Liz Swasey

DIRECTOR OF EDITORIAL SERVICES: Tim Jones

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