

Notable Quotables

February 5, 2001 (Vol. Fourteen; No. 3)

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



Bringing Political Balance
to the Media

“Controversial” Payoff to “Right Flank” vs. Fulfilling “a Promise”

“One of the President’s first actions was designed to appeal to anti-abortion conservatives. The President signed an order re-instating a Reagan-era policy that prohibited federal funding of family planning groups that provided abortion counseling services overseas.”

— ABC’s Terry Moran on *World News Tonight*, Jan. 22, 2001.

vs.

“In a moment, President Clinton keeps his word on abortion rights....President Clinton kept a promise today on the 20th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion....Mr. Clinton signed presidential memoranda rolling back many of the restrictions imposed by his predecessors.”

— Peter Jennings on *World News Tonight*, Jan. 22, 1993.

“This was President Bush’s first day at the office and he did something to quickly please the right flank in his party: He re-instituted an anti-abortion policy that had been in place during his father’s term and the Reagan presidency but was lifted during the Clinton years.”

— Dan Rather on the *CBS Evening News*, Jan. 22, 2001.

vs.

“On the anniversary of *Roe versus Wade* President Clinton fulfills a promise, supporting abortion rights....It was 20 years ago today, the United States Supreme Court handed down its landmark abortion rights ruling, and the controversy hasn’t stopped since. Today, with the stroke of a pen, President Clinton delivered on his campaign promise to cancel several anti-abortion regulations of the Reagan-Bush years.”

— Dan Rather on the *CBS Evening News*, Jan. 22, 1993.

“We’ll begin with the new President’s very active day, which started on a controversial note.”

— Tom Brokaw on the *NBC Nightly News*, Jan. 22, 2001.

vs.

“Today President Clinton kept a campaign promise and it came on the 20th anniversary of *Roe versus Wade* legalizing abortion.”

— Tom Brokaw on the *NBC Nightly News*, Jan. 22, 1993.

Afraid of Losing Jesse Jackson

“Obviously this is something he is feeling shame about and should, but I do not want to have his voice silenced in public debate. I think he’s an important voice in public debate, and I think that having it now lose some authority is too bad.”

— ABC’s Cokie Roberts on *This Week*, January 21.

Ashcroft’s Confederate Agenda

“Good evening on this Martin Luther King holiday, a prelude to what begins tomorrow in Washington — the confirmation hearings for John Ashcroft, the former Missouri Senator who is George W. Bush’s choice to be Attorney General. Race will be a major issue in the contentious hearings, especially since Ashcroft defended the Confederate agenda of Robert E. Lee in an interview with the *Southern Partisan*, a magazine promoting the culture of the Old South.”

— Tom Brokaw opening the Jan. 15 *NBC Nightly News*.

Conservatives Can’t Enforce Law

“He’s not considered a friend to civil rights. He’s been against court-ordered desegregation. The big question is, can an Attorney General enforce federal laws and protect rights that he personally, vigorously, opposes?”

— Barbara Walters to George W. Bush, January 19 20/20.

“I could understand that as a legislator, your political ideology would fit well into your job description, but as somebody who is charged with executing the laws that are on the books, is it prudent for their ideology to be at odds with some of those laws?”

— CBS News reporter John Roberts to White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer, January 10 C-SPAN.

Not a Liberal Label in Sight

“At a jam-packed Washington news conference, the ‘Stop Ashcroft’ battle was launched. There were all the familiar faces from groups who’ve been on the front lines for years fighting over civil and human rights, the environment, gun control and, especially, women’s rights.”

— Phil Jones on the January 9 *CBS Evening News*.

“Completely Inflexible” Harris

“As everyone knows, George Bush was ahead by only a few hundred votes. At the request of Al Gore some counties were launching hand recounts which were gaining votes for him. So what did she do? Well from Day One she seemed completely inflexible, insisting on the narrow letter of the law. She enforced strict deadlines even when one county asked for just two hours more, and she tried to block the hand recount of those punched but disputed ballots. The Bush team was thrilled, the Gore team was outraged.”

— ABC’s Diane Sawyer in a Jan. 11 *Prime Time Thursday* interview with Florida Sec. of State Katherine Harris.

Gumbel's Anti-Ashcroft Crusade

"Can you deny that he distorted Mr. White's record and basically engaged in what some would kindly call character assassination?"

— **CBS's Bryant Gumbel to Ashcroft adviser Charles Polk, January 16 *Early Show*.**

"If he's so much of an extremist liability, as you claim, what's his nomination say about George W. Bush and his claims of compassionate conservatism?"

— **Gumbel to Wade Henderson of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, same show.**

"What do you think Senator Ashcroft's distortion of your record and tarnishing of your good name says about his character?"

— **Gumbel to Missouri Supreme Court judge Ronnie White, January 19 *Early Show*.**

Rejoicing for Senator Clinton

"For this political wife, friends say, a dream come true. Today he holds the Bible for her, trading places from when they first came to Washington eight years ago. From the health care fiasco to the Monica humiliation to the campaign many said she would never win, Hillary Clinton is now the most admired woman in America, beating Oprah by a landslide in the latest Gallup poll."

— **Andrea Mitchell, January 3 *NBC Nightly News*. (Hillary was named by 19 percent in the Gallup poll, Oprah by 4 percent.)**

"What an exhilarating moment it must have been for her — the first First Lady in history to be elected to public office. There, for all the nay-sayers to see, was the woman who had finally come into her own, free at last to be smart, outspoken, independent, and provocative, all qualities she had been forced as First Lady, to 'hide under a bushel.' Still she was voted one of America's most admired women. Just wait. You ain't seen nothin' yet."

— **End of "On My Mind" ABCNews.com commentary by ABC News anchor Carole Simpson, January 7.**

Chavez Aided Awful Reagan

"The person who really is worth watching here and where I think the fight will be ugliest is Linda Chavez, who's up for Secretary of Labor. This is a someone who is a Democrat, became a Republican. She's a Hispanic woman who speaks no Spanish. She was a Reagan civil rights official. Some people would say that's an oxymoron."

— **Time Washington Bureau Chief Michael Duffy, Jan. 5 *Washington Week in Review* on PBS.**

Religious Divider Unfit for Office

"When you nominate someone to be Attorney General... who you know is going to raise questions, rightly or wrongly, justifiably or otherwise about race relations, quote 'a hardline stance on a woman's right to choose' on abortion; when you appoint somebody, nominate someone, to be head of the Interior Department who says, 'Listen, it's alright for people who own private land to pollute,' I'm not saying that's right or wrong. I am saying that a lot are going to say, 'Wait a minute, this is not uniter-divider country.'"

— **Dan Rather, Jan. 15 *Late Show with David Letterman*.**

"In John Ashcroft's America, he said in 1999, 'We have no king but Jesus.' But President-elect George W. Bush has nominated Ashcroft to the position of Attorney General of the United States. In the venerable halls of the Justice Department, where he will work, it is the Constitution that is king....Ashcroft will need to assure the nation that he can enforce the Constitution and the laws of Congress when they run contrary to the laws of Jesus, as they surely will. A larger question, spoken or unspoken, will be: Can a deeply religious person be Attorney General?"

— **Opening of January 16 *USA Today* op-ed piece by former *USA Today* Supreme Court reporter Tony Mauro.**

Gale Norton: Bye-Bye Earth

"In fact, you know, John Ashcroft may damage the Constitution; she's going to do a lot of damage to the planet if she gets a chance. She is so anti-environment, pro-multiple use. She defended the Lead Paint Association...."

— **Time's Margaret Carlson, Jan. 13 *CNN Capital Gang*.**

Ray Ruined Clinton's Last Day

"I gather that the Independent Counsel must have been hitting these people with a sledgehammer in the final days of the presidency....His critics will not be disappointed to see this happen, and his enemies too. Nonetheless, it's a very sad, almost tragic way for the President to spend his last day in office."

— **Peter Jennings during a January 19 ABC News special report on President Clinton's deal with Independent Counsel Robert Ray.**

Snack Chip Conspiracy

"So, I'm getting less chips, paying the same amount of money. Is that legal for them to do this?"

— **CBS's Julie Chen to Carol Foreman Tucker of the Consumer Federation of America, January 3 *Early Show* interview about companies charging the same price for smaller packages of food.**

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