

Notable Quotables

January 3, 2005 (Vol. Eighteen; No. 1)

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



Bringing Political
Balance to the Media

Upset by Treatment of Saddam

"One year after his capture, Saddam Hussein's trial for war crimes, considered the most important since Nuremberg, has yet to hear a single word of testimony....Critics point to several failures: that Saddam has not yet been allowed to meet with a lawyer; that the trial will permit testimony obtained under torture; and that much of the evidence from mass grave sites was not properly preserved or recorded....Saddam waits in his cell, without charge or legal counsel."

— ABC's Jim Sciutto on the Dec. 12 *World News Tonight*.

No Medals from MSNBC

"I was aghast watching that medal of honor ceremony today. George Tenet, Bremer, Tommy Franks — it looked like the President was pinning a medal on the Iraq war, on himself....They're giving a medal for getting us into war under false pretenses?...If you give the Medal of Freedom to the guy who's completely wrong in doing his job, what do you give to a guy who is completely right?"

— MSNBC's Chris Matthews on *Hardball* December 14 discussing the Medal of Freedom going to former CIA Director George Tenet, retired General Tommy Franks and former Iraq administrator Paul Bremer.

Keith Olbermann: "The CIA got blamed for some ill-chosen words in a State of the Union Address, you may recall, yet the former CIA Director was one of three men to get the nation's highest civilian honor today...."

USA Today's Tom Squitieri: "Even in this cynical time, the level of cynicism of this one is reaching new proportions. It's being dubbed by some as 'hush medals.' You know, these guys still have to write their memoirs, and their take on what happened in Iraq in particular, and when you get a medal from the President, it makes you a little bit nicer about what you may or may not want to write."

— MSNBC's *Countdown*, December 14.

Success, But Matt Isn't Satisfied

"The administration is very happy about the success in Afghanistan, the newly elected and democratically elected President Hamid Karzai being sworn-in. But how much is that success tarnished by the fact that Osama bin Laden is still out there and al-Qaeda is so active, just yesterday claiming responsibility for that attack on the U.S. consulate in Saudi Arabia?"

— NBC's Matt Lauer to Washington Bureau Chief Tim Russert on the December 7 *Today*.

Moyers, Biased to the Bitter End

"I'm going out telling the story that I think is the biggest story of our time: how the right-wing media has become a partisan propaganda arm of the Republican National Committee. We have an ideological press that's interested in the election of Republicans, and a mainstream press that's interested in the bottom line. Therefore, we don't have a vigilant, independent press whose interest is the American people."

— Bill Moyers, who retired from the PBS newsmagazine *Now* on December 17, as quoted by Associated Press television writer Frazier Moore in a December 10 dispatch.

"God Bless Us and Screw You"

"'We're the most ill-informed nation about the rest of the world,' [CBS *60 Minutes* correspondent Morley] Safer said....He watched the political conventions this summer from Europe and said he cringed at the 'awful bravado' he heard in speeches from members of both parties....By taking two minutes to acknowledge the international audience, Safer said, the candidates could have dispelled the air of superiority they emitted with their exhortation, 'God bless America,' a statement that he said seemed to be code for 'God bless us and screw you.'"

— Story about Safer's December 5 appearance at the Stonington Free Library in Connecticut, as recounted the next day by Kate Moran in *The Day* newspaper in New London, Connecticut.

Mr. Middle-of-the-Road

"I don't think I'm easily characterized. I grew up in red-state America, but I live in blue-state America and I like to think that I reflect the sensibilities of both those places."

— NBC's Tom Brokaw on MSNBC's *Imus in the Morning* on December 1, his last day as *Nightly News* anchor.

Dan Had "Courage" to Twist News

"Television must deal with political pressures to conform to resurgent conservative values that appear to be stifling editorial courage in the newsroom. [Outgoing CBS anchor Dan] Rather had the inner strength recently to criticize 'these partisan, political ideological challenges.' Will his successor have similar courage? Will the timid network executives have the old-fashioned backbone to take on a crusading administration? I doubt it."

— Former CBS and NBC reporter Marvin Kalb, now the Washington, DC-based Senior Fellow at Harvard's Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, in a December 1 op-ed in the *Los Angeles Times*.

Bush's Awful, Expensive Tax Cuts

Peter Jennings: "Terry, number one, the President wants to make his tax cuts permanent. Talk about that and how he does that given that the federal deficit is getting so much larger every moment."

Terry Moran: "Peter, that is something the President talked about at nearly every campaign stop this fall, so he thinks he's got a mandate to do it, but most experts say that making those tax cuts permanent would cause gigantic deficits virtually as far as the eye can see."

— *ABC's World News Tonight*, December 15.

Real "Reform" = More Taxes

"Private accounts don't address the overall funding problem. Without broader reforms or a rise in the payroll tax, the government side of Social Security will still run out of money. Increasing taxes could easily extend the life of Social Security, but President Bush won't even consider that."

— **John Roberts on the December 15 CBS Evening News.**

Keith Still Rooting for Kerry Win

Keith Olbermann: "Meantime, more than two weeks in the making, what were interestingly described by the Associated Press as 'dissident groups,' finally filed their much-talked about legal contesting of the Ohio vote. Attorney Cliff Arneback of the group calling itself 'Alliance for Democracy,' was joined by the Reverend Jesse Jackson in asking Ohio's Supreme Court to formally review voting there. And they accused the Republican campaign of, quote, 'high-tech vote stealing,' unquote...."

"[Michigan Congressman] John Conyers last week hinted and then backed away from the idea of this challenge to Ohio's electors on January 6th, but now he's conducting these hearings on the road in Ohio and relative to Secretary [of State Ken] Blackwell, he used that phrase, 'Such an action appears to violate Ohio law.' For several weeks, the whole thing looked like it's teetered on the edge of being a mainstream political cat fight. Is it going to teeter into that mainstream?"

Newsweek's Howard Fineman: "I think it's unlikely...."

— *MSNBC's Countdown* December 13, the day presidential Electors officially voted Bush for a second term.

Cue the Laugh Track

"I'm not political. I don't vote....I have no more interest in the political outcome of an election than I did in the winner or loser of any ballgame I ever covered."

— *MSNBC's Keith Olbermann, formerly with ESPN, in an Online Journalism Review interview posted Nov. 30.*

Re-Election Won't Save Bush

"More U.S. troops in Iraq, at least through the January 30th election, at a time when the insurgency in Iraq is becoming more dangerous....It looks like 'escalation,' a scary word from the Vietnam era....Escalation was disastrous in Vietnam. It looms as a serious political danger for President Bush and for his party....Being re-elected, even by a handsome majority, as Lyndon Johnson found out after 1964, doesn't prevent a serious backlash from setting in that he faced over Vietnam."

— **CNN's Bill Schneider on Inside Politics**, December 2.

Baffled by Mel's Freedom Cry

Matt Lauer: "Two thousand British moviegoers were recently polled on a very important question. What are the Top 10 Cheesiest Movie Lines of all-time?...*Braveheart* takes #8 with the baffling battle cry."

Clip of Mel Gibson on horseback rallying his warriors in the movie Braveheart about 13th century Scots battling the British: "That they may take our lives, but they'll never take our freedom!"

— **NBC's Today**, December 7.

Chevy F-Bombs the President

"He deployed the four-letter word that got Vice President Cheney in hot water, using it as a noun. Chase called the prez a 'dumb [expletive].' He also used it as an adjective, assuring the audience, 'I'm no [expletive] clown either.... This guy started a jihad.' Chase also said: 'This guy in office is an uneducated, real lying schmuck...and we still couldn't beat him with a bore like Kerry.'"

— **Actor Chevy Chase onstage during a December 14 People for the American Way awards ceremony at the Kennedy Center, as quoted by the Washington Post's Richard Leiby on December 16.**

If Bush Won't Quit, Impeach Him!

Guest host Susan Sarandon: "How can they get out of this [situation in Iraq]?"

Author Gore Vidal: "He [President Bush] can resign."

Actor Tim Robbins: "How about a good, old-fashioned impeachment? Seems to me there was a guy that was impeached not long ago for oral sex, for lying about oral sex, and it seems to me there's been a couple lies told. So it's more of a high crime and misdemeanor to lie about oral sex than it is to lie about intelligence that forces a country into war?"

Vidal, mockingly: "Tim, you must have values!"

— **Exchange on CBS's Late Late Show**, December 17.

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