

# Notable Quotables

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



Bringing Political Balance  
to the Media

## Ashcroft, Sop to the "Far Right"

"If confirmed, conservative Missouri Republican Senator John Ashcroft will be this nation's next Attorney General. With this move Mr. Bush rewards a defeated U.S. Senator, calms the far right politically, and makes a decidedly law and order statement."

— **Anchor Brian Williams opening the December 22 *NBC Nightly News*.**

"Well, you know, Attorney General is actually an important job. Why can't they buy off the right wing with unimportant jobs? I mean, this is a sop, I assume, to buy off the wing nuts, but it's like giving, I mean, the Attorney General counts, it matters."

— ***Newsweek* Assistant Managing Editor Evan Thomas on *Inside Washington*, December 23.**

"I would quickly say that John Ashcroft across the board, I think...has been mean-spirited. He's a guy who led fights against special education funds. It went well beyond Ronnie White, and I think Frank Keating, who I would have disagreed with strongly, would have brought charm."

— ***Wall Street Journal* Executive Washington Editor Al Hunt on CNN's *Capital Gang*, December 23.**

"What Bush has done is to take the most sensitive Cabinet appointment and make an appointment that thrills the right, in particular the religious right....that post should be the secretary of uniting, not dividing. And on those questions of race and immigration and the death penalty and violence against women and abortion clinics, Senator Ashcroft is way to the right. He's not in the middle. And we have a history in this country of appointing moderates to that job."

— ***Time's* Margaret Carlson on CNN's *Capital Gang*, Dec. 30.**

## Dan's Abortion Labeling Spin

"Anti-abortion groups and the self-described religious right could not be happier with President-elect George Bush's nominee for U.S. Attorney General. Bush today named John Ashcroft, a just-defeated Republican Senator from Missouri known for his tough anti-abortion stand. Planned Parenthood immediately urged Congress not to confirm him. Bush also named New Jersey Governor Christie Whitman, who supports abortion rights, for a post with no role in abortion policy. She was picked to head the Environmental Protection Agency."

— **Dan Rather opening the *CBS Evening News*, Dec. 22.**

## Dubya's Conservative Chutzpah

"[A]dvisers said Bush has determined that the best way to establish his legitimacy despite his messy victory is to lead as if he had a mandate. So he is nominating thoroughbred conservatives to his Cabinet instead of appeasing Democrats with moderates, and is vowing to take his campaign platform to Capitol Hill undiluted even though his allies there are urging him to start with chewable bites."

— **Lead of front page December 31 *Washington Post* story by Mike Allen headlined, "Bush's Choices Defy Talk of Conciliation: Cabinet Is Diverse, but Not Politically."**

"This *Washington Post* piece makes it sound as if George W. Bush is going to try and cherry-pick a few Democrats here and there in order to get his programs passed, rather than going for complete bipartisanship. Do you think he can get away with that in the United States Senate?"

— **Gloria Borger to Sen. Chuck Hagel on CBS's *Face the Nation*, December 31.**

## Where's the Squishy Bush?

"I think his hardest problem really is that the Republican Party is only going to really survive and prosper if it doesn't stiff the moderate wing of its party, and if Tom Ridge and Christie Todd Whitman are being vetoed, which they are already by certain segments of the Republican Party from positions in this administration, it doesn't bode well for the future."

— **NPR legal reporter Nina Totenberg, December 16 *Inside Washington*.**

"You know, some conservatives, and you're a conservative, a proud conservative, but some conservatives are already, you know, expressing some concern that Governor Christine Todd Whitman or Governor George Pataki, you know, people who support abortion rights, affirmative action, gun control, that they may have prominent roles in the Cabinet. Do you take that kind of criticism or concern seriously from, let's say, the far right of your party?"

— **Wolf Blitzer to Dick Cheney in an interview played during the December 18 premiere of CNN's *Wolf Blitzer Reports*.**

"George W. Bush's rhetoric is very inclusive. He means to be inclusive, and he's used very soft rhetoric in trying to reach out to minorities. But the fact is he's proposed no federal programs for minorities. He hasn't talked about using the federal government to broaden the safety net."

— **ABC News reporter Linda Douglass during the *This Week* roundtable, December 23.**

## DeLay's "General Awfulness"

**Peter Jennings:** "Linda, I want a quick prediction from you if I may. Who is the new President going to have more difficulty with? Democrats or Republicans?"

**Linda Douglass:** "My prediction is he'll have more trouble with the conservatives....My prediction is Tom DeLay in the House, the firebrand conservative who has a lot of followers and doesn't want to give an inch."

— **ABC News prime time coverage of Gore concession speech and Bush acceptance speech, December 13.**

"You know, what he ought to do is a Sister Souljah. He ought to use DeLay's extremism and general awfulness and low popularity as a foil to show what a man of the center he is and stiff DeLay....There are two ways to deal with the right here. One is he can let himself get dragged down by them and essentially have what little chance he has of success fail because he kowtowed to the right, or he can use the right as a foil, push off against them, go to the center and get something done."

— **Newsweek Assistant Managing Editor Evan Thomas on *Inside Washington*, December 16.**

## Dan Rather's Mourning Period

"Good evening. Texas Governor George Bush tonight will assume the mantle and the honor of President-elect. This comes 24 hours after a sharply split and, some say, politically and ideologically motivated U.S. Supreme Court ended Vice President Gore's contest of the Florida election and, in effect, handed the presidency to Bush."

— **Dan Rather opening the *CBS Evening News*, Dec. 13.**

"To those who are absolutely convinced that the Supreme Court had a Republican majority and wanted a Republican President and voted politics not the law. As an attorney, and as our President, you say what?"

— **Dan Rather to Bill Clinton, December 19 *60 Minutes II*.**

## Hurray for Hillary's Book Deal

"Unlike Newt Gingrich and his book deal, Hillary Clinton isn't getting her \$8 million advance from Rupert Murdoch with his billions of dollars worth of legislation before the House, which unlike the Senate banned such deals. If Hillary were to utter her first spontaneous word and answer the burning question — Is the Senate worth all you had to put up with? — the book might be worth it. Anyway, since the independent counsel impoverished her, let's let her trick some publisher into paying her legal bills. It takes a Senator."

— **Time columnist Margaret Carlson on CNN's *Capital Gang*, December 16.**

## Kicking Clarence Thomas

"And we can't let Justice Thomas pass on this. There's no opinion of his in here, he doesn't ask questions in court. Does he do anything besides vote and rubber stamp Scalia?"  
— **Bryant Gumbel to CBS legal analyst Jonathan Turley on *Bush vs. Gore*, December 13 *The Early Show*.**

"This was an issue about voting rights. Yet, Justice Thomas voted with the conservative majority. His vote could have changed history. But it was not to be. He is firmly entrenched on the Court's right....In five major cases involving civil rights and liberties, he voted against minorities every time, including rulings against job discrimination and voting rights. He's only 52 years old and could conceivably spend another 30 years on the Supreme Court. If, during his tenure, President-elect Bush ends up making a couple of more appointments like Justice Thomas to the Supreme Court, I have heard many women and minorities say, 'God help us.'"  
— **ABCNews.com online column by *World News Tonight/Sunday* anchor Carole Simpson, December 17.**

## Scaring People Into a Tax Cut

"Where will the economy go? There are some new signs the economy is slowing some, but is talk of a recession responsible? We'll talk to the Treasury Secretary as some others in the White House accuse the Bush team of economic fear-mongering."  
— **Dan Rather opening the Dec. 21 *CBS Evening News*.**

"Well, that's what's pernicious here, is seizing on this as a way to get a tax cut....he could create something self-fulfilling, talk down the economy because he wants to use that as a tool to get a tax cut that we don't really need and is a bad idea."  
— **Newsweek Assistant Managing Editor Evan Thomas on *Inside Washington*, December 23.**

"The economy is going south more quickly than most experts thought, and the Bush people are going to try to use this as an excuse to peddle the dangerously big tax cut."  
— **Al Hunt, December 23 *Capital Gang* on CNN.**

## Gore's Consolation Kiss-Up

"I think his environmental stance. People like to deride him about it, his critics like to laugh a bit about it, but global warming and a whole host of issues, Peter, Al Gore has been the signal carrier in the night of the warning that if we don't do something about this, we're all gonna perish. Sounds silly, but it's a wonderful contribution to alarm us about."  
— **Sam Donaldson on Al Gore's "greatest contribution," ABC News prime time special, December 13.**

### Notable Quotables

**PUBLISHER:** L. Brent Bozell

**EDITORS:** Brent H. Baker, Tim Graham

**MEDIA ANALYSTS:** Geoffrey Dickens, Jessica Anderson, Paul Smith, Brian Boyd, Brad Wilmouth, Ted King

**RESEARCH ASSOCIATE:** Kristina Sewell

**COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR:** Liz Swasey

**INTERN:** Ken Shepherd

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