

Notable Quotables

November 26, 2001 (Vol. Fourteen; No. 24)

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



Bringing Political Balance
to the Media

Up Side of Taliban Thugocracy

"[The] dreaded Vices and Virtues Ministry...unleashed a reign of terror on the cities of Afghanistan. Obviously, therefore, when these people are gone from Kandahar city there will be a sigh of relief as far as the people are concerned. But at the same time, it would be unfair to say that the Taliban did not succeed in certain things, the law and order, for example. Even today, as Kandahar is bombed and there is no electricity and streets remain open and vacant, the Taliban still keep a semblance of law and order."

— CNN reporter Kamal Hyder on *NewsNight with Aaron Brown*, November 13.

Just "Activists With Attitude"

"BBC World Service's international audiences expect authoritative and impartial news and information that is accurate and editorially independent. The word 'terrorist' can appear judgmental in parts of the world where there is no clear consensus about the legitimacy of militant political groups."

— Statement from the BBC read by MSNBC's Brian Williams on *The News with Brian Williams*, November 16.

Scolding American Hypocrisy

"Isn't it a matter of hypocrisy for the United States to condemn such trials as the one of Lori Berenson, who was accused in Peru by a military tribunal? The administration, both administrations have just castigated the Peruvian government for that, and at the same time, set up a system whereby we would essentially be doing the same thing."

— ABC's Chris Bury, substituting for Ted Koppel as anchor of the November 14 *Nightline*, referring to President Bush's order allowing military trials of foreign nationals suspected of terrorist acts against Americans.

Americans Are Terrorists, Too

"It is really interesting, looking at a piece of wire copy this morning, that five other Airbuses have crashed since 1988. And the last one was an Iran airplane that was mistakenly shot down by a U.S. Navy plane. And this morning when we were asking the Iranian President about U.S.-Iranian relations and terrorism, he said 'you define terrorism in one way, but when someone shoots down one of our commercial aircraft that's terrorism for Iranians as well.' Just to show you how many connections are made on a day like this."

— ABC's Peter Jennings during live coverage of the crash of an American Airlines Airbus in New York City on November 12. The Iranian Airbus was accidentally shot down on July 3, 1988, by a missile fired from the U.S.S. *Vincennes* in the Persian Gulf, not a Navy plane.

89% Support = Low Confidence

"This is an interesting and challenging moment for the President because in recent public opinion polls it's suggested that he's having some difficulty managing public expectations about the war against terrorism. At home, some declining confidence in the U.S. counter-terrorism efforts and on the war front. In the last couple of weeks the number of people who believe that the government is doing everything it reasonably can to prevent terrorist attacks, has gone down by about 12 points — from 68 percent in mid-October to 56 percent now."

— ABC's Peter Jennings introducing President Bush's November 8 speech on homeland security.

"[President Bush] still has very strong support in the country and there's a very strong support in the war effort, but our recent polls show there's actually been a drop in the people's confidence in the government's ability to handle these attacks and a drop of about 10 or 12 points in people's belief that the government is doing all it can to protect the homeland, so he's going to focus on that tonight."

— ABC's George Stephanopoulos on the Nov. 8 *Good Morning America*, citing no other specific results from the ABC News/*Washington Post* poll.

Reality Check:

"As Bush prepares to address the country tonight on homeland security, his overall job approval rating stands at 89 percent, unchanged in the past month. Nine out of 10 Americans support the U.S. military action in Afghanistan, also unchanged in recent weeks."

— *The Washington Post's* Richard Morin and Claudie Deane in a Nov. 8 article summarizing the results of the same poll cited by Jennings and Stephanopoulos.

Persecuting Clinton Allowed 9/11

"It was a huge national distraction, going after a guy who lied about getting oral sex from a woman he wasn't married to, and I think I know a million guys who get oral sex from a woman they weren't married to....All of us have a shared guilt right now, and the shared guilt is for the last ten years we have been horribly distracted. I would bet you that I can find you 4,000, 5,000 FBI agents who wish to God they weren't assigned to Whitewater, Monicagate, Bill Clinton — that instead they were on the trail of Osama bin Laden and the people who were plotting mass murder against us."

— Departing CNBC host Geraldo Rivera on the Nov. 15 *The O'Reilly Factor* on the Fox News Channel. Rivera joined Fox as its "war correspondent" the following Monday.

Voters Really Wanted Al Gore...

CNN anchor Paula Zahn: "If Al Gore had gotten what he wanted, which was a statewide manual recount or a recount of those four specific counties, George Bush would still have won. So I wonder, and I'm going to put up on the screen now a paragraph from your book where you once said: 'The wrong man was inaugurated on January 20, 2001, and this is no small thing in our nation's history.' Do you still agree with what you wrote?"

ABC legal analyst Jeffrey Toobin: "Oh, absolutely. I mean, remember, this is just about the undervotes and overvotes. There were thousands of votes that were clearly mistakenly cast. Democracy is about the intent of the voters...."

— Exchange on CNN's *Live at Daybreak* after the latest media recount, November 12.

...Whose Grace Ended Crisis

"If you go back and look at the TV and press reporting, the extraordinary event in all of this was Gore's concession speech, when Gore actually got up and said, 'Not only do I concede, but I accept the finality of it,' meaning that he was going to accept cold the Supreme Court decision against him....Among some academics and critics, the Supreme Court has been damaged, but people accepted it because Gore accepted it....Does that mean the right result was reached or that somebody's not going to recount all of those votes and come to a different conclusion? No, but again, I don't mean to be overly repetitive, but it was the Gore speech and concession which was so graceful and statesmanlike, no one had anything to hang their hat on."

— *The Washington Post's* Bob Woodward on the November 6 *Good Morning America*.

Assuming Government Is Best

"There is some talk of a compromise in which you'd have federal workers at the big airports, private workers at the smaller airports, but many I've talked to here on Capitol Hill say then a terrorist could slip through that smaller airport, re-board at the big airport."

— ABC's Linda Douglass discussing pending airport security legislation on *World News Tonight*, Nov. 5.

Dan Rather: "Holiday travel is coming up fast now, so as CBS's Bob Schieffer reports, at long last there's talk of a watered-down compromise bill ready for takeoff."

Bob Schieffer: "To satisfy conservatives worried about enlarging the government, a few airports will be allowed to experiment with a combination of federal supervisors and private baggage screeners."

— *CBS Evening News*, November 15.

Haunted By Vietnam Analogies...

"Could Afghanistan become another Vietnam? Is the United States facing another stalemate on the other side of the world? Premature the questions may be, three weeks after the fighting began. Unreasonable they are not, given the scars scoured into the national psyche by defeat in Southeast Asia. For all the differences between the two conflicts, and there are many, echoes of Vietnam are unavoidable."

— News analysis by veteran correspondent R.W. Apple in the October 30 *New York Times*.

...Even After Taliban Routed

"Washington being Washington, there was a good deal of talk tonight about a protracted and difficult campaign against Taliban guerrillas by Western commandos. Washington being Washington, it made a lot of people think once more about Vietnam, which haunts the city even when it feels giddy."

— Last paragraph of Apple's news analysis in the Nov. 15 *Times*, after the Taliban fled Kabul and other Afghan cities.

Fight the Right

"Will you be an active spokesman trying to shape Republican Party policy, particularly on issues like abortion rights and gay rights?"

"Do you think the Republican Party has been too conservative, even extreme on some issues?"

— Questions from NBC's Tim Russert to New York City's mayor-elect Michael Bloomberg, a liberal and lifelong Democrat until he decided to run in the Republican primary this year, on the November 11 *Meet the Press*.

Whining About Watchdogs

"Any misstep and you can get into trouble with these guys and have the Patriotism Police hunt you down. These are hard jobs. Just getting the facts straight is monumentally difficult. We don't want to have to wonder if we are saluting properly. Was I supposed to use the three-fingered salute today?"

— MSNBC President Erik Sorenson quoted in a Nov. 7 *New York Times* article describing how various conservatives, including the Media Research Center, are checking for bias in news coverage of the war on terrorism.

A Parody, But Not Too Far Off

"We're getting reports of U.S. special op forces being dropped into Taliban areas with camouflage and night vision goggles. This means the Taliban soldiers won't be able to see our troops, but we'll be able to see them. Is that fair?"

— Actor posing as Pentagon reporter for a comic skit on NBC's *Saturday Night Live*, November 17.

Notable Quotables

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