

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

We've Noticed

"We may tell you all the time that our principal aim in life is to communicate and assist, inform, whatever the fancy words are, our audience. But if you see injustice and you can get people to do something about it, ahh, it's just a glorious feeling....There's nothing a reporter likes more than to have an effect on policy."

— **ABC's Peter Jennings on *Breaking the News*, a CBS News special produced by the Museum of Television and Radio, which aired on August 24.**

Ignoring \$158 Billion Surplus

"The fat federal surplus vanishes into thin air. Congressional accountants say the President will have to use Social Security money to keep the government running....It's gone: The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office says the federal budget surplus for this year has been eaten up by President Bush's tax cut and dwindling tax revenues from the slowing economy."

— **John Roberts on the August 27 *CBS Evening News*.**

"What's gobbling up the surplus? The President's tax cut and the sluggish economy. And now the non-partisan CBO says the President will have to take \$9 billion from the Social Security Trust Fund to cover his spending proposals this year and use \$18 billion from the trust fund in two years to cover his tax cut. New ammunition for Democrats who charged the President is breaking a promise to keep Social Security funds in a so-called lock box."

— **Campbell Brown, *NBC Nightly News*, August 27.**

Tax Cut Threatens Seniors

"Gambling with the federal budget surplus. Billions of dollars evaporate into thin air. Is your Social Security money at risk?"

— **Substitute anchor Elizabeth Vargas's tease at the top of the August 22 *World News Tonight*.**

"Adios, surplus. When retired boomers dine on dog food, will they say thanks for that \$600?"

— ***Newsweek's* "Conventional Wisdom" box, assigning President Bush a "down" arrow in its Sept. 3 issue.**

Gumbel Cheers Helms Departure

"[Republican Senator Jesse] Helms is, let me pick my words here, an unapologetic right-wing conservative, I guess we could say. Is his departure good news for all but hard-right Republicans?"

— **CBS's Bryant Gumbel on the August 22 *Early Show*.**

Helms: Odious & Mean-Spirited

"On racial issues, he was a lightning rod, unrepentant about his support for American segregation, firmly opposed a Martin Luther King Day as a national holiday."

— **ABC's Claire Shipman, *World News Tonight*, Aug. 21.**

"He's been known as 'Senator No' because of his willingness to fight everything — from civil rights bills to help for AIDS patients. That makes him a hero to many conservatives and a favorite bogeyman of liberals with whom he so loves to do battle."

— **NBC's Lisa Myers on the August 21 *Nightly News*.**

"He fought the Panama Canal treaties and has opposed abortion rights, AIDS funding, and even the Martin Luther King holiday. His opponents have accused him of using race to win elections."

— **CBS's Bob Orr on the August 21 *Evening News*.**

"Liberals are going to miss him, he was so wonderfully odious. Remember that old *Time* magazine that had him on the cover with the dark shadows under the eyes and he's this dark and menacing figure? And he was very comforting to the East Coast media establishment to know that there was an evil guy out there that you could really fear."

— ***Newsweek's* Evan Thomas, *Inside Washington*, Aug. 25.**

"As a native North Carolinian, the only question I have is what took him so doggone long? Glad he's gone. He was an old segregationist. He never changed."

— ***Time's* Jack White on *Inside Washington*, August 25.**

"Helms reveled in the politics of personal vilification. He is a mean-spirited homophobe. And whatever one thinks of Bill Clinton, it was unconscionable for Sen. Helms to say the President of the United States would need a 'bodyguard' if he went to a military base in North Carolina."

— ***Wall Street Journal's* Al Hunt in his August 23 column.**

Too Easy on Helms for Broder

"The squeamishness of much of the press in characterizing Helms for what he is suggests an unwillingness to confront the reality of race in our national life....What is unique about Helms — and from my viewpoint, unforgivable — is his willingness to pick at the scab of the great wound of American history, the legacy of slavery and segregation, and to inflame racial resentment against African Americans."

— ***Washington Post* reporter David Broder, in an August 29 op-ed headlined, "Jesse Helms, White Racist."**

Pushing Phony “Lock Box” Fears

“Politicians call Social Security the third rail of politics: Touch it, fool with it, and you can get a terrible shock. Well, today the non-partisan congressional office that crunches the budget numbers projected the government will have to use \$9 billion in Social Security funds this year just to pay for the programs it already has in place. Democrats and Republicans alike have always sworn on a stack of Bibles that Social Security was absolutely, totally, completely off limits.”

— ABC’s Charles Gibson, *World News Tonight*, Aug. 27.

“You talk about talking straight and tough choices. Are the Democrats prepared to make those same tough choices? You say there’s a big problem with the budget this year. Are you prepared, as Senator Byrd has suggested, to come forward and say we have to repeal or delay parts of the tax cut to make sure we don’t tap the Social Security lock box?”

— ABC’s George Stephanopoulos questioning Democratic Senator John Edwards on *This Week*, August 26.

Reality Check

Brit Hume: “We keep hearing that the Social Security surplus may be invaded, which is to say that these payroll tax revenues that come in, which are estimated to be in excess of what’s necessary to pay benefits by somewhere between \$155 and \$160 billion this year, will not be touched, that they’re in a quote, ‘lock box,’ unquote....Isn’t it the case that the money will be very much touched and it will be loaned back to the government? Social Security will get IOUs or government securities, and what will happen is the money will be used to pay down other government debt, correct?”

White House advisor Lawrence Lindsey: “That’s correct.”

— Exchange on *Fox News Sunday*, August 26.

Bush = Cynical Reagan

“He is trying to duplicate a Reagan strategy. Ronald Reagan managed to run for re-election for President as an outsider to Washington. Now, that is an incredible political feat to be able to do it. But I think in the end Reagan’s relentless campaign against Washington, Newt Gingrich’s campaign against Washington when Republicans took over the Congress — and then they wonder why there’s no faith in government, why there’s no confidence in public policy and they’re the ones who are running the government. And I find it inappropriate for people who are running the government to make political profit at bashing the government, and I think that Bush is doing that, and I think it’s cheap and I think it’s cynical.”

— *U.S. News & World Report’s* Steve Roberts on *CNN’s Late Edition*, August 19.

ABC’s “Symbol of Human Rights”

“When you first heard that Jesse Jackson admitted he’d fathered an out-of-wedlock child, what did you think? Jackson, the charismatic national symbol of human rights, the married father of five grown children.”

— ABC’s Connie Chung introducing her *20/20* interview with Karin Stanford, the mother of Jackson’s illegitimate daughter, August 17.

Condit’s Really A Conservative...

“He did make a point of talking about how close he is with the Bush White House, and how he has access to the President and Vice President Dick Cheney, and can get them on the phone and people in the Bush White House on the phone at any time. After all, he’s a conservative Democrat.”

— *Newsweek’s* Michael Isikoff on *NBC’s Today*, Aug. 27.

“Did he almost in ‘94 switch parties? There were a lot of stories that he was going to go Republican, because he is a very conservative Democrat.”

— *CNN’s* Larry King to Chad Condit, August 27. Over his career, Condit’s votes place him in the middle of the spectrum as he earned 52 percent approval from the liberal ADA and 48 percent from the conservative ACU.

...And Reporters Are Sex Police

“While I certainly don’t condone any of this, we should remember that Chandra Levy was a 24-year-old woman, she was not his intern, she was working in Washington, and it’s very sad the way this has turned out. And if Mr. Condit has withheld information that could be helpful in the investigation, he should be rightfully condemned, but I don’t think we need to be the sex police here.”

— *Newsweek’s* Eleanor Clift on *FNC’s The Edge*, Aug. 27.

Missing Mao

“Workers’ Rights Suffering as China Goes Capitalist.”

— **Headline over front-page *New York Times* story by Erik Eckholm about low-paid workers employed by private and foreign companies in China, August 22.**

CNN: Clinton = The King

“Elvis, the first rock star. Clinton, the first rock star President....Clinton had a talent for convincing anyone listening to him that he was speaking only to them, just as Elvis convinced someone in the 100th row that he was singing only to them. Presley drew on black culture for inspiration. Clinton draws on black culture for solace.”

— **CNN political analyst Bill Schneider, prompted by the August “convergence” days apart of Bill Clinton’s birthday and the day Elvis died, August 16 *Inside Politics*.**

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