

Notable Quotables

June 11, 2001 (Vol. Fourteen; No. 12)

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



Bringing Political Balance
to the Media

Principled Jim Jeffords...

"He is a man of principle. He switched parties but not identities. He is a man who is a rare breed now, a moderate Republican and he gave word to what some of us have not been able to, which is that Bush campaigned as a moderate but he's been governing as an arch-conservative."

— *Time's* Margaret Carlson, *CNN's Capital Gang*, May 26.

"For every Vermonter who looks at Jim Jeffords and sees a traitor...there seem to be ten who see a 'profile in courage.' In Vermont, a state with an independent streak that can blaze as boldly as its leaves, Jim Jeffords appears to be a snug fit from the barber shops on Main Street...to the dairy farms in the rolling green hills."

— Reporter Jim Axelrod, May 24 *CBS Evening News*.

"After 26 years in Congress, Jeffords has become an institution in Vermont, and he was treated like a rock star when he went home to explain his reasons for quitting the Republican Party."

— CBS's Bob Schieffer, May 24 *Evening News*.

Reporter Dan Harris: "The speech moved Jeffords' communications director to tears. As for Jeffords' constituents, most political watchers here say this defection will only boost his popularity."

Woman, reading from her protest sign: "Wow, 'a politician with a conscience.' And that's exactly how I feel about Jim Jeffords."

— ABC's *World News Tonight*, May 24.

...Versus Abusive Conservatives

"It seems to me that the modern Republican Party and its moderate wing are in a sort of, to use the psychobabble of the era, in an abusive relationship...and the moderates are the enablers and the conservatives are the abusers and they just got used to doing it that way and suddenly one member said, 'I'm not going to take it anymore.'"

— NPR's Nina Totenberg, *Inside Washington*, May 26.

"Many of Bush's most conservative agenda items were hidden away in the campaign's fine print and covered over by his big messages about moderation and helping the little guy. His compassionate rhetoric masked his conservatism....Thanks to a stern, quiet man named Jeffords, Bush may finally have the opportunity to create the kind of Washington he promised last fall."

— Washington reporter Karen Tumulty, June 4 *Time*.

Excuse To Push GOP Left

"Is this a chance for the party to look at itself and perhaps move more to the center, become more moderate in the wake of his defection?"

— Question from NBC's Matt Lauer to White House counselor Karen Hughes, May 25 *Today*.

"Even top Republicans are acknowledging that some soul searching is necessary now regarding how dissenting voices are treated within the Republican Party. Even Senator Arlen Specter said Jeffords' defection is a very loud wake-up call. Isn't it?"

— Question to Karen Hughes from CBS's Jane Clayson, May 25 *Early Show*.

"A Quiet Yankee Sends a Loud Message to the Republican Right."

— Headline accompanying a picture of Jim Jeffords on the cover of *Newsweek's* June 4 edition.

Insisting Jeffords Is "Moderate"

"[Jeffords] is a maverick, he is an independent. This was really about having his own moderate views heard within what he thinks is an increasingly conservative Republican Party."

— ABC's Linda Douglass on the May 23 *Nightline*.

"He voted against Clarence Thomas, against the Reagan tax cut, against impeachment, pro-choice, pro-environment, so he's been this moderate Republican — fiscally conservative, socially liberal — for many years now."

— *Newsweek's* Jonathan Alter on MSNBC's *The News with Brian Williams*, May 23.

"[Jeffords] sings country music with Trent Lott and other conservatives, but voted against impeachment and for Hillary Clinton's health care plan. It's a record perfectly suited for Vermont — the first state to outlaw slavery, elect a socialist to Congress, produce politically correct ice cream, and legalize same-sex unions. Vermonters say they're not liberal or conservative, just socially conscious."

— NBC's Andrea Mitchell, May 24 *Nightly News*.

Reality Check:

"Jeffords has long been one of the most liberal members of the Senate...."

— CNN's Jonathan Karl on the May 22 *Inside Politics*, accurately categorizing Jeffords, who has a lifetime conservative rating of 27 from the American Conservative Union and a lifetime liberal rating of 61 from the liberal Americans for Democratic Action.

Of Course There's A Bias...

"I'd bet that if you hooked Dan and Tom and Peter up to a lie detector and asked them if there's a liberal bias on their newscasts, they'd all say 'no' and they'd all pass the test. That leaves one other possibility. Messrs. Rather, Brokaw and Jennings don't even know what liberal bias is. I concede this is hard to believe, but I'm convinced it's why we keep getting these ridiculous denials...."

— **Former CBS News reporter Bernard Goldberg**, in a **May 24 *Wall Street Journal* op-ed.**

...But Tom & Dan Won't Admit It

"The idea that we would set out, consciously or unconsciously, to put some kind of an ideological framework over what we're doing is nonsense, it's also self-destructive....The fact is, Mr. Goldberg, that I've heard a lot more, on a regular basis, from liberals complaining about the kind of coverage that they've gotten than I have from conservatives. I only know him a little bit professionally. I know that he's had an ongoing feud with Dan, I wish he would confine it to that, frankly."

— **NBC anchor Tom Brokaw**, responding to **Goldberg's column on C-SPAN's *Washington Journal*, May 25.**

"I'm willing to be judged on the basis of how hard do I try and how often have I succeeded in being simply an honest broker of information? What I won't do — and this is what gets me in trouble with some people — what I won't do is allow someone to tell me how to report the news. There are people, particularly in politics and people who feel very strong ideologically, who want to say, 'Listen, you either report the news the way we want you to report it, or we're going to punish you, Dan Rather.'"

— **Dan Rather on FNC's *The Edge with Paula Zahn*, May 22.**

More For Bears, Less For People

"The Bush plan [to repair park facilities] provides very little funding for protection of species whose numbers have been dwindling. At the same time, the administration is thinking of overturning controls on snowmobiles, which increase noise and air pollution in Yellowstone. Some parks, like the Great Smokies, are already in peril with air pollution reducing visibility by 80 percent. The National Park Service reacted diplomatically, along the lines of 'don't look a gift horse in the mouth.' In a statement released today, the Park Service said if the President wasn't making parks a priority, the parks would indeed be in dire straights. Even the President's most vocal critics admit that some money is better than none, even if it is aimed at visitors to the park rather than the residents."

— **Judy Muller on ABC's *World News Tonight*, May 30.**

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Celebrating Democratic Takeover

"[With their Senate majority, Democrats] can challenge judicial nominations that don't reflect mainstream opinion; they can oversee federal agencies to make sure they're doing the public's business, rather than pursuing a right-wing special agenda....An administration that managed the amazing feat of getting kicked off the U.N. Human Rights Commission this month clearly needs some help. And now the Democrats, thanks to Sen. Jeffords, are in a position to provide some advice and consent."

— **Former *Washington Post* reporter and editor David Ignatius**, in a **May 27 column.**

Cheering Federal Intrusion

Elizabeth Vargas: "Of course, critics [of the ruling that the PGA must allow Casey Martin to use a golf cart] now fear that this will open a Pandora's box of litigation. Justice Scalia in the dissent said that he envisioned parents of Little Leaguers with Attention Deficit Disorder suing to get four strikes instead of three because their child might be at a disadvantage."

Charles Gibson: "He might envision that, but Casey Martin should ride and be able to — it's the right decision, I think."

Vargas: "It's good for Martin. A long victory, a long fight."

Gibson: "Absolutely."

— **Exchange on *Good Morning America*, May 30.**

It's Just Pennies To Jennings

"The Environmental Protection Agency's going to spend \$2 million trying to make some of the nation's beaches less of a health risk. Doesn't sound like a lot of money."

— **ABC's Peter Jennings on *World News Tonight*, May 25.**

No Bias, Just Praise For McCain

"People send me e-mails full of dopey attacks — 'I bet you've never written anything positive about a Republican in your whole life' — obviously never having read any of the columns I wrote praising John McCain during the campaign."

— ***Newsweek's* Jonathan Alter**, quoted by ***Washington Post* media writer Howard Kurtz**, June 4.

More Shameful Than Bill's Cigar?

"The larger question to me is how Republicans had a great, jolly-good time during the previous administration talking about the lack of family values. Rudy Giuliani, now these two [Bush daughters], and we also read in Lloyd Grove's column this week that maybe the First Lady sneaks a cigarette in the White House once in a while. Shame, shame, shame."

— ***Time* national correspondent Jack White on *Inside Washington*, June 2.**

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