

Notable Quotables

August 5, 2002 (Vol. Fifteen; No. 16)

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



Bringing Political Balance
to the Media

Oh, Now They Tell Us

Linda Douglass: "Experts say just the threat of more jail time won't stop corporate crime."

Professor John Coffee, Columbia Law School: "It's an election-year answer to crime. It sounds good, but it won't affect the sentences really imposed or what prosecutors actually do."

— *World News Tonight*, July 24, after House and Senate negotiators agreed on a new corporate regulation law.

vs.

"The Senate has moved with stunning speed to pass this very, very tough legislation....Lots of criminal penalties for such things as giving false stock tips or signing a deceptive financial report, long jail terms, and a very strong new board to oversee the accounting industry. The question now, Peter, is what will happen to this....The lobbyists are swarming over Capitol Hill to try to get the House to water down what the Senate has done."

— ABC's Linda Douglass on *World News Tonight*, July 15.

Regulations Are Very Reassuring

"Will Republicans embrace much of the Sarbanes bill on accountability and reform in corporate America as soon as possible so that the markets will be reassured, the investors will be reassured and that those who violated laws will go to prison?"

— Tim Russert's question to House Majority Leader Dick Army on NBC's *Meet the Press*, July 21.

vs.

"Can you picture this conversation? 'Hey Martha, guess what? Senator Sarbanes is writing new regulations for the stock market, the Senate Democrats are going to pass them and the President says he'll sign whatever they send him.' Is that a signal to buy or sell? My guess is that most people would not be cheered by that news."

— Brit Hume on *Fox News Sunday* the same day.

"Nonideological" Liberal Views

"Almost from the beginning, he has found himself at odds with many of his more hard-line colleagues and the President himself on the handling of foreign policy....Mr. Powell's approach to almost all issues — foreign or domestic — is pragmatic and nonideological. He is internationalist, multilateralist and moderate. He has supported abortion rights and affirmative action."

— *New York Times* reporter Todd Purdum in a July 25 front-page story about Secretary of State Colin Powell.

Cheney's "Shrewd" Stock Sale

"An executive sells shares in his energy company two months before the company announces unexpected bad news, and the stock price eventually tumbles to a quarter of the price at which the insider sold his. George W. Bush at Harken Energy Corp. in 1990? Yes, but also Richard B. Cheney at Halliburton Co. in 2000.....Whether through serendipity or shrewdness, Cheney made an \$18.5 million profit selling his shares for more than \$52 each in August 2000."

— The *Washington Post's* Dana Milbank in a front-page July 17 story. In August 2000, the *Washington Post* and other news organizations demanded Cheney sever all of his financial ties to Halliburton.

Vice President Spiro Cheney?

"The closest parallel would be the investigation of Spiro Agnew in the '70s when he was Richard Nixon's Vice President. Now you recall that Agnew was ultimately forced to resign. Now no one is suggesting that Mr. Cheney is another Agnew, and Cheney's personal integrity is not under investigation by the SEC. But Cheney's problems could damage the Republican party this fall....Democrats would love to make Dick Cheney the poster boy for the Republicans' corporate governance problems."

— CNN's William Schneider on *Inside Politics*, July 18.

In Rubin We Trust

"The blame-Clinton scenario has the appeal of a simple cartoon: Today's corruption began in the 1990s and was shaped, as House Republican campaign chairman Tom Davis puts it, by a 'culture of dishonesty and situational ethics that flowed directly from the White House. A lack of accountability, dishonesty, evasion, and dissemblance are the true legacies of the Clinton era.' Ipso facto, Clinton did it."

"One small problem: He didn't. 'Blaming Clinton is absolutely ridiculous,' ex-Treasury Secretary Bob Rubin told me."

— CBS special correspondent Gloria Borger in her July 29 *U.S. News & World Report* column. Rubin served as Clinton's Secretary of the Treasury from 1995 to 1999.

Bill Clinton Can Save Us

"The key to me is not that you would blame Clinton [for the corporate scandals]. He would win any vote of any question on who you would blame for something. But who would the people turn to right now to get out of this mess? They'd probably vote for Clinton there, too."

— Former *Washington Post* reporter and Clinton biographer David Maraniss on MSNBC's *Hardball*, July 17.

Suspected?

"[Michael] Jackson's representatives said last October he had finished studio recordings for the single, which he hoped would raise \$50 million for victims' families and survivors of the attacks by suspected Islamic militants that killed nearly 3,000 people."

— Last paragraph of July 20 Reuters dispatch from Tokyo.

Brokaw Earns Cheers from Phil

Phil Donahue: "Let me tell you what is impressive. You're not wearing a flag. Well, I don't want to damn you with my praise, but I say hip-hip-hooray for that, and I think you gave the right answer when you spoke at Northwestern University..."

Tom Brokaw: "Right. I said, you know, I wear a flag in my heart, but I think if you wear a flag, it's a suggestion somehow that you're endorsing what the administration is doing at the time. And I don't think journalists ought to be wearing flags."

Donahue: "And I say hear, hear, hear."

— Exchange on MSNBC's *Donahue*, July 25.

Helen Sees Nazi-like Crackdown

"I think the chipping away of our civil liberties is unprecedented. Even in World War II, I never saw anything like that in Washington or any of the wars. I think that people are standing mute, and I remember the rabbi in the March on Washington program. He said that the greatest sin of all in the Nazi era was silence. He had been in a concentration camp for many years. People have got to, they must speak up now or forever hold their peace."

— Hearst White House columnist Helen Thomas on MSNBC's *Donahue*, July 22.

Maybe to Some Journalists, She Is

"Hillary Clinton Emerges as Moderate"

— Headline of July 29 Associated Press story by Washington bureau reporter Shannon McCaffrey.

Well, That Settles Everything

"It's an article of faith among Republicans that George Bush sealed his fate when he went back on his 1988 'Read My Lips' pledge as part of a 1990 budget deal that raised taxes slightly and cut spending to shrink the deficit. But what's forgotten is that the deal worked. Even many Democrats now give 41 some credit for the boom of the 1990s; his deal helped restore confidence in the capital markets."

— Jonathan Alter and Howard Fineman in "A Dynasty's Dilemma," *Newsweek's* July 29 cover story contrasting the two President Bushes.

Slamming a "Reckless" Tax Cut...

"What we have is a crisis of confidence here, and I think it's a crisis that ignores the fact that most of the fundamentals are sound, with the exception of the fiscal situation a few years out, because of that reckless tax cut for the wealthy."

— *Wall Street Journal* Executive Washington Editor Al Hunt on the July 20 *Capital Gang* on CNN.

"The overriding question — the one that dwarfs everything else — is what to do about the huge tax cut that Bush pushed through Congress back when those mythical budget surpluses were still clouding most people's vision....Bush has been adamant in rejecting a rollback or even a delay in the tax cut — virtually all of which will go to the highest-income voters. His House Republican allies, seeking short-term political gain at the expense of long-term fiscal sanity, have been staging votes to make the tax cuts permanent."

— *Washington Post* reporter and columnist David Broder in his July 24 column, "A Time to Face Fiscal Reality."

...But Pushing For More Spending

Dan Rather: "Senior Americans who saw retirement savings evaporate in the Wall Street meltdown have another financial headache now. It turns out it was all talk and no action with the President and Congress again today on passing any version of Medicare prescription drug coverage."

Bob Schieffer: "...They say they'll keep trying, but don't bet on them getting far. Instead, expect Democrats to blame Republicans, Republicans to blame Democrats, and the White House to blame Congress. Seniors, in the meanwhile, just get the shaft."

— *CBS Evening News*, July 23.

Post Decries Mean Pro-USA Song

"The meanest [song], by far, is 'Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue,' which unabashedly glorifies the bombing of Afghanistan. The song traffics in vivid, simple shades of black and white, good and evil."

— *Washington Post* Style-section reporter David Segal writing about country singer Toby Keith's new album, *Vanished*, July 25.

Fantasizing About Janet Reno

"I leave my friends behind and rush the stage to try to dance with [former Attorney General Janet] Reno, only to find myself in a small crowd of men living the same fantasy. When I finally push my way past them, she is gone."

— *Time* staff writer Joel Stein's recounting of Reno's dance party fundraiser for her campaign for Florida Governor, in the magazine's July 29 issue.

Notable Quotables

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