

Notable Quotables

January 21, 2002 (Vol. Fifteen; No. 2)

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



Bringing Political Balance
to the Media

MRC Dishonor Awards: Roasting the Most Outrageously Biased Liberal Reporters of 2001

On Thursday night, January 17, 2002, before an audience of more than 800 at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, D.C., the Media Research Center presented the "Dishonor Awards: Roasting the Most Outrageously Biased Liberal Reporters of 2001."

Winners were picked by a distinguished panel of 14 leading media observers who served as judges — including **Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, Robert Novak, Michael Reagan, and Ben Stein** — all of whom selected first- and second-place choices from five quotes in six award categories. See the back page for a complete list of the judges.

Cal Thomas served as the Master of Ceremonies. Serving as presenters of video clips of the three highest vote-earning quotes in six award categories: **John Fund, Kate O'Beirne** and **David Limbaugh**.

In place of the journalist who won each award, a conservative accepted it in jest. Those standing in for the winners: **Steve Forbes, Lucianne Goldberg, Robert Dornan, William F. Buckley Jr., and Katherine Harris**.

We're All Going to Die and It's Bush's Fault Award (for Doooms- day Environmental Reporting)

Presented by John Fund

Runners-up:

"This is another bouquet to the right. Arsenic in the water. Starting up the Cold War. Make as much carbon dioxide as you like. Laugh about it. Bush has set himself up as a huge target. And the arsenic is going to be the equivalent of what your boss [Newt Gingrich] did with cutting school lunches."

— **Newsweek's Eleanor Clift, addressing Tony Blankley, on the March 24, 2001 McLaughlin Group.**

"The Sierra Club calls President Bush's latest moves on the environment 'March Madness.' In the last two weeks, the administration has signaled that it may allow logging in pristine forests that had been declared off limits, has put off a decision to reduce arsenic in drinking water, has suspended a rule to protect the environment from damage caused by mining, has reversed a decision to limit carbon

- dioxide emissions, and the President also suggested drill-
- ing for oil in national parks and is pushing oil exploration in
- the Arctic Wildlife Refuge. Some in the President's own
- party are becoming alarmed."
- — **ABC's Linda Douglass opening a story aired on the**
- **March 24, 2001 World News Tonight/Saturday.**

And the winner is...

- "Remember when Ronald Reagan tried to save a few pen-
- nies on the school lunch program by classifying ketchup
- as a vegetable? Last week the Bush administration went
- further, axing a regulation that forced the meat industry to
- test hamburgers served in school for salmonella. Imagine,
- Mad Cow Disease among children, K through 12. The day
- it hit the papers the proposal was quickly withdrawn. [If]
- the Bush administration keeps trying to kill health and safe-
- ty regulations at this pace, soon we won't be able to eat,
- drink or breathe."
- — **"Outrage of the Week" from Time magazine's Margaret**
- **Carlson, April 7, 2001 Capital Gang on CNN.**

Accepting for Margaret Carlson... Steve Forbes

To watch, via RealPlayer, the quotes in this issue, go to: <http://www.mediaresearch.org>

Bring Back Bubba Award (for the Best Journalistic Lewinsky)

Presented by John Fund

Runners-up:

"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, 2001** *Inside Politics*.

"Now, the return of the Prodigal Son. The, you know, the man who left office disgraced, burdened down by at least three major scandals that I can think of, got a hero's welcome today, and I couldn't be happier...."

"After impeachment, after Pardogate, after the fake stories about their pilfering of the White House, Bill Clinton's appearance today in Harlem must have been the feel-good event of the season for the former President, and he soaked up the sunshine and love."

— **Geraldo Rivera discussing Bill Clinton's "heroic re-emergence" at the opening of his new Harlem offices, on CNBC's Rivera Live, July 30, 2001.**

And the winner is...

"Throughout the eight years that he was in office, President Clinton warned us that the next great menace was international terrorism...."

"He also brought unprecedented prosperity to our nation, and because of that, President Clinton [Bush] can use the surplus Mr. Clinton left behind to pay for many of the nation's needs in this time of crisis...."

"This lecture series is about the human spirit. To me and millions of others, President Clinton has always personified that. He is the man from Hope, and that is what he has given us, hope. We miss him. Thank you, Mr. President."

— **Former UPI White House reporter Helen Thomas introducing Bill Clinton at an October 9, 2001 Greater Washington Society of Association Executives lecture shown on C-SPAN.**

Accepting for Helen Thomas... **Lucianne Goldberg**

Gilligan Award (for the Flakiest Comment of the Year)

Presented by Kate O'Beirne

Runners-up:

"[Senator Jim 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, 2001** *Nightly News*.

"After pepperoni pizza and banana milkshakes once, I dreamed about Bill Clinton."

— **ABC's Diane Sawyer talking with her Good Morning America co-host Charles Gibson about a study which claimed that sleeping Republicans have three times as many nightmares as sleeping Democrats, July 10, 2001.**

Diane Sawyer: "Watching you and watching you cover the news over the past year, you are so much about passion for politics, and it doesn't matter to you, I mean — I really mean this."

George Stephanopoulos: "Thank you."

Sawyer: "You've been completely non-partisan in covering the news."

— **ABC's Good Morning America, July 24, 2001.**

And the winner is...

Bill O'Reilly: "I want to ask you flat out, do you think President Clinton's an honest man?"

Dan Rather: "Yes, I think he's an honest man."

O'Reilly: "Do you, really?"

Rather: "I do."

O'Reilly: "Even though he lied to Jim Lehrer's face about the Lewinsky case?"

Rather: "Who among us has not lied about something?"

O'Reilly: "Well, I didn't lie to anybody's face on national television. I don't think you have, have you?"

Rather: "I don't think I ever have. I hope I never have. But, look, it's one thing —"

O'Reilly: "How can you say he's an honest guy then?"

Rather: "Well, because I think he is. I think at core he's an honest person. I know that you have a different view. I know that you consider it sort of astonishing anybody would say so, but I think you can be an honest person and lie about any number of things."

— **Exchange on Fox News Channel's The O'Reilly Factor, May 15, 2001.**

Accepting for Dan Rather... **Dan Rather**

Roast attendees heard an "interview" between Kate O'Beirne and Dan Rather made possible by the editing of audio clips of actual past Rather comments:

O'Beirne: "Good afternoon, Mr. Rather, and thank you for making time for us. Let me ask you first, straight out: Is there or isn't there a liberal bias in the media, and where exactly do you fall in the equation?"

Rather: "I'm all news, all the time. Full power, tall tower. I want to break in when the news breaks out. That's my agenda. Now, very respectfully, when you start talking about a liberal agenda and all the, quote, liberal bias in the media, I quite frankly, and I say this respectfully but candidly to you, I don't know what you're talking about."

O'Beirne: "That reminds me, what do you think about winning this year's Gilligan Award for the Flakiest Comment of the Year?"

Rather: "I wouldn't touch that line with a 12-foot pole, which as you know is the pole I reserve for those things that I certainly wouldn't touch with an 11-foot pole."

O’Beirne: “Mr. Rather, I hate to tell you, but you’re losing me. You’re also losing your audience, by the millions, to Fox. Why should conservatives stick with CBS News?”

Rather: “Stay with CBS now for more news, including: Is there a pall over the mall as holiday shoppers think small?”

O’Beirne: “I’ll pass that along, yes I will. One final question for you: Most journalists are loathe to admit an error. Do you ever make mistakes, and if so, why?”

Rather: “Where I come out with this,...look, we’ve made mistakes in the past. Somebody wrote in the paper the other day that I was, quote, ‘boneheaded.’ Well, of course, it’s a matter of record I’m boneheaded, said, ‘well, this is bizarre.’”

O’Beirne: “Hold it a minute. Did I hear you correctly? Are you saying you’re bizarre?”

Rather: “Well, of course I’m bizarre, you know, we’ve known that for a long time...Somebody, I don’t know if he put it exactly this way, but he said, ‘well, you know, it’s a dumb-ass thing he’s doing.’ Well, you know, I’ve been a dumb-ass all my life.”

O’Beirne: “Okay. Thank you for your time, Mr. Rather.”

Rather: “I’ll see you along the trail.”

Peter Arnett Award (for Hopelessly Foolish Wartime Reporting)

Presented by Kate O’Beirne

Runners-up:

“We have been the cowards. Lobbing cruise missiles from 2,000 miles away, that’s cowardly. Staying in the airplane when it hits the building, say what you want about it, not cowardly.”

— **ABC’s Bill Maher on *Politically Incorrect*, Sept. 17, 2001.**

“We all know that one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter and that Reuters upholds the principle that we do not use the word terrorist....To be frank, it adds little to call the attack on the World Trade Center a terrorist attack.”

— **Steven Jukes, global head of news for Reuters News Service, in an internal memo cited by the *Washington Post’s* Howard Kurtz in a September 24, 2001, article.**

And the winner is...

“The Pentagon as a legitimate target? I actually don’t have an opinion on that and it’s important I not have an opinion on that as I sit here in my capacity right now....I can say the Pentagon got hit, I can say this is what their position is, this is what our position is, but for me to take a position this was right or wrong, I mean, that’s perhaps for me in my private life, perhaps it’s for me dealing with my loved ones, perhaps it’s for my minister at church. But as a journalist I feel strongly that’s something that I should not be taking a position on. I’m supposed to figure out what is and what is not, not what ought to be.”

— **ABC News President David Westin to students at a Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism event on October 23, 2001, shown four days later on C-SPAN. (After the quote was publicized, Westin conceded he was wrong.)**

Accepting for David Westin... Robert Dornan

Damn Every Conservative We Can Think of to Hell Award

Presented by David Limbaugh

Runners-up:

“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 following the *Bush vs. Gore* Supreme Court decision, on the *Early Show*, December 13, 2000.**

Bill Maher, host of ABC’s *Politically Incorrect*: “I do think, if it turns out that this beautiful young girl [Chandra Levy] is gone, I think, and he [Condit] is responsible in some way, you have to look to Ken Starr for a little bit of guilt.”

Larry King: “Why?”

Maher: “Because, you know, Ken Starr made it so that you, in the old days, you had an affair with somebody, and you know, okay, you had an affair. The press didn’t report it. They didn’t make a political criminal case of it. Now, it’s almost like you have to get rid of them.”

— **Exchange on CNN’s *Larry King Live*, July 27, 2001.**

And the winner is...

A compilation of Gumbel questions:

“Can you deny that he distorted Mr. White’s record and basically engaged in what some would kindly call character assassination?”

— **CBS’s Bryant Gumbel to John Ashcroft adviser Charles Polk, on Missouri judge Ronnie White whom Ashcroft had opposed for appointment to a federal court, January 16, 2001 *Early Show*.**

“If he’s [Ashcroft] so much of an extremist liability, as you claim, what’s his nomination say about George W. Bush and his claims of compassionate conservatism?”

— **Gumbel to Wade Henderson of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, January 16 *Early Show*.**

“What do you think Senator Ashcroft’s distortion of your record and tarnishing of your good name says about his character?”

— **Gumbel to Missouri Supreme Court judge Ronnie White, January 19 *Early Show*.**

Accepting for Bryant Gumbel... William F. Buckley, Jr.

Sore Losers Award for Refusing to Concede Bush’s Florida Victory

Presented by David Limbaugh

Runners-up:

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 still would 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

20th, 2001 and this is no small thing in our nation's history. Do you still agree with what you wrote?"

ABC News 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 after the latest media recount, November 12, 2001.**

"Should five of our nation's nine Supreme Court Justices be in prison? That's the opinion of famed former prosecutor Vincent Bugliosi. He says the justices who supported George W. Bush in the election dispute are almost treasonous white-collar criminals. He'll explain why. Because all that is right now on *Rivera Live*."

"It is a scathing indictment of the high court of the United States, at least these five conservative justices. And I really, really, I urge law students especially, but anyone who's interested in the machinations of the Court, to check this out. Vincent Bugliosi's *The Betrayal of America*."

— **Start and end of Geraldo Rivera's interview with Bugliosi, CNBC's *Rivera Live*, June 25, 2001.**

And the winner is...

"Nineteen days after the presidential election, Florida's Republican Secretary of State [Katherine Harris] is about to announce the winner — as she sees it and she decrees it...."

"The believed certification — as the Republican Secretary of State sees it — is coming just hours after a court ordered deadline for counties to submit their hand count and recount totals...."

"She will certify — as she sees it — who gets Florida's 25 electoral votes...."

"What's happening here is the certification — as the Florida Secretary of State sees it and decrees it — is being signed...."

"And after this, it will be, at least in the opinion of the Secretary of State, that the results will be final...."

— **Dan Rather during a CBS News Special Report on the November 26, 2000 official certification of Florida's vote.**

Accepting for Dan Rather... Katherine Harris

Quote of the Year

The MRC asked the guests at our January 17 roast to determine the most outrageously biased quote of 2001. The audience was asked to select from four of the six quotes which had already won an award.

The nominees were Margaret Carlson on how Bush is making it so "we won't be able to eat, drink or breathe," Helen Thomas on how she missed Bill Clinton, Dan Rath-

er's judgment that Bill Clinton is "an honest man" and Bryant Gumbel's questions about John Ashcroft's character. As a picture of each was displayed, emcee Cal Thomas asked the audience to hoot, holler and applaud to indicate which one they thought should win. Thomas, along with presenters David Limbaugh, Kate O'Beirne and John Fund, agreed that Dan Rather was easily the winner:

Bill O'Reilly: "I want to ask you flat out, do you think President Clinton's an honest man?"

Dan Rather: "Yes, I think he's an honest man."

O'Reilly: "Do you, really?"

Rather: "I do."

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— **Exchange on Fox News Channel's *The O'Reilly Factor*, May 15, 2001.**

The Judges:

L. Brent Bozell III, President of the Media Research Center

William F. Buckley, Jr., *National Review* Editor-at-Large

John Fund, columnist for *The Wall Street Journal's* OpinionJournal.com

Lucianne Goldberg, Talk Radio Network host and publisher of Lucianne.com

Sean Hannity, co-host of FNC's *Hannity & Colmes*; nationally syndicated radio talk show host

Rush Limbaugh, national radio talk show host

Marlin Maddoux, President of the USA Radio Network

Robert Novak, syndicated and *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist; CNN commentator

Kate O'Beirne, *National Review* Washington Editor and a panelist on CNN's *Capital Gang*

Michael Reagan, nationally syndicated radio talk show host

William Rusher, Distinguished Fellow, the Claremont Institute

Ben Stein, host of Comedy Central's *Win Ben Stein's Money*

Cal Thomas, syndicated columnist and panelist on FNC's *Fox News Watch*

R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr., Editor-in-Chief of *The American Spectator*

Notable Quotables

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