



Change You Can Believe In: From Bushisms to Obamanisms

Shortly after Barack Obama was elected, one of his supporters, alluding to George W. Bush's supposedly lacking intellect, said to me, "I'm just happy to have someone intelligent in the White House."

I'm sure White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel would be very flattered.

Whatever you think of Bush, admittedly, his habitually knotted tongue did give birth to Bushisms, things such as "misunderestimated." Cute. Then there are the "Yogiisms" of former baseball player and manager Yogi Berra, pronouncements such as "I think I made the wrong mistake," which in a sense makes sense (you can get away with some mistakes, but the fatal one will do you in). Now I'm here to tell you that Barack Obama is giving us some new "-isms," and I don't speak of communism or even socialism. I mean the Obamanism.



There is the time on the campaign trail when Obama said he'd been to "every corner of the United States." I'll say. He even found a bunch everyone else missed, telling us he'd [visited](#) "57 states." Then there was the time Obama [called](#) a Navy "corpsman" a "corpse-man" ... twice. Unfortunately, with our journalistically dead press corpse, we never found out if the President was unacquainted with the word or just confused servicemen with Chicago voters.

And now we have another Obamanism: The argument that al-Qaeda is "racist."

That is a White House aide's [explanation](#) of comments Obama made to the South African Broadcasting Corporation. The President was addressing the tragic Uganda bombing and said, "What you've seen in some of the statements that have been made by these terrorist organizations is that they do not regard African life as valuable in and of itself." The administration official later clarified Obama's point, saying, "Al-Qaeda is a racist organization that treats black Africans like cannon fodder and does not value human life."

Al-Qaeda does not value human life... Now there's a point to ponder. Heck, now that I think about it, it could occur to a good American liberal that al-Qaeda might even be a tad homophobic and sexist, too.

But the "racist" label is a stroke of brilliance. I mean, it ruined Jimmy "the Greek." It ruined Al Campanis. It ruined scientist James Watson. Might it also ruin al-Qaeda?

And it's not as if the accusation is unfounded. The administration official supported it by pointing out, "Al-Qaeda recruits have said that al-Qaeda is racist against black members from West Africa because



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they are only used in lower level operations.”

Ah, another excellent point. Muslims worldwide are more than a billion strong and come in different shapes, sexes, sizes, and colors. Yet, does the demographic makeup of these terrorist organizations’ upper echelons match that of the general Muslim population? So forget sending lawyers to Afghanistan and Iraq to draw up rules of engagement. We should embed the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission with our corpse-men. How else can we assure that historically disadvantaged groups are represented in terrorist leadership positions?

But Barack Obama has long been a purveyor of hopey-changeey Obamanisms. For instance, Bernard Lewis at American Thinker [tells us](#) that, way back in the ‘90s, a fresh-faced Obama gave constitutional scholar Larry Tribe the idea of applying Einstein to constitutional law, resulting in Tribe’s classic *Harvard Law Review* work “Curved Space and Constitutional Law.” How does physics have a bearing on constitutional law? Lewis answers this, writing:

It doesn’t. There is not a smidgen of relevance. None. Physics and the law only get together around bloodstains and such, and even then you have to slug your way through chemistry and biology to get there.... Physicist Frank J. Tipler has described Tribe’s paper as “crackpot physics.”

You see, “Curved Space and Constitutional Law” is akin to a spoof intellectual work that someone might create to see if he can fool the so-called experts into believing it was legit. It reminds me of how, after Estelle Lovatt [billed her two-year-old son](#) Freddie Linsky as an accomplished painter who has “dedicated his whole life to art,” art galleries actually wanted to purchase and display his toddlersque daubs. And the success of such gags isn’t unusual, either. As Lewis writes:

[Obama’s and Tribe’s Obamanism] comes right out of a great comedy tradition of long-winded professors spouting obvious claptrap to fool the suckers. Shakespeare used that gag with Polonius in *Hamlet*. Groucho Marx used it. Molière became famous for his “scholar” in the suckered *Bourgeois Gentleman*. Greek and Roman comedy writers used it. Every humorist in history has used that shtick, because it’s funny.

Yes, it is funny. Only, Obama was serious.

Considering all this, you may think that Obama was perhaps a bit misoverestimated. Don’t be so sure. He and Tribe might have just made the right mistake — and American voters the wrong one. After all, Tribe is a respected constitutional scholar, Obama is President, and Americans’ esprit de corpse is at an all-time low.

So who has the most cranial curved space? I’m not sure, but there is one big difference between Bushisms and Obamanisms. When Bush said, “Our enemies are innovative and resourceful, and so are we. They never stop thinking about new ways to harm our country and our people, and neither do we,” I can be sure he simply misspoke.

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