

Jacq.org
 JacqTucker.com
 JacquesTucker.com

✉
 email
 Jacq'

Jacq'

Enforce the
 Bill of Rights
 Tyranny?



Date: August 29, 2002
 To: x9m6@hotmail.com
 Subject: Coultergeist

THE NEW YORK OBSERVER

NEW YORK'S WEEKLY NEWSPAPER



Coultergeist

by **George Gurley**

Ann Coulter, author of the No. 1 best-selling nonfiction book in America *Slander: Liberal Lies About the American Right*, a small book **coruscating** with **giddy bile** was 20 minutes late to lunch at Michael's, the sunlit media-centric restaurant on West 55th Street. I'd been so excited to meet the glowing **scimitar** of the American right that I hadn't fallen asleep until 5 a.m. the night before. [Ed. George is struggling to find appropriate but uncommon words here. He can't even find the 5 ring.]

Now I was worried that Ann had backed out. Had she figured she'd be un-welcomed, hissed at, throttled at the hub center of the media elite?

Bobby Zarem, the publicist, waved to me from a nearby table. He was sitting with a male writer and a female television producer. Both their composesures underwent a remarkable transformation when I told them who would be joining me.

"*She's the devil*," said the producer, adding that Ms. Coulter was "ultraconservative."

"She *is* the Antichrist," said the writer. A piece of food flew out of his mouth. "We might have to leave."

Yes, mention Ann Coulter in New York and food tends to fly out of people's mouths. Then they get a knowing look that says, *Are you kidding me? Well, I've got her number, oh yes I do....* Then, invariably, these people will use the same two words to describe her: either "crazy" or "insane." She is a lunatic "right-wing nut," and also a dangerous, demonic one.

Her book has been No. 1 on the *New York Times* best-seller list for nonfiction since the first week it came out, in early July, which means that the people who dismiss her also have to deal with a secondary emotion: envy. This was true as well in the case of the drenchingly beautiful blonde Clare Boothe Luce, who reveled in writing hit plays when she wasn't wittily attacking New Dealers; the liberals were supposed to be the wits! It was also true of well-haberdashed libertarian Ayn Rand, and peppery magpie Phyllis Schlafly, whom Ms. Coulter champions in her book for bringing down the Equal Rights Amendment. [Ed. Com'on George, Schlafly may be an tedious owl (wise but boring), but she ain't no magpie (chatterer)]

On page 2 of *Slander* before she begins carving up "unhinged liberals" like Al Gore, Jesse Jackson, Dan Rather, Gloria Steinem and Walter Cronkite Ms. Coulter attacks the "pathetic little parakeet males and grim, quivering, angry women on the Upper West Side of Manhattan hoping to be chosen as that day's purveyor of hate": the letter-writers to *The New York Times*.

At that point, I thought I was already falling in love.

However, in the second chapter I experienced an emotion I was less sure about.

"Every pernicious idea to come down the pike is instantly embraced by liberals to prove how powerful they are," Ms. Coulter writes. "Liberals hate society and want to bring it down to reinforce their sense of invincibility."

Now Ms. Coulter had triggered something else in me: I was getting really pissed off. I felt ... infuriated ... stirred up.

I looked around Michael's restaurant. They were *everywhere*.

No one at Michael's really noticed Ms. Coulter when she showed up, a sluice of sweat dripping off her long, perfect New Canaan nose, apologizing profusely radio interview, subway, late for everything. She was wearing a simple black dress and black closed-toe heels. She looked nice, not evil.

"I'm *never* an insider," Ms. Coulter said, looking around the room, not recognizing anyone. "No, I don't know who they are, I don't care who they are. I don't want to go to their cocktail parties, and I no longer want to bother writing articles they ask me to write, only to have them killed when they discover, Oh, maybe we don't want to publish a conservative after all. "

So just write books? I chirped.

"That's right," she said. "That's right. The American people like me; editors don't. I've

arranged my life so that I am unfireable. I don't have any bosses. The only people who can fire me are the American people. That's part of the reason I'm not anxious to have a TV show. Who's gonna give me a TV show? I didn't work for an impeached, disbarred President who was held in contempt by a federal judge. That's what they look for in objective reporters."

Next she mentioned some unfair treatment she'd received by *Washington Post* media columnist Howard Kurtz, and a recent appearance on MSNBC in which she was attacked by the host, **Mike Barnicle** (whose name she had trouble remembering for me), and "this Communist yapping at me" who turned out to be Katrina vanden Heuvel, the editor of *The Nation*.

"I think, on the basis of the recent Supreme Court ruling that we can't execute the retarded, American journalists commit mass murder without facing the ultimate penalty," Ms. Coulter told me. "I think they are retarded. I'm trying to communicate to the American people and I have to work through a retarded person!"

I must have been looking a little terrified.

"So you know, you say something and somehow Betty Boop comes out Adolf Hitler !" she said, laughing. "What?"

The gaunt Connecticut beauty emitted a horsy laugh.

There are 780 footnotes in the back of *Slander*, and so far, Ms. Coulter said, only two minor, irrelevant errors have surfaced. "Do you realize what this means?" she said she told her agent. "*This means the rest of this book is true!* This is scandalous!"

Even though Ms. Coulter's previous book, *High Crimes and Misdemeanors: The Case Against Bill Clinton*, was a best-seller, the publication of *Slander* did not happen smoothly. At the end of last year, her editor at HarperCollins, Robert Jones, to whom *Slander* is dedicated, died suddenly of cancer. Then her book was killed by HarperCollins. It took her agent, Joni Evans, two months to find a publisher. Ms. Coulter was told that conservative books don't sell. An editor at Doubleday informed her that "this book does not move the national dialogue forward," to which Ms. Coulter replied, "That's funny, because I thought book publishers made money on the basis of how many books they sold."

The Crown Publishing Group finally came through.

"I don't know if I were Rupert Murdoch, I think I'd fire some of the people at HarperCollins for turning down the No. 1 best-selling book of the summer for purely ideological reasons," she said. "I think if I were a stockholder in HarperCollins, I'd be interested to know they turned it down because they personally disagree with it because they're Manhattan liberals."

She's been having fun on her book tour. Her recent appearance on *Today* was "fun" and "fantastic." She'd called *Today* co-host **Katie Couric** "the affable Eva Braun of morning TV" in her book, and the media had a glamorous pre-fab **cat fight**. *Larry King Live* didn't work out as well. Ms. Coulter was told they'd only have her on with Whitewater figure Susan McDougal. Then **Phil Donahue** wrestled her unpleasantly on MSNBC.

An old-timer at the next table who'd been staring into space walked by Ms. Coulter and said out of the side of his mouth, "I love the part of your book where you finally nail Reagan for inventing the Al-Qaeda," and kept walking.

Ms. Coulter smiled but didn't look up. "I think he's a crazy person," she said. "There's something about celebrity it attracts people with the tin foil on their heads. I think that was a guy with tin foil on his head."

Ms. Coulter's book is filled with insults. Christie Todd Whitman is a "birdbrain" and a "dimwit," while Senator Jim Jeffords is a "half-wit." *The New Yorker's* Jeffrey Toobin is a "political hack duly celebrated for making things up, engaging in unethical behavior, and sliming other liberal journalists for a want of alacrity in bending over for Bill Clinton." Ms. Coulter described this as "colorful commentary." And she said it's all backed up with footnotes.

She called herself "an open controversialist," as though it rationalized everything. Ms. Coulter's gazpacho was taken away. She was served a hanger steak.

Mr. Zarem and his two friends got up to leave. I told Ms. Coulter they'd called her the Antichrist.

"Excellent!" she said. "*Excellent*. It is a good thing, not a bad thing, to be attacked by the enemy."

Before her book was published, Ms. Coulter had an idea to only run endorsements by her liberal enemies on the jacket flap, but her publisher said no. Instead, there are quotes from Rush Limbaugh, Bill Maher and Geraldo Rivera. Ms. Coulter said she's also friendly with MSNBC commentator and *West Wing* writer Lawrence O'Donnell and *Saturday Night Live* political satirists Jim Downey and Al Franken. Ms. Coulter said she handed a copy of her book to *The New York Times* David Sanger, who looked it over, then replied: "You know, I've got to start e-mailing you my articles because there's a lot more you could have attacked me for!"

One of Mr. Sanger's colleagues was not amused. "Frank Rich," she said, "is the only person ever who has refused to be in a green room with me." But former *Times* White House correspondent Frank Bruni, now in Rome, is a friend of hers, and she said that *Times* columnist Maureen Dowd doesn't mind her, even after being heaped with abuse in *Slander*. "She's attacked me," Ms. Coulter said. "I think it's good P.R. In fact, I'm a little disappointed she hasn't attacked me recently."

I asked Ms. Coulter if she wanted a world without liberals.

"Yes! They've nearly wrecked the country. Off with them!"

Was it O.K. to have been a liberal back in the 1950s and 60s?

"Well, yeah. They believed in America then." Then Ms. Coulter said her "opinion of J.F.K. went up" because "Joe Kennedy Sr. was a *huge* fan of McCarthy. These people were genuine anti-Communists."

But didn't McCarthy ruin hundreds of lives? This wasn't part of the game. Ms. Coulter gave me a *give-it-up* look.

"I think we're off the topic of *this* book. It will be of more interest after my next book."

Ann Coulter, who is on the cusp of 40, grew up in a big house in New Canaan, Conn., the daughter of a lawyer and a homemaker from Kentucky. She describes the whole family as right-wing and "cheerfully argumentative." One day in kindergarten, she said, young Ann confronted a teacher in the library who was wearing a black arm band and denouncing America's involvement in Vietnam.

"I raised my little paw," she said, "and instead of reading *Bambi* to us or whatever that day, we just argued about this." She remembers saying that the country had a "commitment to defend these people, and America's word should be worth something. Exactly as I'd heard it said.

"I can't believe you have me telling you *this*, but it is Coulter family folklore," she said, and then told her family myth about little Ann taking some stuff from her two older brothers and selling it back to them. "My parents wanted to encourage this incipient capitalism, so they gave my brothers a nickel to buy back whatever it was, and everyone thought it was cute until I took it all back again...One time was cute, the second time I was being a Democrat.

"I had a very happy childhood nothing conflicted, lots of friends, lots of boyfriends, athletic," she said. In the seventh grade her beagle, Tiger, died. "That was the only bad thing that ever happened to me."

Her father represented Phelps Dodge Corporation, the mining and manufacturing giant, and while negotiating with the unions, he presided over the largest union decertification ever.

"It was a stupid time," Ms. Coulter said. "The idea that this seems to fit into which is absolutely not true is this idea of the WASPs in Connecticut swatting down workers with their polo mallets. To the contrary, my father was not to the manor born, and has had quite a bit of sympathy with the working man. One of those cases was the copper mines in Arizona ... I've worked in one of those mines, as has my brother, as summer jobs. They get very high wages, they get all their health care taken care of, and it's an open-pit mine, so you're working on the side of a mountain and for the union to be going on strike at that point was just absurd, and they broke the strike and the union was voted out."

Ms. Coulter said she was a "good girl" as a teenager and that one thing she was worried about before her book came out was people sifting through her past looking for dirt. She and an old friend tried, but turned up nothing. "You know, no nude pictures, no drugs, no scandals, no weird associations," she said. She attended Cornell University, was in the Delta Gamma sorority, founded the right-wing *Cornell Review*. Then came the University of Michigan Law School, where she said she was "infamous"; she started the Federalist Society chapter and began following the Grateful Dead in earnest she now estimates she saw the band 67 times, but never did even half a hit of LSD.

"No drug has ever tempted me *except* LSD," she said. "When I'm in the nursing home some day I've never smoked pot *except* passively at Dead shows, but I got a lot of it there." Ms. Coulter can drink, though. "I am a WASP," she said. In 1989, she clerked for a federal appeals court judge in Kansas City. I told her I grew up there.

"I loved **Kansas City!**" she said. "It's like my favorite place in the world. Oh, I think it is so great out there. Well, that's *America*. It's the opposite of this town. They're Americans, they're so great, they're rooting for America. I mean, there's so much common sense!

"No, you're a *real* American."

She said she goes back to K.C. all the time. "You could sit in that beautiful Royals stadium, you could leave your purse in your chair and go to the bathroom I mean, think of that. There's all these attractive people in Izod shirts and just such good values, they re just normal, fun people, and athletic." She compared Kansas City parties to New York "alcohol" parties. "In Kansas City," she said, "all the parties were always organized around, like, a softball game, waterskiing, going on a ski trip together. Oh, I so loved it."

I agreed with her, sort of. It was annoying how people here look down on Middle Westerners. She said they are "so much smarter and cooler."

She also loves Texas.

"I love Texas Republicans!" she said. "They're these beautiful women, they're so great-looking, they're completely loaded. They're dripping in this gorgeous jewelry, they're really funny and sarcastic and smart. Americans are so cool, and they re such parochial idiots here in New York. I mean, they really do seem to think in the Northeast that the South ... is like an English-speaking Saudi Arabia and it must be coached in tolerance."

We were both whooping it up, I'm afraid.

"Oh God, they re so *stupid* in New York! But it's fun living in the belly of the beast, don't you think? I mean we can laugh at them."

I changed the subject. Who was sexy? The movie stars Ms. Coulter digs are Andy Garcia, Peter Horton and Tom Selleck. She doesn't think George W. Bush sexy but finds it "very comforting" he's commander in chief.

What about Clinton?

"Oh! *Never*. Oh, he's a pudgy little guy whose greatest moment on the football field involved a clarinet. *And take that down.*"

It was a saxophone, but no matter. Matt Drudge?

"Oh, Drudge, he's the sexiest man alive. Drudge, he's fabulous."

How about CNN's Tucker Carlson, Howard Kurtz, James Carville and Paul Begala?

"I would say I think all of them are pathetic little girly-boys. They re like anti-sexy. They are *salt peter*."

How did she feel about the Vice President?

"*Cheney is my ideal man*. Because he's solid. *He's* funny. He's very handsome. He was a football player. People don't think about him as the glamour type because he's a serious person, he wears glasses, he's lost his hair. But he's a very handsome man. And you cannot

imagine him losing his temper, which I find extremely sexy. Men who get upset and lose their tempers and claim to be sensitive males: talk about girly boys. No, there's a reason hurricanes are named after women and homosexual men, it's one of our little methods of social control. We re *supposed* to fly off the handle.

"They are supposed to be rock-solid *men*. Dick Cheney exudes that. Can you imagine him yelling at Lynne Cheney? No. Every female I know finds that so incredibly attractive."

What about Rumsfeld?

"*Mmmmm-hmmmm*. And I might add, inasmuch as we have just left the Clinton era, everyone recognizes this: There is absolutely no possible way any one of those men have ever cheated on their wives. No possible way. Even Colin Powell, who I don't particularly like politically no possible way. These are honorable men and I think America recognizes that."

What was the most adventurous thing Ms. Coulter had done?

"Sexually?! Surely you don't imagine I'd answer that. This is *not ElimaDate*. I'm not on *Blind Date*."

Could she tell me the wildest thing she'd done in 2001, 2002?

"You re making a lot of assumptions even asking the *question*. I cannot believe the American journalists are upset that John Ashcroft is asking Muslims what they re doing taking flight lessons but think they can ask *me* about my supposed sex life."

I'd told her I'd heard she'd dated a Muslim guy.

"Yeah, cat's out of the bag on that one. That was after having him checked out by the F.B.I." She laughed.

"Because of my continued high opinion of Ann," e-mailed the Muslim guy, who did not want to be identified, "I am happy to let you know that she is extremely loyal, devoted to her family, as quick-witted a human being as you may ever happen across. She is the first to laugh at herself. She is kind, charming and extremely appreciative of others. She suffers no fools, but if she were forced to, she would suffer a conservative one. *Never a lib*. Her parents are unbelievably delightful and very much interested and inquisitive. She is one of those rare people who is capable of original thought. Oh yes, and she loves dogs, particularly beagles."

I asked Ann when the last time was she had cried.

"Tears of joy, when Clinton was impeached."

We headed down Fifth Avenue and talked about *The New York Times*.

I told her I usually read *The Times* before bed, because it depresses me.

"Oh, it totally gins me up, it works like coffee," she said. "I read it like a *wolf*."

How about all those very unflattering pictures they like running of conservatives, I asked.

"Oh yeah, oh yeah," Ms. Coulter said. "They ran not one but two photos of George Herbert Walker Bush throwing up in Japan. Not one, one was not enough! Two photos of that. Is your tape recorder running? Turn it on! I got something to say."

Then she said: "My only regret with Timothy McVeigh is he did not go to the New York Times Building."

I told her to be careful.

"You're right, after 9/11 I shouldn't say that," she said, spotting a cab and grabbing it.

I first started thinking I might be conservative after witnessing the communist radical Angela Davis give a speech at University of Kansas in the late 80s. Hundreds of students cheered after she blamed the Bush administration for the crack epidemic.

This reminded me of that hippie girl my senior year who berated me at a party for saying I admired Margaret Thatcher. "She's a capitalist pig!" she screamed at me. I stammered. Then one of my best friends defended *her*, saying, "George, sorry, you got no leg to stand on, man." I had left the party ashamed, powerless.

That was in 1991. So I called up this same friend of mine, Hampton Stevens, now a freelance writer now living in Kansas City. He responded to Ann immediately. "I love it when she's unafraid to say that people are stupid and ignorant. She's written some stuff about liberal folly and it's so fantastic."

Did he find her attractive?

"Oh, I'd fuck the shit out of her."

In the cab, I told Ms. Coulter that although back in college I'd been comforted by writers like Tom Wolfe, Camille Paglia and Dinesh D'Souza ("I've dated him, I've dated every right-winger," Ms. Coulter said), I remembered feeling that that nauseating political correctness was the way the world was going to be and I had to accept it.

"And then you moved to New York and it was true," she said. "The rest of America hates New York," she said, laughing. "I love that, I find it very comforting."

There was nothing wrong with me?

"No, we're living in an insane asylum," Ms. Coulter said. She said she "takes joy in liberal attacks. It's like coffee. I mean, usually when I write up a column, I know what's going to drive them crazy. I know when I'm baiting them, it's so easy to bait them and they always bite. That is my signature style, to start with the wild, bald, McCarthyite overstatements seemingly and then back it up with methodical and laborious research. Taunting liberals is like having a pet that does tricks. *Sit! Beg! Shake!* Then they do it."

Ann Coulter is not a screeching reactionary?

"The American people don't think so. I speak for them."

What happens if everybody finally converts to conservatism, then will the liberals finally give in?

"No, liberals are too stupid, they will never give in. They are implacable. They don't read. They hate America."

The cab stopped outside the Empire State Building. Her long, skinny legs stretched to the sidewalk.

"You're never going to get rid of liberals altogether," she said, laughing. Ann Coulter practically glowed at this thought.

I looked up at her from in the taxi. She seemed very tall against the sky.

-30-

You may reach George Gurley via email at: ggurley@observer.com.
This column ran on page 1 in the 8/26/2002 edition of The New York Observer.
<http://www2.observer.com/observer/pages/frontpage5.asp>

Thanks for the alert, Brad. I'd recalled Gurley as a Marxist. I was wrong.

~~~~~  
Another chunk of info / humor / controversy shared  
by Jacq' Tucker. If you wish to be removed from this  
mailing list let me know: [EMail Jacq'](mailto:EMail Jacq')  
~~~~~

[Top of page](#)

© Copyright 1997-2002, Jacques Tucker All rights reserved, *but* all you have to do is ask. Comments and criticisms are welcomed: [eMail Jacq'](mailto:EMail Jacq')
This site is optimized for Internet Explorer because Microsoft competes for voluntary customers in the marketplace, while Netscape/AOL calls the cops against its competitors. [Merci à Pierre Lemieux] In accordance with Title 17 Section 107 of the United States Code, all material contained herein is distributed -- at no profit -- for educational purposes, and for other fair use purposes including, but not limited to, criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship and/or research.

Hosted by [Suncoast Networks](#).

Last update: August 30, 2002