
Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?

Posted by [msgtpain](#) on Wed, 09 Feb 2005 02:08:55 GMT

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This is getting lost in the Pledge thread, so I thought I would start a new one.. Here are the relevant posts so far.. Can anyone solve the mystery of the over used quote?

SEAL

I like how all you guys can really do is roll your eyes at SFE's dissent quote... You make an impressive argument.

All you guys keep rolling that off your fingertips like it's the end-all to any anti-Bush conversation.. But the question is, where does it come from? A quote isn't much of a quote without a source, is it?

I've watched you all use that quote for almost a year every time someone says your views are unpatriotic. So, put up or shut up.. Where can I find that quote from Mr Jefferson? Surely it must be in some text, somewhere, right?

Prove it.

SEAL

I have never used the quote. And it comes from Thomas Jefferson.

<http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&q=%22dissent+is+the+highest%22+jefferson&btnG=Google+Search>

msgtpain

That Google means nothing to me, I simply asked for proof that it came from Jefferson.. A thousand uses on Google doesn't mean that it's factually correct.. In fact, I can't seem to find that quote anywhere in the Jefferson digital archive <http://etext.virginia.edu/jefferson/quotations/foley/> can you?

It is my assumption that this quote was fictitiously fed to the public by some organization such as The American Patriot Friends Network, and it's been taken as fact ever since.

If you look at some of the things that Jefferson actually said, It would seem that he thought the exact opposite.

Quote:republican government required the losing side to support the nation's decision: That the aggressions and injuries of the belligerent nations have been the real obstructions which have interrupted our commerce, and now threaten our peace, and that the embargo laws were salutary and indispensably necessary to meet those obstructions, are truths as evident to every candid man, as it is worthy of every good citizen to declare his reprobation of that system of opposition

which goes to an avowed and practical resistance of these laws. To such a resistance I trust that the patriotism of our faithful citizens in no section of the Union will give any countenance. Where the law of majority ceases to be acknowledged, there government ends, the law of the strongest takes its place, and life and property are his who can take them. [Jefferson, letter to John Gassaway, February 17, 1809.]

Quote:

While the principles of our Constitution give just latitude to inquiry, every citizen faithful to it will, with you, deem embodied expressions of discontent, and open outrages of law and patriotism, as dishonorable as they are injurious; and there is reason to believe that had the efforts of the government against the innovations and tyranny of the belligerent powers been unopposed among ourselves, they would have been more effectual towards the establishment of our rights.[Jefferson, letter to "The Republican Mechanics Of The Town Of Leesburg And Its Vicinity," March 29, 1809.]

Quote:

Political dissension is doubtless a less evil than the lethargy of despotism, but still it is a great evil, and it would be as worthy the efforts of the patriot as of the philosopher, to exclude its influence, if possible, from social life. [Jefferson, letter to Thomas Pinckney, 1797.]

So I say again, if you would like to use this "quote" as some sort of affirmation that you should speak out against the government, and believe that one of our Founding Fathers explicitly gave you that duty, please show me where he said so..

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?

Posted by [cowmisfit](#) on Wed, 09 Feb 2005 02:27:18 GMT

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What i see is you taking only things you see relevent and making a argument between you and Seal taht have nothing to do with anything.

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?

Posted by [cheesesoda](#) on Wed, 09 Feb 2005 02:28:44 GMT

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You...are...an...idiot. Zach, could you for once think? I swear, sometimes you don't think at all. Pain has a good point to be brought up. SFE has absolutely NO proof to back up the Jefferson quote that he uses against us all the time because he feels it's the answer to all of his anti-Bush hatred.

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [msgtpain](#) on Wed, 09 Feb 2005 02:39:49 GMT
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j_ball's correct, this has nothing to do with SEAL, except that he made the comment that sparked my original statement..

All I want is for someone to show me where Jefferson made this comment, since it's continually used as a cornerstone to all the anti-bush arguments. Wouldn't it strike you as odd if people continually fall back on the wisdom of a "founding father," if that wisdom never really existed?

I just don't think that something Jefferson never said should be used to validate so many comments.

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Fabian](#) on Wed, 09 Feb 2005 03:05:59 GMT
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It might be something Jefferson just said, and someone recorded. It may have never been in a speech. I find it hard to believe that such distinguished historians like Howard Zinn would use that quote without knowing it to be an actual quoting.

And secondly, does it really matter? Does whether or not Jefferson said it negate its truth?

Howard Zinn While some people think that dissent is unpatriotic, I would argue that dissent is the highest form of patriotism. In fact, if patriotism means being true to the principles for which your country is supposed to stand, then certainly the right to dissent is one of those principles. And if we're exercising that right to dissent, it's a patriotic act.

One of the great mistakes made in discussing patriotism -- a very common mistake -- is to think that patriotism means support for your government. And that view of patriotism ignores the founding principles of the country expressed in the Declaration of Independence. That is: the Declaration of Independence makes it clear that governments are artificial creations set up to achieve certain ends -- equality, life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness -- and when governments become destructive of those ends it is the right of the people in the words of the Declaration, to alter or abolish the government.

In other words, obedience to government certainly is not a form of patriotism. Governments are the instruments to achieve certain ends. And if the government goes against those ends, if the government is not defending our liberties, but is diminishing our liberties, if the government is sending young people into war or making war which is unjustified, well then the government is not following the principles of caring about life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. When the government is taking huge sums of money from education and health, and using that money for military purposes, that's a violation of the principles of the Declaration of Independence. And a government like that cannot be obeyed. To obey a government like that is not being patriotic. At that point, when a government behaves like that, it is the most patriotic thing to disobey the government.

And for Christ's sake, SFE is the only one to use the quote. Stop saying that I and other "liberals" use it.

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [msgtpain](#) on Wed, 09 Feb 2005 03:24:02 GMT
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Where exactly was Zinn quoting anyone? It reads as his opinion to me.

Why does it matter?

Quote:SEAL is a retard - George W Bush

You tell me. A "Founding Fathers" words are being used to further an argument.. Words that, in my opinion, greatly contradict the principles that actual, citeable sources show he expressed.. You don't see any harm in that?

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Crimson](#) on Wed, 09 Feb 2005 03:25:11 GMT
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You are right in some ways. Dissent of the government is not unpatriotic, nor are you expected to support everything blindly. Dissent of your fellow countrymen (as a whole or large part), dissent of your country as a whole, that is NOT patriotic. Believing the US Military to be wrong before the enemy... that's UNpatriotic dissent, and that's only one example. However, I would NOT find dissent to be the HIGHEST form of patriotism.

I mean, just because I agree with most of the stuff Bush is doing, does that make me UNpatriotic? Or not as patriotic as you who hate our president?

It doesn't make any sense to me how dissent could be the HIGHEST form of patriotism... I mean, I exercise my right to pursue happiness, doesn't that make me patriotic, too? Maybe pursuing happiness is the highest form of patriotism?

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Aircraftkiller](#) on Wed, 09 Feb 2005 03:25:34 GMT
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Yes, it does matter. It's called lying, or willful deception. You know, the kind of things you accuse the President of doing while making his case for the war on Iraq.

Hypocritical? Ding ding...

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Fabian](#) on Wed, 09 Feb 2005 03:30:04 GMT
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I just thought I'd find a nice quote on the subject matter. If you read A People's History of the United States (I had to for US History, it's kinda boring), he does quote it. Sorry for the confusion.

I agree, Crimson. Following your government if you believe what they are doing is good for the country isn't unpatriotic. It's only "patriotic" if you disagree with the government. And even then, it's a stretch to say it's the "highest" form (Although I think it's up there). So no, you aren't any more (un)patriotic than the rest of us, I would hope.

"Maybe pursuing happiness is the highest form of patriotism?"

I like it.

AircraftkillerYes, it does matter. It's called lying, or willful deception. You know, the kind of things you accuse the President of doing while making his case for the war on Iraq.

Hypocritical? Ding ding...

I'm not the one using the quote everywhere, and the person who does use the quote hasn't even posted here to say "it doesn't matter," if anything. So I don't think anyone is being a hypocrit here. Ding Ding!

I personally do not care who said it. I agree with the message it conveys regardless (maybe if you get rid of "highest").

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Aircraftkiller](#) on Wed, 09 Feb 2005 03:34:24 GMT
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lol... that point pretty much flew past you like a hummingbird on nitro.

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Fabian](#) on Wed, 09 Feb 2005 03:35:24 GMT
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Enlighten me, then.

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [msgtpain](#) on Wed, 09 Feb 2005 03:35:43 GMT
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From doing a search, it appears the paragraph you quoted was from an interview with Tom Paine; it was his reply to the topic: "Dissent these days seems to be a dirty word. The Bush administration has, at least since September 11th, usually termed any criticism of its policies 'unpatriotic.'
"

I'm not saying that you didn't see it quoted in a text, but like I said, Google has it quoted 36,300 times.. but not a single one that I can find, has a source other than "Thomas Jefferson"... seems a little odd to me, especially since there isn't a single university or official archive that returns anything with that phrase. hmmm

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Fabian](#) on Wed, 09 Feb 2005 03:41:49 GMT
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Altavista search, limited to .edu's

This seems a lot more like a research project than a discussion...

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [msgtpain](#) on Wed, 09 Feb 2005 03:49:24 GMT
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When I say University Archive, what I mean is "official, digital, historical" archive.. Not just a search that returns more quotes without sources. If you actually go through all those hits, you'll notice that the majority of them are nothing more than thousands of people with that quote in their signature on a forum.. It really makes me wonder just how far the rabbit hole goes!

As for Howard Zinn.. I think you may be on to something.. in a few recent searches, I have actually found a number of citations for that quote as actually being from Howard Zinn...

Try this search:

<http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&q=%22Dissent+is+the+highest+form+of+patriotism%22+%2B+zinn&btnG=Google+Search>

Very interesting...

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [msgtpain](#) on Wed, 09 Feb 2005 03:58:36 GMT
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SEAL

This seems a lot more like a research project than a discussion...

Ahh... but herein lies a critical point of the discussion. Exactly how many people have blindly taken this quotation as fact, simply because they read it somewhere with the text (-Thomas Jefferson) behind it. It's amazing when you think about it. Hundreds to thousands of citations around the Internet, all using it as the backbone of their discussions to speak out against the Government, and not a single one of them took a second to search out the factualness of it.

It sort of brings home a lot of the points that I've made against SFE et al's arguments in the past.. How can you take something so important for granted? How many other opinions are argued simply because they were read somewhere, and regurgitated here. More people need to think for themselves these days, and actually know what they're talking about, rather than just reciting it.

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Fabian](#) on Wed, 09 Feb 2005 03:59:05 GMT
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I'll ask my history teacher. Maybe I'll stump the bitch.

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Jecht](#) on Wed, 09 Feb 2005 04:27:42 GMT
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lol

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Crimson](#) on Fri, 18 Feb 2005 17:40:29 GMT
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It has not escaped my attention that SFE never bothered to reply to this thread.

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Kytten9](#) on Fri, 18 Feb 2005 19:29:49 GMT
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pa-tri-ot-ic : Feeling, expressing, or inspired by love for one's country.

Whether you love Bush or hate Bush, agree or disagree with his actions and agenda. Support the New York Yankees or the New England Patriots, watch sports, drink beer, smoke illegal or non-illegal substances, are gay, hetro, black, white, poor, rich or green and disfigured; if you love your country you are a patriot....all the rest is freedom of speech and your own opinions. (One of the greatest things about living in a free country)

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Jecht](#) on Fri, 18 Feb 2005 19:57:44 GMT
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where has SFE been lately?

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [SuperFlyingEngi](#) on Fri, 18 Feb 2005 21:20:38 GMT
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Stomach virus. I've just been feeling better, thanks for asking.

Here's my response to this thread:

You're asking Seale and me to prove the impossible. Whether or not that quote was actually uttered by Jefferson happened such a long time ago that there really are no more reliable sources stating whether or not he ever said this.

Even if it wasn't spoken by Jefferson, that doesn't mean I can't still share an opinion with it. It's really rather unimportant as to whether or not this quote originated with Mr. Jefferson.

Oh, and since a lot of you conservatives seem to believe that following the current President through thick and thin is the only patriotic thing to do, I presume that you were all on Clinton's side whenever he made a move?

Because if you weren't, wouldn't that make you hypocrites?

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Jecht](#) on Fri, 18 Feb 2005 22:10:15 GMT
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Not true, I dont agree with everything Bush has done.

Example: Making Illegal Aliens Citizens.

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [cheesesoda](#) on Sat, 19 Feb 2005 01:41:04 GMT
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SuperFlyingEngiEven if it wasn't spoken by Jefferson, that doesn't mean I can't still share an opinion with it. It's really rather unimportant as to whether or not this quote originated with Mr. Jefferson.

Oh, and since a lot of you conservatives seem to believe that following the current President

through thick and thin is the only patriotic thing to do, I presume that you were all on Clinton's side whenever he made a move?

Because if you weren't, wouldn't that make you hypocrites?
Funny thing is, you used the very excuse of a founding father having that view to back up your point. It makes all the difference in the world, tool.

While you may not have been directing this at me, I'll remind you once again that I don't blindly follow Bush, I haven't blindly followed Bush, nor will I blindly follow Bush.

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Crimson](#) on Sat, 19 Feb 2005 02:53:18 GMT
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I mostly disagree that dissent is the HIGHEST form of patriotism. One could argue that pursuing happiness is the highest form. One could argue many things.

I don't follow the president blindly, either. I won't go into the digressions again.

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [msgtpain](#) on Sat, 19 Feb 2005 04:13:46 GMT
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SuperFlyingEngi

You're asking Seale and me to prove the impossible. Whether or not that quote was actually uttered by Jefferson happened such a long time ago that there really are no more reliable sources stating whether or not he ever said this.

If it was spoken by Jefferson, it will be "written down" in an archive, go find it. Unless of course you are stating that it's folklore. If so, nothing else really needs to be said to its validity.

SuperFlyingEngi

Even if it wasn't spoken by Jefferson, that doesn't mean I can't still share an opinion with it. It's really rather unimportant as to whether or not this quote originated with Mr. Jefferson.

Fine, share the opinion all you want.. Just make sure you credit the liberal historian as the source, instead of a Founding Father.. It amazes me that you aren't able to see the enormous difference there (or, maybe just not willing to see it)

If it was stated by Jefferson, it is used as a validation of your dissent, how could anyone argue against a position that one of the Founding Fathers expressed is a vital role in the development of this wonderful nation?

If it was stated by a liberal Historian, it's simply a statement made after the fact in an attempt to justify his public dissention's. read, an excuse.

One makes your dissention argument somewhat valid in the eyes of the opposition, the other just makes them laugh.

So, which way did you intend it to be taken?

SuperFlyingEngi

Oh, and since a lot of you conservatives seem to believe that following the current President through thick and thin is the only patriotic thing to do, I presume that you were all on Clinton's side whenever he made a move?

Did we go to war under Clinton? I supported Bosnia, Somalia, launching missiles at Osama; in fact, I supported most everything he did militarily, except drastic downsizing and vetoing budgets affecting the paychecks of every military serviceman in the country. You're the one that doesn't want this to turn in to another Vietnam, so step up to the plate and ensure it doesn't. Cry foul against Bush all you want, just make sure that when our troops need money, you're all for it, and when they return, meet them at the airport and thank them for serving your country; even if you don't agree with the service they provided. When we're no longer engaged, you can begin your downsizing again and reducing military spending.

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Jecht](#) on Sat, 19 Feb 2005 05:48:25 GMT
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cow, this website pwns

I agreed with the Somalia Incident, but the way it was carried out was laughable, unfortunately it wasnt funny for that soldier being dragged into the streets because of the lack of preparation.

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Crimson](#) on Sat, 19 Feb 2005 12:29:09 GMT
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Yeah, I attended an official Protest Warrior demonstration on the grounds on Arizona State University during the third presidential debate. It was amazing to be confronted with the stupidity of liberals first hand. The experience as a whole is something I will never forget.

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [nastym4n](#) on Tue, 22 Feb 2005 13:51:39 GMT

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Bush has the IQ of a squashed Fruit Fly,
id be making up quotes to get rid of the moron as well if i lived there.

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Jecht](#) on Tue, 22 Feb 2005 14:18:18 GMT
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Bush is not the demented bumbling retard your press probably makes him out to be.

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Fabian](#) on Tue, 22 Feb 2005 15:10:30 GMT
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Dissent is the highest form of patriotism, bitches.

There, now you can quote me instead of Jefferson. So many sources quote Jefferson as saying that, I think it would be more meaningful if you guys doubting its validity DISproved that he said it, rather than WE prove it.

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Crimson](#) on Tue, 22 Feb 2005 23:25:49 GMT
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I would think the burden of proof would be on the ones claiming the quote. That's like me making you prove that I didn't say "banana goat cheese" to my brother yesterday.

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Fabian](#) on Thu, 24 Feb 2005 04:41:27 GMT
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Almost, except not at all.

How can I research what your brother said? You CAN, however, research the quote. And since COUNTLESS sources use it, the burden of proof lies with those who doubt it.

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [PointlessAmbler](#) on Thu, 24 Feb 2005 04:56:02 GMT
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CrimsonYeah, I attended an official Protest Warrior demonstration on the grounds on Arizona State University during the third presidential debate. It was amazing to be confronted with the stupidity of liberals first hand. The experience as a whole is something I will never forget.

Details?

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [msgtpain](#) on Thu, 24 Feb 2005 04:57:04 GMT
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My proof was posted at the very beginning, go ahead.. scroll back up and look.. The quote does NOT exist in any single Jefferson digital archive. It exists in 1000's of signature lines from 1000's of Internet forum posters and liberal fan-boys. Not a SINGLE one of them cites it, other than -Thomas Jefferson.

I can not find something that doesn't exist, can you?

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Jecht](#) on Thu, 24 Feb 2005 05:18:01 GMT
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If it existed it would be in some official archive also, as pain stated as well.

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Fabian](#) on Thu, 24 Feb 2005 05:22:16 GMT
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Hold the phones...

<http://urbanlegends.about.com/b/a/146858.htm>

Quote: Misattributed: 'Dissent Is the Highest Form of Patriotism'
Google the phrase "Dissent is the highest form of patriotism" along with the name "Thomas Jefferson" and you will find thousands of Web pages attributing the sentiment to the third president of the United States. The trouble is, says reader Dave Forsmark, who has been waging a one-man campaign to correct what he believes to be a blatant misattribution, "the quote is about two years old, not 200. It was made by [historian] Howard Zinn in an interview with TomPaine.com to justify his opposition to the War on Terror." Someone erroneously attributed the quote to Jefferson soon thereafter, and now seemingly everyone is doing it.

I just won your argument for you. Congrats. Only thing is that I don't think this makes a difference to me. I still agree with what Zinn is saying all the way.

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [msgtpain](#) on Thu, 24 Feb 2005 05:42:37 GMT
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SEAL

Only thing is that I don't think this makes a difference to me. I still agree with what Zinn is saying all the way.

I have no issues with that, as long as you are citing the correct person who's views you agree with:

"I befriended several young Communists, participated in a Communist rally at Times Square carrying a sign, though, I have no memory of what it said. I watched in awe as mounted police charged into the demonstrators, smashing people with their clubs. From that moment on, I was no longer a liberal, a believer in the self-correcting character of American democracy, I was a radical, believing that something fundamental was wrong with this country...something rotten at the

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [warranto](#) on Thu, 24 Feb 2005 06:23:42 GMT
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CrimsonYeah, I attended an official Protest Warrior demonstration on the grounds on Arizona State University during the third presidential debate. It was amazing to be confronted with the stupidity of liberals first hand. The experience as a whole is something I will never forget.

Since we're in the process of giving quotes from outside the forum...

"There is nothing as sad, pitiful and amusing to watch as someone who is arguing for a reason, good or bad, without knowing why he is arguing about it in the first place."
-Benjamin Metcalfe

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Crimson](#) on Thu, 24 Feb 2005 07:38:30 GMT
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I don't know why you quoted my post for that, but whatever.

Regardless of the solution on snopes.com that you found (I do believe they do the best research of any group)... the burden of proof is on anyone who claims the quote is by Jefferson. It should not be MY job to disprove it. How would you react if I put this in my signature:

"Liberalism will be the death of America as we know it."
-Benjamin Franklin

Would you set out to prove he didn't say it, or challenge me to prove he did?

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Chronojam](#) on Thu, 24 Feb 2005 13:44:02 GMT
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I'd question why a labeled "liberal leader of America" would say such a thing, and want an explanation. I guess it's the whole "disprove or make irrelevant" kind of thing in this case, not "make them prove it"

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [warranto](#) on Sat, 26 Feb 2005 01:23:32 GMT
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Crimson: I quoted your post because it dealt more with the topic of my quote. The commentary was there simply to provide an excuse to do it

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [IRON FART](#) on Sat, 26 Feb 2005 05:17:20 GMT
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Quote:
Bush is not the demented bumbling retard your press probably makes him out to be.

Our press is your press. Liberals don't have a top secret, underground, propaganda news network.

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [Jecht](#) on Sat, 26 Feb 2005 05:40:42 GMT
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Your press = ABC, CNN, what have you.

My Press = ABC, Fox, CNN, CBS

I like to get both sides of the story so i listen to basically any news station, but of course I listen to Fox the most as you may have already deciphered from my posts.

So I suppose your right, but most presses display Bush as a bumbling retard straight out of preschool. Hes not, He had a C average at an Ivy league school which isnt bad. And considering all of his accomplishments I think more positive credit needs to be thrown his way.

Subject: Dissent is the highest form of patriotism?
Posted by [IRON FART](#) on Sat, 26 Feb 2005 19:09:15 GMT

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Quote:

Your press = ABC, CNN, what have you.

My Press = ABC, Fox, CNN, CBS

Is that a fact?

Quote:

I think more positive credit needs to be thrown his way.

Such as...
