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Hailed As "Great Journalist" by Dan Rather, Eric Engberg Was Poster Boy for CBS's Worst Liberal Bias

Good Riddance to Two-Faced Reality Checks

CBS News has been championing its retiring "Reality Check" correspondent Eric Engberg as the very model of fair reporting. "We will miss his professionalism, his humor, his style, his friendship and his great journalism," mourned anchor Dan Rather on Friday's *Evening News*. "Engberg's reporting and his approach to journalism reflect many of the virtues of broadcast journalism at its best," gushed CBSNews.com editor Dick Meyer, Engberg's former producer, in an online tribute.

As Engberg would scream in his regular *Evening News* hit jobs on conservatives, "Time out!" The idea that such a thoroughly biased reporter symbolized "journalistic virtues" is a cruel joke on objective scribes everywhere. It was one of Engberg's outrageously slanted stories — a mid-campaign slam on conservative Steve Forbes's flat tax plan in '96 — that so disgusted his CBS colleague Bernard Goldberg that he cited it in a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed as proof that the argument about "liberal bias is so blatantly true that it's hardly worth discussing anymore."

But it's more than just one skewed story which makes Engberg the poster boy for liberal bias. Engberg used his CBS pulpit to rant against perceived conservative misbehavior while condemning critics of unethical liberals:

■ Before Bill Clinton, there was nothing worse than a President who lied. On the May 4, 1989 *CBS Evening News*, at the end of the criminal trials stemming from the Iran-contra scandal, Engberg lectured that "secrecy leads to deception...Deception leads to lies. Lies tear apart the rule of law...Could it happen again? Scholars say yes, until Presidents accept the need to compromise with Congress."

■ Covering Clinton's scandals, there was nothing more frightening than a subpoena. "It is now the one invitation in Washington no one wants, a call to testify before Ken Starr's grand jury. It left some near emotional collapse, others raging about police state tactics," he darkly declared on the March 2, 1998 *Evening News*. "Nearly all of the witnesses, it

is safe to say, felt the ominous chill that comes with the arrival of a grand jury subpoena."

■ According to his friend Dick Meyer, Engberg was "obsessed" with a 1988 TV ad about Michael Dukakis's weekend furlough for murderer Willie Horton, who then went on a crime spree. Four years later — and less than a month before the next election — on the Oct. 14, 1992 *Evening News*, Engberg resurrected his grudge against the ad he claimed "raised questions about racism and dirty politics that still haunt the electoral process like a ghost," adding that, "federal laws may have been violated" if the GOP had coordinated with the ad's independent producer.

■ When it came to Clinton's dirty campaign dealings — including proof the President personally reviewed scripts for supposedly "independent" ads — Engberg chose to beat up on the investigators. He scolded the Senate's oversight committee, declaring on the October 9, 1997 *Evening News* that "when it comes to sniffing out the breakdown of a system created to police money in politics, this committee...could easily start by setting up a great big mirror."

■ After the bipartisan Cox commission determined in 1999 that the Chinese had been stealing nuclear secrets right out from under Clinton's nose, Engberg seemed to suggest on the May 27 *Evening News* that a few H-bombs were nothing to get excited about. "There is a bottom line," he snorted. "Unlike many of the things in the Cox report, there's no argument here. Number of strategic nuclear weapons? U.S., 6,000; China, less than two dozen."

Now that Engberg's finally gone, CBS viewers will be spared such tendentious factoids. The airwaves feel less biased already. — *Rich Noyes*

Engberg: I'm a Casualty of Terrorism War

"CBS correspondent Eric Engberg, who retired last week, says his tentative decision was reinforced by the aftermath of the attacks on New York and Washington. 'The next couple of years are not going to be very fertile ground for reporters,' Engberg says....'The kind of skills and interests I have in covering politics are not well suited to covering this kind of terrorism war.'" — *The Washington Post's Howard Kurtz, in a January 7 article.*

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