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Overnight, CBS's Dan Rather Fiasco Goes From Big Story to Minimal Story on ABC, NBC, and CNN

## Morning Shows Give Short Shrift to CBS Hoax

Last night, the internal CBS probe of the *60 Minutes* Memogate fiasco was a big story on the evening news shows on CBS, as well as on ABC and NBC. But in one indication that the liberal TV networks want a quick exit from the story, ABC and NBC started downplaying the CBS scandal this morning, burying it under a mudslide of weather news. Here's how the CBS story played on the Big Three and CNN:

■ **CBS** gave the story the most air time, as it should. *CBS Evening News* (anchored by Bob Schieffer instead of Dan Rather) led the newscast with two stories lasting five minutes and 23 seconds. The second story, by Jim Axelrod, featured a conservative blogger criticizing the report's lack of focus on the anti-Bush animus of CBS.

On *The Early Show* this morning, CBS was the only network to mention the scandal in its opening minutes, and then aired a two-minute news summary by Wyatt Andrews and a Hannah Storm interview with the probes CBS hired, former Attorney General Richard Thornburgh and former Associated Press CEO Louis Boccardi. When co-host Hannah Storm asked about charges of political bias, Thornburgh changed the subject to how documents are authenticated. Boccardi insisted Rather is "one of the largest figures in this industry, and this event doesn't erase the other things that he has accomplished."

■ **ABC** was the second network on the Memogate story last night, almost six minutes into *World News Tonight*. Reporter Brian Ross's summation and the Peter Jennings introduction lasted three minutes and 15 seconds. Unlike others, Ross noted Dan Rather strongly attacked critics, "often blaming the right wing."

But this morning on *Good Morning America*, the hosts made no whisper of CBS in the show's opening minutes. Diane Sawyer promoted a story on "Get this, they're buying and selling breast milk on the Internet!" News anchor Robin Roberts noted how the Salvation Army discovered a diamond

engagement ring in one of their red kettles. But CBS wasn't mentioned until 15 and a half minutes into the show, when they ran an edited version of the Brian Ross evening story lasting two minutes and 15 seconds.

■ **NBC** was the slowest network to focus on CBS last night, 12 and a half minutes into the broadcast. Reporter

Lisa Myers summarized the report, and then Bob Steele of the "respected" Poynter Institute (read: respected organ of the liberal media) was featured for 100 seconds of commentary in an "In Their Own Words" segment. Myers highlighted how the CBS panel said there was no proof of liberal bias, and Steele insisted

"I don't think bias was a factor in what went wrong."

This morning on *Today*, the hosts said nothing about CBS and news anchor Ann Curry disposed of the story with a 15-second anchor brief eight minutes into the first hour. *Today* hosts did promote actor George Clooney's attack on Fox host Bill O'Reilly, later summarized in a story by reporter Kevin Tibbles. In the 8 am half hour, reporter Carl Quintanilla filed a brief Memogate report lasting one minute, 50 seconds.

■ **CNN**. While Fox and MSNBC both interviewed media experts on the CBS probe this morning, the first hour of CNN's *American Morning* resembled ABC and NBC. Twelve minutes into the show, anchor Bill Hemmer first mentioned CBS with a 30-second clip of CBS President Les Moonves. Co-host Jack Cafferty mentioned it briefly at the bottom of the hour promoting an online poll question.

— Tim Graham and Brent Baker

**ABC's Good Morning America mentioned the sale of breast milk on the Internet and the discovery of a diamond ring in a Salvation Army red kettle before they whispered a word about the news out of CBS — 15 and a half minutes into the show.**

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