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Outgoing CBS Morning Host Once Claimed: "In Terms of My Political Views, I Hold Them In Check"

Bye-Bye to Biased Bryant's Liberal Preaching

It is possible that NBC was caught off-guard when Bryant Gumbel began using the *Today* show as a forum for promoting his own liberal views, including utter contempt for Ronald Reagan — "an administration that so unintentionally did so many things that were laughable," he condescended in April 1989. Discussing a racial attitudes questionnaire that September, he divided the world into two kinds of people: "This test is not going to tell you whether you're a racist or a liberal."

But CBS knew perfectly well it had hired a liberal advocate when it put Gumbel at the helm of *The Early Show* in 1999, a stint which ends with his departure on Friday. For the past 31 months, mornings on CBS have featured the gospel according to Gumbel. Some of his more egregious moments:

■ **Conservatives are hateful racists.** "As long as the Republican Party...is populated by the Pat Buchanans, the Jesse Helmses, the Jerry Falwells, the Bob Barrs, don't blacks have a right to be suspicious?" (August 2, 2000.)

■ **Bush is inept and Clinton's a genius.** "I know you're not a political analyst, but the Bush White House has done very little about this [stock market fall] with the exception of seemingly adding fuel to the fire with talk of a worsening economy...For years the markets pooh-poohed Clintonomics and patted Greenspan on the back, but in truth, do the markets now miss Bill Clinton and Bob Rubin?" (Question to a market analyst, March 22, 2001.)

■ **Bill and Hillary, two for the price of one?** "When your husband ran for president eight years ago, it was often said you get two for the price of one, meaning if you elected him, they got your expertise. Does the same now apply?...If we vote for you, do we get his expertise?" (Question to Hillary Clinton, June 28, 2000.)

■ **Democrats were too far right on family values.** During the 2000 Democratic convention, Gumbel asked Hugh Hefner, "Do you think the Gore preoccupation with morality is a frightening turn for the party?" The next morning, he lectured VP nominee Joe Lieberman's wife, Hadassah:

"'Family values' for a long time, as you know, was a code word for intolerance. Need people be concerned about a hard turn to the social right in the Democratic Party?" (August 15 & 16, 2000.)

■ **Dick Cheney, hard-right extremist.** "Cheney's politics are of the hard-right variety. He's opposed to abortion and gun control and favors both capital punishment and school prayer." (July 25, 2000.)

■ **Clarence Thomas is a joke of a Justice.** "There's no opinion of his in here, he doesn't ask questions in court. Does he do anything besides vote and rubber stamp Scalia?" (Question to a CBS legal analyst about the *Bush v. Gore* decision, Dec. 13, 2000.)

■ **Ashcroft for Attorney General? No way.** "Can you deny that he distorted [Missouri Supreme Court Judge Ronnie] White's record and basically engaged in what some would call

character assassination?" he demanded of a pro-Ashcroft guest in January 2001, referring to Ashcroft's role in blocking the confirmation of a liberal judge to the federal bench. Yet he tossed a softball to an Ashcroft foe: "If he's so much of an extremist liability, as you claim, what's his nomination say about George W. Bush and his claims of compassionate conservatism?" Gumbel sided with Judge White: "What do you think Senator Ashcroft's distortion of your record and tarnishing of your good name says about his character?" (January 16 & 19, 2001.)

■ **He's not biased.** "In terms of my political views, I hold them in check. I don't think that someone who watches is inclined to think that I'm one way or the other," he told Tim Russert on CNBC in October 1999. Maybe now CBS can find a new morning anchor who won't repel viewers with ceaseless liberal advocacy. — *Rich Noyes*

Appalled by Colleague's Respect for Reagan

Bryant Gumbel: "Later on this morning, we're going to be talking on this President's Day about this presidential survey. Who would you think finished first?"

Jane Clayson: "Ronald Reagan."

Gumbel, dropping his pen: "First?!?"

Clayson: "Who was it?"

Gumbel: "No! Reagan wasn't even in the top ten. Abraham Lincoln — maybe you've heard of him?" — *Exchange about a poll of historians which ranked Reagan 11th out of 41 Presidents, Feb. 21, 2000.*

L. Brent Bozell III, Publisher; Brent Baker, Rich Noyes, Editors; Jessica Anderson, Brian Boyd, Geoffrey Dickens, Patrick Gregory, Ken Shepherd, and Brad Wilmouth, Media Analysts; Kristina Sewell, Research Associate; Liz Swasey, Director of Communications. For the more examples of Gumbel's obnoxious bias, visit www.mrc.org.