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CBS's Top Watchdog: "I Think You Can Be an Honest Person and Lie About Any Number of Things"

## Rather Praises Clinton As An "Honest Man"

Appearing on the Fox News Channel's *The O'Reilly Factor* Tuesday night, Dan Rather insisted he had no "inner bias...that goes easy on a Clinton and hard on somebody from the Republican side." But in his answers, Rather revealed that he sees the world through liberal-tinted lenses. Highlights from Rather's FNC appearance:

■ **Rape is a private matter:** "I don't remember all the details of Juanita Broaddrick," Rather dismissively commented in reference to the Arkansas woman who alleged that Clinton raped her in 1978, "but I will say that — and you can castigate me if you like — when the charge has something to do with somebody's private sex life, I would prefer not to run any of it."

■ **Bill Clinton has an honest core:** "I think he's an honest man," Rather told O'Reilly. "Do you, really?" the FNC host incredulously retorted, reminding him that Clinton lied to the country about Monica Lewinsky. "I think at core he is an honest person," Rather absurdly insisted. "I think you can be an honest person and lie about any number of things." (See box)

■ **Mistakes were made:** After Rather claimed that CBS "did do quite a bit on campaign finance," O'Reilly recalled that the anchorman had refused to bring it up when he interviewed the President: "When you interviewed Clinton himself in 1999, we have a transcript of the interview, you didn't ask him anything about the campaign finance stuff." Instead of defending his glaring omission, Rather shrugged, "Look, I'm not a perfect interviewer."

■ **Phantom transcripts:** Rather also wrongly insisted that the *CBS Evening News* had reported the corruption allegations swirling around the Reverend Jesse Jackson's misuse of donations to his non-profit organization, a story

aggressively pursued by FNC. "We nailed Jesse Jackson to the wall because of his abuse of non-profit money. You guys haven't touched him," O'Reilly confronted Rather. "You didn't do anything!"

"Oh, we have. Bill, that's just simply not true and I'll be happy to send the transcript over to you," Rather scolded.

That would be some trick. An MRC review shows that, of all of the major evening news shows, only the *CBS Evening News* entirely refused to report any allegations of financial misconduct against the two-time Democratic presidential candidate. (Even ABC and NBC covered a Jackson press conference held on March 8 in which the liberal activist denied using his charities to enrich himself.) Rather's *CBS Evening News* limited itself to a single January 18 report about Jackson's confession of an illegitimate daughter.

■ **Blame Bob and Russ:** Rather said he "never gave any real credence to any of these allegations [of past drug use] by George Bush....There's no documented evidence anywhere, no credible testimony." When O'Reilly showed him that *Evening News* had run numerous stories

detailing those charges when he was on vacation in 1999, Rather immediately pointed his finger at weekend anchor Russ Mitchell and substitute anchor Bob Schieffer. "Let me stop you right there," Rather interjected. "You're talking about Russ Mitchell's program, not Dan Rather's program....I did not want to run it on my show." Way to take one for the team, Dan. — Rich Noyes

**Bill O'Reilly:** "Do you think President Clinton is an honest man?"  
**Dan Rather:** "Yes, I think he's an honest man."  
**O'Reilly:** "Do you, really?...Even though he lied to Jim Lehrer's face about the Lewinsky case?"  
**Rather:** "Who among us has not lied about something?"  
**O'Reilly:** "Well, I didn't lie to anybody's face on national television. I don't think you have, have you?"  
**Rather:** "I don't think I ever have. I hope I never have. But, look, it's one thing — "  
**O'Reilly:** "How can you say he's an honest guy then?"  
**Rather:** "Well, because I think he is. I think at core he's an honest person. I know that you have a different view. I know that you consider it sort of astonishing anybody would say so, but I think you can be an honest person and lie about any number of things." — *FNC's The O'Reilly Factor, May 15.*

L. Brent Bozell III, Publisher; Brent Baker, Rich Noyes, Editors; Jessica Anderson, Brian Boyd, Geoffrey Dickens, Brad Wilmouth, Media Analysts; Kristina Sewell, Research Associate; Liz Swasey, Director of Communications. For proof of Rather's liberal bias, go to <http://www.mrc.org/news/rather/DanRather20thAnniversary.htm>