



# Media Reality ✓ Check

A Regular Report on Major News Stories Distorted or Ignored ☐ [www.mediaresearch.org](http://www.mediaresearch.org)

Diane Sawyer Praised Objectivity of Former Clinton Aide Currently Auditioning for Morning Host Job

## “Completely Non-Partisan” Stephanopoulos

Diane Sawyer says lots of unbelievable things as co-host of *Good Morning America*, such as today’s dumbfounding assertion — in the context of a report on another international custody dispute — that in the “Elian Gonzalez case, everyone was arguing that indeed he should go back to his biological family,” evidently failing to recall even a single protesting remark from anti-communist, pro-freedom Americans.

But on Tuesday, Sawyer’s liberal lips were deployed in the cause of insisting that her designated co-host for the week, ABC’s political analyst George Stephanopoulos, who campaigned for two years to unseat the previous President Bush and spent four years as a champion of liberal causes in Bill Clinton’s White House, has “been completely non-partisan in covering the news.” Oh, really?

■ Remember Al Gore’s unctuously aggressive first debate performance last year, later lampooned by *Saturday Night Live*? Stephanopoulos claimed he loved it: “Gore dominated the debate,” he gushed. “Even the way that he would interrupt Jim Lehrer and say, ‘Listen, I want one more word.’ He looked like he was dominating and, then again, the issues that the time was spent on — prescription drugs, education, Social Security, even the RU-486 and abortion issue — all of those favor Gore.” (ABC’s post-debate coverage, October 3, 2000.)

■ He was equally “non-partisan” when it came to analyzing then-President Clinton’s speeches. “Virtuoso, Peter,” he exclaimed after the 2000 State of the Union address. “The address of a proud President, a tireless policy wonk and a very shrewd political strategist.” (ABC’s post-State of the Union coverage, January 27, 2000.)

■ During the primaries, he insisted on labeling both Gore and Bill Bradley as “basically centrist Democrats. I think they have one huge fundamental policy difference, over the issue of health care.” (*Good Morning America*, January 6, 2000.)

But when it came to labeling the Republican candidates, Stephanopoulos crowed that “Democrats are pretty happy right now....They had decided they would rather run against George W. Bush, especially because he’s had to move so far to the right. He’s now the kamikaze conservative, with all the positions he’s had to take here in South Carolina — against choice, going to Bob Jones University, really locking himself in on that huge tax cut.” (*This Week*, February 20, 2000.)

■ During the Florida mess, it was hard to tell where David Boies ended and George Stephanopoulos began. “There is no question, or very little question, that Al Gore won the votes cast in the state of Florida,” he baldly asserted a week after the election. “The question is, will he win the votes counted?” (*This Week*, November 12, 2000.)

■ Stephanopoulos has also proved a tireless proponent of McCain-Feingold, although that hardly distinguishes him from the Washington press corps.

Reacting to billionaire Warren Buffett’s endorsement of so-called campaign finance reform, Stephanopoulos lectured that “Warren Buffett is showing the common sense that made him a wealthy man.” (*This Week*, March 18, 2001.)

As a liberal Democratic “spin doctor,” Stephanopoulos recognized that the best spin combines a few factual statements to establish credibility with self-serving analysis and labels like “kamikaze conservative” that shove your opponents into an ideological drawer. ABC has labored to transform his image from Democratic boy wonder to an allegedly neutral journalist, but their efforts — and Sawyer’s shameless claim that he’s completely non-partisan — are belied by his incessant liberal spin. — *Rich Noyes*

### Once a Spin Doctor, Always a Spin Doctor

“Gore exaggerated a little bit. You saw him backtrack on whether or not he was really with James Lee Witt in Texas last night...but there were no big, big lies or distortions.” — ABC “truth squad” analyst George Stephanopoulos on *Good Morning America*, October 4, 2000, downplaying the importance of Al Gore’s false debate claim that he visited a Houston, Texas disaster site with then-FEMA Director James Lee Witt.

L. Brent Bozell III, Publisher; Brent Baker, Rich Noyes, Editors; Jessica Anderson, Brian Boyd, Geoffrey Dickens, Patrick Gregory, Ken Shepherd, Brad Wilmoth, Media Analysts; Kristina Sewell, Research Associate; Liz Swasey, Director of Communications. For the latest evidence of media bias, read the *CyberAlert* at [www.mrc.org](http://www.mrc.org).