



Media Reality Check

A Twice-Daily Analysis of Network Convention Coverage  Tuesday Morning, Aug. 1, 2000

Good Morning!

Welcome to the Media Research Center's morning examination of Republican convention coverage delivered by fax, e-mail and posted on our Web site. This edition concentrates on coverage from Monday night.

This afternoon a second daily edition will look at today's morning shows.

For the latest analysis, check out the MRC Web page:

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"Have to Think About Minorities...Not Just Every Four Years."

Powell Appearance Used to Rebuke GOP

Though network reporters Monday night agreed that Colin Powell received a warm reception, his address provided correspondents with an opportunity to take shots at Republicans and conservatives for not doing enough for minorities. Peter Jennings suggested Powell's appearance provided the GOP with an "unusual sense of inclusion" and during *Nightline* he asked Powell: "Do you ever feel used by the Republican Party?"

Just after Powell's speech concluded at 11:03pm ET, Ed Bradley told CBS viewers "the speech sure played really well" with "no catcalls" as happened in 1996. Bob Schieffer called the speech, which CBS picked up in progress during *48 Hours*, a triumph: "When a black man can stand before an almost hundred percent white audience of Republicans and tell them they're responsible for some of the cynicism of the black community and make them like it and they did seem to like it. I think that's a pretty gutsy thing and I think they got out the message they wanted to tonight."

Earlier, NBC's Tom Brokaw had rebuked Republicans, previewing on MSNBC: "General Colin Powell, the most influential African-American in the Republican Party will be talking to these delegates, reminding them that they have to think about minorities everyday, not just every four years."

During ABC's 10p ET hour of coverage, Jennings observed: "But there is a real enthusiasm and an unusual sense of inclusion." Jennings castigated the convention because "Kweisi Mfume, the head of the NAACP, wanted to speak...here and he was turned down. They said they could come here and be seen, they'd be very welcome to that, but not necessarily heard. And they wanted us to say tonight, as they want everybody to understand tonight, that they had been officially insulted."

Jennings pushed Powell to denigrate himself, arguing on *Nightline*: "Most famous black man in America, probably, and they push you into the front position all the time. Do you ever feel that maybe this is the professional wing of the party trying to use you?" 

Quote of the Night

"You said you ended up with a more conservative platform than you originally drafted. How disappointed are you?"

— **NBC's Maria Shriver to platform committee chairman Tommy Thompson, during MSNBC's Monday night coverage**

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Rhyming Ratherism

"Republicans tonight open a \$60 million plus show, emphasizing television imagery and the politics of plesantry," Dan Rather opened Monday's *CBS Evening News* from the convention floor as he combined rhyme with his caution to viewers.

"Much of the money comes from big corporations and other special interests," he warned before not forgetting to note how "the same will be true of the Democratic convention to follow in Los Angeles."

"Rigidly Right" Cheney Tag Avoided By Avoiding Press

Bill Whitaker, the most prolific labeler in the network media of Dick Cheney, revealed how Cheney escaped being tagged ideologically one day last week. In a July 28 *CBS Evening News* story on the warm crowds which greeted the GOP ticket on Friday, Whitaker tossed out another loaded label in acknowledging that "the campaign seemed almost desperate for a day like this, with images like this after their four-day drubbing over Cheney's rigidly right record."

"They avoided the whole issue," Whitaker added, "by holding no press conferences today."

In other words, "their four-day drubbing" was fueled not by some widespread concern in the populous about Cheney's record but by the agenda of liberal reporters. □

GOP Interviewees Hit With Liberal Agenda Questions on MSNBC Bush, Cheney & Platform Too Conservative

The broadcast networks decided not to offer multi-hour coverage, but viewers were not spared the liberal tilt of network stars as NBC's were showcased all night on MSNBC. From the start of prime time coverage at 8pm ET co-anchored by Tom Brokaw and Tim Russert until they threw it to Brian Williams and Chris Matthews just past 11pm ET, MSNBC delivered relentless badgering from the left about how Republicans were too conservative and would scare away voters.

It all started at about 8:10 ET as MSNBC went to David Bloom on the floor, who challenged former Senator Bob Dole: "But the Democrats say, 'look this is a man **who voted against the Clean Water Act, he voted against the creation of the Department of Education, he voted against a ban on cop-killer bullets.**' His pick, they say, says a lot about Governor Bush."

"What would you say to women who are worried that George W. Bush will appoint people to the Supreme Court who might try to take away that [abortion] right?"

Next, Andrea Mitchell demanded of New York Governor George Pataki: "We just heard Bob Dole defending Dick Cheney's record. **Dick Cheney's conservative record. Democrats are attacking it. How is being against a ban on cop killer tickets, uh, bullets gonna go down** in New York state, with New York voters?" She followed up: "How does that broaden the appeal of the party? **You're talking here tonight about being more inclusive, yet 59 percent of the people here describe themselves as conservative.** And you're not appealing to a broader base with this nominee."

Back on the air a bit later, Mitchell suggested to Senator Chuck Hagel: "Other people are criticizing what's going on here on the floor and on the podium as a lot of packaging. **That it looks like an inclusive party, but it isn't any kinder or gentler when you get down to specifics.**"

Mitchell threw it to Claire Shipman who argued to Congresswoman Jennifer Dunn: "There's one issue that is very important to a lot of women. That's the issue of abortion. And you, with a couple of notable exceptions, are pro-choice. With the exception of federal funding to support abortion and a ban on late-term abortions, which you support. **What would you say to women who are worried that George W. Bush will appoint people to the Supreme Court who might try to take away that right?**"

Up in the booth, Brokaw identified a scapegoat for why Bush did not pick Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge, telling Ridge: "A whole lot of people think that **you did not get the pick by George W. Bush because of the Catholic Church's opposition to your stand on abortion. Do you think that there ought to be more tolerance for abortion in this country,** in terms of the point of view, in exchange of that." Brokaw pressed him to favor another liberal policy: "This is a key industrial state, obviously, for George Bush. President Clinton is already challenging the Republicans to raise the minimum wage. If George Bush came out for raising the minimum wage, would that help him in Pennsylvania?"

And these questions all aired just in MSNBC's first hour, 8 to 9pm ET. □

Watch a RealPlayer clip of NBC's agenda. Go to www.mrc.org click on Campaign 2000

"Why Would Women Voters Be Attracted to This Ticket?"

Cheney Challenged from Left

As detailed in Monday morning's *Media Reality Check*, on Sunday Dick Cheney was grilled by ABC's Sam Donaldson over his conservative voting record. Cheney got the same hostile reception on CBS's *Face the Nation*.

Bob Schieffer demanded to know: "Well, what about this business of cop-killer bullets? That seems a pretty, pretty tough one to me, to vote against that. Why did you do that?"

Co-host Gloria Borger didn't see how Bush gained anything by his pick: "Governor Bush today has said that he is looking to attract independent voters to vote for him in this election. What do you bring to the ticket with this kind of a very conservative voting record that would attract independent voters to the ticket?"

Borger followed up, wondering how any women wouldn't be turned off: "Well, another constituency that, that both Governor Bush and Al Gore are looking at are women voters. And, again, going back to your record, you voted against the Equal Rights Amendment; you have a stronger position, if you will, against abortion than Governor Bush, with no exceptions. And the question is, I guess, why would women voters be attracted to this ticket?"

Of course, if the ERA were so universally popular, it would have been ratified. □

Not Enough Women or Blacks to Satisfy Networks

Delegates Scolded as Too White & Too Male

To counter media condemnations of previous GOP conclaves for being too intolerant, Bush's operatives decided to present a convention which reached out to minorities, but the network reporters weren't satisfied. "Of all the groups that are under-represented here, it has to be said that women are," declared Michel Martin during ABC's 10pm ET hour of coverage Monday night. Martin added: "You know, men, according to an Associated Press poll, 61 percent of the delegates are male, only 34 percent are female, when of course in the general population it's the opposite. Fifty-one percent of the general population is female, and only 49 percent is male."

Earlier, Ed Bradley told *CBS Evening News* anchor Dan Rather that many "admit" being successful: "If you used a broad brush to paint these delegates, you'd say they're overwhelmingly conservative, white and well off. About a quarter of them admit that they're millionaires. Fewer than 10 percent say their family income is under \$50,000 a year."

Over on the Fox News Channel, CBS News veteran Paula Zahn warned in prime time: "What is going to become abundantly clear to anybody watching this convention tonight, the delegates and the alternates are overwhelmingly white, and you wonder how genuine the symbolism will appear to those who are watching this tonight of, of this diversity the Republican Party is trying to show off." □

Cheney-Backed Tax Cuts Caused Deficits

On Sunday's *Late Edition* on CNN Steve Roberts of *U.S. News* challenged Dick Cheney's contention that he opposed a Head Start bill for spending too much in the deficit era.

Roberts argued: "There is a hypocrisy level here and, for instance, on the question of Head Start. Dick Cheney says well I'm sorry about those votes but you got to remember it was the '80s, we didn't have money, we had a big budget deficit. First of all, one of the reasons we had the deficit was because of the tax cuts that he voted for. And secondly it wasn't as if Dick Cheney was struggling to find money for Head Start and couldn't find it in the budget. He and other conservative Republicans were saying let's close the Department of Education, let's reduce the federal role..."

Cheney's "Militia Moms"

Time's Margaret Carlson took a swipe at Dick Cheney on Saturday's *Capital Gang* on CNN. She contended that while Dick Cheney won't earn the support of the pro gun control "Million Mom" marchers he will get other moms:

"Bush has kind of morphed into Clinton and left Al Gore in the dust in between Bob Jones University and now. The only mistake he may have made is by choosing Cheney, which reminds people -- the million moms are not going for Dick Cheney. The militia moms will." □