



Media Reality Check

A Twice-Daily Analysis of Network Convention Coverage  Tuesday Morning, August 15, 2000

Good Morning!

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

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

For the complete collection of these issues, including those published during the Republican convention, please go to <http://www.mrc.org> and click on "Campaign 2000." You'll be able to access issues as regular HTML files or view them as Adobe Acrobat PDF files.

Don't miss the video clips posted each day to illustrate the documented bias: Check the MRC home page and the "Campaign 2000" page for the latest.

Media Reality Check Staff:

- Publisher:** L. Brent Bozell III
- Editor:** Brent H. Baker
- Senior Editor:** Tim Graham
- Afternoon Editor:** Rich Noyes
- Media Analysts:** Geoffrey Dickens, Jessica Anderson, Paul Smith, Brian Boyd, Brad Wilmouth, Ted King
- Communications Director:** Liz Swasey
- Research Associate:** Kristina Sewell
- Web Operations:** Andy Szul, Eric Pairel, Brandon Rytting
- Intern:** Ken Shepherd

Contacts:

To update your fax number or to be added to the e-mail distribution list, please e-mail:

cyber@mediaresearch.org
Or, call: (703) 683-9733

Liberals Probed About Concerns the Ticket Not Liberal Enough Both Parties Too Conservative for MSNBC

In prime time two Monday's ago, opening night of the Republican convention, MSNBC pounded Republicans with about 20 questions from the left about how their conservative positions would turn off voters, especially on abortion. Tom Brokaw argued there "ought to be more tolerance for abortion," and Claire Shipman asked a Congresswoman what she would 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?"

But last night, despite the Democratic Party's hard line pro-abortion position, no attendees were queried if their opposition to banning partial-birth abortion might turn off moderates.

Instead, liberals were probed about whether they are happy with the ticket. David Bloom asked a delegate: "What do you think about this, whether or not the liberal wing of the party has lost influence, what with, for example Joe Lieberman, getting the vice presidential nomination?"

Tim Russert acknowledged the ideology of delegates but found it non-controlling. He inquired of James Carville: "This hall is packed with liberals, hard-left liberals, and Al Gore stampeded to the Left in the primary season, then he races back to the center and picks someone like Joe Lieberman."

Claire Shipman set up Jesse Jackson: "You spoke out very early and publicly in support of the choice of Joe Lieberman but there are a lot of liberal Democrats, a lot of African-Americans who aren't sure they like the choice. He is a more conservative politician. What does the ticket need to do to try to convince liberal Democrats that this is a good pick?" (Lieberman is a "conservative politician" who earned a 95 rating last year from the liberal Americans for Democratic Action and a zero from the American Conservative Union.)

Just before 10pm ET, however, Lisa Myers slipped in a question from the right to Senator Bob Kerrey: "I'm here with one of the most independent-minded members of the Senate....Senator, the Clinton legacy. You once said this President is 'an unusually good liar.'" □

Quote of the Night

"Everyone who runs for office has fears."

— Dan Rather to Hillary Clinton during an interview shown on the August 14 *CBS Evening News*. Clinton replied that she fears a prosperous nation "can so easily be lulled into a sense of complacency" and make a "very bad decision" in voting.

Inside

- 2 CBS & NBC Ran Hillary, Spiked Laura
- 3 Donaldson Took Dig at Reagan's '88 Speech
- 3 Brad Pitt: ABC's Expert on Campaign Finance

CBS "Mistake" Helps Dems

Dan Rather, who faced charges of a double-standard in breaking into *48 Hours* to show 15 minutes of Hillary Clinton's 18 minute speech Monday night, conceded CBS "made a mistake" in not carrying Laura Bush's speech on the first night of the GOP convention.

Rather told Ed Bark of the *Dallas Morning News*: "Laura Bush is not a candidate for anything....I'd be surprised if Mrs. Bush or anybody else didn't agree that to compare the two is a little bit like comparing watermelons with turnips. I don't think anybody would want us to say, 'Well, OK, we made one mistake so we're gonna make another.'"

But CBS is not alone in a double standard. NBC ran *Third Watch* at 10pm ET/PT instead of Laura Bush. Last night they aired *Dateline* and joined Mrs. Clinton's speech at 10:30, with 12 minutes to go.

Kilborn Apologized

Without mentioning the specifics of his show's August 4 "Snipers Wanted" caption over video of Bush, Monday night CBS *Late Late Show* host Craig Kilborn said he wanted to "apologize for a mistake we made....with a caption on our screen concerning Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush that should not have made it on the air." He added: "I want to apologize personally to George W. Bush, our audience, the viewers at home, and to anyone else who was offended. I am sorry it happened."

"Masterfully Delivered," But Late Hour Reduced Audience Bill Clinton's Speech Hailed

CBS's Dan Rather proclaimed that Bill Clinton's speech was "masterfully delivered." Bob Schieffer lamented: "I guess the only downside, Dan, is how many people got to hear it because it was almost 11 o'clock on the east coast when he got started." Ed Bradley: "He never mentioned George Bush or Dick Cheney and I don't think it's a speech that anyone would characterize as negative in tone, yet he was able to draw a sharp contrast between what he sees as the record of the Clinton-Gore years with what Republicans in Congress predicted would happen."

CNN's Jeff Greenfield also respected its tone: "Gently, gently mocked the opposition, referred to the Republican opposition to his program and said time has not been kind to their predictions." But ABC's George Stephanopoulos saw a more negative tone: "That was one of the most partisan convention speeches I ever saw Bill Clinton give. In 1996, he wouldn't even mention the Republican Party. This time he took some shots. This wasn't just Bill Clinton unfiltered, Peter, it was Bill Clinton unplugged." □

Sam on Clinton: "As Good a Political Speech as I've Ever Seen" ...But in 1988 He Took on Reagan

Last night on ABC, Sam Donaldson offered effusive praise for Bill Clinton's speech, but he applied a more critical lens to Ronald Reagan's similar pass-the-baton address 12 years ago, making a liberal political point about how Reagan's tax cuts caused deficits.

■ Donaldson, Monday night: "I think this was as good a political speech as I've ever seen a politician give, certainly under these circumstances. He has a record on the economy, his strong suit, that is very, very hard to argue against and by saying to the country, 'Are you better off today than you were eight years ago? You bet you are,' I think that's going to resonate. But Peter, I think you put your finger on it. Does this transfer to Al Gore? Do these cheers we hear for Bill Clinton and this speech of sweet reasonableness, this humbleness, this easy manner, transfer on Thursday night to a man who so far has not been able to connect? We'll see. At the moment it's simply Bill Clinton's night and that's all we can say about it."

■ Donaldson on August 15, 1988: "It was a typical Reagan speech. He defended his record and American values. He excoriated the opposition party. There was a sentimental close, and Reagan the little kid threw balloons out on the floor. I mean, he may be 77, the President of the United States, but there's a lot of little kid in this man. Now, Jeff [Greenfield] may also be right that when you look at the substance of the speech it's another thing. Reagan said he's not responsible for the deficits, but he's the man who insisted on super-large defense expenditures and cutting taxes so you didn't pay for them. And he tried to talk about George Bush as the next leader, but his only answer to the Democrats' 'Where was George?', he said George was there when it came to helping reform government regulations. Well, if that's the best he can say, 'George was there,' that probably is not going to be good enough. Still, it was a great effort by Reagan. 'C' maybe, but 'A' here in the hall." □

FNC Explored Delegate Quotas & Definition of "Working" A Unique Perspective from Fox News

CNN and MSNBC made passing references Monday night to the Democratic Party's racial, ethnic and sexual orientation quotas for state delegations, but only FNC explored them as co-anchor Brit Hume wondered if boasts of "inclusion" were "in any way undercut with the public by the fact that this is achieved by a fairly rigid system of quotas?"

Carl Cameron outlined the targets: "26 percent Latino/African American, 16 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, nine percent, specifically to California, Native American goal was one percent, disabled 10 percent, gay men five percent, lesbians five percent." Cameron then discussed the topic with a gay activist from Ohio, noting how there's even a requirement for "transgender" delegates.

Earlier, Hume quizzed Dick Gephardt about the definition of "working family," a phrase frequently employed by liberals. Gephardt said it only means "If you work," leading Hume to ask: "If you work at all? So George W. Bush's family, that's a working family, right?" Gephardt agreed: "I think so." Hume replied: "And Bill and Hillary Clinton, the First Family, they work, right?" Gephardt went along: "I think so." Hume followed up: "Now, is there an income limit?" Gephardt: "No, no income limit." Hume: "So you could be extremely rich, but as long as you still work, so Steve Forbes' family is a working family?" Gephardt decided: "Working is good." □

Stars Drive SUVs to Hillary Clinton for Senate Fundraiser

Celebrities: "Best Eight Years of Our Lives"

A long list of celebrities turned out Saturday for a \$1 million fundraiser for Hillary Clinton's Senate campaign held at the estate of "radio mogul" Ken Roberts. In Monday's *USA Today* Jeannie Williams passed along some of the gushing over Bill and Hillary that she overheard:

"**John Travolta** sat with the President at dinner after the outdoor concert and spoke, thanking Clinton 'for the best eight years of our lives.' ...Hillary, in a pink suit and giant pink pearl necklace, got her share of plaudits: 'I can't wait to call you Senator!' said **Michael Bolton** before launching into *When A Man Loves a Woman*, which he said was a request. The President mouthed 'thank you.' **Jimmy Smits** wasn't waiting for November, greeting her with, 'Good evening, Senator!' He thanked the President for 'walking the walk' with the Latino community. **Whoopi Goldberg** reminded Hillary, 'I'm one of your constituents, girl!' (and told her husband, 'You kicked a--'). Mary Steenburgen told Hillary, 'You killed on Leno last night!' ...Guests **David Hasselhoff** and wife Pamela have met Hillary and he calls her 'very cool.'"

Some other attendees listed by Williams: Brad Pitt, Jennifer Aniston, Gregory Peck, Patti LaBelle, Toni Braxton, Melissa Etheridge, Dylan McDermott, Anjelica Huston, Alfre Woodard, David Spade and Red Buttons.

The celebs put their comfort ahead of the liberal environmental ideology espoused by Hillary Clinton and Al Gore. Williams observed: "Supportive celebs put up with portable toilets with flowers but few flushes, and lengthy waits in a line of limos and SUVs heading up a single lane to the estate." □

Brad Pitt, ABC's Campaign Finance Expert

Who better to assess the influence of corporate donations than actor Brad Pitt? At least that's what ABC, the same network which chose Leonardo DiCaprio to interview Bill Clinton, apparently assumed as Monday's *World News Tonight* featured his thoughts.

Reporter Brian Ross asserted: "The entertainment and media industry is a major source of corporate money for both parties, with the Disney company, which owns ABC, one of the biggest overall media corporate contributors."

Then, as viewers saw dark video of Brad Pitt outdoors at night, Ross implored: "Does that give the industry more voice than somebody who doesn't have the millions to spend?" Pitt answered: "Uh, well, you know what, I'm sure it does. I'm not saying that's a good thing, but yeah, money has an effect. No question." Ross followed up: "Does that trouble you?" Pitt: "Yeah, that troubles me. Do I have an answer to that? No."

Texas: Starving Women

Cher, on George Bush's Texas, as she expounded on the 9pm ET edition Monday night of CNN's *Larry King Live*: "More people, more women are starving in his state than any other state in the United States. More children are going to bed hungry. If you look at the child council, it says that it's the worst place to raise a child. Texas is the worst place to raise a child."