



Tell the Truth! 2004

Media Reality ✓ Check

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Expert Documentation of the Latest Liberal Media Bias ☉ **Monday, August 23, 2004**

ABC, CBS & NBC Morning Shows Have Failed to Interview A Member of Swift Boat Veterans for Truth

TV Focuses on Kerry's Spin, Not Kerry's History

John Kerry's Vietnam history might seem central to the campaign, but the morning shows on ABC, CBS, and NBC have yet to interview a single member of Swift Boat Veterans for Truth (SBVT) on the air. Monday's morning shows focused not on scrutinizing the contradictions in Kerry's war stories, but promoting Kerry's spin lines.

■ **ABC.** On *Good Morning America*, the man on the spot wasn't Kerry, but former Sen. Bob Dole. Reporter Jake Tapper said Dole "raised a lot of eyebrows when he stepped into this ugly battle. Dole harshly questioned John Kerry's three Purple Hearts." Dole said in a clip: "All superficial wounds. He got two in one day, I think." Tapper protested: "But that is not true. Navy records show the medals were earned in three different months."

Tapper raised the Kerry talking points — William Rood, the *Chicago Tribune* metro editor and Swift Boat veteran pressed into defending Kerry on some points, and the Bush campaign dismissing Ken Cordier, a veteran volunteer who appeared in the second SBVT ad. Tapper concluded: "Could this get any uglier? Yes, it could, because Democrats and their third-party groups are renewing attacks against President Bush's service in the Texas Air National Guard. So put on your flak jackets." But ABC had no scrutiny of Kerry.

■ **NBC.** On *Today*, reporter Carl Quintanilla noted: "John Kerry's silence on the issue of his medals now opens him up to more questions...And more criticism....But the so-called Swift Boat Veterans for Truth are also under fire, contradicted by witnesses in news accounts and challenged on their facts." Quintanilla showed a headline from the *Chicago Tribune* story. NBC used an out-of-context quote from Van

O'Dell of SBVT saying: "I can't speak on it because I wasn't there that day." (Rood's *Tribune* piece focused on February 28, 1968, while O'Dell speaks about March 13, 1969.) Quintanilla concluded: "On Sunday Kerry launched a new ad telling the President to quote, 'denounce the smear.' The President may make comments on that as early as today." NBC had no scrutiny of Kerry.

CBS: Hasn't Kerry Connected the Dots?

"The Kerry camp has repeatedly called on President Bush and the White House to denounce these ads, to come out strongly against them, something they, so far, have been unwilling to do. And then over the weekend, we just said, that this Bush adviser, whose job it was to reach out to veterans, resigns over his role in this new ad. Is this the proof that the Kerry camp has been saying all along is out there, that these two are connected?" — CBS's Rene Syler to Craig Crawford on *The Early Show*, August 23.

■ **CBS.** *The Early Show* included a report from Sharyn Alfonsi: "More than 35 years after he fought in Vietnam, John Kerry is in the midst of another ugly battle, fighting to defend his military record....Critics of Kerry are sticking to their version of one 1969 mission even after an exhaustive *Washington Post* investigation found documents to support Kerry's version of what happened." (The *Post* story found inaccuracies in Kerry's version as well.)

In an interview with pundit Craig Crawford, co-host Rene Syler lamented, "Here we are, another day we're talking about the same thing that's been dominating headlines of late." That's odd, since this was the first *Early Show* interview with anyone about the SBVT ads. She asked only about the Kerry camp's complaints (see box). She also asked if Kerry's complaint to the Federal Election Commission would be heard, and "Is this the kind of thing that President Bush wants to see dominating the headlines?" But she had no scrutiny of Kerry.

As the controversy picks up steam, one overwhelming truth has emerged. If we left all the news gathering to the liberal media, they never would have questioned John Kerry's war hero stories. Their impulse was to leave any "ugly" fact-checking to opponents. — *Tim Graham*

To schedule an interview with an MRC spokesman, please contact Katie Wright at (703) 683-5004