



Campaign 2000

Media Reality ✓ Check

Expert Documentation of the Latest Liberal Media Bias ☆ Tuesday, September 19, 2000

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ABC, CBS and NBC Hyped "RATS," But Won't Tell Viewers About Vice President's Fictional Tales

Gore Drug Claim Not True. Who Cares?

Vice President Gore was neither "knocked off message" nor "distracted by repeated questions from the press" about a report in Monday's *Boston Globe* showing that he concocted a story about his mother-in-law's drug costs as part of a pitch for his big government prescription payment plan.

Instead of dogging Gore, the three evening newscasts ignored it, as did MSNBC's *News with Brian Williams*. CNN and FNC, in contrast, both showed viewers the videotape of Gore making the faulty claims in late August.

Gore said Tipper's mother pays three times as much for her arthritis medicine as he pays for his arthritic dog, Shiloh. The *Globe's* Walter V. Robinson reported "the Gore campaign admitted that it lifted those costs not from his family's bills, but from a House Democratic study" — and then "misused" them. (See box)

But ABC, CBS and NBC chose to let Gore sail above the embarrassment yesterday, failing to see the news value in a candidate's distortions. In contrast, all of the networks raked Bush over the coals last week over an RNC-produced TV ad that weirdly included the letters "RATS" (the last part of "bureaucrats") for 1/30th of a second.

Then, the networks found experts who would scold Bush for them. "The bottom line is voters don't even like the appearance of being manipulated, says Robert Goodstein, who has studied subliminal advertising," CBS's John Roberts gravely noted. CBS did not invite Goodstein back to criticize Gore's manipulations of the truth.

By playing fast and loose with the facts, Gore was trying to conjure the notion that most senior citizens — even an in-law of the Vice President — are victims of drug company

price-gouging, an image designed to justify his pitch for a big government drug deal.

You wouldn't know from the networks, but "two-thirds of seniors [already] have some sort of prescription drug insurance," as *Investor's Business Daily* reported on August 30, and even more get free pills from the states or drug company giveaways. The National Academy of Social Insurance calculated that only 4 out of every 100 senior citizens have drug costs of more than \$2,000 a year.

The networks, though, have stuck to the Gore line. On Sept. 5, for example, CBS's Bill Whitaker show cased a n elderly couple who spend 20% of their income on drugs. "We need help from somebody," the husband pleaded. "Somebody better help us," his wife echoed, reinforcing the supposed need for "universal" coverage. CBS never told viewers the couple's prescription bills were much higher than average

and hardly typical.

The "RATS" ad said Gore's drug plan would empower bureaucrats, and ABC, CBS and NBC bashed it with phony hype about "subliminal advertising." Those same networks' silence about Gore's phony drug claims show their double standard on complaints about deceiving voters.

— Rich Noyes, Director
MRC's Free Market Project

What If Bush Made Such a Faulty Claim?

"Gore's assertion that his black Labrador retriever's monthly bill is \$37.80 and [his mother-in-law's] is \$108 is wrong. The Gore campaign admitted that it lifted those costs not from his family's bills, but from a House Democratic study, and that Gore misused even those numbers: They represent the manufacturer's price to wholesalers, not the retail price of the brand-name product.

"What's more, the costs Gore cited presume that his dog and mother-in-law take the same dosage — which could put 14-year-old Shiloh at risk for stomach ulcers."

— "Gore Misstates Facts in Drug-Cost Pitch," *Boston Globe*, September 18

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