



Campaign 2000

# Media Reality ✓ Check

Expert Documentation of the Latest Liberal Media Bias ✪ Thursday, September 28, 2000

Press Contact:  
Katie Wright  
(703) 683-5004  
Vol. 4, No. 59  
www.mrc.org

Like the RATS Fracas, Networks Take Democratic Handouts And Build a Controversy Around Them

## With Pro-Gore News Like This, Why Buy Ads?

The national media's willingness to serve as an unpaid propaganda arm of the Gore campaign was first tested by the weird claim that the Bush campaign had placed the word "RATS" subliminally in an ad on prescription drugs. Last night and this morning, the networks have thrown out another example of blatant, naked pro-Gore news judgment by hyping the anecdote of 79-year-old Winifred Skinner, a former auto worker who told a Gore town meeting yesterday that she scavenges cans by the side of the road to make ends meet. The TV networks not only promoted the story, they savored it.

■ **ABC:** On *World News Tonight*, reporter Terry Moran exclaimed: **"This is the way campaigns are supposed to work.** A candidate, a voter and a big issue — the high cost of prescription drugs." Moran added, "she got up and told the kind of poignant story both Gore and George W. Bush have heard from voters all year long."

■ **CBS:** *Evening News* anchor Dan Rather plugged the upcoming story before an ad break: **"She's no child, but she belongs on a poster about high drug costs."** Reporter John Roberts oozed: **"It was one of those rare moments when an ordinary citizen can convey the importance of an election year issue better than any candidate ever could."** He warbled: "This was just another campaign event, until Winnie Skinner stopped the room cold by explaining how she can afford her prescription drugs and still eat, by wandering Iowa's highways looking for cans."

■ **MSNBC:** Brian Williams began *The News*: "When an elderly woman stood up today and told the Vice President that she collects aluminum cans by the side of the road to help pay for prescription drugs, it was political red meat. **The Gore campaign could not have scripted a better moment** as their man continues his cross-country pummeling of Texas Gov. George W. Bush" on Medicare.

Reporter Chip Reid explained: "They have been trying for weeks to have this Medicare issue really resonate with the American people. Al Gore has told stories about people who chose between food and medicine, people who didn't take their pain medication and lived in pain because they couldn't afford it, because they had to buy food, a woman who bought nothing but macaroni and cheese for weeks and ate nothing else because she had to buy her medicine. **But those were all scripted by the Gore campaign. This one was spontaneous and, wow, is it resonating.**" Today's *Des Moines Register* reported **"Des Moines union**

**representatives asked her to tell her story."**

### **Spontaneous Story?...Not Exactly**

The networks jumped on an Iowa widow and former auto worker's story at a Gore town meeting that she scavenges for cans to afford prescription drugs. MSNBC called the moment "spontaneous." But today's *Des Moines Register* found **"Des Moines union representatives asked her to tell her story."**

This morning, the Winifred crusade began all over again. **"Outrage over the cost of prescription drugs in America has a new face today,"** began ABC's *Good Morning America*. Their entire segment carried the graphic "Prescription Drug Outrage." It certainly was. On

Today, NBC's Jim Avila underlined **"A simple, sweet story, driving home what for seniors is shaping up to be a cornerstone issue. A woman of dignity, walking her Midwest town to survive."** (*The Early Show* on CBS aired no Winifred story.)

Emotional anecdotes utterly replaced policy analysis, overshadowing that most seniors already have prescription drug coverage. CBS's John Roberts worried that under the Bush drug plan, "studies suggest as few as 25 percent of seniors would participate." So why are the networks pushing another entitlement program to tax young people to subsidize Ross Perot? — *Tim Graham and Brent Baker*

L. Brent Bozell III, Publisher; Brent Baker, Tim Graham, Editors; Jessica Anderson, Brian Boyd, Geoffrey Dickens, Ted King, Paul Smith, Brad Wilmouth, Media Analysts; Kristina Sewell, Research Associate; Liz Swasey, Director of Communications. For a free subscription to this fax report, call Kristina Sewell at 703-683-9733.