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Seven Days Before Election, TV Networks Give Good Press to Democrats, Smack GOP With Bad Press

Media: Treats for Liberals, Tricks for GOP

Appearing on FNC's *The O'Reilly Factor* last week, ABC News Political Director Mark Halperin admitted that the media elite have a bias problem. Citing this year's adulatory coverage of liberal Democrat Nancy Pelosi compared to the mean-spirited coverage the networks dumped on Newt Gingrich back in 1994, Halperin confessed: "If I were a conservative, I understand why I would feel suspicious that I was not going to get a fair break at the end of an election."

A new study released today by the non-partisan Center for Media and Public Affairs (CMPA) confirms the bias: more than three fourths (77%) of ABC, CBS and NBC evening news references to Democrats this fall have been favorable, while 88% of the coverage given GOP candidates has been negative, an unprecedented disparity. Consider a few recent examples of how the big networks are aiding Democrats during the final days of Campaign '06:

■ **All voters "disgusted" with the Republicans.** On Monday's *Good Morning America*, ABC's Jake Tapper went to a diner in Columbus, Ohio to take the pulse of the "real-life actual voters," but his focus group only included those with an anti-GOP attitude: a Republican voter who's voting for the Democrats; a Democratic Navy veteran who's against the war; a conservative Christian who stressed "I'm not pro-war;" a new citizen who thinks illegal immigrants are being treated unfairly; and a cynic who believes that the whole political system is corrupt.

Hours later on ABC's *World News with Charles Gibson*, reporter Dean Reynolds interviewed Indiana Republicans who expressed how they are "frustrated," "confused," "concerned" and have "disgust" for the way Republicans have governed. Halfway through his report, Reynolds admitted the obvious: "It all sounds practically like a commercial for the Democrats." Exactly.

■ **Liberal policies are wonderful.** On Monday's *CBS Evening News*, Katie Couric in Los Angeles trumpeted how "states, starting with California, are flexing their political

muscle, telling Uncle Sam, 'If you won't tackle the tough issues, we will.'" But the report by correspondent Sandra Hughes made clear that the slate of California innovations that so impressed Couric are all liberal: government funding for embryonic stem cell research, raising the minimum wage, taxpayer subsidies for prescription drugs, and "the nation's most restrictive law on greenhouse gas emissions."

■ **No scrutiny of Democrats.** In his report on the Pennsylvania Senate race for Monday's *NBC Nightly News*, reporter Chip Reid had no scrutiny for frontrunner Bob Casey, whom he described using Democratic talking points: The "son of a popular former governor and an abortion opponent like [incumbent GOP Senator Rick] Santorum." Reid's closer hinted at Casey's weakness — "In the final days, Casey's expected to stay out of the spotlight" — but nothing further. Would NBC say nothing if

Republicans felt they had to hide their candidate in a pivotal Senate race during the campaign's final week?

■ **Nancy Pelosi's victory lap.** In 1994, the networks tried to bruise Newt Gingrich (CBS smeared him as "bombastic" and "ruthless"), but this year the media are paving the way for "Speaker Pelosi." The latest gush: on his *Chris Matthews Show* on Sunday, the MSNBC anchor compared Pelosi to a Hall of Famer: "Pelosi at the bat. Not since DiMaggio has San Francisco offered such a stylish player."

Reporters' open desire for GOP defeat is further tarring their already soiled reputation for fairness. Discussing Lynne Cheney's on-air upbraiding of CNN for its tilt, FNC host Bill O'Reilly last night asked NPR liberal Juan Williams if he'd say CNN was "in the tank for the Democrats." Reluctantly, Williams agreed: "I think that's true...It looks to me though like they are becoming more and more partisan." Unfortunately, it's not just CNN. — *Rich Noyes*

As Campaign '06 enters its final week, ABC, CBS and NBC pour on the bias, emphasizing "disgusted" GOP voters, touting the wonders of liberal policies, and sidestepping Democratic weakness.

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