



Network Stars Wanted the Impeachment Trial Cut Short, Hammered GOP for "Lengthening the Process"

Patience Is A Very Partisan Thing

Three weeks and a day into Al Gore's Don't Get Snippy Courthouse Tour, the media keeps floating every potential scheme toward overturning the certified Bush presidency. Is this amazing patience a sign of great objectivity before declaring a winner? For the answer, see network reaction to the Senate impeachment trial in 1999. There were no sermons about the need for every legal avenue to be explored. Instead, the network stars felt the need to move on to the nation's business:

■ "Part of it is that you have conservative Republicans who just want to torture the President for as long as they humanly can. But part of it is that you have serious constitutionalists who really think the process should play out..." — ABC's Cokie Roberts answering a question on why it was hard to start the trial, January 5 *World News Tonight*.

■ "But Senator, if there's no way that this is going to turn around, if the votes aren't there, why is your party dragging this thing out?...But what is certain is what the public sentiment is on this thing. People want it over with, and if the votes aren't there, why not, why go through all this business about witnesses? Why not just get it done?" — *Good Morning America* co-host Charlie Gibson to Bob Dole, January 18.

■ "Bob Dole was here yesterday, a Republican, who said, look, the 67 votes aren't there and aren't going to be there to convict the President. So why, why drag this out when the public, so obviously, doesn't want it dragged out?" — Gibson to Democrat George Mitchell, next day.

■ "Questions such as what to do about Social Security, improving the nation's schools, and the drug menace among America's youth basically are on hold. So is what to do about threats to health of the U.S. economy by what is happening in Asia and Brazil; the threats to U.S. security

posed by Iraq, Iran, and North Korea; and the peril represented by a collapsing Russia and an emerging China — all important parts of the people's business — all remain pretty much on hold, while the trial drags on." — Dan Rather commentary on CBS.com, January 25, 1999.

■ **ABC legal analyst Jeffrey Toobin:** "This may not be the final chapter. Kenneth Starr is still investigating. He is weighing whether to indict President Clinton on these facts, so it is worth keeping in mind whether an actual jury, not a Senate jury, may yet hear the same evidence."

Peter Jennings: "But just so that you don't terrify people altogether, Jeffrey, this is going to be the last of the Senate impeachment trial this week as far as we know."

Toobin: "That's right. This national nightmare is over. We'll see if there's another one." — ABC News coverage of final arguments, Feb. 8.

When Dan Wanted Immediate Closure

"Bob, is there or is there not any sense among the Senators, any talk among the Senators, that there's other very important business that needs to be attended to? Saddam Hussein has his aircraft in the air threatening U.S. fighting men and women in the military. There are questions about Social Security, what to do about health care. There's a long line of the people's business that seems to have been put aside and apparently is going to be put aside for weeks if not months now." — Dan Rather to Bob Schieffer at about 1:25pm ET during the start of the Senate trial, the signing of the oath book by Senators, January 7.

■ "You know who the hero of this whole thing is, it's that guy, what was his name, Richard Llamas, the guy who stood up in the Senate gallery last week and said, 'Good God vote and get over with this, will you.' If they had stretched this out for another two or three weeks, which if they would have had the kind of witnesses Bob [Novak] wanted to have, I want to tell you something, I think the people may have stormed the United States Capitol." — *Wall Street Journal* Executive Washington Editor Al Hunt on a CNN *Capital Gang* special, February 11. — *Tim Graham*

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