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John Roberts, the Front-Runner to Take Rather's Chair, Twists News Stories to Favor a Liberal Agenda

CBS's Bias Won't End When Rather Exits

Conservatives are rightfully cheered by the imminent end of liberal activist Dan Rather's 24-year grip on the anchor chair, but it's hard to imagine that any of Rather's proteges would take the bias out of the *Evening News*. Indeed, the top name floated as taking over for the tainted Rather, Sunday night anchor and White House correspondent John Roberts, has also used his position as a supposedly objective reporter and anchor to help liberal causes and undermine conservatives. A few examples:

■ **Campaign 2004.** When Democrats baselessly charged President Bush had been "AWOL" from his National Guard duties in the early 1970s, Roberts strained to keep the story alive. After dental records showed Bush on base in 1973, Roberts groused how "the dentist who treated him has no specific recollection of seeing the future President." (*Evening News*, February 12, 2004.)

Before Bush spoke at the GOP convention, Roberts painted him as mean-spirited: "He hopes to rekindle his year 2000 mantra of 'compassionate conservatism,' a goal his critics say would be a stunning feat given his record." (*Evening News*, September 2, 2004.) But after John Kerry's speech five weeks earlier, Roberts suggested Democrats weren't mean enough: "There's also been a buzz in the Democratic Party they should have gone after attacks that were more slashing than they did against President Bush, feeling that there were a lot of opportunities to exploit openings that they didn't." (Live convention coverage, July 29, 2004.)

■ **Civility.** During Bush's first week in office, Roberts faulted the new President's conservative approach as divisive: "The Bush White House packaged in its first week the image of the President as a uniter. But Mr. Bush's message has often been at odds with the mission: the Ashcroft nomination, new restrictions on abortion

counseling, plans for school vouchers, an in-your-face attitude that has Democrats reluctant to let down their guard." (*Evening News*, January 26, 2001.) Three months later, Roberts continued to blame the President for a lack of civility, even as Democrats charged Bush with poisoning children. (See box.)

■ **Tax Cuts.** Roberts has exhibited the standard liberal hostility to cutting taxes. In 2001, when Bush's original tax cuts were before Congress, Roberts cited a Reagan-bashing activist as an expert: "Bob McIntyre of Citizens for Tax Justice can't forget the last time Congress went on a tax cut spree in 1981. America is still paying the bill." (*Evening News*, February 5, 2001.)

Interviewing Terry McAuliffe 18 months later, Roberts posed a question that could have been cribbed from DNC talking points: "Is now the time for the President to be proposing new tax cuts, particularly ones that seem to benefit wealthy

investors more than they do middle- and lower-income Americans?" (*Face the Nation*, September 1, 2002.)

■ **Poisoned Golf Courses.** Roberts seems willing to use his newscast to pass on alarmist environmentalist hype: "If you took all the golf courses in all the land and put them together, they would equal the size of Delaware and Rhode Island. But the chemicals needed to tend those 3,000 square miles of grass are raising fears the links may be lethal." (*Evening News*, May 30, 1994.)

Bias contributed to Dan Rather's self-destruction. So does CBS really want another biased liberal anchoring the *Evening News*? — Rich Noyes

Dan Rather's Biased Apprentice

"Democrats ask what happened to Mr. Bush's vaunted promise to change the tone in Washington and put an end to partisan sniping?" — John Roberts on the April 29, 2001 CBS *Evening News*, seconds after showing the anti-Bush DNC ad in which a child asks, "May I please have some more arsenic in my water?"

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