



Media Reality ✓ Check

QUICK TAKE

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NETWORKS UNIMPRESSED WITH THE LIBERAL REVEREND WHEN HE ARRIVES IN FLORIDA TO PUT A DEMOCRATIC FACE ON THE SIDE OF LIFE

JESSE JACKSON GETS NO NEWS MOJO IN SUPPORTING TERRI SCHIAVO'S LIFE

For decades, the Rev. Jesse Jackson has been a magnet for liberal media coverage. But on the day the Reverend arrived in Florida to put a Democratic face on the side of Terri Schiavo's parents pleading for her life, he seemed to lose his powers of attraction. CNN, MSNBC, and FNC all devoted portions of their prime-time shows Tuesday night to interviews with Jackson. He also appeared by phone on FNC's *Fox & Friends* today. But the broadcast networks were much less interested.

■ **ABC's *World News Tonight*** suddenly found the entire Schiavo matter unnewsworthy. For the first time in more than ten days, the newscast had no Schiavo story and didn't utter a syllable about Jackson — although Peter Jennings had time to highlight the latest press release from the American Civil Liberties Union attacking the military's aggressive interrogation tactics. Jackson also went unmentioned on Wednesday's *Good Morning America*. It's ironic, since when a Jackson extramarital affair was reported in 2001, ABC's Cokie Roberts mourned, "I do not want to have his voice silenced in public debate."

■ **CBS interim *Evening News* anchor Bob Schieffer** gave Jackson 22 words: "In Florida today, the Reverend Jesse Jackson prayed with the parents of Terri Schiavo. Jackson said he favors restoring her feeding tube." Jackson was ignored on Wednesday's edition of *The Early Show* — but it's not because they're uninterested in Jackson, just his current cause. The same CBS show interviewed him for three and a half minutes on Monday morning about his radio-show interview with Michael Jackson.

■ **NBC** was the only network to air an evening news story that at least partially featured Jackson's entry into the Schiavo debate. Mark Potter explained: "The Reverend Jesse Jackson was invited to the hospice by Terri Schiavo's parents and joined them in urging Schiavo's husband or Florida Gov. Jeb Bush to reinsert her feeding tube. But Michael Schiavo refused to allow Jackson to even visit with his wife." After a soundbite of Jackson asking for mercy, Potter turned to other developments. Jackson was not mentioned on Wednesday's *Today*. (His trip to Florida was briefly noted Tuesday morning.) But his interview with Michael Jackson was featured in news stories on Sunday's *Nightly News* and Monday's *Today*.