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ABC STILL SELLING FLORIDA COURT AS PACK OF MODERATES **JACK FORD FINDS IT "DIFFICULT" TO SEE POLITICS IN FLORIDA SUPREMES**

Before the Florida Supreme Court baldly ordered more time for recounts in selected Democratic counties and stretched the legal deadline for certification by 12 days, ABC anchor Peter Jennings insisted the court was "moderate to conservative." Today on ABC's *Good Morning America*, legal analyst Jack Ford asked everyone to forget that, and the unanimous vacating of their ruling this week by the U.S. Supreme Court as baffling in its reasoning. He insisted these seven Democratic appointees are not acting like political appointees:

"I think people who have looked at this court have said this is a pretty steady, well-intentioned and probably more importantly, not just political-appointed court. They've got an interesting selection process down there. It's not like some other states where the Governor says, 'You know what? You were my highest contributor or you've been with me since I've been in high school. Bang! You're the Supreme Court justice here.' In Florida there's a commission that gives the Governor a list of three to five candidates, and that commission is based upon somebody from the Governor's office and people from the bar association...So there's a major merit selection process that goes on here."

Substitute co-host Nancy Snyderman added: **"And the Chief [Justice] is a relatively conservative man, is he not?"**

Ford replied: **"Yeah, he is, and in terms of their politics, it's difficult to see how that weaves into their political, into their legal decisions here. But just in terms of a bench and what you expect from a bench, these are very talented and experienced lawyers who became judges, four of whom, as I mentioned, had experience on appellate courts before they moved up to the Supreme Court."**

Ford did not explain that the counsel to Gov. Lawton Chiles, who made most of these appointments, was Dexter Douglass, one of Gore's Florida lawyers, or explain the liberal slant of the state bar association. While networks cast aspersions on Republican elected officials, Democrat-appointed judges are praised as non-political and highly talented.