



Media Reality ✓ Check

# QUICK TAKE

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## SMEARS & PARTISAN INNUENDO IN WAKE OF '95 BOMBING

# **FIRST REACTION: LIBERAL JOURNALISTS BLAMED CONSERVATIVE POLS AND TALK RADIO FOR OKLAHOMA MASS MURDER**

Barring a last-minute court win, Timothy McVeigh will die Monday because he killed 168 men, women and children on April 19, 1995. In the days and weeks after McVeigh's murderous attack, some liberal journalists used his Oklahoma City bombing as an opportunity to take cheap political shots at mainstream conservatives and talk radio hosts. Recall:

**"In a nation that has entertained and appalled itself for years with hot talk on radio and the campaign trail, the inflamed rhetoric of the '90s is suddenly an unindicted co-conspirator in the blast." — *Time* senior writer Richard Lacayo, May 8, 1995.**

**"The bombing in Oklahoma City has focused renewed attention on the rhetoric that's been coming from the right and those who cater to angry white men. While no one's suggesting right-wing radio jocks approve of violence, the extent to which their approach fosters violence is being questioned by many observers, including the President....The list of those the President may have had in mind is at once long and familiar. Right-wing talk show hosts like Rush Limbaugh, Bob Grant, Oliver North, G. Gordon Liddy, Michael Reagan and others take to the air every day with basically the same format: detail a problem, blame the government or a group, and invite invective from like-minded people. Never do most of the radio hosts encourage outright violence, but the extent to which their attitudes may embolden and encourage some extremists has clearly become an issue." — *Today* co-host Bryant Gumbel, April 25, 1995.**

**"Even after Oklahoma City, you can turn on your radio in any city and still dial up hate talk: extremists, racist and violent rhetoric from the hosts and those who call in." — Dan Rather, *CBS Evening News*, April 27, 1995.**

**"Public antagonism toward government has been one of the principal themes of American political discourse for nearly two decades, growing in shrillness in the past year. This sentiment has been voiced and amplified by the new Republican House, which just this month completed its 100 days of action, much of it aimed at paring back the growth of the federal government. But now that an attack on a government building has left scores dead, including children, the allure is coming off the anti-government rhetoric." — *Boston Globe* Washington Bureau Chief David Shribman, in a front-page "news analysis," April 25, 1995.**