



Media Reality ✓ Check **QUICK TAKE**

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PRESIDENT BUSH REBUKED FOR PRESIDENT CLINTON'S ERRORS? ABC'S JENNINGS TO THE LEFT OF THE NEW YORK TIMES ON SECRET COURT RULING

The three network evening newscasts have frequently been faulted for parroting the agenda and liberal spin of the *New York Times*. On Friday, ABC anchor Peter Jennings borrowed a story idea from the *New York Times*, but pressed the liberal spin even farther than the *Times* itself.

"On *World News Tonight* this Friday, a federal court tells the Bush administration it is abusing its power in the campaign against terrorism," Jennings teased at the top of his August 23 newscast. After the show's intro, the anchor declared: **"We are going to begin tonight with the first ever published opinion from a secret court. The court, which operates inside the Justice Department, says the Bush administration is not adequately protecting the privacy of American citizens and permanent residents."**

What Jennings omitted from his anti-Bush intro was included in Friday morning's *New York Times* story by Washington reporter Philip Shenon, subheadlined: **"Clinton-Era Problems Cited in Sharing Intelligence with Criminal Investigators."** Shenon informed readers that most of the problems happened before Bush was elected: **"The court, which is based in Washington, documented the 'alarming number of instances' during the Clinton administration in which the F.B.I. might have acted improperly."**

Friday's *Special Report with Brit Hume* on FNC uniquely noted how one of the court's judges actually went out of his way to **praise** the Bush administration and Attorney General John Ashcroft. After describing the court's ruling, Fox reporter Carl Cameron added that, **"Under the Bush administration those errors were corrected and new procedures for requesting wiretaps adopted. And one judge on the court said quote, 'We consistently find the (FISA) applications 'well-scrubbed' by the Attorney General and his staff before they are presented to us. The process is working. It is working in part because the Attorney General is conscientiously doing his job, as is his staff.'"**

Thankfully, not everyone at ABC News was as skewed as Jennings. Deep into his field report, correspondent John Yang was allowed to report: **"The court said the FBI misled it when it sought permission for wiretaps and search warrants, making misstatements and omissions of facts in cases going back to the Clinton administration."** That's necessary context for viewers to consider — that is, if any ABC viewers had an unprejudiced view of the court's ruling after hearing Jennings's biased introduction.