

The Media Research Center's Monthly Members' Report

Liberal Bias Turns to Character Assassination

Dear Member,

Dan Rather finally resigned his anchor chair at the *CBS Evening News* last month, after 24 years. It was 24 years too late from a conservative's viewpoint given that Rather pushed his liberal political agenda from the beginning. But Rather's departure was startling and gained much attention because of its timing and controversy, which stemmed in large part from CBS's forged memo scandal.

The resignation confirmed, and symbolized, much of what the MRC has been saying for years: The liberal media are in a meltdown. Their liberal bias is doing them in. It's killing their credibility and their audience share. There is a long, long way to go, given liberal media's size. But Rather's downfall shows that some of the cornerstones are cracking in the liberal media behemoth.

Last summer, Crown Forum published my book, *Weapons of Mass Distortion: The Coming Meltdown of the Liberal*

Media. Based on 60 studies and more than 600 examples, the book documents the liberal bias of the major media and also shows how that bias is undercutting the liberal media's credibility and their near-dominant audience share.



Media Meltdown: Dan Rather's attack on President Bush with forged documents backfired, further exposing his liberal bias and undermining CBS's credibility.

To be sure, competition from alternative media – cable, satellite, Internet, talk radio – is taking viewers away from the major networks and newspapers. And that competition is healthy (something we didn't have 25 years ago). However, in terms of numbers and audience share, the liberal media dominate.

For instance, the morning and evening news shows of ABC, CBS, and NBC combined are viewed, on average, by more than 40 million Americans every day. The top newspapers in the country, *USA Today*, *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Washington Post* pull in another 5 million, and they all have a leftist bent in their "reporting" and on their editorial

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America's Media Watchdog

pages. The editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal* is conservative, but its news pages lean to the left.

Conservative talk radio, such as Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity, is very popular. But it is commentary, opinion. It is not “news.” And it does not pretend to be “objective,” as the left-wingers at the networks and CNN and MSNBC, among other outlets, claim for themselves. Furthermore, Fox News Channel is popular, but it’s a cable channel and its audience share for news coverage averages 1.7 million people a night. And even its top opinion show, *The O’Reilly Factor*, pulls in only 3.3 million people a day.

Liberals point to Fox as some sort of right-wing media powerhouse. But the facts, the numbers, just aren’t there. A 1.7-million-person audience doesn’t even scratch the surface of the 40-million-person audience of the three networks. Heck, it doesn’t even beat a daily newspaper, *USA Today*. But a liberal bias, over time, can hurt the real media giants, as Dan Rather’s career at CBS shows.

For years, the MRC has analyzed, documented, and exposed liberal media bias at many outlets, CBS among them. And over those many years, Dan Rather has exposed his liberal political agenda again and again. Our library on his bias – *The Dan Rather File* – is extensive and you can read it on our Web site (www.mediaresearch.org). Last September, Rather and CBS let their political bias get the best of them. They ran the scurrilous *60 Minutes* “report” on George W. Bush’s service in the National Guard with the intention of damaging his campaign, if not scuttling his chances of getting re-elected. They were out to get Bush.

Yet the bias bit them back. They relied on forged documents provided by a Bush-hating Democratic activist. Their hatchet job was immediately questioned by independent bloggers, and the MRC’s own CNSNews.com was the first credentialed news service to question the memos’ authenticity. From there, the story went international, and Dan Rather went into denial. He stonewalled and used his anchor chair to label his critics as “partisan political operatives.” Finally, an independent commission was appointed to review the matter.

Rather’s career is essentially over. The credibility of CBS – a perpetual third-runner behind NBC and ABC – is further shot.

On Nov. 5, a national poll showed that 46 percent of voters, nearly 1-in-2, believed that media coverage of the presidential election was biased. I believe that last year’s media bias against President Bush, exemplified most outrageously by CBS’s forged memo story, actually helped Bush win re-election. The vitriolic bias, from the denigration of the Swift Boat Veterans to the use of forged (and illegal) memos, backfired on the liberals. And they apparently haven’t learned much from the experience.

In his parting special broadcast – *Dan Rather: A Reporter Remembers* – on

March 9, Rather drew a line, equating the “liberal” label with a racist term, “N-lover.” His point was clear: Calling someone a “liberal” is the same as calling someone a “N---r” or a “N-lover.” Thus, all conservatives and critics of the liberal media are ... racists? It was a typical cheap shot, reminiscent of the vicious attacks by the Left against Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan.

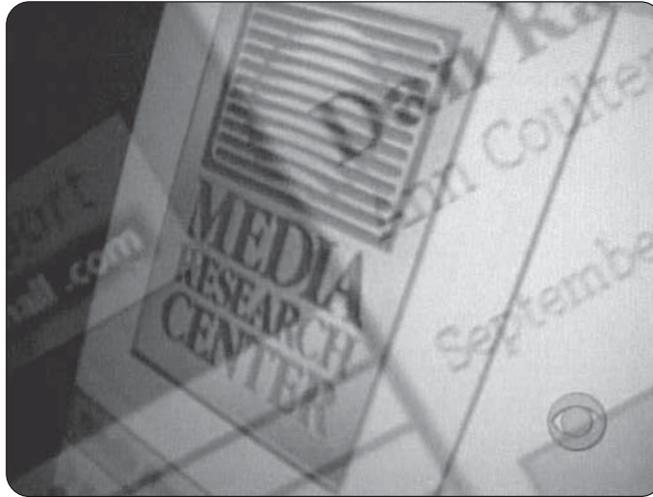
Following the race-baiting setup, Rather’s show broadcast a montage of conservative Web sites, including the MRC’s. The point again: Critics of liberal media bias, e.g., MRC, are racist or dangerous or just plain kooky.

This is the character assassination the liberal media are turning to. The attack by Rather and CBS on alternative media in general, and the MRC in particular, shows that the liberals are in a panic because they are no longer succeeding in telling Americans what they will think, and when they will think it. The liberal media are in a meltdown, as we predicted. But with their 40-plus million viewers, we still have a long row to hoe.

Until next time,



L. Brent Bozell III,
Founder and President



In his March 9 primetime tribute to himself on CBS, *Dan Rather: A Reporter Remembers*, Rather blasted his critics, including the MRC Web site.

ARI FLEISCHER Denounces Liberal Media Bias

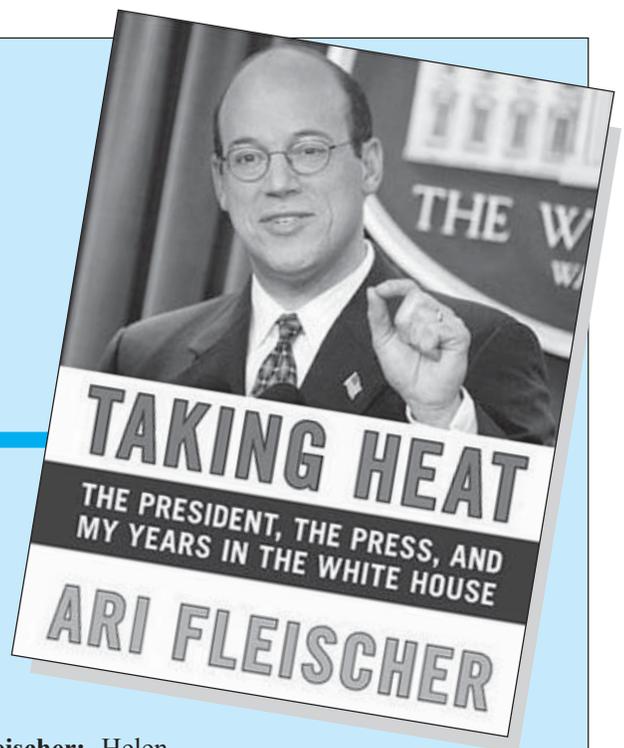
Ari Fleischer, former White House Press Secretary, recently saw his first book published: *Taking Heat: The President, the Press, and My Years in the White House* (William Morrow). In discussing the book on the March 3 broadcast of MSNBC's *Scarborough Country*, Mr. Fleischer commented on the liberal media bias he encountered from the White House press corps.

Joe Scarborough: ... From your experience, is the media biased against Republicans and conservatives like the president?

Ari Fleischer: ... I do think that the press, by and large, sees policy issues, and especially social policy issues, far more through the eyes of Democrats than they do Republicans. And that's a bias that is a problem.

... You know, a survey at the Boston convention, the Democrat Convention of journalists showed, by 12-1, journalists from outside the beltway thought John Kerry would make a better president than George W. Bush. The field of journalism would be stronger if more conservatives were reporters and more conservatives felt that they could go into journalism and that would be a home for them. And I think that's a real problem that the media need to grapple with.

Scarborough: Now, I think they are starting to, Ari. But you know what is so interesting? You have this Jeff Gannon controversy, where a guy with a shady background asked pointed questions, basically leading questions to the president of the United States. I found it interesting — and I want to ask why it never happened — that when somebody like UPI's Helen Thomas, for instance, would ask very leading questions to you, to the president, nobody said a word. And I want our viewers to listen to a clip of Helen Thomas grilling you. Take a listen. (SHOWS VIDEO CLIP)



Fleischer: Helen.

Helen Thomas, UPI: Why is Bush going to bomb them? (LAUGHTER) ... I mean, how do you bomb people back to democracy? This is a question of conquest. They didn't ask to be liberated by the United States. This is our self-imposed political solution for them.

Fleischer: Let me guess that you will not be at the speech tonight. (END VIDEO CLIP)

Scarborough: Ari, did you ever hear, when Helen Thomas, supposedly a respected member of the mainstream media, when Helen Thomas would ask those type of leading questions, anybody in the mainstream media ever criticize her?

Fleischer: No. No, Joe, you are right about that. ... But what I saw time and time again was that the way the news gets told, you constantly see the words "right-wing" in print. You hardly ever see the word "left-wing" in print. You are often told that these people are conservatives. You are hardly ever told that these people are liberals. ... This is the type of subtle bias that I would see on a regular basis inside the government, inside the White

House. I remember one report on ABC that summed up the Bush tax cut as trickle-down economics. Those words were from a Walter Mondale commercial against Ronald Reagan. This is the type of subtle bias that I would see on a regular basis that I wanted to write about, because there are examples that the American people should see.



NPR's liberal Nina Totenberg eats "crow," admitting she was wrong about the Iraqi elections.

Totenberg Eats Crow

NPR's very liberal Nina Totenberg ate crow ... er, actually, her shoe ... while admitting that she was wrong about President Bush's policy in Iraq, and that the January elections there had changed her mind. "If I had a hat I would have to eat it," said Totenberg on the March 6 broadcast of *Inside Washington*. Then, she said, "I've got my shoe here," which she placed in her mouth. Conceding her errors, she added, "I really did not think that this election in Iraq would make that much difference and I was wrong."

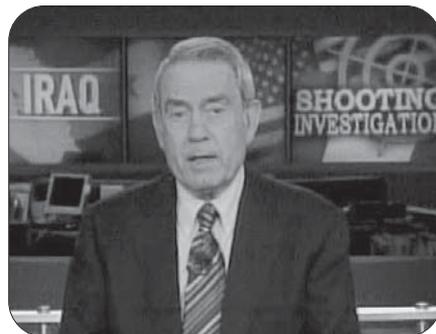
Unwilling to give Bush too much credit, however, Totenberg said "it really does help that Arafat died and they had a real election in Palestine." And it would be wise, she lectured, "that we not engage in a certain level of triumphalism about this."

'Targeted' Reporter a Commie

The U.S. media were quick to report the claims of Italian journalist Giuliana Sgrena that she and her security escort

were targeted and shot at by U.S. troops eager to kill the writer. What the U.S. media failed to report—for days and days in early March after the incident—however, is that Sgrena works for a communist newspaper, *Il Manifesto*, and that her anti-U.S. and pro-Marxist views might have colored her credibility.

Instead, Sgrena's claims were taken as gospel and the major media repeatedly referred to her as a "journalist" or a "reporter" or a "former hostage." Terrorists inside Iraq had been holding Sgrena hostage; her release was negotiated by Italian and U.S. officials. Sgrena's communism was not mentioned



Dan Rather, like most media, reported the anti-U.S. claims of an Italian journalist at a communist newspaper as factual.

by the networks except once, when NBC's Keith Miller, toward the close of his story on a Sunday night, mentioned that her paper was "communist."

CBS's Silliest Story

In what has to be CBS's silliest story since Bob Schieffer assumed the anchor chair, the *Evening News* on March 21 reported that a professor often slept on a cot in his office because gasoline prices were too high for him to commute. Schieffer first misreported that gas prices "hit a new record," ignoring inflation's effects, and then introduced a story about Mike Bower, who endures a five-hour commute to work at Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif. Bower supposedly "can't afford to move closer to work" and "can't work closer



CBS's Bob Schieffer, with a straight face, reports that high gas prices force a commuter to sleep in his office.

to home," said Schieffer, so he "sleeps overnight on a cot in his office."

This is a ridiculous premise, said MRC Vice President for Research Brent Baker. Malibu is surrounded by Los Angeles and is only a few miles from several less ritzy areas with hundreds of thousands of housing units. Millions of area residents manage to find housing closer to their work than this man. CBS never explained if there were other circumstances involved; they blamed the whole issue on high gas prices.

Media Wrong on Gas Prices

In what has to be a case of collective ignorance among the major media, they continually reported in March that gasoline prices were at "record highs," and "all-time highs," and so on. These experts repeatedly failed to adjust for inflation, a basic step for reporting on prices in a currency-inflated marketplace. Instead, CBS reported on March 17 that "the price of gasoline hit a record today" of \$2.06 a gallon. That same day, NBC's Brian Williams made the false claim that "retail prices for regular gasoline hit a record average of a little more than \$2.05 a gallon," an inaccurate charge also made on all the morning news shows.

Adjusted for inflation, \$2.05 is about \$1 short of the cost of a gallon of gasoline in 1981. Oil would have to hit \$90 a barrel to set a record high and gasoline would need to hit or exceed \$2.97 a gallon. That's the record.

Want to stay on top of media bias? Sign up for the **CyberAlert** e-mail report.

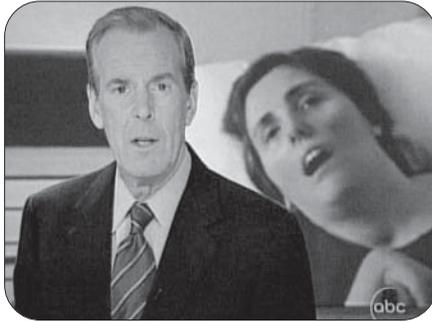
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Mention that you read about the offer in **FLASH**.

ABC: Kill Terri Schiavo

ABC and Peter Jennings suddenly rushed to the defense of state's rights and federalism by criticizing Congress' action in the Terri Schiavo case. "We're going to begin tonight with the extraordinary last-minute attempt by members of the Congress to interfere, or to intervene, in the case of Terri Schiavo," said Jennings on the March 18 *World News Tonight*, before relaying, without a source, that "the Florida judge ... didn't think much of the interference." ABC reporter Jeffrey Kofman then complained that the Florida legislature faces "huge issues — hurricane recovery, education — and yet almost a quarter of the legislative calendar has been devoted to Terri Schiavo."

Reporter Jake Tapper complained that "members of Congress made claims contradicting experts in medicine and bio-ethics," and concluded with this blast: "Terri Schiavo and her family deserved better than the way Congress worked this week."



ABC's Peter Jennings slams the President and Congress for intervening in the Schiavo case.

Bush is the Problem

Meet the Press host Tim Russert pushed the idea that the real impediment to Social Security reform is ... President George W. Bush and his support for private retirement accounts. On March 17, Russert asked Sens. Ben Nelson and Lincoln Chaffee: "Should the Democrats refuse to negotiate until the President takes personal accounts off the table?" and "Should the President take private, personal accounts off the table and focus on solvency?" Russert then complained about the GOP's reluctance to raise taxes to cover Social Security's insolvency and said, "the stumbling block appears to be these private or personal accounts."



NBC's Tim Russert claims that President Bush's plan for private retirement accounts is blocking social security reform.

Bush is in the way of reform, said Russert. "If the President insists that it is his way, private personal accounts as part of Social Security and anything else is a non-starter, can there be a compromise? ... If the administration is saying that anything else other than that is a non-starter, where do you go?"

RATHER DEFENSIVE



Dan Rather resigned as anchor of the CBS Evening News on March 9, marking 24 years as one of the most liberal, politically biased newsmen on TV. Rather's departure was hastened by the forged memo story/scandal, which he and CBS used to try to derail George W. Bush's reelection campaign. As Rather approached resignation, his liberal comrades came to his defense, spinning the facts as much as possible to salvage his reputation. Below are some of their (and Dan's) comments.

☞ "I remember the first time someone accused me of being an 'N-lover.' There was a lot of that during the '60s when I covered the civil rights movement. ... Then, when Watergate came into being was the first time I began to hear this word 'liberal' as an epithet thrown my way." — **Dan Rather** ☞ "The fact is, for my money, he's the best television reporter who's ever lived." — *Early Show* host **Harry Smith** on Dan Rather. ☞ "I think you measure a man by his whole career and not by one incident." — **Peter Jennings** ☞ ABC's **Charlie Gibson** asserted: "His critics have tried to make it about him, but he's always made it about the work and his work has been distinguished over 24 years." ☞ "A salute to you, Dan." — **Diane Sawyer** ☞ "One of the sad things about it is that it gave the right wing, which has had its sights on Rather for years now, something to cheer and dance in the streets about." — *Washington Post* TV critic **Tom Shales**. ☞ "Whatever one thinks of what we did or didn't do with the story in question here, nobody broke the law, nobody lied." — **Dan Rather** ☞ "The lynch mob won." — **Mark Shields** ☞ "The [Memogate] panel found no political agenda." — CBS reporter **Wyatt Andrews** ☞ "Courage." — **Dan Rather**, *CBS Evening News*, March 9, 2005.

By Scott Hogenson
CNSNews.com Executive Editor



New York Times, Washington Post Catch Up With CNSNews.com Reporting

Mission statements are often defined by comparison. In the case of CNSNews.com, the Internet newswire of the Media Research Center, our mission of providing coverage of news and issues that are under-reported or ignored by the establishment media is validated on a routine basis.

Such was the case on March 13 when the notoriously liberal *New York Times* reported on descriptions of how Iraqi weapons facilities that were capable of supporting nuclear arms production and other weapons of mass destruction were being dismantled by Saddam Hussein's henchmen.

This from a bastion of the American liberal establishment which has spent the past two years accusing the administration of lying about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

You may recall it was an investigation by CNSNews.com last October that uncovered numerous Iraqi documents detailing efforts by Saddam Hussein to obtain such weapons. That report was largely ignored by the establishment media until five months later, when the premise of Saddam's WMD programs finally makes Page One of the *New York Times*.

We saw a similar situation emerge two days later when the *Washington Post* moved a lengthy article about Kansas Attorney General Phill Kline and his efforts to prosecute child rape cases. As part of his investigation, he's seeking a relatively small number of records from abortion clinics to determine whether the girls involved were of the age of consent, the theory being quite simple. Child rape is self-evident in the case of a pregnant child.

That same inquiry was reported nearly three weeks earlier on CNSNews.com. Our February 25 article laid out the facts of the case in plain English, including rebuttals from those who oppose Kline's investigative methods. This is the stuff of good news reporting – a compelling issue factually recounted and balanced with opposing viewpoints.

The *Washington Post*, on the other hand, took the opportunity to invoke various liberal mantras, including the lead. Rather than leading from the premise that the top law enforcement officer in Kansas was investigating one of the most heinous crimes imaginable, the *Post* reliably kicked-off its coverage by noting, "Two Kansas abortion clinics are opposing efforts by the state's attorney general to obtain the medical records," of children who may have been raped.

Kline's rationale is of course noted, but not without the obligatory fear mongering so often displayed by liberal activists. Rather than include remarks from officials representing the Kansas abortion clinics, the *Post*'s very first quote is from a spokesperson with the Center for Reproductive Rights in New York, who promptly and prominently decried Kline's investigation as, "really scary for patients."

Really scary? Scariest than the mind-numbing horror of a girl brutalized by rape? This is a snapshot of where much of the establishment media are today. When a news organization places a higher editorial premium on abortion clinic files than fighting child rape, it raises real questions. In a word, it's nuts.

While I'm never at a loss to find examples of why CNSNews.com is a necessary component on the journalistic landscape, I've seldom seen such a stark example to illustrate the importance of the work you support.

But the story of abortion and child rape in Kansas goes deeper. Three days after publishing our report of Kline's investigation, CNSNews.com revealed that the owner of one of the clinics from which Kline is seeking information was a major donor to Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius.

This investigative report, meticulously researched and written by intern Kathleen Rhodes, detailed the thousands of dollars donated by abortion clinic owner George Tiller to various Sebelius campaigns in recent years. This investigation came as Sebelius was facing criticism in some quarters for her recent veto a bill that would have toughened restrictions on late-term and partial birth abortions, which are performed at the clinics owned by Tiller. One such procedure was followed by the death of a 19-year-old woman who began to hemorrhage after her abortion.

And as of this writing, the *Washington Post*, so interested in abortion clinics, has yet to report on the money connection between Gov. Sebelius and Mr. Tiller.

While the *Post* of Washington and the *Times* of New York may never cover such issues, rest assured that CNSNews.com will never rest in its pursuit of 'The Right News, Right Now.' It is and will remain our primary mission and our commitment to you.



AMERICA'S MEDIA WATCHDOG

Documenting, Exposing and Fighting Media Bias

MRC IN THE NEWS

The experts at the Media Research Center are interviewed almost every day on stories of national importance, often reaching millions of Americans daily. They provide analysis and commentary on radio, TV, the Internet, in magazines, books and in newspapers, always striving to help restore political balance to the major media. Some of the MRC's latest media appearances include the following:

Television

- ☛ *Big Story with John Gibson*, March 9
- ☛ *Scarborough Country*, March 9
- ☛ *Fox & Friends*, March 28

Radio

- Rush Limbaugh Show*, March 28
- Linda Chavez Show*, March 22
- Mike Gallagher Show*, March 9

Appearances by MRC Research Director Rich Noyes

- Family News in Focus – March 14
- WOWO – Ft. Wayne, March 11
- WPTF – Raleigh, NC, March 10
- KFTK – St. Louis, March 10
- WAIC – Springfield, Mass., March 10
- The Right Balance* – March 10
- Mitch Albom Show* – March 9
- KTSA – San Antonio, March 9
- WBAP – Arlington, Tex., March 9
- KSLR – San Antonio, March 8
- KOA – Denver, March 9
- WJR – Detroit, March 3
- Newsbeat with Blanquita Cullum* – March 2

Appearances by MRC Director of Media Analysis Tim Graham

- Stacy Taylor Show* – March 11
- NRA News – March 11
- KMWT – March 10
- WSBA – York, Penn., March 10
- WMAL – D.C., March 9
- KDKA – Pittsburgh, March 9
- KPDQ – Portland, March 9
- KFIA – Sacramento, March 9
- WBAL – Baltimore, March 9
- NRA News – March 4

Appearances by Free Market Project Director Dan Gainor

- Newsbeat with Blanquita Cullum* – March 17
- WLW – Cincinnati, March 17
- KMED – Medford, Ore., March 11
- WGBF – Evansville, Ind., March 11
- The Right Balance* – March 4
- WACV – Montgomery, Ala., March 4

- Jerry Doyle Show* – March 4
- WFLA – Tampa Bay, March 3
- WSBA – York, Penn., March 1

Appearances by CNSNews Exec. Editor Scott Hogenson

- KDUX – Salt Lake City, March 30, 2005
- G. Gordon Liddy* – March 2, 28
- Greg Allen Show* – March 18
- KDUX – Salt Lake City, March 15
- Alan Nathan Show* – March 11
- WBAL – Baltimore, March 10
- KOA – Denver, March 8
- KHOW – Denver, March 8
- Greg Allen Show* – March 8
- Newsbeat with Blanquita Cullum* – March 1

Print

- Time* – March 28
- Washington Post* – March 20
- Associated Press – March 14
- Tribune Media Services – Cal Thomas column, March 16
- Investor's Business Daily* – March 8, 9, 16
- Pittsburgh Tribune Review* – March 7, 14, 21, 28
- Christian Science Monitor* – March 29
- Joplin Globe* – March 26
- Washington Times* – March 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 24, 25, 29
- Columbia Journalism Review* – March 23
- The Augusta Chronicle* – March 21
- The Post-Standard* – March 21
- The Union Leader* – March 17
- Human Events* – March 3, 7, 16
- Hartford Courant* – March 15
- Newsday* – March 15
- Chattanooga Times Free Press* – March 13
- Nashua Advocate* – March 11
- Lansing State Journal* – March 9
- Sarasota Herald-Tribune* – March 9
- Richmond Times-Dispatch* – March 9
- Orange County Register* – March 9
- The Examiner. Washington* – March 9
- Augusta Free-Press* – March 4
- Newtown Bee* – March 3
- New York Post* – March 3



MRC President Brent Bozell discusses media coverage of the Terri Schiavo case on *Fox & Friends*.



MRC Research Director Rich Noyes explains the repercussions of Dan Rather's resignation on the *Big Story with John Gibson*.

Internet

- World Net Daily – March 26
- NewsMax.com – March 25
- Poynter Forums – March 24
- LifeNews.com – March 24
- Jewish World Review – March 16
- Family News in Focus – March 15
- Empire Journal – March 15
- MichNews.com – March 15
- Outside the Beltway – March 14
- Media Matters – March 11
- Nashua Advocate – March 11
- News Hounds – March 9
- Crosswalk.com – March 29
- FAIR – March 2

PARTIAL LISTING FOR ALL MEDIA

POST-TAX ANALYSIS

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For more information and a free proposal, please call Thom Golab at (800) 672-1423 or visit us online at www.mrc.gift-planning.org

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Age	Rate
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65.....	6.0%
70.....	6.5%
75.....	7.1%
80.....	8.0%
85.....	9.5%
90+	11.3%



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(ISSN #1087-5077) is published monthly by the Media Research Center, a 501(c)3 nonprofit research and education organization.

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