

The Media Research Center's Monthly Members' Report

Media Got it Right with Pope John Paul But Wrong with Terri Schiavo

Dear Member,

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times – for media coverage, that is. Terri Schiavo. Pope John Paul II. They suffered tremendously. They both died within days of each other. And the major media treated their deaths like night and day.

The Terri Schiavo case showed the media at their worst, while the last days of John Paul II showed that the media, when they want to, can get it right. We only want, and deserve, good journalism more often, which is why we do what we do.

Without reviewing the entire history of the tragic Terri Schiavo case, it is fair to say that the major media sided with her adulterous husband, Michael Schiavo, and his “right-to-die” lawyer, while siding against Terri Schiavo’s family, the millions of conservative religious who prayed for her, the governor of Florida, the U.S. Congress, the President of the United States and, ironically, Pope John Paul II, whose Vatican denounced Terri Schiavo’s death as homicide.



**Terri Schiavo
1963-2005**



**Pope John Paul II
1920-2005**

The liberal bias was everywhere. The networks and CNN produced “medical experts” to claim – repeatedly – that Terri Schiavo was in a “persistent vegetative state” – that she had no awareness of herself or others. Yet alternative media,

including the MRC’s CNSNews.com, interviewed doctors, nurses, and other experts who argued against that diagnosis. Her parents and siblings also confirmed that Terri was often aware of what was happening around her. They argued that she needed real therapy – therapy her husband had denied to her for 10 years.

Furthermore, despite media claims about the extent of her brain damage, a full MRI scan, which would have shown the damage’s real extent, was never done on Terri Schiavo. Why not?

The left-wing media frequently claimed that Terri was on “life support,” implying she was hooked up to some complex medical machinery. Not true. She was not terminally
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America's Media Watchdog

ill, and received nourishment through a simple feeding tube. All her major bodily functions worked. She just couldn't swallow; thus, the tube.

The actor Christopher Reeve, by the way, also received food and water through a feeding tube and yet the media never called for removing his care. Pope John Paul, again ironically, was also put on a feeding tube; did the media call for its removal?

The left-wing media claimed that Congress and the President got involved in the Schiavo case for political reasons. Most of the Washington press corps argued viciously that congressional Republicans were just playing politics. However, the polls showed most Americans opposed Congress' action, destroying that media spin.

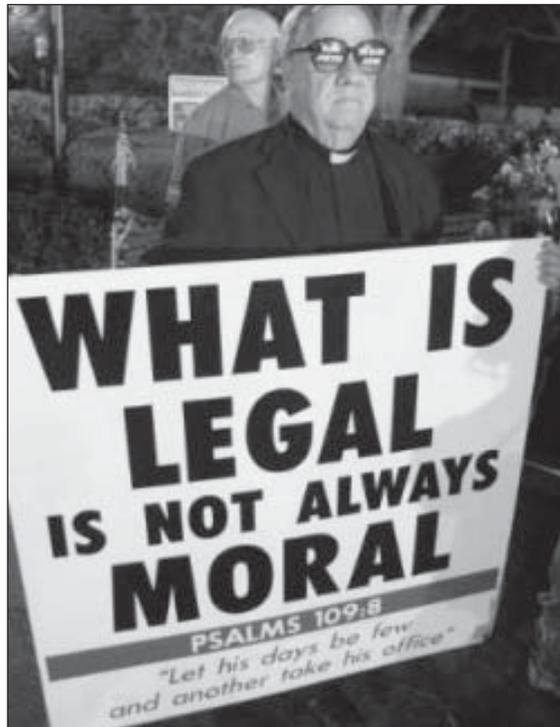
The media further claimed that removal of Terri's feeding tube would lead to a natural and dignified death. Hogwash. Dehydration and starvation cause horrific effects. Death takes about two agonizing weeks. Terri Schiavo persevered for 13 days. She died Thursday, March 31, at the age of 41.

A day and a half later, Pope John Paul, 84, died. As head of the 1-billion-plus member Catholic church, and respected and admired by billions more, the major media dared not disparage the Polish Pope – at least not until after his funeral.

In fact, in the days preceding, and for several days following the Pope's death, the major media provided largely positive and what can easily be called "politically balanced and responsible coverage."

For example: On Sunday, April 3, the day after the Pope died, CNN anchor Aaron Brown declared that the Pope "does provide a kind of moral and human balance to all of the other pressures that culture presents, and Pope John Paul did that aggressively."

Wyatt Andrews of CBS said: "Perhaps, with the exception of Christ himself, no one reached the flock with greater impact."



The media got it right with Pope John Paul II. They got it wrong with Terri Schiavo.

Time's Nancy Gibbs wrote: "The last glimpse of him high above the square became the latest in an album of images he left behind: a kiss on the tarmac in each new city; a smile lit by love and certainty; a white robe stained red by a would-be assassin's bullet, and the public forgiveness that followed; a challenge thrown down before prisoners and Presidents, sinners and saints to heed the highest calling of their hearts."

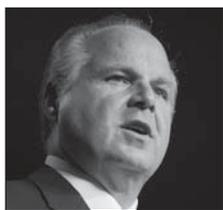
In their tributes, the (mostly) secular media could most easily grasp the Pope's political triumphs bringing his moral witness to bear on the dissolution of Soviet communism. Some reporters noted not just his impact on politics, but inside the Church as well. Writing in *Newsweek*, Andrew Nagorski stated, "I'm convinced John Paul II will go down in history as one of the greatest popes ever, one whose intense spirituality, intellectual brilliance and sheer physical stamina are beyond dispute."

In its many hours of coverage, the news media signaled the respect they held for this Pope in spite of the differences they had with him on important social and religious issues. He was the "Holy Father" in their reports. For all their respectful attention to Church teaching and philosophy, they deserve the gratitude of the Pope's supporters, Catholic and non-Catholic alike.

The media got it right with Pope John Paul II. They got it wrong with Terri Schiavo. And they are savaging the new Pope's conservatism just as they continue to savage the conservatism in the White House and Congress. We're watching the media and documenting their bias every day. With your help (and maybe a little help from above), we can fight harder to get the coverage we deserve and that which we know is possible.

Until next time,

L. Brent Bozell III,
Founder and President



Rush Limbaugh Cites Four News Stories Written by MRC Interns!

What a trip – actually, four trips – for a youngster! Four stories written by MRC interns were picked up and cited by Rush Limbaugh: two on the air to millions of Rush’s listeners, and two in his monthly newsletter, *The Limbaugh Letter*, read by hundreds of thousands of people.

That’s a fantastic achievement for two interns, one of whom, Nathan Burchfiel, is still in college, and the second, Kathleen Rhodes, only recently a graduate. Their hard work and achievement is testament to the worthiness and effectiveness of the MRC’s Youth Education and Internship Program.

The Program, launched in 1992, is designed to teach young people to understand the problem of liberal media bias and the need for balanced journalism as the solution. The Program is further designed to train young people to enter careers in journalism, public relations, marketing or government.

In the Program, interns are assigned to a division of the MRC where they gain hands-on experience—in the News Analysis Division, CNSNews.com/Cybercast News Service, Free Market Project, or the Marketing or Development department. The interns’ work is specifically designed to sharpen the skills they will use in their careers.

The interns also attend events in the nation’s capital, such as CNN’s *Crossfire* at George Washington University and a variety of programs sponsored by the Heritage Foundation, the Leadership Institute, and others. Last November, some interns also had the opportunity to cover the presidential election.

For fall 2004, the MRC hosted four interns: three in CNSNews.com and one in the News Analysis Division.

Nathan Burchfiel (Woodstock, MD), a print journalism major, is a junior at the University of Maryland-College Park. Mr. Burchfiel completed 20 stories and several “World in Briefs.” His Aug. 5 story, “German Firm Defends Subway Restaurant Press Kit” was cited in the September issue of *The Limbaugh Letter* (the monthly publication sent to subscribers of Rush 24/7).

Erin Brezsynyak (Glen Rock, NJ), a political science and sociology major, is a senior at the University of Mary Washington. Ms. Brezsynyak completed seven stories. She prepared several supportive materials for the presidential election, including a newsroom electoral map, and followed election coverage until the final tally was in.

Frank Caliva (Dewitt, NY), is pursuing a Master’s in German & European Studies at Georgetown University. Mr. Caliva completed several News Tracking System (NTS) reports and transcribed numerous segments from the nightly and morning news. He also assisted Research Director Rich Noyes in finding quotes on *Today* and *American Morning*, one of which was used in a Quick Take fax regarding GDP growth numbers and how they were portrayed in 2004 compared to past presidential elections.

Kathleen Rhodes (Newark, DE), holds a B.A. in Government from Franklin & Marshall College. Ms. Rhodes completed more than 10 stories and attended a press conference with Senior Staff Writer Marc Morano regarding foreign election monitors and the

Nov. 2 elections in the USA. She also attended the Leadership Institute’s workshop on Public Relations.

Two of Ms. Rhodes’ stories for CNSNews.com were referenced on the *Rush Limbaugh Show*, reaching potentially 15 million listeners. Her Jan. 19 story, “Anti-War Crowd Backs Notorious Dictators, Communists,” was cited in the February 2005 edition of *The Limbaugh Letter*.

In a gracious “thank you” letter about her internship, Ms. Rhodes wrote to MRC President Brent Bozell: “It was highly rewarding to see that my work was considered important to the overall product of CNSNews.com. I had five stories make the top headline (nine overall), and I was proud to have had two of my stories classified as ‘special reports.’ Even more exciting was to see that prominent conservatives were reading my work. . . .

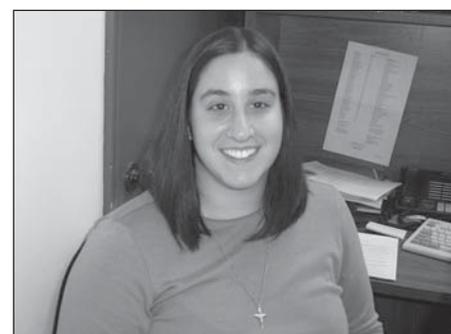
“To have the opportunity to do engaging and consequential work such as this is rare in and of itself, but to be able to do it as an intern is even more incredible. . . . I also think it is wonderful that the MRC gives as much consideration to its internship program as it does, believing it is important to provide interns with a sense of responsibility and importance. This has been as hands-on and intensive an experience as I could ask for and, honestly, it dramatically exceeded my expectations for any internship program.”



Kathleen Rhodes (Newark, DE)



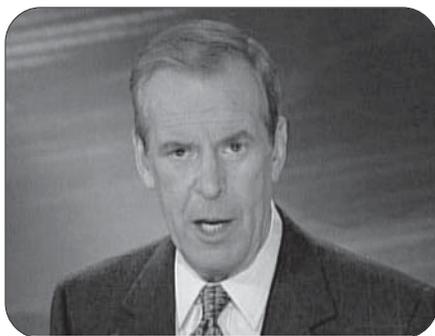
Frank Caliva (Dewitt, NY)



Erin Brezsynyak (Glen Rock, NJ)



Nathan Burchfiel (Woodstock, MD)



ABC's Peter Jennings covered the Terri Schiavo case for 10 days and then ... Jesse Jackson showed up to defend Schiavo. ABC didn't cover Jackson but other major media did.

ABC Ignores Jesse Jackson

The major media love to quote Rev. Jesse Jackson when it comes to liberal causes, but they didn't like it one bit when he defended the innocence of Terri Schiavo. *ABC World News Tonight* with Peter Jennings, in fact, tried to ignore Jackson and then decided not to quote him. On March 29, after covering the Schiavo case for 10 days straight, Jennings and ABC didn't touch the story, although it was the day that Jackson arrived at Schiavo's hospice and cable news was all over the event.

"While law is important, law must be tempered with mercy to have justice," said Jackson in reference to Terri Schiavo. "We ask for mercy today." That day, Jennings and ABC did find time in their broadcast to discuss a memo from the ACLU alleging abuse of prisoners in Iraq by U.S. forces. But that – no surprise – is a liberal claim dear to ABC's heart.

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

It's FREE!

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

Anti-Religious Media Confirmed

Two top media veterans conceded on CNN's *Reliable Sources* that most of their colleagues do not practice a religion and are anti-religious in their coverage. On the March 27 edition of the show, Steve Roberts, who worked at the *New York Times* for 25 years, said: "I could probably count on one hand, in the Washington bureau of the *New York Times*, people who would describe themselves as people of faith." As a result, the "mainstream press," said Roberts, misses big stories, such as pastors registering millions of people to vote in 2004. The media "were not familiar with those churches," he said. "They weren't comfortable in those churches. They weren't members of them. They didn't see what was happening."

New Republic Senior Editor Michelle Cottle said there is a deliberate media bias against religion. The media "do behave as though the people who believe these things are on the fringe," she said, "when actually the vast majority of the American public describes itself as Christian."

West Wing's Left-Wing GOP

Hollywood's ideal Republican President is a left-wing pro-abortion pinecone-eating bleeding heart and that's just who NBC delivered through actor Alan Alda on its March 23 season finale of *The West Wing*. Playing GOP presidential candidate Arnold Vinick, the lefty actor played his part well, listening as another



On *The West Wing*, Alan Alda portrayed Hollywood's ideal Republican presidential candidate: liberal, pro-abortion and anti-religious.

character praised him for "moving the Republicans away from the right wing." Then, after declining an invitation to visit

a church, the character Vinick told reporters: "I don't see how we can have a separation of church and state in this government if you have to pass a religious test to get in this government."

Sandy Berger: Guilty

When Kerry campaign adviser and former Clinton National Security Adviser Samuel "Sandy" Berger was caught last summer taking classified information on terrorism from the National Archives – he actually stuffed the papers into his clothes – most of the top media ran to his defense, claiming the whole situation was overblown, a simple mistake. They also spun the line that the allegations against Berger were timed to deflect coverage of the 9/11 Commission Report.

Well, after much plea-bargaining, Berger admitted in early April in federal court that he was guilty of intentionally stealing copies of the documents and then destroying them. The documents concerned the Clinton Administration's policies against terrorism. Now that the liberal Berger has pleaded guilty, the major media are pretty quiet again. One wonders if they would be so silent if Condoleeza Rice had stuffed classified files about terrorism in her purse and then lied about it ...

Ask Dr. Kevorkian!

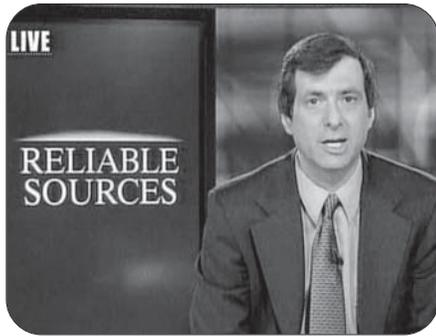
From our Believe It or Not files: ABC's Charlie Gibson and *Good Morning America* chose to interview none other than convicted murderer Jack Kevorkian for his "very interesting perspective" on the Terri Schiavo case. On the March 25 broadcast, Gibson prodded Kevorkian, a.k.a. Dr. Death, to condemn Congress' action in defense of Schiavo. "When you see Congress begin to get involved, when you see this go through layer after layer in the courts, has it become something, in your mind, of a circus?" said Gibson.

Kevorkian, from a prison phone, ranted that the President and Congress were hypocrites because they don't show as much concern for people on

Death Row as they did for Schiavo. Charlie Gibson ended the segment by plugging Kevorkian's new book and movie deal, which promote Kevorkian and his practice of "assisted suicide."

Mr. Kurtz, He Biased

Washington Post media reporter Howard Kurtz – the inside-the-beltway doyen of media criticism – chose not to discuss the findings of liberal media bias



Howard Kurtz, a "media" reporter, ignored the latest research by the Project on Excellence in Journalism, which confirmed vast liberal media bias in the 2004 presidential campaign.

in a recent report from the highly respected *Project on Excellence in Journalism*. The report found that for the broadcast networks, the cable news networks, and the major newspapers, "campaign coverage that focused on

Bush was three times as negative as coverage of Kerry (36% versus 12%)" and it "was also less likely to be positive (20% positive Bush stories, 30% for Kerry)."

Kurtz didn't talk about that, however, and he isn't talking about it. Instead, on CNN's *Reliable Sources*, he stressed the report's other finding that the "most opinionated network on cable news is Fox News." Kurtz quoted further: "When told that Iraq had adopted a new interim constitution, Fox anchor David Asman said, 'Let's pray that it works out.'" Horrors!

Washington Post Editor Blasts U.S. – in Red China

While he no doubt would not give an interview to a fascist newspaper, *Washington Post* Managing Editor Philip Bennett had no problem granting an interview – and bashing the U.S. – to the *People's Daily*, the propaganda sheet of the ruling Communist Party in China (a government responsible for murdering 60 million of its own people). Bennett blasted U.S. foreign policy, saying, "I don't think there is much evidence that promoting democracy is what the U.S. is doing. ... I don't think [the] U.S. should be the leader of the world [because] it is unhealthy to have one country as the leader of the world."

Bennett also suggested U.S. policy is neo-colonialism. "The world has gone

through colonialism and imperialism. We have seen the danger and shortcomings of those systems. If we are heading into another period of imperialism where the U.S. thinks itself as the leader of the area and its interest should prevail over all other interests of its neighbors and others, then I think the world will be in an unhappy period."

NYT: Get DeLay!

Columnist Robert Novak revealed in April that *New York Times* editor Tobin Harshaw asked Republican Bob Livingston to write an op-ed calling for Tom DeLay to step down from his position as House Majority Leader. DeLay is one of the most effective conservatives on Capitol Hill and, hence, the target of liberals. The *Times*' action, said Novak, is a "remarkable case of that august newspaper fishing for an op-ed piece [that] makes it appear part of a calculated campaign to bring down the single most powerful Republican in Congress. The Democratic establishment and left-wing activists have targeted DeLay as the way to end a decade of Republican control of the House ..."

The *Times*' action further demonstrates how the editorial and news pages work in concert: The editorial page creates news which is then touted on the front page.

MINIBITS

☞ "John Paul, rather than affirming life, actually affirmed death when he refused to permit the use of condoms to fight the spread of AIDS." – NBC reporter **Bob Faw** ☞ "It's all about politics. It has nothing to do with Terri Schiavo. ... And it's all cloaked in some, you know, [Republican] mantra that says, 'Oh, we're worried about this woman's life.' Baloney!" – TV journalist **Jack Cafferty** ☞ Republicans only care "about people before they're born and then really after they're dead." – *Newsweek's* **Eleanor Clift** ☞ "[T]he leadership class of the Republican Party is a conservative Christian loony bin [They] are a bunch of sociopathic maniacs who have their lips super-glued to the ass of the conservative right." – actor **Alec Baldwin** ☞ "Bob Novak is at all times a mendacious lycanthrope." – *Boston Globe* magazine writer **Charles Pierce**. ☞ And in the truth department: For network news, "I think it's dead. Sorry. The monster anchors are through." – Sam Donaldson ☞ Adds CBS's **Lesley Stahl**: "The public does not trust us. And we are low down on the institutions that people respect."



On *Hardball*, CBS's **Lesley Stahl** whines and fears for "democracy" because of technological advances and alternative media, such as the Internet and blog sites.

By David Thibault
CNSNews.com Managing Editor



CNSNews.com Set Standard for Reporting on Schiavo Case

On Aug. 5, 2003, a CNSNews.com article by senior staff writer Jeff Johnson began thusly:

“Attorneys for the parents of a 39-year-old Florida woman – who suffered brain damage under uncertain circumstances in 1990 – asked the Florida Supreme Court Monday to stop her husband from allowing her to die by starvation and dehydration.”

The article, focusing on a subject that most of the media establishment was ignoring or under-reporting, marked the first of 64 full-length stories that Johnson would write over the next 20 months about Terri Schiavo’s plight and her husband Michael’s legal battle to remove the feeding tube that was keeping Terri alive.

Johnson’s CNSNews.com colleagues wrote dozens of other stories on the subject during the same period, not only from the news organization’s world headquarters in Alexandria, Va., but from such far-flung places as Israel and New Zealand, to measure international reaction to the increasingly bitter struggle pitting Michael Schiavo against Terri’s parents and siblings who were determined to keep Terri alive.

On Sept. 3, 2003, Johnson’s article “Disabled Woman Would Cry ‘Help Me,’ Caregivers Claim” became one of CNSNews.com’s most widely read stories of the year. It included statements from several health care workers who said they had seen Terri Schiavo utter “help me” and “mommy,” and had been prevented by Michael Schiavo from providing Terri with any kind of physical therapy.

Two weeks later, Jeff reported on the possible conflict of interest between Michael Schiavo’s attorney, George Felos, and the court-appointed physician assigned to investigate the medical evidence in the case. Following publication of that story, Felos told Jeff he would never speak with him again.

The controversy swirling around the bedridden Florida woman quieted down for most of 2004, but it’s instructive to look back at how media giants like the *Washington Post*

and *Boston Globe* dealt with the story between Aug. 5, 2003 – the date of CNSNews.com’s first article on the matter – and Dec. 10, 2003.

While CNSNews.com’s tiny staff turned out 39 full-length news articles about the Schiavo case during that period, a Lexis/Nexis search reveals that the *Post* published five and

the *Globe* ran a grand total of three. Why such an alarming disregard by those newspapers for a story that literally revolved around life and death? Well, it may be that their editorial philosophy is geared more toward the empty and trivial happenings of today’s pop stars.

During the same four-month, five-day period that the *Washington Post* delivered five news articles about the Schiavo case, it made 91 mentions of singer Britney Spears. And during the time the *Boston Globe* mustered only three news articles about the landmark right to die drama, the paper referenced the pop diva Spears 48 times.

With our priorities in proper order, Jeff Johnson became the first national correspondent to report on March 23 of this year that a nurse at the hospice

where Terri Schiavo was receiving care had been fired for claiming that Terri could feel pain.

When Dr. Ronald Cranford, the neurologist hired by Michael Schiavo to evaluate Terri’s medical condition told a national audience that he was 105 percent sure about his persistent vegetative state diagnosis, Johnson was the only reporter to learn and then write about Cranford’s similar and wrong diagnosis of a wounded police officer in 1980. In that case, the officer considered to be virtually brain dead by Cranford, regained consciousness and re-learned how to communicate with his family.

Alas, Terri Schiavo died on March 31 at the age of 41. By then, the establishment media had finally taken up the story, perhaps believing that its readers wouldn’t remember how it had previously been ignored. And because readers of those papers are unlikely to set the record straight, we did it instead.

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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

- ☛ Scarborough Country, April 26
- ☛ Fox & Friends First, April 28
- ☛ Hannity & Colmes, April 5, 13, 29
- ☛ Connected Coast to Coast, April 15
- ☛ Fox News Live, April 11
- ☛ C-SPAN, April 29

Radio

- Rush Limbaugh Show, April 27
- Neal Boortz Show, April 22
- Battleline with Alan Nathan, April 7, 19
- WMAL, Washington, D.C., April 22
- WFLA, Orlando, April 20
- WTWB, Lakeland, Fla., April 20
- Radio America, April 21
- WMUZ, Detroit, April 1, 21
- KDKA, Pittsburgh, April ??????
- WIBC, Indianapolis, April 14
- KIT, Yakima, Wash., April 4
- NRA News, April 12, 15, 22
- WIBA, April 4
- American Family Radio, April 14
- KUIK, Portland, Ore., April 22
- WMET, Washington, D.C., April 18
- KIT, Yakima, Wash., April 18
- Herman Cain Show, April 2
- Linda Chavez Show, April 1, 8, 15, 22
- WBAL, Baltimore, April 6
- KUDO, Anchorage, April 8
- The Right Balance, April 7
- Joe Scarborough Show, April 12
- KMED, Medford, Ore., April 14
- WSBA, York, Penn., April 14
- Chuck Harder Show, April 18
- KDUX, Salt Lake City, March 30, 2005

- WBAP, Arlington, Tex., April 11
- KFAX, Fremont, Calif., April 12
- KOGO, San Diego, April 6, 13, 20
- WBAP, Arlington, Tex., April 8, 15, 22
- WCHS, Charleston, W. Va., April 22
- Radio America, April 28

Print

- Associated Press, April 13
- New York Post, April 12
- The Washington Times, April 4, 7, 14, 25, 26, 27
- Orange County Register, April 6
- Pittsburgh Tribune Review, April 4
- Village Voice, April 4
- Broadcasting & Cable magazine, April 22
- The American Prospect, April 2005
- San Bernardino Sun, April 11
- Catholic Standard & Times, April 12
- Miami Herald, April 17
- The Hotline (National Journal), April 22
- The Frontrunner, April 19
- White House Bulletin, April 19
- Human Events, April 28

Internet

- Rush Limbaugh.com, April 27
- National Review Online, April 11
- GOPUSA, April 7
- Tech Central Station, April 15
- Media Matters for America, April 7
- Human Events Online, April 6
- LifeNews.com, April 9
- The Frontrunner, April 19

PARTIAL LISTING FOR ALL MEDIA



On *Hannity & Colmes*, MRC President Brent Bozell discusses the suitability of awarding the Pulitzer Prize to a photographer who may have been forewarned of Iraqi terrorism.



Director of Media Analysis Tim Graham comments on religion and judicial nominees on MSNBC's *Connected Coast to Coast*.



On *Fox & Friends*, Director of Research Rich Noyes discusses the outrage over Air America radio's "joke" about shooting President Bush.

POST-TAX ANALYSIS

Did you pay too much tax in 2004?

Looking for more deductions in 2005?

How about some tax-free income?

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- ☛ immediate charitable tax deduction
- ☛ lifetime, guaranteed, partially tax-free income stream
- ☛ capital gain tax savings
- ☛ ability to leave a lasting legacy to the MRC

Including the Media Research Center in your financial plans guarantees that America's Media Watchdog will continue to document, expose, and neutralize the liberal media for years to come – a fine legacy indeed!

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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