

The Media Research Center's Monthly Members' Report

Joy Over Limbaugh's Addiction Shows Liberal Hypocrisy at its Worst

By L. Brent Bozell III

A few hours after Rush Limbaugh announced he was addicted to prescription drugs, I was sitting on the set of MSNBC's *Hardball with Chris Matthews* to discuss it.

Chatting with the host before the program, I told Matthews I just didn't think it appropriate for us to have one of those high-voltage debates that has made his show famous. Thankfully, the former Tip O'Neill aide was in complete agreement and conducted a difficult interview about Limbaugh's addiction with real professionalism and grace, qualities one rarely finds in the media today.

His first question was the most basic: How would Rush's fans react to the news?

That is the least of the man's worries, I answered.

I explained: Rush Limbaugh enjoys more devotion than any figure in the conservative movement, with the exception of Ronald Reagan. He has been an inspirational leader and a great popularizer of the conservative cause. Rush has served as a source of hope and humor for the millions who feel their causes are pounded unmercifully and unfairly by the liberal press. Twenty million listeners are indebted to him and will repay him with their affection and loyalty.



Forget all the liberal talk about "compassion." When Rush Limbaugh announced he was addicted to prescription drugs, left-wingers across the country cheered.

At the end of the interview, Matthews stated a surprising concern. Some on the left, he thought, would react to the news of Limbaugh's addiction with glee. And how right he was. Rush's personal crisis has become the target of opportunity for liberals. And they are emptying their guns, happily kicking him while he's down – and can't defend himself.

Al Franken, the former *Saturday Night Live* comedian who has suddenly achieved "pundit" status in the eyes of the liberal media, told the *New York Daily News* that he was "looking forward to the perp walk...I'll be switching channels to get it from every angle." Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry snidely cracked that to improve access to prescription drugs, "You can hire Rush Limbaugh's housekeeper or you could elect me President of the United States."

Media liberals jumped into the melee with joy and enthusiastically kicked the defenseless Limbaugh some more. *Today* host Katie Couric appeared on Jay Leno's program and jokingly claimed she had sat next to Limbaugh on her flight to Hollywood. "He gave me some vitamins. Whaa! It feels good!" the NBC journalist yelped.

Continued on page 2

INSIDE

PAGE 3

MRC Exposes Anti-Schwarzenegger Bias



PAGE 4

Bits & Pieces: ABC: Arrogant Broadcasting Company



PAGE 6

Hogie Notes: CBS Connects the Wrong Dots on Home Schooling



PAGE 7

MRC in the News



PAGE 8

Networks Criticize Pope John Paul II



America's Media Watchdog

Continued from page 1

Newsweek dedicated its October 20 cover story to a personal attack on the talk show host. Evan Thomas, the magazine's assistant managing editor, set the insulting tone by describing Limbaugh as a "twice-divorced, thrice-married schlub whose idea of a good time is to lie on his couch and watch football endlessly."

But there was more to the piece than personal insults. Thomas, a Harvard graduate and grandson of Socialist Party presidential candidate Norman Thomas, also attacked Limbaugh's listeners.

"He is the darling of red state, fly over America," the Ivy Leaguer snobbishly wrote. Limbaugh's success, he suggested, had occurred because his red-state audience was, well, ignorant and gullible. The talk show host had "won over, or fooled a lot of people" with his "heartland pieties," he claimed.

Newsday columnist Jimmy Breslin was even more insulting. "[Rush's] people are hopelessly, embarrassingly dumb," the columnist wrote. "They're all out there whacked out on Hillbilly Heroin just like Rush. Only they can understand his babble."



Evan Thomas described Limbaugh as a "twice-divorced, thrice-married schlub whose idea of a good time is to lie on his couch and watch football endlessly."

The attacks on Limbaugh and his friends by the Thomases, Courics and Breslins of the world prove two points. The first is that the liberal media desperately want to destroy Rush Limbaugh. They realize he is a great asset to the conservative cause and believe that if he can be diminished, whether personally or professionally, conservatives everywhere will suffer. Liberals will then have a better chance to reclaim the government in 2004.

"You can drive almost anywhere in the United States on any weekday," *Newsweek*'s Jonathan Alter admits in his

October 20 column, "and get a three-hour, undiluted, un rebutted and often persuasive advertisement for President Bush and the Republican Party."

"If Rush goes," he cheerfully added, "so does the biggest megaphone in the GOP's elephant echo chamber."

The second point proven by the smears and insults is that today's liberal movement has an arrogant, sanctimonious meanness that conservatives could never – and should never – try to match. Forget their hollow claims of tolerance and compassion. These people are haters, pure and simple.

None of that should matter to Rush right now. He needs to focus on his recovery and let others do battle with these hateful liberals. I've been on numerous radio and television programs defending Rush and used my nationally syndicated October 15 column to support him. Other MRC spokesmen have also defended him on the airwaves and in print.

The most important thing for Rush is to recover. He has 20 million fans who are waiting for him to come home.

The screenshot shows the Media Research Center website. At the top, it says "Media Research Center America's Media Watchdog" with the URL "www.mrc.org". There is a search bar and a "Support the MRC" button. The main content area features several articles with headlines and images. One article is titled "NBC Story on Lynch Rescue Disputes ABC & BBC Accounts" with a photo of a man. Another article is "Media Reality Check Can Moyers Be an Anchor and a Funder?" with a photo of Bill Moyers. A third article is "Bozell's News Column Who's Fudging the Budget?" with a photo of a man. There are also sections for "Celebrity Corner" and "Viewer Poll".

www.MRC.org

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MRC Exposes Liberal Media's Anti-Schwarzenegger Bias

Arnold Schwarzenegger is a hardly a rock-ribbed, Ronald Reagan sort of Republican.

But that didn't matter to the liberal media, who unleashed a volley of unproven charges at the moderate GOP candidate just days before the October 7 California gubernatorial recall election.

On October 2, the *Los Angeles Times* published claims from six women who accused Schwarzenegger of groping them or making inappropriate comments in decades past. Although the *Times* denied the story originated with Democrats, the Schwarzenegger campaign and others believed the charges came from Gov. Gray Davis, a liberal Democrat known for dirty campaigning and below-the-belt election tactics.

The networks immediately promoted the charges. NBC anchor Tom Brokaw trumpeted the *Times* story at the top of the October 2 *Nightly News*. A couple of days later, Brokaw brought the charges up as if they were proven fact. "In

many states," Brokaw said in an interview with Schwarzenegger, "what you did would be criminal, it would be sexual assault."

Brokaw's hypocrisy on this issue is stunning. In February 1999, when a far more serious rape charge was lodged against former President Bill Clinton, Brokaw all but refused to report it. The NBC anchor's only mention of the red hot story was a short, 30-word plug at the end of one *Nightly News* broadcast.

Brokaw wasn't the only anchor to turn over a hypocritical new leaf when it came to the sex charges. "I don't remember all the details of Juanita Broaddrick," CBS anchor Dan Rather told Fox's Bill O'Reilly in 2001, "but I will say that when the charge has something to do with somebody's private sex life, I would prefer not to run any of it."

That's not the approach CBS took with Schwarzenegger, however. The *CBS Evening News*, which ran only one story on Broaddrick's claims in 1999, ran four stories on the charges against Schwarzenegger from October 2 through October 7.

The most blatantly unfair charge during the campaign was made by ABC reporter Linda Douglass, who deliberately misquoted a comment about Adolf Hitler that Schwarzenegger made in the 1970s.

"I admire him for being such a good public speaker and for what he did with it," was what Douglass claimed the candidate had said.

In reality, the Republican candidate had said "I don't admire him for what he did with it." The *New York Times*, which ran the same bad quote as Douglass in its early October 3 editions, rapidly and repeatedly corrected the error after determining it was wrong.

But not Douglass. The ABC reporter let the vicious smear linger and refused to correct it in subsequent reports. Three days later, on the Sunday program *This Week*, Douglass even refused to acknowledge she made an error, only stating that others had a less anti-Arnold interpretation of the comment than she did.

The MRC views this campaign as a warm-up for the 2004 presidential election and energetically disputed the media's unfair reporting.

Vice President for Research and Publications Brent Baker documented every example of biased network reporting in his daily *CyberAlerts* and MRC spokesmen appeared on six radio programs and two television shows to discuss the unfair coverage. In addition, President Bozell's nationally syndicated column on the recall race was reprinted in the October 15 *Investor's Business Daily*.



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ABC: Arrogant Broadcasting Company

ABC's Linda Douglass was in a foul mood after Arnold Schwarzenegger's California victory.

The recall election, she grumpily reported, was the "result of a statewide temper tantrum."

The correspondent's arrogant comment was remarkably similar to charges ABC anchor Peter Jennings made after the 1994 Republican congressional win.

Upset with the conservative landslide, the Canadian-born Jennings blasted American voters in an ABC radio commentary, comparing them to a child throwing a "temper tantrum."

"Parenting and governing don't have to be dirty words: the nation can't be ran by an angry two-year-old," he smugly concluded.

Vice President of Research and Publications Brent Baker recalled Jennings' diatribe and compared it to Douglass's in his October 9 *CyberAlert*. The item was picked up by Fox's Brit Hume, who highlighted the comments of his former ABC colleagues on that night's *Special Report*.

Leakgate: The Media's Selective Outrage

For a few days in late September and early October, the Washington media brimmed with outrage. Outrage!

Valerie Plame, the wife of Bush-bashing former ambassador Joseph Wilson, had been outed as a CIA agent by someone in the White House. Conservative columnist Robert Novak

had published her name in a July piece and that was a crime, according to the liberal media.

Legal issues quickly took a backseat to politics in the coverage. While the leaker could face a prison term, NBC's Jim Miklaszewski noted on September 29, "the political fallout could be much worse for the White House." The next day, Dan Rather proclaimed the Bush administration was "under increasing fire" and Tom Brokaw ruled that "Leakgate" had officially become a "Washington firestorm."

The only thing on fire was the liberal Washington press corps, which was attempting to hold the Bush White House to standards it never applies to anyone else. In the summer of 2002, for instance, National Security Agency officials briefed a joint congressional committee about al Qaeda activities and secret information was leaked within 24 hours. A criminal investigation was called for and only CBS ran a full story. ABC's *World News Tonight* dismissed the leaks with a 19-second mention and NBC gave it nine seconds. And that was it.



NBC's Tom Brokaw was just one of the journalists intent on turning a Bush White House leak into a major scandal.

When it comes to leaks, the standard for a Washington media firestorm is simple. If it's a leak from the Bush administration, report it, embellish it, exaggerate it. If it's from somewhere else, act as if it never happened.

Networks Condone Liberal Hate-Speech

The liberal media takes a similar approach when it comes to what constitutes controversial comments.



Liberal CBS News contributor Nancy Giles compared Rush Limbaugh to Adolf Hitler and the media didn't say a word.

If a conservative utters something that can be interpreted as slightly insensitive, it is reported and pounded. Rush Limbaugh's forced departure from ESPN after suggesting the NFL and the media wanted a quarterback to succeed because he's black is ample proof.

Liberals, however, are allowed to make the most vicious statements without suffering repercussions. On the October 5 *Sunday Show*, CBS contributor Nancy Giles suggested that Limbaugh was similar to Hitler. "What a way to shake up intelligent sports commentary. Hitler would have killed in talk radio," she said. "He was edgy too."

Former CBS anchor Walter Cronkite reached deeper into history to compare Attorney General John Ashcroft to Tomas de Torquemada, the Dominican friar who ran the Spanish Inquisition. "In his two-and-a-half years in office, Attorney General John Ashcroft has earned himself a remarkable distinction as the Torquemada of American law," the former CBS anchor wrote in his weekly column.

Cronkite added that he wasn't accusing the Attorney General of pulling out anyone's fingernails. "At least I don't know of any such cases," he cautioned.

Can you imagine the media outrage that would occur if a conservative compared a liberal to a tyrant or torturer? The coverage wouldn't stop until the conservative resigned his post. Liberals say these things and nothing – absolutely nothing – happens. It's more proof that the media have two very different – and very unfair – standards for liberal and conservative commentary.

Rather Spins Good News Into Bad

Reports that the economy might be rebounding – unemployment held steady in September and payrolls increased by 57,000 – were abruptly dismissed by Dan Rather on the October 3 *CBS Evening News*. “The economy actually created more jobs than it lost for the first time in eight months, but not nearly enough to meet demand,” Rather claimed.

The result, according to Rather, was that “many Americans” were entering the military. Correspondent Anthony Mason



CBS anchor Dan Rather did his best to dampen enthusiasm in a report about the improving economy.

then followed with a short story, complete with a quote from an Army lieutenant colonel, that suggested the slow economy has helped the armed services’ recruiting efforts.

Rather’s rivals weren’t nearly as pessimistic in their stories that night. NBC highlighted high-tech businesses that are

thriving and even ABC’s Peter Jennings said the economic reports were promising news.

What caused Rather to be so pessimistic? Could the CBS anchor, who has been known to raise money for Democratic candidates, possibly be worried that a recovering economy might help President Bush’s reelection?

War Stories or War Facts?

Several journalists over the past month have publicly taken their peers to task for overly pessimistic reporting from Iraq.

MSNBC’s Bob Arnot, who was embedded with the Marines during the war, went back to Iraq in September and couldn’t believe what he saw. “I contrast some of the infectious enthusiasm I see here with what I see on TV,” Arnot told *USA Today*’s Peter Johnson. “And I say, oh, my God, am I in the same country?”

Molly Henneberg of Fox News told a similar story. “Don’t get me wrong,” she said in an e-mail to Fox staffers that Brit Hume highlighted on *Special Report*. “There are still a lot of problems here with infrastructure, but this country appears to be getting its act together.”

Time’s Brian Bennett reached the same conclusion. “I’m not saying it’s all hunky-dory,” the reporter told the September 23 *USA Today*, “but in the States, people have a misperception of what’s going on.”



MSNBC’s Bob Arnot is one of the journalists who have disputed the media’s relentlessly negative coverage of events in Iraq.

The most damning admission that the media reporting has been negatively warped has come from none other than ABC News President David Westin, whose network received the lowest marks for war coverage in the MRC’s April 23 Special Report, *Grading TV’s War News*.

“I’ve been troubled for some time about the reporting of all news organizations on the situation in Iraq,” Westin said in a memo that *USA Today* highlighted on October 15. “We often seem to be captive to the individual dramatic incident – and those of us in television subject to one that comes with great video.”

Perhaps such comments by journalists and news leaders such as Westin will encourage the networks and other journalists to provide more balanced reporting on the American involvement in Iraq.

But we doubt it.

mini-bits

CBS’s **Andy Rooney** ← ABC’s **Dr. Tim Johnson** delivers liberal Democrat spin during a special on health care: “Until all of us embrace the idea that health care should be a right, not a privilege, our system cannot be glibly described as, quote, ‘the best in the world.’” ← ABC’s **Jim Sciutto** thinks Saddam was great for women: “Before the war, Iraqi women had more freedom to study, to work and to dress as they like than in many Persian Gulf countries. Now they see those rights under threat from the lack of security and from Islamic fundamentalists” ←

Charles Gibson of ABC set up Howard Dean by repeating baseless Democratic attacks: “Do you agree with Senator Kennedy that the reasons for going to war were a fraud made up in Texas?” ← “[International] resentment is centered on the person of President Bush, who is seen...at best, as an ineffective spokesman for American interests and, at worst, as a gunslinging cowboy knocking over international treaties and bent on controlling the world’s oil,” writes **Richard Bernstein** in a front-page *New York Times* article.



Andy Rooney thinks the U.N. should be more powerful.

By Scott Hogenson
CNSNews.com Executive Editor



CBS News Connects the Wrong Dots on Home Schooling

Most of you are aware of the liberal political bias woven into some of what's shown on the CBS Evening News. After a decade and a half of tracking and exposing this bias, the Media Research Center has successfully made the case and recent survey's show most Americans agree with the premise of a liberal bias in a lot of network television news.

Now, it appears CBS is branching out into what might be called cultural bias with its October reports on home schooling, which many home school advocates regarded as a hatchet job.

During the week of October 13, CBS News aired two segments of a report on what *Evening News* anchor Dan Rather called "the dark side" of home schooling, warning in a promotional appearance on the network's *Early Show* that home schooling "can put some children's lives at risk."

In a classic example of we in the news business refer as 'connecting the dots,' CBS News linked home schooling to Andrea Yates, the Texas woman who drown five of her children in a bathtub.

The network also reported, among other things, that "not one state requires criminal background checks to see if parents have abuse convictions," before deciding whether to home school their kid in "largely unregulated," manner. I could go on and on, but I think you get the point.

Never mind that walking down stairs at home, crossing the street or climbing a tree "can put some children's lives at risk," as Mr. Rather so ominously warned. As for criminal background checks on parents, the government has so far thankfully refused to force them on moms and dads who want their kids to participate in other such "largely unregulated" activities like Sunday School or Cub Scouts.

The bottom line was, CBS wanted to make the point that government should get involved in home schooling and if it meant trying to link home schooling to the murder of five children by a crazed mother, so be it.

When the CBS News treatment of home school was the subject of a report by CNSNews.com, the Internet newswire of the Media Research Center, the howls began to rise up from among the hundreds of thousands of parents who want to teach their kids at home instead of in the public school system.

"Since when did CBS become a political lobbying body?" asked one reader from Erie, Pa. "It seems they made up their mind about the tone of the show, and they refused to let facts get in their way."

Another reader in Dumfries, Va. wrote in, practically begging us to let him write an article "on the dark side of public schools," raising the question of whether and how the culture of public education might play into the recent spate of classroom shootings.

In reference to the CBS citations of abuse and murder among some children who went to school at home, another reader asked, "If these kids had been in public schools, would CBS trying to connect child abuse/murder with public education?"

My favorite letter was from Andie Silvers, a publicist for CBS News. She found our report – which contained many verbatim passages from the CBS News story plus every word in the CBS statement about it – "disturbingly one sided."

Let me repeat that for those of you who accidentally spit up your morning coffee upon reading the network publicist's response to our report; disturbingly one sided.

Perhaps it would have been less disturbing if we had found a way to link cheap-shot reporting to child abuse and murder, like CBS did to home schooling. Come to think of it, news reporting is a "largely unregulated," enterprise.

In any event, it's a good bet that CBS News and the other networks will serve up more stories with similar liberal cultural bias in the future. But it's an even better bet that CNSNews.com will be here to report on such bias and bring it to the public's attention, just as the MRC has done for liberal political bias.

Documenting, Exposing and *Fighting* Media Bias

It's been a busy month for the MRC as we've documented and battled liberal bias at every turn. MRC spokesmen have defended Rush Limbaugh, countered the unfair attacks against Republicans in California, documented the flaws in the liberal media's war coverage and defended President Bush on television and radio. MRC research was also highlighted in several newspapers and used by a number of high-profile columnists and correspondents.

TELEVISION

President L. Brent Bozell appeared on the October 15 *Fox & Friends* where he discussed President Bush's communications strategy of by-passing the national media by granting interviews to local journalists. Bozell was also appeared on Fox News *Hannity & Colmes* on October 9, where he discussed a recent Gallup Poll that found Americans overwhelmingly believe the media have a liberal bias.

President Bozell was a guest on MSNBC's *Hardball with Chris Matthews* on two occasions. On October 10, Bozell and host Chris Matthews discussed Rush Limbaugh's prescription drug addiction. On October 1, Bozell participated in another *Hardball* debate over whether CBS News should air an interview with a Saddam Fedayeen terrorist.

Director of Research Rich Noyes commented on the California recall race on the October 2 *Fox & Friends* and Director of Media Analysis Tim Graham was a guest on the October 3 CNBC *Capital Report*. Graham discussed the coverage of Limbaugh and Arnold Schwarzenegger.

NEWSPAPERS

The October 15 *Investor's Business Daily* ran President Bozell's nationally syndicated column on the California recall election, in which he argued that Schwarzenegger's victory was a rejection of the liberal media and its slanted reporting.

The *Washington Times* quoted two items from Vice President for Research and Publications Brent Baker's *CyberAlert*. On October 15, the *Times* quoted Baker's item on how the national media were upset by



President Bush granting interviews to local media outlets. On October 3, the *Times* reprinted Baker's analysis of the coverage of Rush Limbaugh's comments on Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb.

Kansas City Star columnist E. Thomas McClanahan wrote a September 30 column about the success American forces are having in Iraq and cited MRC research. The column, complete with the MRC citation, was also ran in the October 4 *Monterey County* (Calif.) *Herald* and the October 6 *Milwaukee Sentinel Journal*.

The MRC *CyberAlert* has also provided background information for number of journalists and news programs. Fox News Brit Hume used *CyberAlert* information in his October 9, 15 and 16 *Special Report* and *Investor Business Daily* ran several *CyberAlert* quotes from left-wing actress Whoopi Goldberg in its October 16 "Overheard" section. *New York Post* columnist John Podhoretz used MRC information for an October 15 column on Rush Limbaugh. In late September, MSNBC's *Scarborough Country* and Fox's *NewsWatch* both highlighted a Dan Rather quote that first appeared in *CyberAlert*.

RADIO

Director of Media Analysis Graham commented on Limbaugh and Schwarzenegger on the nationally syndicated *Ken Hamblin Show* on October 7 and on Howie Carr's program on WKRO in Boston on October 8.

Director of Analysis Noyes discussed the California recall election on Talk Radio Network's *The Chuck Harder Show* on October 7.

President Bozell discussed the Limbaugh situation on the October 3 *Adam McManus Show* on KLSR in San Antonio.

The Networks on the Pope:

Good Job...Except for Abortion, Women and Gays

As Pope John Paul II's 25th anniversary approached, television journalists acknowledged his role in communism's fall, his global evangelism and his attempts to reach out to Judaism and Islam. Despite these positive notes, many still criticized the Pontiff for what they consider his greatest failing: his steadfast adherence to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

On the October 12 *NBC Nightly News*, reporter Dawna Friesen described the anniversary as a "bittersweet" occasion. "The Pope's conservative views on abortion, contraception, divorce, woman priests and homosexuality have alienated many Catholics, as did the sex abuse scandals involving priests," Friesen claimed.

"Some suggest he could become Saint John Paul II," CBS's Allen Pizzey added on October 16, "but his legacy is not without flaws. His staunch refusal to ordain women as priests and rigorous rejection of birth control, abortion and homosexuality have alienated many."

ABC's George Stephanopoulos made it a network trifecta of liberal criticism for the Pope. In an October 12 *This Week*



NBC's Dawna Friesen and CBS's Allen Pizzey both relayed the liberal criticisms of Pope John Paul II, suggesting that his stance on abortion, women and homosexuality was old-fashioned.



interview with the editor of the liberal Catholic weekly *America*, the former Clintonite suggested that many critics find it difficult to "reconcile [the Pope's] outspoken championing of human rights, of human dignity, with what they see as his somewhat authoritarian, antiquated view of women and sexuality."

To network journalists, the highest possible authority is the liberal relativist worldview that promotes abortion and homosexuality as perfectly acceptable choices. Anyone who disagrees with this view, even the leader of the largest Christian faith in the world, is ridiculed as hopelessly out-of-touch and old-fashioned.

The MRC tracked the coverage of the Pope for an entire week. In addition to numerous *CyberAlert* items on the unfair coverage, we also issued an October 16 *Media Reality Check* that documented several outrageous instances of liberal media criticism of the Pope. To read those and other MRC

publications, log onto our website today at www.MediaResearch.org.



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