Liberal Media Agenda: Get George Bush

Dear Member,

April was “Get George Bush” month for the liberal media.

Whether the story was the 9-11 Commission or President Bush’s press conference or Bob Woodward’s latest book, the mainstream media tossed objectivity aside last month and lit into President Bush with a partisan viciousness not seen since the Reagan years.

When 9-11 Commissioner Bob Kerrey, the liberal former Democratic senator from Nebraska, used National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice’s testimony on April 8 to effectively declassify what had been a top-secret Presidential Daily Briefing (PDB), the media storm really started to roll.

The media did their best to play up the dramatics, suggesting this vague, largely historical document was somehow the “smoking gun” that proved the President had been terribly negligent in the days prior to 9-11.

The Washington Post’s Dana Milbank and Walter Pincus led the charge, writing in the lead paragraph of their April 11 front-page story in the Post that the PDB contained information that terrorists “might be targeting a building in lower Manhattan.”

Except the PDB made no such claim and the two men who wrote the story knew it. The document doesn’t even contain the word “Manhattan,” nor does it suggest that any buildings had been targeted. It does state that there had been suspicious activities around federal buildings in New York. These activities turned out to be, as the Post duo noted later in the story, tourists taking pictures. Oops.

This story was so biased that a week later the Post’s ombudsman, Michael Getler, condemned it as misleading and wrote that critics who see political bias in the story “make a fair point in my view.”

The Post wasn’t the only outlet trying to mislead the public. CBS’ John Roberts took a similar tack in his report on the CBS Evening News on April 12. After admitting that there was “nothing specific as to time and place” in the PDB, Roberts still claimed that “counter-terrorism experts say [it] should have raised a deafening alarm at the White House.”

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And who were these counterterrorism “experts”? Roberts interviewed only one, and he was a former Clinton official.

As bad and as slanted and as misleading as the PDB reporting was, it just a warm-up for the outright attack White House reporters launched at the April 13 presidential press conference. Reporter after reporter hounded President Bush, insisting he take personal responsibility for what these journalists had determined were the many failures of his administration. The President was asked six questions, one after the other, urging, begging or demanding that he admit to mistakes in Iraq or apologize for 9-11.

There was “almost an insistence” on the part of reporters for the President admit mistakes, ABC’s Peter Jennings noted in his post-press conference wrap-up. “Why are reporters pushing so hard on this issue?” he asked his sidekick, former Clinton aide George Stephanopoulos.

Answer: Because they want this President to be defeated, as Jennings well knows. The liberal national press corps is opposed to practically everything this President has done, from the War on Terrorism to tax cuts to his judicial appointments, and they desperately want him out of office. Forcing him to admit a mistake in front of a national television audience would provide them with a weapon that they could use against him for the next six months.

Five days after the press conference, Bob Woodward’s new book about the Bush administration was released and it quickly became another media firestorm. Just as they had done with the PDB, journalists insisted on grabbing snippets of information and spinning them into indictments of the President.

CBS’ anchor Dan Rather read a passage about military budgeting and a supposed conversation between the Saudi ambassador and President Bush about reducing oil prices and decided that it was major news. “Explosive new allegations against President Bush: manipulating gas prices and military money!” Rather bellowed as he opened the April 19 CBS Evening News.

Former Clinton adviser Stephanopoulos was also shocked by the revelation, telling World News Tonight viewers that the oil passage was the “most explosive” charge in the book. MSNBC’s Keith Olbermann, a man given to exaggerated attacks on the Bush administration, thought the book raised echoes of Watergate.

As you expect, the MRC confronted these media rantings head on. MRC Vice President Brent Baker wrote an op-ed for the April 21 New York Post, the nation’s eighth largest newspaper, that exposed the networks misleading and slanted coverage of the Woodward book. I appeared on Fox News Channel’s Fox & Friends the next day to defend the President and point out that the book is a generally positive portrayal of the Bush administration and that it’s listed as recommended reading on the President’s campaign Web site.

The MRC also had other comments to make. Research Director Rich Noyes discussed CBS’ 60 Minutes recent trend of hyping anti-Bush books with the Associated Press and the story was picked up in more than a dozen newspapers, including such prominent national papers as the Denver Post, San Francisco Chronicle, Chicago Sun-Times and Miami Herald.

The MRC was also busy on other fronts, releasing a religion study during Holy Week that found network news coverage is hostile to organized religion. More than 70 newspapers and Internet news sites ran stories on this study alone.

These efforts illustrate that the MRC is a lively, active organization that is effectively combating liberal media bias on a daily basis. Needless to say, we could not do this without your support.

And, as always, I thank you for it.

Until next time,

L. Brent Bozell

IT’S HERE... Get the MRC’s 2003 Annual Report

The MRC’s 2003 Annual Report is an 18-page color brochure packed with details about the MRC’s projects, accomplishments, and impact in 2003. If you would like to receive a free copy of the brochure, simply call Jennifer Bookwalter at (800) 672-1423 or e-mail jbookwalter@mediaresearch.org and request a copy. Mention that you read about it in FLASH!
MRC Study Finds Network Morning Shows Ignore 9-11 Families That Are Pro-Bush

A mid-April study of network morning shows found that the families of 9-11 victims who were critical of President Bush received far more air time than those who supported him.

MRC analysts reviewed every interview with 9-11 family members on ABC’s Good Morning America, CBS’ The Early Show and NBC’s Today from March 23, when the 9-11 Commission’s public hearings began, through April 15, when the public hearings ended. They found Bush critics were interviewed 20 times, while Bush supporters were interviewed on only three occasions.

ABC and CBS were the worst offenders. Neither network conducted a single interview with a pro-Bush relative on their morning shows during the three-week period.

The study, which was published in a Media Reality Check and sent to outlets across the nation on April 15, also found that the morning programs focused on a narrow group of 9-11 relatives. Kristen Breitweiser, a Bush critic whose husband died in the World Trade Center, was on NBC’s Today four times during the three-week period and six other anti-Bush relatives made a total of seven appearances on the program.

None of the relatives, pro- or anti-Bush, received tough questioning, but the imbalance in the guest lists means that the theories of those hostile to Bush prevailed. While these relatives are certainly entitled to their views, network viewers are also entitled to a balanced presentation.

Good Morning America Refuses to Report Bush Lead

Add ABC’s Good Morning America to the ranks of network news programs who have decided to play politics with their poll reporting.

In early March, an ABC News/Washington Post poll put Sen. John Kerry ahead of President Bush by four points and Good Morning America highlighted the finding in two morning news updates.

Fast forward six weeks to April 20 and a new ABC News/Washington Post poll found President Bush was ahead of Kerry by five points. Good Morning America reported some of the poll’s findings – news reader Robin Roberts noted that 59% think the U.S. is bogged down in Iraq – but didn’t mention a word about Bush’s lead.

Good Morning America’s decision to spike its poll numbers comes on the heels of similar scandals, as FLASH has reported, at the CBS Evening News and ABC’s World News Tonight.

If we were cynical, we would almost think that these three examples are proof that the networks are spiking pro-Bush numbers on purpose.
TUNE IN...

The MRC’s Graham and Noyes Are Radio Regulars in San Diego, Atlanta and Monterey

MRC members and other radio listeners in San Diego, Atlanta and Monterey, Calif. can now hear the MRC’s Rich Noyes and Tim Graham comment on the latest instances of liberal media bias every week.

Graham, the MRC’s Director of Media Analysis, makes two regular appearances. He appears on The Tom Hughes Show on WGST in Atlanta at 6:50 a.m. Eastern time on Tuesdays and on The Mark Larson Show on WCBQ in San Diego at 4:30 p.m. Pacific time on Wednesdays.

Noyes, the MRC’s Research Director, is a Tuesday regular on The Karen Grant Show at 3:30 p.m. Pacific time. The program is broadcast on KION in Monterey, California.
The MRC released a Special Report entitled Religion on TV News: More Content, Less Context on April 6. Produced by Director of Media Analysis Tim Graham, the study found that while religion receives more news coverage than a decade ago, the tone of the coverage is overwhelmingly hostile to organized faiths.

The MRC Special Report also included four recommendations for the networks to improve their coverage of religion in the future: Hire full-time religion correspondents; hire reporters who are themselves religious; present the religious dimensions of social issues instead of focusing solely on political elements; and present viewers with a balance of religious experts, not just a few favored (generally liberal) theologians.

The study generated nationwide media coverage. An Associated Press story, complete with comments from Director of Media Analysis Graham, was picked up by more than 70 newspapers and Internet news sites (the complete list of outlets is printed on pages 10-11). Readers with Internet access can read the entire Special Report at www.mediaresearch.org/specialreports.
CBS’ Rooney Claims Soldiers Aren’t Heroes

Americans risking life and limb in the war on terror are in Iraq and Afghanistan because they couldn’t get jobs, according to CBS gadfly Andy Rooney.

In a syndicated column in the April 12 Buffalo News, Rooney – who recently also insulted Christians by saying he wouldn’t see The Passion of the Christ because he didn’t want to spend “nine dollars just for a few laughs” – claimed that most soldiers were forced to join the Army because of the poor economy.

“We should not bestow the mantle of heroism on all of them for simply being where we sent them,” the CBS newsman wrote. “Most are victims, not heroes.”

Rooney’s words betray the typical liberal disdain for military service. “Sophisticated” types like Rooney will never admit it publicly, but they think they’re superior to the men and women in uniform and can’t believe anyone would willingly choose to be a soldier. “Victims,” in this case, is nothing more than a liberal code word for “poor and dumb.”

Notions of sincere patriotism and service to something greater than one’s self are concepts Rooney just can’t seem to grasp. But then again, as his other recent comments prove, so are ideas such as civility and tolerance for the beliefs of others.

CBS Pairs Tillman Death with Homeless Veteran Story

At the top of the April 24 CBS Evening News, anchor Mika Brzezinski paired two upcoming stories together, calling them “a tale of two soldiers, one honored in death, the other homeless in life.”

The stories that followed were a reaction piece to the death of former NFL player Pat Tillman, who was killed in a firefight in Afghanistan, and a story on a 23-year homeless veteran and single mother who landed on the streets because her relationship with her own mother had “soured.”

Reporter Kelly Cobiella noted that the woman wasn’t really homeless and that the Veterans Affairs Office had found the young lady a place for her and her child to live and was even helping her find work.

Cobiella also noted that the Army had a jobs and housing program for those leaving the service. But the program is voluntary, the CBS reporter lamented, and some “still fall through the cracks.”

Juxtaposing this story with the Tillman story was atrocious news judgment. The story about the “homeless” veteran was a petty and pointless effort to promote CBS’ liberal worldview and pairing it with the story of Tillman, who sacrificed fame and fortune to selflessly serve – and die for – his country as an anonymous Army Ranger, was demeaning to the legacy of a true hero.

CBS News should be ashamed of itself.

ABC Relays Al Jazeera’s Anti-American Coverage

When heavy fighting broke out in Fallujah in early April, ABC News unquestioningly relayed the anti-American reporting of the Arab television network Al Jazeera.

On April 7, ABC correspondent David Wright reported from Baghdad that the U.S. military had called in air strikes against two mosques in Fallujah because insurgents had been firing from them.

Over video labeled “al Jazeera exclusive,” Wright then told viewers that “Arab language TV channels” had claimed that among the 40 killed in one mosque were those taking part in evening prayers. “The main hospital is
“What drives American civilians to risk death in Iraq? In this economy it may be, for some, the only job they can find,” CBS anchor Dan Rather laments. “Kerry has emerged from the primaries at the philosophical center of his party, if not the country,” claims the Washington Post’s Dan Balz. The New York Times’ Louis Uchitelle agrees, calling Kerry “a centrist in the Clinton mode” and claiming “fiscal responsibility and deficit reduction, hallmarks of the Clinton years, are bedrock orthodoxy in the Kerry camp.” Disgraced former New York Times Executive Editor Howell Raines sees evil conservatives everywhere, even at the Times. “A small enclave of neoconservative editors,” Raines claims, “[were] making accusations of political correctness in order to block stories or slant them against traditional social welfare programs.” NBC’s Katie Couric provides yet another tribute to Hillary Clinton: “Whatever her aspirations these days, she seems to be the life of the party – the Democratic Party.”
Ted Kennedy has been a U.S. senator for more than 40 years and still benefits from the media’s never-ending fascination with all things Kennedy.

But the truth is that the Massachusetts senator, who has long been protected by loyal staff and liberal special interest groups, is awful at communicating his agenda when caught off-guard. He’s so used to sycophants, including those in the media, that when you surprise him and ask him a tough question, he stumbles into incoherence.

Kennedy’s inability in 1978 to explain to television newsman Roger Mudd why he wanted to be President is widely viewed as one of the greatest political gaffes of all time. His extemporaneous skills haven’t improved much over the years, as CNSNews.com’s Robert Bluey discovered on April 7 when he confronted Kennedy on the Senate Judiciary Committee’s Memogate controversy.

Memogate revolves around two former Kennedy aides who wrote the senator a memo urging him to delay the confirmation of one of President Bush’s judicial nominees, Julia Smith Gibbons, in order to prevent Gibbons from participating in a key affirmative action case on the Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The memo, which CNSNews.com published in its entirety on April 7, laid out the liberal strategy in clear-cut terms.

“The thinking is that the current 6th Circuit will sustain the affirmative action program, but if a new judge with conservative views is confirmed before the case is decided, that new judge will be able, under 6th Circuit rules, to review the case and vote on it,” the memo’s authors, Olati Johnson and Melody Barnes, stated.

Amid the conservative outrage over such a conspiracy, which successfully kept Gibbons off the court until long after the affirmative action ruling was issued, Bluey confronted Kennedy at a Capitol Hill news conference.

“Senator … two of your former staffers were the authors of the April 17, 2002, memo on a judicial nominee,” Bluey reminded Kennedy. “No,” Kennedy replied, shaking his head.

Bluey persisted: “I’m wondering, what was your involvement?”

And in true Kennedy fashion, the senator responded: “I’m not gonna, uh, re, uh. No. No.” On that less than profound note, Kennedy was ushered out of the room by his staff.

Even before chasing down Kennedy, Bluey had reported on an ethics complaint filed by the Center for Individual Freedom against Olati Johnson. The center’s director, Jeffrey Mazzella, was also anxious to weigh in on Kennedy’s unwillingness to address the Memogate issue.

“He dodged the question. He was obviously rattled,” Mazzella said. “When asked point-blank, [Kennedy] couldn’t deny any wrongdoing, either by himself or by his staff. It just further enforces the need for a complete and full investigation into all the obvious ethical wrongdoing that took place here.”

The vast majority of newspapers and broadcast networks have ignored the Memogate story, but not CNSNews.com. Since April 7, Bluey has authored six stories, either about Memogate, Kennedy’s role in the scandal or the damage to the NAACP’s integrity as a result of the group’s effort to delay the Gibbons confirmation.

If the Senate Judiciary Committee won’t ask the tough questions regarding the Democrat effort to stall or block the president’s nominations, the task will just have to fall to CNSNews.com’s investigative reporting team.

And it’s not a problem. We relish the challenge.
WHO IS THE BENEFICIARY OF YOUR ESTATE?

Your Family?
Charitable Organizations?
THE GOVERNMENT?

Without a will and proper estate planning, the government (both state and federal) could be the primary beneficiary of your estate.

To stop this from happening, make sure you have a will that distributes your estate in accordance with YOUR principles and beliefs.

We humbly suggest you consider making the Media Research Center a party of your legacy. Including the Media Research Center in your estate plans guarantees that America’s Media Watchdog will continue to document, expose, and neutralize the liberal media for years to come. That would be a gift for future generations.

If you have already included us in your will or living trust, please let us know so that we may thank you properly.

For more information, call Director of Development Thom Golab at (800) 672-1423 or visit us online at www.mrc.gift-planning.org.

Jennifer Bookwalter is the MRC’s Circulation Manager. Her responsibilities include managing the Notable Quotables database, the MRC bookstore and completing several necessary member-ship tasks, such as adding people to the subscription list for FLASH and sending information to those who contact the MRC and are interested in becoming members.

A native of the southeastern Virginia town of Poquoson, Jennifer graduated from Penn State University in May 2003 and settled in Washington, D.C. after graduation. She came to work at the MRC in October 2003 and initially worked as a receptionist and development assistant before becoming Circulation Manager.

Jennifer enjoys living in the Washington, D.C. area and working at the MRC. “The thing I enjoy most,” she says, “is that I'm working with a group of hard-working, devoted individuals who are all working towards a common goal.”
AMERICA’S MEDIA WATCHDOG

Documenting, Exposing and Fighting Media Bias

MRC IN THE NEWS*

Media Research Center personnel are interviewed on an almost daily on stories of national importance. In the last month, MRC spokesmen have appeared on, or have been cited in, more than 90 television, newspaper, radio and Internet news stories. The highlights of the month were President Brent Bozell’s appearance on Fox News Channel’s Fox & Friends morning show and Associated Press interviews with Research Director Rich Noyes and Director of Media Analysis Tim Graham.

Television

● **Fox & Friends**, Fox News Channel, April 22. MRC President Brent Bozell discussed Bob Woodward’s new book.

● **Fox & Friends**, Fox News Channel, April 5. Director of Media Analysis Tim Graham discussed Hollywood’s anti-Bush bias. Graham also discussed the topic on MSNBC’s Scarborough Country on April 2.

Newspapers & Magazines


● **Minneapolis Star-Tribune**, April 17. Director of Media Analysis Tim Graham was quoted in an Associated Press article about the MRC’s religion study. The story also appeared in:
  - Pittsburgh Tribune Review, April 9.
  - The Straits Times (Singapore), April 7.
  - Evansville Courier-Press (Ind.), April 7.
  - San Jose Mercury News, April 5.
  - Seattle Post-Intelligencer, April 5.
  - Springfield News-Sun (Ohio), April 5.
  - New Orleans Times-Picayune, April 5.
  - Tuscaloosa News (Ala.), April 5.
  - Miami Herald, April 5.
  - Henderson Gleaner (Ky.), April 5.
  - North County Times (Calif.), April 5.
  - Rapid City Journal (S.D.), April 5.


● **Washington Times**, April 8. Cited MRC Vice President Baker’s CyberAlert item that noted the media failed to report that former President Bill Clinton’s final policy paper to Congress made no mention of al Qaeda.

● **Washington Times**, April 8. Vice President Baker commented on the media’s coverage of former counter-
terrorism adviser Richard Clarke’s testimony to the 9-11 Commission.


- **New York Times**, April 2. Interviewed Director of Media Analysis Graham about the rising number of entertainment programs that have taken aim at President Bush. The story also ran in the Los Angeles Daily News on April 2.

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### Internet News Sites

- **World Net Daily.com**, April 17. In a story on liberal billionaire George Soros, Director of Media Analysis Tim Graham noted that conservative philanthropist Richard Scaife has received unfair media coverage while the liberal Soros has escaped criticism.

- **Family News in Focus** (Family.org), April 16. Research Director Rich Noyes commented on Air America, the liberal Soros has escaped unfair media coverage while received unfair media coverage while liberal activist Bill Moyers.

- **National Review Online**, April 15. Times Watch Director Clay Waters wrote a review of former New York Times Executive Editor Howell Raines lengthy Atlantic Monthly article, in which Raines defended his managerial style at the Times.

- **Sports Illustrated.com**, April 6. The national sports magazine printed an excerpt from the book The Battle for Augusta National that quoted Times Watch Director Waters on the role of web logs such as TimesWatch.org.

- **Newsmax.com**, April 12. Carried the AP story with Noyes comments on 60 Minutes. The story also ran on:
  - InForum.com (N.D.), April 12.
  - MichiganLive.com, April 11.
  - WJLA.com (Washington, D.C.), April 11.
  - Yahoo.com, April 11.


- **Crosswalk.com**, April 6. Carried the AP story on the MRC’s religion study. The story about the MRC’s study also ran on:
  - WHAS11.com (Ky.), April 5.
  - MLive.com, April 5.
  - Beliefnet.com, April 5.
  - KPVI-TV.com (Pocatello-Idaho Falls, Idaho), April 5.
  - KVUE.com (Austin, Texas), April 6.
  - WHBF.com (Quad Cities, Ill.-Iowa), April 6.
  - WALB.com (Albany, Ga.), April 6.
  - WHNT.com (Huntsville, Ala.), April 6.
  - WANE.com (Findlay, Ind.), April 6.
  - WREG.com (Memphis, Tenn.), April 6.
  - WMCStations.com (Memphis, Tenn.) April 6.
  - ArkansasNbc.com (Ft. Smith, Ark.), April 6.
  - WSTM.com (Syracuse, NY), April 6.
  - KVUE.com (Austin, Texas), April 6.
  - KESQ.com (Palm Springs, Calif.), April 6.
  - WOI-TV.com (Des Moines, Iowa), April 6.
  - WTVM.com (Columbus, Ga.), April 6.
  - KWWL.com (Waterloo, Dubuque & Cedar Rapids, Iowa), April 6.
  - KPLCTV.com (Lake Charles, La.), April 6.
  - WVOX.com (Burlington, Vt.), April 6.
  - WVEC.com (Norfolk, Va.), April 6.
  - Team4News.com (Harlingen, Texas), April 6.
  - WCNC.com (Charlotte, N.C.), April 6.
  - WATL.com (Atlanta, Ga.), April 6.
  - KATC.com (Lafayette, La.), April 6.
  - WRIC.com (Richmond, Va.), April 6.
  - KFOR.com (Oklahoma City, Okla.), April 6.
  - KPHO.com (Phoenix, Ariz.), April 6.

- **KCAU.com (Sioux City, Iowa)**, April 6.
- **KVIA.com (El Paso, Texas)**, April 6.
- **WTVO.com (Rockford, Ill.)**, April 6.
- **WAFF.com (Huntsville, Ala.)**, April 6.
- **ABC28.com (Lubbock, Texas)**, April 6.
- **WKBN.com (Youngstown, Ohio)**, April 6.
- **KAIT8.com (Jonesboro, Ark.)**, April 6.
- **WHOTV.com (Des Moines, Iowa)**, April 6.
- **WAVY.com (Norfolk, Va.)**, April 6.
- **WLBT.com (Jackson, Miss.)**, April 6.
- **WKYT.com (Lexington, Ky.)**, April 6.
- **WBAY.com (Green Bay, Wisc.)**, April 6.
- **WOODTV.com (Grand Rapids, Mich.)**, April 6.

### Radio


- **WARL**-Providence, R.I., April 16. Research Director Noyes discussed how the media have ignored the Clinton administration’s actions in the years prior to 9-11.

- **WRUF**-Gainesville, Fla., April 8. Graham discussed the MRC’s religion study. He also discussed the study on:
  - WSPA-York, Pa., April 6.
  - The Tom Hughes Show, WGST-Atlanta, Ga., April 6.
  - The Mark Larson Show, WCBQ-San Diego, Calif., April 6.

- **Wisconsin Public Radio**, April 9. Graham discussed the media’s coverage of Condoleezza Rice’s testimony to the 9-11 commission.


- **The Karen Grant Show**, KION-Monterey, Calif., April 6. Noyes discussed the MRC’s religion coverage and the media’s coverage of Iraq.

*This represents only a partial listing*
COMING JULY 6, 2004!

Weapons of Mass Distortion
The Coming Meltdown of the Liberal Media
by L. Brent Bozell III

The leading expert on media bias makes the most substantive case yet for the leftward bias of America’s mainstream news organizations, and reveals why the days of the liberal media’s dominance are numbered.

As Founder and President of the Media Research Center, L. Brent Bozell III is a leading expert on the issue of media bias. In Weapons of Mass Distortion, he presents the definitive account of the current prevalence and future vulnerability of the liberal media.

With a wealth of facts and evidence at his command, Bozell reveals exactly how the major TV, radio, and print news outlets not only distort the news but try to dictate the national agenda as well. Bozell also explains why the liberal media’s audience will continue to defect to the emerging alternative news outlets – outlets more in tune with their perspective on the world – and how this defection will change the slant of mainstream news.

Published by CrownForum, a member of the Crown Publishing Group. To purchase the book visit www.MRC.org