Double Standard in Supreme Court Nominee Coverage

Liberal Media Treat Sonia Sotomayor with Kid Gloves

If you want to see the liberal media double standard in action, all you have to do is observe the coverage of Supreme Court-nominee Sonia Sotomayor. What a dramatically different standard the liberal media had when they covered the nominations of Samuel Alito, John Roberts and Clarence Thomas — not to mention Robert Bork!

The double standard is stark, and at the MRC we’ve proven it: the liberal media are helping Obama by spinning Sotomayor’s story in the most favorable light.

Let’s look at some examples. When President Obama announced on May 26 that Sotomayor was his pick to replace retiring Justice David Souter, the networks interrupted their regular programming so they could immediately tell America about the nominee’s compelling life story.

ABC, CBS, and NBC mentioned nearly every biographical talking point issued by the White House. Katie Couric at CBS gushed that Sotomayor has an “amazing life story” and has made an “incredible journey.” Reporter Priya David solemnly declared, “Her beginnings couldn’t be much more humble.”

Also at CBS, Bob Schiffer could barely contain himself, declaring, “This woman has a life story that you couldn’t make up! She’s born in the public projects … she gets scholarships to the best schools in the country, Princeton and Yale … and she is Hispanic. This will be a historic pick.”

ABC’s Claire Shipman also noted Sotomayor’s tough life growing up with just her mother (her father died when she was nine) “in the drug-ridden South Bronx, stricken with juvenile diabetes,” but who never gave up. The judge, Shipman went on to cheer, “if an avid Yankees fan, a mean guacamole maker, and a fierce biker.”

Compare that with how then-NBC News reporter Bob Herbert described Clarence Thomas on Sunday Today in September 1991: “The man is not distinguished and he doesn’t seem to have a heart. Let’s be straight about this. Clarence Thomas is not your friend.”

USA Today Inquiry Editor Barbara Reynolds snarled, “It may sound bigoted — well, this is a bigoted world and why can’t black people be allowed a little Archie Bunker mentality? … Here’s a man who’s going to decide crucial issues for the country and he has already said no to blacks; he has already said if he can’t paint himself white he’ll think white and marry a white woman.”

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Also, columnist Carl Rowan railed on *Inside Washington*, “Clarence Thomas is the best only at his ability to bootlick for Ronald Reagan and George Bush. ... If you gave Clarence Thomas a little four on his face, you’d think you had David Duke talking.”

Then there’s the liberal-conservative labeling double standard. When Sotomayor was nominated, neither CBS, ABC, nor NBC described her as a liberal, despite her race-identity views and that the most left-wing president in U.S. history had picked her. Presidents do, after all, usually pick court nominees who reflect their view about the role of the judiciary.

Nonetheless, there was ABC’s George Stephanopoulos on *Good Morning America* on May 26, talking all about how Republicans and conservatives had prepared a dossier on Sotomayor and other possible Obama nominees. (As if Democrats and liberals don’t?) But Stephanopoulos never even hinted at Sotomayor’s judicial philosophy or political leaning.

Then, within one day, CBS’s Katie Couric was setting down the party line by painting Sotomayor as some sort of centrist with “no clear ideology.”

“Pundits usually label judges as either liberal or conservative, but that won’t be easy with Judge Sotomayor,” reported Couric on the *Evening News*, adding that the judge “can’t be easily defined by political labels.”

As we have abundantly documented, such coverage is in stark contrast with that given to Justices Alito and Roberts. For example, the very night that President Bush nominated John Roberts to the court in July 2005, ABC’s George Stephanopoulos described him as “very conservative.” NBC’s Brian Williams called Roberts “a kind of ‘bedrock conservative.’”

Over at CBS, then-anchor John Roberts pondered if the pick was an attempt to “move the court further to the right.” At NPR, the ever-liberal Nina Totenberg prattled that Roberts is “a very, very, very conservative man.”

As for Alito, who was nominated by Bush on Oct. 31, 2005, ABC’s Jessica Yellen referred to him as a conservative five times in one news story. Just before Bush’s announcement, ABC’s Charles Gibson called Alito “very conservative,” the “most conservative member,” and “somebody very conservative.”

On NBC’s *Today*, Matt Lauer barked at then-Sen. Fred Thompson: “Let’s face it, he [Alito] is an ultra-conservative” and “he goes to the right on key issues.”

Nowhere — nowhere! — have the liberal media labeled Sonia Sotomayor in such a way. The liberal media won’t even mention that she might be liberal, but instead claim that conservatives will try to pigeon-hole her as liberal to try to undermine her nomination.

There are countless other examples of this liberal media double standard, and you can find them at our Web site, www.MRC.org.

Sonia Sotomayor has said that the “court of appeals is where policy is made,” and she hopes that “a wise Latina woman” would often reach “a better conclusion than a white male.” Further, and most tellingly, five of her appeals court cases have gone on to the Supreme Court — the Court reversed three of those five rulings, a 60 percent reversal rate.

The liberal media aren’t saying much about those reversals, which is further evidence of how they are spinning — or ignoring — the facts to help her and the administration to advance their political agenda.

Here we are keeping tabs on that double standard. We are exposing it. And as each day passes and we reach more people, we are neutralizing that liberal bias. That’s why we are America’s media watchdog — a force for truth made possible by your generous support. Thank you, and stay tuned.

Sincerely,

L. Brent Bozell III
Founder and President
THE MRC ONLINE
MRC Launches New, Multimedia Web Site

The Media Research Center unveiled a new Web site in May that is state-of-the-art and positions the MRC to more aggressively and effectively combat liberal media bias than ever before.

The Web site, www.MRC.org, incorporates all of the features that MRC fans are familiar with - but now the homepage and interior Web pages contain more photos, audio, and video clips, as well as visitor-friendly tools to interact with the site and take quick action against liberal media bias by alerting friends and others across the Internet about items posted at the MRC.

The site is split-screen and the left side presents a large, full-color photo with story that is the featured example of liberal media bias for that day. Below that are the other top stories about bias for that day. On the right side is a “Top Videos” display box that presents, in video, the Quote of the Day, the video news story from CNSNews.com, and the highly popular NewsBusted comedy show.

Below that is a red box that informs viewers of the MRC’s grassroots action work, which links to the interior pages for more information. And on the left side of the page again, are the Daily Bias Alerts and Commentary - with more photos and links to more video clips and detailed text stories.

The new MRC homepage also incorporates links to and more detailed information about the other MRC divisions, Business & Media Institute, Culture and Media Institute, TimesWatch and CNSNews.com.

There’s more! The homepage now has a “MRC Community” box, which provides links and contact information for people to interact through such tools as Facebook, Twitter, the NewsBusters blog, and MRC Action, the grassroots activism page.

In addition, the new homepage has more viewer-friendly links – complete with photos and frequently videos – to the MRC’s research products, such as Special Reports, Notable Quotables, Media Reality Check, and the MRC Gala and DisHonors Awards. Also, there are easy-to-use menu-bar links to a fully revamped MRC Press Room, Resources, Analysis, Multimedia, and Take Action pages.

There is still more to the new Web site than can be explained here. Come visit the new site and check out its many features — and tell your friends, family and co-workers to check out www.MRC.org. You can also send the link to a liberal, just to make their day!

Visit www.MRC.org.
$81,000 Date

President Obama took his wife Michelle on a date to New York City on May 30 that cost taxpayers $81,000 for helicopters, planes, staff, and media — and that doesn’t count the cost of security. Despite the recession, all those calls for sacrifice, and smaller carbon footprints, the liberal media, particularly co-host Maggie Rodriguez on CBS’s The Early Show on June 1, cheered the date as “so sweet” and described the First Couple thus: “They’re beautiful.”

The next day, The Early Show told viewers of some of the costs to taxpayers, but CBS’s David Price was quick to run defense. “You know what? He’s entitled to have a night with his wife,” said Price. CBS’s Julie Chen agreed, adding that the spending helped “some business for the local economy, I’ll bet you ticket sales went up for that show [the Obamas attended] and maybe other Broadway shows.” Co-host Harry Smith chirped that the prices did go up: “They did, they actually tripled.” And that is Liberal Economics 101.

What, Islam?

The man arrested for murdering a U.S. soldier at a recruiting station in Arkansas — and also charged “with an act of terrorism” — had recently converted to Islam and taken a trip to Yemen, a radical Islamist country. But NBC’s Today somehow forgot to report that the alleged killer of a U.S. soldier at a recruiting station was a recent Muslim convert specifically hunting U.S. soldiers, as the police had informed the public and the media.

Curry did report that, “Police say the suspect had political and religious motives,” but she did not report what kind of political or religious motives. Curry also never mentioned the suspect’s name in her report. The police had told reporters, many of whom relayed the information to the public, that Muhammad as “a Muslim convert” had been “specifically hunting U.S. soldiers.” Those well-known facts also somehow mysteriously eluded this “news” network.

‘Deadly’ Reporting

ABC’s Good Morning America exploited the killing of abortionist George Tiller with a June 1 report where co-host Diane Sawyer teased, “The abortion debate turns deadly. A doctor known for performing late-term abortions gunned down at church.” Sawyer, of course, did not mention or even suggest that abortion, if successful, is always fatal.

In the same segment, however, reporter Jeffrey Kofman relayed some of the glee on the Internet, saying, “On Twitter, one person wrote, ‘Oh, happy day. Tiller the baby killer is dead.’” Another wrote, ‘God bless the gunman.’” Like Sawyer, Kofman did not mention or reference one pro-life group — and there were many — that had condemned the killing of Tiller.

Hit Rush, Again and Again

MSNBC, like all the liberal media, can’t seem to get enough of attacking Rush Limbaugh who, by the way, has an audience about 25 times larger than any MSNBC news show. Case in point: After Rush criticized Supreme Court nominee Sonia Sotomayor’s comments about “a wise Latina woman” making better legal judgments than “a white male” as bigoted and racist, Hardball host Chris Matthews, without a shred of evidence, swiped on May 27, “Is this the pot calling the kettle black?” And, “Boy, it’s amazing what Rush Limbaugh will come up with these days.”

Matthews then let Politico panelist Jeanne Cummings rail: “Well, all I know is it’s the worst
nightmare for Republicans .... And with things like that, and all the calculation to try to keep Hispanic support, even as small as it’s gotten for Republicans, Rush Limbaugh can chase ‘em all away in an afternoon with that kind of talk.”

‘Outdated’ Catholics

When the charismatic Florida priest Alberto Cutie left the Catholic Church in late May because of a sex scandal, CBS’s The Early Show ran with what should have been a local adultery story and questioned not why Cutie broke his vows but rather why the Church keeps the celibacy rule. As co-host Maggie Rodriguez grilled Fr. Thomas Williams in Rome, “It seems to me that the Catholic Church … is not necessarily being introspective and considering whether Father Cutie and others have left the Catholic Church, and others are failing to join, because of its stringent rules. Would you like to see your church be more introspective, more progressive?” In other words: more liberal.

In a May 11 segment when the scandal first broke, Rodriguez had asked Fr. Williams whether the Catholic Church was willing to overturn its “outdated” and “rigid” rules on celibacy. This “news” journalist then opined: “If they don’t change this policy, do you think that they will continue to lose people, or fail to recruit people who feel the church is too rigid?”

Colin Powell (D)

Former Secretary of State Colin Powell, who publicly endorsed and voted for Obama as president, has done nothing in his long career to help or advance the conservative movement, and he has done precious little to help the GOP, except try to make it more like the Democratic Party. Nonetheless, the liberal media take his claims of being a Republican seriously and promote him as the sensible voice of the GOP.

Typical is ABC, which lead a May 25 World News story with, “Colin Powell hitting back at Dick Cheney and other Republican critics, saying he’s still a member of the party, a party he says has to change.” Also at CBS on the same night: “Colin Powell versus Dick Cheney and Rush Limbaugh. The former secretary of state defends his Republican credentials.” Gen Powell, meet Sen. Arlen Specter.

Minibits

■ ABC’s Charles Gibson doesn’t get it: What’s the problem here? We have terrorists in U.S. prisons, so why not the guys from Guantanamo?” ■ Author and Editor Tina Brown smears Dick Cheney on MSNBC: “In some ways, I kind of admire this kind of crazy jihad, this one man, kind of, hate-fest that he runs on cable shows.” ■ MSNBC’s Chris Matthews rails against the critics of Sonia Sotomayor: “The crazies out there … the troublemakers … the only critics of this nomination with any kind of violence are that R.N.C crowd: Rush, Newt and Limbaugh, I mean and, and Cheney.” ■ TIME’s Michael Grunwald defines the GOP for readers: “A hard-right agenda of slashing taxes for the investor class, protecting marriage from gays, blocking universal health insurance and extolling the glories of waterboarding produces terrific ratings for Rush Limbaugh, but it’s not a majority agenda.” ■ After President Obama showed up unannounced to talk to White House reporters, NBC’s Savannah Guthrie said she was “shocked — I felt a little bit like I was having a dream sequence minus the pink unicorn. I have to say, we attend those briefings every day, they are rarely so exciting.” ■ NBC’s Chuck Todd cheers Obama’s handling of the leaders of Afghanistan and Pakistan: “I think that we will look back on this and say this is quintessential Obama. This is the Obama Doctrine at work. Bring two sides together, get them talking and do this a lot.” ■ Former ABC anchor Ted Koppel slams the CIA’s waterboarding of three al Qaeda terrorists, opining on the interrogation techniques, “You know, it’s almost the moral equivalent of saying that rape is an enhanced seduction technique.” ■ MSNBC’s Chris Matthews, still trashing Sarah Palin: She is, “now don’t laugh — is writing a book. Not just reading a book, writing a book. Actually, in the word of the publisher, she’s ‘collaborating’ on a book. ... What an embarrassment!”
Cheers for Cheney

Dick Cheney clearly drives the liberal media nuts. As much as they’d like to bask in the glow of the new and glorious Obama Era, they simply cannot achieve that requisite state of Nirvana with Cheney around. They spent eight long years packaging Cheney as some evil and deadly combination of Darth Vader and the Ebola virus. Now they can add to the descriptors a new title: Count Dracula. The man refuses to die.

That’s why every speech he makes draws a ferocious chorus of media boos of outrage at the idea he would dare to think he has freedom to speak in the first place. CNN’s Anderson Cooper was so flustered over Cheney’s latest speech at the American Enterprise Institute that he asked Cheney’s daughter Elizabeth: “If a Democrat was doing this in a Republican administration, wouldn’t the Republicans be saying, this is traitorous?”

This is just too rich.

When President Bush was in power, he was regularly assaulted with rhetorical flame-throwers. He was a mad bomber, a dictator, a grand ayatollah, a world-class dolt, even a “smirking chimp.” He was Gomer Pyle, all Three Stooges, and Dan Quayle Redux. His tactics were comparable to the KGB, the Nazis, and the Khmer Rouge. And his critics were painted as the essence of patriotic dissent.

But when Cheney protests the Obama administration weakening the war on terror to the point it won’t even call it terror (just a “man-caused disaster”), bam! He’s Benedict Arnold.

Cindy Sheehan insisted Bush killed her son in Iraq and literally suggested Team Bush was traitorous: “George and his indecent bands traitorously had intelligence fabricated to fit their goal of invading Iraq.” Everywhere she went, the media laid out the red carpet. But when Cheney defends himself, it is “traitorous”?

Cheney was blunt about waterboarding. “To call this a program of torture is to libel the dedicated professionals who have saved American lives, and to cast terrorists and murderers as innocent victims.”

Cooper savaged Cheney’s daughter with Evil Empire analogies on harsh interrogation techniques. “These are techniques which have been around. I mean, the Nazis used them. The Khmer Rouge used them. The North Koreans used them.” Does Cooper really believe that America is just like those mass-murdering dictatorships? We waterboarded the architect of 9/11, but Cooper’s addled outrage implies that the man with the water pitcher is as evil as the man with the wet face who sent more than 3,000 American men, women, and children to their deaths.

When it comes to Bush and Cheney, activists in the media can’t produce anything but distorted caricatures. Here’s CNN legal analyst Jeffrey Toobin on Cheney’s speech: “He chose to speak in a chilling code, in which methods of torture such as waterboarding became ‘enhanced interrogation,’ in the way that death might be called ‘enhanced sleep.’” In their fevered imaginations, waterboarding is a piece of rhetorical Saran Wrap removed from execution.

Dick Cheney knows this is all wildly exaggerated. That’s why he spoke out against “feigned outrage based on a false narrative. In my long experience in Washington, few matters have inspired so much contrived indignation and phony moralizing as the interrogation methods applied to a few captured terrorists.” He added “that people who consistently distort the truth in this way are in no position to lecture anyone about values.”

Anderson Cooper and Jeffrey Toobin: he’s talking about you.

Some of those distorters of truth call themselves the “news” media, but their “values” are often at odds with the national interest. Getting the story first and getting the Pulitzer Prize seems like less of a social responsibility than keeping the country safe.

The former vice president didn’t pull punches on media irresponsibility. One passage that caused a stir was his attack on the New York Times for blowing the secrecy of the Terrorist Surveillance Program. “After 9/11, the Times had spent months publishing the pictures and the stories of everyone killed by al-Qaeda on 9/11. Now here was that same newspaper publishing secrets in a way that could only help al-Qaeda. It impressed the Pulitzer committee, but it damn sure didn’t serve the interests of our country, or the safety of our people.”

The New York Times didn’t find that passage “fit to print.” They hailed Obama’s “nuanced” approach, while denouncing Cheney’s speech as implying “absolutism in the defense of liberty is no vice.”

Dick Cheney was right to support an aggressive war on terror then, and he’s right to get out on the public stage and support an aggressive war on terror now, as the Obama administration makes crucial decisions on whether we stay aggressive, or lay our defenses down. Liberal outrage at this volume tells you he’s doing something very right.

Where was he from 2001 to 2008?
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**

**CBN:** Newswatch, May 11, 14, June 1, 5

**CNN:** Showbiz Tonight, June 4

**FNC:** America's Newsroom, Apr. 30, June 3
  - Fox Newswatch, May 9
  - The O'Reilly Factor, Apr. 30
  - Political Grapevine, Apr. 21, 29
  - Special Report, May 8, June 3
  - Strategy Room, June 4
  - Market Watch, May 14

**Radio**

Neal Boortz Show, Apr. 29

Lynn Woolsey show, Apr. 29

Lars Larson Show, May 20

Rusty Humphries Show, May 21

American Family Radio, Apr. 28, May 20, 27

Thom Hartmann Show, May 5, May 26

Sean Hannity Show, Apr. 16, 23

Laura Ingraham Show, Apr. 21

Dateline, Apr. 27

NRA News, May 1, 22

Internet Radio. Apr. 27

Family News in Focus, Apr. 28

Cable Radio Network, Apr. 30

G. Gordon Liddy, Apr. 28, May 28

Phil Valentine Show, Apr. 29

Catholic Connection, May 19

Internet Radio (Austin, TX), May 11

Small Business Advocate, Apr. 30

KBAR, Burley, ID, Apr. 28, 29, May 19, 28

KFXA, San Francisco, CA, Apr. 29

KFMB, San Diego, CA, May 12

KGAB, Cheyenne, WY, Apr. 30

KGFT, Colorado Springs, CO, May 8

KGLO, Mason City, IA, Apr. 28

KHVH, Honolulu, HI, May 14

KKHT, Houston, TX, Apr. 30

KKTX, Corpus Christi, TX, Apr. 27, 29,
  May 11, 25, 27

KLIN, Lincoln, NE, May 1

**Internet**

HotAir.com, May 22

Drudge Report, Apr. 16, 17, 21, 30, May 29

U.S. News “Washington Whispers,” May 12

American Spectator Online, May 8, 21

CBN.com, Apr. 27, 28, May 13

Huffington Post, Apr. 27, 30

BreitbartTV.com, Apr. 28

OneNewsNow.com, Apr. 30, May 15

Christian Science Monitor blog, Apr. 21

USA Today blog, Apr. 30

WorldNetDaily, Apr. 24

Townhall.com, Apr. 29

RussiaToday.com, Apr. 30

MSNBC.com, Apr. 22

CBSNews.com, Apr. 24

Lucianne.com, Apr. 16, 22, 23, May 1

Newsmax.com, Apr. 13, 14, 15, May 13

WSJ.com, Apr. 20, 21, 22, 28, 29, 30

USA Today.com, Apr. 24, 28, 29, 30

NRO.com, Apr. 16, 21, 29

Village Voice blog, May 11

FoxNews.com, May 11

Catholic Online, May 14

- PARTIAL LISTING
MRC’s NewsBusters Rocks Liberal Media World

The MRC blog, NewsBusters (NB), is the No. 8 Most Popular conservative site on the Internet and its round-the-clock exposure of liberal media bias continually knocks the liberal media off-balance.

The blog, which is manned by MRC staffers and 57 outside contributors 24/7 pulls in more than 120,000 visitors daily. But millions get our messages regularly. NewsBusters’ timely postings are regularly cited by Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, Laura Ingraham, and other powerhouse conservative talk-show hosts.

For example, are you familiar with MSNBC Chris Matthews’ famous outburst that President Obama sent a “thrill” up his leg? Well, that was found by the MRC and was first posted on the Internet by NewsBusters, and picked up by talk radio and nearly everywhere after that.

Do you remember during the campaign when Obama said he wanted to “bankrupt” the U.S. coal industry? NewsBusters found that, too. The NB story was used by the Sarah Palin campaign and picked up by The Drudge Report (12 million visitors), which drove 450,000 visitors back to NewsBusters.

The Drudge Report and the Rush Limbaugh and Mark Levin Web sites regularly post items from NewsBusters, which helps get the MRC message out to tens of millions of people.

There are countless other examples. Overall, NewsBusters’ impact is widespread and extremely effective — and its influence continues to grow. Case in point: Hollywood actress Angie Harmon was asked by InStyle magazine in June what was her favorite Web site. She said NewsBusters because “it reports all the things the news media don’t.” Nice to hear.