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Media Embraced Cindy Sheehan's Anti-Bush Push in 2005; ABC Anchor Now Says: "Enough Already"

## Will Nets Note Sheehan's Anti-Obama Protest?

When Cindy Sheehan arrives on Martha's Vineyard tomorrow (Tuesday), to protest against President Barack Obama, will the news media be as drawn to her as they were in the summer of 2005 when she was condemning George W. Bush?

Last week, ABC anchor Charles Gibson declared "enough already" when asked on Chicago's WLS Radio about Sheehan's plan to travel to Obama's island vacation spot to protest the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. When she camped near Bush's Crawford, Texas ranch four years ago, that was hardly the view of Gibson and his colleagues. At the time, NBC's Kelly O'Donnell aptly dubbed her "a media magnet."

Back then, the networks were eager to publicize her cause from the moment she arrived. Katie Couric, for instance, showcased Sheehan at the top of NBC's *Today* show: "A mother's vigil. Her son died in Iraq. Now this woman is camping outside the Bushes' Texas ranch and demanding a meeting with the President today, Monday, August 8th, 2005."

The next day, Gibson, then co-host of ABC's morning show, led by touting: "Standing her ground. She lost her son in Iraq, she opposes the war, now she's camped out at President Bush's ranch and says she won't leave until he meets with her. An exclusive interview on *Good Morning America*."

The following evening, CBS's Bill Plante noted the obvious as he provided more publicity: "She's gotten a lot of media attention by camping out on the road that leads to the President's ranch." Anchor Bob Schieffer ruminated: "I wonder why the President doesn't meet with her?"

When Bush's motorcade drove by Sheehan's protest camp, CNN's *Situation Room* pounced with "BUSH WALKS ON BY" and "PRES. BUSH PASSES UP CHANCE TO MEET WITH 'PEACE MOM'" on screen as reporter Elaine Quijano highlighted how "Sheehan held up a sign saying, 'Why do you make time for donors and not for me?'" On ABC's *World News Tonight*, Geoff Morrell asked Sheehan: "Are you disappointed he didn't stop?"

That weekend, Sunday, August 14, *NBC Nightly News* devoted its "In Depth" segment to Sheehan's impact, as anchor David Gregory touted how she "has become both a magnet and a source of controversy in the President's hometown, single-handedly bringing the Iraq debate to Mr. Bush's doorstep." Kelly O'Donnell began with how "she's tiny Crawford's biggest draw. This woman said she drove 900 miles from Denver, compelled by Cindy's story."

Three nights later, CBS's Plante celebrated the fame he and his colleagues had delivered: "Out of nowhere, Cindy Sheehan has suddenly become the red-hot symbol of opposition to the war." Plante touted how "in just ten days," Sheehan "has become a magnet for the anti-war movement."

When Sheehan departed Crawford, the networks celebrated her supposed achievements: "Did just one grieving mother spark the beginnings of an anti-war movement? We'll give you the 'Inside Story,'" CBS anchor John Roberts promised before Wyatt Andrews trumpeted: "Her movement seemed to catch fire Wednesday night as tens of thousands of people in more than a

thousand places attended vigils in support." ABC's Charlie Gibson championed: "All across the country protests against the war in Iraq, inspired by the mother standing her ground at President Bush's ranch." On screen, *GMA* heralded: "MOM ON A MISSION: IS ANTIWAR MOVEMENT GROWING?"

Finally, NBC's Carl Quintanilla suggested Sheehan "may be evolving as an icon in the war's turning point, if this is one. For three weeks, she's dominated headlines, mobilized protesters" and made "it safe, her supporters say, to voice doubts about the war, just as Walter Cronkite did on the *Evening News* in 1968." — Brent Baker

### Sheehan Sure Impressed Matthews

**Anti-war activist Cindy Sheehan:** "We're not going to cure terrorism and spread peace and good will in the Middle East by killing innocent people or....I see Iraq as the base for spreading imperialism...."

**Host Chris Matthews:** "Are you considering running for Congress, Cindy?"

**Sheehan:** "No, not this time...."

**Matthews:** "Okay. Well, I have to tell you, you sound more informed than most U.S. Congresspeople, so maybe you should run."  
— MSNBC's *Hardball*, August 15, 2005.

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