



Campaign 2008

# Media Reality ✓ Check

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CBS Host Trashes Palin As a "Down and Dirty...Attack Dog," Then Expects to Be Seen as Fair Moderator

## Bob Schieffer Tilted Left Against Bush in 2004

This year's final debate moderator, CBS's Bob Schieffer, clearly did not take pains to appear objective before the debate. He opened fire on the October 5 *Face the Nation* by denouncing "the Palin factor... a campaign that's turned down and dirty. Down in the polls, the McCain campaign has found a new attack dog." After the opening music, he returned to the hatchet-woman line: "She took after Barack Obama in a style reminiscent of Spiro Agnew when he was Richard Nixon's running mate." He asked if the Republicans were going to get "nastier and nastier."

Schieffer also failed the fair-and-balanced test in a review of the debate he moderated in 2004. Six questions came from the left. Another three dared Bush to disagree with the liberal media's definitions of acceptable views. Only three questions to Kerry came from a more conservative direction. Here are some examples of questions to Bush:

**No to Social Security privatizing:** "You have proposed to fix it by letting people put some of the money collected to pay benefits into private saving accounts, but the critics are saying that's going to mean finding a trillion dollars over the next ten years to continue paying benefits as those accounts are being set up. So where do you get the money? Are you going to have to increase the deficit by that much over ten years?"

**Ban those assault weapons:** "Mr. President, new question, two minutes. You said that if Congress would vote to extend the ban on assault weapons, that you'd sign the legislation. But you did nothing to encourage the Congress to extend it. Why not?"

**Parrotting Kerry:** "He said, and this will be a new question to you, he said that you had never said whether you would like to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, so I'd ask you directly: Would you like to?"

**Are you a religious nut?** "You were asked before the invasion or after the invasion of Iraq if you'd checked with your dad, and I believe, I don't remember the quote exactly, but I believe you said you had checked with a higher authority. I would like to ask you: What part does your faith play on your policy decisions?"

By contrast, here are some questions to Kerry:

### Bob Schieffer's Urgent Obama Quiz

"Senator McCain's running mate, Sarah Palin, claimed in an interview that Alaska's proximity to Russia somehow enhances her foreign policy experience and credentials. Do you agree with that?...Well, do you believe she's qualified?...But don't you think what she says is important?...I mean, she could be a heartbeat away from the presidency." – Schieffer to Obama on *Face the Nation* after the first debate, September 28.

**Tax hikes are essential:** "You pledged during the last debate that you would not raise taxes on those making less than \$200,000 a year....How can you or any President, whoever is elected next time, keep that pledge without running this country deeper into debt and passing on more of the bills that we're running up to our children?"

**Hike the minimum wage:** "The gap between rich and poor is growing wider. More people are dropping into poverty. Yet the minimum wage has been stuck at...\$5.15 an hour now for about seven years. Is it time to raise it?"

**Kerry vs. his church:** "The *New York Times* reports that some Catholic archbishops are telling their church members that it would be a sin to vote for a candidate like you because you support a woman's right to choose an abortion and unlimited stem cell research. What is your reaction to that?"

**Is Bush to blame for lost jobs?** "You know, many experts say that a President really doesn't have much control over jobs. For example, if someone invents a machine that does the work of five people, that's progress. That's not the President's fault. So I ask you: Is it fair to blame the administration entirely for this loss of jobs?"

It's easier for a pundit to call the Democrat the winner when the moderator's questions lean strongly to the left.

– Tim Graham

To schedule an interview with an MRC spokesman, please contact Colleen O'Boyle at (703) 683-5004