



July 29, 2008 Tuesday BYLINE: Glenn Beck

SHOW: GLENN BECK 7:00 PM EST

GUESTS: Jonathan Allen, Dana Rohrabacher, **Robert Lichter**, Robert Balfe, Jeff Abbott

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BECK:

But first, I started my day reading an article in the "L.A. Times." The Center for Media and Public Affairs at George Mason University has just released a study where they found that, during the six weeks, the first six weeks of the general election campaign, ABC, NBC and CBS were tougher on Democrat Barack Obama than Republican John McCain. Really?

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BECK: Robert Lichter is a professor of communications at George Mason University and director of the Center for Media and Public Affairs.

And Robert, I know you to be a credible guy.

ROBERT LICHTER, PROFESSOR OF COMMUNICATIONS, GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY: Thanks very much. I appreciate that.

BECK: So -- but I'm a conspiracy nut. So when I first read this, and I -- and I know who you are, I read it and I went, what the hell? How does that happen? How is my perception that the media has deified Barack Obama and done everything but anoint him the new savior, and yet you say they're tougher on him than McCain?

LICHTER: Because that's what was happening three or four months ago. Barack Obama got great press and a lot of it during the primaries. We tagged him as about two of three comments about him were favorable at the same time that two of three comments about McCain were unfavorable.

But that was during primaries. Once Hillary Clinton dropped out of the race, all of a sudden, the bottom dropped out of Obama's coverage. He's still getting a lot of coverage, much more than McCain, but much more of it is critical. Now, about three out of four comments about him have criticized him in some way.

BECK: Yes, but you know what? I have to tell you, I saw what you take as a negative. And I mean, one of them was Katie Couric saying -- asking, you know, "Why won't you say that the surge worked, that you were wrong on the surge?" I can't remember exactly the phrase that she used, but it wasn't even that tough. I mean, is that negative?

LICHTER: Well, she said people are scratching their heads over your position. That's what -- that's what put it in. Like, I can't understand this. What's going on here?

BECK: Wait a minute. Do you remember when the media was saying if -- if the president can't admit a mistake, he doesn't have the right to be the president. You can't have

somebody that arrogant. That's negative. Somebody saying, "I'm just scratching my head trying to figure out, you're so dreamy" -- how is this -- do you see the difference?

LICHTER: I see the difference, but there's a difference between negative and more negative. This is the system we've been using since 1988. And as you say, in the past, we've found imbalances. And we've also found that, if you try to use our numbers to predict changes in public approval ratings of politicians, they work.

As we define them, more positive or more negative ratings on television are followed by more positive or more negative performances in the polls, in the approval ratings. It does mean something.

BECK: OK. So then you would be predicting that Obama's approval rating will be coming down?

LICHTER: Yes.

BECK: OK. Did you see his trip to Berlin?

Again, look, I know you're right because I have trusted your service before. I have seen the way you do these things. And just because I don't agree with it doesn't mean that it's not right. I'm just trying to figure out, is it possible that maybe my -- my vision of what the media is doing is just because the positives are maybe so positive?

LICHTER: Well, it could be. There's also a German media monitoring group called Media Tenor (ph) that was monitoring his coverage during the trip and found also that it was surprisingly negative.

You know, Jeff Greenfield on ABC, when asked about his -- his perception of Berlin, suggested that Americans may not want a president to be popular in Europe. There's always a way to get a negative out of a positive.

BECK: Is there something to be said for -- is there something to be said that, if the media really endorses somebody and is seen really endorsing somebody, then it actually hurts them?

For instance, I think John McCain getting the endorsement from the "New York Times" hurt him with conservatives, but when Rush Limbaugh said, "I'd never vote for him," that helped him with the people in the middle. Is there anything to that when it comes to the mainstream media?

LICHTER: Well, I think so. And certainly Republicans, especially, think so, because there's such widespread feeling among Republicans and conservatives that the media are on the other side that it sort of makes them feel better about somebody if he gets criticized by the media.

BECK: Right. Yes. Well, I know the media just loves me. So that must say great things about me.

Robert, thanks a lot. Appreciate it.

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