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## Beware of Media-Assisted Republican Dirty Tricks

Commentary / Commentary

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Republican dirty tricks undermined Al Gore and are now slandering John Kerry. Will Republican lies and distortions give Bush another "victory"?

By Frederick Sweet

A Republican dirty tricks campaign last February to embarrass the Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry backfired when it came out that a widely circulated photograph had been faked. Still, the political effect was real.

Republicans falsely credited to the Associated Press a photo making Kerry appear to share a stage with "Hanoi Jane" at a 1970s anti-

Vietnam war rally. Without checking the facts, the mainstream media simply ran the Fonda-Kerry story and the Republican dirty trick was disseminated throughout the country.

"There are going to be a lot of dirty tricks in the [presidential] campaign," said John Hurley, the Kerry campaign's organizer of military veterans.

Do you recall the flap about Naomi Wolf telling Al Gore to wear "earth tones?" The media frenzy about Gore "inventing the Internet?" Gore claiming to have inspired the movie *Love Story*? Gore "discovering" Love Canal?

All of those lies were invented by the dirty tricks division of the Republican National Committee and came out of its "attack faxes." From the fax machine these fabrications went directly and uncritically into print and were broadcast on mainstream radio and television as *facts*. These were not paid political commercials, but made-up stories that were printed and broadcast as "news" to a trusting public. And when these "news" stories were disseminated, they were more persuasive than any political commercial.

Republican dirty tricks helped by media complicity let George W. Bush steal the election from Al Gore in 2000. Data from the journalism resource service, Nexus-Lexus, strongly suggest that if the mainstream media had covered George Bush's



actual lies with the same frequency and depth that they carried the RNC lies manufactured to discredit Al Gore, then Gore would have won by a landslide. Never underestimate the power of Republican dirty tricks.

Remember Adam Clymer and what Bush called him? Remember what Clymer wrote that brought on Bush's blast and Cheney's "big time" remark? The lone reporter dared report on something negative that Bush had done in the Lone Star State. But Clymer's truth telling in Texas was so anomalous that Bush attacked him with profanity. The reporter became the story, and the real story--Bush's poor record in Texas--simply disappeared.

The Clymer incident demonstrated almost unanimous media support for George Bush in every way that truly matters. Similarly, the Naomi Wolf tempest showed the media will sink to the lowest level to blast Democrats.

Republican National Committee operatives sustained their efforts to hammer home the message that Gore was a liar. But the mainstream media not only failed to set the record straight, their megaphone of inaccurate and dishonest reporting reinforced the insidious Republican attacks. So nearly all Americans came to hear that Al Gore said he invented the Internet. And now Americans are hearing lies about John Kerry.

### **Why Is the American Media an Instrument for Republican Lies?**

Most Republican National Committee lies make sensational stories, something the media loves, of course. And most media millionaires want Bush to win, because Bush is good to them. Clear enough, but less clear is how the media billionaires' print and broadcast employees know exactly how to skillfully serve their bosses without having to be told. It becomes second nature because that is where their primary (economic) interests lie. They don't have to be told to turn their brains off when the critical reports come in on the Democratic candidate, because it's automatic.

So the Republican National Committee's dirty tricks continue with the media reports that John Kerry had a mistress, that he's a waffling liar, that he was not wounded three times in Vietnam, etc. The media dutifully reports these canards as campaign "news" even though they come straight from the Republicans' dirty tricks bags. And Americans wonder, did Kerry have a mistress, is Kerry a waffling liar?

### **What are American Citizens Who Insist on the Truth Supposed to Do about This Injustice?**

Every time the media report an inaccurate fact, every time they issue a dishonest report, every time they bend over backwards to smooth over Bush's foibles and mistakes, every time they go overboard to embarrass Kerry by exaggerating his errors and assassinating his character, scream:

- in letters to the editor
- in faxes and emails to radio and TV station news managers
- to your local and national talk shows

Scream louder and louder until the truth breaks through the Republican National

Committee lies and intimidates the complicit media into truth telling. That's the only way to stop Republican dirty tricks from reaching the living rooms of America. Their lies must be challenged at every stage from now until the November 2nd election. Their lies must be challenged until all the ballots are *fairly* counted. Their lies must be challenged until John Kerry has become the President of the United States. And then we must continue to challenge their lies. That is what truth telling is all about in America.

Frederick Sweet is Professor of Reproductive Biology in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. You can email your comments to [Fred@interventionmag.com](mailto:Fred@interventionmag.com)

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