False Memory Syndrome Plays in Politics, Too

April 14, 1994 *by Phyllis Schlajly*

False Memory Syndrome afflicts the liberal media, not merely individuals. This peculiar phenomenon, sometimes known as "recovered memory," occurs when someone suddenly starts to "remember" lurid events of bygone years. The events never really happened, but repeated recitation causes imagined events to become real in people's minds and results in a lot of mischief.

We see one manifestation of this in the way the liberal media have rewritten the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas confrontation before the Senate Judiciary Committee . When the American people watched the events as they happened, they believed Clarence Thomas by a two-to-one majority. Now, two years later, the liberal media have persuaded thousands of Americans to remember something different from what they actually saw.

Likewise, the liberal media have been using False Memory Syndrome to rewrite the history of the 1992 Republican National Convention in Houston. The media are trying to make people believe it caused George Bush to lose the election because four of the 128 speakers talked about traditional family values.

The fact is that the American people reacted positively to all those speeches when they were actually shown on television, and the TV networks' own polls prove it. TV coverage from the 1992 Houston Convention gave a big boost to George Bush's campaign, which was already going down the tubes because he had reneged on the most famous campaign pledge of the 20th century, "Read my lips, no new taxes."

On the eve of the 1992 Republican Convention, before any speeches were delivered, the ABC poll showed George Bush behind Bill Clinton by 21 points (36 % to 57%) . On the Sunday following the Convention, the ABC poll reported that Bush had narrowed Clinton's lead to only 5 points (42% to 47%).

Likewise, on the eve of the Convention, the *CBS/New York Times* poll showed Bush trailing Clinton by 18 points (37% to 55%). On the Sunday following the Convention, this poll showed that Bush had climbed to within two points behind Clinton (46 % to 48 %).

The four major TV networks hired Voters Research & Surveys to do massive exit polls on election day, November 3, 1992. These polls confirmed the obvious, that the economy was the reason George Bush lost the election. The exit polls also showed that, of the 12% for whom the issue of abortion decided their vote, 56 % voted for Bush and only 36 % voted for Clinton.

The latest example of the liberal media using the technique of False Memory Syndrome to rewrite history about the 1992 Houston Convention is a ponderous *New York Times* article headlined "How Houston's Angry Din Still Haunts Republicans."

The *Times* assumes that the "recovered memory" about Houston is a fact (which it isn't), and then proceeds to psychoanalyze the behavior of current Republicans as though it were based on it.

The *Times* presents the hypothesis that Republicans are "afraid to act like Republicans these days" because they are "spooked" by the memory of the Republican National Convention in Houston in 1992. As "evidence," the *Times* mentions that the Republican Party issued "no news releases" and made "no angry speeches" after Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders gave an interview to a gay magazine ridiculing the "prudish" attitudes about sex espoused by conservative religious groups.

Actually, there's no reason for Republicans to be "angry" at Joycelyn Elders or at similar remarks by her colleague, AIDS Czarina Kristine Gebbie. Elders' and Gebbie's offensive espousal of immorality is doing as much as Whitewatergate to discredit the entire Clinton Administration.

What the *New York Times* calls "the clearest example" of how the 1992 Republican National Convention has turned Republicans into Caspar Milquetoasts is their silence in the face of President Clinton's coopting of Dan Quayle's admonition that our country would be better off if "babies were born into two-parent families."

New York Times writers probably don't socialize very much with Republicans . Out in Middle America, Clinton's moralizing about avoiding sex outside of marriage merely provokes smirks and guffaws.

What Republicans do take seriously is the failure of the news media to report the accusations of sexual harassment by Clinton with the same enthusiasm that the media covered the never-substantiated accusations against Clarence Thomas.

As to *why* Republicans in Congress are not speaking out more forcefully on family issues, it's more likely the same reason why they are not speaking out more forcefully against Bill and Hillary Clinton's plan to take over the entire health care industry. Republicans haven't found a leader who is willing to attack liberalism head on, using Ronald Reagan as a model.

When the *New York Times* runs a long article that has no news in it, it's pretty clear that it's just a propaganda piece expounding liberal dogma. And, when a liberal newspaper purports to give advice to conservatives, it's probably using the "don't throw me into the briar patch" technique.