by Phyllis Schlafly

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Media Questions at the Republican Convention

The decision by the three major TV networks NOT to give gavel-to-gavel coverage of the Democratic and Republican national nominating conventions enabled the media to exercise significant control over the message by the questions they asked the delegates. Here are some of the questions most frequently asked by the media during the Republican National Convention in Houston, most of which were an attempt to shove Republicans into a political corner.

“Isn’t this a very divisive Convention, hopelessly divided by the abortion issue into warring factions?” On the contrary, it was one of the most harmonious Republican National Conventions in recent memory (and, incidentally, much more harmonious than the recent Democratic Convention).

“Why are conservatives trying to exclude moderates from the Republican ‘tent’?” The Republican Party is not a closed fraternity into which people have to be initiated; Republicans invite everyone to vote for George Bush for the reason of your choice. For example, many people who are not conservative will vote for Bush just because the trial lawyers have lined up behind Clinton. That's called coalition politics.

“What do Republicans mean by ‘Family Values'?” It may be hard to define precisely, but the American people recognize Family Values in the beautiful image of the 47-year Bush marriage, five handsome children, and a dozen grandchildren. That image is the norm to which most American families aspire despite the constant assaults from a decadent entertainment industry.

“Isn’t it reprehensible of Republicans to attack Bill Clinton's wife?” Hillary is not criticized in her role as Bill's wife, but as a top Clinton adviser who can be expected to pass on Bill's nominations to the Federal courts. She specifically injected herself into the campaign by saying, “If you vote for my husband, you get me; it's a two-for-one, blue plate special.”

Besides, Hillary is supposed to be the epitome of the independent and successful career woman, and now that she has come under criticism, she retreats into a “I’m just a poor little housewife” pose, She can't have it both ways.

“Why pick on Hillary? After all, isn't Hillary just like Marilyn Quayle since both are lawyers, wives and mothers?” No, and it’s the ultimate in sexism to assume that women think alike because they are educated, professional, or married. Nobody says that Dan Quayle and AI Gore are really just the same since both are fathers and were Senators, or that Dan Quayle and Bill Clinton must be alike since both are fathers and lawyers,

“In’t the Platform adopted by the Convention the most extremely conservative ever adopted, and too \narrow' for the voters to accept?” There are only marginal differences between the L992 Platform and those of 1984 and 1988, which resulted in landslide Republican victories.

“Don’t you think that Pat Buchanan's strident speech will drive the voters away?” No, his speech was essential to bring back to George Bush the some 30 percent of Republicans who voted for Buchanan in the spring, particularly the economic conservatives.

“Do the pro-lifers think they can win a floor fight?” was the most frequent question asked during the week before the Convention, since the media were salivating at the prospect of a bloody battle. Although the pro-choicers needed only six state delegations to create a floor fight, they could muster just two -- out of 50!

“Isn't it a mistake to have a pro-life plank in the Platform because the polls say that ‘71 percent of Republicans are pro-choice'?” What happened to the alleged ‘71 percent'? The Platform Committee voted 84-to-16 to readopt the same pro-life plank that was in the 1984 and 1988 Platforms, and that Platform was adopted by the full Convention on a voice vote in which the ‘No' votes were scarcely audible.

“Wasn’t the Platform Committee stacked by the ‘Religious Right’?” The Platform Committee, which consists of one man and one woman from each state, is a very democratically elected institution. First, one must be elected a Delegate to the National Convention by the Republican voters in one's own state's primary or convention, and then one must be elected by fellow Delegates as one of the only two Delegates to represent that state.

“Won’t the Platform cause pro-choice Republican women to leave the Republican Party?” Their most vocal leader, Mary Dent Crisp, already walked out of the Republican Party over the abortion issue in l-980 to become co-chair of John Anderson's third party candidacy, and Ronald Reagan was elected anyway. Somehow, we haven't heard about any “Republican Women for Bill Clinton.”

“Don't you think the Republican presidential nominee in l-996 will be pro-choice, and a good bet is Massachusetts Governor Willian Weld?" No. A man who said that it is all right with him to have abortions in the ninth month could never be nominated by a Republican Convention. Goldwater, who said that abortion should be left out of the Republican Platform?" Barry Goldwater got 27 million votes in 1964 and lost; then came Ronald Reagan and, when he added pro-life to the Republican agenda, the conservative majority doubled to 54 million votes in 1984.