

Double Teamed: Here are the Upcoming Debate ‘Moderators’

Most conservatives we know were outraged when the news came out that Matt Lauer, listed as a “Notable Member” of the Clinton Global Initiative, is to moderate the first joint appearance of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton.

On Wednesday, *NBC News* and far-left media channel MSNBC—along with the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America—will host the Commander-in-Chief Forum in New York City.

We won’t call it a “debate,” as the two candidates will not even be on the stage at the same time but will instead appear back-to-back and will be asked questions posed by members of the audience (mostly members of the military) about national security and military affairs.

It is also notable that in deference to Mrs. Clinton’s health the candidates will be seated not standing in the usual debate format.

The three official presidential debates are scheduled for September 26, October 9 and October 19. The moderators will be NBC’s Lester Holt, CNN’S Anderson Cooper and ABC’s Martha Raddatz, and FOX’s Chris Wallace, respectively.

In dissecting how these media-sponsored debates work, it is worth going back to the 2012 election and reviewing CHQ Chairman Richard A. Viguerie’s analysis of the January 7, 2012, “debate” hosted by *ABC News*, Internet giant Yahoo! and WMUR-TV as detailed in his book *TAKEOVER*.

The “debate” was right before the New Hampshire Republican presidential primary; the media panel consisted of Diane Sawyer of *ABC News*, Josh McElveen of WMUR-TV, and former Clinton campaign operative and White House press secretary

George Stephanopoulos, now of *ABC News*.

Not long into the debate, George Stephanopoulos bizarrely pressed former governor Mitt Romney on whether he believed the U.S. Supreme Court should overturn a 1965 ruling that a constitutional right to privacy bars states from banning contraception—the *Griswold v. Connecticut* case. Here's the exchange according to the transcript of the debate:

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Governor Romney, I want to go straight to you. Senator Santorum has been very clear in his belief that the Supreme Court was wrong when it decided that a right to privacy was embedded in the Constitution. And following from that, he believes that states have the right to ban contraception. Now, I should add that he's said that he's not recommending that states do that. [Santorum tries to jump in but is inaudible] Well, I'll, I'll, absolutely, I'm giving you your due.

Persisting, Stephanopoulos later said: "But I do want to get that core question. Governor Romney, do you believe that states have the right to ban contraception? Or is that trumped by a constitutional right to privacy?"

As Brad Wilmoth of the Media Research Center so accurately characterized it, Romney was "befuddled by the off the wall nature of the question on such an issue that is not on any state's legislative agenda, eventually observed that it was a 'silly thing' for the ABC co-moderator to ask such an irrelevant question." But Stephanopoulos was not to be deterred and kept after Romney with an odd persistence that prolonged the discussion with Romney for more than three and a half minutes.

Only after Stephanopoulos's hectoring of Romney inspired a number of boos from the audience were Ron Paul and Rick Santorum allowed an opportunity to speak.

Although former senator Santorum made it clear that he would

be opposed to banning contraception, as contraception merely violates his religious beliefs without entering into his public policy agenda, Stephanopoulos began the question to Romney by referring to what he claimed was Santorum's position in favor of allowing states to ban contraception. So not only did Stephanopoulos make the headline story on the New Hampshire debate about a nonexistent issue—he set up the question by mischaracterizing Senator Santorum's position on *Griswold*, delivering a “twofer” to President Obama and his radical liberal feminist allies.

As Rush Limbaugh later noted, this was all about exciting the radical feminist base of the Democratic Party. As Rush put it, “All you have to do to get their attention is to dredge it back up that the Republicans want to get rid of their birth control pills and deny them abortion, and that will bring 'em back, and that's what they're trying to do. It's a total move of feint and distraction.”

And by allowing President Clinton's former press secretary George Stephanopoulos on the media panel, the Republican Party played right into their hands. The liberal message that feminists must rise up to protect women's rights from hostile, paternalistic Republicans was pushed hard by the liberal talking heads on TV and was all over the opinion pages of the nation's newspapers for the next few days.

It isn't by fabricating news or outright lying that liberal media operatives manipulate the news content of the debates; it is by selecting questions that set the agenda on liberal terms and presuppose the outcome favored by liberals—or by editing out the conservative viewpoint or facts that tend to support the conservative viewpoint. The result in the general election debates is that Republican presidential candidates are always outnumbered two or three to one in a fight that pits them against a liberal debate moderator and their liberal Democratic opponent.

What would make Republican candidates for president agree to a debate moderated by Matt Lauer, a “Notable Member” of the Clinton Global Initiative, or George Stephanopoulos, the former press secretary of a Democratic president, or the likes of CNN’s notoriously liberal host Anderson Cooper?

Besides rank stupidity, it is hard to think of a reason.

If the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over while expecting a different result, welcome to the nut house of the establishment media-sponsored Republican presidential debates.

What would you call a political party that hands the power to set the agenda during its presidential primaries to its sworn enemies in the liberal media, then doubles down to give the power to set the agenda in the waning days of the general election to a self-perpetuating “commission” of Washington, DC, progressive insiders? Some people might call that the national Republican Party; however, in his book *TAKEOVER*, CHQ Chairman Richard A. Viguerie calls it the Party of Stupid.