

Is the Liberal Mainstream Media 'Rigging the Election' for Hillary Clinton?

Prior to Wednesday night's debate, nationally syndicated radio host Hugh Hewitt debated two members of the liberal mainstream media over Donald Trump's assertions they are "rigging the election" in Hillary Clinton's favor.

They also discussed the Project Veritas voter fraud videos.

Hewitt spoke with both Michael Shear of *The New York Times* and Alex Isenstadt of *Politico*. He first played for Isenstadt a clip of an MSNBC interview in which Hewitt explained the "rigging of the election" being charged by Trump is two-fold: voter fraud and media bias.

He asked if Isenstadt agreed with that assessment.

"Yeah, look, I mean, that is what Donald Trump is talking about, is playing to a group of voters who do believe that the system is sort of set against Donald Trump in certain ways, including the way, in their view, the media is covering this race," he said. "But look, I mean, here's the thing. To some extent, the media is covering these things. The media is covering the Clinton email scandal.

"It's just that Donald Trump has been sort of perceived now by the American electorate as, by a wide swathe of the American electorate, as unacceptable, particularly in light of the Access Hollywood tape. And it's very hard, it's very hard, even if there were, per se, more coverage of the Clinton emails, it would be very hard for Trump to sort of have, to make real inroads in this race."

Hewitt asked Isenstadt if *Politico* has covered the Project

Veritas videos. He said they have not yet.

"I do believe that there is an effective blackout, Alex," Hewitt said. "I haven't seen these things, I know O'Keefe is odious to the left in Manhattan-Beltway media elite. I know because of Project ACORN and all of his colorful and often controversial history, and sometimes downright, you know, he got charged with criminal wrongdoing. I believe he was cleared, but I'm not sure. O'Keefe is a controversial guy, but these are pretty damning tapes. Have you watched them, yet?"

"Well, yeah, you know, I have, but the problem is, is that you know, there have been some, at least some believe there have been some issues with O'Keefe's reporting in the past with the edited tapes, does he manipulate them in some way?" Isenstadt said. "And so there have been some issues, perhaps the primary source, but look, I mean, the problem is, is like, is look at what Donald Trump has been accused of by numerous women now. Look at the—"

"But that's shifting. Alex, you're shifting back," Hewitt responded. "You're doing exactly what my team hates, which is I'm talking about Project Veritas, you want to shift it back to Trump."

Hewitt then suggested the "rigging" that Trump was talking about was Democrat operatives' efforts to ensure they were competing against the businessman in the general election. The WikiLeaks emails and Project Veritas videos, when taken together, paint a broad picture of that kind of "rigging," he added.

"This is a central part of Donald Trump's argument," Isenstadt said. "The question, though, is that is the notion that the media is somehow aligned against Donald Trump, is that an effective argument for him at the end of this race?"

"I don't know that it reaches enough new voters. I don't know that enough votes really believe that somehow that the media

establishment is aligned against him. I don't know if that's an effective enough argument."

"I don't think it is," Hewitt replied. "I think it matters a great deal for democracy going [forward] that the media commit itself to finding scumbags who are attempting to manipulate elections, to nominate the weakest opponent."

Shear, who covers the White House, not the campaign trail, was also asked about Project Veritas videos. The *Times* reporter admitted that while he may have watched clips, he hasn't seen the entire videos yet.

"They show the Democrat manipulation of the cycle," Hewitt said. "We are where we are, but how we got there is important. And I think the President ought to be asked if he knows these people, if he knows what they are up to, because they say they are wired into the DNC."

"And if you—O'Keefe is controversial. I stipulate that. You have to check and make sure that they're accurate, but it's been 48 hours. And I don't really think you can fake these. I would encourage you to watch them."

"I don't think, and perhaps the Democratic Party has some responsibility for what has ultimately happened with Trump," Shear said. "But look, I don't think you can, I don't think you can say that the bulk of the responsibility for why the Republican Party chose Donald Trump is the Democratic Party's responsibility, right? I mean, that's—"

"I'm not saying that," Hewitt responded. "I'm saying when the President chides Trump, and Jan Schakowsky's husband is on tape talking about manipulating the process to elect Trump, that that is newsworthy, because he is a Chicago pol, right, Michael Shear?"

"Right."

"President Obama began and is part of that machine. He no doubt knows these people."

"Right."

"And his press secretary, I just think it's so obviously newsworthy when against the backdrop of the Access Hollywood tape, and I have no objection to that playing, none at all. It's newsworthy."

"Right."

"I have no objection to the Russian intelligence operation being run against the United States being talked about. And Wikileaks doesn't exist. It's a Russian intelligence operation."

"Right."

"And people ought to refer to it as when it's referred to. But it's in the public. We ought to talk about it. But the President seems to be protected by the media. And the fact that Project Veritas is blacked out is very bothersome to me. How many times do you think Access Hollywood tape has been played on television? I asked Alex Isenstadt for an estimate last hour. I'll get your estimate. How many times do you think people have actually played that on the big three networks, CNN, MSNBC?"

"Oh, thousands, probably."

"I guessed at least a thousand, but I think you're probably right, thousands."

"Yeah."

"So wouldn't it be fair to at least play some of the Project Veritas tape?"

"Yeah, look, you know, the, I haven't watched them. You know,

I vaguely have a sense of what you're talking about, and that may be an indictment of the press that I don't have a better sense of that. You know, I think it's fair. I will go back and look at them. I think it's fair to, you know, to hold the press accountable for making sure that it doesn't ignore stuff that's newsworthy. And if that's what the press has been doing, then you know, I think you and others should hold us to account."