



Media Monitor

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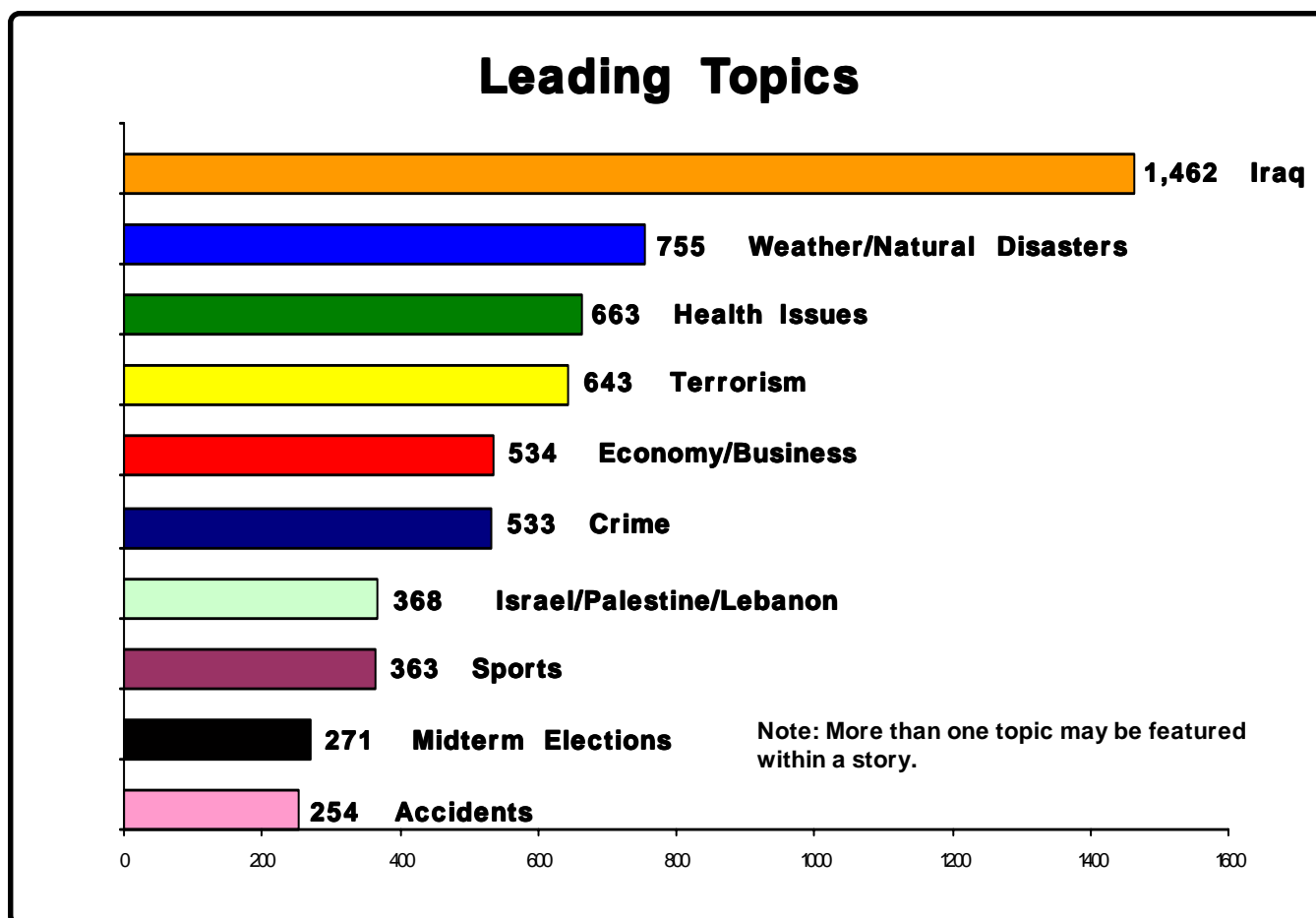
2006 Year in Review

TV's Leading News Topics, Reporters, and Political Jokes

During 2006 we monitored more than 11,000 news stories broadcast on the ABC, CBS, and NBC evening news programs. We also logged 6,203 jokes about public affairs and public figures from the monologues of late night television comics Jay Leno, David Letterman, and Conan O'Brien. This annual review issue of Media Monitor chronicles the leading news topics, most visible reporters and most frequent targets of political humor on TV during 2006.

Major Findings:

- *[Iraq Amok](#) - The war in Iraq was the top story for the fourth year in a row.
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- *[Fast Starters](#) - The 2006 race got the most coverage of any midterm election since 1990. Page 2
- *[Bush Boffo on Leno](#) - President Bush was again the top target of late-night TV comedians. Page 6
- *[Diversity Watch](#) - Minority and female journalists had their most visible year (again). Page 3
- *[Invisible Men](#) - Only four minority reporters finished among the top 50.
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- *[Visible Women](#) - But the top five included two women. Page 4

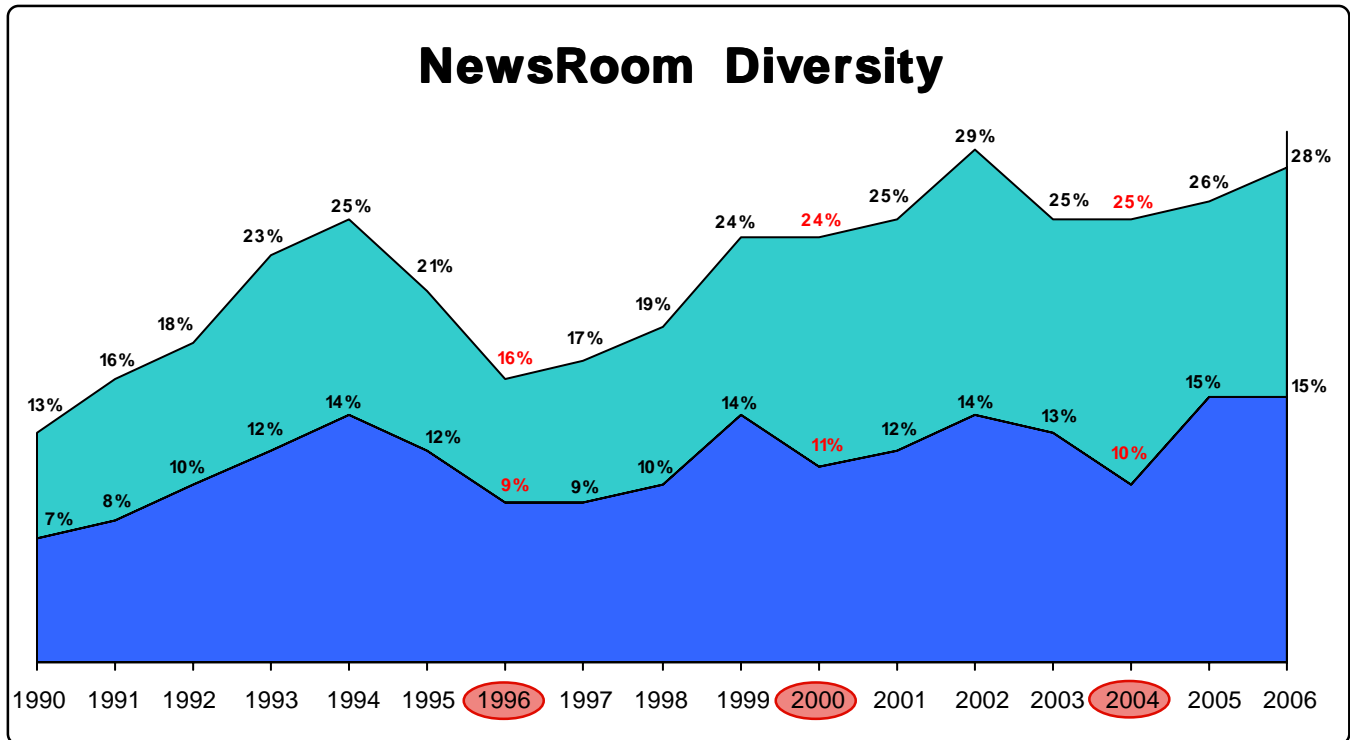


For the fourth year in a row, Iraq was the dominant news story, with 1,462 stories. Coverage was up slightly from the 2005* total of 1,369 stories. For the second year in a row, weather and natural disaster stories were the second most prominent. Stories about the Hurricane Katrina recovery, prospects for the next hurricane season, and other severe weather patterns comprised the majority of these stories.

Health issues were the third most covered topic (663 stories), followed by terrorism (643), and business and the economy (534.) For the second year in a row, economic coverage fell, down nearly 30 percent from the 742 business and economic stories in 2005.

The top ten was rounded out by crime coverage (533 stories), conflicts in the Middle East between Israel and the Palestinians and Israel and Lebanon (368), sports (363), the midterm elections (271) and various accidents (254) such as the Sago Mine disaster. Coverage of the 2006 elections was the heaviest of any midterm election since 1990. (See *Media Monitor*, September/October 2006.)

*Note: The 2005 top ten were: 1) Iraq 1,369 stories, 2) Weather/Natural Disasters 1,076, 3) Economy/Business 742, 4) Crime 717, 5) Health issues 615, 6) Terrorism 365, 7) United Kingdom 248, 8) Sports 227, 9) Vatican 170, and 10) Entertainment 159.



Racial and gender diversity among reporters on the broadcast network evening newscasts matched its highest level since 1990. Our study found that the representation of both minority and female reporters has more than doubled since 1990, when we began studying the demographics of network news reporters.

In 2006, 15 percent of all network stories were reported by minority correspondents and 28 percent were reported by women. This is the highest proportion of minority and female visibility since 2002, when minorities and women accounted for 14 percent and 29 percent of all stories aired, respectively. These figures are more than double those recorded in the first year of this ongoing study. In 1990 minorities reported only seven percent and women thirteen percent of stories aired on the evening news shows.

Minority story assignments remained steady at its record high (since 1990) of 15 percent in 2006. CBS correspondent Byron Pitts was the most prominent minority reporter, ranking 20th of all network news correspondents with 76 stories reported. ABC's Pierre Thomas, NBC's Jim Maceda and CBS's Joie Chen and Randall Pinkston were the other minority journalists to crack 2006's list of "The 50 Most Visible Network Correspondents."

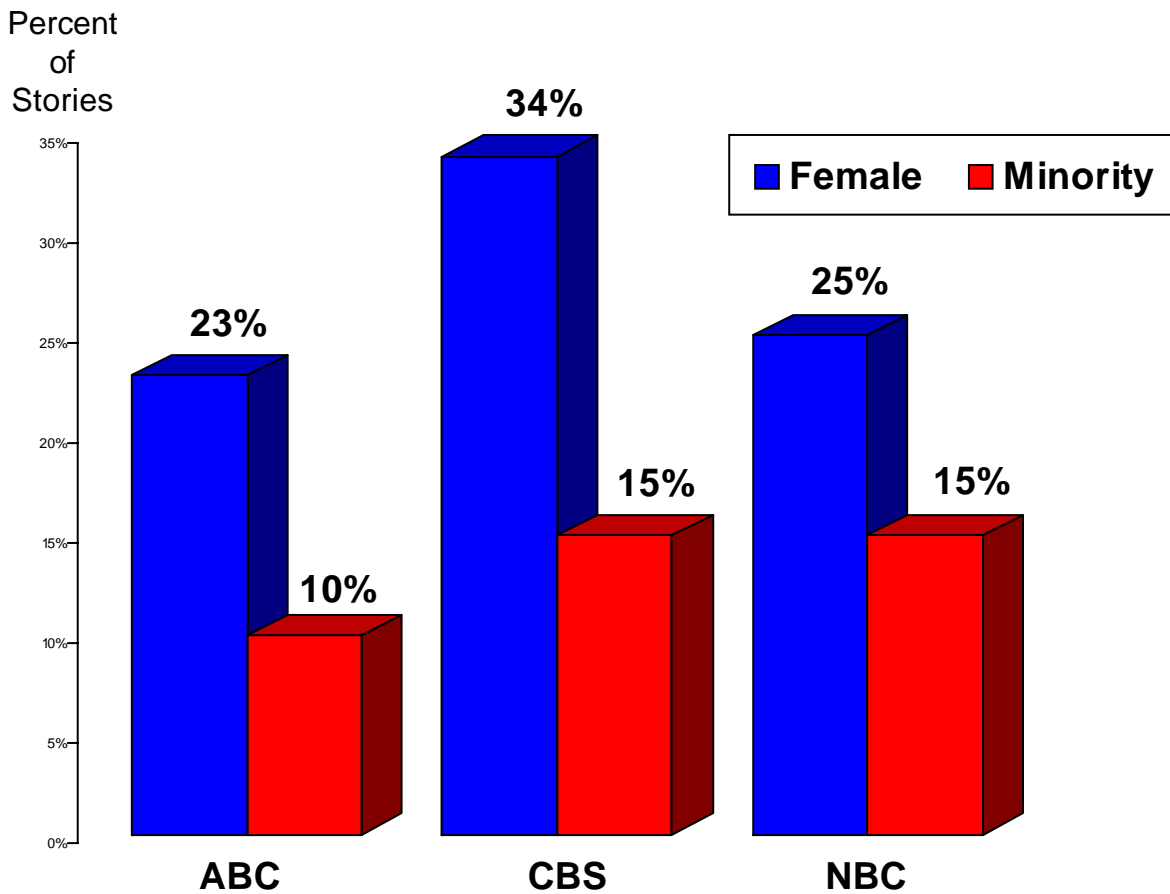
For the second straight year, female correspondents saw an increase in story assignments, rising from 25 percent in 2004 to 26 percent in 2005 to 28 percent last year. ABC's Martha Raddatz was the most visible female news correspondent last year, ranking fourth with 112 stories reported, and CBS's Katie Couric ranked fifth with 103.

Most Visible Reporters 2006

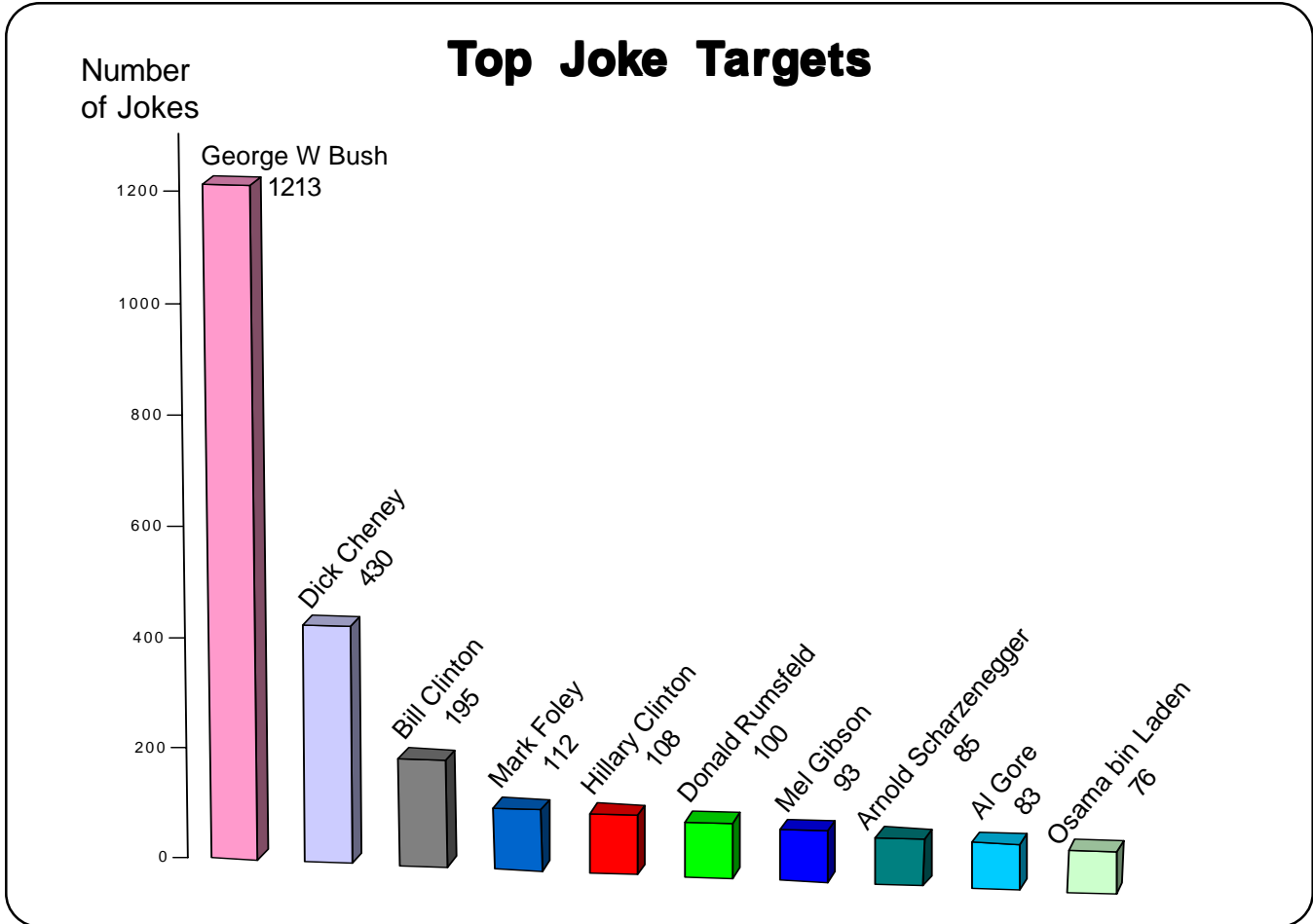
		Number of Stories	Race	Gender	Network
1	Harris, Dan *	137	W	M	ABC
2	Gregory, David	124	W	M	NBC
3	Axelrod, Jim	117	W	M	CBS
4	Raddatz, Martha	112	W	F	ABC
5	Couric, Katie *	103	W	F	CBS
6	Williams, Brian *	102	W	M	NBC
7	Martin, David	100	W	M	CBS
8	Costello, Tom	98	W	M	NBC
	Miklaszewski, Jim	98	W	M	NBC
10	Bazell, Robert	95	W	M	NBC
11	Williams, Pete	93	W	M	NBC
12	Karl, Jonathan	89	W	M	ABC
	Reid, Chip	89	W	M	NBC
14	Engel, Richard	88	W	M	NBC
15	Mitchell, Andrea	85	W	F	NBC
16	Cowan, Lee	82	W	M	CBS
17	Tapper, Jake	81	W	M	ABC
18	Mason, Anthony	79	W	M	CBS
19	Taibbi, Mike	77	W	M	NBC
20	Pitts, Byron	76	B	M	CBS
21	Stark, Lisa	75	W	F	ABC
	Logan, Lara	75	W	F	CBS
23	Stephanopoulos, George	74	W	M	ABC
24	Alfonsi, Sharyn	71	W	F	CBS
	Myers, Lisa	71	W	F	NBC
26	Thompson, Anne	70	W	F	NBC
27	Ross, Brian	68	W	M	ABC
28	Gibson, Charles *	68	W	M	ABC
29	Orr, Bob	67	W	M	CBS
30	Savidge, Martin	66	W	M	NBC
31	Attkisson, Sharyl *	64	W	F	CBS
32	Borger, Gloria	63	W	F	CBS
	Lewis, George	63	W	M	NBC
34	Thomas, Pierre	62	B	M	ABC
35	Schieffer, Bob *	57	W	M	CBS
	Fletcher, Martin	57	W	M	NBC
37	Reynolds, Dean	55	W	M	ABC
	Palmer, Elizabeth	55	W	F	CBS
39	Muir, David	54	W	M	ABC
	Wright, David	54	W	M	ABC
41	Regan, Trish	51	W	F	CBS
	Hartman, Steve	51	W	M	CBS
	Maceda, Jim	51	H	M	NBC
44	Andrews, Wyatt	50	W	M	CBS
45	Chen Joie,	49	A	F	CBS
46	Pinkston, Randall	48	B	M	CBS
47	Stark, Betsy	47	W	F	ABC
	McKenzie, John	47	W	M	ABC
	Fratangelo, Dawn	47	W	F	NBC
50	Stewart, Jim	45	W	M	CBS

*Does not include "headline" anchor-read stories.

Network Differences in Newsroom Diversity



The chart above shows the differences among the three evening news shows in the representation of women and minority reporters. At CBS, 15 percent of all stories were covered by minority reporters, while women reported 34 percent. NBC also assigned 15 percent of its stories to minorities but only 25 percent to women. The least diverse was ABC, where minority correspondents covered only 10 percent of all stories and women correspondents 23 percent.



For the fifth consecutive year, President George W. Bush was the leading target of television’s late-night humorists. The 1,213 jokes aimed at Bush was his highest annual total since taking office, and nearly three times that of Vice President Dick Cheney, who was second with 430 jokes.

Old reliables Bill and Hillary Clinton finished third and fifth, with 195 and 108 jokes respectively. They were sandwiched around number four joke getter and former Congressman Mark Foley (112 jokes), who resigned following publicity about his unseemly contacts with young congressional pages.

Rounding out the top 10 were former defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld, actor Mel Gibson, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, former Vice President Al Gore, and Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

Examples of Late Night Political Humor

President George Bush now wants to end our dependency on foreign oil. Nice to see him nipping that in the bud. *David Letterman, 02/22/06*

Today, President Bush announced his new fitness plan to get people walking again. It's called gasoline at \$3 a gallon. *Jay Leno, 04/12/06*

According to a recent poll, three out of five Americans believe George W. Bush should be impeached. And when he heard that, the President said, "Cool, I love peaches." *David Letterman, 03/22/06*

It was so hot down in Washington, DC that Dick Cheney shot a hunting buddy with a super soaker. *David Letterman, 07/18/06*

The guy who got gunned down is a big Republican donor. Fortunately, the buckshot was deflected by wads of laundered cash. *David Letterman, 02/13/06*

Hillary Clinton said that in her spare time she likes to download iTunes. And of course in his spare time Bill likes to download interns. *David Letterman, 05/22/06*

This weekend is the annual cat show at Madison Square Garden. The cats are judged on poise, gait and bearing. Coincidentally, that is how Congressman Foley selects a page. *David Letterman, 10/13/06*

Last weekend you could have seen Pakistan's President Musharraf on "Meet the Press," Senator Joe Biden on "Face the Nation," and Congressman Mark Foley on "Dateline: To Catch a Predator." *Jay Leno, 10/02/06*

Note: Joke texts may be altered slightly for brevity.



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