

JOHN "CENTURY" MCCAIN REDUCES THE RNC TO BABBLING

Now, I'm sure the RNC has better reasons to call a press conference and claim this ad is "false and defamatory" than any real belief their hysterics will keep the ad off the air. They're almost certainly trying to blur this ad with the GOP's own controversial ads: there's the DCCC's two FEC complaints—backed up by documentary evidence—that the NRCC and Freedom's Watch are coordinating ads, and the race-baiting ad that the strangely impotent John McCain could not prevent the NC GOP from airing. In other words, the GOP is likely trying to water-down any focus on their own (in the NRCC-Freedom's Watch case) illegal ads. Perhaps, too, they're testing the mettle of the cable networks, to see if similar complaints will work as we get closer to the election.

But they can't really be ignorant enough to believe that such an attack won't attract more attention to the ad—and to McCain's vision of a century in Iraq?

What I most like about their attack, though, is the way their argument has reduced their babbling lawyer to utter unintelligibility.

This is a complaint about the facts that are being misrepresented in the ad, and this being a deliberate falsehood, that we are saying, stations have an obligation to protect the public from airing a deliberate falsehood.

First, as the GOP must recognize well from having pioneered this kind of ad, there really aren't facts that are being misrepresented. Consider the content:

- A questioner asks McCain:

President Bush has talked about staying in Iraq for 50 years.

Now to be fair, Tony Snow tried mightily to deny the one thing everyone understood as soon as Bush started saying Iraq would be "like" Korea. That we'd be there for a "like" amount of time, 50 years. But to make the assertion that Bush wants troops in Iraq for 50 years and McCain wants them there for a century, this ad relies solely on this video showing McCain responding to a question about Bush's 50 year statements in Derry NH. The question and answer happened—it is not an assertion, it is just a video clip.

- McCain suggests—speaking of a long-term deployment and mentioning Korea specifically—"maybe a hundred."
- 5 years, \$500 billion, over 4000 dead.

Gosh—we could have been hardnosed! We didn't even mention the hundreds of thousands of Iraqi dead.

- If all he offers is more of the same, is John McCain the right choice, is John McCain the right choice for America's future.

In point of fact, since both McCain and Bush are referring to a Korea-model for our engagement in Iraq, his proposed policy is more of the same.

And that schmoozy hug at the end? Not a photoshop.

So, back to the RNC lawyer's babbling: first, no "facts misrepresented in the ad." There's really no central logical assertion at all, in fact.

Rather, any argument the ad makes is just associational—implying that McCain’s willingness to keep troops stationed in Iraq for a century means more of the dollars and death lost in Iraq. And—as Max Cleland would be thrilled to explain to the RNC—that doesn’t mean the facts are misrepresented. In fact, as Max Cleland would be thrilled to explain to the RNC, this as associational claim—that McCain’s stance will lead to more ugly violence—is a heck of a lot more sound than some other associational ads that Max Cleland can think of.

Then babbling RNC lawyer tries to equate "facts misrepresented in the ad" with "deliberate falsehood." "This is a complaint about the facts that are being misrepresented in the ad, and this being a deliberate falsehood." But does he succeed? What the RNC would like you think is "this complaint asserts that the ad misrepresents the facts, which means that the ad is a deliberate falsehood." But that’s not what babbling RNC lawyer says. After all, what’s the antecedent for "this" in the second clause? The complaint? Or the assertion that facts are being misrepresented? Or "the facts that are being misrepresented"? My vote is for "the complaint." But even if "this" doesn’t refer to "the complaint," it still refers to the facts that are being misrepresented ... meaning: "the facts that are being misrepresented are a deliberate falsehood." I’d buy that too, I guess.

So let’s continue.

This is a complaint about the facts that are being misrepresented in the ad, and this being a deliberate falsehood, that we are saying, stations have an obligation to protect the public from airing a deliberate falsehood.

Again, I’m sure the RNC intends to say that "this complaint asserts that the ad misrepresents the facts, which means that the ad is a deliberate falsehood which the stations have an obligation to protect the public from

seeing." But boy, with that babbling, you wouldn't know it. "This complaint about the facts [passive construction hiding the agent misrepresenting], [run-on and unclear antecedent making it unclear what is the misrepresentation], [huh? phatic?], stations have an obligation to protect the public from airing a deliberate falsehood."

Perhaps I'm over-reading. But I would advise cable stations not to report on the GOP complaint. Because the babbling RNC lawyer believes stations should not report on deliberate falsehoods.