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Kurtz Bashes Stossel: Partisan Person Goes To Partisan Network To Do Partisan Show

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Howard Kurtz must have woken up on the wrong side of the bed Sunday, for his "Reliable Sources" review of John Stossel's new Fox Business Network show was uncharacteristically way off base.

After presenting a cherry-picked video clip of Stossel talking about how he wished Nobel Laureate Al Gore would come on the program to debate man's role in global warming, Kurtz asked guest David Zurawik, "[D]oes this continue a trend of **partisan people going to partisan networks and putting them on partisan shows?**"



After Zurawik's answer, Kurtz carped, "My only problem with that first program is that he basically had one guest for three-quarters of the show, a guy from the Libertarian Cato Institute who is also very skeptical of global warming. And so, except from the studio audience, you didn't hear a lot of contrary voices."

Unfortunately, Kurtz edited out the segment when Stossel read an e-mail message from Gore's representative saying the former Vice President had to decline the invitation to appear on the program because he was too busy (video embedded below the fold with partial transcript):



HOWARD KURTZ, HOST: OK. Let me get to one other television development this week, and that was John Stossel's debut on the Fox Business Network. Stossel, of course, the Libertarian journalist who spent a quarter century at ABC.

His first show this week talked about global warming. He is quite skeptical, shall we say.

Here is part of that program.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

JOHN STOSSEL, FOX BUSINESS NETWORK: I wish that Al Gore were here to debate him and me. The truth is you won't debate anyone. You've been asked lots of times, but you always say no.

But if you do ever want to debate, we'd love to offer you the air time. We will give it to you. I'll give you a special phone number that goes to this phone.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KURTZ: David Zurawik, does this continue a trend of partisan people going to partisan networks and putting them on partisan shows.

DAVID ZURAWIK, TELEVISION AND MEDIA CRITIC "THE BALTIMORE

SUN": You know, I interviewed Stossel and I liked him. He was very frank about this, and he says he's doing a Libertarian show. I think it's fine, especially for the Fox Business Network.

You know, it's fascinating. When I asked him if he felt more comfortable being over at Fox and if other people shared his view, he positioned himself as saying that Bill O'Reilly had too many "big government parts" for him. And I thought, man, this guy is hard core if Bill O'Reilly is too government.

KURTZ: My only problem with that first program is that he basically had one guest for three-quarters of the show, a guy from the Libertarian Cato Institute who is also very skeptical of global warming. And so, except from the studio audience, you didn't hear a lot of contrary voices.

All right.

Emily Rooney, Steve Friedman, thanks very much for joining us.

Nice cherry-pick, Howard. Here's what really happened as NewsBusters reported [0] Friday:

JOHN STOSSEL, HOST: I wish that Al Gore were here to debate him (Jerry Taylor, Energy Analyst for the Cato Institute) and me. We asked Vice President Gore, and his office sent this e-mail saying: "It's very difficult to decline invitations such as yours, but it's an unfortunate inevitability of the growing influence of the climate crisis message and the demand on Mr. Gore's time. (Boos from audience) We do apologize, but thank you for your interest." (Via email 11/23/09).

Come on, Mr. Gore. The idea that you don't have time is pretty silly. You have time to go on programs like "Saturday Night Live." It's not a time issue. (Applause) Truth is, you won't debate anyone. You've been asked lots of times, but you always say no. But if you do ever want to debate, we'd love to offer you the air time. We will give it to you. I'll give you a special phone number that goes to this phone. Glenn Beck has that red phone that goes to the President. For you Mr. Gore, the green phone. I await your call.

Might have been nice of Kurtz to play the entire segment rather than cherry-pick so that his viewers would know that Stossel did indeed try to book someone with a contrary view.

Furthermore, how did Kurtz know Stossel didn't invite on anyone else to express Gore's side of this debate? After all, climate realists have a hard time getting any of the global warming alarmists to debate them.

With most of these folks currently hiding as a result of the ClimateGate scandal, maybe like Gore himself they don't want to go on any program where they will either have their opinions challenged or might have to answer inconvenient questions.

Sadly, Kurtz didn't consider this angle.

Too bad.

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