

Rubio Reaches for Water – Crime of the Century

☒ In 1983, when the outrageously flamboyant Edwin Edwards was running for governor of Louisiana he joked with reporters that “The only way I can lose this election is if I’m caught in bed with either a dead girl or a live boy.” He wasn’t caught with either, and as predicted, he won.

Now it appears that there’s another way to lose an election, even when you’re not running for anything. All you have to do is reach a little too far for a sip of water while you’re making a speech on national television.

No explanation is necessary, I suppose. Everyone by now knows about Marco Rubio’s gaffe during his response to the president’s State of the Union speech. And yes, my conservative friends, it was a gaffe. A rookie mistake. If you’re going to drink water during a speech, have it somewhere in the same zip code.

But this gaffe had absolutely nothing to do with the content of the speech. Unfortunately, nobody remembers very much about the content of the speech. All they remember is the awkward reach for a sip of water.

Yes, we are all inhabitants of an incredibly shallow culture, where such trivia is considered newsworthy. Before you could say “Watergate,” MSNBC ran the clip 155 times. CNN ran it 34 times. Fox ran it a mere 12 times.

Even the serious journalists said stupid things. While Wolf Blitzer incredibly wondered, “So, can a drink of water make or break a political career?” the CNN graphic at the bottom of the screen that said: “Career ender?” After a while, CNN said they were just having fun. Sure.

Brian Williams, the NBC anchor, called the sip, “the televised moment from last night that just might live on forever.” He may be right. But what he didn’t say is that if it does live on forever it will be because people like Brian Williams have decided that it needs to live on forever.

Then, as is often the case, the video clip made its way from the mainstream media to the TV comedians, with Leno, Letterman, Stuart, Colbert and Jimmy Kimmel all getting into the act.

Kimmel asked, “Why was the water so far away? It would have been less awkward if [Rubio] reached down the front of his pants to get it.” Letterman ran a picture of Rubio (the one above) with the caption: “That looks presidential, right?”

The next day, the network news morning shows ran a montage of the clips from the TV comedians the night before. So let’s review: the so-called mainstream media have a field day with trivial incident which then gets picked up by the TV comics, which then gets picked up by the so-called mainstream media, which made something out of nothing to begin with. Eventually it seeps into the bloodstream of the American electorate, which is probably what this fascination with water was all about in the first place.

But the fascination with an incident that in other times wouldn’t even qualify as inconsequential, does tell us something quite consequential about today’s media.

First, it’s a safe bet that if their hero, President Obama, had reached for water in the exact same awkward way Marco Rubio did, the same gang would have praised him for being cool. “He was thirsty,” Brian Williams, a big fan of the president, might have said, “so he reached for a bottle of water and took a sip. What a guy!”

A few days before the incident, Time magazine put Marco Rubio on its cover with the headline “The Republican Savior.” Rule

of thumb: When you're a conservative and gain that kind of traction, when liberals in and out of the media begin to fear your influence, that's when they'll go after you. They'll even try to turn a reach for a sip of water into "Watergate."

But this tells us something else unflattering about today's media. It tells us how incredibly shallow they can be. This is the same crowd that barely touched the Benghazi story even though four Americans, including our ambassador to Libya, were killed. That didn't interest them very much. Rubio's water gaffe does.

And trust me on this: It's not over. If Marco Rubio decides to run for president in 2016, you will be seeing his reach for that water bottle over and over and over again on television. And there will be pundits who question whether a man who made such a *terrible mistake* could possibly make prudent decisions in the Oval office.

Remember: They only go after those they fear, the ones with influence. And only if they're conservative Republicans. Otherwise you would have heard a lot more about those 57 states that Barack Obama campaigned in.