

At CBS, CIA + GOP = “All Segments of American Life”

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Bob Schieffer kicked off his final show as host of CBS’s Face the Nation ([5/31/15](#)) with a clip of what he said on his first show 24 years ago:

“Our aim is going to be very simple here, to find interesting people from all segments of American life who have something to say and give them a chance to say it.”

The Washington Post’s Michelle Ye Hee Lee ([5/31/15](#)), reviewing Schieffer’s last broadcast, wrote:

“And Schieffer remained true to the tradition on his final broadcast, giving guests who had something to say — former Florida governor Jeb Bush, CIA Director John Brennan and a panel of journalists — a chance to say it.”

The idea that the establishment’s favorite right-wing presidential candidate and the head of the CIA qualify as “interesting people from all segments of American life” can only make sense in the insular world of Beltway journalism.



CIA chief John Brennan, GOP politician Jeb Bush—to CBS, this represents “all segments of American life.”

At CBS News, they do really seem to believe that an obsessive, nearly exclusive focus on the most prominent members political class is consistent with a commitment to showcasing the views of “all segments of American life”; at least, they used that same introductory quote to

illustrate what kind of journalist Schieffer was on the occasion of his 20th anniversary, in 2011 (CBSNews.com, [9/21/15](#)). Producer Robert Hendin then proudly launched into a recitation of who had actually been featured on Face the Nation over the previous two decades:

To celebrate Bob's 20th Anniversary, we went through the files and looked at exactly who he's had on the broadcast. Here's a look at Bob Schieffer's 20 years at Face the Nation by the numbers:

Bob has interviewed:

Three presidents of the United States, four vice presidents, seven secretaries of state, six secretaries of Defense and 45 different cabinet members. He's also interviewed 123 senators and 109 different representatives.

Of those, a few notable names come up more frequently than others: Vice President Joe Biden has been interviewed by Bob on Face the Nation 46 times. House Speaker John Boehner, seven times. Former Vice President Dick Cheney has been on the broadcast 16 times, including this past Sunday's program. By far, though, the No. 1 guest of Bob's tenure as host of Face the Nation is none other than Senator John McCain who has been on the program 76 times.

Hendin did mention two categories of guests that Schieffer showcased who were outside the world of Beltway politics, "sports figures and celebrities," and mentioned three of these: Bill Cosby, Morgan Fairchild and NFL commissioner Roger Goodell. So much for "all segments of American life." Apparently there are some parts of the nation CBS doesn't want to face.

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