

A fawning frenzy for Michelle

by *L_Brent_Bozell*

Imagine being Laura Bush and turning on the television and watching the absolute deluge of sticky-sweet syrup being poured all over Michelle Obama during her European debut as first lady. It is as if every TV reporter was handed a pamphlet of talking points and ordered to compare Mrs. Obama to Jackie Kennedy. NBC's Dawna Friesen gushed: "Though Harvard-educated Michelle Obama has substance, not just style, and that's what sets her apart."

Apart from whom? Unspoken, but unmistakable, NBC's saying Michelle has more substance than Laura and more style than Hillary. Everyone expects the press to be polite and gentle with the First Lady, but this is ridiculous. The official "news" media line now is that Michelle is the most smashing and fashionable and intelligent first lady in recent history, maybe ever.

Friesen's embarrassing report set the tone early; it began with five seconds of the Frankie Valli song "Can't Take My Eyes Off of You," as in "You're just too good to be true." That would describe the press, in love and going way beyond the truth. Apparently, Michelle's just like heaven to touch. The media want to hold her so much.

Liberals might insist that conservatives are once again protesting that "reality has a liberal bias." After all, left-wing Europeans and the left-wing European press were captivated by Mrs. Obama, and thrilled the Bushes are gone. Even Queen Elizabeth allowed the usual faux pas of Michelle's hand on her back. But American reporters weren't going to let facts be an obstacle to their Obama hosannas.

Look back at that Friesen report on NBC. She forwarded columnist Helen Kirwan-Taylor claiming Michelle "is absolutely terrifying for the British, because the British like their women to be subdued and doey-eyed and sort of modest and soft-spoken," like the late Princess Diana. They don't like strong, confident women.

Earth to NBC, in orbit: Didn't the Brits elect Margaret Thatcher as their prime minister ... three times?

There was also a repetitive and obnoxious tendency to claim that "everyone" was thrilled by Michelle. Here, again, is Friesen: "Not only has she dazzled everyone with her style here, she seems to have made a new friend at the Palace." NBC's Meredith Vieira claimed, "So everybody in Europe abuzz over this first lady." Did NBC conduct a poll of "everyone" in Europe? Shouldn't these "reporters" try to curb their raging enthusiasm, and try to stay somewhere in the same atmosphere as the facts?

Then there were just the nauseating hyperbolic flourishes, like nominating the Obamas to be America's "royal family." NBC's Brian Williams oozed, "There is no denying the Obamas from America are receiving a rock star reception on this trip. One London paper today called them American royalty." So did NBC White House correspondent Chuck Todd: "America's unofficial royalty, the president and first lady, reconnected tonight for more ceremonial duties, including a private audience with actual royalty, the Queen herself." Over on CNN, reporter Alina Cho chucked aside the qualifier altogether: "As America's first lady embarks upon her first trip to Europe, the world is watching the royal family of the United States."

That's pretty rich for a guy who was elected with a landslide of 52.9 percent of the vote.? The media's wowing would not stop. In fact, the "ugly American" boastfulness that liberal media types claim to dislike so much was breaking out all over. CNN's Alina Cho said the British prime minister's wife was uglier than Mrs. Obama: "In fact, [liberal journalist] Tina Brown, as you know, joked about an hour ago that Sara Brown is a beautiful girl, but, you know, everybody sort of knows that right now, at least, she pales in comparison to Michelle Obama." When the Obamas flew to Paris, CBS's Mark Phillips was thumbing his nose at the inferior supermodel spouse of France's president: "For as long as Michelle Obama is in France, Carla Bruni may be French toast."

What must Laura Bush be thinking? When she debuted in Europe in June of 2001, one Washington Post headline was "The First Lady Takes Europe By Calm." You can't find a network news story on it. Obviously, one reason was Mrs. Bush's desire to stay politely in the background, her humility that no one elected her. But another was the media's glaringly obvious lack of affection for her, unlike the fawning frenzies over the last two Democratic wives.

L. Brent Bozell III is the president of the Media Research Center.

Copyright 2009 Creators Syndicate, Inc.

A fawning frenzy for Michelle by L_Brent_Bozell