

**THE BLOG**

CNN's All-White Color on Selma

By Marty Kaplan

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Did anyone besides me find it a little odd that CNN convened an all-white panel to do color commentary on the Selma black church speeches by Sens. Obama and Clinton?

I'm not surprised that Republican shill John Fund - who denounced Sen. Clinton's denunciation of electoral irregularities that disproportionately affected black voters as baseless; "I know, I wrote a book about it" - was not counterweighted by a liberal voice.

And I'm grateful that CNN took the time to cover both speeches, before returning to the CNN Investigative Unit's meta-porn, "Chasing Angelina: Paparazzi and Celebrity Obsession."

But wasn't it a little odd to hear only white folk talk about how the presidential candidates' speeches went down with black folk?

My own view: It was gutsy for Sen. Obama to talk about absent black fathers, and the need for black parents to turn off the TV and get their kids to value something besides the race of Oprah's bling. And it was surprising to see Sen. Clinton get into the call-and-response cadences of the setting without seeming awkward and script-tied, and it was gratifying to hear her preach an agenda broader than traditional civil rights issues.

But what the hell do I know? I wanted to find out how all the African-American reporters who are "part of the best political team on television" saw the speech. I wanted to celebrate the anniversary of Selma's Bloody Sunday by celebrating the progress made since then in bringing diversity to the journalism profession, showcasing CNN's own top black political journalists.

Oh, wait.

UPDATE: This post originally misidentified Republican shill John Fund as Republican shill David Frum; it was corrected within an hour or so. I regret the error.

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