

## PUBLIC BIDS NO TRUMP

In a month in which no single news story dominated public attention, Americans registered a strong protest about the amount of news coverage devoted to the marital breakup of Donald and Ivana Trump.

A record 55% said there was too much news about the Trumps. This is by far the largest "over covered" rating recorded by the Times Mirror News Interest Index. In contrast, about one in ten Americans (12%) say they have been following this story *very* closely and another 25% say they followed the story *fairly* closely. Public attention to the marital problems of the Trumps, mirrors the level of public interest found in another widely aired marital breakup, that of former Trump associate, Mike Tyson. When he and Robin Givens split up, to much fanfare in 1988, 14% followed the news very closely and 22% fairly closely.

The Trump story did not attract significantly more interest in the East or even in New York where 15% followed it very closely. The story was of somewhat greater interest to women with grade school educations and non-whites. However, the number following very closely did not reach the 20% level in any demographic group. But, the Trump affair did reach a wide audience among those who regularly read personality magazines such as People and Us - with 35% of regular readers of these publications saying they followed the story very closely.

Although few were riveted to news about the Trumps, Marla Maples became a familiar name to many Americans. Thirty-seven percent are able to identify her as Donald Trump's girlfriend - a very significant level of awareness for someone who only entered the public's consciousness within the past month. It's also another indication that even when the public does not follow a heavily covered story very closely, it still absorbs basic facts about the story. In previous months this has been apparent for many international stories that have had modest levels of public interest but high levels of public awareness (In March, see interest in Nicaragua vs. levels of awareness of the Chamorro victory).

Media judgement was also called into question by the public on another major issue of the month - the Andy Rooney suspension. A fifty-eight percent majority of the public disapproved of the CBS decision to suspend the controversial 60 Minutes columnist, while only 24% approved. The CBS decision was unpopular in majorities of every major demographic group, except among blacks, who divided evenly on the suspension (38% approved and 36% disapproved).

For the second consecutive month, the top stories of the month failed to engage the close attention of as much as a third of the public.

The freeing of South African leader Nelson Mandela and the political changes taking place in the Soviet Union led the Times Mirror News Interest Index with 30% and 28% of respondents respectively, reporting that they followed these stories very closely.

Public interest in both stories represents something of a turnabout from a month ago when only eleven percent of the public followed very closely the announcement that the government of South Africa would legalize the ANC and would free Mandela. Also, a month ago, just 13% reported they were following dramatic news about the civil unrest and ethnic violence in the Soviet Union very closely.

As in January, the level of overall interest in the Mandela story was buoyed by extraordinary levels of public interest among African Americans. No fewer than 58% of this group were attentive to it this month. It is also of note that news about the imprisoned African leader's release was as interesting to young people as older people. That is not the typical pattern for an international story. The high level of interest among young people may reflect, in part, the substantial amount of attention given to the black South African cause by rock musicians and entertainers.

The significant level of public interest in the changing politics of the Soviet Union is matched by a relatively high level of awareness that Gorbachev favors allowing a multi-party system - 46% knew his views.

Public attention to the Soviet story may have reduced interest in the political changes occurring in other communist countries. The percentage of the public paying close attention to political changes in Eastern and Central Europe fell to 21% this month from 26% in February, and about that level in earlier months. However, about the same percentage of Americans followed either news from the Soviet Union *or* news about Eastern and Central Europe in each month. In February, we found 30% following *one or both* of these stories closely and in March 34%.

It should be noted that while public interest in Eastern and Central Europe may have flagged a bit, it was considered by Times Mirror respondents as the most important news of the month. ***Eighteen percent named it as that on an unaided basis, compared to 11% naming the Mandela story and 9% naming changes within the Soviet Union itself.***

Nonetheless, Vaclav Havel's visit to the U.S. went largely unnoticed. Just 6% of Americans followed the news about the Czech president's trip very closely. However, Havel did register some gains in public familiarity this month. Fourteen percent correctly identified him, up from 10% in January.

The debate and discussion about the reunification of Germany was followed very closely by 23% of Americans. Interest in German reunification was much greater among Americans 50 years of age and older. Thirty-two percent of those old enough to personally recall WWII were attentive to this story, compared to 18% among those under 50 years of age.

Public interest in news about Nicaragua did not measure up to the amount of network news coverage it received, relative to other major stories. Only nineteen percent paid close attention to the Chamorro victory and the defeat of Daniel Ortega.

The Times Mirror News Content Analysis for February found that the three networks devoted 85 minutes of air time on the evening news to the Nicaragua story in the past month. In comparison, political changes in the Soviet Union received 64 minutes, German reunification 44 minutes. The Mandela story led the airwaves with 230 minutes from February 1-28.

Although, the level of public interest in the Nicaraguan election was modest, awareness of the Chamorro victory was high. Sixty-three percent of the respondents knew that the UNO candidate defeated the Sandinista candidate.

The drug summit in Colombia was followed very closely by 22% of Americans which is about as much attention as President Bush got when he met with Gorbachev off the Malta coast (20%) but, far less attention than he received when he first announced his war on drugs in September (40%).

The Hilary Foretich custody case was the human interest story most closely followed by Americans in the past month. Seventeen percent said they followed news of this case very closely. Women were almost twice as likely to follow this story closely as were men (22% vs 12%). The media received below average grades for the way it covered this story from those who followed it closely - 37% gave press coverage of the Morgan-Foretich case negative ratings (an "only fair" or "poor" rating).

A similarly high negative rating (40%) was also given to the press for its coverage of the Trump affair by those who followed the story closely.

News about the Drexel Burnham bankruptcy engaged 9% of Americans. However, as with the Morgan-Foretich case, significant differences were found between men and women. Only 6% of women followed the story compared to 14% among men. The other business related story of the month, the Perrier recall, evoked extremely high awareness among both sexes and among virtually all groups in the population. Seventy-eight percent of Americans knew of the incident.

The bankruptcy of Drexel Burnham and Lambert is one of five stories that reflect extremely large differences between the interests of serious news consumers and the interests of the population at large.

As in previous months serious news consumers are defined as those who form the regular audience of either the McNeil Lehrer television news show, National Public Radio news shows (Morning Edition or All Things Considered), or are regular readers of such magazines as *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, or *Harper's*. Most also read a newspaper everyday and watch TV news programs regularly.

This segment of the public was more likely than other Americans to follow all the major news stories of the month, with the exception of the Trumps' marital fireworks display. However, serious news consumers were *three times* as likely as others to follow: the elections in Nicaragua, the Havel visit, German reunification, events in Eastern and Central Europe and the demise of Drexel Burnham.

Awareness of the Chamorro victory was nearly universal among serious news consumers and it was the only group in the population for which knowledge of Vaclav Havel was on a par with familiarity with Marla Maples.

<u>Percent Followed Very Closely:</u>	SERIOUS NEWS CONSUMERS	ALL OTHERS
The visit to the United States of Vaclav Havel, the new president of Czechoslovakia	18	4
The discussion of the reunification of Germany	54	19
The freeing of jailed black South African Leader Nelson Mandela	50	27
Political changes taking place in the Soviet Union	57	24
The political changes taking place in <b>Czechoslovakia, Hungary, East Germany</b> and other countries of Eastern and Central Europe	46	17
The elections in Nicaragua	46	16
President Bush's visit to Colombia to attend a Drug Summit	34	20
The marital breakup of Donald and Ivana Trump	14	11
The bankruptcy of Drexel Burnham Lambert Inc.	24	8
The custody case involving a mother who went to jail and a little child taken to New Zealand by her grandparents	26	16
<u>Levels of Awareness:</u>		
Knows Havel	42	11
Knows Maples	45	36
Heard about Perrier	88	76
Knows Chamorro won	89	59
Heard about Rooney	95	86
Knows multi-party system favored by Gorbachev	64	43

## PERCENT FOLLOWING EACH NEWS STORY "VERY CLOSELY"

	The Visit to The United States of Vaclav Havel	Discussion of the Reunification of Germany	Freeing of Nelson Mandela	Political Changes Taking Place in Soviet Union	Political Changes in Eastern and Central Europe
Total	6	23	30	28	21
<u>Sex</u>					
Male	5	28	31	35	25
Female	7	19	29	21	17
<u>Race</u>					
White	6	24	27	28	21
Non-white	3	15	50	23	20
<u>Age</u>					
Under 30	3	18	33	27	18
30-49	4	18	24	24	16
50+	11	32	34	33	28
<u>Education</u>					
College graduate	11	31	36	38	28
Other college	3	26	32	31	20
High school grad.	5	20	29	23	16
Less than h.s. grad.	5	18	22	21	22
<u>Region</u>					
East	8	23	29	30	25
Midwest	7	22	29	25	19
South	4	22	29	26	18
West	6	27	34	31	22
<u>Party ID</u>					
Republican	5	28	26	33	20
Democrat	7	20	34	26	21
Independent	6	22	32	28	23

*Question: Now I will read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past month. As I read each item, tell me if you happened to follow this news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely.*

CONTINUED...

... CONTINUED

	Elections in Nicaragua	Bush's Visit to Colombia to Attend Drug Summit	Trump Divorce	Bankruptcy of Drexel Burnham Lambert Inc.	Custody Case
Total	19	22	12	9	17
<u>Sex</u>					
Male	22	24	9	14	12
Female	17	19	14	6	22
<u>Race</u>					
White	19	22	11	10	17
Non-white	21	23	16	8	19
<u>Age</u>					
Under 30	15	17	10	6	13
30-49	13	18	12	7	16
50+	28	30	13	14	22
<u>Education</u>					
College graduate	27	26	9	14	15
Other college	19	20	12	12	19
High school grad.	16	21	13	5	18
Less than h.s. grad.	16	20	12	8	16
<u>Region</u>					
East	21	24	14	12	16
Midwest	19	22	13	7	18
South	15	23	11	10	18
West	22	16	8	10	16
<u>Party ID</u>					
Republican	19	26	11	10	16
Democrat	18	21	14	10	20
Independent	22	19	10	9	16

*Question: Now I will read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past month. As I read each item, tell me if you happened to follow this news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely.*

# PRESS COVERAGE RATINGS OF NEWS STORIES

## STORY FOLLOWED MOST CLOSELY

	Freeing of Nelson Mandela	Political Changes Taking Place in Eastern and Central Europe	Political Changes Taking Place in Soviet Union	Discus- sion of Reunifi- cation of Germany	Bush's Visit to Colombia to Attend Drug Summit	Custody Case	Trump Divorce
Excellent	32	26	27	30	21	23	21
Good	47	55	46	50	53	38	38
Only Fair	19	15	23	14	23	31	22
Poor	2	1	1	2	1	6	18
Don't know	0	3	3	4	2	2	1
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	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

## PRESS PERFORMANCE

	MAY <u>1989</u>	JUL <u>1989</u>	AUG <u>1989</u>	SEP <u>1989</u>	OCT <u>1989</u>	NOV <u>1989</u>
Excellent	19	26	25	19	32	41
Good	43	42	45	50	45	41
Only Fair	24	21	21	22	18	13
Poor	10	10	8	7	3	3
Don't Know	4	1	1	2	2	2
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	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

  

	DEC <u>1989</u>	JAN <u>1990</u>	FEB <u>1990</u>	MAR <u>1990</u>
Excellent	22	33	23	26
Good	45	48	50	48
Only Fair	25	14	19	20
Poor	6	3	5	4
Don't Know	2	2	3	2
	----	----	----	---
	100%	100%	100%	100%

Question: *In general, how would you rate the job the press has done in covering (STORY FOLLOWED MOST CLOSELY IN Q.7); excellent, good, only fair, or poor?*



## **SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

The survey results are based on telephone interviews conducted by The Gallup Organization under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates among 1,226 adults, 18 years of age or older, during the period of March 1-4, 1990. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus 3 percentage points. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

# **THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

TIMES MIRROR NEWS INTEREST INDEX  
MARCH 1990  
March 1-4, 1990  
n=1,226

**INTERVIEWER NOTE: PLEASE FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE RESPONSE CATEGORIES AND ACCEPT RESPONSES THAT FIT IN THESE CATEGORIES**

Q.1 What do you think is the most important news event that happened in the nation or in the world last month - in February? **(DO NOT READ)**

International Stories

The visit to the United States of Vaclav Havel, the new president of Czechoslovakia 1

The discussion of the reunification of Germany 3

The freeing of jailed black South African Leader Nelson Mandela 11

Political changes taking place in the Soviet Union 9

The political changes taking place in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and East Germany also mentions of Bulgaria, Romania, Poland and Eastern and Central Europe 18

The elections in Nicaragua 9

The elections in Japan 0

The Panama invasion, capture of Noriega 7

Domestic stories

President Bush's visit to Colombia to attend a Drug Summit 1

The marital breakup of Donald and Ivana Trump 1

The bankruptcy of Drexel Burnham Lambert Inc. 0

The custody case involving a mother who went to jail and a little child taken to New Zealand by her grandparents \*

Oil spill in California 2

Other (SPECIFY) 7

Can't say/Refused 29

None  $\frac{2}{100}$

NOW I WANT TO ASK YOU JUST A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT PEOPLE IN THE NEWS - NOT EVERYONE WILL HAVE HEARD OF THEM.

Q.2 Do you happen to know who Vaclav Havel is? (PRONUNCIATION VATS SLAV HOVEL)

20 Yes -----> (IF "YES" ASK:) Who is he? (DO NOT READ)

+QNo  
\*  
80S1  
100 . QDon't Know

14 New President of  
Czechoslovakia  
+QIncorrect answer  
6 S1  
20 . QDon't know

Q.3 Do you happen to know who Marla Maples is?

42 Yes -----> (IF "YES" ASK:) Who is she? (DO NOT READ)

+QNo  
58S1  
100 . QDon't know

37 Donald Trumps girlfriend  
+QIncorrect answer  
5 S1  
42 . QDon't know

Q.4 Now I will read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past month. As I read each item, tell me if you happened to follow this news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. (READ AND ROTATE LIST)

	<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	<u>DK</u>
a. The visit to the United States of Vaclav Havel, the new president of Czechoslovakia	6	19	31	43	1 = 100
b. The discussion of the reunification of Germany	23	41	20	16	* = 100
c. The freeing of jailed black South African Leader Nelson Mandela	30	44	17	8	1 = 100
d. Political changes taking place in the Soviet Union	28	46	16	10	* = 100
e. The political changes taking place in <u>Czechoslovakia, Hungary, East Germany</u> and other countries of Eastern and Central Europe	21	44	21	14	* = 100
f. The elections in Nicaragua	19	36	25	20	* = 100
g. President Bush's visit to Colombia to attend a Drug Summit	22	40	24	14	* = 100
h. The marital breakup of Donald and Ivana Trump	12	25	29	33	1 = 100
i. The bankruptcy of Drexel Burnham Lambert Inc.	9	17	25	47	2 = 100
j. The custody case involving a mother who went to jail and a little child taken to New Zealand by her grandparents	17	32	22	28	1 = 100

Q.5 Which one of the stories I just mentioned, have you followed most closely?  
 (DO NOT READ LIST. ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE.)

	<u>Story Followed Most Closely</u>
a. The visit to the United States of Vaclav Havel, the new president of Czechoslovakia	1
b. The discussion of the reunification of Germany	10
c. The freeing of jailed black South African Leader Nelson Mandela	17
d. Political changes taking place in the Soviet Union	11
e. The political changes taking place in <u>Czechoslovakia, Hungary, East Germany</u> and other countries of Eastern and Central Europe	15
f. The elections in Nicaragua	6
g. President Bush's visit to Colombia to attend a Drug Summit	10
h. The marital breakup of Donald and Ivana Trump	8
i. The bankruptcy of Drexel Burnham Lambert Inc.	1
j. The custody case involving a mother who went to jail and a little child taken to New Zealand by her grandparents	9
<b>CAN'T SAY</b>	<u>12</u>
	<b>100</b>

Q.6 Of all the stories mentioned, which of them, if any, received too much coverage? (DO NOT READ LIST. ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES)

	<u>Received Too Much Coverage</u>
a. The visit to the United States of Vaclav Havel, the new president of Czechoslovakia	1
b. The discussion of the reunification of Germany	1
c. The freeing of jailed black South African Leader Nelson Mandela	6
d. Political changes taking place in the Soviet Union	1
e. The political changes taking place in <u>Czechoslovakia, Hungary, East Germany</u> and other countries of Eastern and Central Europe	1
f. The elections in Nicaragua	1
g. President Bush's visit to Colombia to attend a Drug Summit	3
h. The marital breakup of Donald and Ivana Trump	55
i. The bankruptcy of Drexel Burnham Lambert Inc.	1
j. The custody case involving a mother who went to jail and a little child taken to New Zealand by her grandparents	3
k. None	14
<b>CAN'T SAY</b>	<b>14</b>

**IF RESPONDENT SAID '0' CAN'T SAY IN Q.5, SKIP TO Q.8**

Q.7 In general, how would you rate the job the press has done in covering (STORY FOLLOWED MOST CLOSELY IN Q.5); excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

**STORY FOLLOWED MOST CLOSELY**

		Freeing of Nelson Mandela	Political Changes in Eastern and Central Europe	Political Changes in Soviet Union	Discussion of Reunification of Germany	Bush's visit to Colombia to attend Drug Summit	Custody Case	Trump Divorce
26	Excellent	32	26	27	30	21	23	21
48	Good	47	55	46	50	53	38	38
20	Only Fair	19	15	23	14	23	31	22
4	Poor	2	1	1	2	1	6	18
<u>2</u>	DK	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>100</u>		<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

**NOW I WANT TO ASK YOU JUST A FEW MORE QUESTIONS ABOUT TOPICS IN THE NEWS - NOT EVERYONE WILL HAVE HEARD ABOUT THESE.**

Q.8 Did you happen to hear that Perrier water was taken off store shelves because of possible contamination?

78 Yes

22 No

\*  
100 Don't know

Q.9 Do you happen to know who won the Presidential election in Nicaragua last week? Was it the UNO candidate, Violeta Chamorro or was it the Sandinista candidate, Daniel Ortega?

63 UNO candidate - Violeta Chamorro

12 Sandinista candidate - Daniel Ortega

25  
100 Don't know

Q.10 Have you heard or read that CBS suspended Andy Rooney, a commentator on 60 Minutes for comments that he made about blacks during a newspaper interview?

87 Yes

13 No S))))  
/))Q GO TO Q.12

\*  
100 Don't knowS))-



**IF YES ASK:**

Q.11 From what you know about this matter, do you approve or disapprove of CBS's decision to suspend Andy Rooney?

24 Approve

58 Disapprove

$\frac{18}{100}$  Don't know

**ASK EVERYONE:**

Q.12 As far as you know which of the following best describes Soviet President Gorbachev's position on allowing political parties other than the Communists to hold office in the Soviet Union. **(READ CATEGORIES 1 THRU 3)**

5 He opposes a multi-party system

46 He favors a multi-party system

29 He hasn't declared one way or another

$\frac{20}{100}$  Don't know

Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions for statistical purposes only.

Q.30 In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat or Independent?

- 1 Republican
- 2 Democrat
- 3 Independent
- 4 Other
- 0 DON' T KNOW

Q.31 What is your age?

- 1 1
- 2 2
- 3 3
- 4 4
- 5 5
- 6 6
- 7 7
- 8 8
- 9 9
- 0 0

Q.32 What is the last grade or class that you completed in school? **(DO NOT READ)**

- 1 None, or grade 1 - 4
- 2 Grades 5, 6 or 7
- 3 Grade 8
- 4 High school incomplete (Grades 9 - 11)
- 5 High school graduate, Grade 12
- 6 Technical, trade, or business after high school
- 7 College/university incomplete
- 8 College/university graduate or more
- 0 DON'T KNOW/NO ANSWER

Q.33 Are you now employed full-time, part-time, not employed, or retired?

- 1 Full-time
- 2 Part-time
- 3 Not employed
- 4 Retired
- 5 Disabled **(VOLUNTEERED)**
- 0 REFUSED

Q.34 Is your total annual household income before taxes \$20,000 or more or is it less than \$20,000?

- 1 \$20,000 or more
- 2 Less than \$20,000 --- **SKIP TO Q.37**
- 0 DON'T KNOW/REFUSED --- **SKIP TO Q.39**

Q. 35 Is it \$30,000 or more, or less than \$30,000?

1 \$30,000 or more  
 S)))))))))  
 2 Less than \$30,000 \*  
 \*----- **SKIP TO Q. 39**  
 0 DON' T KNOW/REFUSED \*  
 S)))))))))-

Q. 36 Is it \$50,000 or more, or less than \$50,000?

1 \$50,000 or more  
 S)))))))))  
 2 Less than \$50,000 \* -- **SKIP TO Q. 39**  
 \*  
 0 DON' T KNOW/REFUSED \*  
 S)))))))))-

Q. 37 Is it \$15,000 or more, or less than \$15,000?

1 \$15,000 or more -- **SKIP TO Q. 39**

2 Less than \$15,000

0 DON' T KNOW/REFUSED -- **SKIP TO Q. 39**

Q. 38 Is it \$10,000 or more, or less than \$10,000?

1 \$10,000 or more

2 Less than \$10,000

0 DON' T KNOW/REFUSED

Q.39 What is your race? Are you white, black, or some other?

- 1 White
- 2 Black
- 3 Other
- 0 DON' T KNOW

Q.40 CHECK RESPONDENT' S SEX:

- 1 Male
- 2 Female

Q.41 Which of the following best describes you:

- 1 Married with children under 18 living at home
- 2 Married without children under 18 living at home
- 3 Single with children under 18 living at home
- 4 Widowed or Divorced without children under 18 living at home
- 5 Single living with your parents
- 6 Single not living with your parents
- 0 Don' t know

Q.42 CHECK THE DAY OF WEEK INTERVIEW WAS COMPLETED.

- 1 Mon
- 2 Tues
- 3 Wed
- 4 Thurs
- 5 Fri
- 6 Sat
- 7 Sun

Q. 43 CIRCLE NUMBER OF CALL ON WHICH THIS INTERVIEW WAS COMPLETED.

1 2 3 4

PLEASE RECORD AND VERIFY PHONE NUMBER:

+))0))0)), +))0))0)), +))0))0))0)),  
\* \* \* \* \_ \* \* \* \* \_ \* \* \* \* \*  
.))2))2))- .))2))2))- .))2))2))2))-  
AREA CODE EXCHANGE NUMBER

END OF INTERVIEW. THANK RESPONDENT; Thank you very much for your time.  
Have a nice day/evening.

I HEREBY ATTEST THAT THIS IS A TRUE AND HONEST INTERVIEW.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(INTERVIEWER'S SIGNATURE) (DATE)

# TIMES MIRROR DATABASE

## PUBLIC ATTENTIVENESS TO MAJOR NEWS STORIES (1986 - 1990)

### **PERCENT FOLLOWED VERY CLOSELY**

- 80 Explosion of the Space Shuttle Challenger (July 86)
- 73 Destruction caused by the San Francisco earthquake (Nov 89)
- 69 Little girl in Texas who was rescued after falling into a well (Oct 87)
- 60 Invasion of Panama (Jan 90)
- 60 Destruction caused by Hurricane Hugo (Oct 89)
- 58 U.S. air strikes against Libya (July 86)
- 53 Crash of a United Airlines DC-10 in Sioux City, Iowa (Aug 89)
- 52 Alaska Oil Spill (May 89)
- 51 Supreme Court decision of flag burning (July 89)
- 50 Opening of the Berlin Wall between East and West Germany (Nov 89)
- 50 Flight of the space shuttle (Oct 88)
- 49 Murder of Marine Lt. Col. Higgins in Lebanon, and negotiations to free the other  
hostages in the mideast (Aug 89)
- 49 Drought and its effects on American farmers (Aug 88)
- 48 TWA hostage crisis that took place last summer in Beirut, Lebanon (July 86)
- 47 Political upheaval in China (July 89)
- 47 Supreme Court decision on abortion (July 89)
- 46 Nuclear accident at Chernobyl in the Soviet Union (July 86)
- 43 News about the presidential campaign in 1988 (Oct 88)
- 42 Hot weather this summer and the greenhouse effect (Aug 88)
- 42 Downing of an Iranian passenger plane by a U.S. Navy ship (Aug 88)
- 40 Bush administration's plan to deal with this country's drug problem (Sept 89)
- 40 The stock market crash (Oct 87)
- 39 News about the presidential campaign in 1988 (Aug 88)
- 38 Drug use and efforts to combat it (Jan 90)
- 38 U.S. Navy escort of Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf (Sept 87)
- 37 U.S. Navy escort of Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf (Oct 87)
- 37 Stories about Dan Quayle, the Republican Vice-Presidential candidate (Aug 88)
- 37 Sentencing of Oliver North (July 89)
- 35 Attempts to change the abortion laws (Dec 89)
- 35 Hijacking of the Achille Lauro cruise ship in the Mediterranean (July 86)
- 35 Explosion and fire on the U.S. Battleship Iowa (May 89)
- 34 The war between the Colombian government and the major drug traffickers (Sept 89)
- 33 Crash of the Colombian airliner near Kennedy airport in New York (Feb 90)
- 33 Congressional hearings about the Iran-Contra affair (Sept 87)
- 33 Guilty verdict in the trial of televangelist Jim Bakker (Oct 89)
- 31 The World Series (Oct 88)
- 31 Flight of East German refugees to West Germany (Oct 89)

**PERCENT FOLLOWED  
VERY CLOSELY**

- 31 Oliver North trial (May 89)
- 30 FREEING OF JAILED BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN LEADER NELSON MANDELA (MARCH 1990)**
- 30 Banishment of Pete Rose from baseball for life (Sept 89)
- 30 The Democratic convention (Aug 88)
  
- 29 Suicide in Boston of Charles Stuart who murdered his pregnant wife and blamed it on a black man (Feb 90)
- 29 Political changes taking place in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and East Germany (Jan 90)
- 29 Political changes in East Germany and the flight of refugees to West Germany (Nov 89)
- 29 Attack and sexual assault on a female jogger in Central Park, New York, by a group of youths (May 89)
- 29 Failed coup attempt against Panamanian strongman Noriega (Oct 89)
- 28 POLITICAL CHANGES TAKING PLACE IN THE SOVIET UNION (MARCH 1990)**
- 28 Arrest of Washington's Mayor Barry on drug use charges (Feb 90)
- 28 The revolution in Romania (Jan 90)
- 28 Political changes taking place in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and East Germany (Dec 89)
- 28 Problems at nuclear reactor plants (Oct 88)
- 28 The end of Gary Hart's candidacy and the Donna Rice allegations (Sept 87)
- 27 Acquittal of the owners of the McMartin Day Care Center in California who were charged with sexually abusing children (Feb 90)
- 27 The NFL playoffs (Jan 90)
- 27 The Republican convention (Aug 88)
- 26 Political changes taking place in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and East Germany (Feb 90)
- 26 Passage in Congress of a bill to bail out ailing savings and loan institutions (Aug 89)
- 25 Supreme Court's hearing of arguments in a Missouri abortion case (May 89)
- 23 DISCUSSION OF THE REUNIFICATION OF GERMANY (MARCH 1990)**
- 23 The World Series (Nov 89)
- 22 PRESIDENT BUSH'S VISIT TO COLOMBIA TO ATTEND A DRUG SUMMIT (MARCH 1990)**
- 22 The Super Bowl (Feb 90)
- 22 Letter bombings of federal judges (Jan 90)
- 22 Discoveries made by the spacecraft Voyager 2 (Sept 89)
- 22 Trial of televangelist Jim Bakker (Sept 89)
- 22 April hijacking of a Kuwaiti airplane by Shiite Moslems (May 88)
- 22 Cease fire in the war between Iran and Iraq (Aug 88)
- 22 News about the presidential campaign in 1988 (May 88)
- 22 Charges that Pete Rose has bet on baseball games (July 89)
- 21 POLITICAL CHANGES TAKING PLACE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, HUNGARY, EAST GERMANY AND OTHER COUNTRIES OF EASTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE (MARCH 1990)**
- 21 The scandal involving HUD (Aug 89)
- 20 The Gorbachev/Bush summit (Dec 89)
- 20 Attempts by the U.S. government to depose General Noriega in Panama (May 88)
- 20 Post-season baseball playoffs (Oct 89)
  
- 19 ELECTIONS IN NICARAGUA (MARCH 1990)**
- 19 Coup attempt against the Filipino government (Dec 89)
- 19 Attempts in Congress to repeal the new catastrophic health insurance plan (Oct 89)
- 19 Incidents of racial violence in New York City and Virginia Beach (Sept 89)



**PERCENT FOLLOWED  
VERY CLOSELY**

- 19 Discussions of a U.S. Soviet arms agreement (Sept 87)
- 18 Senator Moynihan's proposal to cut social security taxes (Feb 90)
- 18 The stock market crash (May 88)
- 18 Conflict in the Middle East between Palestinians and the Israelis in the occupied territories (May 88)
- 17 A CUSTODY CASE INVOLVING A MOTHER WHO WENT TO JAIL AND A LITTLE CHILD TAKEN TO NEW ZEALAND BY HER GRANDPARENTS (MARCH 1990)**
- 17 Nomination of Robert Bork to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court (Sept 87)
- 16 Dispute between the President and Congress over allowing Chinese students to remain in America (Feb 90)
- 15 Education Summit held by Bush and the nation's Governors (Oct 89)
- 15 Ethics committee's investigation of Speaker of the House Jim Wright (May 89)
- 15 News about the Democratic candidates for the presidential nomination (Oct 87)
- 15 Conflict of interest allegations about Attorney General Ed Meese (May 88)
- 15 The scandal involving HUD (July 89)
- 14 Renewed fighting between government and the rebels in El Salvador (Dec 89)
- 14 House approval of a cut in the capital gains tax (Oct 89)
- 14 Spy scandal involving a U.S. Diplomat in Vienna (Aug 89)
- 14 Coverage of Democratic and Republican candidates for the Presidential nomination (Sept 87)
- 14 Pending divorce between Mike Tyson and Robin Givens (Oct 88)
- 13 Civil unrest and ethnic violence in Soviet Azerbaijan (Feb 90)
- 13 Resumption of fighting in Nicaragua between the Contras and government forces (Nov 89)
- 13 Elections in Virginia, New Jersey, New York City and other localities (Nov 89)
- 13 News about the Republican candidates for the Presidential nomination (Oct 88)
- 12 MARITAL BREAKUP OF DONALD AND IVANA TRUMP (MARCH 1990)**
- 12 Solidarity's role in governing Poland (July 89)
- 11 Legalization of banned black opposition groups in South Africa and the promise to free Nelson Mandela (Feb 90)
- 10 Japanese purchase of Rockefeller center in New York City (Dec 89)
  
- 9 BANKRUPTCY OF DREXEL BURNHAM LAMBERT INC. (MARCH 1990)**
- 9 Trial of Hotel owner Leona Helmsley for tax evasion (Sept 89)
- 9 Stories about the 20th anniversary of the Woodstock Music Festival (Aug 89)
- 6 THE VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES OF VACLAV HAVEL, THE NEW PRESIDENT OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA (MARCH 1990)**
- 6 Trip of high ranking officials to China (Jan 90)
- 6 The scandal involving the Japanese Prime Minister and other high ranking officials (May 89)
- 6 The scandal involving Congressman Barney Frank and a male prostitute (Oct 89)