

FOR RELEASE: THURSDAY, JULY 18, 1991

**Times Mirror News Interest Index
July 1991**

**Public Interest and
Awareness of the News**

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Economy Still The Number One Story **THOMAS COURT APPOINTMENT STIRS LARGE INTEREST**

The nomination of Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court and stories relating to the condition of the economy were the most closely followed news events of the past four weeks.

Thirty-five percent of the public said they were following news about the economy very closely and 33% said they were following news about Clarence Thomas very closely. Thirty-one percent of respondents polled by telephone by the *Times Mirror Center for the People and The Press* were attentive to news about military base closings around the country, a story with significant economic overtones.

The Thomas nomination has clearly engaged the American public in ways that other important and controversial nominations have not. News about George Bush's latest nominee to the Supreme Court was cited most often by the public as the single story it is following most closely and it was seen as the most important news of the month.

Nearly twice as many Americans are following news of Clarence Thomas very closely as were attentive to news about other recent nominees to the high court. A year ago just 16% of the public said they were following news about Bush's selection of David Souter and four years ago only 17% were following news about Reagan's nomination of Bork.

An important part of the difference in the amount of interest expressed in Thomas vis a vis other nominees is that African Americans are more drawn to Clarence Thomas's story than are whites - 46% of blacks said they were following this news very closely compared to 32% among whites. A year ago blacks showed half as much interest in the Souter nomination (9%) as whites (17%).

African American interest in Thomas has not as yet translated into overwhelming support for Thomas. 45% of blacks favor Thomas' confirmation, 21% are opposed and 34% are undecided. These figures are not very different from the public at large -48% favor, 17% oppose and 35% undecided. Republicans are the only sub-group in the population in which there is clear majority support for Bush's latest Supreme Court nominee (63%). However, it is interesting to note that among people who have followed the Thomas story very closely, 57% favor his nomination compared to 44% among those who have not paid as much attention to the news.

The public demonstrates its expressed interest in the debate about the new high court nominee with a fair amount of knowledge about this story. A 42% plurality think that the current court has a conservative majority while only 9% think that liberals are in the majority. 27% think the court is evenly divided and 22% don't know.

An even larger percentage claim knowledge of Clarence Thomas' political views. 51% think he is a conservative, 16% a liberal, 3% neither and 30% do not know.

Economy A Persistent Interest

Approximately one-third of the public has expressed a high degree of interest in economic news since the onset of the recession. This is the sixth survey showing a third or more of the public intensely interested in news about economic conditions.

People in the East reported following economic news more closely than people in other parts of the country (42%). However, interest in the other closely followed economic story, military base closings, is equally high in all four major regions of the country.

Sustained public interest in news about economic conditions is coincident with a continuing decline in George Bush's approval ratings. In March, 84% of the public approved of the way the President was carrying out his duties; in May, that percentage slipped to 77% and in the current survey it fell again to 67%. As it has been in other surveys, Bush's approval percentage was lower among those

who followed news of economic conditions very closely (62%) than among those less attentive to this kind of news (70%).

The American public continued to be more interested in White House Chief of Staff John Sununu's transportation troubles than they typically are of news about Washington leaders with job-related problems. Twenty-six percent said they were following this story very closely, compared to the 24% recorded in *Times Mirror's May News Interest Index*. By way of comparison with capitol scandals of the recent past, two years ago just 15% were very closely following the ethics committee investigation that led to House Speaker Jim Wright's resignation.

Another "Washington story", the alleged Reagan 1980 campaign deal with Iran also captures the close attention of one in four Americans (24%). However, unlike interest in the Sununu story which is bipartisan, interest in allegations that the hostage release was held up until after the 1980 election campaign is twice as high among Democrats (32%) as among Republicans (16%).

The Supreme Court decision allowing laws that ban doctors employed at federally funded agencies from discussing abortion was followed very closely by 25% of the public. News of the decision was of more interest to women (28%) than to men (20%) and this was the only story covered in the poll that interested people under 30 years of age as much as it interested older people. Young people's interest in the story was sharply higher among young women than among young men (30% vs. 17%).

Important international news stories did not attract a lot of public attention this month. President Bush's decision to lift the trade embargo on South Africa was followed very closely by 17% of the public, Yeltsin's election victory and subsequent visit to the United States attracted the attention of 12% and the conflict in Yugoslavia was the least followed story of the ten tested in the Times Mirror survey at 11%.

The only major domestic story to rank so low in public interest was the debate in Washington about the new civil rights bill. Eleven percent of the public reported following these stories very closely. Interest was higher among African Americans (33%) than among whites (9%), yet attentiveness to the civil rights debate among blacks was lower than the amount of attention blacks paid to South Africa (38%) or to news about the condition of the U.S. economy (40%).

Press Ratings Slip

Public evaluations of press performance were lower than average this month. Just 14% of Times Mirror respondents said the press was doing an excellent job in covering the story that they were following most closely and as many as 39% rated coverage as only fair or poor. Typically, about one in four rate press coverage as excellent and critical ratings are below 25%. In our view, this ratings fall off has more to do with the nature of the stories that dominated the news this month, than it does with a meaningful shift in sentiment about news media.

The public is consistently less positive about news coverage when the top stories of the month do not deal with fast breaking news events and when they deal with either controversial social issues or with the personal or ethical problems of people in high places. All of these criteria apply to the top news stories of the past four weeks and may account for the lower media ratings obtained.

In order to assess public evaluations of the news media, Times Mirror asked its nationally representative sample to judge the *fairness* of reporting on abortion, civil rights, John Sununu and Clarence Thomas.

On the two social issues, the poll found the public divided as to whether the press is fair. Forty-three percent felt the press is generally fair in the way it reported on the abortion controversy, while 43% thought that it is one-sided. Similarly, 49% thought that reporting on civil rights is generally fair and 36% saw it as one-sided.

In each case people who see the press as one-sided split about evenly with regard to the nature of the perceived press bias. Of the 43% who see press bias on abortion, 19% see the bias in the pro-life direction, which is matched by 18% who see it in the pro-choice direction. Similarly, of the 36% who see bias in civil rights news reports, 16% see it as a pro-affirmative action bias, while 15% see it as favoring the anti-affirmative action side.

To the extent that the public sees press bias, it sees it as running counter to the respondent's own views. That is, pro-choice people who see a bias on abortion think that it is in the pro-life direction and vice versa. The same pattern is evident for perceptions of civil rights bias.

In short, while many people see press bias on these two divisive issues, there is no indication that *on balance* the press is perceived as biased in a particular direction. What is clear is that it is difficult for the press to appear dispassionate in the eyes of people who hold strong views about such divisive issues.

Opinion about the fairness of press coverage of John Sununu and Clarence Thomas is different than opinion about reporting on social issues. Far fewer people see the press as unfair, but among those who do, the predominant opinion is that the press is too critical of these men, not too protective.

By a 52% to 26% majority, the public sees the press as fair in the way it reports about Sununu's transportation troubles. Of the 26% who regard the press as unfair, 20% think the press is too critical of the White House Chief of Staff, while just 3% think the press is too supportive.

A fifty-eight percent majority think the press has been fair to Clarence Thomas, but of the 20% who feel that Judge Thomas is being dealt with unfairly, 18% say the press is too critical and **1%** think it is too supportive. It is of note that even among those who oppose Thomas' confirmation, the predominant criticism is that the press is too critical (12%), not too supportive (6%).

PERCENT FOLLOWING EACH NEWS STORY "VERY CLOSELY"

	The Conflict Between the Yugoslavian Republics	Charges that White House Chief of Staff Used Military Airplanes for Personal Trips	Reports About the Condition of the U.S. Economy	Charges that the Reagan Campaign Made a Deal With Iran Concerning the Hostage Release	Russian President Boris Yeltsin's Election Victory and Visit to the U.S.	N
Total	11	26	35	24	12	(1212)
<u>Sex</u>						
Male	15	30	38	24	15	(608)
Female	7	23	34	24	10	(604)
<u>Race</u>						
White	11	26	35	23	12	(1027)
*Hispanic	17	35	35	20	14	(73)
Black	11	28	40	34	14	(107)
<u>Age</u>						
Under 30	9	23	27	20	10	(308)
30-49	14	22	34	22	11	(485)
50+	9	33	43	29	15	(407)
<u>Education</u>						
College graduate	18	27	43	28	15	(314)
Other college	14	24	37	26	13	(328)
High school grad.	9	29	36	20	11	(412)
Less than h.s. grad.	5	24	26	25	10	(155)
<u>Region</u>						
East	12	30	42	28	12	(283)
Midwest	9	24	32	26	12	(327)
South	10	27	37	24	12	(391)
West	14	24	31	17	14	(211)
<u>Party ID</u>						
Republican	12	25	34	16	12	(358)
Democrat	11	29	35	32	12	(381)
Independent	11	24	38	23	13	(421)

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.*

*The designation, hispanic, is unrelated to the white-black categorization
CONTINUED...

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	The Closing of Military Bases Around The Country	The Debate in Washington About a New Civil Rights Bill	The Nomination of Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court	Supreme Court Decision on Abortion in Federally Funded Agencies	Bush's Decision to Lift the Trade Embargo South Africa
Total	31	11	33	25	17
<u>Sex</u>					
Male	33	12	37	20	18
Female	30	11	30	28	16
<u>Race</u>					
White	32	9	32	24	14
*Hispanic	25	15	32	28	15
Black	30	33	46	31	38
<u>Age</u>					
Under 30	26	12	27	23	14
30-49	30	10	32	26	16
50+	36	13	38	24	19
<u>Education</u>					
College graduate	30	15	52	30	22
Other college	36	14	40	24	19
High school grad.	32	9	24	22	14
Less than h.s. grad.	25	10	22	24	15
<u>Region</u>					
East	30	12	38	27	15
Midwest	25	10	30	22	17
South	36	14	33	26	19
West	34	9	31	22	17
<u>Party ID</u>					
Republican	31	9	37	25	15
Democrat	33	17	36	28	21
Independent	29	10	30	20	14

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.

*The designation, hispanic, is unrelated to the white-black categorization

PRESS COVERAGE RATINGS OF NEWS STORIES

STORY FOLLOWED MOST CLOSELY

	Reports About the Condition of the U.S. Economy	The Closing of Military Bases Around the Country	Nomination of Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court	Supreme Court Decision on Discussion of Abortion in Federally Funded Agencies
Excellent	8	10	20	11
Good	47	41	46	40
Only Fair	33	34	26	26
Poor	12	14	5	16
Don't know	0	1	3	7
	----	----	----	----
	100%	100%	100%	100%

PRESS PERFORMANCE

	JAN <u>1990</u>	FEB <u>1990</u>	MAR <u>1990</u>	APR <u>1990</u>	MAY <u>1990</u>	JUNE <u>1990</u>
Excellent	33	23	26	23	28	25
Good	48	50	48	54	49	51
Only Fair	14	19	20	16	17	18
Poor	3	5	4	4	5	4
Don't Know	2	3	2	3	1	2
	---	---	---	---	---	---
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

	JULY <u>1990</u>	AUG <u>1990</u>	SEPT <u>1990</u>	OCT. <u>1990</u>	NOV. <u>1990</u>
Excellent	21	30	33	24	23
Good	50	48	46	48	47
Only Fair	21	14	13	18	20
Poor	6	6	5	8	7
Don't Know	2	2	3	2	3
	---	---	---	---	---
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

	JAN <u>1991</u>	MAY <u>1991</u>	JULY <u>1991</u>
Excellent	27	23	14
Good	48	47	44
Only Fair	18	21	27
Poor	5	7	12
Don't Know	2	2	3
	---	---	---
	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 among a nationwide sample of 1,212 adults, 18 years of age or older, during the period July 11-14, 1991. 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
JULY 1991
July 11-14, 1991
N=1,212

Q.1 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George Bush is handling his job as President?

		NEWS INTEREST INDEX			
		May 1991	March 1991	Jan 25 1991	Jan 3 1991
67	Approve	77	84	79	59
23	Disapprove	16	10	14	24
<u>10</u> 100	Don't know	<u>7</u> 100	<u>6</u> 100	<u>7</u> 100	<u>17</u> 100

Q.2 Do you happen to read any daily newspaper or newspapers regularly?

		NEWS INTEREST INDEX					
		May 1991	March 1991	Jan 3 1991	Nov 1990	Oct 1990	Sept 1990
73	Yes	70	72	72	74	72	69
27	No	30	28	27	26	28	31
<u>*</u> 100	Don't know	<u>*</u> 100	<u>*</u> 100	<u>1</u> 100	<u>0</u> 100	<u>0</u> 100	<u>*</u> 100

Q.3 Do you happen to watch any TV news programs regularly, or not?

		NEWS INTEREST INDEX					
		May 1991	March 1991	Jan 3 1991	Nov 1990	Oct 1990	Sept 1990
84	Yes	84	91	88	80	81	79
16	No	16	9	12	20	19	21
<u>*</u> 100	Don't know	<u>*</u> 100	<u>*</u> 100	<u>*</u> 100	<u>*</u> 100	<u>0</u> 100	<u>*</u> 100

Q.4 Do you listen to the news on the radio regularly or not?

		<u>NEWS INTEREST INDEX</u>					
		<u>May</u>	<u>March</u>	<u>Jan 3</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Sept</u>
		<u>1991</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1990</u>
53	Yes	53	57	55	55	54	51
47	No	47	43	45	45	46	49
$\frac{*}{100}$	Don't know	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$	$\frac{*}{100}$

INTERVIEWER NOTE: PLEASE FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE RESPONSE CATEGORIES

Q.5 What do you think is the most important news event that happened in the nation or in the world in the past 4 weeks? **(DO NOT READ)**

14 OTHER (SPECIFY)
 37 DON'T KNOW
 2 NONE

<u>International Stories</u>	28
The conflict between the Yugoslavian Republics	7
Russian President Boris Yeltsin's election victory and visit to the U.S.	2
President Bush's decision to lift the trade embargo on South Africa	3
Mt. Pinatubo eruption	2
Gulf war/Middle East	9
Nuclear weapons in Iraq	5
<u>Domestic Stories</u>	19
Charges that the White House Chief of Staff used military airplanes and government cars for personal trips	*
Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy	2
Charges that Reagan campaign officials made a deal with Iran to hold up release of the hostages until after the 1980 Presidential campaign	1
The closing of military bases around the country	*
The debate in Washington about a new Civil Rights Bill	*
The nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court of Clarence Thomas to replace retiring Justice Thurgood Marshall	13
The Supreme Court decision allowing laws that bar federally funded agencies from discussing abortion	*
Troops coming home	2

Q.6 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 Not too Closely</u>	<u>at all Closely</u>	<u>DK</u>
a. The conflict between the Yugoslavian Republics	11	31	31	26	1=100
b. Charges that the White House Chief of Staff used military airplanes and government cars for personal trips	26	37	21	15	1=100
c. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy	35	37	17	10	1=100
<u>News Interest Index:</u>					
May, 1991	33	37	18	11	1=100
March, 1991	36	39	17	7	1=100
January 3, 1991	36	40	16	7	1=100
November, 1990	39	36	18	6	1=100
September, 1990	29	38	19	13	1=100
d. Charges that Reagan campaign officials made a deal with Iran to hold up release of the hostages until after the 1980 Presidential campaign	24	33	22	20	1=100
e. Russian President Boris Yeltsin's election victory and visit to the U.S.	12	28	33	26	1=100
f. The closing of military bases around the country	31	38	20	11	*=100
g. The debate in Washington about a new Civil Rights Bill	11	26	34	27	2=100
h. The nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court of Clarence Thomas to replace retiring Justice Thurgood Marshall	33	33	19	14	1=100
i. The Supreme Court decision allowing laws that bar federally funded agencies from discussing abortion	25	31	24	19	1=100
j. President Bush's decision to lift the trade embargo on South Africa	17	33	29	20	1=100

Q.7 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 conflict between the Yugoslavian Republics	6
b. Charges that the White House Chief of Staff used military airplanes and government cars for personal trips	6
c. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy	9
d. Charges that Reagan campaign officials made a deal with Iran to hold up release of the hostages until after the 1980 Presidential campaign	6
e. Russian President Boris Yeltsin's election victory and visit to the U.S.	1
f. The closing of military bases around the country	12
g. The debate in Washington about a new Civil Rights Bill	2
h. The nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court of Clarence Thomas to replace retiring Justice Thurgood Marshall	24
i. The Supreme Court decision allowing laws that bar federally funded agencies from discussing abortion	10
j. President Bush's decision to lift the trade embargo on South Africa	4
CAN'T SAY	<u>20</u> 100

Q.8 Of all the stories mentioned, which of them, if any, received too much coverage? **(DO NOT READ LIST, ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES, BE SURE TO PROMPT FOR "ANY OTHERS")**

	<u>Received Too Much Coverage</u>
a. The conflict between the Yugoslavian Republics	2
b. Charges that the White House Chief of Staff used military airplanes and government cars for personal trips	17
c. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy	1
d. Charges that Reagan campaign officials made a deal with Iran to hold up release of the hostages until after the 1980 Presidential campaign	7
e. Russian President Boris Yeltsin's election victory and visit to the U.S.	3
f. The closing of military bases around the country	2
g. The debate in Washington about a new Civil Rights Bill	1
h. The nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court of Clarence Thomas to replace retiring Justice Thurgood Marshall	12
i. The Supreme Court decision allowing laws that bar federally funded agencies from discussing abortion	6
j. President Bush's decision to lift the trade embargo on South Africa	2
CAN'T SAY	54

IF RESPONDENT SAID '99' CAN'T SAY IN Q.7, SKIP TO Q.10

Q.9 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?

STORIES FOLLOWED MOST CLOSELY:

		<u>Reports About the Condition of the U.S. Economy</u>	<u>The Closing of Military Bases Around the Country</u>	<u>Nomination of Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court</u>	<u>Supreme Court Decision on Discussion of Abortion in Federally Funded Agencies</u>
14	Excellent	8	10	20	11
44	Good	47	41	46	40
27	Only Fair	33	34	26	26
12	Poor	12	14	5	16
$\frac{3}{100}$	Don't know	$\frac{0}{100}$	$\frac{1}{100}$	$\frac{3}{100}$	$\frac{7}{100}$
Sample Size		(110)	(135)	(307)	(122)

ASK ALL:

Q.10 In your opinion, which TV network has been doing the best job of covering the news lately - ABC, CBS, NBC or CNN?

		<u>NEWS INTEREST INDEX</u>				
		<u>May 1991</u>	<u>March¹ 1991</u>	<u>Jan 25¹ 1991</u>	<u>Jan 3¹ 1991</u>	<u>Sept 1990</u>
18	ABC	18	12	12	18	21
14	CBS	13	8	7	17	14
13	NBC	14	10	7	13	13
41	CNN	41	58	61	30	27
$\frac{14}{100}$	Don't know	$\frac{14}{100}$	$\frac{12}{100}$	$\frac{13}{100}$	$\frac{22}{100}$	$\frac{25}{100}$

¹ In March and January respondents were asked which network was doing the best job of covering the "crisis in the Gulf".

Q.11 Just your impression is the U.S. Supreme court now mostly made up of conservative justices, mostly made up of liberal justices or is it evenly divided between conservatives and liberals?

42 Conservatives

9 Liberals

27 Evenly divided

22 Can't say
100

Q.12 Just your impression is Supreme Court nominee, Clarence Thomas a liberal or a conservative?

51 Conservative

16 Liberal

3 Neither, Both (**VOLUNTEERED**)

30 Can't say
100

ON ANOTHER SUBJECT..

Q.13 Just your impression.. has the Bush Administration decided to give the Soviet Union financial assistance, has it decided against giving the Soviet Union financial assistance or is it still considering this question?

16 Will give

4 Won't give

58 Still considering

22 Don't know
100

A FEW MORE QUESTIONS ABOUT NEWS ORGANIZATIONS..

Q.14 Generally, are news organizations fair in the way they report about the abortion controversy do news organization tend to favor one side over the other?

43 Fair - **GO TO Q.15**

43 One sided - **GO TO Q.14a**

14 Can't say - **GO TO Q.15**
100

Q.14a Do they tend to favor those who want to restrict abortion or do they tend to favor those who are against further restrictions on abortion?

19 Favor those who wish to restrict

18 Favor those against further restrictions

$\frac{6}{43}$ Can't say

Q.15 Generally, are news organizations fair in the way they report about civil rights or do news organizations tend to favor one side over the other?

49 Fair - **GO TO Q.16**

36 One sided - **GO TO Q.15a**

$\frac{15}{100}$ Can't say - **GO TO Q.16**

Q.15a Do they tend to favor the side that supports affirmative action, do they tend to favor the side that's against affirmative action?

16 Favor supporters of affirmative action

15 Favor opponents of affirmative action

$\frac{5}{36}$ Can't say

Q.16 Generally, have news organizations been fair or unfair in the way they report about the transportation troubles of White House Chief of Staff John Sununu?

52 Fair - **GO TO Q.17**

26 Unfair - **GO TO Q.16a**

$\frac{22}{100}$ Can't say - **GO TO Q.17**

Q.16a Have news organizations tended to be too supportive of Sununu, or have they been too critical of him?

3 Too supportive

20 Too critical

$\frac{3}{26}$ Can't say

Q.17 Generally, have news organizations been fair or unfair in the way they report about Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas?

58 Fair - **GO TO Q.18**

20 Unfair - **GO TO Q.17a**

$\frac{22}{100}$ Can't say - **GO TO Q.18**

Q.17a Have news organizations tended to be too supportive of Clarence Thomas, or have they been too critical of him?

1 Too supportive

18 Too critical

$\frac{1}{20}$ Can't say

ASK ALL:

Q.18 Do you favor or oppose the confirmation of Supreme Court nominee, Clarence Thomas?

48 Favor

17 Oppose

$\frac{35}{100}$ Undecided

TIMES MIRROR DATABASE

PUBLIC ATTENTIVENESS TO MAJOR NEWS STORIES (1986 - 1991)

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)
- 67 War's end and the homecoming of U.S. forces from the Gulf (March 91)
- 66 Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the deployment of U.S. forces to Saudi Arabia (Aug 90)
- 63 Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and the deployment of U.S. forces to the Persian Gulf (Oct 90)
- 63 Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and the deployment of U.S. forces to the Persian Gulf (Sept 90)
- 62 Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and the presence of U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf (Nov 90)
- 62 Recent increases in the price of gasoline (Oct 90)
- 60 Invasion of Panama (Jan 90)
- 60 Destruction caused by Hurricane Hugo (Oct 89)
- 59 Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and the presence of U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf (Jan 91)
- 58 U.S. air strikes against Libya (July 86)
- 57 The plight of the American hostages and other Westerners detained in Iraq (Sept 90)
- 57 Recent increase in the price of gasoline (Aug 90)
- 56 Recent increases in the price of gasoline (Sept 90)
- 53 Crash of a United Airlines DC-10 in Sioux City, Iowa (Aug 89)
- 52 Alaska Oil Spill (May 89)
- 51 The release of American hostages and other westerners from Iraq and Kuwait (Jan 91)
- 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 The plight of American hostages and other Westerners detained in Iraq and Kuwait (Nov 90)
- 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 The plight of American hostages and other Westerners detained in Iraq and Kuwait (Oct 90)
- 47 Political upheaval in China (July 89)
- 47 Supreme Court decision on abortion (July 89)
- 46 Videotaped beating by Los Angeles police of a suspect they apprehended in an auto chase (March 91)
- 46 Nuclear accident at Chernobyl in the Soviet Union (July 86)
- 46 Freeing of two Americans who had been held hostage in the Mideast (May 90)
- 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)

**PERCENT FOLLOWED
VERY CLOSELY**

- 39 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy (Nov 90)
- 39 News about the presidential campaign in 1988 (Aug 88)
- 38 President Bush's heart problem (May 91)
- 38 News about the candidates and elections in your state (Nov 90)
- 38 Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to the U.S. for a Summit meeting (June 90)
- 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)
- 36 The situation of the Kurds in northern Iraq and allied attempts to help them (May 91)

- 36 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy (March 91)
- 36 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy (Jan 91)
- 36 The murder of five people by a serial killer around the University of Florida campus in Gainesville (Sept 90)
- 35 REPORTS ABOUT THE CONDITION OF THE U.S. ECONOMY (JULY 1991)**
- 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 Civil war in Iraq between Shiite Iraqis and forces loyal to Saddam Hussein (March 91)
- 34 Congressional and administration efforts to reach a budget deficit agreement (Nov 90)
- 34 Attempts by Congress and the Administration to find ways to reduce the budget deficit (Oct 90)
- 34 Reports about flooding in Texas and other southwestern states (June 90)
- 34 The war between the Colombian government and the major drug traffickers (Sept 89)
- 33 THE NOMINATION TO THE U.S. SUPREME COURT OF CLARENCE THOMAS TO REPLACE RETIRING JUSTICE THURGOOD MARSHALL (JULY 1991)**
- 33 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy (May 91)
- 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)
- 32 Criticisms of George Bush for being inconsistent in what he said about taxes and what he said about Persian Gulf policy (Nov 90)
- 31 THE CLOSING OF MILITARY BASES AROUND THE COUNTRY (JULY 1991)**
- 31 Celebration of Earth Day (May 90)
- 31 The World Series (Oct 88)
- 31 Flight of East German refugees to West Germany (Oct 89)
- 31 Oliver North trial (May 89)
- 30 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy (Aug 90)
- 30 Freeing of jailed black South African leader Nelson Mandela (March 90)
- 30 Banishment of Pete Rose from baseball for life (Sept 89)
- 30 The Democratic convention (Aug 88)
- 30 President Bush's call for higher taxes to help reduce the federal deficit (July 90)

**PERCENT FOLLOWED
VERY CLOSELY**

- 29 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy (Sept 90)
- 29 Reports about the fires in Southern California (July 90)
- 29 Lithuania's declaration of independence from the Soviet Union and Moscow's response (April 90)
- 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 The death of 87 people in a fire at a social club in the Bronx, New York (April 90)
- 28 Political changes taking place in the Soviet Union (March 90)
- 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 Deployment of U.S. marines to Liberia to protect the lives of Americans caught in the civil war (Aug 90)
- 27 Lithuania's declaration of independence from the Soviet Union and Moscow's response (May 90)
- 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 CHARGES THAT THE WHITE HOUSE CHIEF OF STAFF USED MILITARY AIRPLANES AND GOVERNMENT CARS FOR PERSONAL TRIPS (JULY 1991)**
- 26 Concerns about Dan Quayle's ability to serve as President (May 91)
- 26 Bush/Gorbachev summit meeting in Helsinki (Sept 90)
- 26 The death of Hank Gathers, a college basketball player, during a game (April 90)
- 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 THE SUPREME COURT DECISION ALLOWING LAWS THAT BAR FEDERALLY FUNDED AGENCIES FROM DISCUSSING ABORTION (JULY 1991)**
- 25 Supreme Court's hearing of arguments in a Missouri abortion case (May 89)
- 24 CHARGES THAT REAGAN CAMPAIGN OFFICIALS MADE A DEAL WITH IRAN TO HOLD UP RELEASE OF THE HOSTAGES UNTIL AFTER THE 1980 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN (JULY 1991)**
- 24 Charges that White House Chief of Staff used military airplanes for personal trips (May 91)
- 24 Supreme Court decision that found laws against flag burning unconstitutional and the attempt in Congress to amend the Constitution (July 90)
- 24 Nelson Mandela's visit to the U.S. (July 90)
- 24 Deployment of the Hubble Space Telescope (May 90)
- 24 Difficulties the government is having in getting people to fill out Census forms (May 90)
- 24 The NCAA Basketball playoffs (April 90)
- 24 Supreme Court decision regarding a person's right to die (July 90)

**PERCENT FOLLOWED
VERY CLOSELY**

- 23 Cyclone that devastated Bangladesh (May 91)
- 23 Attempt in Idaho to pass a bill that would severely restrict abortions (April 90)
- 23 Greyhound bus drivers' strike (April 90)
- 23 Discussion of the reunification of Germany (March 90)
- 23 The World Series (Nov 89)
- 22 Congressional hearings about U.S. Persian Gulf policy (Jan 91)
- 22 Reunification of Germany (Oct 90)
- 22 Washington Mayor Barry's trial (July 90)
- 22 The 54 year old Oregon woman suffering from Alzheimers who ended her life by using a suicide machine (July 90)
- 22 President Bush's visit to Colombia to attend a drug summit (March 90)
- 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 Alleged rape of a young woman at the Kennedy family's Palm Beach estate (May 91)
- 21 Controversy surrounding the way Roseanne Barr sang the National Anthem at a San Diego Padres baseball game (Aug 90)
- 21 Tensions between Moscow and the Baltic Republics of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania who wish to secede from the Soviet Union (June 90)
- 21 Discussions about German reunification (April 90)
- 21 Political changes taking place in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, East Germany and other countries of Eastern and Central Europe (March 90)
- 21 Scandal involving HUD (Aug 89)
- 20 Mikhail Gorbachev's political problems in the Soviet Union (March 91)
- 20 Resignation of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the election of her successor (Jan 91)
- 20 The murder on a New York subway platform of a Utah man attempting to protect his family from attack by teenage muggers (Sept 90)
- 20 Earthquake in Iran (July 90)
- 20 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 Attempts by Congress and the Administration to find ways to reduce the budget deficit (Aug 90)
- 19 Elections in Nicaragua (March 90)
- 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)
- 19 Discussions of a U.S. Soviet arms agreement (Sept 87)

**PERCENT FOLLOWED
VERY CLOSELY**

- 18 News about the candidates and election campaigns in your state (Oct 90)
- 18 Special meetings between the Bush Administration and Congressional Leaders to find ways to reduce the federal deficit (June 90)
- 18 Continuing news about the Savings and Loan scandal (June 90)
- 18 Reports about renewed inflation and rising interest rates (May 90)
- 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 **PRESIDENT BUSH'S DECISION TO LIFT THE TRADE EMBARGO ON SOUTH AFRICA (JULY 1991)**
- 17 Racial tension in New York City resulting from the Bensonhurst trial verdict and the black boycott of Korean grocers (June 90)
- 17 Discussions between the American and Japanese governments about trade issues (April 90)
- 17 A custody case involving a mother who went to jail and a little child taken to New Zealand by her grandparents (March 90)
- 17 Nomination of Robert Bork to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court (Sept 87)
- 16 Nomination of David Souter to the U.S. Supreme Court to replace Justice William Brennan (Aug 90)
- 16 Washington DC Mayor Marion Barry's trial ending in a mistrial (Aug 90)
- 16 Financial troubles of Donald Trump (July 90)
- 16 Dispute between the President and Congress over allowing Chinese students to remain in America (Feb 90)
- 15 Resignation of Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze (Jan 91)
- 15 Senate confirmation of Supreme Court Justice David Souter (Oct 90)
- 15 Controversy over the exclusion of blacks from membership in many country clubs at which national golf championship matches are played (Aug 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 Scandal involving HUD (July 89)
- 14 President Bush's educational reform plan (May 91)
- 14 Political unrest and the worsening economic situation in the Soviet Union (May 91)
- 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 U.S. Department of Education prohibition of racially based college scholarships (Jan 91)
- 13 Worsening economic conditions in the Soviet Union (Sept 90)
- 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)

**PERCENT FOLLOWED
VERY CLOSELY**

- 12 **RUSSIAN PRESIDENT BORIS YELTSIN'S ELECTION VICTORY AND VISIT TO THE U.S. (JULY 1991)**
- 12 The findings of the committee that investigated five senators for doing favors for Charles Keating in exchange for campaign contributions (March 91)
- 12 Major League Baseball's decision to force George Steinbrenner to give up active control of the New York Yankees (Aug 90)
- 12 Pledge of Nelson Mandela's African National Congress to end the armed struggle in South Africa (Aug 90)
- 12 Marital breakup of Donald and Ivana Trump (March 90)
- 12 Solidarity's role in governing Poland (July 89)
- 11 **THE DEBATE IN WASHINGTON ABOUT A NEW CIVIL RIGHTS BILL (JULY 1991)**
- 11 **THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE YUGOSLAVIAN REPUBLICS (JULY 1991)**
- 11 The incident in Gaza in which a deranged Israeli killed seven Palestinians and the West bank riots that followed (June 90)
- 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)
- 10 The spending and tax proposals made by Congressman Dan Rostenkowski to help reduce the budget deficit (April 90)
- 10 Academy Awards (April 90)

- 9 Purchase of entertainment giant, MCA by the Japanese consumer electronics company, Matsushita (Jan 91)
- 9 The investigation of five U.S. Senators for doing favors for Charles Keating in exchange for campaign contributions (Jan 91)
- 9 Aids conference in San Francisco (July 90)
- 9 May day protests in Moscow (May 90)
- 9 Bankruptcy of Drexel Burnham Lambert Inc. (March 90)
- 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)
- 8 The release of the Kitty Kelley biography of Nancy Reagan (May 91)
- 8 The murder in New York city of Jewish militant rabbi Meir Kahane (Nov 90)
- 7 First reports from the 1990 U.S. census (Sept 90)
- 6 William Bennett's change of mind about heading the Republican National Committee (Jan 91)
- 6 Continuing political unrest in the Ukraine and in other republics of the Soviet Union (Nov 90)
- 6 United Nations Children's Summit held in New York (Oct 90)
- 6 Elections in Romania (June 90)
- 6 The visit to the United States of Vaclav Havel, the new president of Czechoslovakia (March 90)
- 6 Trip of high ranking officials to China (Jan 90)
- 6 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)
- 4 Dismissal of Pakistan's Prime Minister Bhutto by Pakistan's President (Aug 90)
- 4 Civil war in Cambodia (May 90)
- 2 Tom Cruise's separation from his wife (April 90)