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Jorge Ramos: Rock Star!

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Distinctly Catholic

The New Republic looks at the role of Jorge Ramos, one of the news co-anchors at Univision. The article notes that Ramos is both a newscaster and a champion of immigrant rights, and it worries, not too much, about whether Ramos has crossed the line from journalist to advocate. The line for journalists is not always clear-cut, as you can see from this paragraph in the TNR story:

This will be difficult for Republicans, because Univision has helped drive the perception that the GOP is hostile to Latinos?for example, when the Spanish language networks covered Arizona?s immigration law, the authors of "Not Business as Usual" wrote that Telemundo and Univision ?contributed to a discourse of fear by choosing to frequently include the most outrageous and polemic anti-immi-grants examples, such as the statements of Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio.?

I think a case can be made that Univision did not "drive the perception that the GOP is hostile to Latinos" so much as it REPORTED the fact that the GOP was hostile to Latinos. If anyone in the GOP thinks Ramos was unfair, their complaint would merit from Ramos the rejoinder that Harry S. Truman once gave to the GOP of his day: "They think I am giving them hell. I am giving them the truth and they just think it is hell." And, if you saw Ramos' interview of President Obama, you know it was the toughest interview the President had to endure in the entire campaign.

The GOP failure among Latinos was deep. It was not just the Arizona law, or Mr. Romney's comments about "self-deportation" or Mrs. Romney looking out at a Latino audience and saying "You people." Indeed, Latino voting behavior was not even exclusively about immigration reform. It was about respect. The GOP, in countless ways, showed a disrespect for Latinos and anyone familiar with Latino culture knows that such disrespect is the deadliest of deadly political sins among Latinos. I recall speaking with a priest about the efforts of Puerto Ricans to shut down the U.S. Navy's proving ground on the island of

Vieques. It was clear that the effort to close the proving ground would also result in the closing of the nearby naval base at Roosevelt Roads, with a consequent loss of jobs. But, the priest explained, the U.S. Navy had treated Puerto Ricans like "pendejos," that is, as if they were idiots. They had disrespected Boricuas, and that was why the issue was so deeply felt. Something like that happened this year with the GOP and Latinos.

The other thing that must be noted about Univision is that it may be the best news program on TV. They devote long segments to important issues. They delve into complicated topics. And, exercising prudential judgment, they keep digging until they reach a conclusion, they do not do what many English-language channels do, put on two people with opposing views and let them argue, even when one side, such as those who deny climate change, are espousing crazy views. So, hates off to Ramos and his co-anchor Maria Elena Selena for reporting the news that mattered to Latinos, and urging their viewers to register and vote.

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