

## Truth Vs. 'Trash Journalism': McCain's Weak Rebuttal to Damaging Allegations

By [Cliff Schecter](#), [AlterNet](#). Posted [April 21, 2008](#).

Reporters told *Real McCain* author Schecter that the McCains were estranged and that the senator frequented Hanoi's red light district.

John McCain is not a very nice man. I have made that abundantly clear in my new book [The Real McCain: Why Conservatives Don't Trust Him And Why Independents Shouldn't](#). When I wrote it, I endeavored to write about the actual man, not the myth or the media legend. Perhaps that was where I crossed the line.

Mccain spokeswoman Jill Hazelbaker [accused me](#) of trading in "trash journalism." Me! Can you believe it? But that was not enough, apparently. The McCain folk then decided they would smear me to try and prevent the truth from setting their man free from the all-encompassing grip of his faux "straight-talk" persona.

Another spokeswoman, Crystal Benton, [dissuaded a major European newspaper from writing a review of my book](#), by accusing me of possessing a "a hate streak," and proffering that I was "known to make outlandish comments." For example, that time I said that we should be in Iraq for 100 more years. Oh wait, that was Senator McCain.

Ok, how about the fact that in earshot of others I have hurled expletives at Senators Domenici, Cornyn and Grassely, called my wife an unspeakable term for a [female body part](#) and have physically assaulted another Senator (the late Strom Thurmond) and a congressman ([Rep. Rick Renzi](#)). Oh, that's right, that was also Senator McCain.

I just don't get where all the "outlandishness" and "hate" comes from on the McCain side. I am only a humble author trying to do my job, sharing facts that are 100% sourced. It's not like I included in my book the account of a former AP reporter who recounted to me seeing John McCain wander off into the Red Light District of Hanoi in 1996 when he was there to normalize relations with the Vietnamese. Or that it was known among reporters that he used to disappear into that part of town alone at night. I never said that in [my book](#). And why would I? That would supposedly be "trash journalism."

Or let's just say that a few reporters told me that the McCains don't really live together anymore, and that until the presidential campaign Cindy McCain was spending much of her time in San Diego with their daughter Bridgette, because her husband was just not Johnny-on-the-spot anymore. I'd never report such an unfounded charge, if those few sources could not provide any more concrete details. *The New York Times* stoops that kind of reporting, but not me.

You see, Mr. McCain, I have purposely chosen to rise above any "outlandishness." And instead, I relied upon pure, 100% all-American (at least pre-Bush) facts. I would think a "straight-talker" like you would have at least a modicum of respect for my taking that tack.

Consider at least that [U.S. News And World Report](#) didn't find my work to be trash journalism:

A new book by liberal writer and political consultant Cliff Schechter lays out a detailed blueprint for how Dems can mine presumed GOP presidential nominee Sen. John McCain's political and personal past -- including already well-documented incidents of his temper -- to defeat him in the fall.

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*[Cliff Schechter Is The Author Of The Real McCain: Why Conservatives Don't Trust Him And Why Independents Shouldn't.](#)*