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Megyn Kelly Sees Biggest Year-To-Year Ratings Increase At Fox News

Glynnis MacNicol Nov. 30, 2010, 6:32 PM 5,238 12

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Megyn Kelly had a big November.

After gracing the page of December's *GQ* with a steamy, much-talked-about photo spread, and anchoring Fox News' election night coverage, Kelly also looks to be the big winner of today's monthly rating numbers.

Kelly, you may recall, got her own two hour Fox News show, *America Live with Megyn Kelly*, this past February when she returned from maternity leave and replaced *The Live Desk*.

The gamble (if it can be called that) has apparently paid off. *America Live with Megyn Kelly* saw a double digit increase over the previous year when it was *The Live Desk*.



Media Babes

By Stephanie Taylor
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MULTIPLE EXAMPLES FROM CABLE NEWS

Should anchor women be "hot?" According to *GQ Magazine*, the answer is yes. Megyn Kelly is the host of *America Live* on the Fox News Channel, a show which discusses legal and political issues. Kelly was interviewed by *GQ* (the men's magazine) for their December 2010 issue. With tongue in cheek, Greg Veis called his article "She Reports, We Decided: She's Hot," riffing on the Fox News slogan "We report you decide."

Kelly's show launched in February 2010. According to *Business Insider*, ratings for *America Live* shot up after publication of the *GQ* interview (which included photos of Kelly posed in a little black dress slip with red platform-heeled sandals). So, do sexier women anchors bring in higher ratings?

I don't want to base my argument on a photo layout for a men's magazine, so here are some examples of how Kelly appears on air:

On Feb 18, while interviewing country music star Joe Nichols about his participation in a charity to raise money to support the military, Kelly wore a fitted sleeveless dark red V-neck dress.

On Feb 20, while reporting on an 11-year-old boy who had been arrested for drawing violent pictures, Kelly wore a black long sleeved top with an asymmetrical neckline.

On Feb 23, while hosting a debate on whether or not a toddler should live, Kelly wore a hot pink long sleeved top showing a bit of cleavage.

Now here are a few examples of how some of Kelly's female colleagues on Fox News dress:

On Feb 17, to inform viewers that zinc might help ease their colds, Jenna Lee (the co-host of the Fox News program *Happening Now*) wore a dark pink fitted dress with long sleeves. On Feb 22, Lee wore a very short sleeved top while describing a new Obama Administration jobs initiative.

On Feb 16, appearing with co-hosts Brain Kilmead and Steve Doocy, Gretchen Carlson of *Fox and Friends* wore a short black skirt with a little side slit. On Feb 21, standing next to Doocy during a report about bomb sniffing dogs, Carlson wore a white thigh-baring dress with beige pointy-toed heels. On Feb 22, while talking with Kilmead about saving tigers from extinction, Carlson sported a pink short-sleeved thigh-baring dress. Note that on all these shows, Carlson's male colleagues were always in standard business attire (wearing suits and ties).

Question: Do all the women on cable news dress this way?

Female anchors on MSNBC definitely dress more conservatively than the women on Fox News. Mika Brzezinski co-anchors the news show *Morning Joe* with Joe Scarborough and Willie Geist. On Feb 23, Brzezinski wore a black long-sleeved top with a high cowl neck line when she interviewed Matthew Strawn (the chairman of the Iowa Republican Party). On Feb 28, Brzezinski wore a pink button-down blouse when she spoke about Wisconsin protesters. On March 1, Brzezinski had on a purple sweater set when she and Scarborough discuss a *New York Times* article about budget cuts.

Brzezinski's MSNBC colleague Savannah Guthrie co-hosts *The Daily Rundown* with Chuck Todd. On Feb 14, Guthrie wore a brown top with sleeves slightly above the elbows when she announced a change in White House press secretaries. On a Feb 15 broadcast, Guthrie wore a black blazer with a white ruffled blouse to report on Arab protesters inspired by recent events in Egypt.

Andrea Mitchell, anchor of her own MSNBC show (*Andrea Mitchell Reports*), wore a black blouse with a matching sweater on Feb 21 when she asked Steve Clemons of the New America Foundation if he thought there would be civil war in Libya. On Feb 22, Mitchell wore a black and white top with a black blazer when she interviewed Rep. Jackie Speier (D-Calif.) about Republican plans to cut funding to Planned Parenthood. On Feb 24, Mitchell wore a black pin-stripe blazer with a purple blouse while speaking with field correspondent Stephanie Gosk about ongoing havoc in Libya.

And over on CNN, anchorwomen cover up just as much, if not a little more, than their MSNBC counterparts.

Kyra Phillips anchors the morning news show *CNN Newsroom*. On Feb 18, Phillips was draped in a black blazer and dark pink top a high V-neck while debated the merits of couples who living together instead of marrying. On Feb 21, discussing recent Justin Bieber comments on abortion and health care, Phillips wore a light green long-sleeve blouse with a dark green top underneath. Interviewing a young army captain on Feb 23 about military service, she had on a light gray sweater set.

Brooke Baldwin co-anchors *CNN Newsroom*. On Feb 24, talking about the deaths of 24 newborn dolphins, Baldwin wore a silk dark blue striped blouse which completely covered her chest. Visiting Wolf Blitzer on the set of his CNN show *The Situation Room* on Feb 28, Baldwin wore a

tan ruffled jacket with sleeves just below the elbow over a black dress which hit right above her knee. On March 2, speaking of a bomb which barely missed a CNN crew in eastern Libya , Baldwin wore a loose red sleeveless top.

Christine Romans is host of CNN's *Your Bottom Line*, a show which specializes in financial advice. On Feb 7, Romans wore nude-colored heels with a dark red skirt outfit. The sleeves of her top hit just below her elbows, and her skirt fell just above the knee. On Feb 21, speaking with CEO Pamela Mitchell of The Reinvention Institute about how to switch careers, Romans wore a black outfit with a short sleeve top. When Romans interviewed educational experts about how to compensate teachers on Feb 28, she wore a white blazer with big black buttons.

What to make of all of this?

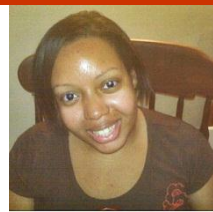
According to *Media Bistro* (2/1/11), Fox News ratings for January 2011 were higher than MSNBC and CNN combined, making Fox News the number one news channel on cable TV. Here are the numbers from *Media Bistro*:

Station Name	Day Time Viewers	Prime Time Viewers
CNN	427,000	670,000
FOX	1.1 million	1.9 million
MSNBC	455,000	835,000

Could it be that high rankings are as easy as sliding on a sexy slip and heels? If yes, then what does this mean about the state of journalism on cable TV?

We report; you decide!

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Stephanie A. Taylor is a Chicago-based writer currently freelancing for *StreetWise* magazine. Her work has also been published/posted in the *Columbia Chronicle*, *Comedy Corner Online* magazine, and *Upsurge* magazine/blog. Stephanie has a BA in Magazine Editing and Publishing from Columbia College Chicago. Two of her favorite movies are *Top Hat* and *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*.

FF2 EDITOR'S NOTE:

Rachel Maddow of MSNBC has been intentionally excluded from this analysis because of her deliberately unique style and persona.

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