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# 'Beer quote' pulled from MSNBC Cheney hunting party article

**Ron Brynaert**  
Published: February 15, 2006

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*Updated to include coverage in The Nation, and re-edited  
MSNBC story*

An article at MSNBC's Website was edited to remove references to alcohol, that may have been available at a picnic, which preceded the accidental shooting of a 78-year-old lawyer by Vice President Cheney last Saturday, **RAW STORY** has learned.

The change to the article was quickly noticed by a number of liberal bloggers, and their readers, many of whom have been following this much discussed story very closely for the last few days.

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In the article, credited to Aram Roston and the NBC Investigative Unit, Katherine Armstrong, a member of the family who own the ranch, revealed new details about her lobbying for the Bush Administration, and about circumstances surrounding the incident itself, which wasn't reported to the media until the following morning. Armstrong was the one who reported the news to a local news reporter, and she said that Cheney agreed with the decision.

The following paragraph was removed for unexplained reasons from the article sometime after it first was published on the Internet:

#

Armstrong also told NBC News that she does not believe alcohol was involved in the accident. She says she believes no one that day was drinking, although she says there may have been beer available during a picnic lunch that preceded the incident. "There may be a beer or two in there," she said, "but remember not everyone in the party was shooting."

#

Jane Hamsher at the popular firedoglake blog included the "beer quote" in a post she wrote while it was still on the Web live, then later noted in an update that the article appeared to have been "scrubbed" (or removed) from the MSNBC Website. Hamsher also linked to an earlier post she wrote in which a similiar "scrubbing" occurred, but

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that time at the CBS News Website.

Other blogs and Websites that spotted the change include Democratic Underground, Thought Crimes, and Daily Kos.

Johnny Cougar, who left the comment at Democratic Underground, appears to have been the first blogger to catch the switch, and he also covered it at his blog, Someone Took In These Pants....

Since Armstrong was interviewed by telephone there may be lingering questions as to why MSNBC "scrubbed" the story.

Screenshot of the article as it originally appeared on Tuesday: [link](#).

Screenshot of the Google News listing including the "beer quote": [link](#).

The article as it appears now: [link](#).

(Special thanks to all the **RAW STORY** readers who sent us links by email. Keep the tips coming!)

Excerpts from an article written by John Nichols at The Nation:

#

Vice President Dick Cheney, who was forced to leave Yale University because his penchant for late-night beer drinking exceeded his devotion to his studies, and who is one of the small number of Americans who can count two drunk driving busts on his driving record, may have been doing more than hunting quail on the day that he shot a Texas lawyer in the face.

....

The MSNBC story, which appeared only briefly before the website was scrubbed for reasons not yet explained, has been kept alive by the able web investigators at [www.rawstory.com](http://www.rawstory.com) and other progressive blogs. And so it

should be, as the prospect that alcohol may have been involved in the Texas incident takes the story in a whole new direction.

....

As with her over-the-top efforts to blame Whittington, the victim, for getting in the way of Cheney's birdshot blast, Armstrong's line on liquor smells a little more like an attempt to cover for the vice president than full disclosure.

#

On Wednesday, MSNBC updated their article, but provided no explanation for the "scrubbing" the day before, even though they now emphasize that the interview was a "recorded, on-the-record phone call."

Excerpts from the updated version:

#

In a recorded, on-the-record phone call with NBC News, Armstrong said that beer may have been available at lunch that day. "If someone wants to help themselves to a beer," she said, "they may, but I did not see anyone do that," Armstrong says. She says she was not sure if there were beers in the coolers but wasn't ready to rule it out: "There may be a beer or two in there, but remember not everyone in the party was shooting," she told NBC News.

Armstrong added that she did not believe that Cheney or anyone else shooting in the hunting party had alcohol on Saturday before the hunting accident.

NBC News called the vice president's office for comment four times Tuesday and Wednesday and asked whether the vice president or anyone in the hunting party had consumed any alcohol on Saturday prior to the accident. In an e-mail statement Wednesday to NBC News, the vice president's press secretary referred NBC News to the Kenedy County Sheriff's Department report on the incident. Later in the day on Fox News, Brit Hume stated that Cheney told him during a taped interview that he had

had "a beer at lunch" before the hunting incident.

#

Hamsher's reaction at [firedoglake](#) to the update: "Big whopping kudos to readers who spotted the MSNBC scrub of Katharine Armstrong's "beer" comments yesterday, and also to everyone who contacted MSNBC about it. I have no doubt that the only reason Dick admitted to drinking a beer before shooting an old man in the face came because of that particular dust-up; he's not one particularly given to candor."

Hamsher also linked to blogger [digby](#), who linked to a CNN [article](#) which also referred to the Vice President's consumption of alcohol last Saturday: "Armstrong had previously told CNN that she never saw Cheney or Whittington "drink at all on the day of the shooting until after the accident occurred, when the vice president fixed himself a cocktail back at the house.""

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