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## Obama's Press List

*Membership shall have its privileges.*

About half-way through President Obama's press conference Monday night, he had an unscripted question of his own. "All, Chuck Todd," the President said, referring to NBC's White House correspondent. "Where's Chuck?" He had the same strange question about Fox News's Major Garrett: "Where's Major?"

The problem wasn't the lighting in the East Room. The President was running down a list of reporters preselected to ask questions. The White House had decided in advance who would be allowed to question the President and who was left out.

Presidents are free to conduct press conferences however they like, but the decision to preselect questioners is an odd one, especially for a White House famously pledged to openness. We doubt that President Bush, who was notorious for being parsimonious with follow-ups, would have gotten away with prescreening his interlocutors. Mr. Obama can more than handle his own, so our guess is that this is an attempt to discipline reporters who aren't White House favorites.

Few accounts of Monday night's event even mentioned the curious fact that the White House had picked its speakers in advance. We hope that omission wasn't out of fear of being left off the list the next time.

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