



Journalists Denying Liberal Bias, Part Three

More examples of journalists denying their liberal bias:

"I'm not going to judge anybody else in the business, but our work — I can speak for NBC News and our newsroom — it goes through, talk about checks and balances. We have an inordinate number of editors. Every word I write, before it goes on air, goes through all kinds of traps and filters, and it's read by all kinds of different people who point out bias."

— **CNBC anchor Brian Williams on Comedy Central's *The Daily Show*, July 29, 2003.**

"Our greatest accomplishment as a profession is the development since World War II of a news reporting craft that is truly non-partisan, and non-ideological....It is that legacy we must protect with our diligent stewardship. To do so means we must be aware of the energetic effort that is now underway to convince our readers that we are ideologues. It is an exercise of, in disinformation, of alarming proportions, this attempt to convince the audience of the world's most ideology-free newspapers that they're being subjected to agenda-driven news reflecting a liberal bias. I don't believe our viewers and readers will be, in the long-run, misled by those who advocate biased journalism."

— ***New York Times* Executive Editor Howell Raines accepting the 'George Beveridge Editor of the Year Award,' February 20, 2003.**

CBS's Lesley Stahl: "Today you have broadcast journalists who are avowedly conservative.... The voices that are being heard in broadcast media today, are far more likely to be on the right and avowedly so, and therefore, more — almost stridently so, than what you're talking about."

Host Cal Thomas: "Can you name a conservative journalist at CBS News?"

Stahl: "I don't know of anybody's political bias at CBS News....We try very hard to get any opinion that we have out of our stories, and most of our stories are balanced."

— **Exchange on the Fox News Channel's *After Hours with Cal Thomas*, January 18, 2003.**

"It took conservatives a lot of hard and steady work to push the media rightward. It dishonors that work to continue to presume that — except for a few liberal columnists — there is any such thing as the big liberal media. The media world now includes (1) talk radio, (2) cable television and (3) the traditional news sources (newspapers, newsmagazines and the old broadcast networks). Two of these three major institutions tilt well to the right, and the third is under constant pressure to avoid even the pale hint of liberalism....What it adds up to is a media heavily biased toward conservative politics and conservative politicians."

— **Former *Washington Post* and *New York Times* reporter E.J. Dionne in a December 6, 2002 *Washington Post* op-ed.**

"I have yet to see a body of evidence that suggests the reporting that gets on the air reflects any political bias."

— **Ex-CNN and CBS reporter Deborah Potter, as quoted in *The Boston Globe*, January 17, 2002.**

"The idea that we would set out, consciously or unconsciously, to put some kind of an ideological framework over what we're doing is nonsense."

— **NBC's Tom Brokaw, C-SPAN's *Washington Journal*, May 24, 2001.**

"I think the tag, you know, somehow or another, 'he's a bomb-throwing Bolshevik from the left side' that's attached to me, is put there by people who, they subscribe to the idea either you report the news the way we want you to report it, or we're gonna tag some, what we think negative sign on you."

— **CBS's Dan Rather, CNBC's *Rivera Live*, May 21, 2001.**

"I think there is a mainstream media. CNN is mainstream media, and the main, ABC, CBS, NBC are mainstream media. And I think it's just essentially to make the point that we are largely in the center without particular axes to grind, without ideologies which are represented in our daily coverage, at least certainly not on purpose."

— **ABC's Peter Jennings, CNN's *Larry King Live*, May 15, 2001.**

"We can now safely conclude that this whole notion that the liberal media elite is coddling Bill Clinton and always plays to the Democrats is absurd. I mean the fact is who's been the undoing of Bill Clinton: *Newsweek* and the *Washington Post*, those raging conservative publications."

— **Former *New York Times* and U.S. News reporter Steve Roberts on Lewinsky scandal coverage, CNN's *Late Edition*, February 1, 1998.**

"Scholar after scholar has disputed, in studying the actual content of the press, what you've just blithely handed out that it's this left-wing media. That's a charge from the '50s. That's not the current press....The bias is a bias against politicians of all kinds, not a bias for one side or other."

— **PBS's Ellen Hume reacting to Bob Novak's assertion the mainstream media are 'tilted to the left.' July 27, 1997 CNN's *Reliable Sources*.**

"I don't think voting for Clinton makes you a liberal. I mean, Bill Clinton isn't even a liberal, and second, if you're liberal, does that mean you can't be fair? What hypocrisy that we sit around and talk about the press like it's some sort of 'they.' It's us. Are we too liberal? N-O."

— ***Newsweek*'s Eleanor Clift on *The McLaughlin Group*, July 5, 1997.**

"There is no convincing evidence that journalists infect their stories — intentionally or otherwise — with their own political prejudices.... While a few studies suggest such a link, most are the handiwork of right-leaning groups and critics whose research methods can't withstand scrutiny....The credibility of the media is not suffering because of a liberal bias; it's suffering, in large part, because of the continuing charge of bias that has gone unanswered for too long."

— **Everette Dennis, Senior VP of the Freedom Forum, in the January-February 1997 edition of ASNE's magazine, *The American Editor*.**

"When you're talking about reporters, not columnists, I don't think there's any liberal bias. I don't think there really ever has been."

— *Los Angeles Times* Senior Washington correspondent Jack Nelson on CNBC's *Politics '96*, March 9, 1996.

"I'm all news, all the time. Full power, tall tower. I want to break in when news breaks out. That's my agenda. Now respectfully, when you start talking about a liberal agenda and all the, quote, liberal bias in the media, I quite frankly, and I say this respectfully but candidly to you, I don't know what you're talking about."

— Dan Rather to talk radio host Mike Rosen of KOA in Denver, November 28, 1995.

"I don't think the coverage of Gingrich and the GOP Congress has been liberally biased..."

— ABC's Cokie Roberts on CNBC's *Meet the Media*, October 23, 1995.

"It's one of the great political myths, about press bias. Most reporters are interested in a story. Most reporters don't know whether they're Republican or Democrat, and vote every which way. Now, a lot of politicians would like you to believe otherwise, but that's the truth of the matter. I've worked around journalism all of my life...[and] most reporters, when you get to know them, would fall in the general category of kind of common-sense moderates."

— Dan Rather answering a caller's question about liberal bias on CBS's *Late Late Show with Tom Snyder*, February 8, 1995.

"A liberal bias? I don't know what a liberal bias is. Do you mean we care about the poor, the sick, and the maimed? Do we care whether people are being shot every day on the streets of America? If that's liberal, so be it. I think it's everything that's good in life."

— UPI White House correspondent Helen Thomas on C-SPAN's *Journalists' Roundtable*, December 31, 1993.

"I watch probably as many talk shows, and as many interview shows, what George Bush calls the professional talking heads on Sundays, as anybody else. I actually think the bias, in the overall system, is from the center to the right."

— PBS's Bill Moyers on CNN's *Larry King Live*, November 2, 1992.

"I don't think there is [a bias] at all. I think anyone who accuses the press of bias is acting in desperation, I think. I think the press has been much more aggressive and fair, in being, in going after both sides, and looking, than ever before."

— *New York Times* reporter Richard Berke on CNN's *Larry King Live*, October 16, 1992.

"My reaction to that button ['Rather Biased'] and others, in part, is a button I bought yesterday that says 'Yeah, I'm In The Media, Screw You!'... Our role is not just to parrot what people say, it's to make people think. I think that sometimes I want to say to the electorate: 'Grow up!'"

— *Newsweek* reporter Ginny Carroll on C-SPAN's *Journalists' Roundtable*, August 21, 1992.