

Decades of Research Showing

- *What Journalists Think*
- *How Journalists Vote*
- *What the Public Thinks About the Media*
- *What Journalists Say About Media Bias*

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- ONE -

WHAT JOURNALISTS THINK HOW JOURNALISTS VOTE

Reporters should keep their personal opinions from influencing the news stories they write and produce. But journalists are only human. A reporter's political outlook is bound to sway the judgments he or she makes each day, such as what events are newsworthy, and on whom to rely for trustworthy information. It is therefore essential to know if the media truly represent a diverse range of viewpoints, or are dominated by just one political philosophy.

Surveys over the past 50 years have consistently found that journalists — especially those at the highest ranks of their profession — are much more liberal than rest of America. They are more likely to vote liberal, more likely to describe themselves as liberal, and more likely to agree with the liberal position on policy matters than members of the general public. The Media Research Center has compiled the relevant data on journalist attitudes, as well as polling showing how the American public's recognition of the media's liberal bias has grown over the years (data presented in Chapter 2).

These surveys of journalists were conducted by professional pollsters, academics or news organizations, not by conservatives trying to score a political point against the press. That fact, along with the remarkable consistency of their findings, is powerful proof that liberals are far over-represented in the American media.

Early Polls of Journalists, 1962-1985

For a 2009 academic paper, "The Political Attitudes of American Journalists: A Survey of Surveys," Northeastern University professor William G. Mayer tracked down survey research from the 1960s, '70s and '80s, including the first known survey of journalists' political ideology and party identification.

KEY FINDINGS:

- In 1962, communications professor William L. Rivers surveyed 273 Washington correspondents, and found 57 percent described themselves as "liberal," vs. 28 percent who called themselves "conservatives. Another 16 percent said they were "middle of the road," or refused to answer.
- Similarly, Rivers found that 32 percent of journalists identified themselves as Democrats, compared to 10 percent who said they were Republican, with the remainder describing themselves as independent, other, or refusing to answer.
- In 1971, researchers John Johnstone, Edward Slawski and William Bownam interviewed 1,313 people occupying editorial positions at 208 news organizations, with the results appearing in their 1976 book, *The News People: A Sociological Portrait of American Journalists and Their Work*.
- Johnston's group found twice as many journalists (40%) called themselves "pretty far to the left" or a "little to the left," compared to the 20 percent who said they were a "little to the right" or "pretty far to the right."
- In 1978, The Brookings Institute's Stephen Hess surveyed 450 correspondents for his book, *The Washington Reporters*. Hess found 42 percent called themselves liberal, 39 percent middle of the road, and 19 percent conservative.
- In 1985, the Associated Press Managing Editors Association (APME) commissioned a wide-ranging survey of 1,333 journalists from 51 newspapers. They found three times as many journalists (30%) referred to themselves as "liberal," compared to 10 percent who said they were "conservative."

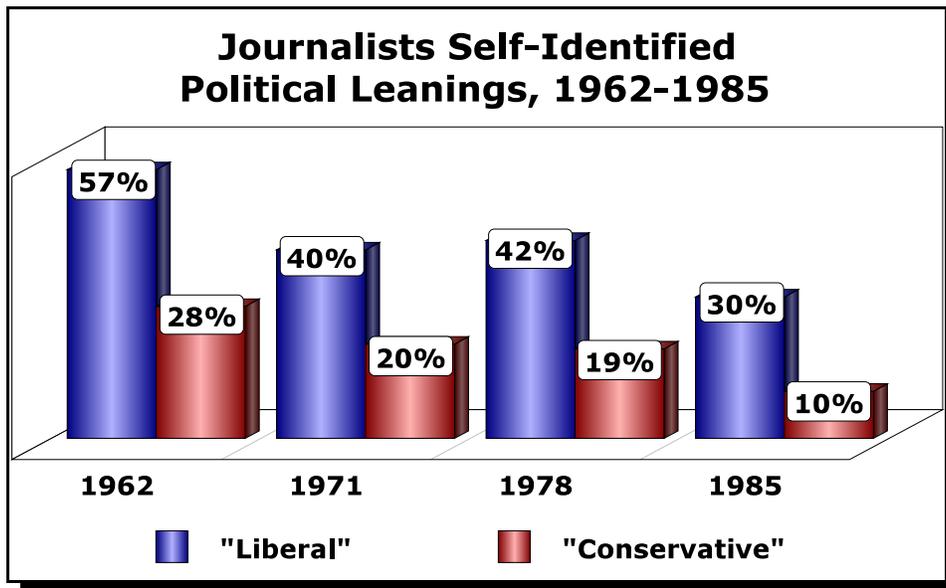


Exhibit 1: "The Media Elite"

In 1981, S. Robert Lichter, then with George Washington University, and Stanley Rothman of Smith College, released a groundbreaking survey of 240 journalists at top media outlets – including the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News & World Report*, ABC, CBS, NBC, and PBS – on their political attitudes and voting patterns. The data showed journalists hold liberal positions on a wide range of social and political issues. Lichter and Rothman’s book, *The Media Elite*, became the most widely quoted media study of the 1980s.

KEY FINDINGS:

- More than four-fifths of the journalists interviewed voted for the Democratic presidential candidate in every election between 1964 and 1976.
- “Fifty-four percent placed themselves to the left of center, compared to only 19 percent who chose the right side of the spectrum,” Lichter and Rothman’s survey of journalists discovered.
- “Fifty-six percent said the people they worked with were mostly on the left, and only 8 percent on the right – a margin of seven-to-one.”
- Nearly half of the journalists surveyed agreed that “the very structure of our society causes people to feel alienated,” while “five out of six believe our legal system mainly favors the wealthy.”
- 30 percent disagreed that “private enterprise is fair to workers;” 28 percent agreed that “all political systems are repressive.”
- 54 percent did not regard adultery as wrong, compared to only 15 percent who regarded it as wrong.
- “Ninety percent agree that a woman has the right to decide for herself whether to have an abortion; 79 percent agree strongly with this pro-choice position.”

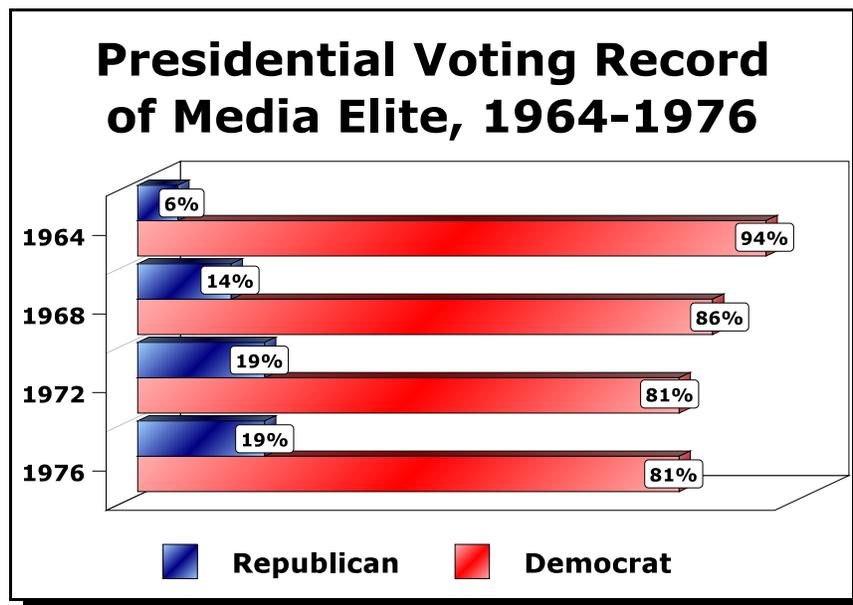


Exhibit 2: The American Journalist

In late 1982 and early 1983, Indiana University journalism professors David H. Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit surveyed more than 1,000 journalists, and reported the results in their 1986 book, *The American Journalist*. While they found more liberals than conservatives among reporters at all levels, among 136 executives and staffers at “prominent news organizations” – the three weekly newsmagazines, the AP and UPI wire services and the *Boston Globe* – the liberal tilt was much more pronounced.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Journalists were instructed: “The media are often classified politically in terms of left, right and center. On a scale from zero (meaning extreme left) to one hundred (meaning extreme right)....where on this scale would you place yourself?”
- Most of the journalists surveyed (57.5%) chose numbers that placed themselves in the middle of the spectrum, with 22.1 percent ranking themselves as more liberal, and 17.9 percent saying they were more conservative, and 2.5 percent not responding.
- “When the political leanings of U.S. journalists are analyzed separately for executive (those who supervise editorial employees) and staffers of prominent and nonprominent news organizations, we find more journalists (both executives and staffers) from prominent organizations claiming to be left-of-center.”
- Among the prominent, or elite, media, 32.3 percent rated themselves as more liberal, compared to 11.8 percent who said they were more conservative. Eight percent rated themselves as solidly “left,” but none of the media elite would place themselves squarely on the “right.”
- Nearly four in ten of all journalists surveyed (38.5%) described themselves as Democrats, compared to just 18.8 percent who said they were Republicans. Among the journalists working at prominent news organizations, just 6 percent would admit to being Republicans, compared to 43 percent who said they were Democrats.

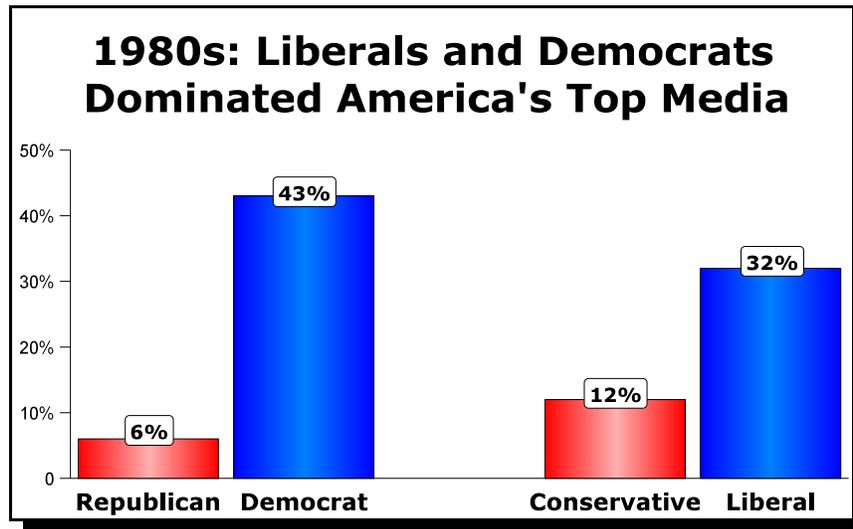


Exhibit 3: U.S. Newspaper Journalists

In 1985, the *Los Angeles Times* conducted one of the most extensive surveys of journalists in history. Using the same questionnaire they had used to poll the public, the *Times* polled 2,700 journalists at 621 newspapers across the country. By a two-to-one margin, reporters had a negative view of then-President Ronald Reagan and voted by the same margin for Walter Mondale in 1984. The survey also asked 16 questions involving foreign affairs, social and economic issues. On 15 of 16 questions, the journalists gave answers to the left of those given by the public.

KEY FINDINGS:

- When asked how they voted in the 1984 election, more than twice as many newspaper journalists chose liberal Walter Mondale (58 percent) over the conservative incumbent Ronald Reagan (26 percent), even as the country picked Reagan in a 59 to 41 percent landslide.
- Self-identified liberals outnumbered conservatives in the newsroom by more than three-to-one, 55 to 17 percent. This compares to only one-fourth of the public (23 percent) that identified themselves as liberal.
- “Sometimes the readers and journalists take diametrically opposed positions – as on the question: ‘Are you in favor of the way Ronald Reagan is handling his job as President?’ Journalists say ‘No’ by a 2-1 margin; readers say ‘Yes’ by about the same margin,” *Times* media reporter David Shaw wrote.
- 84 percent of reporters and editors supported the so-called “nuclear freeze” to ban all future nuclear missile deployment; 80 percent were against increased defense spending; and 76 percent opposed aid to the Nicaraguan contras.
- 82 percent of reporters and editors favored allowing women to have abortions; 81 percent backed affirmative action; and 78 percent wanted stricter gun control.
- Two-thirds (67 percent) of journalists opposed prayer in public schools; three-fourths of the general public (74 percent) supported prayer in public schools.

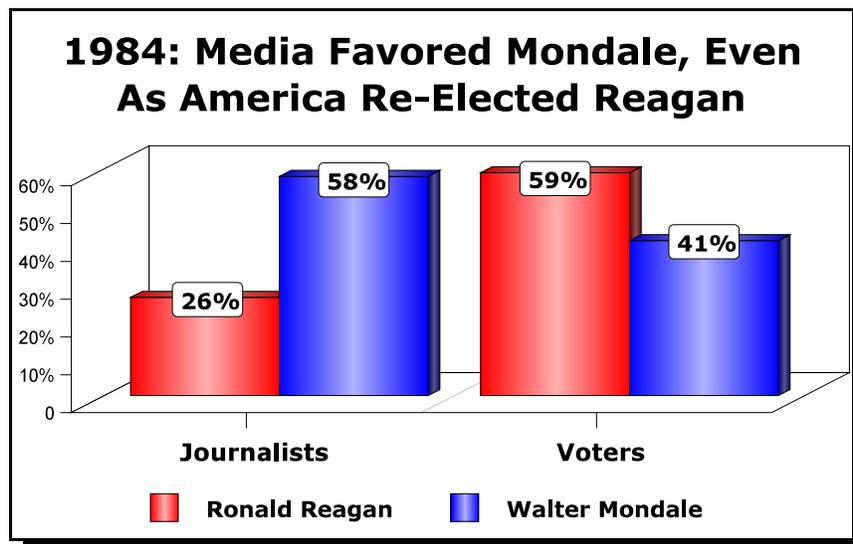


Exhibit 4: Survey of Business Reporters

A 1988 poll by a New York-based newsletter, *Journalist and Financial Reporting*, surveyed 151 business reporters from over 30 publications ranging from the *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune* to *Money*, *Fortune* and *Business Week*. The survey found that newspaper and magazine business reporters are just as liberal as their colleagues covering politics.

KEY FINDINGS:

- 54 percent identified themselves as Democrats, just nine percent as Republicans.
- 76 percent reported they opposed school prayer and 75 percent were against aid to the Contras, rebels fighting the Communist-backed Nicaraguan government. An overwhelming 86 percent favored abortion.
- More than half of the reporters, 52 percent, evaluated President Reagan’s performance in office as “poor” or “below average.” Only 17 percent gave him an “excellent” or “good,” while 19 percent considered him “average.” By way of comparison, Reagan’s average approval rating among the public during 1988 was 53 percent positive, according to Gallup.
- Asked who they wished to see elected President that year, 27 percent named liberal New York Governor Mario Cuomo (D), followed by Democratic Senators Bill Bradley (20%) and Paul Simon (9%). Senator Bob Dole was the most “popular” Republican, garnering a piddling eight percent.
- Rev. Pat Robertson, then a GOP candidate, topped the list – at 44 percent – of those the reporters would “least like to see as President,” followed by 19 percent who named the eventual winner, George H. W. Bush.

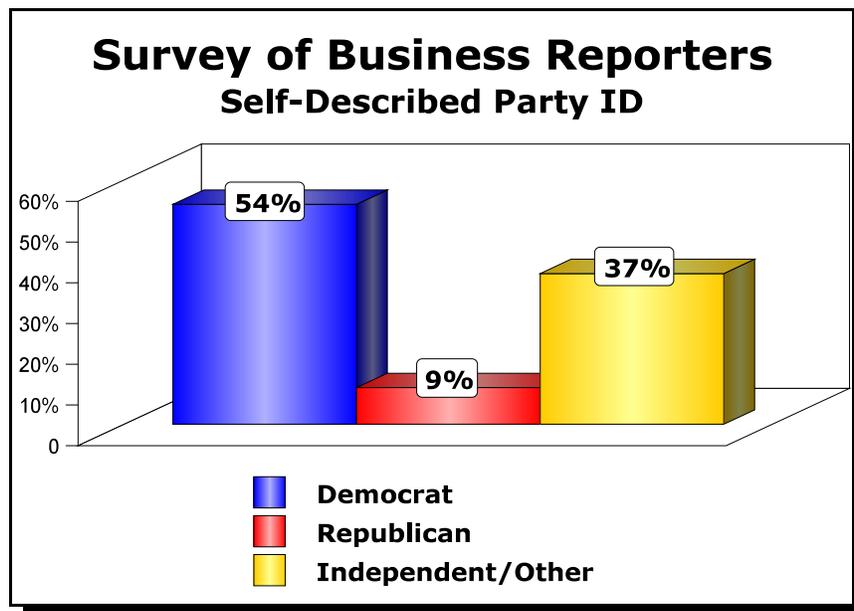


Exhibit 5: Journalists – Who Are They, Really?

In 1992, Indiana University journalism professors David H. Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit surveyed 1,410 journalists who “work for a wide variety of daily and weekly newspapers, radio and television stations, news services and magazines throughout the United States.” Presenting the results in the Fall 1992 *Media Studies Journal*, they found journalists were more liberal, more Democratic, more in favor of legalized abortion and less religious than the public at large.

KEY FINDINGS:

- 44 percent of journalists identified themselves as Democrats while just 16 percent tagged themselves as Republican. Thirty-four percent described themselves as independents.
- “Compared to the overall U.S. population, journalists are 3 percent to 10 percent more likely to say they are Democrats, depending on which national survey you use as a yardstick, and 10 to 17 points less likely to say they are Republicans,” they wrote.
- Nearly half of the journalists surveyed (47 percent) called themselves “liberal,” compared to 22 percent who described themselves as “conservative.” Gallup polls taken at the same time found just 18 percent of the public considered themselves liberal, while 34 percent of the public said they were conservative.
- The study authors found “minorities are much more likely to call themselves Democrats than are white journalists, especially blacks (70 percent), Asians (63 percent) and Hispanics (59 percent).”
- “The percentage of journalists rating religion or religious beliefs as ‘very important’ is substantially lower (38 percent) than the percentage in the overall U.S. population (61 percent).
- More than half of journalists (51%) said abortion should be “legal under any circumstances,” compared to just four percent who thought abortion should be “illegal in all circumstances.” Among the general public, 33 percent wanted abortion “legal under any circumstances,” and 14 percent thought it should always be illegal.

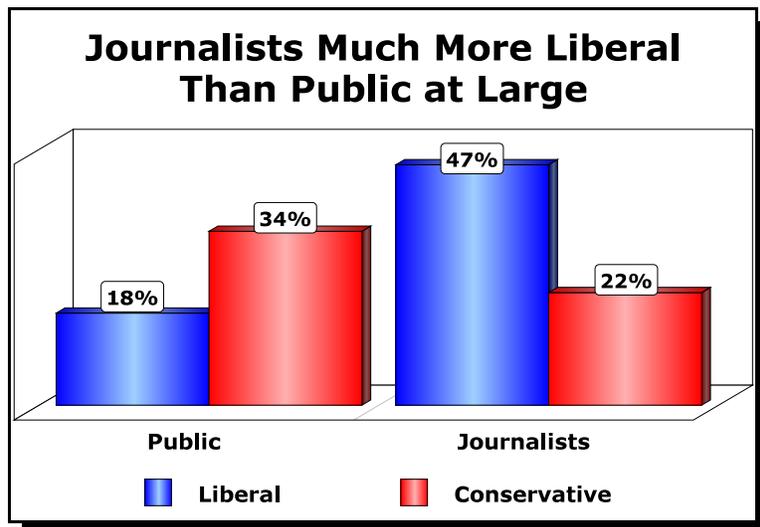


Exhibit 6: White House Reporters

In 1995, Kenneth Walsh, a reporter for *U.S. News & World Report*, polled 28 of his fellow White House correspondents from ABC, CBS, CNN, NBC, the *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Washington Post*, Copley, Cox, Hearst, Knight-Ridder, plus *Newsweek*, *Time* and *U.S. News & World Report*, about their presidential voting patterns for his 1996 book *Feeding the Beast: The White House versus the Press*. Walsh found that his colleagues strongly preferred Democrats, with the White House press corps admitting a total of 50 votes for Democratic candidates compared to just seven for Republicans.

KEY FINDINGS:

- In 1992, nine of the White House correspondents surveyed voted for Democrat Bill Clinton, two for Republican George H. W. Bush, and one for independent Ross Perot.
- In 1988, 12 voted for Democrat Michael Dukakis, one for Bush.
- In 1984, 10 voted for Democrat Walter Mondale, zero for Ronald Reagan.
- In 1980, eight voted for Democrat Jimmy Carter, four for liberal independent John Anderson, and two voted for Ronald Reagan.
- In 1976, 11 voted for Carter, two for Republican Gerald Ford.
- Walsh wrote of the White House press corps members he surveyed: “Even though the survey was anonymous, many journalists declined to reveal their party affiliations, whom they voted for in recent presidential elections, and other data they regarded as too personal – even though they regularly pressure Presidents and other officials to make such disclosures.”
- “Those who did reply seemed to be representative of the larger group. Seven said they were Democrats, eleven were unaffiliated with either major party, and not a single respondent said he or she was a registered Republican (although some might have been but were not willing to say so).”

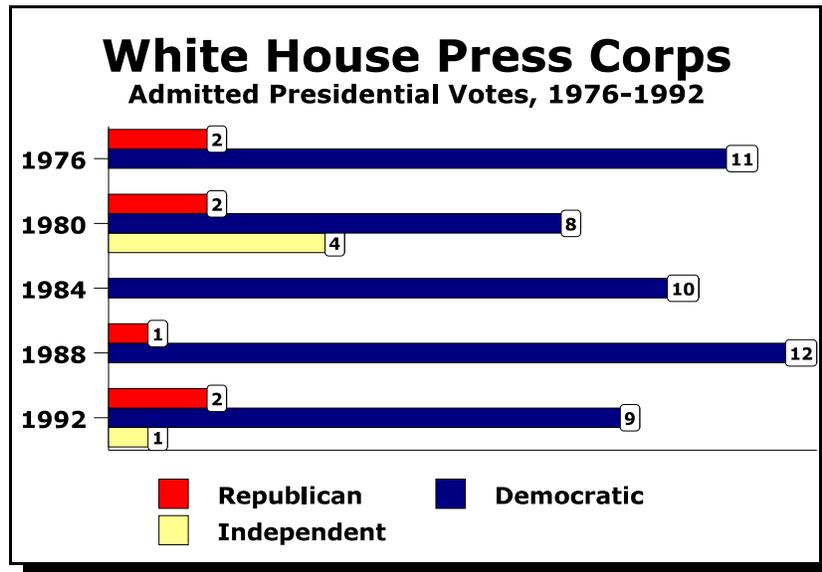


Exhibit 7: The Media Elite Revisited

In 1995, Stanley Rothman and Amy E. Black “partially replicated the earlier Rothman-Lichter” survey of the media elite. (See previous entry, *The Media Elite*.) “The sample of journalists mirrors that from the earlier study, including reporters and editors at major national newspapers, news magazines and wire services,” the authors wrote in a Spring 2001 article for the journal *Public Interest*. They found the media elite held strongly liberal views on abortion, homosexuality, and a range of economic issues. “Despite the discrediting of centrally planned economies produced by the collapse of the Soviet Union and other Communist regimes, attitudes about government control of the economy have not changed very much since the 1980s,” the authors marveled.

KEY FINDINGS:

- More than three out of four “elite journalists,” 76 percent, reported voting for Michael Dukakis in 1988, compared to just 46 percent of the voting public.
- An even larger percentage of top journalists, 91 percent, said they cast ballots for Bill Clinton in 1992, who won only 43 percent of the vote that year.
- Nearly all of the media elite (97 percent) agreed that “it is a woman’s right to decide whether or not to have an abortion,” and five out of six (84 percent) agreed strongly.
- Three out of four journalists (73 percent) agreed that “homosexuality is as acceptable a lifestyle as heterosexuality,” and 40 percent agreed strongly.
- Seven out of ten journalists (71 percent) agreed that “government should work to ensure that everyone has a job,” and 30 percent said they strongly agreed with that statement.
- Three-fourths (75 percent) agreed that “government should work to reduce the income gap between the rich and the poor,” and more than a third (34 percent) strongly agreed.
- Relatively few journalists (39 percent) agreed that “less government regulation of business would be good for the economy,” and just five percent strongly agreed with this sentiment.

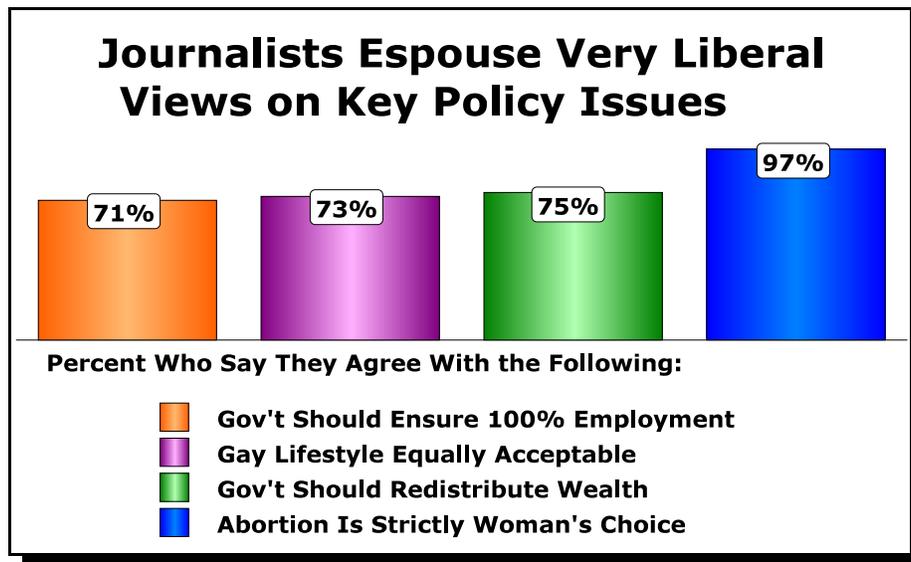


Exhibit 8: Washington Bureau Chiefs and Correspondents

In April 1996, the Freedom Forum published a report by *Chicago Tribune* writer Elaine Povich titled, "Partners and Adversaries: The Contentious Connection Between Congress and the Media." Buried in Appendix D was the real news for those concerned about media bias: Based on the 139 Washington bureau chiefs and congressional correspondents who returned the Freedom Forum questionnaire, the Washington-based reporters – by an incredible margin of nine-to-one – overwhelmingly cast their presidential ballots in 1992 for Democrat Bill Clinton over Republican incumbent George Bush.

KEY FINDINGS:

- 89 percent of Washington-based reporters said they voted for Bill Clinton in 1992. Only seven percent voted for George Bush, with two percent choosing Ross Perot.
- Asked "How would you characterize your political orientation?" 61 percent said "liberal" or "liberal to moderate." Only nine percent labeled themselves "conservative" or "moderate to conservative."
- Fifty-nine percent dismissed the Republican's 1994 Contract with America "an election-year campaign ploy." Just three percent considered it "a serious reform proposal."

Washington-Based Reporters Preferred Bill Clinton 12-to-1

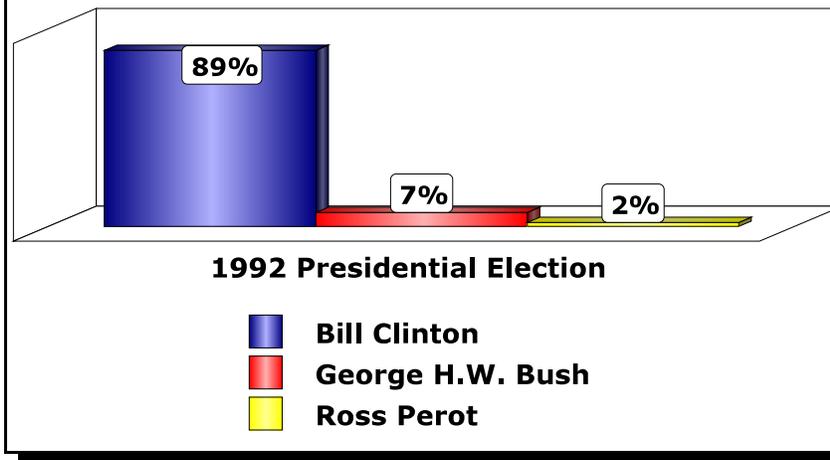


Exhibit 9: Newspaper Journalists of the '90s

In 1996, as a follow-up to a 1988 survey, the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) surveyed 1,037 reporters at 61 newspapers of all sizes across the nation, and found that newsrooms were more ideologically unrepresentative than they had been in the late 1980s. While the percentage of journalists calling themselves “Democrat or liberal” essentially held steady (going from 62 to 61 percent of those surveyed), the percentage saying they were “Republican or conservative” dropped from 22 percent to just 15 percent of journalists. The ASNE report, *The Newspaper Journalists of the '90s*, also revealed that bigger – presumably more influential – newspapers had the most liberal staffs.

KEY FINDINGS:

- According to ASNE: “In 1996 only 15 percent of the newsroom labeled itself conservative/Republican or leaning in that direction, down from 22 percent in 1988. The greatest gain is in the ‘independent’ column, which rose from 17 percent to 24 percent. Liberal/Democrats and those leaning that way slipped only from 62 to 61 percent.”
- “Political orientation does not vary across job descriptions, except that editorial writers are more likely to be independent or conservative than staffers in the newsroom.”
- “On papers of at least 50,000 circulation, 65 percent of the staffs are liberal/Democrat or leaning that way, and 12 percent are conservative/Republican or leaning that way.”
- Women in the newsroom were more likely than men to identify as liberal/Democratic. Only 11 percent identified themselves as conservative or leaned that way.
- Minority journalists are even more liberal/Democrat than other reporters, with a mere three percent of blacks and eight percent of Asians and Hispanics putting themselves on the right.

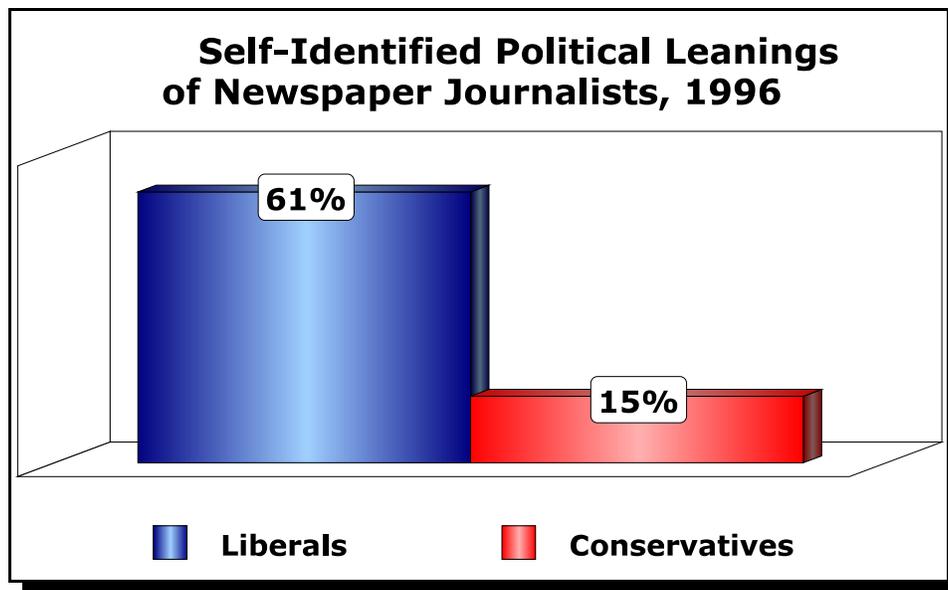


Exhibit 10: Newspaper Editors

In January 1998, *Editor & Publisher*, the preeminent media trade magazine, conducted a poll of 167 newspaper editors across the country. *Investor's Business Daily* reporter Matthew Robinson obtained complete poll results, highlights of which were featured in the MRC's February 1998 edition of *MediaWatch*.

KEY FINDINGS:

- In 1992, when just 43 percent of the public voted Democrat Bill Clinton for President, 58 percent of editors surveyed voted for him.
- In 1996, a minority (49 percent) of the American people voted to reelect Clinton, compared to a majority (57 percent) of the editors.
- When asked "How often do journalists' opinions influence coverage?" a solid majority of the editors (57 percent) conceded it "sometimes" happens while another 14 percent said opinions "often" influence news coverage. In contrast, only one percent claim it "never" happens, and 26 percent say personal views "seldom" influence coverage.

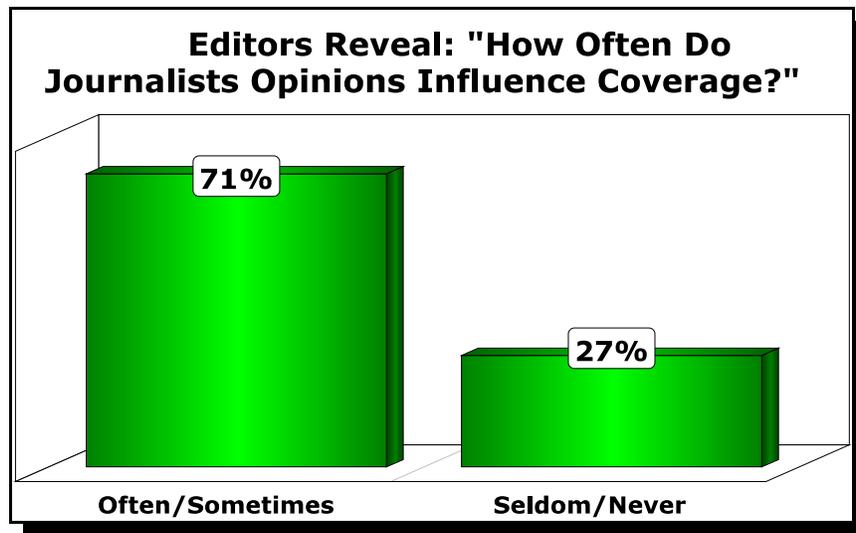


Exhibit 11: The People and the Press: Whose Views Shape the News?

In the July / August 2001 edition of the Roper Center's *Public Perspective*, *Washington Post* national political correspondent Thomas Edsall summarized the findings of a Kaiser Family Foundation poll of 301 "media professionals," 300 "policymakers" and the 1,206 members of the public. The media professionals included "reporters and editors from top newspapers, TV and radio networks, news services and news magazines." The results showed that "only a tiny fraction of the media identifies itself as either Republican (4%), or conservative (6%)," placing reporters far to the left of media consumers.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Four times as many "media professionals" told the pollsters they considered themselves "liberal" (25 percent) than called themselves "conservative" (6 percent). Among the general public, self-identified conservatives outnumbered liberals, 38 percent to 21 percent.
- More than six times as many media professionals called themselves Democrats (27 percent), than said they were Republicans (just 4 percent). Among the general public, Democrats slightly outnumbered Republicans, 34 percent to 28 percent.
- Policymakers were also found to be less liberal than journalists. According to Edsall, "These areas of divergence between the public and the press lend themselves to conflict, both with the consumers and the makers of news, and threaten to diminish the legitimacy of American journalism."
- Edsall: "Whether or not members of the media agree with conservative voters on any given set of questions is not at issue. The problem is the invisibility of these men and women to the national media, and, most especially, the inability of the press to represent their views in public discourse."

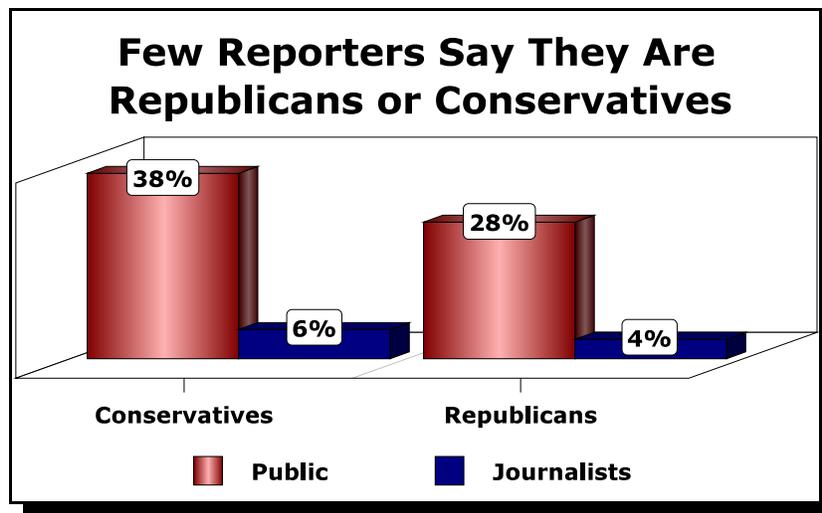


Exhibit 12: How Journalists See Journalists in 2004

In May 2004, the Pew Research Center for The People and The Press (in association with the Project for Excellence in Journalism and the Committee of Concerned Journalists) surveyed 547 journalists and media executives, including 247 at national-level media outlets. The poll was similar to ones conducted by the same group (previously known as the *Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press*) in 1995 and 1999. The actual polling was done by the Princeton Survey Research Associates.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Five times more national journalists identify themselves as “liberal” (34 percent) than “conservative” (just 7 percent). In contrast, a survey of the public taken in May 2004 found 20 percent saying they were liberal, and 33 percent saying they were conservative.
- Liberals also outnumber conservatives in local newsrooms. Pew found that 23 percent of the local journalists they questioned say they are liberals, while about half as many (12 percent) call themselves conservative.
- Most national journalists (55 percent) say the media are “not critical enough” of President Bush, compared with only eight percent who believe the press has been “too critical.” In 1995, the poll found just two percent thought journalists had given “too much” coverage to then-President Clinton’s accomplishments, compared to 48 percent who complained of “too little” coverage of Clinton’s achievements.
- Reporters struggled to name a liberal news organization. According to Pew, “*The New York Times* was most often mentioned as the national daily news organization that takes a decidedly liberal point of view, but only by 20% of the national sample.” Only two percent of reporters suggested CNN, ABC, CBS, or NPR were liberal; just one percent named NBC.
- Journalists did see ideology at one outlet: “The single news outlet that strikes most journalists as taking a particular ideological stance – either liberal or conservative – is Fox News Channel,” Pew reported. More than two-thirds of national journalists (69%) tagged FNC as a conservative news organization, followed by *The Washington Times* (9%) and *The Wall Street Journal* (8 percent).

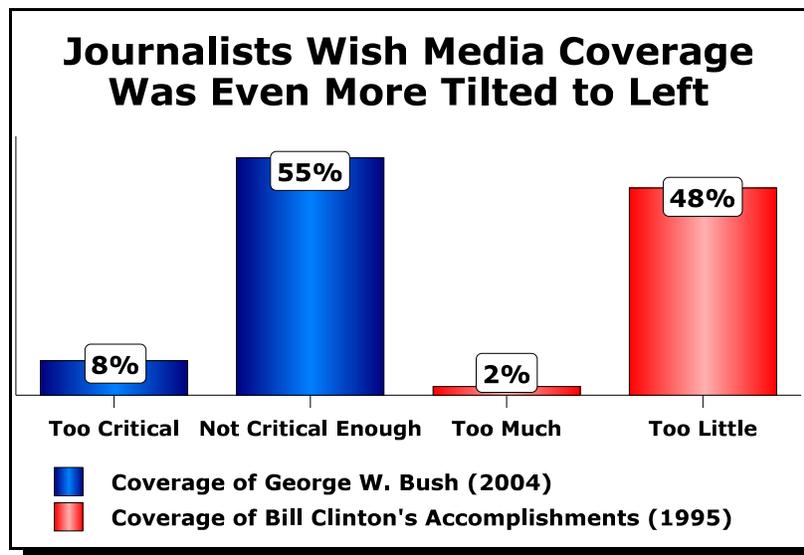


Exhibit 13: Campaign Journalists (2004)

New York Times columnist John Tierney surveyed 153 campaign journalists at a press party at the 2004 Democratic National Convention in Boston, and found a huge preference for Democratic Senator John Kerry over President George W. Bush, particularly among journalists based in Washington, D.C.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Tierney found a strong preference for the liberal Kerry: “When asked who would be a better president, the journalists from outside the Beltway picked Mr. Kerry 3 to 1, and the ones from Washington favored him 12 to 1. Those results jibe with previous surveys over the past two decades showing that journalists tend to be Democrats, especially the ones based in Washington.”
- To see why journalists preferred Kerry, “we asked our respondents which administration they’d prefer to cover the next four years strictly from a journalistic standpoint.” More than half the journalists thought Bush was the better news subject: “The Washington respondents said they would rather cover Mr. Kerry, but by a fairly small amount, 27 to 21, and the other journalists picked Bush, 56 to 40....The overall result was 77 for Bush, 67 for Mr. Kerry.”
- “We tried to test for a likeability bias. With which presidential nominee, we asked, would you rather be stranded on a desert island? Mr. Kerry was the choice of both groups: 31 to 17 among the Washington journalists, and 51 to 39 among the others. ‘Bush’s religious streak,’ one Florida correspondent said, ‘would drive me nuts on a desert island.’”

Exhibit 14: TV and Newspaper Journalists

In March and April 2005, the University of Connecticut’s Department of Public Policy surveyed 300 journalists nationwide – 120 who worked in the television industry and 180 who worked at newspapers – and asked for whom they voted in the 2004 presidential election.

KEY FINDINGS:

- More than half of the journalists surveyed (52 percent) said they voted for Democrat John Kerry in the 2004 presidential election, while fewer than one-fifth (19 percent) said they voted for Republican George W. Bush. The public chose Bush, 51 to 48 percent. One out of five journalists (21 percent) refused to disclose their vote.
- When asked “generally speaking, do you consider yourself a Democrat, Republican, an Independent, or something else?” more than three times as many journalists (33 percent) said they were Democrats than said they were Republicans (10 percent).
- While about half of the journalists said they were “moderate,” 28 percent said they thought of themselves as liberals, compared to just 10 percent who said they were conservative.
- When asked about the Bill of Rights, nearly all journalists deemed “essential” the right of a fair trial (97%), a free press (96%), freedom of religion (95%) and free speech (92%), and 80 percent called “essential” the judicially-derived “right to privacy.” But only 25 percent of the journalists termed the “right to own firearms” essential.

Exhibit 15: The News Media and the War, 2005

As part of a larger study of how the views of “opinion leaders” compare with those of the general public, the Pew Research Center for The People & The Press, in collaboration with the Council on Foreign relations, surveyed 72 top journalists in September and October 2005. The study, which was released on November 17, 2005, found that, compared to everyday citizens, journalists were more likely to have opposed the decision to go to war in Iraq, were more pessimistic about the chances of success in Iraq, and were far less likely to see immigration reform as a national priority. Reporters were also more disapproving of President Bush’s job performance.

KEY FINDINGS:

- The public was nearly evenly split on whether the U.S. should have invaded Iraq in 2003, with 48 percent agreeing with the decision and 45 percent disagreeing. But among journalists, 71 percent said they considered it a bad decision, compared to just 28 percent that thought it was the right move.
- Similarly, while the public is evenly split on whether the war in Iraq will help or hurt the U.S. in the overall war on terror (44 percent to 44 percent), three times as many journalists say the war in Iraq has been harmful as think it was helpful (68 percent to 22 percent).
- While 56 percent of the public said “efforts to establish a stable democracy” in Iraq will succeed, 63 percent of the news media elite think it will fail.
- Nearly half of the public (46 percent) believe torture of terrorist suspects can be “often” or “sometimes” justified, while 78 percent of the news media elite contend it is “rarely” or “never” justified.
- Fewer than one in five journalists (17%) said they thought “reducing illegal immigration” was a “top priority,” compared to 51 percent of the public who rate it as a “top priority.”
- Just 21 percent of the media approved of President Bush’s job performance in the fall of 2005, compared to 40 percent of the public.

Media Much More Anti-War Than Public

| | <u>Media</u> | <u>Public</u> |
|--|--------------|---------------|
| Effort to Build Iraqi Democracy Will Succeed..... | 33% | 56% |
| Decision to Take Military Action Was Right..... | 28% | 48% |
| War in Iraq Helpful to Overall War on Terrorism..... | 22% | 44% |

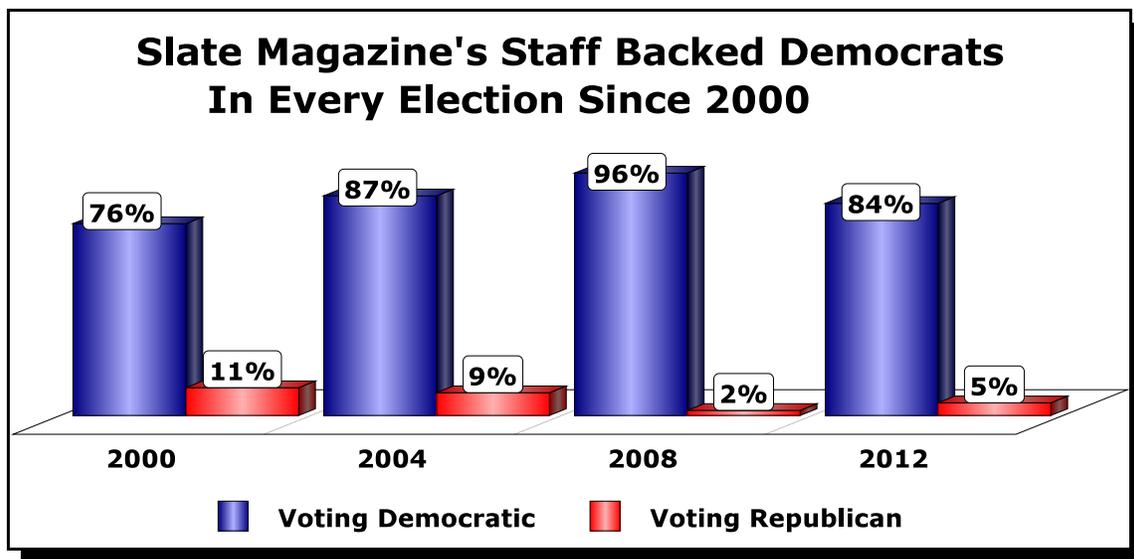
— Based on Pew Research Center polls of top journalists and the general public, report released November 17, 2005.

Exhibit 16: Slate Magazine Pre-Election Staff Surveys

Prior to the 2000, 2004, 2008 and 2012 presidential elections, the online Slate magazine surveyed its staff to find out how they intended to vote. In each of these elections, more than three-fourths of the staff declared their intention to vote for the Democratic candidate, with 96 percent supporting Barack Obama in the 2008 presidential election.

KEY FINDINGS:

- More than three-fourths (29, or 76%) listed Democratic candidate Al Gore as their top choice in 2000, compared to just 10.5 percent (4) who planned on voting for Republican George W. Bush. Eight percent (3) said they were supporting Green candidate Ralph Nader; five percent (2) reported backing Libertarian candidate Harry Browne.
- None of the top 13 editors was voting for Bush in 2000. Twelve of the thirteen said they were voting for Gore; the thirteenth backed the Libertarian, Harry Browne.
- In 2004, 87 percent of the staff who participated said they planned to vote for Democrat John Kerry (46 votes), or nine times as many who planned to vote for Republican George W. Bush (5 votes, or 9%). One said they planned to vote for Libertarian candidate Michael Badnarik, and one said they intended to cast a ballot for Green candidate David Cobb.
- In 2008, 55 of the 57 staffers who responded to the survey (96%) said they were supporting Barack Obama, with just one supporting Republican John McCain and one backing Libertarian candidate Bob Barr.
- In 2012, 31 of 37 staffers (84%) said they were backing Obama for a second term, vs. just two for Republican Mitt Romney (5%), two for Libertarian Gary Johnson, one for Green candidate Jill Stein and one contributor who admitted he was voting for no one because "I missed the registration deadline," but "I would have voted for President Obama."





- TWO -

WHAT THE PUBLIC THINKS ABOUT THE MEDIA

For the news media to serve citizens as an effective source for information, it is essential that the public respect their professionalism, independence and fairness. Yet over the past twenty-five years, the news media's credibility has badly eroded. A wide variety of public opinion polls have documented the fact that most Americans now see the media as politically biased, inaccurate, intrusive, and a tool of powerful interests. By a nearly three-to-one margin, those who see political bias believe the media bend their stories to favor liberals. By a nearly eight-to-one margin, voters recognized the media as promoting Barack Obama's candidacy in 2008.

These polls document a crisis for the news media. Years of skewed reporting has squandered the public's trust. Recent surveys also show a widening partisan divide, as Democrats and liberals choose to believe the *New York Times*, CNN and MSNBC, and Republicans and conservatives put their trust in Fox News and the *Wall Street Journal*. The data presented here tell the story of how journalists have devolved from respected professionals to resented partisans, and have lost the esteem of their audience in the process.

Exhibit 1: The People & The Press, 1997

One of the most comprehensive surveys of the public's general opinion of the media was done in 1997 by the Pew Research Center for The People & The Press, formerly known as the *Times Mirror* Center for the People and the Press. This research compared poll results from the mid-1980s with the late-1990s, (using identical questions) and determined a growing percentage of the public realize the media are biased, inaccurate and an obstacle to solving problems.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Two-thirds (67%) said they agreed with the statement: "In dealing with political and social issues, news organizations tend to favor one side." That was up 14 points from 53 percent who gave that answer in 1985.
- Those who believed the media "deal fairly with all sides" fell from 34 percent to 27 percent.
- "In one of the most telling complaints, a majority (54%) of Americans believe the news media gets in the way of society solving its problems," Pew reported.
- Republicans "are more likely to say news organizations favor one side than are Democrats or independents (77 percent vs. 58 percent and 69 percent, respectively)."
- The percentage who felt "news organizations get the facts straight" fell from 55 percent to 37 percent.
- The public also condemned the media's intrusiveness: "Nearly two-thirds (64%) now believe TV news programs unnecessarily invade people's privacy, rather than intrude only when it serves the public interest."

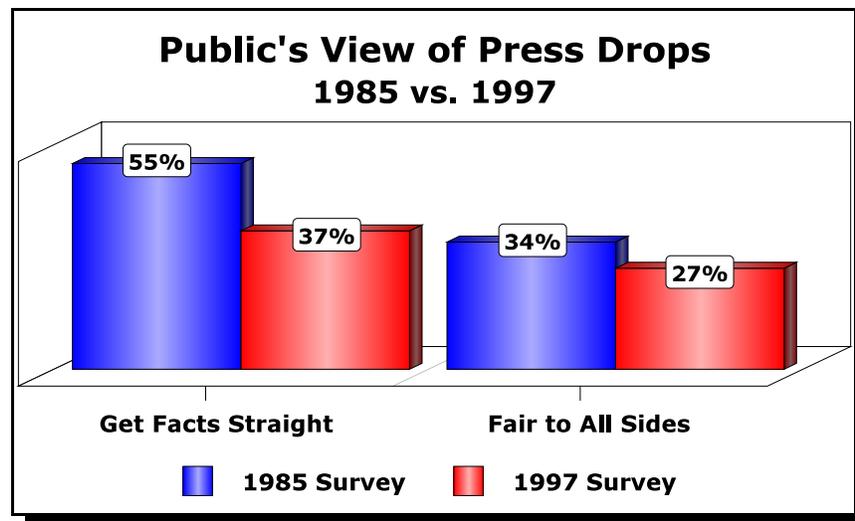


Exhibit 2: ASNE Journalism Credibility Project, 1998

As part of “a \$1 million project to improve the credibility of newspapers and journalism,” the American Society of Newspaper Editors commissioned a poll of 3,000 Americans in April and May of 1998. The survey found that more than three-fourths of Americans (78%) believed that the press is biased, and an equal percentage believed that reporters would “spike or spin” a story to suit powerful interests. The findings were detailed in a 1999 report, *Examining Our Credibility: Perspectives of the Public and the Press*.

KEY FINDINGS:

- “78 percent of U.S. adults agree with the assessment that there is bias in the news media,” the report found.
- “78 percent believe that powerful people can get stories into the paper – or keep them out.”
- “50 percent believe there are particular people or groups that get a ‘special break’ in news coverage, and 45 percent believe that others ‘don’t get a fair shake.’”
- “77 percent believe newspapers pay lots more attention to stories that support their own point of view.”
- “Although a sizeable portion of the public (46 percent) thinks that their newspaper is more liberal than they, another significant segment (36 percent) see the newspaper as more conservative than themselves,” ASNE found.
- The study found a divide between the public and the press. Among everyday Americans, “58 percent believe dissatisfaction with the media is justified – as opposed to 29 percent who say the press is ‘an easy target for deeper problems in our society.’” A survey of newsrooms, however found “only 17 percent of journalists (20 percent of managing editors and assistant managing editors) believe that public dissatisfaction with the press is justified.”

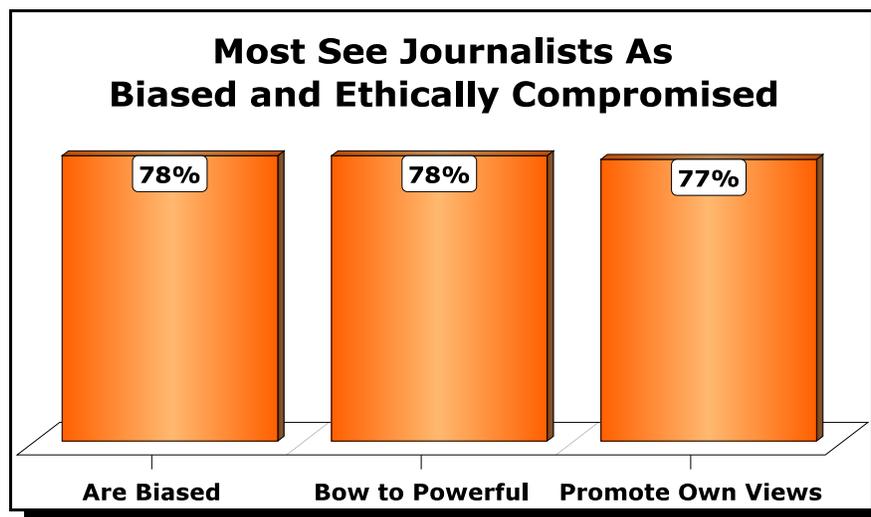


Exhibit 3: The People & The Press, 2000

During the election year, the Pew Research Center for The People & The Press frequently polled public attitudes about the media. In an October 15, 2000 report, the group found that most voters “generally believe the media has been fair to both major presidential candidates, but more say the press has been fair to Al Gore than to George W. Bush.” In fact, the vast majority of respondents (89%) agreed that reporters’ political views often or sometimes influenced the coverage.

KEY FINDINGS:

- When asked, “How often do you think members of the news media let their own political preferences influence the way they report the news?” 57 percent said “often,” and another 32 percent said “sometimes.” Just 8 percent said “seldom,” and only one percent thought reporters’ preferences “never” influenced their coverage.
- Nearly half of the public (47%) thought reporters wanted to see Democratic candidate Al Gore win the 2000 election; just 23 percent thought reporters were hoping for a victory by Republican George W. Bush.

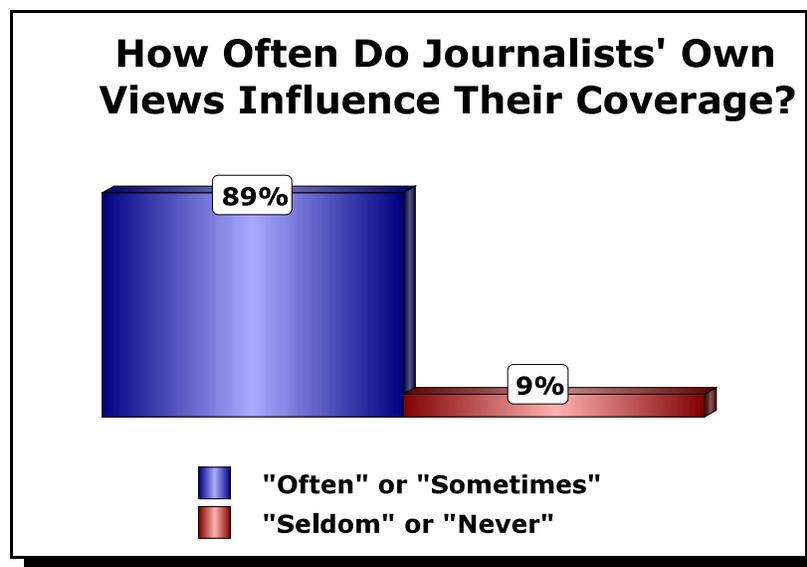
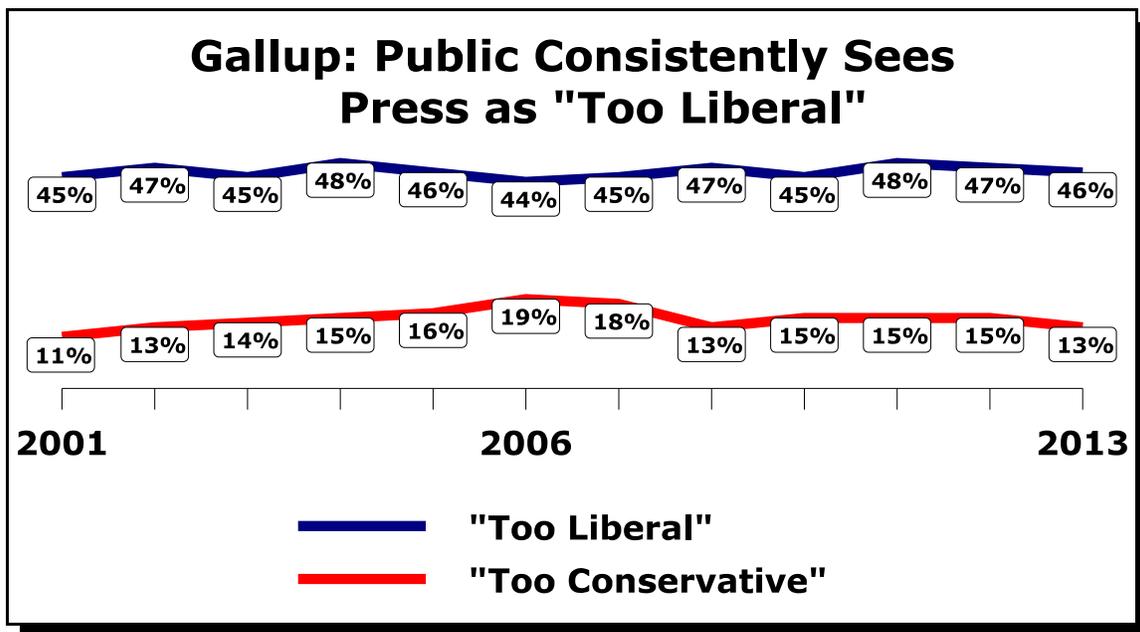


Exhibit 4: The Gallup Organization

Almost every year from 2001 through 2013, Gallup has polled American adults on the question: ‘Now thinking for a moment about the news media: In general, do you think the news media is too liberal, just about right, or too conservative.’ Each year, the number of Americans saying the media are too liberal has outnumbered those seeing a pro-conservative bias by about a three-to-one margin. Gallup also found that while a large majority of Democrats said they had trust and confidence in the media, a similarly large percentage of Republicans expressed little or no trust in the media.

KEY FINDINGS:

- In September 2013, three times as many Americans said that the media are too liberal (46%) than said the media are too conservative (13%).
- Since 2001, the percentage saying the media are too liberal has ranged from 44 percent to 48 percent; the percentage seeing the media as too conservative has never exceeded 19 percent.
- Gallup in 2013: “Perceptions of a liberal bias are particularly strong among Republicans and conservatives, with 74% and 73% saying the media are too liberal. However, half of all independents also call it too liberal, while most Democrats call it ‘just about right.’”
- In 2013, just one-third of Republicans (33%) told Gallup they had a great deal or fair amount of trust and confidence in the media, while the majority of Democrats (60%) said they trusted the media. Only 37% of self-described independents said they trusted the press.
- Gallup’s bottom line in 2013: “Although up from the all-time low found last year, Americans’ confidence in mass media remains lower than it was in the late 1990s and early 2000s.”



Note: Question was not asked in 2012

Exhibit 5: The People & The Press, 2003

In the summer of 2003, Princeton Survey Research Associates conducted a poll of 1,201 American adults regarding the media for the Pew Research Center for The People & The Press. They found that a majority (53 percent) of Americans regard the press as “politically biased,” and most of those said the media tilted to the left.

KEY FINDINGS:

- “Most Americans (53 percent) believe that news organizations are politically biased, while just 29 percent say they are careful to remove bias from their reports,” Pew reported.
- “When it comes to describing the press, twice as many say news organizations are ‘liberal’ (51 percent) than ‘conservative’ (26 percent) while 14 percent say neither phrase applies.”
- Even Democrats thought the press tilted left, not right. Among Democratic respondents, 41 percent thought the media are liberal, compared to 33 percent who found the media to be conservative. Among Republicans, 65 percent said the press is liberal, 22 percent find the media to be conservative.
- “Americans are divided over whether press criticism of the military serves to keep the nation militarily prepared (45 percent) or to weaken the country’s defenses (43 percent),” Pew found. Republicans were especially likely (63%) to say that media criticism was harmful to national defense.
- Journalists also fared badly when it came to public perceptions of their ethics. Pew found that majorities think journalists “don’t care about the people they report on” (56%), “try to cover up their mistakes” (62%), and are “often influenced by powerful people and organizations” (70%).

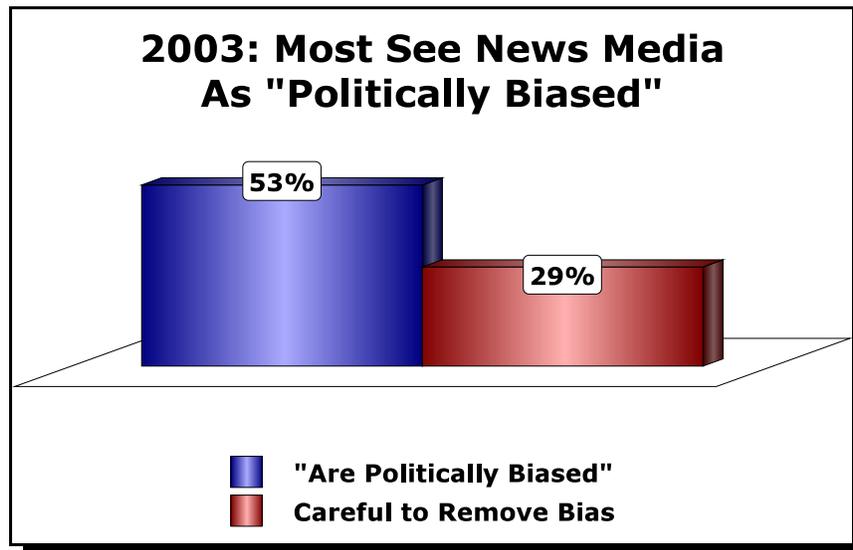


Exhibit 6: Bias in the 2004 Presidential Campaign

Four different polls conducted in the last days and immediate aftermath of the 2004 presidential campaign discovered that more voters saw the media as biased in favor of Democratic candidate John Kerry than Republican George W. Bush. Polls by the Pew Research Center and Gallup in the final weeks of the campaign found twice as many thought the media had been biased in favor of Kerry than saw a pro-Bush tilt. An Election Day survey of voters in 12 battleground states also found one out of every three voters (32 percent) thought news coverage was biased in favor of Kerry and the Democrats, compared to just 14 percent who thought the media were slanted in favor of Bush and the Republicans. And a Pew Research Center poll conducted after the election found that 40 percent of voters believed that media coverage of President Bush had been unfair, compared to 31 percent who thought Senator Kerry's coverage was unfair.

KEY FINDINGS:

- A **Gallup** poll of 1,538 registered voters conducted October 22-24, 2004 found a plurality (45 percent) thought the media coverage has not been biased toward either candidate. But of the remainder, most (35 percent) said the coverage had been biased in Kerry's favor, while fewer than half that number (16 percent) thought coverage had been biased in favor of Bush.
- The **Pew Research Center** surveyed 1,307 registered voters between October 15-19, 2004. "Half of voters (50 percent) say most newspaper and TV reporters would prefer to see John Kerry win the election, compared with just 22 percent who think that most journalists are pulling for George Bush," Pew reported.
- That pre-election poll also found that a large majority of voters thought the news media had too much clout: "Nearly six-in-ten (62 percent) say news organizations have too much influence in determining the election's outcome; only about half that number (32 percent) feel that the media's influence is appropriate."
- A poll of 1,000 voters conducted on Election Day by **Fabrizio, McLaughlin & Associates** of voters in 12 closely-fought "battleground" states found that more voters felt the news media's campaign coverage had been biased (46 percent) than thought the media coverage had not been skewed (42 percent). Of those who saw bias, more than twice as many (32 percent) said the news media had favored John Kerry as felt the media had favored George W. Bush (14 percent).
- A post-election survey of 1,209 voters conducted by the **Pew Research Center** (November 5-8, 2004) reported that "voters are increasingly troubled by what they see as the media's unfair treatment of the candidates. While a majority (56 percent) view press coverage of Bush's campaign as fair, four-in-ten [40 percent] think it was unfair, up from 30 percent four years ago."
- The Pew report continued: "Significantly more voters (65 percent) believe the press was fair in its coverage of the Kerry campaign. However, a growing minority also views this coverage as unfair — 31 percent say that now, compared with 24 percent who faulted press coverage of Al Gore's campaign four years ago."

Exhibit 7: Missouri School of Journalism, 2004

The Missouri School of Journalism's Center for Advanced Social Research surveyed 495 adults about their attitudes toward the press during June and July of 2004. Their results, released in April 2005, showed that most Americans (85%) thought that news reporting was biased, although a smaller majority (62%) still said they considered journalism credible. Of those who thought the media were biased, most said the bias favored liberals.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Nearly six out of seven adults (85%) said there was a bias in news reporting. "Of those, 48 percent identified it as liberal, 30 percent as conservative, 12 percent as both, and 3 percent as other bias," an April 27, 2005 Associated Press report summarized.
- According to the AP summary, "74 percent said reporters tend to favor one side over the other when covering political and social issues."
- "58 percent said journalists have too much influence over what happens in the world."
- "77 percent said they think a news story is sometimes killed or buried if it is embarrassing or damaging to the financial interests of a news organization."

Exhibit 8: CBS's "State of the Media," 2006

In late January 2006, a CBS News/*New York Times* poll asked 1,229 adults about their attitudes toward the news media as part of a "State of the Media" segment on the *CBS Evening News*. The poll found the public's view of the media divided by partisanship, with self-identified Democrats most confident of the media's ability to report news "fully, accurately and fairly" and "tell the truth" all or most of the time, and Republicans expressing much more skepticism.

KEY FINDINGS:

- The poll discovered "large majorities of Democrats and liberals (about seven in 10 of each) think the news media tell the truth all or most of the time. About half of Republicans and conservatives agree."
- Four out of every ten respondents (including 47% of self-identified Republicans) said they thought the news media tell the truth "only some of the time or hardly ever."
- Just over a third of adults (36%) said they had "not very much" confidence or "none at all" in the news media's ability to report the news "fully, accurately and fairly." Nearly half of Republicans (48%) expressed little confidence in the news media, while three-fourths of Democrats (75%) said they had "a great deal" or "a fair amount" of confidence in the media.
- Three out of five Republicans (61%) said they thought the news media had been harder on Bush than previous presidents. A third of independents (36%) and one out of ten Democrats (11%) agreed.

Exhibit 9: Coverage of the War in Iraq, 2007

Two polls conducted in 2007 found the public generally thought the media’s coverage of the war in Iraq skewed in a negative, pessimistic direction. A March 5-11 TIPP poll of 900 adults done for *Investor’s Business Daily* found the public judged the media’s war coverage as “neither fair nor objective.” A Pew Research Center analysis published August 9 found a big drop from 2003 to 2007 in the percentage of Americans who said they were “confident” that they were getting an accurate picture of how the war was going, with Republicans much more trusting of statements from official military sources, and Democrats preferring the media’s message.

KEY FINDINGS:

- When TIPP/IBD asked whether “generally speaking, [has] coverage of the war been fair and objective,” only 35 percent agreed, compared to 62 percent who disagreed.
- The TIPP/IBD poll also found that most Americans thought media coverage of the war in Iraq was too negative (57 percent) and too liberal in viewpoint (55 percent).
- The Pew Research Center analysis found that while 81 percent of the overall public voiced confidence in the accuracy of media reports when the war began in March 2003, that had dropped to just 42 percent in July 2007. However, a majority of Americans (52%) expressed confidence in the accuracy of military reports about the war.
- Pew discovered a sharp partisan divide, with more than three-fourths of Republicans (76 percent) at least somewhat confident in the military’s portrayal of how the war is going, compared with just 36 percent of Democrats.
- “By contrast, a solid majority of Democrats (56%) have confidence in the press to give an accurate picture of Iraq,” compared to just 35 percent of Republicans who said they were confident of the accuracy of war coverage.

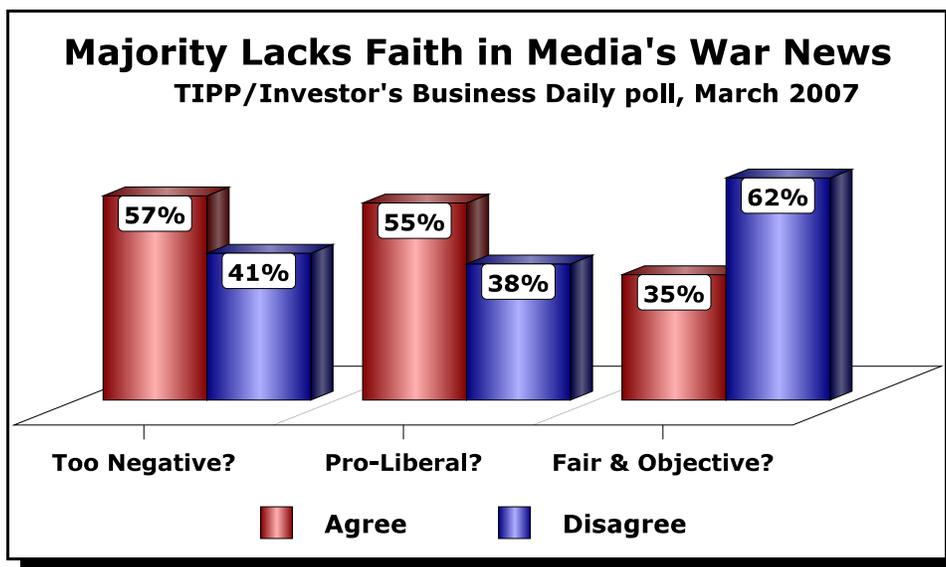


Exhibit 10: Rasmussen Reports on Media Bias, 2007

A pair of Rasmussen surveys conducted in mid-July 2007, each of approximately 1,000 adults, documented how Americans perceive various television news outlets and major newspapers. The first poll found a plurality of Americans see a liberal tilt at ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN and NPR, while at the same time detecting a conservative bias at Fox News. The second poll, released one day later, discovered that most Americans saw the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and their own local newspaper as tilting to the left, while slightly more of those who saw bias at the *Wall Street Journal* thought it favored conservatives (22%, vs. 18% who saw liberal bias at the *Journal*).

KEY FINDINGS:

- “By a 39% to 20% margin, American adults believe that the three major broadcast networks deliver news with a bias in favor of liberals. A Rasmussen Reports national telephone survey found that just 25% believe that ABC, CBS, and NBC deliver the news without any bias.”
- “Similar results are found for CNN and National Public Radio (NPR). By a margin of 33% to 16%, Americans say that CNN has a liberal bias. The nation’s adults say the same about NPR by a 27% to 14% margin.”
- “There is one major exception to the belief that media outlets have a liberal bias – Fox News. Thirty-one percent (31%) of Americans say it has a bias that favors conservatives while 15% say it has a liberal bias.”
- “Those not affiliated with either major party tend to see a liberal bias everywhere except Fox. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of unaffiliateds see a liberal bias at the major television networks while only 19% see a conservative bias.”
- “Among the print publications in the survey, the *New York Times* is perceived as being furthest to the left. Forty percent (40%) of Americans believe the *Times* has a bias in favor of liberals.” Even liberals recognized the bias: “25% of liberals see a liberal bias at the *New York Times* while only 17% see a conservative bias.”

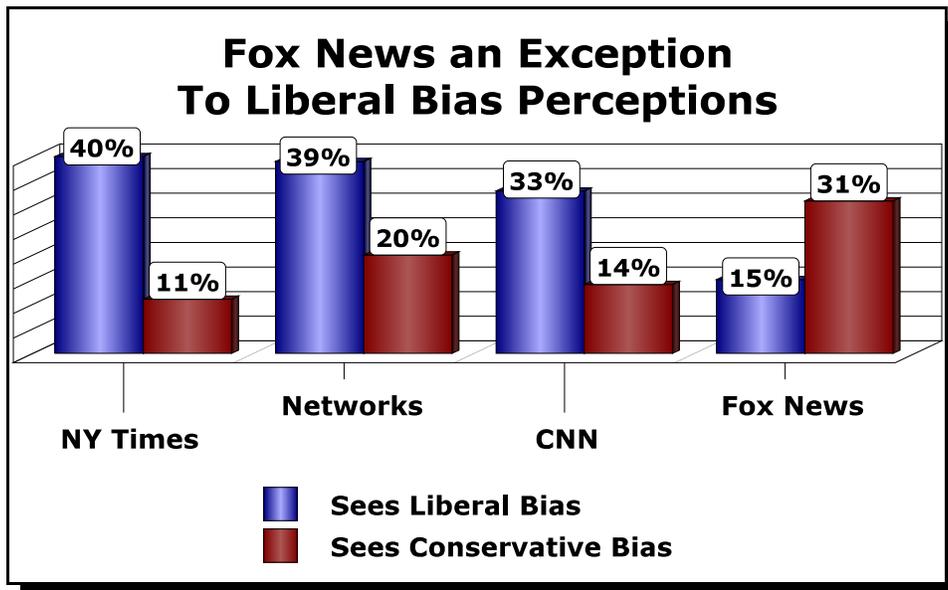


Exhibit 12: Harvard's "National Leadership Index" Survey (2007)

Researchers at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government polled 1,207 adults in September 2007 to ascertain the public's "confidence" in American leaders in a variety of sectors, including the military, business, government and the media. The poll found "leaders in the press have inspired less confidence than leaders in any other sector during each of the three years of the National Leadership Index (2005-2007)," with the military garnering the most public confidence. Americans told pollsters they thought the press was "too liberal" and focused on trivialities; nearly two-thirds said they did not trust media coverage of the presidential campaign.

KEY FINDINGS:

- "64% of Americans say they do not trust the news media's campaign coverage."
- By a two-to-one margin, (61% to 30%), Americans say they "believe the news media's election coverage is politically biased."
- Of those who saw bias, most (40%) said the bias favored liberals, compared to 21% who saw a pro-conservative bias.
- "88% somewhat or strongly agree that the news media focuses too much on trivial rather than important issues."
- "84% believe the news media has too much influence on voters' decisions."

Exhibit 13: Sacred Heart University Polling Institute (2007)

The Sacred Heart University Polling Institute polled 800 Americans in late November and early December, 2007. The results, released early in January 2008, showed further deterioration in the percentage of Americans who trust the news media, while the percentage who saw a liberal bias vastly outnumbered those who thought the media tilt to the right.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Fewer than one in five Americans (19.6%) said "they believe all or most news media reporting. This is down from 27.4% in 2003." Nearly one out of four Americans (23.9%) said "they believe little or none" of what they see in the news.
- "The perception is growing among Americans that the news media attempts to influence public opinion – from 79.3% strongly or somewhat agreeing in 2003 to 87.6% in 2007."
- A huge percentage (86.0%) agreed "that the news media attempts to influence public policies – up from 76.7% in 2003."
- "By a three-to-one margin, Americans see news media journalists and broadcasters (45.4% to 15.7%) as mostly or somewhat liberal over mostly or somewhat conservative."

Exhibit 13: Public Reaction to Media Coverage of the 2008 Primaries

During the 2008 primary season, a Pew Research Center poll of 1,000 Americans discovered that most thought “press coverage has favored Barack Obama than thought it has favored Hillary Clinton.” Earlier, a Rasmussen poll of 800 likely voters taken after the *New York Times* published a front-page story insinuating that Republican Senator John McCain had engaged in an extramarital affair found that two-thirds believed it was not “simply reporting the news,” but “an attempt by the paper to hurt the McCain campaign.”

KEY FINDINGS:

- Rasmussen found “just 24% of American voters have a favorable opinion of the *New York Times*. Forty-four percent (44%) have an unfavorable opinion and 31% are not sure.” Voters were split by ideology: 50 percent of liberals were fans of the *Times*, while 69 percent of conservative voters had an unfavorable view.
- “Of those who followed” the *Times* story about McCain’s supposed extramarital affair, “66% believe it was an attempt by the paper to hurt the McCain campaign. Just 22% believe the Times was simply reporting the news.”
- “Republicans, by an 87% to 9% margin, believe the paper was trying to hurt McCain's chances of winning the White House. Democrats are evenly divided.”
- At the end of the primary season in June, Pew discovered that “nearly four-in-ten (37%) say that in covering the Democratic race, news organizations have been biased toward Obama while just 8% say they have been biased toward Clinton.”
- “Substantial minorities of Republicans (45%) and independents (40%) say the press has been biased toward Obama; somewhat fewer Democrats (35%) see a pro-Obama bias.”
- Looking at the media’s overall approach to the presidential campaign up to that point, Pew found the public mainly disapproving: “Most Americans (54%) say the coverage has been only fair or poor, compared with 43% who rate it as excellent or good.”

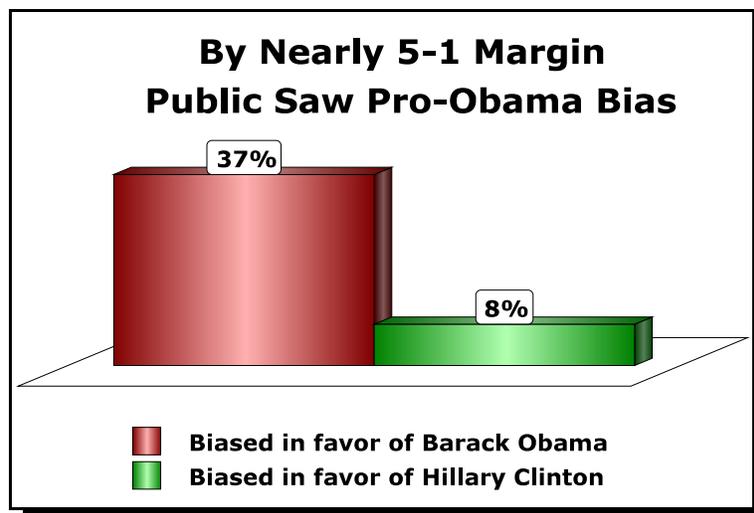


Exhibit 14: Rasmussen Reports on Campaign 2008 Bias

Because the news media's role was so central to the 2008 presidential campaign, Rasmussen Reports posed several questions on public perceptions of the media throughout the campaign. Besides the question of whether voters thought the media were favoring Democrat Barack Obama or Republican John McCain (which we report elsewhere), Rasmussen discovered a notable lack of trust by voters in the media's professionalism and objectivity.

KEY FINDINGS:

- **Journalists Out to "Hurt" Palin:** A September 4 Rasmussen poll of 1,000 likely voters found more than half (51%) "think reporters are trying to hurt Sarah Palin with their news coverage, and 24% say those stories make them more likely to vote for Republican presidential candidate John McCain in November....Just five percent (5%) think reporters are trying to help her with their coverage," a greater than ten-to-one disparity.
- **Many See Media As Unethical:** A September 10 Rasmussen survey of 1,000 likely voters found that a plurality of voters (42%) believe the press would "hide information that hurts the candidate they want to win," compared to 34 percent who think reporters would act professionally.
- **Little Faith in Economic Reporting:** A July 21, 2008 Rasmussen poll of 1,000 adults found that exactly half, "50%, believe the media makes economic conditions appear worse than they really are....Only a quarter (25%) think reporters and media outlets present an accurate picture of the economy."
- **Media Bias Worse than Campaign Cash:** An August 11, 2008 Rasmussen poll of 1,000 likely voters found that "55% believe media bias is more of a problem than big campaign contributions. Thirty-six percent (36%) disagree and think that campaign cash is a bigger problem. People believe media bias is a bigger problem even though 63% believe most politicians will break the rules to help campaign contributors."
- "Just 22% believe it would be a good idea to ban all campaign commercials so that voters could receive information on the campaign only from the news media and the Internet. Sixty-six percent (66%) disagree and think that, despite the annoyance factor, it's better to put up with an election-year barrage of advertising rather than rely on the news media."

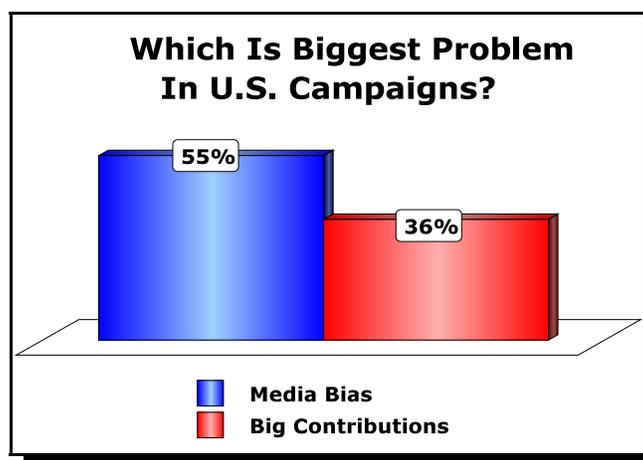


Exhibit 15: Public Overwhelmingly Saw Favoritism For Obama

No fewer than five different polls conducted during the last months of the 2008 presidential campaign found the public strongly believed that the news media was biased in favor of Democrat Barack Obama in his campaign against Republican John McCain. In July, a Rasmussen poll found more than three times as many voters saw journalists favoring Obama; by October, a Pew Research Center poll discovered the margin had grown to nearly 8-to-1.

KEY FINDINGS:

- A **Rasmussen Reports** poll of 1,000 likely voters released July 21 “found that 49 percent of voters believe most reporters will try to help Obama with their coverage, up from 44 percent a month ago,” compared to a piddling 14 percent who think “most reporters will try to help John McCain win.”
- A **Fox News/Opinion Dynamics** poll of 900 registered voters released July 24 found “67 percent of the respondents think most media members want Obama to win. Just 11 percent think most in the media are for McCain.”
- A **Sacred Heart University** national poll of 800 voters released in August 2008 found “more than two-thirds of Americans included in this poll, 67.9%, believed U.S. Senator Barack Obama is receiving the most favorable coverage,” compared to “just 11.1%” who said McCain was getting better press.
- A **Rasmussen** poll of 1,000 likely voters released September 10: “Seven out of 10 voters (69%) remain convinced that reporters try to help the candidate they want to win, and this year by a nearly five-to-one margin voters believe they are trying to help Barack Obama.”
- A **Pew Research Center** poll released October 22 found that “by a margin of 70%-9%, Americans say most journalists want to see Obama, not John McCain, win on Nov. 4.” Pew found the belief crossed party lines: “90% of GOP voters say most journalists are pulling for Obama. More than six-in-ten Democratic and independent voters (62% each) say the same.”
- Pew also found: “In recent presidential campaigns, voters repeatedly have said they thought journalists favored the Democratic candidate over the Republican. But this year’s margin is particularly wide.”

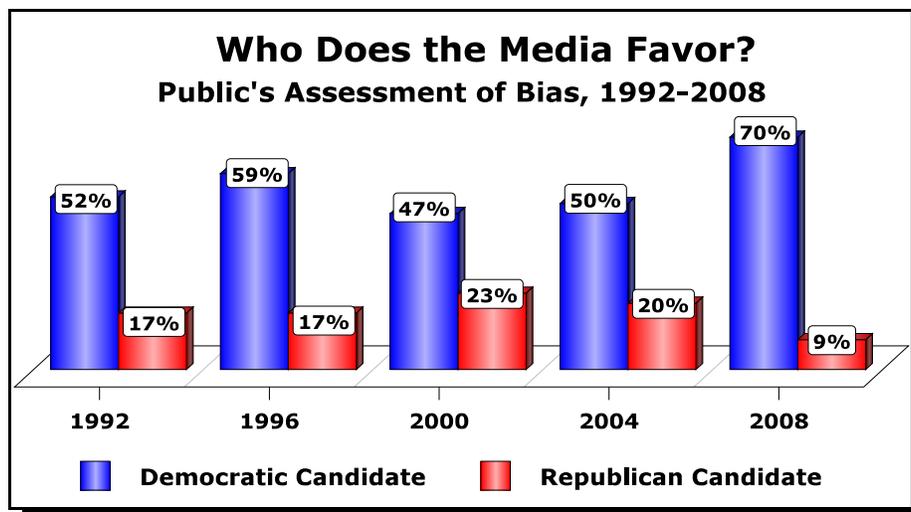


Exhibit 16: Pew Study Finds Media Credibility Plummet

A major biennial news consumption survey from the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press released on August 17, 2008 found that “virtually every news organization or program has seen its credibility marks decline” and “Democrats continue to give most news organizations much higher credibility ratings than do Republicans.” In preparing the 130-page report on media credibility, Pew talked to 3,615 adults; the data are comparable to similar Pew studies from previous years.

KEY FINDINGS:

- “The public continues to express skepticism about what they see, hear and read in the media,” Pew reported. “No major news outlet – whether broadcast or cable, print or online – stands out as particularly credible....Over the last 10 years, however, virtually every news organization or program has seen its credibility marks decline.”
- In 1998, 42 percent said they could “believe all or most” of what CNN reported; ten years later, that figure had dropped to 30 percent (though that was the highest of the news organizations polled).
- Fewer than one-fourth said they could “believe all or most of what NBC News (24%), ABC News (24%) and CBS News (22%) report (based on those who can rate those organizations).” Less than one-fifth (18%) said they could “believe all or most” of what they read in the *New York Times*.
- Far more Democrats than Republicans watch CNN and MSNBC: “51% of CNN’s regular viewers are Democrats while only 18% are Republicans. MSNBC’s audience makeup is similar – 45% of regular viewers of MSNBC are Democrats, 18% are Republicans.” The audience for Fox News is more balanced, according to Pew: “Currently, 39% of regular Fox News viewers are Republicans while 33% are Democrats.”
- “Regular viewers of *The Colbert Report* with Stephen Colbert and *The Daily Show* with Jon Stewart,” on cable’s Comedy Cental are, not surprisingly, “much more liberal than the public at large. More than a third of Colbert’s regular viewers (36%) describe their political views as liberal and 45% of regular *Daily Show* viewers say they are liberal.”

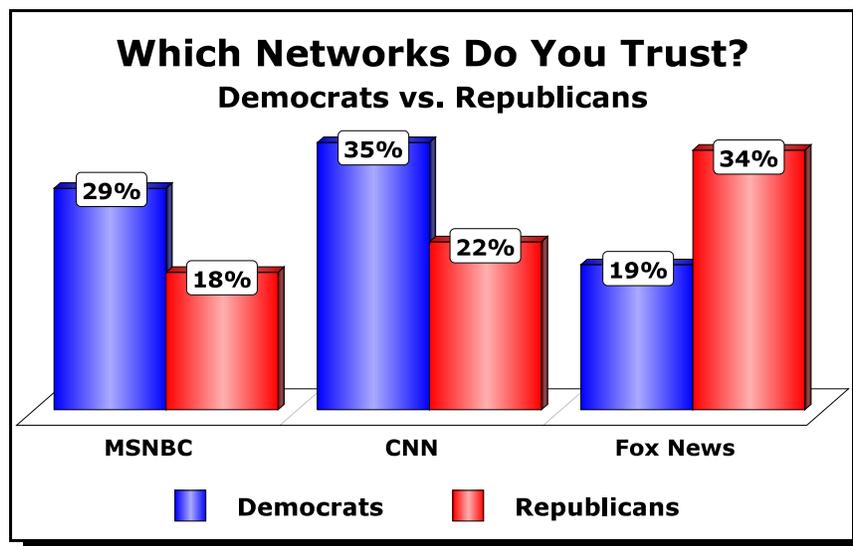


Exhibit 17: Trust and Satisfaction with the National Media (2009)

The Sacred Heart University Polling Institute released its 2009 survey on “Trust and Satisfaction with the National News Media.” The September 2009 poll of 800 Americans found large majorities believe the media are “very or somewhat biased,” played a “very or somewhat strong” role in electing Barack Obama in 2008, and were “promoting the Obama presidency” and the President’s health care effort “without objective criticism.”

KEY FINDINGS:

- “Poll results found 83.6% saw national news media organizations as very or somewhat biased while just 14.1% viewed them as somewhat unbiased or not at all biased.”
- “A large majority, 89.3%, suggested the national media played a very or somewhat strong role in helping to elect President Obama. Just 10.0% suggested the national media played little or no role.”
- “Further, 69.9% agreed the national news media are intent on promoting the Obama presidency while 26.5% disagreed.”
- “Over half of Americans surveyed, 56.4%, said they agreed that the news media are promoting President Obama’s health care reform without objective criticism.”
- Six out of seven Americans (86.6%) “strongly or somewhat agreed that the news media have their own political and public policy positions and attempt to influence public opinion.” Just over 70 percent felt that way in 2003.
- Americans prefer objective reporting to coverage that just reflects their own point of view. “In results that were nearly three-to-one, 59.0% suggested they made their selection based on objective reporting, while 19.0% chose their favorite because they share the same views on issues.”
- Less than one-fourth of Americans (24.3%) “indicated they believe all or most news media reporting.”
- Two-thirds (67.9%) “agreed with a statement that read: ‘Old-style, traditional objective and fair journalism is dead.’”

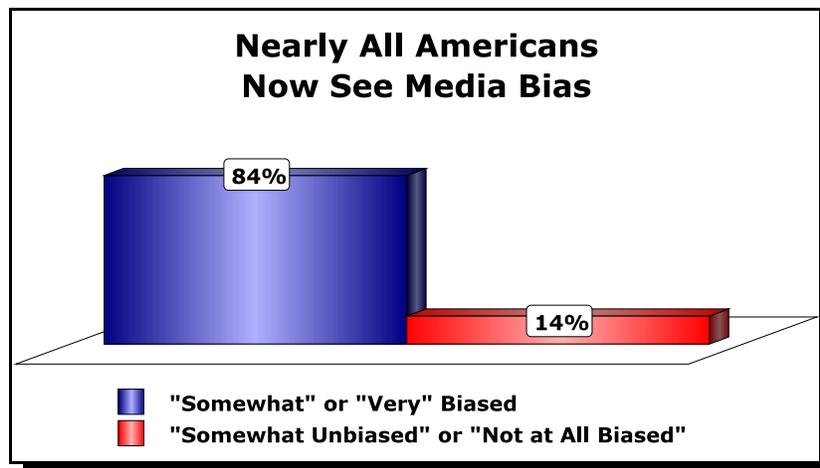


Exhibit 18: In 2012, Most Voters (Again) Saw Media Favoring Obama

A Rasmussen poll taken in the summer of 2012 found that, as in past years, the public perceived the media providing more favorable news coverage to the Democratic nominee. A second Rasmussen poll taken a month later showed most voters declared media bias was a “bigger problem than big campaign contributions.”

KEY FINDINGS:

- An August 2012 Rasmussen poll of 1,000 likely voters found “most voters think President Obama has gotten better treatment from the media than Mitt Romney has, and they expect that biased coverage to continue.”
- According to the poll, nearly six out of ten voters (59%) said they thought President Obama had “received the best treatment from the media so far,” compared to less than one-in-five (18%) who thought Republican challenger Mitt Romney had been treated better.
- As for what these voters expected for the remainder of the campaign, 51 percent said they thought the media would continue to help Obama, compared to just nine percent who expected positive coverage for Romney.

Exhibit 19: Seeing Liberal Bias in the News (2013)

A trio of polls conducted during 2013 showed that, by a wide margin, many more Americans see a liberal bias in the news media than a tilt in favor of conservatives. Even a sizeable percentage of self-identified Democrats seemed to concede this point, with 36 percent telling the Pew Research Center that the media are liberal, and 38 percent of Democrats telling Rasmussen they shared the views of the “average reporter.”

- A Rasmussen poll of 1,000 likely voters conducted in February 2013 found two in five voters (41%) “think the average media reporter is more liberal than they are,” compared with just 18 percent “who feel the average reporters is more conservative than they are.”
- A Pew Research Center poll of 1,480 adults conducted in July 2013 found a plurality of Americans (46%) say “news organizations are best described as liberal,” compared to 26 percent who say they are conservative.
- A September 2013 poll of 1,510 adults by Gallup found “far more Americans say the media are too liberal than too conservative, 46 percent vs. 13 percent, as was the case in 2011, and every year since Gallup has been tracking this trend.”
- According to Gallup, “perceptions of a liberal media bias are particularly strong among Republicans and conservatives, with 74% and 73%, respectively, saying the media are too liberal.” At the same time, Gallup found, “most Democrats (57%) call it ‘just about right.’”



- THREE -

WHAT JOURNALISTS SAY ABOUT MEDIA BIAS

Over the years, the Media Research Center has catalogued the views of journalists on the subject of bias. A number of journalists have admitted that the majority of their brethren approach the news from a liberal angle. During the 2004 presidential campaign, for example, *Newsweek's* Evan Thomas predicted that sympathetic media coverage would boost Kerry's vote by "maybe 15 points," which he later revised to five points. Four years later, NPR's Juan Williams talked about the tilt to Barack Obama on *Fox News Sunday*: "If you were going to events during the primaries, what you saw was that the executive editors and the top people at the networks were all rushing to Obama events, bringing their children, celebrating it."

But many journalists continue to deny the liberal bias that taints their profession. Following Obama's election in November 2008, Reuters ran a headline baldly declaring: "Media bias largely unseen in U.S. presidential race." During the height of CBS's forged memo scandal during the 2004 campaign, Dan Rather ridiculously insisted that the problem wasn't his bias, it was his critics: "People who are so passionately partisan politically or ideologically committed basically say, 'Because he won't report it our way, we're going to hang something bad around his neck and choke him with it, check him out of existence if we can, if not make him feel great pain.'"

JOURNALISTS DENYING LIBERAL BIAS

- “It’s silly that there’s a liberal bias in media. Obviously, there are liberal voices and there are conservative voices. But overwhelmingly, media in the United States — television, newspapers, and that sort of thing — the bias shifts towards the right. It’s a center-right media in this country.”
— Former NBC News reporter and *New York Times* columnist Bob Herbert on MSNBC’s *Melissa Harris-Perry*, April 27, 2013.
- “My work has been so cleansed, as I see it, and as I’ve tried, of political opinions over 27 years.... No one gives a rat’s patootie about my opinion, so it’s nice that I don’t have to share it.”
— *NBC Nightly News* anchor Brian Williams on Alec Baldwin’s *Here’s the Thing* New York City radio show, March 4, 2013.
- “I know that it’s widely believed that CBS, NBC, ABC chock full of liberals. Not true. What it’s chock full of is people who wanted to give honest news, straightforward news, and voted both ways in many elections....Frequently what happened, people who were described as conservatives want to say, ‘I worked at CBS News, and you know, almost everybody there was liberal.’ What they really mean is not everybody there agreed with them all the time. This is a sham. It’s a camouflage...”
— Ex-CBS *Evening News* anchor Dan Rather on Comedy Central’s *The Daily Show*, May 30, 2012.
- “Most of us, do not — you don’t know whether we’re Republicans or Democrats or exhibitionists.”
— Co-host Barbara Walters on ABC’s *The View*, April 9, 2012.
- **Host Stephen Dubner:** “There is a kind of, I think, common analog, I hope I’m not overstating it by saying that it’s common, that Fox News is to the right what the *New York Times* is to the left. I’m guessing you would see that as a false equivalency on a lot of levels. Tell me if I’m right.”
Editorial page editor Andrew Rosenthal: “I think it’s the word I want to use here, but even on public radio-”
Dubner: “Please, we bleep so much on this show.”
Rosenthal: “Well it begins with ‘bull’ and ends in ‘it’ and you can figure out what comes in between. I think it’s absolute pernicious nonsense....Fox News presents the news in a way that is deliberately skewed to promote political causes, and the *New York Times* simply does not.”
— Exchange during the *New York Times* “Freakonomics” radio podcast, February 16, 2012.
- “I think the thing that is underappreciated about MSNBC is that we don’t really do anything as a company, that we all sorta get to do our own thing. There may be liberals on TV at MSNBC, but the network is not operating with a political objective.”
— MSNBC 9pm ET host Rachel Maddow in a December 21, 2011 interview posted at Slate.com.
- “You know, I think that the people who see the *Times* as like a liberal rag are wrong and that they sometimes don’t understand the separation between our opinion side, which produces our editorials and our op-eds, and the news report....You know, the news reporters go into their stories with an open mind. And something I stress to our reporters at the *Times* is even when you think you know the story, go in ready to be surprised or illuminated by what somebody tells you.”
— *New York Times* Executive Editor Jill Abramson on NPR’s *Diane Rehm Show*, October 19, 2011.
- “I am not an American. I don’t vote. I don’t have an ideological bias. I actually have a lot of both — I believe in a lot of liberal policies and a lot of conservative policies.”
— ABC’s Christiane Amanpour on CNN’s *Piers Morgan Tonight*, June 22, 2011.

- “It is true that journalists tend to be more ‘liberal’ than the average American. But hyper-awareness of that fact has caused some of our most respected mainstream media outlets to bend over backwards to compensate – offering far more conservative voices than liberal ones....”
 – NPR’s *On the Media* host Brooke Gladstone in an interview with CNN.com’s “In the Arena” blog posted May 31, 2011.
- “*Hardball* is absolutely non-partisan.”
 – MSNBC’s Chris Matthews in an interview with local Washington, D.C. host Carol Joynt, as quoted by Politico’s Patrick Gavin in a December 9, 2010 article.
- “As Mrs. Roosevelt famously said during World War II, this is no ordinary time.... The division, the hatred, the venom over a policy of something close to universal health care for citizens – I would sooner jab my hand into a food processor than take a side (in my line of work I never engage in opinions anyway) – but this has proven one of those catch-all issues.”
 – *NBC Nightly News* anchor Brian Williams to presenter Matt Frei during the BBC’s *Americana* podcast, March 28, 2010.
- “Even though independent reports have shown the media was more critical of Barack Obama than John McCain during the presidential contest, there is still a fantasy that the press is gaga over now-President Obama.”
 – MSNBC’s David Shuster on *1600 Pennsylvania Avenue*, March 23, 2009.
- “Media bias largely unseen in U.S. presidential race”
 – Headline over Nov. 6, 2008 Reuters dispatch claiming no liberal tilt in favor of Barack Obama.
- “Yes, in the closing weeks of this election, John McCain and Sarah Palin are getting hosed in the press, and at *Politico*....We’d take an educated guess – nothing so scientific as a Pew study – that Obama will win the votes of probably 80 percent or more of journalists covering the 2008 election.... [But] of the factors driving coverage of this election...ideological favoritism ranks virtually nil.”
 – *The Politico* co-founders John Harris and Jim VandeHei in their October 28, 2008 column, “Why McCain is getting hosed in the press.”
- “Hell no! I’m dying to find another liberal [to] open their mouths. Where are they!”
 – Former UPI White House correspondent Helen Thomas, when asked if she thinks most White House reporters are liberal, as reported by *The Washington Examiner*’s Jeff Dufour and Patrick Gavin, July 21, 2008.
- “While I would not dispute the longstanding assertions that there are more political liberals in newsrooms than conservatives, our political staff, as best I can tell, represents all kinds of backgrounds and beliefs, and because we all work so closely and in such a fishbowl, we all tend to keep one another on the straight and narrow.”
 – *New York Times* political editor Richard Stevenson in an online chat with readers, June 23, 2008.
- “We are agnostic as to where a story may lead; we do not go into a story with an agenda or a pre-conceived notion. We do not manipulate or hide facts to advance an agenda. We strive to preserve our independence from political and economic interests, including our own advertisers. We do not work in the service of a party, or an industry, or even a country. When there are competing views of a situation, we aim to reflect them as clearly and fairly as we can.”
 – *New York Times* Executive Editor Bill Keller in his Hugo Young Memorial Lecture in London, printed in Britain’s *The Guardian* newspaper on November 29, 2007.

- “For all the howling on the right, it’s difficult to argue that mainstream news organizations operate with anything approaching Fox’s partisan and ideological agenda.”
 – Longtime *Los Angeles Times* political reporter Ron Brownstein in a March 16, 2007 column.
- “I do not have a liberal bias....I don’t have a conservative bias, either. I don’t have any bias. I am bias-free....Bias is what people who hear or read the news bring to the story, not what the journalist brings to the reporting....[My newscast] is a flavor of neutrality.”
 – PBS’s Jim Lehrer appearing on Comedy Central’s *The Colbert Report*, November 27, 2006.
- “I’ve tried my best through my career to ask challenging questions to whomever I’m speaking, and whether it’s a Republican or a Democrat, I try to raise important issues depending on their particular position....Oftentimes people put their, they see you from their own individual prisms. And if you’re not reflecting their point of view, or you’re asking an antagonistic question of someone they might agree with in terms of policy, they see you as the enemy, and I think that’s just a mistake.”
 – Katie Couric at the Aspen Ideas Festival on July 5, broadcast by C-SPAN on September 2, 2006.
- **Fox News Sunday host Chris Wallace:** “I get e-mails from time to time saying to me, ‘You’re just like your father,’ and they don’t mean it as a compliment.”
CBS’s Mike Wallace: “What does that mean?”
Chris Wallace: “They say, ‘Go to CBS. Go to one of the big networks. Go to the mainstream media’ – as if that were a foreign land. Do you understand why some people feel such disaffection for the mainstream media?”
Mike Wallace: “Oh, yeah. They think we’re wild-eyed commies. Liberals. Yes?”
Chris Wallace: “That’s what they think. How do you plead?”
Mike Wallace: “I think it’s damn foolishness.”
 – *Fox News Sunday*, November 6, 2005.
- “As was the practice in all he did, Dan was meticulously careful to be fair and balanced and accurate. When did we stop believing that this is indeed how we all perform our jobs or try to? When did we allow those with questionable agendas to take the lead and convince people of something quite the opposite? It’s shameful. But I digress.”
 – Longtime MSNBC, ABC and CNN news executive Rick Kaplan praising Dan Rather as the latter received a lifetime achievement award from the National Television Academy, September 19, 2005.
- “I have been called a reactionary by some on the far left, a liberal by some on the far right and I’m insulted by both terms. My point of view is about delivering information and context. It has nothing to do with a political point of view.”
 – MSNBC’s Keith Olbermann, as quoted in a June 9, 2005 *Houston Chronicle* profile.
- “I remember the first time someone accused me of being an ‘N-lover.’ There was a lot of that during the ‘60s when I covered the civil rights movement. Then you move forward from civil rights into the Vietnam War....‘We’re going to hang a sign around you which calls you some bad name: anti-military, anti-American, anti-war.’ Then, when Watergate came into being....was the first time I began to hear this word ‘liberal’ as an epithet thrown my way....People who have very strong biases of their own, they come at you with a story: ‘If you won’t report it the way I want it reported, then you’re biased.’ Now, it is true about me, for better or for worse, if you want to see my neck swell, you just try to tell me where to line up or what to think and mostly what to report.”
 – Dan Rather near the end of his one-hour CBS News special, *Dan Rather: A Reporter Remembers*, which aired on his last night as *CBS Evening News* anchor, March 9, 2005.

■ **Weekly Standard's Stephen Hayes:** "Look, at the end of the day, if we're worried about too many conservatives in the White House press briefing room, this is a discussion that's not, that's not gonna resonate with the American public."

Host Chris Matthews: "You think it's mostly packed with liberals? Are you saying most of those people who are paid to be journalists in that room are lib-labs, they're liberals?"

Hayes: "Yes, of course....Is there a debate about that?"

Matthews: "Well, there's Helen Thomas, who I would call liberal. But who else is in there? Seriously. There are a lot of straight reporters in that room."

Time's Margaret Carlson: "I think they're mostly straight reporters. And I don't think you can keep your job otherwise."

— MSNBC's *Hardball*, February 25, 2005.

■ "[MRC President] Brent Bozell has, you know, an entire organization devoted to doing as much damage, and I choose that word carefully, as he can to the credibility of the news divisions. And now, on the Left, there are the young bloggers out there....These three aging white men are stuck somewhere in the middle trying, on a nightly basis, to give a fair and balanced picture of what's going on in the world."

— NBC *Nightly News* anchor Tom Brokaw, sitting alongside Dan Rather and Peter Jennings, at an October 2, 2004 *New Yorker* Festival forum shown on C-SPAN the next day.

■ "Anybody who knows me knows that I am not politically motivated, not politically active for Democrats or Republicans, and that I'm independent. People who are so passionately partisan politically or ideologically committed basically say, 'Because he won't report it our way, we're going to hang something bad around his neck and choke him with it, check him out of existence if we can, if not make him feel great pain.' They know that I'm fiercely independent and that's what drives them up a wall."

— CBS's Dan Rather as quoted by *USA Today*, September 16, 2004.

■ "Another disturbing development, for which I was unprepared, was that a small enclave of neoconservative editors was making accusations of 'political correctness' in order to block stories or slant them against minorities and traditional social welfare programs."

— Former Executive Editor Howell Raines in "My Times," a 21,000-word article about the obstacles he faced while running the *New York Times*, published in the May 2004 edition of *The Atlantic*.

■ **Journalism professor Jane Hall:** "The Media Research Center, the conservative media watchdog group, has been getting a lot of attention for its reports alleging liberal bias in the media....What is the impact, do you think, of a steady drumbeat of such criticism?"

NBC anchor Tom Brokaw: "It is a little wearying, but you've got to rise above it and take it case by case. Most of the cases are pretty flimsily made.... What I get tired of is [MRC President] Brent Bozell trying to make these fine legal points everywhere every day. A lot of it just doesn't hold up. So much of it is that bias — like beauty — is in the eye of the beholder."

— Interview in the January/February 2004 issue of the *Columbia Journalism Review*.

■ "What troubles me is a disturbing trend of using the popular appeal of those [conservative] beliefs in some quarters as cover for a kind of commercial nihilism....They suffocate vigorous discourse, the oxygen of a system such as ours, by identifying those who refuse to conform and encouraging a kind of e-mail or telephonic jihad which is happily carried out by well-funded organizations operating under the guise of promoting fair press coverage."

— NBC's Tom Brokaw in a November 19, 2003 speech at the National Press Club.

- “I don’t think anybody who looks carefully at us thinks that we are a left-wing or a right-wing organization.”
 – ABC’s Peter Jennings, as quoted in a September 9, 2003 *USA Today* article.
- “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 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.”
 – *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.
- “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 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.
- “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, March 9, 1996.
- “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 reporter 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.

■ “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.

JOURNALISTS ADMITTING LIBERAL BIAS

■ “There is no doubt that the press failed to scrutinize this program [ObamaCare] at the time of passage and during the context of the President’s re-election. I think any reporter who would argue otherwise would be putting their head in the sand.”

– *Time*/MSNBC political analyst Mark Halperin on FNC’s *The O’Reilly Factor*, November 21, 2013.

■ “Are reporters biased? There is no doubt that — I’ve worked at the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, and worked here at *Politico*. If I had to guess, if you put all of the reporters that I’ve ever worked with on truth serum, most of them vote Democratic.”

– *Politico*’s Jim VandeHei during C-SPAN’s coverage of the GOP primaries, March 13, 2012.

■ “No person with eyes in his head in 2008 could have failed to see the way that soft coverage helped to propel Obama first to the Democratic nomination and then into the White House.”

– *New York Magazine* political reporter John Heilemann, January 27, 2012.

■ “If the 2012 election were held in the newsrooms of America and pitted Sarah Palin against Barack Obama, I doubt Palin would get 10 percent of the vote. However tempting the newsworthy havoc of a Palin presidency, I’m pretty sure most journalists would recoil in horror from the idea.”

– *New York Times* Executive Editor Bill Keller in a column for the paper’s June 19, 2011 *Sunday Magazine*.

■ “The mainstream press is liberal....Since the civil rights and women’s movements, the culture wars and Watergate, the press corps at such institutions as the *Washington Post*, ABC-NBC-CBS News, the *NYT*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Boston Globe*, etc. is composed in large part of ‘new’ or ‘creative’ class members of the liberal elite — well-educated men and women who tend to favor abortion rights, women’s rights, civil rights, and gay rights. In the main, they find such figures as Bill O’Reilly, Glenn Beck, Sean Hannity, Pat Robertson, or Jerry Falwell beneath contempt....If reporters were the only ones allowed to vote, Walter Mondale, Michael Dukakis, Al Gore, and John Kerry would have won the White House by landslide margins.”

– Longtime *Washington Post* political reporter Thomas Edsall in an October 8, 2009 essay for the *Columbia Journalism Review*, ‘Journalism Should Own Its Liberalism.’

■ “I’ll bet that most *Post* journalists voted for [Barack] Obama. I did. There are centrists at the *Post* as well. But the conservatives I know here feel so outnumbered that they don’t even want to be quoted by name in a memo.”

– *Washington Post* ombudsman Deborah Howell in her November 16, 2008 column.

- **MSNBC's Joe Scarborough:** "The media has been really, really biased this campaign, I think....Is the media just in love with history here, Mark, do you think?" ...
Time's Mark Halperin: "I think mistakes have been made and people will regret it....If Obama wins and goes on to become a hugely successful President, I think, still, people will look back and say it just wasn't done the right way."
 – MSNBC's *Morning Joe*, October 28, 2008.
- "If you were going to events during the primaries, what you saw was that the executive editors and the top people at the networks were all rushing to Obama events, bringing their children, celebrating it, saying they were, there's this part of history....The American people are smart, they can see this. That's why Obama's on every magazine cover.... There's no question in my mind the media has been more supportive of Senator Obama."
 – NPR's Juan Williams on *Fox News Sunday*, October 26, 2008.
- **Host Howard Kurtz:** "Are journalists rooting for the Obama story?"
The Politico's John Harris, referring to the *Washington Post*: "It wouldn't surprise me that there's some of that....A couple years ago, you would send a reporter out with Obama, and it was like they needed to go through detox when they came back – 'Oh, he's so impressive, he's so charismatic,' and we're kind of like, 'Down, boy.'"
 – Exchange on CNN's *Reliable Sources*, January 13, 2008.
- "From a reporter's point of view, it's almost hard to remain objective because it's infectious, the energy, I think. It sort of goes against your core to say that as a reporter, but the crowds have gotten so much bigger, his energy has gotten stronger. He feeds off that."
 – NBC's Lee Cowan in an MSNBC.com video about the Obama campaign posted January 7, 2008.
- "If we wore our politics on our sleeves in here, I have no doubt that in this and in most other mainstream newsrooms in America, the majority of those sleeves would be of the same color: blue."
 – *Seattle Times* Executive Editor David Boardman in an August 15, 2007 e-mail to his staff, posted by Poynter.org.
- "The elephant in the newsroom is our narrowness. Too often, we wear liberalism on our sleeve and are intolerant of other lifestyles and opinions....We're not very subtle about it at this paper: If you work here, you must be one of us. You must be liberal, progressive, a Democrat. I've been in communal gatherings in *The Post*, watching election returns, and have been flabbergasted to see my colleagues cheer unabashedly for the Democrats."
 – *Washington Post* "Book World" editor Marie Arana in a contribution to the *Post's* "daily in-house electronic critiques," as quoted by *Post* media reporter Howard Kurtz in an October 3, 2005 article.
- "There is, Hugh, I agree with you, a deep anti-military bias in the media. One that begins from the premise that the military must be lying, and that American projection of power around the world must be wrong. I think that that is a hangover from Vietnam, and I think it's very dangerous. That's different from the media doing it's job of challenging the exercise of power without fear or favor."
 – ABC News White House correspondent Terry Moran talking with Los Angeles-based national radio talk show host Hugh Hewitt, May 17, 2005.
- "I believe it is true that a significant chunk of the press believes that Democrats are incompetent but good-hearted, and Republicans are very efficient but evil."
 – *Wall Street Journal* political editor John Harwood on the April 23, 2005 *Inside Washington*.

■ “I worked for the *New York Times* for 25 years. I could probably count on one hand, in the Washington bureau of the *New York Times*, people who would describe themselves as people of faith....I think one of the real built-in biases in the media is towards secularism....You want diversity in the newsroom, not because of some quota, but because you have to have diversity to cover the story well and cover all aspects of a society. And you don’t have religious people making the decisions about where coverage is focused. And I think that’s one of the faults.”

– Former *New York Times* reporter Steve Roberts, now a journalism professor at George Washington University, on CNN’s *Reliable Sources*, March 27, 2005.

■ “Personally, I have a great affection for CBS News....But I stopped watching it some time ago. The unremitting liberal orientation finally became too much for me. I still check in, but less and less frequently. I increasingly drift to NBC News and Fox and MSNBC.”

– Former CBS News President Van Gordon Sauter in an op-ed published January 13, 2005 in the *Los Angeles Times*.

■ “Does anybody really think there wouldn’t have been more scrutiny if this [CBS’s bogus *60 Minutes* National Guard story] had been about John Kerry?”

– Former *60 Minutes* Executive Producer Don Hewitt at a January 10, 2005 meeting at CBS, as quoted by Chris Matthews later that day on MSNBC’s *Hardball*.

■ “The media, I think, wants Kerry to win. And I think they’re going to portray Kerry and Edwards ...as being young and dynamic and optimistic and all, there’s going to be this glow about them that some, is going to be worth, collectively, the two of them, that’s going to be worth maybe 15 points.”

– *Newsweek*’s Evan Thomas on *Inside Washington*, July 10, 2004.

Follow-up:

***The Washington Post*’s Howard Kurtz:** “You’ve said on the program *Inside Washington* that because of the portrayal of Kerry and Edwards as ‘young and dynamic and optimistic,’ that that’s worth maybe 15 points.”

***Newsweek*’s Evan Thomas:** “Stupid thing to say. It was completely wrong. But I do think that, I do think that the mainstream press, I’m not talking about the blogs and Rush and all that, but the mainstream press favors Kerry. I don’t think it’s worth 15 points. That was just a stupid thing to say.”

Kurtz: “Is it worth five points?”

Thomas: “Maybe, maybe.”

– Exchange on CNN’s *Reliable Sources*, October 17, 2004.

■ “Of course it is....These are the social issues: gay rights, gun control, abortion and environmental regulation, among others. And if you think *The Times* plays it down the middle on any of them, you’ve been reading the paper with your eyes closed.”

– *New York Times* Public Editor Daniel Okrent in a July 25, 2004 column asking, “Is *The New York Times* a Liberal Newspaper?”

■ **Jack Cafferty:** “The liberal talk radio station Air America debuts today....Does America need additional ‘liberal’ media outlet?...”

Bill Hemmer: “Why hasn’t a liberal radio station or TV network never taken off before?”

Cafferty: “We have them. Are you – did you just get off a vegetable truck from the South Bronx? They’re everywhere.... What do they call this joint? The Clinton News Network.”

– CNN’s *American Morning*, March 31, 2004.

■ “I think most claims of liberal media bias are overblown. At the same time, I do think that reporters often let their cultural predilections drive their coverage of social issues, and the coverage of the gay marriage amendment offers a perfect example....Why do reporters assume that the amendment is a fringe concern? Perhaps because nearly all live in big cities, among educated, relatively affluent peers, who hold liberal views on social matters. In Washington and New York, gay marriage is an utterly mainstream proposition. Unfortunately, in most of the country, it’s not.”

– *New Republic* Senior Editor Jonathan Chait, CBSNews.com, March 1, 2004.

■ “At ABC, people say ‘conservative’ the way people say ‘child molester.’”

– ABC 20/20 co-anchor John Stossel as quoted in a January 28, 2004 story on CNSNews.com.

■ “There is just no question that I, among others, have a liberal bias. I mean, I’m consistently liberal in my opinions. And I think some of the, I think Dan [Rather] is transparently liberal. Now, he may not like to hear me say that. I always agree with him, too, but I think he should be more careful.”

– CBS’s Andy Rooney discussing his ex-colleague Bernard Goldberg’s book, *Bias*, CNN’s *Larry King Live*, June 5, 2002.

■ “Most of the time I really think responsible journalists, of which I hope I’m counted as one, leave our bias at the side of the table. Now it is true, historically in the media, it has been more of a liberal persuasion for many years. It has taken us a long time, too long in my view, to have vigorous conservative voices heard as widely in the media as they now are. And so I think yes, on occasion, there is a liberal instinct in the media which we need to keep our eye on, if you will.”

– ABC anchor Peter Jennings on CNN’s *Larry King Live*, April 10, 2002.

■ “Everybody knows that there’s a liberal, that there’s a heavy liberal persuasion among correspondents.....Anybody who has to live with the people, who covers police stations, covers county courts, brought up that way, has to have a degree of humanity that people who do not have that exposure don’t have, and some people interpret that to be liberal. It’s not a liberal, it’s humanitarian and that’s a vastly different thing.”

– Former CBS *Evening News* anchor Walter Cronkite at the March 21, 1996 Radio & TV Correspondents Dinner.

■ “The old argument that the networks and other ‘media elites’ have a liberal bias is so blatantly true that it’s hardly worth discussing anymore. No, we don’t sit around in dark corners and plan strategies on how we’re going to slant the news. We don’t have to. It comes naturally to most reporters.”

– Then-CBS reporter Bernard Goldberg in a February 13, 1996 *Wall Street Journal* op-ed.

■ “As much as we try to think otherwise, when you’re covering someone like yourself, and your position in life is insecure, she’s your mascot. Something in you roots for her. You’re rooting for your team. I try to get that bias out, but for many of us it’s there.”

– *Time* Senior Writer Margaret Carlson talking about covering First Lady Hillary Clinton, as quoted in *The Washington Post*, March 7, 1994.

■ “I won’t make any pretense that the ‘American Agenda’ [segments on *World News Tonight*] is totally neutral. We do take a position. And I think the public wants us now to take a position. If you give both sides and ‘Well, on the one hand this and on the other that’ – I think people kind of really want you to help direct their thinking on some issues.”

– ABC News reporter Carole Simpson on CNBC’s *Equal Time*, August 9, 1994.

■ “The group of people I’ll call The Press — by which I mean several dozen political journalists of my acquaintance... — was of one mind as the season’s first primary campaign shuddered toward its finish. I asked each of them, one after another, this question: If you were a New Hampshire Democrat, whom would you vote for? The answer was always the same; and the answer was always Clinton. In this group, in my experience, such unanimity is unprecedented.... Several told me they were convinced that Clinton is the most talented presidential candidate they have ever encountered, JFK included.”

— *New Republic* Senior Editor Hendrik Hertzberg, March 9, 1992 issue.

■ “Coverage of the [1992] campaign vindicated exactly what conservatives have been saying for years about liberal bias in the media. In their defense, journalists say that though they may have their personal opinions, as professionals they are able to correct for them when they write. Sounds nice, but I’m not buying any.”

— Former *Newsweek* reporter Jacob Weisberg in *The New Republic*, November 23, 1992.

■ “We’re unpopular because the press tends to be liberal, and I don’t think we can run away from that. And I think we’re unpopular with a lot of conservatives and Republicans this time because the White House press corps by and large detested George Bush, probably for good and sufficient reason, they certainly can cite chapter and verse. But their real contempt for him showed through in their reporting in a way that I think got up the nose of the American people.”

— *Time* writer William A. Henry III on the PBS November 4, 1992 election-night special *The Finish Line*.

■ “There are things written about Bill Clinton and Al Gore that I’ve never seen written [about other politicians before], even by opinion reporters. I think there has been a double standard.”

— ABC News reporter Brit Hume talking about coverage of the 1992 presidential campaign, as quoted by *The Washington Post’s* Howard Kurtz, September 1, 1992.

■ “There is no such thing as objective reporting...I’ve become even more crafty about finding the voices to say the things I think are true. That’s my subversive mission.”

— *Boston Globe* environmental reporter Dianne Dumanoski at an Utne Reader symposium, quoted by Micah Morrison in the July 1990 *American Spectator*.

■ “I do have an axe to grind...I want to be the little subversive person in television.”

— Barbara Pyle, CNN Environmental Editor and Turner Broadcasting Vice President for Environmental Policy, as quoted by David Brooks in the July 1990 *American Spectator*.

■ “As the science editor at *Time* I would freely admit that on this issue we have crossed the boundary from news reporting to advocacy.”

— *Time* Science Editor Charles Alexander at a September 16, 1989 global warming conference, as quoted by David Brooks in an October 5, 1989 *Wall Street Journal* column.

LAST UPDATED: JANUARY 2014