

# The Fox News Christmas Dinner Conversation



Every year on Christmas Eve, after an early church service, my family heads over to a local restaurant for dinner with some friends and their families. It's an event we always look forward to, and this year was no exception. After appetizers were placed on our table, and many of us were engaged in separate conversations, the topic of television shows came up. Some

of us shared which series we enjoy watching, and I believe my wife made a joke about how many of my DVR'd Fox News shows she has to wade through whenever she's looking for one of *her* recorded shows.

Technically, it wasn't a joke. I do have four FNC shows on our DVR schedule. I almost never watch all of them, but I try not to miss *Special Report*, and I typically catch some of the debate segments from either *The Five* or *The O'Reilly Factor*.

Anyway, the moment that my wife mentioned that I watched Fox News, a sharp sneer formed on the face of a good friend who was sitting across the table from us.

"Fox News?" he asked. "Really? Fox News?" His tone was one of disappointment.

At first, I thought he was joking. After all, it's no secret to my friends that I lean right in most of my political views. It's also no secret that I've been writing regular columns for the website of a prominent Fox News contributor for over three

years now. Still, he seemed legitimately taken back by the revelation, and continued to express disbelief that I had stooped to such a low level.

I didn't take it personal. Though I teased him that he likely got his news from *The Daily Show*, I've long known him as someone who is very apolitical and has little interest in what goes on in Washington and in other parts of the world; he's more of a technology, entertainment, and sports kind of guy. After a little ribbing, he admitted that he's never watched Fox News. I wasn't at all surprised.

I've had these types of conversations in the past with a number of people, and they've always ended with the same discovery: Those who believe that FNC is essentially "fake news" have never actually flipped on the network.

Sure, they may have seen some clips here and there – usually out-of-context stuff on Comedy Central or in YouTube videos – but they've never actually watched a show on FNC. They couldn't tell you the format of any of the programs. They couldn't tell you who Bret Baier, Chris Wallace, or Megyn Kelly is. They couldn't name anyone from the long list of liberal pundits that appear regularly on the network to offer a balanced analysis. They just know that their ultra-conservative parents or in-laws watch the channel, and that the media-driven, pop-culture world says that FNC is a fraud. That's enough for them.

Many people reading this column will understandably have some trouble respecting such a viewpoint. After all, in a country whose national news media has an overwhelmingly liberal bias (much of it blatant these days), it seems kind of silly for non-ideological people to find a problem *only* with the one network that offers a prominently conservative viewpoint. I'm a little empathetic though. I understand how effective the collective power of the mainstream media (including the entertainment world) is at swaying public sentiment. In fact,

a little over a decade ago, I was one of those people who avoided watching Fox News precisely because I kept hearing on television that it was a tabloid, ultra-conservative product that couldn't be trusted.

Then, one day, I actually watched it. My opinion changed.

FNC isn't perfect. They're not without bias, and some of their on-air personalities thrive on throwing red meat to the conservative base. However, in my opinion, they make more of an effort than any other news network to be fair and complete in their reporting. Unlike the other news organizations these days, they aren't shy about reporting on stories that make *their side* look bad. They analyze every story through *both* conservative and liberal perspectives – something often absent from the other channels. The network's characteristically frank and politically-incorrect discussions about serious topics are refreshing, and almost unheard of among their competitors. That's why *I* prefer Fox News over the rest.

Of course, I don't expect everyone to agree with me. I do, however, think people should take the time to familiarize themselves with something before they condemn it. Having an open, curious mind is good for one's character.