

Why is Liberal Opinion Journalism So Breathtakingly ... Unsuccessful?

☒ In the last six presidential elections, going all the way back to Bill Clinton's first victory in 1992, the more liberal candidate won *in the popular vote* five out of the six times.

You would think that with so many Americans opting for a liberal over a more conservative candidate this would bode well for liberals in the media too. But it doesn't. If MSNBC or liberal talk radio were a presidential candidate, they'd lose almost every time.

So what gives? Why are liberals far more popular in presidential races than in media ratings races?

Bill O'Reilly asked me about that recently, citing numbers showing how bad liberal opinion journalism is doing.

"You may remember Air America radio," Bill said, "which launched nation-wide in 2004 – and went bankrupt 6 years later, losing at least 40 million dollars in the process."

So much for wishful thinking in the world of liberal talk radio. What about liberal talk television?

Recently, Bill said, "After Benjamin Netanyahu gave his speech, millions of Americans tuned into the news. But they did not tune in to MSNBC. The ratings for them were catastrophic."

Not so, for Fox News. At 8pm Eastern Time, O'Reilly had nearly five times as many viewers as the show on MSNBC.

There's more. O'Reilly told his audience that, "In February

the Fox news channel was the number one-rated cable channel in the world in prime time. MSNBC on the other hand, declined an amazing 55 percent in the key primetime advertising age group and 28-percent overall, from year to year.”

A “total collapse of ratings,” O’Reilly concluded, “that were never high to begin with.”

Then he asked me why liberal opinion journalism is failing so spectacularly. I told him there are probably a hundred reasons, but here are three:

1. Opinion media all too often violate the cardinal rule of *all* media: They fail to entertain. Instead, liberal opinion hosts – in prime time on MSNBC, for example – lecture us. They drone on forever making pedantic arguments. If you could bottle these shows you’d have a cure for insomnia.

I went to college and like everybody else sat through lectures; I wasn’t fascinated back then and I’m not fascinated today.

You can love Fox or hate Fox – and there are plenty who do both – but you can’t accuse Fox News of being boring.

Same with Bill Clinton and Barack Obama. Whatever you think of their politics, they are not dull. And in their own way, they’re entertaining. That’s a big reason each of them won, twice.

Not so with liberal commentators on TV and radio. They’re oh so serious. And oh so dull. Saving the world and all of humanity from those evil conservatives may satisfy the ego of the host or hostess, but it doesn’t make for good radio or TV.

2. People go to opinion journalism not so much for information, but to get their own views validated. But what we’re calling liberal talk TV and radio aren’t

liberal as much as they are ... far left. So even liberals don't watch MSNBC or listen to talk radio in big numbers – because the content is further left than the listeners. If they want their liberal views validated, MSNBC and liberal talk radio are not the places to go.

3. There's pretty much only one place to go to get conservative news and opinion on television – and that's the Fox News Channel. (There are other small, new conservative stations popping up on cable; but Fox remains the only big one.) But there are plenty of places in the media landscape to get news and opinion that is left-of-center. There are a million places on the Web, and plenty of big city newspapers, and the three broadcast networks that serve up a daily helping of the liberal (or leftist) worldview. No need to watch MSNBC or listen to talk radio if you're looking for “progressive” info and ideas.

Roger Ailes, the visionary who created and runs Fox News, figured it out a long time ago: find a niche and go after that audience. His niche turned out to be half of America. Let's just say the niche for far left opinion journalism is a *tad* smaller.

As I say, there are probably a hundred reasons left wing journalism doesn't register with the American people. Here's where you, my friends, come in: Give me a few more reasons far left news media are on life support. Keep your ideas short. Funny is good, too.

When the Ends Justify the Meanness

☒ Those old, angry, white Republican guys are at it again. They just can't control their worst instincts. They see a black face and they go nuts.

Now they're going after U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice, not because she went on five Sunday news shows and told a fairy tale about why four Americans were killed in Benghazi, but simply because she's a black woman.

At least that's the story some liberals in the worlds of politics and media have come up with to counter GOP opposition to Ms. Rice, whom President Obama will almost certainly nominate to be the next Secretary of State.

Ninety-seven Republicans in the House recently signed a letter telling President Obama that, "Ambassador Rice is widely viewed as having either willfully or incompetently misled the American public in the Benghazi affair." They want him to pick somebody else. In the Senate, John McCain and Lindsey Graham are leading the effort to block her nomination.

This has riled many sensitive liberals who see in this opposition the twin devils – racism and sexism. Congresswoman Marcia Fudge, a Democrat from Ohio and the next chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus told reporters that, "It is a shame that anytime something goes wrong, they [Republicans] pick on women and minorities."

And a magazine called The Week chimed in, opining that, "Republicans are trying to take the newly re-elected Obama down a peg by getting 'Rice's scalp.' But in the end, Republicans will only compound their problems with women and minority voters if [Senator John] McCain filibusters Obama's black, female ambassador over this 'absurd' criticism."

TheGrio, an NBC News Web site aimed at African-Americans, ran a story that said, "The Republicans really need to lay off UN Ambassador Susan Rice. The image of a party of angry old white dudes going after an accomplished black woman will not give them the image makeover they need."

And the Washington Post went even further, with an editorial that read in part: "Could it be, as members of the Congressional Black Caucus are charging, that the signatories of the letter are targeting Ms. Rice because she is an African American woman? The signatories deny that, and we can't know their hearts. What we do know is that more than 80 of the signatories are white males, and nearly half are from states of the former Confederacy."

This is especially nasty. After the mandatory, "we can't know their hearts," the Post says in essence, maybe we can't but we know that those Republicans are white, that they're male and that a lot of them came from states that had slaves *way more than 100 years ago* – and that's all we need to know to convince us that they're racists. The Post should be ashamed but we all know nobody responsible for that smarmy editorial will feel the least bit guilty.

So there it is: If you criticize Susan Rice for putting out false information – possibly to protect the president who was busy telling voters that thanks to him al-Qaeda had been decimated – you're a racist. Never mind that there is not so much as a shred of evidence to support the allegation. In cases like this, facts don't matter. Opponents are bigots simply because they're white and come from the South. The ends justify the meanness.

But this isn't only about Susan Rice. This is a sordid lesson in how liberals use race and sex to smear their opponents and render them illegitimate.

So, if you ever opposed, say, President Obama for just about

anything, it couldn't be an honest disagreement over policy – not as far as those good white liberals are concerned. It must be because you're a bigot. You think Eric Holder is doing a lousy job. That proves just one thing. You hate him because he's black.

Former Newsweek White House correspondent and current MSNBC political analyst Richard Wolffe said as much, telling Chris Matthews that John McCain is leading a “witch hunt” against “these people of color, let's face it around this president, Eric Holder, Valerie Jarrett, now Susan Rice.” When Matthews asked, “You're saying that McCain is being driven by racial prejudice here?” Wolffe said, “There is no other way to look at this.”

Actually there is another way to look at this. Why not accept that McCain and the others oppose Susan Rice because they disagree with what she did, and that her skin color has nothing to do with anything? Why not accept that, since there is no evidence that any of them are racists?

Criticism of white politicians is perfectly legitimate, of course. Just ask George W. Bush or any other Republican who has ever run for president. But the same rules apparently don't apply to African American public officials – if they're *liberal* African American officials. Liberal elites can say whatever they want about Clarence Thomas, Condoleeza Rice, and (soon-to-be former) Congressman Allen West. They're black *conservatives*, which means they're fair game. It's perfectly *permissible* to call them Uncle Toms, house Negroes and the like. But utter a discouraging word about a black *liberal* and you're in for a heap of trouble

Black liberals must be protected. Their honesty and their competence cannot be questioned. No criticism, no matter how reasonable and legitimate, is permitted. And so, their detractors must be slandered as racists. Liberal African American officials – especially those of the highest rank –

can't be held accountable *precisely because they're African Americans*. You get the impression that simply being a black liberal is a kind of get out of jail free card? Oops, is that racist?

Is this what the most important movement of the 20th century – the great Civil Rights Movement – has come to?

To their everlasting credit, liberals were on the right side of the civil rights struggle. So it isn't difficult to understand their belief that racism lurks just beneath the surface, even in today's America. But what they seem *not* to understand is that racism is an ugly thing even when it's the soft kind, pedaled by supposedly *well-meaning* white liberals who are too eager to look the other way when black politicians – like every other kind of politician – get into trouble of their own making. Calling critics bigots is not progress. It's not even liberal.

Bernie Is On Fire!

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NPR's Alicia Shepard is a Pinhead. And how about Nina

Totenberg?

When you live inside the liberal bubble, you have no sense of reality.