

## ROSEN: Mainstream (liberal) media

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Published January 16, 2009 at 12:05 a.m.

In its Saturday opinion section, the *Rocky Mountain News* gives readers a chance to Talk Back to the Media. Under the headline "Mainstream media hardly monolithic," a liberal reader took issue with conservative columnist Charles Krauthammer's criticism of the "mainstream media" for shamelessly favoring Barack Obama during the presidential campaign. The reader disputed this and, implicitly, the notion that the mainstream media have a liberal bias.

He supported his argument by employing the fallacy of overstatement, fabricating a straw man, which he then proceeded to rip apart.

The key word he leveraged was *monolithic*. How can the mainstream media be accused of monolithically supporting Obama, he asked, when that bastion of the mainstream media, *The Washington Post*, at the same time runs Krauthammer's column? The answer, of course, is easy and obvious. The mainstream media are not *monolithically* liberal (and cheerleaders for Obama), they're just *overwhelmingly* liberal (and cheerleaders for Obama).

Just as Krauthammer is an outnumbered conservative on the editorial pages of *The*

*Washington Post*, David Brooks is an outnumbered conservative (and a pretty wishy-washy conservative, at that) on the editorial pages of *The New York Times*. Token conservatives provide a semblance of "balance" at liberal publications, just as the conservative *Wall Street Journal* features a weekly opinion column by the unbearably liberal Thomas Franks.

To offer anecdotal evidence of a differing editorial opinion or two doesn't negate the preponderance of evidence on the other side. The *Rocky* leans right on its opinion pages in spite of the fact that it also runs liberal contributors like Paul Campos and the radically left-wing Amy Goodman.

Personally, I've never liked the term mainstream media to begin with. Rush Limbaugh calls it the "drive-by media," which suggests superficiality, sensationalism and a herd mentality. That's catchy, but I prefer "dominant liberal establishment mass media." Sure, it doesn't roll off the tongue as easily, but it's more precise. Calling the liberal media the mainstream media gives the false impression that their bias is reflective of the mainstream of public opinion. It isn't. It's left of the public mainstream.

That the mass media are dominated by liberals is so obvious as to be beyond debate. This includes NBC, CBS, ABC, CNN, MSNBC, PBS, National Public Radio, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, The Associated Press, etc. The public is onto this, as measured by their declining level of trust in these so-called news sources.

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You have to be pretty far left to honestly regard *The New York Times* as conservative, but, incredibly, there are such people, like the aforementioned socialist Goodman of *Democracy Now*.

To their credit, some members in good standing of the dominant liberal establishment mass media have had the integrity to acknowledge the liberal bias, such as Evan Thomas (grandson of Norman Thomas, six-time Socialist Party candidate for president). Said Evan, when he was *Newsweek's* Washington bureau chief in 1996: "About 85 percent of the reporters who cover the White House vote Democratic. . . . Particularly at the networks, at the lower levels among the editors and so-called infrastructure, there is a liberal bias. There is a liberal bias at *Newsweek*, the magazine I work for. . . . (then ABC White House reporter, now Fox News anchor) Brit Hume's bosses are liberal, and they're always quietly denouncing him as a right-wing nut."

Conservative outposts like TV's Fox News Channel (with 2 million viewers compared with the liberal news networks' 25 million), *The Wall Street Journal's* editorial pages, *National Review* magazine and much of talk radio certainly counteract some of this liberal dominance of the mass media, but that doesn't alter the reality of liberal dominance - to say nothing of liberal domination of public education, academe, the arts and the entertainment industry. Liberals who dispute this are either delusional or liars. If the shoe were on the other foot and conservatives reigned in these places, liberals would be screaming bloody murder.

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