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Morning Shows Ignored Best-Seller Exposing Liberal Bias, but Today Championed Brock's Claims

NBC Showcases Anti-Conservative Smears

When David Brock was trying to promote his book *The Real Anita Hill* back in 1993, the networks barely acknowledged him. Only NBC allowed him a chance to make his case that Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas hadn't sexually harassed Hill, as the liberal law professor had famously proclaimed in 1990. In that interview, NBC advertised disdain for anyone who challenged Hill's credibility: "It seems as if you are an advocate for Justice Thomas in the book. Is it really fair to call yourself an objective journalist?" a hostile Katie Couric demanded of Brock on the May 3, 1993 *Today*.

But after Brock reinvented himself as a conservative-hater, the media's invitations poured in. While nothing Brock now says has undermined the premises of his reporting in his 1993 book on Anita Hill or in his *American Spectator* expose of Bill Clinton's "Troopergate" abuses — he has broadly condemned himself and the conservative movement for never-specified "dirty tricks." The media are lapping up this new spin.

Brock discovered how much friendlier the media can become when in 1998 he wrote a gimmicky "open letter" in *Esquire* magazine "apologizing" to Clinton for the Troopergate article. That snagged him appearances on all three morning shows, NBC's *Meet the Press*, CBS's *Face the Nation*, CNN's *Crossfire*, MSNBC and CNBC. Now he's trying to repeat that hat trick with yet another confessional, *Blinded by the Right: The Conscience of an Ex-Conservative*. In an interview on Thursday's *Today*, NBC's Matt Lauer provided Brock with a forum to assail conservatives without being challenged.

Far from dogging Brock as they did in 1993, *Today* treated his new claims as fully credible, and Lauer added his own colorful invective: "His specialty was character assassination and throughout the 1990s he made a living as a right-wing hatchet man. But after years of lies and, some would say, malicious journalism, this Washington insider wants to clear his conscience," the NBC co-host proclaimed. "David Brock exposes how he says the GOP tried to destroy the Clinton presidency through a series of well-plotted smear campaigns."

Lauer began the interview by helping Brock promote the idea that Thomas was a harasser and that Bill Clinton was falsely maligned by the troopers in the Paula Jones story. "You wrote things that weren't true," he told Brock, leaving the impression that his previous stories were 100 percent false. In fact, the bulk of Brock's reporting about Hill and Clinton remains unchallenged, even by the repentant reporter himself.

Lauer seemed outraged that anyone would use a position with the news media to promote a political agenda. He asked Brock, "You've said you were not even a journalist, you were really basically a political operative masquerading as a journalist. Are you a journalist now?" Brock soothingly

replied that his book is a memoir about his time practicing "dirty tricks" for conservatives.

Lauer also used Brock to bolster Hillary Clinton's conspiracy claims — made to Lauer on *Today* in January of 1998: "After the Monica

Lewinsky story broke and Mrs. Clinton was on this program and she talked about the now-famous 'vast right-wing conspiracy,' you were watching that day. Were you a part of that right-wing conspiracy?" Brock quickly agreed: "I was and I was stunned when she said it because I said 'finally somebody gets it.'" But Lauer did not press Brock to explain how the alleged "vast right-wing conspiracy" recruited then-President Clinton to, among other things, lie in a court deposition.

Brock's book is far from a best-seller, yet *Today* thinks it's important enough to promote. Meanwhile, all three morning shows have ignored a former network journalist who has none of Brock's credibility problems and a best-selling book. Bernard Goldberg's *Bias* demonstrates the prevailing liberal bias of the three major networks. So does NBC's showcasing of Brock's dubious smears.

— Brent Baker and Rich Noyes

The old David Brock wasn't a self-admitted liar, but the new one is. But the networks like the new Brock better because he's trashing conservatives and leaving liberals alone.

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