



Campaign 2004

Media Reality ✓ Check

Expert Documentation of the Latest Liberal Media Bias ✪ Wednesday, March 31, 2004

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Media Elites Show Their Bias as They Gleeefully Push Liberal Talk Radio "Network" With Few Stations

Liberal Media vs. Conservative Talk Radio

The mainstream media's liberal slant is never more obvious than when supposedly neutral reporters fall all over themselves trying to lend credibility to leftist gimmicks like the "Million Mom March" and "Earth Day." Now, the media are really letting their bias show as they lend a helping hand of publicity to Air America, the self-described liberal alternative to conservative radio powerhouses like Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity.

But the liberal "network" is all hype — just five stations and a channel on XM satellite radio. It's the creation of liberal millionaires, not the free market. Yet the media elite seem to love the idea of liberal talk radio as much as they have denigrated and demeaned conservative talk radio over the years.

Back on January 3, 1995, just after Republicans won Congress, *NBC Nightly News* reporter Bob Faw channeled unhappy liberals, asking whether "talk radio is not democracy in action, but democracy run amok." After the Oklahoma City bombing, Bryant Gumbel smarmily insinuated on *Today* that right-wing radio hosts were to blame: "Never do most of the radio hosts encourage outright violence, but the extent to which their attitudes may embolden and encourage some extremists has clearly become an issue."

Now NBC — an organization that does not admit to any liberal bias — is pulling out all stops to help a network that hopes to embolden and encourage liberal extremists. A key talking point: that there are no liberals on radio right now. "Al Franken is looking to give liberals a voice on the radio," NBC's Matt Lauer dutifully plugged on this morning's *Today*

show shortly before Katie Couric interviewed Franken and Air America CEO Mark Walsh.

According to reporter Elizabeth Jensen in Monday's *Los Angeles Times*, NBC is working overtime to assist Franken's new adventure: "NBC News will feature Air America on *Today*, *NBC Nightly News*, MSNBC and CNBC, according to an Air America publicist." Sure enough, MSNBC cut into its Wednesday programming to show Franken at his Air

America microphone alongside co-host Katherine Lanpher.

Liberal Radio: "Nicer" and "Nuanced"?

"Ms. Garofalo and Mr. Seder poked fun at Mr. Bush's former spokesman Ari Fleischer ('Is he not shoveling coal in hell now?' Mr. Seder asked); [and] Karl Rove, the President's senior adviser and political strategist (said by Ms. Garofalo to be pursuing 'the elusive 18-25 Klan demo')..."

"It's not like we're here to say we're going to be as nasty as right-wingers,' Ms. Garofalo said in an interview. 'On the left, traditionally, you've got a nicer type of person. You've got a person who is more willing to engage in conversations that have context and nuance.'" — From a *New York Times* profile of the new liberal network, March 31.

But it's not just NBC that's pushing this Democratic dream. ABC's Jake Tapper profiled the network on Sunday. CNN, which put Franken and fellow Air America host Janeane Garofalo in the liberal seats on *Crossfire* last summer, has given the story heavy play. *Newsweek* donated a three-page spread in its March 29 issue. The *New York Times* gave Franken the cover of its Sunday magazine ("he's full of energy, bursting

with ideas"), and the network got an Arts section profile this morning. Media reporter Jacques Steinberg printed some of Garofalo and co-host Sam Seder's hatefulness, then allowed Garofalo to observe how liberals are "nicer" than conservatives. (see box.)

Last night on NPR's *All Things Considered*, the reigning liberal radio network celebrated its new competitor while reporter Bob Smith recalled the bad old 1990s: "On some days, talk radio seemed to provide the talking points for the entire Republican Party." Much like the rest of the media seem to speak for the Democratic Party.

— Rich Noyes

To schedule an interview with an MRC spokesperson, please contact Katie Wright at (703) 683-5004