

# Omitting for **O B A M A**

How the Old Media Deliberately Censored  
Damaging New Media Scoops in 2009

**VAN JONES**

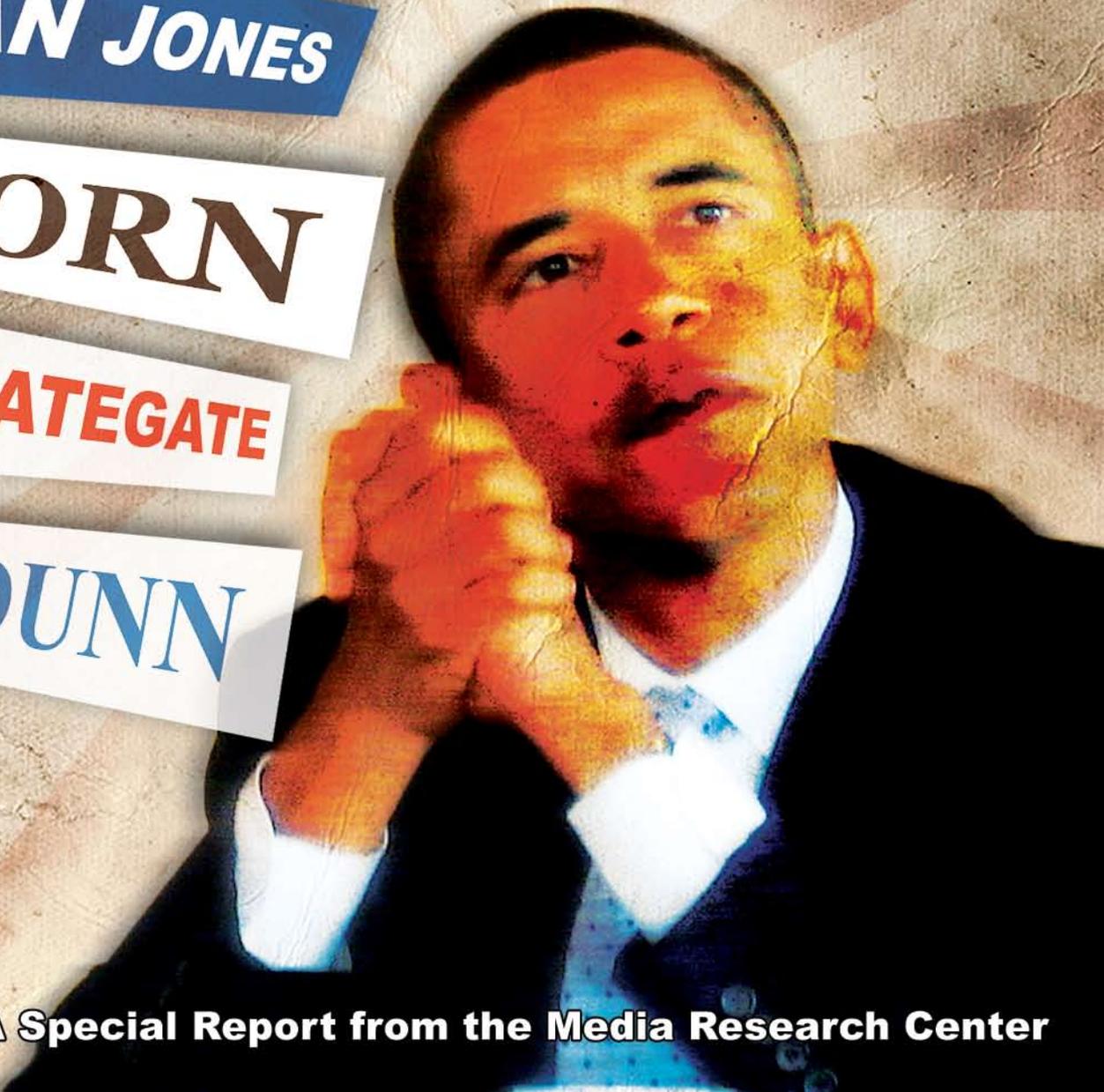
**ACORN**

**CLIMATEGATE**

**ANITA DUNN**



A Special Report from the Media Research Center



# Omitting for Obama

## How the Old Media Deliberately Censored New Media Scoops in 2009

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Obama administration was embarrassed by a series of revelations about its most radical actions, assumptions, and associations in 2009. While Fox News and the conservatives on talk radio and the Internet broke and developed these stories, Americans following only the “mainstream” media would never have heard these reports. Instead of acting as government watchdogs holding the people in power accountable, the nation’s broadcast news networks deliberately suppressed and *de facto* censored embarrassing scoops – at least until President Obama or Congress took action and made them impossible to ignore.

In many cases, this resistance to real news extended even to newspapers like the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, which are supposed to be more substantive and thorough than highly-paid TV news talking heads or unpaid bloggers. A Media Research Center study of four such stories highlighted by the New Media in 2009 that were damaging to the Obama “brand” found that the news was not only slow in arriving, it was fast in disappearing:

■ **Van Jones.** On September 3, blogger Jim Hoft reported that Obama “green jobs” guru Van Jones had signed a petition in 2004 demanding a probe into charges the Bush administration “deliberately allowed the September 11th attacks to occur.” Fox News Channel jumped on the story. But it didn’t draw a single story on ABC or NBC until after Jones resigned his office at the very start of September 6. CBS filed one, and ABC five. NBC never devoted a single full story to Jones (just mentioned him as a distraction in eight pieces). They noticed a few outrageous Jones remarks like suggesting a black child would never shoot up a school, but never noticed Jones calling himself a communist. Even the newspapers were stubborn in their avoidance: the *Washington Post* failed to publish a story until the morning before Jones resigned, and the *New York Times* failed to publish a story until after he resigned.

■ **ACORN.** On September 10, the website Big Government exposed with shocking hidden-camera footage how the leftist Association of Community Organizers for Reform Now (ACORN) in Baltimore advised a man and woman posing as a pimp and a prostitute how to shelter their illegal income from taxes, even as they claimed they were bringing in under-age

girls from Latin America to be their sex workers. While the video aired heavily on Fox News, the broadcast network evening news shows stayed silent for five days until Congress moved to deny the group's millions in federal funding. (ABC broke the network blackout on Saturday morning, September 12 to briefly note the Census Bureau cut off ties to the group.) While the journalists kept releasing videos from ACORN offices – in Washington D.C., Brooklyn, and San Diego – in the end, ABC and CBS aired only one full story, NBC three. As the rest of the country was laughing at Jay Leno ACORN skits, the networks didn't find it a laughing proposition when President Obama claimed to George Stephanopoulos: "Frankly, it's not something I've followed closely," adding he had not been aware that ACORN received much federal money. None noted the comment or Obama's long relationship with the group in Chicago, working as an ACORN trainer and even as ACORN's attorney in court.

■ **Obama's Aide and Mao.** After White House communications director Anita Dunn slammed Fox News Channel as either "the research arm or the communications arm of the Republican Party" in October, Glenn Beck's FNC show unearthed video of her speaking at a 2009 graduation where she lightly declared that mass-murdering Chinese communist dictator Mao Zedong was "one of my favorite philosophers." This speech clip was completely ignored by ABC, CBS, NBC, NPR, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *USA Today*, and the *New York Times*.

■ **Climategate.** In late November, the *New York Times* reported that hacked e-mails from climate researchers at the University of East Anglia in England exposed how the scientific experts cited so often by the media on global warming called their opponents "idiots," proposed censoring them from scientific journals, and twisted scientific data to support their policy agenda. This would be a bombshell if the hacked e-mails came from an oil company manipulating data, calling their opponents idiots, and proposing they be censored. The scandal threatened to ruin President Obama's campaign to push for drastic energy-reduction goals at a summit in Copenhagen. The networks ignored it for two entire weeks, and then when they decided to cover it, ABC, CBS, and NBC each only gave these revelations two full stories, which denigrated the scandal's political or scientific importance. Compared to those six stories, the Big Three devoted 57 full stories and interviews during the same two weeks to the less substantive White House "gate crasher" scandal after the first Obama state dinner.

The report concludes that the Old Media are in danger of losing even more audience members as long as they refuse to acknowledge news until after Democrats in Congress or the White House decide it's news. As much as the Old Media has suggested the New Media are lacking in credentials or professionalism, their performance in 2009 suggests that providing political protection for Obama means more than professionalism to the media establishment.

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# Omitting for Obama

## How the Old Media Deliberately Censored New Media Scoops in 2009

BY TIM GRAHAM  
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The saccharine sea of sweet media accolades for the inauguration of President Obama signaled one thing clearly at the beginning of 2009: this new administration was not going to be eyed suspiciously by the press as a potential rogues' gallery of scandal figures, incompetents, and extremists, which was the way they greeted the incoming Bush administration in 2001. Back then, the staunch opposition of liberal interest groups and activists against Bush and his policies drove the news agenda. Today, the "mainstream media" lament the sad fact that there is any opposition to the Obama agenda.

In 2009, the Old Media left a void where Obama would have been held accountable. This was especially true of traditional broadcast TV news, which covered the Obamas not merely as heads of state, but as global celebrities dazzling the world with their vigor and panache. Into that void stepped members of the New Media, eager to point out Team Obama's troubling associations, political missteps, and ideological extremists.

While Fox News and the conservatives on talk radio and the Internet broke and developed these stories, Americans following only "mainstream" media outlets like the broadcast TV networks never would have heard these reports. Instead of acting as government watchdogs holding the government accountable, the nation's broadcast news networks deliberately suppressed and *de facto* censored embarrassing scoops – at least until President Obama or Democrats in Congress made them impossible to ignore.

In many cases, this resistance to real news extended even to newspapers like the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, which are supposed to be more substantive and thorough than highly-paid TV news talking heads or unpaid bloggers. A Media Research Center study of four such stories highlighted by the New Media in 2009 that

were damaging or embarrassing to the Obama "brand" found that stories were not only slow in arriving, they were fast in disappearing.

## *Van Jones*

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Before Van Jones resigned his position as Obama's "green jobs czar" in the middle of Labor Day weekend for his overwrought radical statements, network news assignment editors may have explained that Jones was too obscure to be newsworthy. But that's not exactly true. In the April 13, 2008 edition of *Time* magazine, they asked who should make their Top 100 (most influential) people issue. The magazine quoted the actor Leonardo di Caprio: "By fusing economic opportunity and social justice with climate change, Van Jones is working to build pathways out of poverty through the creation of green jobs. He is the perfect person to help redefine our country's perception of what it means to be green."

A month before the election, *Time's* Michael Elliott placed Jones in the magazine's "Environmental Heroes" pantheon: "The symbol of environmental concern, says Jones, can't be a polar bear fighting for its habitat; it has to be a Rosie the Riveter making wind turbines in Detroit. Jones sees his fight for green jobs as coming from the great tradition of the civil rights movement of the '50s and '60s - updated."

On December 5, 2008, MSNBC's Joe Scarborough warmly welcomed Jones to his *Morning Joe* show: "You're singing our song. Doesn't this give us an opportunity to retool Detroit?...The green economy's a win-win." On June 2, 2009, ABC's *Good Morning America* ran a soundbite of Jones looking into a crystal ball for our green future for their "Earth 2100" project: "You're gonna see greenhouses, multi-story greenhouses. And each floor will be growing carrots and potatoes, et cetera. And that will be just considered normal."

**Was Van Jones an obscure unknown? *Time* magazine celebrated him twice in 2008 as an "environmental hero," and they lauded him in an interview on MSNBC's *Morning Joe*.**

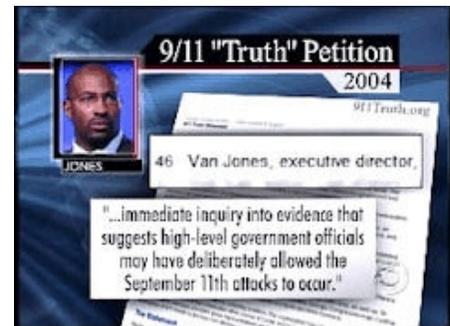
Not everyone considered Jones to be the arbiter of what would be normal. Fox News host Glenn Beck asked "Who is Van Jones?" on his August 24 program, noting his membership in a group called STORM (Standing Together to Organize a Revolutionary Movement) in 1994. Beck noted the alternative newspaper *The East Bay Express*, which reported Jones said "If I'd been in another country, I probably would have joined some underground guerrilla sect. But as it was, I went on to an Ivy League law school." The verdicts in the Rodney King police-brutality case in 1992 sent him further over the edge:

"I was a rowdy nationalist on April 28th, and then the verdicts came down on April 29th," he said. "By August, I was a communist."

On Thursday, September 3, "Gateway Pundit" blogger Jim Hoft posted a bombshell found in Google searching: in 2004, Jones signed a petition at 911truth.org calling for an "immediate inquiry into evidence that suggests high-level government officials may have deliberately allowed the September 11th attacks to occur," a paranoid, Bush-hating conspiracy theory. Talk radio erupted. Fox News updated their Jones storyline.

Later that day, ABC's Jake Tapper posted on his blog that Jones had recanted the signature, saying "the petition that was circulated today, I do not agree with this statement and it certainly does not reflect my views now or ever." Tapper noted Jones could not explain how his signature ended up there, then. But ABC and NBC stayed silent on the air.

CBS filed the first network story (pitched as a story about "conservative outrage") on the September 4 *Evening News*, and never did another full story. Jeff Glor began, "Chances are that until this week, you've never heard of Van Jones." Bill Plante's story noted a pile of statements the networks had ignored: Jones calling the Republican a profane word starting with A, and Jones suggesting when George W. Bush said the country was addicted to oil, he was "just like a crackhead trying to lick the crack pipe for a fix." There was Jones saying prosecution was persecution of blacks: "You don't have to call someone the N word if you can call them a felon."



It took Van Jones' resignation, around midnight Saturday night on a holiday weekend, for ABC and NBC to mention him for the first time during Sunday morning news shows which broached, but failed to quote, the inflammatory "911 truth" petition he signed. (CBS also failed to quote the offending sentence.) None had anything to say about STORM or his self-avowed communism.

ABC aired five stories, although only one on *World News*. They weren't totally soft on Jones. Several quoted Jones saying "You've never seen a Columbine done by a black child. Never." NBC never devoted a single full story to Jones. Word of his resignation was sprinkled sparingly in eight pieces. ABC's George Stephanopoulos, seemingly trying to rationalize ABC's spiking of the subject, came aboard Sunday's *Good Morning America* to dismiss the matter as a "summer squall." Stephanopoulos was impressed by how the White House handled it: "The fact they got it out of the way before the end of the Labor Day weekend, before his spokespeople like Robert Gibbs, who's appearing on *This Week* come on this morning, I think will contain any kind of damage."

On *Meet the Press*, host David Gregory pressed White House adviser David Axelrod to decry the Jones quotes. He asked “Was the president offended by what he said?” and asked if Axelrod himself found the quotes objectionable, but Axelrod avoided answering. But later in the same show, *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman typified the Old Media lecturing the New Media to stop making life so difficult for public figures:

“David, when everyone has a cell phone, everyone’s a photographer. When everyone has access to YouTube, everyone’s a filmmaker. And when everyone’s a blogger, everyone’s in newspaper. When everyone’s a photographer, a newspaper and a filmmaker, everyone else is a public figure. Tell your kids, OK, tell your kids, OK, be careful. Every move they make is now a digital footprint. You are on *Candid Camera*. And unfortunately, the real message to young people, from all of these incidents, OK, and I’m not here defending anything anyone said, but from all of these incidents, is you know, really keep yourself tight, don’t say anything controversial, don’t think anything – don’t put anything in print. You know, whatever you do, just kind of smooth out all the edges, and maybe...you know, when you get nominated to be ambassador to Burkina Faso, you’ll be able to get through the hearing.”

The other view of the battle between the Old Media and New Media was declared by Bill Kristol on *Fox News Sunday*, a narrative of how the so-called right-to-know lobby in the media was silent, while humble bloggers outside the Beltway break the real news stories:

“The mainstream media did not cover this story. The *New York Times* readers tomorrow morning will pick up the print *New York Times* and for the first discover that there was a huge controversy about this radical who was at quite a high level of the White House. So it’s an interesting case study, I think, where some of the blogs, a guy named Jim Hoft in St. Louis, Missouri, who runs a blog called Gateway Pundit, did much more reporting on this than the entire mainstream media.”

As Kristol noted, even the newspapers were stubborn on the Jones story. The *Washington Post* failed to write a story until the day Jones resigned, and the *New York Times* failed to write a story until after he resigned. The *Post* glorified Jones as a “towering” and “legendary” figure of the environmental movement even as he stepped down. (They briefly mentioned the “issue” of the group STORM, which had “Marxist roots.”) The sympathetic *Times* story didn’t note that their own Thomas Friedman had lauded Jones in a 2007 column: “I would not underestimate him. Mr. Jones, age 39 and a Yale Law School grad, exudes enough energy to light a few buildings on his own.”

On Sunday's *NBC Nightly News* that evening, anchor Lester Holt asked "Can the Republican Right claim its first scalp in this administration?" CNBC pundit John Harwood replied that "yes, it is a victory for the Republican Right," though he insisted "Jones was not an especially important figure within the administration. His job wasn't that big."

On ABC's *World News* that evening, reporter Stephanie Sy suggested Jones only spurred outrage by conservatives, not the general public: "The remarks were all made before he joined the Obama administration, but made him an easy target for conservatives." Sy featured Howard Dean lamenting Jones will no longer be able "to help this country," before she concluded: "Democrats worry that Van Jones is only the first of Mr. Obama's so-called policy czars...that will be targeted by Republicans."



CBS's Bill Plante and NBC's Chuck Todd each raised eyebrows on Monday morning by openly declaring that the Jones story was a "distraction" the Obama team was putting aside. When she interviewed President Obama on September 9, *Good Morning America* co-host Robin Roberts cited Jones only to underline her sympathy: "Glenn Beck, for instance, really going after Van Jones, forced to resign, controversial things that he said about 9/11 and Columbine. How difficult is it to stay on message?"

In the Bush years, the networks took pride in knocking the Republicans off message. In the Obama years, they lament the "distractions" being created by conservatives, as if helping the president sell his message was their life's work.

## ACORN

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The same pattern surfaced days later, when again, a story damaging to Obama would be ignored until the government took action. On September 10, the website Big Government exposed, with hidden-camera footage, how the Association of Community Organizers for Reform Now (ACORN) in Baltimore advised a man and woman posing as a pimp and a prostitute how to shelter their illegal income from taxes, even as they claimed they were bringing in under-age girls from Latin America to be their sex workers. As a community organizer and then as a lawyer, Obama built a longstanding relationship with ACORN, and counted on their support in his presidential campaign.

While the video aired heavily on Fox News, the networks evening news shows stayed silent for six days, until after both houses of Congress moved to deny the group's millions of dollars in federal funding. Eventually, ABC and CBS aired only one full story. NBC aired three.

ABC broke the network blackout on Saturday morning, September 12, with a brief anchor update from Ron Claiborne about the Census Bureau cutting its “ties to the community group ACORN for the 2010 Census.”

CBS did the first full story, on the September 15 *Evening News*. Correspondent Cynthia Bowers strongly brought the ACORN side of the story: “ACORN says the workers caught on tape were fired, but contends the videos were illegally obtained, doctored and deceptive, and is threatening legal action against the undercover filmmakers posing as the couple.” NBC’s Lisa Myers picked up the story on *Today* the next morning. While Myers used the conservative label five times in her report to describe ACORN’s critics, like CBS’s Bowers, she never described the community organization as liberal.



Neither did White House reporter Jake Tapper when ABC arrived last, on the evening of September 16. Anchor Charles Gibson told a tale of partisan targeting: “For years, Republicans in that city have been taking aim at an umbrella group of community organizers called ACORN. Opposition to the group intensified when ACORN helped President Obama in his election campaign. And now a videotape has surfaced which has prompted calls for investigations of ACORN’s activities.”

Tapper began, “It’s the nation’s largest grass roots organization lobbying for and reaching out to poor and minority communities.” He divulged the group’s “close ties with Democrats,” but never used a liberal label. But Gibson and Tapper noted they were targeted by Republicans (four times) and by conservatives (another two times). Tapper also told viewers the video aired frequently on Fox News, as another subtle way of saying it was not a “mainstream” story.

The most surprising moment in this omission controversy came when liberal comedian Jon Stewart mocked the networks on *The Daily Show* on Comedy Central: “Where were the real reporters on this story? You know what investigative media, see me on Camera Three: Where the hell were you?...You’re telling me that two kids from the cast of *High School Musical 3* can break this story with a video camera and their grandmother’s chinchilla coat? And you got nothing?”

None found it worth noting when President Obama claimed to George Stephanopoulos, “Frankly, it’s not something I’ve followed closely,” adding he had not been aware that ACORN received much federal money. John Fund of *The Wall Street Journal* insisted that was an odd defense:

Mr. Obama took great pains to act as if he barely knew about ACORN. In fact, his association goes back almost 20 years. In 1991, he took time off from his law firm to run a voter-registration drive for Project Vote, an ACORN partner that was soon fully absorbed under the ACORN umbrella. The drive registered 135,000 voters and was considered a major factor in the upset victory of Democrat Carol Moseley Braun over incumbent Democratic Senator Alan Dixon in the 1992 Democratic Senate primary.

Mr. Obama's success made him a hot commodity on the community organizing circuit. He became a top trainer at ACORN's Chicago conferences. In 1995, he became ACORN's attorney, participating in a landmark case to force the state of Illinois to implement the federal Motor Voter Law. That law's loose voter registration requirements would later be exploited by Acorn employees in an effort to flood voter rolls with fake names.

In 1996, Mr. Obama filled out a questionnaire listing key supporters for his campaign for the Illinois Senate. He put ACORN first (it was not an alphabetical list). In the U.S. Senate, Mr. Obama became the leading critic of Voter ID laws, whose overturn was a top ACORN priority. In 2007, in a speech to ACORN's leaders prior to their political arm's endorsement of his presidential campaign, Mr. Obama was effusive: "I've been fighting alongside of ACORN on issues you care about my entire career. Even before I was an elected official, when I ran Project Vote in Illinois, ACORN was smack dab in the middle of it, and we appreciate your work."

As with the Van Jones story, the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* were slow to notice. The *Post* first noted the story on September 12, relaying that two Baltimore employees in the video were fired. Three days passed before the *Post* ran a brief AP story on the Senate halting ACORN grants. Though it had become a major political scandal, it took eight days before the *Post* put it on the front page.

The *New York Times* ignored the Senate voting to cut off ACORN funds in the paper, and there was still nothing when the New York City Council froze its ACORN funding and the Brooklyn district attorney opened a criminal probe. On

**Scott Shane of the *New York Times* wrote conservatives found a "winning formula" to "dig up dirt" on Obama allies "they view as leftist."**

September 16, six days after the videos surfaced, the *Times* published a snotty Scott Shane story headlined "Conservatives Draw Blood From Acorn, Favored Foe." Shane wrote "It was, in effect, the latest scalp claimed by those on the right who have made no secret of their hope to weaken the Obama administration by attacking allies and appointees they view as leftist." Shane suggested conservatives believed they'd found a "winning formula.... mobilizing people to dig up dirt" and "trumpeting it on talk radio and television." The word "liberal" only came up when Robert Borosage of the "liberal Campaign for America's Future" denounced the conservative expose as "McCarthyite."

The ombudsman or reader's advocate at each of these papers – Andrew Alexander of the *Post* and Clark Hoyt of the *Times* – wrote columns calling out their own newspapers for their disturbing slowness on the Van Jones and ACORN scoops and suggested a lack of interest in the stories the conservative media had developed. Post Executive Editor Marcus Brauchli said he worried “that we are not well-enough informed about conservative issues. It's particularly a problem in a town so dominated by Democrats and the Democratic point of view.” *Times* managing editor Jill Abramson said they would appoint someone inside the newsroom to review conservative media for them, like it was a strange and alien land.

### ***Obama's Aide and Mao***

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After White House communications director Anita Dunn slammed Fox News Channel as either “the research arm or the communications arm of the Republican Party” in October, Glenn Beck's FNC show unearthed video of her speaking at a June 5, 2009 graduation at St. Andrew's Episcopal School in Potomac, Maryland, where she lightly declared that mass-murdering Chinese communist dictator Mao Zedong was “one of my favorite philosophers.” This speech clip was completely ignored by ABC, CBS, NBC, NPR, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *USA Today*, and the *New York Times*. (The *Washington Post* published it – but only in two syndicated columns, not in any news story.) Here's what she said:

The third lesson and tip actually comes from two of my favorite political philosophers - Mao Zedong and Mother Teresa, not often coupled with each other but the two people that I turn to most to basically deliver a simple point, which is you're going to make choices....You're going to challenge. You're going to say, 'why not?' You're going to figure out how to do things that have never been done before. But here's the deal – these are *your* choices. They are no one else's.

In 1947, when Mao Zedong was being challenged within his own party on his plan to basically take China over, Chiang Kai-Shek and the nationalist Chinese held the cities, they had the army. They had the air force. They had everything on their side, and people said how can you win? How can you do this? How can you do this? Against all the odds against you, and Mao Zedong said, you know, 'You fight your war, and I'll fight mine.' And think about that for a second.



While these remarks were skipped, Dunn's statements against Fox were noted by the networks. On October 12, CBS *Early Show* co-host Harry Smith asked analyst John Dickerson about them. On October 18, ABC's George Stephanopoulos asked David Axelrod about them on *This Week*: "Are you worried that your strategy is fortifying your enemy?" On the October 25 *Meet the Press*, NBC's David Gregory started a panel discussion with it.

None of these networks thought that Dunn's Mao remarks said anything about her ideology, or the Obama administration's worldview in general. Dunn's attack on Fox News was designed inside the White House to accomplish just this objective: to make sure that news that breaks on Fox never makes it to the ears of consumers of other networks. This "no one takes Fox seriously" was even used by the White House against the Mao story. When a reporter asked for comment on Dunn's "favorite political philosophers" remark, White House spokesman Bill Burton answered: "I caught some of that from the Glenn Beck show yesterday, but I don't think anybody takes it -- takes his attacks very seriously."

## *Climategate*

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On Saturday, November 21, the *New York Times* reported on its front page that hacked e-mails from climate researchers at the University of East Anglia in England exposed how the "scientific experts" cited so often by the media on global warming called their opponents "idiots," proposed censoring them from scientific journals, and twisted scientific data to support their policy agenda. (This time, the newspapers were first. The *Washington Post* also reported the scandal a day later.) In one 1999 e-mail exchange about charts showing apparent climate patterns over the last two millennia, scientist Phil Jones boasted of a "trick" to "hide the decline" in global temperatures.

Fox News and talk radio heavily focused on whether dire forecasts of catastrophic warming have been scientifically manipulated with "tricks." Eight days after the first newspaper story, ABC's George Stephanopoulos touched on the subject on the November 29 *This Week*, noting "there's been a partisanizing of this issue and then you throw in one more complication we've had over the last week." It was a "complication" that arose from "partisanizing," not a substantive scientific controversy.

The scandal threatened to ruin President Obama's efforts to push for "climate change" goals at an international summit in Copenhagen in December but the networks ignored it for two weeks. When they decided to cover it, ABC, CBS, and NBC each only gave the allegations two stories, which were full of skeptical denigrations of their political or scientific importance.

Compare that to another White House scandal: Tareq and Michael Salahi sneaking in uninvited into the first Obama White House state dinner with the prime minister of India. From November 26, when the story broke, through the weekend that Climategate finally

emerged (December 6), there were 57 morning and evening news stories or interviews on the Big Three networks. There were 31 on NBC (which scored an exclusive interview with the Salahis on December 1), 14 on ABC, and 12 on CBS. There were another 12 anchor-read briefs.

Most of the heat in this scandal was focused on the tackiness of the gate-crashers, not on failures by the White House staff. On NBC, Brian Williams complained: "If this turns out to be somebody's 15 minutes, the equivalent of state dinner Balloon Boy and Girl, I think that'll be tragic and almost pathetic because people in the White House, all White Houses, work hard. It's hard to put on a state dinner. And it was an honor to be invited and an honor for all the invited guests to be there."

The first Climategate news story came on *NBC Nightly News* on December 4, with anchor Brian Williams finally acknowledging "a new scandal burning up the Net these days." Reporter Anne Thompson said global-warming skeptics "say these e-mails from Britain's University of East Anglia show climate scientists massaging data and suppressing studies by those who disagree." She added "critics say the e-mails show catastrophic predictions of countries and people devastated by warming need to be reconsidered." She also noted "Today, in a letter to Congress, 25 leading U.S. scientists accused climate change opponents of misrepresenting the e-mails' significance." She worried that "the e-mails may end up giving politicians from coal and oil-producing states another reason to delay taking action to reduce emissions."



*CBS Evening News* offered the only story that underlined how scientists tried to "hide the decline" in temperatures by swapping temperature data. But it aired on Saturday, when it was blacked out in the Eastern and Central time zones for college football. Kimberly Dozier reported: "An e-mail from 1999 shows scientists worked hard to demonstrate an upward trend. They talk of using a trick to hide the decline in global temperatures. It worked like this: when temperature readings gathered from studying tree rings showed what looked like a decline in temperatures from the 1980s to the present, the scientists added in measurements taken later by more modern instruments, which gave them the answer they wanted."

ABC finally broke in on Sunday evening's *World News*. But they provided no specifics from the reams of e-mails and data from East Anglia University that caused the scandal, and concluded their report with a pay-no-attention-to-skeptics closer from reporter Clayton Sandell: "The science is solid, according to a vast majority of researchers, with hotter temperatures, melting glaciers, and rising sea level providing the proof."

Sandell was echoing what the United Nations bureaucrats stated at the Copenhagen summit opened days later. The *Times* of London reported that U.N. climate chief Rajendra

Pachauri addressed skeptics who “find it inconvenient” to accept the “inevitability” of dramatic global warming. He insisted the U.N.-organized panel of scientists have “a record of transparent and objective assessment stretching over 21 years performed by tens of thousands of dedicated scientists from all corners of the globe.” Neither the scientists or the reporters have offered an “objective assessment.”

The Obama administration and its left-wing environmentalist base clearly favored dire scenarios as a way to goad reluctant citizens into onerous tax and regulatory schemes to “save the planet.” So ABC opened their Copenhagen coverage with more doom: “Facing a clock some say has ticked down to zero, today 192 nations came together to take on a potential global catastrophe.” NBC’s Anne Thompson echoed: “This is about life or death -- 192 countries are here in Copenhagen to cut the carbon



emissions changing the climate and threatening the very existence of some nations and their people.” CBS’s Mark Phillips even stood in water up to his neck and then became completely submerged on camera to illustrate the feared impact of rising sea levels: “The Maldives have become the canary in the global warming coal mine.”

By December 10, ABC’s David Wright was denigrating Climategate as “an inconvenient scandal,” playing on the Al Gore movie title. On CBS, Wyatt Andrews relayed how “to many Republicans, Climategate proves that global warming is a deception,” before he countered: “But if that’s true, it’s a fraud adopted by most of the world’s leading scientists, along with NASA, the U.N., the American Medical Association, and the National Academies of Science of 32 countries, including the United States. “

## ***Conclusion***

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The Old Media are in danger of losing even more audience members as long as they refuse to acknowledge news until after Democrats in Congress or the White House decide it’s news worth a public reaction. During the last administration, *Newsweek* editor Evan Thomas insisted: “Our job is to bash the president, that’s what we do.” But in 2009, he proclaimed that President Obama was poised above the country, even above the world: “He’s sort of God.”

The news media should not see its job as “bashing” the president, but in 2009, it should not have been their job to inflate him into a celestial being, either. They seem incapable of continuity – of assessing a Republican president and a Democratic president with the same sense of monitoring the rhetoric and operations of governing without “fear or favor.” With

Obama, the media have instead favored Obama, and feared that conservative journalism would ruin the public-relations effect of those favors.

As much as the Old Media has suggested the New Media is lacking in credentials or professionalism, their performance in 2009 suggests that providing political protection for Obama means more than demonstrating a measure of independence and professionalism that can be appreciated outside the rarefied air of the White House bubble.

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