



Media Fairness Initiative

A Look at Bias in the News



Journalists: Liberal over Conservative by 4 to 1

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The number of journalists who identify themselves as liberal outnumbers the number who identify themselves as conservative by 4 to 1, according to a poll by the Project for Excellence in Journalism.

The survey indicates that the national media are out of step with the American public. **Just 19 percent of Americans consider themselves liberal, while 36 percent identify themselves as conservative.**

NBC Reporter Awe-Struck by Obama Campaign

NBC News reporter Lee Cowan again has demonstrated an uncontrollable excitement about covering Sen. Barack Obama's presidential campaign.

In a recent promotional piece distributed by NBC News, Cowan wrote: "When NBC News first assigned me to the Barack Obama campaign, **I must confess my knees quaked a bit.** Not only would the Illinois senator land me square in the center of rough and tumble presidential politics, but his candidacy was truly historic. I wondered if I was up to the job. **I wondered if I could do the campaign justice.** I wondered if the experience would swallow me whole."

Cowan is the same reporter who made headlines in January by admitting to NBC Nightly News host Brian Williams that it's "**almost hard to remain objective**" while covering the Obama campaign.

Pick the Quote

One of the following quotes is from New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, on the day he endorsed Sen. Barack Obama for president. The other three quotes are from members of the media (ABC's Claire Shipman and George Stephanopoulos, and CNN's Campbell Brown). All the quotes describe a recent speech by Sen. Obama. Can you pick the one from Gov. Richardson?

- A. "It was daring. Instead of simply distancing himself today from his former pastor's offensive remarks, Senator Obama took the opportunity and the risk of doing much more. Quietly, but clearly with great passion, he walked the listener through a remarkable exploration of race from both sides of the color divide, from both sides of himself."
- B. "Senator Obama could have given a safer speech ... He could have just waited for the controversy over the deplorable remarks of Reverend Wright to subside, as it surely would have. Instead, Senator Obama showed us once again what kind of leader he is. He spoke to us as adults."
- C. "As a speech, it was sophisticated, eloquent. Barack Obama is as fine a writer as you'll find in a politician. The question is ... how voters will respond, not only to the honesty that Barack Obama showed yesterday, not only the sophistication he showed in the speech, but also the honor that he showed. He did not renounce someone that he was under a great pressure to renounce, even though he disagreed with his comments. And I think a lot of voters, even if they're uncomfortable with Reverend Wright, will respect Barack Obama for that act."

Answer: B