

The Communists had PRAUDA. Republicans have FOX

Fox News calls itself “fair and balanced.” But in the words of our greatest living newsman, Walter Cronkite, Fox has always intended to be “beyond conservative, a far-right wing organization.”

Cronkite was interviewed as part of a disturbing new documentary called “OutFoxed: Rupert Murdoch’s War on Journalism.” Through additional interviews with former Fox journalists—and extensive use of archival footage—Fox is proven to be virtually “G.O.P. TV.”

On its self-proclaimed “signature news show,” for example, five Republican guests are interviewed for each Democrat, and five conservatives for every liberal.

All the Fox news programs get daily marching orders from the top, specifying the day’s stories and slant [see sidebar]. Says Cronkite: “I’ve never heard of any network, or any other legitimate news organization doing that.”

And so George Bush is defended and John Kerry demeaned. Bad news from Iraq is minimized, while the patriotism of war opponents is questioned. Divisive social issues, from abortion to gay rights, are continually emphasized.

This conservative ideology is effectively being packaged in Fox’s “high-tech tabloid” style, where commentators and reporters are interchangeable, sarcasm and hyperbole commonplace, and fear mongering is the order of the day.

Ultimately, Fox doesn’t really do the news; they are state of the art mass propagandists. That’s why MoveOn.org is proud to have helped underwrite Robert Greenwald’s documentary. That’s also why we’re petitioning the Federal Trade Commission this week—to deny Fox permission to use the slogan “fair and balanced.”

It’s a simple question of false advertising.

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The Party Line

Recent excerpts from the daily instructions given to Fox News reporters and producers by senior management:

“The so-called 9/11 commission has been meeting. Do not turn this into Watergate.”
(3/23/04)

“Today is likely to be the apex of the so-called 9/11 commission hearings. Remember that while there are obvious political implications for Bush, the commission is looking at eight years of the Clinton Administration versus eight months . . . for Bush.”
(3/24/04)

“Do not fall into the easy trap of mourning the loss of U.S. lives [in Iraq] and asking out loud why are we there.”
(4/4/04)

“Ribbons or medals? Which did John Kerry throw away after he returned from Vietnam? His perceived disrespect for the military could be more damaging to the candidate than questions about his actions in uniform.”
(4/26/04)

“Also, let’s refer to the US marines we see in the foreground as ‘sharpshooters,’ not ‘snipers,’ which carries a negative connotation.”
(4/28/04)

“The President and VP are MEETING with the 9/11 commission. They are NOT testifying . . .”
(4/29/04)

“The President goes to Michigan [today], accompanied by a powerful campaign asset, the first lady.”
(5/3/04)