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Replacement for Bill Moyers Is Becoming the New Poster Boy for Blatant Liberal Bias on Public TV

PBS on Tom DeLay: Favors “Virtual Slavery”?

Exhibit A of a liberal bias at PBS is still the program *Now*, first hosted by Bill Moyers, and now by David Brancaccio. On Friday night, the blatantly partisan ghost of Moyers was still hanging over the broadcast as Brancaccio led off by linking House Majority Leader Tom DeLay to slavery: “The ethical questions dogging Majority Leader Tom DeLay continue to grow. Have his favors to lobbyists led him from family values to supporting virtual slavery?”

The program dealt with DeLay’s relationship with lobbyist Jack Abramoff, who lobbied for the Mariana Islands and their low-wage clothing makers. Brancaccio’s opening echoed liberal Rep. George Miller, who said conditions in the Marianas were close “to indentured servitude, to slavery.” PBS had no DeLay defenders on the program. The DeLay critics were bipartisan: Rep. Christopher Shays (R-Conn.) told PBS DeLay needs to resign. It was a one-sided get-DeLay program. (*Now* hasn’t tackled the ethics of Hillary Clinton.) Even when the program is “balanced” with conservatives and liberals, it’s really fake balance:

May 20: LaRue vs. Ivins. In a program on judicial nominations, Brancaccio interviewed conservative Jan LaRue of Concerned Women for America and liberal Molly Ivins, a syndicated columnist. He introduced LaRue as “one part of a sprawling coalition of conservative groups who are taking no prisoners in their efforts to get President Bush’s nominees on to those federal benches.” He treated LaRue like a hostile witness: “How far do you take this? Do you think that the traditional separation between church and state is a good thing or a bad thing?” And: “So in my efforts here to understand, sort of, where your limits are on this, you wouldn’t support a state that wanted to establish an official religion, would you?”

Ivins was not described as liberal, or as an author of two anti-Bush books, *Shrub* and *Bushwhacked*. She was treated like a respected expert. “The naked power plays in the U.S. Senate this week come as no surprise to anyone who knows

their way around certain state capitals. The one in Texas comes to mind... Molly Ivins has been following this posse out of Texas since long before its members rode into Washington.” His idea of a tough question: “This issue about the judicial nominees if you take a look at Washington now, what are some of the things that bother you the most that are being bandied about?”

PBS, Not Fox, is Fair and Balanced?

“[I]t is clear that PBS does not belong to any single constituency, no one political party or activist group or foundation or funder or serves an agenda of any kind....this country needs one media enterprise where education comes first; where fair and balanced isn’t just a slogan or a goal, but a way of life; where partisanship is checked at the newsroom door.” — *PBS President Pat Mitchell in a National Press Club speech, May 24.*

May 6: Garofalo and Barr.

Brancaccio touted interviews with Janeane Garofalo (“An outspoken liberal says as media conglomerates get bigger and bigger, the audience is deserting them”) and former Rep. Bob Barr (“an outspoken conservative says as the government is getting bigger it’s trampling on the rights of citizens”).

Brancaccio had a chummy talk with Garofalo on how the country’s political chatter is sullied by conservative euphemisms: “You’re not supposed to say taking prisoners and sending them to countries that torture, you’re supposed to say ‘rendition.’ And whatever you do....do not say drilling for oil, you’re supposed to say, ‘responsible energy exploration.’ I mean, the list goes on... you have to hand...you are handing it to the conservative movement. They’re very, very good at it.”

Barr came to criticize the Patriot Act, and drew softballs: “What needs to go away in your view?” But Brancaccio pushed him on judicial nominations: “What about this crazy scenario? The Bush administration says: ‘Okay let’s end this stuff by proposing some more moderate names.’”

Liberal defenders of public broadcasting hate the idea that anyone inside the system should watch for fairness and balance. But Brancaccio’s show proves that taxpayers are still being forced to underwrite one-sided liberal propaganda that mocks PBS claims of balance. — *Tim Graham*

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