



WHAT IS FAKE NEWS? ANDREW KLAVAN

You've probably heard a lot of people recently screaming and yelling about Fake News. Charges fly from all points on the political spectrum: this story is mistaken — it's Fake News; that statement is incorrect — it's Fake News.

But to my mind, these arguments miss the point. Mainstream American news is ALL fake because the major news outlets are so consistently biased toward the left that whether any given story they report is factual or not, their overall reportage is essentially leftist propaganda. You can complain about the right-wing slant of Fox News all you want, but left-wing ABC, CBS, NBC, MSNBC and CNN have, combined, almost ten times the viewers.

Look, the chief journalist at ABC is former Clinton operative George Stephanopoulos; the president of CBS News is David Rhodes, the brother of a former senior Obama staffer. Comcast, which owns NBC, is run by a major Democrat donor. Same for the leadership at CBS and Time Warner, which owns CNN.

Only seven percent of American journalists identify as Republican. And while a lot of news outlets forbid their reporters to donate to candidates, 96 percent of those who did donate last time out gave to Hillary Clinton. These journalists claim that despite the fact they're all Democrats, they can be objective. It just ain't so. Psychologists have shown that when people associate almost exclusively with those who agree with them, they suffer from groupthink and confirmation bias and lose their ability to see events clearly.

Now, it's not that these journalists are liars, exactly — it's that their bias skews their reporting in very specific ways. Let me give you Andrew Klavan's Three Rules of Mainstream Media Journalism. These can transform any story, whether it's true or not, into Fake News.

Rule Number One:

Whenever left-wing prejudices are confirmed by a single event, that event is treated as representative. But whenever left-wing prejudices are contradicted by a single event, that event is treated as an isolated incident — and if you treat it as representative, you are deemed to be hateful.

So, for instance, a white cop shoots a black suspect. The mainstream media treats that story as representative of general police racism even though studies show cops don't use deadly force more often on blacks than on whites.

On the other hand, if a Muslim commits an act of terrorism, and someone is bold enough

to point out that the terrorist act is, in fact, representative of the daily acts of Muslim terror around the world, this is considered Islamophobic.

The leftist media cherry-picks when an event illustrates a larger narrative. That's Fake News.

Rule Number Two:

When a scandal breaks on the right, the news is the scandal. When a scandal breaks on the left, the news is: who wrongfully disclosed that scandalous information? Thus, when the media wanted to raise suspicions that Donald Trump was somehow in league with the Russians, they freely quoted illegally leaked information from intelligence sources. But when Congressman Devin Nunes announced he had information that the Obama administration might have misused intelligence against Donald Trump's transition team, the story became: How did Nunes get that information? And did he do it legally?

The scandal meter is heavily weighted to fall to the right. Fake News.

Rule Number Three:

Individual extremists on the right are highlighted, but the overall extremism of the left is ignored. In one of the fakest Fake News stories in recent history, the mainstream media rose up as one to tar conservative Tea Party members as racist, when all they really wanted were lower taxes and less government spending. Reporters gave the Tea Party disparaging nicknames; represented their almost universally peaceful gatherings as "ugly" and "violent"; and whenever an individual Tea Partier said something wrong, it was cited as evidence that the movement itself was tainted. Meanwhile, the continually violent, vandalizing, anti-Semitic socialist movement that went by the name of Occupy Wall Street was hailed by journalists as an important social development right up to the moment it vanished without a trace (except for the piles of litter its protesters left behind).

Peaceful Tea Partiers wanted the small government prescribed by the Constitution, so they were radicals; violent Occupiers wanted the widespread government intrusion of socialism, so they were heroes. Very Fake News.

Newsweek Editor Evan Thomas was once criticized when his magazine essentially convicted some white Duke University lacrosse players of raping a black woman — a rape, it turns out, they did not commit — because it didn't happen. Thomas defended himself, saying, "The narrative was right, but the facts were wrong."

The mainstream media almost always get their left-wing narrative right, whether the facts support it or not. That's called confirming your own prejudices. It's called bias. It's called Fake News.

I'm Andrew Klavan for Prager University.