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"Freedom of the Press belongs to those who own one."

A. J. Liebling of the New Yorker

November 6, 2002



Election News Analysis

Commentary

While the pundits are passing out kudos and assessing blame for the Republican election blowout, they have missed the obvious.

While the Capitol Gang and the Beltway Boys all give deserved credit to the President and to Karl Rove, I believe much of the credit goes to Roger Ailes, and to a somewhat lesser degree, to Matt Drudge. (Rush Limbaugh is already an icon in the conservative comeback and carried the torch for years with Roger Ailes assistance in the background.)

In case you don't remember, Roger is a former strategist for the Republican Party who went into the media. Unlike most pols who thrive on face time before the warm red light of the TV camera, Roger went behind the scenes. He first became mentor to Rush Limbaugh, then became the man behind FOX NEWS TV, as its President.

Those of us who labored in the philosophical for decades while there were only the three liberal TV newscasts have always remembered the tiny publication called *National Review*, managed so ably by the erudite William F. Buckley, Jr. He was a man of enormous brilliance and wit, who, almost single-handedly, raised the banner of non-racist conservatism. His humor and his obvious intelligence gave the lie to the liberal caricature of conservatives as knuckle-draggers. He kept the Constitutional Underground alive during the dark ages of the Great Society.

With the proliferation of the cable systems, the initial advantage went to the ultra-liberal CNN, who, with the unlimited leftist money of Ted Turner and his somewhat more conservative wife, Jane Fonda, monopolized the cable airwaves for several decades. CNN made even less of an attempt to hide their liberal bias than did the three major networks.

With the availability of cable, the cost of entry to “established” media came down suddenly. The Internet offers almost any nut, including me, the opportunity to express his/her opinions – and Matt Drudge took full advantage. He broke the story of Monica Lewinsky because the liberal weekly *Newsweek* was sitting on the story! Liberals do not usually blast their liberalism – they just dissemble or actually spike any story that will hurt liberal politicians. The liberal press will simply not publish the extremist outrages of the left lest they taint liberalism in general, while playing up all of the kooks on the conservative side.

Then Roger Ailes organized the FOX NEWS network. In spite of difficulties getting on local channels – it took years to get on any major San Diego cable networks – FOX is now beating CNN in many time slots. FOX is in fewer cable systems than CNN, a LOT fewer, but the legendary liberal voice of Larry King has been surpassed by not only conservative Bill O’Reilly but the conservative-led show of Hannity and Colmes just last month.

Trying to get back into the media game that liberals monopolized for so long, NBC brought back the gray eminence of all liberals, Phil Donahue. On August 27, 2002, the Drudge Report headlined: “MSNBC’S ‘DONAHUE’ HITS LOWEST NIELSEN RATING POSSIBLE — Phil Donahue has plunged in total collapse on MSNBC with cable viewers, NIELSEN ratings show.”

The audience of America now had alternatives to the liberal media. Rush was on the radio daily, and indeed the radio format was populated by conservatives of all stripes. Efforts by liberals to introduce alternative liberal voices like Mario Cuomo met yawns – and almost immediate failure in the radio ratings game.

Banned from a voice for years by liberal domination of the news outlets, and led by Roger Ailes, conservatism now has equal access. That spells nothing but trouble for liberals...witness the election of November 5. Given equal access to people’s minds, conservatism wins and will continue to win.

The Bazaars of Ideas are now open to all comers.

FOX News outpolled CNN in three of the four hours of the election news.

Let the best ideas win.

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