

# OUR ENEMY THE MEDIA

By Don Feder

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Based on her interview with Sen. Joe Biden, we may assume that WFTV, Orlando Anchor Barbara West: 1. Did not graduate from a school of communications, 2. Will never receive an award from the Society of Professional Journalists, 3. Is unlikely to be employed by *The New York Times* in the foreseeable future, and 4. Will soon be working with Joe the Plumber, installing bathroom fixtures.

Silly rabbit -- Didn't West know that tough questions are reserved for Republicans?

Yet, there she was asking old leaden-tongued Joe how his running mate's spread-the-wealth platform differed from standard Marxist redistributionism (from each according to his abilities, etc.) The vice-presidential candidate was reduced to sputtering "Are you kidding?" and "I don't know who's writing your questions."

I'm surprised the Delaware Senator didn't remind West that when a TV reporter posed impertinent queries to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1929, FDR penned an article for "People" magazine reminding his fellow Americans to "ask not what your country can do for you."

As all good journalists knoweth, you're only supposed to ask embarrassing questions of Republicans. As a media minion, your curiosity should be confined to Sarah Palin's wardrobe, her daughter's pregnancy and Cindy McCain's past addiction to prescription painkillers.

West's grilling of Biden (the campaign retaliated by canceling a later interview with his wife) was so extraordinary for the mainstream media as to constitute a freak occurrence – like a snowstorm in July or a British MP plagiarizing one of Biden's speeches.

Media bias in past presidential campaigns (going back to 1964) is nothing next to the way the drive-bys managed, manipulated and mangled coverage of the McCain-Obama race.

MSNBC's Chris Matthews epitomized media worship of the messiah, when he confessed that while listening to Obama, "I felt this thrill going down my leg." Matthews' colleagues probably feel more like the prom queen when the star quarterback's hand is reaching up her leg.

The media doesn't even try to disguise its school-girl crush. According to a survey by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, by a margin of 70% to 9%, those polled in mid-October said most journalists want Obama to win, over John McCain.

At this stage of the 2004 campaign, the public said the media favored Kerry over Bush by 50% to 22% (comparable to 2000, when 47% of those surveyed said the press liked Gore, versus 23% who said reporters leaned toward Bush).

The public's perception is confirmed by a Project for Excellence in Journalism study, which looked at coverage of McCain and Obama in the six weeks following the nominating conventions. It found that while 57% of stories about the GOP nominee were negative and 14% positive, Obama's positives/negatives were 36%/35%. In other words, there was four times as much negative coverage of McCain as of Obama.

If the news media is a criminal conspiracy, *The New York Times* is its Vito Corleone. The Gray Lady set the tone for the rest of the press – which sounds a lot like The Dixie Chicks humming “The Internationale.”

You probably didn't know that besides editing the editorial pages of *The Times*, Andrew Rosenthal is also a stand-up comic. Performing live at the Association of National Advertisers annual conference, Rosenthal observed that *The New York Times* “aims to ensure opinion and news are kept separate, even as the Internet increasingly blurs the line” (as reported by “Advertising Age” on October 17).

For sheer hypocrisy, this is hard to beat. In the real world, *The New York Times* is to objectivity what Jack the Ripper was to women's rights.

After seeing their candidate bludgeoned in its news pages for months, on September 22, the McCain campaign charged that *The New York Times* is “150%” behind Barack Obama. Said McCain spokesman Steve Schmidt: “Whatever *The New York Times* once was (*in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century?*), it is not today by any standard a journalistic organization. It is a pro-Obama advocacy organization that every day attacks the McCain campaign, attacks Senator McCain, attacks Governor Palin and excuses Obama.”

This is a revelation on par with: Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has issues with Israel.

In late July, Rosenthal's paragon of objectivity ran an opinion piece by Obama (“My Plan for Iraq”), then rejected a similar offering by McCain – the rationale being that McCain's piece didn't “mirror” Obama's. As a top McCain aide explained, the paper

simply didn't agree with McCain's Iraq policy, and wanted him to change his position, not "re-work the draft." That's fair.

From the moment McCain announced his choice of Alaska Governor Sarah Palin as his running mate, *The Times* attack machine went into hyper-drive. A division of investigative reporters was deployed to Juneau, literally sifting through garbage to get dirt on Palin.

Every aspect of the lady's personal life has been subjected to media scrutiny.

On September 2, *The Times* ran a convention story ("Palin's Daughter's Pregnancy Interrupts G.O.P. Convention Script") worthy of *The National Inquirer*. Her daughter, Bristol, age 17, was five-months pregnant, the family announced. *The Times* covered the disclosure with glee. Here was a pro-family candidate who was such a lousy mother that she couldn't keep her teen-aged daughter from getting pregnant -- this from a newspaper that believes in giving condoms to 14-year-olds, without parental notification.

From there, it was a dizzying descent into tabloid hell. *The Times* breathlessly informed readers that the Palins eloped on Aug. 29, 1988, and that their first child, Track, was born eight months later.

The article hit rock-bottom, when it reported "some claimed that Ms. Palin had not actually given birth to Trig (*her youngest son*), but that Bristol had, and that the family had covered it up." As support for this absurdity, *The Times* cited photos posted on "various websites" supposedly showing that the governor didn't look pregnant in the months leading up to Trig's birth.

In his speech to The Association of National Advertisers, Rosenthal compared the wild rumors and preposterous theories flying around the Internet with impeccable reporting at *The New York Times*. But the paper is willing to repeat the most outlandish cyber speculation, if it suits its purposes.

Rosenthal's rag was also fascinated with Palin's wardrobe. The Republican National Committee is reported to have spent \$150,000 to outfit her in a manner befitting a vice-presidential candidate.

An October 23 *New York Times* story mentioned unnamed Republicans expressing "consternation" at the Palin "shopping spree" and wondering if this would "compromise her standing as Senator McCain's chief emissary to working-class voters."

Naturally, there was no speculation on how Obama could campaign as a middle-class hero attired in \$1,500-suits. At least Palin didn't get her duds compliments of Tony Rezko.

But most *Times* coverage of Palin focused on her alleged lack of experience, corny rhetoric and the contention that she just wasn't vice-presidential material.

In an October 3 story on the vice-presidential debate, *The Times* termed Palin's performance "unusual theater," while stressing her use of phrases like "a heck of a lot."

The governor was said to rely on a "steady grin, folksy manner and carefully scripted talking points." In other words, she's a hick, a rube, a Republican Stepford Wife who can't function without 3x5 cards. You may recall another politician whose intelligence the media questioned because of his use of index cards. He was the president who won the Cold War and gave us the longest peacetime prosperity in our history.

A *Times* editorial, which ran the same day, charged that after "a series of stumbling interviews that raised serious doubts even among conservatives (*again, unnamed*) about her ability to serve as vice president," Palin "never really got beyond talking points in 90 minutes, mostly repeating clichés and tired attack lines and energetically refusing to answer far too many questions." For *The New York Times*, anything not heard recently at a Manhattan cocktail party is a cliché or a tired attack line.

Compare the foregoing to *The Times* carefully crafted coverage of Biden, whose gaffes are either buried with the TV listings or totally ignored.

Discussing the current financial crisis, Biden reminded us that in 1929, President Roosevelt (who didn't become president until 1933) went on television (which wasn't widely used until the late 1940s) to explain the Great Depression to the American people.

Speaking to Virginia coal miners, Biden revealed "I am a hard coal miner." The closest anyone in his family came to working in the mines, was a great-grandfather who was a mining engineer.

At a September 9 rally in Columbia, Mo, Obama's running mate urged a Democratic state senator in a wheelchair to "stand up" so the crowd could get a better look at him – all of which was studiously ignored by the mainstream media.

Then there was Biden's prediction, at a Seattle fundraiser, that six months after he took office, foreign powers would "test" President Obama the way Khrushchev tested JFK

in the Cuban missile crisis, thus implying Obama is so green that his inexperienced hand at the helm would invite an international crisis.

Other than Fox News, the networks refused to air the remarks. The day after the event, *The Times* mentioned it briefly in the 11<sup>th</sup>. paragraph of a page A-18 story headlined “Obama Briefly Leaving Trail to See Ill Grandmother.”

If Palin had said McCain is so old and feeble that his election would have our adversaries circling like vultures – it would have appeared in *The New York Times* above the page-1 fold.

The Palin Treatment wasn’t confined to coverage of the Alaska governor. Candidate’s spouses are usually off limits. Not this year. Not when the candidate is John McCain.

In an October 18 profile, *The Times* just had to mention Cindy McCain’s past addiction to prescription pain-killers – a story which was old news a decade ago.

The article noted that the McCains are apart much of the time -- he in D.C., she in their Arizona home. For Congressional wives, this is hardly unusual, but, along with the revelation that the couple sometimes vacation separately, the story suggested that Mr. and Mrs. McCain aren’t that close and perhaps their marriage is troubled.

The how-low-can-they-sink moment came when it was revealed that one of the reporters who wrote the piece tried to contact a friend of the McCains’ 16-year-old daughter, through her Face Book page, to ask what she knew about Cindy as a mother.

Even Joe The Plumber got *The Times* once-over with a blowtorch. An October 17 story (“Real Deal on ‘Joe the Plumber’ Reveals New Slant”) sought to debunk the GOP icon.

Joe doesn’t have a plumber’s license (gasp!), owes back taxes and is a registered Republican, the story disclosed. And his name isn’t even Joe, it’s Samuel J. Wurzelbacher (who, FYI, owes less than \$1,200 in back taxes.) For *The Times* to attack so minor a figure shows that the Democrats don’t have to spin the news; the media does it for them.

All that was missing was an expose of the McCains’ dog: He benefited from the financial crisis. He voted with George Bush 96% of the time. His name isn’t Fido; it’s Floyd, and he isn’t even an Irish Setter. He’s really a Golden Retriever.

The only time the paper mentioned Obama's friendship with 1960s terrorist William Ayers was to rationalize the relationship or to attack the McCain campaign for raising the issue.

An October 11 story said Ayers "worked with him (*Obama*) on a school project and a charitable board and gave a house party when Mr. Obama was running for the U.S. Senate." This is like saying that Monica Lewinsky was a White House intern who shared certain interests with then-President Clinton.

*The Times* didn't think it was relevant to mention that Ayers and his comrades carried out more than 30 bombings, including the Capitol Building and the Pentagon; that Ayers' current goal is to "teach against oppression" embodied in "America's history of evil and racism, thereby forcing social transformation;" that Ayers chose Obama to serve as chairman of the Chicago Annenberg Challenge -- a group they used to fund radical causes like ACORN; and that the duo served together on the board of the Woods Fund of Chicago -- another milch cow for the radical left.

*The New York Times* used its editorials to blast McCain and Palin for talking about Ayers ("one of the most appalling campaigns we can remember" the paper wailed.) In so doing, the Republican ticket has moved beyond mere "distortions" of Obama's record "into the dark territory of race-baiting and xenophobia," *The Times* screeched.

Given that Ayers is white and native-born, this isn't an easy case to make. But *The Times* doesn't have to actually prove a charge, just make it.

A few more things about which *The New York Times* and the rest of the establishment media displayed a stunning lack of curiosity include:

- Why Obama sat in a pew of Chicago's Trinity United Church of Christ for 19 years listening to his preacher/mentor the Rev. Jeremiah ("God damn America!") Wright spew racism and anti-Americanism?
- Obama's relationship with Louis Farrakhan. Wright and Father Michael Pflieger (another friend of Obama) are tight with America's most dangerous demagogue. Obama attended Farrakhan's 1995 Million Man March, and described it in glowing terms in a community newspaper. Farrakhan practically anointed Obama in a January address to the Abomination of Islam.
- Obama's connection to the leftist ACORN (voter-fraud-r-us)

- Michelle Obama's embrace of "black power" as a student at Princeton.
- The details of Barack's drug addiction – what substances did he use besides cocaine? When did his addiction end? Was he using drugs as an Illinois state senator? Who was his supplier?
- Obama's foray into Kenyan politics in support of an avowed Marxist who ran for president.
- Obama's missing birth certificate, which is said to prove he was born in Kenya.
- Why Mr. Compassion hasn't done anything for his Kenyan half-brother, who's living in poverty, or his best friend from prep school days, who just got out of prison?

Of course, the media's interest in any of the above would presuppose that they actually wanted to report the news, instead of advancing their ideological agenda by pushing the candidate they adore.

One of the defining moments of the 1964 Republican National Convention, which nominated Barry Goldwater at the Cow Palace in San Francisco, was when a speaker mentioned the media and angry delegates turned around and shook their fists at the press box. As the French say, the more things change, the more they remain the same.

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