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AIM REPORT

For Fairness, Balance and Accuracy in News Reporting

2013 | XLII-11

Media Downplay Their Conflicts of Interest

By Roger Aronoff

The mainstream media might just be owned and operated by the Obama Administration—lock, stock, and barrel. They are married at the hip, quite literally, and often have relatives within the Administration.

The Washington Post named names in a recent piece entitled, "Media, administration deal with conflicts." Conflicts of interest, that is.

But the Post took an unusual approach to the conflicts. It said the media are unconcerned and can police their own behavior. Does this sound familiar? Eric Holder, anyone?

"So what to make of all the family ties between the news media and the Obama administration?" wrote Paul Farhi for The Washington Post. "According to the news media, *nothing much at all*," he added (emphasis added). "News organizations say they've worked out the conflicts—real or potential—involving their journalists. But that hasn't stopped a few eyebrows from being raised."

Consider the words of Richard Grenell, a political consultant who in an appearance on Fox News noted that top networks ABC, CBS and CNN have intimate family ties to the Administration. "CBS News President David Rhodes and ABC News President Ben Sherwood, both of them have siblings that not only work at the White House, that not only work for President Obama, but they work at the NSC on foreign policy issues directly related to Benghazi," said Grenell.

CNN's deputy bureau chief, Virginia Mosely, is married to Tom Nides, who was appointed by Obama to work under Hillary as Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources. This means that the Benghazi scandal causes some familial angst. What better (or worse, depending on your perspective) reason to go soft on reporting than because your own family is involved?

"Conservatives have suggested that these relationships may play a role in how the media cover Obama, specifically in their supposedly timid approach to reporting on the White House's handling of the terrorist attacks last year on American facilities in Benghazi, Libya," wrote Farhi.

Clearly, ABC, CBS, and CNN cannot be trusted to tell the



whole story on Benghazi. But the bias doesn't end there.

It is commonly known that David Plouffe, Obama's former campaign manager, has joined Bloomberg News as a commentator, and former senior advisor to the president David Axelrod was hired by MSNBC. (The President went so far as to joke at the latest White House Correspondents' Association dinner that "... David Axelrod now works for MSNBC, which is a nice change of pace since MSNBC used to work for David Axelrod.")

What is less well known is that 14 or more journalists have joined the Obama Administration and taken key posts there. "Those inside the administration hit 14 this month when the Post's Stephen Barr joined the Labor Department," reported the Washington Examiner last February. "That's a record, say some revolving door watchers, and could even be much higher: The [Washington] Post reports that 'dozens' of former journalists have joined the administration, although Washington Secrets couldn't verify that tally." After all, there's "... a whopping 19 journalists and media executives, including five from The Washington Post and three each from ABC and CNN, who've gone into the administration or center-left groups supporting the president."

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PLEASE NOTE AIM'S NEW ADDRESS

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AIM

in the News

Judi McLeod of the **Canada Free Press** wrote: "Is anyone other than **CFP** and **Accuracy in Media's Cliff Kincaid** suggesting that the **Obama** administration has to leave **Snowden** as 'The Spy Who Never Comes in from the Cold' in order to pull off its latest psyop mission?"

In light of the new effort to re-open the investigation of **TWA 800**, as described in the adjacent letter from the editor, **The Journal News**, a **Gannett** newspaper that serves Westchester and several other New York City suburbs, re-published a 1998 article about **TWA 800** that focused on **AIM's** investigation into the 1996 crash.

"**Retired Adm. Thomas H. Moorer**, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, called yesterday for new congressional hearings into the explosion of **TWA Flight 800**," reported the **Gannett paper**.

"**Moorer**, an expert on missile weaponry, said he attended the news conference convened by a media critic group that scoffs at the official **NTSB** and **FBI** findings unveiled a month ago." That group, named in the next paragraph, was "**Accuracy in Media**, which coordinated the briefing." It was the dogged work and dedication of **Reed Irvine** that finally proved that the **NTSB** findings were false.

Editor's Message



Dear Fellow Media Watchdogs:

TWA 800 is a story that those of you who have been with AIM for a long time, know well. It was a story I worked on when I first arrived at Accuracy in Media back in 1997. Reed Irvine, AIM's founder and then-chairman, was approached by two people, with different theories, both of whom made strong cases that the plane was brought down by a missile, or missiles, as opposed to the official story, that it was a spark in a fuel tank, caused by an unknown source, which caused the

tank to explode and the plane to crash into the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Long Island, New York, on July 17th, 1996. All 230 people aboard were killed.

I produced a documentary for AIM called "TWA 800: The Search for the Truth," which examined the best evidence for each of the three leading theories—the official story, an errant missile from a naval exercise gone terribly wrong, or a terrorist missile.

Finally, on July 2nd of this year, I got to see the reconstructed wreckage of TWA Flight 800. I attended a press briefing put on by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). The purpose was to remind the press that, in their view, this story was settled years ago. But a new documentary, "TWA Flight 800," produced by Tom Stalcup and Kristina Borjesson, was previewed for the press and set to air on the EPIX-TV network on the anniversary of the incident. They have brought together a number of whistleblowers, people who were inside the investigation, who are now telling their stories. Some had told what they knew from the beginning, such as Hank Hughes, who headed up the NTSB's reconstruction of the plane. He told a Senate committee that he witnessed evidence being tampered with, and some being destroyed.

The new documentary has gotten a lot of media attention, including from CNN, The Today Show and Fox News. A petition was filed by Stalcup and his group to re-open the investigation. The NTSB must answer within 90 days, but they decided to put on a presentation to remind everyone of their conclusions. The evidence, however, remains overwhelming that the plane was brought down by a missile or missiles. I don't have the space to review it here, but you can read previous reports that we've done at AIM. Others who deserve a lot of credit as well include Jack Cashill, Jim Sanders, Bill Donaldson, Tom Stalcup, Ray Lahr and John Clarke, among others.

At the NTSB briefing, I asked Joseph Kolly, who led the briefing, how he accounts for the 92 eyewitnesses—out of a total of 736 who saw the explosion—who saw something streaking toward the plane, having risen from the surface or horizon. They argue that what all the eyewitnesses saw was burning fuel coming down after the nose blew off, and the fuselage ascended, which is not possible. Still, it was a fascinating day, and something like a visit to a holy shrine, for those of us who have lived with this story. •

For Accuracy in Media

Roger Aronoff

Your Letters

To the Editor:

Regarding your article on the battle over student loan rates, I watched the Special Report panel of Fox discuss this. Nobody even thought to mention that the government shouldn't even be in the student loan business, let alone running it. The government took over a service and it got more expensive? Who'da thunk it?

Herman

Please send Letters to the Editor to:

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or email to info@aim.org

Please keep your submissions to 50 words or less. Letters may be edited for length.

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So the media have relatives in the Administration, accept political hacks from the Administration as commentators, and have former colleagues who work there. The interrelations are so complex that reporters have to recuse themselves behind the scenes and even reassign employees because the conflicts are too great.

What possible reason, then, would the media have to cover for the Administration's missteps? It looks like there are lots of reasons.

The Washington Post article outlined several more journalists with marital or familial conflicts. For example, "NPR's White House correspondent, Ari Shapiro, is married to a lawyer, Michael Gottlieb, who joined the White House counsel's office in April." And, "The Post's Justice Department reporter, Sari Horwitz, is married to William B. Schultz, the general counsel of the Department of Human Services; the reporter of this article sometimes writes about CBS News and is related to an employee there." In addition, "Biden's current communications director, Shailagh Murray (a former Post congressional reporter), is married to Neil King, one of the Wall Street Journal's top political reporters."

It's no wonder, then, that The New York Times and ABC News reported the recent IRS targeting scandal as a Republican attempt to gain political traction in Washington and throughout the nation, rather than as a Nixonesque grab for power.

But we are supposed to trust the media to recuse themselves from stories in which

they have a conflict of interest. "Some outlets demand that their journalists recuse themselves from assignments that might tread too close to a family member's area of responsibility," reports Farhi. "ABC, for example, says that Sherwood doesn't get involved with any stories dealing with arms control, his sister's specialty," he writes. "NPR said Shapiro avoids any story in which a member of the White House counsel's office participates, such as a recent background briefing on Benghazi."

What possible reason, then, would the media have to cover for the Administration's missteps? It looks like there are lots of reasons.

"And CNN said [Virginia] Moseley, who formerly was with ABC News, recuses herself from working on any story about the Benghazi investigation, even though her husband left the State Department in February." Note that two of the examples involve the Benghazi scandal.

While journalists may recuse themselves from stories that they may influence, that doesn't mean their existence as an employee—or, especially, as a leader—doesn't put soft pressure on a news organization to cover the story from a different angle. Sometimes all it takes is a behind-the-scenes comment to influence a story. And generally the biases are known in advance. Accepted truths are just that: the diffuse influence of friends, colleagues, and family

members on a person's perspective.

But Farhi certainly left readers with the idea that we are safe from media bias. After all, ABC's Shipman "stopped covering politics in late 2008 after her husband, Carney, left Time magazine to become press secretary for Vice President-elect Joe Biden." Carney, of course, later became White House spokesman for President Obama. And late last month—after he had been caught either lying, or passing on wrong information about who at the White House knew about the IRS targeting of conservative groups and when they knew it—he was rewarded with a 900-word, two-page Style section puff-piece in The Washington Post about his musical proclivities and favorite band. If he were a conservative, this would have been said to have "humanized" him.

"She's [Shipman] now the senior national correspondent for 'Good Morning, America' and covers soft topics such as 'diet and fitness,' says Farhi.

Farhi quoted Jeffrey Schneider, ABC News' chief spokesman, as saying, "There is zero evidence, *zero*, that [Ben Sherwood's relationship] has had any impact on our coverage." Evidence is an interesting word in this context. How about common sense and human nature? Though not quantifiable evidence, they certainly lead us to draw conclusions. Conclusions that our liberal media clearly don't want us to draw. •

Roger Aronoff is the Editor of Accuracy in Media. He can be contacted at roger.aronoff@aim.org.

Glenn Greenwald Calls "Weakening of America" a "Very Good Thing"

By Cliff Kincaid

In a 2011 article in the socialist publication *In These Times*, anti-NSA journalist Glenn Greenwald said "the only thing that can truly strengthen America's national security is a weakening of America." He said that al-Qaeda's 9/11 terrorist attacks on America were "very minimal in scope compared to the level of deaths that the United States has been bringing to the world for decades—from Vietnam to illegal wars in Central America..."

Blogger Trevor Loudon, who first reported the controversial comments, noted that, in the speech that is the basis for the article, Greenwald described senior al-Qaeda leader Anwar al-Awlaki, who

planned terrorist operations, as "someone who the U.S. government hates because he speaks effectively to the Muslim world about the violence that the United States commits regionally, and the responsibility of Muslims to stand up to that violence."

Greenwald's history of anti-American bias and rhetoric has been ignored by most media outlets, even by commentators on the right. But they are highly relevant to the fact that he has emerged as the mouthpiece for former NSA contract employee Edward Snowden, who released classified information about the activities of the spy agency. He then spent weeks in Hong Kong before moving on to Moscow, from where he is trying to seek asylum.



In his first public comments on Snowden, FBI director Robert Mueller said at a House Judiciary Committee hearing that the disclosures about the terrorist surveillance programs have caused "significant harm to the nation" and that Snowden "is the subject of an ongoing criminal investigation."

The "In These Times" article was adapt-

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ed, with Greenwald's permission, from a speech he gave to the "Socialism 2011" conference, co-sponsored by a Marxist-Leninist group, the International Socialist Organization. AIM has reported that Greenwald has been attending these conferences on an annual basis.

In his speech, Greenwald declared the U.S. to be a "declining empire," and announced that its "leaders" seek to remain in power through "militarism and civil liberties assaults." He added, "If they can continue to scare the population enough with threats of foreign evil and foreign villains, they will overlook the raping and pillaging taking place domestically that these leaders are engaged in and get behind these leaders."

Getting into his discussion of 9/11, which killed nearly 3,000 Americans, Greenwald said, "They [al Qaeda] knew that a single attack on U.S. soil, very minimal in scope compared to the level of violence that we bring to the world and have been bringing to the world for decades, would trigger these bankruptcy-inducing policies. And that is what we're seeing. Ironically, the only thing that could stop this kind of growing assault on civil

liberties, the militarism that accompanies it, is a weakening of the U.S. to the point where they're no longer sustainable and the weakening is happening precisely because of these very policies. And oftentimes if you're in the United States and you talk about a weakening of the United States, it's considered to be a thing that we want to avoid like it's a very bad thing. But, I think it's a very good thing."

The Communists greeted his remarks with applause.

Greenwald, a slavish disciple of Julian Assange, founder of WikiLeaks, defended Assange going to work for Moscow-funded Russia Today (RT) television. He quoted another commentator as saying that while the channel is "biased," it also produces "segments that provide necessary and sharp critiques of the U.S. government that typically do not appear on mainstream U.S. networks." Assange is in hiding (in plain sight) in the London embassy of Marxist Ecuador because he doesn't want to face sex crimes charges in Sweden.

Greenwald himself appeared on RT, in order to defend Assange.

Greenwald has also appeared on Al

Jazeera, but has lately expressed concern that the channel may be altering its content in order to gain entry and acceptance in the U.S. media market. "It's certainly possible that Al Jazeera America can provide unique and important journalism: networks owned by governments can and do produce real journalism," he said. But he went on to say that this will only happen "if it remains independent of the Qatari regime's foreign policy aims and is free to risk offending and alienating powerful people: the hallmark of good journalism."

Qatar funds and controls Al Jazeera, in the same way Moscow funds and controls RT.

There is no evidence whatsoever that Al Jazeera and RT are independent of their respective governments in any way.

But Greenwald seems to believe they are preferable to America's "corporate media."

As we have previously reported, Greenwald was the recipient of the first annual I.F. Stone Award, named in honor of the left-wing journalist identified as an agent of influence for Soviet intelligence. At the awards ceremony, Greenwald said that Soviet agent Stone "pioneered what modern journalism ought to be."•

The U.S. Support Apparatus Behind NSA Traitor Snowden

By Cliff Kincaid

If the NSA or the FBI wanted to find out more about fugitive Edward Snowden, who went first to China and then to Russia, its analysts and agents might want to examine a controversial non-profit group, the Freedom of the Press Foundation, and its main financial sponsor, the San Francisco-based Foundation for National Progress.

The Freedom of the Press Foundation, which includes Snowden's media mouthpiece and handler Glenn Greenwald on its board, acknowledges that the organization "is made possible by the fiscal sponsorship of the Foundation for National Progress."

The Foundation for National Progress is best known as the publisher of Mother Jones magazine, and is backed by several prominent liberal foundations, including the Open Society Institute of billionaire George Soros, according to its 2010/2011 annual report.

Mother Jones journalists accepted an award this year named in honor of I.F. Stone, who postured as an "independent"

journalist but was exposed as a Soviet agent of influence. Greenwald had previously received the award.

Snowden is their new hero. "At the heart of Edward Snowden's decision to expose the NSA's massive phone and Internet spying programs was a fundamental belief in the people's right-to-know," said actor John Cusack on the website of the Freedom of the Press Foundation. Cusack is also a member of its board.

The Freedom of the Press Foundation, which openly funnels money to WikiLeaks and Julian Assange, says it is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and that the Foundation for National Progress "provides users a way to give tax-deductible donations."

"We are pleased to receive anonymous donations in the mail," it says.

One purpose of the arrangement is to make sure that WikiLeaks has a secure funding source, as "U.S. officials unofficially pressured payment processors to cut WikiLeaks off from funding in late 2010, despite the fact that the organization has never been charged with a crime," the



group claimed.

In fact, U.S. officials regarded WikiLeaks as hostile to the United States because it publicly released classified counter-terrorism information from Army analyst Bradley Manning, who is now on trial for espionage against the U.S. and aiding the enemy. WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange went to work for Moscow-funded television.

Prosecutors say that WikiLeaks material was found in the possession of Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda after a U.S. raid killed the terrorist leader.

Assange has called Snowden a "hero," but NSA Director General Keith Alexander said at a hearing of the House Intel-

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ligence Committee on Tuesday that the leaks created “irreversible and significant damage” to national security. Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-MN), a member of the committee, said Snowden was clearly a “traitor.”

The title of the hearing was, “How Disclosed NSA Programs Protect Americans, and Why Disclosure Aids Our Adversaries.”

But the radical left, including members of Barack Obama’s “progressive” base, are rallying around Snowden, even as Obama himself gives lip service to what the NSA is doing.

One of the prominent directors of the Foundation for National Progress that is backing Snowden is Susan S. Pritzker, a member of one of the richest families in the United States, the Pritzker family, which is very close to Obama. The Pritzker family owns the Hyatt Hotel chain.

Another member of the family, Penny Pritzker, is a Chicago billionaire nominated by President Obama to lead the Commerce Department. Her nomination has been held up because of questions from Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA) about income generated from an offshore account.

The Freedom of the Press Foundation board includes not only Glenn Greenwald of the British Guardian, but Laura Poitras, described by Alana Goodman of The Washington Free Beacon as a “long-time activist filmmaker who has railed against U.S. counterterrorism policies put into place after the Sept. 11 attacks.”

Poitras and Greenwald arranged the secret interview with Snowden in Hong Kong and authored the Guardian’s story about him. Poitras also shared the lead byline with former Post journalist Barton Gellman on the front-page NSA story in The Washington Post.

Poitras, who is emerging as perhaps the central figure in the NSA leaks controversy, even more important than Greenwald, says she “has been detained and interrogated about her work at the U.S. border over 40 times.” Greenwald himself has written that the Department of Homeland Security has been behind her detentions and interrogations.

In a New York Times interview, she said she had been placed on a “Watch List” by the U.S. Government since 2006, and claims she has been trying to find out why, with the assistance of the ACLU.

John McCormack, a staff writer for The

Weekly Standard, may have the answer. He reports evidence that Poitras, who has been covering the wars in the Middle East, “had foreknowledge of a November 20, 2004 ambush of U.S. troops [in Iraq] but did nothing to warn them.” He says a Joint Terrorism Task Force investigation was launched about the attack, but that no charges were filed against Poitras, and she did not respond to requests for comment.

Nevertheless, the Soros-funded blog

Free Press has launched a petition campaign demanding that Congress investigate the National Security Agency’s terrorist surveillance activities, labeled “spying programs.”

Think Progress hailed Poitras for making “a series of powerful documentaries about the impact of the War on Terror.” Think Progress is part of the Center for American Progress, one of the major Soros-funded groups in Washington, D.C.

The Freedom of the Press Foundation promotes Snowden as a whistleblower, rather than a traitor, as do “journalism and transparency organizations” such as WikiLeaks, the Center for Public Integrity, and the National Security Archive, the latter two of which are funded by Soros.

Another member of the Freedom of the Press Foundation’s board is Josh Stearns, the Journalism and Public Media Campaign Director at Free Press, a Soros-funded group started by Marxist Professor Robert. W. McChesney.

Free Press has launched a petition campaign demanding that Congress investigate the National Security Agency’s terrorist surveillance activities, labeled “spying programs.”

“Stand up for privacy and push Congress to dig up the truth about the NSA’s surveillance schemes,” the left-wing group says. “Millions of Americans have woken to the threat the NSA’s programs pose to our civil liberties.”

Similar claims have been echoed on the right by some personalities in the conservative media, such as radio host Michael Savage.

A “Stop Spying on Us” website has been launched, featuring “A Network of Groups Across the Political Spectrum, Organizing against Surveillance Abuse, Government Repression, and Political Witch Hunts; and Working to Expand Civil Liberties, Free Speech, and the Right to Dissent

for All.”

The National Lawyers Guild, once identified as a Communist front, is playing a key role in the effort.

Another coalition, “Stop Watching Us,” includes conservative groups such as Freedom Works and the Competitive Enterprise Institute, in addition to MoveOn.org, Electronic Frontier Foundation, and Greenwald’s Freedom of the Press Foundation.

Coming to the defense of Greenwald, the Soros-funded Free Press has attacked Rep. Peter King of New York for saying that “journalists who report NSA surveillance leaks should be arrested.”

This is not what King said, however. Appearing on Fox News, King had said, “Greenwald, not only did he disclose this information, he has said that he has names of CIA agents and assets around the world, and they’re threatening to disclose that. The last time that was done in this country, we saw a CIA station chief murdered in Greece...I think it should be very targeted, very selective and certainly a very rare exception. But, in this case, when you have someone who discloses secrets like this and threatens to release more, yes, there has to be legal action taken against him.”

King was referring to Snowden’s comments, in the interview arranged by Greenwald and Poitras, that he possessed the “full rosters of everyone working at the NSA, the entire intelligence community and undercover assets all around the world, the locations of every station we have, what their missions are and so forth.”

Since Greenwald presumably has access to Snowden’s classified information on U.S. intelligence activities, including the names of agents around the world, King’s concern may be valid.

Greenwald promised “significant revelations that have not yet been heard over the next several weeks and months,” but denies he had threatened to name U.S. covert agents.

However, since Greenwald has a history of anti-American rhetoric and is a fixture at international Communist conferences, as documented by Accuracy in Media, disclosures of this classified information to individuals and groups hostile to the United States cannot be ruled out. •

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Howard Kurtz on Move to Fox News: "I'll have the freedom to criticize anyone"

By Don Irvine

Fox News raised a few eyebrows when it announced that it had hired veteran media critic and longtime CNN host Howard Kurtz, effective July 1.



Kurtz will be the new anchor of *Fox News Watch*, replacing Jon Scott, who will move to the specials unit. The show's format will be revamped. Kurtz will also serve as an on-air analyst for a variety of programs—much like what Juan Williams does—and will be writing a column for FoxNews.com.

In an exclusive interview with Mediaite, Kurtz said that while he had 15 great years at CNN, the opportunity at Fox News "was too good to pass up."

"The chance to help build a new franchise and be a media and political analyst during the week, and to write for the network's website, is a complete package that had great appeal for me," he added.

Kurtz told Mediaite that he expected the *Reliable Sources* format to translate well to Fox, but plans to "add a few new wrinkles." He said he hopes to "improve on the model I helped build," while he plans to be an independent voice on the network.

"Fox wouldn't have hired me if it wasn't interested in my independent brand of media criticism. So, I'm very comfortable that I'll have the freedom to criticize anyone I need to in my new role."

In a press release, Fox News Executive Vice President for news, Michael Clemente, said of Kurtz: "Howie is the most accomplished media reporter in the country. He's also a master of social media trends, information good and bad, and a veteran political reporter. Altogether, he will add even greater depth to a very accomplished team of reporters and anchors."

While Kurtz thanked CNN president Jeff Zucker on Twitter for his support, CNN's reaction was far more muted:

"Howie Kurtz has served as host of *Reliable Sources* for 15 years, developing

it into a leading source for commentary and critique on the media," said a CNN spokesperson. "We thank him for all his contributions to CNN, and wish him all the best in this new opportunity."

In reality, CNN was probably glad that Kurtz departed. They have been struggling to defend him since he was terminated from *The Daily Beast* after they had to issue a retraction for his story on gay NBA basketball player Jason Collins in May.

With Kurtz's hiring, Fox News turns just another slight notch to the left, as he joins fellow liberals and leftists who are making a living at the right-leaning network. •

Chris Matthews: Christie "Reasonable," Santorum "Radical"

By Don Irvine



On a recent *Hardball* episode on MSNBC, host Chris Matthews jumped into the 2016 presidential race with a chart showing where he thought some of the potential Republican candidates stood on the political spectrum. He labeled New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie as "reasonable," and former presidential candidate and Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum as "radical."

Christie earned the "reasonable" tag from Matthews for governing more from the middle than the right, while Santorum is a "radical" for consistently adhering to his conservative pro-life views, even when it wasn't popular to do so.

Matthews lumped Sen. Marco Rubio, Jeb Bush and Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker into the "Republican"—read establishment—category. In Walker's case that would be an insult. Sens. Rand Paul and Ted Cruz were labeled as "Right Wing" rather than Tea Party or conservative.

While Matthews is firmly in the Hillary Clinton camp for 2016, he has wasted no time in pushing a moderate like Chris Christie for the GOP nomination. Clearly he believes that would be better for Clinton than one of those scary right-wingers, or the more "radical" Santorum. •

Brokaw Finds Expansion of "Blogosphere" Troubling

By Don Irvine

Former NBC Nightly News anchor Tom Brokaw lashed out at the rapid expansion of the blogosphere, which he said is now laced with profane, vitriolic and misogynistic language.

Brokaw made his comments on *Andrea Mitchell Reports* on MSNBC:

"...I think about my grandchildren, just from a domestic point of view. They'll still have very good lives, they'll be able to go places. But it will not be as easy for them. People will be looking in on their lives. We talk about any time that they send an email message, it'll be there forever...And what troubles me a lot more with every passing day is the expansion of the blogosphere and the outrageous commentary now hidden behind pseudonyms of one kind or another. It's been bad for some time. But now it's become so vitriolic, scabrous and profane—and a lot of misogyny directed at women who are in public office.

"You read the worst kinds of things about them. Look, I'm a public person and so are you and so is Michael [Beschloss] up to a point: We can take the hits, but somebody who just finds themselves coincidentally in the news, then comes under this vicious attack, and we don't know where the roots of it are, and it's there forever. It's the dialogue that we ought to be having in this country about the impact of all of this on...the commonwealth and civility and what we stand for."

I understand Brokaw's anger and frustration with the blogosphere, but he is tarring all bloggers with the same brush. A large majority of blogs are operated by reputable and honest individuals, and many are doing the investigative work that the mainstream media no longer do.

But maybe what's really bothering Brokaw is that the blogosphere is exposing inconvenient truths that he would have preferred to have left untold. •

What You Can Do

Please send the enclosed postcards to:

- Mr. Piers Morgan, of CNN, for his comments during the Zimmerman trial;
- Ms. Melissa Harris-Perry of MSNBC for comments after the Zimmerman trial; ;
- Please make a sizable donation to AIM to help us continue our work in 2013.