



What Liberal Media?: The Truth about Bias and the News

By Eric Alterman

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Widely acclaimed and hotly contested, veteran journalist Eric Alterman's ambitious investigation into the true nature of the U.S. news media touched a nerve and sparked debate across the country. As the question of whose interests the media protects-and how-continues to raise hackles, Alterman's sharp, utterly convincing assessment cuts through the cloud of inflammatory rhetoric, settling the question of liberal bias in the news once and for all. Eye-opening, witty, and thoroughly and solidly researched, What Liberal Media? is required reading for media watchers, and anyone concerned about the potentially dangerous consequences for the future of democracy in America.

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What Liberal Media?: The Truth about Bias and the News By Eric Alterman Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

The incredulity begins with the title *What Liberal Media?*, journalist Eric Alterman's refutation of widely flung charges of left-wing bias, and never lets up. The book is unlikely to make many friends among conservative media talking heads. Alterman picks apart charges made by Ann Coulter, Rush Limbaugh, George Will, Sean Hannity, and others (even the subtitle refers to a popular book by former CBS producer Bernard Goldberg that argues a lefty slant in news coverage). But the perspectives of less-incendiary figures, including David Broder and Howard Kurtz, are also dissected in Alterman's quest to prove that not only do the media lack a liberal slant but that quite the opposite is true. Much of Alterman's argument comes down to this: the conservatives in the newspapers, television, talk radio, and the Republican party are lying about liberal bias and repeating the same lies long enough that they've taken on a patina of truth. Further, the perception of such a bias has cowed many media outlets into presenting more conservative opinions to counterbalance a bias, which does not, in fact, exist, says Alterman. In methodically shooting down conservative charges, Alterman employs extensive endnotes, all of which are referenced with superscript numbers throughout the body of the book. Those little numbers seem to say, "Look, I've done my homework." *What Liberal Media?* is a book very much of 2003 and will likely lose some relevance as political powers and media arrangements evolve. But it's likely to be a tonic for anyone who has suspected that in a media environment overflowing with conservatives, the charges of bias are hard to swallow. For liberals hoping someone will take off the gloves and mix it up with the verbal brawlers of the right, Eric Alterman is a champion. --*John Moe*

From Publishers Weekly

Media bias has been preventing the American public from getting the whole story, says journalist Alterman, and bestselling books like Ann Coulter's *Slander* and Bernard Goldberg's *Bias* aren't helping matters. Alterman, who writes the "Stop the Presses" media column for the *Nation* and an MSNBC Web log, "Altercation," passionately lays out his case in this succinct, abridged reading of his latest book. Along with Coulter and Goldberg, Sean Hannity, Rush Limbaugh and George Will come under the gun, too, as Alterman picks apart the problems with today's news media. While it's intriguing to hear him list what he sees as quite grievous offenses by conservative media outlets, Alterman's well-documented research is what makes the book so engaging. Alterman reads this audiobook like a fervent political science or journalism professor might, listing facts and citing reports, then adding his own inflections to emphasize points. A Queens, N.Y., native, Alterman speaks with a slight accent and an even slighter lisp, but this does not detract from his heated, heartfelt performance.

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From [The New Yorker](#)

Alterman, a columnist for *The Nation*, says that, to the extent that the liberal media still exists, "I work in the middle of it, and so do many of my friends. And guess what? It's filled with right-wingers." His thesis, a response to recent books by the conservatives Ann Coulter and Bernard Goldberg, is that liberal media outlets take pains to feature opinion from all across the political spectrum (and are in some cases veering rightward); meanwhile, the right-wing media—a well-funded empire of radio stations, TV shows, and magazines—pursues an overtly partisan agenda. A polemic is nothing without passion, and Alterman's argumentative vigor is engaging, although his focus sometimes drifts, and he can happily spend an entire paragraph upbraiding Howard Kurtz for having said that William Kristol's being a Mets fan proves him to be "contrarian." Like most media commentators, Alterman probably overestimates the influence of media

commentators, but the meticulous care with which his arguments are sourced and footnoted is in commendable contrast to the efforts of some of his more fire-breathing conservative opponents.

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