

# Outfoxed rupert murdoch's war on journalism



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" Outfoxed" did not simply convey the degree to which the mass media shapes public opinion but the extent to which it has the power to manufacture truth. Media ethics rules and guidelines may dictate the moral imperatives of honest, objective and fair news reporting (International Center for Journalism, 2008) but Fox News has quite effectively transformed these imperatives into nothing more than a slogan. This is amply evidenced in its persistent tendency to selectively report news, its declaration of any and all who oppose the Iraq War as enemies of the state' (O'Reilly, cited in " Outfoxed") and its determined efforts to debase the liberal Democratic perspective and consistently uphold the Conservative Republican one. Indeed, as the former Fox News correspondent, Jon Du Pre, asserted, " We are not so much a news-gathering organization as we are a proponent of a point of view" (cited in " Outfoxed"). As the highly biased proponents of a particular point of view, Conway, Grabe and Grieves (2007) contend that the network does not only display a blatant disregard for media ethics but outright disrespect for the truth. It is this disrespect for the truth which is at the core of Fox News' failure to inform its viewers that no weapons of mass destruction were found in Iraq and that much of the global community is opposed to this war. Indeed, a polling of Fox News viewers evidenced that, several years into the war, more than a third believed that WMDs had been found in Iraq and that the international community, including the Iraqi people themselves, are supportive of the United States' war (Conway, Grabe and Grieves, 2007). This amply evidences the extent to which the mass media can manufacture truth, irrespective of facts.

The film establishes the degree to which Fox News distorts reality and obfuscates the truth. The danger of a news organization's commanding such

power is that the public is that the truth becomes obscure and a matter of debate rather than of fact. As seen in " Outfoxed," for example, to ensure continued support for the war, Fox News' anchors and correspondents continually broadcast news items which show the country's schools being rebuilt, Iraqi athletes training for the Olympics and its markets flowing with produce. These reports, which further claim that life is better for 95% of the Iraqi people, display a blatant disregard for the truth. In just one year, from 2003 to 2004, over 60, 000 Iraqi civilians were killed as a direct consequence of the war (Clark, 2005). The country is trapped in a civil war, as Fisher (2006) emphasises, is being overrun by terrorists, the government is incapable of maintaining law and order and, to put it as briefly as possible, is being destroyed by the war. In fact, much of the remnants of Iraq's ancient civilization, monuments which have survived centuries, have been destroyed by the war (Clark, 2005). Fox News has persistently ignored these facts and realities. In claiming that life is better for the Iraqis and that the Iraqis support the war, Fox News is exchanging facts for propaganda, facts for fiction and, importantly, is blatantly violating the principles of fair and objective journalism.

## References

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