

All the news that fits the Bush agenda

By [Dr. Ernest Partridge](#)

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[Online Journal and Crisis Papers 1](#)

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Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

In-depth Report: [FOILED UK TERROR PLOT](#)

It is difficult to understand how anyone with even a modicum of critical intelligence, can still believe the right-wing complaint that the mainstream media (MSM) “has a liberal bias.” Evidence to the contrary is overwhelming, and new evidence appears almost daily.

The persistent belief in “the myth of the liberal media” is still more evidence of the efficacy of “the big lie.” The myth is repeated so often and forcefully that, among the “true believers,” it is accepted despite the evidence. “They wouldn’t say it, if it weren’t true, right?”

And so the mainstream media, with a very few honorable exceptions, persists in its unwavering service to the GOP, George Bush, and his “war on terror.”

Case in Point: The (alleged) London/Airline Bomb Plot

On August 10, the day after Ned Lamont’s victory over Joseph Lieberman, the MSM breathlessly announced that an imminent plot to blow up as many as 10 trans-Atlantic airliners had been foiled in London. Some 24r British Moslems, we were told, had devised the plan which would cause, in the words of a London police administrator, “mass murder on an unimaginable scale.” (So much for fabled British understatement).

And who will save us from such dastardly deeds? Why, none other than our “wartime president” along with his faithful Brit ally, Tony Blair. (The polls indicate that “the war on terror” is Bush’s strongest issue, and perhaps his only effective issue). Thus several Busheviks were quick to claim credit for the work of British law enforcement.

Sensational! And Topic #1 on the MSM for a few days, at least.

Then it all began to unravel:

-Specific details of the plot were obtained from lead suspect, Rashid Rauf, [under torture by Pakistani authorities](#). As is well known, testimony obtained by torture is of little value, since the victim will say anything he believes the torturers want to hear, regardless of the truth.

-The plot couldn’t have been “days away,” as first announced, since none of the alleged plotters had airline tickets, and a few did not even have passports (required for international flights).

-Chemistry experts report that the kind of “binary” chemical explosives described in news reports would be [virtually impossible](#) to activate and explode in flight.

-Moreover, why should terrorists resort to such complicated and unreliable methods, when all they need to do is stash explosive devices in the cargo compartments of the airliners (as was done in the Lockerbie bombing)? The Bush administration, let us recall, has declined to enact full-scale inspection of airline cargo. "Too costly," we are told.

Away from "the mainstream," additional serious and informed doubts about the plot have been raised by Geov Parrish in [Working for Change](#), Craig Murray in [The Guardian](#), Christopher Reed in [Counterpunch](#), James K. Galbraith in [The Guardian](#), Gwyn Dyer in [The Age](#), Bev Conover in [Online Journal](#), and Michel Chossudovsky in [Global Research](#) (reprinted in [Online Journal](#)), among others.

PSST! That's the sound of another "terror plot story" being deflated.

And so, we've heard very little about the "deadly liquids bomb plot" of late. But it did succeed in diverting public attention from the Connecticut primary. *Mission accomplished.*

In short, in with a bang, out with a whimper. "The Great Liquid Bomb Plot" shrivels in the light of subsequent evidence — and lack of evidence.

This is not to say that there was no serious terrorist bomb threat that further investigation might prove, followed by the conviction of the culprits. We just don't know. And that's the outrage. We have a right to know, and the media has an obligation to report. But once again, the MSM, in its typical failure to report counterbalancing doubts and anomalies, casts no light on the issue. It merely adds more fuel to fire up public fear in support of Bush's "war on terra."

Rot at the Top: The decline and fall of "The Grey Lady"

Junk journalism has always been with us, and always will be. So in attempting to discredit the MSM, there is no point in exposing the shortcomings of such dregs of journalism as *The National Enquirer*, *The Washington Times*, or *The New York Post*.

Nor is there any need to do so. The decline of American journalism can be better demonstrated if we can find it in the most prestigious and esteemed publications, such as *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. And, sadly, it appears that we can.

At *The Washington Post*, Bob Woodward, the scourge of the Nixon administration and an essential instrument to Nixon's downfall, has become a stenographer and apologist for the Busheviks. And efforts at investigation and reform by John Conyers are met with scorn and derision by the likes of "reporter" Dana Milbank.

But I choose, instead, to direct my attention to *The New York Times*: the "flagship" of American journalism and the so-called "newspaper of historical record" which proudly proclaims every day on its masthead: "All the News that's Fit to Print." If *The New York Times*, presumably the best of American journalism, has been corrupted, then whom or what can we trust?

So what have we to learn from the New York Times? In the last decade, we have learned:

- There is good reason to suspect that Bill and Hillary Clinton were involved in an

illegal land deal: “Whitewater.” (They have since been totally exonerated).

- A Chinese-American nuclear scientist, Dr. Wen Ho Lee, may have sent classified secrets to China. (Also exonerated).
- A newspaper consortium analysis of the 2000 Florida vote “proved” that Bush would have won the state and the election despite the Supreme Court ruling, “Bush v. Gore.” (The text of that November 12, 2001 article refuted the headline assertion).
- As reported by now-discredited Times reporter Judith Miller, Saddam Hussein imported aluminum tubes that could only be used to refine uranium for nuclear bombs. Miller also “informed” us that, according to “reliable sources” (i.e., the convicted embezzler, Ahmed Chalabi), Saddam Hussein had stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction. All these claims were subsequently proven to be false.

And this is what the New York Times has **not** told us — presumably not “fit to print.”

- That the GOP slanders against Al Gore (e.g., that he claimed to have invented the Internet and to have “discovered” the toxic site, Love Canal) were all groundless.
- That the “Swift Boat Veterans for Truth” conducted a baseless smear against John Kerry, and conversely, that Kerry’s military record and his medals were authentic.
- That George Bush was absent without leave from his military obligation with the Texas Air National Guard.
- That Bush likely violated securities law as an executive and investor with Harken energy.
- That there is compelling evidence that the 2000, 2002 and 2004 elections were stolen by the Republicans through vote fraud.
- That the Bush administration violated the FISA laws on wiretapping of US civilians. (The Times did report this eventually, but “held” the story past the 2004 election, which might have been affected by the disclosure).

“All the news that’s fit to print?” I think not.

How the mighty have fallen! With a record like this, why should anyone pay any attention to what *The New York Times* might be reporting?

Decades ago, when I lived in Manhattan and taught at the City University of New York, one of the highlights of the week was when I brought a newly-minted Sunday *New York Times* to my flat, and spread it out on my bed, reading voraciously.

No more! Today, I won't pay the annual \$50 for access online to the NYT columnists. "It will only encourage them." Despite the worthy contributions of such "exceptions" as Frank Rich and Paul Krugman, "the best of American journalism" is simply not good enough.

So we must turn to the remaining independent media, the foreign press, and the Internet for our news.

We, the progressive public, do not own *The New York Times*, nor do we have a voice on its editorial board. Still, we do have leverage — simply by ignoring them. Like all modern newspapers, *The New York Times* relies more on advertising than on subscriptions and sales for its revenue. But advertising rates are a function of circulation. If the public gives *The New York Times* (and *The Washington Post*, etc.), the attention and credence they authentically deserve (i.e., very little), their bottom lines will suffer. Then, at long last, a reform of American journalism may soon be at hand.

A Plea to the (formerly) responsible media: "Just the facts, please."

We don't need a mirror-image liberal-bias to "balance" the rightward slant of the MSM. "Just the facts," will do just fine. For, as Steven Colbert so aptly put it, "reality has a liberal bias."

And so to *The New York Times* in particular, we plead, fulfill the daily promise on your masthead: "All the news that's fit to print."

If, in general, American journalists are once again permitted to report the unbiased facts, then the fall of Bushism will be assured and the restoration of our democracy will take care of itself.

Dr. Ernest Partridge is a consultant, writer and lecturer in the field of Environmental Ethics and Public Policy. He has taught Philosophy at the University of California, and in Utah, Colorado and Wisconsin. He publishes the website, "The Online Gadfly" (www.igc.org/gadfly) and co-edits the progressive website, "The Crisis Papers" (www.crisispapers.org). His book in progress, "Conscience of a Progressive," can be seen at www.igc.org/gadfly/progressive/^toc.htm.

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