



The Right's Own Juan Williams

October 25th, 2010 at 1:58 pm [David Frum](#) | [28 Comments](#) |

Last week, conservatives criticized NPR's firing of Juan Williams as a sign of liberal close-mindedness. Yet, as my latest CNN column points out, conservatives are often guilty of the same offense.

A few hours after NPR fired analyst Juan Williams, Sen. Jim DeMint sent this tweet to his Twitter followers:

"The incident with Juan Williams reminds us the only free speech liberals support is the speech with which they agree."

Maybe so. But if DeMint, a Republican from South Carolina, meant to imply that conservatives have a better record, then I have two words to say to him: Brink Lindsey.

Brink Lindsey is not a household name outside the Beltway, but inside he's a well-known writer and thinker. After a successful career as an international trade lawyer, Lindsey was hired by the libertarian Cato Institute. At Cato, Lindsey studied trade issues, wrote two widely praised books, and launched the institute's influential [web magazine](#). He was promoted to Cato's vice president for research. . . .

As with Juan Williams, there came with Brink a straw that broke the camel's back:

Lindsey published a negative review of a new book by Arthur Brooks, president of the American Enterprise Institute. Brooks argued that America was riven by a radical culture war, with 30 percent of the country manipulating democratic institutions to impose European-style social democracy on an unwilling 70 percent majority.

Writing in the liberal (uh oh) American Prospect in July, Lindsey [argued](#):

"Figuring out how to restore growth and how to construct an effective but affordable safety net, are questions for debate, analysis, and democratic decision-making. My answers to those questions may differ from yours, but dividing up into warring tribes and demonizing each other aren't the ways to figure out who's right."

Shortly after that article appeared, Lindsey was fired along with a more junior Cato associate with whom Lindsey was co-authoring a book, Will Wilkinson (now a blogger at the *Economist*).

Neither Lindsey nor Cato have any comment on the separation, but see here for my [reporting soon after the event](#).

The Lindsey-Wilkinson firing touched off no Fox News explosion. No bold assertion of the

principle of freedom of expression: only a little murmuring among Washington policy elites.

[Click here to read the rest.](#)

- **SkepticalIdealist** // [Oct 26, 2010 at 12:01 am](#)

NPR is one of the best news sources there is. Period. They try hard to be objective. Recently, they banned their employees from attending Jon Stewart's political rally, for example. Are they perfect, unbiased, nonpartisan robots? No, it's still run by human beings with their own opinions, beliefs, and sensibilities. However, they make a conscious effort to be even-handed, which is more that can be said of organizations like Fox news, which wear their bias on their sleeve.

Must I remind you all that Fox News' parent organization news corp gave a MILLION dollars towards electing Republican Governors? Must I remind you that Fox news had its media personalities headline tea party rallies, promoted them heavily, and in many ways created that phenomena? Must I remind you that it essentially serves as a robust welfare program for loyal conservative operatives to feather their nests and get free national exposure (e.g. Sarah Palin, Huckabee, Rove, etc. etc.)?

Fox news complaining about bias at NPR is like Hitler calling Obama....well, Hitler.

- **Smarg** // [Oct 26, 2010 at 8:12 am](#)

I disagree, skeptic.

For over 40 years, until Fox News came along, Americans were forced to endure social engineering by the leftist mainstream media outlets: ABC, CBS, NBC, and later, CNN.

Who can forget the leftist scag Walter Cronkite's anti-war diatribes during Vietnam?? "Golly Martha, if'n Walter's sayin' it, it must be true."

Thank GOD for Fox News.

- **Nanotek** // [Oct 26, 2010 at 9:17 am](#)

"Who can forget the leftist scag Walter Cronkite's anti-war diatribes during Vietnam??"

so being pro-war is a conservative default position?

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