

# *Patriots and Pinheads: The Propagandistic Stylings of the Fox News Channel's "The O'Reilly Factor"*

TADEUSZ LEWANDOWSKI  
(Opole)

## Introduction

The American talk show *The O'Reilly Factor* premiered in 1996 on media mogul Rupert Murdoch's Fox News Channel. Hosted by commentator Bill O'Reilly (1949–), the *Factor* tackles social and political issues with guests from a variety of fields five nights a week. As of late 2009, it is the highest-rated cable news program in the United States, averaging approximately 3.5 million viewers a night (Anthony and Anthony 2009). O'Reilly is the most controversial leader of a new wave of ultra-conservative media pundits that have appeared on Fox News over the last decade, who together have forged a new in-your-face reporting style that has garnered top ratings for the entire network (Shea 2009). Fox's slogan of 'Fair and Balanced' coverage is what O'Reilly claims to uphold on his show, unambiguously stating on his website: "I will not stand for spin". There, it is further explained that the *Factor* "uncovers news items from the established wisdom and goes against the grain...O'Reilly's signature 'no spin zone' cuts through the rhetoric", offering honest common sense appraisals of political issues for the American people (*O'Reilly Factor Website* 2010). Yet despite his disdain for spin, O'Reilly does have his biases and idiosyncrasies. With over-the-top denunciations of the 'radical' liberal establishment, O'Reilly aggressively promotes a platform that is anti-immigrant, anti-minority, anti-welfare and anti-abortion, casting himself as the disgruntled voice of white, working-class America and the pro-Christian,

pro-military patriotic values they hold dear. Most distinctive is his interviewing style: in doing battle with liberal or left-wing opponents he frequently resorts to the bellicose injunction 'Shut up!' along with the hurling of invectives. Though such histrionics have earned him great celebrity, O'Reilly's reporting has come under significant scrutiny from media watchdog groups such as Media Matters for America and Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), both of which condemn him for extreme partiality and blatant inaccuracy. In addition, a study by researchers at Indiana University has ultimately determined O'Reilly fits the profile of a right-wing propagandist. This paper analyzes the provocative stylistic content of *The O'Reilly Factor*, and examines the various criticisms the program and its host have so combatively drawn.

## The Man

William James 'Bill' O'Reilly's rise to prominence came steadily. Born to solidly middle-class parents of Irish stock, he spent his all-American childhood near the low-income suburb of Levittown, Long Island, attending a private Catholic boys high school and excelling in Little League. Upon graduating high school in 1967 he enrolled in Marist College, becoming a History honors student and punter in the National Club Football Association, and later teaching high school and playing semi-professional baseball. O'Reilly subsequently earned a Master's degree from Boston University, where he wrote for local newspapers and interned at a local TV station. After earning another Master's in Public Administration from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, he began a low-level career as a news reporter for local TV stations, only finding work as a correspondent for the national network ABC News in 1986 (Kitman 2007). His big break came in 1989 when O'Reilly signed on as host of the tabloid and gossip news show *Inside Edition*, which sensationalized most of its content. In 1996 he moved to Fox, where he developed his contentious independent-minded persona as a "self-appointed... 'common man' battling intellectual elites" (Who2 Biography 2010). O'Reilly openly declares the supposedly working-class orientation of the *Factor*, claiming, "We're the only show from a working-class point of view", and offering his humble credentials: "I understand working-class Americans. I'm as lower-middle-class as they come" (Ackerman and Hart 2001). But despite this generalized perspective, the host argues he sees both the world and the truth from an autonomous viewpoint, rather than any ideology:

I'm not a political guy in the sense that I embrace an ideology. To this day I'm an independent thinker, an independent voter, I'm a registered independent...there are certain fundamental things that this country was founded upon that I respect and don't want changed. That separates me from the secularists who want a complete overhaul of how the country is run (Gross 2003).

While the above sentiments might strike one as 'conservative,' O'Reilly shuns the label, characterizing himself as a "traditionalist" that merely "believe[s] the United States was well founded and has done enormous good for the world". As a committed "culture warrior", he has taken the fight to "the secular-progressive movement that wants to change America dramatically" (O'Reilly 2006). He states plainly: "See, I don't want to fit any of those labels, because I believe that the truth doesn't have labels" (Ackerman and Hart 2001). Such deliberative objectivity ostensibly informs the content of *The O'Reilly Factor*, which airs every weekday at 8:00pm EST.

### *The Factor*

O'Reilly breaks up the *Factor* into several segments, each seeking to make a point on some topical issue. The first and most famous is his 'Talking Points Memo,' in which the host remarks on what he deems the most important newsworthy event of the hour. In a typical example from December 2008 entitled "Hating George Bush", O'Reilly gives his observations on the Iraqi shoe-throwing incident that occurred the previous day during George W. Bush's trip to Baghdad. O'Reilly notes disdainfully that the shoe-thrower was "obviously trying to demean the President", noting snidely but triumphantly that "the guy is now in prison". However, the commentator has a larger point to make about intolerance among the politically benighted and the unpatriotic nature of the liberal media. "The sad truth is", he continues, "there are millions of Bush haters all over the world, including many Americans. Two of the most hateful political websites in the US, the DailyKos and the Huffington Post [both considered 'liberal'] were absolutely gleeful about the shoe thrower". Such odium, O'Reilly protests, is terribly misguided:

Hate is hate. But in a country that honors free speech it's allowed...and now in Iraq dissent is allowed as well. The shoe-guy knew he'd get thrown in the slammer but he still has his head, something he wouldn't have if he did that to Saddam or some Taliban leader.

Indeed, this failure to appreciate the successes of the Bush years seems rife in both Iraq and America. O'Reilly concedes that, "There's no doubt some historians will hammer the President", but insists, "his legacy will be open to debate". Stressing that there has been no subsequent terrorist attack since 9/11, he proclaims that Bush has "kept the homeland safe – a very big achievement". Likewise, he has damaged al-Qaeda, "[h]is generosity has saved millions of lives in Africa, and for three quarters of his administration there was relative prosperity in America". Finally, O'Reilly argues that most Americans would have a better view of the President had they not been misled by liberal reporters and left-wing radicals: "But those accomplishments have been marginalized by a hostile media and a vicious hate-Bush movement. It's not really fair", he concludes, "but that's the way it is" (*The O'Reilly Factor* Dec. 15, 2008). The segment provides an excellent illustration of O'Reilly's *modus operandi*, dividing the world into heroes such as Bush, and villains, in this case the liberal media, unpatriotic president-hating Americans, and troublesome, ungrateful Iraqis.

'Unresolved Problem' is another integral segment of *The O'Reilly Factor* in which the host brings attention to his maverick positions on events the rest of the media fails to cover properly or honestly. On a show from September 2009 O'Reilly focuses on the unresolved problem of global warming. The issue is not that the environment is in danger, but that global warming conspirators such as Al Gore and Greenpeace have distracted the public from the reality of 'global cooling.' He begins: "The Obama administration believes climate change is a frontline issue, that global warming must be addressed immediately". Then he disparages Greenpeace for claiming that recent wildfires in California were exacerbated by global warming, and turns to a weatherman named Joe Bastardi, who deems global warming a myth that has obscured obvious global cooling. Bastardi explains:

I'm gonna show you the facts over the last two years. California has been very, very dry. Why is that the case? Well, whenever the Pacific Ocean starts cooling, and the global temperatures start to cool, California gets dry. You see this ocean temperature presentation, all this cold water off California means the air sinks over top of California. When it sinks, it dries out, so global cooling is actually a cause of drought in California, which by the way is a dry climate naturally.

O'Reilly, mildly taken aback by such information, asks: "Okay. Why is the global warming movement so successful throughout the world?" Bastardi laments the simple problem that "people haven't been confronted with the facts", quickly referring to a number of charts and diagrams that purportedly demonstrate a drop in

average temperatures for the last ten years. Impressed, O'Reilly confirms: "Your stats are very solid, which is why we put you on the program". The host then suggests that global warming conspiracies have arisen as a moneymaker for interested parties, who have duped the unwitting public for financial gain:

But this big industry, and the president of the United States is on board on the industry, Al Gore has made \$100 million from it. I don't understand why so many people around the world just buy it. They just – like Greenpeace comes out and says okay, the California wildfires, terrible, are spreading faster because of global warming. You say that's bull, that there is no science to back that up. I will submit to you, Joe, millions of people believe Greenpeace. They don't even care about the data!

Bastardi proceeds to verify such suspicions, complaining that such ignorance is "a problem in society today". "You're a historian", he says to O'Reilly, "You know the facts". The installment ends with O'Reilly exhorting the viewers: "The point of the matter is look at the history, look at the facts, go arm yourself, and then you make the call yourself" (*The O'Reilly Factor* Sept. 9, 2009). The example demonstrates O'Reilly's bold willingness as an objective everyman to question complex scientific phenomena, encouraging the average man to decide for himself regardless of lack of expertise. The data do not lie, but the scientific establishment, clearly associated with liberals, does.

O'Reilly often ends his show with 'Pinheads and Patriots,' where he lauds individuals who have worked for the betterment of America, and castigates those he deems are doing irreparable damage to the nation. On one occasion, O'Reilly bestowed the 'patriot' honor on himself: "I, your humble correspondent, am the patriot tonight. I know that doesn't sound humble, but hear me out". He explains that for the past five years he has picked the correct Super Bowl winner: "So in the Super Bowl picking category, I am the patriot". The pinhead, meanwhile, is country singer Willie Nelson, who in a recent interview had questioned the official story of the Bush Administration with regard to the events of 9/11. Remarking that Nelson now "counts himself among the 9/11 conspiracy nuts", O'Reilly plays a brief sound bite from the interview in which the singer likens the World Trade Center's collapse to an implosion, and expresses concern over why no footage of the Pentagon attack has ever been made public. O'Reilly punctuates the clip with "Good Grief. Pinhead!" – offering no more commentary (*The O'Reilly Factor* Feb 6, 2008). 'Patriots and Pinheads' is another instance of how O'Reilly categorizes people. Imbeciles question their government, while patriots keep their focus on concerns such as football.

Nelson was fortunate not to be a guest on the *Factor*. In the main part of the program, entitled 'Personal Story,' O'Reilly interviews guests who are either praised for their beliefs, or relentlessly attacked for failing to agree with his wisdom. The host's interviewing style is his signature, as his exchanges are peppered with *ad hominem* attacks, bursts of 'Shut up!' and furious shout downs that prevent the opponent from expressing anything. Despite such behavior, O'Reilly insists his guests follow his standards of decorum: "No slander and no personal accusations without facts to back them up. If the guest violates those rules, they are scolded by me and will not be invited back" (FAIR 2005). The day after interviews, O'Reilly often recasts the gist of hostile guests' statements, retroactively canceling out any legitimate point they may have made. This was the case with one of O'Reilly's most notorious and widely examined exchanges, which also dealt with the events of 9/11.

In 2003 Jeremy Glick appeared on the *Factor*. His father was killed in the 9/11 attacks, and he had come to O'Reilly's attention for signing an anti-war, anti-Bush advertisement entitled "Not in our Name". O'Reilly began the interview by questioning why Glick had signed an ad that, in the host's view, equated the United States with terrorists. Glick explained that he felt that Bush's Presidency was illegitimate, and that the CIA had originally trained Osama Bin Laden and the Mujahideen in Afghanistan to topple the Soviet-backed government: "Our current president now inherited a legacy from his father and inherited a political legacy that's responsible for training militarily, economically, and situating geopolitically the parties involved in the alleged assassination and the murder of my father and countless of thousands of others". O'Reilly responded with ire, citing the man's dead father as justification:

You are mouthing a far left position that is a marginal position in this society, which you're entitled to... You're entitled to it, all right, but you're - you see, even I'm sure your beliefs are sincere, but what upsets me is I don't think your father would be approving of this... I don't think he'd be equating this country as a terrorist nation as you are.

Glick calmly protested that his father also felt Bush's Presidency was illegitimate, and continued to explicate the elder Bush's involvement with radical Islamic fundamentalists: "[S]ix months before the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, starting in the Carter administration and continuing and escalating while Bush's father was head of the CIA, we recruited a hundred thousand radical Mujahideens to combat a democratic government in Afghanistan, the Turaki government". Glick, however, had little chance to elaborate.

The comments led O'Reilly to cut him off entirely: "I don't want to debate world politics with you... Because, number one, I don't really care what you think". In response Glick challenged him: "You [in]voke 9/11 to rationalize everything from domestic plunder to imperialistic aggression worldwide". The exchange continued:

O'REILLY: That's a bunch of crap! I've done more for the 9/11 families by their own admission – I've done more for them than you will ever hope to do... So you keep your mouth shut when you sit here exploiting those people!

GLICK: Well, you're not representing me. You're not representing me.

O'REILLY: And I'd never represent you. You know why?

GLICK: Why?

O'REILLY: Because you have a warped view of this world and a warped view of this country.

Soon after O'Reilly stopped the interview prematurely, telling his producer "Cut his mic", and telling Glick "I'm not going to dress you down anymore, out of respect for your father" (*The O'Reilly Factor*, Feb. 4, 2003). Glick was then warned by producers to leave the building immediately for fear that O'Reilly might attack him physically (*Outfoxed*, 2004). The very next day O'Reilly persisted in his onslaught:

This is our house here. If somebody comes to your house and starts spitting on the floor, you'd remove them. Glick was out of control, and spewing hatred for this program and his country, using vile propaganda. Glick was saying without a shred of evidence that President Bush and Bush the elder were directly responsible for 9/11. Now that kind of stuff is not only loony, it's defamation (*The O'Reilly Factor* Feb. 5, 2003).

In characterizing Glick's statements and demeanor as 'out of control' and 'loony,' O'Reilly began a series of distortions that continued as long as 11 months later, when in another piece related to 9/11 he claimed: "[Glick] came on this program and accused President Bush of knowing about 9/11, and murdering his own father" (*Outfoxed*, 2004).

## The Critics

The tactics described above have not gone unnoticed by media watchdog groups. Media Matters for America and Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting have criti-

cized O'Reilly on a number of fronts, pointing to his misrepresentation of facts and skewed reporting. FAIR has even questioned the official account of his supposedly humble childhood in Levittown and his claim to speak for average Americans as one of their ilk, revealing that O'Reilly in fact comes from a rather privileged milieu. In interviews O'Reilly has claimed his father "never earned more than \$35,000 a year in his life". Adding that,

You don't come from any lower than I came from on an economic scale... I fully realize that blacks in the ghetto, and all that, had a much rougher life than I had. But I started from ground zero. When I got out of B.U., I had not a nickel (Gay 2006).

However, FAIR has pointed out that when adjusted for inflation the elder O'Reilly's 1970s salary would be over \$90,000 in 2001 dollars – certainly a fair sum. In addition, O'Reilly's mother admitted to the *Washington Post* that the family lived in Westbury, Long Island, an affluent suburb situated near working-class Levittown, where O'Reilly attended an expensive private school. FAIR also accuses O'Reilly of deliberately downplaying his conservative views, using his 'no-spin zone' as a smokescreen to claim he holds both the political right and left to account. After extensive analysis, they have found few instances where O'Reilly has attacked conservatives or Republicans, citing that in contrast he "scrutinized every action of the [Clinton] administration" while giving the Bush Whitehouse a "softball treatment" – as in the 'Talking Points Memo' described previously (Ackerman and Hart, 2001). In sum, they charge he plays the populist while espousing a radical right-wing agenda.

O'Reilly has drawn even greater criticism from Media Matters for America, who charge him with "saying anything [he] can get away with to stir up the base" (Holden 2010). In response to such indictments, the host has dubbed the group "the most vile, despicable human beings in the country" (*Media Matters* 2004). Interestingly, Media Matters uncovered that O'Reilly had falsely stated his status as a registered independent, showing in fact that he was a registered Republican (*Media Matters* 2005). Yet more seriously, Media Matters has implicated O'Reilly in the promotion of right-wing vigilantism, which in one case held deadly consequences.

In 2005, O'Reilly began to use his show a platform to denounce 'Tiller the baby killer,' a nickname for George Tiller, a Kansas physician whose medical practice performed late-term abortions. The Tiller case is a complex one, which O'Reilly reduced to a black and white issue by depicting Turner as a remorseless and wanton baby murderer. In fact, the doctor only performed late-term abortions when the fe-



tuses were found to have severe or fatal birth defects, or when the mother's health would be irreparable damaged in childbirth. In every abortion he performed, two additional and independent doctors were required to certify that the procedure was a medical necessity (Simon and Bustillo 2009). Nonetheless, O'Reilly took to vilifying Tiller regularly, fully aware that there had already been a near fatal shooting attempt on his life by an anti-abortion activist. Some of O'Reilly's statements included:

Tiller has killed thousands, thousands of late-term fetuses without explanation.  
'Tiller the Baby Killer' out in Kansas, acquitted, acquitted today of murdering babies.  
This guy will kill your baby for \$5,000, any reason. Any reason.  
If we allow this, America will no longer be a noble nation (qtd. in Boehlert 2009).

Then on May 31, 2009, while attending a church service, Tiller was murdered by another anti-abortion activist. Media Matters has linked O'Reilly and Fox News to the slaying, pointing to "the atmosphere of vigilantism fomented by their words and actions", and "the incendiary language that they're actively mainstreaming" (Boehlert 2009). In response Fox went into damage control mode, and O'Reilly's reaction was twofold. Defiantly, he stated on air that there would be "no backpedaling here...every single thing we said about Tiller was true" (Kurtz 2009). However, he simultaneously asserted that he never sought to demonize the Tiller, but merely debate the issue of abortion, falsely adding that he had never called the doctor 'Tiller the baby killer,' but merely reported others had called him that. Media Matters declared the subterfuge "laughable" (*Media Matters* 2009).

### Conclusion: Propaganda Pays

Perhaps most damning assessment of *The O'Reilly Factor* has been made by researchers at the Indiana University School of Journalism, who in 2007 published an analytical survey of half a year (115 episodes) of the show's 'Talking Points Memo' segment in the academic journal *Journalism Studies*. Entitled "Villains, Victims and the Virtuous in Bill O'Reilly's 'No Spin Zone': Revisiting World War Propaganda Techniques", the study sought to determine whether O'Reilly used propaganda by employing diagnostic techniques formulated by the Institute for Propaganda Analysis, which formed in the 1930s to combat a perceived inability among the American public to critically examine vital social and political issues. They concluded that that O'Reilly is a heavy "user of the seven devices developed

by the Institute of Propaganda Analysis” (Conway, Grabe, and Grieves 2007). Specifically, he indulges in:

- Name calling – giving something a bad label to make the audience reject it without examining the evidence;
- Glittering generalities – the opposite of name calling;
- Card stacking – the selective use of facts and half-truths;
- Bandwagon – appeals to the desire, common to most of us, to follow the crowd;
- Plain folks – an attempt to convince an audience that they, and their ideas, are “of the people”;
- Transfer – carries over the authority, sanction and prestige of something we respect or dispute to something the speaker would want us to accept; and
- Testimonials – involving a respected (or disrespected) person endorsing or rejecting an idea or person (qtd. in Indiana University 2007).

In particular, the researchers showed that O’Reilly used “name-calling more than once every seven seconds in his ‘Talking Points Memo,’ and “the Fox News personality consistently paints certain people and groups as villains and others as victims to present the world, as he sees it, through political rhetoric” (Indiana University 2007). As well, O’Reilly’s memos include “ample use of fear appeals and the construction of the battle between good and evil”. Specifically “[a] virtuous flank emerged as an all-American crew made up of the military, criminal justice system, Bush administration, and ordinary citizens”, while terrorists, immigrants, and “groups (media, organizations, politicians) who share a political leaning to the left” served as examples of unadulterated iniquity (Conway, Grabe, and Grieves 2007).

But whatever the disingenuous nature of the *Factor’s* ‘no spin zone,’ such techniques have earned dividends for both O’Reilly and his network. Fox is currently the highest rated 24-hour news channel on American television, and O’Reilly latest four-year contract is estimated to be worth between 40 and 48 million dollars (Huff 2008). Propaganda – regardless of what the critics might say – pays.

## References:

- Ackerman S. and P. Hart, 2001, “Bill O’Reilly’s Sheer O’Reillyness: Don’t call him Conservative – but he is”. July/August 2001. Available online at: <http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=1070>
- Anthony C. and C. Anthony, 2009, “Fox News dominates July ratings; Bill O’Reilly again tops – and Nancy Grace makes impressive gains”. *Orlando Sentential*, July

- 28, 2009. Available online at: [http://blogs.orlandosentinel.com/entertainment\\_tv\\_tvblog/2009/07/fox-news-dominates-july-contest-bill-oreilly-again-tops.html](http://blogs.orlandosentinel.com/entertainment_tv_tvblog/2009/07/fox-news-dominates-july-contest-bill-oreilly-again-tops.html)
- Boehlert E., 2009, "O'Reilly and Fox News will have more right-wing vigilantism to explain". *Media Matters*. June 9. Available online at: <http://mediamatters.org/columns/20090609000>
- Conway M., M. E. Grabe, and K. Grieves, 2007, "Villains, Victims and the Virtuous in Bill O'Reilly's 'No Spin Zone': Revisiting World War Propaganda Techniques", *Journalism Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2.
- FAIR, 2005, "O'Reilly's Political Smears: Fox host says Donahue and Michael Moore think Bush 'orchestrated' 9/11". October 5, 2005. Available online at: <http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=2693>
- Gay J., 2006, "Fox News Superstar Bill O'Reilly Wants to Oppose Hillary in 2006!" *The New York Observer*. April 9, 2006. Available online at: <http://www.observer.com/node/52060>
- Gross T., 2003, "Interview with Bill O'Reilly", *National Public Radio*. October 8, 2003. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1459090>
- "Hating George Bush". *The O'Reilly Factor*. December 15, 2008. Available online at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fngdr-LLrTM>
- Holden J., 2010, "Bill O'Reilly and the technique of saying anything you can get away with to stir up the base". *Media Matters*. February 08, 2010. Available online at: <http://mediamatters.org/blog/201002080050>
- Huff R., 2008, "Bill O'Reilly signs contract for four more years on Fox News Channel", *The Daily News*. October 22, 2008. Available online at: [http://www.nydailynews.com/entertainment/tv/2008/10/21/2008-10-21\\_bill\\_oreilly\\_signs\\_contract\\_for\\_four\\_mor.html](http://www.nydailynews.com/entertainment/tv/2008/10/21/2008-10-21_bill_oreilly_signs_contract_for_four_mor.html)
- Indiana University, 2007, "Content analysis of O'Reilly's rhetoric finds spin to be a 'factor'". *IU News Room*. May 2. Available online at: <http://newsinfo.iu.edu/news/page/normal/5535.html>
- "Jeremy Glick Follow Up". *The O'Reilly Factor*. Feb. 5, 2003. Available online at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21wIRNM5noY&feature=related>
- Kitman M., 2007, *The Man Who Would Not Shut Up: The Rise of Bill O'Reilly*, New York: St Martin's.
- Kurtz H., 2009, "Let's Take a Deep Breath". *The Washington Post*. June 2. Available online at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2009/06/02/AR2009060200889.html>
- Media Matters*, 2009, "O'Reilly still falsely claiming he only reported groups calling Tiller 'the baby killer'" *Media Matters*, June 4. Available online at: <http://mediamatters.org/columns/200906090004>

- Media Matters*, 2005, "O'Reilly falsely claimed he did not have option to register as an independent", October 3. Available online at: <http://mediamatters.org/research/200510030001>
- Media Matters*, 2004, "O'Reilly attacked Media Matters: 'the most vile, despicable human beings in the country'; called ADL president 'a nut'", December 9. Available online at: <http://mediamatters.org/research/200412100002>
- O'Reilly B., 2006, *Culture Warrior*. New York: Broadway Books.
- O'Reilly Factor* website, 2010. Available online at: <http://www.foxnews.com/oreilly/about-the-show/index.html>
- Outfoxed.*, 2004, *Rupert Murdoch's War on Journalism*. Dir. Robert Greenwald. Cinema Libre Studios, 2004.
- "Personal Story: Interview with Jeremy Glick". *The O'Reilly Factor*, February 4, 2003. Available online at: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdtwN\\_twgrk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdtwN_twgrk)
- "Pinheads and Patriots" *The O'Reilly Factor*. February 6, 2008. Available online at: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSByug87\\_gY&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSByug87_gY&feature=related)
- Shea D., 2009, "Fox News Dominates 3Q 2009 Cable News Ratings". *Huffington Post*. September 30 Available online at: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/09/30/fox-news-dominates-3q-2009\\_n\\_304260.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/09/30/fox-news-dominates-3q-2009_n_304260.html)
- Simon S. and M. Bustillo, 2009, "Abortion Provider is Shot Dead", *The Wall Street Journal*. June 1. Available online at: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124379172024269869.html>
- "Unresolved Problem". *The O'Reilly Factor*. September 9, 2009. Available online at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDqfXHjp-N0>
- Who2 Biography, 2010, "Bill O'Reilly, TV Personality". 2010. Available online at: <http://www.answers.com/topic/bill-o-reilly>

### *Patriots and Pinheads: The Propagandistic Stylings of the Fox News Channel's "The O'Reilly Factor"*

The American talk show *The O'Reilly Factor* premiered in 1996 on media mogul Rupert Murdoch's Fox News Channel. Hosted by conservative commentator Bill O'Reilly (1949- ), the *Factor* tackles social and political issues with guests from a variety of fields, and is the highest-rated cable news program in the United States, averaging approximately 3.5 million viewers a night. O'Reilly is the most controversial leader of a new wave of ultra-conservative media pundits that have appeared on Fox News over the last decade, who together have forged a new in-your-face reporting style that has garnered top ratings for the entire network. O'Reilly claims to uphold Fox's motto of 'Fair and Balanced' coverage, and has labeled his own show the 'no spin zone.' Here he indulges in over-the-top denunciations of the 'radical' liberal establishment, promotes an

*Patriots and Pinheads:*

TADEUSZ LEWANDOWSKI

anti-immigrant, anti-minority, anti-welfare and anti-abortion platform, and casts himself as the disgruntled voice of patriotic working-class Americans. Most distinctive is his interviewing style: in doing battle with liberal opponents he frequently resorts to the bellicose phrase 'Shut up!' among other invectives. Though such histrionics have earned him great fame, O'Reilly's reporting has come under considerable scrutiny from media watchdog groups such as Media Matters for America and Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), both of which condemn him for extreme bias and inaccuracy. In addition, a 2007 study of *The O'Reilly Factor* by the researchers at the Indiana University School of Journalism has concluded that the program regularly employs propaganda techniques defined by the Institute of Propaganda Analysis in the 1930s. This paper analyzes the provocative stylistic content of *The O'Reilly Factor*, and examines the various criticisms the program and its host have so combatively drawn.

Keywords: *Bill O'Reilly, The O'Reilly Factor, Fox News, Propaganda, Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, Media Matters for America.*

The first part of the report discusses the current state of the world economy and the impact of the Asian financial crisis. It notes that the crisis has led to a sharp decline in economic growth in many Asian countries, and has had a significant impact on the global economy.

The second part of the report discusses the impact of the crisis on the global economy. It notes that the crisis has led to a sharp decline in economic growth in many Asian countries, and has had a significant impact on the global economy. It also discusses the impact of the crisis on the global financial system, and the role of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in providing financial assistance to affected countries.

The third part of the report discusses the impact of the crisis on the global financial system. It notes that the crisis has led to a sharp decline in economic growth in many Asian countries, and has had a significant impact on the global economy. It also discusses the impact of the crisis on the global financial system, and the role of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in providing financial assistance to affected countries.

The fourth part of the report discusses the impact of the crisis on the global financial system. It notes that the crisis has led to a sharp decline in economic growth in many Asian countries, and has had a significant impact on the global economy. It also discusses the impact of the crisis on the global financial system, and the role of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in providing financial assistance to affected countries.

The fifth part of the report discusses the impact of the crisis on the global financial system. It notes that the crisis has led to a sharp decline in economic growth in many Asian countries, and has had a significant impact on the global economy. It also discusses the impact of the crisis on the global financial system, and the role of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in providing financial assistance to affected countries.

The sixth part of the report discusses the impact of the crisis on the global financial system. It notes that the crisis has led to a sharp decline in economic growth in many Asian countries, and has had a significant impact on the global economy. It also discusses the impact of the crisis on the global financial system, and the role of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in providing financial assistance to affected countries.