



THE ANATOMY

OF A SMEAR

How the Left is fighting to silence Glenn Beck
by Meredith Jessup

We should've seen it coming.

As his Fox News Channel television audience exploded in 2009, it was only a matter of time before the liberal Left organized itself into a full-court press against Glenn Beck.

Since the conservative radio phenom made the jump from CNN's Headline News to FNC, Beck has set cable ratings records, adding more fans to his radio audience of millions. His five o'clock timeslot on Fox has grown to rival the primetime titans of cable news, Bill O'Reilly and Sean Hannity. Though O'Reilly and Hannity are no strangers to hatred from liberals, Glenn Beck's "fusion of entertainment and enlightenment" incites a particularly unique level of vitriol unmatched by any other television commentator today.

The concentrated disdain for Beck has also united the Left behind one common goal: getting him off the air. Various levels of the Left—from grassroots organizers to the Obama White House—are working in an all-hands-on-deck concert to discredit Beck with a barrage of attacks in a relentless smear campaign.

LET THE BOYCOTTS BEGIN

To Beck's regular audience, his disregard for political correctness and adherence to no-nonsense *common* sense are refreshing. To his detractors, he is a fear-mongering extremist whose opinions represent reckless "vitriolic rhetoric."

When third-year University of Wisconsin law student Angelo Carusone was annoyed by Beck's "controversial" opinions, he launched StopBeck.com—an online effort aimed at pressuring advertisers to withdraw their commercial support from Beck's broadcast on Fox and, in turn, force Beck off the air.

Working from an office in his two-bedroom apartment in Madison, Wis., Carusone sends sound bites of Beck's show to

corporate sponsors and questions whether their products and services should support Beck's programming. In many cases, this slight nudge is enough to make the targeted advertisers pull their commercials.

If advertisers don't pull their support, Carusone uses his website and social networking sites to organize other Beck opponents—including his nearly 8,000 followers on Twitter—to bombard the companies with messages in support of a Beck advertising boycott. And if the snowballing effect of thousands of outspoken anti-Beck activists doesn't stir enough commotion for a company to relent, Carusone picks up the phone to personally confront them. In what he calls his "least flattering method of persuasion," Carusone argues with corporate media executives until they give in.

StopBeck.com also claims that Beck "uses his media platform to disseminate vitriolic hateful rhetoric and stoke racial anxieties," and the group works in conjunction with ColorofChange.org—a group founded by dismissed Obama green jobs czar Van Jones—in boycotting Beck's commercial sponsors. Both organizations disparaged Beck for questioning President Obama's personal motives in condemning the Cambridge, Mass., Police for arresting Harvard professor Henry Gates in 2009.

ColorofChange.org Executive Director James Rucker told *Townhall* that the group's goal has been "to bring Beck's pattern of race-baiting to advertisers' attention, to let them know about our members' concerns and to ask whether those companies feel comfortable enabling Beck's rhetoric." But when rapper Kanye West infamously stated that President George W. Bush "doesn't care about black people" following Hurricane Katrina, there was no boycott of West's album sales. And when pressed by *Townhall* about uber-Leftist comedian Bill Maher's recent comments about Barack Obama not being a "real black president" because he didn't carry



“Rule #11: Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it, polarize it.”

—Saul Alinsky’s “Rules for Radicals”





Left: Radio and television personality Glenn Beck appears on the “Fox & Friends” television show (AP/Richard Drew)

Right: Hip-hop artist Nas joins members of MoveOn.org and ColorofChange.org to deliver a speech to supporters protesting Fox News coverage of Barack Obama in front of News Corp. headquarters in New York City. (AP/Mary Altaffer)

a loaded pistol in his waistband, Rucker and Color of Change did not respond. By Color of Change’s own standards, these comments seem “repulsive and dismissive,” yet Beck and Fox News remain the group’s only boycott targets.

Color of Change and StopBeck.com represent a small niche of the anti-Beck movement on the Left that uses advertising dollars as leverage to silence what they refer to as Glenn Beck’s “brand of hate”—a “brand” they’ve constructed by using selective interpretation of mere fragments of Beck’s contextual dialogue.

But the Left’s efforts in smearing and silencing Beck run well beyond the limits of these two online campaigns. The complex structure of the Left’s Glenn Beck smear campaign also includes some familiar big players in liberal politics.

ENTER GEORGE SOROS’ MEDIA MATTERS

Beck is a daily fixture of self-described “progressive” media “monitor” Media Matters. However, instead of pointing out factual errors in Beck’s programming, Media Matters merely inserts its own political opinion. Media Matters obsessively posts nearly a dozen anti-Beck stories on their website daily and thrives on clipping apart Beck’s statements to paint crude and incomplete pictures of Beck and his large devoted audience.

Media Matters also publishes media “research” on its site that other liberal outlets pick up and disperse across the Internet and blogosphere. Among these hard-hitting items:

- “Glenn Beck’s disturbing use of race and race-baiting”
- “Beck’s embrace of violent, anti-government rhetoric”
- “Beck’s slavery fetish”
- “Beck promotes book rife with anti-Semitism and racism”
- “Beck pushes bogus ‘evidence of socialism’ in Obama’s policies”

Media Matters joins StopBeck.com and Color of Change in supporting a widespread boycott of Beck’s programming and advertisers and runs a daily list of companies who advertised during

the Fox show.

Another group providing the Left with *invaluable* out-of-context quotes and blatantly slanted interpretations to use in attacking Beck is John Podesta’s Center for American Progress (CAP), which talks about Beck “claiming [Van] Jones’ proverbial scalp” and complains about Beck’s “vitriol” that is “increasingly allowed to infect our public discourse.” Incidentally, Podesta’s CAP and Media Matters not only spread each other’s research, but also share staff. In fact, Podesta was a pivotal figure in founding Media Matters. And CAP’s Eric Alterman, who writes about Beck’s “hatred for sale,” likes to remind readers that he’s a senior fellow at—surprise!—Media Matters.

Not surprisingly, Media Matters and the Center for American Progress share common donors that keep operations running smoothly, including generous financial gifts from George Soros and his Open Society Institute. Soros “affiliate” MoveOn.org has also joined in spreading the Left’s disdain for Beck, including a joint venture with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) in constructing a fake broadcast video that pokes fun at Beck’s “conspiracy theories.”

THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA ASSAULT

Saul Alinsky’s fifth “rule for radicals” says, “Ridicule is man’s most potent weapon.” Against irrational ridicule, there is no defense and an enemy is forced into concessions. Taking a page right out of Alinsky’s playbook, the Left uses various media outlets to push not only its policy agenda but also to advance its campaign against Glenn Beck.

By himself, Beck represents a formidable opponent in the media market. He’s a media giant in every sense of the word—commanding a broad audience in radio, television, books and public appearances—and it drives the Left and their friends in the mainstream media crazy. On average, Beck’s five o’clock timeslot ratings wallop cable



competitors CNN and MSNBC's *combined* primetime line-up ratings. When Beck had his regular show on HLN, the media could largely ignore him. But when he was added to the Fox roster with the policies of a new Democratic administration to comment on, Beck became an unstoppable force and Fox's cable competitors and other mainstream media outlets have had to put up a concerted effort to drown out his success.

"Rule 11: Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it, polarize it," Alinsky wrote. "Don't try to attack abstract corporations or bureaucracies. Identify a responsible individual. Ignore attempts to shift or spread the blame."

Time magazine recently ran a cover story on Beck titled, "Mad Man: Is Glenn Beck Bad for America?" *Time's* own Joe Klein lobbed a heavier accusation while appearing on MSNBC's "The Chris Matthews Show," claiming that "people like Glenn Beck ... rub right up close to being seditious."

Further, *Time's* managing editor, Richard Stengel, appeared on Joe Scarborough's "Morning Joe" on MSNBC to plug the magazine and personally attack Beck. Beck's work, he claimed, "plays a part in the lack of civility in political discourse," Stengel said. He also claimed Beck was stoking the public's angst about many things, including the fact that President Obama is an African-American.

The *New York Times* dubbed Beck "mad" and "apocalyptic."

Veteran liberal journalist Cokie Roberts dubbed Beck "a traitor to the American values he professes so loudly to defend" and claimed he is "corrupting the very essence of democracy."

MSNBC's Rachel Maddow cherry-picked statements from Glenn Beck's radio show to accuse him of lying about global warming (see "Maddow's Snow Job" sidebar).

Ex-CBS anchor Dan Rather considers Beck "controversial," but says he "loves" Keith Olbermann of MSNBC.

Speaking of MSNBC—not content on merely calling him a "racist," the network cut right to the chase and called on Fox News to fire Beck. Following his comments that Obama has deep-seated problems with white people, MSNBC's "First Look" said that it was "amazing" that what Beck said "isn't a fireable or even *asuspendable* offense."

Arianna Huffington, the namesake of President Obama's suggested reading for the American people, the Huffington Post, says she "resents spending even a second of my life thinking about him. But part of me recognizes that [Beck]'s too dangerous to ignore." She goes on to accuse him of inciting violence and anger and argued that while the government cannot hold him legally liable, he should be held "morally liable" and subsequently fired from Fox News.

The New Yorker calls Beck "energetically hateful, truth-twisting," and blasts the "negative, regressive take on politics" he expresses with "raw-throated outrage, smiley sarcasm and, occasionally, a display of hurt, even tears."

Newsweek went so far as to prominently feature Beck in an article titled, "HATE: Antigovernment Extremists Are on the Rise—and on the March." Pictures in the article link Beck and former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin to 1930s socialists with a caption that reads: "Huey Long castigated the rich and Father Coughlin denounced Jews in the 1930s. Today, the microphones belong to Glenn Beck and Sarah Palin."

A week before Beck's latest best-seller, a novel titled "The Overton Window," was even released, the Left was already working to discredit



MADDOW'S SNOW JOB

To illustrate how the liberal attack machine works, follow this sequence of exchanges between MSNBC host Rachel Maddow and Glenn Beck:

Friday, Feb. 12: As the East Coast was pounded with record amounts of snow fall, Beck joked on his morning radio program (in a stereotypical mobster voice, no less) that God was sending people like Al Gore a message, but noted that one large snowstorm does not prove or disprove anything.

Friday, Feb. 12: In a brief segment on her primetime MSNBC show, Maddow quotes Beck's joke as if he were serious in claiming the snowstorm disproves Al Gore's global warming theory. Maddow conveniently leaves out Beck's comment that "one storm does not prove anything."

Monday, Feb. 15: Beck takes to the radio airwaves and responds to Maddow's Friday segment, calling her "dishonest" and reminding listeners that his stereotypical fake mobster/God voice was nothing more than a joke. Beck implied that it was irresponsible for Maddow to present his joke as "evidence" in an attempt to discredit him.

Tuesday, Feb. 16: Maddow fires back at Beck: "I think it's between you and your God or you and your conscience as to how much you're willing to stir up Americans' fear and prejudice for profit. But it's between you and me when you accuse me of lying. I didn't lie. Back off."

Wednesday, Feb. 17: Beck plays the audio of his original comments, proving that Maddow had indeed selectively edited the audio in order to suggest Beck based his opinion of global warming on one large snowstorm: "The very next line that I said was 'you're an idiot if you believe this one storm in Washington proves there's no global warming.' I mean, it's the very next line. They are so dishonest they have to go that far."

In many cases like this, there is not one ounce of truth in the attacks on Beck. The tactic is also known as propaganda—and it's just another tool in the Left's smear arsenal.

the book and its author. Media Matters derided the fictional work as sheer "lunacy" and once again labeled Beck a conspiracy theorist. The Huffington Post critiqued a short video trailer promoting the book, which featured stanzas written by British poet Rudyard Kipling, stating, "The trailer for Glenn Beck's new book is just as nuts as you'd expect."



Baseless charges like these are hurled at the conservative talker on a daily basis from the mainstream media—a liberal salute to Alinsky’s Rule 8: Keeping the pressure on your opponents. “The major premise for tactics is the development of operations that will maintain a constant pressure upon the opposition. It is this that will cause the opposition to react to your advantage.”

When the media’s feigned outrage over Beck’s opinion does not hinder the growth of his audience, they turn to the next slanderous charge. When *Fortune* ran a cover feature on Beck’s unique ability to turn his political and comedic commentary into cold, hard cash, the media accused him of being a money-grubbing showman.

When Beck warned viewers about Black Liberation Theology and the Left’s ideas of “social justice,” newspapers such as the *Washington*

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Post reserved copy space for a rebuttal. The radical progressive Rev. Jim Wallis, Obama’s own “spiritual adviser,” urged Christians to “stand up to Glenn Beck” and accused him of “picking a fight.” *Time* echoed Wallis with an article asking, “Why Does Glenn Beck Hate Jesus?”

It’s not uncommon to go through a week with a different Glenn Beck hit piece splashed across the pages of all the country’s major newspapers, magazines and left-wing cable channels. Simply put, the media are reacting to a threat to their agenda—and their agenda is Barack Obama.

As a result, the mainstream media have joined the liberal blogosphere and organizations like Media Matters and the Center for American Progress in an organized effort to attack Beck with amazing coordination from coast to coast. With a close look at various media outlets’ coverage, it seems clear they all use the same set of recycled Glenn Beck talking points and all regurgitate the same distortions and outright lies.

MODERN-DAY GOVERNMENT BLACKLISTING

In addition to Wallis, others close to President Obama have played a role at various levels of the Left’s smear machine. The White House began waging war with Fox News last spring, accusing the cable network of spreading false information about the president’s health care plan and pedaling propaganda from the Republican Party. Ironically, then-communications director Anita Dunn said the White House would not just sit back and defend itself because the conservative media “will say anything. They will take any small thing and distort it.”

Most recently, the Left’s attack machine has moved to a new level, incorporating the power of the federal government. Rep. Anthony Weiner, D-N.Y., is accusing Beck of misleading his viewers in an attempt to profit off Americans’ economic jitters. Weiner is accusing Beck of maintaining an “unholy alliance” with Goldline, one of Beck’s television and radio sponsors, and suggests that Beck talks about America’s dangerous levels of debt only to try and scare

people into purchasing gold. Lost on Weiner, apparently, are the fact that Beck himself is a customer of the gold dealer and the fact that America’s debt is indeed at a dangerous level.

“Goldline rips off customers, uses misleading and possibly illegal sales tactics and deliberately manipulates public fears,” Weiner claims, yet the company maintains an “A+” rating from the Better Business Bureau. Typical of government bullies, Weiner promises a future congressional investigation into Beck’s business relationship with Goldline.

Finally, when all else fails, the Left brings in the big guns. President Obama himself has singled out Beck’s programs, calling Beck and Rush Limbaugh “troublesome” and telling Americans to get their news somewhere else.

During a recent commencement address at the University of Michigan, Obama told the audience, “If you’re a fan of Glenn Beck or Rush Limbaugh, try reading a few columns on the Huffington Post website.” But even with the power and prowess of the president behind the Left’s smear of Glenn Beck, it’s doubtful Beck fans will happily hop over to a website that promotes a “Twitter protest” against Beck or features headlines such as “Lewis Black: ‘Glenn Beck Has Nazi Tourette’s’”; or stories about how Glenn Beck hates Mother’s Day; or riveting video of HLN’s Joy Behar telling Beck, “I don’t give a flying f**k about you.”

SOLDIERING ON

To a regular viewer and listener of Beck’s programs, the accusations thrown at him from the Left’s smear campaign machine are ludicrous, untrue and sometimes even comedic. Suggesting Glenn Beck “hates Jesus” or leads an “axis of the obsessed and deranged” serves only to unite Beck’s loyal bloc of viewers *against* the Left.

Though he does from time to time use over-the-top imagery and sarcasm on his shows that may be lost on many people, it’s not this behavior that causes the Left to froth at the mouth and howl with outrage. Perhaps most offensive to the far-Left is that Glenn Beck refuses to succumb to the rules of political correctness and doesn’t try to soften the blow of the harsh realities the country faces today. The American people appreciate honesty, and Beck dishes out his own daily dose.

Above it all, Beck has sparked a movement toward enlightenment in America—both political and historical—and this movement represents a significant threat to the Obama agenda and, subsequently, the media. He has reignited the public’s interest in our nation’s founding principles, exposes left-wing policies and individuals that make up the Obama administration and serves as the common man’s advocate against their disastrous economic policies.

For a self-educated, self-described “rodeo clown,” Glenn Beck must be doing something right. For the time being, Beck is a pivotal public figure in the fight against the agenda of President Obama and his liberal progressive cohorts. And as long as he’s able to withstand the onslaught of attacks from the Left, Beck will remain a de facto leader of the movement working to take our country back. •

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