

In New Book, Former 'New York Times' Supreme Court Reporter Glories in Pro-Choice Bias

We've reposted Tim Graham of Newsbusters' analysis of the career of former *New York Times* Supreme Court reporter Linda Greenhouse through the prism of a review of her new book written by *Washington Post* book critic Carlos Lozada.

I was so intrigued I went to Lozada's review of *Just a Journalist: On the Press, Life, and the Spaces Between*. Sure enough, he was a little bit hard—not nearly as hard as he should have been—on a woman whose influence was so profound it was dubbed the “Greenhouse effect.” This is a reference to the very plausible theory that explained why some conservative Supreme Court justices would tend to vote more liberally as the years went by—the need for her approval.

But what struck me first were the reader responses. There are stories at the *Post* that receive thousands and thousands of reader email responses. This one, a review that ran October 27, had exactly none.

Lozada found himself in an interesting predicament. He knows perfectly well that Greenhouse cavalierly violated every canon of the journalist's formal and informal code of ethics. But he wants to hammer President Trump (which he does in the first few paragraphs and later), yet Greenhouse's unabashed partisanship—making monthly donations to Planned Parenthood for years even as she was covering the Supreme Court, for example, and participating in a 1989 pro-abortion march in Washington, DC—s proof positive of the president's charges of media bias and fake news. (The irony here is that even though she violated journalistic norms and produced analysis of court cases that could have been written by Planned Parenthood,

Greenhouse still professes to have been a “journalist” when she wrote those patently biased stories.)

Lozada rightly gives a lot of attention to Greenhouse’s back-of-the-hand dismissal of “false equivalency.” That’s shorthand for giving a voice to both sides of an issue when (in the journalist’s omnipotence) there aren’t two sides

To Greenhouse and alas, increasingly to a huge swathe of reporters, that is stupid and an abandonment of the journalist’s calling. Some issues don’t have more than one side, like abortion, right?

To Greenhouse it was and is preposterous to even cite what we have to say. And if we are misogynists (including the super-majority of us who are women) who peddle “junk science,” why would you?

But maybe, in fact, pro-lifers are the true egalitarians, believing in finding win-win solutions. And when it comes to science—say the link between induced abortion and an increase in breast cancer risk—whose inquiries into the evidence essentially stopped more than a decade ago?

It’s those who deny the link exists. They are the ones peddling “junk science.” We look at the evidence coming out of South Asia that virtually shouts out loud that the “ABC link” is deadly real.

I want to leave time for you to read Graham’s post and Lozada’s review so let me end with this.

If we believe Lozada’s mixed-feelings review, Greenhouse glories in violating conventional journalist practices (she believes observing a code of neutrality is just an excuse for “deferring to power”).

“Much of the book is devoted to relitigating episodes when the author violated ethical norms that she found superfluous.”

Lozada writes. Greenhouse offers a raft of rationales why none of the usual rules of the game apply to her, but they all come down to the same thing. She—and by extension other reporters—have quasi-mystical powers of insight which allows them to glean the truth and therefore feel righteous about giving short shrift to those whose opinions differ from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*.

That this is just preposterous; that this is a position she would loathe if suddenly her beloved *Times* was bought out by someone whose position was 180 degrees from the current orthodoxy, is not worthy of even a passing word. {eo}

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