

BILL KELLER: TRUE = FALSE, BUT BETTER FALSE THAN LEFT OR RIGHT

As you read Bill Keller's latest exercise in public masturbation, keep in mind how the NYT long refused to correct its credulous and ultimately, factually false, reporting on James O'Keefe III's ACORN videos (Update: here's BradBlog's coverage of their belated admission they were wrong).

Now consider how Keller equates O'Keefe's serial fabrications with Julian Assange's leaks—leaks the NYT has heavily relied upon in its own reporting.

Has anyone actually seen James O'Keefe and Julian Assange together? Are we quite sure that the right-wing prankster who brought down the leadership of National Public Radio and the anarchic leaker aren't split personalities of the same guy – sent by fate to mess with the heads of mainstream journalists?

Sure, one shoots from the left, the other from the right. One deals in genuine (albeit purloined) secrets; the other in "Candid Camera" stunts, most recently posing as a potential donor and entrapping a foolish NPR executive into disclosing his scorn for Republicans and the Tea Party.

Aside from equating video fabrications with documents the accuracy of which the NYT has confirmed itself, Bill Keller repeats the NYT's earlier habit of repeating O'Keefe's lies unquestioningly. [Update, 3/28 AM: The NYT has corrected part of Keller's description of what really happened with O'Keefe's latest; let's see how long it takes them to correct Keller's

portrayal of Schiller's intent.]

Here's a better description of what O'Keefe's fabrications exposed NPR Executive Ron Schiller to have said and done, from the digital forensic consultant NPR employed to review the full video.

Take the political remarks. Ron Schiller speaks of growing up as a Republican and admiring the party's fiscal conservatism. He says Republican politicians and evangelicals are becoming "fanatically" involved in people's lives.

But in the shorter tape, Schiller is also presented as saying the GOP has been "hijacked" by Tea Partiers and xenophobes.

In the longer tape, it's evident Schiller is not giving his own views but instead quoting two influential Republicans – one an ambassador, another a senior Republican donor. Schiller notably does not take issue with their conclusions – but they are not his own.

I assume the Keller and the NYT will ignore this analysis, as they did the analysis ACORN had done, and cling to their unquestioning acceptance of O'Keefe's propaganda about what Schiller said and did.

Now, Keller spends the remainder of his exercise in public masturbation arguing that unlike these two, the NYT has *standards*, and values "being right" (oh, except for the little Iraq fiasco) and impartial.

Except that in his first two paragraphs, Keller makes it clear that he doesn't much care about being right—or has forgotten how to do even the most basic work that requires. He's just going to spout what he wants to as long as it makes him feel important.

So I guess the better question is, has anyone

actually seen James O'Keefe III and Bill Keller
in the same place at the same time?