



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on March 9, 2023

Ex-Bill Moyers Staffer: We Used Technical Magic to Make Our Leftist “Intellectual” Guests Sound Smart

The standard liberal line, smacking of arrogance but also projection, is that conservatives are dark, dorky, and, most significantly, dumb. Yet one somewhat-disheartened liberal has learned through personal experience as a Bill Moyers staffer that the last notion may be dumb itself.

For our younger friends unacquainted with [Moyers](#), know that he’s a now 88-year-old liberal journalist who for decades hosted a series of Public Television shows featuring, ostensibly, the *crème de la crème* of leftist intellectual elites. Yet writing at Substack under the pseudonym The Ivy Exile, the former Moyers staffer reveals that this was illusion: Their guests were strikingly unintellectual and incoherent, a defect overcome only through high-tech, cut-and-paste editing.

What’s more, as time progressed, the job became harder because finding truly intellectual left-wing guests was like seeking a unicorn.

Ivy starts out explaining that he (the writer’s sex is unknown, so proper English rules dictate the masculine pronoun’s usage) is a child of the “New Left” who graduated from Brown University and worked for Moyers for several years. He also speaks highly of Moyers and his ex-colleagues, so he’s no disgruntled employee.

Ivy relates that he was a big fan of Aaron Sorkin’s *The West Wing*, which, though I never watched it, dazzled audiences with “the tightly written, rapidly voiced arguments for what was a traditional liberal democrat worldview,” [informs](#) American Thinker. “Watching *The West Wing*, you were transported to the reincarnation of what John F. Kennedy’s administration (or a Robert Kennedy administration) could have been” (ostensibly).

But that was Hollywood fantasy — and, it turns out, Moyers’s show became something similar. As Ivy [writes](#):

Uncut conversations were eye-opening; it was astonishing how often our esteemed guests hemmed and hawed and got basic facts embarrassingly wrong. And how many came off bat[****] crazy: one, later an anchor on MSNBC, speculated that Captain Sully’s Miracle on the Hudson — visible from our west side offices — had been God blessing the Obamas.

Drafting the Moyers Blog and promotional listings, I’d sit in with producers and video editors to consult on coalescing broadcasts. They were like wizards, casting away



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awkwardness and errors to sculpt artful vignettes of the most compelling bits of conversations that often stretched well over an hour or more.

So many of the most rousing clips came from when guests were at their most factually inaccurate, and editors deftly dipped in and out to pull and seamlessly reassemble the very best parts. It was wondrous alchemy.

So as with the J6 hearings, the Trump-Russia-collusion hoax, and Covid policy, Moyers's high-brow PBS show was an illusion. It was effective, though. As Ivy tells us, "Viewers, or at least those motivated enough to weigh in, frequently testified that their social-democratic faith had been wavering until they'd seen whichever inspiring interview affirming what they'd always believed."

But it wasn't just the viewers exhibiting rationalization. Consider: "By no means were Bill Moyers and team operating with any less than the highest of ethics or best of intentions — from their perspective, we were clarifying what our distinguished guests were truly saying," Ivy further states. "The problem was that the intellectual scene our show channeled was dwindling, but my colleagues so badly wanted things to be better that it was all too easy to paper over the accelerating collapse of discourse."

Perhaps, just maybe, the intentions were good — but the intellectual honesty wasn't. Note that presenting what they're sure "you really mean" is what leftists do with conservatives continually. They [can say](#) that Daily Wire podcaster Michael Knowles called for "transgender" people's eradication at CPAC — when he merely said "transgenderism" (the ideology) must be deep-sixed — because they're certain that's what he "really means." They will call you a racist, sexist, fascist, intolerant, or some other pejorative, even though you never said anything warranting such, because they know what you "really mean." They'd be great on a jury — in a kangaroo court. Who would need evidence when these clairvoyants could divine that when the defendant pleaded "not guilty" he really meant "guilty"?

But that's called prejudice: In these leftists' minds, their co-ideologists are brilliant and profound even when they're dumb and shallow, while conservatives are dumb and shallow even when they're brilliant and profound. It's a simple formula for understanding (read: misunderstanding) the world.

There are a few more takeaways here:

- Moyers's problems can occur when prioritizing credentialism over competence. Having the means and time to get a Ph.D. at a woke-joke propaganda mill and then landing a professorship at one, all because you have the "right" ideology, does not a wise man, or a good guest, make.
- I've pointed out that what's called "leftism" isn't actually an ideology but instead is movement toward moral disorder; it's not surprising, then, that as we descend down a rabbit hole toward idiocracy (gravitate "left"), our liberal "scholars" move toward increasing intellectual disorder.
- The last point partially explains why today's leftists — Sandy Cortez, Bill Gates, Al Gore, etc. — rarely if ever agree to debate their positions: They can't back them up. Why, Democrat Katie Hobbs wouldn't even debate Kari Lake during last year's Arizona gubernatorial race.

In conclusion, it's not mere prejudice to say that "leftist intellectual" is an oxymoron. "Intellectual" implies use of the intellect, and leftists operate emotionally. They can't coherently explain their feelings because that's all they are: *feelings*. They are, to paraphrase British satirist Jonathan Swift, the people who you cannot reason out of a position because they have not reasoned themselves into it.



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