



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on December 31, 2009

AP Caught Misleading On Climategate

The Associated Press (AP) was caught misleading readers with biased and inaccurate coverage of the Climategate scandal in an article entitled “Science not faked, but not pretty” that was carried by hundreds of publications.

The AP gave copies of the [leaked e-mails](#) to three scientists for the story. It then attempted to portray their views on the scandal in a dishonest manner. The international wire service selectively quoted the experts it interviewed to make it seem as though they did not think the leaked e-mails and data from the University of East Anglia’s Climate Research Unit were a very big deal. But the leaked e-mails were a big deal, and the scientists interviewed knew it.



Now, the truth has come out. In an explosive *Washington Times* editorial entitled “[Biased reporting on Climategate — Associated Press coverage raises eyebrows](#),” the newspaper, which spoke to all three of the scientists cited by the AP, exposed the AP’s shoddy “journalism.”

“There’s a big difference between saying that there isn’t sufficient evidence to determine if falsification of data occurred — and that there should be an investigation — and saying, as AP did: ‘Science not faked,’” noted the *Times*. The *Times* concluded that the “Fourth Estate watchdog” was acting more like a “third-rate pocket pet” in relation to its coverage of climate change and, more specifically, Climategate. All three of the scientists gave a very different impression to the *Times* than that portrayed by the AP article.

For instance, the director of scientific freedom, responsibility, and law at the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Mark Frankel, was quoted by AP as saying that there is “no evidence of falsification or fabrication of data, although concerns could be raised about some instances of very ‘generous interpretations.’” However when he spoke to the *Times*, Frankel explained what he really meant: The e-mails alone are not enough to determine whether the science was fake, and a proper, independent investigation must decide that. He also said that outsiders with “impeccable” credentials should be brought in to help the ongoing investigations.

The next scientist, Professor Dan Sarewitz at Arizona State University, was quoted by the AP saying: “This is normal science politics, but on the extreme end, though still within bounds.” But he was not talking about the “validity of the climate science,” according to the *Times*. “While AP used the quote to suggest that there was nothing terribly wrong that had been revealed in Climategate,” wrote the *Times*, “Mr. Sarewitz was trying to issue a warning that politics infects too much science and that reporters, politicians and the public are naive about that reality.” Sarewitz also supports a proper investigation and is skeptical of the ones currently being conducted by the universities involved.

The third scientist interviewed by the AP also told the *Times* a similar story: The data should be shared



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and the investigations should continue. The *Washington Times* editorial summed it up nicely: “The wire service portrayed the trio of scientists as dismissing or minimizing allegations of scientific fraud when, in fact, the scientists believe no such thing.”

The AP refused to let any of the “reporters” or editors involved with the “not faked” story speak to the *Times*, claiming that they did not have time. Ironically, one of the lead reporters who worked on the story is himself caught up in the Climategate scandal. The AP did note at the very end of its article that one of the Climategate e-mails was from one of the reporters working on the story — Seth Borenstein. But, the AP dismissed the e-mail as nothing more than a request “for reaction to a study, a standard step.” In reality, the e-mail is very damning of the AP science writer’s mentality.

“Mr. Borenstein’s e-mail was hardly standard and far from neutral,” notes the *Times*’ editorial. “In it, the reporter disparages Marc Morano, a critic of man-made global-warming claims, as “hyping wildly” the study that Mr. Borenstein asked scientists to comment on. The e-mail almost makes it appear as if Mr. Borenstein were asking those involved in Climategate to help him discredit critics of man-made global warming.”

Finally, the *Times* notes that “East Anglia and Penn State are not the only two institutions that need to answer questions about what is going on behind the scenes.” Indeed, the AP has some serious explaining to do. This distortion of reality was run in publications around the globe, often on the front page of Sunday newspapers. How many people were left with a false impression about Climategate? And more importantly, what does the AP plan to do to regain the trust of readers? What about the newspapers that innocently ran the story, assuming it was accurate?

That a respected, international journalism organization has been exposed essentially lying to readers demands some sort of response. If the people cannot even trust the Climategate-connected scientists or the press to fairly debate the global-warming issue, how can they trust the government to re-engineer society, ration and tax carbon dioxide, and ultimately remake the entire global economy?



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