



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on November 11, 2008

Admissions of Media Love-in for Obama

However, the Republicans' self-destruction notwithstanding, there is little question that the Obama-Biden ticket and the Democrats in general benefited from an illicit media love affair with Barack Obama. [As we reported here](#) on October 28, surveys released by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press on October 22 and 23 found that 70 percent of Americans believed most journalists wanted to see Obama, not John McCain, win on November 4. (Only 9 percent believed otherwise.) And the Pew Center's own research validated those perceptions, finding that media coverage "has clearly been negative for John McCain, according to a survey of newspaper, Internet and television news since the political conventions."



Rosie Dimmano, a reporter for the *Toronto Star*, was at Chicago's Grant Park for Obama's election-night victory speech. Apparently, the press corps was as star-struck as Oprah Winfrey and the rest of the swooning Obama fans. Here's [her report](#) on the event:

I was in the press tent in Chicago on election night, with some hundred other journalists whose news organizations had ponied up large for a tabled seat at Grant Park. These were all veteran reporters, including the "travelling media" posse - embeds - who had accompanied Barack Obama throughout the campaign.

At 10 p.m. on Tuesday, Wolf Blitzer appeared on the giant television screen to announce Obama had won the U.S. presidency, as projected by CNN, which was hardly a risky declaration with several big swing states already in the bag.

Huge cheers erupted, squeals of delight, and some reporters high-fived.

I was stunned. Not at the victory, of course, but that top-drawer journalists would so lose their arm's-length professional detachment from events.

Dimanno noted, "This spectacle did rather put the lie to heated and defensive denials of slanted, pro-Obama media sympathies during the election."

Washington Post Ombudsman Deborah Howell reported on November 9 that there was indeed "[An Obama Tilt in Campaign Coverage](#)" at the *Post*. Howell wrote that "readers have been consistently critical of the lack of probing issues coverage and what they saw as a tilt toward Democrat Barack Obama. My surveys, which ended on Election Day, show that they are right on both counts." Her report continued:

The op-ed page ran far more laudatory opinion pieces on Obama, 32, than on Sen. John McCain, 13. There were far more negative pieces about McCain, 58, than there were about Obama, 32,



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and Obama got the editorial board's endorsement.

Obama deserved tougher scrutiny than he got, especially of his undergraduate years, his start in Chicago and his relationship with Antoin "Tony" Rezko, who was convicted this year of influence-peddling in Chicago.

A few members of the journalist class openly admitted their infatuation with Obama. MSNBC commentator Chris Matthews amused and embarrassed many of his media colleagues with his bizarre "thrill going up my leg" over Obama [comment](#): "I have to tell you, you know, it's part of reporting this case, this election, the feeling most people get when they hear Barack Obama's speech. My, I felt this thrill going up my leg. I mean, I don't have that too often."

On another occasion, Matthews excitedly cast Obama in [Biblical, Messianic terms](#). "I've been following politics since I was about 5," said Mr. Matthews. "I've never seen anything like this. This is bigger than Kennedy. [Obama] comes along, and he seems to have the answers. This is the New Testament. This is surprising."

And Matthews had no problem admitting that Obama's victory speech brought him to tears: "It was the best speech I've ever heard.... And I'm tearing up, and I'm writing down notes, and I'm trying to keep track of this thing."

He also has said that he believes its his job not to hold the Obama presidency accountable, but to [make it "successful"](#):

I want to do everything I can to make this thing work, this new presidency work. Yeah, it is my job. My job is to help this country.

This country needs a successful presidency.

As a commentator, Matthews can get away with wearing his bias openly. However, if many of his media colleagues were honest they would admit the same bias and stop pretending to be "objective."

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