

Hogging the screen: should journalists be centre stage? (guest blog)

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A video of Fox News personality Laura Ingraham has been circulating in which she complains, yells, argues and moans about everything from makeup to words on her teleprompter being spelled wrong. It is amusing, but why are so many journalists becoming the stories rather than reporting them? Polis Summer School student Rachel Thomas reports.

About a month ago, a video similar to the Laura Ingraham compilation gained prime coverage throughout the United States. In the clip, Fox's *The O'Reilly Factor* anchor, Bill O'Reilly, throws a fit at the teleprompter while taping a segment. (Also check out Comedy Central's Stephen Colbert's parody of the clip [here](#).) As O'Reilly screams "We'll do it live!" as loud as he can, you cannot stop yourself from laughing. Yet again, was this really worth national coverage?

America's news media's obsession with itself, I believe, came to a climax when NBC political pundit Tim Russert passed away on June 13th, 2008. While Russert deserved to be recognized by both the media and the public, it was basically the only story covered for an entire weekend (as Russert passed away on a Friday) and even into the following week.

Given that it may have been a slow news week, the scale of coverage of the *Meet the Press* moderator's death seemed to be greater than coverage of former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto's assassination. Entire shows were dedicated to Russert, and the news media was unwilling to report anything else. In my opinion, the amount in which the media obsessed over Russert diminished the actual story. Check out Hal Boedeker's opinion, in the Orlando Sentinel, about [how journalists often go over the top when reporting about other journalists](#).

American journalists, especially political commentators, seem to be acting more like celebrities than reporters. The focus on the media should be the story, not who delivers it. I admit that seeing Bill O'Reilly and Laura Ingraham act like divas is entertaining, so watch the videos, but don't waste too much time on them. Unfortunately I too am feeding into the trend just by arguing against it.

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