

Behind Jeff Bezos' Changes at Washington Post

By Roger L Simon

Mayday! Mayday! That sky is falling (not)!

The Washington Post staff is exploding (yes)!

Big changes are coming to their left-leaning opinion page—and maybe more (hope so).



The paper's owner, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, published the following on X Feb 26:

"I am writing to let you know about a change coming to our opinion pages.

"We are going to be writing every day in support and defense of two pillars: personal liberties and free markets. We'll cover other topics too of course, but viewpoints opposing those pillars will be left to be published by others.

"There was a time when a newspaper, especially one that was a local monopoly, might have seen it as a service to bring to their reader's doorstep every morning a broad-based opinion

section that sought to cover all views. Today the internet does that job.

“I am of America and for America, and proud to be so. Our country did not get here by being typical. And a big part of America’s success has been freedom in the economic realm and everywhere else. Freedom is ethical—it minimizes coercion—and practical—it drives creativity, invention and prosperity.”

I’m relatively certain readers of this Substack realize I concur completely with Mr. Bezos.

Not surprisingly, much of his staff at the WaPo doesn’t. His opinion editor David Shipley resigned. Their complaints are available everywhere on the internet, so I don’t feel it necessary to rehearse them here. They are easy enough for any intelligent person to imagine anyway.

I will note, however, that these same people almost never piped up when their paper and the New York Times were caught lying for two straight years about Trump-Russia collusion, not exactly the highest journalistic standard.

In fact, much of the paper is and was propagandistic garbage.

In that, however, they are not unique. One of the myths of our time is that there is such a thing as “evenhanded journalism.” It doesn’t exist since written by humans, all of whom are biased to one degree or another. (I believe the WaPo’s vaunted Woodward and Bernstein are responsible for institutionalizing bias in journalism—but that’s a subject for another article.)

Which leads me to what I think may be Bezos’ thinking beyond a gradual, but inexorable shift in his political views that appears to be quite genuine.

He and Elon Musk are the great business geniuses of our era so it’s worth paying attention to both. Both made their extraordinary fortunes not by inheriting them but executing

brilliant concepts with unremitting hard work.

Bezos gives us a hint of his thinking in his conclusion on X:

“I’m confident that free markets and personal liberties are right for America. I also believe these viewpoints are underserved in the current market of ideas and news opinion. I’m excited for us together to fill that void.”

Underserved? Fill a void? What does he mean? What about the venerable Wall Street Journal, among the most important and read newspapers in our country, if not in the world? What could be more free markets than that?

My guess, and likely some of yours, is that Bezos has been paying attention to the family succession struggle at News Corp. that controls the WSJ, the NY Post and Fox News and therefore the ideology of those outlets.

Here’s what Google’s AI had to say about it (no, that’s not necessarily impartial either):

“Rupert Murdoch’s family battle with his children involves a dispute over the family trust that controls the Murdoch media empire. The battle centers on Lachlan Murdoch’s desire to become the sole heir and control the companies, and his father’s attempts to make that happen.”

Lachlan is the conservative older son who wishes to preserve the old Fox empire while his brothers, conventional Manhattan liberals, want to water it down to something approximating CNN-lite.

As Google’s AI concludes under “What’s at stake”:

“If Rupert doesn’t succeed in making Lachlan the sole heir, the conservative media empire he built could be a risk.

“The battle could also determine the future of Fox News.”

So far the courts have not looked favorably on Rupert's request to change the family trust. Auguries are not good.

This will make for a large gap that only Newsmax is currently filling on cable—and, surprisingly successful as they are, they are still not close to News Corp. in reach.

Has this potential opening been lost on a businessman Bezos' perspicacity? I'd throw away my trusty Kindle if it had. I repeat this is not to disparage the Amazon founder's genuine change of views in anyway. Since I made a similar change some time ago, I would never do that. It is just to point out that what he is doing makes long-term business sense as well.

In the short run he will hemorrhage staff and, so we are told, readers. But the Washington Post was already having its problems and making little impact outside the Beltway. The way things are going under Trump, there will soon be fewer Beltway readers anyway.

Bezos, as we know from his worldwide company selling practically everything practically everywhere, does not think small. He obviously has a national, perhaps international, newspaper in mind.

I wish him luck with his new (or renewed) endeavor. In the spirit of the era, he might consider renaming the Washington Post.

Perhaps "The Gulf of America Times".

PS: Just wanted to be clear since I use AI for illustration purposes, incthanks

cluding here, and have just quoted Google's version that I regard them as just as biased as human journalists and ultimately more dangerous.

Elon Musk just posted on X:

“Maybe the biggest existential danger to humanity is having it [woke] programmed into the AI, as in the case for every AI besides [Musk’s own] @Grok. Even for Grok, it’s tough to remove, because there is so much woke content on the internet.

For example, when other AIs were asked whether global thermonuclear war or misgendering was worse, they picked the latter.”

Enough said. Caveat emptor AI.

First published at American Refugees