



# National Coalition For Men (NCFM)

Since 1977

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Mr. Schumacher-Matos  
NPR  
1111 North Capitol St., NE  
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Dear Mr. Schumacher-Matos,

I am president of the National Coalition For Men (NCFM). NCFM is a nonprofit educational organization that raises awareness about how sex discrimination adversely affects men and women. NCFM is the oldest men's rights organization in the world.

One of NCFM's members Ray Licht, recently wrote the article, *Why is NPR so Sexist*; a copy of which is attached; or, you can find it on our website at <http://ncfm.org/2014/04/action/ncfm-member-ray-licht-writes-the-superb-article-why-is-npr-so-sexist/>

To support Mr. Licht's contention, he examined the reporting for NPR's *All Things Considered*, during February, 2014. Mr. Licht wrote, "...the bias favoring women and against men staggering. It seems unlikely that all this negative focus on men and positive focus on women is by accident. It appears to be intentional." He also listened to and researched other NPR shows, bolstering his conclusion that NPR turns a blind eye to males unless they can be portrayed as stupid, vile, or vicious.

Consequently, I listened to NPR station KPBX in San Diego off and on for several weeks. I soon stopped listening for the same above bias. The wickedly sweet sexism was thick and nauseatingly pervasive. Such programming has to be intentional.

NPR is the people's radio network. As far as we know, men are people too, and they need to be fairly portrayed by public radio.

In sum, NPR's sexist, pro-woman anti-male reporting violates various tenets of NPR charter and code of ethics. Therefore, we ask that NPR take affirmative steps to address its sexist ways.

Sincerely,

  
President

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## WHY IS NPR SO SEXIST?

By Ray Licht

The media seem to be very biased against men nowadays. This is especially true of advertising media. There is a very simple reason for this: women are largely or exclusively the deciders concerning most product choices. Some have estimated that women make 80% of all consumer product decisions. Naturally, in a situation like this, advertisers are going to tend to aim their ads at women. As a result, advertising media are also going to aim at women in order to attract more advertising revenue, which is, of course, their main goal. In this situation, advertising media certainly do not want to offend women. However, the advertising media can largely ignore or even offend men with little consequence. Some women may even be more likely to buy advertisers' products if they and their media do insult and belittle men. There is little chance for men to receive a fair deal in any advertising media—e.g., television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and the internet. For example, check out another article on this website (<http://ncfm.org/2013/12/action/anti-male-media-bias/>) that shows that 95% of all negative portrayals in TV ads are of men.



I am not happy about this situation. Of course, I wish that all media were totally fair and unbiased at all times. But this is not happening. I do not like it, but I do understand it. **OF COURSE, WOMEN COULD CORRECT THIS PROBLEM IMMEDIATELY BY REFUSING TO BUY PRODUCTS THAT PORTRAY MEN NEGATIVELY IN THEIR ADVERTISING.** I do not see this happening anytime soon. (But women should keep in mind that it was primarily men who passed women's suffrage, Title IX, the Violence Against Women Act, and all other pro-woman legislation. Men may have been slow, but they finally righted some past wrongs. Now it is women's turn to help men.)

But certainly men should get a fairer deal in media that are not funded by advertising. In the U.S., advertisers' effect on National Public Radio and the Public Broadcasting Service should be much less, and therefore **NPR** and **PBS** should not be as biased against men as other media. Also, since *NPR* and *PBS* receive some governmental support and oversight, they should contain no sexism. However, this does not appear to be true. Public broadcasting seems to be even more pro-female and anti-male than advertising media.

To explore this situation with public broadcasting, I examined the reporting for NPR's news program, "All Things Considered," during February, 2014. I found the bias favoring women and against men staggering. It seems unlikely that all this negative focus on men and positive focus on women is by accident. It appears to be intentional. I found many of the effects of the sexism found in advertising media in ATC as well.

Positive portrayals of women and their activities are everywhere in the media. ATC's Olympic coverage followed this pattern. When "All Things Considered" was not giving results of events, but giving human-interest reports, ATC focused mostly on women. Examples included hockey player Kacey Bellamy (2/5)

explaining how much her parents and little sister sacrificed so she could play hockey, slopestyle skier Devin Logan (2/10) also focusing on how much her family helped support her, Noelle Pikus-Pace (2/14) discussing how hard it was to balance motherhood and training for skeleton, and one report on the fitness of curlers (2/18) even mentioned that the men's Canadian team put out a beefcake calendar of shirtless team members. This non-advertising medium is falling over backwards to pander to women.

Most media today have a strong feminist bias. This bias often appears as promoting all rights for women but all responsibility for men. Public broadcasting and ATC probably have a stronger feminist bias than most. For example, on 2/7, ATC gave a mostly fair report on accusations of child sexual abuse against Woody Allen. However, the report did contain a quite feminist quote from a woman demanding that we automatically believe women and girls who claim sexual abuse. This, of course, assumes that women never lie, and would negate the fundamental legal concept of "innocent until proven guilty."

ATC gave two very feminist reports on American women's ski-jumping team members who fought to get the event into the Olympics. The reports contained the usual feminist accusations of discrimination and embarrassing excuses for not allowing women to compete (e.g., a woman's uterus might fall out). Of course, the official reasoning for not allowing women's ski-jumping was that it was too dangerous and the women were not competitive enough. These reasons were discounted in the reports.

This brings up another common effect of bias in the media: spinning situations hypocritically to either glorify women or portray them as victims—whichever benefits women the most. Often one situation can be spun in both ways. ATC's reporting on the American women's ski-jumping team did both. Women sued to get the event into this year's Winter Olympics. In the first segment (2/2) the women were portrayed as victims of the Olympic Committee who were unfairly denying women participation for spurious reasons—fear of injuries and lack of competition. However, in the second segment (2/11) we learn something conveniently left out of the first report—that our best female ski-jumper, Sarah Hendrickson, had a major knee injury six months before the Olympics. Instead of using this fact to imply that the Olympic Committee may have had a point about injuries, it was used in the story to explain Hendrickson's poor showing in the competition. ATC returned to portraying women as victims in a 2/12 segment on the physics of ski-jumping, where they expressed sympathy for another American ski-jumper, Lindsey Van, who also injured a knee—"jammed her leg bones together and her knee cartilage essentially exploded." Although not mentioned in any ATC program, Jessica Jerome, the final member of the American women's ski-jumping team, also has suffered a major knee injury.

There is a controversy currently in explaining why women seem to suffer more knee injuries than men for the same abuse (especially in basketball.) Some argue that women's knees are structurally different from men's, which leads to more injuries. Others counter that women have the same knee structure, but generally do not play sports as much, especially as youngsters. As a result, women have weaker leg muscles and do not learn how to cut and land in a way to avoid injury. But the ATC reports seemed to imply that the Olympic Committee was just a group of male chauvinist pigs unjustly victimizing women.

One does not need to be an expert to see that the Olympic Committee's point about lack of competitiveness may also be valid. There is a vast difference in the showings of men and women in many events, e.g., slope-style skiing, slope-style snowboarding, and moguls. This is something we all see, but we are not allowed to say out loud: the performances of the men are far more complex and dangerous. And the women's events are often on easier courses. Yet, women suffer more injuries—the women's rate of injury for all events was over 40% higher than men's during the 2010 Winter Olympics. It may be paternalistic, or it may be responsible for the Olympic Committee to take these issues into account. But the Olympic Committee did not deserve the treatment it got from ATC. After suing to be let into the Olympics in ski-jumping, I fear now that women will sue the Olympic Committee for being injured.



ATC's hypocrisy and spinning can also be seen in other Olympic coverage. As I mentioned earlier, skeleton athlete Noelle Pikus-Pace was portrayed as a victim when she complained of the difficulty of being a mother and training for the Olympics in a 2/14 ATC report. The segment left the impression that women have a much more difficult time participating in the Olympics than men. However, in a separate interview of Pikus-Pace airing on 2/24 (I guess women are important enough to highlight twice), we find that her husband took a leave of absence from his job in order to take care of their kids while she trained and competed. Why was this information not included in the earlier report.

Another example of bias found in advertising media as well as ATC is ignoring men and their activities, or highlighting negative aspects. Sports are not exclusively male activities anymore, but still, they are a major focus for most men. One of the major sporting events of the year is football's Super Bowl. ATC barely covered the game at all. However, the program did highlight several negative aspects of football. The ATC shows on the Friday and Saturday before the Sunday Super Bowl both carried reports on concussions in the NFL. The 2/14 program contained a report on Congresspeople demanding a name change for the Washington Redskins. A segment on bullying on the Miami Dolphins team also appeared on 2/14.

But ATC highlighted more positively features of the Super Bowl of more interest to women. The show on the day before the Super Bowl contained a segment on how advertisers were aiming at women during the game. The show on the day after the game contained a report on how entertainers benefited from performing during halftime.

Another common practice by the media is to purposely find women to highlight, and present them either as victims or as success stories. (A recent example of this in the general media is that all of the victims I have seen highlighted in news reports of GM's faulty ignition switch have been young women.) Women are often highlighted even if they are not direct victims. An example of this occurred in one of the segments on concussions in football mentioned above—a wife of an affected player revealed the effects of the concussions on her and her three daughters.

It appears ATC also purposely went looking for women to highlight in success stories. In a 2/5 story on the drought in California, ATC found a female mayor to interview. I found that about 25% of the mayors of California are female. So it is not unreasonable to assume that they picked a woman by chance. But still, it is 3 times more likely for ATC to have selected a male mayor, if the selection were made randomly. However, consider a segment on 2/13 concerning The Chronicle of Philanthropy's 50 top charity donors. The magazine's list contained 29 men, 18 couples and 3 women—Millicent Atkins being the only self-made woman on the list. Guess who ATC selected to highlight in it's report. That's right, ATC picked Atkins, even though she was listed 50th (ATC did not reveal this fact) and she died in 2012. It is unlikely that Adkins was chosen by chance. I also would think ATC would have picked a donor still alive so the segment could have included an interview. Instead, ATC instilled the story with feminist ideology by telling us how smart, frugal, and hard-working Atkins was, while working in a man's world.

Of course, in a negative story the media will find men to hold responsible. On 2/4, ATC presented a report on the insincerity of public apologies. ATC gave five examples in the report: Lance Armstrong, Chris Christie, Rob Ford, Sean Phillips (Denver Broncos), and Reed Hastings (Netflix.) All are men. I guess women never do anything that requires an apology.

A related strategy of the media is to hide male victimization. Instead of referring to male victims as "men," media often use words like "workers," "miners," or "people" to hide the gender of male victims or to imply that women are also victims. However, the media will almost always explicitly tell us of any female victims. On 2/5, ATC presented a segment on a report by the United Nations on child sexual abuse by Catholic priests. The



transcript of the ATC story contained 12 uses of the words “child” or “children” even though the vast majority of victims have been boys—over 80%. The word “boys” did not appear in the report. Another example of this occurred on 2/26 in a report about the excessiveness of zero-tolerance programs in schools. The report mentioned blacks and Hispanics are punished more often for violations but neglected to mention that the vast majority of punished students are boys.

This effort to hide male victimization can be extreme. In another 2/26 report, female reporters discussed the murder of at least 59 “students” in a school in Nigeria by a militant group. The students were locked in a building which was set on fire. Any students who escaped were shot and their throats cut. It wasn’t until halfway through the report that we learned that all of the students killed were boys. The girls in the school were told to go home. If only girls had been killed, I suspect ATC would have portrayed it as a horrific hate crime. But there was none of that for the boys. Instead, the reporter focused much of the report on the fact that a nearby girls’ school had been closed in order to protect the girls. This resulted in a fear in the reporter that girls in this school and others would not receive needed education. But the reporter showed no concern for the education or lives of the boys who had been killed or the boys who also may refuse an education for fear for their own lives. This report not only minimized male victimization, but focused on a relatively minor victimization of girls. I find it incomprehensible that a journalist feels the education of girls is more important than the horrible slaughter of boys.

Another inclination of the media is to highlight the first woman to accomplish something. This is quite common. Oddly, we rarely hear about the first African-American, man, or other minority to achieve. ATC highlighted that Janet Yellen was the first female Chair of the Federal Reserve during its 2/11 show. Other media had mentioned this fact over and over, but it was odd that ATC was still mentioning this after Yellen had started her new position. Will ATC keep mentioning this forever? When will Yellen just be the “Chair of the Fed?”

This tendency was taken to an extreme on 2/27 when Cheryl Boone Isaacs, the current President of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, was described as “only the third female president” of the organization. The segment even mentioned the names of the first two female presidents. (To be fair, the segment also mentioned that Isaacs was also the first black president of the Academy.) How high will the numbers need to go before ATC does not need to mention this aspect of women’s achievement? It must also be noted that the main point of the report was to expose the white-male makeup of the Academy and possible bias in the Academy Awards.

The media also seem to concentrate much attention on breast cancer. Any new medical development obtains national attention. I think it is safe to say that breast cancer is the most media-covered disease in the country. One would think that the most-covered disease would not predominately be restricted to half of the population. On 2/12, ATC covered the release of a Canadian study concerning the value of mammograms. The study found that mammograms do little to save lives. This is a controversial topic and receives much debate. There is a similar debate in the medical field concerning men and prostate cancer, but it receives little media attention.

Violence against women, especially sexual violence, also seems to get more attention than the statistics would lead one to expect. After all, men are the victims of violence far more often than women. Yet, the focus in the media is on violence against women. On 2/11, ATC had a segment on a conference on sexual assault on campus. The report gave as fact a controversial statistic that 25% of college women report being sexually assaulted. (The reporter attributed the statistic to a Center for Disease Control study, but it appears to be from an almost 20-year-old Department of Justice survey with fundamental credibility problems. The survey concluded 25% of women in college were victims of rape OR attempted rape.) The segment also quotes a student who states that we should focus primarily on abusers and not on alcohol, drugs, hooking up, or other contributing

factors. (In other words, women can do whatever they want even though feminism will continue to blame men—all men—with the inventions of “rape culture” and the “patriarchy.”) But the segment had little discussion of new rules and standards implemented by the Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights. Universities must now use the lower evidence standard of “preponderance of evidence” instead of “clear and convincing evidence,” and can deny lawyers, witnesses, or any cross-examination in disciplinary proceedings. This allows universities to punish men for sexual abuse with little more than an accusation—something that cannot happen in the criminal justice system. It undermines the concept of due process and turns our colleges into kangaroo courts.

Book reviews are a frequent feature on ATC. Most of these during the month were slanted toward women, promoting female authors or books about women and their interests. Segments included reviews of books highlighting the history of perfumes, one woman’s World War I story, a woman’s childhood expressed in poetry, short stories about relationships, a woman’s adventures after being kicked out of a conservative sect, an historical romance in China, and a singer disappointed in her partner and life. There was even a segment on a beginning writer winning a contest to have her romance novel published. And strangely, *An Unnecessary Woman* was reviewed twice.

ATC focused on women in many other reports during the month. These segments included reports on the lack of contestants for agricultural queen contests (2/3), a presidential debate in Afghanistan which discussed how to preserve women’s rights (2/7), romance novels (2/9), getting more women into NASCAR (2/15), focusing on girls getting vaccinated against HPV (2/19), Native-American women and domestic violence (2/20), how the American Bar Association underrates women (2/26), and how managers refuse to let women telework (2/27). The focus was on women throughout the month.

On those rare occasions where men as men were mentioned, it was usually in a negative context. For example, a segment on 2/16 was entitled “Fumbling Through Fatherhood.” In a 2/25 segment on dating for older singles, a woman stated that even if the men she dates are older, that does not mean they are mature. This same woman said she had no luck meeting a man at work. Of course, a man trying to meet a woman at work probably would have turned into a segment on sexual harassment.

Even a report on President Obama’s Program, “My Brother’s Keeper,” on 2/27, could not let stand that young minority men have disadvantages and are victims. The report included a quote that these men should not receive special treatment. It also contained an admonition from the President that even though the program was there to help them, the men have a great responsibility to help themselves. Wow! I do not remember seeing anything like that in any of the many reports about women’s victimizations. Again, women have rights, men have responsibilities.

Here is one final shameful and odd example of bias on NPR. It appears the quiz show “Wait, Wait, Don’t Tell Me” has been guilty of cheating in order to give women a better chance to win. (It is difficult to know for sure, since it appears many questions and answers are edited out of the show—an absolutely odd thing to do on a quiz show.) Men on the show have often suffered the disadvantage of fewer questions. This resulted in women being only 42% of the contestants in 2013, but 63% of the winners. The cheating appears to have stopped, but please check out past shows at <http://www.npr.org/programs/wait-wait-dont-tell-me/archive>. Observe the number of questions for each player during the Lightning Fill-In-The-Blank section at the end of the show.

PBS’s problems are similar to those at NPR. The network has aired many programs just for women with nothing comparable for men: “Women and Money,” “Menopause and Beyond,” “Living Courageously: the Spirit of Women,” “Powder and Glory” (women and cosmetics), “On the Contrary,” “Unleash the Power of the



Female Brain,” Apollo Wives on “American Experience,” “Women War and Peace,” “Makers: Women Who Make America,” “Women Who Rock,” “Breaking the Silence,” and “Telling Amy’s Story.”

Regular programming such as “Bill Moyers,” “Nova,” “Need To Know,” “POV,” “News Hour” and “Frontline” also often have had shows from a very pro-woman and anti-male perspective. Examples include speculation that Shakespeare was a woman and that Einstein stole his ideas from his first wife. Interviews have included Kavita Ramdas of the Global Fund for Women, Gloria Steinem, Leymah Gbowee of the Liberian women’s peace movement, and Billie Jean King. Subjects have included the women’s movement, nerdy women ignored for being too smart, women balancing life and work, powerful women and other feminist ideology. The day before the Super Bowl, the “News Hour” had a segment on sex trafficking near the game. Wordgirl is a superhero who usually defeats bad men. Even “Sesame Street” has angelic female characters but mean, grumpy, stupid, and obnoxious male characters.

It is evident that public broadcasting is heavily biased for women and against men—and it appears to be intentional. This is surprising given that NPR and PBS do not have the advertising pressures that many other media have. Also public broadcasting has governmental oversight. Public broadcasting should be fairer than most other media. But this does not appear to be the case.

Do not take my word for it. Transcripts and audio recordings of the ATC programs mentioned above are online at <http://www.npr.org/programs/all-things-considered/archive>. Please see and hear for yourself. I assume NPR will not delete or change them in response to this article.

This constant positivity toward women and negativity toward men in advertising media as well as public broadcasting must have an effect on our children. Girls must grow up believing they are superior as well as constant victims. Boys must see themselves as worthless dregs. This needs to stop, especially in public broadcasting.

I used to donate to my local NPR and PBS stations. I will not contribute again until the bias stops. Perhaps Congress could encourage public broadcasting to stop the sexism.



**So, why IS NPR so sexist?**