

Are Dishonest Journalists Inherently Dishonest?

By JOE GUZZARDI

Can a journalist who is willfully dishonest in his immigration reporting be an exemplary citizen in every other aspect of his life?

Can a professional flout his own trade's ethical code yet remain an otherwise reliable member of society?

Look at it this way: If you knew that a certain stockbroker consistently churned his accounts, would you be likely to enter into a business partnership with him?

The same alarm bells that go off with shady stockbrokers should also sound when evaluating the character of journalists who refuse to write with fairness and balance about immigration.

My questions have intrigued me since 2000 when I began the Media Standards Project for NumbersUSA.Com

For the last five years I have continued, carrying the VDARE.COM banner, to scrutinize the media.

Since launching the MSP program, I have regularly spoken with reporters and editors of major daily newspapers and read countless immigration stories and opinions.



**Newspaper Columnist
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Joe Guzzardi, an instructor in English at the Lodi Adult School, has been writing a weekly newspaper column since 1988. This column is exclusive to VDARE.COM.

Despite engaging in dozens of conversations and analyzing thousands of words, my query about their character remains with me. I can't yet give a conclusive answer.

But interesting trends have developed.

In 2005, VDARE.COM wrote extensively about former *Sacramento Bee* columnist and immigration enthusiast Diana Griego Erwin and her senior editor and chief enabler Rick Rodriguez.

From my prior years MSP work, I knew both Griego Erwin and her boss Rodriguez as devious and deceitful.

When the *Bee* conducted an exhaustive independent investigation into a large body of her columns, it discovered that Griego Erwin fabricated dozens of sources. Her career was built on lies.

Knowing that, would you buy Griego Erwin's used car?

Now another cunning pro-immigration columnist stands exposed as double-dealing.

Los Angeles Times' Michael Hiltzik, winner of the second annual VDARE.COM "Worst Immigration Coverage" award, had his "Golden State" column and blog of the same name suspended several months ago for what the *Times* described as posting:

...Items on the paper's website, and on other websites, under names other than his own. That is a violation of *The Times* ethics guidelines, which requires editors and reporters to identify themselves when dealing with the public. The policy applies to both the print and online editions of the newspaper. *The Times* is investigating the postings.

Hiltzik's AKA postings were harshly critical of those who disagree with him and supportive of his own philosophy.

In a twenty-year journalism career, I have never considered taking pot shots at my adversaries or

writing my own fan mail under a disguised name.

But I'm not surprised that Hiltzik did.

Always unfair in his immigration comments, Hiltzik—who is still employed by the Times in a sports department make-work position—is entitled to his opinions. But as James Fulford has written about other journalists, Hiltzik is not entitled to his own “facts.”

And “facts” of his own invention are exactly what Hiltzik drew upon when he wrote about immigration.



Of many examples to choose from, I'll point you to Hiltzik's September 22 2005 column, “Border Policy Is Pinching Farmers” [PDF] wherein he urged that a guest worker program be implemented immediately so that California raisins could be harvested before the “September rains.”

But as Hiltzik and every other California resident knows, the state receives little if any rain during the early fall. See data here.

Hiltzik isn't stupid. He's a graduate of the Columbia School of Journalism and Colgate University. But he is dishonest.

Knowing about Hiltzik what you now know, would you lend him money?

Bad enough that Griego Erwin, Hiltzik and numerous others are hypocritical journalists.

But must they be sanctimonious too?

They, not us, are the ones who post on their websites how dedicated they are to the truth and telling both sides of every story no matter how distasteful one argument may be to them personally.

The Society of Professional Journalists, the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the Columbia School of Journalism, Gannett, the Organization of News Ombudsmen and AP are but a few among many who beat their breasts about journalistic integrity.

If only they practiced it.

(For a comprehensive list of all the ethical codes of journalism societies and newspapers, go here.)

In my ongoing travels among the MSM, I continually hear one thing:

“Your VDARE.COM perspective is interesting. But we can't give it much credence because you have an agenda.”

To which I answer:

“Yes, we have an agenda. So do you. The difference is we are entitled to ours and you, by your own admission, are not. And we promote our bias (for immigration reform) up front and honestly. You claim the high road but do not travel it.”

Here's what I mean.

Peter Brimelow, in his September 16, 2001 column, “The Role of VDARE.COM after 9/11: It's The Immigration Stupid” spelled out our position exactly:

VDARE.COM is not a full-service webzine. We focus on immigration and the National Question because we believe they are no longer covered in the establishment media, liberal or “conservative”. Generally, we think that revenge is a dish best eaten cold. But we don't intend to get into the foreign policy debate—except to say that we favor as much American victory as possible.

We are here to point out that, unlike chasing alleged terrorist leaders around Afghanistan with airborne missiles, immigration policy actually offers concrete ways in which America can be defended. The borders can be sealed. Illegals can be expelled. Alien enclaves can be assimilated. And the mounting destabilization of America's political order can be stopped—even reversed.

That's what VDARE.COM is about. We practice what we preach.

I can say without fear of contradiction that readers can have faith that the VDARE.COM contributors will continue to do exactly what Peter has outlined above.

And—good news—should any of us put our used vehicles on the market, you may buy them in complete confidence. ■