

Shakeup at the Washington Post signifies shift by corporate media to the right before 2024 elections

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On Sunday evening, Will Lewis, publisher and CEO of the *Washington Post*, abruptly informed newspaper employees that Executive Editor Sally Buzbee was being replaced.

Lewis said Matt Murray, former editor-in-chief of the *Wall Street Journal*, would become executive editor through the presidential election, and Robert Winnett, a deputy editor of the *Daily Telegraph* in Britain, will assume the role after the election.

Buzbee, who has been executive editor for the past three years, announced shortly thereafter that she was leaving the *Post*. According to an anonymous source, the *New York Times* reported that Buzbee told the staff, “I would have preferred to stay to help us get through this period, but it just got to the point where it wasn’t possible.”

Official explanations for Buzbee’s departure revolve around a conflict over CEO Lewis’s reorganization plan announced two weeks ago. Under the plan, a news division devoted to service and social media journalism will be created under the direction of a new editor that would have removed its editorial staff from Buzbee’s supervision.

Meanwhile, when Lewis announced his reorganization plan at an all-hands meeting, he revealed that the *Post* had lost \$70 million and 50 percent of its audience in the past year.

The hiring by the *Washington Post* of former editors from the Murdoch Fox News Corp. and British Telegraph Media Group publishing empires shows that a further shift to the right by the newspaper is under way.

The changes now taking place were foreshadowed when *Post* owner and mega-billionaire founder of

Amazon, Jeff Bezos, announced in November 2023 the hiring of Will Lewis. A former CEO of Murdoch-owned Dow Jones and publisher of the *Wall Street Journal* from 2014 to 2020 and chief creative officer of News Corp., Lewis was also editor-in-chief of the *Daily Telegraph* from 2005 to 2009.

At the time, Bezos said he was confident in the future of the *Post* “in the hands of Will, an exceptional, tenacious industry executive whose background in fierce, award-winning journalism makes him the right leader at the right time.”

The career of Lewis, 55, parallels the transformation and degradation of cable TV news and the integration of corporate-based journalism into imperialist military operations to spread lies and justify war crimes over the past three decades.

Among Lewis’s “tenacious” accomplishments, for example, was his role in leading a massive coverup of criminal activity at Murdoch’s News Corp in connection with the hacking and bribery scandals at the British Sunday tabloid *News of the World* between 2010 and 2012.

That Bezos brought in Murdoch-fixer Lewis as CEO is no doubt also connected with the billionaire’s concern about the growth of class tensions at the *Post*, which erupted last December in a 24-hour walkout, the first at the paper in nearly 50 years.

In a puff piece on Monday, the *Post* described the new editors Matt Murray and Robert Winnett as having “decades of experience overseeing ambitious, aggressive journalism.” Among Murray’s accomplishments promoted by his new employer is work at the *Wall Street Journal* reporting on “the origins of the coronavirus, including questions about

whether it leaked out of a Chinese laboratory.”

In other words, Murray has been one of the leading proponents of the right-wing, anti-Chinese, unscientific and false claims about where the coronavirus pandemic came from. As Murray told the *Post* in 2021, “Our goal was and always is to simply ask questions and see what we can find out and follow the facts.”

It is precisely this type of journalism that promoted and gave legitimacy to the far-right “Stop the Steal” campaign of would-be dictator Donald Trump promoting lies that the 2020 elections results were rigged by the Democratic Party.

As reported by the *World Socialist Web Site* at the time, Bezos’s selection of Sally Buzbee in May 2021 was a safe one because of her close ties to the US military-intelligence apparatus. She is the widow of former State Department official John Buzbee, and she served as regional bureau chief of the Associated Press in Cairo, as well as in Washington, where she directed AP coverage of both the 2012 and 2016 presidential elections.

Now, Buzbee is considered insufficiently right-wing under conditions where both establishment candidates for president in the 2024 election are deeply despised by the public, which is moving sharply to the left.

With presumptive Republican nominee Donald Trump now a convicted felon and the incumbent Democrat being referred to as “Genocide Joe,” the financial elite is desperately seeking to contain the political crisis from spiraling into an independent movement of the working class from below.



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