

'American Journalism Collapsing Before our Eyes'

Veteran journalist Michael Goodwin, [writing in the New York Post](#) over the weekend, said a tragedy is unfolding before our eyes.

Donald Trump may or may not fix his campaign, and Hillary Clinton may or may not become the first female president. But something else happening before our eyes is almost as important: the complete collapse of American journalism as we know it. The frenzy to bury Trump is not limited to the Clinton campaign and the Obama White House.

They are working hand in hand with what was considered the cream of the nation's news organizations. The shameful display of naked partisanship by the elite media is unlike anything seen in modern America.

A Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who spent a decade at the *New York Times* before he became executive editor of the *New York Daily News*, Goodwin is not exactly a right-wing crank. He [voted for Obama](#) in 2008 and has spent most of his career cocooned in the *crème de la crème* of New York media. But he makes the case that media have grown so partisan that they do not even bother to hide it, and that this is endangering our democracy.

A similar point was made last week by Matt Taibbi in *Rolling Stone* magazine. In an article titled "[The Summer of the Shill](#)," Taibbi, an outspoken liberal, compared today's media coverage to propaganda in the Soviet Union during the Cold War-era. He said media organizations had crossed a dangerous line in their efforts to whittle down Donald Trump.

It's not that stations were wrong to denounce Trump's comments. He deserves it all. But he's not the only stupid, lying, corrupt politician in the world, which is the impression one could easily get watching certain stations these days.

These all-Trump, all-the-time story lineups are like Fox in reverse. The commercial media has devolved, finally, into two remarkably humorless messaging platforms. What's crucial to understand is that a great many commercial media outlets now are not so much liberal-leaning as Democratic-Party leaning.

Taibbi makes some good points, and it's worth reading his piece in its entirety. But he also goes easy on the biggest culprits.

It is the television networks Taibbi primarily takes to task, which in some ways makes sense. TV journalism is lower-brow, and the talking heads on Fox, MSNBC, and CNN are easy targets. Casual observation and [documented reports](#), however, show that America's newspapers have been even more tilted in their coverage than the networks, particularly the *Washington Post*.

The *Post's* coverage of Trump has been borderline obscene, a deluge of hit pieces day after day after day. Earlier this year [it was revealed](#) the paper had assigned 20 reporters to dig in to "every phase" of Trump's life for a book set for release this week, [Trump Revealed: An American Journey of Ambition, Money, Ego, and Power](#).

The resources the paper dedicated to nuking Trump dwarf that which it has dedicated to investigating Hillary Clinton. Trump has received similar negative coverage from the *New York Times*.

"The disparity in coverage is indefensible," a reporter at one of these papers recently told me. "Even if Trump deserves every bit of the scrutiny and criticism he's gotten."

Most would agree that Trump deserves every bit of scrutiny he's received; in modern history, however, publications have viewed it as a responsibility to provide scrutiny on both presidential contenders.

Part of the media animosity toward Trump could stem from the fact that he [revoked the press credentials of the Post](#), an unwise and heavy-handed move reminiscent of the White House's attempts to [remove Fox News from certain press events](#). The action could have provoked fear in members of the press and given them, in their minds, *carte blanche* to go after the real estate mogul.

Ezra Klein suggested something akin to this [last week writing at Vox](#).

"[T]he press is afraid of Donald Trump in a way unique to any candidate I've covered. Members of the media think Trump is a threat to the free press as an institution," Klein wrote on Vox.

I don't doubt fear is part of the equation. Trump should be feared, as his opponent should be. But neither candidate is so great a threat to our republic that we should abandon journalistic standards and devolve into Trump Sucks/Hillary Sucks factions. This is essentially where we've gone, and it's not healthy to journalism or democracy.

"Forget about the fact that it's boring," writes Taibbi. "How will we know if a real scandal hits?"

Indeed.

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