

Media Hostility Could Help Trump Win Reelection

Numerous high-profile investigations, including [new probes just announced by Democrats in the House of Representatives](#), add to uncertainty about President Trump's election prospects in 2020. Nevertheless, a strong case can be made that a hostile media environment will actually make the president's reelection highly likely.

Although I have been a student of politics for decades, having worked for President Reagan and later Chief Justice Warren Burger, I have never seen the intensity of media hostility now directed at President Trump. But not until very recently did I come to the realization that such animosity works very much in the president's favor.

My epiphany came on February 11, 2019, with [President Trump's campaign rally in El Paso](#). It was déjà vu all over again: 10,000 supporters, say local authorities, gathered to hear the president. I thought to myself: it's the same huge, wild, yelling, clapping crowd that attended his campaign rallies in 2016. His poll approvals shot up to 52 percent, having been before El Paso at some 41 percent. It has of late been in the high 40s.

Caitlin Flanagan, a writer for the center-left, cerebral *The Atlantic*, has written two prescient articles that show that media animosity and myopia against Donald Trump could bring about his reelection. The stronger the resistance, the stronger the resistance to that resistance by a silent majority.

In January, Flanagan published the perceptive article, "[The Media Botched the Covington Catholic Story](#)" with the tag line, "And the damage to their credibility will be lasting." After

showing how the media initially falsely reported that a group of MAGA-hat-wearing teenage boys had, for racist reasons, harassed a Native American elder drumming at the Lincoln Memorial, Flanagan concludes the piece by addressing the *New York Times*:

You were partly responsible for the election of Trump because you are the most influential newspaper in the country, and you are not fair or impartial. Millions of Americans believe you hate them and that you will casually harm them. Two years ago, they fought back against you, and they won.

Then her bombshell: “If Trump wins again, you will once again have played a small but important role in that victory.”

“If Trump wins again” is an explicit comment that the president’s reelection is possible, that the silent majority could rise again. Flanagan had voiced such irony and paradox in her *Atlantic* piece of May 2017. Her title said it all: “[How Late-night Comedy Fueled the Rise of Trump](#).” She emphasized that “hosts of the late-night shows decided that they had carte blanche to insult not just the people within this administration, but also the ordinary citizens who support Trump.” Hillary Clinton, two months before the 2016 election, blew herself out of the water by calling these ordinary citizens the “[deplorables](#).” [As Mitt Romney can attest](#), it is political suicide for a candidate to attack voters. Many today continue to attack ordinary people by commanding them to “Take off that MAGA hat!” or claiming “He has a MAGA hat and is therefore racist.”

The word may be spreading that an angry, myopic media can possibly help get Trump reelected. John Diaz, editorial page editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, wrote a prescient editorial on January 25, entitled, “[Covington Catholic story shows danger of a rush to judgment](#).” Like Flanagan, Diaz calls out “the danger of a rush to judgment” – an inclination that

aids Trump by giving him more “Fake News!” ammunition to shoot on the campaign trail.

Earlier polls showed President Trump’s approval rating at a low 41 percent. But recall that this was roughly his favorable rating when he surprisingly defeated Hillary Clinton. The media is still angry about that one, and they were made to look foolish. But they seem determined to exercise the same animosity and myopia against Trump that he turned into an advantage. Similarly, I have to wonder if, say, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Nancy Pelosi are doing Trump a big favor by attempting to pummel him.

If Trump runs in 2020, the election could be a horserace. It is the inchoate, silent (electoral) majority that remains the greatest unknown. In 2016, Democrats, liberals, progressives, the media—all were certain that Hillary Clinton would win. Some even laughed about it in certainty.

We should remember Santayana’s insight: Those who “don’t remember history are condemned to repeat it.” But the hostile media apparently don’t remember history and are at it again.

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