Donald Trump’s Relationship with the Media

It was recently reported that during a heated debate between President Trump and CNN reporter, Jim Acosta, “Donald Trump has threatened to walk out of future press briefings if reporters do not act with ‘decorum’” (Zurcher). Ever since Donald Trump was elected President of the United States, he has focused on the media as his main enemy. He does not seem to be backing down and they don't either. Certain networks in the media have constantly disagreed with the president and his administration and, as a result of this, there has been an abundance of bickering occurring, mostly due to headstrong personalities on both sides. In this new age of Trump, because the people deserve to know the truth, it is more important than ever that the media should not back down or resist covering stories; because if they do, Trump will attack reporters and journalists and degrade their credibility to the American people.

Since the media is such an important source of providing and presenting information to the public, it is extremely important for news researchers to find the facts to present to the people. This is significant because “failing to report [news] … is not just a craven surrender to actual bias, it is a fundamental dereliction of duty” (Garfield 2). When they are not seeking out, observing, and reporting groundbreaking news and stories, the journalists are at fault for disregarding their duty to inform the public. According to the American Press Institute, journalism helps “provide citizens with the information they need to make the best possible
decisions about their lives, their communities, their societies, and their governments” (American Press Institute). The American people rely on journalists to record events as they are happening and objectively report any wrongdoings or conflicts that they have witnessed. Thus, if the people are aware of particular events in the government that can affect their lives greatly, they are able to make informed decisions based on the constant reporting of the media. All journalists have their own unique style of news reporting, but they are still united in their pursuit of the facts as they are happening. As Ann Cooper of The New York Times suggests, “journalists need to separate their debate on editorial choice from the issue of Donald Trump and his freewheeling character assassinations...When Trump attacks one, he attacks us all” (Cooper 2). Whether it’s being broadcast on Fox News or MSNBC, journalists and reporters will have different opinions about the president and his administration, and whether they disagree or not, it’s still their duty to let the people know of recent breaking news.

When the President does not answer questions in his press briefings, he’s not only offending reporters who are trying to do their job of gathering information, he’s disrupting the citizens’ constitutional right to be truthfully informed by the press. According to the U.S. Constitution, “The First Amendment guarantees freedoms concerning...freedom of speech, or of the press” (Legal Information Institute). The Founding Fathers of America believed the people in the U.S.A. deserve the right to gain access to a free press and speak openly about what they disagree with. When Trump declines or rejects questions he is being asked, he’s impeding the people’s rights to obtain the facts that they entitled to. Suzanne Nossel, CEO of Pen America, satirically names her article “Trump’s Attacks on the Press Are Illegal. We’re Suing” and in this article, she talks about the President’s defensive claims. She says that he’s “Using the force of
the presidency to punish or suppress… [is at] the heart of the First Amendment… Presidents are free to mock, needle, evade and even demean the press, but not to use the power of government to stifle it” (Nossel 2). The American people pride themselves in having free speech and it applies to everyone, including the president. However, that doesn’t mean it’s right. Trump constantly tries to assert his credibility since he’s the highest power in the government, but at the cost of jabs against journalists, correspondents, and other political writers.

Fighting back against the President and the government shows how these reporters want to find out the truth for the American people and not let Donald Trump or his administration undermine citizens who are justified to want to hear the truth. Others might say that when Trump dismisses questions or insults someone, he’s only trying to get his voters excited and display his power by attacking someone who is critical of him. Lauren Mannerberg of the University of Albany, states that “It may seem like the freedom of the press is at risk with Trump publicly berating and denouncing news organizations and journalists, but this administration is at odds with the press just as presidents have been in the past” (Mannerberg 49-50). So why should we overreact or make assumptions based on the Trump presidency if he isn’t even the first American president to clash with the media? Whether the president is in cahoots with news networks or the media or he still believes they are the “enemy of the people”, the communities still have natural born rights and the president is obligated to deliver information to the American public. Trump’s supporters are extremely loyal and the commander in chief is known for his campaign rallies back in 2016 and his ability to rally his voters quickly and efficiently. He capitalizes on one of his famous slogans, ”fake news”. For instance, when the news show 60 Minutes ran a news article on Donald Trump separating immigrant children from their parents at the border, Trump
tweeted that “@60Minutes did a phony story about child separation when they know we had the exact same policy as the Obama Administration. In fact, a picture of children in jails was used by other Fake Media to show how bad (cruel) we are, but it was in 2014 during O[bma] years” (@realDonaldTrump). As there are many examples of Trump berating his critics, it’s even more important that we make sure to persist and to disregard his negative statements regarding the media and their attempts to report the daily news. As stated by a cognitive scientist, Stephan Lewandowsky, in an article by Lorraine Ali, a Los Angeles Times journalist: “Democracy relies on people being informed... A society [with] their own set of facts is absolutely devastating” (Ali). Generating fake news can distance people away from much-needed reporting of events that can affect their daily lives and perspective on modern society. The public needs to hear what’s happening in the world and political writers are trying to achieve that goal of reporting the news which the President isn’t allowing.

Journalists and reporters suffer a large amount of backlash from the President and they deserve to be treated with respect. In order to accomplish their intention to cover news stories, they must stand up to Trump’s attacks to defend themselves, other writers, and the American people. When watching the President’s press conferences and rallies, it’s important to think critically about what he says and how he interacts with correspondents from the press. The rest of the world is observing Trump and watching how the media is perceived in the United States. This can affect their perceptions of the policies in the United States and in their own countries. Globally, the media is a way for people in other countries to find out what’s going on the world especially with the U.S. when Trump is bombarding reporters and journalists for fulfilling their duty to the American people.
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