



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on August 7, 2017

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The Final Days of CNN?

CNN holds a few distinctions. Founded by globalist Ted Turner in 1980, CNN — which stands for Cable News Network — was the first all-news television channel in the United States, as well as the first 24-hour cable news channel. For many years, the liberal news network enjoyed something of a primacy among news media, boasting high ratings and an undeserved sense of credibility — even while surreptitiously propagating one false narrative after another.



Then something happened that put CNN in a position to overextend itself in its manufacturing of fake news: Donald Trump ran for (and was elected to) the presidency of the United States, and CNN declared war on him. In an apparent effort to discredit Trump and bring him down, the titanic news network seems to have overestimated the maximum dosage of fake news the American viewer can consume. One outlandish story after another has been pumped out and has backfired on CNN. The result is that it is CNN, not President Trump, that has been discredited and is headed for failure.

As of this writing, CNN has been rocked with one fake news scandal after another. It issued a major retraction that resulted in the “resignation” of three CNN employees responsible for that story, and it was the centerpiece of a series of undercover videos showing that CNN knows its reporting on alleged connections and collusion between Trump and Russia is “bulls**t,” the whole Russia thing “is just a big nothingburger,” and that CNN practices selective editing to promote a false narrative to deceive American voters who a CNN producer said are “stupid as s**t.” Added to that, CNN reacted to a (probably) tasteless but (certainly) harmless video meme of Trump punching CNN in the face by using intimidation to force an apology and a promise of reform from the creator of that meme.

It’s been a bad few months for CNN.

The network that has spent 37 years building an empire producing fake news and mostly getting away with it is in the process of learning the hard way that it gambled badly by pitting itself against Donald Trump and the American people. CNN appears to have lost its collective mind in a race to boost ratings while at the same time attempting to delegitimize Trump’s presidency.

CNN — which had taken several potshots at Trump during the primaries — escalated the anti-Trump coverage once Trump had secured the Republican nomination. While some of that coverage could be characterized as merely slanted, other portions of it can only be called outright false. For instance, after the first presidential debate between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, CNN reported that the debate “highlighted Trump’s tendency to make false claims,” including “his contention that Clinton was behind the so-called birther conspiracy.”

Of course, the fact is that the Clinton campaign in 2007 and 2008 had circulated information that Barack Obama was born outside the United States and was therefore ineligible to run for president. In



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fact, it was the Clinton campaign that — on any scale that matters — got the birther ball rolling. It started with a March 19, 2007 memo written by Hillary’s chief strategist, Mark Penn. That memo discussed strategies for beating Obama in the primaries and said, “I cannot imagine America electing a president during a time of war who is not at his center fundamentally American in his thinking and in his values,” and advised Clinton to make sure all of her speeches “contain the line that you were born in the middle of America to the middle class in the middle of the last century.” The memo also said, “Let’s explicitly own ‘American’ in our programs, the speeches and the values. He doesn’t.”

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Following that advice, in late 2007 and continuing into early 2008, an e-mail was circulated by the Clinton campaign to the effect that Obama was not an American-born citizen and was not eligible to run for president. Documented evidence that Clinton was at ground zero of the birther movement is easy to find, and for CNN to claim that Trump was making “false claims” about it says more about CNN than it does about Trump.

CNN’s support of Clinton over Trump (both open and undercover) has served as a springboard for other dishonest actions and has lacked anything resembling journalistic integrity. As the leaked Podesta e-mails published by WikiLeaks in July 2016 showed, in March 2016, Donna Brazile — who was at the time a CNN contributor — e-mailed the Clinton campaign a question about the death penalty that Clinton would be asked the following day at a town hall hosted by CNN. In the midst of the scandal caused by the Podesta e-mails, Brazile left CNN to take over as the DNC chair. It would appear that leaking questions to Clinton and the DNC has its rewards.

The second debate between Trump and Clinton was co-hosted by CNN’s Anderson Cooper, who went considerably out of his way to paint Trump into a corner on several points of the debate while allowing Clinton to give non-answer after non-answer. Many of the questions that Trump was hammered with came at times in the debate when Clinton appeared to need a way out of questions about the leaked Podesta e-mails that were so damning to her campaign.

As the election drew close and it was obvious that Trump was within striking distance of the Oval Office, CNN cranked up the fake-news machine to full production. Just before the election, CNN reported that Trump had encouraged voter fraud by telling supporters to vote more than once. What Trump had *actually* said was, “In some places, [Democrats vote] four or five times, but we don’t do that.” CNN later quietly edited the story in an obvious attempt to hide that fake reporting.

Starting with its reports coming out of the second and third presidential debates, CNN helped Clinton spread the false Trump/Russia narrative. In one report after another, CNN not-so-subtly implied (without offering a shred of evidence) that — as Clinton had put it — Trump is “Putin’s puppet.”

Then, once Trump had completely upset the liberal apple cart by a surprising electoral victory, CNN spent the weeks between the election and the inauguration being even less subtle (if that were possible) and trading implication for what can only be called slander by publishing a so-called dossier purported to be the product of a former British intelligence agent. The “dossier” — which was so error laden and burdened with poor grammar, bad spelling, worse formatting, and self-contradictions that it could only be fake — claimed that Trump was at the same time the victim of Russian blackmail (by which the Kremlin would control him) and the recipient of Russian espionage on the Clinton campaign (by which the Kremlin was able to assure his victory). The “dossier” was so spurious that even the *New York*



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Times and the *Washington Post* wouldn't touch it. But CNN "broke" the story, setting the stage for BuzzFeed to publish the "dossier" *in toto*. The document has since been completely discredited.

While reporting on that document, CNN claimed that a two-page summary of it had been "presented" to Trump by the intelligence community. After several sources — including Trump himself — disputed that he had been given a copy, CNN quietly changed the story to say Trump was told about it.

In February, James O'Keefe of Project Veritas — which was responsible for scuttling ACORN, the left-wing get-out-the-vote group that was caught advocating illegal behavior, with a series of undercover videos in 2009 — released more than 100 hours of secretly recorded audio from CNN's Atlanta headquarters. The audio was provided to Project Veritas by a former employee. As Project Veritas explained at the time it published the audio clips, the recordings — made in 2009 — include "soundbites from current and previous CNN employees Joe Sterling, Arthur Brice, and Nicky Robertson, as well as numerous others" that demonstrate, among other things, the lack of journalistic integrity at CNN, which lends itself to producing reports so skewed and lacking in honesty that they can only be described as "fake news."

The release of that audio should have been enough to put CNN on notice that Project Veritas was ready to strike at the heart of CNN's fake news, but apparently the folks over at CNN are a little slow on the uptake. One Project Veritas journalist after another has managed to get up close and personal with CNN personnel and get them to admit things they certainly would later regret.

The hidden-camera videos that came out of those encounters contain some pretty damning stuff.

As mentioned above, CNN has spent the past several months propagating the myth of a Trump/Russia connection and collusion between Trump (or at least those close to him) and Putin. If the folks over at CNN actually believed that myth, they could perhaps be excused as merely stupid. (Again, there is no proof that this is true, and even former FBI Director James Comey — who has an axe to grind against Trump for firing him — testified that neither his agency nor others that he knew of had any evidence showing collusion.) Since the hidden-camera videos published by Project Veritas show that CNN knows the myth is false, the network is without excuse. Stupidity is occasionally excusable; deliberate lying never is.

The first of those videos, released June 27, captures CNN Medical and Health producer John Bonifield on hidden camera admitting that the Trump/Russia narrative is "mostly bulls**t right now" because "we don't have any big giant proof." Bonifield goes further, admitting that Trump "is probably right to say, like, look, you are witch hunting me." So why do CNN producers and reporters keep beating the Trump/Russia drum if it's "mostly bulls**t"? Bonifield said the direction to "keep digging" into that line of reporting comes all the way from the top — CEO Jeff Zucker — and it's all about "ratings."

Before the dust could even settle from that video, CNN political commentator (and avowed communist activist) Van Jones was shown in another hidden-camera video released the next day saying that the whole "Russia thing is just a big nothingburger." It is worth noting that Jones' remark was not restricted simply to the fallacious claim that Trump is colluding with Russia. He was asked, "What do you think is going to happen this week with the whole Russia thing?" His answer — in that broad context — was that the whole Russia thing amounts to "just a big nothingburger."

Two days later, Project Veritas struck again. Jimmy Carr, associate producer for CNN's *New Day*, was shown on a hidden-camera video admitting that CNN hates President Trump (no big surprise there) and



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that he and his co-workers think American voters are “stupid as s**t.” The video also shows that CNN practices selective editing to promote a false narrative.

After saying that Trump “is a clown,” is “hilariously unqualified for this, he’s really bad at this and that he does not have America’s best interests,” and is “just f***ing crazy,” Carr is asked on the video about how that reflects on the intellect of American voters. His answer is, “They’re stupid as s**t.”

Nice.

It appears that since American voters are “stupid as s**t” and elected a “clown” who is “just f***ing crazy,” it is perfectly alright to lie to those voters to promote a false narrative. Because that is exactly what Carr’s show did. *New Day* is hosted by Chris Cuomo (the brother of New York Governor Andrew Cuomo) and Alisyn Camerota. On March 30, *New Day* contained a segment showing Camerota interviewing a panel of six Trump voters to get their “grades” and “impressions” of the Trump presidency after “sixty-plus days.” The video segment shows a Trump voter named William Baer, who appears unable to answer a simple question about Trump’s claim of voter fraud in the election. Baer winds up looking like a conspiracy kook. Unfortunately for CNN, Project Veritas obtained a leaked copy of the raw audio from that segment. That uncut audio shows that the producers of *New Day* — which would include Carr — selectively edited that segment. In the uncut audio, Baer can be heard giving a complete and reasonable answer about his own firsthand knowledge as a poll watcher in New Jersey where he saw voter fraud, including people using other people’s names to vote and not being asked for proof of identification and provisional ballots that are never challenged. CNN simply edited the segment to make it appear to say what the producers and reporters wanted it to say, instead of what the panel actually said.

When selective editing is not an option, CNN is not above creating a story out of thin air. Those videos came on the heels of CNN’s retraction of investigative reporter Thomas Frank’s June 22 article claiming the Senate Intelligence Committee was investigating Trump campaign team executive Anthony Scaramucci for ties to the Kremlin-controlled Russian Direct Investment Fund. The story — based on the claims of a single, unnamed source — turned out to be a complete fabrication. After it was published, Scaramucci pushed back against the story, and CNN retracted it, deleted it from its website, and replaced it with an editor’s note saying:

On June 22, 2017, CNN.com published a story connecting Anthony Scaramucci with investigations into the Russian Direct Investment Fund.

That story did not meet CNN’s editorial standards and has been retracted. Links to the story have been disabled. CNN apologizes to Mr. Scaramucci.

Even CNN couldn’t publically whitewash that mess. After CNN replaced the bogus story with a weak retraction, the online site Buzzfeed reported that a CNN source said the story was a “massive, massive f*** up” and that “people will be disciplined.” The following day, three CNN employees — writer Thomas Frank, unit editor Eric Lichtblau, and unit executive editor Lex Haris — “resigned” from CNN.

In a statement on his resignation, Haris said, “On Friday, CNN retracted a story published by my team. As Executive Editor of that team, I have resigned.” He added, “I’ve been with CNN since 2001, and am sure about one thing: This is a news organization that prizes accuracy and fairness above all else. I am leaving, but will carry those principles wherever I go.”



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It should be noted that an endorsement of “accuracy and fairness” from a man who was just caught making up a story doesn’t carry much weight. And — as the Project Veritas videos show — the cancer at CNN seems to have metastasized and infected the system from the top down. Disciplining three employees by “resignation” will not fix what is wrong at CNN.

Neither will overreacting to an Internet meme. But overreacting is the best word to describe CNN’s actions after President Trump Tweeted an edited version of a clip from WrestleMania 23 in 2007 when Trump went up against WWE CEO Vince McMahon during a “Battle of the Billionaires” match in which Trump slammed McMahon to the floor and punched him in the face. A user on the social news aggregation site Reddit edited the video by superimposing the CNN logo over McMahon’s face so the clip showed Trump “taking down fake news.” CNN began by releasing a statement saying, “It is a sad day when the President of the United States encourages violence against reporters.”

If CNN had stopped there, the network might have just looked like a crybaby. But, alas, CNN went further and wound up looking like a bully. The network tracked down the anonymous redditor and threatened to expose his identity — even though he is concerned that CNN doing so would endanger him and embarrass his family. In fact, CNN reported that the truth-battered network did not publish his name only “because he is a private citizen who has issued an extensive statement of apology, showed his remorse by saying he has taken down all his offending posts, and because he said he is not going to repeat this ugly behavior on social media again. In addition, he said his statement could serve as an example to others not to do the same.”

CNN added, “CNN reserves the right to publish his identity should any of that change.”

It is a federal crime under 18 U.S. Code Section 241 for two or more people to conspire to use intimidation to prevent someone from “the free exercise or enjoyment of any right or privilege secured to him by the Constitution or laws of the United States, or because of his having so exercised the same.”

What could have fixed what is wrong at CNN would have been a complete (top down) house cleaning. And — with ratings already beginning to tank — that may be the only solution CNN has left short of closing up shop.

In an industry driven by ratings and advertising income (which depends, to a large degree, on ratings), losing viewers in large numbers is a sign of pending demise. CNN viewers have responded to the realization that the network would be better described as Concocted News Network by switching the channel. In fact, between May (when the fake news revelations began) and June, CNN lost 20 percent of its viewership, dropping from 821,000 viewers per hour throughout the entire day and 1.12 million total viewers during the prime-time hours to 666,000 viewers per hour throughout the day and 882,000 viewers during prime time.

That amounts to a ratings drop that — as of this writing — has CNN in the 13th place in cable TV ratings — with 40-year-old reruns of the *Yogi Bear Show* on Nick at Nite drawing more viewers than CNN’s prime-time evening shows hosted by Anderson Cooper and Don Lemon in the same time slots.

Added to that loss of viewers is the pending loss of advertising dollars. Based strictly on viewership, advertisers would be more likely to spend their advertising budget on a network that is not busy committing suicide. Perhaps Nick at Nite.

In the wake of CNN threatening to reveal the identity of the creator of an Internet meme that



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embarrassed the network, the #CNNBlackmail hashtag began trending on social media, with many tagging CNN advertisers and promising to spend their money with other companies that don't advertise on CNN. If those advertisers respond in their own best financial interests, CNN can't survive.

Given the fact that CNN is doubling down on its fake news instead of cleaning house, the formerly successful — and ostensibly credible — news empire may have already passed the point of no return.

Ted Turner — who is not much involved in the actual operation of the network these days — famously stated that CNN would never cease transmission, saying, “We won't be signing off until the world ends. We'll be on, and we will cover the end of the world, live, and that will be our last event.” He added, “We'll play ‘Nearer, My God, to Thee’ before we sign off.” “Nearer, My God, to Thee” is believed by many to be the last song the band on the *Titanic* played as the ship was sinking. Given the rate at which the ship of CNN is taking on water, perhaps it's time to cue the band.



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