



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on December 22, 2024

Ex-CBS Reporter: We Colluded With Dems in Faking Negative Impact of Gov't Shutdowns

It could be Exhibit A for why people don't trust government and the legacy media. Only, well, there are so many damning exhibits to choose from. The story?

We've heard much about "collusion," such as the Trump/Russia-collusion hoax. But here's a story of real collusion, from the people who gave us that hoax:

Years ago, CBS couldn't find real-life negative impacts of a government "shutdown" that was taking place and which the Democrats were blaming on the Republicans. The solution?



Bill Oxford/iStock/Getty Images Plus

Be party to the Democrats' faking of a negative impact.

This bombshell was revealed, too, by a reporter who was with CBS at the time: Sharyl Attkisson.

Smoke and Mirrors

Attkisson was obviously inspired to relate the information by the recent budget battle, during which a Government Shutdown™ loomed. As she [wrote](#) Thursday on X:

Quick story about govt. shutdowns and the theatrics behind them. One year when I was reporting at CBS News during a govt. shutdown, I think 2013, we were sincerely searching for real life impact. When we couldn't find any, *that* should have been part of the story. Instead, we kept trying to create the appearance of an impact. It wasn't really trying to be dishonest. It was, in my retrospective view, because the general editorial idea for the story was to show how bad the "Republican" shutdown was for ordinary Americans, and the answer simply couldn't be that it wasn't. I've written quite a bit about this but we, as journalists, too often "decide" the story in advance and shape the facts to fit our narrative, rather than gathering information and letting that tell the story, whatever it may be. Anyway, the Ds were blaming Rs for the shutdown, so we were calling Ds and the Obama administration for ideas to report what was the real impact. Taking our cue, these officials fabricated impact that we could report. For example, they cordoned off outdoor public monuments in Washington DC. We knew and even discussed in the newsroom that this made no sense. These monuments weren't "manned" to begin with. The only reason to cordon them off from the public was so that visiting tourists would see the "impact" of the shutdowns and the news media would have something to take pictures of and interview people about. There are other examples but this is the one I remember the most.

Here's Attkisson's tweet:

**Stealth Dishonesty**

Telling the tale in the above, however, is Attkisson's statement that it "wasn't really trying to be dishonest." For not "really" being dishonest also means *not really being honest*. (Apropos to this, too, I just penned a ["Last Word" column](#) on honesty, appearing in the January 13, 2025 issue of *The New American* magazine.) As I explained, responding to Attkisson on X:

Except, Sharyl, that it WAS an example of being dishonest.

Look, I'm a fellow journalist and appreciate the work you're doing now. But if you want to avoid dishonesty in the future, you must acknowledge what it is. And what you're really saying (it's important to define this precisely) is this:

Your team was rationalizing; that's when one lies to oneself.

And, of course, once self-deception is achieved, fooling others happens as a matter of course.

"Honesty about honesty is the best policy," I then added in a second post (tweets below).

Do know that Attkisson's experience — realizing that a story thesis is invalid during investigation — is common in journalism. But when the situation arises, you must either alter the thesis or abandon the story.

Yes, I know from experience this hurts. On a few occasions in my career, I've spent hours on an article, only to then realize there was no "there" there. That's when you have to suck it up and move on.

Admittedly, this is easier to do when you're flying solo, as I often do, than when you're part of a team bent on doing a given story. Yet this is also why you must choose your team wisely. At *The New American*, management would be foursquare behind any writer who exposed a story thesis' falsity. It's called having honor and, most importantly, loving *Truth*.

The Cost of Lies

And if we love Truth and want to see it prevail, in our time and place, we mustn't be faint-hearted in characterizing trespasses against it. What CBS and the Democrats did is nothing less than *evil*.

As [I often say](#), giving people misinformation is like feeding false data into a computer: garbage in, garbage out. Consider Attkisson's government shutdown example.

First, the Democrats' political games had an immediate effect. That is, people enjoying once-in-a-lifetime vacations, schoolchildren on field trips, etc., had their experiences partially to completely ruined by the cordoning off of the monuments.

But then there's a far more serious effect: causing Americans to support bad politicians and policies. Most simply, the Dem-CBS deception surely influenced some people to support the Democrats, the very people causing the problem. (Of course, that's the idea.)

Even more egregiously, however, the stunt helped promote the illusion of big government's necessity. If people actually experienced how nothing much changes during a "shutdown," they might realize how unnecessary much of government is.

As to this, the excellent John Stossel segment below illustrates shutdowns' true (in)significance.



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The second most popular commenter under the video summed the matter up well. “The crisis is that the people might learn that we can live without big government,” he wrote.

What we can’t live with, though, are big lies — peddled continuously.

The good news is that the big liars, the legacy media, are going out of business. And few things would be better for our Republic than their demise.



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