



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on January 15, 2017

## CNN and BuzzFeed Run “Fake News” in Attempt to Damage Trump

Donald Trump once enjoyed a fairly friendly relationship with the mainstream media. Then he ran for president. As a Republican. On an “America First” platform. The relationship soured quickly. As bad as Candidate Trump’s relationship with media was, President-elect Trump’s relationship with media is worse. It appears that some media organizations are willing to risk everything in an effort to bring him down.



While organizations such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* maintained at least a *semblance* of credibility by staying away from the story about the less-than-credible “dossier” on Trump, others — CNN and BuzzFeed in particular — went all out creating fake news about what is likely a fake document.

CNN [reported](#) on the “dossier” and claimed that:

Classified documents presented last week to President Obama and President-elect Trump included allegations that Russian operatives claim to have compromising personal and financial information about Mr. Trump, multiple US officials with direct knowledge of the briefings tell CNN.

And:

The classified briefings last week were presented by four of the senior-most US intelligence chiefs — Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, FBI Director James Comey, CIA Director John Brennan, and NSA Director Admiral Mike Rogers.

One reason the nation’s intelligence chiefs took the extraordinary step of including the synopsis in the briefing documents was to make the President-elect aware that such allegations involving him are circulating among intelligence agencies, senior members of Congress and other government officials in Washington, multiple sources tell CNN.

BuzzFeed followed CNN’s lead and went a step further. BuzzFeed’s [report](#) spelled out the sordid details of the salacious allegations and contained a link to the full 35-page document.

In his press conference on Wednesday, the president-elect called out CNN and BuzzFeed while thanking other media organizations who did not report what they could not confirm. He said:

I want to thank a lot of the news organizations for some of whom have not treated me very well over the years — a couple in particular — and they came out so strongly against that fake news and the fact that it was written about by primarily one group and one television station.

Without naming them at this point in the press conference, it was clear that he was addressing BuzzFeed and CNN, in that order. Later in the press conference, Trump was more specific. His first shot was fired at BuzzFeed. He said, “As far as BuzzFeed, which is a failing pile of garbage, writing it, I think they’re going to suffer the consequences,” adding, “They already are.” He then turned to CNN,



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which had not actually published the document but had embellished several key points. He said:

And as far as CNN going out of their way to build it up and — by the way, we just found out [as] I was coming down. Michael Cohen — I was being — Michael Cohen is a very talented lawyer. He's a good lawyer in my firm. It was just reported that it wasn't this Michael Cohen ... we're talking about. So all night long it's Michael Cohen.

I said, "I want to see your passport." He brings his passport to my office. I say, hey, wait a minute. He didn't leave the country. He wasn't out of the country. They had Michael Cohen of the Trump Organization was in Prague. It turned out to be a different Michael Cohen. It's a disgrace what took place. It's a disgrace and I think they ought to apologize to start with Michael Cohen.

CNN correspondent Jim Acosta tried to cut in and ask a question. After a tense back-and-forth where Trump continued to dismiss Acosta while the CNN correspondent continued to demand that Trump allow him to ask a question, the president-elect shut him down with, "No, I'm not going to give you a question. I'm not going to give you a question. You are fake news."

While many said that Trump's treatment of Acosta and his statements about BuzzFeed and CNN went too far and were "unpresidential," others have said it was good to finally see the liberal media receive its comeuppance at the hands of someone who has finally had enough. Considering the vile nature of the allegations in the spurious document, Trump's reaction to those media outlets who chose to capitalize on it — while appearing to make up details as they went along — is not surprising.

CNN, in particular — which received the sharpest rebuke of the press conference — had not only taken a document which had not been — and likely *cannot* be — verified and reported on it as if it were proven, but had gone further in creating facts to add to the lacking veracity of the story. For instance, as quoted above, CNN reported that "Classified documents presented last week to President Obama and President-elect Trump included allegations that Russian operatives claim to have compromising personal and financial information about Mr. Trump." Trump denied in the press conference that he had been given those documents, saying he heard about it "outside of the meeting" with intelligence officials. Immediately after the press conference, CNN anchor Jake Tapper defended his network's decision to publish what it did and said that — unlike BuzzFeed, which had published the entire document — CNN had published only the same two-page synopsis that was "shown to" President Obama and Trump by intelligence officials.

But what happened next is typical of the type of "fake news" that Trump blasted. In a statement released by CNN soon after Tapper's remarks, CNN wrote:

We are fully confident in our reporting. It represents the core of what the First Amendment protects, informing the people of the inner workings of their government; in this case, briefing materials prepared for President Obama and President-elect Trump last week.

Details are such pesky things. For instance, the difference between "presented to" (in the report) and "prepared for" (in the statement). Perhaps CNN doesn't know the difference. Perhaps they thought no one would notice. Either way, in their full-steam-ahead rush to damage Trump, CNN has likely done real harm to what credibility they had left after the misreporting done by the network throughout the election.

As this writer knows [first hand](#), mistakes are easy to make. But since truthful reporting matters — and, just to put in the for-what-it's-worth-column, is what that portion of the First Amendment actually protects — the editorial process is designed to catch those mistakes before they appear in a publication.



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When a mistake makes it through that process, admitting it and correcting it are the proper steps to take. Burying it and pretending it isn't a mistake are sure signs of a lack of journalistic integrity. As of this writing, CNN's original report is unchanged.

Given President-elect Trump's attitude, unless CNN changes course, it would not be surprising to see the White House press pool without a seat for a CNN correspondent.



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