



CNN's Collapse Symptomatic of Entire Mainstream Media's Problem

CNN's [breathtaking decline](#) in its audience following the release of the Mueller Report is symptomatic of the problem facing the entire mainstream media: CNN assumed that President Trump was guilty of all manner of offences involving collusion with Russia during his campaign for the presidency in 2016. The network was the head cheerleader of that parade, but following the release of the Mueller Report the entire mainstream media has suffered a mighty, perhaps fatal, blow to its claim of journalistic integrity.



CNN's decline in its audience is simply staggering. In April Nielsen reported that its prime time ratings dropped 26 percent from a year earlier, while in its most coveted 25- to 54-year old demographic (which drives advertising revenue) it lost 41 percent of its audience.

The decline extended into the second quarter, with CNN's 25-54 demographic suffering a 37 percent decline compared to the second quarter of 2018.

It isn't just CNN that has lost so much of its audience and credibility. It's the entire mainstream media — including the New York Times, the *Washington Post*, and MSNBC — which published more than 8,500 articles on the Mueller investigation, reflecting the foregone conclusion that not only was the president guilty but that the revelations to come would end his administration in disgrace and possibly prison time.

When that report failed to arrive at that preconceived and heavily promoted outcome, their audience began its rush for the exits. After the Mueller Report was completed in March, Matt Taibbi, a virulent anti-Trumper who authored the book *Insane Clown President* (2017), wrote 26 pages expressing his disgust over the media's selling out of its former credibility. In his opinion piece entitled "It's Official: Russiagate is this Generation's WMD," he compared the failed mainstream media's effort to vet claims of weapons of mass destruction by the Bush administration that led to the U.S.'s disastrous and monstrously costly war in Iraq.

Taibbi concluded:

As a purely journalistic failure, however, WMD was a pimple compared to Russiagate. The sheer scale of the errors and exaggerations this time around dwarfs the last mess. Worse, it's led to most journalists accepting a radical change in mission. We've become sides-choosers, obliterating the concept of the press as an independent institution whose primary role is sorting fact and fiction.

We had the sense to eventually look inward a little in the WMD affair, which is the only reason we escaped that episode with any audience left. Is the press even capable of that kind of self-awareness now? WMD damaged our reputation. If we don't turn things around, this story will



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on July 5, 2019

destroy it.

Also following release of the Mueller Report, White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders demanded an apology from the media for its two years' efforts to besmirch the president and end his administration. All she got were claims from them that they were just reporting the "facts." Said Jeff Zucker, president of CNN: "We are not investigators. We are journalists, and our role is to report the facts as we know them, which is exactly what we did." Martin Baron, executive director of the *Washington Post*, echoed Zucker: "Our job is to bring facts to light." Dean Bacquet, executive editor of *New York Times*, repeated the canard: "We wrote a lot about Russia, and I have no regrets. It's not our job to determine whether or not there was illegality."

But what if the "facts" are wrong? What if they are incomplete? What if they are conveniently selected to promote a pre-approved narrative? To paraphrase Thomas Huxley, "The great tragedy of a false narrative is the slaying of that beautiful hypothesis by an ugly fact."

Trump's legacy, when it is finally written, will surely include not only the destruction of the fake news media's claim to journalistic integrity, but also the exposure of this media as the instrument of those who are working to destroy America and turn it into a socialist tyranny.

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