



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on February 3, 2021

Forbes Media Adopts “Truth Reckoning” Against Ex-Trump Staffers

Writing in the *Independent Review*, William Baumgarth (an associate professor of political science at Fordham University) said, “The direction progressivism is taking seems to involve taking Orwell’s *1984* not as a warning but as a handbook.”

In Orwell’s classic dystopian novel of a future totalitarian state, the mere expression of an opinion not approved by the governing authorities was a crime. In the book, this *thoughtcrime* was punishable by death, and the person who dared to offer a contrary viewpoint became an *unperson* — as though he had never even existed.



AP Images

In modern America, expressing a view unpopular with the progressive elites may not get one the death penalty (at least not yet, but it should be noted that the person most responsible for the infamous Reign of Terror during the French Revolution, when thousands died on the guillotine, was Maximilian Robespierre — a former opponent of the death penalty).

Randall Lane, the chief content officer for *Forbes*, announced a few days ago that Forbes Media was planning on “holding those who lied for Trump accountable.” He termed it “a truth reckoning.”

Readers of Orwell’s novel might recall that the fictional tyrannical government had a “Ministry of Truth,” which, of course, perpetrated monstrous lies to keep the ruling elite in power. Lane said that he is holding these Trump staffers responsible for the demonstrations at the Capitol on January 6, and that they should not be allowed to obtain future jobs. He threatened any potential future employers: “Hire any of Trump’s fellow fabulists ... and *Forbes* will assume that everything your company or firm talks about is a lie.”

Among those slated to become veritable unpersons by Lane are former Trump White House Press Secretaries Sean Spicer (who presently hosts the Newsmax TV show *Spicer & Co.*), Sarah Huckabee Sanders (now a candidate for governor of Arkansas), and Kayleigh McEnany. For their “crime” of serving under Trump, Lane intends for them to be blacklisted from getting lucrative jobs in the future. “Don’t let the chronic liars cash in on their dishonesty. Trump’s liars don’t merit that same golden parachute” that others have enjoyed in book royalties and such after they left the government payroll.

It should be noted that Steve Forbes, who once ran the Forbes businesses, does not agree with the current direction of the magazine, which was launched by his grandfather, B.C. Forbes, and continued by his father, Malcolm Forbes. Steve Forbes is a conservative who endorsed Trump in both of his presidential campaigns of 2016 and 2020. This provides a sad commentary on how business enterprises launched by conservatives often abandon the original ideals of their founders. Forbes Media was sold six years ago to a company based in Hong Kong — now part of Communist China.



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We here in Oklahoma have experienced such a misfortune. The state's largest newspaper, *The Oklahoman*, was led by E.K. Gaylord, then his son Edward L. Gaylord, for decades, and provided a no-nonsense conservative voice during that time. Sadly, the paper is now owned by Gannett, which publishes the liberal paper *USA Today*. While the paper is still called *The Oklahoman*, it is really a different newspaper — a paper that promotes progressive causes on a daily basis. It appears that Forbes Media is only the latest such victim of this pattern.

Another lesson from this is the rank hypocrisy of the Left. While it is a staple of progressive beliefs to cite the 1940s Hollywood Blacklist of actors, directors, and writers who were members of the U.S. Communist Party as a horrible episode, leftists have no problem blacklisting conservatives in Hollywood, academia, politics, as this recent blacklist of Trump media coordinators demonstrates. It should be noted that the blacklist of American Communists was of individuals who were members of a movement that owed its allegiance to a hostile foreign power — the Soviet Union — then led by one of history's most evil tyrants, Joseph Stalin. Stalin was responsible for literally millions of deaths before his own death in 1953. Yet, to progressives such as Lane, someone who worked in the Trump White House is worse than supporters of a mass murderer.

Even individuals such as Steve Forbes, who are generally conservative, repeat false narratives about the era that produced the Hollywood Blacklist. Forbes told Rob Schmitt on the show *The Count* that he has a “dim view of history where we had blacklists ... so I take a different view.” Forbes added, “It's one thing to point out where somebody has not spoken the truth, that's part of the example of what the press is supposed to be about. But again, we believe in diversity of opinion.... I think we have to keep in mind, in terms of blacklisting, which happened in the 50s during the McCarthy era, harm the culture, harm the politics, we don't want that again.”

One can certainly agree with Forbes that we do not want to blacklist individuals because of their political viewpoints, but Forbes calling it “the McCarthy era” betrays that he has, unfortunately, bought into the progressive re-writing of the era's history. The McCarthy of the so-called era was Senator Joe McCarthy of Wisconsin, who courageously attempted to get communists and Soviet spies out of the U.S. government. McCarthy expressed no opinion on what Hollywood or any other private business did about communists they employed. He had nothing to do with the Hollywood Blacklist, which was put together before McCarthy began his crusade against communist spies in the government in 1950.

I have even heard the statement that McCarthy created the Hollywood Blacklist while he was chairman of the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Of course, that is untrue, as it would be highly unusual for a senator to chair a House committee!

Forbes is right to oppose what is happening now at the magazine and media empire that bears his family name. But we do not need to slander a great patriot — Senator Joe McCarthy — in order to do it.

Instead, we should focus on opposing the “cancel culture” that more closely resembles the fictional totalitarian system of the book *1984*.



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