Who's Behind the Michael Avenatti-Stormy Daniels Fake News Parade?

Michael Avenatti is giving ambulance-chasing lawyers a bad name. The publicity hound attorney for porn star Stormy Daniels has so discredited himself that the barrister tribe is woefully remiss for failing to protect news consumers. The least they could do is disavow his membership in the legal fraternity or file a lawsuit against him for impersonating a legal expert.

Despite the fact that Avenatti's "evidence" thus far has been a giant nothing burger, the "mainstream" media can't get enough of him. Like Robert Mueller's "Trump-Russia collusion" witch hunt, Avenatti provides grist for the non-stop 24/7 "Get Trump" media mill. They've already milked gossip-meister Michael Wolff's fact-free *Fire and Fury* book tour for all they can. Even though Wolff admitted in the book's prologue that many of his accounts of alleged activities and conversations in the Trump White House are "badly untrue," and even though many liberal critics lambasted Wolff's factual inaccuracies and his known record for inventing stories, he still received the royal media treatment. Nevertheless, Wolff didn't provide the Trump takedown that anti-Trumpers had hoped for. Likewise for James Comey's media saturation book tour. Even though the former FBI boss has been transformed into a Big Media celebrity, Comey's charges have failed to catch fire. Thus, it looks like the Fake News gangs have settled on Avenatti (known increasingly as "the creepy porn lawyer") as the latest Trump takedown ticket.

According to a recent tabulation by Bill D'Agostino and Rich Noyes for the Media Research Center (MRC), Avenatti "has been interviewed a staggering 147 times on broadcast and cable news shows" during the 10-week period from March 7 (when the publicity first began) through May 15. "More than half of those interviews (74) were on CNN, which almost certainly makes Avenatti the most ubiquitous guest in the network's history," the MRC report states.

"No guest — not Donald Trump or Bernie Sanders in 2016, nor Adam Schiff in 2017 — received anything close to the outpouring of free media coverage that CNN has bequeathed to Avenatti," it notes. "The media's massive donation of publicity is obviously the main reason why Daniels and Avenatti have been able to use a crowd funding site to raise a whopping $500,000 to fund their anti-Trump lawsuits, with many of the thousands of anonymous donors citing the interviews as they make their gifts," the MRC reports.

"While CNN has been the friendliest network, hosting the Trump-bashing lawyer an astonishing 74 times, MSNBC has been close behind, donating 57 segments featuring Avenatti," D'Agostino and Noyes note. "On a single day (May 3), MSNBC featured Avenatti a stunning seven times — from 7am ET (Morning Joe) through 10pm ET (The Last Word). Rounding out the tally were interviews on ABC (six), CBS (five), NBC (four) and the Fox News Channel (just once, on FNC's Fox News at Night back on March 20)."

Anti-Trump Derangement Addiction

Not surprisingly, the MRC study found that CNN's *Anderson Cooper 360* and MSNBC's *The Last Word with Lawrence O'Donnell* "were the most smitten with Avenatti, interviewing him the most of any program (20 times in the case of Cooper, 16 in the case of O'Donnell)."

CNN newsie Brian Stelter, in a recent interview with *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof, admitted that "I'm a Trump addict." For his part, Kristoff conceded that both he and his wife also suffer from "Trump addiction." To be more accurate, both Kristof and Stelter should have said that they suffer from *Anti*-Trump Derangement Addiction (ATDA). In fact, it's obvious that there is an institutional epidemic of the condition at both the *Times* and CNN. Clearly, these people need help. Kristof and Stelter have taken the first step to recovery by admitting their addiction, but they still have a long way to go. And they are marinating in a toxic employment environment surrounded by fellow addicts suffering from the same ATDA psychosis.

Recovery prospects are not good. Their Stage 4 ATDA has obviously clouded their judgment to such a degree that now they don't even bother with the pretense of being objective and unbiased, and are getting increasingly sloppy about covering their tracks. Case in point: revelations that CNN's Don Lemon is palsy-walsy with Michael Avenatti. This came out in a tweet by lobbyist Juanita Scarlett, who boasted she was "thrilled" to have met Michael Avenatti "at the Sag Harbor soiree" of CNN host Don Lemon. The tweet included a photo of Avenatti and at least three CNN regulars at Lemon's home in the Hamptons: Lemon, political commentator Errol Louis, and LGBT "Republican" activist-commentator Margaret Hoover. The tweet-photo was deleted, but not before conservative writer Stephen Miller saved it (see the link above).

Then there's CNN analyst April Ryan, who posted a picture on Instagram of herself and Avenatti — all smiles and arms around each other — with the gloating caption: "Was I singing 'Stormy Weather' to Stormy Daniels' attorney Michael Avenatti? You had to have been there to know why we're both smiling so hard." In the interests of transparency and full disclosure, do any of the "journalists" interviewing or commenting on Avenatti ever mention their chummy relationships with him? Not that we are aware of.

Avenatti Viewer Fatigue

Not everyone in medialand is totally enamored of the bald, limelight-chasing lawyer. In a May 17 article entitled "Gaffes, threats should mean its time to take Avenatti off air," Joe Concha, media reporter for *The Hill*, outlined a number of the problems with Avenatti, including his slimy "off the record" tweet threatening to sue reporters from *The Daily Caller* for reporting unfavorably on him. Concha also reminded us of a photo from an Avenatti tweet of March 22 showing a DVD lying on a desk. Avenatti's titillating text accompanying the tweet asked: "If 'a picture is worth a thousand words,' how many words is this worth?????" In an interview with CNN's Wolf Blitzer, Avenatti said the pictured disk contained evidence proving Stormy Daniels' claims of an affair with Donald Trump in 2006. The impression Avenatti has tried to give in his media appearances is that the DVD contains video or photo evidence of Trump-Daniels sexcapades.

This Avenatti buildup has all the makings of being many times worse than Rachel Maddow's epic fail during her much-much-much-hyped "reveal" of Donald Trump's tax returns, on March 14, 2017. She and MSNBC led viewers to believe they had obtained the "holy grail" — President Trump's much sought-after tax returns. Turns out, after a pre-show Twitter buildup and more than 20 minutes of the program opening with teasing and suspense-building blather, Maddow had only 2 pages of an old 1040 return from 2005. To top it off, Trump came off pretty well; the old tax return showed he had paid millions of dollars in taxes, and it provided no evidence of any wrongdoing. Even many of Maddow's

Trump-hating comrades in the media and in Camp Clinton were chagrined, or even outraged, at having been misled. Maddow and MSNBC were roundly (and rightfully) mocked and scorned for the deceptive oversell.

But, apparently, the lessons that should have been learned from the Maddow-Tax disaster have been lost on the ATDA-afflicted Trump haters in the establishment media bubble. Anti-Trump Derangement Addiction, clearly, reigns in the mainstream media (MSM) "news" rooms. CBS's *60 Minutes* allowed Avenatti and Daniels to push their evidence-free salacious charges to 22 million viewers on March 25. And they have continued to push the same story unchallenged in many dozens of friendly interviews since.

Follow the Money

"Who is paying Michael Avenatti?" That question forms the title of an article by Mark Penn in *The Hill*. It is a question that the high-dollar journalists in Big Media should be asking (and should have been asking all along). But, of course, they are too busy fawning over Anenatti and posing for selfies with him to trouble with such basic, Journalism 101 questions.

Penn notes that Avenatti "wants to make the discussion all about where Michael Cohen, President Trump's personal attorney, got his money but, to have clean hands, Avenatti needs to come forward with exactly who is financing his operation, who his sources were for detailed banking information, and whether he really is an attorney solely representing Stormy Daniels or just using her as cover to wage a political operation."

"From the beginning," says Penn, "this has been fishy. Daniels's previous lawyer advised her to stick to her agreements. In contrast, Avenatti okayed her violating with impunity her non-disclosure agreement on '60 Minutes' despite a binding arbitration judgment against her. She acknowledged on Twitter that she is not paying for her lawyer. So who is? And did he indemnify her against all multimillion-dollar penalties?" Basic questions. Why is no one at the *Times,* CBS, CNN, MSNBC, etc., asking them? Our question is rhetorical, naturally. We know why the relentless anti-Trumpers in the discredited "prestige" press don't ask the obvious questions; because doing so would risk exposing their conspiracy to bring down Trump.

Avenatti is not merely a media-hound lawyer (although he is that); he is, primarily, a political hack, a Democrat attack dog trained by political street fighter Rahm Emanuel, currently the mayor of Chicago. Emanuel, a longtime asset of Goldman Sachs, served as senior advisor to President Bill Clinton before moving on to a three-term stint in the House of Representatives, and then a plum role as White House chief of staff for President Barack Obama.

"Avenatti learned some of his hard-charging ways in the toughest of all arenas, the political world," according to an article by Suzie Frisch in the July 2009 issue of *SuperLawyers*. "After his time at Wharton as a University of Pennsylvania undergrad, he spent five years at a political consulting firm run by Rahm Emanuel, the current [2009] White House chief of staff," wrote Frisch, noting that Avenatti worked on nearly 150 campaigns in 42 states. And now he's working on the biggest one of his career, to bring down the president of the United States.

But who is he working for? As noted above, he has, reportedly, raised $500,000 through crowd-funding online. But we don't know from whom that has come, and that is not likely to be sufficient to cover potential legal costs. The recently released report of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) has revealed that Democrat operative Daniel Jones, a former top aide to Senator

Dianne Feinstein, is leading an ongoing $50 million opposition research operation against President Trump involving British agent Christopher Steele and Fusion GPS. These are the same folks who fabricated the "salacious and unverified" hit piece known as the "Steele dossier." And they are being funded, noted the HPSCI report, to the tune of $50 million from "7 to 10 wealthy donors located primarily in New York and California." Is some of this money being sluiced into Avenatti's legal-media attacks on President Trump? Or is he being funded by other Democratic mega-donors?

These are legitimate, relevant questions, yes? Just don't hold your breath waiting for Anderson Cooper, Chuck Todd, Joe Scarborough, Jake Tapper, or any of the other talking heads of the Fake News commentariat to ask them.

Photo of Michael Avenatti and Stormy Daniels: AP Images

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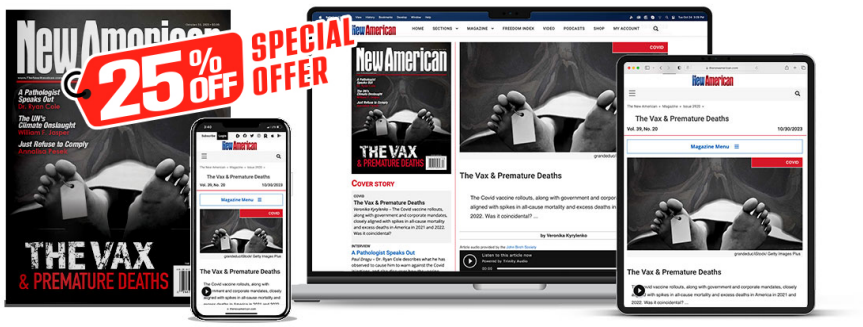

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