

OPINION: Fake News Brethren : Fox News and Trump

By Bruce C. Ditata

In author Ray Bradbury's nightmarish view of the twenty-fourth century, Fahrenheit 451, Donald J. Trumpism and his symbiotic propaganda network, Fox News, have effectively won the final media war. Other real news outlets have been quashed, silenced by government media control; books have been banned and those who hide them, along with the books themselves have become subject to incineration.

Written in 1951, Bradbury's dystopia projects a future where objective truth, facts, real investigative news has been made obsolete by the slow, inexorable inability of humanity to know the difference between incessant, government controlled newspeak and measurable, empirical reality.

The willingness of our population to sift and synthesize truth from fantasy has been destroyed by the steady cadence of nonsensical presidential tweets and Fox News' menu of innuendo and conspiracy theories, replaced by a docile complacency. In Bradbury's ominous warning,

"... at a clip where you can't think of anything else but the danger...sitting in some room where you can't argue with the television. Why? The television is "real." It is immediate, it has dimension. It tells you what to think and blasts it in. It must be right. It seems so right. It rushes you on so quickly to its own conclusions your mind hasn't time to protest..."

The role of media in the minds of our founding fathers, hundreds of years ago was not as a state sponsored rationalizer of all the dubious actions of the United States President- as Fox News views its reason for being- while parroting all the familiar Trumpistic bombast.

On the contrary, media in its many forms- print, television, online websites- has an obligation to dig into the actions of government institutions and government officials to make certain their actions are lawful, ethical, and appropriate according to the mandates of our constitutional, democratic form of government.

Benjamin Franklin, writing in 1736 nearly sixty years BEFORE freedom of the press was included in the U.S Constitution's Bill of Rights, referred to it as " ... a principal pillar of a free government; when this support is taken away, the constitution of a free society is dissolved and tyranny is erected on its ruins. Republics... derive their strength and vigor from a popular examination into the action of the magistrate."

In present day times circa 2018 the head "magistrate," one Donald J. Trump, aka President of the United States, rejects completely the notion that his utterances and actions are subject to "popular examination" by anyone, especially the news outlets that dare to question his singular vision as to how "America will be great again." From the onset of his presidential candidacy and throughout Trump's first year in office, to do so is to be relegated to "fake news" status.

In the best traditions envisioned by Franklin and other founding fathers, who knew the absolute necessity for a free, unfettered press, there has been a renaissance of investigative journalism, mining all the questionable, possibly illegal dealings of the Trump election campaign, its shady, potentially treasonous conspiracy with Vladimir Putin and Russia to tilt the 2016 presidential election away from Hillary Clinton, and now the growing drum beat of his administration and lackey news outlet, Fox, to denigrate and delegitimize Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into all of the above.

It might be well nigh time for the thirty six percent of

Americans still in thrall with Trumpism and the truly “fake news” Fox network to seek a moment of lucid truth seeking as Montag did, the protagonist in Fahrenheit 451 when he realized how valuable books were and the truths therein.

Bradbury wrote about books in the way America circa 2018 ought to be assessing real media, holding Trump and his minions accountable in every way possible.

“... books are so important because they have quality... book(s) can go under the microscope...books have pores...texture...truthfully recorded details of life...”

And Bradbury wrote about Trumpism and Fox News, too, inferring these dubious types, “ want only wax moon faces, poreless, expressionless... flowers...trying to live on flowers instead of growing on good rain and black loam... bad ones leaving (life) for the flies...”