



Alfred E. Newman says it: “All the News That Fits”

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The advent of the iPhone has led to the concept that everybody is a journalist. People go around taking pictures and videos of anything they can see and then post it online. They consider this journalism. I have to get a laugh at this. Because journalism is a lot more than having a morning show on YouTube and posting ridiculous videos.

I think the people who best illustrate this nonsense are called First Amendment Auditors. They go into public buildings and harass the office workers claiming that it's a public building and they can do anything they want in that building. They use the old trope that these are public “servants” and they must bow to their whims. They think they have the same rights, reinterpret the law and become YouTube lawyers. I have seen some of them try to go into schools to take pictures of the kids in their classrooms and expose what's happening in our schools. Another group of auditors have invaded public clinics to, in their minds, expose what is happening regardless of the rights of patient's privacy. They harass the police, they harass citizens, and they make general nuisances of themselves. First Amendment Auditors go so far as to compromise security on military bases. They claim to be exercising and protecting our rights but they are really making us less safe. Then they go and post this on YouTube and claim they are journalists, protecting our rights. All they are doing is monetizing their ridiculous videos and unfortunately the courts have held that anything can be considered journalism and that they can monetize your face and your image.

It gets even worse when you get to Tic Toc and Instagram. You'll see signs like “breaking news” but all it is, is some persons AI created nonsense. Many of these are probably from foreign powers seeking to influence American public opinion. And yet our young people tend to believe these things because they don't know how to research and obtain first hand news. Even the real journalists interpret rather than present the facts as they are. Witness some of the reporting. I will never forget the scene when Minneapolis was burning and an NBC reporter called it a peaceful protest. And last night, some guy pours gasoline in front of the federal building, lights it on fire, and NBC reports it as a few fireworks went off. So where is Journalists integrity?

Going back to the First Amendment Auditors who call themselves journalists. I have to ask, in what world, do journalists make themselves the story? We have forgotten the basic principles of journalism that is, reporting who, what, where, when and why. You don't see that anymore. It's always colored by the journalist. And it happens whether they are politically left or right. They color every story with their personalized views. There are some who make fun of others who write because they don't agree with their opinions. And they want to monetize their own platform. Yet, we need competition so that all points of view are expressed. I remember the day when New York had multiple newspapers and each one expressed their own point of view. It wasn't boring. It was competitive and led to a better understanding of the world we live in. The news was true and reported without bias. There was time when the New York Times truly lived up to its motto, “all the news that's fit to print”. Now its motto seems to be, all the news that we agree with and if it's something else, we will turn it into something we agree with even if the story is false. That's the world we live in today.

A free press is essential for a free society. But that press has a responsibility to tell the story as it is. To not embellish the story and do not put your points of view on the story. The only place where opinions count is in opinion pieces which should be clearly labeled and not presented as news. This newspaper and this humble writer will always make sure that opinions are clearly marked and not present our opinions as news as some others clearly do.