



The Horrifying Rise Of Total Mass Media Blackouts On Inconvenient News Stories

Description

Two different media watchdog outlets, [Media Lens](#) and [Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting](#) (FAIR), have published articles on the complete blackout in mainstream news institutions on the [revelation by Icelandic newspaper Stundin](#) that a US superseding indictment in the case against Julian Assange was based on false testimony from diagnosed sociopath and convicted child molester Sigurdur Thordarson.

FAIR's Alan MacLeod writes that "as of Friday, July 2, there has been literally zero coverage of it in corporate media; not one word in the New York Times, Washington Post, CNN, NBC News, Fox News or NPR."

"A search online for either 'Assange' or 'Thordarson' will elicit zero relevant articles from establishment sources, either US or elsewhere in the Anglosphere, even in tech-focused platforms like the Verge, Wired or Gizmodo," MacLeod adds.

"We have not found a single report by any 'serious' UK broadcaster or newspaper," says the report by Media Lens. "But in a sane world, Stundin's revelations about a key Assange witness — that Thordarson lied in exchange for immunity from prosecution — would have been headline news everywhere, with extensive media coverage on BBC News at Six and Ten, ITV News, Channel 4 News, front-page stories in the Times, Telegraph, the Guardian and more."

"For those who still believe the media provides news, please read this," [tweeted](#) Australian journalist John Pilger regarding the Media Lens report. "Having led the persecution of Julian Assange, the 'free press' is uniformly silent on sensational news that the case against Assange has collapsed. Shame on my fellow journalists."

As we [discussed the other day](#), this weird, creepy media blackout has parallels with another total blackout on a different major news story which also involved WikiLeaks. In late 2019 the leak outlet Assange founded was [publishing multiple documents](#) from whistleblowers in the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) revealing that the organisation's leadership actively [tampered in the investigation](#) into an alleged chlorine gas attack in Douma, Syria in 2018 to support the US government narrative on the allegation, yet the mass media [wouldn't touch it](#). A Newsweek reporter

resigned from his position during this scandalous blackout and [published the emails](#) of his editors forbidding him from covering the story on the grounds that no other major outlet had reported on it.

Make no mistake, this is most certainly a new phenomenon. If you don't believe me, contrast the blackout on these stories with the mass media coverage on WikiLeaks revelations a few short years earlier. The press eagerly lapped up the 2016 publications of Democratic Party emails and actively collaborated with WikiLeaks in the publication of the Chelsea Manning leaks in 2010. Even the more recent [Vault 7 leaks](#) published in 2017 received plenty of media coverage.

Yet now every WikiLeaks-related story that is inconvenient for the US-centralized empire is carefully kept out of mainstream attention, with a jarring uniformity and consistency we've never experienced before. If the media environment of today had existed ten or fifteen years earlier, it's possible that most people wouldn't even know who Assange is, much less the important information about the powerful that WikiLeaks has brought to light.

We also caught a strong whiff of this new trend in the [near-total blackout](#) on the Hunter Biden October surprise last year, which only went mainstream because it stood to benefit one of America's two mainstream political factions. After the New York Post [first broke the story](#) we saw mainstream media figures publicly explaining to each other why it was fine not to cover it with reasoning that was all over the map, from [it's a waste of time](#) to [it's just too darn complicated](#) to [it's not our job to research these things](#) to the [Washington Post's notorious](#) "We must treat the Hunter Biden leaks as if they were a foreign intelligence operation — even if they probably aren't."

Anyone who dared publicize the leaks anywhere near the mainstream liberal echo chamber was [bashed into submission by the herd](#), and without any legitimate reason it was treated like a complete non-story at best and a sinister Russian op at worst. And then, lo and behold, in April of this year Hunter Biden [acknowledged](#) that the leaks could very well have come from his laptop after all, and not from some GRU psyop.

And I think that whole ordeal gives us some answers into this disturbing new dynamic of complete blackouts on major news stories. Last year The Spectator's Stephen L Miller [described how the consensus formed](#) among the mainstream press since Clinton's 2016 loss that it is their moral duty to be uncritical of Trump's opponent and suppress any news stories which might benefit them.

"For almost four years now, journalists have shamed their colleagues and themselves over what I will call the 'but her emails' dilemma," Miller writes. "Those who reported dutifully on the ill-timed federal investigation into Hillary Clinton's private server and spillage of classified information have been cast out and shunted away from the journalist cool kids' table. Focusing so much on what was, at the time, a considerable scandal, has been written off by many in the media as a blunder. They believe their friends and colleagues helped put Trump in the White House by focusing on a nothing-burger of a Clinton scandal when they should have been highlighting Trump's foibles. It's an error no journalist wants to repeat."

Once you've accepted that journalists have not just a right but a duty to suppress news that is both factual and newsworthy in order to protect a political agenda, you're out in open water in terms of blatant propaganda manipulation. And we saw the mainstream press shoved into alignment with this doctrine in the wake of the 2016 election.

This shove was never the biggest story of the day, but it was constant, forceful, and extremely dominant in the conversations that mainstream journalists were having with each other both publicly and privately in the wake of the 2016 election. Even before the votes were cast, we saw people like [Vox's Matt Yglesias](#) and [Axios editor Scott Rosenberg](#) shaming mass media reporters for focusing on the Hillary Clinton email scandal, and after Trump hysteria kicked in it got a whole lot more aggressive.

In 2017 we saw things like Clinton insider Jennifer Palmieri [melodramatically lamenting](#) the media's fixation on WikiLeaks publications despite the Clinton campaign's desperate attempts to warn them that it was a Russian operation (a claim that to this day remains [entirely without evidence](#)). Liberal pundits like [Joy Reid](#), [Eric Boehlert](#) and [Peter Daou](#) (prior to his [leftward conversion](#)) were constantly [browbeating](#) the [press](#) on [Twitter](#) for covering the leaks at all.

It ramped up even further when mainstream reporters like [The New York Times' Amy Chozick](#) and [CNN's Jeffrey Toobin](#) stepped forward with degrading mea culpas on how badly they regret allowing the Russian government to use them as unwitting pawns to elect Donald Trump with their reporting on [newsworthy facts about completely authentic documents](#). It was like a cross between the [confession/execution scene](#) from *Animal Farm* and the [walk of atonement scene](#) from *Game of Thrones*.

Bit by bit the belief that the press has a moral obligation to suppress newsworthy stories if there's a possibility that they could benefit undesirable parties foreign or domestic became the prevailing orthodoxy in mainstream news circles. By mid-2018 we were seeing things like BBC reporter Annita McVeigh [admonishing a guest](#) for voicing skepticism about Syrian president Bashar al-Assad's culpability in the Douma incident on the grounds that "we're in an information war with Russia." It's now simply taken as a given that managing narratives is part of the job.

Again, this is a new phenomenon. Mainstream media have always [been propaganda firms](#), but they've relied on spin, distortion, half-truths, uneven coverage, and uncritically parroted government assertions; there weren't these complete information barricades across all outlets. You'd see them giving important stories an *inadequate* amount of coverage, and *some individual outlets* would neglect inconvenient stories. But you'd always see someone jump at the chance to be the first to report it, if for no other reason than ratings and profit.

That's simply not how things work now. A major story can come to light and only be covered by media outlets which mainstream partisans will scoff at and dismiss, like RT or Zero Hedge.

The way the mass media have begun simply ignoring major news stories that are inconvenient for the powerful, across not just some but **all** major news outlets, is extremely disturbing. It means any time there's an inconvenient revelation, mainstream news institutions will just pretend it doesn't exist.

Seriously think about what this means for a moment. This is telling whistleblowers and investigative journalists that no matter how hard they work or how much danger they put themselves in to get critical information out to the public, the public will never find out about it, because all mainstream news outlets will unify around blacking it out.

You want to talk about a threat to the press? Forget jailing journalists and whistleblowers, how about **all** news outlets of any real influence unifying to simply deny coverage to any major information which

comes to light? This is a threat to the thing the press fundamentally *is*. More than a threat. It's the end. The end of the possibility of any kind of journalism having any meaningful impact.

The journalist who worked on the Stundin report [says](#) he spent *months* working on this story, and he would surely have expected his revelations to get some coverage in the rest of the western press. The OPCW whistleblowers would surely have expected their revelations to get enough attention to make a difference, otherwise they wouldn't have leaked those documents at great risk to themselves. What's being communicated to whistleblowers and journalists in these blackouts is, don't bother. It won't make any difference, because no one will ever see what you reveal.

And if that's true, well. God help us all, I guess.

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