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From: Joe Pompeo - POLITICO Media
Sent: Mon 6/19/2017 10:13:46 AM
Subject: Morning Media, presented by American Optometric Association: 'High marks' for Megyn Kelly — The ink-stained friendship of Baron and Baquet — The 'billionaire bromance' of Murdoch and Trump

By Joe Pompeo | 06/19/2017 06:10 AM EDT

With Alex Weprin

SO WHAT'D YOU THINK OF MEGYN KELLY'S ALEX JONES FEATURE LAST NIGHT? Putting aside the fiery debate about whether Kelly and NBC News were right to give such primo airtime to a man who has spread dangerous conspiracy theories like Pizzagate and the Sandy Hook hoax nonsense, the question for many journalists ahead of last night's highly-anticipated "Sunday Night with Megyn Kelly" segment was all about how tough Kelly would prove to be in grilling her controversial subject -- just three weeks into her new program, at that. Given how high the stakes were as a result of last week's public outcry, one assumes the editors at NBC News were working overtime to make sure the piece was as tough as possible. And given the favorable reviews, one assumes the network is happy with the end result.

A few moments worth mentioning....

-- **The Infowars boss downplayed his relationship with President Trump:** "I think my influence on Trump is way way lower than what MSM has said." Kelly: "Well what kind of access do you have?" Jones: "He's just called sometimes and, you know, talked about politics or thanked me, stuff like that. That's it."

-- **Ridiculous statement:** "The media never covers all the evil wars it's promoted." Kelly responded, "That doesn't excuse what you said about Newtown, and you know it." But really, she coulda/shoulda nailed him on the "media doesn't cover wars" part.

-- **This is more like it:** "You misstated facts about Chobani and its owner which, you could've found out if you just had a reporter do a little shoe-leather reporting -- pick up the phone, check out the facts. You never would have had to retract that or apologize."

-- **"Do you think of yourself as a journalist?"** Jones: "I have some journalists that work for me and I do journalistic work and I've broken a lot of big stories and I understand the basics of it."

If you missed it last night, you can watch the full clip [here](#).

Veteran CNN TV critic Brian Lowry: "[T]he piece that aired Sunday credibly justified covering the Infowars phenomenon, which was the bar that "Sunday Night With Megyn Kelly" ultimately had to clear. ... Moving into a prosecutorial mode that was frequently her strength on Fox, Kelly did press him, enlisting a Newtown parent and MSNBC contributor Charlie Sykes to help contextualize the 'toxic paranoia' that he spreads among his listeners. ... Kelly's handling of the interview should calm some nerves [at NBC News], even if it won't quiet all the dissenting voices."

Our own Jack Shafer: "[S]he took the mendacious Jones apart in such a textbook manner you had to wonder what all the shouting had been about. ... Short of waterboarding him, I don't know what more Kelly could have done to expose Jones' dark methods."

**** A message from the American Optometric Association:** More than 5,000 Doctors of Optometry and students from all 50 states are in DC to spotlight Optometry's expanding role in the health care system and key advancements in patient-centered care. For more information on the essential primary care being provided by optometrists -- America's family eye doctors - in communities across the country, visit www.aoa.org. **

TIPS AND COMMENTS: jpompeo@politico.com / [@joepompeo](https://twitter.com/joepompeo). **Morning Media** is edited by **Alex Weprin** ([@alexweprin](https://twitter.com/alexweprin) / aweprin@politico.com) and produced with writing/reporting help from **Cristiano Lima** (clima@politico.com / [@ludacristiano](https://twitter.com/ludacristiano)). **Archives**. **Subscribe**.

EXCERPT - From my feature this morning, "The Not-So-Bitter Rivalry of Dean Baquet and Marty Baron," over at POLITICO Magazine: "Baron and Baquet are the two most important newspaper editors in America right now, at a time when the media is tackling the most epic and consequential story of the past 40 years. ... Many news organizations have been moving the needle on the Trump story in different ways ... But when it comes to inside reports from intelligence and national security agencies, the Times and the Post, with their expanding rosters of veteran correspondents, have the greatest institutional advantages. In particular, the investigations into whether the Trump team colluded with Russia in the 2016 election have played to the historic strengths of both newspapers. ... The result has been a resurgence of ink-stained combat that makes NYT v. WaPo the most compelling journalistic rivalry since the days of Baquet and Baron's respective forefathers, Abe Rosenthal and Ben Bradlee. The other thing that makes the rivalry compelling is that unlike Rosenthal and Bradlee, who were cordial at most, Baron and Baquet are legit pals. ...

"And yet, looking back on their journeys to the ivory towers of American journalism , it's equally clear that Baron and Baquet have been formidable competitors, if collegial ones, over the course of their professional lives. Perhaps no two editors' careers have overlapped and shadowed one another so closely. In the past, they've each contended to be the top editor at The New York Times and to have all the power and influence that goes along with it. After decades of ups and downs for both men, Baquet eventually got that job, but at the same time, Baron got the glory and fame that only the most Herculean journalistic achievements can confer. Now, their competition defines not only their careers but, to no small degree, the fate of the Trump administration. Every morning, each goes to work knowing that part of what he needs to do that day is to be better and faster than the other."

That's the nut graph, in a nutshell. You can read the rest [here](#). (It's long, so I won't be offended if you bookmark and save for later.)

SIDENOTE: SOME POST NUMBERS THAT SURFACED IN MY REPORTING - "A person with knowledge of company finances said the Post now has more than 900,000 digital-only subscribers at three monthly access levels - \$3.99, \$9.99 and \$14.99 - with the majority of

its customers registered at the higher two tiers. Based on those numbers, digital subscriptions could theoretically be in the ballpark of \$100 million at this point. (In 2016, digital circulation at the Times was \$232.8 million.) ... Digital advertising this year, according to the person with knowledge of company finances, is projected to be at least \$120 million, up from roughly \$100 million in 2016. (Digital ad revenue at the Times in 2016 was \$208.8 million.) Since the Post, as opposed to the Times, is a private company and does not make its finances public, it wouldn't hurt to take these subscription and revenue numbers with a grain of salt."

SOUND BITES:

-- ".@megynkelly scored high marks with Alex Jones interview. Nailed the scumbag." [[Tina Brown](#)]

-- "Watching @megynkelly interview with Alex Jones, I'm even more convinced that her piece wasn't just ok to do, but important journalism." [[Dan Abrams](#)]

-- "Bottom line on NBC's Alex Jones piece: Strong editing gave it an edge & made him look like a kook. Still a win for him; boosts his profile." [[Margaret Sullivan](#)]

-- "If you're unfamiliar with Alex Jones, and are watching this Megyn Kelly report, hard to imagine you walk away believing anything he says. And fwiw, I think she's done about as good as anyone can do on TV taking him to task on many of his conspiracies." [[Kyle Blaine](#)]

-- "You could see the producers cutting and re-cutting it to meet various points of objection." [[Jay Rosen](#)]

BILL O'REILLY TEASES POSSIBLE 'NEW NETWORK' - [via Newsday](#) : "Making the first stop at his 'The Spin Stops Here' tour, O'Reilly ... made some news during the question-and-answer period ... Asked whether he planned to start his own network, he said 'there could be a new network' that will compete directly with Fox News. 'A bunch of people are looking to compete with Fox because there's a perception' of decline, he said. ... "But I am starting my own operation. We are going to do that ... where we will go into a studio and here it will look like 'The Factor.' . . . It's basically an experiment to see how many people are going to want this service. That's coming and will be here before September in a robust form. But I suspect there will be another network maybe merging with us. There will be a network that rises up because the numbers for Fox are going down."

DONALD TRUMP AND RUPERT MURDOCH, A HISTORY - [From The Guardian over the weekend](#) : "The alliance between Donald Trump and Rupert Murdoch has never been stronger. ... Now, with a reported criminal investigation in connection with sexual harassment allegations into Fox News, the stakes are higher than ever for the two friends. ... As Trump's 'inevitability' grew and it became clear he was going to win the Republican nomination, the two men grew closer still, uniting around what is perhaps the biggest thing they have in common: both men love to win, and suddenly they were in a position to use one another to do just that." Sid Blumenthal: "His entire empire's at stake - that's why Murdoch is talking to him every day. It's not because he enjoys the sparkling conversation of Donald Trump." More: "[Donald Trump](#)"

and Rupert Murdoch: inside the billionaire bromance"

MUST READS:

-- "Memo Shows Watergate Prosecutors Had Evidence Nixon White House Plotted Violence" [\[NBC News\]](#)

-- "Before the Gunfire in Virginia, a Volatile Home Life in Illinois" [\[NYT\]](#)

-- David Remnick: "Who in the White House Will Turn Against Donald Trump" [\[The New Yorker\]](#)

-- "The Normalization of Conspiracy Culture" [\[The Atlantic\]](#)

ERIC BOLLING FOR SENATE? [My colleague Hadas Gold reports this morning](#) : "Fox News anchor Eric Bolling may have just signed a new multi-year contract, but he's also eyeing a possible career change: A future run for Senate. For now, Bolling is secure in his job as co-host of the new show 'The Fox News Specialists.' But In a recent telephone interview from Fox News headquarters in New York City, Bolling said that 'when the lights go down on the TV career' he wants to make a primary challenge against a sitting Republican senator in the South. 'A lot of Republicans run as conservatives only to be elected, and we find out they're not conservative at all.' ... Bolling ... declined to specify which state in the South he'd run, which senator he would challenge or even when it would happen."

BIG UNIVISION FEATURE FROM JIM RUTENBERG - [In today's Times](#) : "By now you've probably heard that this is a golden age for journalism -- how The New York Times and The Washington Post are warring for scoops in ways reminiscent of the Watergate era; how an information-hungry public is sending subscriptions and television news ratings soaring, reinvigorating journalists and reaffirming their mission ... But the story isn't complete if it doesn't include Univision News, one of the most striking examples I've seen all year of a news organization that is meeting the moment. It is the leading news source for Hispanics in the United States, citizen and noncitizen alike -- a core audience that has an almost existential stake in the Trump administration's policies." More: ["A Newsroom and a Lifeline: Univision's Urgent Sense of Purpose"](#)

REVOLVING DOOR: [via Poynter](#): "Emma Carmichael, the editor in chief of Jezebel, announced on Friday that she's stepping down from that position next month. 'This has been the hardest decision of my professional life, but it's one I feel clear-headed about - I'm simply a little burnt out and ready to take a break from running a website,' she wrote in a memo to her staff. ... Carmichael becomes the third woman in a leadership position to leave Gizmodo Media Group in as many months. ... But the company has also made increasing gender diversity a priority."

SOUNDTRACK: The Ramones, "[Commando](#)"

EXTRAS:

-- Margaret Sullivan: "When student journalists need defending, these lawyers swoop in. For free." [WaPo]

-- Ken Doctor: "Will Tronc Get Squeezed Out of a Sun-Times Acquisition?" [The Street]

-- A profile of Task & Purpose, veterans-focused digital publication born out of a jobs board. [NiemanLab]

**** A message from the American Optometric Association:** Through the delivery of personalized care and comprehensive eye exams, doctors of optometry help ensure precise and healthy vision, identify and treat glaucoma and serious infections and provide early diagnosis of threats to overall health, including hypertension, stroke and diabetes, which may have no obvious symptoms. The doctor-patient relationship is at the heart of optometry practices serving thousands of communities across the country. With health care legislation a priority, AOA member doctors and students are asking Senators and House members to:

- Co-sponsor the AOA & ADA-backed bi-partisan Dental and Optometric Care Access Act (HR 1606).
- Vote to eliminate the health insurance industry's anti-trust exemption (bi-partisan HR 372, passed the House 416-7, March 22nd).
- Demand that Federal bureaucrats withdraw their scheme to impose costly mandates targeting eye doctors.
- Keep primary eye health and vision care a priority for the VA.
- Require patient health safeguards and quality care standards on remotely attempted care.

For more information, visit www.aoa.org. **

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/media/tipsheets/morning-media/2017/06/19/high-marks-for-megyn-kelly-the-ink-stained-friendship-of-baron-and-baquet-the-billionaire-bromance-of-murdoch-and-trump-001294>

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