

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
From: Joe Pompeo - POLITICO Media
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Subject: Morning Media, presented by the National Confectioners Association: Fox sinks, MSNBC rises in ratings race -- Reporting while female -- Covering Manchester

By Hadas Gold | 05/23/2017 05:51 AM EDT

With Cristiano Lima and Alex Weprin

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 17 YEARS FOX NEWS PLACED THIRD IN THE PRIMETIME DEMO RATINGS LAST WEEK. MSNBC, meanwhile, had a monster week, riding high off of Rachel Maddow's strong ratings and controversy swirling around the White House, placing number one in total primetime audiences and the 25 to 54 year old demographic ratings that advertisers care so much about. The network was also the second most watched network in all of cable for primetime last week. Meanwhile Fox is still reeling from a primetime news shakeup and opinionated primetime hosts who would rather cover other stories than the latest drama at the White House.

The numbers breakdown according to Nielsen from last week's weekday primetime (8-11p.m.):

MSNBC with 2.440 million total viewers, 611,000 in the 25-54 year old sweet spot demo.

Fox News with 2.405 million total viewers, 497,000 in the demo.

CNN with 1.649 million total viewers, 589,000 in the demo.

Granted, Fox is still in a really strong position and wins the day overall in total audience numbers. But the strength of MSNBC is striking. As [TVNewser notes](#), the last time Fox finished third in the prime time demo for a full week was the week of June, 9, 2000.

Former Fox star Bill O'Reilly weighed in on the slipping ratings in an appearance we missed last Friday on Glenn Beck's show: "On the Fox News side, you know, they made their decisions," he said, according to the [Free Beacon](#). "They didn't have to make those decisions, and they really didn't have a plan. When you take a guy like me out of the lineup, and I'm doing five, six million viewers a night, you better have a plan to replace that."

HELLO FROM OSLO, NORWAY - I'm Hadas Gold, filling in for Joe who will be back tomorrow, never fear! I'm here where the sun doesn't set until 10p.m. this time of year speaking at a conference about all things Donald Trump and the media. Send Oslo and media tips to hgold@politico.com and follow me on twitter [@hadas_gold](#). Special thanks to Alex Weprin and Cristiano Lima for their extra help these last two days.

Morning Media is edited by **Alex Weprin** ([@alexweprin](#) / aweprin@politico.com) and produced with writing/reporting help from **Cristiano Lima** (clima@politico.com / [@ludacristiano](#)). [Archives](#). [Subscribe](#).

COVERING MANCHESTER: The bombing at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, U.K. last night caused U.S. TV news channels to pivot from President Trump's first foreign trip. MSNBC had Brian Williams anchoring starting at 10 p.m. (Lawrence O'Donnell was at a family event in Boston, we hear), while Shepard Smith anchored at 9 and 11 p.m. on Fox News. Sean Hannity anchored a live hour at 10, while coverage continued into the overnight hours. CNN, likewise, extended live coverage to cover the breaking news. ABC, CBS and NBC all broke into regular programming with special reports about the news.

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MORE LAWSUITS HIT FOX NEWS: The tough week for the channel continues as three more complainants came forward alleging discrimination. Per [Bloomberg](#), one woman "claims she faced retaliation for reporting sexist and harassing conduct," another says she "encountered a racially hostile work environment and was fired less than three days after telling her supervisor she was pregnant." A third, "who wasn't classified as a permanent employee, said she was also subjected to racial discrimination and was fired after giving birth." The three are represented by the law firm Wigdor LLP which is also representing more than a dozen other current and former Fox employees alleging discrimination against the network.

FOX'S RESPONSE: "We have consistently demonstrated that the Company is committed to a diverse workplace that is free from all forms of discrimination, takes any complaint of discrimination seriously, and in these particular matters took prompt, effective and, where necessary, strong remedial action. We believe these latest claims are without legal basis and look forward to proving that Fox News at all times has acted appropriately, and lawfully, in connection with these matters."

REPORTING WHILE FEMALE: Our colleague Annie Karni and the Wall Street Journal's Carol Lee were the print poolers yesterday on Trump's foreign trip. Normally this would be nothing unusual but yesterday the fact that they were female affected how they could cover an event. At the Western Wall in Jerusalem, men are separated from the women, so Annie and Carol were not able to accompany Trump to the wall, instead going down with Melania and Ivanka Trump.

"As female poolers, Carol and I were technically on the female side of the Wall, separated from the male press pool by a small, low barrier that we could look over. We couldn't hear anything of what was happening, but the rabbis spoke quietly to Trump as they approached the Wall," Karni reported. Reuters' Steve Holland then stepped in, providing some details on what happened after Trump left and the women were ushered away.

"Once he and Melania reunited, Trump's son in law Jared Kushner, economic adviser Gary Cohn and national security adviser H.R. McMaster and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson approached the wall en masse and offered their own prayers."

SAUDI ARABIA BLOCKED ISRAELI REPORTERS FROM COVERING TRUMP'S TRIP by denying their visas, the Forward reports. The reporters were approved by the White House to travel on the press charter plane but last week were told they were not getting visas. It's nothing new for Saudi Arabia (the country does not have diplomatic relations with Israel) and they last made such a move in 2014 during a Barack Obama trip to the kingdom.

NO, THE INFOWARS CORRESPONDENT DOES NOT HAVE A PERMANENT WHITE HOUSE PRESS PASS, at least not yet. Jerome Corsi tweeted on Monday that he had secured White House press credentials. But Corsi was only in the White House on a day pass, not the more difficult to obtain and greater access granting White House hard passes. The worst kept secret in Washington is that nearly anyone who can claim in any way that they publish news (pretty low bar with this thing we call the internet) can apply for and be granted a temporary day or even weekly White House pass that allows them into the briefings. The fringe characters have been showing up to regular briefings for years, just this time around they're getting a bit more attention.

BUZZFEED NEWS' MONTANA PLAN via Alex Weprin: BuzzFeed News is planning another live election night show, this time covering the special House race in Montana on Thursday, May 25. The program will kick off at 8 PM MST, and will air exclusively on Twitter and Periscope. BuzzFeed will have a number of reporters stationed in Montana covering the race, and commentary will be provided by editor in chief Ben Smith, Decision Desk HQ's Brandon Finnegan and others. BuzzFeed previously hosted live election coverage during the Georgia special election.

--Speaking of BuzzFeed: "Judge won't move libel suit against BuzzFeed to New York over Trump dossier," via our colleague Josh Gerstein : "BuzzFeed and its editor-in-chief Ben Smith asked that the case be relocated to New York City, but Miami-based U.S. District Court Judge Ursula Ungaro issued a ruling Monday refusing to give up the case filed by Russian tech executive and entrepreneur Aleksey Gubarev. BuzzFeed took the controversial step of publishing the 35-page dossier in January, after press reports said it was mentioned in reports U.S. intelligence agencies circulated to top officials in the Obama administration and the incoming Trump team. Smith acknowledged that his reporters could not verify the accuracy of the facts in the dossier, but he said the public should be able to see it since it had circulated widely in Washington and was affecting policy discussions."

BUZZFEED, NETFLIX HONOR MICHAEL HASTINGS - BuzzFeed and Netflix hosted a screening and discussion of the new film "War Machine" recently, in honor of journalist Michael Hastings, whose book "The Operators" served as the inspiration for the movie. Hastings died in a car crash in 2013.

The film (Spoiler alert) features a journalist based on Hastings serving as the narrator and as a character in the film. The Hastings character follows the fictional general Glen McMahon as he works on a Rolling Stone profile (McMahon was based on Stanley McChrystal, who Hastings profiled for the magazine). "We were really captivated by Michael's book," said Brad Pitt, who plays McMahon in the film, and also served as a producer, during the discussion afterward. "It

certainly highlighted the absurdity of the [war in Afghanistan] even at that time."

"I think Michael would certainly see it as progress, that at least now it is not heresy to question the war machine," said Hastings' widow Elise Jordan, who previously served as director of communications for the National Security Council. "I think what people forget now about Michael, when he wrote that story he was so young he was 30 years old and taking on one of the most powerful institutions in the world, and that is a really really hard thing to do, when you are a young man and you have incoming from so many people. Sometimes you see the press sic on their own, and I think that is something to be cognizant of, as we are watching all of the coverage of the Trump administration, journalists staying on their mission of delivering honesty, delivering truth to their readers, and not getting derailed by the sideshow squabbles."

"I remember Michael being frustrated that everybody was asking about how he got the interview, and whether it was off the record or whether it was on the record, and it never got to a discussion about the war fighting itself," said BuzzFeed News national security correspondent Nancy Youssef. The fact that we are having this discussion makes me optimistic that we will be able to talk about it."

"[Michael] did say to us at one point when we were agreeing to [adapt his book into a movie], please don't turn this into something that glorifies war," said Plan B Entertainment co-president Jeremy Kleiner. "And I think the film is very funny, I think the film is very tragic, clever, subversive and I think the film shows some individual nobility. What I think the film does not say, is that war is glorious."

REVOLVING DOOR:

-- **ProPublica, soon launching its first regional bureau in Chicago**, announced its first three Illinois hires: NPR visuals alum David Eads joins as a news applications developer and the Chicago Tribune's Jason Grotto and Jodi Cohen come aboard as reporters.

-- **Tomi Lahren's new gig** will be with the Great America Alliance, a pro-Trump political non-profit that seeks to build grassroots support for the president's agenda.

-- **McClatchy layoffs hit Sacramento Bee newsroom**. The parent-company, which reported a net loss of \$95.6 million in the first quarter of 2017, did not specify the number of layoffs, but several of its papers have seen staff reductions in recent weeks.

-- **CBS chairman and CEO Les Moonves has signed a contract extension** that will keep him at the helm, of the media giant into 2021, the network announced Monday.

SOUND BITES:

-- "The late Fox chief pledged Americans fair and balanced news. Maybe now we'll get it." [Monica Lewinsky]

-- "Is media Trump deranged? Maybe. Dependent? For sure." [Chris Stirewalt]

-- "This is a leak about firing leakers," [Edward-Isaac Dove]]

INDEPENDENT JOURNAL REVIEW IN THE HOT SEAT ONCE AGAIN for questionable journalism practices. A piece posted on the conservative viral news site on Monday detailed Sheriff David Clarke's defending himself after CNN's KFILE reported that he had plagiarized parts of his master's thesis. But the piece added something more: a headline noting "something missing on reporter's resume". The reporter, Andrew Kaczynski, did not finish college. Soon enough the piece was updated , now with a headline that sounded more like it's defending Kaczynski (Sheriff Clarke Denies Plagiarism Claim as His Supporters Go After the Reporter Who Broke the Story) and an editor's note that says the headline and copy have been updated "for clarity."

If you need reminding of IJR's previous run-ins with journalism gone awry, see here and here. An IJR spokesperson did not respond to a request for comment.

MORE DETAILS ON TRUMP ASKING COMEY TO JAIL JOURNOS - Last week the New York Times reported that Trump had suggested to former FBI Director James Comey that he should target reporters for publishing leaks. Now CNN reports that in the Valentine's Day meeting in the Oval Office, Trump expressed frustration about news stories detailing his private conversations with the leaders of Mexico and Australia the previous month, saying Comey needed to go after the leakers, the source said.

BREAKING NEWS: BABY STELTER IS HERE! And she already has her own Twitter account (of course). Elated parents CNN correspondent Brian and NY1 traffic reporter Jamie shared the details: "It's a GIRL ☐☐☐ Sunny Ray Stelter was born Sunday, May 21 at 1:24pm. (Almost in time for Reliable Sources!) She weighs 6 pounds 13 ounces and is all sunshine ?????? Jamie and I are over the moon and can't wait for everyone to meet our sweet SUNNY ☐" Mazel tov you two! (See a picture of the beautiful bundle here).

STEPHEN COLBERT: TED CRUZ WANTED ME TO 'HUMANIZE' HIM: Back when he was in the throes of a hotly-contested Republican primary battle, Texas Sen. Ted Cruz made a surprising request of "Late Show" host Stephen Colbert: "I was hoping we could humanize me," the senator said to the late-night host prior to their Sept. 2015 interview. Colbert, who recalled the interaction on Saturday at New York Mag's Vulture Festival, according to the New York Post , then gave Cruz some TV advice: "Step 1, don't ask anyone to humanize you. That's something humans don't ask." He added, "Don't go into a stump speech and you will be a human being," Cruz replied, "'That's hard," and Colbert came back, "So is being human.'" Read more on the exchange here.

MSNBC ANCHOR STEPHANIE RUHLE TOOK AIM AT TRUMP in a commencement speech at her alma mater Lehigh University on Monday. Trump gave the commencement address at Lehigh 29 years ago, descending on the campus in the helicopter. Some excerpts from Ruhle's speech:

--Ruhle advised graduates to "be selfish" and take care of themselves, otherwise they won't be

able to perform at their best. "And just because you can have two scoops of ice cream on your chocolate cream pie, doesn't mean you should. Just try to be good. I am not talking about a selfishness that means two scoops for you and only one for your guests. Not that kind of selfishness."

--"Last week (the president) gave another commencement address, and he said, "No politician in history has been treated worse or more unfairly. When I was in your seats, I thought Lehigh had been pretty unfair to me. I was wrong. And the president is wrong."

--"If you break something, say sorry. If you flake on a commitment say sorry. If you accuse the former President of the United States of criminal wiretapping and you're wrong, say sorry...."

SOUNDTRACK:

One of the top songs here in Norway right now is "[Fy Faen by Hkeem/Temur](#)", the title of which is a new curse word I've learned while here.

EXTRAS:

-- Rolling Stone founding editor and publisher Jann Wenner will be profiled in an in-depth biography hitting the shelves on Oct. 24. [[WWD](#)]

-- "How NPR considers what new platforms - from smartwatches to fridges - will get its programming" [[Nieman Lab](#)]

-- ABC scored the first sit down television interview with Billy Bush, leading some to speculate he might be eyeing a job there. [[ABC News](#)]

-- Washington Examiner is launching a "Trump's America" project, a four-year reporting project "that will monitor the pulse of the Trump presidency with deep, long-form reporting in nine key counties that helped swing the election to the Republican candidate." [[MediaDC](#)]

-- Megyn Kelly's new NBC show "Sunday Night With Megyn Kelly" will debut on June 4. [[The Wrap](#)]

**** A message from the National Confectioners Association - #AlwaysATreat:** We've always created transparent, fun, and great-tasting treats. By 2022, Mars, Wrigley, Nestlé USA, Ferrero, Lindt, Ghirardelli, Russell Stover, and Ferrara Candy Company will work together to make half of their individually wrapped products available in sizes that contain 200 calories or less per pack. And, 90 percent of the best-selling treats made by these companies will have calorie information printed right on the front of the pack. During the same time period, the newly established [AlwaysATreat.com](#) will evolve into a digital resource full of easy-to-use information for consumers to better understand the unique role that chocolate and candy can play in a happy, balanced lifestyle. Learn more at [AlwaysATreat.com](#). **

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