

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
From: Joe Pompeo - POLITICO Media
Sent: Fri 7/7/2017 9:44:23 AM
Subject: Morning Media: CNN clamor grows — NYT copy-editor culling in progress — Farewell for now, dear reader

By Joe Pompeo | 07/07/2017 05:42 AM EDT

With Cristiano Lima and Alex Weprin

A CNN REBUKE FROM BEN SMITH - We were emailing yesterday and he had some thoughts on the latest CNN debacle, in which reporter-cum-Internet-sleuth Andrew "KFILE" Kaczynski (who got his start under Smith at BuzzFeed before CNN poached him) has been mega-backlashed over a controversial line that was edited into Kaczynski's [story about the Trump wrestling GIF troll](#).

Smith said I could share his remarks for the Morning Media crowd: "It makes me sick that they're not out there defending a great reporter who is taking all the heat for them. Editors need to have reporters' backs, and to take responsibility for screw-ups. This, and the recent firings" -- for the record, [officially they were resignations](#) -- "send a terrible signal to reporters who are trying to do their jobs." (A CNN rep last night didn't return an email asking if they'd like to respond.)

As I was [saying yesterday](#), the KFILE controversy is a bit of a mess for CNN, which is not only at war with the president, but also trying to move past a series of recent brouhahas that have helped fuel the trumped up (and Trumped up) "fake news" fire that right-wing critics have been all too happy to ignite. As of yesterday, the unflattering press was still coming.

Lloyd Grove in The Daily Beast: "[O]thers at the cable network are increasingly apprehensive about death threats and other harassing messages targeting on-air anchors and top executives being sent on social media and harassing phone calls. The parents and wife of Andrew Kaczynski, author of the GIF story and leader of CNN's investigative K-File team, had received around 50 harassing phone calls each by Wednesday while other K-File team members had ugly messages -- apparently from Trump supporters -- left at their homes." More: "[High Anxiety at CNN Amid Attacks From Trump and His Trolls](#)"

J.K. Trotter in Gizmodo: "The backlash caught CNN by surprise -- in part, according to people familiar with the editing process, because the passage in the story that provoked the backlash had been written by a network executive as a defensive measure to explain their sourcing decision. The sources say the ongoing media morality play has been based on false assumptions about the purpose of the story, and about how a thorny reporting process had unfolded. The result is a case study in how not to avoid outrage." More: "[How CNN Made Its Own Reporting Sound Like Blackmail](#)"

DEAL KILLER? A "source familiar with President Trump's thinking" [told The Daily Caller yesterday](#) that the White House won't support the proposed merger of AT&T and Time Warner, (CNN's parent company) unless CNN gets rid of network chief Jeff Zucker, the man who made

Trump a hit with NBC's "Apprentice" years before earning a spot on the president's hit list thanks to CNN's aggressive coverage. "TheDC's source said that Zucker could be fired in order for the merger to go through." That jibes with the following tidbit in a Wednesday New York Times report: "White House advisers have discussed a potential point of leverage over their adversary, a senior administration official said: a pending merger between CNN's parent company, Time Warner, and AT&T."

NOT SO FAST! Here are some grains of salt from my colleagues Steven Overly and Margaret Harding McGill: "President Donald Trump has only limited tools for venting his often-expressed fury at CNN, even as his administration weighs whether to approve AT&T's bid to purchase the network's parent company, Time Warner. White House chief strategist Steve Bannon has pushed the idea of blocking the merger, a White House official told POLITICO on Thursday ... But the official added that Bannon hasn't mentioned the matter in recent days and that it does not appear to be at the top of his agenda. And many industry observers say Trump's Justice Department has no obvious antitrust arguments for blocking AT&T's \$85 billion deal." More: "CNN parent's \$85B deal at little risk from Trump"

CNN, for its part, doesn't appear to be sweating, according to HuffPost's Michael Calderone: "Inside CNN, the consensus is that the deal is likely on track, according to a network source who was not authorized to speak publicly. Still, Trump has publicly suggested that Zucker's days at the company are numbered. Zucker has also been the subject of unflattering coverage on Fox News and in the New York Post, both owned by Rupert Murdoch -- a close Trump ally whose 21st Century Fox competes with Time Warner." And on that note...

THE TIME HAS COME YOU GUYS - Today is my last day at POLITICO after a combined six years covering the media beat here and at the website formerly known as Capital New York, which was absorbed by the POLITICO empire (graciously and happily) in 2013. That makes this my final edition after 13 months of late nights and six-day work weeks. (Fun and grueling, but mostly fun.) When I started this newsletter a little over a year ago, I didn't expect it would catch fire the way it did, with tens of thousands of subscribers and a steady stream -- often more like a firehose -- of reader interaction. So, seriously....

THANK YOU!!! The kind emails I've received from so many of you over the past three weeks are what make it extra hard to give this thing up, but I also know you'll be in good hands come Monday, when my hard-charging colleague **Hadas Gold** picks up where I left off. She doesn't bite, and she looooves a juicy tip, so don't be shy: hgold@politico.com / [@Hadas_Gold](#). As you know well by now, **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](#).

STAY IN TOUCH - Starting July 17, I'll be over at **Vanity Fair** covering media for [The Hive](#) across a variety of platforms. To all of my sources, tipsters and publicist pals past, present and future, you can reach me going forward at joe_pompeo@condenast.com. (Or, of course, at my personal email address, for those of you who have it.) Now how 'bout a few final blurbs before I call it a day, yeah?

DONALD TRUMP'S GOT NOTHING ON THIS GUY - via the AP: "Gov. Paul LePage [Republican, of Maine] ... characterized the state media as 'vile,' 'inaccurate' and 'useless.' 'I just love to sit in my office and make up ways so they'll write these stupid stories because they are just so stupid, it's awful,' he told WGAN-AM on Thursday. ... In the radio interview, LePage reiterated his disdain for the media, in particular newspapers, saying 'the sooner the print press goes away, the better society will be.'"

IF THAT'S NOT A GOOD SOUND BITES SEGUE, I DON'T KNOW WHAT IS:

-- "I can't discuss the details of the situation, unfortunately, but just know that I'm as baffled as anyone by this strange turn of events." [Eric Lichtblau]

-- "So @KFILE, left to defend himself, did not write the most controversial line in the Reddit poster story" [Maggie Haberman]

-- "A year ago tdy I jumped off a cliff w/o knowing what was below. Thx to all who supported me & even 2 those who didn't. #BeFierce #SpeakUp #BU" [Gretchen Carlson]

-- "Since I got fired, of course I will entertain any job offers that come my way." [Greta Van Susteren]

NYT COPY EDITOR BLOODBATH BEGINS - Poynter's Ben Mullin reports : "One-by-one, copy editors ... are learning today [yesterday] that they won't have jobs at the newspaper once the latest round of cuts takes place and are being encouraged to apply for buyouts. ... 'People here are baffled and bitter, in part because there was some confusion at first about what the people summoned in to meet with senior editors today were being called for,' a source told Poynter. "At first, some thought it was for the promised second interview that was part of the application process for editors whose jobs are ending. It gradually became clear that this was not the case."

Executive editor Dean Baquet yesterday responded to a barrage of reader questions about the copy editor culling: "Our goal with these changes is to still have more than one set of eyes on a story, but not three or four. We have to streamline that system and move faster in the digital age. ... At the end of this process, The Times will still have more editors than any similar institution. But it will use the savings from these cuts to bring in more reporters and other journalists ... This is actually not primarily a financial issue ... If we find our report suffering, we will indeed make changes. But remember, we are not eliminating copy editing."

SNEAKY RATINGS TRICK GETS WSJ A-HED - "Boosting TV ratings is easy for networks that don't mind playing dumb," Joe Flint writes in the latest edition of the legendary front-page Journal feature. "In a game largely sanctioned by TV-ratings firm Nielsen, television networks try to hide their shows' poor performances on any given night by forgetting how to spell. That explains the appearance of 'NBC Nitely News,' which apparently aired on the Friday of Memorial Day weekend this year, when a lot of people were away from their TVs. The retitling of 'NBC Nightly News' fooled Nielsen's automated system, which listed 'Nitely' as a separate show. Hiding the May 26 program from Nielsen dramatically improved the show's average viewership that week. ... The network needn't feel defensive. ABC took its own ratings mulligan

seven times during the 2016-17 season with 'Wrld New Tonite.' CBS misspelled 'The CBS Evening News' as the 'CBS Evening Nws' 12 times this season." More: "[In TV Ratings Game, Networks Try to Disguise Bad News from Nielsen](#)"

MUST READS:

-- "How the Death of a Muslim Recruit Revealed a Culture of Brutality in the Marines" [[NYT Mag](#)]

-- "America's Future Is Texas" [[The New Yorker](#)]

-- "Amelia Earhart: Does photo show she died a Japanese prisoner?" [[BBC](#)]

-- "Time Capsule That Looked Like an Old Missile Causes Bomb Scare in Manhattan" [[New York/Daily Intel](#)]

LATEST SEXUAL HARASSMENT SITUATION AT FOX - [via The Los Angeles Times](#):

"Fox Business Network host Charles Payne has been suspended while 21st Century Fox investigates sexual harassment allegations made against him, the company confirmed Wednesday night. Payne's suspension was announced by Fox Business Network following his program 'Making Money,' and shortly after the Los Angeles Times first reported the investigation. ... The allegations are the latest to hit 21st Century Fox, which has been plagued by sexual harassment charges across several units over the last year."

REVOLVING DOOR: ProPublica has raided Fortune for its latest two hires. Peter Elkind and Nick Varchaver, long-serving veterans of the Time Inc. financial magazine, are joining as a senior editor and a senior reporter, respectively. "Both will focus on coverage of the Trump administration and the President's businesses," according to an announcement. These are the latest installments in what appears to be a hiring spree at the nonprofit investigative outlet, which also has nabbed Pam Colloff and Ken Armstrong in recent months, as well as staffing up a new team in Illinois.

SLEEVE POLICE - [via CBS News](#): "A young, female reporter recently tried to enter a guarded room known as the Speaker's lobby outside the House chamber, but her outfit was considered inappropriate because her shoulders weren't covered. She was wearing a sleeveless dress. Forced to improvise, she ripped out pages from her notebook and stuffed them into her dress's shoulder openings to create sleeves, witnesses said. An officer who's tasked with enforcing rules in the Speaker's lobby said her creative concoction still was not acceptable."

ONE LAST THING - I finally got around to reading that great [Chelsea Manning profile from The New York Times Magazine last month](#) . Has this part been reported before? "Manning told me her decision to provide the information to WikiLeaks was a practical one: She originally planned to deliver the data to The New York Times or The Washington Post, and for the last week of her leave, she dodged from public phone to public phone, calling the main office lines for both papers, leaving a message for the public editor at The Times and engaging in a frustrating conversation with a Post writer, who said she would have to know more about the

files before her editor would sign off on an article. A hastily arranged meeting with Politico, where she hoped to introduce herself to the site's security bloggers, was scrapped because of bad weather." Super interesting.

SOUNDTRACK: Sonic Youth, "Teen Age Riot"

EXTRAS:

-- Paul Farhi: "The New York Times will fly you around the world for \$135,000. Is that a problem?" [WaPo]

-- Bret Stephens: "Sean Hannity Is No William F. Buckley" [NYT]

-- Erik Wemple: "Trump on Washington Post: 'fake news.' Trump on helpful Washington Post story: 'well reported.'" [WaPo]

-- "Despite the phenomenon that was the Bernie Sanders campaign, avowed socialists are not suddenly popping up on op-ed pages." [CJR]

-- The scoop on Richard Engel's new themed series. [AP]

OK for real this time. So long, folks! Thanks again for everything, and enjoy the rest of your summer.

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/media/tipsheets/morning-media/2017/07/07/cnn-clamor-grows-nyt-copy-editor-culling-in-progress-farewell-for-now-dear-reader-001305>

To change your alert settings, please go to <https://secure.politico.com/settings>

This email was sent to jackson.ryan@epa.gov by: POLITICO, LLC 1000 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

Please click [here](#) and follow the steps to unsubscribe.
