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From: Joe Pompeo - POLITICO Media
Sent: Tue 6/13/2017 10:04:00 AM
Subject: Morning Media: Megyn Kelly + Alex Jones = brouhaha — Trump's body-slam constituency — NYT lifts comment cap

By Joe Pompeo | 06/13/2017 06:00 AM EDT

With Alex Weprin

TALK ABOUT STEPPING IN IT - By the time Megyn Kelly woke up yesterday morning, a teaser of her upcoming sit-down with Infowars boss Alex Jones had begun circulating online. By the time Kelly went to bed last night, she'd entered full-on media controversy mode, as she faced heavy criticism for her decision to interview the far-right radio host, conspiracy maven and Sandy Hook skeptic. There was fierce backlash on Twitter, including from family members of Sandy Hook victims. Calls for a boycott of Kelly's new NBC News show, "Sunday Night with Megyn Kelly," made headlines. At press time, at least one sponsor, J.P. Morgan, had reportedly pulled its ads. On the other end of the spectrum, Infowars was accusing Kelly of being a shill for the so-called "deep state," and Jones himself was calling for her to pull the interview, scheduled for Sunday, on the basis of Kelly "misrepresenting my views on Sandy Hook," he claimed on Twitter.

The irony here is that Kelly, who made her NBC debut less than three weeks ago, had finally escaped the scandal-infested waters of Fox News -- and in fact the seas over there were looking pretty calm yesterday by comparison, with little more to speak of than an announcement about six executive promotions (more on that below) -- only to find herself enveloped in a different sort of sh-t storm. NBC reps weren't responding to reporters, but one would expect they'll have to say *something* beyond Kelly's Sunday evening tweet explaining her news judgment on the matter: "POTUS's been on & praises @RealAlexJones' show. He's giving Infowars a WH press credential. Many don't know him; our job is 2 shine a light."

Late last night, CNN published some quotes from an interview with Kelly's executive producer, Liz Cole: "As journalists it's our job to interview newsmakers and people of influence no matter how abhorrent their views may be. ... Giving him a platform would mean he goes unchallenged, and that's not the case in any way. ... Viewers will see Megyn do a strong interview where she challenges him appropriately ... Until you see the full program, in the full context, I wouldn't judge it too much."

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**, who's on vacation this week. (clima@politico.com / [@ludacristiano](https://twitter.com/ludacristiano)). **Hadas Gold** contributed to today's column. [Archives](#). [Subscribe](#).

MUST READS:

-- "Is Trump Inc. the President's Greatest Vulnerability?" [[New York](#)]

-- 'Remembering the Murder You Didn't Commit' [[The New Yorker](#)]

-- "Paying a Price for 8 Days of Flying in America" [[NYT](#)]

-- "Death of a Downtown Icon: Remembering Benjamin Cho" [[NYT](#)]

EXHIBIT A - "Congressman-elect Greg Gianforte was sentenced on Monday to 40 hours of community service and 20 hours of anger management as well as a \$385 fine after he pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor assault charge connected to an altercation with a reporter last month. The Montana Republican apologized to Guardian reporter Ben Jacobs for assaulting him the night before the special election, after initially denying that he 'body slammed' him."

EXHIBIT B - "42% of Trump voters think it's appropriate for politicians to body slam reporters, compared to 45% who think it's inappropriate. By contrast only 6% of Clinton voters think it's appropriate to body slam reporters, to 89% who think it's inappropriate. Overall 22% of voters think it's ok to body slam reporters, to 69% who think it's not."

Ben Jacobs: "If this incident were simply between myself and the Congressman-elect, that would be one thing. But it's had national ramifications on our politics and our culture. While I have no doubt that actions like these were an aberration for Congressman-elect Gianforte personally, I worry that, in the context of our political debate, they have become increasingly common. In recent years, our discourse has grown increasingly rancorous and increasingly vile. This needs to stop."

TAKE TWO - "Corey Lewandowski... is shopping a book to publishers," [CNN's Oliver Darcy reports](#) . "Publishers were told to submit offers to Lewandowski's agent, Mel Berger of WME Entertainment, by a Friday deadline, according to one of the sources, who said Berger was expecting to ultimately fetch seven figures for the book deal. It was not clear what Lewandowski's book would be about. A proposal wasn't submitted, likely to avoid details leaking to the public, the source added. Lewandowski previously had an offer from HarperCollins worth \$1.2 million, but lost it over concerns about a nondisclosure agreement."

SOUND BITES:

-- "In other non-Mueller news, Ivanka Trump, who excoriated the "viciousness" of Washington on Fox, made a visit with Conde Nast brass at 1WTC" [[Maggie Haberman](#)]

-- "White House press shop promoting Ivanka in ways I haven't seen them promote another top WH aide" [[Sam Stein](#)]

-- "They are trying to kill you. These other media outlets are trying to kill you. That's just it, so don't give them the bloody knife." [[Brian Kilmeade to Kellyanne Conway](#)]

-- "What does EXCLUSIVE mean when another publication ran an 11,000-word feature last month?" [[Matt Haber](#)]

REVOLVING DOOR:

-- **As we reported yesterday**, there's a new Washington bureau chief in the mix at the Associate Press, and now we know who it is: Julie Pace, who's moving over from the White House beat to lead AP's D.C. coverage. [Memo here](#).

-- **Fox News made six promotions yesterday**, constituting what programming chief Suzanne Scott called "a new programming leadership team." [Press release](#).

NEW YORK TIMES OPENS THE COMMENT FLOODGATES - Heretofore, commenting was available on only about 10 percent of Times stories due to limited manpower among a team of 14 moderators manually policing some 12,000 comments daily. Now, starting today, commenting will be enabled on all top stories (i.e. stories on the homepage that include an article summary) published during business hours. Additionally, comments in the opinion and news sections will for the first time remain open 'round the clock. The change is made possible by a new machine-learning software, developed with the Google-founded tech incubator Jigsaw, designed to give the moderators more bandwidth. The Times is in the midst of evolving how it deals with reader comments and complaints, having recently (and divisively) eliminated its public editor position while creating a new "[reader center](#)" run by a team of Times journalists.

FACEBOOK'S LATEST OLIVE BRANCH TO MEDIA OUTLETS - [via WSJ](#): "The social-media giant is building a feature that would allow users to subscribe to publishers directly from the mobile app, according to people familiar with the matter. The feature, long-requested by publishers, is expected to roll out by the end of 2017, three of the people said. Many details remain up in the air, but discussions have centered around making the feature available only on stories published natively to Facebook through its Instant Articles product."

FACEBOOK'S FIRST SCRIPTED SERIES? [THR reports](#) that the social media titan "has lined up one of the first series in its push to bulk up on original video programming. The social media giant is near a deal to revive Nicole Byer vehicle Loosely Exactly Nicole for a second season, sources tell The Hollywood Reporter. The news comes four months after the scripted comedy was canceled after one low-rated season on MTV."

SOUNDTRACK: Refused, "[Summerholidays vs Punkroutine](#)"

EXTRAS:

-- Michael Calderone: "NBC Has A Right To Book Alex Jones, But Does It Have A Good Enough Reason?" [[HuffPost](#)]

-- "NBC Nightly News Removed Itself From an Entire Week of Ratings" [[TV Newser](#)]

-- Scores of websites have been banned in Egypt amid a censorship crackdown. [[Reuters](#)]

-- Fox has "quietly started offering a national, 24-hour feed on Hulu's live-streaming TV service in more than 70 markets." [[WSJ](#)]

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/media/tipsheets/morning-media/2017/06/13/megyn-kelly-alex-jones-brouhaha-trumps-body-slam-constituency-nyt-lifts-comment-cap-001290>

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