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From: Morning Media
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Subject: Morning Media: Rebuilding public trust — Brian Ross fallout continues — Amanpour is interim Charlie Rose replacement — Behind political Twitter 2017 — Jeremy Peters lands GOP book deal

By Michael Calderone and Jason Schwartz | 12/05/2017 06:00 AM EDT

"WE CANNOT AFFORD TO GET ANYTHING WRONG," New York Times White House reporter Peter Baker said Monday, given that any inaccuracy can be "weaponized" against journalists. "One small thing will be used as a club to beat you upside the head, 'See, fake news, you can't trust anything they do.'" The question of how the press can gain public trust in a hyper-politicized, polarized, and, at times, seemingly post-truth climate was hashed out among a few dozen political reporters, editors, and academics Monday at the [Poynter Journalism Ethics Summit](#).

- **Journalists suggested increasing transparency** into the reporting process, supporting media literacy initiatives, and reframing threats to the First Amendment to emphasize how all Americans, and not just journalists, lose out when freedoms are curbed. During a morning panel, Baker said the Times recently hired a fact-checker in the paper's Washington bureau to scrutinize the work of reporters, like himself, prior to publication. Baker also said editors have scaled back the use of blind quotes in news stories given reader skepticism over anonymity.

- **There is "no silver bullet,"** Poynter ethicist Kelly McBride said after a series of panels in which attendees offered various approaches to tackling the trust issue. Many agreed on the urgency of the matter, with moderator Dana Bash saying some of the findings in a [new Poynter survey](#) had crushed her soul. Forty-four percent of Americans said they believe the news media "fabricates stories about President Trump more than once in awhile," which isn't true, and high-information Republicans were found to be the most distrustful of the media. Nearly a third of Americans surveyed agreed with Trump's despot-like characterization of the news media as "the enemy of the people" and a quarter of respondents support abandoning the Constitution by allowing the U.S. government to "block news stories it sees as biased or inaccurate."

- **The ethics summit played** out Monday amid a major journalism scandal, with ABC News correspondent Brian Ross [suspended](#) for four weeks over a Friday Trump-Russia bombshell that wasn't. "There is such a desire among large swaths of the public to use any screw-up to dismiss everything," National Review's Jonah Goldberg said during an afternoon panel. "The damage that Brian Ross did by getting that story wrong is significant." Goldberg said hardcore Trump supporters, especially, "are looking for a reason to ignore you permanently."

- **Indira Lakshmanan**, the Newmark chair of journalism ethics at Poynter, and the lead organizer of Monday's conference, urged journalists to help educate those outside the media bubble about what goes on inside it. "We sort of think that we know what journalism is and everybody should know what journalism is," she said. "But when I talk to very smart people who aren't journalists, it constantly amazes me how they don't get what we do, they don't get why we do it, they don't get how we do it. And I just think the more we build that into our stories and show what we're doing, the more opportunities we have for building that kind of a trust with the

audience and across partisan barriers."

- **Journalists can surely do more** to open themselves up to the public, and yet there are limits to how successful such efforts can be when a significant segment of Americans reflexively dismisses fact-based journalism that doesn't validate their views. Weekly Standard editor Stephen Hayes praised the Post's transparency through a [disclosure](#) in its initial story on the four women accusers of Alabama Senate candidate Roy Moore, telling attendees that "there's no way you cannot believe what these women are saying when you know how the story was reported." And yet 71 percent of Alabama Republicans don't believe Moore's accusers, according to a [new CBS poll](#). Among those who don't believe, 88 percent say the media is behind the women's claims.

Good morning and welcome to Morning Media. Please send tips to mcaldерone@politico.com and [@mlcaldерone](#). Daniel Lippman ([@dlippman](#)) and Cristiano Lima ([@viaCristiano](#)) contributed to the newsletter. [Archives](#). [Subscribe](#).

ABC NEWS PRESIDENT SOUNDS OFF: "I don't think ever in my career have I felt more rage and disappointment and frustration," ABC News president James Goldston said during a more editorial call in reference to correspondent Brian Ross's erroneous reporting on former national security adviser Michael Flynn, according to audio [obtained by CNN](#). Goldston scorched ABC News employees for the mistake and told them that Ross would no longer cover any stories related to the president. Goldston also said on the call that ABC News would undertake a full review of how the incorrect report made it to air.

- **BuzzFeed's Steven Perlberg and Henry Gomez** [report](#) that Ross's mistake has been "turned into a messaging weapon for Trump allies." One former White House official told BuzzFeed it "was an affirmation of what [conservative voters] already believe to an extent about the 'fake news' media. That's why it is so powerful."

- "**All journalists make mistakes**, but Ross's blunders have often been spectacular - and unusually plentiful for someone of his prominent status in broadcasting," The Washington Post's Paul Farhi [writes](#) in a look at Ross's high-profile errors over the years.

CHRISTIANE AMANPOUR IS IN FOR CHARLIE ROSE -- [at least for now](#). PBS announced yesterday that "Amanpour," her CNN International interview show, will replace Rose's program "on an interim basis." CNN International will continue airing the show, which will now also reach a nationwide US audience. "Amanpour on PBS" will roll out in New York on Monday, and then to additional stations beginning Dec. 11. "Amanpour on PBS" adds to the long tradition of public-affairs programming that has been a hallmark of public media for decades," PBS President and CEO Paula Kerger said in a [statement](#).

O'REILLY SUED: Last fall, Bill O'Reilly told -- of all people -- Matt Lauer that his ouster from Fox News was "a political hit job." He also said to the [New York Times](#) that the harassment allegations against him were "politically and financially motivated," a fact he could prove with "shocking information." That no holds barred response looks like it has now led to a [fresh lawsuit](#) : Rachel Witlieb Bernstein, a former Fox News producer who was one of six women

reported to have reached a settlement with O'Reilly, filed a defamation and breach of contract suit against both him and Fox News on Monday. She alleged that public statements made by both parties violated her settlement and, according to the New York Times, "portrayed her as a liar and politically motivated extortionist."

- **Bernstein reached her settlement with O'Reilly** in 2002 after making repeated complaints to Fox News executives and HR officials, according to the suit. She alleges that O'Reilly, through his public statements, breached the agreement's confidentiality and non-disparagement clauses. Bernstein also targeted Fox News, saying that the network's claim that no employee had ever used a hotline to complain about O'Reilly was misleading. During her tenure at Fox News, she said, there was no reporting hotline.

- **O'Reilly's lawyer issued** a statement saying the suit had "no merit" and vowing to "respond aggressively in court." Fox News did not reply to a request for comment from POLITICO.

NEW YORK TIMES REPORTER JEREMY PETERS is writing a book for Penguin Random House's Crown imprint titled, "Insurgency: The Inside Story of the Battle for the Soul of the Republican Party," according to Vanity Fair's Joe Pompeo. The book, set for publication in 2019, reportedly sold in the high six figures.

WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN WOULDN'T SPEAK ON THE RECORD: The Los Angeles Times reports: "On Monday, the White House broke another precedent in limiting the press' ability to ask questions about the president's decisions. On a day filled with news, White House spokesman Hogan Gidley told reporters traveling with the president aboard Air Force One that he would not take any questions on the record."

TRUMP IS THE MOST TWEETED ABOUT WORLD LEADER, according to new data released this morning from Twitter. But none of Trump's tweets cracked the top 10 most retweeted posts this past year, with former president Barack Obama grabbing three spots. (First place went to the guy who wanted free Wendy's nuggets.) Obama also had the first and third most-liked tweets of 2017, with Ariana Grande in between. More data from Twitter below:

- **Top tweeted U.S. elected officials:** 1) @realDonaldTrump 2) @VP 3) @SpeakerRyan 4) @BarackObama 5) @TedLieu 6) @SenJohnMcCain 7) @SenWarren 8) @SenateMajLdr 9) @SenSanders 10) @SenSchumer 11) @NancyPelosi 12) @RepAdamSchiff 13) @MarcoRubio 14) @MaxineWaters 15) @TedCruz

- **Top followed new U.S. political accounts:** 1) @PreetBharara 2) @SallyQYates 3) @brhodes 4) @PeteSouza 5) @SHSanders45 6) @AmbassadorRice 7) @SamanthaJPower 8) @SecretaryCarson 9) @BetsyDeVosED 10) @SecretaryZinke

-- **Top tweeted news outlets and the top tweeted journalist/commentator at each:** 1) @FoxNews - @SeanHannity 2) @CNN - @JakeTapper 3) @NYTimes - @MaggieNYT 4) @MSNBC - @JoyAnnReid 5) @WashingtonPost - @Fahrenheit 6) @TheHill - @JoeConchaTV 7) @NBCNews - @BraddJaffy 8) @ABC - @GStephanopoulos 9) @POLITICO - @ddiamond 10) @AP - @ZekeJMiller

- **Most tweeted activism hashtags in the U.S.:** 1) #Resist 2) #MAGA 3) #ImpeachTrump 4) #TrumpTrain 5) #WomensMarch 6) #NotMyPresident 7) #BlackLivesMatter 8) #NoDAPL 9) #TakeAKnee 10) #BoycottNFL

TODAY: The Fair Media Council will be holding "The News Conference: Real & Powerful" at the Garden City Hotel in Long Island. The event will feature more than 65 speakers, including WNET President and CEO Neal Shapiro, New York Daily News columnist Harry Siegel, The Daily Beast media reporter Lloyd Grove, Newsweek senior political reporter Celeste Katz, former Bloomberg News global legal counsel Charles Glasser. Topics include "Trump Effect on the News" and "Fake News vs. Wrong News."

WATCH: Megyn Kelly is slated to interview former Trump campaign hands and "Let Trump Be Trump" co-authors Corey Lewandowski and David Bossie on "Megyn Kelly Today" at 9 pm. It will be Kelly's first interview with Lewandowski since Fox News accused Lewandowski, then Trump's campaign manager, of threatening Kelly before a GOP presidential debate.

JOIN POLITICO PLAYBOOK - LIVE: Join Playbook co-authors Anna Palmer and Jake Sherman for a live taping of POLITICO Playbook. Featured guests include: Michael Barbaro, host of the *New York Times*' "The Daily" Podcast, DCCC Executive Director Dan Sena and NRCC Executive Director John Rogers, and Rachael Bade, Seung Min Kim, and Annie Karni. *Sixth and I - Dec 7 - Doors open 6:00 p.m. Get tickets: [here](#).*

THAT TIME OF THE YEAR: Time magazine named its 10 finalists for "Person of the Year" yesterday: Jeff Bezos, the Dreamers, Patty Jenkins, Kim Jong Un, Colin Kaepernick, the #MeToo movement, Robert Mueller, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Trump, and Xi Jinping.

- **Trump has** professed a lack of interest in the award, but Twitter observers couldn't help but imagine the president's reaction if one of his favorite Twitter targets won. And not that Morning Media endorses this sort of thing, but for those interested, as of this writing, the British betting house Ladbrokes has #MeToo as the favorite at 2:1, with Trump at 8:1, followed by his Twitter bete noirs, Kaepernick (10:1), Mueller (12:1), Bezos (16:1), and Kim (16:1).

SOUNDBITES

"On Sunday we said MSNBC did not cover the Steinle verdict on Friday or Saturday at all. We were wrong. In that 48-hour span, they covered it a total of 2 minutes and 15 seconds." [Fox & Friends]

"Less talk about career rehab for Billy Bush. More talk about career rehab for all the countless women who've been pushed out, ignored and marginalized in this sexist system." [Kathleen McLaughlin]

"Welcome @jeffglor to the evenings. Congratulations and good luck as you start your new chapter at @CBSEveningNews" [Lester Holt]

MARK ZUCKERBERG ON INSTA WITH RUPERT MURDOCH? Fox News President for News Jay Wallace posted an [Instagram shot](#) of an internal Fox event on Friday, with what looked an awful lot like Mark Zuckerberg sitting next to Rupert Murdoch in the front row. Facebook confirmed on Monday that Zuckerberg, accompanied by other Facebook execs, did in fact pay a visit to Fox News last week. It was part of a meeting between the News Corp and Facebook leadership teams, according to a Facebook spokesperson, who said "it's something Facebook does regularly with other companies." The spokesperson declined to elaborate on what was discussed in the meeting. Fox News did not respond to request for comment.

NO MATTER WHERE NEWS BREAKS, you can now win a Pulitzer for it. The Pulitzer Prize Board announced a change in criteria to its "breaking news" award yesterday: previously, the category was restricted to local reporting by news outlets based near the story's location. Now any outlet is eligible to win for any breaking news stories. The award was often seen as a chance for local publications--like the East Bay Times last year and even The Tuscaloosa News in 2012--to nab a Pulitzer, and some worried that larger publications will now big-foot the competition.

- "**Going to be a lot harder for the little guys to win this category,**" [said](#) Wall Street Journal reporter Ben Mullin. And Gizmodo Media CEO Raju Narisetti [chimed in](#): "Was the one category where a "local" newsroom had a greater chance of winning a [@PulitzerPrize](#), even with disproportionate resources vs national/intl media. This evens those odds, even as it is the right frame from an audience perspective."

ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS, the media mogul and Ben Carson confidante, [told](#) the Washington Post he's interested in buying Washington City Paper because "I just like to surround myself with the best." Williams also said he would commission more soft features on Trump staffers and allies.

TRUMP HAS OFTEN SUGGESTED that members of the media be sued for their work - now, if anyone ever follows through against Fox News Radio White House correspondent Jon Decker, he'll at least be able to save some money on representation. Decker was sworn in Monday to the D.C. bar, making him, so far as Morning Media knows, the only lawyer in the White House press corps.

CORRECTION: Yesterday, Morning Media misidentified the editor of the Opelika-Auburn News: It's Troy Turner. Apologies for the error.

REVOLVING DOOR

Gillian Turner has been named a full-time news correspondent for Fox News, based in D.C. The former National Security Council staffer had been a contributor at the network.

MSNBC has reportedly [cut ties](#) with **Sam Seder** over a 2009 tweet.

EXTRAS

- Steve Bannon, Sean Hannity, Ann Coulter, James O'Keefe, and Eric Trump were among the attendees at a book party for Corey Lewandowski and David Bossie, reports CNN's Oliver Darcy.
- Hello to the Indicator, Planet Money's faster, shorter, more frequent spinoff.
- Tucker Carlson explained to Business Insider why he hasn't covered Fox News' sexual harassment issues.
- Discovery Communications bought majority control of Oprah's network, OWN. You get a network! And you get a network! And you get a network!
- Netflix says it will resume production on "House of Cards" in early 2018, sans Kevin Spacey.
- NYC's City Council booted reporters from City Hall.

KICKER

"We're not supposed to be part of the resistance, that's not why we're here. But if journalism is attacked, we should resist" -- *CNN's Jim Acosta at Poynter's Journalism Ethics Summit yesterday.*

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/media/newsletters/morning-media/2017/12/05/rebuilding-public-trust-brian-ross-fallout-continues-amanpour-is-interim-charlie-rose-replacement-behind-political-twitter-2017-jeremy-peters-lands-gop-book-deal-001394>

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