

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
From: Morning Media
Sent: Mon 11/13/2017 10:35:18 AM
Subject: Morning Media: Breitbart tries to discredit WaPo bombshell --Vanity Fair's new editor -- Hannity loses advertisers -- Gawker's legacy -- Remembering Liz Smith

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BREITBART READERS WERE TREATED SUNDAY NIGHT to the site's latest attempt at discrediting the Washington Post's explosive Friday report on Alabama Republican Senate candidate Roy Moore. "EXCLUSIVE - Mother of Roy Moore Accuser: Washington Post Reporters Convinced My Daughter to Go Public," a headline blared.

-- **This "exclusive" information should've been evident** to anyone who read the Post's original report on allegations that Moore, at age 32, had a sexual encounter with a 14-year-old girl and relationships with three other young women between the ages of 16 and 18 while he was in his 30s. "She did not go to them. They called her," Nancy Wells, the mother of Moore accuser Leigh Corfman, told Breitbart News reporter Aaron Klein in a Sunday report. Indeed, the Post already disclosed Friday that "neither Corfman nor any of the other women sought out the Post" and all the women "were initially reluctant to speak publicly." Klein suggests the reporters' methods are evidence of "activist behavior."

-- **"It's called journalism.** Breitbart might want to try it some time," The Post's Karen Tumulty responded. Certainly, what the Post reporters did - follow a lead, report out details, ask people to speak publicly - is basic news gathering. But Breitbart's ominous framing of the Post's reporting methods, while mocked by journalists, may work on readers reflexively distrustful of the press and willing to support Moore no matter what's revealed about him.

-- **Breitbart, which has long boosted Moore's candidacy**, has been spinning for the Republican since Friday, emphasizing in its first headline on the story that "Bezos's Washington Post" endorsed Moore's Democratic rival. The Post's editorial board, which makes endorsements, and its owner, Amazon chief Jeff Bezos, have no role in the reporting of the Moore story. But again, those unaware of how newsrooms function and generally suspicious of the media could be swayed into thinking there's some grand conspiracy when there is no evidence of one.

-- **Such Breitbart storylines are likely to continue** alongside those of other conservative sites, such as Gateway Pundit, that have tried discrediting the Post's meticulously reported story in even more ridiculous fashion. Both Klein and Breitbart Washington editor Matt Boyle are now in Alabama on a mission "to discredit the Washington Post's reporting on Roy Moore's alleged sexual misconduct with teenagers," according to Axios' Jonathan Swan. "Bottom line: This story is about to get even uglier, if that's imaginable," he writes.

Good morning and welcome to Morning Media. Please send tips to mcalderone@politico.com and @mlcalderone. Daniel Lippman (@dlippman) contributed to the newsletter. Archives. Subscribe.

RADHIKA JONES TO LEAD VANITY FAIR: The New York Times broke the news over

the weekend that Jones, the editorial director of the Times' books department, is expected to be named the next editor of Vanity Fair. She'll succeed Graydon Carter, 68, who announced in September that he was leaving after a quarter-century leading a magazine with influence inside the power centers of New York, Washington, Hollywood, and, increasingly, Silicon Valley.

-- **A former deputy managing editor** at Time magazine, Jones, 44, is highly respected in New York media circles and brings literary flair to the job, with early stints at highbrow publications like Artforum, The Paris Review, and Grand Street. New Yorker editor David Remnick - who was heavily involved in the search process along with Condé Nast's CEO Bob Sauerberg and artistic director and Vogue editor Anna Wintour - is said to have championed Jones's candidacy. And the news, while surprising to some inside Condé Nast, seems to be going over well. Former colleagues of Jones's have been singing her praises to future colleagues at 1 World Trade Center.

-- **Jones didn't make the early round-ups** of contenders, with speculation largely focused around high-profile candidates like GQ editor Jim Nelson and Janice Min, who led Us Weekly and helped remake The Hollywood Reporter into an industry powerhouse. Jones has appeared on shows like "Morning Joe" and worked on the glitzy Time 100 event but isn't a celebrity editor known for hosting extravagant parties, like Vanity Fair's post-Oscars bash. Carter seems to relish his role hosting that star-studded affair and has long had a presence in upscale Manhattan society, with a Greenwich Village townhouse and investments in restaurants like the Waverly Inn and Monkey Bar. In contrast, Jones lives in Brooklyn, where many magazine editors and writers have decamped over the past decade.

-- **Although Jones, like Carter, will be an ambassador for the brand**, the role of Vanity Fair editor, like the magazine business more broadly, is changing. Jones takes over as Condé Nast, once famous for supporting the lavish lifestyles of its top editors and pouring resources into ambitious launches, is in cost-cutting mode, evident in the recent shuttering of Teen Vogue's print edition and layoffs at GQ. She'll presumably have to make some tough budgetary choices in the coming years while continuing to expand Vanity Fair's output online (as it's done through brands like "The Hive") and generating revenue through other ventures, like the magazine's conference business.

SOUND BITES

"A real reporter would go to Alabama to learn more about the allegations and confirm whether or not they're true. Only a political operative would go with the specific goal of discrediting the allegations no matter what they find out." [\[Peter Sterne\]](#)

"This conduct described here - convincing people with newsworthy information to share it with the public - is known as 'journalism'" [\[Glenn Greenwald\]](#)

"Planning to read every single word of @radhikajones' Vanity Fair." [\[Jodi Kantor\]](#)

"To anyone who works with @radhikajones, this news is a) a massive bummer and b) totally unsurprising." [\[Jennifer Senior\]](#)

GAWKER'S LEGACY: The now-shuttered flagship news and gossip site is getting a second look these days, given that Gawker and its sibling sites were years ahead of the national media in addressing sexual misconduct claims against powerful men in entertainment, including Louis C.K., Bill Cosby, Kevin Spacey, and Harvey Weinstein. "I'm not saying I think every story Gawker did was good journalism or anything I would want to publish," Washington Post columnist Margaret Sullivan said in a new video, "but I think overall they served a real purpose and that they are really missed."

-- "I've come to think of a lot of what Gawker did as a kind of twilight news," NPR's David Folkenflik said in a weekend segment. "And that is news that's perhaps not ready for prime time, news that may rely on anonymous sources, news that may not even identify by name the person they're reporting on but stuff that's disturbing and often of public interest. And I think this is something that the New York Times and the conventional press is not equipped to do. And yet the surfacing of these issues happened earlier in this twilight news setting. There is a purpose being served, even if it's from a place about which, at times, I had great, great reservations."

LIZ SMITH, 1923-2017: The Times' obituary for the legendary gossip columnist notes: "From hardscrabble nights writing snippets for a Hearst newspaper in the 1950s to golden afternoons at Le Cirque with Sinatra or Hepburn and tête-à-tête dinners with Madonna to gather material for columns that ran six days a week, Ms. Smith captivated millions with her tattletale chitchat and, over time, ascended to fame and wealth that rivaled those of the celebrities she covered."

TRUMP'S "SAFE SPACE": The Times' Michael Grynbaum reports that Fox News' pro-Trump prime-time lineup is doing "superbly" with viewers. "After falling behind MSNBC on weeknights among the sought-after 25-to-54 demographic, Fox News has surged back," he writes. "And Ms. Ingraham pulled 2.7 million total viewers her first week, nearly half a million more than her competition on MSNBC, Lawrence O'Donnell. Mr. Hannity beat Rachel Maddow on MSNBC last week by about 300,000 viewers."

RELATED: POLITICO's Jason Schwartz wrote last week how Fox News has clung even closer to President Trump than Candidate Trump.

SEVERAL ADVERTISERS CUT TIES WITH HANNITY over his handling of the Moore story, reports CNBC's Sarah Whitten. The companies include Keurig, Realtor.com, 23 and Me, Eloquii and Nature's Bounty. Some Hannity fans have been taking out their anger on Keurigs. (Flashback: I spoke to Hannity in May as some advertisers fled over his coverage of the Seth Rich conspiracy.)

JOURNALISTS TRAVELING WITH TRUMP PROTEST RESTRICTIONS: The Washington Post's David Nakamura reported from the president's stop in Vietnam: "On Saturday, New York Times photographer Doug Mills, a member of the White House Correspondents' Association board, tweeted a 'photo' of a black box, framed with a decorative border, to illustrate the group's frustration. In the tweet, Mills said the 13-member travel 'pool' of reporters, photographers and camera operators that provides reports for the rest of the news media would have no access at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit."

EXTRAS

- CNN's Brian Stelter looked at how Alabama papers are playing the Moore story.
- Joe Biden expressed uncertainty about running for president in 2020 during an interview on Snapchat's "Good Luck America," which will be released Tuesday.
- Fox News' Chris Wallace called out Trump for "most direct, sustained assault on a free press in our history," but also didn't let the media off the hook.
- Joe and Mika had a Trump impersonator at their engagement party, which included guests such as Senator Chuck Schumer, Mayor Bill de Blasio, former Secretary of State John Kerry, and agent Ari Emanuel.
- How Saturday Night Live is handling sexual harassment allegations against powerful men.

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/media/newsletters/morning-media/2017/11/13/breitbart-tries-discrediting-wapo-bombshell-vanity-fairs-new-editor-gawkers-legacy-remembering-liz-smith-001378>

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