

Why the 'media' has become a four-letter word

Bill McKee/Moscow-Pullman Daily News Editorial Board

Being in journalism can be tough sometimes.

Sure, the hours are long and the pay isn't great, but that's not the worst of it.

No, what's really difficult is that we tend to all get lumped together. Every journalist has, at some point, been at a social or family gathering where they've heard that four-letter word, "the media," uttered by someone. Often it leads to a record-scratch moment - talking stops and eyes turn to the journalist with either an apologetic look or scorn.

We get it.

Conservatives like to complain about the "liberal media," and the liberals love trashing the "right-wing spin" of outlets like Fox News.

But while partisan issues can get a paper or station a reputation for being one-sided in their storytelling, it's organizations like the New York Daily News that have turned "the media" into the obscene word it has become.

They justified running three images taken from stills off the GoPro camera worn by Vester Flanagan as he shot and killed a former co-worker, Alison Parker, on live TV in Virginia by saying it was because they hoped it would push forward the conversation about the importance of increasing gun control laws.

"We feel passionately about strengthening gun control, imploring politicians to improve mental health services and highlighting the extraordinary scale of daily gun violence," New York Daily News spokeswoman Anne Muscarella said Friday.

We feel passionate about the need to increase gun control laws to curb the more-than-daily shootings in this country as well, but we don't believe that's the way to do it. Nor do we believe their stated justification is the whole truth.

To be fair, the New York Daily News wasn't the only one to publish the images - The Daily Mirror in the UK and The Daily Star of Scotland also had it on their front pages, while CNN ran the footage from the camera about once an hour following the shooting.

People often accuse news organizations of throwing taste and good journalism aside in attempt to sell more papers. We're occasionally accused of it ourselves, and, let's be honest, selling papers is somewhat integral to our business model.

But that's not how we want to do it. And we're thankful, at least, it seems most of the rest of "the media" agree with us.

