

Who do you trust less - Donald Trump or the media?

Michael Costello/Lewiston Tribune

If today's mainstream news media were composing 21st-century mythology, they would likely cast themselves in the role of Cassandra. In Greek mythology, Cassandra was blessed with surpassing beauty along with the ability to see the future. But she also carried a curse that prevented anyone from believing her. If I were to write the mythology, I would be more inclined to cast the media in the role of "The Boy Who Cried Wolf."

If we are so unfortunate as to have Donald Trump as president, we will owe that disaster to the mainstream news media. You can't fault their effort. They've done all they can to warn us. But they no longer possess credibility. As a result, when they tell us that Trump is wholly unsuited for the job of president, many Americans view it as an enhancement of his resume.

One reason is that they also know that Hillary Clinton is at least as unqualified for the office and they know that she will never endure similar scrutiny.

Let's examine two recent examples of the press misfiring on Trump.

The press went into full-on hysterical mode, claiming that Trump was in favor of registering Muslims on a database, so that the federal government could track them. But no honest person who actually saw that interview or read the transcript would have drawn the same conclusion. Trump was trying to finish whatever incoherent train of thought he was on as the interviewer attempted to put words in his mouth. The two were talking over each other and Trump was ignoring the interviewer. He probably didn't even know what the interviewer was asking until he read about it the next day.

And the next day's headlines were all about how Trump intended to force Muslims to identify themselves, much as Jews were required to wear yellow stars in Adolf Hitler's Germany.

Even those who did not see the interview would have recognized the typical overheated rhetoric that they have come to expect from the liberal press. And they instinctively distrust it.

Another recent lost opportunity to sink the Trump juggernaut came when he declared that he had seen thousands of Arabs dancing in the streets of Jersey City as the World Trade Center Twin Towers fell on Sept. 11, 2001.

The New York Times and the Washington Post both denounced Trump for making up such slanderous lies. No such thing ever happened, they assured us.

But if they had read their own stories of that day or watched CBS News, they would have learned that Muslims were dancing in the streets of Jersey City. It's just that the number was fewer than 10 and not thousands. The FBI describes the neighborhood as "swarming with suspects."

Had they reacted more judiciously, they could have allowed Trump to hang himself. Why not say that nobody but him seems to remember this as he does and then ask Trump to supply evidence? If he had seen it on television, as he claimed, then the local television stations supposedly showing it would have had archival footage of those reports. It seems that nobody has those newsreels. Trump did not see what he claimed to have seen because it didn't happen.

When asked why no footage of these events could be found, Trump's spokesperson replied that camera phones weren't available to record it. So how then did Trump manage to watch it on television? But, by then, the press' overwrought response had exhausted its momentum and the American people again turned away from a news media that squandered its credibility by revealing its own biases before it could prove Trump's fabulism.

As a result, Trump was able to escape unscathed.

And, in fact, most Americans did see thousands of Arabs dancing in the streets after the 9/11 attacks. But those celebrations were in Arab countries and not in the United States.

The fact remains that Americans have been assaulted and insulted by years of liberal elite insistence that Islam has no association with terrorism and that Islam is an inherently peaceful religion. Perhaps the best metaphor for the press is neither Greek mythology nor fairy tales. It might be Groucho Marx, who once asked: "Who are you gonna believe? Me or your own lying eyes?"

When given the choice between two liars, Americans have far more experience with being lied to by the press than by Trump.

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