

Missing the Trump Team's Misconduct

Between flailing over Russia-gate and obsessing over a "tell-all" book, the major U.S. news media continues to miss the more substantive misconduct of the Trump administration, says JP Sottile.

By JP Sottile

On Monday, I flipped over to MSNBC and what were they "covering"? Trump's "stable genius" tweet. And no, they were not "advancing the story" ... that is, if there is a way to advance a stale story based on a two-day-old tweet. Instead, they just had a couple talking heads blathering on in pointless speculation about Trump's state of mind. In other words, they were filling dead air with hot air.

Surprisingly, there is a takeaway from this episode and from the countless hours of Trumped-Up, blatherati-driven coverage churned out by MSNBC, CNN and the three networks ... and it's this: If the so-called "Liberal Media" really is out to "get" Trump ... they really suck at it.

Why? Because if I was a managing editor at MSNBC (or CNN or the "Today Show" or "Good Morning America," for that matter) and I was "out to get" Trump ... I'd have spent a good three blocks of airtime on former Eli Lilly bigwig Alex Azar. He's Trump's replacement for the sleazy, insider trading Dr. Tom Price at the Department of Health and Human Services. Hell, POLITICO even did most of the work when it published a big story detailing the way Eli Lilly gamed the patent system to sustain Cialis as a rock-hard profit producer when Azar was a Lilly exec. They used a pediatric study loophole the makers of OxyContin had once used to squeeze another six months of profits out of their drug.

Why not hone-in on THAT story? It's Eli Lilly, for chrissake! They are right there with Monsanto as a name that inspires groans and occasional vomiting (along with a voluminous list of quite real side effects). Even better, Azar is another in a long list of crony-baloney capitalists who've turned the Trump Administration into one of the most corrupt cash machines I've ever seen. But what is MSNBC talking about? A senescent tweet.

On the other hand, they are not talking about the Oil Industry's influence and the opening up of offshore drilling. They are not talking about the significant expansion of the war on terror ... and Trump's direct hand in a spike in civilian casualties around the Muslim world. They are not talking about the trainwrecks inside the Department of Energy, the U.S. Department of Agriculture or the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). They are not talking about

Trump pushing DIPLOMATS to get even more involved in selling weapons around the world. They are not talking about Trump's role in opening up the media for more consolidation. And they are not talking about a dozen other damning stories that, if they'd just dispatch some effing reporters and producers and photographers, they could use those video-driven packages like a goddamn barrage to pepper Trump's presidency and, in turn, to corner his supporters on Capitol Hill.

But no ... they are poring over the cheap and easy regurgitation of kooky tweets. They are wringing every last drop out of Michael Wolff's book. And they are forever circling around meaningless details about Russiagate that not only DO NOT advance the story, but ultimately make it look like they are ginning-up stories when, in fact, they actually don't know what Mueller knows ... even as they piss away precious hours of airtime speculating about "what's coming next."

Fine, I get it. If you get a leaked detail, you report it and talk about it for a few hours ... but then you MOVE ON to Trump's growing ownership of an ever-bloodier War on Terror or to food safety or environmental collapse or to growing consumer debt or to Trump's retinue of corporate shills like Alex Azar. You look at the policies that are being made each and every day and the quite real consequences that will come of these often-major shifts.

The upshot is that you'd not only be doing real damage to Trump's presidency ... but you'd also be doing ACTUAL JOURNALISM! You can "get" Trump and do your job, too! It's a two-fer! Everything else is just an easy way to maintain the profitability you could only dream of before that 24/7 star of your predictable little daytime drama came down that godforsaken escalator in his monomaniacal search for the one thing you give him in spades – airtime.

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