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AIM REPORT

For Fairness, Balance and Accuracy in News Reporting

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Hate Groups Such as Sleeping Giants a Growing Threat

By Brian McNicoll

Conservatives know to be wary of content from the New York Times, Washington Post or CNN. They know these media operations are so hostile to the Trump administration that they won't hesitate to bend the truth or outright lie to make him look bad.

Unnamed sources who say exactly what the papers hoped to print that day, misleading spin or mischaracterization of documents are familiar tactics for these operations.

But even with all the dirty tricks and transparent motivations, conservatives never have made a serious attempt to put these outlets out of business for their actions.

The left has no such compunction. An organization called Sleeping Giants now seeks to put conservative media out of business. It identifies whose ads appear on conservative websites, then tweets at the companies saying, "Hey company X, your Facebook advertising is appearing on far right Breitbart. Please #stopfundinghate."

Some point out this "problem" is "easy to fix" and invite the companies to contact Sleeping Giants, a social media activist organization formed after Donald Trump was elected president last November. Its goal is to remove ads from "conservative news outlets that promote 'bigotry, sexism, and racism.'"

It has convinced more than 1,000 companies to stop advertising on Breitbart, a conservative site that was supportive of Trump from the outset. Once it identifies a target, its 95,000 followers pile on with tweets such as, "I really like your products, but did you know your ads support bigotry, sexism and racism? Easy to fix."

The list of companies chased off Breitbart includes AT&T, Kellogg's, BMW, Visa, Autodesk, Lenovo, HP Inc., Vimeo, Deutsche Telekom, Lyft, Allstate, Nest, EarthLink and Warby Parker. It even convinced the Canadian government to stop ads on Breitbart by declaring its contents "did not align with the Government's Code of Value and Ethics."

The organization claims to be looking only to wipe out rac-



ism, sexism, etc., but its decisions on who to go after and who to leave alone put the lie to that. Recently, a Sleeping Giants follower tweeted out that Amazon had advertised in a clearly marked white supremacist organization's publication. The best that it could do against such a valuable ally in the media was as Amazon was to say, "We're not focused on this site right now, but damn @Amazon, this looks pretty awful."

Sleeping Giants takes the position most companies do not know where every last ad dollar is spent. They spend some amount for Facebook ads but do not necessarily track where those ads appear. Right now, they are attempting to get Hertz and Acura to order their ad agencies not to let their ads appear on Breitbart. Hertz has ignored the group so far, so it has asked its followers to undertake a harassment campaign against the rental car leader.

This kind of low-wattage activism – the group has no website; its only communications are over social media – has become a force in attempting to silence debate by cutting off purveyors of alternate views at their fiscal knees. The lack of notoriety convinces companies that it's easier to go along with the demands because it seems little is at stake.

But aside from the decidedly un-American notion that wiping out ideological opponents makes for a better country, it may be time to take the threat seriously.

Some already do. When Target announced it was adopting the Obama administration's bathroom policy even after

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AIM

in the News

AIM Chief Executive Officer **Don Irvine** was recently interviewed by WJLA.com on the protests in Charlottesville. **Irvine** told WJLA that the focus of the liberal media on the activities of these extreme groups is far out of proportion to the level of influence they actually have in the conservative movement and that they thrive on the press coverage and the anger of liberal counter-protesters.

Irvine was also a guest on the Alan Nathan show where he discussed President Trump's relationship with the media.

Upcoming Events: AIM CEO **Don Irvine** will be a guest on Tom Gresham's Gun Talk radio program beginning at 3:05 pm Eastern Time. For more information on how to listen to the interview, go to <https://guntalk.com/gun-talk-radio>

Quote of the Month

"Taylor asked no questions to verify my identity, did no vetting whatsoever, sought no confirmation from a second source – but instead asked leading questions to support his various theories, asking me to verify them." -- Source who hoaxed Louise Mensch and her associate, Claude Taylor, by pretending to be an insider in New York AG Eric Schneiderman's office.

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Please remember AIM in your will.

Editor's Message



Dear Fellow Media Watchdogs:

First of all I want to apologize for the lateness of this issue. We had a major office move and downsizing in September that took most of our time and energy and the AIM Report was a temporary casualty of the move.

The good news is that the move is complete—at least the physical part and we are now getting back on track and making up for lost time.

Last month we introduced a couple of major changes — a new editor, Brian McNicoll, and a new design for the AIM Report—the first major changes in more than a decade.

While the AIM Report has always contained good information, many of you told us that by the time it arrived, you had already seen or read much of it elsewhere. We are trying to change that with content exclusive to the newsletter—with the exception of my blog which appears on our website and other news about AIM—and hopefully more useful to you.

While we are redesigning the newsletter, we are also refocusing the content on the website, www.aim.org, to be more media bias centric with increased analysis of the days news.

I know that change isn't always easy and I hope that you like the changes we have made to date and those that are yet to come. As always, we are here for you. If there is something you think we should be writing about or may have missed please let me know at don.irvine@aim.org

As always I'm grateful for your support and hope that you will continue helping us fight the "fake news" scourge that has become so pervasive. •

For Accuracy in Media

Don Irvine

Accuracy in Media has moved back to our nation's capital.

**Our New Mailing address is:
1717 K Street N.W. Suite 900
Washington, DC 20006**

Please update your files to reflect our new address.

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President Trump rescinded the directive that men be allowed to use women's restrooms if they felt sufficiently woman that day, conservatives stepped up with a boycott campaign against Target that has its CEO on the crosshairs.

When Kellogg's announced it was pulling its ads off Breitbart, the website responded with a boycott campaign against Kellogg's that raised eyebrows in its Michigan board rooms as well.

Conservatives must remember they also have market power. They can withhold support for products and institutions, and given they control a lot of money in this country, those producers and institutions will have to take notice.

But what would be better than that is to stop harassing advertisers and let voices other than yours be heard. That's hard for the left. It doesn't seem to understand there are other views and approaches to problems, and some of those are superior to lefty prescriptions.

Most importantly, it is time to restore individuals – rather than self-appointed censors – to the job of determining what constitutes racism, sexism and bigotry. Sleeping Giants does not seem to have much understanding of what those words mean or how they reflect the organization's own actions. •

Intern Spotlight



AIM/AIA Interns Made a Splash In Their Summer in Bethesda

Two young men who hope to run for public office one day spent their summer gaining practical experience and learning what to expect from the media

By Brian McNicoll

Everything about Keith Olbermann – his work history, his extreme mood swings, his bouts of barely contained rage – suggests he may be a little off.

But he provided a service recently with one of the "Resistance" rants he does for GQ in that he provided a valuable summary of how the left views the media landscape and what he and a lot of

through their internships at Accuracy in Media and Accuracy in Academia.

Brendan Cassell, who will attend Texas A&M this fall, and Len Robinson, who will continue his studies at the University of Baltimore, said they were possibly interested in political careers and found their summer at AIM and AIA a productive stepping stone.

"I got a good writing opportunity and a chance to hone my reporting and media skills," said Cassell, the Accuracy in Media intern, who made news with dramatic footage of freedom of speech rallies on the Washington Mall. "But most rewarding was to be able to get a sense of what people in the media feel like."

Robinson, who is studying English and jurisprudence with an eye toward attending law school, said the internship confirmed his instincts to get and stay involved with the media-political world.

"Interning at Accuracy in Academia has given me confirmation that I want to continue to work in media/journalism even if it is no more than publishing an op-ed column or serving in a commentary role," Robinson said. "AIA has given me the opportunity to make connections with a wide variety of people from interns, policy experts, elected officials and business leaders. Words barely suffice in expressing how grateful I am for both of these."

Both are Maryland guys. Cassell grew up in Bethesda, not far from AIM/AIA headquarters. He went to Walter Johnson High there. His dad owns a construction business, and his mom is a teacher. He has a brother who is a police officer in High Point, N.C., and another who is studying for his Masters in marine biology in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Cassell said he hopes to become an

officer in the Army and eventually serve as a public official. He carved out a niche at AIM by attending rallies and shooting video. One video featured the violent fascists of Antifa, who tried to intimidate him and stop him from filming when they found out he represented Accuracy in Media.

"He has a real knack for filming and putting himself in the right spots," said Don Irvine, CEO of AIM. "It took a lot of dedication and, frankly, guts to do what he did. I have a lot of respect for the work he produced."

But for Cassell, the feedback on writing meant just as much. "The knowledge of how to write was valuable," Cassell said. "I will take that with me going forward."

Robinson grew up in Laurel and attended St. Vincent Pallotti High there. He knew Irvine from political activity, and the two initially discussed his becoming an intern at the International Students for Liberty conference back in March.

He is interested in becoming a writer, lawyer, filmmaker and "possibly a husband" in addition to perhaps seeking public office.

Robinson said he enjoyed making connections and building relationships with interesting people, and he thanked his editor, Mal Kline of Accuracy in Academia, for all his help.

"Mal is a world-class editor with a knack for writing and conveying points of view that are eye-catching for readers," Robinson said. "Not only is Mal a superb editor, he's a fantastic storyteller and even better mentor, sharing stories and countless tips from his expansive and interesting career. Getting to know him was the most rewarding part of this internship." •

Olbermanniac?



others think should be done.

He starts out outraged that President CNN, of reporters creating stories out

Trump would joke about reporters with Vladimir Putin, "a dictator in whose country reporters are regularly murdered."

Olbermann decries Fox News for calling out CNN and other networks for broadcasting fake news, despite the lengthy record, especially on

of thin air or shaping them in order to mislead viewers.

It drives him crazy that Fox and especially other networks sometimes hire reporters who are not predisposed to criticize Trump's every move.

"Some of the other networks, the ones Trump also calls fake news, the ones Trump suckers will never watch and have never watched, hire more Trump apologists as contributors and promote Trump apologist contributors to Trump apologist show hosts because they think they still might get some of those Trump viewers to watch them," Olbermann asserts.

Reporters who have made up their minds about the president and his policies beforehand serve only to increase the danger of and vulnerability to fake news, he seemed to say – and it's time to do something about it.

It's time, he said, to abandon all pretense of objective reporting, Olbermann indicates, to stop giving "equal time to those speakers who have repeatedly resorted to the most reprehensive and transparent lies."

It's time to boycott Trump's allies, spokesmen and press events, to stop covering this administration or even to hear it out. Straight reporting, he says, is for suckers.

"The American media continues to stick to its rules while Trump laughs at those rules," Olbermann said. "The American media continues to adhere to some fanciful, noble but stupid conception of balance while Trump tells the FBI director he should consider putting reporters in prison for publishing classified information."

He says President Trump has declared war on freedom of the press and freedom of speech and that "every word out of the mouths of these monsters is intended to put another hole in the First Amendment."

Thus, it no longer makes sense to Olbermann to "give time to those speakers who can document and prove corruption and the internal threat to our democracy and then to give equal time to those speakers who have repeatedly resorted to the most reprehensive and transparent lies."

So if you're following along, Olber-

mann is saying networks no longer should hire or employ anyone remotely favorable to the president. He is saying newspapers and networks should stop trying to cover the administration, to stop attending its functions, or even to assign reporters to it except to attempt to set up a confrontation over press room rules.

He is saying balance doesn't make sense because anything the Trump person would say would be a lie.

"With all its phony unnamed sources and highly slanted and even fraudulent reporting, fake news is distorting democracy in our country," he says. Who is running stories based on supposed memos supposedly read to reporters over the phone? Who is creating protests out of whole cloth to exaggerate the size of the "resistance" to Trump's policies? Not stated.

He is saying ignore the president and don't even argue with his policy agenda. Rather, make the case that Trump is mentally ill. "When the democracy is on fire, who is supposed to ring the fire alarm?" Olbermann said, his voice rising. "When the emperor has no clothes and loyalty to his country and no sanity, who is supposed to say that again and again and again day after day until it is clear?"

So what he is suggesting is rather than to inform on a president, to track his every move, pore over his every record, analyze his every official act – the role of the press with this president should be to drive him from office. "Resist. Remove," he says at the end.

No one has ever treated the press as Trump does. Presidents have assumed the largest media outlets had to be accommodated in the largest way because they could turn the largest numbers of people against you and your initiatives.

Trump does not need the press to reach his audience. He has nearly 35 million followers on Twitter, and he and those networks Olberman decries for having him on know he is ratings gold.

So Trump has not hesitated to push back against unfavorable reports and, more to the point that has Olbermann so upset, the press hierarchy. Reporters who waltzed into front-row seats for the eight years of the Obama administration

found themselves sitting behind reporters from news outlets they didn't expect to see represented at official events. The daily briefings were changed to a less-formal setting to reduce reporter preening opportunities, and reporters from news outlets, such as the Daily Caller, Breitbart and others, soon found themselves being called on during the question period.

This is no threat to democracy. It's impossible to claim Trump is particularly secretive about anything. The argument that he is disloyal to his country could not be less serious.

But two points to take away ... The Leftist media is not interested in covering the administration at all. It has embraced some sort of savior complex and seeks to extricate us from Trump. To – in the name of democracy – overturn the results of a national election.

And second, it confuses its actions with those of the other side. It is the left that is attacking democracy here. It is the left that is using anonymous sources and fake news to press a non-case. It is the left that is laughing at the rules, having absolved itself of any responsibility for following them.

Indeed, when the emperor has no clothes, no loyalty and no sanity, who is supposed to say that again and again and again day after day until it is clear? We are. •

Brian McNicoll is the Editor of *Accuracy in Media*. He can be contacted at brian.mcnicoll@aim.org.

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