

North Korea, America and the Media: How Different Are We?

When it comes to having access to information, North Korea and America are worlds apart. One nation is totally closed, with the populace only getting what the media feeds them. And the people have no internet access. The other nation is wide open, with the populace having access to an endless stream of media options and with virtually universal internet access.

Yet, in another, very real way, the two countries are similar. The populations in both countries are heavily manipulated by the media.

Consider the recent BuzzFeed report alleging that Donald Trump had instructed his former attorney, Michael Cohen, to lie to Congress.

It was widely and instantly believed by millions of Americans. Except, we are told by Robert Mueller's offices, it wasn't true.

What if Mueller chose not to rebut the report? What if a day or week or month had gone by without the apparent truth coming out?

The opinions of millions of Americans would have been shaped by a media-manufactured (or, media-repeated) lie. How much different is this than North Korea?

Over the weekend, both the left and the right were in uproar over the allegedly horrible behavior of some pro-life Catholic school students. Not only were they wearing MAGA hats (a serious sin in and of itself), but they allegedly harassed an elderly Native American drummer. What's more, they also yelled, "Build the wall!"

The personal information of these students has even been released. And, as expected, they are receiving personal threats. And there is video evidence of their infractions too.

Except this story appears not to be true either. At the least, there is much more to the story, including a foul-mouthed attack from the Black Hebrew Israelite cult, anti-White rhetoric from another Native American, and no one yelling, "Build the wall!" And the drummer was apparently the instigator rather than just being an innocent victim.

And the video evidence, played in full, gives a very different impression.

Did the American populace, this time on both the left and right, jump to wrong conclusions?

Conservative columnist Rod Dreher wrote, that, "in this case, the white Catholic boys in their MAGA hats appearing to intimidate a Native American elder serves as a useful club with which to beat the entire March for Life, as well as conservative Christianity in general. I'm not saying that it wasn't news, or shouldn't have been reported. But tell the whole story. Tell how [Nathan Phillips, the Native American elder] instigated this thing, and how the boys appear not to have understood what was happening. Tell how Phillips's companion cursed them and hurled a racial slander at them. Talk about the Black Hebrews."

In response to Dreher's column, Princeton professor Robert P. George tweeted, "I apologize to the Covington Catholic boys. What Rod Dreher says of himself goes double for me. I jumped the gun and that was stupid and unjust. It is I, not the boys, who needs to take a lesson from this."

Dreher concluded his article with this: "From what I can tell from over here, what is being reported about the Covington Catholic boys appears to be almost 100 percent Fake News. I started out ready to condemn those boys, but after watching

more videos of the entire incident, I changed my mind. I am willing to revise this opinion if more facts come forward, and I welcome your e-mailing them to me.”

Even liberal outlets like *The New York Times* are issuing reports stating that, “A fuller and more complicated picture emerged on Sunday of the videotaped encounter between a Native American man and a throng of high school boys wearing ‘Make America Great Again’ gear outside the Lincoln Memorial in Washington.”

But this is the day in which we live.

We react instantly to a video, to a headline, to an accusation, with almost no critical filter.

And whether we follow right-wing news or left-wing news, we tend to follow our side slavishly. The other side is evil. Our side alone is telling the truth.

As for these Catholic students, what happens now that their personal information has been released to the public and their faces and names vilified?

Add to this the fact that internet giants like Google influence what sites and videos we see, and it’s clear: We are being manipulated.

Over at the *New York Post*, and coming from a different angle, Kyle Smith penned an op-ed titled, “How the media convinces us we’re all outraged—even when no one cares.” In short, Smith alleges that lazy journalists can manufacture a widespread outrage by selective reporting. And, of course, we believe it.

As Smith writes, “I’m outraged. You’re outraged. They’re all outraged. We’re all outraged!!! Except, what if we’re not?”

The reality is that, just like the people of North Korea, we are being manipulated by the media (including social media).

In the case of North Korea, by the paucity of media. In our case, by the abundance.

Let the viewer/reader/listener beware.