

Daily Meditation 12-01-25

Trump vs. The Media: A *Guardian* Victory & Lessons For Media Who Grovel

Good morning.

In today's daily meditation, we celebrate the victory from *The Guardian* in not rolling over, but rather taking on the lawsuit from Donald Trump's company -- a \$250 million dollar lawsuit -- but they won it, and it's a fine example from a small and independent media source. Do not roll over and play dead, like the big corporate media have done so much of, in the past year.

Another lesson about the importance of conscience, conscience with individuals, but conscience in companies as well. And what a scandal it is, that in the most powerful and richest of our corporations, in the media and elsewhere, seem to roll over the fastest when authoritarianism comes their way. "Greed," as Thomas Aquinas says, "has no limit and tends to infinity." It's the role of conscience to stand up to greed, among other things. But especially in a capitalist system like ours, greed, if not lassoed and restricted and held back, will carry the day.

Now I'd like to bring to your attention to just one of the many mortal sins -- mortal, meaning deadly -- that the present authoritarian regime in Washington, with the 99% complicity of its Republican congress people, has brought about. And that is the cutting off the federal funding for public radio and television. The results, as one commentator has written, have been "devastating." PBS laid off 15% of its staff. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting closed its doors. More than 50 local stations have made layoffs, and 115 will likely shut down entirely, in the next few months.

So once again, the narrative is that we develop alternative media, and support that which is authentic and ongoing. As one article comments, *Many stations have patched together enough money to keep broadcasting for at least a few more months. But they too will soon close, without additional support.* And further commentary: *This isn't about saving taxpayer money. Closing NPR and PBS is not about saving taxpayer money. Public Broadcasting represented less than 0.01% of the federal budget. And we get enormous value in return for that investment, in early childhood education, public safety, local public affairs programming, and documentaries, such as the current documentary on the Revolutionary War, and so much more.*

What IS it about? *Donald Trump's ongoing effort to destroy any news outlet that questions MAGA propaganda, and any organization that dares to challenge his power. There is a Senate Appropriations Committee debating whether to restore funding for public broadcasting.*

Senator Cory Booker has said, *Public broadcasters like PBS and NPR give every American, every American, access to culture, history, art, and trusted journalism. They are a cornerstone of civic life. We must defend them.* To that I say, Amen.

Others have commented that organizations like NPR and PBS are not owned by billionaires. *They are not owned by billionaires, and they don't spread conspiracies. They believe in facts, and that is precisely why Donald Trump is trying to defund them. He knows he can't control them, and he wants to destroy every bit of objective truth out there, so he can be the only voice in America.*

Well, of course, that's not how democracy works, but it's certainly how authoritarianism and NeoFascism works, and demands its control of information. The scandal is, so many corporations are just blithely, blindly, willingly going along, like the sycophants they are.

There's an article by Thom Hartmann that came out a couple days ago, called *Trump should be removed from office and prosecuted*. The subtitle is, *Under Trump's NeoFascist worldview, the only legal act is obedience, while defiance of his whims and illegal orders is a crime*. The only legal act is obedience. We see that in all kinds of fascist systems, and certainly in the Nazi experience of a few generations ago. But he also says, "I've been feeling something unusual these past few weeks -- optimism." Now, why is Thom Hartmann, whom we also held up in today's essay, feeling some optimism?

He says, *Not naive optimism, or the kind that ignores danger, but the real kind that arrives when you see people waking up, standing up, and refusing to bow before a lawless president who believes rules are for suckers and the Constitution is a mere suggestion, rather than the foundation of our republic. We're now governed by a man who treats legal limits as personal insults. Like every wannabe 3rd-World tinpot dictator before him, he despises the idea that any law can constrain him at all.* And of course, he has tremendous complicit actors, since he's taken over the entire Republican Party, and so many media such as Fox News, and so many more have followed him down the rabbit hole.

Trump and the spineless sycophants, says Hartmann, in this administration, have rejected the entire idea of a rules-based society. They are turning the presidency into a throne, painting as enemies, anyone who insists soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen, and

others in government, should follow the law. Of course, he's referring to the fact that recently, he ranted about six CIA and military veterans who are also in Congress, calling them seditious behavior punishable by death, because they got on air and said that soldiers should remember that they took an oath to Constitution, and in the oath is the fact that you are not to obey illegal orders. And he reposted, Trump did, a message saying that these people should be hanged. He's talking about politicians.

Hartmann comments, *This was Trump's declaration of war on the rule of law, something so essential that it is the basis of every democracy and civilized society in history throughout the world.* And he points out that *the Fox propaganda channel and other right-wing media are actually defending this obscene behavior. It is also criminal, according to a code, 18 US Code Number 610, makes it a crime for any federal official, including the President, to use their authority to intimidate, threaten or punish citizens for their political expressions, voting behavior or dissent. And so, to threaten Congress with execution for not following the dictates of the dictator, is an extreme and textbook violation,* Hartmann points out, *of this law.*

So all this is to bring in some hope. The hope, the optimism, is in terms of people standing up and resisting, which they are doing more and more, and the polls are dropping for this kind of authoritarian dictatorship. But we have to keep doing more. And it is in that common solidarity, protest, that we find hope, and we find the energy, not just to gather a pity party, but to get something done, and to bring in a sense of conscience and justice and authentic law -- law for the common good.

Thank you. We'll see you next week.