

The Media and Politics: The Press and the 2016 US Presidential Race

Clarence W Thomas*

Mass Communication Department, The Robertson School of Media and Culture, USA

History tells us that the press "The Fourth Estate" has great power (just as the Church, Nobility, and the People). Along with this power comes great responsibility. In the United States, the press has a social responsibility to facilitate the very society which allows it to thrive. In other words, the press in the U.S., via the First Amendment, is provided with a unique environment where it is left free to do its job without fear of reprisal. A free press facilitates an informed knowledgeable society with in turn facilitates the democratic process. The press serves as a watch dog and alerts society of the ills of government and business. The press can and should investigate and raise societal conflict to discussion and possible solution. However, at a point, society itself must advocate for change and reformation after enlightenment by the press.

Both before and during the US presidential campaign(s) and election of 2016 the press did an excellent job of working toward an informed electorate. The press showed us Republican Party primary

campaigns and debates full of insults, name calling, divisiveness and general unorthodoxy resulting in a highly unlikely leader. The press also allowed us to see Democratic Party primary campaign(s) and lack luster debates full of passive aggressive conflict tainted by the threat of Russian influence on the US political process. As America faced the main presidential campaign and debates, the press once again provided us with a view of the uncivilized gladiator style (kill or be killed) political contest/conflict. Ultimately, the press revealed an election outcome that caught half of the nation off guard, resulting in a controversial winner. The press then turned to the aftermath of the election filled with buyer's remorse-(similar to the Brexit vote in Europe) and the resulting unrest, protests, demonstrations, and rioting. The press now leaves us at a point in US history where Americans might ask if the country will really be "great" again or doomed and headed to ruin. In either event, the press did its job. Did society pay attention?

***Corresponding author:** Thomas CW, Mass Communication Department, The Robertson School of Media and Culture, USA, Tel: 804-827-3772; E-mail: cwthomas@vcu.edu

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