

## Truth and Integrity: The Gold Standard behind the Currency of Journalism

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The main function of journalism, like that of history, is to provide truth via integrity to society. Then, society has the obligation to take truth and render the best deliberation and decision(s) possible which facilitate and uplift society.

Without truth, the information received through journalism is flawed and nothing more than entertainment. Without truth, the value of journalism is null and void and society goes lacking (just as a currency which lacks a standard such as gold). Therefore, journalists (and the hierarchy/management of said) take the pursuit and presentation of truth and integrity in journalism very seriously.

Several major journalism scandals/incidences illustrate the importance truth and integrity as journalism standards. Namely, the situations faced by Brian Williams (NBC News), Jason Blair (The New York Times), and Janet Cooke (The Washington Post).

### 2015 Brian Williams (NBC News)

Williams was suspended from work for six months without pay for inaccuracy, misrepresentation, and exaggeration of content relating to his coverage of events during the Iraq war.

### 2003 Jayson Blair (The New York Times)

Blair resigned from work after facing allegations of journalistic fraud and widespread use of fabrication and plagiarism.

### 1980 Janet Cooke (The Washington Post)

Cooke wrote the story "Jimmy's World" which supposedly chronicled the life of a young boy who was victim to the heroin trade in the slums of Washington, D.C. Initially, the story was acclaimed, going on to win the Pulitzer Prize. Unfortunately, for Cooke and her paper, the story was discovered to be mostly a work of fiction. Cook resigned from the paper and the Pulitzer Prize (the highest award in journalism) was returned.

These cases illustrate the fact that journalists and hierarchy of journalism have no tolerance for those that might even appear to tarnish the importance of integrity and truth in journalism and the importance of journalism in society and the world at large.

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