

Speaker 1: Welcome to the Bill Walton Show, featuring conversations with leaders, entrepreneurs, artists and thinkers.

Speaker 1: Fresh perspectives on money, culture, politics, and human flourishing.

Speaker 1: Interesting people, interesting things.

Bill Walton: Hello. Welcome to the Bill Walton Show.

Bill Walton: Liberal media bias, the media's war with Donald Trump, growing censorship by Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. These issues, color, divide and dominate America's political landscape.

Bill Walton: Some questions: Is Donald Trump the cause or the consequence of elite liberal media bias, political correctness and identity politics? Are the social media companies gearing up to influence the outcome of the 2020 election and how far have things come when Twitter blocks Senator Mitch McConnell's account because he posted a video of antifa mob shouting death threats in front of his house?

Bill Walton: With me to unpack what's going on, are Brent Bozell and Dan Gainor with the Media Research Center, the largest media watchdog organization in America.

Bill Walton: Brent is the founder and President of MRC as well as For America with its over seven million Facebook followers. His new book, Unmasked: Big Media's War Against Donald Trump, exposes the full extent of the media in league with the swamp bent on destroying the President.

Bill Walton: Dan Gainor is Vice President of Business and Culture at MRC, Heads Up Tech Watch and is leading its social media analysis unit. Dan, welcome.

Dan Gainor: Thank you.

Bill Walton: Full disclosure, I'm on the board happily and proudly of the Media Research Center.

Bill Walton: So Brent, let's kick off with your book, Unmasked: Big Media's War Against Trump, why now and what's the...

Brent Bozell: Tim Graham and I, my colleague, had done a...

Bill Walton: Tim's the co-author?

Brent Bozell: Yeah, also with the MRC.

Brent Bozell: I've done a number of books on presidential campaigns and candidates in the past and with this one it was different because on the one hand, everybody knows that there's a conflict between Donald Trump and the media. On the other hand, no one knows just how ferocious it really is and even we didn't know how ferocious it was, and even though we monitor it every single day, but you have to put it all together and look at it.

Brent Bozell: That's what Tim did. He went off for about a month and went home and looked at all the research and came back and said, "Look what we have" and we hadn't expected it. What we found was, Bill, there's a perfect storm where Donald Trump is concerned in the media. Why is it so vicious against him? Why the most vicious coverage in the history of the Republic against any president, and that's no exaggeration?

Brent Bozell: There were three things going on. One, Donald Trump said from the outset that he was going to undo the Obama legacy, and this was something that the press was fully vested in.

Brent Bozell: Number two, they created him and they felt the need to destroy him. Remember, he came from the Apprentice, he came from Hollywood, and they thought it was all very interesting until he got serious and they realized he was actually going to pose a threat.

Brent Bozell: So that was the second one, but the third one was the most important. Donald Trump declared war on the press. Every other Republican before him, to one degree or another, had run from the press because they were intimidated by the press. They felt that if the press slapped them once and they retaliated, the press would slap them again. Donald Trump understood something significant, which was in a mano-a-mano combat, Donald Trump's numbers might be low, but they were twice as good as theirs so he was going to win in the court of public opinion. Plus, he was going to win a presidential campaign because of it, because they were the number one enemy of the conservative movement. Therefore, the fight.

Bill Walton: What's the media's favorability rating? It's higher than Congress, but not much?

Brent Bozell: Oh, it might even be lower than Congress right now. I've seen numbers in the low teens, in the favorability. In the believability, I've seen numbers that have it at 11%. You turn on CNN, networks like CNN, and you simply don't believe them, and I don't think they're ever going to regain. MSNBC, CNN, the [inaudible 00:04:48], I don't think they're ever going to regain their reputations. I think they have destroyed themselves.

Bill Walton: Well, I asked the question at the outset, is Donald Trump the cause or the consequence of all the bias and everything? I think he's the consequence.

Brent Bozell: Yeah.

Bill Walton: The people, a lot of people in America, probably in a majority, that were waiting for this guy to come along and say, "Look, I'm going to call you out on this stuff you've been telling, is true."

Dan Gainor: Brent's second point, they helped create it. He spent 12 years where NBC would bring him on board, not just promote his show, but they brought him in on the morning show. You know, "We're going to bring him in." They brought him in to the sound effects of the Imperial March from Star Wars, put him on the show and have him fire their interns as this big thing.

Dan Gainor: Well, they thought they were basically building up somebody as a celebrity and Donald Trump outsmarted them. He basically uses the foundation for political campaign and they can't deal with it. They blame themselves. Of course you'll never hear any... Never see any fingers pointed. They point fingers at Facebook, they point fingers at Twitter where Trump is more powerful than they are, but they won't point fingers at NBC because that's them. They can't take the blame.

Bill Walton: One of the fun things in the book was to look at election night coverage. Everyone talks about the Hillary campaign and how they were in a state of absolute stunned disbelief when... I mean they had all their pyrotechnics ready to go. Well, so did the press and if you looked at election night coverage, I think there were thousands of people on suicide watch that night because their world was collapsing. A, Hillary didn't win and B, he did. It just couldn't have been a worse outcome for the press that night.

Brent Bozell: Well, I remember watching Fox and Chris Wallace, who's not exactly a Trump guy, said at some point like 10 o'clock "Well, if these trends continue, he could win."

Dan Gainor: Katie Yoder who used to work for us, now works for National Review, did a great video that's got more than three million views on YouTube, of just a collection of stuff like that, but the best site to watch that night was the Young Turks, which is radical far left outlet and just watching them as Cenk Uygur, the guy who heads the Young Turks is like, "Well, we don't need that state," and you just watch as it goes down the line.

Dan Gainor: [inaudible 00:07:17]. Oh and they'd start to get worried, and one of the other guys is looking at the overall numbers and they're watching. We all watched the New York Times percentage. It started out, it was all the way here, 95% chance that Trump... And just watch it shift all evening. It was fun because it was for more than 60 million people in this country, it was comeuppance over the media.

Brent Bozell: Well, you know...

Bill Walton: 63.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Brent Bozell: Along those lines, to look at it seriously, 2014 we were talking about the way it shouldn't have been done. The way it should have been done, I've always found this to be fascinating, look at the 2014 presidential, the reelection campaign... No, no, no, 2004 reelection campaign of Bush 43, because it's fascinating.

Brent Bozell: All the exit polling data showed he was going to get destroyed and so everyone on the sets of these networks all believed that Bush was doomed. Now if you watch Fox News, I've talked to Brit Hume and others and they all believed it, going into it, that he was finished, but they had to keep that even keeled tone. Then the numbers started shifting. Virginia came in and Delaware, these other states started coming in. They had to keep the same tone.

Brent Bozell: Juan Williams also. At the very beginning there was elation and towards the end he too was on suicide watch, but you didn't see it with any of them. They all just reported it flatly, which is how it's supposed to be done. You couldn't. There's no way on God's good earth you'd ever see someone do it today.

Bill Walton: Well then as you write in the book, after that night, Trump was no longer a joke. He was a threat and that changed everything. Then I think that's when the hounds were unleashed. Was there any big takeaway? They get together the next day and say, "Here's what we're going to do?"

Brent Bozell: You know, I'm asked that question all the time. Is this a green conspiracy by the media to get Trump and I used to joke about this not being a grand conspiracy to get conservatives. You know, I do think it is now. I think they are just so fixated on this cost that this is all journalists talk about when they are around the water cooler. This is all they talk about when they're in Manhattan at their parties. It is a cause of the far left to have this man removed from power. They believe he's illegitimate somehow. He just should not have won and the people who voted for him really do have horns and smoke coming out of the ears and when they see that we have a full set of teeth, they just don't understand.

Bill Walton: It's that full set of teeth especially.

Bill Walton: You're watching the Bill Walton Show. I'm here with Brent Bozell and Dan Gainor. They're with the Media Research Center and we're talking about the election, the surprising election of Donald Trump and the media's reaction to it.

Bill Walton: We're in 2019 now, moving towards fall. Attention's turning to 2020 and how do you see the media coverage picking up steam or changing? I also want to talk about the social media part of what's happening aiming towards 20, what do you see?

Brent Bozell: I'll let Dan comment on this too. I don't see any difference. I think that the... One of the points that Tim and I wanted to make about this book is that

whereas all the other books we've done are retrospectives. This is a prospective in the sense that past is prologue. It's good.

Brent Bozell: What they began in the summer of 2015 is going to continue all the way to 2020, if need be. They won't let up for a moment. Watch the Mueller Report. They spent over two years pointing at the Mueller Report as that moment where this man was going to be unmasked and the world was going to see that they were right all along.

Brent Bozell: After all of that, after thousands of stories pointing to Mueller, Mueller, Mueller, Mueller; Mueller came out with this report and said there was no there there, and for about 24 hours, they were in a state of shock until the first Democrat on the house, Nadler, or somebody said, "Well, we're going to look at it and we don't believe Mueller.", and they all shifted immediately to the Democrats. "No, that's right. We don't believe him. We never liked him to begin with." So it's anything to continue the jihad against Trump. I think it really has been seamless. I don't know if Dan agrees with me.

Dan Gainor: I think the only thing I can say is it's getting worse. We are 15 months out and we see Nicolle Wallace talking about falsely accusing Trump of planning to eliminate Latinos. The kind of thing that would get you fired from any, not just news organization, but pretty much any organization in the world, and she throws up a Twitter apology, "Oh yeah, I misspoke."

Dan Gainor: How can you misspeak about that? The tenor of things keeps escalating, so I tell people when I do radio, we're 15 months out, it's going to get worse. I've been saying this the whole Trump era, it's going to get worse. Imagine how bad it will be next October.

Brent Bozell: Yup. Think about the gun violence stories and his reaction. So you have something in Charlottesville, they slammed him for not giving a quick enough response and not giving the correct response. So you have El Paso, he gives an immediate correct response and their response is we don't believe him. The man cannot win and he understands this. There's nothing he could do.

Brent Bozell: Bush 41, as a wonderful gentleman as he was, never understood this. Bush 43, never understood this. They're not going to like you. Romney never understood this. They're not going to like you. So why do you try to put up with them? Why try to like them? I believe that Donald Trump over places hands many times. He shows no... Sometimes there are no guardrails, when he should show guardrails. He gives that terrific address in Normandy that has even Jim Acosta applauding him. He should have sat back and basked for about a week in his presidential aura. Instead, he attacked Nancy Pelosi not 22 hours later. It's his DNA to pick fights. If he didn't, he'd be in a much better position because he should pick his fights selectively with the press, but his supporters are behind him 100% when he does.

- Dan Gainor: And you look at what he does. He's the ultimate troll though, what we say for social media. He taunts the media. He goes right up to the line. Look what he said about the congresswoman, who he didn't even name, but he said send them back, but he didn't say what the media reported, reported endlessly. Oh, he wanted to kick them out of the country? No.
- Dan Gainor: What he did, if you read the tweet, very clearly it said send them back, let them learn something and let them come back and show us that their ideas work. What he's saying is their ideas are wrong, but the media jumped on it and says, "Oh, this is what he said" because they can't report honestly. So it's any attempt they can to get it. He could literally give the weather report and they would say that, "Look at it, he's talking about snow, he's racist."
- Bill Walton: So the question is big media, we know who they are, their audience is not growing. Their audience, CNNs audience, is shrinking. Are they talking to each other or are they talking to the rest of America? How much impact do you think this is really having?
- Brent Bozell: Well, it's an interesting question and we're going to be exploring that at the MRC because the answer's going to be somewhat subjective. It's not just the retail audience you have. If you were to look at the retail audience of CNN, it's pathetic. It's 761 or 729,000 I think it is now, primetime viewers, and to put that one in it's right perspective, that's two tenths of 1% of the American people. To put that in it's right perspective, because we've looked at this, there are more people with pet chickens in America than there are viewers of CNN. There are...
- Bill Walton: Not just chickens, but pet chickens.
- Brent Bozell: It gets better. There are more practicing witches in America then there are viewers of CNN, and my favorite, there are more prostitutes in America than there are viewers of CNN and I don't know what that one means, but that's your retail, but now look at the wholesale and the wholesale changes. If you look at CNN.com it's 20 million that they have. If you look at CNN as something that's picked up...
- Bill Walton: CNN.com?
- Brent Bozell: Dot com.
- Bill Walton: Dot com, okay.
- Brent Bozell: It's 20 million. Fox has 26 million and running away with it, but still look at CNN. It's like New York Times. They're very strong in the dotcomosphere, but when you look at them as news outlets that will be picked up and used by others, there still is a power that CNN has, but the bottom line is where John Q public is concerned, take away the airport monitors and by the way, they pay for those,

take away those airport monitors and they really don't have anyone of substance watching them anymore.

Brent Bozell: But then you also have to look at, they have international reach because there's CNN international and then of course the Twitter and the audience. It's not just CNN, or you're on Facebook holdings, but it's all their employees.

Brent Bozell: So Jake Tapper, who's got a lot of influence as well, and politics, the people on Twitter, it's influencers. The study recently said that, I think it's something like 80 or 90% of all content on Twitter is done by 10% of the people. I'm probably one of those 10%, God help me, but so is Jake Tapper, and so politicians go on there and they see what Jay Tapper has to say and he influences policy and that's also important. [crosstalk 00:17:56].

Bill Walton: I heard something recently I tend to think is it is not the Democrat party influencing the media, it's the other way around.

Brent Bozell: Oh, absolutely.

Bill Walton: I think the media is by far in the catbird seat here.

Brent Bozell: If you are a conservative, your opposition is not Nancy Pelosi.

Bill Walton: Yeah.

Brent Bozell: It is not Chuck Schumer. It is not that AOC thing. It is a national press corps. They have a lot more influence, but it occurs to me, listening to Dan talk, that there's a... CNN, once upon a time, was almost the gold standard for journalism. There's a story that's never been told about CNN, the impact in the right direction.

Brent Bozell: That story has to do with the fall of the Soviet Empire. Up until CNN, the only way the truth got to people in the eastern block, or say in Nicaragua, was the voice of America or one of those subsidiaries, but once you had CNN, you had CNN broadcasting into hotel rooms and just that, into hotel rooms, was bringing the truth about the West for the first time and it had an extraordinary effect in that the people in these countries, that were enslaved by communism, for the first time saw the actual visuals of what the West was really like.

Brent Bozell: So I don't know that CNN has ever gotten the applause it deserved for what it did during the Cold War.

Bill Walton: And So that gave them a series of purpose and a larger cause than they have now, which is...

Brent Bozell: Well, you know, but they did it by just simply reporting news.

Bill Walton: Okay.

Brent Bozell: What happened, we were talking off air about Bernie Shaw, their original anchor, who I thought was a paradigm of objectivity. He was to some degree ruined after the first Gulf War because he became a celebrity, because he was there reporting on the set, and I think it took away from his currency that he was no longer just a reporter. No one's a reporter anymore. Everyone's a journalist because to be a reporter means just to look at the who, what, when, and why, and the facts. When you're a journalist, you could do all sorts of nonsense.

Dan Gainor: So everybody's a journalist?

Brent Bozell: Well, I think [crosstalk 00:20:28]...

Bill Walton: No more stock brokers, all investment advisors.

Dan Gainor: I think Brent, I think that's one of the most important points applying to now social media. The point Brent just made about celebrity.\.

Bill Walton: Let's stick with that for a second. You're watching the Bill Walton Show. I'm here with Brent Bozell and Dan Gainor. We're talking about a terrific book, Unmasked, which is Brent's recent book, Big Media's War Against Trump.

Bill Walton: Let's shift gears to social media because we've been talking about traditional media, one way message following the usual kind of guidelines that that follows. Now we have social media and we have platforms, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Google, not exactly a platform and we're now communicating through these private companies.

Bill Walton: How has that changed political discourse and what's the likely impact in 2020.

Brent Bozell: Go ahead.

Dan Gainor: Well as you said, Brent's point about celebrities [crosstalk 00:00:21:20]...

Bill Walton: Yeah, you set it up perfectly.

Dan Gainor: Yeah, I was going to say what happened? I'm a very odd duck in that I've worked online almost the entire history of online. I've been, I think my 24th or 25th year, I'd have to go back and check and I'm not going to bother, but what that means is I've seen how it's all changed.

Dan Gainor: When you first launched the internet it was a very small number of people and that lasted until around close to 2000 and then it picked up, the dot com era picked it up, but by and large, was a useful positive thing until social media.

Dan Gainor: But as the internet became more powerful, journalists went from being reporters and covering things, to wanting to get more attention and they realized positive reinforcement was the more that they posted crazy things, radical things, in particularly liberal things, they got positive reinforcement from the people that they knew.

Dan Gainor: There's been a study, a professor I knew, who sort of introduced me to [inaudible] journalists in general mostly follow liberals on Twitter. They don't pay any attention to conservatives. They don't interact with them because they're not their friends, that's not what they prefer to read, and so it escalated with the launch of social media and we had Myspace, but that didn't really... It was Twitter and Facebook that did it. That's been a little over 10 years and we've watched the decline. I would say the decline of journalism has rapidly enhanced by that because journalists now, everybody wants to be a celebrity and it is just destructive to journalism. They rather snark.

Dan Gainor: You watch a presidential speech and you'll see famous journalists, prominent, important journalists, making jokes during the speech. They didn't do it during Obama, but they'd do it every time Trump talks because they know that's their audience.

Brent Bozell: I grew up not far from where we're sitting right now and I remember my older brother subcontracting his Washington Evening Star newspaper route to me. I was about eight and he sat home and I think he watched cartoons while I did all of his work for him, and I was about six, but just imagine that those days when you read the Washington Post first thing in the morning, then in the afternoon you've got the afternoon newspaper. This is something I think the millennial generation would never understand. They don't understand paper so that is self explanatory I suppose, but that was the news era where you waited for someone to tell you what was of importance in your world.

Brent Bozell: Today we're in the information age. Today, if you want something, you just go here and you look for whatever it is you want. Now, if you go to a new source, you can now go through their... You're in a cafeteria and you go through their menu, so if you have this CNN app, you scroll through what you want to see and you pick the one thing you want to see. So you're really no longer getting news, you're getting the information that you want. That is one dynamic.

Brent Bozell: Now add to it the social media dynamic, where those people who are supposed to be just reporting that are now involved in the conversation where they're trying to effect the very thing that they're supposed to be reporting on. They are now activists in their own news. This is something that if you did this 30 years ago, you'd have been fired. You would be told that that's a guardrail and you're never allowed to do this. T.

Brent Bozell: Social media has brought out, I think, the very best and the very worst in us. The very best is the ability for anyone to discuss anything, this is in theory, with your

fellow man without having to go through the filter of the [inaudible 00:25:27]. The huge negatives on this is one, that's not true, what I just said. You absolutely have to go through a filter now, and this is the big tech companies that have now decided that there are a set of standards and if you don't abide and genuflect by their worldview, you'll be banished from those platforms.

Brent Bozell: But secondly, because it is bringing out the worst in the human spirit with some people. You look at anyone who's committed a mass murder, had a Facebook page, had a Twitter, where they just rant on those things. You have people deliberately lying on these things and just look at the Russians. They're nobody's fool and they're still trying to affect elections by stoking the flames on social media.

Brent Bozell: I hope to God, we're going to get in their country too, by the way, but this is the world of social media. Social media is something that is very, very frightening in one way. In another way, it is the very best thing that could happen to a democracy.

Bill Walton: Well, I guess the thing that frightens me about social media is that it's not an open airwaves form of media, that all our conversations are going through big companies; Google, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and that poses an entirely different issue when it comes to what the rules ought to be, what the guidelines ought to be and what their role ought to be.

Bill Walton: Unfortunately, we've run out of time for this segment of the Bill Walton Show. We've been here talking with Brent Bozell and Dan Gainor about media bias and Donald Trump.

Bill Walton: We'll see you next time on our show for another topic. If you want to stay with this topic we're going into what we call over time now and we're going to dig into what the big media companies, or the big social media companies, mean for the election and for our freedom of speech.

Bill Walton: So thank you and we'll talk and sit with you soon. Bye.

Speaker 1: Thanks for listening. Want more? Be sure to subscribe at thebillwaltonshow.com or on iTunes.