

Section 1: Mini Essay - Shepard Smith

JOUR608

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“As consumers of news, we have to be better at it.” - *Shepard Smith*

Fox News is fifty percent news, fifty percent opinion. Because opinion got them their publicity, they pushed opinion into hard news. Fake news is a destructive force that radicalizes many by undermining the truth. Shepard Smith’s greatest concern while working for Fox was being a part of news so far deviated from truth, broadcasting to a country already divided over what is real (CNN). Smith butted-heads with Fox opinion hosts, and was even mocked by Tucker Carlson.

Colleagues were spreading lies they knew were false, even though they were smart and educated enough to know better. He stayed at Fox regardless of his discomfort in effort to keep pushing out news that was “right,” or not saturated by either political side. To Smith, it seemed selfish of him to leave Fox viewers to fall further into the wrath of opinion and deception (CNN). Smith hoped to educate viewers that were consuming news from his colleagues. “Those of us who are so honored and grateful to have a platform of public influence have to use it for the public good,” (Ushe).

After 23 years, he chose to no longer propagate false premises circulating his newsroom. “I chose to know better.”

I think Smith and his decision-making aligns with rule-based thinking by Immanuel Kant, “Follow the principle you want everyone else to follow.” Behave in a way that your actions could become a universal standard (Kidder). Stick to your principles and let the outcomes be

outcomes. Smith argued, “If the opinion is based on facts you’re certainly entitled to it,” (CNN). But when opinion is used as a tool to feed lies and deception, “I’ll stop watching it.”

Smith felt his public duty to report in context and with a variety of perspectives, without fear or favor (Steinberg). He stuck to his principles and let outcomes fall as they did. He carefully constructed a career on an honest fight to pinpoint and report the facts of daily life. He behaved in such a way that his actions should be the standard. To be truth-seeking, honest, know when something no longer serves you, and to not be too attached to the outcome. Ultimately, Smith hoped facts and truth would become more popular than opinion and lies. He wanted to sustain an environment where journalism could thrive, providing a great example of integrity to journalists through his resignation from Fox.

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