

What a Fight with my Boyfriend Taught Me About Journalism, and Democracy

In the era of an increasingly volatile and confusing media landscape, the role of media in a democracy, I believe, is more important than ever before. My high school Broadcast Journalism teacher said it best- the role of the media is to give people information they can use to make decisions about their lives. Now, in a time where we have almost too much information at our fingertips, the role of the media must shift to giving the public verified information.

For our betterment or to our detriment, humans are emotional creatures. Often, we act or speak before getting all the facts straight or giving our brains time to process the information we've been told. Just last week, I lashed out in defensiveness at my boyfriend when he told me my sweater was on backward. I didn't even bother to look down to check if he was right before disagreeing with him, as my brain told me that I knew all the facts, even though I didn't have all the information.

Imagine if my short-fuse and defensive nature had access to nuclear codes or the ability to deploy troops or resources (please don't consider this my official run for office).

On a small scale, my sensitivity about my sweater illustrates a bigger problem in our democracy- people act or make up their minds before they have all the facts straight. I believe that this is a crucial point in many of the significant political issues we are facing today- gun control, women's healthcare, immigration, aid for other countries, etc.

Too often in our history, people have acted impulsively without having all of the facts. For example, [a man opened fire](#) in a restaurant in Washington, D.C., in 2016 because of false information he had regarding a theory about Hillary Clinton running a child sex ring out of a pizza place. Furthermore, in situations like the conflict in the Middle East, where there is a plethora of unverified information flying around from both sides, some people were too quick to throw their support behind a cause they didn't know enough about.

That is why I believe the media must act as a filter for democracy- not as a filter of opinion, but as a filter of unvetted or unverified information. While journalists are the watchdogs of the government, they are also the protectors of the people. [The Pew Research Center](#) found that majorities of both parties support the idea of the watchdog function, but a substantial partisan gap exists. The media has a duty to do their due diligence to ensure the information they publish is based on reliable facts to prevent the further splintering of our society.