



PRESIDENT'S AWARD
for Impact on Media

DELIVERING Facts and Truth in the 'FAKE NEWS' ERA

BY ALEX BEN BLOCK

STANDING UP
FOR WHAT IS
RIGHT EARNS
JAKE TAPPER THE
L.A. PRESS CLUB'S
PRESIDENT'S
AWARD

A month after Donald Trump's unexpected victory in the 2016 Presidential election, then-Vice President-elect Mike Pence appeared on CNN's news show "The Lead with Jake Tapper."

Tapper asked him why General Michael Flynn, Trump's nominee to head the National Security Agency, sought a national security clearance for his son, a conspiracy theorist who was behind a bizarre, fake news story about a D.C. pizzeria being a front for a Hillary Clinton pedophilia ring.

As a result of those rumors, on the day before Pence spoke to Tapper, a man with two rifles had burst into the pizza parlor and threatened employees.

Did Pence, who headed the Trump transition, know Flynn wanted security clearance for his son?

Instead of answering, Pence equivocated, telling Tapper "how grateful and honored" he and Trump were to have Flynn. Of course, Flynn was later fired for lying to Pence and has been implicated in the Russia/Trump election scandal.

Pence shifted topics but Tapper kept coming back to the same question—nine times in four and a half minutes. Pence just repeated that Flynn's son was no longer on the transition team and they were going to make America great again.

That was the last—and only—time Pence was on with Tapper. The Veep has since refused to appear on his Sunday newsmaker show, "State of the Union," even if he is mak-



ing the rounds on competitors like "Meet The Press."

"He was protesting the fact I had stood up for trying to get an answer to the question about something that was empirically shocking," says Tapper. "It's not pleasant to be disliked, but if you feel like you're standing up for the right thing, I think it is important."

That ability to stand up for what is right, and being a journalist who will not take pat answers from the powerful, rich and connected, has made Tapper stand out, especially in the Trump era. The Los Angeles Press Club is presenting him with the President's Award for impact on the media at tonight's Southern California Journalism Awards.

"During a divisive election," says NBC4 anchor/reporter and L.A. Press Club President Robert Kovacic, "Jake Tapper was willing to take on politicians from both sides of the aisle.



John Nowak



David S Holloway



Meghan Sinclair/Conaco, LLC



David S Holloway

His effective interview style cuts to the core."

Rising ratings are one sign of Tapper's success across six hours a week of CNN programming. However, the surest sign he is an impartial journalist is that he is equally disliked by politicians from both parties.

President Obama felt Tapper was too tough on him. Hillary Clinton was blunt when the anchor ran into her after she became Secretary of State.

Tapper had asked Clinton if he should refer to her as "Madame First Lady" or "Madame Secretary." "She said, 'either one is preferable to what we call you when you're not around,'" recalls Tapper. "That kind of burned."

Tapper grew up in Philadelphia, the son of a pediatrician father and nurse mother. At Dartmouth he worked as cartoonist for the school paper, skewering a range of subjects.

He tried film school at USC but dropped out,

worked in public relations, helped the group Handgun Control and began freelance writing with an article about dating Monica Lewinsky (once).

He took a salary cut to join the *Washington City Paper* to pursue his passion, covering politics. His editor there, the late David Carr, later a star *New York Times* reporter, became Tapper's mentor.

"I learned at his knee," Tapper said. "He was tough but great. I remember every criticism."

He spent a year working for the online magazine *Slate*, covering the presidential campaigns of John McCain and George W. Bush. Tapper wrote a book about the Florida recount in 2000, which led him to appearances and part-time work on CNN and VH1.

He was hired by ABC, where he got his big break covering Arnold Schwarzenegger's successful run for Governor in the 2003 California

Top: September, 2015: Tapper hosts "State of the Union" from the Reagan Presidential Library where he will moderate the CNN Republican Presidential Candidate Debate.

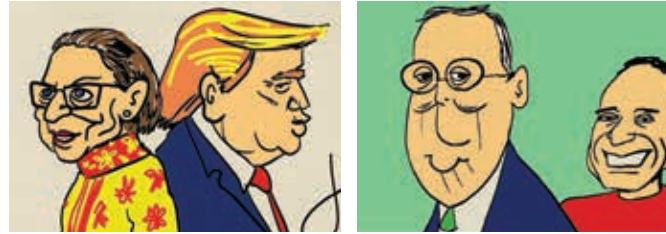
Across the bottom: Vice President-Elect Mike Pence on "The Lead with Jake Tapper."

2016 Election Day coverage in Washington DC with Wolf Blitzer.

CNN Presidential Town Hall with President Barack Obama in 2016 to discuss veterans, national security and foreign policy issues impacting the US military.

Tapper appears on the Conan O'Brien show in 2016.

PRESIDENT'S AWARD JAKE TAPPER



Tapper worked as a cartoonist for the Dartmouth newspaper and still keeps his hand skills; above are subjects sketched, including Ruth Bader Ginsburg with Donald Trump and Mitch McConnell.



Dimitrios Kambouris/Getty Images for TBS

Jake and Jennifer Tapper attend "Full Frontal With Samantha Bee's" Not The White House Correspondents' Dinner, April 2017.



The CNN Republican Candidate Debate at the Reagan Presidential Library on September 16, 2015: Jake Tapper facing: George Pataki, Rick Santorum, Bobby Jindal, Lindsey Graham. Right: In the CNN offices, Washington, DC.

David S Holloway



CNN on location coverage of the Ferguson, Missouri, protests. Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager, was shot and killed by Darren Wilson, a police officer, in 2014.



recall election. That led to air time on "Good Morning America," "World News Tonight" and "Nightline."

Tapper authored *The Outpost*, a critically acclaimed book about the war in Afghanistan, and ABC soon named him its White House correspondent. He got married (he has two children).

After Jeff Zucker became CEO of CNN in 2013, his first hire was Tapper. A year later Medialite.com named "The Lead With Jake Tapper" the top cable TV news show.

Zucker calls Tapper's coverage of the 2016 election "truly remarkable," adding, "He has an intense curiosity about the world, a profound desire to take advantage of every opportunity to demand answers and truth, a sharp mind and a very quick wit. His reporting and interviews cut through in a unique way."

Covering Trump's presidency has pushed Tapper's profile to a new level. "When there

is such disdain coming from the most powerful man in the world for empirical facts and empirical truth," says Tapper, "and when the President of the United States makes it his mission to undermine the Fourth Estate, calling reporters the enemy of the American people, that is quite a challenge."

That is aggravated by the rise of conservative news outlets led by arch competitor Fox News. Yet Tapper is undeterred.

"I have a responsibility to deliver facts and the truth to the public and my viewers," says Tapper. "I can't worry about people who believe falsehoods and see the world in a topsy-turvy way. I just have to make sure my facts are correct and what I am presenting is the truth—because at the end of the day, the truth always wins out."

Tapper has been heralded as courageous, but he shakes that off.

"'Courageous' is Navy Seals going into Yemen and trying to kill terrorists.... What I do takes a certain degree of assuredness and requires that you feel you are on stable, moral, non-partisan, non-ideological ground, but I would never use the word courage."

That said, he recognizes his work is having an impact.

"I have met a lot of young people who are now inspired to be journalists," says Tapper. "This is a time for us to rise to the moment, when journalism is under attack rhetorically at home and literally abroad, and be worthy of the [first] amendment that protects us." 🇺🇸

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