

As British philosopher Matthew Kieran once wrote, “Paradoxically, we demand that journalists tell the truth and yet, to get at the truth, they may have to lie” (Kieran 66). Today, “fake news” is common for those in the media, with scandals always attracting the public’s eye. But while everyone focuses on the content of these reports, no one questions the reporter. True, “don’t shoot the messenger” is a common phrase, but what if the messenger is the problem? According to a study titled “Lying to Tell the Truth: Journalists and the Social Context of Deception”, “Fourteen of the 20 journalists [interviewed] said they have used deception in their work” (Lee 101), an astounding 70%. Perhaps what is more concerning is their justification, which included “appeals to a higher good”, “necessity”, “harm prevention”, and “humor” (Lee 101-102). How does one fix this major problem?

In my opinion, there are two possible solutions. First, peer editing should be required in the media industry, seeing as a journalist would feel more guilty lying to a helpful colleague. Paul Ekman, a professor emeritus at the University of California, San Francisco, writes about this in his book *Telling Lies: Clues to Deceit in the Marketplace, Politics, and Marriage*, stating, “...there won't be much (if there is any) deception guilt, unless there are at least some shared values between target and liar” (Ekman 70). By requiring a colleague to review an article before publishing, the writer will reconsider lying for coverage to avoid lying to a coworker with common values. Next, a standard review system should be implemented to review the credibility, quality, and transparency of all news networks. Journalism has already seen the effect of approval by credible organizations. Authors are well-acquainted with the *New York Times* Best Seller list, for example, and a study published by the Stanford Graduate School of Business found that “for first-time authors sales probably would increase by an impressive 57 percent”

(Kravovsky), simply by appearing on this list. With a standard review system in place, journalists will be more honest in their writing to increase their ratings.

Equally important, how would these methods improve the process of electing our leaders? In today's democracy, we do *not* hear the stories of those deemed to be "less wealthy", "less influential", and overall "less relevant", a reality that also needs changing. This is referenced in the article "The Democratic Paradox of Campaign Finance Reform", which acknowledges that "each citizen is entitled to compete for that attention, and to have a chance at persuasion, on fair terms, a chance that is now denied almost everyone without great wealth or access to it" (Ortiz 8). With initiatives like peer editing and a review system, however, the fake news surrounding the wealthy will disappear, meaning no celebrity scandal can detract public attention from the voices of relatable, average citizens. This newfound access to stories about the experiences of typical Americans, then, will strengthen voters' ability to cast ballots rooted in honesty and revitalize democracy.

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