

“I will provide the people of this city with a daily paper that will tell all the news honestly. I will also provide them with a fighting and tireless champion of their rights as citizens and as human beings.”¹

Charles Foster Kane wrote this editorial on his window sill in *Citizen Kane* to define the essence of journalistic integrity: to cater to the ethics of society before the ethics of establishment, to provide the common man and woman their daily information without external influence. No special interest, no suppression of thought. In the offset that the government intrudes on the intentions of the diligent, honest reporter, all of the aforementioned principles of journalism would be nullified, and all that is left is a propagandist newsletter that might as well be mid-morning gossip in the *National Inquirer*. The reality of such First Amendment oppression is quite staggering, and is an indication on why we, as citizens of the self-promoted “free nation of the world”, should be the recipients of unfiltered, unbiased media, and why today’s journalists should be the donators of said media.

Let’s set the stage to March 9, 1954, with the threat of Red Scare and blacklisting still rampant by Senator Joseph McCarthy. A single utterance of counteraction against the tyrannical McCarthy or his actions would’ve meant the looming possibility of unemployment or, if the scenario was too severe, imprisonment. Taking a stand against the senator on his CBS television show was Edward R. Murrow, who peeled back the layers of McCarthy’s legalized misconduct through footage of the senator making seething accusations against innocent Americans. Yes, this was all presented on a major news network; yes, it was all performed by a major broadcast journalist. However, Murrow’s actions are a precursor and focal point of government-absent journalism: to educate the public and expose fraudulent activity without being bound and gagged

¹ *Citizen Kane*, dir. Orson Welles, writ. Orson Welles, perf. Orson Welles, DVD, Warner Bros, 2003.

by the stars and stripes of political oppression. Also, consider the fact that this was during conservative 1950's America, where the government's eyes still illuminated over what the nation was watching on television, listening to on the airwaves, or reading in print, most notably, in terms of the news; if Murrow was willing to put his financial livelihood and freedom as a citizen on the line to expose the misconduct of a powerful U.S. official on national television, then today's men and women of journalism, with the advent of residing in the more liberal digital era of Youtube and blogging, should be able to report with the same amount of integrity in ideologically safe surroundings and reach millions of people.

To hearken back to Kane's editorial, the primary goal of the journalist should be to provide citizens with their daily information tirelessly, with fighting prowess, and, most importantly, truthfully. Our modern journalists need to follow in the guidance of Edward R. Murrow and report independently of the government, whether it's through social networking or viral video channeling, to avoid the claws of censorship and propaganda from the Bald Eagle.