

THURSDAY MORNING, LATE: LIKE A SUCKER PUNCH

It's true

*That it kicks you in the teeth when you
are least expecting*

Bad news

*Oh it beats you black and blue before
you see it coming*

– excerpt, Bad News by Bastille

This little ditty seemed appropos for today. I'm surprised it was just a B-side.

Spin Factory

BAD DOG, REUTERS – When a big event happens, news media jump all over it and churn out reporting. But in the age of social media and the failure of traditional business models, crap is published and too often blown off. Like this

 Reuters Top News @Reuters · 2h
Egypt prime minister says cannot rule out terrorism behind vanished plane
reut.rs/1Tr3k3Q



8:13 AM · 19 May 2016

tweet:

Looks innocuous, right? But it's not – this is the replacement for a tweet that preceded it. Same story, but with a frigging picture of Donald Trump attached. I'd post that original tweet here but they deleted it before I could snag it.

Initial reaction too often is "It's just a tweet, it's just Twitter." No. Hell, no. If

Reuters can't get something as simple as a photo on a tweet correct, what else are they getting wrong with slap dash coverage?

Reuters isn't just any news outlet; businesses pay its parent corporation, Thomson Reuters for their information products. What are businesses getting in purchased real-time feeds? Some of these businesses are broadcasters. Are erroneous feeds shaping broadcasters' perceptions before they even reproduce news content? It's rather important today when some news outlets sought whacko tweets and quotes from Trump before attempting to get a reaction from the White House.

Reuters' alleged bias has already been controversial; a contributor left in 2013 claiming editorial bias for climate skepticism demanding false balance made reporting on climate change difficult. Reuters denied the claim.

ON THE MEDIA – Rather than allow media churn to burn us with bad (as in poorly executed and unethical) news, best to consult On The Media's *Breaking News Consumer's Guide – Airplane Edition*.

< CUT OUT AND TAPE NEAR YOUR COMPUTER OR TV

BREAKING NEWS CONSUMER'S HANDBOOK

Airline Edition

1. Immediately after a commercial flight crashes, TV wildly speculates.
2. Beware blame directed at the usual suspects:
 - *Aviation authorities*: They only coordinate decisions about routes decided by sovereign nations.
 - *Airlines*: They have redundant safety systems — usually what went wrong never happened before.
 - *Pilots*: Most are better at their jobs than we are at ours.
3. Beware "aviation experts" offering answers on cable news.
4. Be patient. The real answer usually isn't known for at least a year.
5. Don't count on black boxes. In big crashes, they rarely hold the answer.
6. Ignore media guesses based on the passenger list. It's generally a dead end.
7. All governments lie, usually to deflect from their own recklessness.
8. Tune out "Peril in the Skies" headlines: Flying is safer than walking.

ON [THE MEDIA]

FIFTY CENT PARTY – You’ve probably seen a news story about this research. Cut out the middlemen and read it at this link:

King, Gary, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts. How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts for Strategic Distraction, Not Engaged Argument. 2016.
<http://gking.harvard.edu/50c>.

RIP MORLEY SAFER – And more bad (as in sad) news: former CBS reporter and correspondent Morley Safer has died at age 84. The three-time Peabody Award winner retired from CBS only last week. We need more journalists like Safer, who began his career with reporting from the Vietnam War that galled then-President Lyndon Johnson for its honesty.

Busy day here, can't spend any more time at the keyboard. See you here tomorrow morning!