Donald Trump’s presidency has exposed widespread political, ideological and social/cultural biases in American mainstream media. More alarming, for us in Canada, is the CBC News’ parroting of American political coverage by left-leaning news outlets like CNN, MSNBC, *The New York Times* etc. It is not in the interest of Canadians that its state broadcaster, funded in part by taxpayers, is in lockstep with the American media's partisan coverage of their preferred politicians or party. Yet, incredibly, this is exactly what has been happening for several years.

           There are hundreds of examples of shoddy, rushed, biased and über-woke reporting on the CBC. Take, for instance, the story by Cameron MacIntosh on The National posted on YouTube on June 23, 2020 concerning an alleged noose found in the garage of NASCAR driver Bubba Wallace at Talladega Superspeedway on June 21. The elements of the story were low-hanging fruit for the progressive CBC News: an African American driver, a symbol of Southern racism, a sport vaguely problematic in the Canadian imagination because of its “deplorable” supporters (good ol’ Southern boys), the Confederate flag, and a president at the back of it spouting racist rhetoric.

MacIntosh’s ‘reporting’ included a two-second clip of Trump at a Tulsa rally on Saturday, June 20 in which he said “they want to demolish our heritage,” a reference to the removal of federal monuments by protestors during the summer of 2020 and support for it from the “radical left,” as evidence for a causality between Trump and the noose in Wallace’s garage. MacIntosh followed Trump's remark with images of race fans at Talladega driving pickups with Confederate flags in order to suggest that, even if Trump didn’t physically hang the noose there, he kind of did.

MacIntosh’s other hard-hitting ‘evidence’ for the alleged pernicious atmosphere at NASCAR events and in Trump’s America generally was an interview with two Canadians, one he erroneously called “fellow NASCAR driver” Amber Balcaen, who said she was “disgusted” by the story of the noose, and the other her fiancé Jordan Reeves, a defensive linesman with the Saskatchewan Roughriders, who MacIntosh says has felt racism at racing events in the American South. In a separate interview, he said people “stared” at him. The charge of racism is a serious one and should be explored much more fully than MacIntosh's two-minute hitjob on NASCAR for The National. He did his best with the time he had, though. He painted all NASCAR fans as racists who should be hated. He made sure they were not interviewed about their alleged views because he was not interested in journalistic objectivity.

MacIntosh’s story collapsed after an investigation by a 15-member team from the FBI which rushed to Talladega to find a crime, but found none. The FBI concluded that the noose appeared in video from October 2019, eight months before Wallace’s team occupied garage number four. There was no evidence of a federal hate crime, the FBI announced. The “noose” was a garage pull, that’s all.

MacIntosh’s concluding remark, that this race was “destined to be remembered for what happened off the track,” unintentionally described his own flawed reporting and CBC News’ biased coverage of American politics generally. And, true to CBC form, he was *following*the cues of the talking heads at CNN and the like such as Anderson Cooper who lamented that “someone was able to get inside Bubba Wallace’s garage stall to leave a noose.” The conviction with which Cooper made this statement *before* the incident was even investigated, and the CBC’s blind acquiescence to his assumptions, is part of the bigger story here of bias, journalistic unprofessionalism and bigotry.

The FBI’s correction to the noose narrative was buried in the sports section of CBC News’ website, but no retraction on The National ever appeared (at least not that I could find), and comments have been disabled on its YouTube post of the original story.

This refusal to acknowledge its own bad reporting and to suppress viewers’ responses (their mockery?) can be folded into a broader discussion of the mainstream media’s reluctance to upend or deviate from or accept criticism for its agenda, its unquestioned, unnuanced affiliation with one political party over another on a mass, seemingly coordinated, scale.

There is another related, even more disturbing issue: the suppression by Big Tech of conservative views, or stories that hurt its preferred political candidates. For example, Twitter blocked a *New York Post* investigative piece about Hunter Biden’s questionable financial affairs and suspended several accounts for sharing it. It also locked out the New York Post itself for 16 days. The chilling implications of Big Tech's censorship of a free media sent off alarm bells among many lawmakers in Washington and brought calls to revoke Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which lets internet companies remove content that violates their policies and protects them from liability.

The CBC news’ take on the story is something all Canadian should be concerned about. It attempted to shield the Bidens and place blame on the report about the Bidens’ alleged influence peddling and corruption on Russian disinformation instead. Never mind investigating whether the story was true or not. Again, the CBC hastily and prematurely relied on American mainstream media for its position. A headline on its website, “FBI probing if Russia involved in Hunter Biden email story," appears lifted from the YouTube post of the story on Wolf Blitzer's Situation Room the same day: “US investigating if emails connected to Russia disinformation against Biden.” Predictably, that position on Russian disinformation has since been debunked after reports surfaced that the U.S. Department of Justice had been investigating Hunter Biden on his dealings in China and elsewhere for two years.

Lest you think the Biden thing and the NASCAR story are one-offs, there are numerous other examples of a rush to judgement by American media and subsequent sycophantic reporting by the CBC. An obvious example is the Covington Catholic High School boys incident on the Plaza of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, January 18, 2019. A short video that went viral appeared to show a smirking teenager at a Right to Life event wearing a MAGA hat, surrounded by a horde of privileged white teens taunting a noble native elder beating a drum. The native elder and self-described Vietnam War Veteran, Nathan Phillips, said he heard chants of “build that wall.” The Detroit Free Press quoted him as saying, “these young men were beastly, and these old black individuals was their prey,” referring to a group of Black Hebrew Israelites present on the Plaza. He said the hatred in the boys' faces resembled “lynchings that were done in America.”

Big media leapt on the story. The boys were vilified, doxxed, sent death threats. Ana Navarro of CNN in a since-deleted tweet called the boys “ass wipes.” CNN legal analyst Bakari Sellers tweeted that the boy at the centre of it all, Nick Sandmann, “is a deplorable” and “can also be punched in the face.” Comedian Kathy Griffin wasn't horsing around when she shrieked, “Name these kids. I want NAMES. Shame them.” And so on.

However, as is now well known, longer videos surfaced soon after which painted a starkly different picture of the incident. The Black Hebrew Israelites had been insulting the boys with vile epithets (“a bunch of child molesting f----ts,” “dirty ass crackers,” “incest babies”) while the boys were waiting for their bus. No calls of “build the wall” can be heard. The boys said they began their school chants to drown out the hateful attacks. Neither as brave, honourable or victimized as he made himself out to be, Phillips approached the students, not the adult Black Israelites (who had taunted the Natives as well), and beat his drum in the boy's face. He lied about having served in Vietnam. Then he lied about having lied.

Despite the availability of the longer videos, Paul Hunter in his report on The National on January 21, 2019, “Teen defends encounter with Indigenous veteran at rally,” persisted with the original. He ignored the evidence and went all-in with CBC's usual party line on American politics. With sly, veteran savvy he tried to spin a version of events that castigated the boys, despite evidence to the contrary. Yet, inadvertently, he turned his own portrayal and that of the mainstream media he was following, against itself. His statement (or accusation?) that Nick Sandmann was “staring and smiling” was a sort of ‘faceshame’ that reminded many people of George Orwell’s insidious “facecrime” in *1984*. He said the other students behind Sandmann laughed and chanted and performed the derisive tomahawk chop.

This attack on laughter by Hunter and others in the media who took his position made me think of Russian writer Mikhail Bakhtin’s discussions of laughter’s ability to overturn normal relations of power in events like the carnival, a concept developed in the dark days of the purges in the Soviet Union and a utopian antidote to repression. By condemning the boys’ laughter, Hunter and other in the mainstream media accidentally gave the power which they had reserved for themselves (to condemn, to shame, to mock) right back to the boys, who must have sensed on some instinctive, unconscious level, the forces that were being deployed against them.

The long and short of all this is that Canada Revenue should include an opt-out box on T4 slips for those who no longer want to fund Canada’s national news broadcaster. The time has come, to use a popular buzzword on CBC last year, to defund CBC News.