The Dark Side of the Press in cinema: decontextualization, sensationalism, entertainment, and fake news

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United Nations' 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference, and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers”

Britain has a much longer history
- 1695—Britain abolishes Licensing of the Press

Cinema generally portrays the Press as Heroes
- Informing the public
- Investigating issues/problems not widely known
- Providing tempered analysis and context to complex issues
- Exposing corruption
- Encouraging civic dialog
- Independent journalists motivated by ideals, not profit

But western Press in late 20th Century began looking very different
People getting their News from Broadcasting (TV, Radio) started incorporating:
- Decontextualization
- Sensationalism
- Ideological and propaganda-like
- Entertainment replacing News
- Lying, Fake News (Orwellian)
- Focus on ratings and profits
- Journalists subservient to corporate owners and motivations
Media personalities have become presidents and newsmakers

- Documentary about the Fox News Channel showed:
  - Commentary instead of News; commentators become media stars
  - Commentary reflected Corporate point of view, & the channel was used as a political tool (or propaganda)
  - Sensationalism
  - Panders to fears
  - News without Journalism

Selected Films that predicted this dark side of Freedom of the Press-

A Face in the Crowd (1957)
Face in the Crowd (1957) public is stupid

Face in the Crowd (1957) Media personalities influence president

WUSA (1970) media lies

Network (1976) news as entertainment
Messidor (1979)

Network (1976) TV turning individuals into consuming undifferentiated automatons

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