44.

In modern society where media coverage is ubiquitous, there is a claim that no living men or women can be regarded as heroes because of their reputation, when subjected to media scrutiny, will eventually be diminished. In my opinion, it is undeniably true that media scrutiny is capable of deteriorating one's reputation; however, such abilities do not necessarily mean a hero's positive image will collapse. Even if heroes' imperfection are revealed, society may still regard living men or women as heroes.

In the first place, no man is perfect and "to err is human", says Alexander Pope. Therefore, if every aspect of one's life is exposed to the public by the media, his or her reputation could certainly be compromised. Some of his or her behaviors may not accepted as the moral standard for a hero. For example, a brave, heroic firefighter who is willing to risk his own life to save others' life might be committing adultery, which, if revealed, would result in his reputation being defamed. Also, the media can exaggerate a hero's negative side in order to gain more publicity. In such extreme cases, media scrutiny could focus on a hero's derogatory remarks and bias public opinion towards him or her.

That being said, the argument above assumes that media will excessively probe into the heroes' personalities in details and/or focus on the negative. This assumption, however, could be wrong. With regard to the first part, media may not be willing to invest time and resources discovering every negative aspect of a hero's life due to limited resources and perhaps weak public resonance it can provoke. Furthermore, it would be unfair to assume that every media source is biased in this way. Thanks to the First Amendment, there are many independent media sources in the United States providing information from different angles. Even if politically motivated, it would be almost impossible to require or force all media to dedicate its coverage to a hero's dark side.

Even if a hero's reputation is diminished to some extent by media scrutiny, it is still necessary for society to regard him or her as a hero. To understand this claim, we need to revisit the definition of hero. Heroes are those who possess essential qualities which are admired by people. In other words, it is those particular qualities, such as valor, self-sacrifice, and commitment to public interest, that make a man or woman a hero. Therefore, as long as those key qualities not falsified by the media, heroes can exist despite negativity concerning their personalities. Let's return to the aforementioned imaginary firefighter who has extramarital affair. If he indeed saves other people's lives by sacrificing his own in a blaze, it is not surprising at all that he will still be regarded as a hero. It is the valor and commitment demonstrated through him paying the ultimate price that outweigh the stain on his character and earn him the title of hero.

To summarize, it is true that media scrutiny has the potential to diminish one's reputation. Because men are inherently imperfect, the media could deliberately focus on the negatives but this cannot be guaranteed. The media may not necessarily broadcast only negative aspects intended to destroy a hero's positive image. Even if the media did so, the public would still accept them because they possess key characteristics that define them as heroes.