**Ch\_3\_a**

**News is……**

If you ask journalists why they took up the profession, many will make some reference to investigative journalism as a spur. (I would guess very few would claim to have been inspired by the idea of just writing down what people said and putting it in a paper or a news bulletin). I have always liked this definition –

**“News is something that someone, somewhere, doesn’t want you to know. Everything else is just advertising”.**

In my mental notebook, I have attributed these words to [Lord Northcliffe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_Harmsworth%2C_1st_Viscount_Northcliffe). But trying to confirm that he was the first person to say this takes one down an instructive rabbit hole – where similar ideas are attributed to a whole range of great figures in the field of journalism.

Searching for similar definitions on Google one find things like “As [Katherine Graham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katharine_Graham), the former publisher of the Washington Post, used to say: **News is what someone wants suppressed. Everything else is advertising.**

source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/news-is-what-someone-wants-suppressed-everything-else-is-just-advertising>

OR

<https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/lord_northcliffe_164571>

OR

**News is something, someone, somewhere, doesn’t want you to know. Everything else is [just advertising]**

OR

[**News is something, someone, somewhere, doesn’t want you to print. Everything else is [just advertising]**](https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/77244-news-is-something-somebody-doesn-t-want-printed-all-else-is)[Randolph Hearst](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Randolph_Hearst)

OR

Some people attribute something similar to [George Orwell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Orwell)….

["Speaking the truth that somebody wants you not to publish is journalism. Everything else is marketing."](https://literature.stackexchange.com/questions/8293/source-of-quote-speaking-the-truth-that-somebody-wants-you-not-to-publish-is-j) though the questioner names [Oscar Wilde](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar_Wilde) as the possible source!

Another user found (24 November 2012) a similar quote from Alfred Harmsworth, Lord Northcliffe: "News is what somebody somewhere wants to suppress; all the rest is advertising." And yet another user found another similar quote from [Horacio Verbitsky](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horacio_Verbitsky) (in Spanish):

**“Journalism is to spread what someone does not want you to know; the rest is propaganda.”**

And finally - finally! - someone linked to the [Quote Investigator](https://quoteinvestigator.com/) page on this quote, from 20 January 2013.

(Quote Investigator, by the way, is an absolutely invaluable resource for answering quote-identification questions here: they do really in-depth research to puzzle out the true origins of a quote, and everything is properly sourced and verifiable).

So here's the “final” word on the matter:

A version of this quote first appeared on 30 November 1918, in page 18, column 4 of The Fourth Estate: A Newspaper for the Makers of Newspapers, Ernest F, Birmingham, Fourth Estate Publishing Company, New York. The quote is as follows:

**“Whatever a patron desires to get published is advertising; whatever he wants to keep out of the paper is news,” is the sentiment expressed in a little framed placard on the desk of L. E. Edwardson, day city editor of the Chicago Herald and Examiner.**

source: <https://quoteinvestigator.com/2013/01/20/news-suppress/>

Whoever defined news in this way is not really important - what matters is that our job should be to unearth the details which people, somewhere, don’t want us to report.

With so much data now being made available online, many of the facts, data, and details which would previously have been hidden away, are now there for us all to use – hiding in plain sight.

All we have to do is to learn how to sift through them in the most efficient way, and join the dots to find the story which “somebody, somewhere, doesn’t want us to know”