When it’s claimed that objectivity in media is dead, it’s often done so in relation to mainstream television news programs, and as a case study, the 2016 election serves as a wonderful platform to be able to analyze just how a lack of true, wide-reaching, mainstream “objective” news media lead to a failure in the coverage of the news. To discuss so-called “objective” news, however, a distinction must be initially made: true objectivity is impossible, as at some level, a journalist, a writer, an editor, will always be affected by some level of bias, some level of personal belief, and in a capitalist, hierarchical system, the need to make money to stay alive and to stay relevant will always influence what is reported and how it is reported. In the same vein, it’s important to note that big cause of why so-called mainstream “infotainment” news on TV exists is very much so a result of the capitalist system that news media finds itself in, leading to this type of media to take on every trick in the book to be marketable, popular, consumable, and profitable: infotainment news, like that leading into the 2016 election, will join in onto any popular topic and latch on in a feeding frenzy, exploiting it until it no longer *is* profitable, and will treat the entire process as a game, it’ll dramatize it, it’ll only tell part of the story, and it will make it relatable on a personal level when, in reality, it is so much more than that.

This is why, for both candidates, there was an equal amount of bad press reported on how neither Trump nor Clinton were supposedly fit for office and why for both candidates there was far more overall negative publicity for both of them than there ever was positive. This sort of politics-as-a-game coverage, where both sides were equally bad supposedly according to television news media, lead to a false equivalence between the two in how they were being portrayed; by associating Clinton, however, with the establishment – an establishment of the news media and of the political establishment – in comparison to Trump, who was considered a “wild card” despite coming from much the same wealth as Clinton did, even when both news was equally bad, the view in many a viewers’ eye towards Clinton was with the same distrust that news media was growing at this point in time.

This was a massive boon to the Trump campaign, which had already been hailing Trump as a wildcard to win the Republican primaries. The view that the system was massively flawed, even if Trump, himself, was massively flawed in the eyes of viewers and through the lens of media, allowed for a spin that Trump would be the one to dismantle it; Trump played the media’s game of dramatizing stories and treating politics as a game as media gave him a voice through every ounce of good or bad publicity that they gave Trump. Even if every word reported on him was true, and wasn’t just playing into the profitable feeding frenzy of how every word reported on Trump would be a successful, profitable story the next day, the media’s reporting and framing, whether on purpose or on accident, allowed for the Trump campaign to set the agenda for what was important, and during the 2016 election, the never-ending scandals between Trump and Clinton *were* what the media had already said was important. It became a self-fulfilling prophecy.

In this process of agenda-setting and political spin, a loss of true journalistic independence could be seen; because the mainstream television news on both sides of the isle were predominantly focused on viewer numbers and, thus, profits, they only could choose to focus on the quagmire that was the 2016 election. Through this methodology is how “objectivity” came to die in the 2016 election, as reporting on what is popular and what is profitable requires a move away from the role of journalism as a true watchdog to critique the system it lives in (admittedly, while doing so in such a way that does not result in its ejection from the system or a lost of trust in itself). It removes the veneer of true investigative journalism and leaves media as biting at its own tail, jumping on whatever is popular.