Thank God for the demonstrations.

I was beginning to worry for CNN and all of those other twenty-four hour news channels that had dedicated the past two years to the American political circus. A sudden cessation of hostilities – and yes, they were definitely that – would have caused widespread alarm in the news rooms of these organizations; the effects of the cold-turkey withdrawal, the pending lay-offs, the looming likelihood of having to report other, more prosaic, news would have had the massed armies of correspondents and assorted punditry phoning their union reps, their agents, their psychotherapists in a frantic attempt to calm their nerves and soothe their bruised egos. Because, lets face it, there’s not much call these days for the failed clairvoyance of the “expert”. And the list of failures that can be attributed to these “experts” is, pretty much, inexhaustible. So thank God for the demonstrations, for giving these news channels a short reprieve, a reason to pundit on.

From the beginning, most news channels, and most notably CNN, had displayed their bias and had decided that Clinton would, and should, be the democratic contender; and, despite the growing support for Bernie Sanders, which they covered grudgingly and attributed it mainly, and with a measured disdain, to the youth vote; which, of course, is news-speak for “don’t bother”, because it’s a well-known fact that the youth don’t vote.

The republican contest provided a less certain early favourite with the news organizations; but again, the well-informed political talking heads singled out a shortlist; Cruz, Rubio and the latest scion of the Bush family, Jeb; which is short, apparently, for John Ellis Bush; I cannot describe my disappointment in learning this fact; having assumed that it was some Old Testament character or a tribute to some Civil War confederate ancestor. Donald Trump was written off almost before he started as being nothing more than a sideshow, a headline-grabbing showman intent only on boosting his ego and spoiling the race. He was all of that, certainly, and so much more - or so much less, depending on your point of view.

From the start the experts were wrong, out of touch with public sentiment, fighting, as is complained of poor generals, the last war. But worse than being wrong, the media, especially the CNNs of this world, were complicit in promoting the ascendancy of both Clinton and Trump, and they accomplished this with two different, and quite opposite, tactics.

For Clinton, despite her lack of public appearances and press availability for long periods, the mainstream media took an early position, and maintained it for the duration of the contest, that she was the de facto leader of the democratic race. And as such provided little coverage of her competitors, most notably Bernie Sanders. This reporting bias continued to the end of the democratic race, despite the upsurge of support for Mr. Sanders and the revelations of behind the scenes democratic committee hanky-panky in assisting Clinton. Why the massed expertise of political punditry believed that Clinton was the natural contender for president is hard to fathom; after all, the same arguments that they had used in her previous run for democratic candidate for president, that she had a wealth of experience in politics, that she actively supported many of the democratic parties core values had been insufficient against a relatively unknown and inexperienced Barack Obama. She lost out then to an opponent who had charm and personality, and in the intervening years she has gained none of these qualities.

For Trump, the opposite was the case. Here was a contender without a chance; the archetypal ugly American whose every utterance should have guaranteed public revulsion; who should have been treated as a crazy relative, as a madman seen pushing a shopping cart down Main Street shouting profanities at buses, But, no, while he said nothing of political value, every word was golden to the newsrooms, they couldn’t get enough of him. And as a result, he was everywhere; his every utterance was dismissed, even condemned and yet repeatedly pored over and analyzed by panelists. He was, at the same time, a no-hoper and the centre of attention. The press loved him.

And while this smug condemnation of the contender was going on, the newsrooms seemed almost willfully oblivious to the public support he was garnering.

Watching CNN on election night was like watching the Hindenburg crash and burn; as prepared scripts and plans were abandoned, rewritten, reversed. Where, just hours earlier, interactive maps had been used to show the slimmest of options available for a Trump victory, they were now being pushed and prodded trying to find an escape route for Clinton.

So thank God for the demonstrations. Perhaps the experts can derive solace from the fact that they weren’t alone, that many others thought as they did, believed as they did. Or, just maybe, others had bought what they had reported.