

FAIR.ORG says BuzzFeed is 'Owned By The White House' and a shill for Obama Campaign Financiers in Silicon Valley

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BuzzFeed's Obama Coverage Is 99 Percent Uncritical—and Borderline Creepy

By [Adam Johnson](#)

President Obama hung out with a group of kids while on a trip to Yosemite National Park with his family over the weekend, and it was pretty darn cute.



Since its launch as a scrappy clickbait site in 2006, **BuzzFeed** has grown to become one of the biggest names in online media and news, venturing into [serious news coverage](#) of politics and world events in attempt to add gravitas to a name typically associated with levity and listicles. While **BuzzFeed** has certainly done important work of late, on issues ranging from [sex harassment](#) to [AIDS in Africa](#), when it comes to the most powerful person on earth, however—the president of the United States—its coverage is almost uniformly uncritical and often sycophantic.

FAIR reviewed **BuzzFeed**'s coverage of President Barack Obama, looking at the last 100 stories as found in a **Google** search—which took us back about four months. Of the 100 stories, 65 were positive, 34 were neutral and only [one](#) was critical. You can view the list [here](#).

The stories were mostly from **BuzzFeed News**, the website's "hard news" brand, while others bore the more general **BuzzFeed** label; in practice, both kinds of stories are presented together on the website's homepage. FAIR emailed **BuzzFeed** political editor Katherine Miller twice asking her for any notable examples of critical reporting on the White House the site may have done. Neither email was answered.

Obama is the most powerful person on earth; that sites like **BuzzFeed** decide to cover him like one of the Jonas Brothers does not make him any less so. The following are ten of the creepiest examples of **BuzzFeed**'s power-serving coverage of the president — all of which were written by someone in the news division:

- [Can You Look at These Photos of Trudeau and Obama Without Getting All Hot?](#) (3/10/16)
- [Lin-Manuel Miranda Freestyled at the White House With Obama's Help](#) (3/15/16)
- [The First Family Gave Us Family Goals as They Walked Through Old Havana](#) (3/21/16)
- [Steph Curry Being Mentored by Obama Will Give You Squad Goals](#) (4/16/16)
- [Prince George Met the Obamas in His PJs and It's Too Much](#) (4/22/16)
- [Obama Drinks Flint Water, Tells Residents 'I've Got Your Back'](#) (5/4/16)
- [Obama's Powerful Tribute to Muhammad Ali Is One for the History Books](#) (6/4/16)
- [President Obama Killed It When He Slow-Jammed the News With Jimmy Fallon](#) (6/10/16)
- [These Kids Wishing Obama a Happy Father's Day Are So Cute](#) (6/19/16)
- [A Ranking of the Hottest US Presidents](#) [Obama is No. 1, of course] (6/29/16)

The overwhelmingly positive coverage of the president is even more glaring when one considers that **BuzzFeed** spends a great deal of its resources documenting Russia's propaganda efforts:

- [Putin's Patriotic Playland Is the Russia-iest Place on Earth](#) (6/22/15)
- [Documents Show How Russia's Troll Army Hit America](#) (6/2/14)
- [Russian Newspapers Are Warning People About Disinformation on State TV](#) (6/14/16)
- [14 Insane Moments From RT's Coverage of the Russian Invasion of Ukraine](#) (3/3/14)
- [Russia's Propagandist-in-Chief Went on a Junket to Meet US Security Officials](#) (3/21/14)
- [The EU Is Plotting a New TV Channel to Counter Russian Propaganda in Europe](#) (12/31/14)
- [Russia Has a New Propaganda Outlet and It's Everything You Thought It Would Be](#) (11/10/14)

The last article, by consistent Russia critic and senior editor Miriam Elder, is mocking **Sputnik**, the Russian government's [BuzzFeed-like information outlet](#). One is compelled to ask, however, if a neutral observer unfamiliar with both outlets were to review **BuzzFeed** and its shoddy Russian counterpart, comparing their coverage of their respective presidents, how would they tell the difference?

One could dismiss this overall ethos of flattering coverage as the mere whimsy of a pop culture website, but **BuzzFeed** is fast becoming a major player in news that wants to be taken seriously, and the president of the United States, despite how much we may want him to be, is not our "daddy" or our "bae." He sits atop an [unprecedented global military apparatus](#), a [multi-billion dollar drug war](#), a [years-long assault on whistleblowers](#), and has waged a drone war that has [killed well over 1,100 people](#). Lame duck or not, he's still an exceedingly powerful person, and the coverage of his day-to-day activities remains serious business.

David Mack, nominally a straight news reporter, is uniquely sycophantic, writing the majority of the gushing headlines and articles displaying how cool, talented and squad goal-ish the president of the most powerful nation in history is. Let's imagine how his coverage would read if it was on a non-American website:

Putin Offered Medvedev Financial Help During His Son's Illness

"I'll give you the money. Whatever you need, I'll give you the money."

posted on Jan. 12, 2016, at 9:07 a.m.



David Mack
BuzzFeed News Reporter

President Putin Is Going To Rough It in The Siberian Wilderness With Bear Grylls

Somebody's already started a petition for the president to drink his own pee.

posted on Aug. 31, 2015, at 11:25 a.m.



David Mack
BuzzFeed News Reporter

The Putins' Face While Reading A Story for Kids Are Just Incredible

These guys really, really get into it.

posted on Mar. 29, 2016, at 11:37 a.m.



David Mack
BuzzFeed News Reporter

This is The Little Girl Whose Pope Halloween Costume Made Putin Lose It

A lot of work went into making the Halloween costume that made the commander-in-chief crack up.

posted on Nov. 4, 2015, at 4:02 p.m.



David Mack
BuzzFeed News Reporter

BuzzFeed's main investor, **Comcast**, has long had a cosy relationship with Democratic Party-aligned media. In addition to investing \$200 million in **BuzzFeed**, **Comcast** also gave \$200 million to center-left **Vox** and owns the generally pro-Democrat cable network **MSNBC**. Last week, **BuzzFeed** ["teamed up" with Obama](#) for a get-out-the-vote initiative. **BuzzFeed** has previously [been criticized](#) for focusing too heavily on its positivity-for-positivity's-sake ethos, captured in their motto "no haters." **BuzzFeed** CEO Jonah Peretti ([Poynter](#),

[3/4/14](#)) pushed back against this criticism, however, insisting that “no haters” didn’t mean never being critical:

We sometimes use the phrase “no haters.” That doesn’t mean that we don’t do critical work. We just ran a profile of Donald Trump, which he was really upset with. He tweeted that **BuzzFeed** is a terrible, irrelevant site. But the piece was very fair. Or our piece about the terrible conditions in an Afghan military hospital that was in part run by the US government. We ran that story with graphic pictures in it, exposing this terrible abuse. That’s not being a hater, that’s being a good journalist, that’s exposing corruption and wrongdoing. We do that as part of our mission.

While **BuzzFeed** has consistently had harsh coverage of [Donald Trump](#) (and occasionally [Sanders](#) and [Clinton](#)), its coverage of the person actually in charge, President Obama, has turned into little more press releases from the White House social media team. If **BuzzFeed** wants to continue to distance itself from its clickbait past, perhaps it could direct some of the hundreds of millions of dollars it’s raised into aggressively reporting on the most powerful politician on earth.

*Adam Johnson is a contributing analyst for **FAIR.org**. Follow him on **Twitter** at [@AdamJohnsonNYC](#).*