


# Episode 151-- There Are No Alternative Facts

 Tue, 10/12 10:30AM  27:57

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, fred, alternative facts, jamie, podcast, guttenberg, brady, gun violence, fight, andy, cult, literally, listen, lies, public shaming, google, parkland, lunatic, stop, josh

## SPEAKERS

Kelly Sampson, JJ Janflone, Fred Guttenberg, Andy Parker, Josh Scharff

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JJ Janflone 00:08

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Josh Scharff 00:37

Hey everybody. This is not JJ this is Josh Scharff, legal counsel and director of programs here at Brady.



JJ Janflone 00:44

But this is JJ. Hey, everybody. And hey, Josh, welcome to co hosting.



Josh Scharff 00:48

I can't tell you how excited I am to be a co host.



JJ Janflone 00:51

Well, we're very, very happy to have you with us. And by us, I mean, you know, me and the pod. And so welcome back. And in honor of the podcast second year round the sun-



Josh Scharff 01:01

Congrats by the way!



JJ Janflone 01:03

Yes thank you. To honor that birthday, we're presenting podcasts that you the listeners really loved and ones that our Brady family really loved and enjoyed, too. And so Josh, what was it about this podcast in particular, which originally ran into the title of the dangers of hoaxers in alternative truth, the first got your interest?



Josh Scharff 01:24

Well, look, I'm a dad and and Andy and Fred, they're both dads too, and they're dads that really just suffered the most unimaginable loss, right, losing a child to gun violence. And the fact that there are these extremists out there, that these selfish people that are profiting off of exploiting this tragedy and causing them so much pain, it just makes me so angry, it makes me so sad, frankly. And, you know, to hear Andy and Fred, talk us through just how they're exploiting the system, how they're exploiting the downfalls of our political system of our laws of social media. It's, it's scary, but also at the same time that Andy and Fred are out there fighting for the necessary change so that others don't have to go through this. There's something inspiring in there. And and that combination just really speaks to me and catches, you know, my interest, and really my attention throughout the entire episode. So let's turn this over to Fred Guttenberg and Andy Parker, the two great guests from this episode to explain why these conspiracy theorists are just so so harmful, and what we can do about it.



Andy Parker 02:47

I'm Andy Parker, I'm the father of Alison Parker, who is the journalist that was killed on live television in 2015.



Fred Guttenberg 02:55

I'm Fred Guttenberg, father of Jamie Guttenberg, and in context of this phone call, also brother to Dr. Michael Guttenberg.



JJ Janflone 03:04

Well, and this is a podcast that really came together quickly, especially when we started to see what was happening, not just in the news, but on Twitter, you know, where people were reporting on what Marjorie Taylor Greene had had said, in terms of claiming that the Parkland shooting wasn't you know, real or didn't happen is obviously no, the facts have proven that it did. But this is something that Fred and Andy, you and I have talked about before in terms of conspiracy theories. And so Fred, I'm just wondering if you can give us you know, just a little bit of detail on the background here.



Fred Guttenberg 03:35

I don't believe anyone expected that the truth would punch back as powerfully as it did this past week. And we're not done punching, you know, this lunatic. And we have to be clear, I'm referring to her as a lunatic no disregard to anyone suffering from a mental health issue, because we have to separate that individual from the bigger part.



JJ Janflone 03:58

Yeah, I do want to jump in there, though, because we avoid terms like crazy or lunatic because we certainly don't want to further stigmatize those mental health issues. And I think we all realize that those who struggle with their mental health are more likely to be victims of gun violence, you know, certainly rather than perpetrators. But I totally get what you're saying here because she is behaving irrationally and irresponsibly. You know, she's behaving in this way.

F

Fred Guttenberg 04:21

You know, she has said Parkland was a false flag, law enforcement and others were paid off. Okay, in order to create this gun issue for Nancy Pelosi. I share video yesterday, which is now being widely distributed of her talking about Las Vegas, which is the most insane thing if you haven't seen it, you need to watch it the insane belief that she has there. But the good news is, her insanity is coming face to face with the truth before it has time to take hold. Now, let's differentiate between her as an insane person who managed to, in an unopposed election sneak her way into Congress. And the bigger problem, which is the fact that she has not disowned anything she has said, and the party's not making her do it. The fact that the party has not said we disown this, we're going to do something about it, we reject it. This is not who we are. And too much time has already passed, for them to have the ability to do that. They now own it. This is now this party, embracing that under the leadership of McCarthy, because he believes it's a winning strategy in the next election. He is willing to let people like her win in other districts so he can be speaker. It is so cynical, it is so evil, and it can't win.

A

Andy Parker 05:54

And it's and Fred to your point. It's cowardice too. The representative that I had, well, he is I live in his district guy named Morgan Griffith, who was one of the 130 or so republicans that decided ignore the election results. You know, I think that there are guys like there are people like Marjorie Taylor Greene, who, as you say, she is a lunatic. She drinks the Kool Aid, she actually believes this stuff. And then you've got people like Morgan Griffith who know better, but they're so afraid of being primaried. I mean, look, what Matt gates did, you know, flying up to Wyoming to check out you know, to throw shade at Liz Cheney, they are so afraid of getting primaried that they're going along with these, they're still have in, you know, my rural part of Virginia, and they still have their damn Trump signs up. The cult is not going away. And they don't have the courage to tell them, you know what, it was all a big lie, and I'm not sure who I just like most more Greene or Griffith.

F

Fred Guttenberg 06:59

Listen, it is a cult, that is a large cult that has taken over a political party. I mean, you remember, we started with Republicans and Democrats, and they disagreed on policy and how to get to a certain end point. It's now they disagree on whether or not we're a democracy, okay, that's the dividing line. And there's a the cult has a leader, he's now living in Palm Beach, and the current minority leader in the house, went to visit the cult leader yesterday for cake and caviar and cocktails, so that they could strategize how to finish the job of making this cult, the dominant form of government. We can't let it happen. And that's why this conversation that we're having here and obliterating these lies and not giving them an inch, matters.

A

Andy Parker 07:57

And Fred you know, they have a very willing accomplice in social media. Now I will say that Twitter has actually done a very good job but Google and Facebook have not and that's why I've sort of as you know, too, I've driven into the lane of we've got to have section 230 reform we've got to you know, I'm finally I think going to win the battle with

television to get copyright. And the only way to challenge Google for copyright infringement. But I literally had to go do public shaming to get that done. And it's the same with Google, it's going to get there eventually, but that's what it's going to have to take to maybe remedy some of this stuff because to Kris's point earlier in the early days, because I was a real actor and professional actor, but when the video of Alison's shooting came out, and they say, hey, look, he's a crisis actor, look at the commercials he did and they put two and two together and came up with 10. So that's a that's the other battle that we've got to fight that to put the kibosh on all this stuff.



JJ Janflone 09:09

Well and just a clue listeners in can you tell us a little bit about your battle with social media, Andy?

A

Andy Parker 09:14

Well, the short story is that as I mentioned earlier, when you know Allison was murdered on live television was captured on video and these videos I thankfully, I've never seen it, I it's, you know, it's it's like a landmine out there. And it's come close a couple of times, but I've never seen it never want to, but I knew that they were up there. And so you know, one day I went down the rabbit hole to the degree that I could and and typed in Alison Parker on YouTube and they were literally pages after pages after pages, you know, and it was then that I decided that I needed to take take on Google and try and get them to remove this stuff because according their to their terms of service and community guidelines, they don't Allow that and they will that's typically the their answer. Well, why don't you take this down? but we don't allow that it's this circular thing going on. So I've literally been engaged in this fight for four and a half years, we're we're getting close, they have removed things, but it's always at, you know, they always have to be coerced either by the press or by Congress. Literally right before this call I was on there's a story coming out in the Washington Post, I was on with the the journalist for the post about my fight with gray television, you know, here's this, they own the station, and they own the video, and we're trying to just get co copyrights so that we can do what I call the Al Capone prosecution, you can't go after him for the big stuff. So let's go after him for this. But in order to do that, we have to have the CO copyright so they literally would ghost us they were pulling the same tactics that Google was we couldn't figure it out. It's like, why can't you do the right thing? And so that's why I started this change.org petition, you know, why I did the piece on or they 60 minutes came to me to do the piece. So I figured it was a good time to sort of the moon in the stars to to align here to bring focus on this. So that's what I've been trying to do. If Google and Facebook have the same editorial guidelines that the Washington Post, or hell Fox News for that matter, you wouldn't be seeing all this stuff, and promoting all this the proliferation of all this garbage, which feeds this stuff and feeds these these extremists like Marjorie Taylor Greene.

F

Fred Guttenberg 11:35

So let me ask you a question. Because that's a great point. And Twitter's now taking kind of trying to take control of their platform responsibly late, but doing it. As these people get shoved off these major platforms, they're going into the dark web, and they're not going to stop what they're doing. We're just going to have less visibility of it. If you think of the Pittsburgh temple shooting that was planned on the dark web, nobody saw it coming. So the question is, how do we stop the proliferation? But also find ways to keep our eyes on what's happened?

A

Andy Parker 12:15

Yeah, I don't know that you can totally stop it, it's, it's like a sieve, it's going to find find it someplace, I think the best thing that we can do is to try and mitigate it. So that some of the people some of these other folks that have become radicalized and and what you used to think were normal people have become domestic terrorists, you know,

the hardcore they will always find that that place in the dark web, but if we can at least prevent what we can and hold the standard, at least you'll stop some of the bleeding, I guess. And as I've said, I just want my day in court. I want to be able to go after these bastards and sue them for what they've done. Because they do monetize it. They make money from it, they say we don't, Oh, we don't accept that. You know, it's clickbait. You see that video, whether it's Alison's murder, or it's a cat playing the piano. If you liked that video, you'll see the thing on the side there, but it points you to it's its algorithmic amplification. That's what they do. They say, Oh, we don't promote it. And that's just complete bullshit. They do.

F

Fred Guttenberg 13:22

Well, and Andy, you know, listen, our legislators, and these companies are going to have to come to grips with the reality that what happened January 6, and what will happen next, is all predictable, and it was predictable, it was preventable. And anyone who says we didn't see it coming is lying. The afternoon of January 6. I was in a recording all afternoon for a documentary that's going to come out in the spring. In that recording, we were discussing the NRA, the gun lobby as a whole, their impact on society, and where things are headed. I literally we were, I was walled off from the world in the studio, I had no idea what was happening in Washington, DC that afternoon, none. And I'm literally talking and I thought I was exaggerating about the threat of tying together guns with all of these groups on social media and their use of social media, and the encouragement from elected leaders. And I was talking about my fear that something terrible was going to happen an attack on our democracy before this transition was done. I was literally pulling all these pieces together. And I thought I was exaggerating, sounding crazy to make a point. And the recording ended and I looked at my phone, and I just said to all the people from the studio, I said, you're not going to believe what's going on right now. So they're going to take the day of my interview and pull together all the real world news stories that are happening during it. It was predictable. Yeah, it was. We all concluded and saw it coming. And we all as we sit here now, we know there's more coming. There's more being planned. And the same platforms that were used to energize it are still energizing it. Yep. Legislators better get off their ass and they better start getting on this and our intelligence agencies which were obliterated have their work cut out for them.



JJ Janflone 15:25

Well I think this goes to your earlier question too about you know, what happens to people move to the dark web and you know how we have a country we haven't I don't think deeply considered how this mix of guns and hate and conspiracy theories is a domestic threat. Because you know, when you have people with arms and hate and misinformation, that deserves serious investigation, it's scary.

F

Fred Guttenberg 15:50

And people come up to me not only said what you said, but they've also threatened me with additional violence if I don't stop talking about what happened. So you know, it's worse and which is why somebody like Greene who has threatened violence who has made it clear people should be shot, yet walks around carrying her gun in the halls of Congress. We need to take her at her word we need to take her seriously she is a threat.

A

Andy Parker 16:17

Yeah and but unfortunately it's going to take what two thirds of the house to expel her and there is not two thirds of the the democrats overwhelmingly will be but there's not enough spine in the republican party to get rid of her and I don't know how you fix that.

F

Fred Guttenberg 16:35

You either get her out or she becomes the face of that party that she is the dominant face of that party going forward if they don't remove her

A

Andy Parker 16:44

The problem though is she is the face of the party just like Lauren Boebert you know, same with Bob Good and I go back to you know, money is certainly important. But you know, you can't fix stupid, but you can fix ignorant, and I think that's what we got to concentrate on around here.

F

Fred Guttenberg 17:06

Well, so you have to call it what it is a lie. Listen, you can't make this stuff up. She doesn't believe my daughter died in Parkland. She doesn't believe my brother died because of 911. But she does believe because my name is Guttenberg that I have a blazer that says forest on fire.

A

Andy Parker 17:20

Well, I knew that.

F

Fred Guttenberg 17:22

Well, it's true.



JJ Janflone 17:23

I hope you all know that. That's the soundbite that they're going to use. I just yeah.

F

Fred Guttenberg 17:28

And this is listen, this is where I'll never forget what Kellyanne Conway said for the very first time, "we believe in alternative facts." They have made the world of alternative facts, their facts, okay. And I don't think we should ever, ever, ever forget that phrase. And we actually need to use it. We need to differentiate between reality and the world of alternative facts that they that they embrace, and they are acknowledged that they embrace. You know, there's truth. And there's alternative facts. That's where they live. We, listen, it's going to be a battle, but we need to defeat the alternative facts. For three out of Donald Trump's four years, nobody called them lies, they said, should he have said that? Is this normal? Is this okay? It took him finally looking like he was gonna lose for them to start calling it what it was a lie. And we can't stop doing that now.

A

Andy Parker 18:27

That was all about ratings. I mean, that's the whole that's, you know, Donald Trump was a gift to every media

mainstream, every mainstream and, you know, alternative media outlet out there.



JJ Janflone 18:39

And I was just wondering too, Fred and Andy, you know, what are some ways that you think moving forward, we can actually live in an actual reality, not an alternative reality, not an alternative reality as a country. And you know, just to kind of move past you know, that there's people over here who think that 911 was a hoax, or that Sandy Hook didn't happen or that gun violence doesn't matter. Like, how do we all solve this?

F

Fred Guttenberg 19:01

I highly recommend everybody read what Malcolm Nance wrote and published in the Washington Post, because he talks about this. And this is where we need to really get good at public shaming of alternative facts and people who push them. It's a really powerful weapon. If you look at the news clip last night, from the 11th hour, where Brian Williams was going to put up a video clip of the bully in Palm Beach and McCarthy and instead it turned out to be the Tom Cruise character from Show Me The Money where it's the you completely see and that's what he made Kevin McCarthy look like you have to watch the video clip. It's genius. We have to we have to stop playing like these people own the the reality, and that we're always on defense. And we have to hit them hard. We have to do it with facts, with video with pictures, and you know what? We have to shame them?

A

Andy Parker 20:14

Yeah, I'm all about shaming and I've been doing a good bit of that of late. So it works. I mean, it's if I get this co copyright from gray it's it's only because I shamed it, you know, did public a public shaming and Google the same way. You know, we just Fred, you're right. I mean, we just have to keep battling them. And it's you know, whether it's work as as GVP warriors or social media warriors, they kind of go hand in hand. And that's why it's the combination of that focus is going to or the efforts I think is going to hopefully, ultimately prevail. And maybe we can gain some converts here and in rural America,



JJ Janflone 20:57

and, and what role if any, do you think that gun owners have sort of in in changing this narrative?

A

Andy Parker 21:04

I think that the majority of at least I like to think so. But the majority overwhelming majority of gun owners feel like we do. They're just afraid to say something.

F

Fred Guttenberg 21:14

But you know what? There is something changing, that may change all of this, which is, for the first time because the January six donors, corporations have started to pull their money from that machine. And maybe we need to direct some of our energy towards not letting them forget, and making sure that money doesn't start to flow again.



JJ Janflone 21:40

And and Fred and Andy, it may seem strange to end on this note. But I always want to circle back when we do these episodes to the folks that we're actually talking about, right? You know, there's there's been a loss here that has been running through this whole podcast. And so I'm wondering if you could tell our listeners a little bit about who Jamie and Alison, actually were.



Andy Parker 22:04

Yeah, thank you. I think Fred, our daughters shared the love of arts and dancing. I mean, Allison was just, I always said that if she hadn't gone into journalism, she could have been a professional dancer on Broadway. And, you know, that was trying to be, I was as objective as I could, because I've seen the best. And, you know, she was one of those people that that anything she tackled, she did well, and I always admired her. She had more talent in her little pinky than I ever did. But beyond that, she was people ask me, Well, what, you know, what is the thing that you could describe most of what sums it up about Allison and Allison was just a beautiful kind soul. She was beautiful. You know, from the, you know, she was beautiful, but she was beautiful in here. And there were so many things that she did, and to mentor people and to help people that, you know, stories that I heard, that I never, you know, the people shared with me that I never knew about. But she was that's that's, she was just a kind soul. And she had so much promise, just like Fred's daughter. I mean, like, Jamie, it's, they were robbed. They were robbed. We were we were robbed. They were robbed.



Fred Guttenberg 23:23

Yeah. They sound like they're cut from the same cloth. Yeah. Listen, I think beautiful kind soul sums it up for Jamie as well. I will tell you, you know, Jamie was the energy in the room. She you were laughing because of her. Sometimes you were yelling because of her because she was very stubborn. But you are always reacting to her. And, you know, at the end of the day, I always taught my kids. One really simple lesson. You always do what's right, not what's easy. And, you know, that's what Jamie tried to do. It's what my son thankfully still gets to do, because he was there also that day. And, you know, Jamie, in addition to her love of dance, which dominated her life, you know, it didn't matter where we were, when we were, she was dancing. It's just what she loved to do. But Jamie also loved being around other kids, who maybe weren't always treated as well by other kids. So she really got involved in anti bullying programs. She dedicated her time, both my children do for kids with special needs, and they get that gene from my wife, who's a pediatric occupational therapist, and has always been. My kids have grown up around kids like that and Jamie, that's what she wanted to do, as well as a pediatric physical therapist. Just the world lost two amazing souls because of what happened to us, and it's why we do what we do.



Andy Parker 25:02

Exactly, exactly. And they were they were cut from the same cloth. And I'd like to think that somewhere they're dancing together.



Fred Guttenberg 25:10

After this conversation I'm counting on it.

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JJ Janflone 25:15

Josh, absolutely excellent choice in episode couldn't have thought of a better episode to kick the whole series off with.



Josh Scharff 25:21

Thank you. I think so too.



JJ Janflone 25:23

And so based on what Fred and Andy talked about, you know, because we always want to start with a call to action, you know, what are we going to do this week to honor their stories and their work?



Josh Scharff 25:31

Look, it's incumbent on us, we have to go out there. And we've got to fight conspiracy and misinformation with fact, we have to fight extremism with common sense. This issue of gun violence prevention, the issue of guns, just attracts so much conspiracy and extremism from the other side. And it's our job to go out there every day and make sure that they don't win.



JJ Janflone 25:56

I really like that, you know, we're not letting the quote unquote, alternative truths, win because those are lies!



Josh Scharff 26:05

There's truth and lies.



JJ Janflone 26:07

And for me, I'm going to do one thing in particular, I'm going to contact a survivor in my life and just sort of check in on them, you know, I'm going to let them know that they're heard that they're loved, and that their stories are valued.



Josh Scharff 26:21

And that's so important. There are real people out there experiencing such real pain, and we need to check in on them. And we need to be there to support them. And really just be there for them.



JJ Janflone 26:33

Well, and for all of you out there listening right now, let us know how you're going to fight against these conspiracy theories. If you're gonna do what Josh said, if you're under what I said, if you do a mix of the two, we love that. Or if

you've got your own plans, you know, as always, we love to hear you know what brilliance you all have come up with. Hey, want to share with the podcast? Listeners can now get in touch with us here at Red, Blue, and Brady via phone or text message! Simply call or text us at (480) 744-3452 with your thoughts, questions, concerns, ideas, whatever!



Kelly Sampson 27:06

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