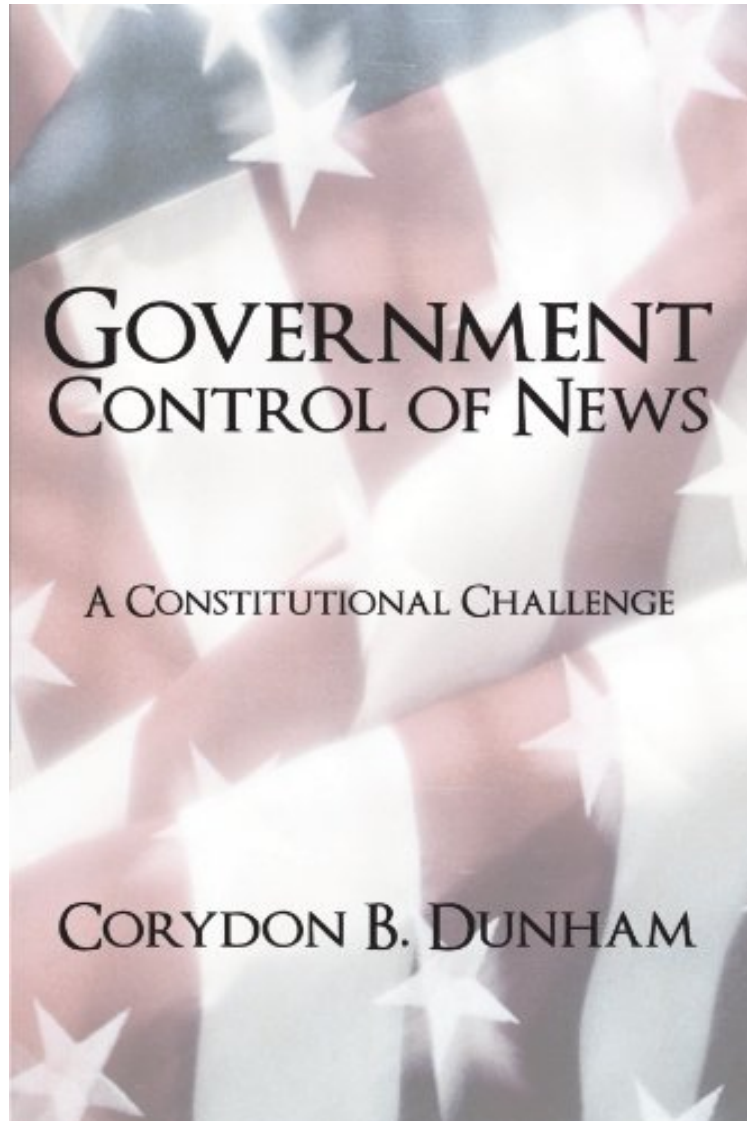


[Download free pdf] Government Control of News: A Constitutional Challenge

## Government Control of News: A Constitutional Challenge

*Corydon B. Dunham*

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**Corydon B. Dunham : Government Control of News: A Constitutional Challenge** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Government Control of News: A Constitutional Challenge:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. News ControlBy LAHeatWell written, well documented book. Very interesting !!! After reading this, it is apparent why the major news agencies offer very "soft" news reporting - or in some case non-reporting, as it relates to the politics within our government. Now, it all makes sense! Who would have

thought with the first amendment and all ..... Its not that the news media is in love with any particular administration (Democratic or Republican) it's a matter of survival! Too bad....2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Excellent book!By George LarkinSomeone should have told June and Ward Cleaver to beware.Do you ever get an uneasy feeling that things aren't as they seem? You could often feel that the news on your Internet home page each morning looks as if the stories are highly slanted. You may think that the official earnings and unemployment numbers released by the government don't have the ring of truth. You might sometimes wonder if there's a news blackout regarding details about the war, but you dismiss those uncomfortable thoughts with the assumption that you merely missed something.You couldn't be more mistaken.According to Corydon B. Dunham, those ill at east thoughts that keep you awake at night are worth listening to. If you missed anything, that blank was more than likely the result of the government deploying all manner of methods to spin, shield, deflect, suppress, distort, and sometimes blatantly lie about the facts. Dunham says in his powerful new book that government regulation of the content of television news started with television broadcasting in 1949 with a regulation called the Fairness Doctrine and their theory that regulation of news content would provide "contrasting views about controversial issues."Think Jack Nicholson in A FEW GOOD MEN shouting "You can't handle the truth!"Media people finally woke up and rebelled. "In 1985," Dunham writes, "the FCC completed an exhaustive, official review of its almost forty years of regulating and editing the content of television news and speech under that doctrine. The commission found that contrary to the old theory, government management of broadcast news and speech had in fact distorted and suppressed the news, chilled speech, and enabled the use of government power to silence political views. The doctrine had, in practice, reduced the public's access to diverse sources of information and to political dissent."Thus begins Dunham's remarkable new book, which spreads seven mesmerizing chapters over 282 pages along with four Appendices and an Index. Dunham traces the beginning of television news through the Cameron Swayze, Walter Cronkite, Chet Huntley, and David Brinkley years through to 1959 and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), a congressional regulatory agency, and their enforcement, control, and management of television news content. Content changes were routinely made "in the public interest," making the government the ultimate news editor. Unfortunately, Dunham points out, the FCC's standard was not truth.Dunham discloses that news and speech were routinely suppressed by the FCC and penalties were sometimes levied against offending broadcast stations. The FCC sometimes intimidated broadcast journalists with the threat of the loss of their licenses. Even political views were occasionally silenced--all in the name of protecting mom, pop, and their 2.5 kids from something the government didn't want them to see or hear. How delicate are the average person's sensibilities? Apparently, according to Dunham, they were frail enough to warrant congressional investigators to subpoena broadcast television anchors, reporters, commentators, and television and newspaper organizations for their confidential news sources and material in their ongoing efforts to force all media into becoming a "pallid conduit for that propaganda which is palatable to the majority of Congress or the administration of the moment."Dunham explores Executive Branch censorship in a fascinating, highly detailed reflection of Richard Nixon and his administration's searing and public campaign against print and news broadcast, a smelly series of confrontations that did not stop until the doomed president was forced to resign before he was done in by an impeachment proceeding.This book encompasses more than reminisces about long-forgotten eras. The recent Obama years are also brought under Dunham's penetrating searchlight, including Obama's appointment in 2009 of Julius Genachowski as FCC chairman, a job that morphed into one of Obama's "czars" responsible for managing everything from revoking uncooperative station's licenses under a doctrine of "localism" to harassing conservative radio stations, slapping fines on stations that did not fall into line, and using the collected money to buoy public radio and enlarge its role in broadcasting. The scary part of this scenario is that all this subterfuge and unsavory behind the scenes shenanigans probably still goes on right now. Makes you want to think twice before ever listening again to all the soft fluffy news you hear on public radio.Dunham's new book took the author years to research, compile, and compose. His monumental efforts stack up to a persuasive argument, and every point is meticulously detailed by an extensive Notes section that clearly annotates each source he used for the claims he makes. This well-documented work will please those who believe that overwhelming changes in media during the past twenty years have threatened our First Amendment values. Others may be so blinded by a broadcast, print, and web landscape characterized by insipid daytime talk shows, mind-numbing nightly talent shows, and feathery personality-driven trivia disguised as news that they will be stunned and turn away in disbelief.In other words, the modern descendants of June and Ward Cleaver may be shocked.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. "Fairness Doctrine" is an OxymoronBy Charles HellerGovernment Control Of News A Constitutional ChallengeBy Corydon B. Dunham282 Pages,Publ. 2011 by IUniverse BooksISBN 98--978-1-4502-6406-8 (sdc)Review by Charles HellerCory Dunham was for many years, a broadcast attorney, First Amendment Lawyer, and executive vice-president of legal affairs, government relations, and network broadcasting standards for NBC. His expose, if it can be called that, is an eye opener into the world of government regulation of the news business in the era of the so-called "Fairness Doctrine," which was heavy on doctrine and light on "fairness."Dunham begins by a historically accurate description of the beginnings of the television news business in its origins from radio reporting, and on to the earliest television news event, the 1948 political conventions. Congress had regulated radio news since 1934 through the Federal Communications Commission, and it began to apply that same

regulation to television news in 1949. Ten years later, Congress passed legislation to put into statute the FCC's use of the "Fairness Doctrine." This "Fairness Doctrine," stated that all points of view needed to be "balanced" with no regard for the truth of each point, or to the truth of any particular statement. The method of investigation of complaints was to review transcripts of broadcasts, without seeing videotapes of each broadcast for inflection or pictorial content. It led to a straight "abacus method" of accounting for balance of argument, as opposed to a thorough coverage of the news. Such complaint investigations could result in multiple layers of hearings, testimony, time away from news reporting, and multiple affidavits and accounting for news reporting methods. In the end, the threat was that if a station did not give "balance" to the news (an arbitrary standard which was never clearly defined) a broadcast license might not be renewed. While this threat was rarely carried out, stations never the less spent many hours in hearings, and many hundreds of thousands of dollars in compliance costs and attorneys fees to follow the FCC's directives. To enforce the "Fairness Doctrine," the FCC investigated broadcast news judgment in selecting and deciding on the issue to be broadcast and how it would be presented. If it concluded that a view should be changed, it ordered that. If in the view of the Commission, significant viewpoints had been excluded, the FCC would then order those points to be included in further programs. Stations rarely fought the FCC. The Supreme Court took on the "Fairness Doctrine," in a case called "Red Lion," which arose out of an alleged libel, and the right of one party to issue a response to an opinion in rebuttal to one aired on television. The Supreme Court upheld the "Fairness Doctrine," saying that it was constitutional due to the "limited number of broadcast frequencies on which TV could be broadcast." The author gives examples of how various administrations have used regulation by the FCC as a political weapon, especially the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon Administrations, with specific references and quotes. It is well documented. Dunham also points out how the FCC plans to do the same thing to the Internet, that it once did to broadcast television. ("Fairness Doctrine was dropped in 1987.) A great example of this is the coverage of the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago. Mayor Daley at the time, made specific limitations on the locations from which broadcast journalist could report and film. Those limitations were later brought up in Congressional hearings as to the bias of news organizations, even though the limits had been imposed by the leader of the party they were covering! A person interested in the history of Twentieth Century Journalism might do well to be familiar with this work. This is not a "page turner," but a fairly meticulous documentation of the attempts (and largely successes at media censorship.) Dunham goes to great length to document the ways in which the FCC added and subtracted material for broadcast on a regular and non-sensical basis. He does a good job of documenting such rulings in his endnotes, which are extensive. He also reprints some of the decisions from courts and commissions in the endnotes of the book, so that there is a reference for further research for the student of broadcast journalism. Dunham is a spirited guy, passionate about his subject, one to which he devoted his entire working life. An interview of him can be found at Liberty Watch Radio dot com, in the left column.

Because of the overwhelming changes in media within the past twenty years, First Amendment values are more vital than ever to this country's freedom. This thorough study brings to the forefront the reasons that government regulation of news content violates the public interest and the fundamental principles of the First Amendment. A recent FCC decision may even threaten the freedom of news on the Internet. The U.S. State Department urged at World Press Freedom Day in 2011 that journalists should not be the only ones standing for press freedom. "Each one of us who recognize the value of an informed citizenry must also stand up for this fundamental right"

\*[www.misa.org/mediarelease/pressfreedom.html](http://www.misa.org/mediarelease/pressfreedom.html)

About the Author Corydon B. Dunham enjoyed a lengthy career working on television free press issues as a First Amendment lawyer and executive vice president for a television network in charge of its legal matters, relations with the government, and network broadcast standards.