

CALL FOR PAPERS FOR THE PROGRAM OF THE SECTION ON COMMUNICATION, MEDIA & INFORMATION LAW AALS 2020 ANNUAL MEETING

The Section on Communication, Media & Information Law is pleased to announce a Call for Papers from which an additional presenter will be selected for the Section's program to be held during the AALS 2020 Annual Meeting in Washington D.C.

The program title is *Danger, Drama & Self-Defeat? Diagnosing What Faces "the Press."* The theme for the 2020 Annual Meeting is *Pillars of Democracy: Law, Representation and Knowledge*. Obviously one of the critical pillars of democracy is a robust and independent press. The press today faces a variety of threats, of which the panel will examine three kinds: 1) *Danger*: physical threats against journalists and newsrooms; 2) *Drama*: lawsuits against the press as "weaponized" political theater; and 3) *Self-defeat*: self-destructive press behavior. Although Jamal Khashoggi's murder has focused the discussion of violence against the press on threats to the press abroad, we are also facing home-grown press-targeting and threats to the physical safety of working journalists. Do we need more laws protecting journalists from such harm, or are proposed legislative options flawed? In addition to physical threats, the press today faces a burgeoning strategy designed to cripple it in the court of public opinion. Eerily reminiscent of prior strategic attempts to marshal law to deter criticism, cases like the \$250 million *Sandmann v. Washington Post* defamation suit read as little more than political theater designed to delegitimize the press and sow public distrust. Do we need responses like federal anti-SLAPP laws to protect the press from such "drama" lawsuits? Or do stories of press misbehavior—like revelations of "catch and kill" policies, plagiarism charges, conflicts of interest and the substantial number of #MeToo claims against prominent media figures—counsel caution? What do recent charges of a politicized press, of coziness between news organizations and government—of the "Fox News White House" and the Sinclair management's "must run" statements to independently-owned affiliates—mean for the identity of the independent "press"? What can be done to improve press function and bolster confidence in the institution of the press in light of a clear-headed look at modern media practice?

The panel will feature both law professors and non-law speakers (including one or more journalists).

If you're interested in presenting on this panel, please send a proposal electronically by **5:00p.m. Friday, June 14, 2019** to Lili Levi (Chair of the Section for this upcoming meeting) at llevi@law.miami.edu. Proposals should contain a title, an explanation of the substance and likely argument you plan for the presentation, and a description of how your paper will support the panel's stated objectives. The papers will be selected after review by a committee appointed by the Section Chair from members of the Section's Executive Committee. The selection will be by "anonymized review," so we would appreciate your submitting your proposal with a cover page including your name and paper title but without identifying information on the proposal itself. We would hope to notify the author of the selected paper by August 30, 2019.

If you have any questions about this Call for Papers, please feel free to contact Lili Levi at llevi@law.miami.edu or 305.284.2289 (O) or 305.772.8187 (C), or the other officers of the Section:

Professor Sonja West (Chair-elect), Professor RonNell Andersen Jones (Secretary), and Professor Catherine Sandoval (Treasurer).

Thank you very much for your interest.