



Murdoch isn't just a sleaze peddler. He's one of the wealthiest and most powerful people on the planet — and he has a political agenda that matters more to him, I imagine, than a random billion in cash here or there. The silent virulence of his influence on public events, more than the sensational headlines and lurid scandal-mongering he inflicts on us, is my real concern.

Big as Murdoch is in the U.S., with his 24-7 rightwing propaganda network called Fox News, in Great Britain he's bigger than the royal family. "He's often referred to as the country's permanent Cabinet member," Beth Fouhy wrote recently for Associated Press. Since the days of Margaret Thatcher, he's been the godfather of British prime ministers, able to make them offers they can't refuse.

This is journalism utterly devoid of human sympathy — journalism, I would say, on the wrong side of the human race. It has zero interest in contributing to an informed society or creating social cohesion. It's toxic junk food, a creepy sort of "reality" entertainment purveyed to bored and isolated readers for no purpose except to keep them consuming the product. It has made Murdoch rich beyond measure.

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