



**Kevin McCauley**  
Editor-in-Chief

# O'Dwyer's

The Inside News of PR & Marketing Communications



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## P&G'S BUCHHOLZ DRIVES TO GM

General Motors has announced that Procter & Gamble veteran Craig Buchholz will join the automaker as senior VP-global communications on April 1.

He will take over for Tony Cervone, who is retiring July 1.

As P&G's chief communications officer & VP-communications, personal health and oral care, Buchholz helped drive



**Craig Buchholz**

the corporate narrative with consumers and key stakeholders. He was in charge of media relations, policy, financial, crisis and employee outreach.

Earlier, Buchholz spent more than 20 years at Merck (VP-global communications), Johnson & Johnson (VP-worldwide communications), Pharmacia (director-global consumer communications) and Dorland Global Communications (VP).

At GM, he will report to CEO Mary Barra.

P&G has named Damon Jones to succeed Buchholz as CCO.

Jones has been with P&G since 1997, most recently serving as VP, global communications & advocacy. His previous positions with the company included director, global company communications and communications director, P&G Asia. Jones also served as director of press relations for the Democratic National Convention committee in 2008.

## KAISER CCO BEISER HEADS FOR LILLY

Kaiser Permanente chief communications officer Kathryn Beiser is headed to Eli Lilly and Company, where she will take the position of VP, global communications, effective April 6.

Before joining Kaiser Permanente in 2018, Beiser was a senior advisor at APCO Worldwide. She has also been global chair, corporate practice at Edelman and executive vice president, corporate communications at Hilton Worldwide.



**Kathryn Beiser**

A former trustee of the Arthur W. Page Society, Beiser has worked for firms including Golin, Hill & Knowlton and Burson-Marsteller, working with clients in healthcare and other highly regulated industry sectors.

In her new role, Beiser will oversee all aspects of Lilly's corporate communications strategy, including internal and external corporate communications, media relations, crisis management, executive communications, digital and social media, and corporate brand and reputation management.

## MILLION MASK CAMPAIGN SEEKS PR FIRM

The [Million Mask Campaign](#), an initiative that's raising funds to purchase N95 medical-grade respirators to support doctors and nurses in the fight against COVID-19, is in need of a PR firm that can help promote the organization's efforts.

The organization has partnered with a 501(c)(3) charity, [BlueStar Veterans Foundation](#), to gather and distribute masks to healthcare workers in hospitals.

The group has a contract to purchase 50,000 masks, with the goal to distribute those masks across hospitals in New York, which is on the front lines in the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.



Million Mask Campaign is looking for a PR firm that can help increase media coverage of this initiative for the purpose of driving donations for the purchase of additional masks.

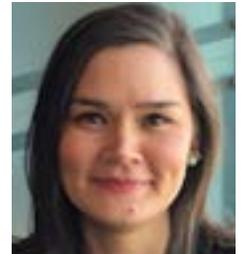
Million Mask Campaign was founded by a DLA Piper attorney (and former Navy officer), an investment bank associate and a former immunologist turned entrepreneur. Co-founder Alex Carchidi told *O'Dwyer's* the group "desperately threw this campaign together literally overnight because we couldn't handle the feeling of sitting and doing nothing while our healthcare workers faced the coronavirus without essential armor."

All interested PR agencies should contact Carchidi at [millionmaskcampaign@gmail.com](mailto:millionmaskcampaign@gmail.com).

## GIUDA RETURNS TO WEBER SHANDWICK

Michelle Giuda, who exited the top global communications and marketing post at Weber Shandwick in February 2018 to head the State Dept.'s PA strategy as assistant secretary, has returned to the Interpublic unit.

She will take the executive VP-geopolitical strategy and risk job in the firm's PA practice. She will help lead its COVID-19 response and counsel clients on how geopolitics impacts on their strategy and reputation.



**Michelle Giuda**

Giuda revamped the State Dept.'s communications unit; invested in data/analytics, real-time video and mobile platforms; and launched a new website. She counseled Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and ambassadors. In 2019, she became undersecretary of state for public diplomacy & public affairs.

Prior to her first stint at Weber Shandwick, Giuda was a member of former House Speaker Newt Gingrich's communications team, and national deputy press secretary for his 2012 presidential run.

## **MAYORS WANT PR TO SUPPORT ‘DREAMERS’**

The Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City has released an RFP for a multi-city PR campaign in support of the more than 17M foreign-born people who are part of the deferred action for childhood arrivals (DACA) program.



The US Supreme Court is expected to determine whether or not to rescind the DACA by this summer.

The anticipated \$90K PR push is on behalf of the Cities for Action coalition of nearly 200 US mayors and county executives fighting for pro-immigrant

federal policies and inclusive programs.

The RFP calls for a PR campaign to “dramatically raise public awareness and help advance a positive narrative on DREAMers.” It will “leverage the voices of our cities’ leadership to counteract the negative narrative strategies that label immigrants as criminals and drains on public welfare.”

The desired partner will be “a firm that is able to support a large-scale, multi-city, social-issue based campaign that seeks to shape public narratives and educate communities about rights and resources.”

Responses are due April 15 for the communications effort that will run from May 15 through December. They go to Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City at [fundrpf@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:fundrpf@cityhall.nyc.gov) with subject line: Communications Consultant—C4A DACA Campaign.”

Questions go to the same email by April 1. Answers will be posted on [www.nyc.gov/fund](http://www.nyc.gov/fund) on April 7.

Click [here](#) for the RFP.

## **MISINFORMATION ABOUNDS ABOUT COVID-19**

Americans remain deeply divided on the facts surrounding the coronavirus pandemic as well as their opinions regarding the media’s handling of it, according to a new survey released by the Pew Research Center.

Pew’s report, which focused on Americans’ perceptions of COVID-19 as well as the ongoing media coverage and misinformation surrounding the crisis, found that about half of U.S. adults polled (48 percent) report that they’ve seen at least some made-up news about the pandemic, with about 12 percent of them claiming they’ve seen “a lot” of fake reports. About a third of Americans (32 percent) reported not seeing much fake COVID-19 news, and 20 percent said they hadn’t seen any. A quarter of Americans (26 percent) reported seeing conflicting facts about the outbreak.

This mix of conflicting information may have contributed to some of the ongoing confusion regarding the facts surrounding the outbreak. When asked about the virus’ origin, the survey showed that 43 percent correctly believe it most likely developed naturally, while nearly a quarter (23 percent) think COVID-19 was developed intentionally in a lab. Another six percent believe the virus was made accidentally in a lab, while one percent still think the entire crisis is made up. About a quarter of Americans said they still aren’t sure.

Most U.S. adults think the media have exaggerated the risks surrounding the coronavirus pandemic.

Given the wealth of conflicting information, perhaps it should come as no surprise that Americans’ opinions re-

garding the threat of the pandemic remain divided. Nearly two-thirds of those polled (62 percent) said they think the media has exaggerated the risks associated with the outbreak, with 37 percent of them claiming the media have “greatly exaggerated” COVID-19’s risk. A quarter of Americans (25 percent) believe these risks are only slightly being exaggerated, while only 30 percent think the media have conveyed the coronavirus’ risks accurately.

The study confirms that the coronavirus’ dominance in the news cycle has caught Americans’ attention. About half of U.S. adults (51 percent) reported that they’re following coronavirus-related news very closely, with another 38 percent claiming that they’re following it fairly closely. A majority (70 percent) think the media have covered COVID-19 adequately, while a little less than a third (29 percent) believe the media’s coverage isn’t doing a good job.

Once again, however, partisanship arose as an evident variable in influencing Americans’ perceptions regarding the threat of the virus as well as the media’s treatment of it.

Among respondents who identify as Democrat or Democratic-leaning, 80 percent believe the media are doing at least somewhat of a good job covering the crisis, while only 59 percent of Republicans and Republican-leaning respondents are likely to believe this. About three-quarters (76 percent) of Republicans believe the media have exaggerated the risks associated with the virus, a belief shared by only a fourth of that number (17 percent) among Democrats.

More than half of Democrats (52 percent) also more correctly identified that COVID-19 most likely came about naturally, while only little more than a third of Republicans (37 percent) believe this.

Pew’s analysis was based on a survey of more than 8,900 respondents drawn from the nonpartisan think tank’s American Trends Panel, a nationally representative list of randomly selected U.S. adults. Data for the report was compiled as part of the nonpartisan think tank’s Election News Pathways project, an ongoing initiative that seeks to understand how Americans are getting their news in the months leading up to the 2020 election. Surveys were conducted between March 10 and March 16.

## **B-M ALUM KLASKY NAMED ACTIVISION CCO**

Activision Blizzard has named Helaine Klasky, one-time chair of Burson-Marsteller’s US public affairs & crisis communications practice, chief communications officer.

She succeeds Kristin Binns, who is moving to the newly created senior advisor spot, and reports to CEO Bobby Kotick.

Klasky, who exited B-M in 2018, did a seven-year at General Electric serving as senior advisor and CCO of the energy management group.

She also was CCO at Yale University and deputy assistant for PA at both the Treasury Dept. and Office of the US Trade Representative.

Klasky joins Activision Blizzard from SoundExchange, nonprofit that distributes digital royalties to recording artists.

Los Angeles-based Activision Blizzard gaming company owns franchises such as Candy Crush, World of Warcraft and Call of Duty.



**Helaine Klasky**

## **VIRUS CRISIS PROVIDES PR OPPORTUNITY**

Every crisis offers outstanding PR opportunities for forward-thinking, responsible executives. Since both the airline and cruise line industries are asking U.S. taxpayers to bail



**Rene Henry**

them out to the tune of some \$100 billion or more, I believe now is the time for them to do something to show the world their appreciation.

Thousands of U.S. citizens from various countries are stranded throughout the world. While the U.S. State Department is doing little or nothing, Germany and Israel took the leadership and are chartering airlines to bring home their citizens at no cost. Congress and

the White House are pondering conditions for financial gifts such as not allowing stock buybacks and restricting management bonuses, but airline CEOs could step forward and say they are ready to send planes to various countries to bring home citizens without any charge. The Trump administration discussed using U.S. military aircraft for this effort.

This would be one small “thank you” Alaska, American, Delta, United and other airlines could show for getting help from the American public that it has nicked-and-dimed and made flying a hassle since de-regulation. There should be no cost to any passenger and hopefully, the airlines would not charge for any luggage or other money-generating gimmicks the industry has used since it was deregulated.

Most cruise lines are foreign-owned and few U.S. citizens work on the ships. The traveling American public has been the profit generator for the industry. Many cities and states are scrambling to build temporary hospitals and other spaces for those who have tested positive or are infected with the virus. Consider the relief to U.S. hospitals if ships that accommodate thousands of passengers were docked in Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, Miami and other cities.

A cruise ship would be a perfect solution to accommodate those in need as well as the medical staff. Ships are already equipped with all facilities needed to house and feed everyone. Necessary medical equipment and supplies could be brought on board. During World War II all luxury cruise ships were converted to transport ships. Some cruise ships were responsible for exacerbating the uncontrollable spread of the virus and many large ships will be available now and in the near future with few people cruising these days.

Since a number of cruise lines had previous viruses spread quickly throughout their ships, such as Norovirus, I was surprised none had a crisis plan in place to immediately ask help from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or the National Institute of Health (NIH) and pay to have medical staff immediately provide assistance.

The expense involved by the airline and cruise line industries to do this would be nominal compared to what I believe they are now spending for lobbying. It would be a nice way of showing appreciation to the American taxpayer for a financial bailout to keep a foreign company profitable and in business. It also would be an outstanding public relations opportunity that would win many friends and future passengers.

*Rene A. Henry is the author of 10 books including **Communicating In A Crisis**, a book used as the text by some universities. He also writes on customer service and many of his articles are posted on his website [www.renehenry.com](http://www.renehenry.com).*

## **LARRY RASKY, BOSTON PR VETERAN, DIES**

Larry Rasky, a political strategist and CEO/chairman of Boston-based Rasky Partners, has died.

The *Boston Globe* reported that Rasky died Sunday morning in his Quincy, MA home. The cause of death remains unknown. He was 69.

A fixture in Democratic political circles, Rasky was a longtime advisor and friend of Vice President—and now presumptive Democratic nominee—Joe Biden, serving as press secretary for the then-Senator’s first White House run in 1988. He was later a communications director for the “Biden for President” campaign in 2007. Last year, he helped launch Biden PAC Unite the Country.

Rasky founded Rasky Partners—formerly Rasky Baerlein Strategic Communications—in 1989. The independent agency, which maintains an additional office in Washington, D.C., specializes in lobbying, financial services, healthcare, grassroots organizing, energy and the environment, technology, crisis communications and reputation management.

In 2014, Rasky Partners merged with Washington-based Prism Public Affairs. It counts Boston Medical Center, Citizens Financial Group, Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare, Movie Pass, the Boston Museum of Science, Shields Healthcare Group and UMass Amherst as clients.

Prior to founding his agency, Rasky served as deputy press secretary to President Jimmy Carter’s re-election campaign. He later worked for John Glenn’s 1984 presidential campaign, was a communications director to John Kerry’s first Senate campaign and a special assistant to Congressman Ed Markey.

He was also formerly director of public affairs for Boston’s Cablevision Systems Corporations.

Rasky Partners posted a statement on Twitter last night that read: “Larry was a giant in so many ways, not just professionally but personally. He loved & was loved by so many. He treated the company like a family, and we are all shocked and saddened by the news of his passing.”



**Larry Rasky**

## **DRAFTKINGS BETS ON BALLARD PARTNERS**

DraftKings is betting on Donald Trump-connected Ballard Partners to help it achieve its economic development and regulatory relief goals in Washington.

The coronavirus pandemic has dealt a blow to the online gaming platform as US professional sports leagues have suspended play during 2020.

DraftKings, which had \$343M in 2019 revenues, is in the midst of wrapping up a merger with SB Tech to create the “only vertically-integrated pure-play sports betting and online gaming company based in the US.”

The deal also is a vehicle for DraftKings to go public

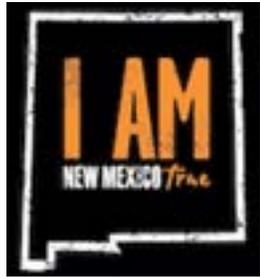
Brian Ballard, who chaired the Trump Victory organization in Florida, heads the DraftKings team, which includes Rebecca Benn, staffer to Sen. Thad Cochran (R-MS), and Daniel McFaul, chief of staff to Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-FL).



## **NEW MEXICO WANTS TRAVEL PR**

The New Mexico Tourism Dept. is looking for a PR firm “to build destination brand awareness, create deep connections with the venturesome traveler, and inspire increased visitation” to the Land of Enchantment, according to its RFP.

The Department wants a firm located in New Mexico but it may team with an out-of-state partner “in order to broaden reach and increase performance capacity for maximized national and international exposure.”



It desires PR with a storytelling approach filled with compelling messaging that personifies the “New Mexico True” brand promise—adventure steeped in culture.”

The firm will communicate with influencers, journalists, editors, and producers to develop relationships and inspire coverage through social media and other digital engagement platforms.

The contract will run for four years.

Proposals are due April 2 and go via express carrier to:

Carlos F. Gonzales

RFP # 20-418-2002-00003-00 (NMTD Public Relations Agency) State Purchasing Division  
1100 St. Francis Dr. Room 2016  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505  
Click [here](#) for the RFP.

## **FTI CONSULTING WORKS RECYCLING CRISIS**

Corporate funded Recycling Partnership has hired FTI Consulting to work Washington to achieve its goals of strengthening public recycling programs and accelerating the rise of the “circular economy.”



**THE RECYCLING  
PARTNERSHIP**

The move comes as curbside recycling “faces the most stressful time in its 30-year history” due to higher costs of materials processing combined with falling prices paid for captured goods, according to a Partnership report.

Its 2020 state of curbside recycling report found that programs are capturing only about 32 percent of recyclable waste. More than 50 communities in the US either eliminated or restricted their curbside programs last year.

The Partnership calls for “Recycling 2.0,” in which local governments, consumer goods marketers and commodity industries pitch the long-term benefits of recycling in the areas of climate change, pollution and reduction of environmental impacts from mining of raw material.

The Partnership’s financial backers include ExxonMobil, Coca-Cola, Dow Chemical, Amazon, Ball, Alcoa, International Paper, 3M, Procter & Gamble, Heineken, Colgate-Palmolive, Kellogg’s, Plastics Industry Assn., Poland Spring, Nestle, Carton Council, Target and PepsiCo.

FTI’s Recycling Partnership team includes Bob Moran, senior managing director for government affairs/strategic communications, and managing directors Sonja Nesbit and Nelson Litterst.

## **ON THE MOVE**

**Lippe Taylor** has hired **Emily Buchanan** to serve as executive vice president and lead the agency’s new Minneapolis office—its first outside of New York. Buchanan comes to Lippe Taylor from Carmichael Lynch Relate, where she was director of brand marketing. She has also been senior vice president and deputy director of global consumer marketing at MSLGROUP and vice president in the consumer lifestyle group at MWW. In addition to heading up Lippe Taylor’s new office, Buchanan will play a key role in managing and growing the agency’s Midwest-based clients.



**Emily Buchanan**

**Authentic Campaigns**, a political digital communications firm that worked with Kamala Harris on her presidential campaign, has named **Loren Merchan** partner and president. Merchan was previously vice president and director of advertising at the firm. Before coming to Authentic, she was vice president of advertising at Revolution Messaging, and worked for Bayard Advertising and Discovery Communications.

**Steller** has brought on **Ryan Hodgson** as VP of marketing. Hodgson was previously chief operating officer at Realogics Sotheby’s International Realty, where he also led in-house marketing teams. He has also served as VP, integrated marketing at B2B marketing agency Yesler and senior VP, integrated marketing communications at Weber Shandwick. In his new role, he will work to drive the vision and execution of Steller’s strategic marketing and growth initiatives.

**TransMedia Group** has appointed **Dilara Tuncer** director of public relations. Tuncer was previously a senior publicist at TARA, Ink. in Miami. In addition to her PR and marketing experience, Tuncer has published articles in *Haute Living* and *Miami New Times*. At TransMedia Group, she devises and executes PR campaigns for such clients as Billiards by Brandt, stylist Donna Marie Fischetto and artist /muralist Ken Beberman.

**Marinus Pharmaceuticals**, which develops therapeutics to treat orphan seizure disorders, has appointed **Sasha Damouni Ellis** as vice president, investor relations and corporate communications. Damouni Ellis joins Marinus from Bayer US, where she was director of external communications and media relations, driving external brand-building strategies in therapeutic areas of oncology, hemophilia, cardio-pulmonary, and women’s health. In her new role, she will lead strategic investor relations and communications programs.



**Sasha Damouni Ellis**

**Wana Brands**, which produces cannabis edibles, has hired **Joe Hodas** as chief marketing officer, a newly created position. Hodas was previously CEO at Gofire, which develops hardware and software Internet protocols for plant-based medicine and mainstream healthcare companies. Before that, he was chief operating officer at General Cannabis Corporation. At Wana, he is tasked with working to generate revenue by creating marketing campaigns for the organization, as well as supporting new market expansion, partnerships, government relations and innovation within the company.

## **MARKETERS FEAR LAYOFFS**

Marketers are bracing themselves for the possibility that the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic will result in industry-wide job losses, [according to a survey released](#) by professional social network Fishbowl.

The Fishbowl survey, which polled thousands of professionals—including employees at Edelman and Ogilvy—found that nearly two-thirds of marketing industry professionals (65 percent) believe the COVID-19 pandemic will lead to layoffs at their agency.



The average concern level was markedly lower among professionals polled overall (54 percent), suggesting marketing experts remain far more worried about the future of their jobs than professionals working in other industries.

By comparison, only 44 percent of finance professionals—whose industry is currently facing a bear market—reported layoff concerns. Lawyers exhibited the least amount of layoff-related fears, at 32 percent.

When comparing responses by region, the San Francisco Bay area led with the highest percentage of employees fearing layoffs (61 percent), followed by New York (60 percent) and Atlanta (59 percent). Columbus, Pittsburgh and Toronto exhibited the lowest percentage of layoff fears, at 34 percent, 40 percent and 44 percent, respectively.

Already, the marketing industry is bracing for a big hit in light of the coronavirus pandemic. Digital market research company eMarketer in March estimated that COVID-19's financial impact on 2020 ad spends [currently stands at about \\$20.3 billion](#).

A [separate Fishbowl survey](#) also found that nearly two-thirds of advertising professionals polled (63 percent) reported that their workplace has either restricted travel or encouraged them to work remotely in light of the pandemic, a far higher percentage than professionals overall (52 percent).

Fishbowl's survey polled more than 17,000 professionals stationed across a variety of industries between March 13 and March 16 using the Fishbowl app.

## **EDELMAN'S CORRECHA-PRICE JOINS LLYC**

Edelman's Carlos Correcha-Price is joining Madrid's Llorente & Cuenca as CEO of its US operations in Miami.



**Carlos  
Correcha-Price**

The 15-year Edelman veteran will assume duties once held by Mike Fernandez, who departed for the CCO post at Enbridge energy pipeline operator.

Correcha-Price was Edelman's GM in Miami & Bogotá, director of PA for Latin America and senior VP for international PA in Washington.

Alejandro Romero, CEO of LLYC Americas, expects Correcha-Price will strengthen the firm's positioning among US companies with investments in South America.

LLYC posted a 12.4 percent gain in 2019 revenues to \$47M, paced by 21 percent growth in both Spain and Brazil, its biggest markets.

## **N6A'S RIZZETTA STARTS COVID CEO PLEDGE**

North 6th Agency founder and CEO Matt Rizzetta has launched the COVID CEO Pledge as a way to encourage corporate leaders to help lessen the effect of the crisis on employment and job retention. CEOs who take the pledge will commit to a salary reduction of 50 percent through the end of the second quarter of 2020.



**Matt Rizzetta**

Those funds should then be reinvested in the preservation of jobs, or the addition of new jobs at their firms over the next three months. In the hours after its launch, the site garnered \$2M in annualized salaries, with the goal of reaching 100 commitments by the end of the month. "Taking the pledge will send the right message to our employees, our industry and the broader global business community," said Rizzetta.

"We leaders are willing to take a short-term salary cut in order to preserve or stimulate job growth in our industry during this delicate period in which our people face so much uncertainty and potentially lasting financial consequences."

## **MEDIA MANEUVERS**

*Playboy's* Spring 2020 issue, set to hit newsstands this week, will be its final print issue of the year. Beginning in 2021, Playboy Enterprises CEO Ben Kohn says that the company will "move to a digital-first publishing schedule for all of our content." The company says that the coronavirus crisis, with its effects on the publishing supply chain, contributed to the decision. *Playboy* switched from a monthly to a quarterly publishing schedule in 2019. Its circulation, which topped out at 5.6 million in the 1970s, slid to 210,000 by 2018. Kohn says that the magazine's trademark features—the Playboy Interview, Playboy Advisor and Playmate pictorials—will still appear on its digital platform.



Another publishing victim of COVID19: the *Sacramento News & Review*. The weekly publication will cease operations following its March 20 issue. Most of its staff will be laid off. While CEO and majority owner Jeff vonKaenel told the *Sacramento Business Journal* that the closure was a "temporary setback," he added that it would likely be permanent if the sheltering in place currently effect in the area continues for an extended period. The News & Review's editions in Chico, CA and Reno, NV will also shut down. All three publications depend primarily on advertising for restaurants, clubs, bars, theaters and entertainment, vonKaenel said.

The European Union has asked Netflix chairman and CEO Reed Hastings to limit streaming of its films and TV series to standard definition, as opposed to high definition at peak times during the course of the crisis, according to a story in the *Hollywood Reporter*. High-definition streaming takes up considerably more bandwidth than standard definition does. "To secure Internet access for all, let's #SwitchToStandard definition when HD is not necessary," EU Internal Market and Services Commissioner Thierry Breton wrote in a Twitter post. A Netflix representative told CNN that the platform already adjusts the quality of streams to available network capacity, and uses a special delivery network that keeps its library closer to users as a way of consuming less bandwidth.

## COMMENTARY

**Secretary of State Mike Pompeo** says a global effort is needed to defeat the coronavirus pandemic. “Every nation has a responsibility to share all of their data, all of their information in as timely and accurate a fashion as they have the ability to do not only because it’s the right thing to do, but because that’s how you save lives for your own people as well,” he said during a March 17 press briefing.



**Mike Pompeo**

Donald Trump, who is trying to pull off a remarkable transformation from downplaying COVID-19 as something that will mysteriously disappear when the weather warms to a self-proclaimed wartime president, undermines Pompeo’s call to global action by stubbornly referring to the pandemic as the “Chinese virus,” a racist characterization that infuriates the Beijing government and poses a threat to the Chinese-American community.

Trump says he calls COVID-19 “the Chinese virus” because the sickness originated in Wuhan. The Chinese government, for its part, did not cover itself with glory in the early stages of the outbreak, denying the seriousness of the pandemic and then devising an over-the-top propaganda campaign portraying the heroic response of patriotic medical workers combatting the disease.

The US president’s initial slow response to the outbreak mimicked that of China’s government. After banning travel from China, Trump wasted more than a month, viewing coronavirus as a more of a PR problem than a public emergency.

The “Chinese virus” description is just the latest effort by Trump to shift blame for his failed leadership. He would rather see outrage over his use of “Chinese virus” than blowback over the lag in testing for COVID-19, which is why the nation is in the midst of a healthcare crisis.

A wartime president would understand that Chinese scientists have the most experience in fighting coronavirus. Beijing now reports no new cases of the virus.

A wartime president would reach out to China’s government and scientific community, rather than fighting a war of semantics with China.

He wouldn’t spout utter nonsense like, “We’ve done a fantastic job,” on the same day that Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin is warning about the potential of a 20 percent unemployment rate.

The *Wall Street Journal* editorialized on March 18: “Markets are panicked in part because they sense that our political leaders are more panicked than the public is.”

Our wartime leader is AWOL.

Since Italy has now surpassed China as the nation with the most COVID-19 deaths, will Trump now brand COVID-19 as “the Mafia hitman?”

**Fox News commentator Tucker Carlson** has demanded the resignation of Sen. Richard Burr (R-NC) for unloading

up to \$1.7M of stock after he participated in a briefing that projected public health and economic devastation from the coronavirus pandemic.

“There is no greater moral crime than betraying your country in a time of crisis, and that appears to be what happened,” said Carlson.

While Burr was selling shares, president Trump was downplaying the threat from COVID-19 and assuring the public that the economy would remain strong.

Writing in the *Washington Post*, Jennifer Rubin said its hard-to-believe that the president did not get the same dire COVID-19 projections that Burr received.

*“If Trump got no briefings telling him otherwise and believed the gibberish spouted by Fox News, he is the most negligent and incompetent president in history.”*

*“However, if he knew otherwise — if he knew that the pandemic was coming and would have devastating consequences — then he betrayed his country in some futile attempt to keep the stock market pumped up for as long as possible,”* she wrote.

Trump must be taken to task.

During the Senate Watergate investigation, Republican Howard Baker famously asked, “What did the President know and when did he know it?”

What Republican Senator has the moral strength to ask the same of Trump about what he knew about Covid-19? Can the nation depend on the lone GOP Senator, Mitt Romney, who had the backbone to support the impeachment of Trump?

If Republicans fail to find to challenge Trump on coronavirus, the press should assume the job.

Rubin wrote that Americans have the right to know if the “president intentionally misled the country, thereby preventing the sort of preparation that could have saved thousands, if not millions, of lives.”

We need to know if Trump committed the moral crime of betraying the country in a time of crisis that Carlson alluded to. If so, a second impeachment would let him off easy.

**Russia may be using the COVID-19 to test some of the disinformation** tactics that it plans to unleash during the US presidential election.

The European Union reports that pro-Kremlin media are spreading disinformation about coronavirus in a bid to add to the public health crisis, according to *the Guardian*.

Russian media have profiled COVID-19 as a biological weapon developed by the US, UK and China. They also reported that immigrants are responsible for the pandemic and that US pharmaceutical companies are ready to cash in on the disease.

Trump should tell his pal, Vladimir Putin, to cut it out.

—Kevin McCauley



**Tucker Carlson**