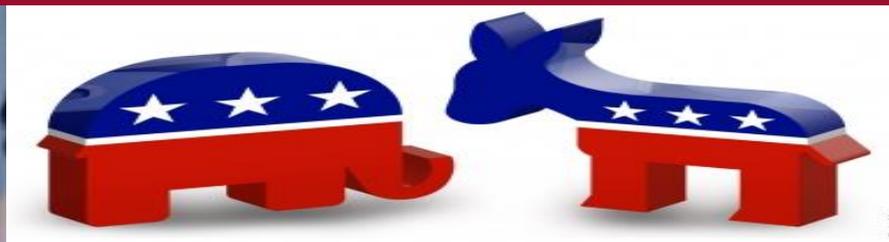# Did CNN create a self-fulfilling prophecy on Nov 8? Not even Fox saw a close race

U.S. TV & print news, January 1 – November 8, 2016

- Why did CNN say the race was close when the media did not provide facts backing this position?
- To what extent were voters influenced by states being called while voting was going on?
- What is the background on reports covering threats towards Clinton supporters from Trump crowds?
- How might the lessons of the last year and Nov 8 impact pending Electoral College Vote Dec 19?

Basis:
64,600 reports on politicians on U.S. TV news programs in 8 U.S. opinion-leading print media
Inter-Coder-Reliability: 88 % in Q1 2016

Media Tenor International
Racheline Maltese
r.maltese@mediatenor.com

As Trump suggested, we need to know what happened November 8

New York, November 15, 2016. As the media starts to take a closer look into what went wrong in this year's election – including their role in serving the public with relevant information for voters – the coming weeks are the right time to not too quickly rush into the next phase, but to finally do the research necessary to understand what happened on November 8.

Five issues that need addressing before the Electoral College vote on December 19 which officially concludes the 2016 Presidential election:

1) While FOX called Trump on November 8 at around 6pm to say that they would likely announce Hillary Clinton as the winner of the 2016 Presidential Elections by 10pm, CNN presented the election as a close race. Media audiences need to see the basis of these reporting choices as no other media outlet - nor any election professionals – were aware of data backing the CNN thesis. After having sold advertising for the whole day, CNN needed an Election Day that was close or else they faced the possibility of a weak audience. But when the race is declared close, this can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Was this the case in 2016?.

2) Why did Wolf Blitzer anchor in such a way as to press John King into answers that favored the GOP? Why did Blitzer not wait to hear answers from the experts lined up in the CNN studio?

3) In 2000, CNN declared Gore as having won Florida when this was not backed up by the vote. They had to change this incorrect call, but took 30 minutes to change the state back to *too close to call*. During those 30 minutes, more than 3 million text messages were sent to Gore supporters who still had the opportunity to vote and impact voter behavior. Why did CNN do this again in 2016?

4) Twitter and other social media platforms have an interest in disclosing what happened on November 8 in regards to both campaigns in order to avoid further rumors that they were part of any voter manipulation.

5) What was the impact of Trump crowds standing with baseball bats in front of voting stations and driving to regions with high shares of Clinton supporters to yell at and threaten them?

This research examined 64,600 reports on politicians on five U.S. TV news programs and in 8 opinion-leading print publications during this years U.S Presidential campaign, and 14,506 lines of data on presidential candidates in previous elections, 2000 – 2012.

For over 20 years Media Tenor's mission has been to contribute to objective, diverse and newsworthy media content by bringing together the diverse parties. Media Tenor's global research projects include analyses of election campaigns, investor relations, public diplomacy, corporate communications and other topics critical to news makers and news audiences. For more information, please contact Racheline Maltese at r.maltese@mediatenor.com or +1 212-935-0210.

This lead for Clinton was the basis of Fox informing Trump he lost

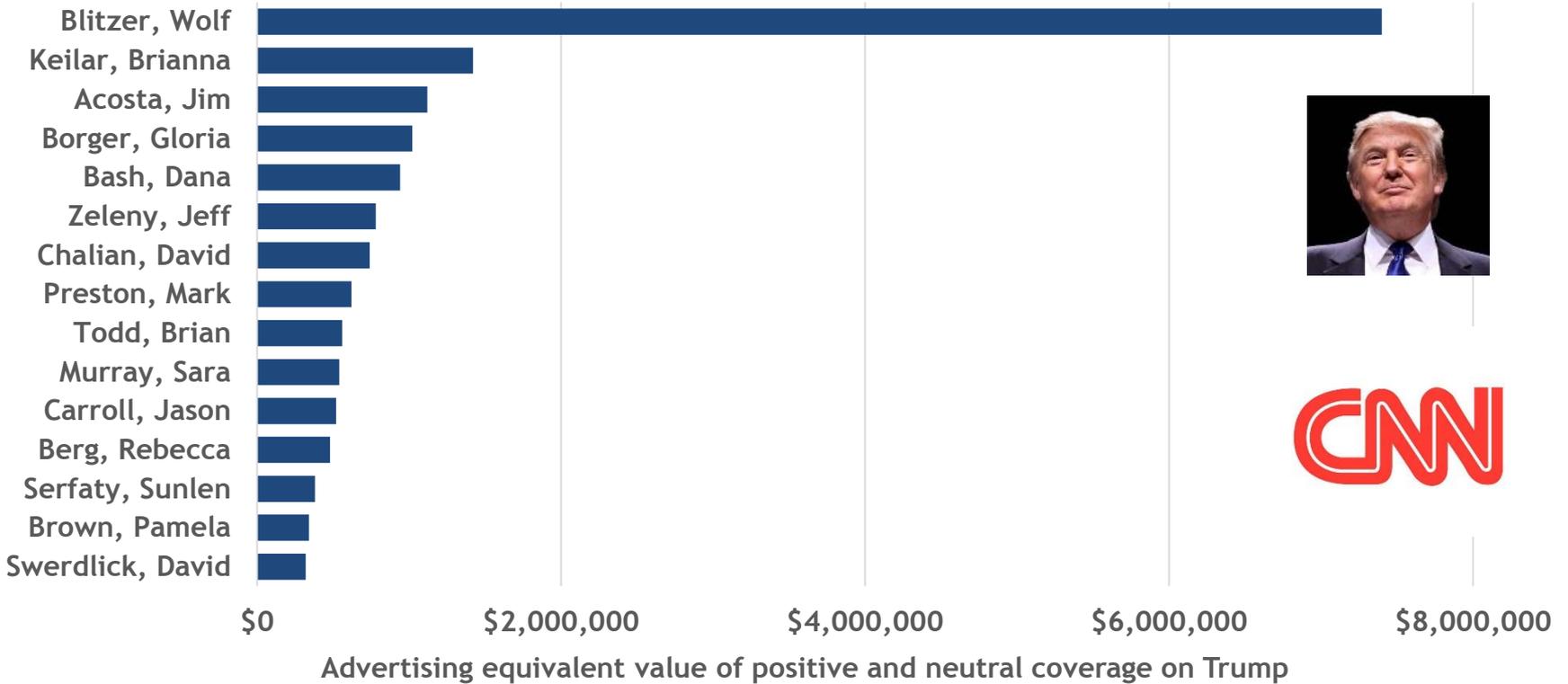**Advantage Clinton**

Advantage Trump
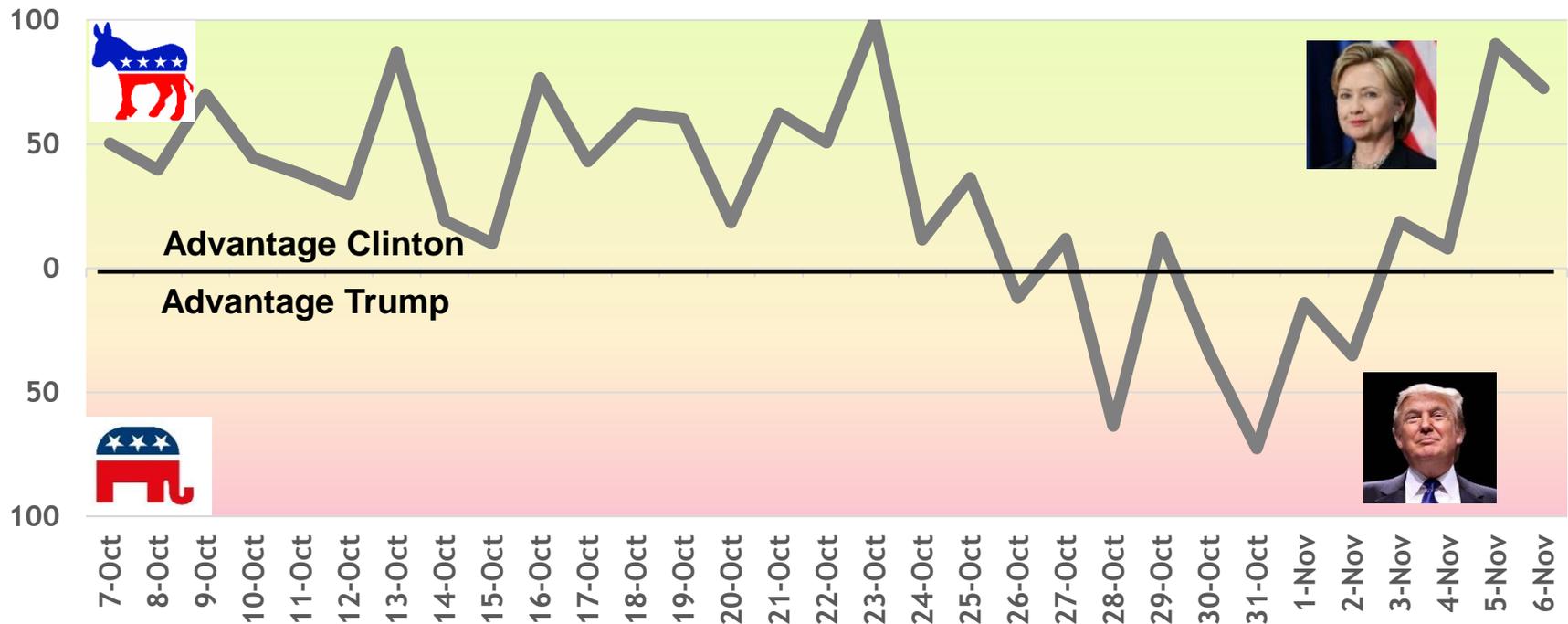
In the last month there were only four days where Trump has the winning media sentiment. All other days leading up to the election, the overall sentiment saw only one winner: Clinton. Voters follow this sentiment. Based on this, Fox called Trump Nov 8 at 6pm to tell him he lost.

CNN saw a different winner than ABC/CBS/NBC and WSJ

Advantage Trump (CNN)

Advantage Clinton (ABC/CBS/NBC)

Advantage Clinton (WSJ)
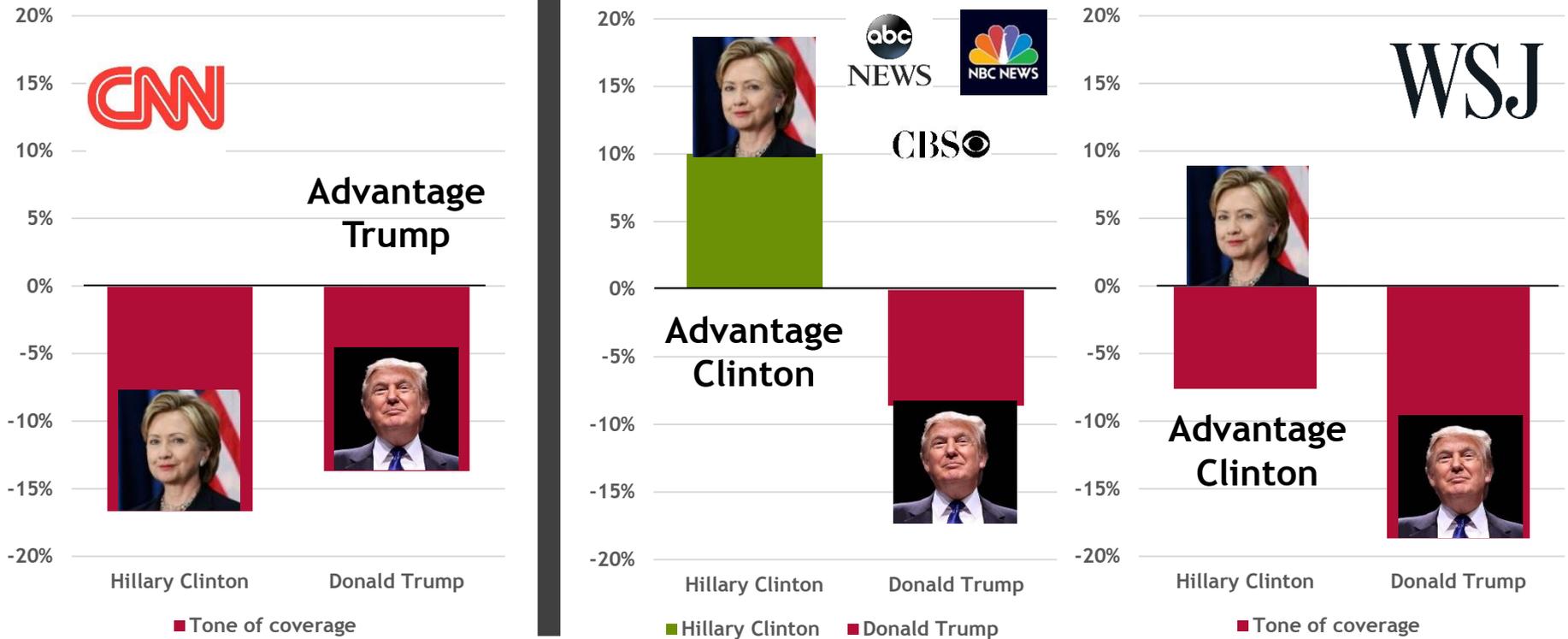
ABC/CBS/NBC gave a clear advantage to Clinton in the week before the election. *The Wall Street Journal* may not have liked Clinton, but they also gave her a strong advantage. So why did CNN give the edge to Trump and create an atmosphere that the race was close?

Basis: 260 / 245 reports on Clinton / Trump out of 1,517 reports on politicians on U.S. TV news programs and in 8 opinion-leading print media

MediaTenor strategic media intelligence 4

Earned media helped to boost Trump

Advertising equivalent value of positive and neutral coverage on Trump

Chart categories (top to bottom):
- Blitzer, Wolf
- Keilar, Brianna
- Acosta, Jim
- Borger, Gloria
- Bash, Dana
- Zeleny, Jeff
- Chalian, David
- Preston, Mark
- Todd, Brian
- Murray, Sara
- Carroll, Jason
- Berg, Rebecca
- Serfaty, Sunlen
- Brown, Pamela
- Swerdlick, David

X-axis: $0, $2,000,000, $4,000,000, $6,000,000, $8,000,000

CNN provided significant value to the Trump campaign from July 1 to November 8. Why did Blitzer, the anchor for *The Situation Room,* provide such pro-Trump coverage? What was his agenda on election day?
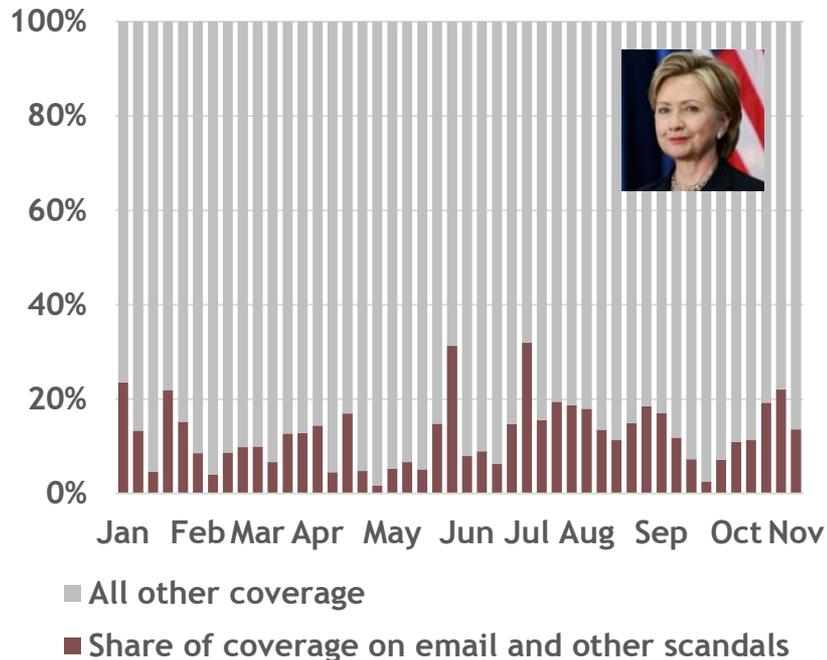
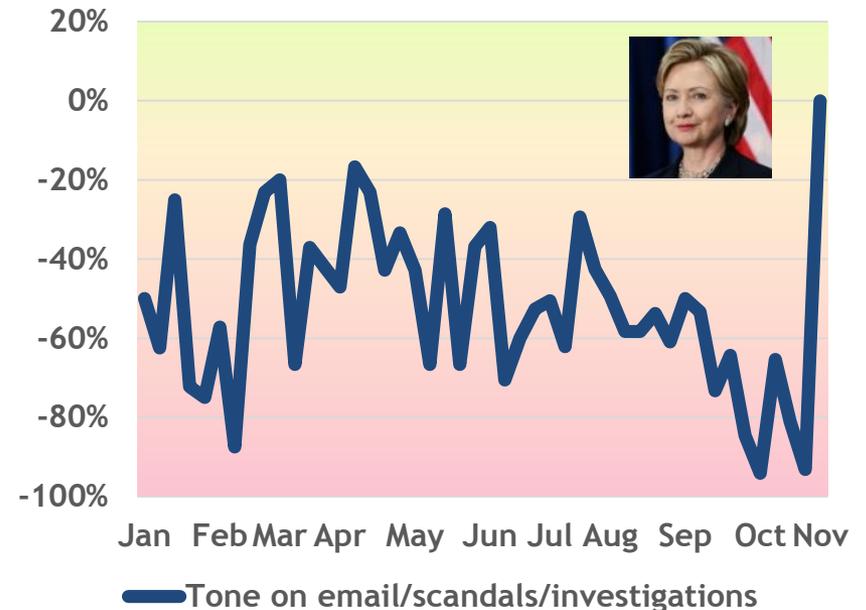# In fact, CNN was consistently more favorable on Trump
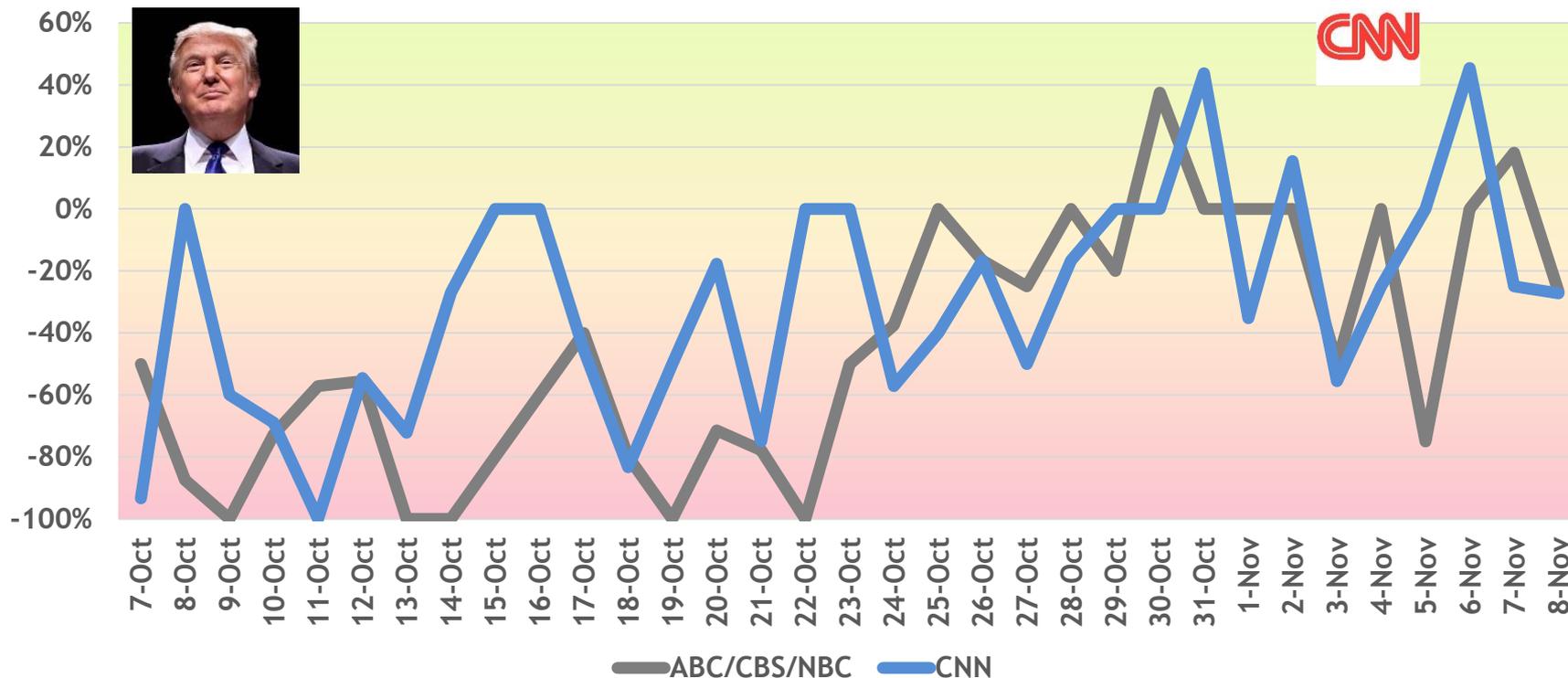
For the 30 days prior to election day, CNN often gave Trump a more positive media image compared to other TV news. CNN only seemed to agree with other TV media right around the initial FBI announcement. Otherwise, they were often more enthusiastic on Trump.

The FBI announcement impacted Clinton's lead, but wasn't fatal
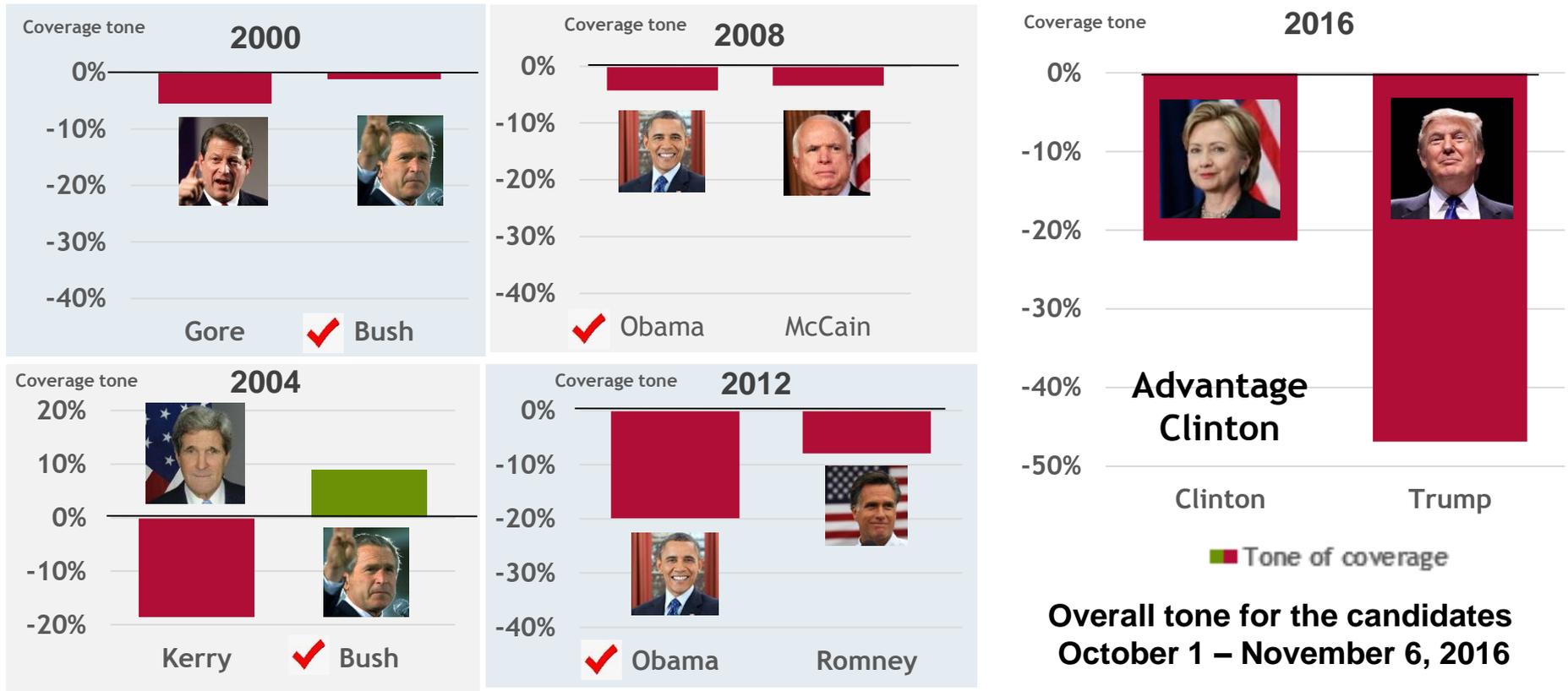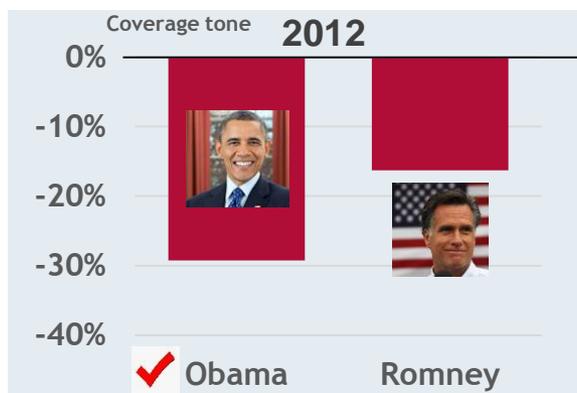
Share of coverage

- All other coverage
- Share of coverage on email and other scandals
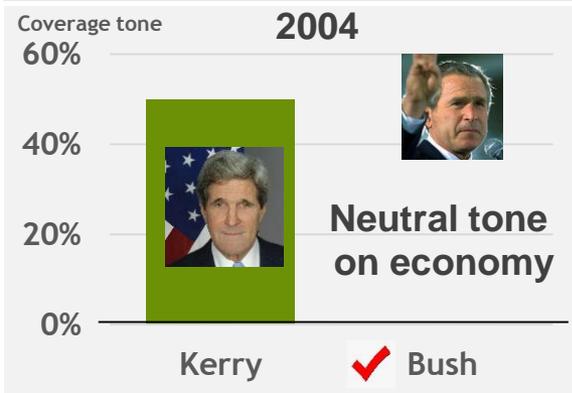
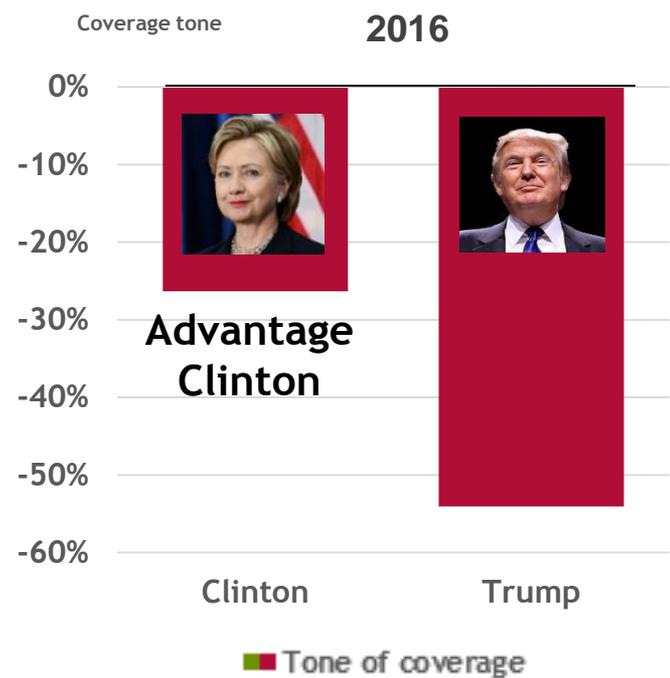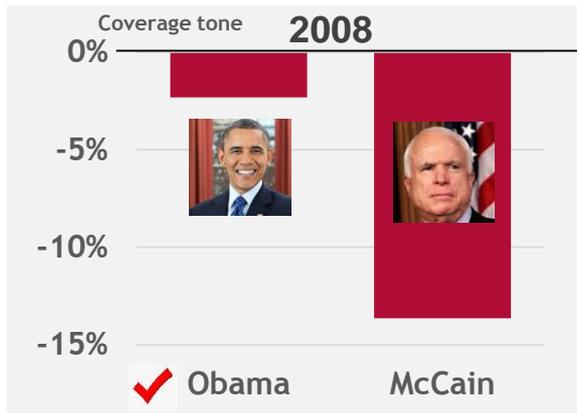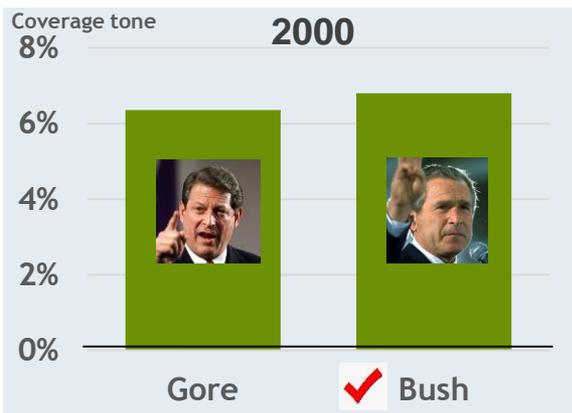**Coverage tone**

— Tone on email/scandals/investigations

After a period of intense focus and grave concern on the email issue, the FBI's finding that there was nothing that merited criminal charges for Clinton in materials found on the laptop belonging to Huma Abedin and Anthony Weiner neutralized the issue.

On Nov. 8 Clinton had largest advantage compared to 2000-2012

Coverage tone
2000
0%
-10%
-20%
-30%
-40%
Gore ✔ Bush

Coverage tone
2008
0%
-10%
-20%
-30%
-40%
✔ Obama McCain

Coverage tone
2004
20%
10%
0%
-10%
-20%
Kerry ✔ Bush

Coverage tone
2012
0%
-10%
-20%
-30%
-40%
✔ Obama Romney

Coverage tone
2016
0%
-10%
-20%
-30%
-40%
-50%

Advantage Clinton

Clinton Trump

■ Tone of coverage

Overall tone for the candidates October 1 – November 6, 2016

▶ Since October, Clinton's image, despite containing negatives, was far better than Trump's. This long-term negativity seemed impossible for him to overcome, even with a brief advantage in late October.

Basis: 1,547 / 1,626 reports on Clinton / Trump out of 1,517 reports on politicians on U.S. TV news programs and in 8 opinion-leading print media

MediaTenor
strategic media intelligence 8

Trump's business didn't help him on economy - not even on FOX

Coverage tone
2000
8%
6%
4%
2%
0%
Gore   ✔ Bush

Coverage tone **2008**
0%
-5%
-10%
-15%
✔ Obama   McCain

Coverage tone **2016**
0%
-10%
-20%
-30%
-40%
-50%
-60%
Advantage Clinton
Clinton   Trump

Coverage tone **2004**
60%
40%
20%
0%
Neutral tone on economy
Kerry   ✔ Bush

Coverage tone **2012**
0%
-10%
-20%
-30%
-40%
✔ Obama   Romney

■ Tone of coverage

**Tone for candidates on economy
October 1 – November 6, 2016**

▶ Skepticism of Trump's business skills were visible as problems with his hotels were reported. The media also highlighted criticism on his ability to negotiate in a meaningful way on the international stage. Clinton had the advantage.

Basis: 1,547 / 1,626 reports on Clinton / Trump out of 1,517 reports on politicians on U.S. TV news programs and in 8 opinion-leading print media

MediaTenor
strategic media intelligence   9

Why it matters

- Trump highlighted in his 60 Minutes interview that America needs to return to "one man, one vote." In addition to the issues posed by the Electoral College, we need to get transparency on whether November 8, 2016 really represented this "one man, one vote" ideal, or if Blitzer and other members of the media effectively had more than one vote by influencing millions through non-factual reporting.

- Reporting on elections is the highest service every journalist can - and should - do for fellow citizens who depend on the media to get all the news that matters. But the American media obsession with presenting elections as if they were sporting events is harmful to the fundamentals of democracy. The recent World Series demonstrated that the game is not over until it's over: it would be a great improvement if CNN and their colleagues stopped suggesting final election outcomes when we're still only halfway through the game.

- An election where voters cannot vote because there are too few polling locations, unnecessary and unpredictable voter restrictions, and threatening actions by one candidate's supporters cannot be called a fair and free election.

- An election where the FBI, or any law enforcement agency, plays such a partisan role through the media cannot be called a fair and free election.

These voters are the future of U.S. democracy and beyond

This is how the future voted. This is what people 18-25 said in casting their votes.
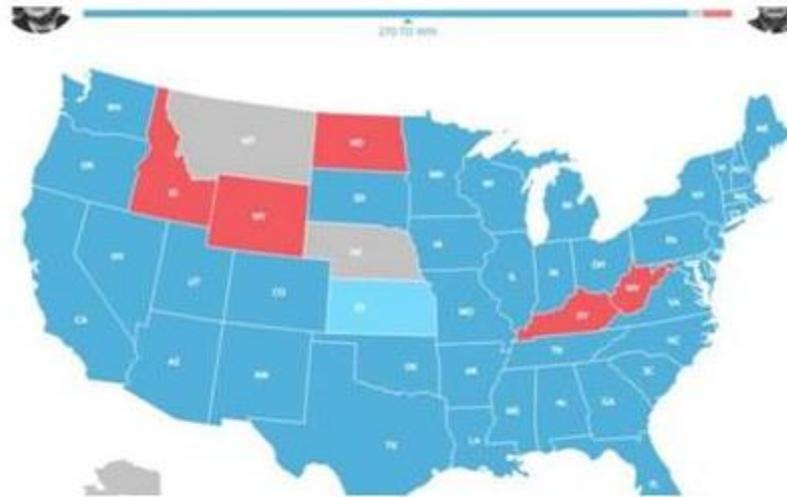
3:45 AM - 9 Nov 2016

The future voters of America – and the rest of the world – deserve transparency on what happened Nov. 8, 2016