Egalitarianism  
Affirmative Case



Here’s a philosophically-heavy case rewritten from 2005’s NCFCA resolution, “the media’s right to protect confidential sources is more important than the public’s right to know.” It was originally written by Lauren Dueck of Colorado, modified by Chris Jeub.

Lauren’s case defines Egalitarianism and uses it to show that truthful information is the highest ideal in a free press. Egalitarianism is indeed a philosophical criterion, but for what? Simply for deciding between the public’s right to truthful information and the media’s need to protect the individual privacy of its sources. Enjoy!

Equal Right for Egalitarianism

Ronald Regan wrote, “Information is the oxygen of the modern age. It seeps through the walls topped by barbed wire, it wafts across the electrified borders.”

Because of the vital importance of information in ensuring a free and equal society, I agree with the resolution, that criminal procedure should value truth-seeking over individual privacy

# Observation 1: Philosophical Criterion

Upon entering today’s debate round, it’s important that we introduce a mechanism by which the round will be decided. How should we choose between truth seeking and individual privacy? This foundation will provide you, the judge, with a way to evaluate the resolution.  This mechanism ought to be the philosophy of ***egalitarianism.***  Egalitarianism is defined in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy as the view that people should get the same or be treated the same. This foundational philosophy will be justified in…

# Contention 1: Egalitarianism should be the standard.

Equality is essential to the American way of life. According to the Declaration of Independence, all men are created equal. By arguing that everyone is entitled to the same opportunities, knowledge and treatment, the founders established an egalitarian society. This society, which has proven to be the most prosperous in the world, should be maintained. Accordingly, whichever side of the resolution best pursues egalitarianism should be upheld in today’s debate round.

# Contention 2: Truth seeking is essential to egalitarianism.

Thomas Jefferson said, “Information is the currency of democracy.” In order for a free and equal society to flourish, the public must have access to truthful information. When the principle of truthful information is breached, corruption flourishes. The corruption-fighting organization Transparency International holds that the openness of institutions, and the accessibility of the public to information about the functioning of government, is vital to democracy. In order to maintain a democratic, egalitarian society, the public needs truthful information.

# Contention 3: The public need for truthful information overrules the individual privacy.

We’ve already talked about the foundational role of truthful information in establishing and maintaining a free and equal society. Far from merely relating to government secrecy, the preservation of truthful information is essential to maintain individual privacy.

While the media often forwards truthful information, sometimes they work contrary to that goal by withholding the names and credentials of sources. This creates a special class of people, the media, who are “in the know.” This refusal to educate the American populace flies in the face of egalitarian ideals. Political commentator Hugh Hewitt criticizes White House press correspondent Terry Moran for fostering this elitism, saying,

“In making his demand for a special status above that of every American, Moran at least gave honest voice to the elite media's view of itself: above every citizen, above every elected official, above, well, everything.”

The protection of individual privacy exacerbates the problem, as was illustrated by the “Rathergate” scandal of 2004. In the run up to the presidential election, CBS News broke the big story that President George Bush was negligent in his military duties during the Vietnam War. The news had a huge effect on the campaign – in public perception, Bush went from hero to coward overnight. CBS claimed the documents on which they based their story were from the file of Bush’s commanding officer, but did not reveal the name of their informant. After further investigation, it was discovered that the documents were forgeries. If CBS had abided by the egalitarian principle of truthful information and revealed the name of their source, the story never would have hit the press and much damage would have been avoided.

# Conclusion

The media’s elitism is merely furthered by giving them the privilege of withholding truthful information vital to the public’s education. An egalitarian ideal cannot be pursued if the media is permitted to establish itself as a superior in the American social hierarchy. The first step to undermining this emerging American aristocracy is withdrawing the unwavering trust the media has enjoyed, forcing them, like everyone else, to reveal the sources of their information.