



**CONTACTS: NOLAN ROSENKRANS
PRESIDENT, TOLEDO NEWS GUILD
NOLAN.ROSENKRANS@GMAIL.COM**

**ASHLEY MURRAY
UNIT SECRETARY, NEWSPAPER GUILD OF PITTSBURGH
ASHLEYNICOLEMURRAY@GMAIL.COM**

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TOLEDO AND PITTSBURGH NEWS GUILD LOCALS HOLD JOINT NEWS CONFERENCE IN RESPONSE TO MANIPULATED BLADE COVERAGE

We have known for years that publisher John Block's politics are far-right leaning and he has repeatedly tried to slant news coverage to paint Trump, the presidential candidate The Blade and Post-Gazette endorsed under Block's guidance, in a more positive light.

On Wednesday, Blade Executive Editor Kurt Franck issued an edict to all Blade web staff saying they could not refer to those rioting in Washington as "Trump supporters," despite the event being Donald Trump-branded, and one the president appeared at and encouraged.

Blade newsroom managers inserted the qualifiers "a majority," "mostly," and "some" in front of references to Trump supporters, both in wire copy, wire photos, and a story written by a Blade reporter. Doing so waters down the truth of what happened on Wednesday and is a disservice to our readers. They are also done in a political climate where some are attempting to create misinformation about who was responsible for, and participated in, Wednesday's chaos.

These actions follow years of blatant moves by the Blocks to push their political views into the newspapers that the communities of Toledo and Pittsburgh depend on for fair and accurate reporting.

In January 2018, The Blade and Post-Gazette co-published the wildly controversial "Reason as Racism" editorial that was called, among other things, ["a sorry pastiche of whitewashing drivel."](#) The author of the editorial, Keith Burris, [was promoted a year later](#) to executive editor of the Post-Gazette.

During the protests that arose after the murder of George Floyd in May 2020, [Post-Gazette management barred a Black reporter](#), Alexis Johnson, from covering anything related to the protests,

citing bias because of a tweet about property damage at a county-music concert. Johnson currently has a pending discrimination lawsuit against the paper.

After tweeting support for Johnson, Post-Gazette reporters were also barred by management from covering protests. On the night of June 5, PG management deleted two published articles by [reporters Ashley Murray and Lauren Lee](#) from post-gazette.com and the next morning replaced them with stripped down copy, without bylines.

Throughout all of this, the NewsGuild locals that represent the workers of The Blade and Post-Gazette have been the last line of defense for the editorial integrity of the newspapers. When the unions saw the wife of Block Communications chairman Allan Block, Susan Allan Block, [spread lies and conspiracy theories on social media](#) regarding the presidential election, they couldn't stay silent.

The communities of Toledo and Pittsburgh deserve better.