

Opinion and the Bully Pulpit of Stardom

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The bully pulpit of stardom has become one of the most intrusive forces in modern culture, and audiences are right to be tired of it. Entertainment used to be a simple contract: the audience pays for the performance, and the performer delivers the craft they trained for, whether acting, singing, dancing, or athletic excellence. That clarity has eroded as more public figures mistake visibility for authority and celebrity for expertise, turning stages, award shows, and postgame interviews into unsolicited platforms for political commentary and personal grievances.

Skill in performance does not confer insight into policy, governance, or social theory; yet, the machinery of modern fame encourages exactly that illusion. When I buy a ticket or stream an album, I pay for the work, not the sermon. A popular internet meme, which is often attributed to Clint

Eastwood, captures this principle perfectly: “The difference between coffee and your opinion is that I asked for coffee.”

I am not calling for silence but for context. Celebrities have every right to their own opinions but not to commandeer professional stages funded by the public to broadcast their personal views to an audience that did not consent to receive them. Awards shows are not campaign rallies; halftime shows are not policy forums; and postgame interviews are not ideological platforms. The public’s patience is wearing thin because entertainment, once a refuge from the noise, has become another source of it.

The solution is straightforward: thank the fans, acknowledge the support that made the moment possible, deliver the work, and leave

opinions at the door. That is not censorship but professionalism, and audiences are not asking for silence but for boundaries and a return to the contract that once respected the difference between performance and proselytizing.

Opinion is not fact, not truth, not evidence, not scholarship, not science, not even disciplined thought. Opinion is whatever the giver declares it to be: a judgment, a reflex, a whim, a mood, a corporate script, a paid narrative wearing the costume of insight. In the modern media environment, that last form has become the dominant species.

We are invited to believe that journalists speak freely, as if they operate without pressure, as if editors, publishers, and owners exert no gravitational pull on what appears beneath their mastheads. Accepting that requires a level of innocence that borders on intellectual malpractice.

Most journalists do not publish their own opinions; they publish the opinions they are compensated to deliver. The editorial line functions as a leash, not a guideline. The public—exhausted, overstimulated, and drowning in noise—often accepts these manufactured positions as truth, not

because they withstand scrutiny, but because they arrive with volume, repetition, emotional voltage, and the borrowed authority of a brand.

We have become a culture that confuses loudness with legitimacy, emotion with evidence, and repetition with reality. In such a climate, opinion mutates into something hazardous: a counterfeit for truth. Truth requires verification, context, consistency, logic, scrutiny, and reality-testing. Opinion requires none of that; it requires only a platform. Platforms belong to people with agendas.

In the spirit of calling a spade a spade, let's name this phenomenon accurately. It's not a spade but a dung shovel, a tool for flinging whatever narrative the owners want absorbed. The minimum requirement for intellectual survival is a functioning BS detector, finely tuned, kept on, never surrendered.

Opinions circulate endlessly, but truth remains the only standard against which anything is worth measuring. Lose that distinction, lose the plot, lose the culture.

And so, it is... Ω



“It takes tremendous discipline
to control the influence,
the power you have
over other people’s lives.”
—Clint Eastwood