Welcome to When Journalism was a Thing. I am Alexandra Kitty.

This is the last podcast of the year, and there is a good reason for that.

The Internet was not built with truth in mind or at heart, and as someone who is a big supporter of the truth, I never cared for this medium.

It is the place to collect flocks of pigeons and train them to fool themselves as they waste their lives on this lifesink.

It brings addictions of the worst sort. People cannot drive, walk, eat, sleep, or go to the bathroom without staring at a screen. Being addicted to fantasy is the worst way to squander your existence, and makes you impervious to warning signs that you are wasting your soul away for online killing games.

The Internet's basis is not in seeking truth, but presenting a mirage.

We speak of everything being *virtual,* after all.

Meaning, not real. So you are trading the real for, actually, nothing.

Think someone is getting screwed with that deal? Perhaps, I don't know, you personally?

Marshall McLuhan's theories in media were interesting. His most famous line that the medium is the message, and it gives us a starting point.

Television was the medium that turned audiences into passive spectators. Television was always scripted and highly edited. News anchors looked at people straight in the eye, or least, gave that appearance.

All of that hints at ploys of deception, but it had nothing on the medium that would come after it.

Every con game ever created seems to have been used as a model to create the Internet, yet most of us never actually see it, which suits the grifters just fine.

Except that some of us do see it.

The medium we call the Internet is so flawed, that it is rigged for people to believe lies and deceptions, not truths.

How so?

It uses the methods of quack doctors, cults, love scams, propagandists, astrology, greed and pity scams, and fear-mongering, rolling them all into one.

So let's take a look into how that structure looks.

First, social media, and by extension, the Internet gives an impression of intimacy between the screen and the user. You are closer to your computer and smart phone in proximity than you are to most human beings. If you don't believe me, look around you right now, and if there is a person near you, guess how far they are from you versus how far you are to your machine.

The propinquity hypothesis states we feel closer to those who are physically closer to us than those who are farther away.

It's the reason sex robots – an emotional hoax if there ever was one, is becoming a relationship choice for people who have now been conditioned to care for an object that not only will never love them back, but does not even know their name.

The robot will not spot a predator or care if you have been riddled with bullets, but now people will choose the mirage of a person rather than an actual person.

They are pigeons who have been not just been duped, but isolated, the way cults isolate people to make them vulnerable, and be unable to compare the cult's behavior toward them with a control group of family and friends who will become alarmed as their beliefs become more extreme, dysfunctional, and abnormal.

And speaking of cults, nothing has confined and constricted thinking more than social media. It is a very simple thing to foster a confirmation bias on it, coupling it with an appeal to authority. You choose web sites and followers who believe the same stupid lies you believe. The false sense that having numbers on your side means anything is a powerful mirage, and it is one that Nazis took comfort in as they embraced psychopathic mindsets.

Far from people learning tolerance, they have learned intolerance.

They are looking for websites that can be their "authorities" as if the writings on a screen were a divine decree. It combines that with quack medicine – finding the magic website or propaganda poster that will cure all your problems at once.

But there are ways the Internet is built with deceptive rigs. You commit the sin every single day whenever you post an article on your Facebook feed or Twitter account.

You post articles and posters without verifying whether or not the information is true.

And verification is not using google or snopes. It is by looking up original studies, telephoning people to confirm accounts, and finding primary sources, not secondary or tertiary sources.

And the Internet is a giant secondary source – that also happens to be a vanity publisher. There is no vetting: anyone can put out a website, no

qualifications required – and they can even look better than a legitimate source.

In other words, you may feel like your own broadcaster, but you are one who should have your licence revoked.

The Internet is all about flattery and ego stroking, the hallmarks of any con game. Internet sites use casual language, making it feel as if you know them. You have followers and friends, even if you have never seen the person in your life. You have a false sense of people reading your thoughts and opinion, even if they never do, and just like your posts because they want the bulk in numbers in terms of followers.

And speaking of bulk in numbers, you can buy fake followers of the nonexistent figments if you wish. It is a medium of puffery.

Your thinking is being altered every day, and you don't see it because there is an illusion of control, and that you are in charge.

But you're not.

You are providing reviews of books and restaurants without getting paid. You are broadcasting articles without the social media site or the news outlet paying you. You are doing the work of public relations free of charge.

And yet you are agreeing to sucker contracts by pressing "I agree" to the terms of agreement. You can't even negotiate with Facebook or Google to alter the terms to something that would benefit you.

Never mind the false achievements gaming and social media give out to distract people – you worrying how many friends you have versus other people, or how many more reviews you need to give before reaching the next level. It is not about finding new facts to share or verifying information; so we are so caught up on that hamster wheel, we don't

notice how we are being actively pushed around to notice every trivial detail, but nothing that is real.

When I was exploring the ways of how the Internet uses big data and big brother techniques, I would have at least two computers running – and my phones and tablets all beside me. I wondered if the Internet would be secretly rigging and gaming the information I received, depending on what pages I looked at or what search engine terms I used in conjunction with others.

In one experiment, I would look for identical terms on Google on all my devices – but I would also look at a specific set of terms on each computer, ensuring that my primary Google account was deactivated.

So, for one computer, I would look at journalism articles, but also any keyword for tarot and horoscopes, and on another, I would use the same journalism-based search terms, but also look at science and skeptic-based keywords.

I would also visit the pages of tarot and astrology sites – or the skeptic-based ones, just so my footprints would be logged.

On another device, I just put in the journalism terms. That was my control group.

And lo and behold, very shortly after I established a pattern on each device, what came on my screens was radically different. I would be presented with very different web sites and points of view in a different order, depending on whether I seemed to be more inclined to believe new age things or STEM-based things.

The same held true whether I was looking at Left-winged ideology or Right-winged ideology.

So my search for journalism-related subjects would vary, depending on the kinds of base things I presented to search engines or through clicks.

That is the way con artists work: they tell you precisely what you want to hear, not what you need to hear, as in truth and reality.

So visiting Drudge got me different results than the Huffington Post, and Infowars got me different articles than Daily Kos.

But most people do not use multiple computers to have a direct comparison to test whether the Internet is playing a con game with them.

It reminds me of a mind-reading card trick that hinges on people not paying attention to the pips on a card: I can present a seven of hearts as the card you chose, when it actually was the seven of diamonds.

Facebook has been the worst offender of this kind of mass manipulation. They conducted secret experiments to see how emotions could be manipulated. They have decided literacy is a thing of the past, and that the written word is too inconvenient. People have lost patience with dissenting points of view, advocating killing and imprisoning people who do not applaud their own uninformed and uneducated selfish opinions.

We have cyber bullying, grooming, and luring, destroying lives of the young.

And bullying, grooming and luring are the tools of the trade of the con artist.

This is the medium that depends on word of mouth, not primary sources.

People are forgetting how to find primary sources, meaning journalism has no place on the Internet.

It is one of the reasons journalism collapsed: the Internet recoils at both truth and reality.

People are distracted by gossip and games.

And with all con games, the grifter gets richer at the expense of the pigeons.

We have media companies who are too powerful for comfort, insinuating themselves into every facet of your life, from your messages to your refrigerator. You tell them where you are, what you are buying, how much, and when.

They have billions of dollars while you have to rent out your couch, and yet you are giving them free content. It is only now where there are capitalists who are becoming seriously concerned with the imbalance, but so long as people think they will be famous, or are famous because their YouTube video of their malnourished cat got a lot of hits, people like their illusions and will choose their fantasy over the devastating reality that they are now facing.

So deluded people have become that when someone has the courage to question their beliefs in an online forum, they will tag or @ a person, as if they were the king, and the dissenter is a servant who must be summoned for their shaming and tongue lashing.

It is the reason I never read any message where I have been tagged. I am not your punching and I do not care what a pigeon thinks about me.

But it is the ways of magical thinking and false narratives: you fancy yourself as a hero, even though the Internet is a passive medium. Someone tells you that your theory is flawed. You insult them. Yay, hero!

No, you troll. You aren't a hero. You are a pigeon.

If a new form of journalism and information-gathering is to ever take place, it cannot be in this tainted well. I don't care if the well is brand new and made of the most advanced and expensive material around. If the well is poisoned, it is poisoned, and people get sick and die.

There is no vetting on the Internet. Propaganda, hoaxes, and lies litter this place, and it looks no different than legitimate pieces.

I honestly have sympathy for Julian Assange. He had a very good idea with WikiLeaks – put the hard-to-find primary sources on the Internet, and people will become enlightened.

Except for that whole part that people prefer their ego-stroking lies to truths that require action, not passivity.

I am certain more people looked at Bieber backside than what the WikiLeaks group unleashed.

Worse, when the truth became inconvenient, people accused WikiLeaks of being a Soviet puppet, and dismissed them – even though those same people want to be communists because work and free thought seem so hard.

They did some commie stuff for a few decades in the former Yugoslavia.

And then they all went insane and slaughtered each other in the name of buying more Revlon.

I have no issues with progress or technology, but I do have serious issues with the set-up and structure of the Internet.

Journalism has taken a back seat for this new god we call the Internet. Atheists love their new god. So do people who love Trump, and the ones who hate him, too.

None of them bother to verify what they post, making them feel as if they were broadcasters.

They are upset at the end of net neutrality, but I am not at all.

If you want to be a broadcaster, then you will need to be treated like one.

That means verifying your sources of information, paying to post the work of others as you properly compensate them, and paying for running your operations.

For those who truly believe in real journalism, the first order of business is to create a fifth medium.

The Internet is a liar's medium. It is rigged to reward scams, not truths or reality.

The future is not on the Internet. It creates unnatural thought patterns and habits. The future is elsewhere. This may be a jalopy I have to drive before getting a proper vehicle, but I am not a fan on the Internet as it is way too dishonest and passé for me.

Stayed tune – changes are coming. And I, for one, am looking forward to them.

Thank you for listening. Comments are always welcome. Take care, and until we speak again, I'm Alexandra Kitty.