

‘The lost honor of Marie Fee Meyer’

In 1974, German nobelist Heinrich Böll publishes a short story that is now considered an archetypical example of the critique against a certain practice of the newspapers. The book, widely known today, was titled *The lost honor of Katharina Blum* and deals with the story of an ordinary girl who – because of her random meeting with a wanted man – gets targeted by the police. Next, the yellow press of the time (Böll has clearly stated that he pictures the *Bild* newspaper in his story) which takes up the cannibalistic slandering of Katharina Blum who, with the synergy of police and press, starts living a rising Kafkaic nightmare without end.

Sadly, these things don’t happen just in literature. In real life we watch daily the calumny and ridicule of people by the television and journalists of the press who act shamelessly as press offices of the secret police and the anti-terrorist unit (in the Internet age it’s easy for someone to see that most of them don’t change a single word in their alleged reportages from the official or unofficial press releases given to them by their sole informers, that is the police).

We’ve seen this play repeated in the last days with the arrest of 27-year-old Marie Fee Meyer. A cup of coffee with a man considered suspicious by the police was enough to have her arrested by the anti-terrorist unit and consequently unravel the thread of [journalistic vagrancy](#). In this case actually, police and journalists blame each other for responsibility over who created the low level Hollywood script: her mother was a member of RAF on the run for years, and her father, also a merciless terrorist, was killed in an armed conflict with the police... neither of which were, of course, true (it was plain synonymity, Meyer being a common German surname). Her father is alive and neither of her parents has ever been a member of RAF. A formal refutation from Germany followed but, as it usually goes in cases such as these, the ‘exposure’ of the refutation is about 1/20 of the exposure of the slander.

Apart from all the ridicule and libel (with all the consequences they may have in someone’s everyday life) that journalists provoke without punishment, there is also the more serious collateral issue of the exact way in which that’s exactly how a suitable ambiance is created so as to imprison people and lock them up in jail for 1-1.5 year until they’re tried and prove they’re not lying (if they are able to prove it).

In Böll’s universe, catharsis comes even by the distorted way of vigilantism. In real life, we watch every day the rapid fascist conversion of society, the nightmarish police-judicial fortification, the States’ arbitrariness (which are able to conveniently confess that [they adduced and beat someone because he looks like someone else](#), as was the case recently with Dimosthenis Papadatos-Anagnostopoulos, member of the parliamentary party Syriza) and the media’s brinkmanship in the conductor’s part that step over anyone without punishment.

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