



NBC's Brian Williams screwed up one of the biggest jobs in American journalism | Opinion

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NBC News anchor Brian Williams gives his acceptance speech at the New Jersey Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony at the Asbury Park Convention Hall in Asbury Park in November 2014.

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My initial reaction was that "conflate" was a word only a Brian Williams would use to justify what everyone else viewed as an outright falsehood.

By Carl Golden

Sometime in the late 1980s ('86, '87 or so, I recall), I was in my second-term hitch as press secretary to Gov. Tom Kean when a tall, good-looking, impeccably clad young man strode into my office, stuck out his hand and said:

"Hi, I'm Brian Williams, Channel 10 news."

We chatted for a few minutes, the gist of our conversation long since forgotten.

I remember thinking after he'd left, though, "This dude's got a future."

We crossed paths periodically after that. He'd show up in the Statehouse occasionally, seeking an interview with the governor or a cabinet officer and doing his stand-ups in front of the glass doors leading to the executive suite.

My belief in his future prospects turned out to be well-placed as he rose through the industry and eventually into the anchor desk of NBC Nightly News.

It's all turned to ashes, now, a stunning fall from grace brought about by a self-aggrandizing attempt to project an image of the dashing, swashbuckling foreign correspondent, throwing aside concerns about his personal safety in pursuit of the story.

His brush with death, he said, came in Iraq when the helicopter in which he was a passenger was struck by enemy fire and forced down in the desert.

Sadly, he did.

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