

MEDIA SPIN TRUMP-POPE MEETING

When President Donald Trump met Pope Francis on May 24th in the Vatican, the media went into high gear spinning the meeting to make the president look bad. Neither man deserved to be exploited for political purposes, but both were.

The media acted as if they were shrinks: they micro-analyzed one photo, choosing the one where President Trump is smiling and Pope Francis is not. Here is a sample of how the media spun the photo:

- “The president smiled broadly beside the pontiff, who appeared subdued and stone-faced before the 30-minute private conversation.” (NBC News)
- “They posed for photographs and then sat down at the papal desk, the pope unsmiling, as their private meeting began.” (CBS News)
- “While Trump flashed a wide grin, the Pope offered only a modest smile—his demeanor, business like.” (CNN)
- “The contrast between Donald Trump and the Pope is nothing short of comical. As the president grins awkwardly next to Melania, Pope Francis looks—quite frankly—dejected.” (International Business Times)

These news reports were referring to the photo below on the left. The one next to it was not widely featured.

Now if the media were fair, they would have to conclude that the photo at the bottom shows the pope to be “subdued and stone faced,” “unsmiling,” “business like,” and “dejected.” But, of course, the media are not fair, which is one reason why the public holds them in such low esteem.

