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The Media

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Our diminished debate

by [James Bowman](#)

On loss of manners in civil affairs.

As I write, the media world continues to debate what Serena Williams said, since the noise of the crowd at the U.S. Open Tennis Tournament drowned out at least some of her words. By one account, those words included: “I swear to God I’m f----- going to take this f----- ball and shove it down your f----- throat. You hear that? I swear to God.” Another subtracts one of these bits of improbable fornication and the double reference to the Almighty, making the threat only a hypothetical one: “If I could, I would take this f----- ball and shove it down your f----- throat.” A third account has it that this implied threat was unambiguously aspirational, in a detached and merely fanciful way: “I wish I could take this f----- ball and shove it down your f----- throat!”—as if to say that, in spite of the vehemence of the language, both Serena Williams and her in ...

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