### Fake News

**O Timothy, be careful of that which is entrusted to you;**

**Flee from empty echoes and from the perversion of false science.**

***(1 Timothy 6:20)***

**Threats or rumors that an angry student would go on a Columbine-style shooting spree have caused widespread absenteeism in dozens of high schools in recent weeks. Students spread the rumors in minutes through hundreds of text messages and cell phone calls, causing as many as two-thirds of the students to stay home. *(USA Today, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 16, 2008)***

**Millions more have seen bogus AI-generated images of Trump wading through the floodwaters in the wake of Hurricane Helene, feeding a Trump-backed narrative that only he –and not the Biden administration – cares about the storm's victims. Clearly, we have a reality problem, but it's one that traditional media is largely powerless to fix. *(Theunis Bates, as it appeared in The Week magazine, November 1, 2024)***

**Just 12 people are responsible for 65 percent of false and misleading anti-vaccine posts on social media, according to a new study. The bogus claims, made through multiple Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts, include denying Covid-19 exists, touting false cures, and charging that vaccine-caused deaths are being covered up, according to the Center for Countering Digital Hate. *(NPR.org, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 28, 2021)***

**America's first bathtub was built in Cincinnati in 1842. Constructed of mahogony, lined with sheet lead, it was exhibited at a Christmas party. The next day the local newspapers denounced it as a "luxurious and democratic vanity." Doctors warned that the bathtub would be "a menace to health." The next year, in 1843, Philadelphia undertook by public ordinance to prohibit bathing between November 1 and March 15. Two years later Boston made bathing unlawful except when prescribed by a physician. *(Herbert V. Prochnow, in The Complete Toastmaster)***

### So far this year, some 400 false 911 calls about shootings or bombs at schools have triggered active-shooter lockdowns and SWAT team responses, terrifying children in those schools. The FBI believes some of these “swatting” calls are computer-generated and originate overseas. *(Time, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 5. 2023)*

**Truth is confirmed by inspection and delay; falsehood by haste and uncertainty. *(Tacitus)***

### In 2019, terrorism researchers at the University of Maryland identified six violent attacks whose perpetrators said they were motivated by a conspiracy theory. In 2020, the year of the most recent survey, they found 116. *(Associated Press, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 16, 2024)*

### A new analysis by BuzzFeed.com found that 20 fake election stories generated more Facebook engagement during the homestretch of the campaign than did real news from 19 major outlets combined. All but three of the fake stories were overtly pro-Donald Trump, including a story claiming Clinton sold weapons to ISIS and another claiming the pope had endorsed Trump. Facebook has said it will create a task force to tackle the issue. *(The Week magazine, December 2, 2016)*

**Bad week for: Rewriting history, after Tennessee Tea Party activists demanded that the state legislature change curricula and textbooks to omit negative views of the Founding Fathers. Teachers should stop repeating "an awful lot of made-up criticism about, for instance, the Founders intruding on the Indians or having slaves or being hypocrites," said a Tea Party spokesman. *(The Week magazine, February 3, 2012)***

**The Great Migration is the name given to the social phenomenon that started during the early twentieth century when millions of African-Americans traveled across America in pursuit of better economic opportunity. During the first Great Migration "blockbusting" was a practice started by U.S. realtors and building developers. In order to get white homeowners to sell their properties at a loss, they would lie to the locals that African-Americans and other ethnic minorities were moving into their neighborhoods, sometimes even paying black people to walk down the street of otherwise white neighborhoods. *(Charlotte Lowe, in Useless History Fact-O-Pedia, p. 123)***

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**The truth may sometimes hurt, but the lies are in bed with collective death. *(Jonathan Lethem, in Bookmarks)***

**The ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or the convinced Communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction and the distinction between true and false no longer exist. *(Hannah Arendt)***

**Elon Musk’s false or misleading posts about the election, such as the claim that Democrats are “importing” migrants to vote, have generated more than 2 billion views on his X platform, according to the Center for Countering Digital Hate. The non-profit found that Musk’s election-related posts, boosting Donald Trump and slamming Kamala Harris, were worth about $24 million in advertising. *(CNN.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, November 15, 2024)***

### **Four nonprofits that spread medical misinformation during the pandemic collectively added $118 million to their coffers from 2020 to 2022. Tax records show Children’s Health Defense – the anti-vaccine group founded by Robert F. Kennedy Jr. – received $23.5 million in contributions and other revenue in 2022, eight times what it received in 2019. Another anti-vax organization, the Informed Consent Action Network, quadrupled its revenue to $13.4 million. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 8, 2024)***

**Former President Trump's insistence that the 2020 presidential election was stolen from him has cost taxpayers at least $519 million. That tally includes the costs of sending National Guard troops to Washington, D.C., defending against lawsuits, security for poll workers who faced death threats, and repairing damage to the Capitol after the January 6 insurrection. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 19, 2021)***

**Woodland, North Carolina, has rejected a proposed solar farm after residents expressed fears that it would consume too much sunlight. Resident Joe Mann**

**told the town council that the farm would steal sunlight that plants need, while another resident warned that it might “suck up all the energy from the sun.” The council rejected the proposal, despite assurances that solar panels do not “draw additional sunlight.” *(The Week magazine, September 1, 2023)***

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*Only 2 percent of the claims Donald Trump has made during his presidential campaign have been true, according to the fact-check organization PolitiFact.com. Six percent were mostly true, 15 percent were half true, another 15 percent were mostly false, 43 percent were false, and 18 percent were "pants on fire" lies. His 76 percent "false" rating far exceeds that of all other candidates who ran for president. *(PolitiFact.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, June 3, 2016)***

**In an impromptu half-hour interview President Trump gave to The New York Times on December 28, he made 24 false, misleading, or dubious claims – a rate of one every 75 seconds. Among them, “I am the one that saved coal” and “I think it’s been proven there is no collusion.” In 2017, fact-checkers found, Trump made 1,950 false or misleading claims. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, January 12, 2018)***

**Donald Trump made 30,573 false or misleading claims during his four years in office. He averaged six such claims a day in the first year, 16 in the second, 22 in the third, and 39 a day in his final year -- including more than 800 repetitions of the Big Lie that the 2020 election was stolen. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 5, 2021)***

**Donald Trump and his allies are insisting Trump was “exonerated” of all crimes, said Will Saletan. This “revisionist garbage.” Trump claimed last week that when it came to his criminal cases, he’d won every one,” “without cause.” These are blatant lies. The FBI raided Mar-a-Lago only after Trump repeatedly refused requests to turn over boxes of classified documents and directed an aide to hide them. Trump was charged with multiple crimes in the documents case, and for trying to invalidate the 2020 election. Those cases were not tried before the election, thanks to Trump appointed Judge Aileen Cannon and the six conservatives on the Supreme Court, and are in limbo because it’s Justice Department policy not to prosecute a sitting president. Nontheless, Trump was tried and convicted of 34 felonies for falsifying business records to hide his hush-money payments to a porn star. Trump and Republicans, however, are pretending that “voters are the ultimate jury and that by re-electing Trump, they issued the definitive judgment on his prosecutions.” That’s not how our system works. “In sum, the number of cases in which Trump has prevailed on the merits is zero.” *(The Week magazine, December 27, 2024/January 3, 2025)***

**Trump falsely claimed that the U.S. had spent three times as much on the war in Ukraine as Europe had – Europe has spent an estimated $138 billion, about $20 billion more than the U.S. – and said he believes Russian President Vladimir Putin “wants to make a deal.” He refused to refer to Putin as a dictator, despite labeling Zelensky one last week. “I don’t use those words lightly,” Trump said. *(The Week magazine, March 7, 2025)***

**In a marathon address to Congress this week, a triumphant President Trump promised to continue his blitz of “swift and unrelenting action” to slash the size of government and reshape trade, immigration, and foreign policy. Trumpeting the achievements of his first six weeks in office, such as ending the “green new scam,” Trump praised DOGE’s mass federal layoffs and asserted falsely that Elon Musk had found “hundreds of billions of dollars in fraud.” (The Week magazine, March 14, 2025)**

**Lest we forget, Trumps’ first term ended in a nightmare, as he urged Americans not to fear Covid; hundreds of thousands who trusted him needlessly perished. The U.S., had 20 percent of the world’s Covid deaths on Trump’s watch, despite having just 4 percent of the global population. History often repeats – especially when it’s ignored. (The Week magazine, March 14, 2025)**

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