

Eye on the World

July 1, 2017

This compilation of material for "Eye on the World" is presented as a service to the Churches of God. The views stated in the material are those of the writers or sources quoted by the writers, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the members of the Church of God Big Sandy. The following articles were posted at churchofgodbigandy.com for the weekend of July 1, 2017.

Compiled by Dave Havir

Luke 21:34-36—"But take heed to yourselves, lest your souls be weighed down with self-indulgence, and drunkenness, or the anxieties of this life, and that day come on you suddenly, like a falling trap; for it will come on all dwellers on the face of the whole earth. But beware of slumbering; and every moment pray that you may be fully strengthened to escape from all these coming evils, and to take your stand in the presence of the Son of Man" (Weymouth New Testament).



An article by Patrick Goodenough titled "Trump Administration Rejects UN Human Rights Council's 'Safe Abortion' Text" was posted at cnsnews.com on June 23, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

What a difference a year makes. Last summer, the Obama administration not only supported a text at the U.N. Human Rights Council that included a call for access to "safe abortion where such services are permitted by national law" but also co-sponsored it, despite not then being a member of the Geneva-based body.

On Thursday, when this year's version of the resolution came around for a vote again, the Trump administration rejected the abortion reference, reminding the HRC that key international documents drawn up in the 1990s did not create a "right" to abortion.

The broader resolution, dealing with eliminating violence against women, was adopted without a vote, but not before Jason Mack, a member of the United States' U.N. contingent, distanced the U.S. from the paragraph containing the abortion reference.

The section in question includes “safe abortion where such services are permitted by national law” among a list of “quality comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care services” which countries’ health services should provide.

Mack explained that the U.S. supported the “spirit” of the broader text, and that it “joins other members of this council in condemning all acts of violence against women and girls.”

“However, we must dissociate from the consensus on operational paragraph 9,” he continued.

“We do not recognize abortion as a method of family planning, nor do we support abortion in our reproductive health assistance.”

After taking office, President Trump reinstated a Reagan-era policy that prohibits federal funding for organizations that promote or perform abortions abroad. Last month Secretary of State Rex Tillerson approved a significant expansion of that “Mexico City policy,” which now applies not just to funds for family planning programs but to all U.S. foreign health assistance.

Mack said the U.S. believes that women should have equal access to reproductive health care, and pointed out that the U.S. remains the world’s number one bilateral donor of reproductive health and family planning assistance.

The “Accelerating efforts to eliminate violence against women” resolution adopted by the HRC on Thursday invoked key international documents that came out of the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994, and the 1995 Beijing world conference on women a year later.

Mack said the U.S. remains committed to the commitments contained in those texts, but stressed that it has long been made clear there is international consensus that they do not create a “right” to abortion.

After the Beijing conference delivered its “platform for action,” some advocacy groups took to interpreting terms in the document such as “reproductive rights” and “reproductive health services” as including a global right to an abortion.

Citing the Beijing document, some non-governmental organizations sought to put pressure on governments, especially in the developing world, to amend their abortion laws.

That question has roiled U.N. events in more than one occasion, including in 2005, when the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) met in New York to review progress made over the decade since Beijing.

The Bush administration held up proceedings over the issue, proposing an amendment to a draft political statement to make it clear the Beijing platform for action did not create a right to abortion.

Lobbying and debate continued for several days, before the administration withdrew the amendment, but only after it had been made clear there was consensus that the terms in question—in the words of the U.S. delegation

head—"do not include abortion or constitute support, endorsement, or promotion of abortion or the use of abortifacients."

The U.S. said it had accomplished its goal and pro-life groups, which had drawn hundreds of thousands of messages of support from around the world for the U.S. stance, also declared a win.

Pro-lifers welcomed Thursday's development.

The Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life Global Outreach group, an international NGO, said it fully supported and was encouraged by the administration's decision to oppose abortion as a legitimate "treatment" for women.

"Advocates of abortion on demand have worked for many years to insert abortion rights language into every conceivable U.N. document, treaty and statement, regardless of whether those instruments address the care of unborn children and their mothers," the group said in a statement.

When last year's version of the "Accelerating efforts to eliminate violence against women" resolution came up before the HRC, the U.S. was not a member, since it was taking an obligatory one-year break following two consecutive terms. (It won a new three-year term last October, beginning in January 2017.)

Despite not being a member of the 47-seat council, the Obama administration joined other mostly Western and Latin American countries in co-sponsoring the text.

On that occasion it was left to Paraguay to raise concerns about the abortion reference.

Its delegate argued that the HRC could not condemn the death penalty but then with the same voice support an action—abortion—that results in the disappearance of a human life.

The Obama administration was an enthusiastic participant of the HRC, even while acknowledging its flaws. Its successor by contrast has signaled that it is reviewing its participation, highlighting some of those same flaws, primarily a systemic anti-Israel bias and the fact some members of the U.N.'s top human rights body are themselves right abusers.



An article by Patrick Goodenough titled "Qatar Told to Sever Ties With Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, and Shut Down Al-Jazeera" was posted at cnsnews.com on June 23, 2017. Following is the article.

Saudi Arabia and three allies that have cut ties to Qatar want the small Gulf state to cut ties with the Muslim Brotherhood and all U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organizations and shut down the Al-Jazeera TV network.

The AP says it received a copy of the list of 13 demands from one of the governments involved in the diplomatic standoff. It's not clear how much it differs from a list of ten Saudi demands, reported on by Al-Jazeera two weeks ago but never confirmed.

Accusing Qatar of supporting extremists and Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates have suspended diplomatic ties and severed air links, among other measures.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson earlier this week called on the four countries to present Qatar with a list of "reasonable and actionable" demands it should meet to end the row.

State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert on Thursday reiterated that expectation, while declining to comment on the contents of the list.

"The secretary has been really very clear with all the parties about this," she told a daily briefing. "If you're going to ask Qatar to do something, and to do something differently, it has to be something that they are actually capable of doing."

Early on in the dispute President Trump sided with the Saudis and their partners, praising them on Twitter for acting on his appeals during last month's summit in Riyadh for countries in the region to cut off financing of extremism.

But after a fortnight of unsuccessful mediation attempts, the State Department in a startling shift earlier this week signaled that the U.S. was running out of patience with the Saudi-led quartet.

"We are mystified that the Gulf States have not released to the public nor to the Qataris the details about the claims that they are making toward Qatar," Nauert said on Tuesday.

"At this point we are left with one simple question. Were the actions really about their concerns regarding Qatar's alleged support for terrorism or were they about the long simmering grievances between and among the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] countries?"

According to the list seen by the AP, the Saudi-led group want to Qatar, among other things to:

- Shut down Al-Jazeera, the Doha-based network that some governments in the region have long accused of promoting the Muslim Brotherhood and other controversial groups, and of interference in their domestic affairs.

As CNSNews.com reported earlier, Al-Jazeera this month published a fatwa defending Qatar against the allegations of terror-sponsorship—written by a radical cleric who has been designated by the U.S. and U.N. for facilitating and funding terrorism.

- Sever ties with the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamist group outlawed by Egypt and some of the GCC countries. Its spiritual leader, Egyptian Sunni cleric Yusuf Qaradawi, is based in Qatar and appears regularly on Al-Jazeera.

- Hand over individuals wanted by the Saudi-led quartet for terrorism. Earlier this month the four countries listed a number of Qatar-based individuals and organizations they said were “linked to terror.” Qaradawi was among them.
- End diplomatic ties with Iran and limit trade with Iran to business that does not violate U.S. sanctions.
- Stop funding groups that are designated by the U.S. government as foreign terrorist organizations. The FTO most closely associated with Qatar is the Palestinian terror group Hamas, whose leader was until recently based in Doha, since leaving Damascus early on during the Syrian civil war.

Other FTOs with whom some Qataris sympathize include Hezbollah, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS/ISIL) and al-Qaeda.

A senior U.S. Treasury Department official in a 2014 speech described Qatar—along with Kuwait—as “more permissive jurisdictions” for people collecting funds for terror groups in Syria, including ISIS and the al-Qaeda affiliate, al-Nusra.

He also noted that Qatar “has for many years openly financed Hamas, a group that continues to undermine regional stability.”



An article by Eleanor Ross titled “How to Survive Nuclear War: Japan Warns Citizens About North Korea Attack” was posted at newsweek.com on June 26, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

Japan is on red-alert in the face of North Korea’s repeated missile tests, with ten launches by Pyongyang during 2017 including one in which a Hwasong-12 rocket reached an altitude of more than 1,300 miles and landed in just 200 miles off the Japanese coast.

Japan is now readying itself in case of nuclear attack and the government has published advice on how citizens can survive. They have been told that if inside a building, they must lie down on the floor, protect their heads, and stay away from windows. Citizens will be alerted by a public address system currently used for alerting cities to earthquakes and tsunamis.

Detailed instructions on how to keep safe in the event of nuclear attack are being aired by 43 television stations, while 70 newspapers are publishing details of key ways citizens can protect themselves, between now and July, Kyodo News reported.

Bomb shelter sales have increased in Japan and there is now a waiting list despite the \$250,000 price tag. The company, Oribe Seiki Seisakusho, based in Kobe, has sold out of 50 Swiss-made air purifiers, which are said to keep out radiation and poisonous gas and cost \$5,630.

Japan can protect itself from missiles using the Aegis anti-missile system, which is used by Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force. But can only intercept missiles flying at 650 miles rendering it useless against the Hwasong-12.

Self-defence forces also have the Patriot PAC-3 surface-to-air missile intercept, but again, it would struggle to intercept a missile travelling as quickly as the Hwasong-12, according to the Nikkei Review.

In April, Japan held evacuation drills in schools, which was the first time since the Second World War the government had informed citizens how to stay safe in the event of an attack.

Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe announced that North Korea might send sarin-tipped missiles towards Japan, a potent and lethal nerve gas. Sarin was used by a Japanese doomsday cult in 1995 to kill 12 people and injured thousands on Tokyo subway trains.

Japan is believed to be a target for North Korea as it plays host to around 50,000 American troops, most of which are stationed in Okinawa Island at a U.S. airbase. After the Second World War, Japan was not permitted to create its own military, so the United States has a heavy presence in the country.



An article by Kevin Loria titled "A Huge Crack in Antarctic Ice is 'Hours, Days, or Weeks' From Breaking Off An Iceberg the Size of Delaware" was posted at businessinsider.com on June 28, 2017. Following is the article.

The 1,000-foot-thick, Delaware-sized iceberg that's getting ready to break off of Antarctica's Larsen C ice shelf could calve within "hours, days, or weeks," researchers say.

Scientists monitoring the ice shelf report that from June 24 to June 27, the outer end of the iceberg started to accelerate to the fastest speeds ever recorded at this location—a development they say is a "notable departure from previous observations."

As of May 31, the crack itself had just about eight miles to go before the iceberg would break free. The crack has not lengthened in the past month, so the ice is still attached. But that ice has suddenly started to move far faster than it ever has: more than 30 feet per day.

Researchers can't say when the rift will cause the ice to break off the shelf, but when it does calve, that will remove 10% of the Larsen C shelf. The 2,000-square-mile iceberg would then become the third largest in recorded history.

The increase in the iceberg's movement speed is "another sign that the iceberg calving is imminent," scientists from Swansea University in the UK wrote on the website for Project MIDAS, which is tracking the rift.

The researchers also warn that the break could destabilize the entire 19,300-square-mile shelf and eventually cause it to disintegrate. This happened with the Larsen B ice shelf after a similar iceberg calved from there in 2002.

The Sentinel-1 satellite image data below illustrates the substantial change in ice speed from early June to late June.

The Project MIDAS team said on June 24 that the rift has been widening about 6 feet per day since the end of May, but there has been no observable change in the length of the crack since then.

When the iceberg does break free and sail into the Southern Ocean, it should not contribute to sea level rise, since it's already on the water. But if the full Larsen C ice shelf collapses, the land-based glaciers that it is holding back could have a significant impact on sea level.



An article by Hannah Osborne titled "Yellowstone Supervolcano Earthquakes Swarm Reaches 878 Events in Just Two Weeks" was posted at newsweek.com on June 27, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

Over 800 earthquakes have now been recorded at Yellowstone supervolcano over the last two weeks, with the ongoing swarm taking place on the western edge of the National Park.

But there is virtually no risk of the volcano erupting, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) currently lists the volcano alert level as normal and the aviation color, which lists the potential risk to flights, is at green.

The current earthquake swarm began on June 12. A week later, the USGS put out a statement to say that 464 earthquakes had been recorded, with the largest being magnitude 4.4 "This is the highest number of earthquakes at Yellowstone within a single week in the past five years," it said.

At the time, a spokesperson for the USGS told Newsweek activity appeared to be "slowly winding down," adding that "no other geological activity has been detected."

However, in a newly released statement about the ongoing swarm, seismologists from the University of Utah said 878 events have now been recorded at Yellowstone National Park.

"The swarm consists of one earthquake in the magnitude 4 range, five earthquakes in the magnitude 3 range, 68 earthquakes in the magnitude 2 range, 277 earthquakes in the magnitude 1 range, 508 earthquakes in the magnitude 0 range, and 19 earthquakes with magnitudes of less than zero," the latest report said.

An earthquake with a magnitude less than zero is a very small event that can only be detected with the extremely sensitive instruments used in earthquake monitoring.

- Swarms in Yellowstone are a common occurrence. On average, Yellowstone sees around 1,500-2,000 earthquakes per year. Of those, 40 to 50 percent occur as part of earthquake swarms.
- This swarm is larger than the average swarm we record but this is a normal thing to happen in Yellowstone (and other volcanic regions throughout the world).
- The largest swarm ever recorded in Yellowstone occurred in October of 1985 and lasted for 3 months and had over 3,000 located earthquakes in it.
- In January of 2010 there was a swarm that had over 2,000 located events in it that lasted for about a month.



An article by Matt Vespa titled "NY Post: The Myth That Russia Hacked the Election is Dead—And Shame on Team Obama for Peddling It" was posted at townhall.com on June 23, 2017. Following is the article.

Well, I'm not sure that myth is quite dead yet, but it appears that it took a direct hit. Still, a majority of Democrats believe that Russia hacked the election. And by hacked, I mean messed with vote tallies. There is no evidence to suggest that, as DHS officials, including former Secretary Jeh Johnson, noted this week. The Russians did not tamper with the vote totals.

Regardless, this is some of the best tin-foil hat drama from the Left in a long time. Still, for the NY Post's editorial board, Johnson and company's testimony killed this myth and blamed the Obama administration for peddling it and mishandling the situation to the point where it snowballed into unbridled hysteria. Now, they do admit, like everyone else, that there was a Russian interference campaign waged by fake news and social media trolls, but added that it played no pivotal role—and it didn't:

- Johnson told the House Intelligence Committee outright that the Russians failed to alter "ballots, ballot counts or reporting of election results."
- Yes, it's clear Russia (with Vladimir Putin's full approval) orchestrated cyberattacks designed to influence the 2016 contest, and also pushed fake news.
- But the hack, and release via WikiLeaks, etc., of Democratic emails produced nothing game-changing. The biggest impact was to confirm the obvious: The Democratic National Committee favored Hillary Clinton from the start.
- Johnson also made it plain that Democrats didn't take the problem too seriously: "The FBI and the DNC had been in contact with each other months before about the intrusion, and the DNC did not feel it needed DHS's assistance at that time."

■ Johnson also explained why the Obama administration kept quiet on the threat. The White House, he recalled, argued that a public admission of possible Russian interference might be seen as an effort to influence the election—particularly since Donald Trump was warning “the election was going to be rigged.”

■ That is: Because Obama was fervently campaigning for Clinton, the White House figured that raising alarms about Russian interference would seem mere electioneering.

■ The administration didn’t take action until after Election Day, when it slapped Moscow with new sanctions—putting the question of Russian interference on Page One only after Trump had won.

■ It’s good that the hysteria has finally died down, but too bad Team Obama’s handling of it all helped produce so much misdirected hysteria in the first place.

Following Hillary Clinton’s defeat, *The New York Times* reported that Obama officials were rushed to spread their information about Russian meddling with as many people in government as possible.

The only question here is why now? If Russian interference was so terrible, why didn’t they take action?

Former CIA Director John Brennan did reach out to his Russian counterparts to tell them to quit their activities concerning our election, but were not heeded. After that, there was nothing. Maybe that’s why there are reports that Hillary Clinton is actually more infuriated with Obama than James Comey or the Russians.

The issue is that Democrats are still going mad over Trump being president. It will be exacerbated by Jon Ossoff’s loss in Georgia, making the Democratic Party 0-4 in special elections. Maybe the Russians tampered with those vote totals too, huh? Or maybe it’s just that the Left isn’t coming out of the political wilderness just yet.



An article by Matt Vespa titled “Well, Democrats Agree With Trump on Something; Obama Should Have Done More on Russia Meddling” was posted at townhall.com on June 26, 2017. Following is the article.

There’s a lot of buzz from The Washington Post’s in-depth piece about the Obama White House’s tortured process they undertook in responding to the Russian meddling during the 2016 election. It seems as if they dropped the ball, especially concerning whether or not to tell the American people that Russia was running an interference campaign.

There was no election hack, however, with Department of Homeland Security officials, including former DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson, saying that vote tallies were not impacted during the 2016 election. The interference campaign didn’t impact the election either; fake news stories did not play a pivotal role.

In May, former acting CIA Director Michael Morell said that the Obama administration appeared to have done nothing in the face of this maneuver by Russia. Now, he says that they did somewhat okay responding to the crisis. Obama and then-CIA Director John Brennan warned Russia over the attack and worked with states to better secure their voting systems; Morell gave them high marks for that.

For sitting on the information about the interference, the former intelligence chief said the Obama White House ceded the playing field to Vladimir Putin. For future deterrence—booting some Russians, closing some compounds, and ineffective sanctions—he said this was an abject failure. Putin sees this as nothing more than a slap on a wrist.

David Ignatius added that while Republicans may have been a contributing factor to the Obama administration putting their Russian intelligence in a dark filing cabinet for the remainder of the 2016 election, he did note that they were scared about what the Russians would do. This administration was scared of the Russians.

The debate over this will rage on for weeks, especially within Democratic circles where some are agreeing with President Trump: Obama should have done more in his reaction to the Russian meddling (via Newsweek):

- The president encouraged greater scrutiny of the Obama administration, tweeting Thursday: “By the way, if Russia was working so hard on the 2016 Election, it all took place during the Obama Admin. Why didn’t they stop them?”
- Trump’s Democrat rivals also criticized the former president Friday, after the Washington Post reported that U.S. intelligence briefed Obama in August that Russian President Vladimir Putin had personally ordered a campaign of interference to help elect Trump.
- Democrat Eric Swalwell, a member of the House Intelligence Committee, criticized Obama for being excessively cautious.
- “[The response] was inadequate. I think [the administration] could have done a better job informing the American people of the extent of the attack,” he said.
- Others accused Obama for failing to sufficiently sanction Russia once the election was over and the Trump administration was preparing to take power.

Let’s also circle back to where the Russia story really leads us to, or at least where Democrats really want it to end up: Trump and his associates colluding with Russian intelligence operatives to sink Clinton to win an election. I mean it’s a great political thriller in the vein of the Manchurian Candidate, or a film by Sydney Pollack or Alan J. Pakula (Parallax View)—but there’s no evidence.

None. Zip. Just gross speculation and Democrats yearning to classify Russia as an enemy nation, which is irresponsible in the extreme.

Even The New York Times’ David Brooks, the supposed conservative on their op-ed page, says that there’s no evidence, this isn’t as bad a Watergate, and

the politics of scandal over this hysteria is starting to worry him. But hey—let's look at the silver lining here: Democrats and Donald Trump think Obama fumbled the ball on this one.

Yet, some in the Clinton camp, like former communications director Jennifer Palmieri, decided to give her former boss some cover, saying Obama and his team "made the best decisions they could."

On the other hand, Hillary Clinton is reportedly more upset with Obama than with Russia or former FBI Director James Comey for not speaking out on the Russian meddling sooner. Before joining the Hillary campaign, Palmieri was White House communications director under Obama.



An article by Eric DuVall titled "California Restricts State Travel to Four States Over LGBT Laws" was posted at upi.com on June 23, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.



Officials in California said the state would cut off funds for travel to four other states due to laws deemed discriminatory against the LGBT community.

California Attorney General Xavier Becerra said the Golden State would no longer use taxpayer money to pay for employees to travel to Texas, Alabama, Kentucky and South Dakota. Becerra cited laws passed in each state he said discriminate against lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people.

In Texas, a recent law allows state workers to avoid putting a child in the care of a gay foster parent.

Laws in Alabama and South Dakota allow adoption agencies to turn away same-sex couples.

In Kentucky, legislation allows schools to ban gay student organizations, Becerra said.

Legislation passed by California lawmakers restricts travel for state employees using taxpayer funds if the destination permits discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The law empowers the attorney general to make that distinction.



An article by Steven Klett titled "California Travel Ban: What is the Travel Law and How Many States Are Involved?" was posted at ibtimes.com on June 24, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.



California's Department of Justice added Texas, South Dakota, Alabama, and Kentucky to the state's travel ban Friday. The ban prohibits state employees from traveling to states that have passed laws discriminating against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals and their families.

The new ruling expands the number of states affected by the ban to eight. California officials, under then-Attorney General Kamala Harris, have already banned state-funded travel to Tennessee, North Carolina, Mississippi, and Kansas in February.



An article by Jennifer Van Laar titled "California Universal Healthcare Bill Taken Off Life Support" was posted at townhall.com on June 24, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

Single-payer healthcare is not going to happen in California—at least this year. Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon is holding the bill in the Rules Committee until further notice, saying the bill was "woefully inadequate."

SB 562 passed the Senate a few weeks back, just after the cost estimate of \$400 billion a year (more than double the state budget!) was released and considerably dimmed the measure's popularity. At the time Dems said they'd get all of those little details worked out in committee then bring the bill back to the Senate, but Rendon's decision stopped that for now.

As one who's watched Sacramento closely over the last four years, Rendon's move is stunning. During this era of almost unchecked Democrat power, skeletal bills are passed and signed into law routinely, and then bureaucrats decide the details later in the form of regulations. Last year's slate of gun control bills (Gunpocalypse) are a glaring example of this practice.

Nearly a year after they were signed, the Department of Justice has yet to promulgate regulations and is asking for extra time to so. In addition, DOJ came back to the legislature this year with a "Budget Change Proposal" asking for millions of additional dollars to implement the legislation—because the proper financial analysis wasn't performed during the legislative process.

Rendon's statement ends with acknowledging that the leaders of Campaign for a Healthy California want have single-payer healthcare initiative on the ballot in 2018, and that they still have plenty of time to pursue that.

Knowing how much California Dems want to poke Trump in the eye, and that their standard operating procedure is to pass incomplete, overreaching laws without hesitation, California conservatives should breathe a sigh of relief that this bill is stalled but remain on high alert.



An article by Bernard Goldberg titled “Young Voters for Old Socialists” was posted at townhall.com on June 27, 2017. Following is the article.

The thing about old socialist politicians, like Bernie Sanders, 75 and Britain’s Jeremy Corbyn, 68, is that they have youth on their side.

Across the pond, the youth vote allowed the British Bernie Sanders to do a lot better than the so-called experts thought he’d do in the recent general election. Here in America, we all know how the millennials went ga-ga for Bernie. He got more millennial votes in the primaries than Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump—combined.

I recently made a reservation for dinner at a restaurant in a very liberal city in North Carolina—using only my first name, Bernie—and the young hostess told me she was hoping it was Sanders who was coming in for dinner. Maybe she was kidding. Maybe not. She had a pleasant smile on her young face the whole time, but a pleasant smile is pretty much obligatory in the South, especially when you’re disappointed.

The fact is, a lot of millennials like socialism. A 2016 poll conducted by Harvard University showed that a majority of voters between 18 and 29—51 percent—rejected capitalism while a third said they supported socialism.

And a 2011 Pew poll of millennials revealed that there was more support for socialism than capitalism. Forty-nine percent had positive views of socialism while only 46 percent had positive views of capitalism.

How could this be? Doesn’t everybody know by now that socialism doesn’t work? Haven’t they heard the famous Margaret Thatcher line, “The trouble with Socialism is that eventually you run out of other people’s money”?

If they did hear it, they haven’t taken it seriously. In a New York Times op-ed, “Why Young Voters Love Old Socialists,” Sarah Leonard, a 29-year old editor at the far-left Nation magazine explains: “(W)ithin this generation, things like single-payer health care, public education and free college—and making the rich pay—are just common sense.”

Of course they are. Until you run out of other people’s money.

Let’s acknowledge the obvious: Getting free stuff is fun—mainly because . . . it’s free! So it shouldn’t be a shock that young voters fell head over heels for a (democratic) socialist like Bernie Sanders who promised them a “free” college education paid for by those miserable rich people who have too much money anyway.

And just imagine if the Democrats somehow manage to come up with a young, progressive, attractive, even sexy version of the old socialist from Vermont next time around. Republicans—and more importantly, America—could be in serious trouble.

But here's where millennials get off easy: No one is calling them out for what a lot of them are—which is greedy.

Here's how Thomas Sowell, the great thinker from California, put it: "I have never understood why it is 'greed' to want to keep the money you've earned, but not greed to want to take somebody else's money."

So what we have is a greedy generation that feels entitled to all sorts of things, including other people's money. If this is the future, give me the past.

George Bernard Shaw had it right a long, long time ago when he said: "A government that robs Peter to pay Paul can always depend on the support of Paul."

Who knew that Paul was 25 and voted for Bernie?

Memo to millennials: You won't be young forever. And when you get older and have jobs and pay taxes, who do you think is going to pay for all those "free" goodies you once demanded when you were young and—forgive me—not-too-smart? The bill for all that "free" stuff—with interest—is going to come due at some point, right? And by then the next generation of millennials is also going to want "free" stuff. You'll be paying for that, too.

One more piece of wisdom from Thomas Sowell, wisdom that young voters in the embrace of socialism might want to consider: "If you have been voting for politicians who promise to give you goodies at someone else's expense, then you have no right to complain when they take your money and give it to someone else."

Having second thoughts yet, millennials, about the virtues of socialism?



A video and an article by Miranda Green, Phil Mattingly and Ashley Kilough titled "Four GOP Senators Say They Can't Vote for Current Republican Health Care Bill" was posted at cnn.com on June 23, 2017. Following are excerpts of the article.

Four conservative Republican senators announced Thursday that they opposed the current version of GOP Senate leadership's health care bill as written.

Sens. Rand Paul of Kentucky, Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, Ted Cruz of Texas and Mike Lee of Utah said in a joint statement they're "not ready to vote for this bill."

"Currently, for a variety of reasons, we are not ready to vote for this bill, but we are open to negotiation and obtaining more information before it is brought to the floor," the senators said. "There are provisions in this draft that represent an improvement to our current health care system, but it does not appear this draft as written will accomplish the most important promise that we made to Americans: to repeal Obamacare and lower their health care costs."

Republicans can only lose two members of their 52-senator caucus in order to pass their proposal to repeal and replace Obamacare. In a 50-50 outcome, Vice President Mike Pence would provide the tie-breaking vote.

“As currently drafted, this bill draft does not do nearly enough to lower premiums,” Cruz said in a separate statement obtained by CNN’s Dana Bash. “That should be the central issue for Republicans—repealing Obamacare and making healthcare more affordable.

Because of this, I cannot support it as currently drafted, and I do not believe it has the votes to pass the Senate.”



Looking back to February, here are excerpts from an article by Daniel Payne titled “16 Fake News Stories” that were posted at thefederalist.com on February 6, 2017.

Since Donald Trump’s election, our media have been in the grip of an astonishing, self-inflicted crisis. Despite Trump’s constant railing against the American press, there is no greater enemy of the American media than the American media. They did this to themselves.

We are in the midst of an epidemic of fake news. There is no better word to describe it than “epidemic,” insofar as it fits the epidemiological model from the Centers for Disease Control: this phenomenon occurs when “an agent and susceptible hosts are present in adequate numbers, and the agent can be effectively conveyed from a source to the susceptible hosts.”

The “agent” in this case is hysteria over Trump’s presidency, and the “susceptible hosts” are a slipshod, reckless, and breathtakingly gullible media class that spread the hysteria around like—well, like a virus.

It is difficult to adequately sum up the breadth of this epidemic, chiefly because it keeps growing: day after day, even hour after hour, the media continue to broadcast, spread, promulgate, publicize, and promote fake news on an industrial scale. It has become a regular part of our news cycle, not distinct from or extraneous to it but a part of it, embedded within the news apparatus as a spoke is embedded in a bicycle wheel.

Whenever you turn on a news station, visit a news website, or check in on a journalist or media personality on Twitter or Facebook, there is an excellent chance you will be exposed to fake news. It is rapidly becoming an accepted part of the way the American media are run.

How we will get out of this is anyone’s guess. We might not get out of it, not so long as Trump is president of these United States. We may be up for four—maybe eight!—long years of authentic fake news media hysteria. It is worth cataloging at least a small sampling of the hysteria so far. Only when we fully

assess the extent of the media's collapse into ignominious ineptitude can we truly begin to reckon with it.

Since Trump's election, here's just a small sampling of fake news that our media and our journalist class have propagated.

■ **Early November: Spike in Transgender Suicide Rates**

After Trump's electoral victory on November 8, rumors began circulating that multiple transgender teenagers had killed themselves in response to the election results. There was no basis to these rumors. Nobody was able to confirm them at the time, and nobody has been able to confirm in the three months since Trump was elected.

Nevertheless, the claim spread far and wide: Guardian writer and editor-at-large of Out Zach Stafford tweeted the rumor, which was retweeted more than 13,000 times before he deleted it. He later posted a tweet explaining why he deleted his original viral tweet; his explanatory tweet was shared a total of seven times. Meanwhile, PinkNews writer Dominic Preston wrote a report on the rumors, which garnered more than 12,000 shares on Facebook.

At Mic, Matthew Rodriguez wrote about the unsubstantiated allegations. His article was shared more than 55,000 times on Facebook. Urban legend debunker website Snopes wrote a report on the rumors and listed them as "unconfirmed" (rather than "false"). Snopes's sources were two Facebook posts, since deleted, that offered no helpful information regarding the location, identity, or circumstances of any of the suicides. The Snopes report was shared 19,000 times.

At Reason, writer Elizabeth Nolan Brown searched multiple online databases to try to determine the identities or even the existence of the allegedly suicidal youth. She found nothing. As she put it: "[T]eenagers in 2016 don't just die without anyone who knew them so much as mentioning their death online for days afterward."

She is right. Just the same, the stories hyping this idea garnered at least nearly 100,000 shares on Facebook alone, contributing to the fear and hysteria surrounding Trump's win.

■ **November 22: The Tri-State Election Hacking Conspiracy Theory**

On November 22, Gabriel Sherman posted a bombshell report at New York Magazine claiming that "a group of prominent computer scientists and election lawyers" were demanding a recount in three separate states because of "persuasive evidence that [the election] results in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania may have been manipulated or hacked." The evidence? Apparently, "in Wisconsin, Clinton received 7 percent fewer votes in counties that relied on electronic-voting machines compared with counties that used optical scanners and paper ballots."

The story went stratospherically viral. It was shared more than 145,000 times on Facebook alone. Sherman shared it on his Twitter feed several times, and

people retweeted his links to the story nearly 9,000 times. Politico's Eric Geller shared the story on Twitter as well. His tweet was retweeted just under 8,000 times. Dustin Volz from Reuters shared the link; he was retweeted nearly 2,000 times. MSNBC's Joy Reid shared the story and was retweeted more than 4,000 times. New York Times opinion columnist Paul Krugman also shared the story and was retweeted about 1,600 times.

It wasn't until the next day, November 23, that someone threw a little water on the fire. At FiveThirtyEight, Nate Silver explained that it was "demographics, not hacking" that explained the curious voting numbers. "Anyone making allegations of a possible massive electoral hack should provide proof," he wrote, "and we can't find any." Additionally, Silver pointed out that the *New York Magazine* article had misrepresented the argument of one of the computer scientists in question.

At that point, however, the damage had already been done: Sherman, along with his credulous tweeters and retweeters, had done a great deal to delegitimize the election results. Nobody was even listening to Silver, anyway: his post was shared a mere 380 times on Facebook, or about one-quarter of 1 percent as much as Sherman's. This is how fake news works: the fake story always goes viral, while nobody reads or even hears about the correction.

■ **December 1: The 27-Cent Foreclosure**

At *Politico* on December 1, Lorraine Woellert published a shocking essay claiming that Trump's pick for secretary of the Treasury, Steve Mnuchin, had overseen a company that "foreclosed on a 90-year-old woman after a 27-cent payment error." According to Woellert: "After confusion over insurance coverage, a OneWest subsidiary sent [Ossie] Lofton a bill for \$423.30. She sent a check for \$423. The bank sent another bill, for 30 cents. Lofton, 90, sent a check for three cents. In November 2014, the bank foreclosed."

The story received widespread coverage, being shared nearly 17,000 times on Facebook. The New York Times's Steven Rattner shared it on Twitter (1,300 retweets), as did NBC News's Brad Jaffy (1,200 retweets), the AP's David Beard (1,900 retweets) and many others.

The problem? The central scandalous claims of Woellert's article were simply untrue. As the Competitive Enterprise Institute's Ted Frank pointed out, the woman in question was never foreclosed on, and never lost her home. Moreover, "It wasn't Mnuchin's bank that brought the suit."

Politico eventually corrected these serious and glaring errors. But the damage was done: the story had been repeated by numerous media outlets including *Huffington Post* (shared 25,000 times on Facebook), the New York Post, Vanity Fair, and many others.

■ **January 20: Nancy Sinatra's Complaints about the Inaugural Ball**

On the day of Trump's inauguration, CNN claimed Nancy Sinatra was "not happy" with the fact that the president and first lady's inaugural dance would

be to the tune of Frank Sinatra's "My Way." The problem? Nancy Sinatra had never said any such thing. CNN later updated the article without explaining the mistake they had made.

■ **January 20: The Nonexistent Climate Change Website 'Purge'**

Also on the day of the inauguration, *New York Times* writer Coral Davenport published an article on the *Times's* website whose headline claimed that the Trump administration had "purged" any "climate change references" from the White House website. Within the article, Davenport acknowledged that the "purge" (or what she also called "online deletions") was "not unexpected" but rather part of a routine turnover of digital authority between administrations.

To call this action a "purge" was thus at the height of intellectual dishonesty: Davenport was styling the whole thing as a kind of digital book-burn rather than a routine part of American government. But of course that was almost surely the point. The inflammatory headline was probably the only thing that most people read of the article, doubtlessly leading many readers (the article was shared nearly 50,000 times on Facebook) to believe something that simply wasn't true.

■ **January 20: The Great MLK Jr. Bust Controversy**

On January 20, *Time* reporter Zeke Miller wrote that a bust of Martin Luther King Jr. had been removed from the White House. This caused a flurry of controversy on social media until Miller issued a correction. As *Time* put it, Miller had apparently not even asked anyone in the White House if the bust had been removed. He simply assumed it had been because "he had looked for it and had not seen it."

■ **January 20: Betsy DeVos, Grizzly Fighter**

During her confirmation hearing, education secretary nominee Betsy DeVos was asked whether schools should be able to have guns on their campuses. As NBC News reported, DeVos felt it was "best left to locales and states to decide." She pointed out that one school in Wyoming had a fence around it to protect the students from wildlife. "I would imagine," she said, "that there's probably a gun in the school to protect from potential grizzlies."

This was an utterly noncontroversial stance to take. DeVos was simply pointing out that different states and localities have different needs, and attempting to mandate a nationwide one-size-fits-all policy for every American school is imprudent.

How did the media run with it? By lying through their teeth. "Betsy DeVos Says Guns Should Be Allowed in Schools. They Might Be Needed to Shoot Grizzlies" (*Slate*). "Betsy DeVos: Schools May Need Guns to Fight Off Bears" (*The Daily Beast*). "Citing grizzlies, education nominee says states should determine school gun policies" (CNN). "Betsy DeVos says guns in schools may be necessary to protect students from grizzly bears" (*ThinkProgress*). "Betsy DeVos says guns shouldn't be banned in schools . . . because grizzly bears" (*Vox*). "Betsy DeVos tells Senate hearing she supports guns in schools because of grizzly bears" (*The Week*). "Trump's Education Pick Cites 'Potential Grizzlies' As A Reason To Have Guns In Schools" (*BuzzFeed*).

The intellectual dishonesty at play here is hard to overstate. DeVos never said or even intimated that every American school or even very many of them might need to shoot bears. She merely used one school as an example of the necessity of federalism and as-local-as-possible control of the education system.

Rather than report accurately on her stance, these media outlets created a fake news event to smear a reasonable woman's perfectly reasonable opinion.

■ **January 26: The 'Resignations' At the State Department**

On January 26, the *Washington Post's* Josh Rogin published what seemed to be a bombshell report declaring that "the State Department's entire senior management team just resigned." This resignation, according to Rogin, was "part of an ongoing mass exodus of senior Foreign Service officers who don't want to stick around for the Trump era." These resignations happened "suddenly" and "unexpectedly." He styled it as a shocking shake-up of administrative protocol in the State Department, a kind of ad-hoc protest of the Trump administration.

The story immediately went sky-high viral. It was shared nearly 60,000 times on Facebook. Rogin himself tweeted the story out and was retweeted a staggering 11,000 times. Washington Post columnist Anne Applebaum had it retweeted nearly 2,000 times; journalists and writers from *Wired*, *The Guardian*, the *Washington Post*, *Bloomberg*, *ABC*, *Foreign Policy*, and other publications tweeted the story out in shock.

There was just one problem: the story was more a load of bunk. As Vox pointed out, the headline of the piece was highly misleading: "the word 'management' strongly implied that all of America's top diplomats were resigning, which was not the case." (The Post later changed the word "management" to "administrative" without noting the change, although it left the "management" language intact in the article itself).

More importantly, Mark Toner, the acting spokesman for the State Department, put out a press release noting that "As is standard with every transition, the outgoing administration, in coordination with the incoming one, requested all politically appointed officers submit letters of resignation." According to CNN, the officials were actually asked to leave by the Trump administration rather than stay on for the customary transitional few months. The entire premise of Rogin's article was essentially nonexistent.

As always, the correction received far less attention than the fake news itself: Vox's article, for instance, was shared around 9,500 times on Facebook, less than one-sixth the rate of Rogin's piece. To this day, Rogin's piece remains uncorrected regarding its faulty presumptions.

■ **January 27: The Photoshopped Hands Affair**

On January 27, Observer writer Dana Schwartz tweeted out a screenshot of Trump that, in her eyes, proved President Trump had "photoshopped his hands bigger" for a White House photograph. Her tweet immediately went viral, being shared upwards of 25,000 times. A similar tweet by Disney animator Joaquin Baldwin was shared nearly 9,000 times as well.

The conspiracy theory was eventually debunked, but not before it had been shared thousands upon thousands of times. Meanwhile, Schwartz tweeted that she did “not know for sure whether or not the hands were shopped.” Her correction tweet was shared a grand total of . . . 11 times.

■ **January 29: The Reuters Account Hoax**

Following the Quebec City mosque massacre, the *Daily Beast* published a story that purported to identify the two shooters who had perpetrated the crime. The problem? The story’s source was a Reuters parody account on Twitter. Incredibly, nobody at the *Daily Beast* thought to check the source to any appreciable degree.

■ **January 31: The White House-SCOTUS Twitter Mistake**

Leading up to Trump announcing his first Supreme Court nomination, CNN Senior White House Correspondent Jeff Zeleny announced that the White House was “setting up [the] Supreme Court announcement as a prime-time contest.” He pointed to a pair of recently created “identical Twitter pages” for a theoretical justices Neil Gorsuch and Thomas Hardiman, the two likeliest nominees for the court vacancy.

Zeleny’s sneering tweet—clearly meant to cast the Trump administration in an unflattering, circus-like light—was shared more than 1,100 times on Twitter. About 30 minutes later, however, he tweeted: “The Twitter accounts . . . were not set up by the White House, I’ve been told.” As always, the admission of mistake was shared far less than the original fake news: Zeleny’s correction was retweeted a paltry 159 times.

■ **January 31: The Big Travel Ban Lie**

On January 31, a Fox affiliate station out of Detroit reported that “A local business owner who flew to Iraq to bring his mother back home to the US for medical treatment said she was blocked from returning home under President Trump’s ban on immigration and travel from seven predominantly Muslim nations. He said that while she was waiting for approval to fly home, she died from an illness.”

Like most other sensational news incidents, this one took off, big-time: it was shared countless times on Facebook, not just from the original article itself (123,000 shares) but via secondary reporting outlets such as the Huffington Post (nearly 9,000 shares). Credulous reporters and media personalities shared the story on Twitter to the tune of thousands and thousands of retweets, including: Christopher Hooks, Gideon Resnick, Daniel Dale, Sarah Silverman, Blake Hounshell, Brian Beutler, Garance Franke-Ruta, Keith Olbermann (he got 3,600 retweets on that one!), Matthew Yglesias, and Farhad Manjoo.

The story spread so far because it gratified all the biases of the liberal media elite: it proved that Trump’s “Muslim ban” was an evil, racist Hitler-esque mother-killer of an executive order.

There was just one problem: it was a lie. The man had lied about when his mother died. The Fox affiliate hadn’t bothered to do the necessary research

to confirm or disprove the man's account. The news station quietly corrected the story after giving rise to such wild, industrial-scale hysteria.

■ February 1: POTUS Threatens to Invade Mexico

On February 1, Yahoo News published an Associated Press report about a phone call President Trump shared with Mexican president Enrique Peña Nieto. The report strongly implied that President Trump was considering "send[ing] U.S. troops" to curb Mexico's "bad hombre" problem, although it acknowledged that the Mexican government disagreed with that interpretation. The White House later re-affirmed that Trump did not have any plan to "invade Mexico."

Nevertheless, Jon Passantino, the deputy news director of BuzzFeed, shared this story on Twitter with the exclamation "WOW." He was retweeted 2,700 times. Jon Favreau, a former speechwriter for Barack Obama, also shared the story, declaring: "I'm sorry, did our president just threaten to invade Mexico today??" Favreau was retweeted more than 8,000 times.

Meanwhile, the Yahoo News AP post was shared more than 17,000 times on Facebook; Time's post of the misleading report was shared more than 66,000 times; ABC News posted the story and it was shared more than 20,000 times. On Twitter, the report—with the false implication that Trump's comment was serious—was shared by media types such as ThinkProgress's Judd Legum, the BBC's Anthony Zurcher, Vox's Matt Yglesias, Politico's Shane Goldmacher, comedian Michael Ian Black, and many others.

■ February 2: Easing the Russian Sanctions

Last week, NBC News national correspondent Peter Alexander tweeted out the following: "BREAKING: US Treasury Dept easing Obama admin sanctions to allow companies to do transactions with Russia's FSB, successor org to KGB." His tweet immediately went viral, as it implied that the Trump administration was cozying up to Russia.

A short while later, Alexander posted another tweet: "Source familiar [with] sanctions says it's a technical fix, planned under Obama, to avoid unintended consequences of cybersanctions." As of this writing, Alexander's fake news tweet has approximately 6,500 retweets; his clarifying tweet has fewer than 250.

At CNBC, Jacob Pramuk styled the change this way: "Trump administration modifies sanctions against Russian intelligence service." The article makes it clear that, per Alexander's source, "the change was a technical fix that was planned under Obama." Nonetheless, the impetus was placed on the Trump administration. CBS News wrote the story up in the same way. So did the *New York Daily News*.

In the end, unable to pin this (rather unremarkable) policy tweak on the Trump administration, the media have mostly moved on. As the Chicago Tribune put it, the whole affair was yet again an example of how "in the hyperactive Age of Trump, something that initially appeared to be a major change in policy turned into a nothing-burger."

■ February 2: Renaming Black History Month

At the start of February, which is Black History Month in the United States, Trump proclaimed the month “National African American History Month.” Many outlets tried to spin the story in a bizarre way: TMZ claimed that a “senior administration official” said that Trump believed the term “black” to be outdated. “Every U.S. president since 1976 has designated February as Black History Month,” wrote TMZ. BET wrote the same thing.

The problem? It’s just not true. President Obama, for example, declared February “National African American History Month” as well. TMZ quickly updated their piece to fix their embarrassing error.

■ February 2: The House of Representatives’ Gun Control Measures

On February 2, the Associated Press touched off a political and media firestorm by tweeting: “BREAKING: House votes to roll back Obama rule on background checks for gun ownership.” The AP was retweeted a staggering 12,000 times.

The headlines that followed were legion: “House votes to rescind Obama gun background check rule” (Kyle Cheney, Politico); “House GOP aims to scrap Obama rule on gun background checks” (CNBC); “House scraps background check regulation” (Yahoo News); “House rolls back Obama gun background check rule” (CNN); “House votes to roll back Obama rule on background checks for gun ownership” (Washington Post).

Some headlines were more specific about the actual House vote but no less misleading; “House votes to end rule that prevents people with mental illness from buying guns” (the Independent); “Congress ends background checks for some gun buyers with mental illness” (the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette); “House Votes to Overturn Obama Rule Restricting Gun Sales to the Severely Mentally Ill” (NPR).

The hysteria was far-reaching and frenetic. As you might have guessed, all of it was baseless. The House was actually voting to repeal a narrowly tailored rule from the Obama era. This rule mandated that the names of certain individuals who receive Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income and who use a representative to help manage these benefits due to a mental impairment be forwarded to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.

If that sounds confusing, it essentially means that if someone who receives SSDI or SSI needs a third party to manage these benefits due to some sort of mental handicap, then—under the Obama rule—they may have been barred from purchasing a firearm. (It is thus incredibly misleading to suggest that the rule applied in some specific way to the “severely mentally ill.”)

As National Review’s Charlie Cooke pointed out, the Obama rule was opposed by the American Association of People With Disabilities; the ACLU; the Arc of the United States; the Autistic Self-Advocacy Network; the Consortium of Citizens With Disabilities; the National Coalition of Mental Health Recovery; and many, many other disability advocacy organizations and networks.

The media hysteria surrounding the repeal of this rule—the wildly misleading and deceitful headlines, the confused outrage over a vote that nobody understood—was a public disservice.

As Cooke wrote: “It is a rare day indeed on which the NRA, the GOP, the ACLU, and America’s mental health groups find themselves in agreement on a question of public policy, but when it happens it should at the very least prompt Americans to ask, ‘Why?’ That so many mainstream outlets tried to cheat them of the opportunity does not bode well for the future.”



Looking back to May, here are excerpts from an article by Daniel Payne titled “13 More Major Fake News Stories in Just Five Months of Trump’s Presidency” that were posted at thefederalist.com on May 23, 2017.

We are merely five months into the presidency of Donald J. Trump, and still in the midst of a fake news epidemic. It has grown more subtle and refined over time—gone is the regular cycle of industrial-scale media ineptitude and stupidity that began shortly after Trump clinched the presidency—but it is still chugging on like one of those old-fashioned Kalamazoo hand-pump railway cars: slow and quiet but somehow weirdly inexorable.

At a certain point we must ask ourselves why. We know the media are overwhelmingly liberal, deeply hostile towards Trump’s presidency and conservatives generally, and thus must feel rather strained and desperate when their arch-nemesis-apparent holds the White House and Republicans command an historic amount of political power throughout the country. Heady times will drive anyone batty.

Yet this still does not explain its relentless nature. Trump administration or no, majority Republican governor bloc or no, after a cursory freak-out it shouldn’t be that hard for journalism to return to square one. The news media have one job, and it is to report facts: factual things, things that are true, things that are the opposite of false. It should not be difficult to do this.

Yet for many of our media leaders, it apparently is. This, to the great discredit of the American fourth estate, is the media we have. What follows are 13 more examples of the post-election trend I tracked in an earlier article counting 16 others.

■ **January 22: The Trump-Comey Bromance**

On January 22, shortly after President Trump took office, author Richard Hine tweeted out a short video that he claimed showed Trump “literally [blowing] a kiss to James Comey at a WH reception for law enforcement.” Hine’s tweet was retweeted nearly 10,000 times. The media, naturally, glommed into it.

Among the media boosters of this story: *ThinkProgress’s* Judd Legum (retweeted nearly 1,600 times), *The New Republic’s* Jeet Heer (657 retweets),

the *Washington Post's* Gene Weingarten, the *New Yorker's* Ben Taub, *Slate's* Mark Joseph Stern, *Vox's* Matt Yglesias, GQ's Keith Olbermann (retweeted nearly 1,100 times), *ThinkProgress's* Ian Millhiser, and many others. The news outlets that ran with this story, meanwhile, included *HuffPost*, *Raw Story*, *The Week* and others.

Unfortunately for all of the credulous media figures who took this story to press (or to tweet), it wasn't true: audio of the exchange clearly shows Trump is not blowing a kiss to Comey, but rather saying his name. But a good, juicy fake news story is hard to quash: months after this fake news died down, the *Washington Post's* Jenna Johnson reported on it as if it were credible.

■ February 1: Neil Gorsuch's 'Fascism Forever' Club

On February 1 the U.K. *Daily Mail* reported that Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch had "founded and led a student group" known as the "Fascism Forever Club" in high school. The story made waves at news websites and on social media: *U.S. News and World Report*, *The Nation*, AOL, the AV Club, *Salon*, and *Vice* all fell for it, while writers and media personalities such as Bill Maher, Heer, Gersh Kuntzman, Millhiser, and Olbermann all eagerly and credulously tweeted about it.

As it turns out, it wasn't true at all: Gorsuch had simply included the club as a joke in his yearbook entry. Much of the media couldn't simply wait to confirm this, however, leading to yet another hysterical fake news media cycle.

■ February 17: The Mobilization of the National Guard

On February 17, Garance Burke at the Associated Press published a bombshell report that claimed "the Trump administration considered a proposal to mobilize as many as 100,000 National Guard troops to round up unauthorized immigrants, including millions living nowhere near the Mexico border." The AP story was shared 43,000 times on Facebook. The *Boston Globe* ran the story; so did CBS and the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Los Angeles Times* and *Slate* and *Vice* and countless smaller outlets. Social media went nuts.

Everyone took the AP at its word, which turned out to be a mistake: as Becket Adams pointed out at the *Washington Examiner*, the entire story was more or less bogus: the "proposal" was in fact an "early, pre-decision draft," one never seriously considered by the Department of Homeland Security, it never mentioned "100,000 National Guard troops," and never actually mentioned nationalizing the National Guard.

The AP quietly edited its story to correct these humiliating errors, although to this day there is still no official correction on the story's webpage.

■ February 25: Kuwait's Pay-to-Play at Trump Hotel

On February 25, NPR and Reuters reported that Kuwait's ambassador was holding his annual National Day celebration at Trump International Hotel in Washington DC, an event that could have cost him upwards of \$60,000. Trump

was spotted at the same hotel, leading many in the media to believe he was there as part of some pay-for-play scheme with the Kuwaiti government.

Many in the media jumped on board this story and began circulating it widely. ThinkProgress's Legum put out a series of tweets about the alleged scandal; these tweets were collectively retweeted thousands and thousands of times. Phillip Rucker, the *Washington Post's* White House bureau chief, tweeted about it. *New York Times* and MTV writer Ana Marie Cox tweeted about it, and so did *HuffPost's* Sam Stein tweeted it, as well.

One big problem, however: NPR and Reuters got their dates mixed up. The Kuwaiti celebration had actually been held the Wednesday prior to Trump's visit. Most of these erroneous tweets were subsequently deleted as the mistake became clear, though Cox left hers up and simply issued a correction (her original tweet received 1,200 retweets; her correction received a grand total of ten).

■ April 11: The Jeff Sessions 'Filth' Scandal

On April 11, Attorney General Jeff Sessions gave a speech to border agents in Nogales, Arizona. The prepared remarks lambasted the "international criminal organizations that turn cities and suburbs into warzones, that rape and kill innocent civilians" and declared "It is here, on this sliver of land, where we first take our stand against this filth."

The line about "filth," which obviously refers to brutal criminal gangs, did not actually make it into the speech; Sessions left it out while talking. Nevertheless, the prepared remarks managed to circulate through the press, somebody pointed out the line about "filth," and—predictably—media types began freaking out.

Daniel Drezner, a writer for the *Washington Post*, tweeted that Sessions "described illegal immigrants as 'filth.'" His tweet received more than 5,300 retweets. *Vox's* Yglesias claimed that Sessions vowed to "rid the nation of the 'filth' of Latin American immigrants." *Daily Kos* writer Gabe Ortíz claimed Sessions's speech went "full-on white nationalist." Legum tweeted that Sessions had simply been talking about "immigrants." So did *ThinkProgress* Senior Editor Ned Resnikoff.

To his credit, Drezner eventually issued a mea culpa in the *Washington Post*.

■ May 1: Ghosts of Billboards Past

On May 1, a fellow named Peter Brack claimed on Twitter that the president of the Philippines had received an invite to the White House around the same time that Ivanka Trump "model[ed] in an ad for POTUS's new Tower in Manila." The implication, of course, was that the two presidents were colluding in some pay-for-play scheme.

Brack's tweet was retweeted thousands and thousands of times. Numerous media figures ran with the story: Jon Lovett (retweeted more than 1,500 times), Joy Ann Reid (retweeted just as much), Keith Boykin (more than 2,000 retweets), Matt Laslo, Audra Wolfe, Mark Follman, Michael Showalter, Victoria McGrane, Paul Farhi, Richard Lawson, Jonathan Wald, Aaron Vallely, many others.

It was a horrible scandal—except for the small, irrelevant detail that the billboard in question had come down years before and the photo was years out-of-date. Other than that, the outrage was well-placed and spot-on!

■ **May 3: The DOJ Prosecutes a Woman for Laughing**

On May 3, Vox's German Lopez published a piece claiming that "the US Department of Justice is literally prosecuting a woman for laughing at Jeff Sessions." It will not surprise you to know that this story went insanely viral: it was shared nearly 106,000 times on Facebook. A few days later at Vox, Lizz Winstead wrote that the woman was "arrested for the crime of laughing . . . during the confirmation hearings of Attorney General Jefferson Beauregard Sessions" (this netted an additional 20,000 Facebook shares).

A *Mother Jones* headline blared: "Woman Convicted After Laughing During Jeff Sessions' Confirmation Hearing" (43,000 shares). *Vanity Fair*: "A jury just convicted a woman for laughing at Jeff Sessions" (40,000 shares). *HuffPost*: "A woman is on trial for laughing during a congressional hearing" (13,000 shares). *NBC News*: "Activist faces jail time for laughing during Sessions hearing" (13,000 shares). *The New York Times*: "A code pink protestor laughs over a Trump nominee and is convicted" (34,000 shares).

It once again took Adams at the *Washington Examiner* to throw some water on this hysterical fire. The foreman of the jury that convicted the woman pointed out that the woman "did not get convicted for laughing. It was her actions as she was being asked to leave. [The woman's] comments as she was being escorted out caused the session to stop. It disrupted the session." Indeed, the protestor herself, Desiree Fairouz, wrote an article for Vox in which she pointed out that other people had laughed at the hearing yet hadn't been arrested—a strong indication that Fairouz's crime was disruptive behavior, not simply "laughing."

The media, propelled by sensational gender politics and profound paranoia about Sessions, could not be bothered to write up a nuanced or detailed take on this issue. Indeed, you can see this slyly dishonest tendency at Snopes.com: writer David Emery rated as "true" the claim that Fairouz "was prosecuted for disorderly conduct after she laughed" during the hearing. This is technically accurate, but deliberately and cleverly misleading—in other words, a normal media trick in the Age of Trump.

■ **May 4: The Nonexistent Beer Party**

On May 4, shortly after the American Health Care Act passed the House of Representatives, "lady reporter" Alexandra Jaffe tweeted that she had seen "cases upon cases of beer . . . rolled into the capitol on a cart covered in a sheet." From this dubious tweet about an unverified beerfest, retweeted over 3,400 times, all hell broke loose.

Sally Kohn, seemingly rhetorically, asked if the beers were there "to celebrate the millions of Americans who will be hurt by [the GOP's] new legislation?!?!?!" The Center for American Progress-Action's Igor Volsky, incredulous,

lous and flabbergasted, demanded: “THESE FRAT BOYS ARE GONNA F-CKING PARTY AFTER STRIPPING 24 MILLION OF INSURANCE?!?!” (Volksy’s tweet was shared more than 2,100 times.)

The feminist website Jezebel wrote that Republicans “[drank] beer” in the wake of the AHCA’s passage. “Republicans celebrated taking away Americans’ health insurance with cases of beer,” blared a headline at Mic. MSNBC’s Joe Scarborough called the news about the beer party “deplorable.” At RawStory, Brad Reed wrote that Republicans “plan massive beer bash as they take healthcare away from women, the disabled and the poor.” Yahoo’s Dan Devine was scandalized by the news. The Daily Dot reported that Republicans were ordering “cases upon cases of beer” to celebrate. Stephen Colbert condemned the GOP’s “beer bash.” Because they allegedly drank beer after the AHCA passage, *Newsweek*’s Kurt Eichenwald said that “it should be [the GOP’s] loved ones who die.”

All of this righteous anger might have been well-placed—if the beer bash had actually happened. As it turned out, the man who had wheeled the beers into the Capitol explicitly told Jaffe that the drinks were not for the GOP conference.

A fantasy story, flatly contradicted by the testimony of a knowledgeable witness, nevertheless sent media types into gales of howling outrage. Nobody bothered to fact-check the reports or even wait to see how the story developed. They just rolled with the anger, humiliating and debasing themselves in the process.

■ **May 4: ‘Rape Is a Preexisting Condition’**

Not to be outdone by the fake beer party hysteria, the Internet feminist machine decided to do the hysterics one better. On May 4, the feminist group Ultraviolet Action tweeted out a graphic that claimed the AHCA “made being a rape survivor a preexisting condition.” Media outlets ran with this claim, with astronomical social media shares quickly following: Mic (shared a staggering 248,000 times on Facebook), *New York Magazine* (13,000 shares), CNN (24,000 shares) and HuffPost (nearly 40,000 shares), among many others. The coverage was sensational, outrageous and terrifying.

It was also wrong. The *Washington Post* gave the claim four Pinocchios: “[T]his claim relies on so many factors—including unknown decisions by a handful of states and insurance companies—that this talking point becomes almost meaningless.” It was a falsehood from the start, but that didn’t stop prominent media outlets from running with it. Just another fake news event in the Age of Trump.

■ **May 4: The Football Analogy Fiasco**

May 4 was a busy day for the media. Sometimes the fake news incidents are a little less consequential and a little pettier. The media rounded out May 4 with a sneering little scofflaw over an analogy White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus made after the passage of the AHCA in the House.

The Hill’s Molly Hooper tweeted out that, following the passage of the bill, Priebus claimed that President Trump “stepped up and helped punt the ball into the end zone.” The mangled metaphor—nobody punts into the end zone!

—caused a number of outlets to titter with condescension: *Slate*, *Vice*, *Talking Points Memo*, *Sports Illustrated*, the *New York Daily News*, Fox Sports, and *Mic* all guffawed about Priebus's idiocy. Even Colbert jumped on board.

Now, this may shock you, but it turns out that Hooper was wrong, and Priebus actually said "punch," not "punt." The writers who had so quickly and so eagerly mocked Priebus were forced to issue embarrassing corrections to their smarmy hit pieces.

■ **May 10: The Fake Rosenstein Resignation Scandal**

On May 10, the *Washington Post* reported that Trump's Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein "threatened to resign" after a "narrative" emerged that he was behind the firing of FBI Director James Comey. An anonymous source reported this allegation to the Post.

The news was spread far and wide: the *New York Daily News*, the *Huffington Post*, *U.S. News and World Report*, ABC News, *Talking Points Memo*, and other outlets all cited the Post's claim. Media types like Kyle Griffin, Yashar Ali, Ruth Marcus, Adam Serwer, Tim Hanrahan, and Blake Hounshell all credulously tweeted the report.

As always, there was just one teeny weeny little problem with this story: it wasn't true. Rosenstein has explicitly denied that he threatened to quit. In the Age of Trump, the media have become almost obsessively dependent upon anonymous sources to advance their stories. In many cases, as in this one, the source ends up being complete bunk.

■ **May 10: Comey's Russian Probe Resource Request**

Also on May 10, the news media exploded with reports that, prior to being fired by President Trump, Comey had requested that the Justice Department devote more resources to the FBI's probe into Russia's election meddling. The unspoken implication, of course, was that Trump fired Comey to keep him from discovering the truth about Trump's involvement with Russia.

The media went nuts. The *New York Times*, NBC News, Reuters, CBS, ABC, the *Washington Post*, CNN, *Vox*, CNBC, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Politico*, the *Chicago Tribune*, Fox News, *The Hill*, *Business Insider*, *ThinkProgress*, the *Boston Globe*, and many other news outlets ran with this story.

It is beyond the scope of one article to detail the staggering, almost biblical-proportions-level media response on Twitter, although a few examples should suffice. The story was tweeted by the *Washington Post's* Ashley Parker, who received over 5,200 retweets, while CNN's Manu Raju tweeted about it to the tune of 4,100 retweets. And those are just two reporters.

As is ubiquitous in the Age of Trump, these reports were inspired solely by the testimony of anonymous sources. The on-the-record sources, on the other hand, told a different tale: Department of Justice spokesman Ian Prior said the report was "totally false," while acting FBI director Andrew McCabe (who was under oath, mind you!) affirmed that the FBI has "resourced" the Russian inves-

tigation “adequately.” He also claimed he was “not aware of” any request made by Comey regarding additional resources (also pointing out that Comey would have asked Congress, not the Justice Department, for additional resources).

There are three possibilities here: either Comey made the request but, inexplicably, nobody told his successor about it; Comey made the request, McCabe was informed, then perjured himself to cover it up; or Comey never made the request and it was a bogus story to begin with. Which do you think is the most likely? And which of these options sound like fake news?

■ **May 20: The ‘Ivanka Charity’ Insanity**

On May 20, *Wall Street Journal* reporter Rebecca Ballhaus tweeted, along with a WSJ story, that “Saudi Arabia and UAE pledge \$100 million to Ivanka’s Women Entrepreneurs Fund.” This tweet was retweeted over 3,400 times. She followed with another tweet: “Trump pilloried Clinton for such donations to the Clinton Foundation on the campaign trail.” This tweet was retweeted more than 7,400 times.

Shortly thereafter, CNN national security correspondent Jim Sciutto retweeted Ballhaus’s initial tweet and claimed: “This is virtually identical to what Trump and others in GOP criticized Clinton Foundation for.” This garnered an astonishing 11,700 retweets (at press time). George Takei claimed that “the Saudis plopped \$100mil into Ivanka’s charity.” Retweet count: 21,000 and growing. CNN contributor Ana Navarro tweeted: “Ivanka Fund got \$100MM pledge from Saudis & UAE.” At the time of this writing, this tweet had been retweeted more than 43,000 times. Forty-three thousand.

It is rare to see a fake news event of this magnitude, perpetrated with such extreme ignorance and ineptitude, spread by people who should honestly know better but who, in the Age of Trump, simply do not care anymore. As *Wall Street Journal* editor Sohrab Ahmari pointed out (repeatedly, yet to no avail), the organization in question wasn’t “Ivanka’s Woman Entrepreneurs Fund” or an “Ivanka Fund” or “Ivanka’s charity,” and it wasn’t comparable to the Clinton Foundation in the slightest.

It was, rather, “a World Bank initiative that Ivanka is championing.” As NPR put it, the fund was merely “inspired” by Ivanka Trump: “While Ivanka Trump proposed the idea along with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, she is not involved with its operation.” Then too, NPR notes, “The World Bank fund . . . differs from the Clinton Foundation in some significant ways.”

Never the matter. In the Age of Trump, facts are unimportant to the media; reality is secondary to narrative-making. It did not matter to these veteran journalists (or Takei) that the fake news dreck they were peddling on Twitter was out-and-out false. With Trump in the White House, the media is increasingly apathetic towards, if not antipathetic to, the truth.

You deserve to have the facts. You deserve to know the truth—even if the media often does its best to hide it from you.



Isaiah 55:6-11—“Seek you the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. ‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”