

Infodemics

**How to identify disinformation
and inoculate the public against it.**



Fake News

Witch Hunts

Conspiracy Theories



Presented by:

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Owner, Data Doyenne

NOT - a conspiracy theorist

Learning Objectives:

Tell the difference between disinformation and misinformation and recognize identifiers.

Craft and implement strategies to address misinformation and disinformation.

Learn how to communicate with those who believe disinformation.



Disinformation

- Knowingly sharing false information with intent to harm or profit.
- Examples?

Misinformation

- Sharing of false information without intent to harm.
- Examples?



Big Whoop. Who Cares?

- 60% of respondents think misinformation and disinformation are major world problems.
- 75% of respondents feel that disinformation is a threat to democracy in the U.S.
- 63% feel as though disinformation infringes on human rights.
- 52% say disinformation makes them feel stressed and anxious.

Big Whoop. Who Cares?

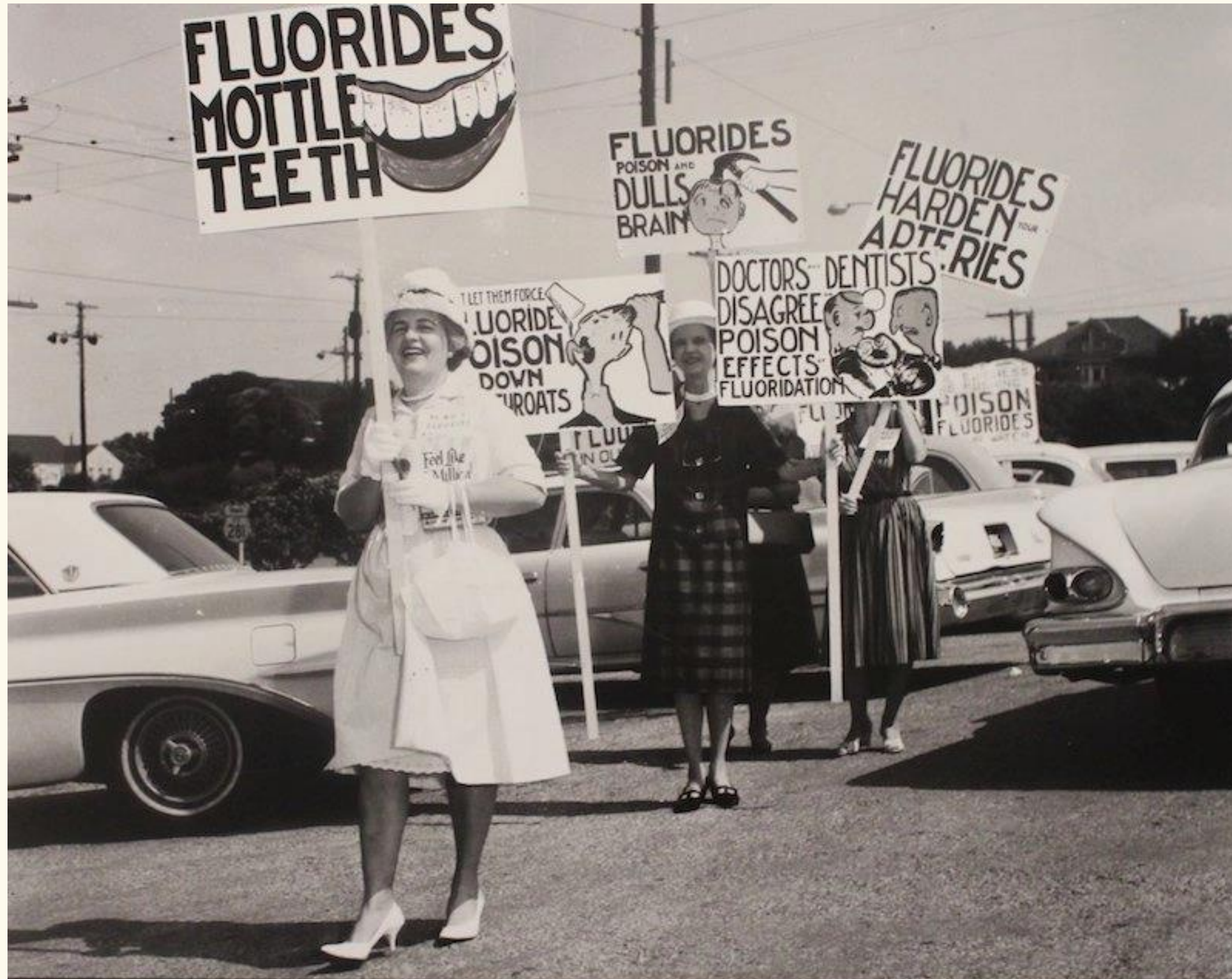
- People trust families (35%), people like me (27%) and friends (22%).
- Business is seen as the most trusted institution.
- Trust in government and trust in media are declining equivalently.
- 62% say the social fabric has grown too weak in their country.
- 20% of respondents are willing to live in a neighborhood with those who disagree with them.
- 30% would help them if they were in need.
- 20% would want to work with them.

Big Whoop. Who Cares?

“Among YouTube videos about emerging infectious diseases, 20–30% were found to contain inaccurate or misleading information.”

YouTube is considered the second most visited search engine in the world after Google.

WHO considers the infodemic a public health crisis.



**Pickets outside a water fluoridation hearing at McAllister Auditorium.
Photograph by Joe Barrera, June 4, 1964.
*San Antonio Express-News Photograph Collection.***

An illustration of a woman in a yellow jacket and hat kneeling on the ground, assisting a young child in a red dress and white apron who is playing with a wooden toy house. The scene is set outdoors with a white fence and a house in the background.

**COCAINE
TOOTHACHE DROPS**
Instantaneous Cure!
PRICE 15 CENTS.
Prepared by the
LLOYD MANUFACTURING CO.
219 HUDSON AVE., ALBANY, N. Y.
For sale by all Druggists.
(Registered March 1885.) See other ads.



PICK-UPS
"GOOD TIME" GIRLS
PROSTITUTES

SPREAD SYPHILIS AND GONORRHEA

You can't beat the Axis if you get VD

MARIHUANA

WEED with ROOTS in HELL

NOT RECOMMENDED FOR CHILDREN



Sinners
That
Gave In
Youth's
Eye



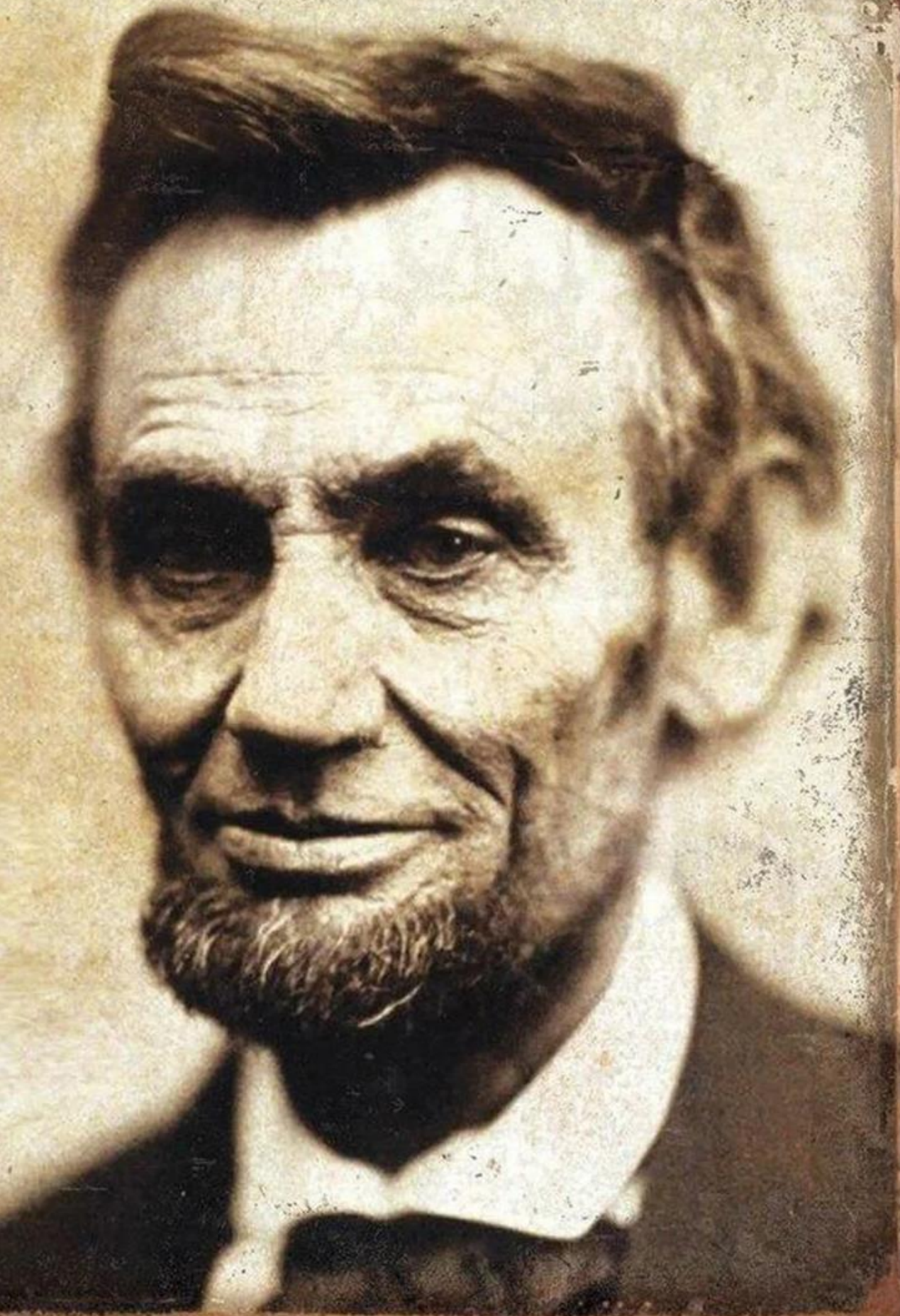
What
Happens
in
Marihuana
Parties

WEIRD ORGIES
WILD PARTIES



“THE TROUBLE
WITH QUOTES ON
THE INTERNET
IS THAT YOU
NEVER KNOW
IF THEY ARE
GENUINE.”

- *A. Lincoln*





Communication Tools

- Signals (Word of Mouth)
- Printing Press
- Typewriter
- Radio
- Television
- Internet
- Social Media

Why do People Believe?

- Confirmation Bias
 - Look for others like you
- Cognitive Bias
 - Fear, emotion, anxiety
- Partisan Bias
- Post-truth
 - Trust emotions over facts/logic
- Simplification of Complex Issues
- Echo Chamber
 - Self-selection
- Filter Bubble
 - Personalization
- Trauma/Trust

Types of Disinformation

False Connection

Headlines, visuals, etc. don't support the content.

"Coming Soon: an implanted pacemaker that dissolves away after use."
(from HealthDay)

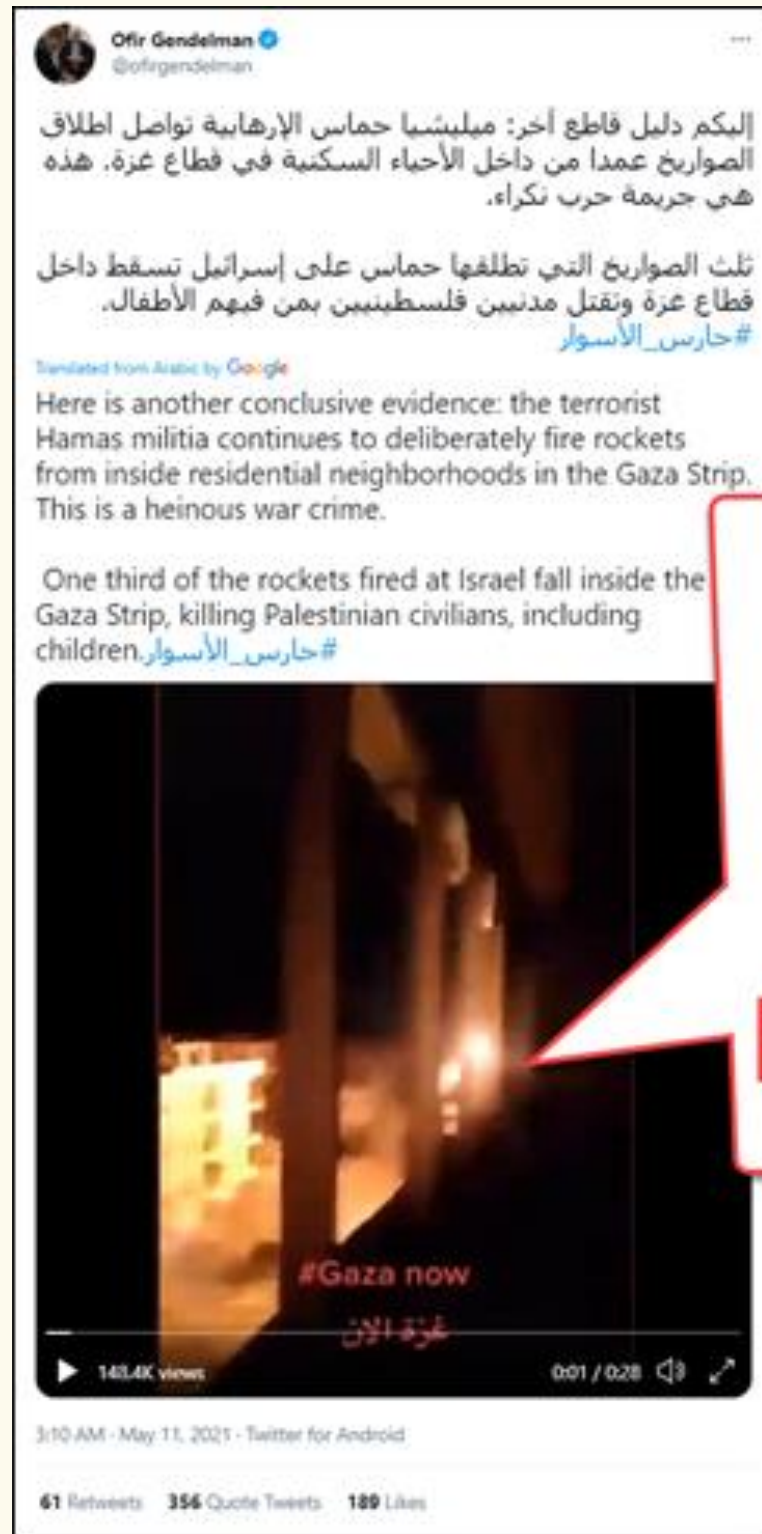
Not so fast.....



Types of Disinformation

Manipulated Content

Content used out of context or altered altogether.



X
OLD FOOTAGE

Tweet re: Gaza (from 2018 in Syria - recycled in 2019 re: Libya)



Types of Disinformation

Misleading Content

The image shows a screenshot of a tweet from March 16, 2020, at 4:10 PM. The tweet text reads: "Here's an unexpected side effect of the pandemic - the water's flowing through the canals of Venice is clear for the first time in forever. The fish are visible, the swans returned." Below the text are four images: a close-up of clear water, a view of a canal with buildings, a white swan in a canal, and a view of a canal with buildings. Annotations include: a red box "This is misleading." pointing to the tweet text; a red box "This location is unconfirmed." pointing to the top-left image; a green box "This is in Venice." pointing to the top-right image; and a black box "These were taken in Burano, an island that is technically outside the city of Venice." pointing to the bottom two images. The tweet has 282.2K Retweets and 1M Likes.

This is misleading.

Here's an unexpected side effect of the pandemic - the water's flowing through the canals of Venice is clear for the first time in forever. The fish are visible, the swans returned.

This is in Venice.

This location is unconfirmed.

4:10 PM · Mar 16, 2020 · Twitter for Android

282.2K Retweets · 1M Likes

These were taken in Burano, an island that is technically outside the city of Venice.

Using false connections or content to frame and issue or someone.

Types of Disinformation

Fabricated Content



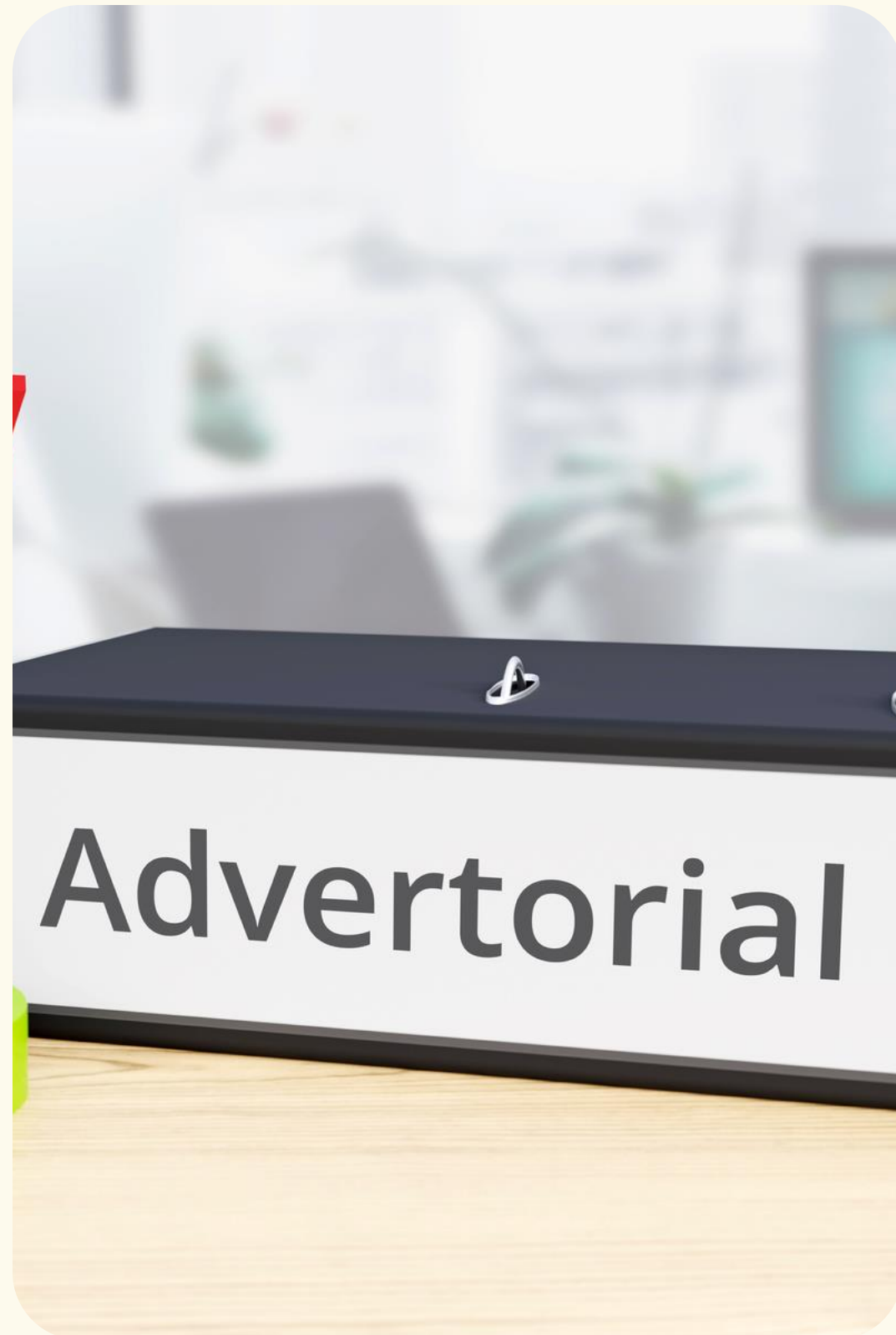
Just make stuff up.

AOC (Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez) said “It’s okay to eat pets if food runs scarce during Covid.”

Types of Disinformation

Sponsored Content

Advertising or editorials disguised as content.



Types of Disinformation

False Context

Something very poetic about a king in a golden coach being driven over a load of potholes filled with wet sand because no one in his country has the money to fix the roads properly lmao



Genuine content shared using false context.

(Protecting horses from drain holes.)

Types of Disinformation

Satire or Parody



Not intending to cause harm but may.

Types of Disinformation

Imposter Content



Genuine sources are impersonated.

CNN.com (not CNNNews.net)

JoeBiden.com (not JoeyBidden.com)

Types of Disinformation

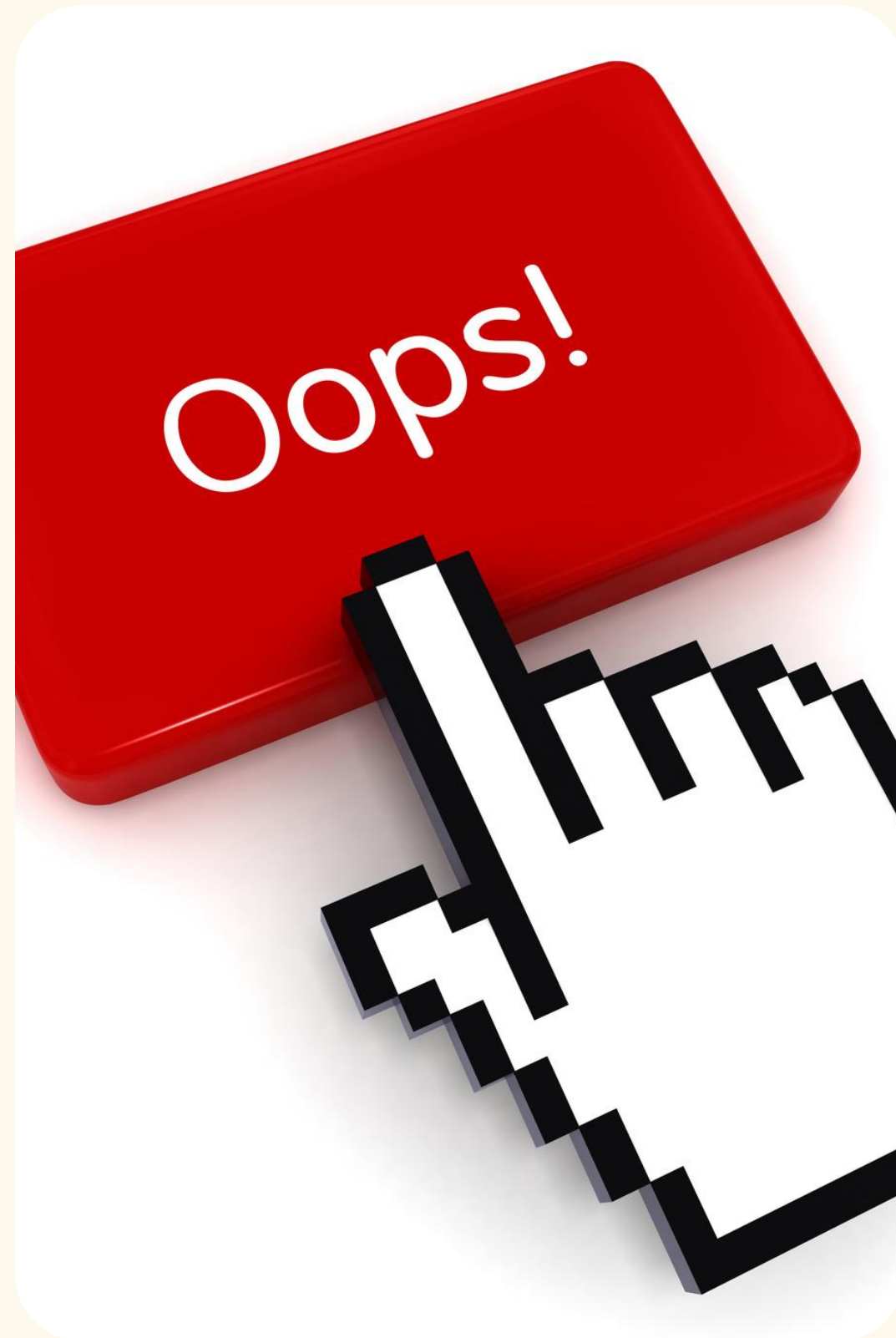
Propagand

a

Using content to manage values, behaviors, knowledge.



Types of Disinformation Error



Sometimes we make mistakes.
Whoops.

Red Flags:

Let that sink in....

The media won't report this.

Make this go viral.

Do your own research.

There are no coincidences.

Anonymity

Trust

Rush to judgement

Taken out of context

Literacy issues

Fear of the “other”

Nomenclature

Scientific method

Justin Trudeau, premier of Canada, Tweeted in 2022:

"Canada denounces the Iranian regime's barbaric decision to impose the death penalty on nearly 15,000 protesters," the English tweet said. "These brave Iranians were fighting for their human rights – and we continue to stand united in support of them, and united against the regime's heinous actions."

Trudeau's team took the Tweet down after about 12 hours.

His account had 6.3 million followers at the time.

That Tweet was shared by Viola Davis, actress and producer, who had 1.8 million followers at the time.

When Trudeau removed the Tweet, it remained on Davis' account.

Certainly 6.3 million and 1.8 million people didn't see that Tweet nor did they share it, but they could have. That's just two people. Think about the reach beyond just those two individuals.

Rapper Nicki Minaj tweeted in September, 2021:

“My cousin in Trinidad won’t get the vaccine cuz his friend got it & became impotent. His testicles became swollen. His friend was weeks away from getting married, now the girl called off the wedding. So just pray on it & make sure you’re comfortable with ur decision, not bullied.”

At the time she had about 22 million followers (she now has over 27 million).

That Tweet has been retweeted 23,600 times, quoted 88,800 times, liked 139,900 times and bookmarked 7,389 times (as of this writing).

As with Trudeau's Tweet, 22 million people aren't likely to have seen the Tweet. That said, without doing a more extensive analysis of the spread of the Tweet, this is powerful. Those who retweeted may have had their retweet retweeted, liked, etc.

The media coverage that this one Tweet generated is also noteworthy. It was covered in numerous media outlets each with its own followers who likely shared, liked and bookmarked it. The Trinidadian Health Minister and others spoke out against the Tweet.

FAKE EXPERTS

→ Presenting unqualified individuals or institutions as sources of credible information.

AGAINS!
→ Citing large numbers of seeming experts to argue that there is no scientific consensus on a topic.

Magnified Minority
→ Magnifying the significance of a handful of dissenting scientists to cast doubt on an overwhelming scientific consensus.



LOGICAL FALLACIES

Using arguments where the conclusion doesn't logically follow from the premises. Also known as a non sequitur.

False analogy
→ Assuming that because two things are alike in some ways, they are alike in some other respect.

Ambiguity
→ Using ambiguous language in order to lead to a misleading conclusion.

Jumping to conclusions
→ To make a wrong claim look logical by ignoring relevant information.

False Choice
→ **False dichotomy**
Presenting two options as the only possibilities, when in fact other possibilities exist.

→ **Single cause**
Assuming a single cause or reason when there might be multiple causes or reasons.

Ad hominem
→ Attacking a person/group instead of addressing their arguments.

Red Herring
→ Deliberately diverting attention to an irrelevant point to distract from a more important point.

Strawman
→ Misrepresenting or exaggerating an opponent's position to make it easier to attack.

IMPOSSIBLE EXPECTATIONS

→ Demanding unrealistic standards of certainty before acting on the science.

Moving goalposts
→ Demanding higher levels of evidence after receiving requested evidence.

Misrepresentation
→ Misrepresenting a situation or an opponent's position in such a way as to distort understanding.

CHERRY PICKING

Skillfully selecting data that appear to confirm one position while ignoring other data that contradict that position.

Slothful induction
→ Ignoring relevant evidence when coming to a conclusion.

Anecdote
→ Using personal experience or isolated examples instead of sound arguments or compelling evidence.

CONSPIRACY THEORIES

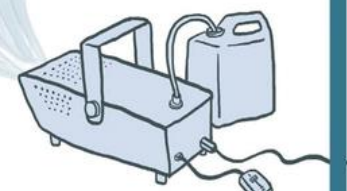
Proposing that a secret plan exists to implement a nefarious scheme such as hiding a truth.

DISINFORMATION 101

The reality of global warming, the effectiveness of vaccinations or the health risks of car exhausts have one thing in common: the scientific basics get regularly distorted in political discussions.

It happens on Facebook, Twitter & Co., as well as on internet blogs, in parliamentary speeches or in personal discussions. For lay people the rhetorical tricks used to manipulate public opinion are often difficult to detect.

This graphic explains the often-used strategies employed by the fog machine of disinformation.



Disinformation 101

Fake Experts

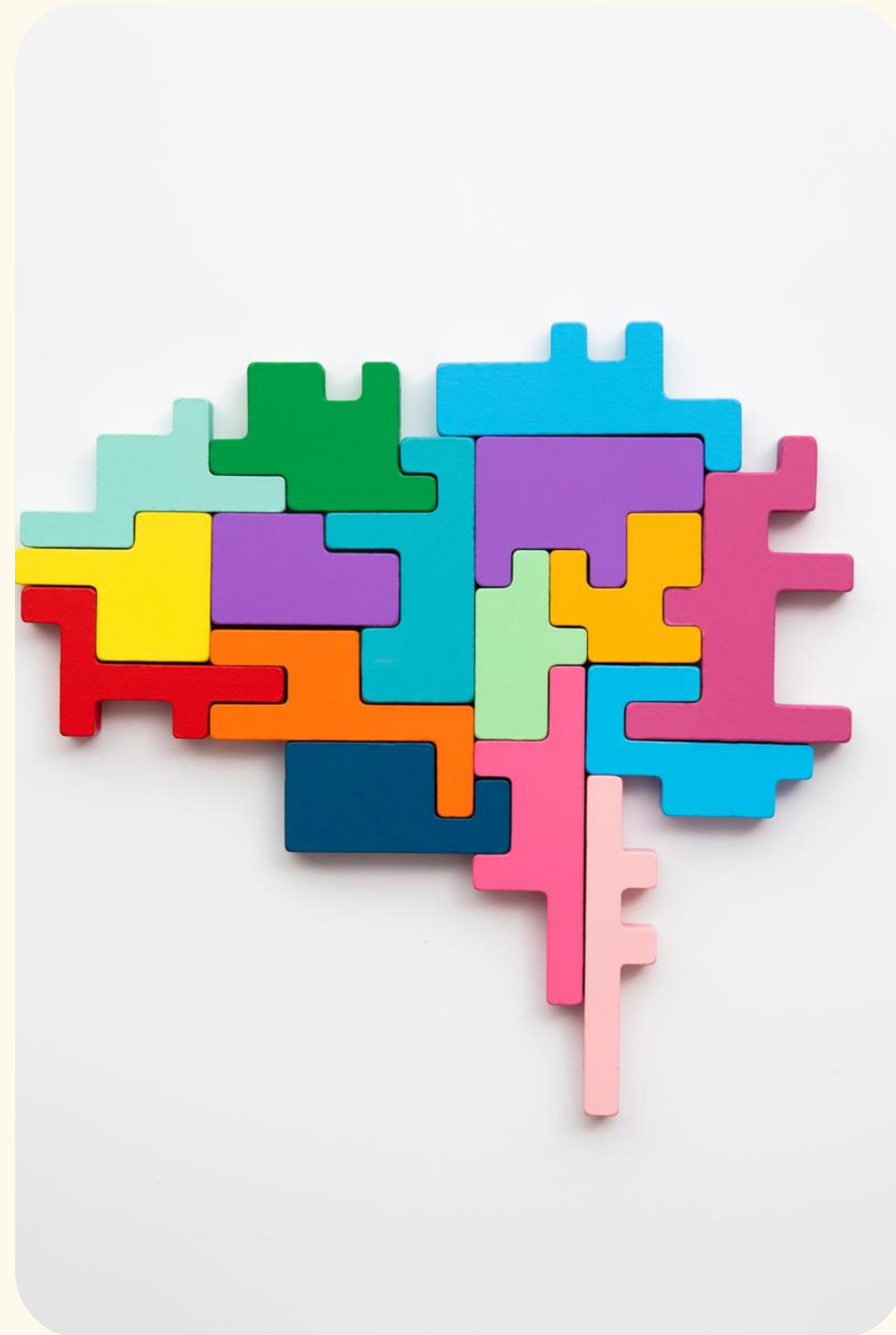


- **Bulk fake experts** - make it seem as though there is consensus on a topic.
- **Magnified minority** - magnify a handful of scientists to support your argument.
- **Fake debate** - presenting science as if there is some debate.

Disinformation 101

Logical

Fallacies



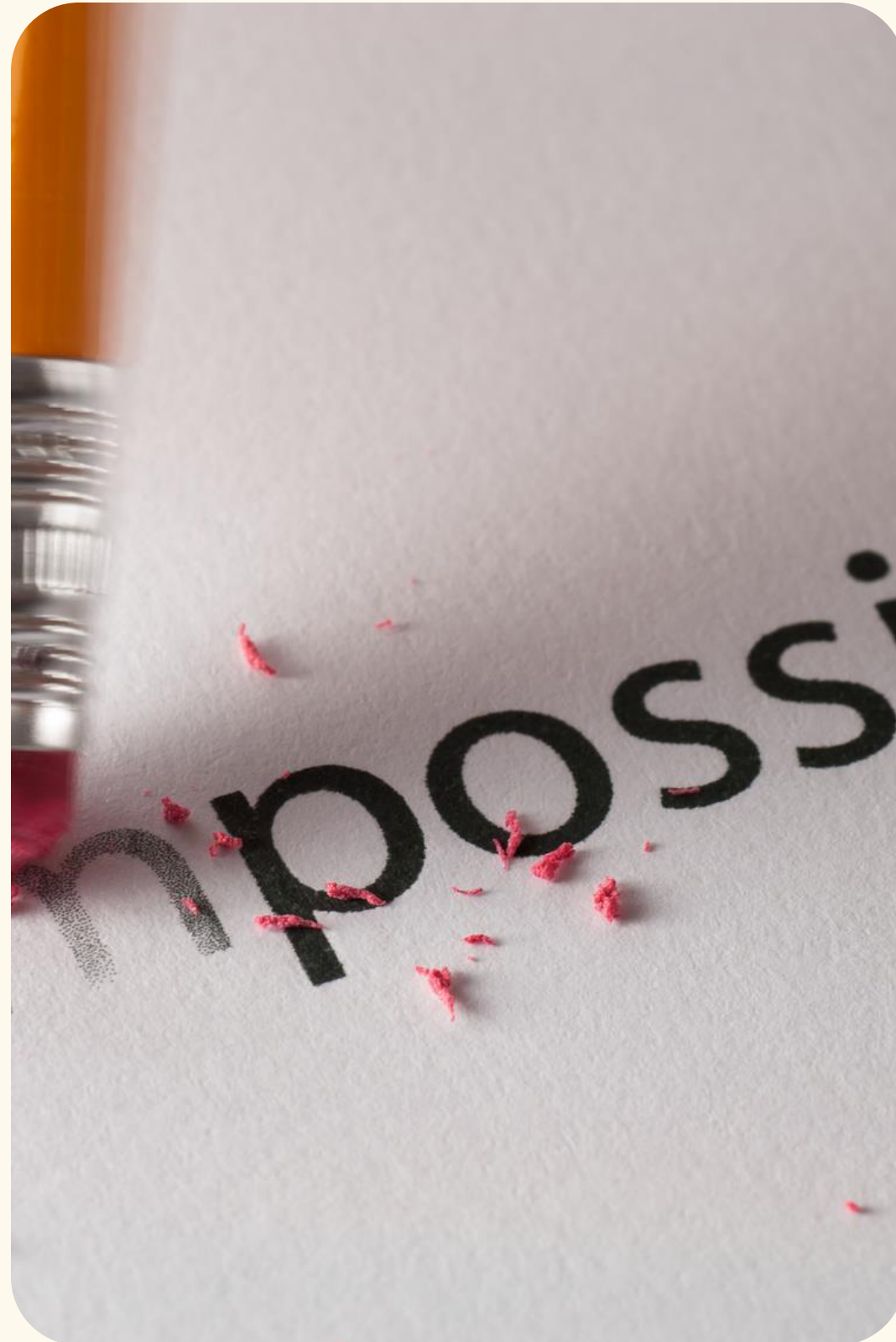
- **Ad hominem** - attacking the person instead of the argument. (Pauline can't be trusted to tell us about disinformation because she is an hysterical woman.)
- **False analogy** - comparing things that can't really be compared. (If we can get a vaccine to market that fast, we can solve the problem of world hunger.)
- **Ambiguity** - using ambiguous language to confuse. (Waste no time in hiring him.)
- **Jumping to conclusions** - making a wrong claim seem logical by ignoring important info. (Some people left because they hate me.)
- **False choice** - *Dichotomy* - presenting just two options when there are others. (Which is best to drink in the morning, coffee or tea?) or *Single Cause* - assuming there is just one reason (Overweight? Menopause is the reason.)
- **Red herring** - changing the subject to avoid the subject (Me: Did you like this presentation? You: How about them Bills?)

Disinformation 101

Impossible

Expectations

- **Moving goalposts** - demanding higher level of evidence after meeting initial level (Me: You said you wanted me to show that the vaccine is 95% effective. You: right, but now I want you to show it is 100%.)
- **Misrepresentation** - misrepresenting so as to distort (Buzz Aldrin said the moon landing never happened. What else have we been told that isn't true?!)
- **Strawman** - misrepresenting to make it easier to attack (Dog: Mom said she is taking me to the kennel. Mom: I said you can't have two meals.)



Disinformation 101

Cherry

Picking



- **Slothful induction** - ignoring relevant information (You've been involved in six accidents in six months. Perhaps you shouldn't drive. Nah, just a coincidence.)
- **Anecdote** - personal experience (I won't get lung cancer. My dad smoked two packs a day and lived to 150.)

Disinformation 101

Conspiracy Theories

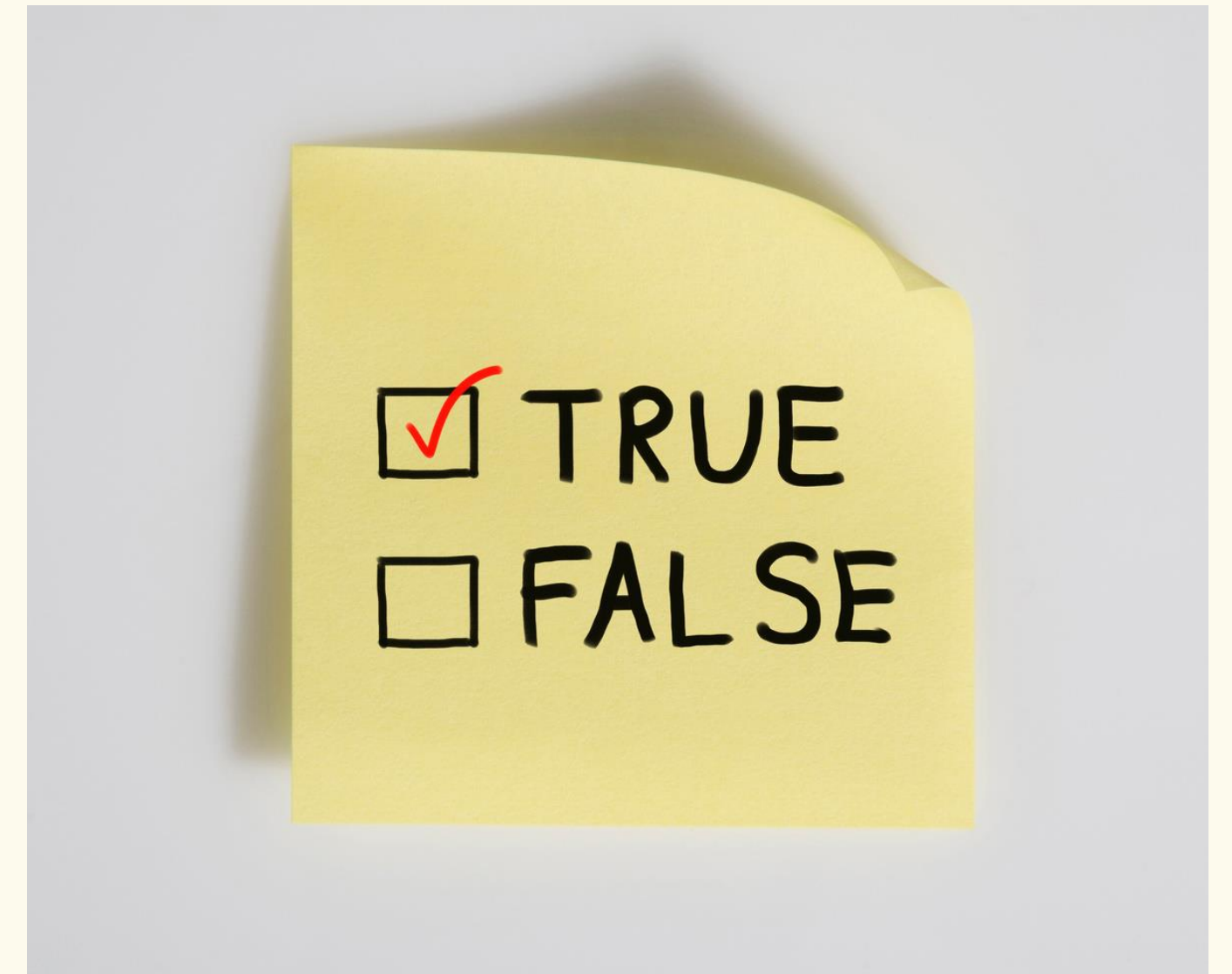
Secret, nefarious plans.....



More to come.....

Steps to determine is it legit?

- Search
- Look for Standards
 - Multiple credible sources (supporting evidence)
 - Avoidance of bias (check your own)
 - Documentation
 - Fairness
 - Verification
 - Balance
 - Context
- Check the Author
- Check the Date
- Check for Transparency
- Examine how Errors are Handled
- Assess News Coverage
 - Do you see original reporting?
 - Do they provide straight news reports or just commentary and opinion?



Standards

The screenshot displays the Global Times website interface. At the top, the logo "GLOBAL TIMES" is centered, with "Sign in" and "Subscribe" buttons to its right. A navigation bar below the logo lists categories: HOME, CHINA, SOURCE, OPINION, HU SAYS, IN-DEPTH, WORLD, LIFE, SPORT, VIDEO, PHOTO, INFOGRAPHIC, and CARTOON. On the left side, there are social media icons for WeChat, Facebook, and Twitter. The main content area features several articles:

- More than 70 percent of Arabs anticipate closer ties with China: GT ...**
With the world paying close attention to China-Arab relations as the two sides further promote their friendship this week, a ...
- China further focuses on severe COVID cases treatment with tiered medical services ...**
China on Friday issued a working plan on health services for COVID-19 key groups to optimize tiered medical services for ...
- Historic summits chart course for China-Arab ties at strategic level**
Chinese President Xi Jinping and leaders from Arab states on Friday gathered in Riyadh, capital of Saudi Arabia, to continue ...
- Domestically developed first C919 jet delivered to China Eastern, 'marking a start ...**
The world's first C919 aircraft, and also China's first domestically-developed passenger jet, was delivered to China Eastern Airlines in Shanghai ...

On the right side, there is a featured section titled "LETTERS FROM XI" with an image of Xi Jinping. Below it, an "OP-ED" section includes the article "Alarm is sounded after TSMC becomes 'USSMC': Global Times editorial" with a small image of a person holding a sign. Another article below it reads "West is losing the ability to lead as it breaks climate commitments" by Global Times. At the bottom right, another article is titled "GT Voice: Hying China's 'impact' on prices exposes West's anxiety" by Global Times.

Standards

BBC

We tried emailing the people who approached Mirko and Léo. The emails bounced back, not from Fazze, but from the domain of a company called AdNow.

Fazze is a part of AdNow, which is a digital marketing company, registered in both Russia and the UK.

The BBC has made multiple attempts to contact AdNow by phone, email and even a letter couriered to their Moscow headquarters, but they have not responded.

Author

Gizmo Files Lawsuit Against Disney Over 'Baby Yoda', Claims Company Stole His Likeness

POSTED ON JANUARY 12, 2020 BY **BOB THE EMPIRE NEWS POTATO**



LOS ANGELES, California -

Gremlins star Gizmo has filed a lawsuit in a Los Angeles superior court against Disney over their latest viral property, "Baby Yoda," also known as The Child, from the hit Disney+ series *The Mandalorian*. Gizmo claims that Disney stole his likeness when they created the cute, cuddly character.

How Errors are Handled

September 13, 2021
10:05 AM CDT
Last Updated a day ago

Future of Money

Alerts and story on Walmart to accept Litecoin payments withdrawn

1 minute read

Reuters



Sept 13 (Reuters) - Alerts and story on Walmart announcing a partnership with Litecoin are wrong and have been withdrawn, after Walmart confirms to Reuters that the press release was fake.

Errors

The **NCBI study** begins with the following abstract:

Many countries across the globe utilized medical and non-medical facemasks as non-pharmaceutical intervention for reducing the transmission and infectivity of coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19). Although, scientific evidence supporting facemasks' efficacy is lacking, adverse physiological, psychological and health effects are established. It has been hypothesized that facemasks have compromised safety and efficacy profile and should be avoided from use. The current article comprehensively summarizes scientific evidences with respect to wearing facemasks in the COVID-19 era, providing proper information for public health and decisions making.

What an absolute joke. American has been led down an insane path of wearing masks that don't prevent the transmission of COVID-19 and cause more health risk than ever imagined.

[Submit a Correction](#)

Strategies to Address Mis and Disinformation

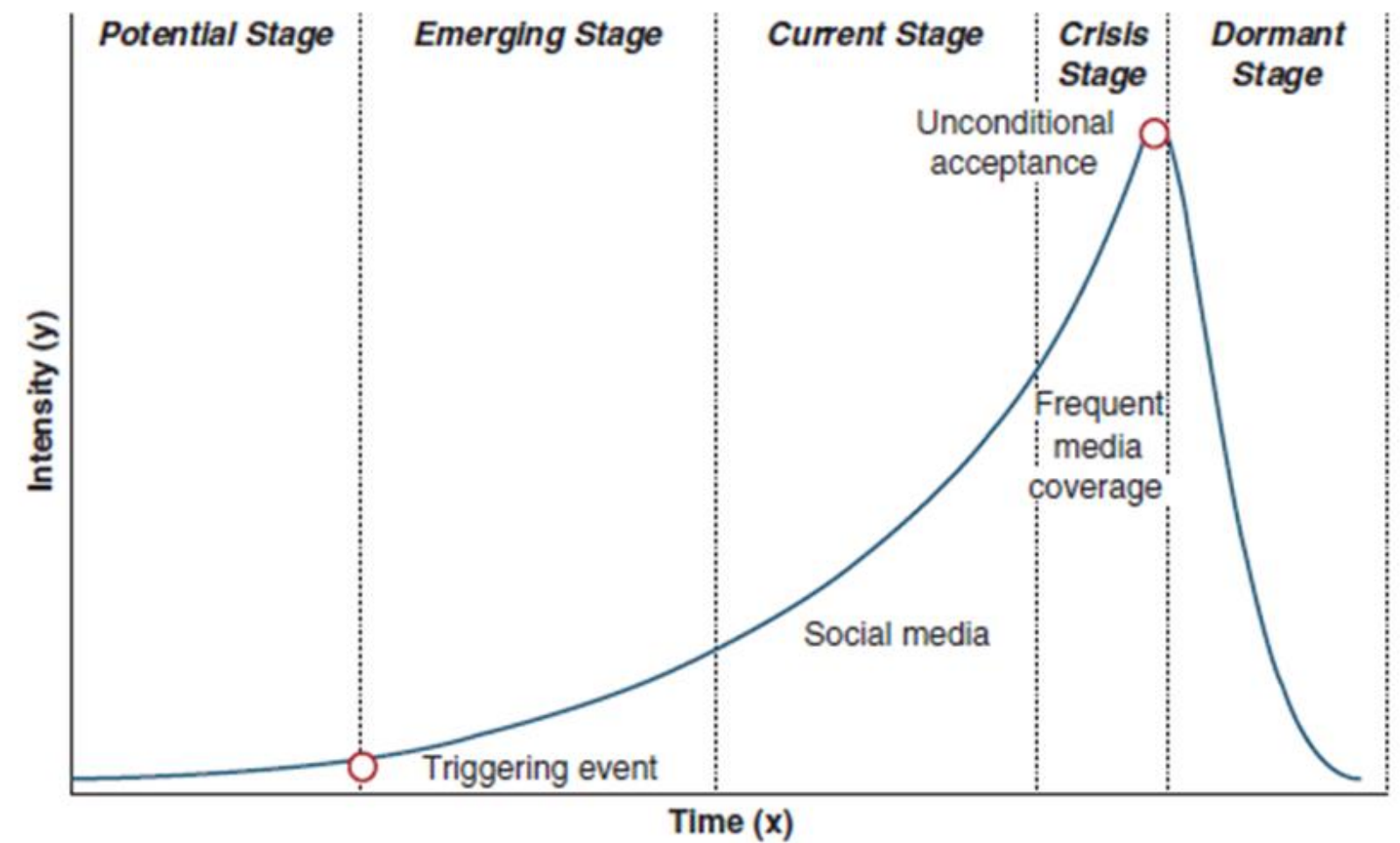
- Reread
- Research
- Care before you share
- Have a response plan
- Monitor what's said
- Build trust through authentic messaging
- Be transparent
- Be data-driven but empathetic
- Control the narrative
- Find the mis/disinformation
- Respond - or don't
- No one is stupid

Who do you worry about?

- 1% immediately favorable
- 45% leaning favorable
- 8% opinion leaders
- 45% leaning unfavorable
- 1% immediately unfavorable

FIGURE 12.1

Issue Life Cycle



Source: Reprinted with permission from Max B. Meng, MEd, MA.



Become an engaged listener

Listening well means not just understanding the words or the information being communicated, but also understanding the emotions the speaker is trying to communicate.



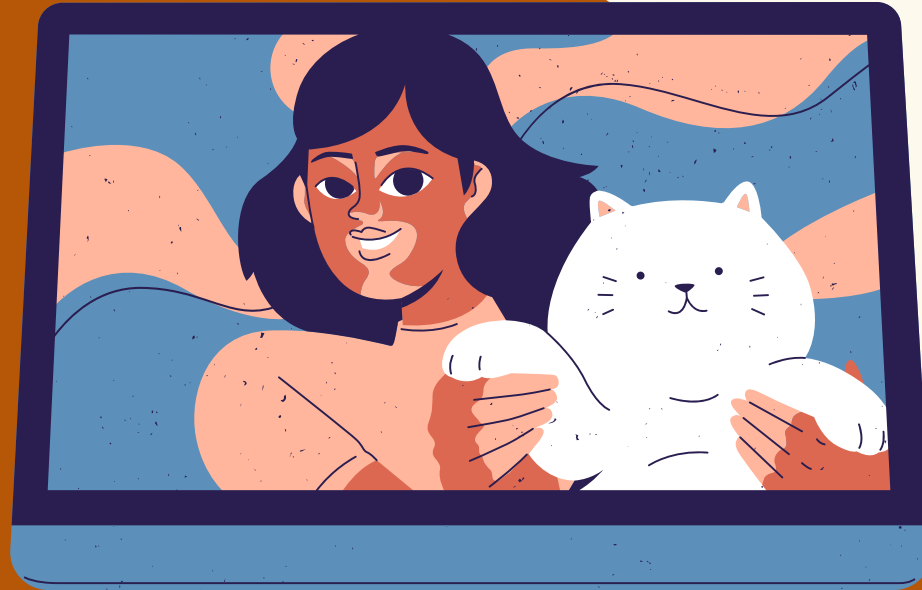
Apply positive self-talk and perception

**Positivity is the best
encouragement. It welcomes good
vibes and pleasant outlook in all
communication.**



Use appropriate language

Tailor the words you will use based on your audience or listener. Keep it simple or understandable.



Be Open

Suspend your own judgment, ideas, and beliefs. Give the speaker time to develop and express his/her ideas or point before you conclude if the message has any value, little value, or none at all.



Give and accept feedback

Feedback keeps the communication going. Respond to what has been heard. Keep an open mind and avoid overreacting emotionally to a message or feedback.



Find Common Ground

Often we don't take the time to get to the root of the problem. We also don't think we have anything in common when in fact we do.



Present Information

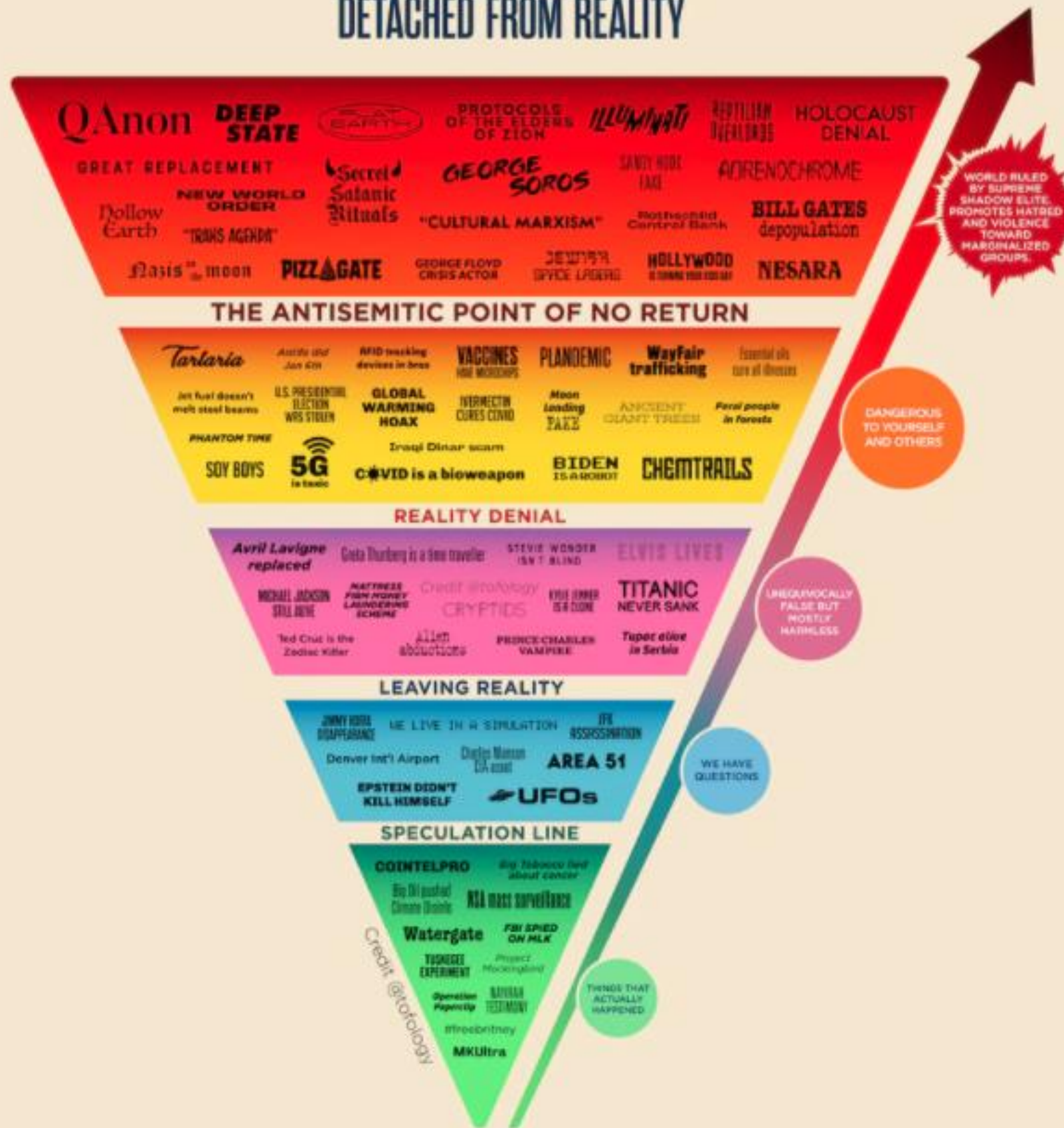
It's important to know your audience. Will they be moved by facts and figures? Do they need stories and anecdotes? Other?



Pay attention to nonverbal signals

Feedback keeps the communication going. Respond to what has been heard. Keep an open mind and avoid overreacting emotionally to a message or feedback.

DETACHED FROM REALITY



GROUNDING IN REALITY

Credit: @otology

Do you like to play games? How evil are you?

[Go Viral!](#)

Can you protect yourself against Covid-19 mis and disinformation?

[Cranky Uncle](#)

Can you build resilience to mis and disinformation?

[Bad News](#)

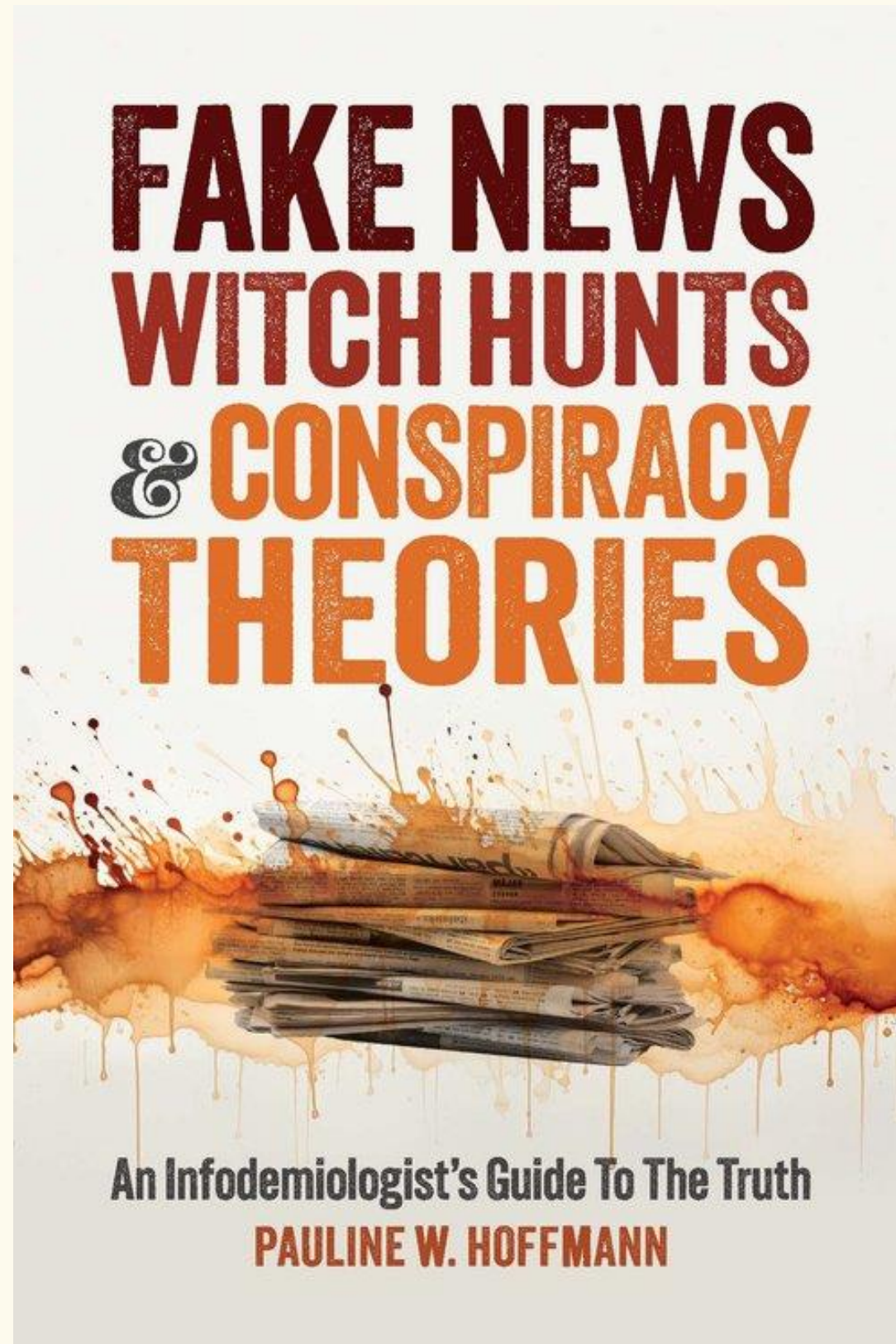
How good are you at creating disinformation campaigns? Let your evil side shine!

[Fake It to Make It](#)

Up your evil street cred by creating a site designed to disinform.

Resources

- [WHO Mythbusters](#)
- [News Literacy Project](#)
- [Misinfo Rx](#)
- [American Association for the Advancement of Science](#)
- [The Media Manipulation Casebook](#)
- [AFP-Fact Check](#) (Agence France-Presse)
- [PolitiFact](#)
- [UC Berkeley Info](#)



www.datadoyenne.com

www.pwhoffmann.com