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### **News & Media Literacy**

#### Objectives:

- Understand the historical roots of misinformation & disinformation
- Learn how to fact check news sites and find credible information
- Learn how to identify misinformation on social media websites like Facebook and Twitter
- Understand bias, balance, and fairness in news
- Learn about the power and politics of information
- Understand “whose news” and “who decides what’s newsworthy”

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# News & Media-Literacy Quiz

1. Identify three ways to spot fake news.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Which of the following are things not to do in order to validate a site? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

a) Use search order to determine credibility

d) Identify who supports the site

b) Check what other sites are saying

e) Verify the URL

c) Research the sources of the site

3. Which of the following are not reputable sites to help fact-check? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

a) [www.snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com)

d) [www.checkthefacts.gov](http://www.checkthefacts.gov)

b) [www.factcheck.com](http://www.factcheck.com)

e) [www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/)

c) [www.politifact.com](http://www.politifact.com)

4. Short answer: Describe a historical example of fake news.

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5. Who can publish a news story online?

a) Only experts

d) Journalists

b) Anyone

e) Researchers

c) Accredited professors

6. In order to verify the credibility of an article, what are some key questions you should ask yourself?

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## Open-Ended Questions

7. What is confirmation bias, and why is it important to pay attention to?

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8. Why would one normally leave a site to verify it?

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9. Why is “fake news” problematic, and what is the value of accurate news?

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## 10. Definitions

Match each term in the word bank to the definitions below.

## Word Bank:

- |                       |                        |                   |             |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| A. Clickbait          | D. Imposter content    | G. Misinformation | J. Validate |
| B. Fabricated content | E. Manipulated content | H. Propaganda     |             |
| C. False connection   | F. Media literacy      | I. Satire         |             |

- \_\_\_\_\_ The use of attention-grabbing headlines and outrageous claims to lure readers into clicking on what would normally be uninteresting content.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and communicate using information in all media forms.
- \_\_\_\_\_ False or incorrect information that is spread intentionally or unintentionally.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote or publicize a particular political cause or point of view.
- \_\_\_\_\_ To check or prove the validity or accuracy of (something).
- \_\_\_\_\_ To imitate or make fun of original news events, with no intent to deceive the reader.
- \_\_\_\_\_ When headlines, images, or captions don't accurately connect to the content or main story.
- \_\_\_\_\_ When genuine news sources are imitated.
- \_\_\_\_\_ When real information/images are manipulated to deceive the reader.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Completely fabricated information manipulated to resemble credible journalism. The purpose and intent are to drive traffic or clicks to hoax sites, hyperpartisan blogs, and the like (also known as “fake news”).

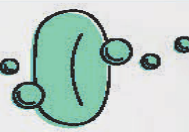
# FAKE NEWS: HISTORICAL TIMELINE

63 B.C.



Roman Emperor Augustus Octavian built a campaign of disinformation to support his victory over Marc Antony during the War of the Roman Republic.

1915



The rumor of the German Corpse Factory was a major source of anti-German propaganda during World War I. Several newspapers with "official sources" claimed that members of the German military were extracting fat from dead soldiers to make soap, food for animals, and other materials. Almost 10 years later, a British general admitted that he made up the story.

1924 - 1953



Communist leaders viewed disinformation as an effective war tactic. Stalin used this tactic to discredit perceived enemies like the United States and the Roman Catholic Church. The weapon of disinformation was also used to falsely frame civilians, which resulted in many innocent deaths.

2017



A fake news website called The Boston Tribune reported that Barack Obama's mother-in-law would receive money from the government for taking care of her grandchildren, Sasha and Malia. The story reached mainstream media but was quickly shut down, as it had no evidence and was completely false. The fake news site has since been taken down.

1475



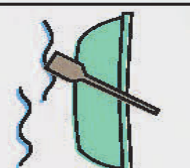
A false story by Franciscan preacher Bernardino da Feltre blamed the Jewish community for a missing child. Fifteen people were falsely accused, found guilty, and tortured, contributing to widespread anti-Semitism as the story spread.

1874



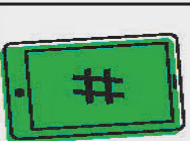
The New York Herald published an article claiming that many animals had escaped from the Central Park Zoo. There was widespread public panic, but people later found out that the story was a hoax.

1927



Dorothy Cochran Logan, a British doctor, claimed to swim the English Channel for 13 hours straight. She was celebrated by European newspapers, which wrote about her accomplishment and gave her money as a reward. The story later broke that she had secretly completed most of the journey by boat.

2016



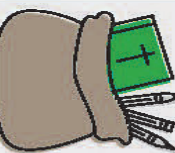
Rumors falsely accused Hillary Clinton of being at the center of a child trafficking ring. #Pizzagate

16th & 17th Centuries



The invention of the printing press led to mass distribution and sales of printed materials, regardless of their source. Gossip disguised as "news" became the norm by the 1780s, and opinion columns pushed content designed to manipulate public opinion.

1844



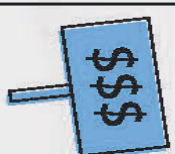
Anti-Catholic newspapers in Philadelphia published stories that falsely accused Irishmen of robbing schools and stealing Bibles, which provoked violent riots and attacks on Catholic churches.

1933-1945



Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels — one of Hitler's closest associates and a powerful force in Germany's news media — founded a newspaper called The Attack to serve his propaganda messages. Goebbels used lies and disinformation to influence the public into supporting the Nazis' horrific regime.

1991



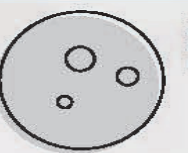
A rumor spread through American news outlets that Vladimir Lenin's body would be auctioned off for millions of dollars. The Russian government grew furious, and the editor of Forbes admitted that the story was not true.

1782



Benjamin Franklin created a fake issue of the Boston Newspaper to build sympathy for the American Revolution. The paper claimed that the Brits hired Native Americans to scalp soldiers and civilians. The false information was widely circulated by other newspapers, increasing public hostility toward Native Americans.

1835



The New York Sun ran reports of animal-like creatures inhabiting the moon in the "Great Moon Hoax." Circulation went from 8,000 to 19,000 copies, making it the world's best-selling daily newspaper at the time. Unbeknownst to the public, the hoax was a commercial strategy.

1938



Orson Welles' War of the Worlds was broadcast on the radio, and because news radio was brand-new at the time, many listeners believed the story. Allegedly, public panic erupted from people who believed an alien invasion was happening. While this rampant fear is documented in American history, it still remains unclear if this public panic truly occurred.

1983



The Patriot newspaper published the article "AIDS may invade India: Mystery disease caused by US experiments." The false story was picked up in major newspapers in 50 countries and cited an anonymous American scientist suggesting a "deadly new disease had been created by the Pentagon in a bid to develop new biological weapons."

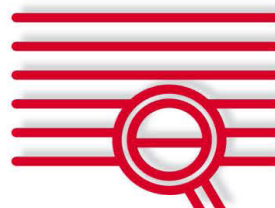


# HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS



## CONSIDER THE SOURCE

Click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact info.



## READ BEYOND

Headlines can be outrageous in an effort to get clicks. What's the whole story?



## CHECK THE AUTHOR

Do a quick search on the author. Are they credible? Are they real?



## SUPPORTING SOURCES?

Click on those links. Determine if the info given actually supports the story.



## CHECK THE DATE

Reposting old news stories doesn't mean they're relevant to current events.



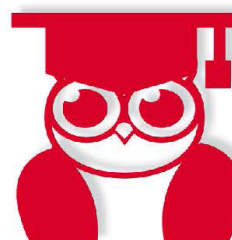
## IS IT A JOKE?

If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.



## CHECK YOUR BIASES

Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.



## ASK THE EXPERTS

Ask a librarian, or consult a fact-checking site.

# RealTrueNews

A Zero-Day Exploit In The Mainstream Media

Home Fast Check Meme About

## Fake, But Accurate

### ObamaTablets - Democrat Vote Buying

September 5, 2016 | Max Insider

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Would you vote Hillary for a brand new Samsung tablet? That highly illegal proposition seems to be what a new Hillary campaign Get-Out-The-Vote initiative seems to be banking on. This document, sent to us by someone working inside the Hillary machine appears to be a draft of a plan to blanket certain neighborhoods in fliers that promise--and deliver--an "Obama Tablet" to anyone who goes into a voting booth (or, perhaps, submits a signed mail-in ballot) and bubbles in Hillary Clinton, and takes a selfie photo with the marked ballot to prove they did it.

Not only does this violate a multitude of campaign laws, but the financing for thousands of Samsung tablets, but the cost, at about \$100.00 per tablet (retail) would run at least 20 to 30 million if they were going to try to significantly affect a national vote.

It would also, unquestionably be discovered if it were traceable to the Hillary campaign. Finally, no one we know would vote Hillary for a 100 dollar tablet. Right?

However, the information we've gotten is that the Hillary campaign is trying to replicate the success that Obama had with Obama-Phones in the black community. In this case, by attempting to use a loophole in the Bush-Era Lifeline program (which did provide free landline phones to impoverished homes), they are going to claim the tablet is a "communications device" and is therefore covered under the program and current law. While actual *vote buying* as the ad promotes is still illegal, it will likely be done through a web of unaccountable entities distributing the actual message.

These fliers will be used to blanket black neighborhoods, appealing to young people who would otherwise not vote, and have been told constantly that Mr. Trump is a racist. This kind of appeal, although probably very, very illegal, if funded with sufficient dark-money could move demographics in a few key swing states.

We asked Michael Whaley, a Democrat strategist, about this plan. He told us "This is a nearly unprecedentedly brazen attempt in kind of modern election strategy. While there has, historically, been vote-buying in the United States, this is overt and, while illegal, could wind up being litigated in the courts far past November 8th. This is the sort of thing the Clintons excel at."

He continued to note that as younger black voters "Tend not to trust Clinton any more than Trump," it is likely that the campaign is becoming strained in areas where it is planning on winning as much black support as Obama won while not under-performing Obama with whites.

"That isn't happening," Whaley said. "Right now they're doing very well with the African American vote but at the *expense* of moderate, white suburban voters. Those voters have consistently been told Trump is a racist, and they don't like that--but we're seeing, as the campaign goes on, movement back towards the center and a tighter race. In the 2012 election, the black community was heavily invested in free phones including new-model iPhones and top-end Android products. These Obama-Phones were a very successful outreach to the welfare-based black community and it looks like Clinton is trying to up her game with that same segment. Ironically, those same phones are what they'll use to take the selfie."



Trump Opens Successful War on...

September 26, 2017



ALERT: DEMS HAVE PEE TAPE

September 16, 2017



Professor: 'How Political...

September 16, 2017

Asked if it was judged illegal after the election what would happen, Whaley shrugged: "I assume if the administration is already entrenched, with a friendly attorney general and several circuit-court appointments made or pending, they'll be untouchable. We also know that while the Democratic National Committee or Dark Money group might be indicted, the charges would, as always, never quite reach Clinton herself."

In other words, by then it would be too late.

Tags: Hillary



### My Life With The Red Pill

September 15, 2017



### Conservatives 'Disappoint...

September 15, 2017

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NEWS • 11.26.10

Black Man Does 8 Years

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# Frustrated Obama Sends Nation Rambling 75,000-Word E-Mail



WASHINGTON—Having admittedly "reached the end of [his] rope," President Barack Obama sent a rambling 75,000-word e-mail to the entire nation Wednesday, revealing deep frustrations with America's political culture, his presidency, U.S. citizens, and himself.



*The president's e-mail also CC'd a number of world leaders.*

The e-mail, which was titled "A couple things," addressed countless topics in a dense, stream-of-consciousness rant that often went on for hundreds of words without any punctuation or paragraph breaks. Throughout, the president expressed his aggravation on subjects as disparate as the war in Afghanistan, the sluggish economic recovery, his live-in mother-in-law, China's undervalued currency, Boston's Logan Airport, and tort reform.

According to its timestamp, the e-mail was sent at 4:26 a.m.

"Hey Everyone," read the first line of the president's note, which at 27 megabytes proved too large for millions of Americans' in-boxes. "I'm writing to you because I need to clear up some important issues. First and foremost, I want to say that this has nothing to do with the midterm elections because I was going to send an e-mail regardless of the outcome. However, I guess one could argue that, in the end, the midterms are an important measure of a president's overall success, though I wouldn't go so far as to call the results a referendum. Legislatively, I feel I've had a lot of success that I think history will judge quite favorably. I mean, pretty much every modern president has seen his party lose seats during a midterm, you know?"





A 150-page printout confirms that while Obama's points are generally cogent in the first quarter of the message, the increasingly chaotic spacing, multiple spelling errors, and near total lack of commas rendered the later portions almost impossible to parse.

Excerpts indicate an erratic use of capitalized and underlined words, with the phrase "Stopped a second Great Depression" mentioned 14 times in a bolded red font double the size of surrounding text. In addition, the e-mail contained multiple links to the Wikipedia entry for Social Security and line graphs of Ronald Reagan's year-by-year approval ratings.

Because Obama copied and pasted some critical passages directly from right-wing editorials and personal blogs, the e-mail included formatting irregularities that caused many citizens to receive a message in which all of the apostrophes were replaced with question marks. Moreover, some software flagged it as spam.

"I don?t mean to be rude, but I thought we were all on the same page about helath care reform," the 29th paragraph of Obama's e-mail read in part. "It was part of my platform. You all knew I was goingt o pursue it when you elected me. And just real fast, going back on what I said earlier, the economic stimulus cut taxes for 95% of Americans. It didn't raise them. It cut them. You people need to look at facts and stop litnening to all the right wing crap out there. By the way, we're basically out of Iraq now. You?re welcome."

"JESUS CHRIST, WE LOST OVER @ MILLION JOBS BEFOREE I EVEN TOOK OFFICE!!!11!" reads a sentence occupying a large white space between two massive chunks of texts, one of which was a 6,500-word tangent on the Muslim community center being built two blocks from the former World Trade Center site.

According to White House sources, Obama "snapped" late Tuesday afternoon when a staffer reminded him he was scheduled to take a call from incoming Speaker of the House John Boehner. At that point, a visibly disgusted Obama was observed slowly repeating the words "House Speaker Boehner" before ordering everyone to leave the Oval Office, where he sat typing and, according to some, banging angrily on his keyboard for the next five hours.

When White House Chief of Staff Pete Rouse urged the president to sleep on the e-mail, Obama told him he had already sent it.

"In terms of fulfilling campaign promises I think I've actually done a pretty good job in terms of fulfilling campaign," Obama wrote in response to an anonymous comment made to a post by



reform too—trust me it is still a priority because "TOGETHER WE CAN & MUST EMBRACE CLEAN ENERGY""

"Yes we can!" the e-mail concluded. "Ugh, you know what? Forget it. Believe what you want. Yours, Barack."

Thus far the response from the American public has been subdued, though a sixth of the populace did not even receive the e-mail because the message generated 50 million mailer-daemon delivery failure notifications.

"I tried reading [Obama's] e-mail, but it was just way too long," said 48-year-old Sophia Washington of Moraine, OH, adding that because her computer displayed the text all on one line, she had to scroll from left to right in order to read it. "I just ended up skimming to see if my name was in there. It wasn't, but I did notice that my daughter can stay on my insurance for one more year. That's great. I think that's because the Republicans won the midterms."

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INFOGRAPHIC • 9.27.17

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## Arguments For And Against Single Payer Healthcare



Paul Ryan Uses Visual Aids to Defend House Record to Hannity, Throws McConnell Under The Bus

Peyton Manning Tosses Cold Water on Potential Senate Run: 'Zero Consideration'

Meghan McCain Reportedly to Join The View

Russians Reportedly Bought Black Lives Matter Facebook Ad Targeting Ferguson and Baltimore

Stephen Curry Blasts *Sports Illustrated* for Not Including Kaepernick on 'Sports United' Cover: 'Terrible'

159

## FoxNation.com Reposts Anti-Obama Article From *The Onion*, Doesn't Mention It's A Joke

by [Jon Bershad](#) | 11:55 am, November 26th, 2010

Most people recognize *The Onion* as the Peabody Award-winning satire machine that it is. Some people, however, don't. Which is why we get a story like [this](#) every few months. Of course, it's sometimes easy to mistake an *Onion* article for the real thing since the writers make sure to skew as close to their targets as possible. It also doesn't hurt when real news outlets reprint the satirists' work and decide not to let their readers know it's a joke, as Fox Nation [did today](#).

CULTURE November 26, 2010

### Frustrated Obama Sends Nation Rambling 75,000-Word E-Mail

149 123



Yes, the Fox Nation editors were apparently so enamored with an *Onion* piece from today entitled ["Frustrated Obama Sends Nation Rambling 75,000-Word E-Mail"](#) that they reposted the first two

paragraphs in their culture section with nary a sign as to its fictional nature. The only clue that this wasn't real (besides a quick peek at your inbox to confirm that **Barack Obama** hasn't been emailing you) was a link at the bottom instructing readers to go to [TheOnion.com](#) for the real story. This tiny link was, unfortunately, not enough for the vast majority of FN readers. At least, that's the way it seems from the comments section.

Here's a sampling:

### ALSO ON MEDIAITE

Some 12-Year-Old on Fox & Friends: Trump 'Done More Good in the Past 6 Months Than ...

MORE FROM AROUND THE WEB by Zergnet



"If this story is correct, that he did send out this email, it is very concerning about his current state of mental health. I am surprised he would be allowed to send something like this out and if he is not functioning very well why there isn't some attention being paid to his current state."

"Hey, you fraud: Get out. Your presidency is an affront to the exceptionalism of America. Pathetic loser."

"HAHAHAHAHAHA OBUMMA – Un-raveled. EPIC FAILURE. IMPEACH it."

In fact, at the time of this post's writing, you have to scroll through 20 comments to find someone who realizes the story's fake. Five comments below that there's actually someone (sarcastically?) saying they emailed The Onion for confirmation on the story.

Whether Fox Nation reposted this story without a disclaimer accidentally, as a prank, or because of something more sinister, we'll leave up to you decide. However, Fox Nation should be aware that, sad as it may be, not everyone is familiar with the brilliance that is *The Onion*. And for every one of my aunts who forwards me this article today, I'm going to be very, very angry at them.

Here's a screenshot of [the post](#) before it's (hopefully) taken down. Click through twice to get full size:

Have a tip we should know? [tips@mediaite.com](mailto:tips@mediaite.com)


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 **Shocker! NBC Poll on Trump's Approval Rating With Millennials is Absolutely Brutal**

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#### TIPS



**Have a tip or story idea? Email us. Or to keep it anonymous, click here.**





CULTURE November 26, 2016

## Frustrated Obama Sends Nation Rambling 75,000-Word E-Mail



Menu

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NEWSLETTER



Having admittedly "reached the end of [his] rope," President Barack Obama sent a rambling 75,000-word e-mail to the entire nation Wednesday, revealing deep frustrations with America's political culture, his presidency, U.S. citizens, and himself.

The e-mail, which was titled "A couple things," addressed countless topics in a dense, stream-of-consciousness rant that often went on for hundreds of words without any punctuation or paragraph breaks. Throughout, the president expressed his aggravation on subjects as disparate as the war in Afghanistan, the sluggish economic recovery, his live-in mother-in-law, China's undervalued currency, Boston's Logan Airport, and tort reform.

[READ THE FULL STORY AT THEONION.COM](#)

Showing 20 of 123 comments

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?...apparently he inhaled.

[Like](#)[jimonfox](#) 0 minutes ago

He can write 75000 words...but he couldn't write any of his own books?

[Like](#)[rdk36532](#) 0 minutes ago

"Frustrated"? Call it like it is. Incompetent.

[Like](#)[jimonfox](#) 1 minute ago

Malignant Narcissism Gone Wild!.....now available on DVD with a signed copy of the original e-mail.

[Like](#)[jimonfox](#) 3 minutes ago

75000 words to Obama...is just a "Hi...how you been?" to us.

[Like](#)[jimonfox](#) 4 minutes ago

75000 words....that was probably just his opening line...

[Like](#)[femnp](#) 5 minutes ago

If this story is correct, that he did send out this email, it is very concerning about his current state of mental health. I am surprised he would be allowed to send something like this out and if he is not functioning very well why there isn't some attention being paid to his current state.

1 person liked this [Like](#)[im\\_griff](#) 2 minutes ago [in reply to femnp](#)

I said before, if the story is correct - it is written evidence that can be evaluated by professionals - as for being allowed to send it out - perhaps that is how staff wanted us to find out, none can be blamed

[Like](#)[reflexes123](#) 5 minutes ago

HAHAHAHAHA OBUMMA - Un-raveled. EPIC FAILURE. IMPEACH IL

1 person liked this [Like](#)[theoutlawjosephwhales](#) 5 minutes ago

Hey, you fraud: Get out. Your presidency is an affront to the exceptionalism of America. Pathetic loser.

1 person liked this [Like](#)[professorbrown](#) 7 minutes ago

Wow! I can't believe how many readers think that this is REAL! I can't believe that FoxNews is broadcasting this as REAL news! This link will be removed within an hour. That is if anyone with a brain is working at FoxNews today...

It's "The Onion" for God's sake!! We as a country are hurting when the right can tell the difference...

159 Comments

Mediaite

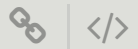
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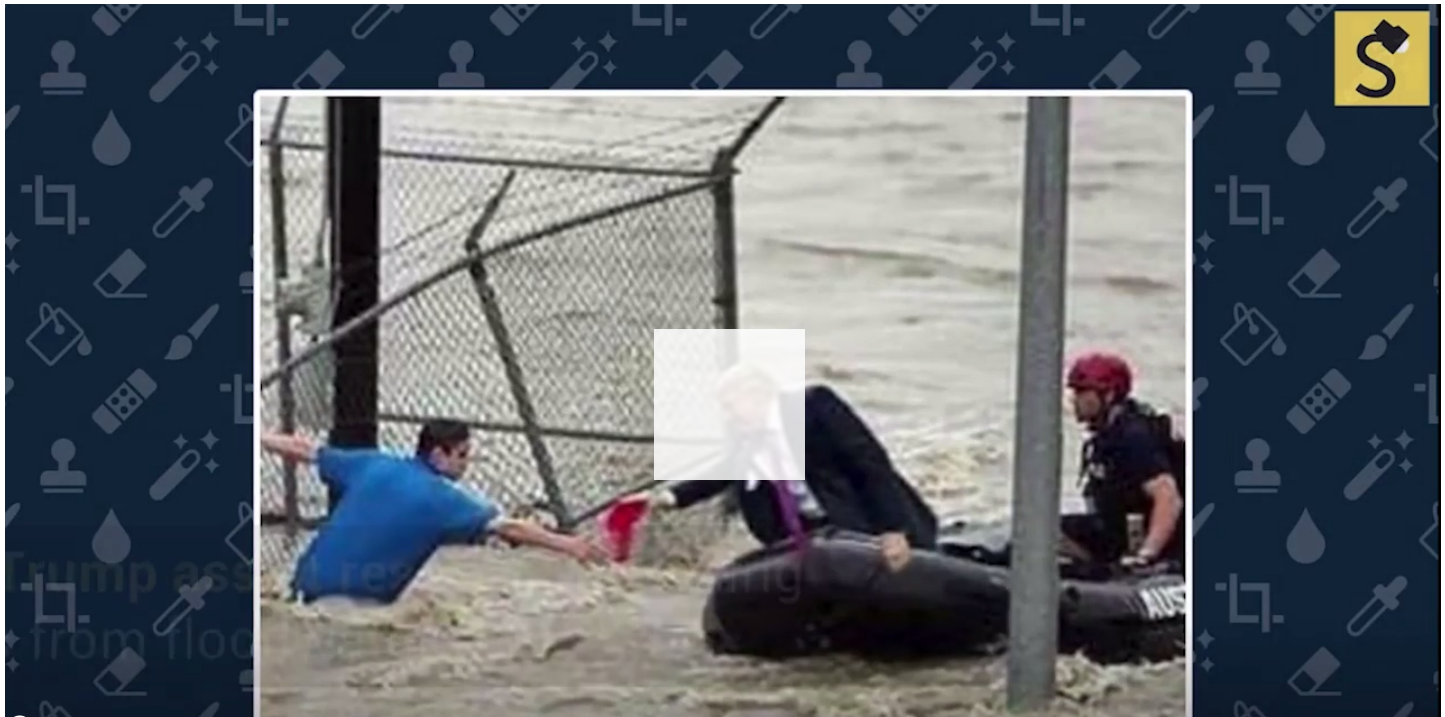
OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS

Name



## from Floodwaters?

A doctored photograph appears to show the President on a raft in Texas saving a flood victim.



0:00 / 0:58



### CLAIM

A photograph shows President Donald Trump reaching out to rescue a Harvey flooding victim.

### RATING



### ORIGIN

In the days following Hurricane Harvey, which caused catastrophic flooding in southeast Texas in late August 2017, an image began circulating online that appeared to show President Donald Trump leaning over the side of a raft, reaching out to a stranded flood victim.

<<http://static.snopes.com/app/uploads/2017/08/a-6.jpg>>

Tellingly, the President is pictured wearing a suit and no life vest — an unlikely scenario in a dangerous flood. Presidents also generally do not personally take part in rescue operations after disasters.

The image, unsurprisingly, was digitally altered. The original <http://i2.cdn.cnn.com/cnnnext/dam/assets/150526102136-02-severe-weather-0526-super-169.jpg> can be found on CNN's web site, and actually depicts three rescuers with the Austin Fire Department reaching out to help a man clinging to a chain-link fence out of the water:



President Trump did visit <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/08/29/photos-president-donald-j-trump-and-first-lady-melania-trumps-visit> the storm-ravaged region on 29 August 2017, but he did not go out on floodwaters to rescue victims.

Got a tip or a rumor? Contact us [here](http://www.snopes.com/contact/) <http://www.snopes.com/contact/>.

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**Fact Checker:** [Bethania Palma](http://www.snopes.com/author/bethania/) <http://www.snopes.com/author/bethania/>

**Published:** Sep 1st, 2017

**Sources:**

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Liptak, Kevin, and Diamond, Jeremy. "Trump Pledges Storm Recovery 'Better Than Ever Before.'" CNN. 29 August 2017.

Hawkins, Derek, and Andrews, Travis M. "Trump and Harvey: 'There Was Something Missing' From What the President Said." *The Washington Post*. 30 August 2017.

Carroll, Rory, et al. "Receding Waters Reveal Harvey's Devastation as Death Toll Reaches 35." *The Guardian*. 31 August 2017.