

2017 Media “Missteps” (“Lies”)

Dec. 26: Stop Making Fund of Me

The Claim: Republicans funded the Trump-Russia dossier.

The Source: CNN's Evan Perez.

The Facts: GOP donor Paul Singer contracted Fusion GPS via the Washington Free Beacon during the 2016 primaries to perform opposition research on Trump and the other Republican candidates. The research that was done for that specific project is ultimately unrelated to the so-called "Russia dossier."

Dec. 21: Dismissed!

The Claim: A judge has dismissed a suit accusing President Trump of profiting through his office, ruling that the president had not violated the Emoluments Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

The Source: [The New York Times](#).

The Facts: The judge didn't quite clear Trump of the charges. Rather, the judge said he found the plaintiffs lacked standing. It's a small thing, and this isn't really a major mistake on the Times' part. That said, the reason this since-corrected misfire is so notable is because it stands as one of the extremely rare examples of a media misstep that favored Trump.

Dec. 19: Begging the Begin

The Claim: The GOP "begged" Democrats to work with them on tax reform, according to White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders.

The Source: A headline published by [the Hill](#).

The Facts: She said no such thing. Rather, Sanders said Democrats should have been "begging" the GOP to work with them on the bill.

Dec. 18: Off the Rails

The Claim: A deadly Amtrak derailment in Tacoma, Wash., that killed three people is another example of how the GOP puts tax cuts for the wealthy ahead of funding for infrastructure and technology advancements that could save lives.

The Source: A tweet by [MSNBC's Joy Reid](#) that ended up being shared by more than 10,000 social media users.

The Facts: The derailment happened on a new track built specifically for a brand-new high-speed rail. Reid issued a correction eventually noting the facts of the deadly derailment.

Dec. 15: How Orwellian

The Claim: Under the Trump administration, the CDC has issued a list of banned words, including "fetus," "transgender," "vulnerable," "entitlement," "diversity," "evidence-based" and "science-based."

The Source: [The Washington Post](#).

The Facts: There is no ban, and there was no attempt by right-leaning ideologues to strip supposedly politically charged language from the CDC's lexicon. Rather, some bureaucrats suggested that certain words be removed from budget proposals so as to ensure specific programs would get requested funding "The Times confirmed some details of the report with several officials, although a few suggested that the proposal was not so much a ban on words but recommendations to avoid some language to ease the path toward budget approval by Republicans," the paper reported.

Dec. 12: Fox Overhype

The Claim: Fox News has obtained roughly **10,000** messages sent by [two anti-Trump FBI officials](#) previously involved in special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation.

The Source: Fox News.

The Facts: Fox obtained the same 375 texts that were made available to Congress and the press prior to Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein's testimony before Congress. The cable news network did not, in fact, have access to additional materials that could've have gone a long way to [disquieting concerns](#) regarding the fact that the text scandal hinges entirely on out-of-context excerpts taken from private conversations spanning several months.

Dec. 11: Pentagon With the Wind

The Claim: "The Pentagon says it will allow transgender people to enlist in the military beginning Jan. 1, despite Trump's opposition."

The Source: The Associated Press.

The Facts: Nope.

"Just confirmed with the lead lawyer on this case: This tweet is WRONG. The Pentagon will *respect a court order* requiring transgender enlistment on Jan. 1. That's it. The order will likely be appealed before then," reported Slate's [Mark Joseph Stern](#).

"No, the Pentagon did not overrule Trump on the trans troops ban," he added. "I suppose the tweet could be technically correct under an EXTREMELY generous reading of it — but even then, highly irresponsible, because anyone without our background knowledge of the case would misunderstand it."

Dec. 8: Audience Size Twitter is the Best Twitter

The Claim: President Trump appeared before a nearly empty arena in December to stump for Republican Alabama Senate candidate Roy Moore.

The Source: The Washington Post's [Dave Weigel](#).

The Facts: Weigel shared a picture on Twitter claiming President Trump's appearance on behalf of Moore had attracted a pitifully small crowd. Weigel was wrong, and the picture he shared was taken prior to the rally's official start time. Weigel [deleted the inaccurate claim](#) and apologized.

Dec. 8: "A Colossal Screw Up"

The Claim: Donald Trump and his inner circle received advance notice during the 2016 presidential election of WikiLeaks' plans to dump thousands of hacked emails belonging to Democratic National Committee staffers and Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta.

The Source: [CNN](#), [MSNBC](#), and [CBS News](#).

The Facts: The email that supposedly showed the 2016 GOP nominee and his team received advance notice of the email dump was actually sent *after* the hacked correspondences were made publicly available. CBS, MSNBC, and CNN each reported separately that Trump and his team were given a heads-up, according to an email sent on Sept. 4. In reality, the email in question was sent on Sept. 14, after the emails were published online.

The difference between Sept. 4 and Sept. 14 is the difference between someone flagging already public information and someone quietly slipping the GOP nominee and his team advance access to hacked correspondences.

In short, the since-amended reports are little more than a "colossal fuck up" for their respective newsrooms, as on CNN reporter put it for the *Washington Examiner*.

Dec. 5 and Dec. 6: Deutsche Marks

The Claim: Special counsel Robert Mueller has subpoenaed President Trump's bank records.

The Source: [Bloomberg News](#) and the [Wall Street Journal](#).

The Facts: Both newsrooms eventually walked back their supposed scoops and the stories that remain are now about Trump *associates*.

"Trump's Deutsche Bank records said to be subpoenaed by Mueller," read the original Bloomberg [headline](#). A day later, Bloomberg amended the story and the headline so that it now reads, "Deutsche Bank Records Said to Be Subpoenaed by Mueller."

The Wall Street Journal, for its part, published a headline originally titled, "Trump's Deutsche Bank Records Subpoenaed by Mueller."

That headline was corrected eventually to read, "Mueller Subpoenas Deutsche Bank Records Related to Trump."

Dec. 4: Another Huge Russia Scoop!

The Claim: Former deputy national security adviser K.T. McFarland appears to have lied to Congress this summer when she testified about disgraced Gen. Michael Flynn's communications with the Russians, according to her personal emails.

The Source: [The New York Times](#).

The Facts: The Times has amended the article heavily since publication so that it is now mostly innuendo. The initial references to the emails have been removed, and the story now leans mostly on Sen. Cory Booker, D-N.J., who only questions whether McFarland was forthright in her congressional testimony. The report's core message has been softened considerably since its initial publication. Where the headline once declared that "McFarland Contradicted Herself on Russia Contacts," the story now reads, "A leading Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee questioned on Monday whether a high-ranking official in Donald J. Trump's transition team had been deceptive over the summer about her knowledge of discussions between Michael T. Flynn ..."

The article, which was once so sure of itself, now eases away from its original message by stating McFarland, "might have given 'false testimony' in her answers."

That's not to say the article doesn't try to pin something on the former deputy national security adviser. The wink-winking seen in the original version of the story is still there; the language is just less certain.

Dec. 3: Hatched From Thin Air

The Claim: Sen. Orrin Hatch is largely uninterested in rescuing funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program because he believes sick and lazy children do not deserve government aid.

The Source: Journalist Twitter, including [MSNBC's Joe Scarborough](#), Newsweek's [Kurt Eichenwald](#) and the Los Angeles Times' [Jamil Smith](#).

The Facts: Hatch said no such thing. Rather, he said that the "billions and billions" that are wasted on those who can help themselves make it harder to keep CHIP funded.

Hatch said in reference to welfare spending in general: "I have a rough time wanting to spend billions and billions and trillions of dollars to help people who won't help themselves, won't lift a finger and expect the federal government to do everything."

The senator also said in those same remarks that he's committed to protecting CHIP funding. Lastly, it's worth noting Sen. Hatch co-wrote the bill to extend funding for CHIP.

Dec. 2: A Huge Russia Scoop!

The Claim: K.T. McFarland conceded in a private Dec. 29 email that Russia tipped the 2016 presidential election in Donald Trump's favor.

The Source: [The New York Times](#).

The Facts: McFarland did indeed write that Russia "has just thrown the U.S.A. election to [Trump]."

However, as Times report itself noted, she most likely said this in paraphrase of Democratic criticisms of the Trump administration. The White House certainly denied she wrote it in earnest.

The Times' breathless handling of a single excerpt from her emails nevertheless set off a news cycle alleging McFarland had actually conceded Russia stole the U.S. election for Trump.

Dec. 2: A Kushner Job

The Claim: Kushner ordered Flynn to contact the Russians.

The Source: A headline published by [the Hill](#).

The Facts: White House senior adviser and Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner reportedly ordered Gen. Flynn during the transition period to contact Russian officials about a certain U.N. resolution. That's it. The headline suggests something much more ominous, but it's just not there.

Dec. 1: Lobbyists Everywhere

The Claim: More than 6,000 lobbyists worked on GOP tax reform bill.

The Source: A headline published by the Hill.

The Facts: The report itself notes that there are, "11,000 active lobbyists in the nation's capital ... and more than half of them — 6,243 — have reported working on taxes this year."

That's not quite the same thing as working specifically on the GOP's tax bill.

Dec. 1: Flynn, ABC News and Brian Ross

The Claims: Former national security advisor Gen. Michael Flynn is prepared to testify that, as a candidate, Donald Trump directed him to make contact with the Russians.

The Source: [ABC News' Brian Ross](#).

The Facts: The referenced directive came *after* the 2016 election. The president-elect reportedly ordered his transition team to contact Russia and other world leaders regarding the incoming administration's foreign policy objectives, which is standard for incoming presidents.

It took ABC eight hours to issue a correction. When it did, it characterized it incorrectly as a "[clarification](#)." Ross was suspended for his error, and subsequently banned from any further coverage of the president.

Nov. 30: Plagiarist Not

The Claim: Ivanka Trump plagiarized one of her own speeches during her visit to India

The Source: [Newsweek](#).

The Facts: Ivanka Trump didn't plagiarize a thing. She referenced her earlier, original speeches. That's called repeating yourself.

The Newsweek story has since been amended so that the headline now reads, "Ivanka Trump Recycles One of Her Own Speeches in India." The article also includes an editor's note that reads, "The headline of this story was changed to reflect that Trump reused portions of an earlier speech rather than 'plagiarized' it."

Nov. 9: Not a First

The Claim: Trump is the first president since George H.W. Bush to fail to take questions from reporters alongside his Chinese counterpart on his first visit to China.

The Source: [CNN's Jeremy Diamond](#).

The Facts: Trump is the first U.S. president since the last U.S. president to take no questions during a first trip to China. Former President Barack Obama took no questions with the Chinese president during their first meeting in China.

Nov. 6: Japan and Cars

The Claim: President Trump doesn't know Japan already builds cars in the United States.

The Source: CNN.

The Facts: The president is definitely aware Japanese businesses build cars in the U.S.

"[W]e have a couple of the great folks from two of the biggest auto companies in the world that are building new plants and doing expansions of other plants," Trump said in his address to Japanese business leaders on Nov. 6. "I also want to recognize the business leaders in the room whose confidence in the United States — they've been creating jobs — you have such confidence in the United States, and you've been creating jobs for our country for a long, long time."
He added, "Several Japanese automobile industry firms have been really doing a job. And we love it when you build cars — if you're a Japanese firm, we love it — try building your cars in the United States instead of shipping them over

Nov. 6: Don't Be So Koi

The Claim: President Trump embarrassed himself in Japan when he dumped all of his fish food during the ceremonial feeding of the palace koi.

The Source: [CNN](#), the [New York Daily News](#) the Guardian and many more.

The Facts: Full video of the event showed Trump was only following Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's lead.

The two world leaders visited the Akasaka Palace in Tokyo, where they were both given individual boxes of fish food for the traditional feeding of the palace's koi fish. The president and the prime minister spooned in their feed a little at a time. Abe then dumped the rest of his box into the pond. Trump followed suit, spooning in just a little at first, and then dumping out the remnants of his box. That's it.

Nov. 2: Kill Him Two Times

The Claim: The fact that Donald Trump called for the death penalty for vehicular terrorist Sayfullo Saipov, but not for the white man who carried out the Las Vegas shooting, suggests the U.S. president is probably racist.

The Source: GQ magazine.

The Facts: Trump probably hasn't called for the death penalty for Stephen Paddock because the Las Vegas shooter is already dead. Meanwhile, the man who killed eight people in New York City on Oct. 31 is still very much alive.

October 19: Flunking a True Statement

The Claim: No, the Clintons were not paid millions by Russia.

The Source: [Newsweek](#).

The Facts: Yes, the Clintons have accepted millions of dollars from Russian entities. Newsweek's supposed fact check came in response to [a tweet](#) from President Trump that read, "Russia sent millions to Clinton Foundation."

He is not wrong, and the Newsweek article acknowledges as much.

It acknowledges that former President Bill Clinton received a generous \$500,000 speaking fee in 2010 from a Kremlin-linked bank with ties to Uranium One, a Canadian uranium company that had mines in the U.S. The Newsweek article also acknowledges a separate [New York Times](#) report that showed Uranium One's chairman donated approximately \$2.35 million to the Clinton Foundation in four separate installments as his company was being acquired by a Russian nuclear energy firm called Rosatom.

The Newsweek article doesn't, however, acknowledge that Uranium One owners donated an estimated [\\$145 million](#) to the Clinton foundation. That particularly glaring omission is just icing on a crummy cake.

Oct. 13: Lyin' Ryan

The Claim: House Speaker Paul Ryan said it's on hurricane-ravaged Puerto Rico to get back on its own two feet.

The Source: The Hill, MSNBC's [Joy Reid](#), NowThis News' [Matt Saccaro](#), SB Nation's [Marc Normandin](#).

The Facts: Ryan wasn't being callous about the situation in Puerto Rico, nor did he dismiss the issue as merely a problem for the small unincorporated U.S. territory.

"There's a humanitarian crisis that has to be attended to. And this is an area where the federal government has a responsibility, and we're acting on it...Yes, we need to make sure that Puerto Rico can begin to stand on its own two feet," he said.

Ryan added, "They've already had tough fiscal problems to begin with," the House Speaker told reporters this week. "We've got to do more to help Puerto Rico rebuild its own economy so that it can be self-sufficient."

Oct. 2: The Mentally Ill and Guns

The Claim: Republicans have made it easier for the mentally ill to buy guns.

The Source: An oldie, recycled most recently by Washington Post columnist [E.J. Dionne](#) and Politico's [Michael Grunwald](#).

The Facts: This is a malicious smear.

Here's what happened: Congress voted to overturn a last-minute Obama-era regulation that would give the Social Security Administration the power to revoke a person's Second Amendment rights based on whether

he receives disability for a mental impairment that keeps him from working, or if he "[uses] a representative payee to help manage their benefits."

The repeal of the Obama-era regulation, "doesn't allow people to buy guns who have been properly adjudicated by a court of law as mentally ill or unstable," as my [Washington Examiner colleague David Freddoso](#) explained at the time.

"The Obama-era rule was designed to take away people's rights without due process of law. It would have flagged the names of people who, for example, have an anxiety disorder or depression which keeps them from working, and who, as the SSA puts it, 'need help in managing [their] personal money affairs,'" he added. "As the many non-political mental health and autism advocacy groups that supported the House action noted, there is no link between these factors and a propensity for violence."

Republican lawmakers were joined in their opposition to the regulation by a number of [disability and civil liberty advocacy groups](#), including the American Association of People with Disabilities, the Arc of the United States, the Association of Mature American Citizens, the Autistic Self-Advocacy Network, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the National Council on Disability, the National Disability Rights Network and the American Civil Liberties Union.

Like the GOP, these organizations held that the Obama gun regulation posed a threat to civil liberties. They also argued that the now-defunct regulation stigmatized the disabled.

Opposition wasn't about making it "easier" for the mentally unstable to get their hands on firearms. Only an intentionally uncharitable read of the issue would take someone to that conclusion. Opposition was about restoring due process rights to people caught up in the now-defunct regulation's overly broad guidelines.

Oct. 2: Gun Lift

The Claim: The House is voting to lift restrictions on gun suppressors just days after a mass shooting event in Clarke County, Nevada, left 58 dead and hundreds more wounded.

The Source: CNN chief national security correspondent and former Obama State Department official Jim Sciutto, NBC News' [Rebecca Sanchez](#) and Mic's [Emily C. Singer](#)]

The Facts: The House had no plans that week to address [H.R.3668](#), which includes a provision that would loosen federal restrictions on gun suppressors. It never did.

This story appears to have originated with a San Francisco Chronicle report titled, "[Pair of pro-gun bills on move in House](#)." The article suggests the House "could pass" the SHARE Act as soon as this week, but it never provides proof of this claim. The closest that the report gets to backing the allegation is when it cites House Minority Leader Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., who said last week that the House had the votes to pass H.R.3668.

A review of the [House's legislative itinerary for the week beginning Oct. 2](#) showed the measure was not scheduled for consideration. A handout provided to reporters on Sept. 29 by the office of Majority Leader Rep. Kevin McCarthy's, R-Calif., which is responsible for setting the House's legislative agenda, also showed no signs of the SHARE Act. A source in McCarthy's office also confirmed the bill was never slated for consideration that week.

In short, this particular narrative is a total fabrication.

Sept. 25: Betsy DeVos and Private Jets

The Claim: "Education Secretary DeVos uses a private jet to fly around the country to tour schools and attend other work events" and "DeVos uses private jet for work-related travel."

The Source: The Associated Press and the Hill.

The Facts: DeVos uses – ahem – *her own private jet at her own expense* for work-related travel.

She pays for almost everything. There is practically no cost to taxpayers. In fact, her to-date submitted travel expenses amount to a mere \$184. Though the AP and Hill reports actually mentioned these details, the headlines were misleading enough as to have kicked off the usual cycle of online rage mobs.

September 5: Stepping on Rakes

The Claim: Top White House adviser Kellyanne Conway doesn't know how to read a news report.

The Source: Journalist Twitter.

The Facts: Conway [published a note](#) on Twitter that read, "In 1300-word story, NYT Fails To Mention Federal Criminal Defendant Bob Menendez Is A Democrat."

Her tweet linked to [a Daily Caller](#) report titled, "NYT Writes 1300 Words About Dem Senator's Corruption Trial Without Mentioning He's A Democrat."

The Daily Caller article and Conway are 100 percent accurate.

The initial run of the Times' report on the New Jersey senator appeared online without a single mention of his party affiliation. Social media users noted the glaring omission, and a few even accused the Times of deliberately shielding the Democratic Party from the Menendez scandal.

The Times eventually updated its story to include that he's a Democrat, which several journalists apparently didn't notice or understand. Instead, they dumped on Conway for saying something that was true because *they* didn't understand what happened.

September 1: A Good Scrubbing

The Claim: Trump administration officials "quietly" removed a 2014 sexual assault report from the White House website

The Source: The Huffington Post, [Teen Vogue](#), [the Root](#), [the New York Times' Women in the World page](#).

The Facts: No one was "quietly" trying to undo the previous administration's work on sexual assault reporting. White House administrators were merely adhering to policies established several years ago during the Clinton and Bush eras.

The White House website is normally wiped clean with each new administration. The older pages are archived elsewhere. In fact, the Obama-era issues pages, including the sexual assault report, are still available at the archived version of the [Obama White House website](#). This is how it was done during the transition periods between presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush and between Bush and Barack Obama.

August 31: Fake News Comes For Mnuchin

The Claim: U.S. Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin may scrap plans to replace Andrew Jackson on the \$20 with abolitionist hero Harriet Tubman.

The Source: The Hill, Vice, Journalist Twitter.

The Facts: Mnuchin never committed to any such thing. He only declined to comment specifically on the Treasury's plans for the \$20. He redirected his interviewer to a different subject, which is what government officials do when they're not prepared to speak on a specific subject.

"Let me just comment on, you know, ultimately we will be looking at this issue. It's not something that I'm focused on at the moment, but the number one issue why we change the currency is to stop counterfeiting. So the issues of why we change it will be primarily related to what we need to do for security purposes, and I've received classified briefings on that. That's what I'm focused on for the moment," he said
He added after some pressing from Liesman, "people have been on the bills for a long period of time. This is something we'll consider."

Aug. 1: Affirmative!

The Claim: "The Trump administration is preparing to redirect resources of the Justice Department's civil rights division toward investigating and suing universities over affirmative action admissions policies deemed to discriminate against white applicants."

The Source: The [New York Times](#), [the Washington Post](#) and the [Wall Street Journal](#).

The Facts: DOJ officials published a job posting to the Civil Rights Division requesting volunteers to help investigate [a complaint filed in 2015](#) by 64 Asian-American groups. The complaint alleged discrimination against Asian college applicants by Harvard University. The "white applicants" language appears to have originated from rumor or from a poor understanding of the DOJ documents viewed by the Times, the Journal and the Post, which have yet to correct their respective report.

The Asian-American Coalition for Education, which filed the complaint against Harvard, was pleased with the news, saying in a statement, "Today, we are very encouraged that the Trump Administration will start looking into this issue, providing Asian-American students with equal protection under the laws."

July 10: ComeyLeaks

The Claim: Former FBI director James Comey's personal memos detailing private conversations with President Trump contained top-secret information.

The Source: Fox News, twisting original reporting from the Hill.

The Facts: The report upon which Fox News hosts based their claims said no such thing.

The Hill report never stated Comey leaked "top secret" information to an associate. There's also no indication the Trump administration even classified the Comey memos as "top secret."

The Hill only went so far as to suggest that it's *possible* Comey may have maybe leaked something classified. It all depends, really, on which memos were leaked, and whether they were classified at the time of leaking. The Hill doesn't commit to answering these questions, and he report is carefully worded for a reason.

To be clear, the Hill report, titled "Comey's private memos on Trump conversations contained classified material," does not appear to be outright false, though the headline does oversell what the report actually says.

July 6: A Monumentally False And Stupid News Cycle

The Claim: House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wisc., has imposed a puritan dress code on female congressional reporters.

The Source: Yahoo News, Fortune, Glamor, Esquire, Bustle, Mashable, Newsweek, Mic, Jezebel, Vogue.

The Facts: The Speaker's lobby dress code is decades old. Ryan has nothing to do with what it requires of members of the press, including that men wear jackets and ties and that women dress "appropriately," meaning no sleeveless dresses or open-toe shoes.

The dress code is loosely defined, and enforcement depends on who is doing the enforcing. The code is not new, it applies [specifically to the Speaker's lobby](#) and it has been this way for many, many, many years.

July 6: Correcting Trump When He's Not Wrong

The Claim: President Trump is trying to mislead on the Russia scandal by criticizing inaccurate reports alleging all 17 intelligence agencies agreed Moscow interfered in the U.S. election to get him elected.

The Source: [The New York Times' Maggie Haberman](#).

The Facts: Trump was correct in noting [newsrooms got the number wrong](#). He was also correct in suggesting newsrooms conflated two separate intelligence assessments.

Worse than getting the figure wrong, however, is that newsgroups seem to have borrowed the bungled number from the 2016 Clinton campaign.

On [Oct. 7, 2016](#), the Department of Homeland Security, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the Federal Bureau of Investigation released a joint statement claiming Russia had directed cyber-attacks on the Democratic National Committee and Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman, John Podesta. This assessment said nothing about whether the attacks were done to benefit Trump.

Several months later, on [Jan. 6](#), the ODNI published a second assessment. This one stated Russia not only spearheaded the cyber-attacks, but that it did so with the explicit purpose of aiding Trump's election efforts. As in October, the ODNI did not say the Jan. 6 assessment was the conclusion of all 17 agencies.

In fact, former DNI chief James Clapper stated explicitly during his congressional testimony on [May 8](#) that the January conclusion was the work of *three* intelligence agencies acting "under the aegis" of his office.

Nevertheless, both the [Associated Press](#) and the [New York Times](#) claimed in June that all 17 agencies shared the Jan. 6 conclusion. The Times reported this in a June 25 article authored by Maggie Haberman. The AP, for its part, reported on June 2, June 26 and June 29 that all the branches shared the Jan. 6 assessment.

The AP and the Times covered the new assessment exactly as they covered the Oct. 7 statement, meaning they repeated the 17 branches line without verifying whether it was actually true.

Both newsrooms issued corrections for their June stories, because someone must have realized they were still parroting a line left over from [Clinton's 2016 campaign](#).

July 6: Trump Snub

The Claim: Poland's first lady snubbed President Trump this summer.

The Source: A random Twitter users, who was repeated soon by dozens of journalist and their newsrooms.

The Facts: The video upon which this news cycle hinged was abbreviated and lacked context. Though the full video included a moment where it looked as if Trump *was* snubbed, the video also makes it clear it wasn't intentional. It appears Agata Kornhauser-Duda first made eye contact with first lady Melania Trump, they shook hands and then Poland's first lady moved immediately to shake the U.S. president's hand. That's it. That's all of it. That's the entire story.

July 4: The Great DPRK News Service Rides Again

The Claim: After a ballistic missile launch in July, the North Korean government issued a statement that read, "Imbecilic Americans drunkenly fire missiles into East Sea of Korea, demonstrating near total ignorance of ballistic science."

The Source: [The New York Times](#).

The Facts: The North Korean government said no such thing. The Times cited a parody Twitter account called DPRK News Service.

June 28: Two's Company

The Claim(s): Vice's Motherboard published an article on May 19 claiming Disney chiefs were unsure about whether President Trump's animatronic figure should be given a speaking role at Disney World's famed "[Hall of Presidents](#)." The news group published a second article on June 26 alleging the president's team insisted on writing the robot's speech.

The Sources: Vice's Motherboard.

The Facts: On June 28, Motherboard's editorial team retracted both articles after Disney responded publicly to say the stories were false. In place of both since-deleted articles is an [editor's note](#) that reads, "After a thorough investigation into the sourcing of two stories ... we have decided to retract both pieces."

June 25: Overestimating

The Claim: All 17 American intelligence agencies agree Russia interfered in the U.S. election with the intention of tipping the scales in Trump's favor.

The Source: [The New York Times](#), though this particular narrative can be traced all the way back to the 2016 Hillary Clinton presidential campaign.

The Facts: The Jan. 6. hacking assessment referenced by the Times was a conclusion drawn by analysts representing *three* intelligence agencies acting "under the aegis" of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, former DNI chief James Clapper testified on [May 8](#).

He said specifically that the conclusion that Russia meddled in the election to benefit Trump was a "coordinated product" from the Central Intelligence Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the National Security Agency, "not all 17 components of the intelligence community." Though the three agencies worked independent of one another, and each came to the same conclusion, it's inaccurate to claim the entire community came up with the agreement, the former ODNI chief testified in response to questions from Sen. Al Franken, D-Minn. It's worth noting that the ODNI and the FBI issued a joint statement on Oct. 7, 2016, announcing Russia was responsible for the hacking of email accounts belonging to Democratic National Committee staffers and Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta. However, that assessment said nothing about whether the meddling was done to benefit Trump.

June 22: Fatal Retraction

The Claim: Longtime Trump ally Anthony Scaramucci, who played a significant role in the president's transition team, has deep ties to a \$10 billion Russian investment fund owned by a Kremlin-connected bank.

The Source: CNN.com

The Facts: The story was taken offline after attempts to verify its central claim failed to produce anything conclusive. The original story cited a single anonymous source. The article's sourcing was so thin, and Scaramucci's denials so total, that CNN decided it couldn't stand by its own coverage.

Three CNN staffers involved in the story's publication, reporter Thomas Frank, editor Eric Lichtblau, and executive editor Lex Haris, resigned after the report fell apart.

June 14: Blame It On Palin

The Claim: Former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin inspired the 2011 mass shooting in Tucson, Ariz.

The Source: The New York Times editorial board.

The Facts: This is a well-worn and long-ago-debunked smear. There is no proof that the Tucson shooting was ever inspired by Palin's now-famous crosshairs map. There's no evidence the shooter, Jared Loughner, ever saw the map or even followed Palin. The shooter reportedly didn't watch television, he didn't read the news, and he didn't listen to talk radio.

"He didn't take sides. He wasn't on the Left. He wasn't on the Right," said Loughner's high school friend [Zach Osle](#).

Lastly, Loughner's obsession with then-Congresswoman Gabby Giffords dates back to at least 2007, before Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., introduced Palin to the nation as his vice presidential nominee.

The New York Times amended its editorial later and issued a mealy-mouthed apology. Palin sued for defamation and lost.

June 13: A Gold Mine of Garbage

The Claim: The Golden State Warriors decided unanimously to reject an invitation from the White House after the team's 2016 NBA championship victory.

The Source: [CNBC's Josh Brown](#), NBC News' Kyle Griffin, the [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#), the [Daily Mail](#), the [New York Daily News](#).

The Facts: Brown, who started this particular news cycle, is guilty of repeating an unsourced rumor. Pressed for his sources, [Brown responded](#), "just repeated a few other verified users on twitter who had said it early this morning. I have no idea if its true, hence 'per reports.'"

The Warriors did not even receive an invitation from the White House yet, let alone vote unanimously to reject it, they said Tuesday.

"We have not received an invitation to the White House, but will make those decisions, when and if necessary," the team said in a statement.

Months later, [on Sept. 24](#), the team had its White House invite rescinded after one of their star players, Stephen Curry, criticized the president.

June 13: Resigning in Protest? Not so much.

The Claim: Shell Smith, the U.S. Ambassador to Qatar, has resigned from her post following President Trump's continued attacks on the country.

The Source: CNBC's [John Harwood](#), the [Economic Times](#), an actual former [U.S. ambassador](#).

The Facts: Though Smith's exit from the State Department *did* coincide with the president's disparaging remarks for Qatar (he has [accused it of aiding and abetting terrorists](#)), her leaving was planned well in advance of the commander in chief's harsh words.

U.S. ambassadors serve an average of three years before being replaced, as Smith's noted in her resignation. They can stay on longer, but they must specifically be asked to do so. Smith was already on her way out prior to announcing it on social media, and the timetable for her exit is 100 percent normal.

June 8: Come Again?

The Claim: Attorney General Jeff Sessions told former FBI director James Comey to refer the Russia probe as a "matter" instead of an "investigation."

The Source: The New York Times' [Jonathan Weisman](#).

The Facts: Comey [testified on June 8](#) that former Attorney General Loretta Lynch encouraged him to refer to the bureau's probe of Hillary Clinton's private email server as a "matter" rather than an "investigation." Comey said the request made him uneasy, explaining further that it was one of the reasons he went ahead without the Justice Department in July 2016 when he recommended that no charges be brought against Clinton.

But here's what Weisman tweeted: "'Comey says Attorney General Sessions told him not to call Russia probe an investigation but 'a matter.' Let [Comey] to step away from DOJ.'" Practically none of that is correct.

June 2: Whoopsie

The Claim: Attorney General Sessions may be under investigation.

The Source: The Associated Press' Twitter feed.

The Facts: The AP tweeted the claim with no accompanying link. When the global newswire eventually got around to publishing the relevant story, it only quoted U.S. Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein as answering a hypothetical about what steps he'd take should either he or Sessions come under investigation for their respective roles in Comey's firing. Rosenstein responded by saying he'd recuse himself from the investigation. That's it.

May 30: No Birth Control For You

The Claim: The Trump administration is going to ban birth control.

The Source: Vox.com.

The Facts: The Trump administration proposed a regulation that would protect religious groups from having to participate in the Department of Health and Human Services mandate requiring that they cover services like the morning-after pill.

Vox.com, for its part, characterized the regulation thusly, "Trump's birth control crackdown is coming."

May 25: Wait For It

The Claim: "AG Sessions did not disclose Russia meetings in security clearance form, DOJ says."

The Source: [CNN](#).

The Facts: False alarm, [CNN eventually reported later](#). It's true Sessions didn't disclose foreign contacts from his senate years – because his team was instructed by the FBI that that information was not necessary. In fact, the DOJ said at the time of the original CNN report that *not* disclosing the senate-related foreign contacts was standard policy.

May 16: The Seth Rich Conspiracy

The Claim: A private investigator has uncovered evidence showing WikiLeaks collaborated with slain DNC data analyst Seth Rich prior to his murder in 2016.

The Source: FoxNews.com and [Fox 5 Washington](#).

The Facts: Rod Wheeler, an ex-D.C. homicide detective who works as a private investigator and occasional Fox News contributor, told Fox 5 that Rich's laptop, which was supposedly inspected by the FBI, held evidence of collusion.

Wheeler was asked point blank: "You have sources at the FBI saying that there is information that could link Seth Rich to WikiLeaks?"

"Absolutely," he asserted. "And that's confirmed."

FoxNews.com reported separately that Wheeler said, "My investigation up to this point shows there was some degree of email exchange between Seth Rich and WikiLeaks."

It was all bogus.

Wheeler, who was [dismissed](#) from the DC Metropolitan Police Department in 1995, has recanted his story later, claiming he was taken out of context by Fox reporters.

The FoxNews.com report cited an additional source outside of Wheeler. This unnamed source, a supposed "federal investigator," claimed the murdered DNC staffer was in contact with WikiLeaks via the late journalist Gavin MacFadyen. The anonymous tipster also claimed the FBI conducted a forensic analysis of Rich's laptop within 96 hours of his death.

However, FBI officials claim the bureau was not involved in the Rich case and that it had never handled his laptop.

And there's one last piece of nonsense in this lousy story.

Wheeler had been recommended to Rich's family by financial adviser and Fox News contributor Ed Butowsky. The conservative businessman and occasional Breitbart News contributor initially lied about his involvement in Wheeler's investigation, and confessed later after he was caught.

Where does this leave us? A detective who recanted his story, a right-wing benefactor who was caught in a boldfaced lie, and FBI officials who deny their agency has been involved in any way in the Rich case, contrary to what was initially reported. Also, [the Rich family is furious about how it all played out](#). Fox 5 eventually issued lengthy and detailed corrections while FoxNews.com simply deleted its version of the story from its site.

May 11: Speaking of Hacks

The Claim: Russia "hacked the election."

The Source: Journalist Twitter, political pundits.

The Facts: The problem here lies in specificity. Russia [reportedly meddled in](#) in the presidential election, according to the U.S. intelligence community. They didn't, however, "[hack the election](#)," changing voter tallies or anything of the sort.

A high-profile iteration of this misleading allegation occurred on May 11 when Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., posed a carefully worded question to a panel of national security experts.

"Do you believe that the January 2017 intelligence community assessment accurately characterizes the extent of Russian activities in the 2016 election, and in its conclusion Russian intelligence agencies were responsible for the hacking and leaking of information and using this information in order to influence our elections?" the senator asked.

They responded in the affirmative.

"In new threat assessment, Trump's director of national intelligence accepts Russian hacked 2016 election – a conclusion Trump himself rejects," the Wall Street Journal's Byron Tau [wrote](#) on social media Thursday morning.

The AP's Tom LoBianco then [tweeted the following](#): "Warner up now - to the panel - did Russia hack the election? Entire panel: Yes."

CNN's [Daniella Diaz](#) was not far behind: "WARNER: Did Russia hack the election? PANEL: Yes."

The problem with this shorthand – by hard-news reporters – is that it perpetuates the lie that voting numbers may have been tampered with, which would mean Trump's victory over Clinton is somehow illegitimate. This would run contrary to everything said by the intelligence community and even former President Barack Obama.

May 10: I Need More Men!

The Claim: Former FBI Director James Comey was fired shortly after requesting additional resources for the Russia investigation.

The Source: [Politico](#), the New York Times, CNN, the Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal.

The Facts: FBI deputy director Andrew McCabe, [who is no Trump lackey](#), testified that he had no knowledge of any such request. He also stated that the implication that Comey was fired for requesting additional resources one was likely a work of fiction.

"I cannot confirm that request was made. As you know ma'am, when we need resources, we make those requests here. So I — I don't — I'm not aware of that request and it's not consistent with my understanding of how we request additional resources," McCabe told lawmakers.

He added, "That said, we don't typically request resources for an individual case. And as I mentioned, I strongly believe that the Russian investigation is adequately resourced."

May 5: The FCC Won't Let Me Be Me

The Claim: The FCC plans to retaliate against late-night comedian Stephen Colbert for making an obscene joke about President Trump.

The Source: [The Hill](#), Teen Vogue's [Lauren Duca](#), Politico's Eric Geller, Task And Purpose senior editor [Adam Weinstein](#) and others.

The Facts: The FCC, which was formed in 1934, has long been tasked with the duty of regulating interstate communications broadcast over television, radio, wire, satellite and cable. One of its duties is to police [inappropriate materials aired during primetime hours](#) as well as so-called obscene materials shown between 10:00 pm and 6:00 am.

The agency also reviews the thousands of complaints it receives from viewers about profanity and indecent content broadcast over the public airwaves.

So, when Colbert said of Trump that, "[T]he only thing your mouth is good for is being Vladimir Putin's c—k holster," the FCC received complaints.

FCC Chairman [Ajit Pai never even hinted](#) that the agency was going to go after Colbert. He said only that they would review Colbert-related complaints, which is 100 percent standard operating procedure for the 83-year-old federal agency.

May 4: They Raping Everybody Out Here!

The Claim: Rape and domestic violence could be preexisting conditions because of the GOP's American Health Care Act

The Source: [CNN](#), [New York Magazine's The Cut](#), and [Mic.com](#).

The Facts: This particularly gross bit of scaremongering had no basis in fact, according to [Reason's Elizabeth Brown](#) and the [Washington Post's Michelle Ye Hee Lee](#), the latter of which awarded the conspiracy theory an unflattering four Pinocchios. The bill would allow states to, "apply for waivers that will allow insurance companies, under certain limited circumstances, to charge higher premiums to people based on their personal medical histories — that's it," Brown explained. "(States that are granted the waivers must also set up special high-risk insurance pools to try and help defray costs for these people.)" "Under Obamacare, no such price variances based on preexisting conditions are permitted," she added. Lee, for her part, wrote, "The notion that AHCA classifies rape or sexual assault as a preexisting condition, or that survivors would be denied coverage, is false. ... this claim relies on so many factors — including unknown decisions by a handful of states and insurance companies — that this talking point becomes almost meaningless."

May 4: Kegger!

The Claim: House Republicans wheeled cases of beer into the Capitol building in anticipation of the passage of the American Health Care Act, the GOP's response to the Democratic Party's Affordable Care Act.

The Source: Vice's [Alexandra Jaffe](#), American Progress's [Igor Volsky](#), MSNBC's [Joe Scarborough](#), Yahoo contributor [Dan Devine](#), Jezebel, Mic and many others.

The Facts: Jaffe [tweeted](#) at 1:50 pm, "Cases upon cases of beer just rolled into the Capitol on a cart covered in a sheet. Spotted Bud Light peeking out from the sheet."

She then followed that tweet, which came shortly before the House voted to pass the Republican health care bill, [with this](#): "In fairness I don't know where his was going. Just hopped on an elevator."

Jaffe then tweeted, "Here are the beers. Asked if they were going to a GOP conference meeting & he said 'no, different meeting,' no further details."

And that's that.

April 30: Loyalty Day

The Claim: By marking May 1 as "Loyalty Day," President Trump is reviving a Cold War-era holiday and/or taking a page straight out of the authoritarian's playbook.

The Source: MSNBC's [Joy Ann Reid](#), Teen Vogue's [Lauren Duca](#) and the Young Turks' [John Ladarola](#).

The Facts: Trump did indeed mark May 1 as "Loyalty Day" — just like every president since 1955. The Cold War-era holiday is not new, it's not insidious and it's not a Trump creation. Google is your friend.

April 27: Shut It Down

The Claim: President Trump wants a government shutdown.

The Source: USA Today.

The Facts: Trump himself didn't say he wanted a shutdown. The USA Today article is based on a Trump tweet *responding* to Democratic lawmakers who threatened a government shutdown.

April 25: It was a joke!

The Claim: President Trump doesn't read the text of his executive orders.

The Source: [The New York Times' Pete Baker](#) and GQ.

The Facts: Trump joked during a signing ceremony that he doesn't read his executive orders.

The Times' Peter Baker tweeted the president's off-hand remark, but the reporter forgot to mention it was said in jest.

"He was making a joke after reading the title out loud and I thought it was funny. I should have been clearer about the context," [Baker clarified](#) eight hours later.

The Times reporter eventually deleted his original tweet, which had gathered more than 5,000 shares and 6,000-plus likes in a matter of hours.

April 19: It's Not the Size That Counts

The Claim: Several New England Patriots snubbed the White House after the football team's 2016 Super Bowl win.

The Source: [New York Times Sports](#).

The Facts: The Patriots were about as well represented at the White House in [2015 as they were in 2017](#). It was up to the 2016 Super Bowl champions to [correct the Times](#).

"These photos lack context. Facts: In 2015, over 40 football staff were on the stairs. In 2017, they were seated on the South Lawn," the Patriots' Twitter account noted.

It added, "Comparable photos: The last time the #Patriots won two Super Bowls in three years, 36 players visited the White House. Today, we had 34."

April 11-12: Jeff Sessions' Border Patrol Speech

The Claim: Attorney General Jeff Sessions referred to illegal immigrants as "filth."

The Source: [The Wall Street Journal](#), [Fox News' Geraldo Rivera](#) and [Journalist Twitter](#)

The Facts: The prepared version of Sessions' speech contained a line that read, "It is here, on this sliver of land, where we first take our stand against this filth."

The word "filth" was not meant to refer to illegal immigrants. Rather, it was in reference to gang violence and cartel activity in the United States.

For what it's worse, Sessions ended up not even using the word during his speech to border patrol agents.

April 4: Gorsuch Plagiarism

The Claim: Judge Neil Gorsuch's book contains material stolen from Indiana lawyer Abigail Kuzma

The Source: [Politico](#) and [BuzzFeed](#).

The Facts: Though there are similarities between Gorsuch's book and Kuzma's professional work, the former followed the norms of citation in legal writing, according to none other than the latter.

March 31: Using the Bible to Justify Food Stamp Policy

The Claim: Rep. Jodey Arrington, R-Texas, cited a verse from the New Testament to justify stringent SNAP work requirements.

The Source: [Washington Post](#).

The Facts: Arrington never actually said, "the unemployed shall not eat," as the Post headline claimed. Also, the story didn't even quote the lawmaker as saying that. Lastly, there isn't an actual Bible verse regarding nutrition benefits for the unemployed.

The Post adjusted the headline eventually so that it now reads, "GOP lawmaker: The Bible says 'if a man will not work, he shall not eat.'"

March 30: Media Falls for Nork Parody Account (Again)

The Claim: North Korea has issued a scathing statement in response to Sen. John McCain's, R-Ariz., calling Kim Jong-un a "crazy fat kid."

The Source: USA Today.

The Facts: The Arizona senator did indeed refer to North Korea's leader as a "crazy fat kid," but the supposed response cited by USA Today was fake. The North Korean government didn't actually respond by calling McCain an "infantile lunatic." The supposed response came from a notable parody Twitter account.

March 29: The Golden Easter Egg

The Claim: In a first for the White House, the eggs used for the annual Easter Egg Roll will be gold instead of the usual rainbow and pastel colors.

The Source: A New York Times reporter.

The Facts: This was not the first time that the White House has used golden eggs for the annual hunt. The Obamas had golden eggs as did previous administrations.

March 21: Handguns and Neil Gorsuch

The Claim: Handguns didn't exist in the 18th century, proving further that Constitutional originalism, which is championed by Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch and used to defend the modern legal interpretation of the Second Amendment, is "bullshit."

The Source: [Cosmopolitan](#)

The Facts: Handguns certainly existed in the 18th century. Consult the story of Alexander Hamilton's death. This example is a little thing, and it's not on this list so much because it's a major error. It's here because it's funny and because it's indicative of the sort of know-nothing approach to covering the Trump administration.

March 17: Fake Nixon

The Claim: McDonald's founder Ray Kroc sent President Richard Nixon a telegram in 1973 that read, "Retire Bitch."

The Source: Forbes Magazine, a Twitter prankster.

The Facts: This report was based on a satirical forgery made by Twitter user @mattoomic.

Forbes later corrected its error. An editor, Geoff Smith, told [BuzzFeed News](#) he was told about the error as "he was leaving the office."

This is really a very small thing, but it's too funny to omit from this list.

March 16: Meals on Wheels

The Claim: President Trump's budget proposal would eliminate Meals on Wheels, a program that feeds an estimated 2.4 million seniors.

The Source: [Time magazine](#), the Hill and the New York Times.

The Facts: Newsrooms overstated the potential effect of the proposed budget cuts. Though federal funds support a portion of Meals on Wheels services, almost two-thirds of its funding comes from extra-

governmental sources, including private and corporate donations. The program would not disappear entirely should its funding suffer some cuts.

March 9: Sneaky, Sneaky

The Claim: The New York Times has stealth-edited a FISAgate scandal headline so that the amended version would fit better with its preferred narrative.

The Source: [National Review's Andrew McCarthy](#).

The Facts: The Times wasn't being sneaky, and it didn't quietly change a headline. The paper simply used two different headlines: One for the digital version, and one for the print version.

The print version read: "WIRETAPPED DATA USED IN INQUIRY OF TRUMP AIDES," while the online headline read, "Intercepted Russian Communications Part of Inquiry Into Trump Associates." McCarthy explained he thought he saw a conspiracy of dishonesty, writing, "the headline of the Times report in the print version seemed to me tailored to Phase I. It stresses that there is an investigation that is focused on Trump associates who were connected to his campaign, that they are under investigation because they have 'Russian ties,' and that agents are poring over 'wiretapped data' involving these associates. By contrast, the website headline highlights 'Intercepted Russian Communications' (i.e., the focus of any wiretapping is on the Russians, not the Trump associates)."

He added, "Since I incorrectly assumed that the website headline was an alteration of the original print headline, I further incorrectly assumed that it was evidence of the transition from Phase I to Phase II."

Unfortunately, the incorrect claim that the Times quietly changed its headline gained an enormous amount of traction after it was repeated by none other than President Trump.

March 2: Lynch, Sessions and Recusal

The Claim: Former Attorney General Loretta Lynch recused herself in 2016 from the federal investigation of Hillary Clinton's private State Department email server.

The Source: CNN's Don Lemon

The Facts: Lynch never recused herself.

Feb. 21: A Racial Dog Whistle?

The Claim: Donald Trump said repeatedly during the 2016 presidential election that white People built America.

The Source: American Urban Radio Networks' April Ryan.

The Facts: Ryan said during a Feb. 21 White House press briefing, "when [Trump] was [a] candidate ... he said things like, you know, 'We made this country,' meaning white America, not necessarily black. ... He said that. I heard him say that."

Pressed for specific examples of Trump saying white people built America, Ryan pointed the *Washington Examiner* to a [campaign speech she covered on March 12, 2016](#).

In an address delivered in Vandalia, Ohio, last year, Trump said, "We cannot let our First Amendment rights be taken away from us, folks. We can't let it happen. We can't let it happen. We have a right to speak. I mean, we are law-abiding people. We are people that work very hard. We are people that have built this country and made this country great."

"We're all together, and we want to get along with everybody. But when they have organized, professionally staged wiseguys, we've got to fight back. We've got to fight back," he added.

There are some additional examples of this sort of language from the Trump 2016 campaign, including a fundraising pitch that referred to "[hard working Americans](#)" as those who "built this country."

However, there are no clear-cut examples of the then-GOP nominee stating explicitly that white people made America.

Ryan defended her assertion nonetheless, asking on Twitter on Feb. 22, "A question: So what does 'we built this country' mean in front of a predominantly white crowd?"

She also told the *Examiner*, "[Trump] had been saying it right after the cancellation of that Chicago rally due to violence."

Feb. 21: Do It For the Skiffer

The Claim: President Donald Trump was aboard a skiff at his Mar-a-Largo resort in Florida when he was given a classified intelligence briefing regarding a North Korean missile launch.

The Source: A Politico reporter

The Facts: White House press secretary Sean Spicer used the acronym "SCIF" on Feb. 21 to describe the president's intelligence update. Spicer was, of course, using the shorthand for "Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility." The president was inside a "SCIF" when his team updated him on the North Korean missile launch.

However, when Spicer used the acronym "SCIF" to refer to "Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility," the reporter thought the White House spokesman meant "skiff."

Oops.

The reporter deleted his original tweet, and later admitted the error. Like certain entries on this list, this example is here not because it is a major error. Indeed, it's a small thing. It's here because it's funny and because it embodies this year's rash of lousy Trump coverage.

Feb. 17: The AP Botches Report on Immigration Roundups

The Claim: President Trump is considering mobilizing National Guard troops for immigration roundups.

The Source: The Associated Press.

The Facts: As it turns out, the AP got a *lot* wrong in its story. The draft memo mentioned in the report is real, as confirmed by DHS officials, but it doesn't quite say what the AP reported.

For example, the memo [didn't specifically suggest mobilizing the National Guard](#), as suggested by the AP story. The draft memo also never used the 100,000 figure referenced by the AP, though it's possible the newsgroup got this number by tallying the National Guard units [currently stationed in the 11 states](#) where they would supposedly be used to crack down on illegal immigration. If that's how the AP got its 100,000 figure, which, again, it doesn't explain, it means they reported an assumption, not a fact.

Lastly, just to be clear, the word "deportation" is never used in the memo. As far as National Guard troops are concerned, the memo only floats the idea of giving them the authority to assist in the "investigation, apprehension and detention" of criminal aliens.

Feb. 16: Eavesdropping

The Claim: Trump allowed Boeing CEO Dennis Muilenburg to eavesdrop on his calls to Lockheed Martin in January.

The Source: [ProPublica's Michael Grabell](#).

The Facts: Grabell's claim is based on a report that said no such thing. Rather, the cited Bloomberg News story, titled "Trump's F-35 Calls Came With a Surprise: Rival CEO Was Listening," reported Trump allowed Muilenburg to sit in on calls made to the Air Force general who manages the Lockheed Martin Corp. F-35 jet.

Grabell eventually deleted his initial tweet, and he noted his mistake.

"I tweeted a story with incorrect reading earlier. I was working and didn't note the [number] of [re-tweets]," he said. "Fine, it's a correction my original tweet was wrong. Read the story."

Before he deleted his incorrect interpretation of the Bloomberg story, it had more than 600 shares. As of this writing, his clarifications have been shared a combined total of 60 times.

Feb. 14: NYT Duped

The Claim: Following Michael Flynn's resignation on Feb. 13 as the president's national security adviser, the retired U.S. Army Lieutenant General remarked on Twitter, "While I accept full responsibility for my actions, I feel it is unfair that I have been made the sole scapegoat for what happened."

"But if a scapegoat is what's needed for this Administration to continue to take this great nation forward, I am proud to do my duty," the general supposedly added.

The Source: [The New York Times, Newsmax](#).

The Facts: Flynn said no such thing on social media. The Times was duped by a parody Twitter account. Flynn temporarily deleted his personal account several weeks prior to his resignation.

Feb. 14: Comey Stomp

The Claim: The Trump campaign colluded with Russian intelligence officials during the 2016 election.

The Source: [The New York Times](#).

The Facts: Former FBI director James B. Comey bluntly refuted this story during a June 8 hearing before Congress.

"That report by the New York Times was not true. Is that a fair statement?" Sen. Jim Risch, R-Idaho, asked.

"In the main, it was not true," Comey replied. "The challenge, and I'm not picking on reporters, about writing on classified information is: The people talking about it often don't really know what's going on, and those of us who actually know what's going on are not talking about it."

He added, "And we don't call the press to say, 'Hey, you got that thing wrong about this sensitive topic.' We just have to leave it there."

Feb. 14: One Hell of a Buried Lede

The Claim: "Trump Campaign Aides Had Repeated Contacts With Russian Intelligence."

The Source: [The New York Times](#).

The Facts: This entry is slightly different from most of the others on this list.

The Times reported Trump's team communicated with Russian intelligence officials at around the same time that hackers published personal emails stolen from of Democratic National Committee staffers and Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman, John Podesta.

By all accounts this appears to be a legitimate story, and it raises serious questions about the Russians and the 2016 election.

However, the issue with this particular Times report is that there is a crucial bit of information that the paper doesn't mention until *after* the reader has already been introduced to the idea of Trump/Russian collusion.

Buried at the third paragraph is a crucial detail: "The officials interviewed in recent weeks said that, so far, they had seen no evidence of such cooperation."

Oh.

That's an important piece of information, and it should have been included in the story's first paragraph.

Feb. 11: An Olympic Never-Mind

The Claim: President Trump's temporary immigration ban ensnared American-born Olympian Ibtihaj Muhammad.

The Source: Ibtihaj Muhammad in an interview with Popsugar, [Time magazine's Motto](#), the [Independent](#), the [Daily Mail](#), the [New York Daily News](#) and [the Hill](#).

The Facts: Muhammad claimed in an interview on Feb. 7 that she was detained "just a few weeks ago" by U.S. Customs agents, who held her for more than two hours without any explanation. Reporters ran with her claim, tying it to Trump's executive order temporarily barring immigration from several Middle Eastern countries. Few journalists bothered to corroborate her story.

On Feb. 11, [Muhammad clarified](#) the alleged incident occurred in December 2016. Barack Obama was still president at that time. Trump was sworn into office on Jan. 20, 2017. His immigration order was signed into law on Jan. 27.

A Customs official who spoke on the condition of anonymity confirmed in an interview the *Washington Examiner* on Feb. 13 that Muhammad had indeed been detained – in December 2016.

Feb. 10: A Fact-Checking Gone Wrong

The Claim: President Trump said the New York Times' story alleging he hadn't talked to Chinese President Xi Jinping in months is "fake news." He is wrong.

The Source: [Journalist Twitter](#) ([here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#), among others)

The Facts: Trump is 50/50 on this. The Times published [a report on the evening of Feb. 9](#) alleging Trump hadn't spoken with the Chinese president since November 2016. The story's original headline read, "China's President, Stung by Taiwan Call, Is Said to Shun Trump."

However, Trump spoke with Xi by phone on the same evening as the publication of the Times report.

The paper updated its online report accordingly, [amending significant portions](#) of the story to note the president's call to the Chinese president. The report's headline was also updated so that it now reads, "After Silence From Xi, Trump Endorses the 'One China' Policy."

The online edition of the Times' story carries no editor's note or clarification noting that it has undergone significant changes.

For whatever reason, the Times did not update its national print edition before it went out to subscribers.

That version of the story still claimed Trump hadn't spoken with Xi. As the president is notoriously fond of hardcopy, it's fair to assume he received and read the print edition that claimed incorrectly that he had not spoken with Xi.

Trump [tweeted](#) at 8:35 am on Feb. 10, "The failing @nytimes does major FAKE NEWS China story saying 'Mr.Xi has not spoken to Mr. Trump since Nov.14.' We spoke at length yesterday!"

Members of the press tried to fact-check Trump's tweet with screen grabs from the updated online version of the Times' story.

But the facts leaned more in Trump's favor.

The Friday print edition claimed incorrectly that the president hadn't spoken with Xi. The president responded Friday morning to the story. Journalists then tried to "gotcha" Trump with the online edition of the report, but fact-checking him with the retroactively updated online version of a story that appeared differently in print doesn't seem the way to go.

Feb. 9: Trump Backs the Gang of Eight?

The Claim: Trump is ready to get behind the Gang of Eight immigration bill, a piece of legislation that he has vigorously opposed since a little before his entry into the 2016 GOP primary.

The Source: Politico's [Seung Min Kim](#).

The Facts: Trump assured a group of senators in safe and businesslike terms that he'd at least hear them out on the immigration bill, according to Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.V.

"We were trying to explain the [Gang of Eight] bill," the senator told MSNBC's Kasie Hunt. "[Trump] says, 'well, I know what amnesty is, and I'm totally opposed to amnesty.'"

"I said, 'but this, this 10-13 year pathway forward — that you have to play by the rules.' He said, 'well I want to see it.' So he was very anxious to see it. He says, 'I know what amnesty is.' And I said, 'sir, I don't think you're going to find this amnesty at all.' [Trump] is open — he is open to reviewing this piece of legislation. He says, 'well you've got to start working on it again,' and I says, 'absolutely we will,'" Manchin said.

Feb. 9: Doesn't Smell Right

The Claim: President Trump was confused during a phone call with Russian President Vladimir Putin by references to New START, the 2010 treaty imposing limits on the number of warheads deployed by the U.S. and Russia.

The Source: [Reuters](#).

The Facts: This doesn't make sense considering the president spoke privately with officials about New START four weeks before his call with Putin. It doesn't help that the Reuters report hinges entirely on an anonymously source.

Feb 7: Yemen Has Had Enough

The Claim: "Yemen Withdraws Permission for U.S. Antiterror Ground Missions."

The Source: [The New York Times](#), [CBS News](#), the [Daily Mail](#) and others.

The Facts: The Associated Press threw cold water on these anonymously sources stories on Feb. 8 with an on-the-record quote from a Yemeni government official.

"Yemen continues to cooperate with the United States and continues to abide by all the agreements," Yemeni Foreign Minister Abdul-Malik al-Mekhlafi told the AP, stressing that earlier reports alleging his government had ordered U.S. forces to cease operation were simply "not true."

Feb. 7: A Grizzly Tale

The Claim: Newly confirmed Education Secretary Betsy DeVos thinks school administrators should carry guns because you never know when a bear might attack.

The Source: The Washington Post.

The Facts: This stupid narrative just won't die. DeVos said during her confirmation hearing that there should be no blanket federal policy regulating guns in schools.

Asked by Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., whether she supported federal solutions to this issue, she responded by saying she doesn't think it should be left up to Washington. She argued that states and localities are best suited to make these judgments, and she said federal policies tend to overlook the individual needs of individual schools.

This is what DeVos said: "I think that's best left for states and locales to decide. I would refer back to Senator Enzi, and the school he was talking about in [Wyoming]."

"I would imagine there, that there's probably a gun in the school to protect from potential grizzlies," she added.

Feb. 4: Faulty Voter ID Study

The Claim: Voter ID laws disproportionately favor white Republicans.

The Source: [The Washington Post](#), the Los Angeles Times and many more.

The Facts: The study upon which this claim is based is extremely dubious, a number of experts from Yale, Stanford and Penn concluded later on March 15. The analysts who scrutinized the voter ID study concluded the original researchers failed in their metrics and their interpretations of data.

Feb. 4: Bannon vs. Kelly

The Claim: White House chief strategist Stephen Bannon tried to dominate Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly over the issue of Trump's executive order temporarily banning immigration from seven Middle Eastern countries. Kelly reportedly pushed back hard, telling the Trump confidant that he had no authority to issue orders to DHS. There was in-person confrontation later between Bannon and Kelly at the DHS headquarters, as well as words exchanged during a 2:00 a.m. conference call.

The Source: [The Washington Post](#).

The Facts: We'll let this Washington Post editor's note, which appeared subsequently, speak for itself: The article has been updated to reflect comments from White House press secretary Sean Spicer. The article previously stated that Stephen K. Bannon visited Homeland Security Secretary John F. Kelly's office on Jan. 28. Spicer said Bannon did not make such a visit. He also said that Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Bannon did not participate in a 2 a.m. conference call on Jan. 29.

The article also previously stated that President Trump approved a pause in executive orders pending new procedures. According to Spicer, it was White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus, rather than the president, who approved the new procedures, but not a pause.

Feb. 3: A Secret Service Purge?

The Claim: Certain manager-level Secret Service personnel were escorted suddenly from the Eisenhower Executive Office Building after they were forced to resign.

The Source: [The Atlantic's Steve Clemons](#).

The Facts: An agency spokeswoman told the [Washington Examiner](#) that the claim is "absolutely false." Clemons himself backtracked later, and said on social media that he meant to say that it was the White House Chief of Information Security who was "forced to resign."

"I have confirmed that the Chief of Information Security at White House forced to resign. Was error in tagging him as Secret Service," he said. "It is the [Chief of Information Security] function, at minimum, in [White House] that saw forced resignations last night. These folks work w/ [@SecretService](#) but not of Secret [Service]."

Interestingly enough, the [Secret Service's official Twitter account](#) responded to Clemons' online clarifications by claiming he was still incorrect. The Secret Service account also claimed Clemons never contacted them for comment.

Feb. 2: Trump Meets Putin

The Claim: Trump's team switched off recording devices in the Oval Office during the his call with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The Source: Raw Story and Ilan Berman, vice president of the Foreign Policy Council.

The Facts: Berman was only speculating. He never claimed to have inside information. Berman offered the theory only as a means to explain the lack of detail regarding Trump's call to Putin.

Raw Story saw his suggestion, however, and things spun out of control. They published a report titled, "Foreign policy insider: 'No readout of Trump-Putin call because White House turned off recording.'"

It's worth noting that [there is a readout of Trump's call with Putin](#). It's just vague and short on details. Also, White House calls are generally not recorded, and they haven't been since the time of Richard Nixon, according Yahoo's Olivier Knox.

Raw Story updated its story eventually to note that no one actually knows what they're talking about.

Feb. 2: Payback For Putin

The Claim: The Trump administration had eased restrictions on Russia, allowing U.S. companies to go into business with KGB successor the Federal Security Service.

The Source: NBC News' Peter Alexander.

The Facts: Alexander ultimately debunked his own claim, tweeting a note of clarification that read, "Source familiar w sanctions says it's a technical fix, planned under Obama, to avoid unintended consequences of cybersanctions."

The New York Times' Peter Baker noted elsewhere that the proposed fix was indeed in the works long before Trump took office.

"Treasury action on Russian sanctions was a technical fix initiated by career officials when Obama was still in office, not a Trump move," [he said](#).

Feb. 2: Gorsuch In College

The Claim: "As a student, SCOTUS Nominee Gorsuch Supported Gays and Opposed Campus Military recruiters."

The Source: [NBC News](#).

The Facts: NBC News misunderstood its source material. The college newspaper referenced in the NBC story contained an editing error that confused reporters, and caused them to credit Gorsuch for an article he didn't write. The error wasn't that hard to spot. The NBC story has been updated so that it's now a different report entirely.

Feb. 2: Ryan Dodged a Question?

The Claim: Speaker Paul Ryan declined to answer a question at a press conference about Trump's allegedly contentious phone call with the Australian prime minister.

The Source: [CNBC's John Harwood](#).

The Facts: Speaker Ryan did no such thing. He declined only to answer a question about the feud between former California governor [Arnold Schwarzenegger](#) and President Trump.

Feb. 1: Mexican Invasion

The Claim: President Trump told Mexican president Enrique Pena that he'd invade Mexico if its government failed to get its drug problem under control.

The Source: [The Associated Press](#).

The Facts: President Trump only offered to help the Mexican government in its ongoing war with the drug cartels, according to official White House transcripts obtained later by the [Washington Post](#).

"You have some pretty tough hombres in Mexico that you may need help with, and we are willing to help you with that big-league. But they have to be knocked out and you have not done a good job of knocking them out," the president said.

He added, "We have a massive drug problem where kids are becoming addicted to drugs because drugs are being sold for less money than candy because there is so much of it. So we have to work together to knock that out. And I know this is a tough group of people, and maybe your military is afraid of them, but our military is not afraid of them, and we will help you with that 100 percent because it is out of control – totally out of control."

The AP report upon which this particular news cycle hinged was based on an, "excerpt of a transcript of the conversation." It was obviously wrong, as both the Mexican government and the White House said at the time.

Feb. 1: Worlds Apart

The Claim: Melania Trump will continue to live in New York City, even though her husband is taking up residence in the White House.

The Source: [Us Weekly](#), [The Hill](#), [Daily Mail](#).

The Facts: Melania Trump will divide her time between New York City and Washington, D.C., at the end of the school year, her advisor, Stephanie Winston Wolkoff, told CNN.

The clarification came only after groups like Us Weekly ran headlines like, "First Lady Melania Trump May Never Move Into the White House." The Feb. 13 edition of celebrity gossip magazine was published with the headline, "SEPARATE LIVES."

Also, it's worth noting that Melania Trump stated during the election that she would split her time as first lady between D.C. and New York City. She explained at the time that it would be for the benefit of their son, Barron.

Feb. 1: Fascist Club

The Claim: Trump's Supreme Court pick, Neil Gorsuch, founded and presided over a group in high school called the "Fascism Forever Club."

The Source: [The Daily Mail](#).

The Facts: Gorsuch did no such thing. His claim to have founded such a club during his four years at Georgetown Prep was just a gag, a bit of self-deferential humor regarding his conservatism and his frequent back-and-forths with his left-leaning teachers.

The whole thing was "a total joke," Steve Ochs, who teaches history at the elite high school, told [America Magazine](#).

"There was no club at a Jesuit school about young fascists," added Ochs, who served as student government advisor when Gorsuch was a junior and senior. "The students would create fictitious clubs; they would have fictitious activities. They were all inside jokes on their senior pages."

Jan. 31: The Deadly Travel Ban

The Claim: An ailing woman died in Iraq due to President Trump's executive order banning travel from several countries that are predominantly Muslim.

The Source: [Fox 2 Detroit](#).

The Facts: It was a lie. Mike Hager's mother died five days prior to the executive order going into effect, a local imam later told Fox 2 Detroit. Hager's original story, which went viral quickly, was apparently too good to check.

Jan. 31: Twitter Trolling

The Claim: In an attempt to keep Trump's SCOTUS nominee a secret, the White House set up two separate Twitter accounts for Judges Neil Gorsuch and Thomas Hardiman.

The Source: CNN's Jeff Zeleny.

The Facts: Zeleny is responsible both for the claim and the eventual correction.

"White House is setting up Supreme Court announcement as a prime-time contest: @JusticeGorsuch and @JusticeHardiman identical Twitter pages," the CNN reporter tweeted.

He followed that up with this embarrassing clarification, "The Twitter accounts of @JusticeGorsuch and @JusticeHardiman were not set up by the White House, I've been told."

Jan. 31: Secret SCOTUS

The Claim: Trump managed somehow to keep his SCOTUS nominee a secret until he made the announcement at 8:00 pm on Jan. 31.

The Source: [The Washington Post](#).

The Facts: This is wrong. News that Trump had picked Judge Gorsuch was scooped first by the conservative news site [Townhall](#). The [Independent Journal Review](#) was close behind, independently confirming the president's decision. [National Review](#) followed suit with sources of its own. Each individual report came out hours before Trump formally announced his SCOTUS nominee.

Jan. 31: A Retroactive 'Gotcha'

The Claim: President Trump greatly underestimated the number of people who were affected by his immigration executive order.

The Source: [The New York Times](#).

The Facts: Trump claimed in a tweet on Jan. 30 that, "Only 109 people out of 325,000 were detained and held for questioning. Big problems at airports were caused by Delta computer outage."

The Times published a story on Jan. 31 titled, "721 People (not 109) Were Denied Entry Under Trump."

The problem with the Times report is that it attempts to fact-check Trump with DHS data that became available only after the president's Jan. 30 tweet. Further, the Times report didn't even paraphrase Trump accurately.

The report's original opening paragraph stated incorrectly that Trump referenced the number of individuals who "were denied entry into the United States." That is incorrect because Trump used specific DHS figures to say 109 people had been *detained*, not *denied entry*.

The Times has attached a correction to its story, but it still fails to mention the timing and context of the president's Jan. 30 remarks.

Jan. 28: Never Mind

The Claim: The Justice Department "had no input" on Trump's immigration executive order, and the federal agency was reportedly left in the dark when the law was drafted.

The Source: CNBC's John Harwood.

The Facts: Harwood said on social media, "senior justice official tells [NBC News] that Dept. had no input. Not sure who in WH is writing/reviewing. Standard [National Security Council] process not functioning." But then Harwood tweeted a clarification about an hour later, stating, "new info from [NBC's Pete Williams]: another DOJ official says proposed immigration order was reviewed by department lawyers before it was issued."

Acting Atty. Gen. Sally Yates [confirmed](#) later that attorneys at DOJ's Office of Legal Counsel approved the order as lawful on its face and properly drafted.

Jan. 26: A Chilling Phone Call

The Claim: Trump "pressured" and "ordered" the National Park Service director into digging up photos of the president's inauguration crowds.

The Source: [The Washington Post](#).

The Facts: The president requested photos of his inauguration from the one federal agency that would have them. That's the entire story.

Jan. 26: The State Department Debacle That Wasn't

The Claim: The U.S. State Department's "entire senior administrative team" has resigned *en masse* in protest of Trump

The Source: [The Washington Post](#).

The Facts: Four mid-level State Department officials were told their services were no longer needed, which is common during White House transition periods. As is customary, the four officials tendered their resignations. They were accepted. That's a long way off from what the Post initially reported.

Jan. 24: Gag Order

The Claim: The Trump administration has taken unprecedented steps to silence scientists at the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services.

The Source: [The Associated Press](#), [BuzzFeed](#) and dozens of reporters on social media.

The Facts: The federal agencies, which were instructed in memos to halt all "public-facing" documents temporarily, said the press oversold the story.

"I've lived through many transitions, and I don't think this is a story," one senior EPA official told the [New York Times](#). "I don't think it's fair to call it a gag order."

It's all "standard practice," he said.

"And the move with regard to the grants," the official added, "when a new administration comes in, you run things by them before you update the website."

The agency's communications director, Doug Ericksen, added, "We're just trying to get a handle on everything and make sure what goes out reflects the priorities of the new administration."

A USDA spokesman said separately, "This is what has happened at the transition of every administration ... it's just a pause."

Jan. 20: Melania And a Conflict of Interest?

The Claim: Melania Trump is using the White House website to promote her business interests.

The Source: [The Washington Post](#).

The Facts: The White House website includes a brief biography of first lady and former model Melania Trump. Her bio lists some of her professional accomplishments, which include launching a line of jewelry and posing for several major magazines.

This is hardly the scandal promised in the Post's headline. The word "promotes" suggests some sort of abuse of the White House website for personal gain and/or profit.

Jan. 20: MLK Is Still There

The Claim: The Trump transition team removed a bust of Martin Luther King Jr. from the Oval Office.

The Source: Then-Time magazine White House reporter Zeke Miller.

The Facts: The MLK bust was never moved. It was merely obstructed from Miller's line of vision. By the time Miller corrected his mistake, the initial erroneous claim had already spread all over social media, taking on a life of its own.

Jan. 20: Website Down?

The Claim: The Trump administration has removed several important issues pages from the White House website, including pages for climate change and LGBT rights, signaling they may ignore these topics in the future.

The Source: The [Washington Post](#), [CBS News](#), [the Hill](#) and others (mostly reporters on social media).

The Facts: The White House website is normally wiped clean with each new administration. The older pages are archived elsewhere. This is how it was done during the transition periods between presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush and between Bush and Barack Obama. There is nothing at all unusual about pages disappearing, despite reports suggesting otherwise.

Jan. 20: Their Way

The Claim: Nancy Sinatra is furious after learning president-elect Donald Trump and his wife, Melania, plan to dance to "My Way" at the inauguration Liberty Ball.

The Source: [CNN](#).

The Facts: CNN published a story on Jan. 20 titled, "Nancy Sinatra not happy Trump using father's song at inauguration."

In its story, CNN noted that Nancy Sinatra had already responded to the "My Way" news when she quipped on social media, "Just remember the first line of the song" (the first line is "And now, the end is near").

Sinatra, who is admittedly not fond of Trump, responded to CNN's headline with a very blunt denial:

"That's not true. I never said that. Why do you lie, CNN?"

CNN updated its story eventually to reflect her comments.

"Oh, man! I'm not angry," she said later. "What a rotten spin to put on a harmless joke. I'm not sure why this became such a big deal. It was really just a joke."

She added in reference to the Trump team using Frank Sinatra's song, "Actually I'm wishing him the best. A good president helps the entire world. I don't believe anyone tries to be a bad president."

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