

“THE FRAUDSTERS COMPLAIN THE LOUDEST AND THE FASTEST:” LEGACY MEDIA IGNORES IMPORT OF GAZA CONDOM FACT CHECK

At a weird appearance in the Oval Office rife with awkward projections that Elon Musk believes he is more powerful than Trump (here's the full CSPAN video), a journalist asked Elon how – given the egregious error he made about condoms and Gaza – we should believe anything he said.

The exchange is bad enough: Elon basically confessed, in front of Trump, that a hoax Elon started that traveled first to Trump propagandist Karoline Leavitt and from there, through Jesse Watters' exaggerations on Fox News, into several repetitions of the false claim by Trump was wrong.

The entire point of this presser was to substantiate Trump's false (and undocumented) claim that DOGE [sic] had found billions of dollars of waste, fraud, and abuse and use that to, first, pressure judges who are putting brakes on DOGE and, then, justify giving DOGE [sic] authority to fire a bunch of people via Executive Order.

When Trump asked Elon to substantiate such claims, Elon instead vaguely pointed to people who were wealthy even though they had meager salaries – not something that should be under

his review. He listed other things that are known – and were known, during Trump’s first term – which are archaic but not fraud.

And in that appearance, a journalist called Elon out for inventing something about Gaza that led Trump to lie publicly.

That should have led to stories about how, in Trump’s presence, Elon admitted he makes shit up and Trump repeats them.

For the most part, it didn’t happen:

- NYT noted that Elon offered no proof of fraud, but did not mention the proof that Elon got caught in a lie.
- WaPo focused on the E0, but later explained that neither Trump nor Musk offered proof – but didn’t mention he got caught in a lie.
- Politico focused on the E0, but later noted that Elon said he would police his own conflicts.
- In an analytical piece, CNN claimed that Elon offered examples of fraud (which is false), but didn’t mention Gaza.

After airing Elon about scrutiny he claimed he was getting, WSJ *did* mention the Gaza question.

Asked about the Trump administration’s false assertion that the federal government sent \$50 million worth of condoms to Gaza, the billionaire acknowledged that he might at times promote erroneous information. “Some of the things that I say will be incorrect and should be corrected,” Musk said.

“Nobody is going to bat 1,000.”

But WSJ didn’t pursue the implication of it: that Elon got caught in a false claim.

Indeed, the only specific example that Trump mentioned was funding FEMA spent in NYC to house migrants – something approved by Congress – for which the staffers have been fired (as I’ll return to, Trump’s DOJ is already misrepresenting this in courts), *was also based on an Elon lie.*

The Trump administration said on Tuesday that it had fired four employees from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, including the agency’s chief financial officer, over their roles in disbursing federal funds to house migrants in New York City hotels.

The firings capped a startling chain of events that began on Monday with an early-morning social media post by Elon Musk who claimed, misleadingly, that FEMA had recently sent \$59 million meant for disaster relief to New York City to pay for “high end hotels” for migrants, and who called the expenditure unlawful.

New York City officials raced to clarify that the federal money had been properly allocated by FEMA under President Joseph R. Biden Jr. last year, adding that it was not a disaster relief grant and had not been spent on luxury hotels.

Nonetheless, just two hours after Mr. Musk’s post, FEMA’s acting director, Cameron Hamilton, announced that the payments in question “have all been suspended” – even though most of the money had already been disbursed – and that “personnel will be held accountable.”

By Tuesday morning, roughly 24 hours after Mr. Musk’s post, the Trump

administration had followed through on one part of its pledge.

Elon also made a false claim that they had turned on AIDS prevention – in one of the state lawsuits, Washington State presented a case where funds for AIDS *prevention* programs was being withheld.

This press conference consisted of Elon (and Trump) making false claim after false claim.

It also consisted of Trump lying over and over, without proof, about how one only needed to look for fraud to find it. No one asked why he hadn't looked in his first term. Indeed, several times he blamed Biden for problems that have existed for decades.

And yet, at best, journalists instead claimed only that Elon and Trump simply presented no proof.