

ANATOMY OF A SELF-IMAGINED JOURNALIST WHO FANCIES THAT TRUMP TELLS THE TRUTH IN HIS TWEETS

There was a delightful moment on Xitter today (and by “delightful … on Xitter” I mean yet another stunning shitshow at Elon’s Nazi Bar), when Jonathan Martin presumed to fact check just one element of Trump’s latest tweet attempting to enforce loyalty around Epstein.



∅ ...

Not the main point here, but I always love the insistence by one party that the other party is more loyal and cohesive.

“democrats stick together like glue”

Well, except that de facto parliamentary coup this time of a year ago in which they purged their sitting president

It’s as if Martin genuinely believes that the things included in Trump’s tweet are factual assertions. It’s as if Martin has no fucking clue that this tweet – virtually all Trump tweets – are an attempt to reinforce polarization pivoting around himself as the center of all power: In group, out group, create your very own reality by tweet to which your in group must adhere and the out group reinforces by posing in opposition to it. This is, they always are, about reinforcing his cult.

Let’s lay out all the things that lefties and journalists like Martin are disseminating today, as if they were transparent statements of truth, clinging to their blind faith that language is transparent, even when wielded by a guy who doesn’t hide his authoritarian aspirations.

The Radical Left Democrats have hit pay dirt, again! Just like with the FAKE and fully discredited Steele[*] Dossier, the

lying 51 “Intelligence” Agents, the Laptop from Hell, which the Dems swore had come from Russia (No, it came from Hunter Biden’s bathroom!), and even the Russia, Russia, Russia Scam itself, a totally fake and made up story used in order to hide Crooked Hillary Clinton’s big loss in the 2016 Presidential Election, these Scams and Hoaxes are all the Democrats are good at – It’s all they have – They are no good at governing, no good at policy, and no good at picking winning candidates. Also, unlike Republicans, they stick together like glue. Their new SCAM is what we will forever call the Jeffrey Epstein Hoax, and my PAST supporters have bought into this “bullshit,” hook, line, and sinker. They haven’t learned their lesson, and probably never will, even after being conned by the Lunatic Left for 8 long years. I have had more success in 6 months than perhaps any President in our Country’s history, and all these people want to talk about, with strong prodding by the Fake News and the success starved Dems, is the Jeffrey Epstein Hoax. Let these weaklings continue forward and do the Democrats work, don’t even think about talking of our incredible and unprecedented success, because I don’t want their support anymore! Thank you for your attention to this matter. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN! [my emphasis]

Here’s what Trump’s latest post looks like as a series of truth claims, with my assessment of the truth – or, more often, the utility – of each.

Democrats have hit pay dirt. There’s a great deal that is not said in this sentence, perhaps to avoid the logical conflict of his past screed about Epstein, where in sequential sentences Trump said, repeatedly, that Democrats created

the “Epstein files,” but then asked, “Why didn’t these Radical Left Lunatics release the Epstein Files?” Perhaps Trump is assuming familiarity with that earlier screed. Nevertheless, he starts by claiming that Democrats are succeeding at ... he doesn’t say what, with the Epstein story. That’s actually true though: the Democrats’ focus on Epstein is undermining Trump’s coalition, but they’re able to do so largely thanks to Trump’s own reliance on conspiracy and the ineptitude of his own Deep State.

The Steele dossier is fake. Note, Trump actually issued two versions of this tweet, the second one just to correct the spelling of “Steel.” I think Trump is justified in claiming that some – but not all – of the allegations in the Steele dossier are fake. That’s why he has spent years building his polarization around it.

The Steele dossier is fully discredited. Again, I think it’s fair that the dossier itself has not stood up to scrutiny.

Dems created that story. While it is true that, after Oleg Deripaska first paid Christopher Steele (indirectly) to hunt down dirt on Paul Manafort, the dossier itself was funded (indirectly) by Democrats. But there’s abundant reason to believe that Deripaska, who learned about it in real time, was able to fill it with disinformation (though Steele denies this). And the most inflammatory allegation – that Michael Cohen colluded with Russia to address the Russian scandal – likely involved Dmitry Peskov’s office, the one guy who definitely knew that Cohen and Trump were both lying to hide that they had been in direct communication with the Kremlin, with Peskov’s office, during the election, in pursuit of an impossibly lucrative real estate deal. So while Democrats paid Steele (again, indirectly), they didn’t create the false stories. There’s very good reason to believe Russia created at least some of them.

The 51 people who signed a letter saying that the Hunter Biden laptop looked like a Russian

information operation were analysts. Here's where Trump starts telling a series of lies about the letter that 51 former spooks wrote raising questions about the Hunter Biden laptop. By calling them "Intelligence" analysts, Trump attempts to denigrate them in two ways. He is attacking the very idea of intelligence. And he is minimizing the qualifications of many of those – including John Brennan and James Clapper – who signed the letter. Plus, while some of the signatories were analysts, some had other intelligence functions, including operational roles.

The 51 former spooks lied. The former spooks did not lie in real time – they expressed an opinion that the emails published by Rudy Giuliani had the earmarks of a Russian information operation and substantiated the reasons for that opinion with a number of true reasons. And some of the people who signed the letter say they still believe the Hunter Biden laptop – the packaging up of all the records on one laptop – could be an information operation. Nothing in the Hunter Biden prosecutions disproves that – the FBI never digitally validated the laptop, never did an index of what was on it and when it got added. Indeed records prosecutors themselves submitted suggest that the copy of a laptop that John Paul Mac Isaac shared with Rudy did not match the laptop as it was earlier shared with the FBI.

The 51 former spooks "swore" the laptop came from Russia. The 51 spooks did not swear the laptop came from Russia. They wrote an unsworn letter asserting that it had the earmarks of Russian involvement, even stating "we do not know if the emails, provided to the New York Post by President Trump's personal attorney Rudy Giuliani, are genuine or not and that we do not have evidence of Russian involvement."

Dems created that story. Again, Trump is misstating the Democrats' role here. Dems definitely were behind the writing of the letter (though with the involvement of non-partisan

spooks). But Rudy was the guy who – after soliciting help from alleged Russian intelligence agents over the course of a year – released the files in such a way that they could not be verified.

The laptop came from Hunter Biden's bathroom. This allegation, like a recent claim Trump has made that the laptop came from Hunter's bedside, doesn't match the known facts but is very interesting nonetheless. The stated provenance of the laptop shared with John Paul Mac Isaac is that Hunter Biden *dropped it off* and JPMI offered it up to the FBI. But there is another laptop – the one Keith Ablow sat on for a year – that *did* come from inside a cottage Biden was renting that directly abuts on Ablow's office. This claim the laptop came from Hunter's personal space doesn't make sense, but it seems to envision the possibility that Ablow (who is friends with Roger Stone) had a role in the Rudy laptop caper.

Russia, Russia, Russia is a "totally fake and made up story." Trump's Coffee Boy, Campaign Manager, National Security Adviser, personal attorney, and rat-fucker were all legally adjudged to have lied to cover up details of Trump's ties to Russia in the 2016 election. They lied about:

- An impossibly lucrative business deal that Michael Cohen and Trump were chasing during the election
- When and how the Trump campaign learned that Russia planned to release stolen emails to hurt Hillary
- What Manafort said during an August 2, 2016 meeting with alleged Russian spy Konstantin Kilimnik, at which they discussed:

- The campaign strategy to beat Hillary in swing states
- A plan to carve up Ukraine
- How Manafort would get paid, including by Deripaska, whom the FBI also alleges has ties to Russian intelligence
- Whether and how Roger Stone got advanced notice of the stolen files WikiLeaks would later drop, starting around the same time his lifelong buddy Manafort had that meeting with Kilimnik
- Trump's plans to undercut President Obama's efforts to punish Russia for the election interference

Russia is not a totally fake story in the least: It's true that those lies – and Trump's rewarding of them with pardons – prevented Robert Mueller from ever explaining what the men were lying about. But that doesn't make it fake; it makes the truth unexplained. Data mules who disseminate such claims without correction are complicit in disinformation.

Dems created that story. While Democrats supported the investigation into Trump's aides, they didn't contribute in any way to the lies told by his Coffee Boy, Campaign Manager, National Security Adviser, personal attorney, or rat-fucker. Indeed, Trump's own actions – his attempts to dismiss the import of Mike Flynn's lies – caused the FBI to keep digging.

Hillary Clinton is crooked. Trump's DOJ

conducted two extended investigations into Hillary Clinton, first the Clinton Foundation, and then her concerns about Trump's Russia ties. Very motivated prosecutors never managed to implicate her in any crime. Meanwhile, much of what Trump claims implicates Hillary – like a corrupt foundation or making false public claims about an opponent or weaponizing the FBI to fabricate a case against one's political adversaries – are things he himself does, on top of the open financial corruption.

Hillary Clinton had a big loss in the 2016 Presidential Election. In 2016, Hillary had the exact same electoral loss that Trump had in 2020: 232 Electoral Votes to 306. But Hillary won the popular vote.

The Russia story was used to "hide" Clinton's loss in the 2016 Presidential Election. Hillary Clinton freely conceded the election. And while she has said Russia had a factor in the loss (a claim that has never been tested), most Democrats, including Hillary, point to Jim Comey's shenanigans as the proximate cause for her loss, a claim Trump himself reinforced when he fired Comey.

Democrats are only good at hoaxes. This section begins Trump's attempted jujitsu at creating polarization around political success or failure. Democrats actually suck at hoaxes, as the spectacular backfiring of the Steele dossier shows.

Democrats are no good at governing, policy, or picking winning candidates. Trump's attempts to reverse Biden's policies are already resulting in inflation and economic decline. And Democrats certainly picked the winning Presidential candidate in 2020!

Democrats stick together like glue. That Jonathan Martin even imagined Trump meant this as a serious fact claim is farcical. The Dems are squabbling right now over how much support to give their rising new star, Zohran Mamdani! But Trump is using this statement to set up

artificial conflict in an attempt to regain the loyalty of his followers. That is, he's attempting to contrast non-existing Democratic unity with alleged disunity on the right.

The Jeffrey Epstein scandal is new. The sweetheart plea deal that Alex Acosta signed with Jeffrey Epstein was in 2008. Acosta joined Trump's cabinet in 2017. Trump's hand-picked US Attorney Geoffrey Berman charged Epstein anew in 2019, the same year Epstein killed himself. Ghislaine Maxwell was charged under Trump, too, shortly after Trump's AG fired Berman to stop various investigations implicating people close to him. Maxwell's prosecution and conviction took place under the Joe Biden Administration – but Trump's own DOJ just declined to intervene in Maxwell's appeal to the SCOTUS. The scandal has rolled out over years, during many of which Trump himself was President and Trump's own people, from his chosen FBI leads to his own family members to key pro-Trump trolls to his Vice President, have sustained Epstein as a current issue.

We will forever call the Jeffrey Epstein scandal “the Jeffrey Epstein Hoax.” Trump is, here, attempting to slot in the Epstein scandal as a hoax besides the other true things (plus the Steele dossier) that Trump has convinced his followers are not true. Trump is exceedingly good at repetition of his chosen labels so this one is likely to stick.

Those who “buy this ‘bullshit’ are Trump’s “PAST” supporters. Trump here is playing a loyalty game, effectively pushing those who continue to chase the Epstein scandal into his out group.

Those past supporters have been “conned … for 8 long years.” After trying to push those adhering to the Epstein scandal to an out group, Trump falsely claims they've believed anything but what he has told them in the last eight years. Heck, Trump's own FBI Director, Deputy Director, and Attorney General were very recently chasing this scandal, and Trump isn't pushing *them* into

an out group.

Trump has had more success in six months than perhaps any President in history. Trump has had political success, sure, with Republicans in Congress backing his policies largely unquestioningly. But his chosen policies are beginning to destroy America.

Trump's past supporters "want to do the Democrats [sic] work." Again, this is an attempt to push those adhering to the Epstein scandal into the off group, accusing them of disloyalty.

Trump's past supporters should not "even think about talking of our incredible and unprecedented success." This is yet more attempt to push those adhering to the Epstein scandal into an out group, a group he is attempting to prohibit from sharing in his claimed success.

Trump doesn't want the support of those past supporters anymore. Trump of course wants the support of the 30% of his base that adheres to the Epstein scandal – as both a formal study and Harry Enten's polling make clear, "Donald Trump would not have won the Presidency in 2024 if it were not for the backing of QAnon believers." This is yet another attempt to lure people away from the Epstein scandal by pushing them into an out group.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. This is a new standard element to Trump's tweets. Perhaps someone (Susie Wiles?) believes it gives Trump gravitas. Still, it's nice that Trump is thanking us for doing what so many can't withstand, paying attention to his every tweet.

Trump wants to make America like it was in some idyllic past. The slogan "make America great again," mobilizes an every-moving sense of nostalgia (and, for many, racism) that works especially well with disaffected people. Repeating it as Trump does reinforces his in-group that believes the past was some kind of idyllic time.

This post is, at current count, almost 2,200 words, 1,900 if you exclude the actual tweet. This is the kind of fact checking and context that journalists should do *every time* before they disseminate Trump's tweets. Doing anything less – disseminating a 200th tweet that claims "Russia Russia Russia is a hoax" without rebuttal is simply cooperating in the disinformation (to say nothing about how critical comments reinforce the out group dynamic).

These are not truth claims, poor naive Politico "Senior political columnist," Jonathan Martin. I'm sorry I need to explain this to you, eight years into Trump's regime by tweet. I'm sorry you haven't thought about how much disinformation you helped to repeat unquestioned over those years. But these were never truth claims.

This tweet, like most of Trump's tweets, is an attempt to reinforce via repetition – especially repetition of Trump's false claims of victimization – the polarization and tribalism that leads his followers to adhere to him so unquestionably. It is true that Epstein is posing unprecedented challenges for this operation. But journalists would do well to use this moment to think about how Trump's tweets work, and have always worked.

* In a rare move, Trump issued a second version of this post, correcting an initial misspelling, "Steel."