

FAKE NEWS: HISTORICAL TIMELINE

63 B.C.



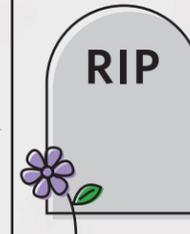
Roman Emperor Augustus Octavian built a campaign of disinformation to support his victory over Marc Antony during the War of the Roman Republic.

1915



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

1924 - 1953



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

2017



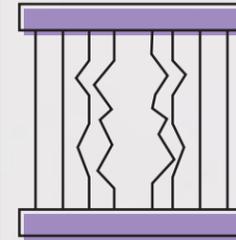
A fake news website called The Boston Tribune reported that Barack Obama's mother-in-law would receive money from the government for taking care of her grandchildren, Sasha and Malia. The story reached mainstream media but was quickly shut down, as it had no evidence and was completely false. The fake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

1475



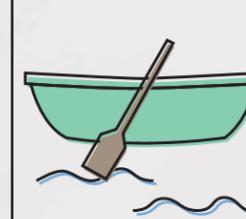
A false story by Franciscan preacher Bernardino da Feltre blamed the Jewish community for a missing child. Fifteen people were falsely accused, found guilty, and tortured, contributing to widespread anti-Semitism as the story spread.

1874



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

1927



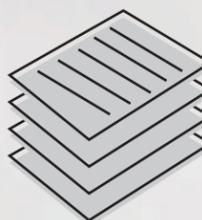
Dorothy Cochrane Logan, a British doctor, claimed to swim the English Channel for 13 hours straight. She was celebrated by European newspapers, which wrote about her accomplishment and gave her money as a reward. The story later broke that she had secretly completed most of the journey by boat.

2016



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

16th & 17th Centuries



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

1844



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

1933-1945



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

1991



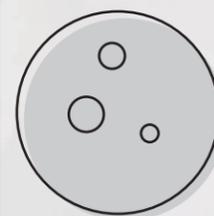
A rumor spread through American news outlets that Vladimir Lenin's body would be auctioned off for millions of dollars. The Russian government grew furious, and the editor of Forbes admitted that the story was not true.

1782



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

1835



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

1938



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

1983



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