

# In Court, Facebook Admits 'Fact Checks' Are Pure Opinion

Analysis by [Dr. Joseph Mercola](#) ✓ Fact Checked

## STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › “Fact checks” are nothing but a biased censoring mechanism, and now we have proof of this fact, thanks to a lawsuit brought against Facebook by journalist John Stossel
- › In court documents, Facebook admits that fact checks are “statements of opinion” and not factual assertions
- › Facebook recently censored a whistleblower report published by The British Medical Journal (BMJ), one of the oldest and most respected peer-reviewed medical journals in the world, variably labeling the article as “False,” “Partly false” or “Missing context.” Some users reported they could not share the article at all
- › The fact check inaccurately referred to The BMJ as a “news blog,” failed to specify any assertions of fact that The BMJ article got wrong, and published the fact check under a URL containing the phrase “hoax-alert”
- › The BMJ calls the fact check “inaccurate, incompetent and irresponsible.” In an open letter addressed to Mark Zuckerberg, The BMJ urges Zuckerberg to “act swiftly” to correct the erroneous fact check, review the processes that allowed it to occur in the first place, and “generally to reconsider your investment in and approach to fact checking overall”

We’ve long suspected that fact checking organizations are nothing but a biased censoring mechanism more interested in manipulating opinion than establishing actual

facts, but now we have absolute proof, thanks to a lawsuit brought against Facebook by journalist John Stossel.<sup>1,2</sup>

In 2020, a Facebook fact checker called Science Feedback slapped “False” and “Lacking context” labels on two videos posted by Stossel. The videos featured Stossel’s interviews with experts who discussed the negligible role of climate change in the 2020 California forest fires. While they did not deny climate change is real, they proposed there were other, likely more contributing factors, such as poor forest management.

Why were his videos flagged as misinformation? According to Facebook fact checkers, Stossel was “misleading” people when he claimed that “forest fires are caused by poor forest management, not climate change.” But according to Stossel, he never actually made that claim.

According to Stossel, the labels damaged his reputation as an investigative journalist and resulted in a loss of followers. Interestingly, when Stossel contacted Science Feedback about its fact checks, two reviewers agreed to be interviewed. With regard to the first video that got flagged, they admitted they’d never even watched it. In the case of the second video, a reviewer explained that they “didn’t like [his] tone.” As noted by The New York Post:<sup>3</sup>

*“That is, you can’t write anything about climate change unless you say it’s the worst disaster in the history of humanity and we must spend trillions to fight it.”*

“The problem is the omission of contextual information rather than specific ‘facts’ being wrong,” the fact checker told Stossel, who says:<sup>4</sup>

*“What? It’s fine if people don’t like my tone. But Facebook declares my post ‘partly false,’ a term it defines on its website as including ‘factual inaccuracies.’ My video does not contain factual inaccuracies ... I want Facebook to learn that censorship – especially sloppy, malicious censorship, censorship without any meaningful appeal process – is NOT the way to go. The world needs more freedom to discuss things, not less.”*

## Facebook Claims Fact Checks Are 'Protected Opinion'

So, Stossel sued for defamation, and this is where it gets good, because to defend Facebook, its lawyers had to at least temporarily resort to telling the truth. In their legal brief, they argue that fact checks are protected under the First Amendment because they are OPINIONS, not assertions of facts! Commenting on the case, climate change blogger Anthony Watts writes:<sup>5</sup>

*"Facebook just blew the 'fact check' claim right out of the water in court. In its response to Stossel's defamation claim, Facebook responds on Page 2, Line 8 in the court document that Facebook cannot be sued for defamation (which is making a false and harmful assertion) because its 'fact checks' are mere statements of opinion rather than factual assertions.*

*Opinions are not subject to defamation claims, while false assertions of fact can be subject to defamation ... So, in a court of law, in a legal filing, Facebook admits that its 'fact checks' are not really 'fact' checks at all, but merely 'opinion assertions.'*

*This strikes me as public relations disaster, and possibly a looming legal disaster for Facebook, PolitiFact, Climate Feedback and other left-leaning entities that engage in biased 'fact checking.'*

*Such 'fact checks' are now shown to be simply an agenda to suppress free speech and the open discussion of science by disguising liberal media activism as something supposedly factual, noble, neutral, trustworthy, and based on science. It is none of those."*

## Facebook Censors The British Medical Journal

Stossel is far from alone in being censored these days. In the video above, he points out other noteworthy experts who have been censored for their opinions and educated stances, such as environmentalist Michael Shellenberger, once hailed by Time Magazine

as a “hero of the environment,” statistician and environmentalist Bjorn Lomborg, once declared “one of the most influential people of the 21st century,” and science writer John Tierney.

**“ As Facebook has now admitted in court, these so-called fact checks are nothing more than a declaration of preferred opinion. They’re statements of approved narrative. They have nothing to do with the verification of facts.”**

Of course, I am no stranger to censorship either, having been falsely labeled as one of the “biggest misinformation agents” on the entire internet when it comes to the COVID jab. In these times of Orwellian Doublespeak, I consider this one of most significant achievements I have ever achieved.

Think about it for a moment. The entire mainstream media has agreed that I am the most influential spreader of the truth about COVID on the internet. Even my friend and major freedom fighter, Bobby Kennedy, was only No. 2. I couldn’t be more delighted with their award. I might even have it inscribed on my tombstone.

Most recently, Facebook even censored The British Medical Journal (BMJ) over an article that highlighted potential problems with Pfizer’s COVID jab trial, and The BMJ is one of the oldest and most respected peer-reviewed medical journals in the world!

In early November 2021, The BMJ published a whistleblower report<sup>6</sup> that claimed there were serious data integrity issues in the Pfizer COVID jab trial. The article was censored by Facebook and labeled variably as either “False,” “Partly false” or “Missing context.” Some users reported the article could not be shared at all.

The Facebook fact check of The BMJ article was done by Lead Stories, a Facebook contractor. The headline of its “fact check” rebuttal read: “Fact Check: The British

Medical Journal Did NOT Reveal Disqualifying and Ignored Reports of Flaws in Pfizer's COVID-19 Vaccine Trials.”<sup>7</sup>

## **‘Inaccurate, Incompetent and Irresponsible’ Fact Checking**

In response, The BMJ has slammed the fact check, calling it “inaccurate, incompetent and irresponsible.”<sup>8,9,10</sup> In an open letter<sup>11</sup> addressed to Facebook’s Mark Zuckerberg, The BMJ urges Zuckerberg to “act swiftly” to correct the erroneous fact check, review the processes that allowed it to occur in the first place, and “generally to reconsider your investment in and approach to fact checking overall.” As noted by The BMJ in its letter, the Lead Stories’ fact check:<sup>12</sup>

- Inaccurately referred to The BMJ as a “news blog”
- Failed to specify any assertions of fact that The BMJ article got wrong
- Published the fact check on the Lead Stories’ website under a URL that contains the phrase “hoax-alert”

Lead Stories refused to address the inaccuracies when contacted by The BMJ directly. The BMJ also raises “a wider concern” in its letter:

*“We are aware that The BMJ is not the only high quality information provider to have been affected by the incompetence of Meta’s fact checking regime. To give one other example, we would highlight the treatment by Instagram (also owned by Meta) of Cochrane, the international provider of high quality systematic reviews of the medical evidence.*

*Rather than investing a proportion of Meta’s substantial profits to help ensure the accuracy of medical information shared through social media, you have apparently delegated responsibility to people incompetent in carrying out this crucial task.*

*Fact checking has been a staple of good journalism for decades. What has happened in this instance should be of concern to anyone who values and relies*

on sources such as *The BMJ*.”

## **Fact Checkers Are as Biased as They Come**

When it comes to fact checking, it's high time everyone understood that fact checks are not done by independent, unbiased parties who are sifting through facts to make sure a given piece is accurate.

As Facebook has now admitted in court, these so-called fact checks are nothing more than a declaration of preferred opinion. They're statements of approved narrative. They have nothing to do with the verification of facts. As reported by the New York Post:<sup>13</sup>

*“The Post has faced this same gauntlet too many times. In February 2020, we published a column by Steven W. Mosher asking if COVID-19 leaked from the Wuhan Lab. This was labeled ‘false’ by Facebook’s fact-checkers.*

*Of course, those supposed ‘independent’ scientific reviewers relied on a group of experts who had a vested interest in dismissing that theory – including EcoHealth, which had funded the Wuhan lab.*

*When Twitter ‘fact checked’ and blocked The Post’s stories about Hunter Biden’s laptop as ‘hacked materials,’ what was the basis? Nothing. It wasn’t hacked; the company’s staff just wanted an excuse. Guess they didn’t like our tone. In both these cases, our ‘fact checks’ were lifted, but only after it no longer mattered.”*

The New York Post also points out that “The fact-check industry is funded by liberal moguls such as George Soros, government-funded nonprofits and the tech giants themselves.”<sup>14</sup> Science Feedback, for example, received seed funding from Google.<sup>15</sup>

Journalism’s icon, the Poynter Institute – which runs the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) – also funded Science Feedback to build what Poynter describes as “a database of fact checks and of websites that spread misinformation the most.”

In a round robin of circular funding, IFCN's revenues come from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Google, Facebook and government entities such as the U.S. Department of State.<sup>16</sup> To top it off, Science Feedback's crowdfunding is run through the University of California, Merced, so they can avoid taxes in the United States.<sup>17</sup>

## **Fact Checkers Protect the Technocratic Agenda**

One of the primary funders of the fake fact checking industry that The Post failed to mention is the drug industry. NewsGuard and other fact checking organizations are loaded with Big Pharma conflicts of interest, and their bias in favor of the drug industry is undeniable.

Fact checking organizations are also clearly influenced by technocratic organizations such as the World Economic Forum, which is leading the call for a Great Reset.

NewsGuard, for example, is partnered with Publicis,<sup>18</sup> one of the world's largest PR companies that has a huge roster of Big Pharma clients, and Publicis in turn is a partner of the World Economic Forum.

NewsGuard also received a large chunk of its startup capital from Publicis. No doubt, Big Pharma and The Great Reset are tightly intertwined and work together toward the same goal, which is nothing less than world domination and the enslavement of the global population under a biomedical police state.

## **PR Posing as Free Press Has Unleashed Fake News Pandemic**

Publicis actually appears to be coordinating the global effort to suppress information that runs counter to the technocratic narrative about COVID-19, its origin, prevention and treatment – suppression and censorship that has been repeatedly aimed at this website specifically.

It is part of an enormous network that includes international drug companies, fact checkers and credibility raters like NewsGuard, Google and other search engines, Microsoft, antivirus software companies like Trend Micro, public libraries, schools, the

banking industry, the U.S. State Department and Department of Defense, the World Health Organization and the World Economic Forum.

Mind you, this is not a comprehensive list of links. It's merely a sampling of entities to give you an idea of the breadth of connections, which when taken together explain how certain views – such as information about COVID-19 and vaccines – can be so effectively suppressed and erased from public discourse.

To understand the power that PR companies such as Publicis wield, you also need to realize that PR has, by and large, replaced the free press. This has had a devastating effect, and I don't think I'm overstating the matter when I say that it is PR masquerading as news that gave birth to the whole “fake news” phenomenon.

However, in true Orwellian double-speak, these same fake PR-news pushers claim everyone else is peddling fake news. They want us to believe their PR is the truth, even though its typically devoid of data and flies in the face of verifiable facts.

## **China's Hidden Influence**

In addition to fact checkers doing the bidding of Big Pharma and the technocratic elite, the public is also being deceived and manipulated by Chinese propaganda. In a December 20, 2021, New York Times article,<sup>19</sup> Muye Xiao, Paul Mozur and Gray Beltran details how China manipulates Facebook and Twitter to further its own authoritarian aspirations.

According to Xiao, Mozur and Beltran, China's government has “unleashed a global online campaign” to bolster its image and suppress accusations of human rights abuses. To that end, it hires companies to flood social media with fake accounts that are then used to advance China's agenda worldwide.

This includes creating content on demand, identifying and tracking critics that live outside of China, running bot networks to flood social media with tailored propaganda messages to steer discussion and more – strategies referred to as “public opinion management.”

Disturbingly, while the Chinese government has long hunted down dissenting voices inside the country and forced them to recant, they're now hunting Chinese dissenters worldwide.

Any user who has connections to the mainland can find themselves in a situation where their family members in China are detained or threatened until or unless they delete the offending post or account. People of Chinese descent who live in other countries may also be detained by police if they return to mainland China, based on the opinions they've shared online.

## **China Aims for More Sophisticated Propaganda**

According to the documents the trio obtained, the Chinese police are also working on more sophisticated propaganda maneuvers. For example, rather than relying on bot farms and fake troll profiles to create an appearance of public opinion, they're looking to grow popular accounts that have an organic following, so that these accounts can later be taken over by government to push whatever propaganda is desired at that time.

These are known as "profiles for hire." As explained in the article, "The deeper engagement lends the fake personas credibility at a time when social media companies are increasingly taking down accounts that seem inauthentic or coordinated."

## **Facebook Itself Is an Opinion Management Tool**

Of course, Facebook and Twitter lend themselves to this kind of manipulation because they are essentially "public opinion management" tools. Even if they didn't start out that way (and that's a big if), they've certainly grown into it. There can be no denying that both platforms have been instrumental in censoring information about COVID-19 on behalf of the drug industry and global technocracy.

As reported by The National Pulse,<sup>20</sup> email correspondence between Dr. Anthony Fauci and Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg reveals Zuckerberg even agreed to send Fauci

reports on Facebook users' sentiments to "facilitate decisions" about COVID-19 lockdowns. An April 8, 2020, email from Zuckerberg reads in part:<sup>21</sup>

*"... If we're looking at a prolonged period of tightening and loosening shelter restrictions around the country, then if there are aggregate, anonymized data reports that Facebook can generate to facilitate these decisions, for example, we'd be happy to do this ..."*

*We've kicked off a symptom survey, which will hopefully give a county-by-county leading indicator of cases to inform public health decisions. If there are other aggregate data resources that you think would be helpful, let me know ..."*

As noted by The National Pulse, this is a "stark example" of how Big Tech corporations and government agencies collude and use user data to restrict our freedoms and liberties.<sup>22</sup>

## **Government Colludes With Big Tech to Circumvent Constitution**

Indeed, aside from this, we've also had clear examples of politicians colluding with Big Tech to censor on behalf of the government, in clear violation of the U.S. Constitution. This is why I sued U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren.

In early September 2021, Warren sent a letter<sup>23</sup> to Andy Jassy, chief executive officer of Amazon.com, demanding an "immediate review" of Amazon's algorithms to weed out books peddling "COVID misinformation."<sup>24,25,26</sup>

Warren specifically singled out my book, "The Truth About COVID-19," co-written with Ronnie Cummins, founder and director of the Organic Consumers Association (OCA), as a prime example of "highly-ranked and favorably-tagged books based on falsehoods about COVID-19 vaccines and cures" that she wanted banned.

As a government official, it is illegal for her to violate the U.S. Constitution, and pressuring private businesses to do it for her is not a legal workaround. Since she willfully ignored the law, Cummins and I, along with our publisher, Chelsea Green

Publishing, and Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who wrote our foreword, sued Warren,<sup>27</sup> both in her official and personal capacities, for violating our First Amendment rights.

The federal lawsuit, in which Warren is listed as the sole defendant, was filed November 8, 2021, in the state of Washington.

## **‘Fact Checks’ Are Brainwashing Attempts**

Is there a fact checking organization you can rely on? The simple and direct answer is no. They all exist for a single purpose – to metaphorically “shout over” anyone whose views differ from the officially sanctioned narrative on a given topic and suppress the truth that interferes with the implementation of their agenda.

It’s like two people trying to have a conversation about something while a third person keeps interjecting, screaming at the top of their lungs “THINK THIS! SAY THIS!”

Who needs that? They’re useless. By reading them and giving them any credence, all you’re doing is filling your head with propaganda and increasing your likelihood of falling into the pervasive mass delusional psychosis we’re seeing all around us. It’s just one big brainwashing attempt. With any amount of luck, Facebook’s court admission that fact checks are mere opinion pieces will end up triggering the fact blockers’ demise.

## **Sources and References**

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- <sup>3, 13, 14</sup> [New York Post December 14, 2021](#)
- <sup>4</sup> [New York Post December 13, 2021](#)
- <sup>5</sup> [wattsupwiththat.com December 9, 2021](#)
- <sup>6, 11, 12</sup> [The BMJ 2021;375:n2635](#)
- <sup>7, 8</sup> [Reclaim the Net December 17, 2021](#)
- <sup>9</sup> [Medscape December 20, 2021](#)
- <sup>10</sup> [ZeroHedge December 20, 2021](#)
- <sup>15</sup> [Science Feedback Partners, Funders & Donors](#)
- <sup>16</sup> [Poynter IFCN Transparency Statement](#)
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- <sup>18</sup> Twitter Publicis Health Media April 27, 2021
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- <sup>20, 21, 22</sup> National Pulse December 14, 2021
- <sup>23</sup> Warren's letter to Andy Jassy September 7, 2021
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- <sup>25</sup> The Guardian September 13, 2021
- <sup>26</sup> New York Times September 8, 2021
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