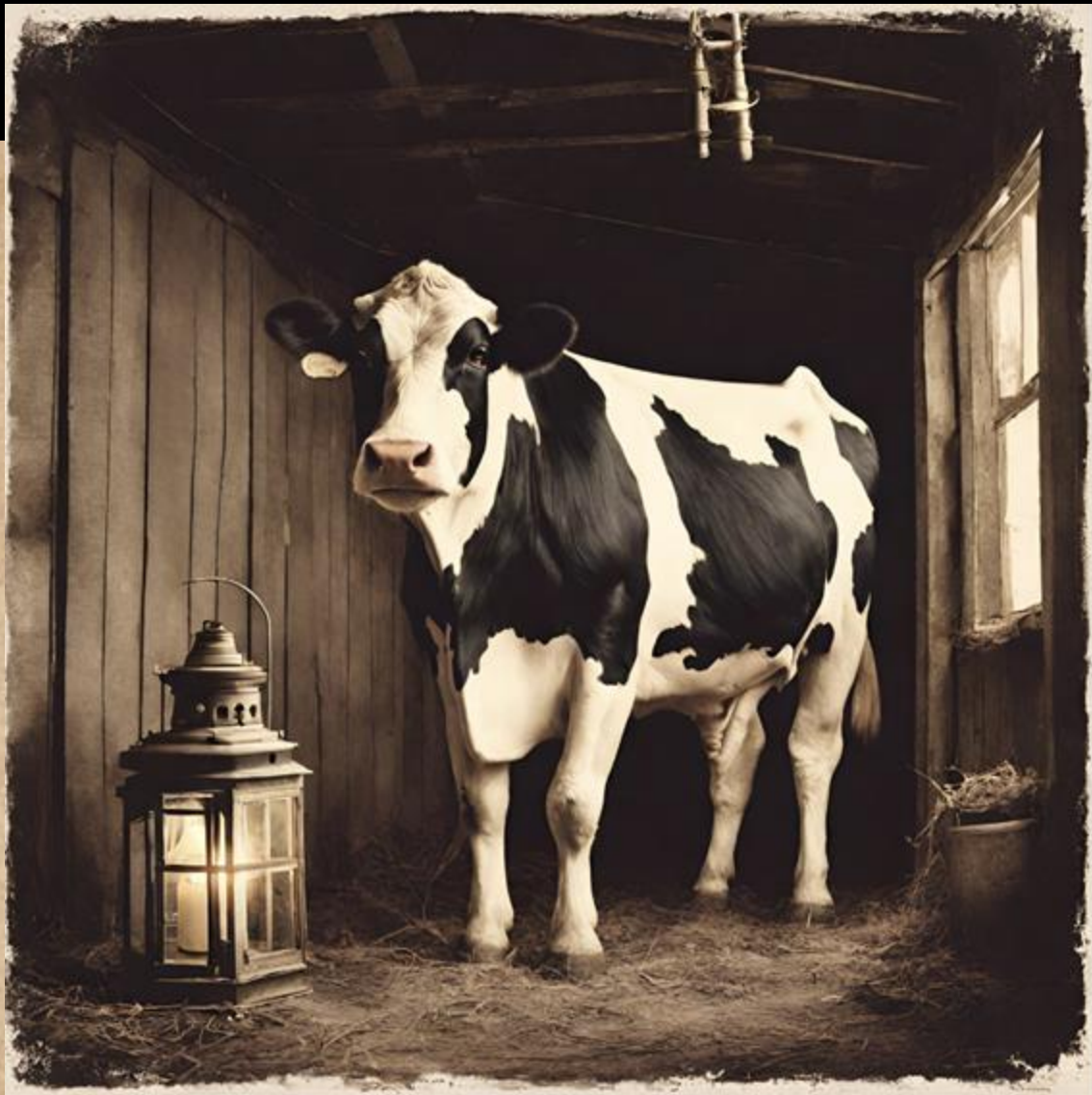




Full

BLAMED THE COW?



HISTORICAL ABSURDITIES,
BIASES & FAKE NEWS

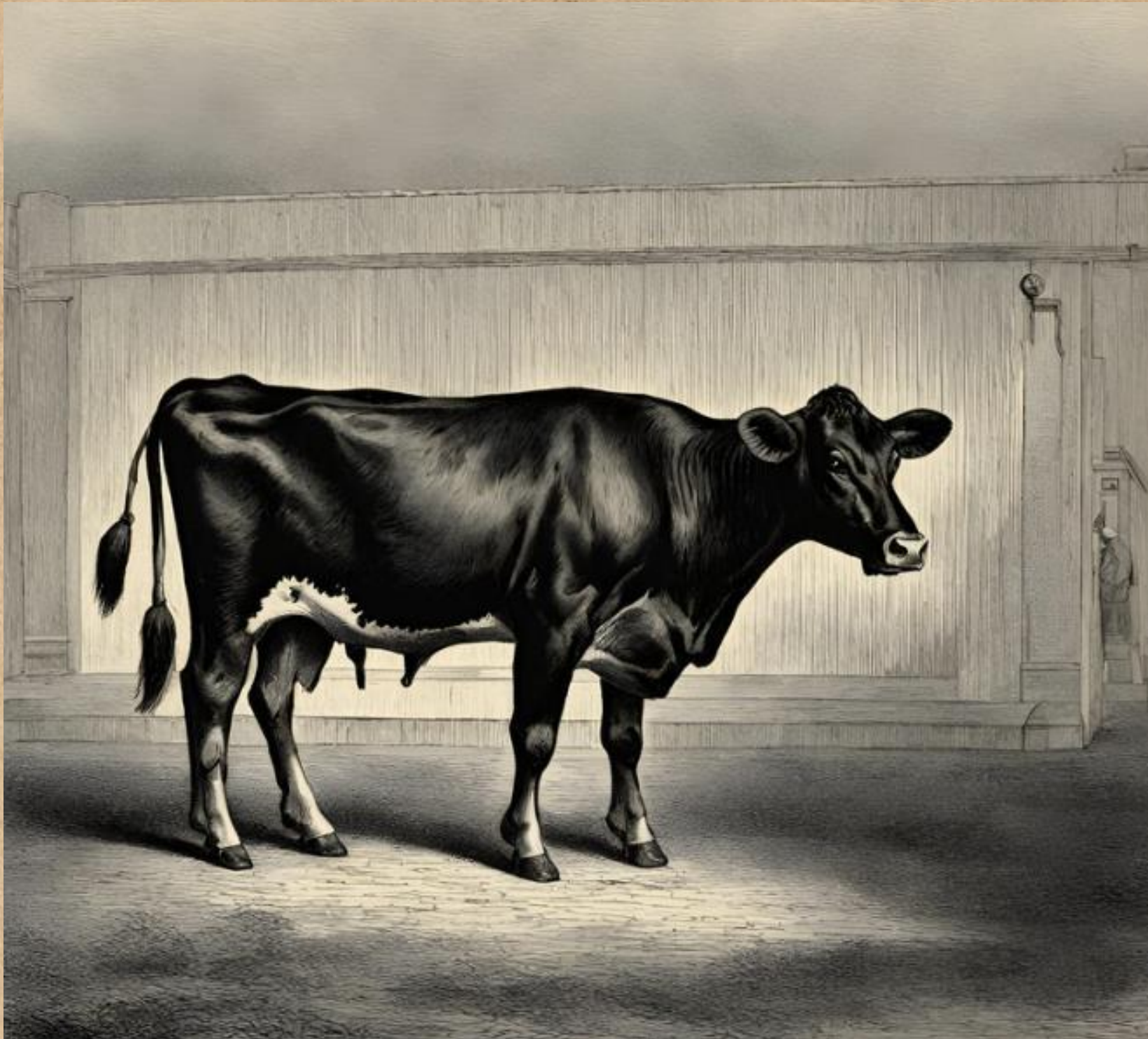
Robbie Barber, Ed.D.

2025



The Daily Fake

News



CONTENTS

- 01** Vocabulary & Semantics
- 02** Examples
- 03** Engaging Patrons
- 04** Resources

Vocabulary

HISTORICAL ABSURDITIES, BIASES & FAKE NEWS

Historical Bias

- **Historical Bias** is made up of:
 - Political agenda
 - Cultural background
 - Limited information
 - Perspectives & bias of others including historians
- **Skew** our understanding which can have major consequences.



Satire vs. Sarcasm

- **Satire** is being misled and then laughing at ourselves.
- **Sarcasm** is *sharp* satire intended to cut.



Post-Truth

- **Post-Truth:** Objective facts mean less than someone's emotions or personal beliefs.
- **Conspiracy Theory:** Secret group of powerful people are out to get you.

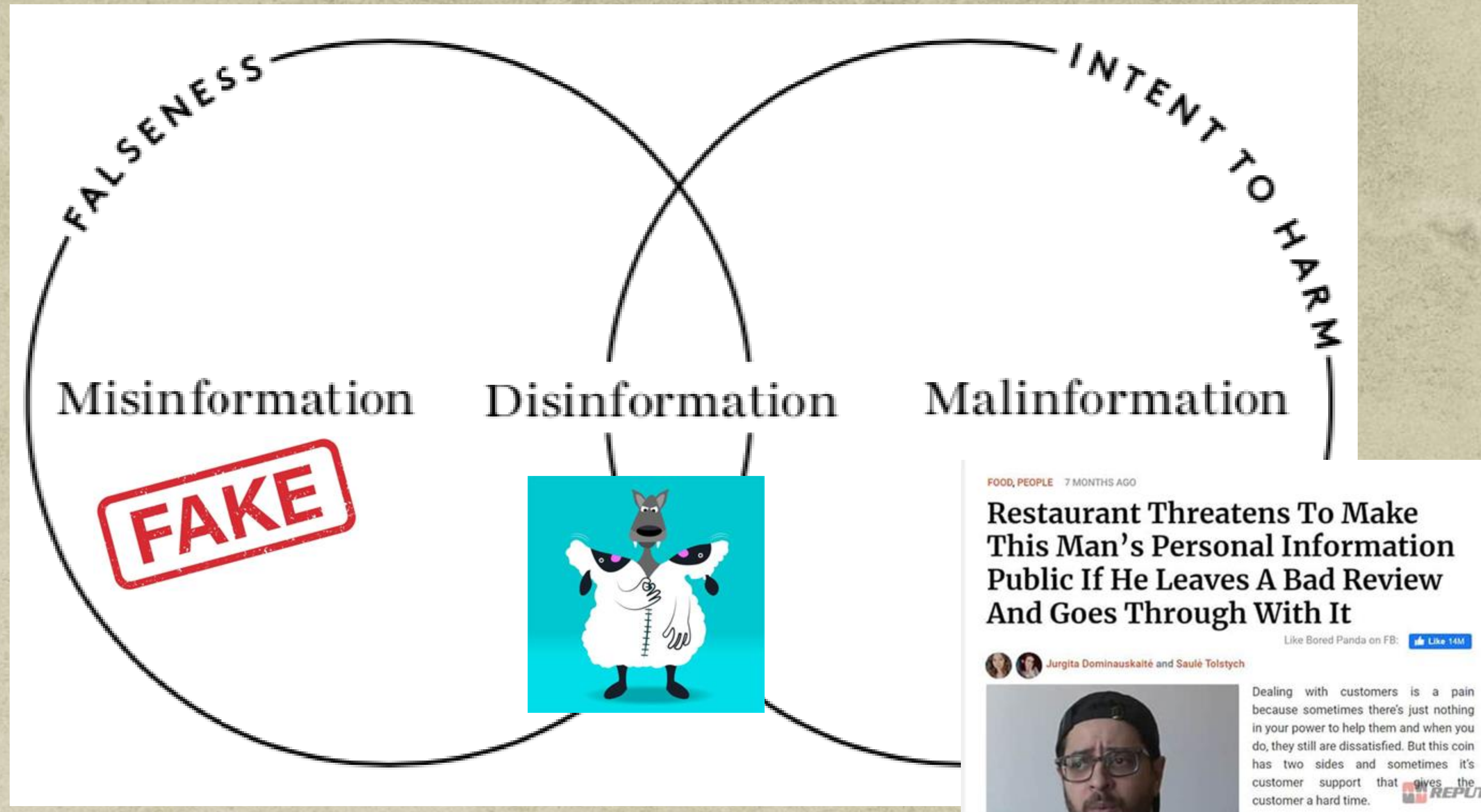


DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES



By Tim Rickard / Brewster Rockit, Space Guy
Originally published 5-2-2017

MIS-, DIS-, MAL-INFORMATION



Reference: The Deakin Library Blog. (March 13, 2023). Don't believe everything you see. <https://blogs.deakin.edu.au/article/misinformation-2023/>

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Semantics

HISTORICAL ABSURDITIES, BIASES & FAKE NEWS

Semantics is the study of meanings of words and phrases.

Words with different meanings need to be explained. For example:

‘Crash’ means:

- accident;
- a drop in the stock market; OR
- attending a party without an invitation



Note. Image generated with the phrase “Model-T car crash in vintage style hitting a fence” using Canva, 2024. (canva.com)

crane



That bird is a crane.



They had to use a crane to lift the object.



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News

**I love the phrase
“bear with me”**



**because it means either
‘be patient’
or
‘the zoo heist was a success’.**

AI LEARNS FROM HISTORY

If AI learns from history, how will it direct and change based on changes in the future?

For example, historically women made less money than men. IF AI tells HR that the less amount is “normal”, how do we change it’s bias?



Note. Image generated using the text “woman teaching in one room school house in vintage style” by Canva, 2024. (canva.com)

IMAGE MANIPULATIONS

The choice of what images to use or not use to represent a news story is an important decision made by all media sources.



- ❑ Titles / Captions
- ❑ Camera Angles
- ❑ Backgrounds
- ❑ Headline
- ❑ Placement of story
- ❑ Omission of details
- ❑ Statistics

IMAGE MANIPULATIONS



Reference:
<https://121clicks.com/inspirations/fake-viral-photoshopped-images-that-believed-real>

IMAGE MANIPULATIONS



Reference: Calzon, Bernardita. (Jan. 6, 2023) Misleading Statistics Examples – Discover The Potential For Misuse of Statistics & Data In The Digital Age
<https://www.datapine.com/blog/misleading-statistics-and-data/>

IMAGE MANIPULATIONS



Reference: Calzon, Bernardita. (Jan. 6, 2023) Misleading Statistics Examples – Discover The Potential For Misuse of Statistics & Data In The Digital Age
<https://www.datapine.com/blog/misleading-statistics-and-data/>

AI = IMAGE MISTRUST?

“Calling attention to a misleading image, e.g., one that alludes to a conclusion not present in the text, may come with a risk increasing its elaboration and unwittingly improving memory for the misleading conclusion.”

(Conclusion, Newman & Schwartz, 2024)

The News Literacy Project RumorGuard.

<https://www.rumorguard.org/post/fox-news-did-not-feature-taco-bell-story-on-day-of-trump-conviction>



The Daily fake

HISTORICAL ABSURDITIES, ~~News~~ BIASES &
FAKE NEWS

REAL? OR FAKE?

READY?

CAN YOU TELL WHAT IS REAL OR FAKE?



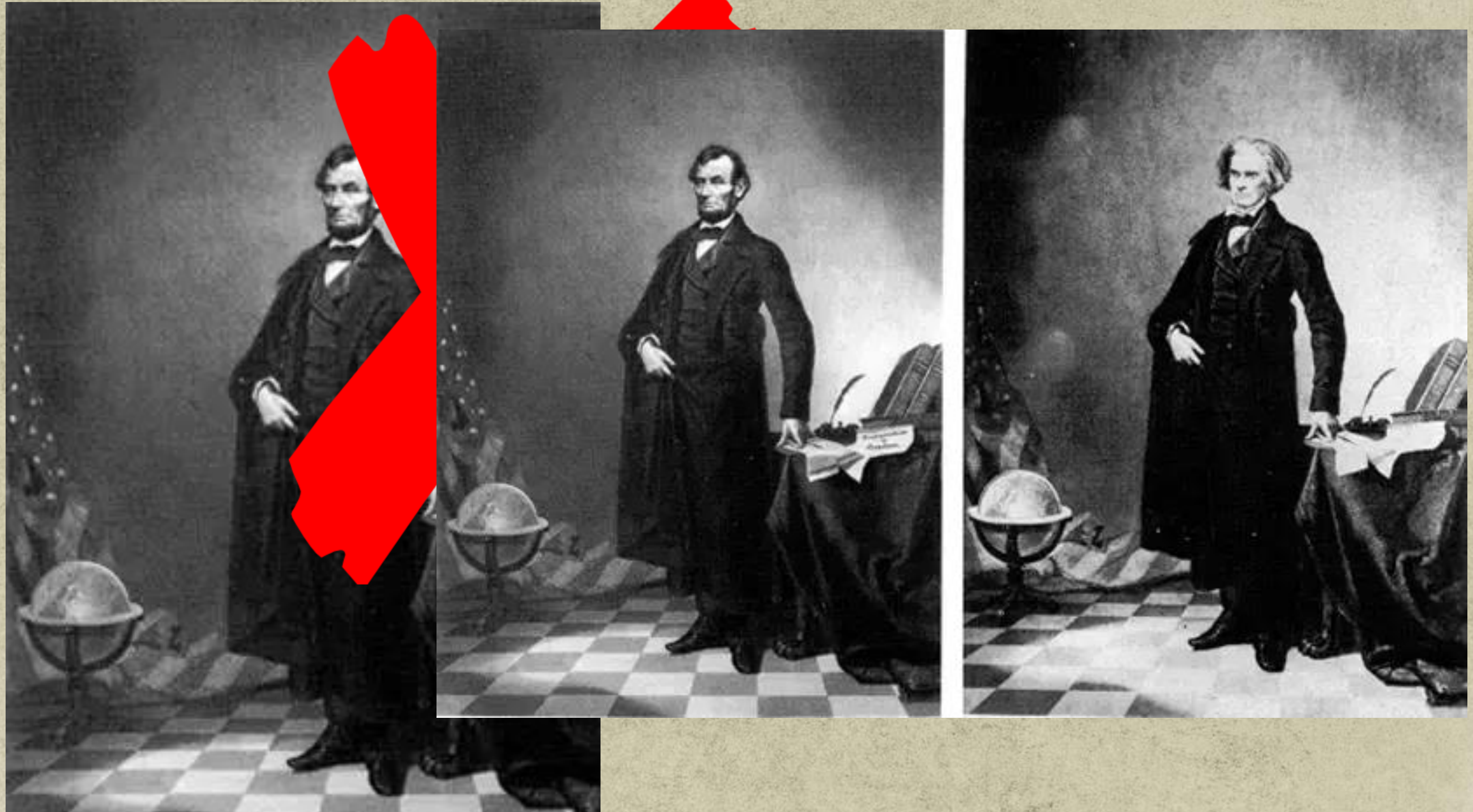
REAL OR FAKE?



REAL OR FAKE?



REAL OR FAKE?



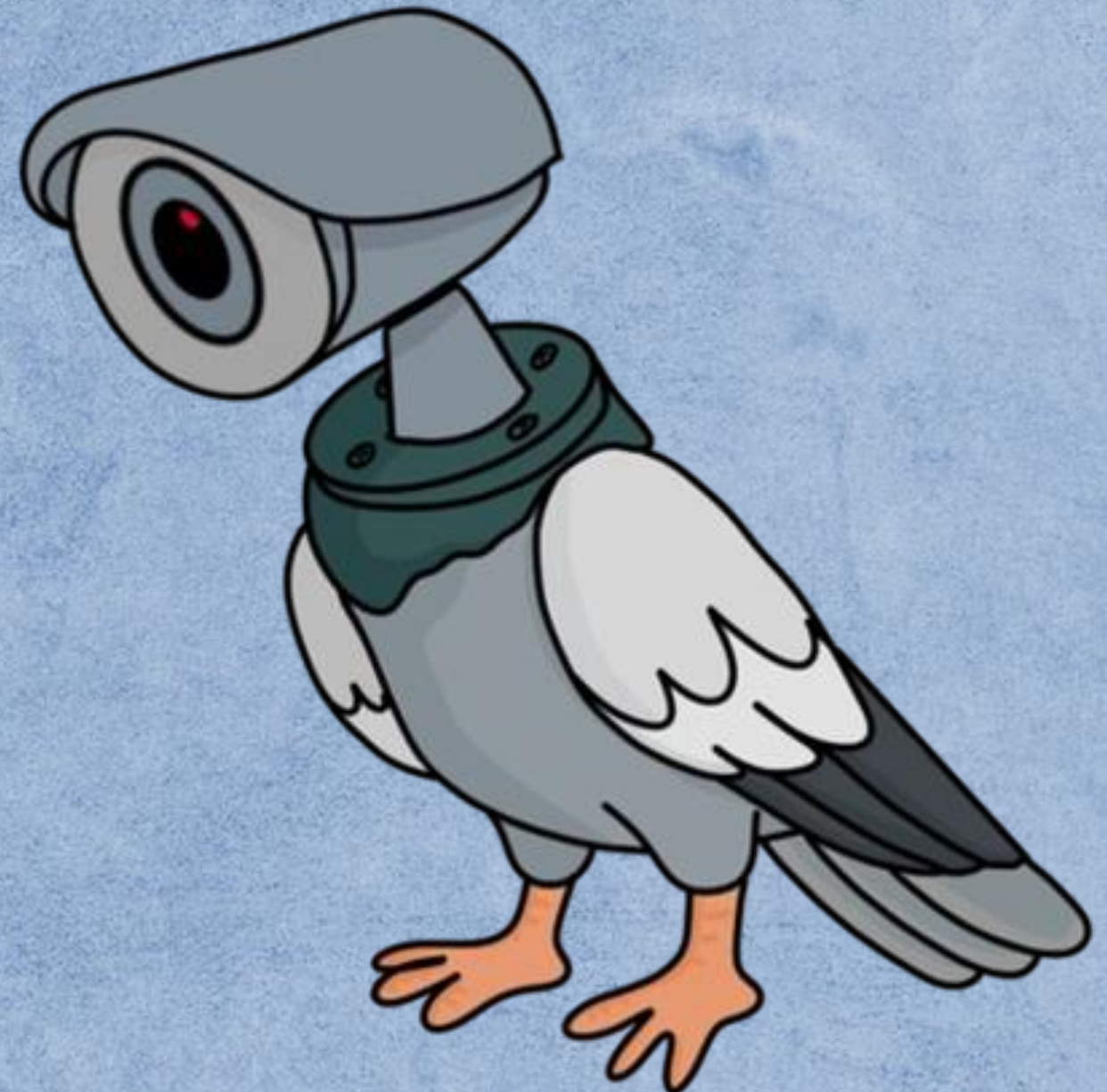
From The Business Insider:
<https://www.businessinsider.com/fake-photos-history-2011-8#this-famous-picture-of-lincoln-features-his-head-grafted-to-the-body-of-jefferson-davis-president-of-the-confederacy-1>

The Daily Fake

Examples

HISTORICAL ABSURDITIES, BIASES & FAKE NEWS

Government conspiracies are a great way to convince others that they are being targeted.



BIRDS AREN'T REAL

Peter McIndoe

**Founder of Bird's
Aren't Real
Movement**



it was just the most absurd thing i could think of i'm angry and i'm here to protest sign in hand

BIRDS AREN'T REAL

Video: 60 Minutes from
May 3, 2022
[https://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=lsgrYog6WO](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsgrYog6WO)



LESSONS FROM BAR

- ☐ Humor matters
- ☐ Be careful with your vocabulary
- ☐ “A picture is worth a thousand words”
- ☐ Stay on the side of not hurting others.
- ☐ Share with friends.
- ☐ Try to stay away from Controversy*

*May not be possible

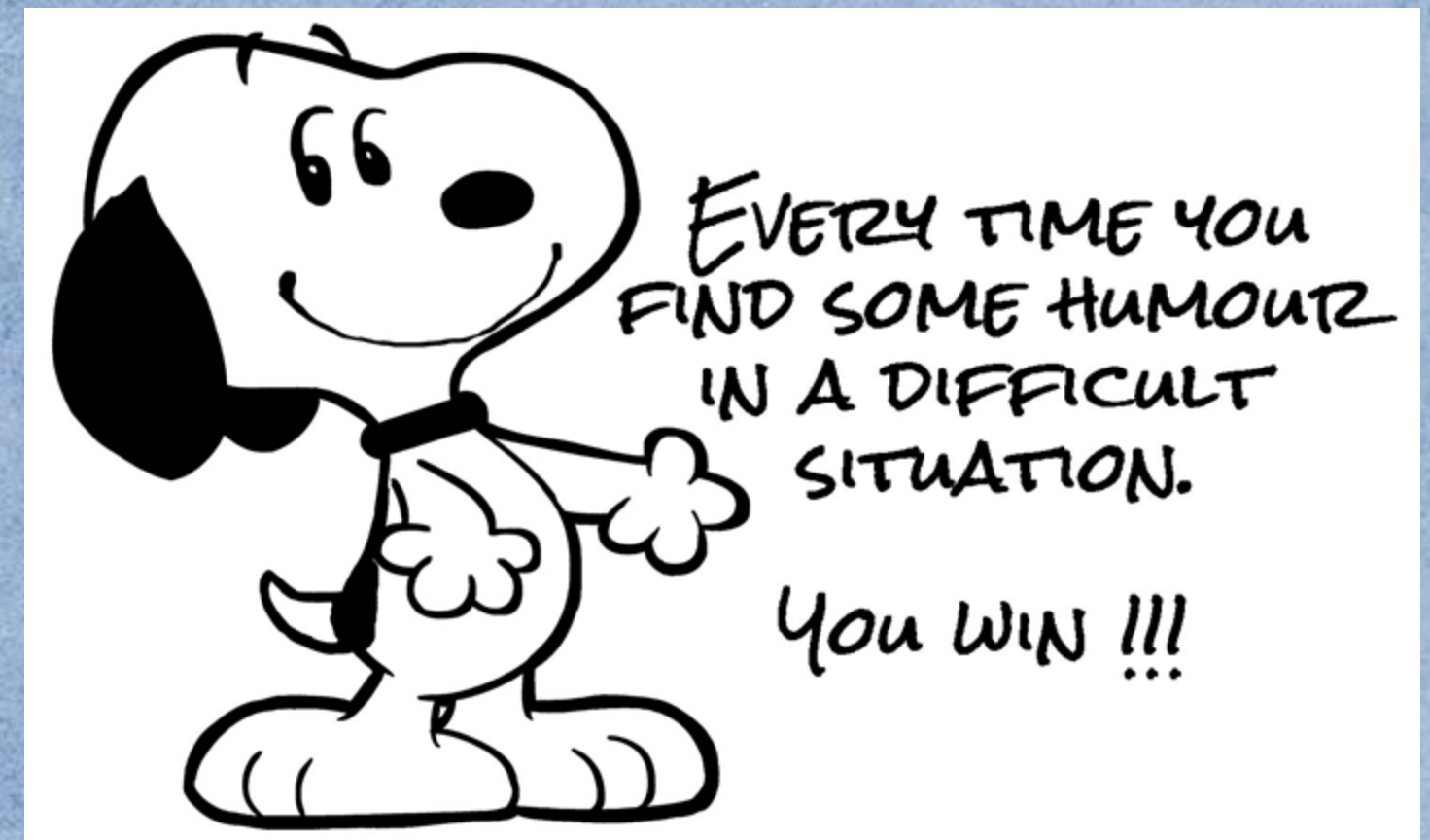
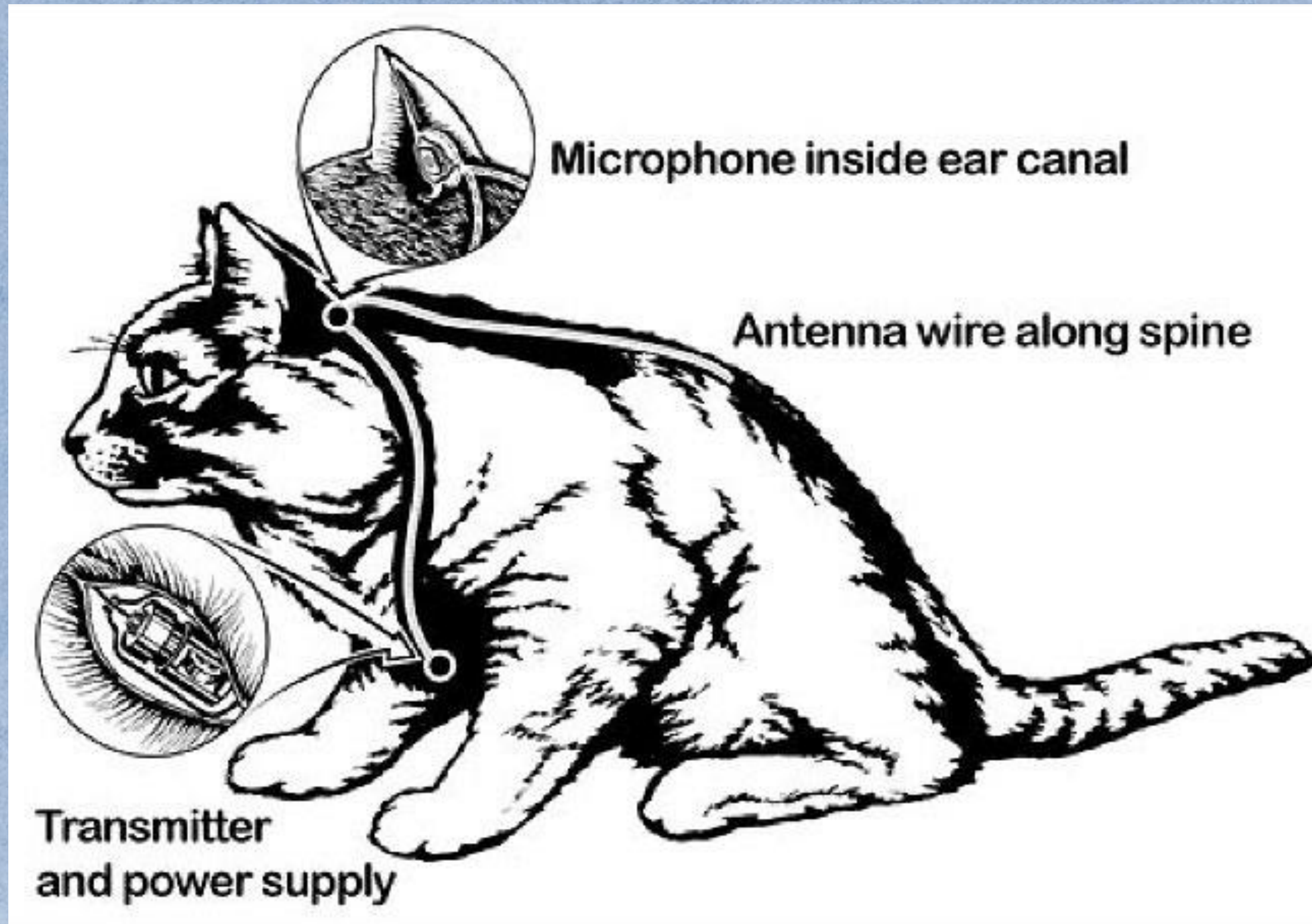


Image reference: <https://www.nursingwithhumour.com/2020/09/29/humour-healing/>

CIA: PROJECT ACOUSTIC KITTY



Reference:

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/cia-experimented-animals-1960s-too-just-ask-acoustic-kitty-180964313/>

GROUP DYNAMICS

“[In identifying misleading information]...
social dynamics affected group performance
stronger than equal access to online sources.”

From the Abstract
Jahnke, Isa, and Kroll, Michele Meike. (2018)



Note. Image generated with the text “multiple hands high five” on Canva, 2024. (canva.com)

OUR CHALLENGES

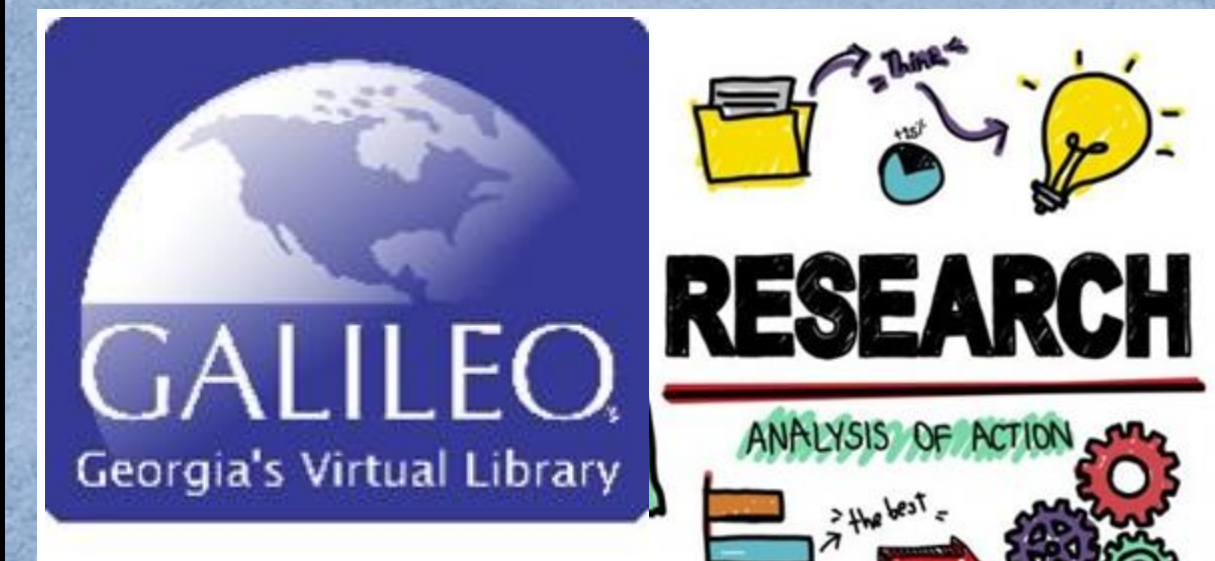
Promote Diverse
Perspectives



Encourage Critical
Thinking



Research!
(Do & Teach)



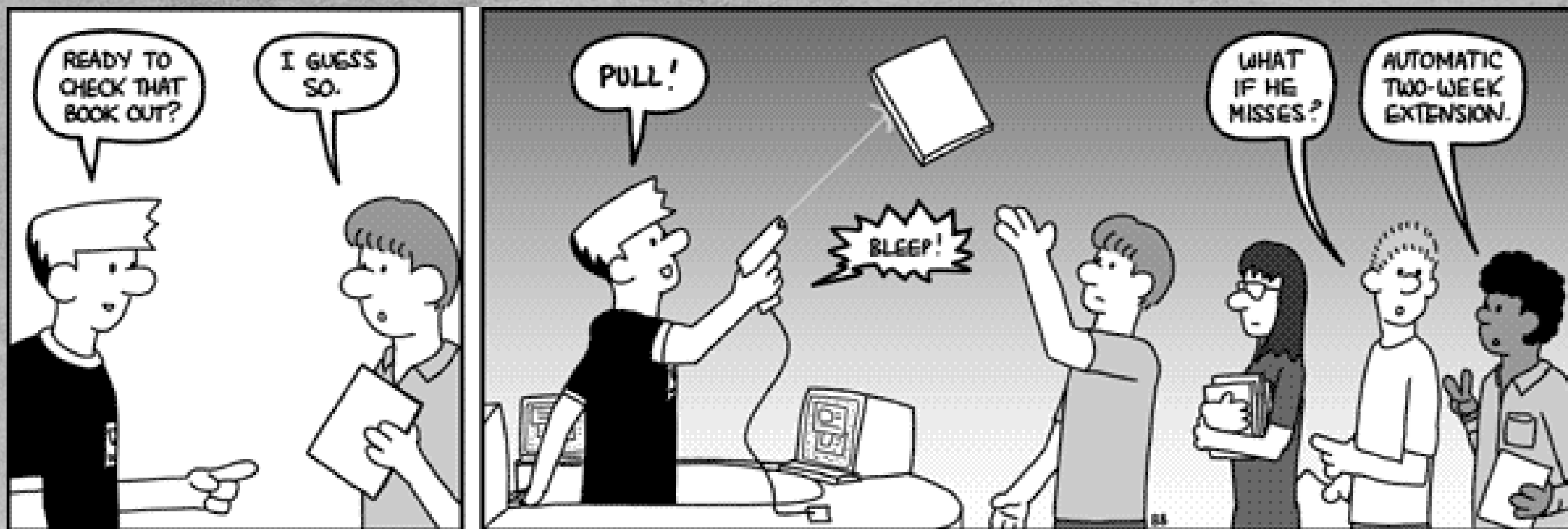
Reference:
<https://www.avu.education/component/easyblog/how-to-write-an-effective-research-paper?Itemid=437>

The Daily Fake

Engaging Patrons

HISTORICAL ABSURDITIES, BIASES & FAKE NEWS

How do we **engage** our patrons without crossing into misunderstandings? GAMES!



GAME TIME!



[https://tinyurl.com/
ALAcow](https://tinyurl.com/ALAcow)

3:00

What Just *Happened*?!



Pressure Points:

- Fake Group Dynamics
- Arbitrary Timer
- Contest
- No explanation of how to do this

LATERAL READING

Verifying what you're reading as you're reading it.

Open multiple tabs.

Use a slight change of keywords in each tab.

Lateral reading.

To get the full picture, verify what you're reading as you're reading it.



News
Literacy
Project
.....

[#NewsLitTip](#)

LATERAL READING

The image displays three overlapping browser windows, each showing a Google search result page. The windows are titled 'what is lateral reading - Google', 'who uses lateral reading - Google', and 'why bother with lateral reading - Google'. The first window shows the search results for 'what is lateral reading', with the first result from Scribbr titled 'What is lateral reading?'. The second window shows the search results for 'who uses lateral reading', with the first result from Spartanburg Co titled 'Evaluating Sources'. The third window shows the search results for 'why bother with lateral reading', with the first result from teachhub.com titled 'Lateral Reading vs. Vertical Reading: Differences and Benefits'. The search results are displayed in a list format, with the first result highlighted. The browser windows are overlapping, with the third window in the foreground and the first window in the background.

what is lateral reading - Google

https://www.google.com/search?q=what+is+lateral+reading&oq=what+is+lateral+re&as_lcrp=EgZiaHJvbV

Google

what is latera

All Images

Examples

About 409,000

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Google

what is lateral reading - Google

All Images Videos

About 42,300,000 res

checkers

Reading laterall
them quickly re
credible or not.

Spartanburg Co
https://libguides.s

Evaluating Sour

why bother with lateral reading - Google

https://www.google.com/search?q=why+bother+with+lateral+reading&oq=why+bother+with+lateral+r

Google

why bother with lateral reading

All Images Videos Shopping News More

About 9,790,000 results (0.46 seconds)

In lateral reading, readers are truly fact checking the information in the articles and pieces they are reading. Readers are seeking knowledge and looking for credibility and validity, which is why lateral reading is essential in the research process. Oct 30, 2020

teachhub.com
https://www.teachhub.com › 2020/10 › lateral-reading-v...

Lateral Reading vs. Vertical Reading: Differences and Benefits

1871 Chicago **FIRE**

**Did the
cow do it?**



ONE DARK NIGHT WHEN WE WERE ALL IN BED
OLD MOTHER LEARY LEFT THE LANTERN IN THE
SHED

AND WHEN THE COW KICKED IT OVER
SHE WINKED HER EYE AND SAID THEY'LL BE A
HOT TIME IN THE OLD TOWN TONIGHT
FIRE! FIRE! FIRE!

Reference: <https://youtu.be/fg7uQDSUh5A>

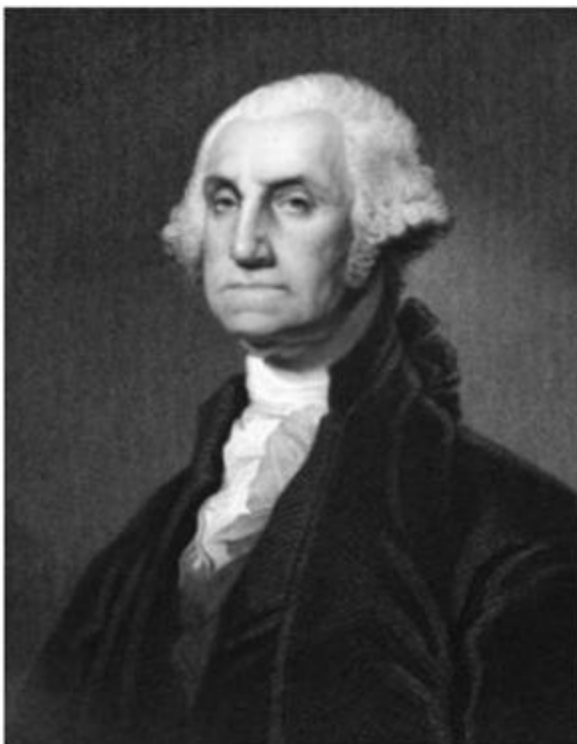
Reference: <https://greatchicagofire.org/oleary-legend/>

Facts:

- Mrs. O'Leary and her husband were known to go to bed early.
- Growing anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant sentiments in the Chicago area as the Irish Catholics grew as a community.
- Anti-female feelings based on Mr. O'Leary not being blamed.
- The journal author, Michael Ahern, at the 40th anniversary said he made it up about her.
(No one believed him.)



**Did George
Washington
have wooden
teeth?**



What do you put in the search?

**"George Washington wooden
teeth"**

"George Washington teeth"

"Replacement teeth in 1700s"

**Was
Napoleon
short
compared to
his men?**



**How much
money was
donated to
the
Society
for
Indecency
to Naked
Animals?**



STARTING POINTS

- Is this a real thing?
- Where do I look?
- What search terms to find the money?

How much money was donated to the Society for Indecency to Naked Animals?



society for indecency of naked animals money

Images Perspectives Videos News Shopping Books Maps Flights

Wikipedia
https://en.wikipedia.org › wiki › Society_for_Indecen...

Society for Indecency to Naked Animals

The **Society for Indecency to Naked Animals**, or SINA [pronounced "sinna"], was a satirical hoax concocted by serial prankster Alan Abel. The group used the ...

[History](#) · [Support and anthems](#) · [Exposure](#)

Abel noted that people had been either outraged by the idea of SINA, or quite supportive of it. One woman in Santa Barbara reportedly tried to donate \$40,000 to the cause. Abel politely turned down the money, insisting that the bylaws of SINA forbade him from taking any money from strangers. But surprisingly few called the bluff of Abel and Henry. Apparently almost everyone was willing to accept that such a society could be real.

YOURS FOR DECENCY

THE CAMPAIGN TO CLOTHE
NAKED ANIMALS BY
ALAN
ABEL



Alan Abel, in 1959, founded The Society for Indecency to Naked Animals (SINA), a campaign to clothe all naked animals for the sake of decency.

Tagline: *A nude horse is a rude horse.*



Trevor Noah

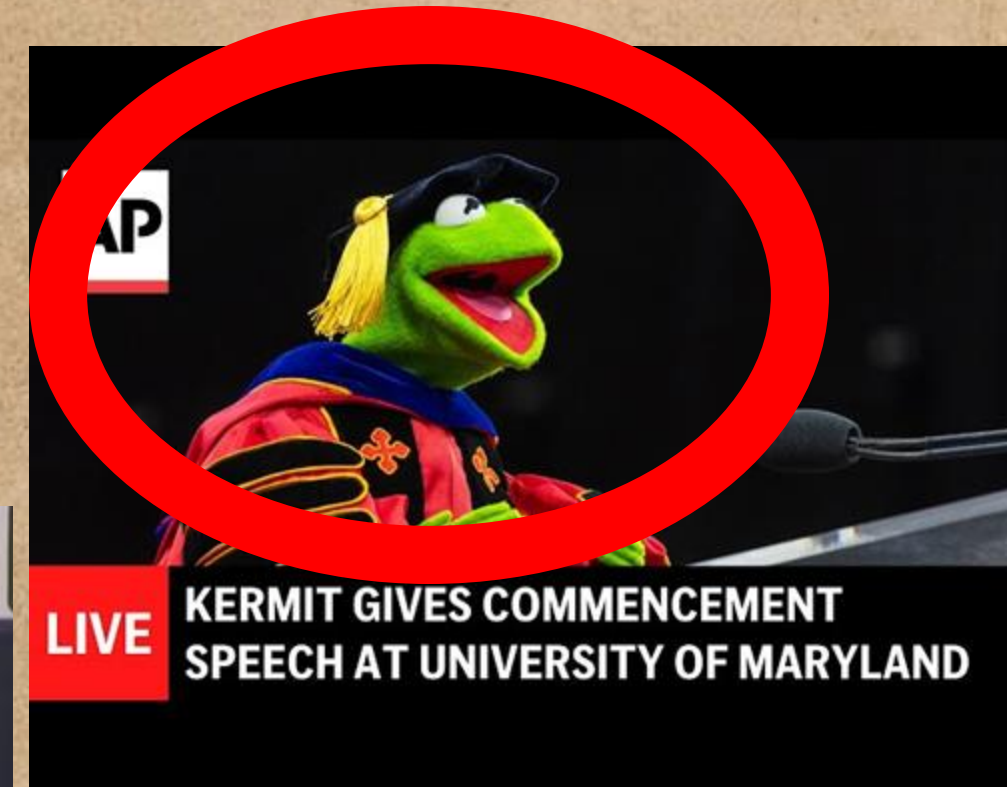
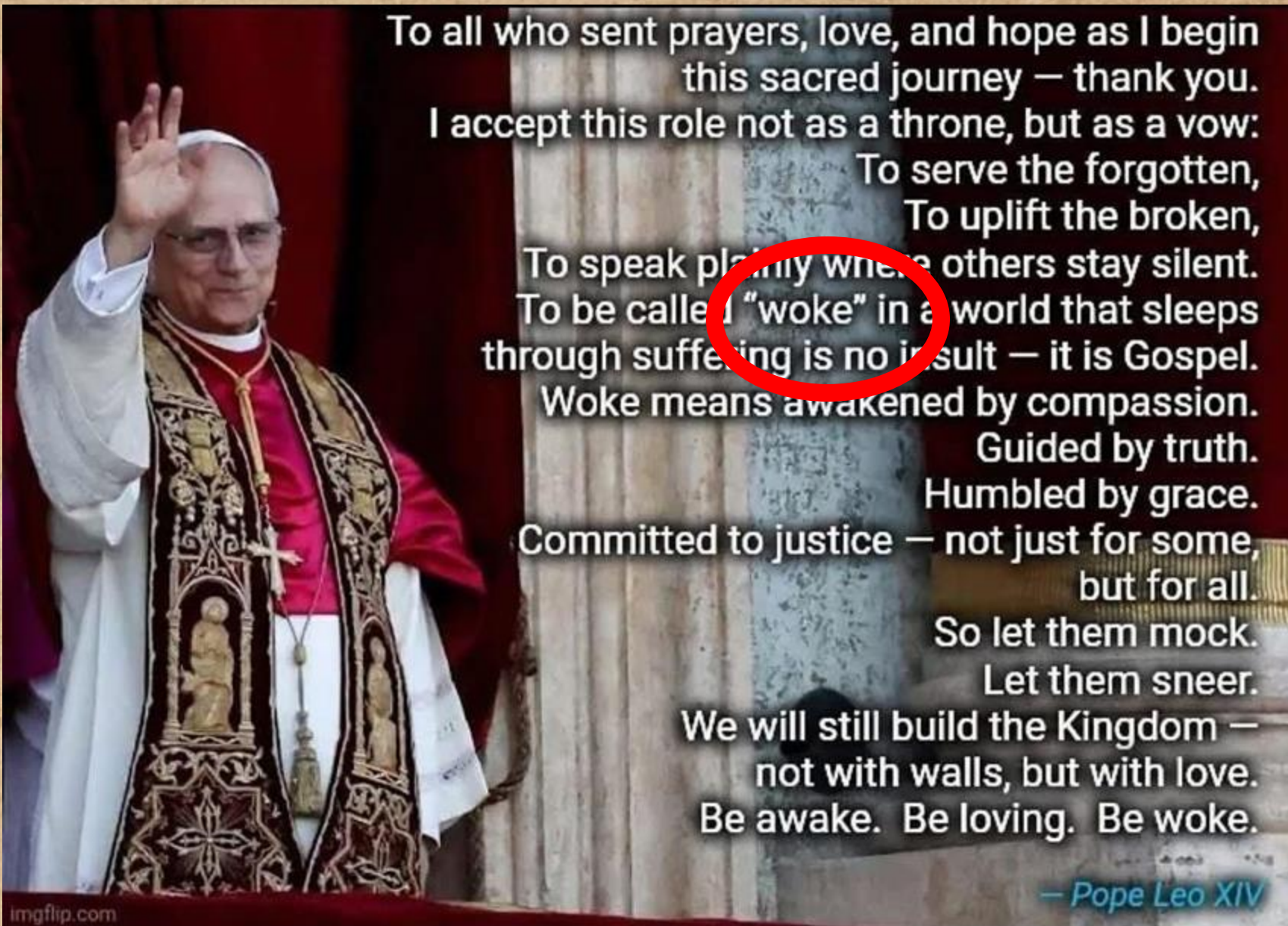
LATEST **LY**

“

Comedy is a great tool.
We are trying to
find ways to use humor
to enlighten people
without preaching
to them.

”

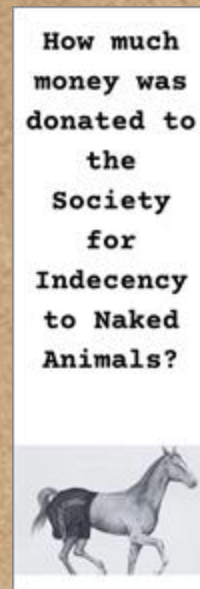
Question Everything!!



RESOURCES

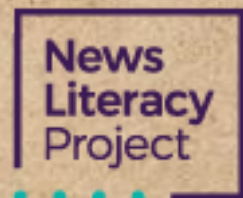
[Bookmarks for Download](#)

You can download the PDF file with eight bookmarks.



[Checkology by NewsLitProject](#)

Checkology empowers learners to identify credible information and understand the importance of a free press.



checkology®

[Bad News Game](#)

From fake news to chaos! How bad are you? Get as many followers as you can.



[RumorGuard](#)



The platform covers all types of misinformation and categorizes it by topic, from manipulated content or engagement bait to pressing issues like climate change and politics.



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‘The lunacy is getting more intense’: how Birds Aren’t Real took on the conspiracy theorists.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/apr/14/the-lunacy-is-getting-more-intense-how-birds-arent-real-took-on-the-conspiracy-theorists>

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Birds Aren’t Real, or Are They? Inside a Gen Z Conspiracy Theory.

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CIA Agent Confesses to Bird Drone Surveillance (video by Birds Aren’t Real).

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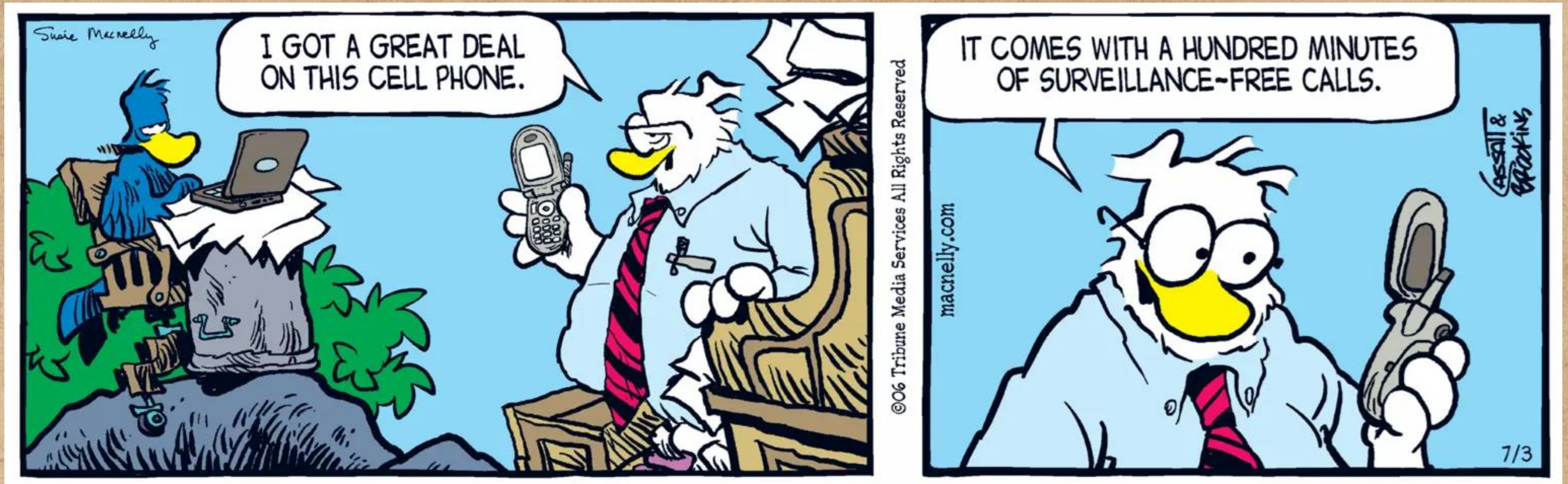


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Published in 2006



Originally published July 3, 2006

Thank you!

<https://tinyurl.com/GALILEOCow>

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