FAKE NEWS

IS THIS THE END OF
Hi Bill,

It came to my attention today a site is [using your photo](mailto:xxxxxx@xxxxxxxxx.com) claiming you’re the person who’s writing the articles. I believe it’s a site run by attorneys in hopes jurors will google the plaintiff’s names and find it.

I just wanted to note that to you, as I wouldn’t want someone using mine.

Best,

Kassie McClung

Reporter - The Frontier
The Tulsa Report

T.S. HUNTER

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CONFIRMATION BIAS:
Bias that results from the tendency to process and analyze information in such a way that it supports one’s preexisting ideas and convictions.

- dictionary.com
Confirmation bias is “wishful thinking.”

“Once we have formed a view, we embrace information that confirms that view while ignoring, or rejecting, information that casts doubt on it. Confirmation bias suggests that we don’t perceive circumstances objectively. We pick out those bits of data that make us feel good because they confirm our prejudices. Thus, we may become prisoners of our assumptions.

“This error leads the individual to stop gathering information when the evidence gathered so far confirms the views (prejudices) one would like to be true.”

- Sharam Heshmat, Ph.D. 
  Psychology Today
A wolf pack: the first 3 are the old or sick, they give the pace to the entire pack. If it was the other way round, they would be left behind, losing contact with the pack. In case of an ambush they would be sacrificed. Then come 5 strong ones, the front line. In the center are the rest of the pack members, then the 5 strongest following. Last is alone, the alpha. He controls everything from the rear. In that position he can see everything, decide the direction. He sees all of the pack. The pack moves according to the elders pace and help each other, watch each other.”
A massive pack of 25 timberwolves hunting bison on the Arctic circle in northern Canada. In mid-winter in Wood Buffalo National Park temperatures hover around -40°C. The wolf pack, led by the alpha female, travel single-file through the deep snow to save energy. The size of the pack is a sign of how rich their prey base is during winter when the bison are more restricted by poor feeding and deep snow. The wolf packs in this National Park are the only wolves in the world that specialize in hunting bison ten times their size. They have grown to be the largest and most powerful wolves on earth.
Labeling a high-ranking wolf alpha emphasizes its rank in a dominance hierarchy. However, in natural wolf packs, the alpha male or female are merely the breeding animals, the parents of the pack... Thus, calling a wolf an “alpha” is usually no more appropriate than referring to a human parent or a doe deer as an “alpha.” Any parent is dominant to its young offspring, so “alpha” adds no information...
FACT OR FICTION?

Can you tell the difference?
Sen. John McCain once had his photo taken alongside Osama bin Laden.
He was with then-Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai.
The United States has had more mass shootings than Australia, Canada, China, England, Finland, France, Germany, Mexico, Norway and Switzerland combined.
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FACT
Emma Gonzalez, the Parkland shooting survivor, ripped up the Constitution for a photo shoot.
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FICTION
In September of 2017, President Trump gave a Hurricane Harvey survivor a red MAGA hat while touring the Houston floods in a rescue boat.
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Former Maine Gov. Paul LePage once apologized to a Bangor schoolboy for saying he wanted to shoot the boy’s father.
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On April 1, 1985, the Portland Evening Express reported that Philippines First Lady Imelda Marcos planned to open a line of shoe stores in the United States, including one on Congress Street in Portland.
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HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS
Who said it?

• Click away from the story and go to the site that generated it.
• Click on the “About Us” tab.
• What is the site’s stated mission?
• Does it provide contact information or opportunity for feedback?
• Examine the URL closely for typos or other oddities, such as “nbcnews.co” rather than “nbcnews.com”
Go beyond the headline

• Read the whole story. Does the story support the headline?
• Does the story contain frequent typos?
• Are the sources identified by name?
• If the story references named “experts,” do they withstand a quick Google check?
• Are the images attached to the story real? (Try Google Reverse Images Search)
Check the author

• Google the name.
• Is he/she credible?
• Is he/she real? (Long live T.S. Hunter!)
Look for supporting sources

• Clink on any imbedded links. Does the content there support what was in the story?
• Enter the story topic into Google and hit “News.”
  - Have others written about this?
  - If so, who?
  - If not, be skeptical.
Check the date

• Old stories may not be relevant to current events.
Are you kidding me?

• If it sounds outlandish, it may be satire:

“Thousands of Students Forced to Attend Iowa State After University Sets Acceptance Rate to 140%” - The Onion

“Couple Who Moved to Maine This Morning Now on 7 Different Town Committees” - New Maine News

“Trump’s Budget Contains Twenty Million Dollars for Bail” - Andy Borowitz, The New Yorker
Check your biases

• Consider if your own biases might be affecting your judgment.
• Do you want it to be true?
• Be your own devil’s advocate.
Truth be told...

- Check the story against a reputable fact-check site:
  - Snopes.com (Snopes Media Group)
  - FactCheck.org (UPenn Annenberg Public Policy Center)
  - PolitiFact.com (Poynter Institute)
  - Fact Checker (washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker)