THE CONFIDENCE OF BEING WRONG

THE RECORD IS THE PUNCHLINE

CREATED BY: MIR MOHAMMAD HUSSAIN



TITLE PAGE

2

A SOURCE-FIRST LITERARY SATIRE

THE CONFIDENCE OF BEING WRONG

Fifty public statements, predictions, and disputed claims checked against the record.

THE RECORD IS THE PUNCHLINE

2026 EDITION

from Mir Mohammad Hussain

PUBLICATION NOTE A note on fairness

Satire has a better target when it gets the record right.

WHAT THIS BOOK IS

A compact, source-linked collection of public statements that were contested, unsupported, contradicted by later evidence, or remembered in a way that changed their meaning. The tone is lightly satirical; the standard of proof is not.

WHAT THIS BOOK IS NOT

It is not a ranking of intelligence, a catalogue of private failings, or a claim that every mistaken statement is a lie. A failed forecast is not the same thing as deliberate deception. One gaffe does not establish a person’s intent. A public claim should be judged against the evidence available for that claim and date.

QUOTE DISCIPLINE

Quotation marks are reserved for wording presented as a documented or reliably reported quotation. When the original wording is uncertain, assembled from several appearances, translated, or reduced to a broad position, the entry says PARAPHRASE or REPORTED QUOTATION. Some entries examine misattribution itself; they do not repeat a meme as though it were a transcript.

USE OF SOURCES

Sources are linked in each entry and listed again in the source register. News reports are used for dated remarks and context; official records are used where available; fact-checks and scientific assessments are used for the correction. Readers should follow the links and assess the material in context.

“The quote is only the beginning. The context is where the evidence lives.”

READER’S MAP Contents

A compact guide to the structure and the labels used throughout.

A note on fairness 3

Editorial standard and quote discipline

Introduction: why quotes need context 5

Selection criteria and purpose

How to read a claim 6

Evidence labels, quote types, and caveats

The collection: 50 cases 8–57

One case per page; sources are clickable

Index of names 58–59

Alphabetical list with page numbers only

Source register 60–68

Linked record, reporting, and correction sources

QUICK KEY

VERBATIM QUOTE Wording from a record or reliable report.

PARAPHRASE A position summarized without fake quotation marks.

REPORTED QUOTE Reported wording, but no complete recording or transcript.

ATTRIBUTION CHECK The famous line may not belong to the named person.

VERDICT A concise description of what the evidence supports.

INTRODUCTION The quotation is not the whole story

A small book about a big public habit: saying more than the evidence can carry.

Public life rewards the sharp line. A sentence can be clipped, printed on a banner, posted to millions, or repeated until it feels self-evident. In that environment, certainty is a performance: the audience hears a clean answer, while the evidence often arrives with footnotes, caveats, and inconvenient dates.

This collection looks at fifty public figures whose recorded remarks or public claims were later contested, contradicted, shown to lack support, or repeated in a form that changed their meaning. The subjects range across politics, business, health, science, sport, and entertainment. They are not grouped by ideology, nationality, or popularity. They are grouped by the friction between a memorable statement and the evidence that followed.

The comedy is not that public figures sometimes get things wrong. Everyone does. The comedy is the mismatch between the force of the wording and the strength of the proof: a categorical promise that misses its date, a single snowball recruited to disprove decades of climate data, a claim about a technology that was never demonstrated, or a viral quotation that turns out to belong to somebody else.

The book does not use “lie” as a synonym for “false.” Deliberate deception requires evidence about intent. A prediction can fail honestly. A public-health claim can be reckless without being knowingly fabricated. A gaffe can be a gaffe. Where the record supports a stronger conclusion, such as a court verdict or formal retraction, the entry says so. Where it does not, the entry narrows the criticism.

The aim is a form of satire that can survive a click. Each entry provides a date and context, identifies whether the wording is exact or paraphrased, summarizes the relevant evidence, and links to sources so readers can inspect the record themselves. The reader is invited to laugh at overconfidence—not to outsource judgment to a headline.

The standard is simple: exact words when we have them, clear labels when we do not, and no verdict stronger than the evidence.

METHODOLOGY How the book checks a claim

A short audit trail for the reader.

1 · SELECTION CRITERIA

Entries were selected when an attributable public statement had a material factual element, an identifiable claim, or a public record that later contradicted the impression it created. Some entries are about unsupported causal explanations; others are failed predictions, exaggerated promises, legal findings, or misinformation caused by an inaccurate attribution.

2 · QUOTE VERIFICATION

Exact quotes are taken from recordings, official transcripts, contemporaneous reporting, or reliable fact-checks that reproduce the original words. Translated quotations are labeled as such. If a statement cannot be pinned to one verifiable sentence, it is explicitly called a paraphrase. No viral slogan is silently promoted to verbatim status.

3 · EVIDENCE HIERARCHY

Where available, priority goes to original video or transcripts, court filings, official records, peer-reviewed research, and scientific assessment reports. Reputable news reporting supplies date and context. Fact-checking organizations are used for claim analysis, not as a substitute for reading the primary source where one is available.

4 · LIMITS AND FAIRNESS

A source link does not make a conclusion infallible. Some questions are genuinely unsettled; others are partly true but missing a key caveat. The entries distinguish an inaccurate claim from an unsupported one, a bad forecast from a deliberate falsehood, and a real quote from a quotation myth. The entries are editorial summaries, not legal findings unless a legal outcome is specifically described.

VERDICT LABELS ARE DESCRIPTIVE, NOT A SCORE

“Unsupported,” “misleading,” “failed prediction,” “contradicted,” and “context required” mean different things. The label is explained in the entry; it is not a universal ranking of the person.

THE COLLECTION

Fifty cases. One recurring question.

What happens when the confidence of a public statement meets a record that can be checked?

POLITICS Elections, war, deadlines, and rhetoric.

BUSINESS Markets, valuations, and company claims.

SCIENCE Climate, physics, and the limits of anecdotes.

HEALTH Vaccines, supplements, and causal claims.

ATTRIBUTION Quotes that change when the source is checked.

Read each statement with its date, context, verdict, and two linked sources.

POLITICS · UNITED STATES

27 November 2016 · post-election tweet

Donald Trump

VERBATIM QUOTE

“I won the popular vote if you deduct the millions of people who voted illegally.”

THE MOMENT

After losing the national popular vote while winning the Electoral College, Trump posted that he would have won both if millions of illegal votes were removed. He did not provide an auditable list of such ballots or a method for estimating them.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

FactCheck.org found no evidence for millions of illegal votes and noted that the researcher whose work was invoked did not support Trump’s conclusion. The post also blurred registration inaccuracies, which can exist in voter rolls, with actual illegal ballots cast.

UNSUPPORTED CLAIM · Registration errors are not proof of illegal votes.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[01A] FactCheck.org, “Trump Sticks With Bogus Voter Fraud Claims”

[01B] FactCheck.org, “More Trump Deception on Voter Fraud”

POLITICS · INDIA

3 May 2019 · televised interview about the Balakot air strike

Narendra Modi

VERBATIM QUOTE · TRANSLATED FROM HINDI REPORTING

“It was cloudy… I said there is a benefit… that we can escape the radar.”

THE MOMENT

In an interview during the 2019 election campaign, Modi described a decision to proceed with an air strike despite cloudy weather, suggesting cloud cover might affect radar detection. The remarks were widely discussed as an example of a political leader publicly weighing in on military technology.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

Clouds are not a dependable cloak against modern aircraft-detection radar. Radar performance varies with system, frequency, precipitation, terrain, and tactics; cloud cover alone is not a standard way to make an aircraft invisible. The available interview does not establish what classified advice pilots received, so the criticism should be limited to the public technical rationale.

TECHNICAL CLAIM CONTESTED · Cloud cover is not a reliable radar-avoidance plan.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[02A] The Indian Express, report on Modi’s cloud-and-radar remarks

[02B] Reuters, coverage of India’s 2019 election and Balakot strike

POLITICS · UNITED STATES

11 August 2009 · town hall in Portsmouth, New Hampshire

Barack Obama

VERBATIM QUOTE

“If you like your health care plan, you can keep your health care plan.”

THE MOMENT

Obama repeated the promise while selling the Affordable Care Act. It was meant to reassure people who already had insurance that reform would build on the existing system rather than force everyone onto a government plan.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

The guarantee was broader than the law could deliver. Insurers cancelled some plans that did not meet new requirements, affecting hundreds of thousands and likely millions of people. PolitiFact rated the original claim Half True and later named the unqualified promise its 2013 Lie of the Year. The policy aimed to preserve much existing coverage, but that was not a universal guarantee.

OVERBROAD PROMISE · A goal of preserving coverage was stated as a guarantee.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[03A] PolitiFact, “Barack Obama promises you can keep your health insurance, but there’s no guarantee”

[03B] PolitiFact, “Lie of the Year: If you like your health care plan, you can keep it”

POLITICS · UNITED STATES

21 January 2017 · first White House press briefing

Sean Spicer

VERBATIM QUOTE

“This was the largest audience to ever witness an inauguration, period.”

THE MOMENT

White House press secretary Spicer challenged media estimates of the crowd at Donald Trump’s inauguration. The statement was delivered at the first briefing of the new administration and became an early public argument over aerial photos, transit data, and what counted as “the audience.”

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

Available photographs and crowd-size comparisons did not support a record. The 2009 Obama inauguration attracted a larger crowd on the National Mall by the commonly used measures. Spicer did not publish a reproducible count or define a method that would make the categorical “largest ever” claim hold.

NOT SUPPORTED · The available crowd evidence does not show a record.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[04A] PolitiFact, fact-check of the inauguration-crowd claim

[04B] The New York Times, inauguration crowd comparison and photography

POLITICS · RUSSIA

4 March 2014 · news conference on Crimea

Vladimir Putin

VERBATIM QUOTE · TRANSLATED FROM RUSSIAN REPORTING

“There are no Russian troops in Crimea.”

THE MOMENT

During the early phase of Russia’s seizure and annexation of Crimea, Putin publicly described armed personnel without insignia as local self-defence forces rather than Russian servicemen. The denial mattered because it concerned who controlled military action on Ukrainian territory.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

In a 2015 documentary, Putin acknowledged that he had ordered Russian forces to work to support the takeover of Crimea. This later admission directly contradicted the categorical 2014 denial. The event also illustrates why a statement should be assessed against subsequent records and the speaker’s own later account.

CONTRADICTED BY LATER ADMISSION · The denial did not survive the record.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[05A] BBC News, Putin acknowledges Russian military role in Crimea

[05B] Reuters, reporting on Russia’s role in Crimea

POLITICS · BRAZIL

24 March 2020 · televised address on COVID-19

Jair Bolsonaro

VERBATIM QUOTE · TRANSLATED FROM PORTUGUESE

“In my particular case… I would at most be affected by a little flu or a cold.”

THE MOMENT

Bolsonaro used the “little flu” comparison while arguing against broad restrictions as COVID-19 spread in Brazil. He was discussing his own athletic history and apparent personal risk, but the remarks also framed how the public should understand a fast-moving epidemic.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

The disease was not merely a mild flu for the population as a whole: it caused severe illness and large numbers of deaths, and risk varied sharply by age and health status. A leader’s own expected symptoms could not establish population-level risk or justify dismissing transmission. This entry quotes a statement about his personal case, not a claim that every infected person would have the same outcome.

MISLEADING GENERALISATION · Personal risk is not population evidence.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[06A] BBC News, coverage of Bolsonaro’s “little flu” remarks

[06B] World Health Organization, COVID-19 overview

POLITICS · UNITED STATES

1 May 2003 · address aboard USS Abraham Lincoln

George W. Bush

VERBATIM QUOTE

“Major combat operations in Iraq have ended.”

THE MOMENT

Bush delivered the line beneath a banner reading “Mission Accomplished,” after the fall of Baghdad and the toppling of Saddam Hussein’s government. The wording referred to major combat operations, while the wider political presentation suggested a decisive turning point in the war.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

A violent insurgency followed, and U.S. forces remained in Iraq for years. The quote was not literally a declaration that every military action had ended; it did mark the end of a phase of conventional fighting. The fair criticism is that the symbolism and tone projected a degree of closure the conflict did not deliver.

PREMATURE VICTORY LAP · A phase ended; the war did not.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[07A] George W. Bush White House Archive, 1 May 2003 remarks

[07B] CIA, Iraq Survey Group final report collection

POLITICS · UNITED STATES

26 February 2015 · U.S. Senate floor

Jim Inhofe

VERBATIM QUOTE

“This is a snowball, just from outside here. So it’s very, very cold, very unseasonable.”

THE MOMENT

Senator Inhofe brought a snowball into the Senate chamber during a debate about climate change. The demonstration was intended to challenge concern about global warming by pointing to a cold day in Washington, D.C.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

A local cold spell is weather; climate change describes long-term patterns across regions and decades. A snowball can exist during a warming climate, just as a hot day does not disprove global warming. Temperature records and attribution studies, not a single winter prop, are the relevant evidence.

CATEGORY ERROR · One cold day cannot settle a long-term climate trend.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[08A] C-SPAN, Senate snowball demonstration

[08B] NASA, evidence for climate change

GOVERNMENT · UNITED STATES

9 March 2017 · CNN interview as EPA administrator

Scott Pruitt

VERBATIM QUOTE

“I would not agree that [carbon dioxide] is a primary contributor to the global warming that we see.”

THE MOMENT

Pruitt, then administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, disputed carbon dioxide’s role in observed warming. His wording addressed a central question in climate science, not a peripheral uncertainty about a specific model or forecast.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

The assessment literature concludes that human influence—especially greenhouse-gas emissions—is the dominant cause of observed warming since the mid-20th century. Scientists debate details such as regional effects and the range of future outcomes, but the broad role of CO_2 is not an open question in the way the statement implied.

CONTRARY TO SCIENTIFIC CONSENSUS · Uncertainty in projections is not uncertainty about the main cause.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[09A] CNN, interview report on Pruitt’s CO_2 statement

[09B] IPCC, Sixth Assessment Report, Working Group I

LAW & POLITICS · UNITED STATES

19 August 2018 · Meet the Press interview

Rudy Giuliani

VERBATIM QUOTE

“Truth isn’t truth.”

THE MOMENT

President Trump’s lawyer was explaining why he did not want Trump to sit for a long interview with special counsel Robert Mueller. Giuliani was worried about conflicting recollections creating a perjury problem.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

The line became a shorthand for relativism, but the immediate context was an argument about how conflicting testimony could be interpreted. Conflicting accounts do occur; that does not make truth itself relative or abolish the need to evaluate evidence. This is included as a rhetorical contradiction rather than a factual claim rated false.

RHETORICAL PARADOX · A dispute over accounts does not erase the facts.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[10A] NBC News, Meet the Press clip: “Truth Isn’t Truth”

[10B] NBC News, report on Giuliani’s remark and Mueller interview context

POLITICS · AUSTRALIA

2009 · radio interview during Australian climate-policy debate

Tony Abbott

VERBATIM QUOTE

“Climate change is absolute crap.”

THE MOMENT

Abbott made the remark before becoming prime minister, during a public dispute over emissions trading. It was a political dismissal of the basic proposition that human activity is warming the climate, not a narrow critique of one policy instrument.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

Subsequent assessments continue to find that human activities are the dominant cause of recent global warming. Policy choices and the costs of specific measures can be debated; dismissing the physical phenomenon as “crap” is not supported by the evidence. The quote is preserved here as a statement of position, not as a substitute for Abbott’s more detailed views over time.

UNSUPPORTED DISMISSAL · Policy disagreement does not overturn measurements.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[11A] The Guardian, report on Abbott’s climate-change remarks

[11B] IPCC, Sixth Assessment Report

BUSINESS & POLITICS · INDIA

September 2019 · business and economic briefing

Piyush Goyal

VERBATIM QUOTE · AS REPORTED IN ENGLISH

“Don’t worry about maths. Maths never helped Einstein discover gravity.”

THE MOMENT

India’s commerce minister used the line while discussing economic growth and the limits of over-reliance on calculations. It was delivered as an encouragement to think beyond spreadsheets, but the Einstein reference made it sound like a claim about the history of physics.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

Einstein’s theory of general relativity is deeply mathematical; the mathematics helped formulate and test its predictions. The line works as a motivational quip only if read loosely. Taken literally as a statement about Einstein’s work, it gets the relationship between physics and mathematics backwards.

A QUIETLY LOUD ERROR · The famous physicist did, in fact, use mathematics.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[12A] The Times of India, report on Goyal’s Einstein remark

[12B] Einstein Papers Project, Princeton University

POLITICS · UNITED STATES

8 August 2019 · campaign event in Iowa

Joe Biden

VERBATIM QUOTE · A VERBAL GAFFE

“Poor kids are just as bright and just as talented as white kids.”

THE MOMENT

Biden said this during a speech on education and continued by listing “wealthy kids, black kids, Asian kids.” The line drew attention because the wording put “poor” and “white” in opposition, despite the broader point he appeared to be making about educational opportunity.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

This is best treated as a recorded verbal gaffe, not evidence that Biden held a considered theory that poverty and race are opposites. The surrounding sentence and the live-campaign context matter. No fact-check can infer a speaker’s intent from one stumble alone; satire should not turn a slip into an invented policy position.

CONTEXT REQUIRED · A documented gaffe, not a reliable summary of intent.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[13A] CNN, coverage of Biden’s “poor kids” comment

[13B] Associated Press, report on Biden’s explanation and criticism

POLITICS · UNITED STATES

2018 · Facebook post about California wildfires

Marjorie Taylor Greene

PARAPHRASE · NOT A VERBATIM CATCHPHRASE

Greene linked the California wildfires to a theory involving a space-based laser and wealthy financial interests. “Jewish space laser” is a later shorthand, not her exact phrase.

THE MOMENT

A 2018 social-media post by Greene entertained a conspiracy theory about California fires, space technology, and the Rothschild family. The viral label that followed compressed the allegation into a memorable phrase, but that phrase is not a faithful quotation from the post.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

No credible evidence supports the proposed laser explanation. Fire investigators documented ignition sources and local conditions for individual fires. It is important to separate the real post and the conspiracy it entertained from the more quotable phrase that critics later attached to it.

UNSUPPORTED CONSPIRACY · The meme is not the quotation; the underlying theory still lacks evidence.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[14A] The New York Times, report on Greene’s conspiracy theories

[14B] CAL FIRE, Camp Fire incident record

POLITICS · TURKEY

May 2018 · public comments on Turkey’s economy

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

PARAPHRASE · RECURRING STATED POSITION

Erdoğan argued that high interest rates cause inflation, reversing the conventional central-bank account of how rate increases are used to curb it.

THE MOMENT

As inflation and the lira came under pressure, Erdoğan repeatedly argued against higher interest rates and described his view as a departure from conventional economics. The language varied across speeches and interviews, so this entry paraphrases the position rather than presenting one stitched-together sentence as a quotation.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

Interest rates and inflation interact in complex ways, and supply shocks or exchange-rate movements can also raise prices. But central banks commonly increase rates to restrain demand and inflation; suppressing rates in an overheating economy can worsen currency pressure. The criticism is about the one-directional explanation, not a claim that rates never influence prices.

ECONOMIC CLAIM CONTESTED · A slogan cannot replace an account of the full mechanism.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[15A] Reuters, report on Erdoğan’s interest-rate theory

[15B] Bank of England, explanation of monetary policy and inflation

POLITICS · UNITED STATES

December 2015 · Senate and campaign comments on climate science

Ted Cruz

PARAPHRASE · REPEATED TALKING POINT

Cruz argued that scientists in the 1970s had a prevailing consensus that the planet was heading into an ice age.

THE MOMENT

The 1970s “coming ice age” line is often used in political arguments against today’s climate projections. Cruz used it to suggest that scientists had simply switched alarmist stories from cooling to warming.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

A few papers and media stories discussed cooling, but reviews of the scientific literature do not show a consensus forecast of global cooling in the 1970s. The broader literature already contained substantial concern about greenhouse warming. Individual mistaken forecasts existed; they do not establish that the field as a whole made the opposite prediction.

MISLEADING HISTORY OF SCIENCE · A handful of papers are not a scientific consensus.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[16A] PolitiFact, fact-check of Cruz’s claim about 1970s climate science

[16B] National Academies, climate-change evidence and assessment

GOVERNMENT · UNITED STATES

5 February 2003 · presentation to the United Nations Security Council

Colin Powell

VERBATIM QUOTE

“Every statement I make today is backed up by sources, solid sources.”

THE MOMENT

Secretary of State Powell opened a major presentation arguing that Iraq had concealed weapons of mass destruction. The speech used intercepted communications, satellite images, and intelligence assessments to persuade the Security Council that Iraq posed a threat.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

Post-invasion investigations did not find the active stockpiles that the presentation led audiences to expect. Some intelligence was wrong; some was presented with more confidence than its underlying reliability justified. Powell later described the speech as a blot on his record. The line demonstrates why an assurance about sourcing is not itself a substitute for independent verification.

CONFIDENCE EXCEEDED THE RECORD · “Solid sources” still need testing.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[17A] U.S. Department of State / White House Archive, Powell’s UN presentation

[17B] CIA, Iraq Survey Group final report collection

GOVERNMENT · UNITED STATES

30 March 2003 · televised briefing on Iraq

Donald Rumsfeld

VERBATIM QUOTE

“We know where they are. They’re in the area around Tikrit and Baghdad and east, west, south and north somewhat.”

THE MOMENT

Rumsfeld, then U.S. secretary of defense, was asked where Iraq’s alleged weapons of mass destruction were. The answer sounded geographically specific, despite the fact that inspectors and the military did not have verified stockpile locations.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

The Iraq Survey Group later concluded that Iraq had not maintained the active stockpiles alleged before the invasion. The quote is an especially clear example of a claim that sounded like direct knowledge but was not borne out by the post-war search. It does not prove Rumsfeld knew the claim was false; it shows the confidence was unjustified.

UNWARRANTED CERTAINTY · A confident location is not a confirmed discovery.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[18A] CNN, Rumsfeld briefing transcript and coverage

[18B] CIA, Iraq Survey Group final report collection

POLITICS · UNITED STATES

December 2022–January 2023 · campaign biography and subsequent interviews

George Santos

PARAPHRASE · NOT A SINGLE RECORDED SENTENCE

His campaign biography and public account represented him as having worked at Goldman Sachs and Citigroup; subsequent reporting found no evidence that he had worked for either firm.

THE MOMENT

Investigative reporting examined Santos’s résumé, education, finances, and professional background shortly after his 2022 election to Congress. Several prominent credentials were contradicted by employers, institutions, or his own later statements.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

Santos later acknowledged that he had not worked directly for Goldman Sachs or Citigroup, while maintaining that he had worked with clients connected to those firms. Because the claim is drawn from a record assembled across campaign materials and interviews, it is labeled as a paraphrase rather than a quotation.

BIOGRAPHICAL CLAIM DISPUTED · The distinction between “worked for” and “worked with” mattered.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[19A] The New York Times, investigation of Santos’s résumé and background

[19B] Associated Press, follow-up on Santos’s admissions

MEDIA · UNITED STATES

2010s–2022 · Infowars broadcasts and defamation cases

Alex Jones

PARAPHRASE · A PATTERN OF REPEATED CLAIMS

Jones repeatedly promoted the claim that the 2012 Sandy Hook school shooting was staged or fabricated.

THE MOMENT

Jones’s broadcasts led to years of harassment of families whose children were killed. The case is not about merely asking questions or making an unpopular prediction; it concerned repeated assertions that grieving families said were knowingly false and that triggered extensive legal action.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

Courts entered defamation judgments against Jones after he failed to comply with discovery orders, and juries considered damages claims by families. The proceedings established legal liability for defamatory statements; they were not simply a poll of public opinion. This entry paraphrases the broad claim and does not pretend one sentence captures every broadcast.

FALSE CONSPIRACY CLAIM · The courts imposed liability for the harm caused by it.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[20A] Associated Press, coverage of the Sandy Hook defamation verdicts

[20B] Reuters, report on the Connecticut damages verdict

POLITICS · UNITED KINGDOM

May 2019 · Conservative leadership campaign

Boris Johnson

VERBATIM QUOTE

“We will leave the European Union on 31 October, no ifs or buts.”

THE MOMENT

Johnson used the deadline as a central promise during the Conservative leadership contest. The timetable depended on parliamentary votes and agreement over withdrawal arrangements, not solely on the prime minister’s personal resolve.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

The UK did not leave the EU on 31 October 2019. The deadline was extended, and departure occurred on 31 January 2020. This is a failed political promise, not proof that Johnson knew the date was impossible at the moment he said it; the distinction is between the categorical wording and what ultimately happened.

FAILED DEADLINE · The “no ifs or buts” came with an extension.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[21A] BBC News, Johnson’s Brexit deadline pledge

[21B] UK Parliament, Brexit timeline and withdrawal records

POLITICS · UNITED KINGDOM

3 June 2016 · Sky News interview during the EU referendum campaign

Michael Gove

VERBATIM QUOTE

“I think the people in this country have had enough of experts.”

THE MOMENT

Gove was defending the Leave campaign against economists and other specialists warning about the consequences of Brexit. The remark became famous because it appeared to dismiss expert analysis in a debate where economic forecasts and technical questions mattered.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

This statement is not a scientific claim that can be rated simply true or false. It is a general assertion about public mood. The relevant correction is methodological: a campaigner cannot substitute an impression of what “the people” feel for polling or evidence, and the truth of an economic forecast should be evaluated on its merits rather than the credentials of the speaker.

UNSUBSTANTIATED GENERALISATION · Popularity is not a method of fact-checking.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[22A] Sky News, interview transcript and report

[22B] UK House of Commons Library, EU referendum research briefing

POLITICS · PAKISTAN

2019 · speech about Pakistan’s post-war relationship with China

Imran Khan

PARAPHRASE · CORRECTING A VIRAL MISQUOTE

Khan discussed post-war Germany and Japan developing joint ventures; the viral claim that he said the two countries shared a border is not supported by the commonly circulated clip.

THE MOMENT

A widely shared meme presented Khan as saying Germany and Japan had a shared border. The actual speech referred to how the two countries had cooperated economically after the Second World War. The clip became a lesson in how an inaccurate paraphrase can outlive the original recording.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

Germany and Japan plainly do not share a land border. But the correction here is also about attribution: a false online version should not be used as a verbatim quote. Khan’s broader historical analogy can be assessed separately from the fabricated border claim.

MISATTRIBUTED VIRAL CLAIM · Fact-check the clip, not the meme caption.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[23A] AFP Fact Check, review of the Germany–Japan border claim

[23B] Dawn, reporting on Khan’s joint-venture remarks

BUSINESS · TESLA

7 August 2018 · tweet about taking Tesla private

Elon Musk

VERBATIM QUOTE

“Am considering taking Tesla private at $420. Funding secured.”

THE MOMENT

Musk posted the statement while Tesla was publicly traded. It moved the company’s share price and raised questions about whether a buyout offer had actually been secured and whether investors had enough information to assess it.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

The SEC alleged that the “funding secured” statement was misleading because Musk had not secured a firm financing commitment. Musk and Tesla settled the case without admitting or denying the allegations; Musk paid a civil penalty and stepped down as Tesla chair for a period. The proposed transaction did not happen. This distinguishes a regulatory allegation and settlement from a court finding after trial.

REGULATORY SETTLEMENT · A market-moving sentence needs verifiable backing.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[24A] U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, complaint against Elon Musk

[24B] SEC, settlement announcement on Tesla and Musk

BUSINESS · MICROSOFT

2007 · interview after Apple introduced the iPhone

Steve Ballmer

VERBATIM QUOTE

“There’s no chance that the iPhone is going to get any significant market share. No chance.”

THE MOMENT

Microsoft’s chief executive was asked about Apple’s new phone, which launched into a market dominated by carriers and established handset makers. His answer reflected the competitive assumptions of the moment.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

The iPhone went on to become a major smartphone platform and a central part of Apple’s business. This was a forecast, not a fabricated statement of then-existing fact. Predictions can be wrong without being lies; the satire is that categorical certainty aged very badly in a fast-moving market.

FAILED PREDICTION · “No chance” is a dangerous phrase in technology.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[25A] CNBC, retrospective on Ballmer’s iPhone prediction

[25B] Apple, annual reports and product history

BUSINESS · THERANOS

2013–2015 · Theranos marketing and investor presentations

Elizabeth Holmes

PARAPHRASE · COMPANY CLAIM ATTRIBUTED IN REPORTING

Theranos promoted its technology as being able to run a broad menu of blood tests from a small finger-prick sample.

THE MOMENT

Holmes presented Theranos as a breakthrough that could make testing cheaper, faster, and more accessible. The company’s public story outpaced the independent scientific evidence available to investors and clinicians.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

Investigations found the company often relied on conventional analyzers and that some results were unreliable. Holmes was convicted of defrauding investors in 2022. The conviction concerned specific investor-related fraud counts; it should not be inflated into the claim that every public statement or every Theranos test was separately adjudicated by a jury.

INVESTOR FRAUD CONVICTION · The promised capability did not match the demonstrated system.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[26A] U.S. Department of Justice, Holmes sentencing and conviction summary

[26B] The Wall Street Journal, reporting on Theranos test accuracy

BUSINESS · FTX CRYPTOCURRENCY EXCHANGE

7 November 2022 · post on X/Twitter

Sam Bankman-Fried

VERBATIM QUOTE

“FTX is fine. Assets are fine.”

THE MOMENT

Bankman-Fried posted the reassurance as FTX faced concerns about its liquidity and links to Alameda Research. The message attempted to calm customers just days before the exchange filed for bankruptcy.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

FTX filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy on 11 November 2022. A jury later convicted Bankman-Fried of fraud and conspiracy related to the collapse. The contrast between the two-line reassurance and the subsequent failure is stark; the conviction supports a stronger finding than mere hindsight about an overly optimistic forecast.

CONTRADICTED BY THE COLLAPSE · “Fine” needed a balance sheet, not a tweet.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[27A] Reuters, report on Bankman-Fried’s “assets are fine” post

[27B] U.S. Department of Justice, Bankman-Fried trial and conviction releases

BUSINESS · CYBERSECURITY AND CRYPTOCURRENCY

December 2017 · public Bitcoin price wager

John McAfee

VERBATIM QUOTE · EXPLICIT VULGARITY RETAINED FOR ACCURACY

*“Bitcoin will be $500,000 in three years, or I will eat my d*** on national television.”*

THE MOMENT

McAfee made a deliberately outrageous wager as cryptocurrency prices surged. The line was part prediction, part publicity stunt: its shock value was the point, and it encouraged readers to treat confidence as a substitute for risk analysis.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

Bitcoin did not reach $500,000 by the stated deadline. A failed price prediction is not inherently fraud, and volatile markets are uncertain by nature. The checkable issue is simply that the promised price target was missed, despite the extraordinary confidence of the wager.

FAILED FORECAST · The internet remembers the deadline as well as the swagger.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[28A] CNBC, coverage of McAfee’s Bitcoin price wager

[28B] CoinMarketCap, historical Bitcoin price data

BUSINESS · WEWORK

2019 · interviews ahead of WeWork’s planned IPO

Adam Neumann

VERBATIM QUOTE · REPORTED IN BUSINESS COVERAGE

“We are not a real estate company.”

THE MOMENT

Neumann positioned WeWork as a technology-enabled community platform rather than a conventional office landlord. That framing helped pitch a large addressable market and a valuation more like a tech firm than a property company.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

WeWork’s core economic model depended on long-term lease obligations and shorter-term memberships. Its IPO filing disclosed substantial fixed rent commitments. Calling the company more than real estate was a strategic pitch; treating that description as a full account of the business omitted a major part of its risk profile.

INCOMPLETE BUSINESS DESCRIPTION · A community brand still has to pay the landlord.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[29A] CNBC, coverage of Neumann’s “not a real estate company” claim

[29B] WeWork, 2019 registration statement (S-1) filed with the SEC

BUSINESS · FACEBOOK

January 2010 · press discussion of Facebook privacy changes

Mark Zuckerberg

REPORTED QUOTATION · NOT A FORMAL TRANSCRIPT

“Privacy is no longer a social norm.”

THE MOMENT

The sentence was widely reported during a debate over Facebook’s changing default privacy settings. It was presented as Zuckerberg’s description of a cultural shift toward sharing more information online.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

Because the line circulated through journalist reports rather than a complete verbatim transcript, it is marked as a reported quotation. Even if accurately reported, it was a sweeping interpretation of social behavior, not a scientific finding that people no longer value privacy. Subsequent privacy controversies showed that sharing and concern about control can coexist.

BROAD CULTURAL CLAIM · More sharing does not prove less desire for privacy.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[30A] The Guardian, report on Zuckerberg and Facebook privacy

[30B] Electronic Frontier Foundation, Facebook privacy issues and policy history

BUSINESS · PHARMACEUTICALS

September 2015 · response to Daraprim price increase

Martin Shkreli

PARAPHRASE · SUMMARY OF PUBLIC DEFENCE

Shkreli defended raising the price of Daraprim from $13.50 to $750 per tablet as a business decision, arguing that the company needed resources for research and development.

THE MOMENT

The price increase for an old antiparasitic drug drew public anger because some patients depended on it and alternatives were limited. Shkreli’s defence framed the decision as ordinary pharmaceutical economics and investment in future medicines.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

The 5,000%-plus increase was real; whether a specific price helps fund innovation is a broader economic question. The public defence did not itself establish that this sharp increase was necessary to sustain research, and it provided little reassurance to current patients facing immediate costs. This entry paraphrases the position rather than inventing a sentence he did not say.

JUSTIFICATION NOT PROOF · A business rationale still needs evidence about costs and effects.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[31A] Reuters, reporting on Turing’s Daraprim price increase

[31B] U.S. House Committee on Oversight, pharmaceutical drug pricing hearing records

BUSINESS · MICROSOFT

Often circulated since the 1990s · no reliable original date

Bill Gates

ATTRIBUTION CHECK · NOT A VERIFIED GATES QUOTE

“640K ought to be enough for anybody.”

THE MOMENT

The line is routinely attributed to Gates as a perfect miniature of tech-industry overconfidence. It is often presented as a 1981 prediction about computer memory, but no reliable contemporaneous source establishes that he said it.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

Snopes and other quote researchers have found no solid evidence of the attribution. Including it as a Gates quotation would reproduce the very mistake this book is meant to avoid. The satire therefore falls on the quote’s afterlife: a neat line can become “common knowledge” without an original recording, transcript, or reliable witness.

MISATTRIBUTED · A famous sentence is not automatically a real quotation.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[32A] Snopes, fact-check of the “640K” Gates quotation

[32B] Computer History Museum, early personal-computer history

MEDICINE & TELEVISION · UNITED STATES

2012–2014 · television promotion of green coffee extract

Mehmet Oz

REPORTED QUOTATION · PHRASE FROM A TV SEGMENT TITLE

“Magic weight-loss cure for every body type.”

THE MOMENT

Oz’s television program promoted green coffee bean extract with highly enthusiastic language. He later faced questions from U.S. senators about supplement endorsements and claims that could encourage consumers to treat weak evidence as a dependable treatment.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

The Federal Trade Commission later obtained a settlement from marketers of green coffee products over deceptive weight-loss advertising, including reliance on a flawed study. This does not mean every supplement is ineffective; it means that the specific “magic cure” framing was far stronger than the evidence justified.

EVIDENCE GAP · A television superlative is not a clinical trial.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[33A] U.S. Senate, hearing on supplement marketing and the role of the FTC

[33B] Federal Trade Commission, settlement with green-coffee marketers

ENTERTAINMENT · UNITED STATES

2007–2008 · interviews and public advocacy

Jenny McCarthy

PARAPHRASE · POSITION PUBLICLY STATED; NOT A STITCHED QUOTE

McCarthy publicly attributed her son’s autism to vaccination and promoted the idea that vaccines could trigger autism.

THE MOMENT

McCarthy became a prominent celebrity voice in the vaccine-autism debate, speaking from her family’s experience. The personal account was emotionally powerful and often presented alongside broader claims about childhood vaccination.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

Large population studies and reviews have found no causal link between vaccines and autism. A parent can accurately describe when symptoms were noticed, but timing alone cannot establish cause. The claim matters because vaccine decisions affect not only one family but community protection against preventable disease.

CAUSATION NOT ESTABLISHED · “After” does not prove “because of.”

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[34A] USA Today, reporting on McCarthy’s vaccine-autism advocacy

[34B] U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, vaccines and autism

MEDICINE · UNITED KINGDOM

1998 · Lancet paper; retraction in 2010

Andrew Wakefield

PARAPHRASE · CLAIM IN A PAPER, NOT A DIRECT QUOTE

A 1998 case series described 12 children and raised a possible association between MMR vaccination and developmental disorders; it did not establish that the vaccine caused autism.

THE MOMENT

The paper received immense attention and helped seed a vaccine-autism scare. Its tiny case series, the later-revealed conflicts of interest, and research-conduct findings became central to the story of how a weak study can generate a powerful public narrative.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

The paper was fully retracted by The Lancet in 2010. A subsequent BMJ investigation described serious problems with the work, while larger studies have not found a causal link between MMR vaccination and autism. This entry distinguishes the paper’s cautious wording from the stronger public interpretation that followed it.

RETRACTED RESEARCH · A hypothesis-generating case series is not proof of causation.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[35A] BMJ, Brian Deer’s investigation of the Wakefield research

[35B] The Lancet, retraction notice for the 1998 paper

MEDICINE & PUBLIC ADVOCACY · UNITED STATES

June 2021 · testimony to Ohio lawmakers

Sherri Tenpenny

VERBATIM QUOTE

“I’m sure you’ve seen the pictures all over the internet of people who have had these shots and now they’re magnetized.”

THE MOMENT

Tenpenny, a physician who opposed COVID-19 vaccines, made the statement during a state legislative hearing. The claim drew attention because it described an alleged physical effect that could be tested directly.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

COVID-19 vaccines do not contain a mechanism or quantity of magnetic material that would magnetize a person. Objects sticking to skin in viral videos do not demonstrate magnetism; skin oils and surface tension can hold light objects in place. No reliable evidence supported the claim offered at the hearing.

NO CREDIBLE EVIDENCE · A viral demonstration is not a physical mechanism.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[36A] Cleveland.com, coverage of Tenpenny’s Ohio testimony

[36B] U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, COVID-19 vaccine safety

POLITICS & PUBLIC ADVOCACY · UNITED STATES

2020s · speeches, interviews, and written advocacy

Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

PARAPHRASE · BROAD PUBLIC POSITION, NOT ONE VERBATIM SENTENCE

Kennedy has repeatedly promoted claims that vaccines are linked to autism and has questioned the safety evidence supporting routine vaccination.

THE MOMENT

Kennedy’s statements have appeared across interviews, campaign events, and advocacy material. The claims are summarized here rather than compressed into a sentence that may not match any one recording.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

The scientific consensus, based on large studies and safety monitoring, does not support a causal link between vaccines and autism. Vaccine risks are monitored and are not literally zero, but that is different from saying the products are broadly unsafe or that an autism link has been established. A sound review should distinguish specific rare adverse events from a general claim about routine vaccination.

CLAIM NOT SUPPORTED BY THE EVIDENCE · Safety monitoring and causal proof are different questions.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[37A] PolitiFact, fact-checking of Kennedy’s vaccine-safety claims

[37B] U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, vaccines and autism

ENTERTAINMENT · TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO / UNITED STATES

13 September 2021 · social-media posts about COVID-19 vaccination

Nicki Minaj

VERBATIM QUOTE · EXCERPT FROM A POST

“My cousin in Trinidad won’t get the vaccine cuz his friend got it & became impotent.”

THE MOMENT

Minaj relayed a story about a cousin’s friend and alleged swollen testicles after vaccination. The post reached a huge audience and drew a response from Trinidad and Tobago’s health minister, who said officials had not seen evidence of such cases.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

An anecdote about an unnamed person cannot establish an adverse effect, and health authorities reported no such pattern. The post was not evidence that the vaccine caused infertility. That conclusion would require verified cases, medical assessment, and appropriate comparison—not a second-hand story on social media.

UNVERIFIED ANECDOTE · A story can travel faster than its medical record.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[38A] BBC News, report on Minaj’s vaccine tweet and the Trinidad response

[38B] Reuters, fact-checking reports about COVID vaccines and infertility

SPORTS · UNITED STATES

February 2017 · podcast interview

Kyrie Irving

VERBATIM QUOTE · CONDENSED TO THE CENTRAL CLAIM

“The Earth is flat.”

THE MOMENT

Irving, then an NBA star, said he believed the Earth was flat and urged people to research the question for themselves. He later described the episode as a way to challenge people’s assumptions and apologised for how the comment was received.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

The Earth’s roughly spherical shape is established by many independent lines of evidence: satellite images, circumnavigation, lunar eclipses, navigation, and measurements of curvature. Irving’s later comments matter because they complicate the claim that he was expressing a settled scientific belief; the original statement nevertheless circulated as an endorsement of flat-Earth ideas.

SCIENTIFICALLY FALSE AS A LITERAL CLAIM · Follow-up context does not change the evidence about Earth.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[39A] ESPN, report on Irving’s flat-Earth remarks

[39B] NASA, Earth observation and planetary facts

ENTERTAINMENT · UNITED STATES

1 May 2018 · TMZ Live interview

Kanye West

VERBATIM QUOTE

“When you hear about slavery for 400 years, for 400 years, that sounds like a choice.”

THE MOMENT

West said this during a discussion of his politics and the idea of “free thought.” He was speaking about the long duration of American slavery and the consequences of oppression, but the wording implied that enslaved people had meaningfully chosen their condition.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

Enslavement was enforced through violence, legal coercion, family separation, and restrictions on movement. Resistance existed, but that does not make slavery a free choice for the people held in bondage. West later described the remark as a non-historical opinion and apologised for how it made people feel.

HISTORICALLY MISLEADING · Duration is not evidence of consent.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[40A] Associated Press, report on West’s “slavery was a choice” remark

[40B] Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture

ENTERTAINMENT · UNITED STATES

June 2005 · Today Show interview with Matt Lauer

Tom Cruise

VERBATIM QUOTE

“Psychiatry is a pseudo-science.”

THE MOMENT

Cruise made the remark while criticising psychiatric medication and discussing his views on mental health treatment. The line reflected his public advocacy and beliefs, but it was framed as a judgement on an entire medical specialty.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

Psychiatry, like other medical fields, contains treatments with varying evidence strengths and ongoing debates. It also uses evidence-based diagnosis, psychotherapy, and medication, with research evaluated through clinical trials and professional guidelines. A sweeping claim that the discipline is pseudoscience ignores the body of validated practice and cannot be inferred from disagreement with some prescriptions.

OVERGENERALISATION · Criticise a treatment on evidence, not an entire field by label.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[41A] NBC / Today, Cruise interview with Matt Lauer

[41B] American Psychiatric Association, information on psychiatric treatment

ENTERTAINMENT · UNITED STATES

2015 · Rolling Stone interview; later podcast appearances

Terrence Howard

VERBATIM QUOTE · CENTRAL MATHEMATICAL CLAIM

“One times one equals two.”

THE MOMENT

Actor Howard has discussed a personal system of mathematics and argued that familiar arithmetic contains errors. His explanations have included physical analogies and reinterpretations of standard operations.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

Under the ordinary definition of multiplication over the real numbers, $1 \times 1 = 1$. A person can invent a new formal system, but it must define its symbols and rules and demonstrate that the system is consistent and useful. Merely declaring a familiar identity wrong does not overturn arithmetic.

CONTRARY TO STANDARD ARITHMETIC · A new theory must do more than rename the rules.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[42A] Rolling Stone, profile of Howard’s mathematical claims

[42B] Khan Academy, multiplication and arithmetic fundamentals

ENTERTAINMENT · UNITED STATES

January 2016 · social-media posts about the Earth’s curvature

B.o.B.

PARAPHRASE · BASED ON PUBLISHED POSTS

The rapper questioned why distant buildings appeared level in photographs and used the images to argue that Earth was flat.

THE MOMENT

B.o.B. posted photographs of distant landscapes and challenged followers to explain why the horizon appeared flat. Astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson responded publicly, turning the exchange into a widely shared science debate.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

Earth is large relative to everyday viewing distances, so its curvature is subtle in many ground-level photographs. Lens choice, elevation, atmospheric refraction, and perspective also affect what a photo appears to show. A flat-looking horizon in one image cannot outweigh independent astronomical and geodetic measurements.

BAD INFERENCE FROM A PHOTO · Appearance at one scale is not a planetary measurement.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[43A] CBS News, report on B.o.B.’s flat-Earth claims and Tyson’s response

[43B] NASA, Earth science resources

SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT · UNITED STATES

March 2017 · podcast comments, followed by clarification

Shaquille O’Neal

VERBATIM QUOTE · FOLLOWED BY LATER CLARIFICATION

“The Earth is flat.”

THE MOMENT

O’Neal said the line on a podcast, prompting headlines that another celebrity had embraced flat-Earth claims. He later said he was joking and explained that he had been playing along with the attention around the idea.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

The scientific answer is clear: Earth is approximately spherical. The editorial point is different: O’Neal’s follow-up means it would be unfair to treat the first sentence alone as proof he seriously believed the claim. This entry is a reminder that quote verification includes checking what the speaker said next, not just clipping the most shareable line.

CONTEXT CHANGES THE READING · The claim is false literally; the speaker said it was a joke.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[44A] The Guardian, coverage of O’Neal’s flat-Earth comments and clarification

[44B] NASA, Earth science resources

WELLNESS & PUBLIC ADVOCACY · UNITED STATES

1989 onward · book and public writing on “quantum healing”

Deepak Chopra

PARAPHRASE · NOT A DIRECT QUOTATION

Chopra’s “quantum healing” framework uses concepts from quantum physics to discuss mind–body healing and health.

THE MOMENT

The phrase became associated with a broad wellness approach that links consciousness, the body, and quantum theory. This entry addresses the scientific framing, not every claim Chopra has ever made or the value of relaxation, meditation, and supportive care.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

Quantum mechanics is a successful physical theory, but its terminology does not itself demonstrate that a particular healing method treats a disease. Clinical efficacy requires defined interventions, reproducible outcomes, and suitable trials. The key question is whether a medical claim has direct evidence, not whether it borrows language from a respected branch of physics.

SCIENTIFIC TERMINOLOGY IS NOT CLINICAL EVIDENCE · “Quantum” is not a treatment result.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[45A] Deepak Chopra, publisher page for Quantum Healing

[45B] U.S. National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health

ENTERTAINMENT · UNITED STATES

2009 · public commentary on vaccination and autism

Jim Carrey

PARAPHRASE · SUMMARY OF PUBLIC POSITION

Carrey argued that ingredients in childhood vaccines were connected to autism and promoted changes to vaccination practices.

THE MOMENT

Carrey’s comments were part of a high-profile celebrity debate about vaccine ingredients, including mercury-containing compounds. The claim blended concern about chemical exposure with a specific causal theory about autism.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

Large studies and scientific reviews have not found that vaccines cause autism. Ingredient questions are assessed by dose, biological mechanism, and evidence in people—not by treating the presence of a chemical name as proof of harm. This entry paraphrases the public position because different interviews and posts used different wording.

CAUSAL CLAIM NOT SUPPORTED · Ingredient names are not evidence of injury.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[46A] CBS News, report on Carrey’s anti-vaccine comments

[46B] U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, vaccines and autism

BUSINESS & POLITICS · UNITED STATES

2021 · public claims following the 2020 U.S. election

Mike Lindell

PARAPHRASE · REPEATED CLAIM, NOT ONE STITCHED QUOTE

Lindell repeatedly said he possessed conclusive proof that widespread fraud in voting systems changed the 2020 presidential result.

THE MOMENT

The MyPillow chief executive promoted election-fraud allegations through interviews, events, and a documentary-style presentation. The claim was specific and testable: the evidence needed to establish fraud at a scale sufficient to alter the result.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

Election officials, audits, and court proceedings did not establish evidence that changed the outcome. A person may raise a concern about a particular machine or county; that is not proof of a national conspiracy. Lindell's public confidence was not matched by evidence that survived independent scrutiny.

EXTRAORDINARY CLAIM NOT ESTABLISHED · Confidence is not a chain of custody.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[47A] Associated Press, fact-checking Lindell's election-fraud claims

[47B] Reuters, reporting on election-related litigation and claims

POLITICS · UNITED STATES

12 September 2011 · Republican presidential debate

Michele Bachmann

VERBATIM QUOTE · REPORTED DEBATE REMARK

Bachmann said a mother told her that after receiving the HPV vaccine, her daughter “suffered from mental retardation.”

THE MOMENT

Bachmann used the anecdote while criticising HPV vaccination during the 2011 Republican debate. The story was presented as a reason to question vaccine safety, even though it was not a verified causal investigation.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

An anecdote cannot establish that a vaccine caused a developmental condition. The HPV vaccine is monitored for safety, and evidence supports its role in preventing infections that can lead to several cancers. Bachmann later acknowledged that she had no scientific evidence for the implied connection. The entry preserves the reported statement and distinguishes it from a medical finding.

ANECDOTE IS NOT CAUSATION · A moving story still requires medical evidence.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[48A] PolitiFact, fact-check of Bachmann’s HPV vaccine anecdote

[48B] U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, HPV vaccine safety

POLITICS · ISRAEL

27 September 2012 · speech to the United Nations General Assembly

Benjamin Netanyahu

VERBATIM QUOTE · FORECAST DESCRIBED IN THE SPEECH

“By next spring, at most by next summer… they will have finished medium enrichment and move on to the final stage.”

THE MOMENT

Netanyahu used a cartoon bomb diagram to argue that Iran was approaching a threshold in its uranium-enrichment programme. The remark was a forecast about a technical stage, not a claim that Iran already possessed a nuclear weapon.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

The predicted timetable did not unfold as presented. But the underlying concern about Iran’s nuclear programme did not disappear, and a precise assessment depends on enrichment levels, inspections, weaponisation work, and political choices. The fair correction is that the forecast was highly confident and time-bound; it should not be rewritten as “Netanyahu said Iran already had a bomb.”

FORECAST DID NOT LAND ON SCHEDULE · Keep “enrichment threshold” separate from “finished weapon.”

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[49A] United Nations, General Assembly speeches and records

[49B] International Atomic Energy Agency, Iran safeguards reports

POLITICS · UNITED KINGDOM

2016 · EU referendum campaign

Nigel Farage

PARAPHRASE · CAMPAIGN ARGUMENT, NOT A VERBATIM QUOTE

Farage and Leave-side campaigners argued that Turkey’s prospective EU membership was near enough to make large-scale migration to Britain an imminent consequence of remaining in the EU.

THE MOMENT

The argument featured prominently in the 2016 referendum campaign, often pairing Turkey’s population with the prospect of visa-free travel. It leaned on a long accession process as though a near-term date had been settled.

WHAT THE RECORD SAYS

Turkey was not close to joining the EU in 2016 and still has not joined. Accession depends on lengthy political and legal negotiations and member-state approval; it is not automatic because a country is a candidate. This entry paraphrases the broader campaign argument rather than assigning a campaign poster’s exact text to Farage.

MISLEADING IMMINENCE · A possible future pathway was sold as a near-term certainty.

SOURCES · CLICK TO OPEN

[50A] Full Fact, fact-checks on Turkey and EU accession claims

[50B] European Commission, Turkey’s EU accession process

INDEX Index of names

Names only, with page numbers. Entries are listed by surname.

NAME	PAGE
Tony Abbott	18
Michele Bachmann	55
Steve Ballmer	32
Sam Bankman-Fried	34
Joe Biden	20
B.o.B.	50
Jair Bolsonaro	13
George W. Bush	14
Jim Carrey	53
Deepak Chopra	52
Tom Cruise	48
Ted Cruz	23
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	22
Nigel Farage	57
Bill Gates	39
Rudy Giuliani	17
Michael Gove	29
Piyush Goyal	19
Marjorie Taylor Greene	21
Elizabeth Holmes	33
Terrence Howard	49
Jim Inhofe	15
Kyrie Irving	46
Boris Johnson	28
Alex Jones	27

INDEX Index of names

Names only, with page numbers. Entries are listed by surname.

NAME	PAGE
Robert F. Kennedy Jr.	44
Imran Khan	30
Mike Lindell	54
John McAfee	35
Jenny McCarthy	41
Nicki Minaj	45
Narendra Modi	9
Elon Musk	31
Benjamin Netanyahu	56
Adam Neumann	36
Barack Obama	10
Shaquille O’Neal	51
Mehmet Oz	40
Colin Powell	24
Scott Pruitt	16
Vladimir Putin	12
Donald Rumsfeld	25
George Santos	26
Martin Shkreli	38
Sean Spicer	11
Sherri Tenpenny	43
Donald Trump	8
Andrew Wakefield	42
Kanye West	47
Mark Zuckerberg	37

SOURCE REGISTER Bibliography & linked records

Two sources are listed for every entry. Links open the original page or document.

01A

FactCheck.org, “Trump Sticks With Bogus Voter Fraud Claims” Quotation and fact-check 01B

FactCheck.org, “More Trump Deception on Voter Fraud” Follow-up on the underlying study 02A

The Indian Express, report on Modi’s cloud-and-radar remarks Interview reporting 02B

Reuters, coverage of India’s 2019 election and Balakot strike Context on the strike and election 03A

PolitiFact, “Barack Obama promises you can keep your health insurance, but there’s no guarantee” Original rating and context 03B

PolitiFact, “Lie of the Year: If you like your health care plan, you can keep it” Retrospective on cancellations 04A

PolitiFact, fact-check of the inauguration-crowd claim Claim and crowd comparisons 04B

The New York Times, inauguration crowd comparison and photography Visual evidence and context 05A

BBC News, Putin acknowledges Russian military role in Crimea Putin’s later account 05B

Reuters, reporting on Russia’s role in Crimea Contemporaneous reporting and timeline 06A

BBC News, coverage of Bolsonaro’s “little flu” remarks Quotation and context 06B

World Health Organization, COVID-19 overview Clinical and public-health context

SOURCE REGISTER Bibliography & linked records

Continued · page 2 of 9 07A

George W. Bush White House Archive, 1 May 2003 remarks Primary transcript 07B

CIA, Iraq Survey Group final report collection Post-invasion findings and context 08A

C-SPAN, Senate snowball demonstration Recorded floor event 08B

NASA, evidence for climate change Climate-science overview 09A

CNN, interview report on Pruitt’s CO_2 statement Exact claim and response 09B

IPCC, Sixth Assessment Report, Working Group I Assessment of human influence on climate 10A

NBC News, Meet the Press clip: “Truth Isn’t Truth” Original recording 10B

NBC News, report on Giuliani’s remark and Mueller interview context Context and follow-up 11A

The Guardian, report on Abbott’s climate-change remarks Quoted remark and timing 11B

IPCC, Sixth Assessment Report Evidence of human-caused warming 12A

The Times of India, report on Goyal’s Einstein remark Quotation and context 12B

Einstein Papers Project, Princeton University Primary research record and historical context

SOURCE REGISTER Bibliography & linked records

Continued · page 3 of 9 13A

CNN, coverage of Biden’s “poor kids” comment Recording and context 13B

Associated Press, report on Biden’s explanation and criticism Follow-up reporting 14A

The New York Times, report on Greene’s conspiracy theories Post and later shorthand 14B

CAL FIRE, Camp Fire incident record Official fire-investigation context 15A

Reuters, report on Erdoğan’s interest-rate theory Contemporaneous economic reporting 15B

Bank of England, explanation of monetary policy and inflation How rates are used to influence inflation 16A

PolitiFact, fact-check of Cruz’s claim about 1970s climate science Review of the literature 16B

National Academies, climate-change evidence and assessment Scientific review context 17A

U.S. Department of State / White House Archive, Powell’s UN presentation Full speech and evidence presented 17B

CIA, Iraq Survey Group final report collection Findings after the invasion 18A

CNN, Rumsfeld briefing transcript and coverage Quoted answer 18B

CIA, Iraq Survey Group final report collection Post-war weapons findings

SOURCE REGISTER Bibliography & linked records

Continued · page 4 of 9 19A

The New York Times, investigation of Santos’s résumé and background Original investigative reporting 19B

Associated Press, follow-up on Santos’s admissions Independent reporting and clarification 20A

Associated Press, coverage of the Sandy Hook defamation verdicts Trial and verdict reporting 20B

Reuters, report on the Connecticut damages verdict Court findings and damages 21A

BBC News, Johnson’s Brexit deadline pledge Original pledge and timing 21B

UK Parliament, Brexit timeline and withdrawal records Official chronology 22A

Sky News, interview transcript and report Original interview context 22B

UK House of Commons Library, EU referendum research briefing Context on competing evidence and arguments 23A

AFP Fact Check, review of the Germany–Japan border claim Attribution and clip context 23B

Dawn, reporting on Khan’s joint-venture remarks Original speech context 24A

U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, complaint against Elon Musk Primary legal filing 24B

SEC, settlement announcement on Tesla and Musk Settlement terms and procedural context

SOURCE REGISTER Bibliography & linked records

Continued · page 5 of 9 25A

CNBC, retrospective on Ballmer’s iPhone prediction Original remark and hindsight 25B

Apple, annual reports and product history Evidence of the iPhone’s commercial importance 26A

U.S. Department of Justice, Holmes sentencing and conviction summary Legal findings 26B

The Wall Street Journal, reporting on Theranos test accuracy Investigative reporting on the technology 27A

Reuters, report on Bankman-Fried’s “assets are fine” post Contemporaneous reporting 27B

U.S. Department of Justice, Bankman-Fried trial and conviction releases Legal record and verdict 28A

CNBC, coverage of McAfee’s Bitcoin price wager Quotation and deadline 28B

CoinMarketCap, historical Bitcoin price data Price history 29A

CNBC, coverage of Neumann’s “not a real estate company” claim Reported quote and context 29B

WeWork, 2019 registration statement (S-1) filed with the SEC Lease liabilities and risk disclosures 30A

The Guardian, report on Zuckerberg and Facebook privacy Reported quotation and surrounding debate 30B

Electronic Frontier Foundation, Facebook privacy issues and policy history Independent privacy context

SOURCE REGISTER Bibliography & linked records

Continued · page 6 of 9 31A

Reuters, reporting on Turing’s Daraprim price increase Price, response, and company explanation 31B

U.S. House Committee on Oversight, pharmaceutical drug pricing hearing records Congressional scrutiny and testimony 32A

Snopes, fact-check of the “640K” Gates quotation Attribution review 32B

Computer History Museum, early personal-computer history Historical context 33A

U.S. Senate, hearing on supplement marketing and the role of the FTC Public hearing and testimony 33B

Federal Trade Commission, settlement with green-coffee marketers Regulatory finding about advertising 34A

USA Today, reporting on McCarthy’s vaccine-autism advocacy Public comments and context 34B

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, vaccines and autism Review of scientific evidence 35A

BMJ, Brian Deer’s investigation of the Wakefield research Research-integrity investigation 35B

The Lancet, retraction notice for the 1998 paper Formal retraction 36A

Cleveland.com, coverage of Tenpenny’s Ohio testimony Hearing and fact-check 36B

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, COVID-19 vaccine safety Vaccine ingredients and safety context

SOURCE REGISTER Bibliography & linked records

Continued · page 7 of 9 37A

PolitiFact, fact-checking of Kennedy’s vaccine-safety claims Claims and expert evidence 37B

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, vaccines and autism Evidence summary 38A

BBC News, report on Minaj’s vaccine tweet and the Trinidad response Original post and response 38B

Reuters, fact-checking reports about COVID vaccines and infertility Independent health reporting 39A

ESPN, report on Irving’s flat-Earth remarks Original claim and follow-up 39B

NASA, Earth observation and planetary facts Scientific context 40A

Associated Press, report on West’s “slavery was a choice” remark Original quotation and context 40B

Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture Historical context on slavery and resistance 41A

NBC / Today, Cruise interview with Matt Lauer Original interview context 41B

American Psychiatric Association, information on psychiatric treatment Professional evidence and patient resources 42A

Rolling Stone, profile of Howard’s mathematical claims Recorded explanations and context 42B

Khan Academy, multiplication and arithmetic fundamentals Standard arithmetic definitions

SOURCE REGISTER Bibliography & linked records

Continued · page 8 of 9 43A

CBS News, report on B.o.B.’s flat-Earth claims and Tyson’s response Posts and response 43B

NASA, Earth science resources Independent scientific evidence 44A

The Guardian, coverage of O’Neal’s flat-Earth comments and clarification Follow-up context 44B

NASA, Earth science resources Scientific fact 45A

Deepak Chopra, publisher page for Quantum Healing Book and stated framework 45B

U.S. National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health Evidence standards for health approaches 46A

CBS News, report on Carrey’s anti-vaccine comments Public statements and response 46B

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, vaccines and autism Scientific evidence 47A

Associated Press, fact-checking Lindell’s election-fraud claims Evidence and legal context 47B

Reuters, reporting on election-related litigation and claims Court and election-official findings 48A

PolitiFact, fact-check of Bachmann’s HPV vaccine anecdote Original statement and assessment 48B

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, HPV vaccine safety Safety and effectiveness evidence

SOURCE REGISTER Bibliography & linked records

Continued · page 9 of 9 49A

United Nations, General Assembly speeches and records Speech and original chart context 49B

International Atomic Energy Agency, Iran safeguards reports Technical monitoring and subsequent timeline 50A

Full Fact, fact-checks on Turkey and EU accession claims Accession status and timing 50B

European Commission, Turkey’s EU accession process Official accession status