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Corporate News Outlets Again "Confirm" the Same False Story, While Many Refuse to Correct it (/archives/featured-articles/2021/may/04/corporate-news-outlets-again-confirm-the-same-false-story-while-many-refuse-to-correct-it/)

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One of the primary plagues of corporate journalism, which I have [documented](https://greenwald.substack.com/p/how-do-big-media-outlets-so-often) (<https://greenwald.substack.com/p/how-do-big-media-outlets-so-often>) more times than I can count (<https://theintercept.com/2020/09/05/journalisms-new-propaganda-tool-using-confirmed-to-mean-its-opposite/>), just reared its ugly head again to deceive millions of people with fake news. When one large news outlet publishes a false story based on whispers from anonymous security state agents with the CIA or FBI, other news outlets quickly purport that they have “independently confirmed” the false story, in order to bolster its credibility (oh, it must be true since other outlets have also confirmed it).

This is an obvious scam — they have not “independently confirmed” anything but rather merely acted as servants to the same lying security state agents who planted the original false story — but they do it over and over, creating the deceitful perception that a fake story has been “confirmed” by multiple outlets, thus bolstering its credibility in the public mind. It was the favored tactic for spreading debunked Russiagate frauds and is still used. One of the most vivid examples occurred in December, 2017, when CNN [falsely reported](https://theintercept.com/2017/12/09/the-u-s-media-yesterday-suffered-its-most-humiliating-debacle-in-ages-now-refuses-all-transparency-over-what-happened/) (<https://theintercept.com/2017/12/09/the-u-s-media-yesterday-suffered-its-most-humiliating-debacle-in-ages-now-refuses-all-transparency-over-what-happened/>) what it hyped as “a major bombshell”: that Donald Trump, Jr. had advance access to the WikiLeaks archive. Within an hour, NBC News’ Ken Dilanian and CBS News both claimed they had “independently confirmed” this fairy tale. When it turned out that it was a complete lie, all based on a false date on an email to Trump Jr., these outlets embarrassingly corrected it hours later and then simply moved on as if it never happened, never explaining how multiple outlets could possibly have all “independently confirmed” the same blatant falsehood.

On Thursday night, The Washington Post, citing anonymous sources (of course), [claimed](https://twitter.com/michaeldweiss/status/1388114235083968515/photo/1) (<https://twitter.com/michaeldweiss/status/1388114235083968515/photo/1>) that the FBI gave a “defensive briefing” to Rudy Giuliani in 2019, before he traveled to Ukraine, that he was being targeted by a Russian disinformation campaign to hurt Joe Biden's candidacy, yet he ignored the FBI's warnings and went anyway. The Post also claimed that the right-wing news outlet OANN was similarly briefed. The claim about Giuliani not only predictably ricocheted all over social media and cable news — where, as usual, it was uncritically treated as Truth — but it was shortly thereafter “independently confirmed” by both NBC News’ de facto CIA spokesman Ken Dilanian along with The New York Times.

What was the problem with this story? It was totally false (<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/05/01/media/washington-post-new-york-times-retraction-giuliani/index.html>). The FBI never briefed Giuliani on any such thing. As a result, The Washington Post had to append (https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/rudy-giuliani-fbi-warning-russia/2021/04/29/5db90f96-a84e-11eb-bca5-048b2759a489_story.html) this "correction" — meaning a retraction — to the top of its viral story:

At first, The New York Times attempted to quietly change (<https://twitter.com/oliverdarcy/status/1388548179801616386>) the story to delete the false claims without noting they were doing so. But upon being pressured, they finally faced up to what they did and posted (<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/29/nyregion/giuliani-yovanovitch-search-warrant-ukraine.html>) their own retraction at the very bottom of the story that reads: "Correction: An earlier version of this article misstated whether Rudolph W. Giuliani received a formal warning from the F.B.I. about Russian disinformation. Mr. Giuliani did not receive such a so-called defensive briefing." In their self-glorifying jargon, the Paper of Record did not spread Fake News — perish the thought — but merely "misstated" the truth. Meanwhile, NBC News, at the top of its false story, posted (<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/justice-department/giuliani-received-2019-briefing-fbi-warning-he-was-target-russian-n1265971>) this explanation for why Dilanian got the story completely wrong:

An earlier version of this article included an incorrect report that Rudolph Giuliani had received a defensive briefing from the FBI in 2019 warning him that he was being targeted by a Russian influence operation. The report was based on a source familiar with the matter, but a second source now says the briefing was only prepared for Giuliani and not delivered to him, in part over concerns it might complicate the criminal investigation of Giuliani. As a result, the premise and headline of the article below have been changed to reflect the corrected information.

This credibility carnage was so glaring that even CNN acknowledged (<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/05/01/media/washington-post-new-york-times-retraction-giuliani/index.html>) that "the corrections are black eyes to the newsrooms which have aggressively reported on Giuliani's contacts with Ukrainians in his attempts to dig up dirt on then-presidential candidate Joe Biden." But there have been so many similar "black eyes" like this one, indeed far worse ones, over the last five years, and they never change anything that causes these "black eyes" because they want to do this: spreading disinformation is their function. Indeed, as I have asked almost every time these debacles happen: how is it possible that these same outlets keep "confirming" one another's false stories?

And the answer is obvious: they all serve as mouthpieces for the same propagandists and disinformation agents of the CIA, FBI and other security state agencies. In this capacity, they dutifully write down and vouch for what they are told by those agencies to publish without any investigative scrutiny or confirmation. The most amazing part of it all is that when they try to malign independent journalists for not doing "real reporting" — real reporting like these corporate outlets do — this is what they mean by real reporting: getting a call from the CIA or FBI and being told what to say. And that is why they so often mislead and deceive the public with blatant disinformation in unison (<https://greenwald.substack.com/p/journalists-learning-they-spread>).

Fair use excerpt. Read the rest here (<https://greenwald.substack.com/p/corporate-news-outlets-again->

confirm).
