

Can you spot fake news?



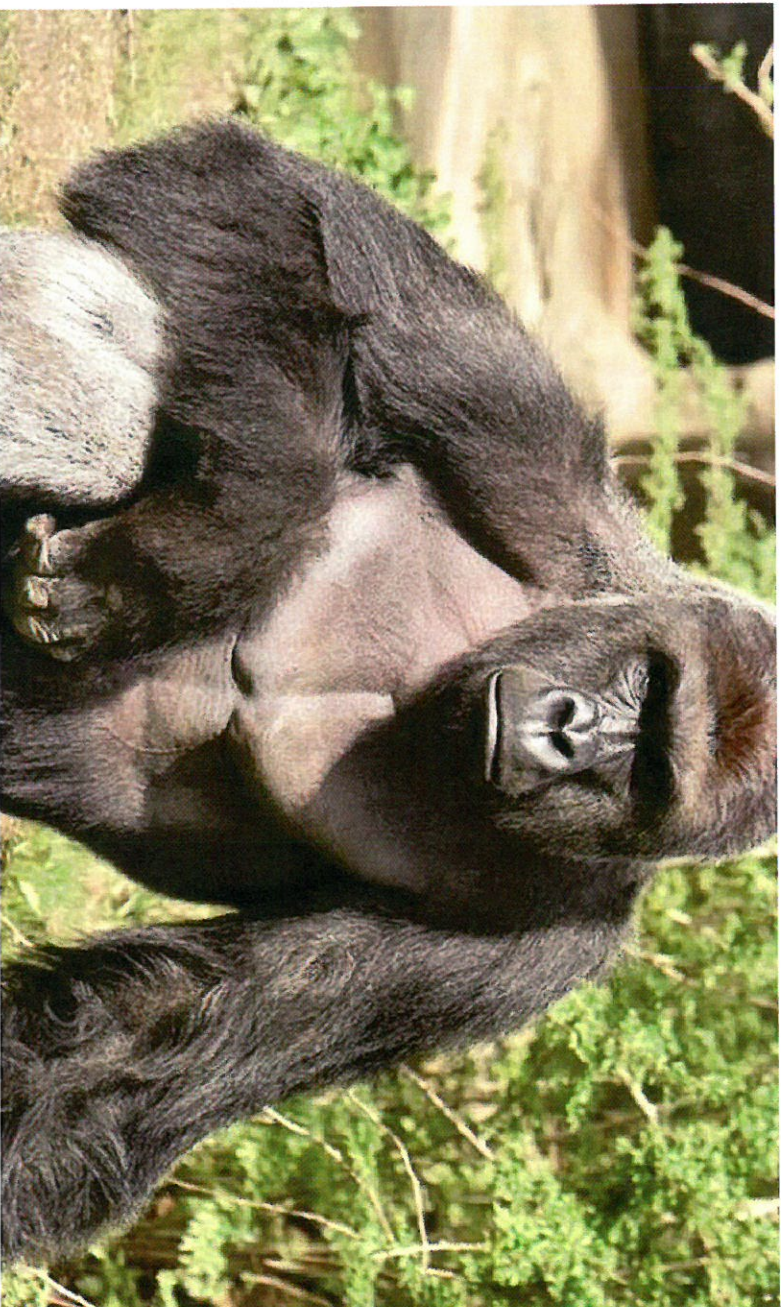
Some fake news stories are completely false, often intentionally so. Others fall into the category of being distorted or misleading but not totally false, usually with the aim of generating likes, shares and ad revenue. Which one of these stories fell into that category?

- 1. US just admitted that cannabis DOES kill cancer cells**
- 2. Muslims see a Christmas tree being set up, then start attacking it!**
- 3. Fake cigarettes are being sold and killing people, here's how to spot counterfeit packs**

US just admitted that cannabis DOES kill cancer cells

CORRECT - This bold headline appeared to rely as a source on a report of tests carried out on mice and rats. The story failed to mention key clarifications, such as the fact that there had been no officially recognized clinical trials of cannabis as a treatment for cancer in humans. The US National Cancer Institute noted: "There is not enough evidence to recommend that patients inhale or ingest cannabis as a treatment for cancer-related symptoms or side effects of cancer therapy."

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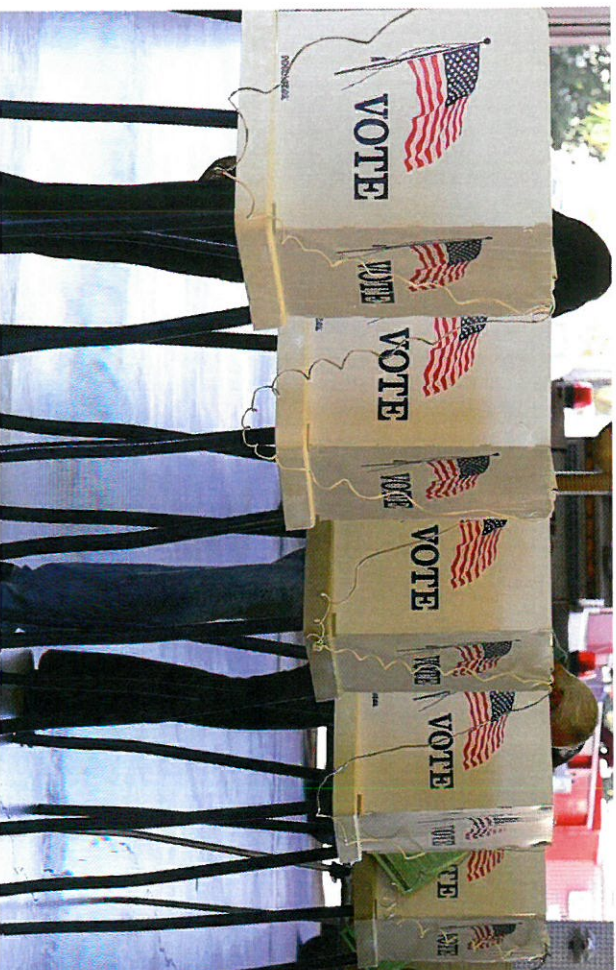
"Harambe, a dead gorilla, got over 15,000 votes for president of the United States." Another fake news headline. But how do you know it must be false?

1. Election rules mean we wouldn't know about it even if that many people had written in their ballots that way
2. Write-in votes are counted as a single unofficial category and not broken out by individual name
3. Write-in votes are prohibited in US presidential election

Election rules mean we would not know about it even if that many people had written in their ballots that way

CORRECT – It is possible that some voters did write in the name of Harambe, the gorilla shot dead by Cincinnati zookeepers when a child fell into his enclosure. We won't ever know how many. Each state has its own rules for write-in votes. Some prohibit them, others do not count them, most attach conditions that a dead gorilla could not meet and others lump all write-in votes into a single "unofficial" category.

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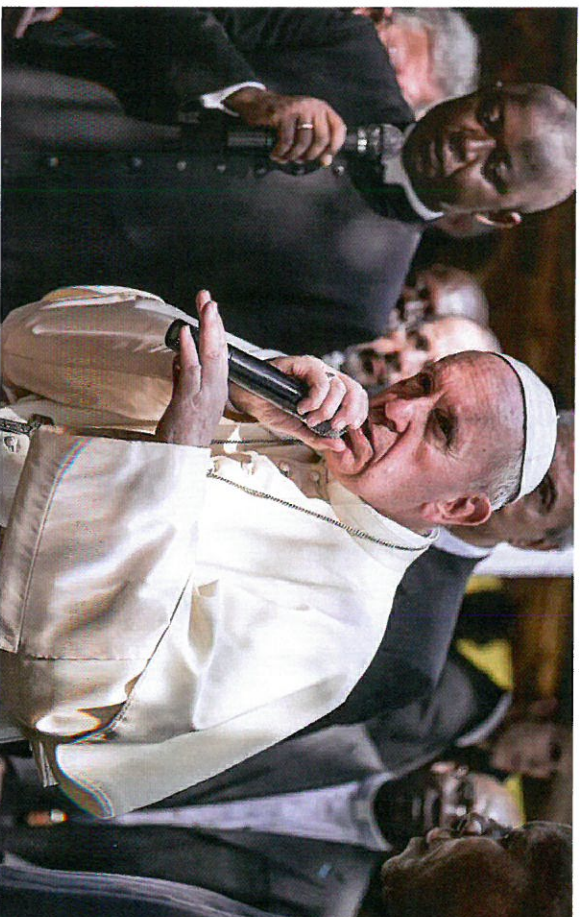
A Google search for "final election numbers" or "final vote count 2016" returned a fake news story as its top result. What did it say?

1. There had been a conspiracy to delay announcing the result in Michigan
2. Donald Trump had won both the popular vote and electoral college
3. Hillary Clinton had expanded her lead in the popular vote



Donald Trump had won both the popular vote and electoral college.

CORRECT - A Google search returned a fake news story that Donald Trump had won the popular vote as well as the electoral college. Many publications criticized both Google and the article it had surfaced as its top result. "Those numbers are not remotely accurate," one commentator said.



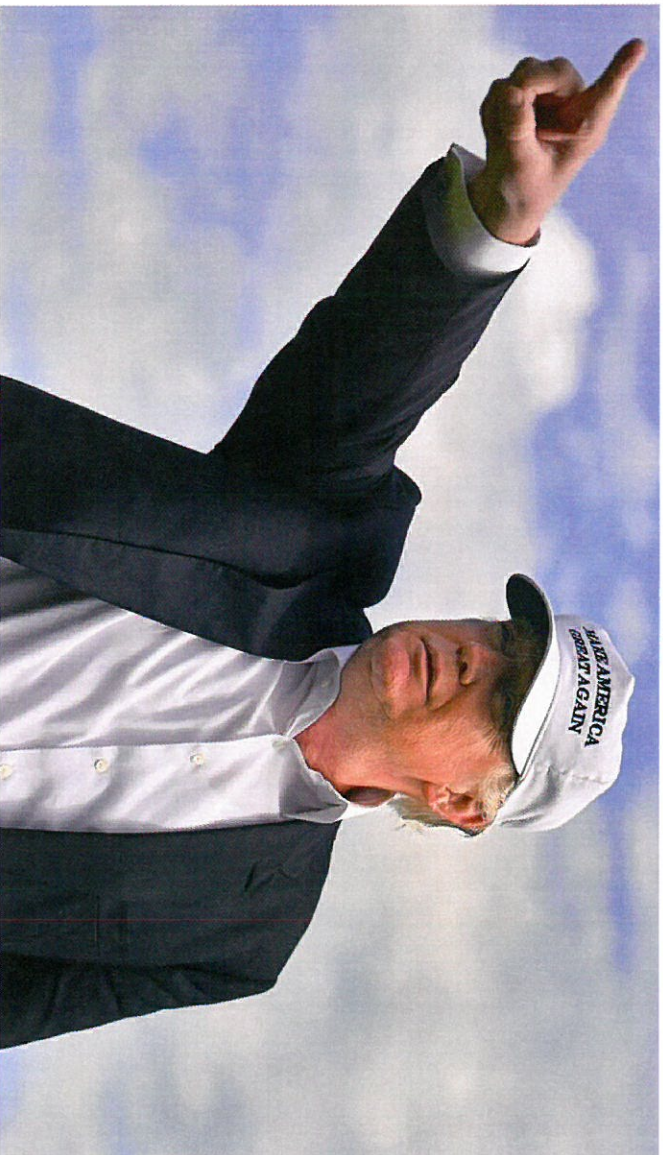
Which of these did Pope Francis NOT say during the recent US presidential election campaign?

- 1.** I have been hesitant to offer any kind of support for either candidate in the US presidential election but I now feel that to not voice my concern would be a dereliction of my duty as the Holy See.
- 2.** If anything, it's the Communists who think like Christians. Christ spoke of a society where the poor, the weak, the marginalized, have the right to decide. Not the demagogues.
- 3.** A person, who thinks only about building walls, wherever they may be, and not building bridges, is not Christian.

I have been hesitant to offer any kind of support for either candidate in the US presidential election but I now feel that to not voice my concern would be a dereliction of my duty as the Holy See.

CORRECT - This quote appeared in a fake news story that said Pope Francis was supporting Donald Trump in the race for the White House.

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In which country have at least 140 US politics websites been launched in the past year, almost all publishing sensationalist and often false pro-Trump content?

- 1. Russia**
- 2. Macedonia**
- 3. Morocco**



Macedonia

CORRECT - More than 140 strongly pro-Trump sites have been traced by BuzzFeed to a single town in Macedonia, Veles. According to BuzzFeed, those starting the sites are indifferent to politics or the effect they may be having but have found their activity to be a good way of making money from advertising.

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Who was falsely quoted as backing Donald Trump in the US presidential election, with the words: "We need more and more jobs. Unemployment is way up here. He's hired more employees, more people, than anyone I know in the world. "

- 1. Denzel Washington**
- 2. Brad Pitt**
- 3. Both of the above**



Both of the above

CORRECT - This quote has been used in many fake news stories, variously attributed to both Denzel Washington and Brad Pitt. Neither of them said it. The quote appears to originate in a New York Post article from March, 2016 in which Charles Evers, brother of murdered 1960s civil rights activist Medgar Evers, used those words in endorsing Mr. Trump.