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0873: The Fake News and Information Literacy  
Project

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3-21-2022

**West Virginia Participant 29 (White/female/19), interviewed on  
March 21, 2022**

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# Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

## The Fake News and Information Literacy Project

Stephen M. Underhill, PhD, Principal Investigator

	Marshall University IRB	
	Approved on:	9/17/21
	Expires on:	9/15/21
	Study number:	1779793

### Key Information

You are invited to participate in a research study. Research studies are designed to gain scientific knowledge that may help other people in the future. You may or may not receive any benefit from being part of the study. Your participation is voluntary. Please take your time to make your decision, and ask your research investigator or research staff to explain any words or information that you do not understand. The following is a short summary to help you decide why you may or may not want to be a part of this study. Information that is more detailed is listed later on in this form.

The purpose of this study is to understand the Appalachian experience with fake news and how people determine what is/not credible online. We expect that you will be in this research study for one hour. Though you will be anonymous and your identity will be kept secret, a redacted copy of your interview transcript will be posted online on Marshall University's Digital Scholar website ([https://mds.marshall.edu/oral\\_history/](https://mds.marshall.edu/oral_history/)).

You will be asked 64 questions. Your dialogue will be recorded on Microsoft Teams and housed on Marshall University's OneDrive, which is password protected. The recording will be destroyed at the end of the semester (during finals week). To protect your privacy, you will be identified by your state of residence, race, sex, age and participant number. For example, the Digital Scholar website will catalogue your interview with a pseudonym like "Kentucky Participant 5 (White/Male/65), interviewed on October 5, 2021." Please avoid mentioning your name or other identifying information in the interview. Your name will not be on the transcript. The name of the interviewer will not be included in the transcript or otherwise on Marshall University's Digital Scholar website. All identifying information will be removed before transcripts are posted online. But once transcripts are posted on Marshall University's Digital Scholar website, they will be permanent. We will not be able to remove them.

### How Many People Will Take Part In The Study?

About 24 people every semester people will take part in this study. A total of 24 subjects are the most that would be able to enter the study per semester.

### What Is Involved In This Research Study?

You will be asked a series of 64 open-ended questions about your thoughts and feelings on fake news and disinformation online. You will be asked about your opinion of sensitive social questions like issues of race, class, religion, etc.

With your consent, this interview will be recorded. You will only be identified as "you" during the interview. The Microsoft Teams recording, which will be with the camera turned off, will be stored on Marshall University's OneDrive and will only be shared with the FYS small group, the FYS graduate assistant and the professor. These people will use the recording to verify consent and make a

Subject's Initials \_\_\_\_\_

redacted transcript. Definitized transcripts will be uploaded to Marshall University's Digital Scholar website ([https://mds.marshall.edu/oral\\_history/](https://mds.marshall.edu/oral_history/)).

### *What Are Your Rights As A Research Study Participant?*

You may choose to not take part in the study. You may leave the study up to the point that the interview is complete. Once the redacted transcript is posted on the website a participant may not withdraw. Refusing to participate or leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. If you decide to stop participating in the study we encourage you to talk to the investigators or study staff first.

The study investigator may stop you from taking part in this study at any time if he/she believes it is in your best interest; if you do not follow the study rules; or if the study is stopped.

### *Detailed Risks Of The Study*

Because the recording will be destroyed at the end of the semester, and because the only a deidentified redacted transcript will be posted online, there is no foreseeable risk in the study.

### *What About Confidentiality?*

We will do our best to make sure that your personal information is kept confidential. However, we cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Federal law says we must keep your study records private. Nevertheless, under unforeseen and rare circumstances, we may be required by law to allow certain agencies to view your records. Those agencies would include the Marshall University IRB, Office of Research Integrity (ORI) and the federal Office of Human Research Protection (OHRP). This is to make sure that we are protecting your rights and your safety. If we publish the information we learn from this study, you will not be identified by name or in any other way.

### *What Are The Costs Of Taking Part In This Study?*

There are no costs to you for taking part in this study. All the study costs, including any study tests, supplies and procedures related directly to the study, will be paid for by the study.

### *Will You Be Paid For Participating?*

You will receive no payment or other compensation for taking part in this study.

### *Whom Do You Call If You Have Questions Or Problems?*

For questions about the study or in the event of a research-related injury, contact the study investigator, Stephen Underhill at 304-696-3020 or at [underhills@marshall.edu](mailto:underhills@marshall.edu). You should also contact the investigator if you have a concern or complaint about the research.

Subject's Initials \_\_\_\_\_

For questions about your rights as a research participant, contact the Marshall University Office of Research Integrity (ORI) at (304) 696-4303. You may also call this number if:

- You have concerns or complaints about the research.
- The research staff cannot be reached.
- You want to talk to someone other than the research staff.

Did you receive a copy of the consent form?

Please say Yes or No

Do you agree to take part in this study and confirm that you are 18 years of age or older?

Please say Yes or No

Have you had a chance to ask questions about being in this study and have had those questions answered?

Please say Yes or No

What is today's date?

Subject's Initials \_\_\_\_\_

**West Virginia Participant 29 (White/Female/19), interviewed on March 21, 2022**

The participant agreed to the terms of the consent.

**Interviewer:** Tell me about when you first started using social media and news started to appear for the first time on your feed on Facebook or Twitter.

**Participant:** Well, I started using social media when I was, I think, 11 years old. And the only thing I had on my social media was probably just funny videos at the time. Just memes and stuff like that. Not current events or anything.

**Interviewer:** OK, how do you use the Internet on a typical day?

**Participant:** On a typical day, I usually use apps, Instagram or TikTok, or I'll use Google quite often. And that is probably about it. I text and everything. I wouldn't consider that social media, I guess.

**Interviewer:** What type of websites do you visit?

**Participant:** Websites? I guess I like Pinterest. I do that quite often. I have the app for that, so I wouldn't call it a website. I don't have any particular websites that I visit that I don't have an app for. OK, well, are you going to include Twitter, Facebook, all that?

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Participant:** So, Instagram, Pinterest, Facebook, and TikTok. So on and so forth.

**Interviewer:** What did you search for online in the last week?

**Participant:** That's a good question. It can be anything. Well, I am going to say, when does daylight savings start up? Just questions about my job, baking stuff, and what kind of recipes and stuff I should use at work or school. Just typical information. Simply curious.

**Interviewer:** OK, what websites do you visit the pass time when you are bored?

**Participant:** TikTok most definitely. TikTok and Instagram are a big two.

**Interviewer:** What do you do on those sites?

**Participant:** I just waste time. And just watch videos and read memes, I guess. Bother my friends with those videos and memes. Just waste time as I said.

**Interviewer:** OK, why do you visit those particular sites?

**West Virginia Participant 29 (White/Female/19), interviewed on March 21, 2022**

**Participant:** They are the most entertaining to me. I think because I just like watching short little videos that they have or just reading the little posts. It is just the most entertaining.

**Interviewer:** OK, yes, thinking about these questions, what do you think other people are doing? Both people you know and people you do not know. How do other people pass the time online?

**Participant:** I'd probably say about the same thing as I do, mainly TikTok and Instagram. Those are a big two, I think, not only for myself but for most people. Also, Twitter. That's a really big one, as well as Facebook, but mainly for the older crowd. But yeah, I think they also just use it as a forum to waste time or communicate with people, just that stuff.

**Interviewer:** OK, what devices do you use to access their Internet: a phone, tablet or laptop? Which do you use the most and the least?

**Participant:** I use my phone and my laptop the most. The least? I would probably say my iPad and then the most will probably be my phone.

**Interviewer:** OK, what social media or forums like Twitter or Reddit do you use? When, why, or for what do you use them? Please share any that you try to avoid any reasons for avoiding them.

**Participant:** The one I use most is TikTok. I do it as I said earlier, just to waste time. I like the little videos on Instagram. I do it when I feel awkward in public. I will just open it and I go to my DMs to just waste time, it calms me, I guess in awkward situations. Ones that I try to stay away from is Tumblr. Twitter confuses me. I don't like them very much. But I do like Reddit. I like getting on Reddit and reading the stories and everything that is on there, and Pinterest. I look for recipes and stuff, simple food and everything, just stuff like that and also on Pinterest. Just cute outfit inspirations.

**Interviewer:** OK, so when thinking about people you likely disagree with, please describe which forums you think they use and why.

**Participant:** I think that they probably use Twitter the most. For one person that I disagree with a lot, they use Twitter the most, I'd say, and it just makes sense because they're weird. I do not, just. I do not know.

**Interviewer:** OK, well, you answered it. OK, so next question, describe what you do when you want to find something factual.

**Participant:** If I have my hands busy, which they usually are at work, I will ask Siri. But if my hands are not busy, I will go through Safari myself and go to Google and then just look up the question, and then if the answer is not immediately there, I'll reword the question so it will be there or I will have to go through some articles and stuff.

**West Virginia Participant 29 (White/Female/19), interviewed on March 21, 2022**

**Interviewer:** OK, how do people around you find out something factual?

**Participant:** They do the same. They will go through safari or Google. Uh, or they will ask Siri, which is a massive thing. But yeah, the same. Very rarely does anybody around me use books or anything anymore.

**Interviewer:** OK, everyone comes across things that surprise them on social media between advertising, news, and commentary. Please describe a time when you came across content that you doubted was trustworthy or made you distrust the author or its purpose.

**Participant:** Well, you see, I am a very naive person, so I believe a lot online that I should not believe. I was just talking today with somebody about how women do not need men to reproduce, and I was doing research on it. I was incorrect. Well, at least in mammals, but that is beside the point. But yes. I believe a little too much, I believe. I believe things that I really should not believe are factual, but it is neat and cool, so that is that.

**Interviewer:** OK, here are some other examples of it, share a time when you talk to your friends and family about such content. Tell me about a time when you saw such content discussed on the news. If there are any social media sites that you think are untrustworthy, what makes them untrustworthy?

**Participant:** Well as I said earlier, I was talking to my friend about this one article, not an article really, but something that I read on the Internet and I just thought to be factual. But turns out it's really not. But I guess Facebook and Instagram are two big sources of bad information, but I don't typically believe things off of them because it's a lot of people just sharing their thoughts. And they're just shrouded in doubt. So it's really just, I feel those two are the most untrustworthy sites because information gets spread really fast there regardless of anything. It's just people's personal opinions.

**Interviewer:** OK, tell me about your experiences finding conspiracy theories.

**Participant:** I do not read conspiracy theories. They're something I tend to stay away from. They kind of scare me. I don't like them. A few years ago, an influencer such as Shane Dawson would use social media to talk about conspiracy theories. I don't particularly follow them, so I tried to stay away from him.

**Interviewer:** OK, if applicable, please grab a time when you shared content that you thought was true but later learned was not true.

**Participant:** There are too many, uh, too many times that that's happened. I really can't think of one that I haven't already brought up at the moment.

**West Virginia Participant 29 (White/Female/19), interviewed on March 21, 2022**

**Interviewer:** OK, that's OK. Please describe a time when you share things that you knew were not true.

**Participant:** Earlier today I said on Instagram. I'll send just funny little videos that aren't real or true. I'll just send them to my friends because I think they'll get a kick out of it.

**Interviewer:** OK, tell me about a time when a search engine like Google or Yahoo seemed to give you what it thought you were looking for based on what you already searched for.

**Participant:** Come again. I'm sorry.

**Interviewer:** Tell me about a time when a search engine like Google or Yahoo seemed to give you what it thought you were looking for based on what you already searched for. Describe a time when you noticed that search results seemed somehow tailored to you. If anywhere, where on the news have you seen this discussed?

**Participant:** OK, I understand what you're talking about. I recently looked up a certain website to buy chef pants. Because everything is tied to my email, I use basically one email for everything, so everything is tied to that, and I was watching YouTube and it was called, the website was called "Chef Design" and it had given me an ad from Chef design talking about pants and shoes and everything. And I was "huh? That's interesting. how did they know that?" I just looked it up 2 days prior. Uh, but I have seen this discussed in social media before, because it was, it was a conspiracy story, it was a hot topic that everybody was on for a while and I think that is just really interesting.

**Interviewer:** OK, how do you decide what personal information you will provide to social media companies like You Tube or Google?

**Participant:** I just share anything and everything. If I'm being honest, I shouldn't, but I do. Most social medias require you to have certain information to get on the website. But it just depends, if what it's asking is not required, I probably will not put the information down that's not required, but the stuff that is required, obviously you have to.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, OK, so tell me the ways you try to protect your personal information online.

**Participant:** I don't. OK, I really don't. I should, but I rely too much on Apple's security, the stuff that they put up there to secure our information. I rely a little too heavily on that.

**Interviewer:** OK, what do you think others do around you pertaining to the idea of protecting their online information?

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**Participant:** Well, I know that my father is very, very, very concerned about protecting his stuff. He will not put his debit card information on the computer. He only puts his credit card information. Because there's a difference there, obviously, but he doesn't really put his phone number or he doesn't put his email really on a lot of things, just the stuff that requires it. But I know that my dad is concerned about that stuff. My mother not so much. Not at all. Me not really at all either. OK, definitely not my brother either.

**Interviewer:** OK, what have you heard about protecting your identity or personal information on the news? Or heard your friends or family discuss?

**Participant:** There's a lot. I see a lot of ads on YouTube about VPNs and how they protect your Internet browsing, and other apps that are created to protect your information that you put online. But VPN's are the ones that I've seen the most discussed.

**Interviewer:** OK, how have you responded to how Internet companies try to customize or control what you see on their platform platforms in Google searches? What have you heard others discuss about this?

**Participant:** Oh, I don't think that I've seen much about it, really. At all, if I'm being honest. The only thing I really think about when you said that was like a child lock. But that's all I think of.

**Interviewer:** OK, what would you say if you were to explain to your friends or family how false information spreads and can be found on the Internet or how to avoid false information?

**Participant:** Uhm, I would say, just do your research. If you see something and you're thinking of sharing it with people or telling people, "hey, I saw this on social media today and I just wanted to share it with you." I would tell you to do your research beforehand to make sure that it's factual. And if you don't want to do your research, I would say just keep your mouth shut and not do it at all. So basically what I'm saying is don't believe everything that you see on the Internet unless you do your research, and you figure it out because most of the false information is spread on Facebook could be wrong or could be right. It's still spreading out there to your followers to other people to see. It's giving them likes and views and stuff and that that is just an important thing that's happened so quickly. It's hard to stop really.

**Interviewer:** OK, what do you think determines what I've seen online or how things spread? How does it work? Who benefits? Who do you think made this system? What do you think controls information online or in our apps?

**Participant:** Well, that's a loaded question. I think. Sorry, can you repeat the first half of that again?

**Interviewer:** What do you think determines what is seen online or how things spread? How does it work and who benefits?

**West Virginia Participant 29 (White/Female/19), interviewed on March 21, 2022**

**Participant:** OK, I don't want to sound like that person, but I really am going to say the government. But I feel the government can't control what we do see and what is publicly known. Uhm, but, say we get to the topic of the Kardashians, they control aspects of their lives that we can and cannot see. It's all just up to who or what the information is about. And regardless of if it spreads or not. And who benefits from that? I honestly couldn't tell you. Probably the people who the information is about.

**Interviewer:** OK, the Internet is full of stories that divide people about things like the coronavirus, Capitol Riot, Stop the Steal, Antifa, Black Lives Matter, climate change, QAnon, and the political parties. If you were to decide, how would you want schools to discuss such topics?

**Participant:** I would want everything just to be seen as it is. Uhm, I wouldn't want it altered from its original. I don't want to say purpose, but for lack of a better word, I because, the Capitol Riots for instance, I want it to be seen as it is. It's literally a terrorist attack. Uh, and you can't tell me that it wasn't because it literally was. But I don't really want it to be altered far from what it really is, because I feel that's just how people think, people said the Capitol Riot was heroic and patriotic, but it really wasn't. If it had been any minority group, it would have been seen as a terrorist attack, but since it wasn't a minority group, it was seen as patriotic, which is ignorant and it's stupid. So I would want the information to be seen as it is. I wouldn't want it to be edited.

**Interviewer:** OK, if you happen to see stories about Stop the Steal or the Capitol Riot, what do you make of why the protesters were there? Why do you think some dressed in costumes hunters or trappers, or with animal pelts or with Norse tattoos? Or as Roman soldiers? Or in groups Cowboy for Trump? What does this mean for stories about voter fraud and voting rights? Where did you learn about this and what does it mean to you?

**Participant:** Well, I'm going to start with where I learned about this. I learned about this from social media. That's how anybody learns about anything these days. But what I would say is if the people who did that in the way that they dressed and how they just treated the Capitol, it's just ignorant. That's all it is. It's just plain ignorance and people who think that, as I said earlier, they think they're patriotic, and people who believe they are doing the right thing. But in reality, they're not. They're just being stupid. What was another part of that question?

**Interviewer:** What does this mean for stories about voter fraud and voting rights?

**Participant:** I feel, it just feels the right, the far-right community saying, "this was right. This is what is needed to happen to prevent voter fraud, so on and so forth." It just lit a match for them. Because they did this because they were scared, "oh, we need to protect, need to prevent voter fraud from happening," and just stuff like that.

**West Virginia Participant 29 (White/Female/19), interviewed on March 21, 2022**

**Interviewer:** OK, if you happen to see stories about the Black Lives Matter protest and Antifa, what do you make of the protests after George Floyd was killed? Why do you think some of some burned buildings or other property? Why did protesters denounce the police, where did you learn this, and what does it mean?

**Participant:** OK, I started with the last question. I'm going to start with how did I learn this. Through social media, obviously, news coverage, YouTube, and Instagram were big. That's just how everybody really learns anything these days. I would say the aftermath of George Floyd's death was, I'm going to say it was, it was very, very warranted, because there needed to be a change. We weren't seeing any change. We continue to see death after death of people in minority groups from police. But I think everything that happened after George Floyd's death was very much warranted. Because we, as I said, haven't been seeing change, we need change. And as for burning the buildings and everything, I don't want to say it was warranted, but also because the Black Lives Matter movement has been peacefully protesting for years and seeing hardly any change. And I don't want to say that violence is necessary and everything, but it's starting to seem the only way to get anybody's attention these days because nobody is going to care otherwise. But even with the violence, it's just pushing people to hate Black Lives Matter protests even more or the movement even more, should I say, and I don't know, it's just it's, it's quite a predicament. I don't know what to make of it.

**Interviewer:** OK, uh, what content do you post online? Which type of content do you try to make visible for others to see, and what type do you try to hide from others?

**Participant:** Well, on my Instagram, I don't post much. My past three posts have been of my two best friends and my trip to DC in New York. That's what it's been. I don't have a- I don't want people to know everything about my life, so I try to keep a bunch of things hidden from social media because nobody needs to know. They just need to see what I allow them to see. And it's just fun bits of my life, I guess.

**Interviewer:** OK, can you remember when you were careful about what you chose online because of how it might affect your visibility?

**Participant:** Oh my gosh, the visibility of other people's contributions and content in your social media feed? Yeah, this was something I was insecure about in high school and in middle school. It's funny that you asked that because I would catch myself liking something and then unliking it because, "Oh my gosh, what if so and so sees that I like this?" And I didn't want anybody to see what I like because I don't care much for having an online presence. But now you can't see who likes what because on Instagram, you used to be able to look at somebody's account and press the photos and everything they liked. And that was very gross. I did not do that, so I always monitor what I liked on social media. I still do because I'm on Tik TOK these days. You could like something and it will make similar content show up on your page.

**West Virginia Participant 29 (White/Female/19), interviewed on March 21, 2022**

**Interviewer:** OK, so tell me about a time when you try to influence or change the content of what you see online. Whether on YouTube, Google, or any social media result by searching for something differently.

**Participant:** Yeah, I remember. I used to have a spam account when I was in high school. I mean middle school, and I still have that spam account. But the things that I went to I wanted to see in middle school are vastly different from what I want to see now. I would go through a few purges of my followers. I would unfollow a bunch of people. Uh, which is the main thing that would help me change what I happen to see on social media, or I would follow many different people. Of the things that I would prefer to see. So yeah, I do that now and then stuff. I'll come across accounts that I had followed back in middle school, and it's not the content I want to see, so I'll just unfollow them. Or I'll go as far as blocking them. I don't know why but I do. So I do that now and then.

**Interviewer:** OK, how do you decide if an online source of information is reliable or credible?

**Participant:** If I do that, I'll probably do more research on it, and it all has to do with the website that you're on. If it's ending in .com, we know that is not precisely reliable. Things with .edu or .gov and stuff that you can feel a little better about. There's that. And, as I said, more research on the topic.

**Interviewer:** OK, can you tell me when you double-checked information online to verify if it was credible? What made you suspicious, and what steps did you take to see if the information was correct? What did your findings make you feel about the website?

**Participant:** See, I had just written a paper for my English class about a Marvel character, and I went on multiple websites and saw multiple different. Well, I saw it was other stories of the same happenings. How this Marvel, for instance, how this Marvel character, for example how this Marvel character became paralyzed, and it was four different stories, so I didn't know what to go with, so I just continued until I saw one that everybody eventually settled on. It's just that how a website is set up for me personally is if it's credible or not in my mind, which doesn't always make sense and isn't always correct. But that's also how I see certain things.

**Interviewer:** OK, please tell me about a time that your friends or family distrusted their website or information on a website. Did they double-check the data from a different source to verify it was crazy?

**Participant:** Usually OK with my dad. He does this a lot. He will- He will check multiple websites and multiple resources, or he will look at multiple resources and everything to make sure something is right before he tells it. But my mom on the other hand, she will not do that. She believes what she sees on social media, particularly Facebook, and runs with it. Which I don't. I wish she would quit because it has started multiple arguments between her and me. Because it's just stupid. Anyways.

**West Virginia Participant 29 (White/Female/19), interviewed on March 21, 2022**

**Interviewer:** OK, how do you think the media should cover stories about fake news or disinformation? Should the media do more to teach people how to verify the credibility of information?

**Participant:** Absolutely. Yeah. I think the media should teach people, especially people who have become stuck in their ways and the youth, how to stop the spread of fake news and false information and to make sure that the things that they are saying are credible because if it's not credible, then, what's even the point? It's just stupid. You are just spreading false information, and it's going to confuse a lot of people. And it is just ignorant.

**Interviewer:** OK, What are your thoughts about fake news?

**Participant:** Yeah, as I said, it's ignorant. I don't see the point in it. I don't know why it's a thing. Why would you want to spread it? Why would you like to spread fake news and facts that are not true? I don't understand it, and it's just stupid. It's just stupid.

**Interviewer:** OK, how would you describe it, where is it, and who does it target?

**Participant:** It targets the naive and the ignorant, uh, well, the blissful ignorance. Shall I say, people don't care to know any better? So they just take what they read, and they run with it. Oh, where is it at? Oh, a big, huge one is Facebook. Uh, it is. It's a very big one, especially towards the far-right. People it targets? A lot of far-right, because there, I'm not going to finish that sentence, but I'm going to say it. You find it on Facebook the majority of the time. You can also find it on Instagram, Twitter, and stuff like that. You just need be in a really weird part of social media.

**Interviewer:** OK, What do you think it means for democracy? And do you think it's a real problem?

**Participant:** Absolutely, I think it is a very real problem because it's, as I said, spreading false information and it's stupid and just confusing many people. And I feel because a bunch of false fake news was started. But I don't want to say coined either. But, Donald Trump, that was a huge thing because he said in an interview, "Oh, that's fake news." We know how it originated. I don't need to explain it, but I feel it is just taking, it's furthering us from democracy because it's just fake...

**Interviewer:** Propaganda? Is that what you're kind of trying to say?

**Participant:** Yes, yeah, it's basically. Yeah, it's propaganda. Uhm, thank you.

**Interviewer:** Yes, you're welcome. What are the politics of it all, and what new laws or constitutional amendments might we need for the Internet age?

**West Virginia Participant 29 (White/Female/19), interviewed on March 21, 2022**

**Participant:** That's a very good question, I would say. I mean, it is a good question. I don't know any laws that could prohibit fake news or false information from being spread. Because, yeah, I don't. I can't think of anything that would prevent that, but it doesn't mean that there shouldn't be. But also I feel, I don't know, I don't know. I think if there are any, if there are laws, I feel that would worsen the far-right's mind of "oh, now they're trying to control what we have to say" and "what happened to our freedom of speech?" I feel they would be that. It controls our freedom of speech. If that makes any sense, no, that makes sense.

**Interviewer:** Uhm, please offer some examples of where you have seen fake news, who are the people who publish it, what are they trying to get from it, and what you think personally should be talking about.

**Participant:** I have a perfect example for that. Kyle Rittenhouse is a prime example. I argued about this with my mother once, and she was trying to say that he was protecting me. She wants to say that. "OK, so that she was saying that they had lit a dumpster on fire and were pushing it towards a gas station and that it would explode the gas station in the nearby neighborhood and so on." Just stupid things. And she said he had a right to carry that gun and shoot these people. And she said he had a right to do that because he was protecting his family's gas station. First and foremost. No, his family did not own that gas station. Second, he wasn't even old enough to carry a gun. It wasn't even his gun as well. His father or the owner of the gun should have been charged. I guess endangerment or whatever. Because that's something that I learned from a young age. My dad always told me not to bother with his guns because if I happened to shoot somebody, it would be on him, and he would go to jail because it wasn't my gun. It wasn't my going to me. I'm too young. Just as Kyle Rittenhouse was or is, but that's just a bunch of false information because I argued. My mom said that, and I said, "Where did you? Where did you? Where did you read that?" She was "I saw on an article on Facebook." I said, "Babe. Are you stupid?" I said no, I said that is not true. He was doing that because he is an entitled white asshole first and foremost, and that's all I have to say about that. No. He felt he deserved to do that because he disagreed with the movement, which was ignorant and stupid. My mom also tried to tell me that he was defending himself from a kid who would hit him with his skateboard.

**Interviewer:** OK, yeah, no, that was perfect actually. Is there anything else you would like to share about fake news and its effect on democracy?

**Participant,** I would just close it off by saying that it is just ignorant, and something should be done. I don't know about laws or anything because, as I said, it would affect our freedom of speech. Shall I say, and I feel it would worsen our democracy if we did have laws, but I think something does need to be done because, on social media, on places like Tik TOK, it would say at the bottom if information may or not may not be accurate, which I think that should be on a lot of things. I feel that should be the first step toward preventing fake news and false information from spreading.

**West Virginia Participant 29 (White/Female/19), interviewed on March 21, 2022**

**Interviewer:** Ah, I'd say so, yeah

**Participant:** any more questions or anything? Or are you done?

**Interviewer:** OK, what is the date?

**Interviewee:** March 23

**Interviewer:** OK, your state of residence.

**Participant:** West Virginia.

**Interviewer:** Age?

**Participant:** I'm 19 years old.

**Interviewer:** Your gender

**Participant:** I'm a female.

**Interviewer:** Your race

**Participant:** I am white.

**Interviewer:** Your highest level of education completed.

**Participant:** College, I guess my first semester.

**Interviewer:** OK, thank you so much for letting me have you.

**Interviewee:** Anytime.