sonsoflagertmedia.com

A political news site with a self-described "Christian, Biblical world-view" that has repeatedly published false stories, including claims that Barack Obama's birth certificate is fake.

Ownership and Financing

The site is owned by The Sons of Liberty, a Minnesota-based nonprofit group described as "an international ministry" in its U.S. Internal Revenue Service filings. Its president and CEO is Bradley Dean Smith, who goes by the name Bradlee Dean, a conservative minister. Dean gained notoriety in May 2011 when he implied that then-U.S. President Barack Obama was not a Christian during his opening prayer before the Minnesota House of Representatives.

In its 2018 filing with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, The Sons of Liberty reported revenue of $531,000, with all but $20,000 coming from contributions.

The site generates revenue through advertisements, donations, a shop, and the sale of monthly memberships.

Content

The About page on SonsOfLibertyMedia.com says the site "facilitates the testimonies of experienced culture warriors, namely, those who are in the fight for the good fight of faith on your behalf. From Christian Constitutional attorneys, Preachers of the unadulterated Word of God, and from those who are awakening Americans and telling them what their rights are and how those rights are being violated, and of course what to do to reclaim them God-given rights."

Articles typically summarize news stories first reported by other websites and add commentary. Sections include Constitution & Law, U.S. News, Family, and Education. Typical headlines include "All of a Sudden the Government Cares For The People – Consider The Source, Americans," "The Indecency of Joe Biden," and "Maybe If The US Acted More Like Hungary, We'd Put An End To Mass Muslim Migration."

The site's homepage link to separate sites focused Dean's radio show (SonsOfLibertyRadio.com) and his blog (BradleeDeanBlog.com).

Credibility

SonsOfLibertyMedia.com has repeatedly published false information, including conspiracy theories about the 2020 coronavirus outbreak.

"Many theorize COVID-19 is a manufactured germ designed to bring on a worldwide recession, especially here in the US, thus destroying the number one accomplishment of the president," the article stated. "The Nazi nucleus based NWO Socialist movement financed by George Soros, his billionaire buddies and managed by Barack Obama, very well could have brought on this disaster as their nuclear option in getting President Trump out of office."

The article cited as evidence for its claim that "Soros has investments in WuXi Pharma Tech who has a laboratory in Wuhan," the city in China where the coronavirus first emerged.

According to a March 2020 PolitiFact article, Soros was a shareholder in WuXi, a pharmaceutical company that does have a branch in Wuhan. However, there is no evidence connecting the company -- or Soros -- to the COVID-19 virus.

The site repeated the false claim that the virus was engineered in a February 2020 article titled "Wuas Coronavirus a "Plan-Demic" As Part Of Population Control? These Videos Certainly Make One Consider That Possibility." The article referred to videos, which were filmed at an October 2019 emergency preparedness exercise co-hosted by the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security. This simulation involved a mock coronavirus with different features than the COVID-19 virus.

However, the article published on SonsOfLibertyMedia.com said, "The obvious question that should be asked, given that many of these"
organizations and entities promote population control and even depopulation, is this coronavirus weaponized for the purpose of depopulation?"

In October 2018, the site made several false claims about the mail bombs sent to Democratic politicians and CNN, including claiming in the article, "Alleged Pipe Bombs To Democrats & CNN Are Very Suspicious," that the bomb sent to CNN was "fake." Another October 2018 story claimed that Florida suspect Cesar Sayoc's van was "doctored" with pro-Trump, anti-Democrat stickers before the fake bomb hoax.

In announcing the charges against Sayoc on Oct. 26, 2018, FBI Director Christopher Wray said of the bombs: "These are not hoax devices." Several media outlets, including the New York Times, Washington Post, and Miami Herald all interviewed Floridians who recalled seeing Sayoc's van covered with stickers before the bombs were mailed.

Another October 2018 story reported that Sayoc was a DJ at the same Florida strip club where adult film actress Stormy Daniels -- who claimed she had a sexual relationship with President Trump -- performed in April. The article then questioned whether Sayoc and Daniels "are involved in a false flag operation to destroy President Trump? Shouldn't that possibility at least be investigated?" The story cites a Townhall article which was later edited to remove what Townhall editors called "a sentence that hinted at a baseless conspiracy, falling short of our standards."

The site has advanced false claims that mass shootings were staged. A March 2018 article called the high school shooting in Parkland, Florida, a "false flag attack" ("Soros, Bloomberg & Planned Parenthood Funding David Hogg's Anti-Gun Student Protests.") A September 2018 article falsely claimed that Parkland-survivor-turned-gun-control-activist Emma Gonzalez is a "professional actress." The basis for the latter claim is a profile on a casting website for a "Emma Jane Gonzalez," which belonged to 31-year-old woman living in New York who had no connection to the Parkland shooting, according to a May 2018 story by the Washington Post.

The site also falsely claimed that former President Obama's birth certificate was "fraudulent" and that Obama was born in Kenya (July 2018's "Obama Rubs America's Nose In It From Kenya: "I'm The First Sitting American President To Come From Kenya").

Because SonsOfLibertyMedia.com has promoted unfounded or debunked conspiracy theories in its articles and headlines, NewsGuard has determined it has repeatedly published false content, fails to gather and present information responsibly, and does not avoid deceptive headlines.

The site does not post a policy for correcting errors. NewsGuard found two corrections on the site, one published in 2019 and another in 2015. Because the site does not regularly publish corrections, and has not corrected numerous other false claims in stories, NewsGuard has determined that SonsOfLibertyMedia.com does not meet its standard for regularly issuing corrections.

A disclaimer at the bottom of every page on SonsOfLibertyMedia.com says the site is a "politically neutral organization." "We believe that the Judeo-Christian ethic has provided the principles upon which this nation was founded," the disclaimer says. "It is our belief that these principles provide not only the foundation and framework for American government and society, but are also essential to the maintenance of a fair and just society. All content is based on a Christian, Biblical worldview."

The site does label some articles as commentary, though the same articles may also be tagged as "Featured News" or "U.S. News." The site's news articles often contain opinionated statements criticizing Democrats.

For example, a March 2020 article titled "Biden: A Figurehead Proxy for His VP," said that former U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden Jr. "is Deep State candidate, but lacks the mental capacity to focus on being a janitor, much less a president."

A February 2020 article about the coronavirus outbreak stated, "This virus hoax is about killing traditional food markets and allowing the big Corporations to expand and get everyone hooked on a toxic western diet AND FORCE VACCINES ON EVERYONE. Once they get everyone hooked and dependent on restaurant fast food and they can no longer grow their own food/raise their own chickens/cattle...the elite control the worldwide food economy."
In an October 2018 phone call with NewsGuard, Dean declined to answer questions about the site’s editorial policies and said he would forward an email NewsGuard sent with questions to his attorney. He also said, “I already did some homework on you and I know you’re George Soros-fundied, so what is it that you need from me?”

Soros is not an investor in NewsGuard. The full list of NewsGuard’s actual investors are available on the NewsGuard website: www.newsguardtech.com.

“You’re bullying,” Dean said. “I don’t like your tone, I don’t like your propaganda. I don’t like who’s funding you, and if you have an issue with us, govern yourself accordingly. That’s all I’m telling you.”

In March 2020, Dean again told NewsGuard in an email, “Govern yourself accordingly.” In response to questions about the website’s false claims related to the coronavirus outbreak.

Transparency

The site makes it clear that Dean is in charge of editorial content. His name appears in the banner logo on every page. The site’s About page provides his biography, along with a summary of his political and religious views.

However, the site does not explicitly state that Dean or his organization own it. In addition, no information is provided about donors to the Sons of Liberty group, which does not meet NewsGuard’s standards for revealing ownership and financing for a nonprofit.

In October 2018 phone call with NewsGuard and in a March 2020 email to NewsGuard, Dean declined to answer questions about the site’s lack of ownership disclosure.

Articles are generally attributed to authors, with biographies typically included at the bottom of articles. There are some exceptions where no biographical information is provided, such as when the article is being shared from another site, but the site typically includes a prominent link to the original source.

Advertisements are distinguished from editorial content.

History

Dean’s ministry was founded as You Can Run But You Cannot Hide International in 2008. According to filings with the state of Minnesota, the name was changed to Sons of Liberty in September 2013. The domain name was registered in March 2011.

The site’s About page discusses the history of the Sons of Liberty, a group of colonists formed in Boston before the American Revolution who believed that they should not be taxed without their consent.

Correction: An earlier version of this Nutrition Label gave incorrect date for the website’s domain registration. It was registered in March 2011.

Editor’s Note: This Nutrition Label was updated on March 19, 2020.

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Send feedback to NewsGuard: Click Here

Sources

Ownership and Financing

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