TheGatewayPundit.com does not disclose its ownership. Conservative blogger Jim Hoft, who is from St. Louis, told NewsGuard in a February 2020 email that he is the website’s founder, owner, and editor-in-chief.

In 2018, a legal services firm, CT Corporation System in Clayton, Missouri, filed incorporation documents in the state establishing The Gateway Pundit Foundation as a nonprofit association. The foundation is tasked with “ensuring accuracy, fairness, and a balance of diverse views in the media through research and public education,” according to the documents. Hoft told NewsGuard that the foundation “was established but never utilized. No funds were collected and it is in the process of being closed.”

The site generates revenue from advertisements and sponsored articles. It also collects donations, under a “Donate for Truth!” tab on the site, and sells T-shirts and sweatshirts.

The Gateway Pundit publishes national news and opinion, focusing on politics and U.S. President Donald Trump’s administration. The site includes a slogan at the top of its page, stating, “We report the truth - And leave the Russia-Collusion fairy tale to the Conspiracy media,” referring to the investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election.

Articles often feature writers’ commentary alongside tweets, video clips, and excerpts of reports from national and international news publications, ranging from Politico, The Hill, and CNBC, to conservative outlets such as Fox News, Breitbart, and The Daily Caller.
Stories generally advance conservative, pro-Trump views. Typical headlines include “We Need to Put a Cape on His Back, an ‘S’ on His Chest, and Call Him Superman’ -- Ordinary Americans React to President Trump’s SOTU Address (VIDEO), “BREAKING: Trump Administration Removes Anti-Trump Deep State Operative Alex Vindman from NSC Following His Role in Sham Impeachment,” “92-Year-Old Woman Sexually Abused and Murdered by Illegal Alien After New York Refused to Hand Him Over to ICE,” and “Trump Curse: Red Sox Manager Who Refused to Visit President Trump in the White House with His Team -- Is Fired for Cheating.”

The Gateway Pundit’s articles have been regularly declared false by numerous fact-checking organizations and news publications, including Snopes, PolitiFact, FactCheck.org, the Washington Post, CNN, and the Chicago Tribune. Stories often advance unproven conspiracy theories or add false information to breaking news stories.

For example, several stories in 2019 and 2020 advanced false and unsubstantiated claims about an unidentified whistleblower whose complaint about President Trump’s phone call with Ukraine’s president led to an impeachment inquiry. A January 2020 story, “BREAKING EXCLUSIVE: Anti-Trump CIA ‘Whistleblower in Ukraine Hoax Was the Leaker in the Russia Hoax? ... And Much, Much More!’” said that the whistleblower “was close to Barack Obama and many other individuals connected to George Soros.” The article also said, without evidence, “We also now know he was a key player in the Russia Collusion Hoax.”

The article summarizes several different reports about the whistleblower, who The Gateway Pundit identified by name, although the whistleblower’s identity has never been publicly confirmed by intelligence authorities. The website, without providing substantiation, said that the whistleblower attended a meeting in 2016 with the director of an organization that is partially funded by billionaire philanthropist George Soros’ Open Society Foundation.
Even if the whistleblower had attended such a meeting, there is no evidence that the whistleblower “was close to ... many other individuals connected to George Soros.” There is also no evidence in the article or elsewhere to support a claim that the whistleblower “was the leaker in the Russia hoax,” as the article’s headline claimed, a presumed reference to the investigation into Russian meddling in the U.S. presidential election.

The Gateway Pundit also claimed without substantiation that Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, a former U.S. National Security Council official who testified at House impeachment hearings, had given information to the whistleblower. In a November 2019 story titled “HUGE! Perjury? Vindman Testified Earlier That He DID NOT Know the identity of the Whistleblower But Nunes Just Caught Him (VIDEO),” The Gateway Pundit reported on Vindman’s testimony that he had spoken to two people about President Trump’s telephone call, including “someone in the intelligence community” who was not named. The article then falsely claimed, “Vindman on Tuesday admitted to being the primary source of the leak to the whistleblower.”

As the article also said, Vindman had testified previously that he does not know the whistleblower’s identity. He did not testify that he gave the whistleblower any information about the president’s telephone call to Ukraine’s president or anything else.

Hoft defended the website’s reporting on the whistleblower in the president’s impeachment inquiry. “We have proof of this,” he wrote of the story that connected the whistleblower to “the Russia Hoax,” as the article claimed. He said the story that claimed Vindman gave information to the whistleblower “is accurate.”

In 2020, the website published articles promoting unproven treatments for the COVID-19 virus. A March 2020 article titled “STUNNING! NY Doctor Vladimir Zelenko Finds 100% Success Rate in 350 Patients Using Hydroxychloroquine with Zinc (VIDEO),” cited claims of Zelenko, a family doctor from a small upstate
New York community, that were widely shared on YouTube and Facebook, as well as on programs with conservative commentators such as Sean Hannity.

The Gateway Pundit article said that Zelenko “posted a video explaining his success with hydroxychloroquine and Zinc. His treatment resulted in the shortness of breath issue being resolved in 4 to 6 hours. Dr. Zelenko in his study had zero deaths, zero hospitalizations and zero intubations!”

Zelenko and the Gateway Pundit did not present evidence of a “100% Success Rate” from the use of chloroquine, which is usually used to treat malaria. In an interview with the Jewish news organization the Forward, Zelenko acknowledged “that his regimen was new and untested, and that it was too soon to assess its long-term effectiveness.”

International health authorities have not concluded that chloroquine is a proven treatment for the COVID-19 virus, although some early studies have suggested that it could be effective, including a March 2020 study by French researchers who tested the drug on 20 people. Asked about research into chloroquine and COVID-19, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the leading infectious disease specialist in the U.S., said in March 2020, “the information that you’re referring to specifically is anecdotal. It was not done in a controlled, clinical trial. So, you really can’t make any definitive statement about it.”

Asked about The Gateway Pundit’s article, and a second article that also touted research on the drug’s effectiveness for treating COVID-19, Hoft wrote, “Please note I was speaking of the two studies in question. Not on the overall effectiveness of the drug in controlled scientific studies.”

In August 2019, The Gateway Pundit renewed a long-running conspiracy theory that suggested that former U.S. President Bill Clinton and his wife, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, are responsible for the deaths of more than 40 people, including convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. The article, titled “Here It Is... Complete List of Clinton Associates Who Allegedly
The article listed the people who had died, including former Clinton administration members deputy White House Counsel Vince Foster, who killed himself in 1993; former U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown, who died in a plane crash in 1996; and Democratic National Committee staff member Seth Rich, who was fatally shot in 2016. The Gateway Pundit article said that Rich was “the DC staffer murdered and ‘robbed’ (of nothing) on July 10. Wikileaks found Assange claims he had info on the DNC email scandal.”

Epstein was found dead on August 10, 2019, in a Manhattan jail cell, where he was awaiting prosecution on federal sex trafficking charges. His death was ruled a suicide later that month by the New York City Medical Examiner’s office.

Police in the District of Columbia said that Rich died as a result of a botched robbery. The Gateway Pundit’s claim that Rich had contact with WikiLeaks and “info on the DNC email scandal” before his death has been repeatedly debunked. Rich’s parents wrote in a Washington Post column in 2017 that detectives examined Rich’s computer and personal email and found no evidence of communication with WikiLeaks. Fox News had reported in May 2017 that Rich was in contact with WikiLeaks before his death, quoting an unnamed federal investigator and a private investigator. However, Fox retracted the story eight days after publication, and after the private investigator denied making comments attributed to him.

Hoft said in an email, “The article on Epstein’s death and Clintons did not say the Clintons were behind it. It does note there are several coincidences that occurred around the Clinton orbit.” Hoft also said that the article expressed an opinion. “Certainly you are not saying we do not have a right to post a pattern without making an accusation?” he added.
In October 2018, a Gateway Pundit story falsely claimed that a woman had accused then-Special Counsel Robert Mueller of sexually assaulting her in 2010 at a New York City hotel. The story said, “What we know: The woman is a ‘very credible witness.’ Her story are (sic) corroborated. ... The woman is a professional.”

After the story was published, a spokesman for Mueller’s office said that it had referred evidence to the FBI that women had been offered money to fabricate sexual assault allegations against Mueller -- a charge repeated by several journalists and social media influencers, who said they were contacted by women making similar claims.

No women have ever come forward to accuse Mueller of sexual assault and Mueller has never faced a law enforcement investigation or charges for such crimes.

Hoft removed the initial story, which carried his byline, from the website. In an editor’s note that appeared on a follow-up story, he said that the story was posted by contributor Jacob Wohl without his knowledge. “Under most circumstances we allow our writers, based all over the world, to post their stories directly to the website,” the statement said. He said at the time that an investigation into the story’s claims “is ongoing.”

However, as of February 2020, the website had not posted an update into its investigation. NewsGuard also found that some stories that advanced Wohl’s initial claims remained online, including a November 1, 2018, story in which Wohl and his attorney, Jack Burkman, defended the story and claimed without evidence that Mueller’s accuser existed.

“The woman accusing Robert Mueller of rape has nothing to financially gain from coming forward with her allegations against the special counsel and her testimony can be corroborated, the attorney representing the accuser and the journalist who discovered her maintain,” the Gateway Pundit article said. The article remained online as of February 2020.
Asked about the results of his investigation into the story, and whether writers regularly post stories directly to the website, Hoft wrote in an email, “Jacob Wohl was fired over the stunt with Mueller. He produced a photo of a woman he was traveling with. I am not sure why Jacob does these things.”

Hoft said he announced Wohl’s dismissal on Twitter. Hoft told NewsGuard that he would review additional stories that remained on the site and still reported charges against Mueller.

In October 2017, after a Las Vegas gunman massacred 58 people and injured more than 800 at a concert, The Gateway Pundit published a story that misidentified the shooter by name, describing him as a “far left loon” who was a fan of MSNBC host Rachel Maddow and liberal activist organizations such as MoveOn.org.

Gateway Pundit appeared to have based its report on unattributed messages that were published by the 4chan platform. However, the website named a person who was uninvolved with the shooting. The actual gunman, Stephen Paddock, was found dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound in his Las Vegas hotel room, after shooting at a crowd of hundreds of people from his window.

The Gateway Pundit later deleted its story without issuing a correction. Hoft wrote that the story had only been online for 10 minutes, which NewsGuard was not able to confirm. “Obviously, this was tracked by a liberal outlet who spread it around to their media partners. We posted the correct name. And the mainstream media punished us for this mistake,” Hoft wrote.

In 2018, The Gateway Pundit was one of the first organizations to spread a debunked theory that students who spoke out in favor of gun control after the February 2018 mass shooting at a Parkland, Florida, high school, had staged their responses. A story.headlined “School Shooting Survivor Turned Activist David Hogg’s Father in FBI, Appears To Have Been Coached on Anti-Trump Lines” said that Hogg’s responses were prepared. Another February 2018
article claimed in its headline, “Soros-Linked Organizers of ‘Women’s March’ Selected Anti-Trump Kids to be Face of Parkland Tragedy -- And Excluded Pro-Trump Kids.”

Referring to the story about Hogg, Hoft wrote, “The David Hogg story made two points: 1) that Hogg’s dad is ex-FBI 2); From the video, it appeared he was being coached. If you dispute that please explain.”

The website later reported that the shooting suspect, Nikolas Cruz, was a registered Democrat, although fact-checking sites quickly noted that the suspect was not registered to vote at the time of the shooting. Cruz later registered as a Republican voter from a Florida jail. Instead of issuing a correction, The Gateway Pundit updated its story, saying in a new headline that Cruz “was not Registered as Democrat as Some Sources Reported.”

Because The Gateway Pundit regularly publishes hoaxes, conspiracy theories and false information that often advances right-leaning views, NewsGuard has determined that the website repeatedly publishes false content, fails to gather and present information responsibly, and fails to avoid deceptive headlines.

The Gateway Pundit has published corrections in the past and has deleted some false articles, such as the story about the Las Vegas shooter. NewsGuard found three corrections from 2017 in a 2020 review of the site. However, the site does not regularly publish corrections and most of the stories cited above, as well as many others, remain uncorrected, which does not meet NewsGuard’s standard for regularly correcting errors.

Asked about the website’s corrections practices, Hoft told NewsGuard, “We rarely delete an article. We may make corrections in the article and note it has been updated.” He did not provide examples of recent corrections when asked.

The Gateway Pundit’s content is not labeled news or opinion, but its articles contain conservative-leaning opinion. For example, in a February 2020 story Headlined “How Is This Fair? Social Media Posts Prove
Judge Amy Berman Jackson Rigged Roger Stone Trial with Far Left Loons and Activists,” Jim Hoft called the judge presiding over the trial of Trump associate Roger Stone “a corrupt liberal Obama judge who imposed a very strict gag order on Roger Stone even though he did nothing wrong.”

Another February 2020 article featuring a video of U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren, a Democratic presidential candidate, was headlined “CREEPY: EVERY SINGLE WORD that Comes Out of Liz Warren’s Mouth is Scripted and Phony (VIDEO).” “There is not ONE SINGLE original thought coming from her lips,” Hoft wrote. “What a fake!”

And a February 2020 article by Jim Hoft’s brother, Joe Hoft, was titled “Let’s Face It -Democrat Presidential Candidates Are Billionaires, Socialists, Animals and Losers.”

The website does not disclose a conservative perspective on its About page. Hoft writes, “The Gateway Pundit is one of the top political websites,” and says that he “has a devotion to growing democracy and freedom movements everywhere, from inside Iran to the darkest corridors of the U.S. Capitol. His passion is liberty. His dedication is to a free America.”

Because The Gateway Pundit regularly includes partisan conservative opinion in its stories without disclosing an overall perspective, NewsGuard has determined that the website does not handle the difference between news and opinion responsibly.

Asked about the lack of a disclosed perspective on The Gateway Pundit and its unlabeled opinion in news stories, Hoft told NewsGuard that the website planned to add information about its perspective and label individual opinion articles in the future.

Transparency

Hoft states on the Gateway Pundit’s About page that he founded the website, but neither he nor the Gateway Pundit Foundation is identified as its owner.
Hoft often writes articles for The Gateway Pundit, and his email address is listed on the homepage. However, the website does not identify him or anyone else as its editorial leader. Hoft told NewsGuard in a February 2020 email that the website would identify him as The Gateway Pundit's owner and editor-in-chief after an upcoming redesign.

Articles are attributed to authors and often include photographs, although some authors are only identified by pseudonyms or first names. The website provides contact and biographical information for Jim Hoft. However, because at least half of the content is produced by other writers, and because contact or biographical information is not available for them, NewsGuard has determined that the website does not meet NewsGuard’s standard for providing information about content creators.

Hoft told NewsGuard in February 2020 that the website would make changes in the future to provide individual contact information for its writers.

Some display advertisements are distinguishable from editorial content. However, The Gateway Pundit publishes several sponsored articles under the headings “From The Web,” “You Might Like,” and “Powered by Zergnet,” a content-sharing firm, without describing any financial arrangement. The Gateway Pundit also published sponsored articles headed “Powered by Feed Network,” and other paid content that appears as political polls in the middle of articles, labeled “Promoted Content.” None of these advertisements meet NewsGuard’s standard for clearly labeling paid content.

Hoft told NewsGuard that the website would label paid content as advertising following an upcoming redesign.

The right side of every page features a “Contact The Gateway Pundit” section that lists links to general email addresses, as well as Jim Hoft’s email.

History

Hoft launched TheGatewayPundit.com as a blog in 2004. The website was registered under its current domain name in 2011.
The site’s name refers to Hoft’s home of St. Louis, Missouri, and its iconic Gateway Arch.

In 2012, Hoft served as an associate producer for “Hating Breitbart,” a film described by the New York Post as “less a documentary than a wholly uncritical celebration” of the late Andrew Breitbart, the conservative commentator who founded Breitbart.com.

In 2017, President Trump’s administration granted The Gateway Pundit White House press credentials and the website hired a White House correspondent.

The correspondent, Lucan Wintrich, “was let go” from the website in 2018, Hoft said in February 2020. The website does not currently have a White House correspondent, although two reporters in the Washington area have day passes to attend briefings as needed, he wrote.

“The White House quit their daily briefings and we no longer found it reasonable to keep Lucan in the White House,” Hoft said.

Correction: An earlier version of this Nutrition Label erroneously reported that The Gateway Pundit falsely called student survivors of the Parkland, Florida, mass shooting “crisis actors.” Although the website made claims that the students’ responses were coached and staged, it did not specifically use the term “crisis actors.”

Editor’s Note: This Nutrition Label was updated on April 4, 2020. This Nutrition Label was updated in February 2020 to reflect NewsGuard’s determination that TheGatewayPundit.com does not meet NewsGuard’s standard for disclosing ownership, for clearly labeling advertising, or for revealing who is in charge. The criteria checklist has been adjusted accordingly. This Nutrition Label has also been updated throughout with comments from the site’s founder and editor.

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Sources

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http://archive.is/CKjvh(2017 Las Vegas shooting)


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