politicalite.com

A website providing conservative-leaning news and commentary about British and American politics. The site frequently publishes dubious and often damaging claims based on anonymous sources.

Ownership and Financing

Politicalite.com is owned by Jordan Kendall, the website’s founder and editor-in-chief, through the privately held company News Worldwide Limited. On the site, Kendall describes himself as “a working-class media graduate” from “a forgotten working-class former mill town in the North West England.”

The site generates revenue from advertising and reader donations.

Content

Politicalite covers British, European, and American politics “in a provocative and easy to understand tabloid style”, according to the site’s About page. The site features dedicated sections for COVID-19, Brexit, Tories, Labour, Media, USA, and Entertainment.

The site writes extensively about Brexit in a positive manner and is critical of prominent Labour politicians. Typical stories have included “WUHAN WOES: Experts Say Evidence Coronavirus Escaped From Wuhan Lab ‘Increasing By The Day’”; “BULLDOG BORIS: ‘I’d Rather Collapse Talks Than Follow EU Rules’”; “BREXIT REVEALED: UK Food Supply At FULL CAPACITY Thanks To ‘No Deal’ Brexit Planning;” and “LOONY LISA: Labour MP exploits Coronavirus Pandemic to call for DELAY to Brexit.”

On its About page, Politicalite states that it supports “America’s vote for President Trump.” The site reports on U.S. President Donald Trump in a favorable way, echoing his claims on issues such as the threat from the “deep state” and the alleged media bias against him. Articles in the Media section often take aim at the BBC and other mainstream news organizations.

Proceed with caution: This website severely violates basic standards of credibility and transparency.

Score: 37/100

- ✔️ Does not repeatedly publish false content (22 points)
- ✗ Gathers and presents information responsibly (18)
- ✗ Regularly corrects or clarifies errors (12.5)
- ✗ Handles the difference between news and opinion responsibly (12.5)
- ✗ Avoids deceptive headlines (10)
- ✔️ Website discloses ownership and financing (7.5)
- ✔️ Clearly labels advertising (7.5)
- ✗ Reveals who’s in charge, including any possible conflicts of interest (5)
- ✗ The site provides names of content creators, along with either contact or biographical information (5)

Criteria are listed in order of importance.

More information.
The Exclusives section has featured stories by “yellow vest” activist James Goddard and by Anne Marie Waters, a far-right politician who founded For Britain, an anti-Islamist party. The section also includes articles about other influential right-wing figures, such as far-right activist and UKIP adviser Tommy Robinson. Politicalite also covers entertainment.

Credibility

Politicalite bases many articles on reporting from established news organizations, including The Guardian, The Times, and The Daily Express. However, Politicalite often relies on unnamed sources for its original reporting, particularly for the stories it dubs “exclusives” or “world exclusives.”

For example, a March 2020 article, titled “LIKE A NAZI WEAPON’ Two Scientists Claim COVID-19 escaped from Chinese Laboratory”, quoted extensively from a video showing two men discussing the possible origins of the virus. In the video, one of the men stated: “If you add it all up the probability it [COVID-19] is like .0001% chance that all of these things could have been zoonotic [passed from animals to humans]. You can see the big ‘copy and paste.” According to the Politicalite article accompanying the video, “This means that the virus to a layman was genetically engineered to be boosted (gain of function) to affect more of the population.” (At the end of the story, Politicalite included the following note: “DISCLAIMER: Politicalite and its advertisers do not endorse the scientists or views expressed in this article, we report on claims surrounding COVID-19.”)

The claim that the 2020 coronavirus was man-made in a lab has been refuted by numerous studies and experts. A March 2020 study published in the journal Nature Medicine concluded that the virus “is not a laboratory construct or a purposefully manipulated virus.” An earlier study, published in February 2020 in the journal Nature, found that the COVID-19 virus is “96% percent identical at the whole-genome level to a bat coronavirus.” Both the World Health organization
and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have stated that the virus was passed from animals to humans.

Moreover, the video discussion cited in the article did not take place between two “scientists” — the participants were Francis Boyle, who teaches at the University of Illinois College of Law, and Paul Cottrell, who holds a PhD in finance and was studying for his master’s degree in biology at the Harvard Extension School.

Asked to comment on this story, Politicalite’s owner, Jordan Kendall, told NewsGuard in an email: “It’s a story also reported in the Daily Mail, Fox News, The Sun and others — we reported it first and we’re accused of fake news, now the White House is investigating the Lab theory.”

Kendall added, “We put disclaimers on some articles, including the Coronavirus lab claims — because in an age of disinformation we don’t want to be seen as ‘spreading fake news’ especially amid the Coronavirus pandemic. But I still think that more solid theories should be free to be discussed in public discourse. On my first day studying Media at University, I was taught by my lecturer to ‘Question Everything,’ and it’s something I do over and over again in life and my media career.”

On May 14, 2020, Politicalite published a story titled “WORLD EXCLUSIVE: Mark Dougan Leaks Epstein Blackmail Sex Tape with Underage Girl,” which included the baseless charge that a top U.S. media executive (who was named in the article) had allegedly engaged in sexual acts with an underaged girl linked to the alleged sex-trafficking network run by the late disgraced financier Jeffrey Epstein. The claim was said to have been based on images leaked by Dougan, a former Florida deputy sheriff, who in 2016 fled to Russia and received political asylum, after his home was raided by the FBI amid an investigation into a hack of confidential Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office files. Dougan
released the images on the video platform Bitchute, claiming that they had come from footage captured by Epstein’s home surveillance system.

Four days after publishing the story, Politicalite deleted it and issued a retraction, explaining that the video was in fact taken from a porn website and did not depict the executive. The retraction stated: “Politicalite does not now believe the images to be credible and we deeply apologise to [the named executive] for the error, and fully retract the story and the claims that were made in several articles.” The site added, “Politicalite has been unable to verify Mr Dougan’s claims on the matter, and discrepancies [sic] still exist.”

Nevertheless, this retraction notwithstanding, Politicalite did not take down or amend subsequent stories on the same topic. The day before publishing the retraction notice relating to the original story, Politicalite posted a similar story, titled “WORLD EXCLUSIVE: Ex-Cop John Mark Dougan Says He Believes Man In Epstein Tape IS [the named executive].” The article was based on Politicalite’s interview with Dougan, who stated that he believed that the media executive was present in the video. Again, there is no evidence to back that claim.

Another story, “WORLD EXCLUSIVE: John Mark Dougan Leaks Epstein Blackmail Sex Tape Allegedly ‘Showing [a top media company, which was named] Boss Engaging In Acts With Underage Girl,’ was published on May 16, 2020, in the site’s Exclusive section. At the bottom of both stories, Politicalite included a copy of the retraction notice for its first story. However, the newer articles included the same false claims about the executive. They appear to have been taken down on May 19.

Asked to comment on how these stories came to be published, Kendall told NewsGuard in an email: “It was a severe error of judgement. I was not on the ball, in the quest to get a scoop, I rushed the publication without the correct checks. As it was from a trusted (at the time)
source who had submitted content and had been used as a source via numerous mainstream outlets, we believed it to be credible. So my guard was down.

“We often slam the mainstream media, but this time. We got it wrong,” he continued. “I have owned up and admitted my mistakes publicly. Have you ever made a mistake in life? Have you ever got duped by someone you trusted? The people behind the news are only human, we will remember this the next time we call out the mainstream media.”

Kendall told NewsGuard that before he published the allegations, he sought comment from the media executive who was the subject of the Politicalite stories. He sent NewsGuard a screenshot of an email he appeared to have sent to a communications official at the media executive’s company. However, the email, which sought comment on the allegations against the executive, was timestamped May 16, 2020 — two days after Politicalite published its first story on the topic.

Asked why the site published two articles about the false allegation after the retraction ran, Kendall said that he did that “because it was still being shared across social”. He added: “People would see the headline, click on the link and see an ERROR 404! Which would create a conspiracy, so we had to … make sure people knew it was no suppression by powerful people.”

In April 2020, Politicalite published a video purporting to show Chinese workers “rubbing their feet on the face masks that are meant to be shipped to New York,” according to the article accompanying the video. The video clip showed a man rubbing his shoes with masks that were strewn across a factory floor; however, there is no evidence to support the claim that those masks were bound for New York, or that they were even intended for shipment at all. The video was uploaded to Twitter by a pseudonymous user who has regularly posted content critical of China.

Kendall declined to comment on this story.
A March 2020 article, published in the Conspiracy Files section, reported on the alleged “Great Awakening” conspiracy theory, which claims that elite globalists have used the COVID-19 pandemic to quash a “populist revolution.” The conspiracy, according to the Politicalite story, includes several outrageous claims, including that actor Tom Hanks “was arrested last week for alleged paedophilic crimes” and “arrests of former U.S. presidents will occur in early 2021.” Politicalite noted in its article that it “cannot verify the claims and do not report this as fact.”

Kendall declined to comment on the story.

Because Politicalite has promoted baseless conspiracy theories and publishes “exclusives” based on anonymous sourcing without evidence to back the claims, including damaging personal claims, NewsGuard has determined that the site does not gather and present information responsibly.

Politicalite regularly publishes misleading headlines.

For example, as noted above, the headline “‘LIKE A NAZI WEAPON’ Two Scientists Claim COVID-19 escaped from Chinese Laboratory” did not reflect the story, as the “scientists” were in fact a law professor and a biology student who had completed a pre-med program.

An April 2020 story, headlined “EXCLUSIVE: Sir Starmers SECRET Tax Dodging Donors Exposed,” named several wealthy contributors to Keir Starmers, the leader of the Labour Party. However, the article did not include any information about the donors’ alleged “tax dodging”.

The March 2020 story “BROWN PAPER ENVELOPE: Ex-PM Gordon Brown ‘Let RAPE GANGS Roam Free In Return For Saudi OIL MONEY,’” backtracked on the headline’s claim, noting that “there is no way of verifying the claim that Brown cut a deal ‘to let Muslims do what ever they wanted’ as no one will go on record.”
Because the site regularly publishes headlines that do not reflect the content of the articles, NewsGuard has determined that Politicalite does not avoid deceptive headlines.

Asked about the site’s approach to headlines, Kendall told NewsGuard in 2019, “We do try to make our headlines eye-catching, often using jokes, puns and humour - this is never done in a malicious way - it's simply the working-class Northern way.” In May 2020, Kendall declined further comment.

The site has a dedicated page for corrections. However, because the site has not corrected some egregious errors, including in headlines, and has published false claims that it had previously retracted, NewsGuard has determined that the site does not have consistent or effective correction practices.

The site’s About page provides a description of Politicalite's political orientation and editorial mission. The site states that it supports “Britain’s vote for Brexit and America’s vote for President Trump.” According to the About page, “We describe our political views as ‘populist’, give fair coverage to all politicians from all parties, the truth comes first no matter our political affiliation.” The site includes the word “comment” in headlines to denote opinion articles.

However, many stories presented as news include opinion.

For example, an April 2020 article in the Labour section said of Labour MP Bell Riberio-Addy: “When she isn't complaining about the supposed evils of the British Empire, she’s moaning about how ‘racist’ it apparently is to complain about the coronavirus being a ‘Chinese virus’ (yes, really).”

Another April 2020 story about Labour leader Keir Starmer stated, “Establishment stooge Kier Starmer helped Britain’s most vile celebrity peadophile evade justice.”
A March 2020 article in the USA section concerning U.S. Senator Mitt Romney stated: “TRAITOROUS Republican senator Mitt Romney felt the wrath of U.S. President Donald Trump last night after the senator voted with the Democrats in an attempt to impeach President Trump.”

Because Politicalite often publishes unlabeled opinion content in news sections, NewsGuard has determined that the site does not handle the difference between news and opinion responsibly.

Asked about the site’s handling of opinion, Kendall told NewsGuard in May 2020: “On the mixing of opinion and news - we do tag 'Opinion' and 'Comment' often. Sometimes writers like to add in opinions and jokes. I'm sure the reader can tell the difference between opinions and facts.” Kendall added, “Also, unlike many other outlets - we clearly state our political views and who we support in our about page. We're a Conservative supporting outlet, and our readers know where we stand.”

The Corporate page discloses Politicalite’s ownership by News Worldwide Ltd.

While the About page identifies Politicalite’s editor as Jordan James, business records show that a Jordan Kendall is the registered owner of the website. (Kendall’s full name is Jordan James Kendall, according to a driver’s license Kendall shared with NewsGuard). Because Kendall does not use his real surname to identify himself on the site, NewsGuard has determined that Politicalite does not reveal who is in charge.

Kendall declined to comment on the record regarding his use of a pseudonym.

Articles include the names of authors, but the site generally does not provide any biographical or contact information for them. In addition, because many articles are written by the pseudonymous James, NewsGuard has determined that Politicalite does not provide adequate information about his content creators.
Kendall provided NewsGuard with links to information about Politicalite’s content creators, but did not respond to an inquiry about why this information is not included on the site.

Advertising is distinguishable from original content.

Kendall founded Politicalite in 2017. He told NewsGuard that he started the site “to report unreported news to the forgotten people of Britain, a place that has a huge problem with the under-reporting of the lower classes.”

Editor’s Note: This Nutrition Label was updated on May 21, 2020, to reflect that upon further review, NewsGuard has determined that the site does not meet NewsGuard’s standards for issuing corrections and for gathering and presenting information responsibly. In part this new determination was influenced by the three articles cited above relating to the media executive, whom the site named, which were published after NewsGuard published its May 12, 2020, update of this label. But it is also the result of mistakes we now realize we made in not correctly assessing the overall content of the site in view of the other irresponsible articles we reviewed (examples of which are cited above) and should have taken into account. We apologize for the error. This label was previously updated, on May 12, 2020, to reflect that Politicalite.com does not provide information about editorial leaders and content creators.

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Send feedback to NewsGuard: Click Here

Sources

Ownership and Financing
https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/company/12509165/filing-history
https://www.politicalite.com/about/
https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/company/11503722/persons-with-significant-control
https://suite.endole.co.uk/insight/people/24918039-mr-jordan-kendall

Content

Credibility

https://archive.is/ltBj0(Dougan sex tape story)