

Fake News Award for Science Goes to ... The New York Times!



By Alex Berezow, PhD — January 17, 2018



Credit: Storyblocks [1]

Much buzz has surrounded President Trump's "Fake News Awards." Given that part of our mission is debunking pseudoscience and bogus health claims, we felt obliged to offer our own Fake News Award ... for junk science.

Websites like Food Babe, Mercola, InfoWars, and Natural News are perennial contenders. But giving them the award is too easy and predictable. Anyone with a halfway decent frontal lobe knows that these websites are [pure garbage](#) [2].

So, the Fake News Award for Science should go to a media outlet that has credibility (in some people's eyes, anyway), yet consistently gets the science wrong, likely for ideological reasons. With those criteria in place, the runaway winner is *The New York Times*. There isn't even a close second.

The *New York Times* Should Stop Writing About Science

Back in 2015, when I was editor of RealClearScience, I wrote a piece called "[The *New York Times* Should Seriously Consider Not Writing About Science Anymore](#) [3]." My assault on the Gray Lady was prompted by several outlandish articles, such as [one that cited Joseph Mercola](#) [4], an anti-vaxxer and "[cell phone truther](#) [5]" who is the purveyor of the aforementioned garbage site Mercola. The NYT also rose my ire by [teaching the controversy](#) [6] on post-treatment Lyme disease syndrome, [fretting over scary chemicals](#) [7], [claiming that sugar is toxic](#) [8], and ceaselessly promoting organic food. [Acupuncture](#) [9]? *The Times* loves it!

Believe it or not, the *New York Times* has gotten even worse.

Early in 2017, Danny Hakim was caught [flat-out lying about glyphosate](#) [10]. Mr. Hakim, who fancies himself a journalist, clearly didn't even bother to do a PubMed search before declaring agricultural pesticides to be akin to "Nazi-made sarin gas." A few months later, Stephanie Strom hammered away at Ben & Jerry's over trace levels of glyphosate in its ice cream, gleefully [doing the bidding of activists](#) [11] who want the company to go 100% organic.

The NYT's alignment with the organic food industry is probably not coincidental. The former publisher of the paper, who just handed over the job to his son, is married to a person who sits on the board of Whole Foods. That helps explain their [long-standing crusade against PhD scientists who support GMOs](#) [12], such as when [journalist Eric Lipton defamed plant biotechnologist Kevin Folta](#) [13].

Even New Yorkers are waking up to the dishonesty of their hometown paper. My colleague, Dr. Josh Bloom, just penned an [article](#) [14] about the NYT's opioid coverage, which he described as "misleading, manipulative, and also illogical."

For these and many other transgressions, the *New York Times* easily wins the Fake News Award for Science in 2018. Given its track record, it is already the top contender for the award in 2019.

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[1] <https://www.storyblocks.com/stock-image/portrait-of-successful-business-woman-with-trophy-hryxg1swwj3bixvv0>

[2] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/03/05/infographic-best-and-worst-science-news-sites-10948>

[3] https://www.realclearscience.com/blog/2015/03/maybe_nyt_should_stop_writing_about_science.html

[4] https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/19/style/could-wearable-computers-be-as-harmful-as-cigarettes.html?_r=0

[5] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/02/28/uc-berkeley-psychologist-joel-moskowitz-cell-phone-wi-fi-truther-10928>

[6]

http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/medical_examiner/2013/07/the_new_york_times_chronic_lyme_dise

[7] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2015/06/04/chemicals-in-your-popcorn-asks-the-times-kristof-yes-there-are>

[8] <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2011/04/whats-really-killing-us/237439/>

[9] <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/02/well/live/acupuncture-can-ease-wrist-pain-of-carpal-tunnel-syndrome.html?source=acsh.org>

[10] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/03/15/glyphosate-nyts-danny-hakim-lying-you-11001>

[11] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/07/31/nyt-greenmails-ben-jerrys-teaches-controversy-glyphosate-11633>

[12] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/10/26/nyts-eric-lipton-science-birther-12039>

[13] <https://geneticliteracyproject.org/2017/09/06/kevin-folta-sues-ny-times-reporter-lipton-malicious-2015-profile-labeling-scientist-monsanto-lackey/>

[14] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2018/01/15/dear-ny-times-your-opioid-coverage-has-been-terrible-heres-why-12419>