

FACEBOOK'S CONTENT ALGORITHMS UNDERMINED COVID-19 RESPONSE, SPREAD VIOLENT MISINFORMATION IN THE WAKE OF GEORGE FLOYD'S KILLING

The United States has faced two major inflection points this year: the virulent spread of COVID-19 and the fight for racial equity. In both instances, Facebook's content curation and recommendation algorithms have actively promoted the spread of dangerous misinformation and extremism, directly threatening public health and safety.

An Accountable Tech study of the platform in the months following the COVID-19 outbreak and the killing of George Floyd found that Facebook's algorithms pushed users to join Groups, "like" Pages, and engage with content that have promoted COVID-19 conspiracy theories, encouraged violence against protestors, and actively spread racist and hateful speech.

These results are not aberrations. Facebook designed its products to maximize engagement, and that's exactly what they do. As the company's [own research has made clear](#), their algorithms inherently boost the most divisive content and steer users to increasingly extreme social and information spheres.

To the extent Facebook is attempting to moderate COVID-19 misinformation and racist content, they are fighting against their own toxic content-shaping algorithms – and they are failing. Accountable Tech's study of the platform found:

- > Despite Facebook's [claim](#) that Groups in violation of platform policies are removed from algorithmic recommendations, Facebook repeatedly suggested joining Groups falsely touting the efficacy of hydroxychloroquine, spreading dangerous misinformation about testing, and calling for violence against BLM protestors. In promoting these Groups – including "[Hydroxychloroquine](#)," "[PLANdemic](#)," "[Black Lives Matter is a Terrorist Organization](#)," and "[In Defense of the Confederacy](#)" – Facebook proactively spread misinformation already marked as false by the platform's fact-checking partners.
- > After "liking" several ostensibly innocuous Pages – including "[FLOTUS Melania](#)" and "[Keep Trump in Office](#)" – Facebook's algorithm recommended users follow a myriad of pandemic and BLM conspiracy theorists, contrary to claims the company no longer recommends such Pages. As a result, by simply heeding Facebook's prompts, users very quickly end up with a News Feed riddled with COVID-19 misinformation and racist content, including claims that facemasks are "[mind control devices](#)," that COVID-19 vaccines will cause [autism](#), and that [George Soros](#) is behind BLM protests.
- > Despite claims by Facebook that the company is promoting authoritative information, viral COVID-19 misinformation and racist content has consistently won out. For example, a video live-streamed by Breitbart News claiming that masks and shutdowns are ineffective in stopping the spread of COVID-19 was viewed more than [20 million](#) times before Facebook removed it – more views than any [CDC video](#) posted on Facebook since the pandemic began. Further, four out of five of the highest-performing posts on Facebook about George Floyd have come from the controversial Preacher Franklin Graham, who is regularly featured on the Southern Poverty Law Center's "hate watch."

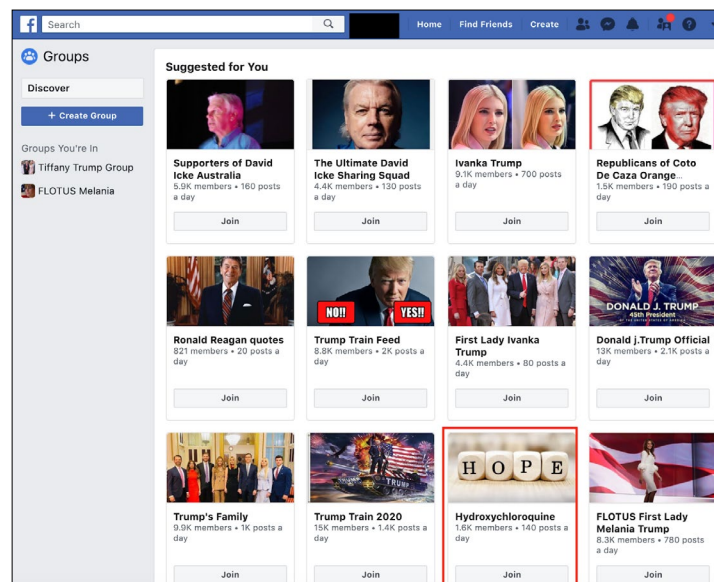
COVID-19 MISINFORMATION

FACEBOOK'S ALGORITHM PUSHED USERS TO JOIN GROUPS THAT SPREAD COVID-19 MISINFORMATION AS THE PANDEMIC RAGED.

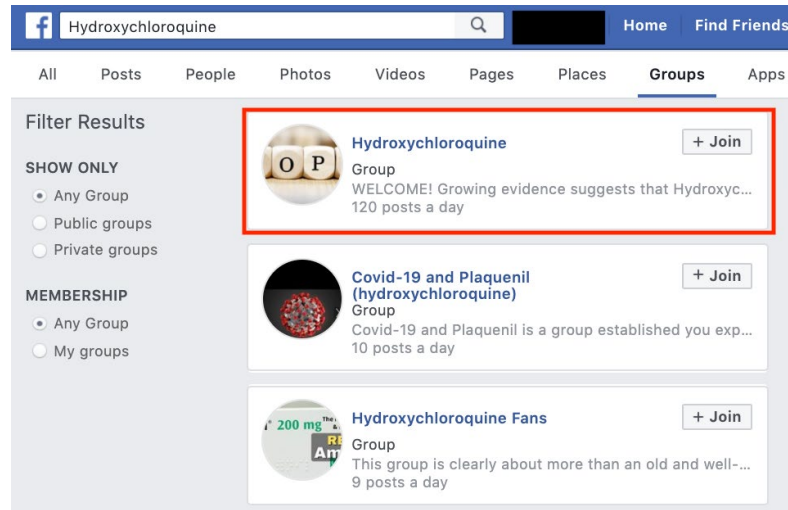
Facebook Claim: If "Groups repeatedly share content that violates our Community Standards, or is rated false by fact-checkers, we reduce their distribution, [and] remove them from recommendations... When reviewing a Group to decide whether or not to take it down, we will look at admin and moderator content violations, including posts by members that they have approved, as a stronger signal that the Group violates our standards."

Accountable Tech Findings: An Accountable Tech study of the platform found Facebook's algorithm has continued to recommend COVID-19 misinformation Groups that have violated Community Standards. After joining two President-Trump related groups – "[FLOTUS Melania](#)" and "[Tiffany Trump Group](#)" (which is no longer active) – Facebook's "Suggested for You" and "Related Groups" algorithms promoted Groups that heavily feature dangerous coronavirus lies.

> **Facebook Recommendation: "Hydroxychloroquine."** The Facebook Group "[Hydroxychloroquine](#)" has consistently and falsely touted the drug's efficacy as a treatment for "slowing coronavirus spread and combating Covid-19 disease." Yet despite Facebook removing several false posts from the Group's administrator, Accountable Tech found the Group is suggested by Facebook's recommendation engine for accounts that engage with content related to President Trump. Further, despite Facebook's claim that such Groups "will not be included in recommendations or in predictions when you type into Search," this was the very first result when searching for "hydroxychloroquine" from several different accounts.

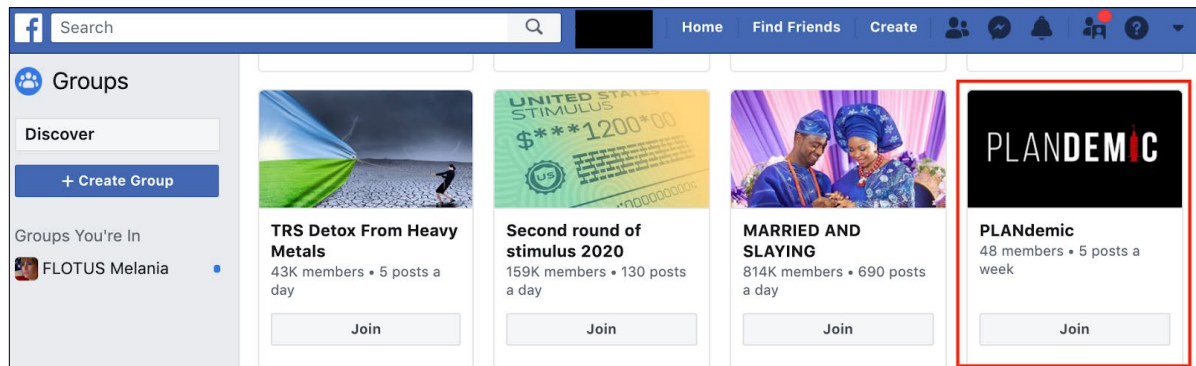


SEARCH RUN: MAY 30, 2020



SEARCH RUN: MAY 30, 2020

- > **Facebook Recommendation: "PLANdemic."** Named after the viral conspiracy video, the Group "PLANdemic" was recommended by Facebook's "Discover" algorithm. The Group is dedicated to COVID-19 conspiracy theories, and features posts promoting the 5G conspiracy theory, claims that the Floyd protests were "staged race riots" and a setup for "pandemic 2," and links to purported "non-consent" forms to opt-out of a COVID-19 vaccine.



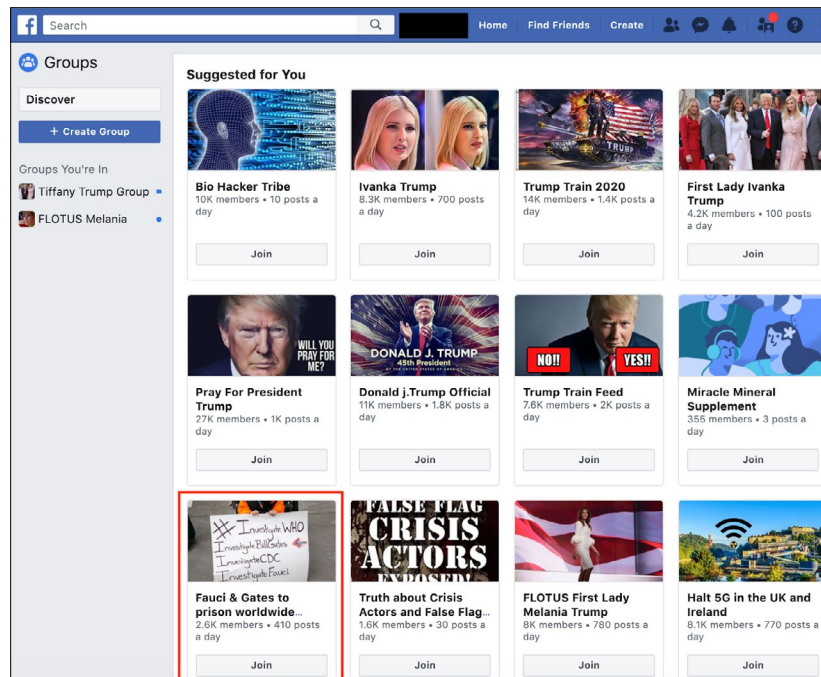
SEARCH RUN: MAY 30, 2020



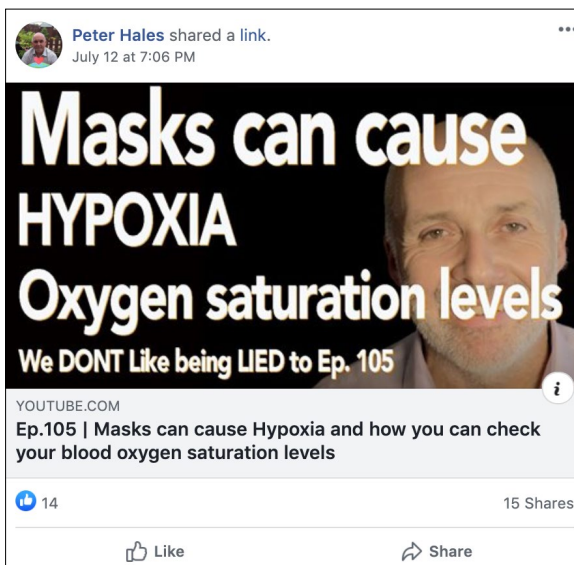
POSTED: MAY 18, 2020.

> Facebook Recommendation: "Fauci & Gates to prison worldwide Resistance."

Facebook's algorithm also recommended joining a Group called "Fauci & Gates to prison worldwide Resistance." The group – which has over 7,000 members – had 987 posts in the 30 days after it was created. Posts in the Group seek to undermine the efficacy of a potential vaccine, including posts claiming COVID-19 is a "scamdemic," Dr. Anthony Fauci "is guilty of causing millions of deaths," that "the unvaccinated are healthier than the vaccinated," and COVID-19 was created by Bill Gates so that he could profit from a vaccine, which was marked as "false" by Facebook's fact-checking partners.



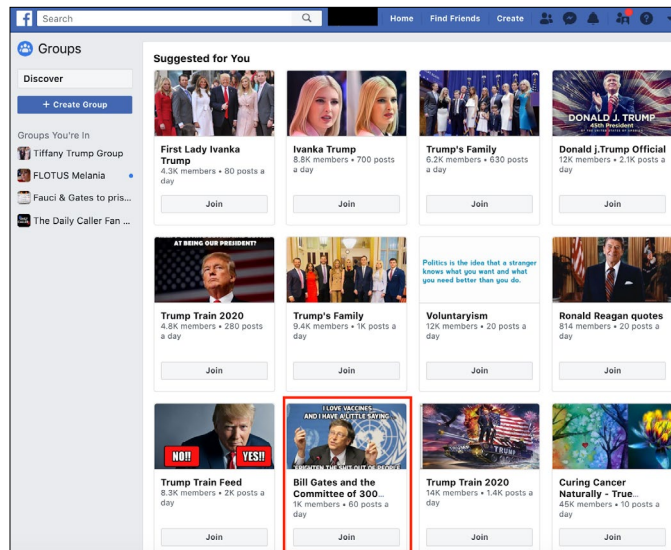
SEARCH RUN: MAY 30, 2020.



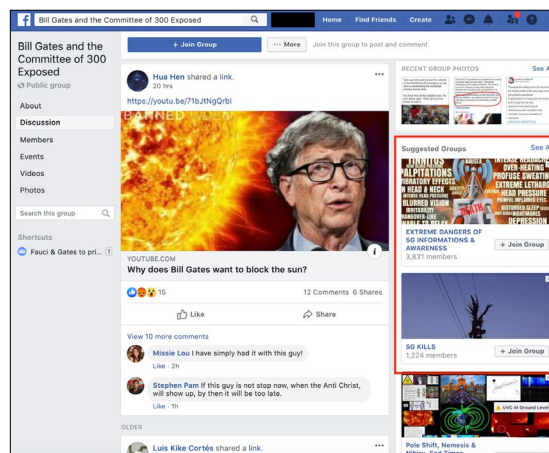
POSTED: JULY 12, 2020.

> Facebook Recommendation: "Bill Gates and the Committee of 300 Exposed."

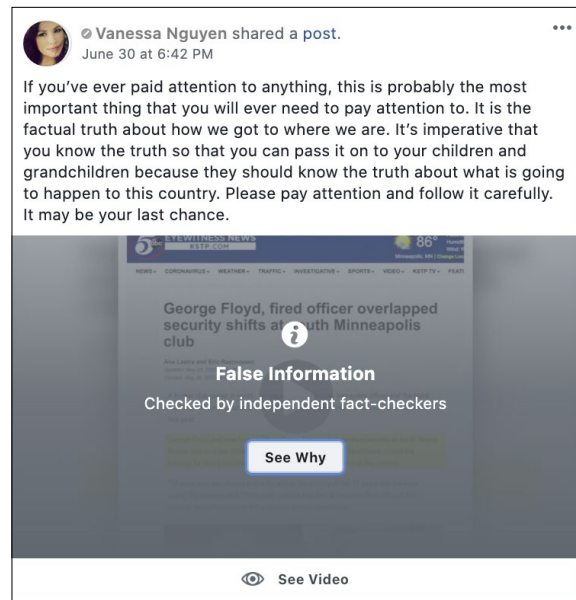
After heeding Facebook's recommendation and joining "Fauci & Gates to prison worldwide Resistance" and "the Daily Caller Fan Club," the algorithm updated its Group recommendations to include "[Bill Gates and the Committee of 300 Exposed.](#)" Despite recommending the Group, its posts include COVID-19 content that has been flagged by Facebook's fact-checking partners as "[partly false](#)" and misinformation [videos](#) from disgraced osteopath Dr. Rashid Buttar, who [created](#) a viral series of videos pushing blatant COVID-19 falsehoods. On the Group's page itself, Facebook was further recommending users engage with COVID-19 misinformation, suggesting users join several 5G conspiracy Groups. One month after Facebook recommended joining the Group, false conspiracies were still actively being shared on the Group's discussion board, including a video that racked up over 6 million views, despite being tagged as "[false](#)" by independent fact checkers, claiming that COVID-19 is a hoax designed by the Democratic Party to thwart President Trump's reelection campaign.



SEARCH RUN: JUNE 1, 2020.

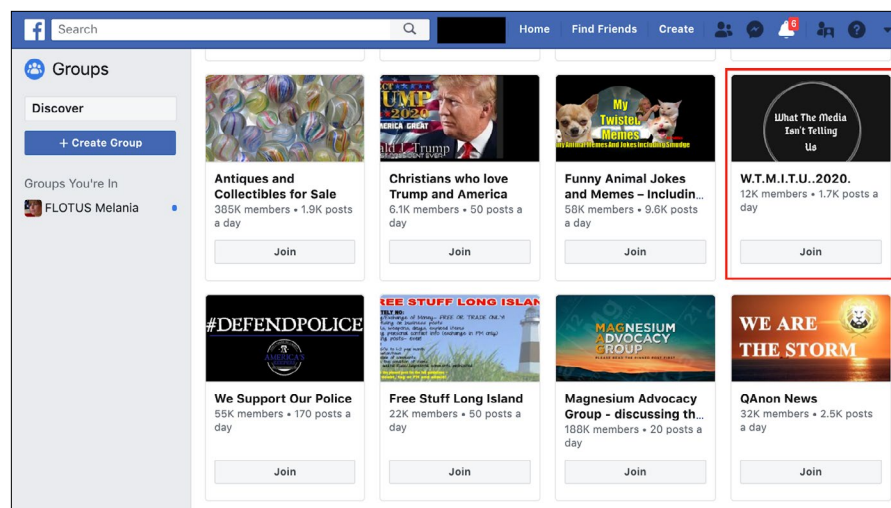


SEARCH RUN: JUNE 1, 2020.

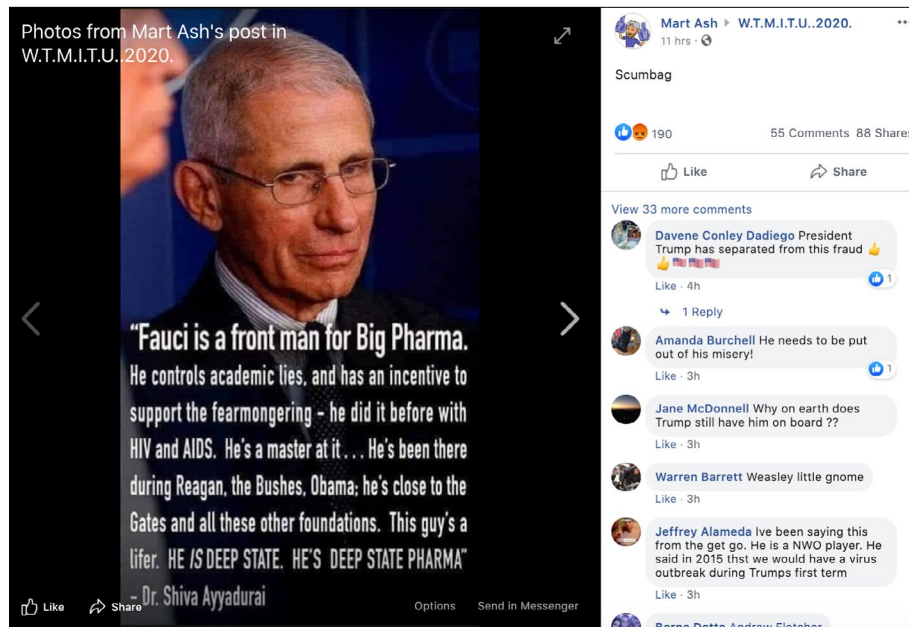


POST SHARED: JUNE 30, 2020.

> **Facebook Recommendation: "What the Media Isn't Telling You."** Over one month after joining the Groups FLOTUS Melania and Tiffany Trump Group (which is no longer active), Facebook continued to suggest Groups promoting COVID-19 conspiracy theories, including "What the Media Isn't Telling You," which has over 14,000 members. The Group regularly publishes conspiracy theories about top U.S. public health experts – including Dr. Fauci – and spreads misinformation dangerous to the country's COVID-19 response. In one post, the page described Fauci as a "front man for Big Pharma" who spreads academic lies and fear mongers for the deep state.



SEARCH RUN: JULY 15, 2020.



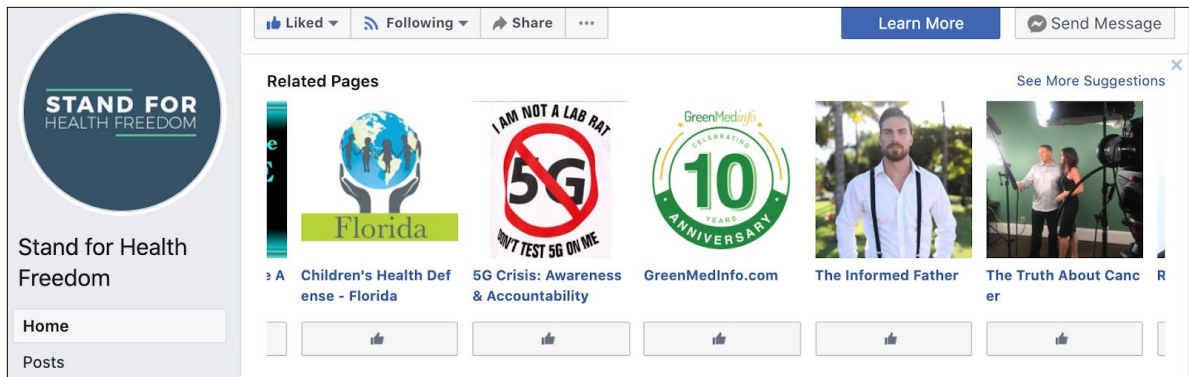
POSTED: JULY 13, 2020.

FACEBOOK'S ALGORITHM RECOMMENDED PAGES THAT SPREAD DANGEROUS COVID-19 MISINFORMATION.

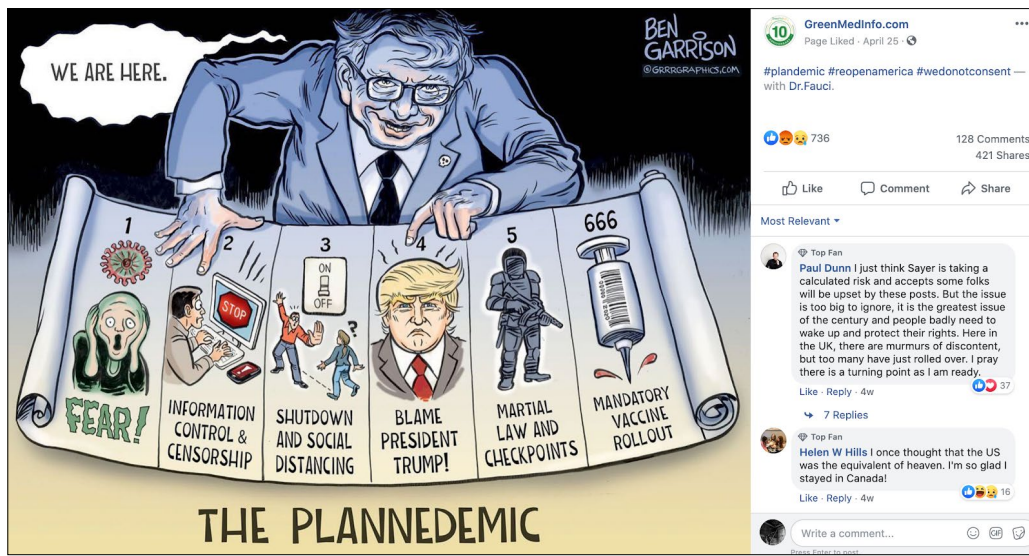
Facebook Claim: "If Pages...repeatedly share content that violates our Community Standards, or is rated false by fact-checkers, we reduce their distribution, remove them from recommendations, and we remove the ability for Pages to monetize and advertise."

Accountable Tech Findings: Accountable Tech conducted a simple case study to examine whether Facebook's "Related Pages" algorithm is properly filtering out pages that spread COVID-19 misinformation from its recommendations. As a starting point, we searched for "health freedom" Pages, given Facebook implemented a [policy](#) to combat vaccine misinformation in March 2020. After liking one of the top results – a nonprofit organization called "[Stand for Health Freedom](#)" – Facebook's "Related Pages" algorithm recommended users visit Pages that heavily feature dangerous COVID-19 misinformation.

> **Facebook Recommendation:** "GreenMedInfo.com." Facebook's algorithm recommended "[GreenMedInfo.com](#)," a [deceptive alternative health site](#) with more than half a million followers that has pushed false claims for years, such as presenting marijuana as a proven cure for cancer. The Page's moderator has consistently posted COVID-19 misinformation, including claims COVID-19 is a "[plandemic](#)," facemasks are "[mind control devices](#)," and COVID-19 vaccines are an attempt by Bill Gates to "[control](#)" the population. Independent fact checkers have marked content on the Page as "[false](#)" and GreenMedInfo.com has been deplatformed by [Pinterest](#) and [others](#). On April 28, 2020 Facebook itself [warned](#) the Page "may soon be unpublished" – yet they've continued to post flagrant misinformation unimpeded, promoted by Facebook's recommendation algorithm.

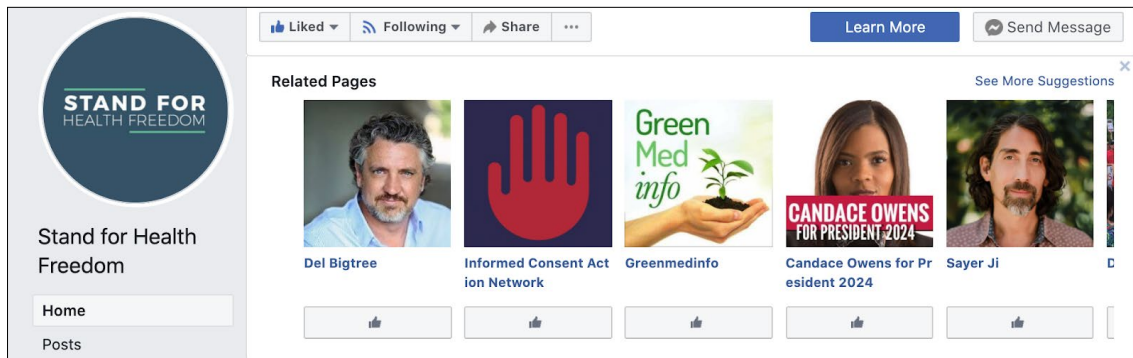


SEARCH RUN: MAY 31, 2020.

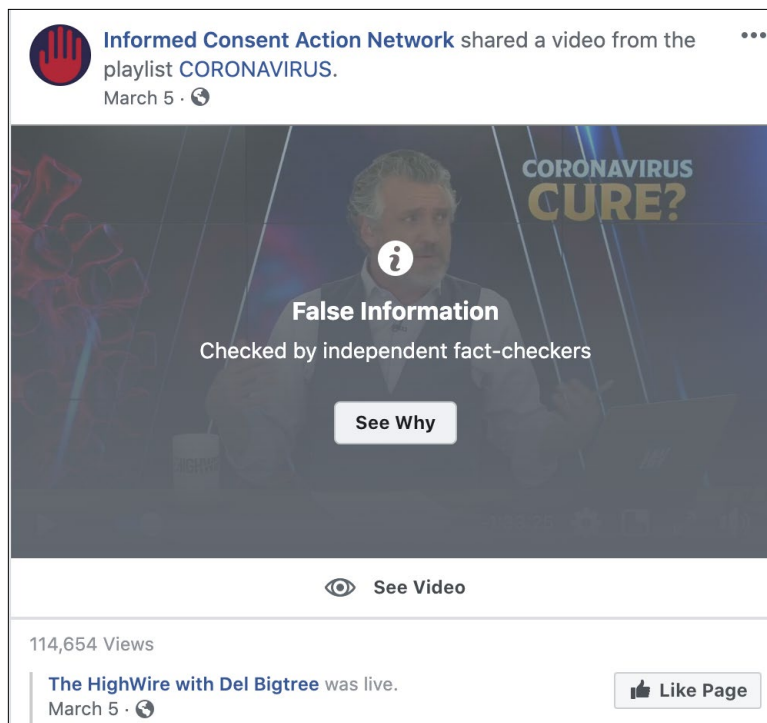


POSTED: APRIL 25, 2020.

- > **Facebook Recommendation: "Informed Consent Action Network."** Facebook's Page algorithm also recommended "[Informed Consent Action Network](#)" (ICAN) – one of the nation's most well-funded anti-vaxx organizations. ICAN's Page contains multiple coronavirus-related videos that have been marked "false" by Facebook's fact-checking partners. ICAN's founder, [Del Bigtree](#), hosts a regular webcast called The HighWire, where he's argued "Covid-19 is a set-up by the pharmaceutical industry to enrich itself." A recent report by Media Matters found that on the webcast, Bigtree has also repeatedly claimed wearing a mask poses a serious health hazard, suggested that people intentionally expose themselves to the coronavirus in order to build herd immunity, and characterized COVID-19 as "one of the most mild illnesses there is." Bigtree is regularly joined by other prominent COVID-19 conspiracy theorists on the webcast.

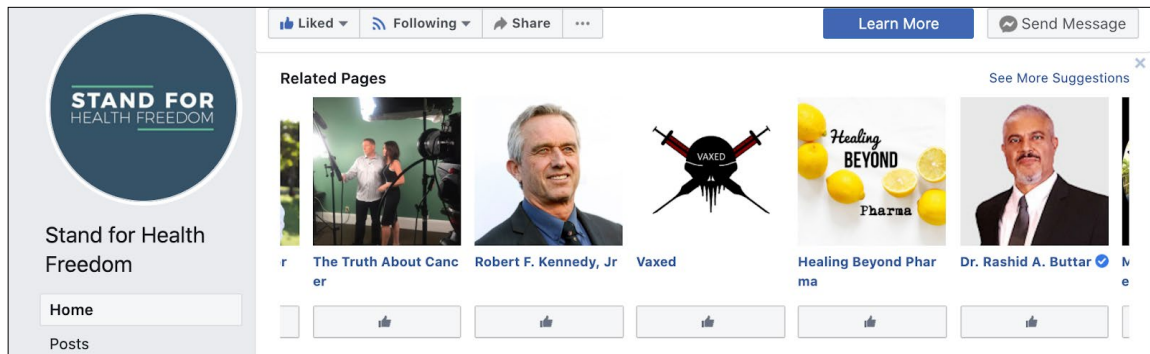


SEARCH RUN: MAY 31, 2020.



POSTED: MARCH 5, 2020.

> **Facebook Recommendation: "The Truth About Cancer."** Another Facebook Page recommendation, "The Truth About Cancer," has over 1.1 million likes and has been a superspreader of COVID-19 misinformation, including claims that the virus was created as a bioweapon and is connected to 5G. The Page administrators run a webcast series called "the truth behind the COVID-19 curtain." One recent episode, which has been viewed on YouTube over 100,000 times, asserts that wearing masks is harmful, that human-to-human coronavirus spread does not occur, and that viruses generally are 'gifts' that help us clean our bodies and update our genetic code. The Page also features interviews with both discredited Dr. Judy Mikowitz of the now-infamous "Plandemic" video, and Zach Vorhies, who orchestrated the marketing campaign for "Plandemic."



SEARCH RUN: JUNE 1, 2020.



IMAGE VIA NEWSGUARD

ALGORITHMS HAVE HELPED COVID-19 MISINFORMATION THRIVE IN USERS' NEWS FEEDS, CASTING DOUBT ON THE EFFICACY OF FACEBOOK'S EFFORTS TO ELEVATE AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES.

Facebook Claim: "Ever since COVID-19 was declared a global public health emergency in January, we've been working to connect people to accurate information from health experts and keep harmful misinformation about COVID-19 from spreading on our apps."

Accountable Tech Findings: A review of recent studies and independent research performed by Accountable Tech found that COVID-19 hoaxes have thrived in users' News Feeds, casting doubt on the efficacy of Facebook's efforts to lift up authoritative sources and downrank harmful misinformation. In particular, by pushing users to follow COVID-19 misinformation Pages and Groups through its recommendation engines – and then boosting the most divisive and outrageous content users' follow through its opaque News Feed algorithm – Facebook has supercharged false conspiracy theories that undermine our public health.

> **News Feed Algorithm Boosts “Supersharers” of Misinformation.** Under Facebook’s engagement-based metrics, a user who likes, shares, or comments on 1,500 pieces of content has more influence on the platform and its algorithms than one who interacts with just 15 posts, allowing “super-sharers” to drown out less-active users. Accounts with hyperactive engagement are far more partisan on average than normal Facebook users, and are more likely to behave suspiciously. Facebook experts personally presented CEO Mark Zuckerberg with a proposal to fully eliminate the weight given to these users. He refused. The decision has been devastating during the pandemic.

According to internal Facebook documents, as the spread of COVID-19 rapidly accelerated in March 2020, more than 90 percent of the clicks to coronavirus content came from “supersharers.” Due to Facebook’s algorithm, their activity had a disproportionate downstream effect as posts containing COVID-19 misinformation from hyperactive accounts with millions of followers like The Truth About Cancer, REALfarmacy.com, and Rush Limbaugh were shared thousands of times, according to NewsGuard.

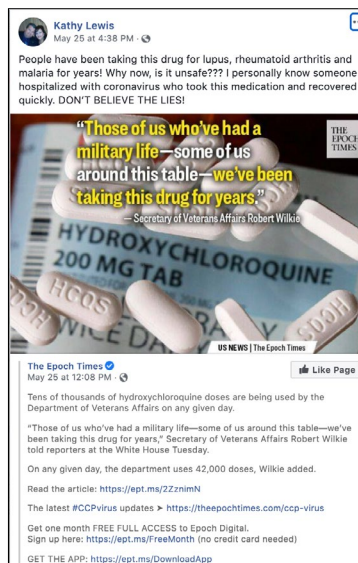


- > **Misinformation Outpaces CDC on Facebook.** A video live-streamed by Breitbart News on July 27 to a Facebook audience of 185,000, was quickly shared by over 500,000 users, racking up 17 million views in its first eight hours of being posted. Although the viral video attempting to discredit masks and social-distancing was eventually removed by Facebook, its News Feed algorithm allowed the video to be viewed by over 20 million users, threatening the country's public health response. Facebook algorithms promoting the video proved more powerful than attempts by the platform to lift up authoritative voices, with the Breitbart video being viewed more times than any CDC video posted on Facebook since the pandemic began.



POSTED: JULY 27, 2020.

- > **Junk News Site Receives 8x More Engagement than CDC and WHO.** Between January and April 2020, Facebook posts that contained a link to TheEpochTimes.com – a junk site that is banned from advertising on Facebook – received more than 48 million interactions, or eight times more engagement on Facebook than all links to the CDC or WHO websites, according to an investigation by BBC Click and the Institute of Strategic Dialogue. Throughout the COVID crisis, the Epoch Times has consistently published health misinformation, including several posts pushing hydroxychloroquine as a safe treatment for COVID-19.



POSTED: MAY 25, 2020.

MISINFORMATION ON GEORGE FLOYD PROTESTS AND THE BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT

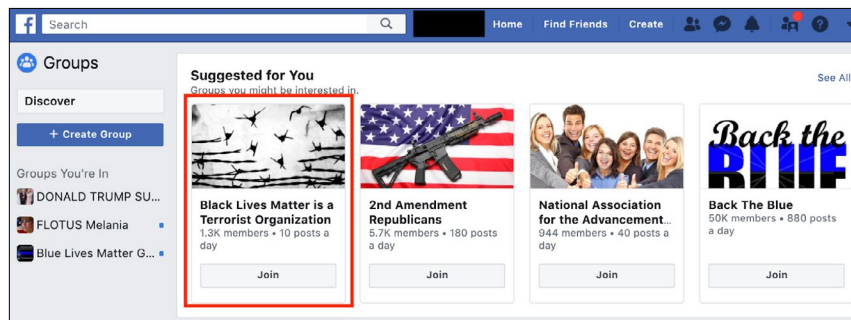
FACEBOOK'S ALGORITHM PUSHED USERS TO JOIN GROUPS THAT ORGANIZE VIOLENCE AGAINST PROTESTORS AND SPREAD RACIST MISINFORMATION.

Facebook Claim: If "Groups repeatedly share content that violates our Community Standards, or is rated false by fact-checkers, we reduce their distribution, [and] remove them from recommendations... When reviewing a Group to decide whether or not to take it down, we will look at admin and moderator content violations, including posts by members that they have approved, as a stronger signal that the Group violates our standards."

Accountable Tech Findings: An Accountable Tech study of the platform found Facebook's algorithms have continued to recommend Groups that have violated Community Standards by promoting racist conspiracy theories and encouraging violence. After joining three groups – "Blue Lives Matter," "FLOTUS Melania," and "Tiffany Trump Group" (which is no longer active) – Facebook's "Suggested for You" and "Related Groups" algorithms recommended a series of increasingly polarizing, racist, and dangerous Groups.

> Facebook Recommendation: "Black Lives Matter is a Terrorist Organization."

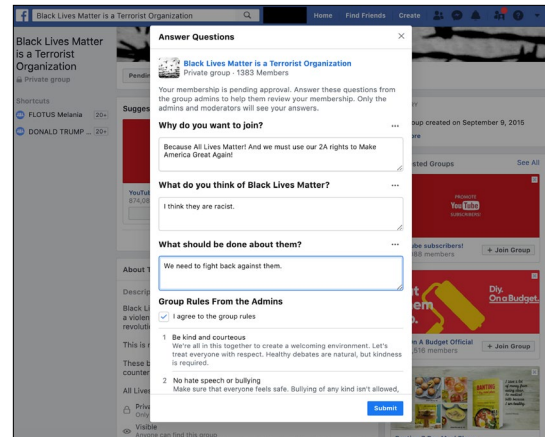
After engaging with Groups related to President Trump and "Blue Lives Matter," Accountable Tech found Facebook's algorithm recommended joining a Group called "[Black Lives Matter is a Terrorist Organization](#)." In the Group's description, it makes the false claim that "Black Lives Matter is a violent, racist, supremacist terror movement that supports violent revolution and all out race war." Group moderators regularly promote and organize violence in the Group. For example, on [June 23, 2020](#), a moderator claimed BLM was "setting up a new Autonomous Zone in DC" and sought to recruit Group members "interested in defending this country from these domestic terrorists." The Group is private, and to gain access, Facebook users must fill out a survey that is then approved by the Group's moderator. Accountable Tech found that users who threatened violence in the survey were granted access to the Group.



POSTED: JUNE 9, 2020.

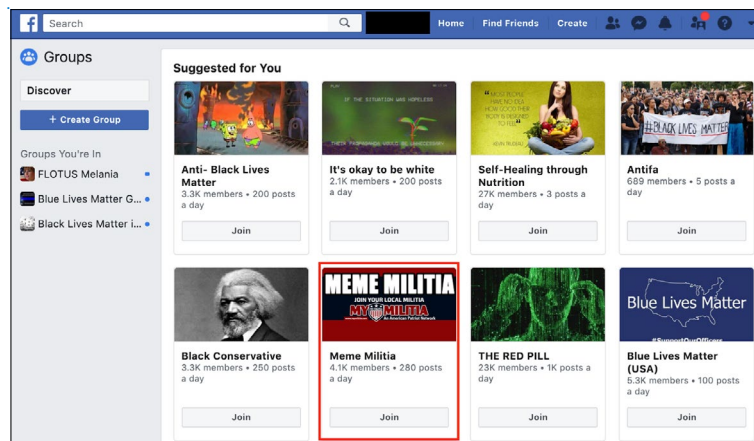


POSTED: JUNE 23, 2020

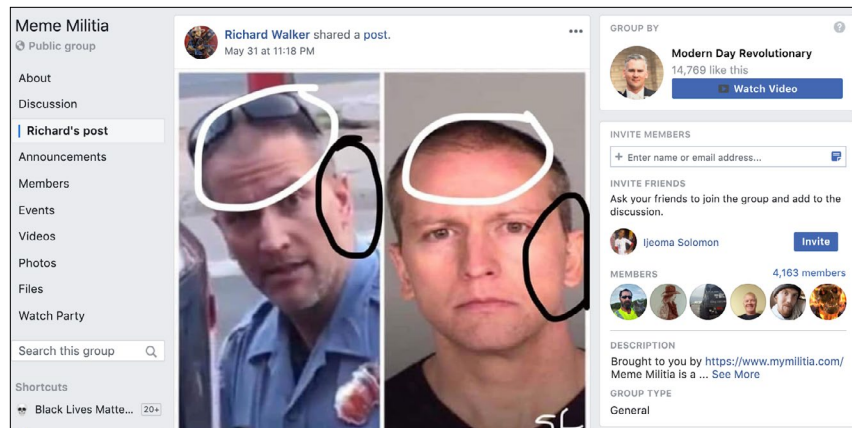


REQUEST SUBMITTED: JUNE 9, 2020.

> **Facebook Recommendation: "Meme Militia."** After joining "Black Lives Matter is a Terrorist Organization," Facebook recommended a series of militia Groups to join, including "Meme Militia," a Page moderated by Josh Ellis, the leader of "American Revolution 2.0" and "My Militia." According to an [investigation by the Guardian](#), Ellis' groups have "been assisted by far-right individuals – some with extremist links." The Guardian also [found](#) "evidence neo-Nazis and racist activists have attempted to spread propaganda to 'My Militia' users." The Facebook Page itself heavily features content from "American Revolution 2.0," including [donation links](#) to the organization and Josh Ellis conspiracy theory videos on YouTube. The Page also promotes other [conspiracy theories](#), including [claims](#) that George Floyd's killing was "all staged in order to invoke a race war before the election" and that Joe Biden [said](#) "ANTIFA are courageous Americans," a post marked as "false" by Facebook's independent fact-checking partners.

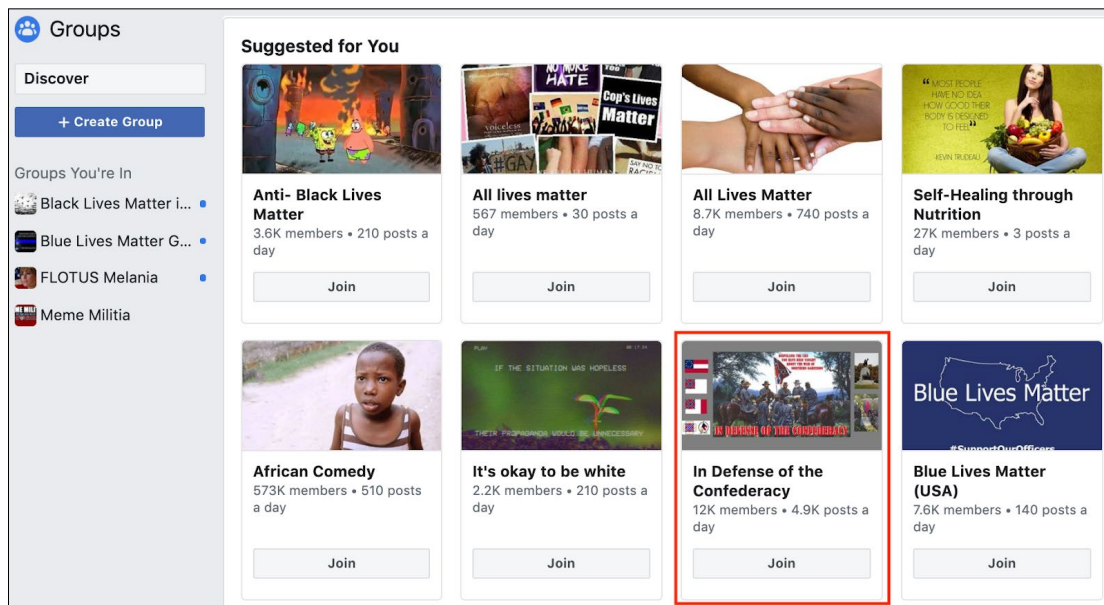


SEARCH RUN: JUNE 23, 2020.

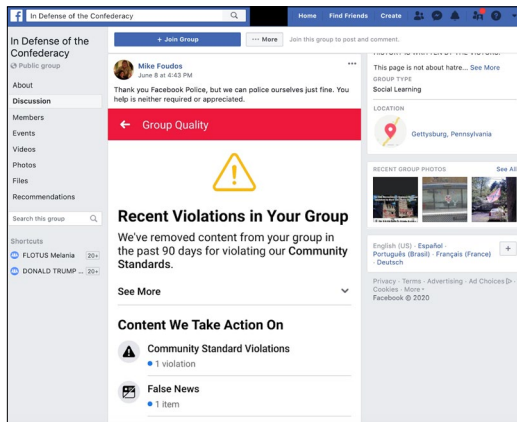


POSTED: MAY 31, 2020.

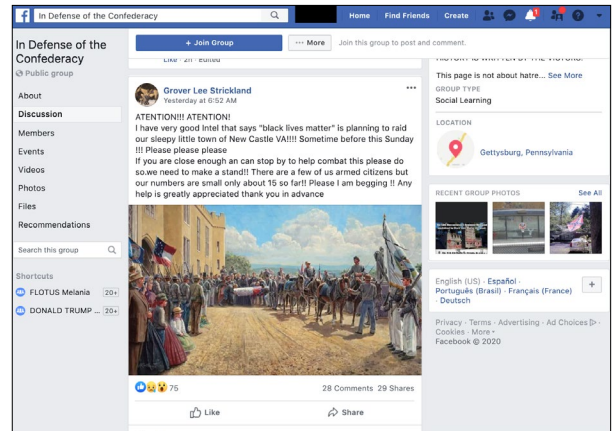
- > **Facebook Recommendation: "In Defense of the Confederacy."** After joining Meme Militia," Facebook's algorithm made another Group recommendation: "In Defense of the Confederacy." On June 8, 2020 Facebook itself warned the Group's administrator of "recent violations" in the Group, including "False News" and "Community Standards Violations" – yet the Group's violent and racist content continues to be promoted by Facebook's Group recommendation algorithm. For example, the Group, which has over 14,000 members, features content calling for targeted violence against Black Lives Matter protestors (this post subsequently removed, but captured below); includes misinformation from administrators about the Civil War that has been flagged as "false" by Facebook's fact-checking partners; and serves as an organizing tool for armed counter-protestors to "restore order" in cities and identify NAACP protests.



SEARCH RUN: JUNE 27, 2020.




POSTED: JUNE 8, 2020.



POSTED: JUNE 11, 2020 (SUBSEQUENTLY REMOVED).

> **Facebook Recommendation: "Southern Confederate Patriots."** Facebook also recommended users join the Group "Southern Confederate Patriots." The Group, which has over 7,000 members, describes itself as a community of "southern rebels that are willing to pick up arms and protect our way of life and our freedoms." They list Black Lives Matter and the ACLU as their enemies and require new members to answer if they are "locked n loaded" before gaining access to the Group. According to news sources, at least one member of law enforcement was a member of the Group and has interacted with its content.



Southern Confederate Patriots (SCP)

Private group · 7618 Members

Your membership is pending approval. Answer these questions from the group admins to help them review your membership. Only the admins and moderators will see your answers.

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS OR YOU WONT BE ACCEPTED . Are you locked n loaded to protect our southern heritage and 2nd amendment ? Are you 18+ ?

Write your answer...

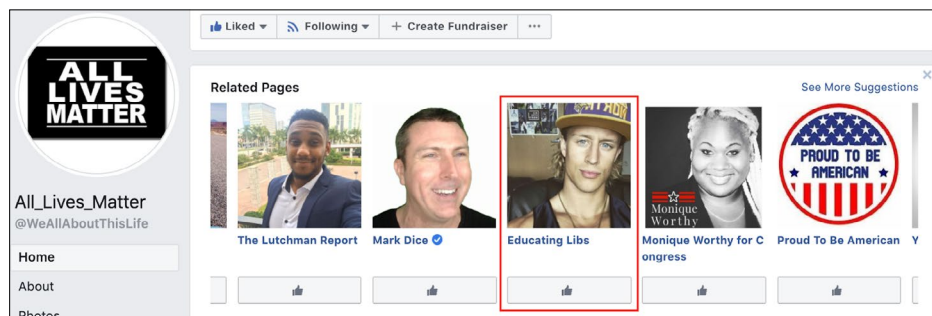
REQUEST SUBMITTED: JULY 13, 2020

FACEBOOK'S ALGORITHM RECOMMENDED PAGES THAT CELEBRATE VIOLENCE AND FEATURE MISINFORMATION RELATED TO THE FLOYD PROTESTS.

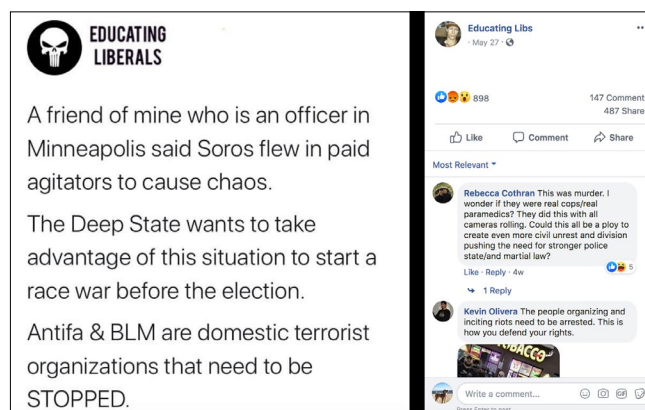
Facebook Claim: "If Pages...repeatedly share content that violates our Community Standards, or is rated false by fact-checkers, we reduce their distribution, remove them from recommendations, and we remove the ability for Pages to monetize and advertise."

Accountable Tech Findings: Accountable Tech conducted a simple case study to examine whether Facebook's "Related Pages" algorithm is properly filtering out pages that spread racist misinformation and promote violence from its recommendations. As a starting point, we "liked" two Pages: "[Keep Trump in Office](#)" and "[All Lives Matter](#)," after which Facebook's "Related Pages" algorithm recommended users visit Pages that celebrate violence and feature misinformation related to the Floyd protests.

> **Facebook Recommendation: "Educating Libs."** Facebook's Pages algorithm recommended a Page called "[Educating Libs](#)," which is moderated by an individual banned from using Twitter due to consistently spreading misinformation and conspiracy theories related to COVID-19 ([COVID-19 conspiracies](#) are also regularly featured on the Educating Libs Facebook Page). The Page features conspiracy theories related to the Floyd protests, including claims that George Soros "flew in paid agitators to cause chaos" in Minneapolis and the protests across America were not real. The Page also features posts marked as "false" by Facebook's independent fact-checking partners, including a post with fake statistics about crimes committed by Black Americans.

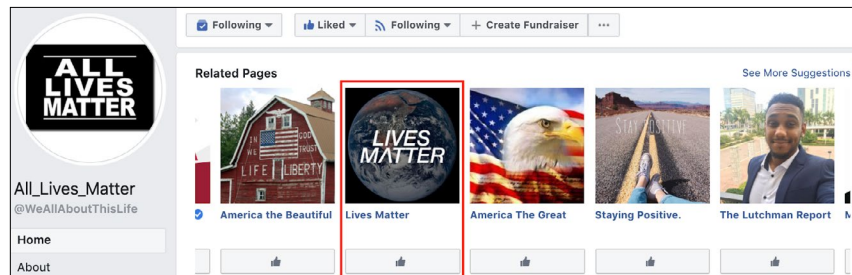


SEARCH RUN: JUNE 25, 2020.

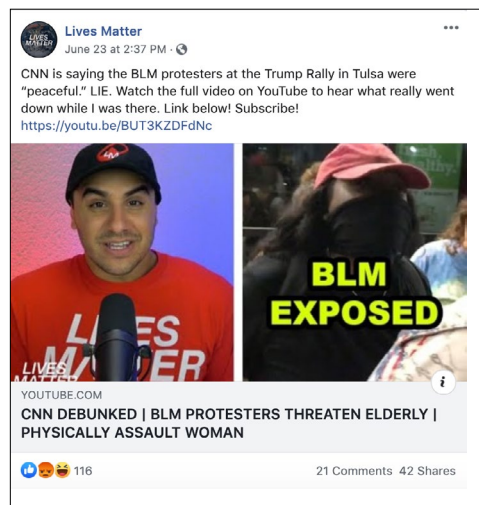


POSTED: MAY 27, 2020.

> **Facebook Recommendation: “Lives Matter.”** Another Page recommended by Facebook’s algorithm, “[Lives Matter](#),” has over 26,000 followers and regularly posts misinformation videos about the Floyd protests. For example, one video posted on the Page, “[CNN Debunked | BLM Protestors Threaten Elderly](#),” is rife with misinformation and false claims that BLM protestors outside President Trump’s Tulsa rally in June were violent. The Facebook post is preceded by a series of posts claiming “[BLM protestors](#),” “[communists](#),” and “[homosexuals](#)” were assaulting Trump supporters at the rally. On Instagram, Drew Hernandez, the Page’s moderator, [claimed](#) that “More Black people have been killed due to the George Floyd riots than unarmed Black people fatally shot by police in 2019, a claim that was rated “false” by Instagram’s independent fact-checking partners.




SEARCH RUN: JUNE 26, 2020.



POSTED: JUNE 23, 2020.

> **Facebook Recommendation: “Opening Up America Again.”** Facebook’s Pages algorithm also recommended a Page called “[Opening Up America Again](#)” which heavily features misinformation related to both COVID-19 and the Floyd protests. For example, the Page features [content](#) calling George Floyd’s death a “psy-op/precursor to a terrorist Antifa insurgency” and claims it is “odd” that Floyd’s death happened “just as COVID-19 loses traction.” The Page also features misinformation about protestors, including a post marked “[false](#)” by Facebook’s independent fact-checking partners in which the Page claims CNN “lightened the photo of [a] man who drove into the protestor last night in Seattle.” Since the Page was created in April, independent fact-checkers have marked eight posts as “false,” yet Facebook’s algorithm still recommends the Page.

**Opening up America Again**
June 15 at 8:44 PM · 🌐

CNN SUCKS! This is what they do!

CNN lightened the photo of the man who drove into the protester last night in Seattle. They said he was white.. ck out the real photo. Ok.. do you understand they are just giving everyone riled up with LIES..

False information

Checked by independent fact-checkers

See Why

> **Facebook Recommendation: “Big Facts.”** Facebook’s “Top Suggestions” algorithm also recommended the Page “[Big Facts](#),” which is categorized on Facebook as a “New & Media Website” and has nearly 25,000 followers. Like other Facebook Page recommendations, “Big Facts” regularly shared misinformation and conspiracy theories in the wake of the Floyd protests. The Page includes [claims that](#) “China, Iran, [and] Russia” sent “in Antifa to vandalize property as if they are freedom fighters,” [that](#) “Democratic mayors sent SWAT teams to shut down churches...but let ANTIFA burn down cities,” and that the Black Lives Matter website [donates directly to Democratic politicians](#), a claim marked as “false” by Facebook’s independent fact-checking partners.



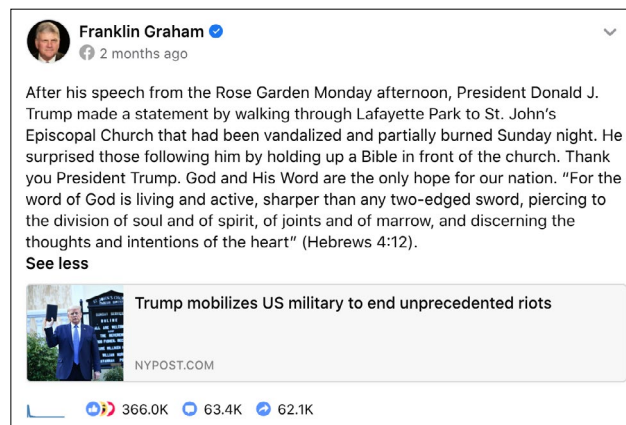
19

FACEBOOK'S NEWS FEED ALGORITHM BOOSTED BIGOTRY OVER OBJECTIVE NEWS OR ANTI-RACIST ACTIVISM IN THE WAKE OF GEORGE FLOYD'S KILLING.

While Facebook's algorithms are opaque and each user's News Feed is personalized, examining which posts generate the most interactions across the platform provides insight into the kind of content the company's AI is elevating on any given subject. Using the social media monitoring tool CrowdTangle, Accountable Tech conducted an analysis of the highest-performing Facebook posts about George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement and found that bigotry consistently came out on top.

> **The highest-performing Facebook posts about George Floyd came from preacher consistently featured on SPLC "hate watch."** Accountable Tech found that four of the top five Facebook posts about "[George Floyd](#)" belonged to Franklin Graham, a controversial preacher with a well-documented history of [bigotry](#). Graham is [consistently featured](#) by the Southern Poverty Law Center's "hate watch." The single highest performing [post](#) about Floyd was Graham praising President Trump's infamous photo-op at St. John's church, linking to a [New York Post](#) article with the headline: "Trump mobilizes US military to end unprecedented riots." The only non-Franklin Graham post to crack the top five was the Daily Wire's Ben Shapiro [touting](#) Trump's refusal to provide federal funding to Minnesota.

Expanding the parameters of the search to include content without links, the single highest-performing "[George Floyd](#)" post on all of Facebook is a video from far-right activist Candace Owens, which has racked up more than 93 million views, smearing the late Floyd – [posted](#) with the text, "Confession: I DO NOT support George Floyd and I refuse to see him as a martyr."



POSTED: [JUNE 2, 2020](#).

¹ Analysis reflects CrowdTangle data for searches on the keyword terms in quotation marks, sorted by most interactions among all posts containing links from U.S.-based pages over the period from 5/25/20 – 7/15/20, unless otherwise noted.

> **The highest-performing Facebook post about the Black Lives Matter movement also came from Graham.** Similarly, Accountable Tech found that each of the top five posts about “Black Lives Matter” came from either Franklin Graham or Ben Shapiro, with the number one spot going to a Graham invective baselessly attacking BLM as a Marxist organization that’s “against the American model and patriotism in this country.” And a separate search showed the top “#BLM” post was Candace Owens fundraising for a cafe owner who had slandered George Floyd as a ‘thug’ – a campaign that got Owens suspended from GoFundMe due to her “repeated pattern of inflammatory statements that spread hate, discrimination, intolerance and falsehoods against the black community at a time of profound national crisis.”



POSTED: JUNE 6, 2020.

CONCLUSION

As America has attempted to navigate through an historic pandemic and racial reckoning – a time in which empathy, honest discourse, and authoritative information have been sorely needed – Facebook has failed us. Its engagement-optimized algorithms have promoted harmful misinformation, extreme voices, and hateful content. Facebook has not merely been negligent amid these crises; it has actively exacerbated them.