

GUARDIANS OF INFORMATION

Trafficking in aborted foetuses, Open's wacky fact-checking debunked

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OPEN

The online Italian newspaper *Open* collaborates in a project of Meta, the company that includes Facebook and Instagram, with the declared aim of “fighting fake news and disinformation”. To do this, it uses what are called fact-checkers (or debunkers), who are

usually, but not always, journalists, called upon to do what any journalist should do: fact-checking. Only that the term fact-checker is more specifically linked to the idea of cleaning up what is stated or written by politicians or even fellow journalists, to dismantle so-called fake news. Which may be true but inconvenient news.

An article by yours truly - published on 13 August by the *Nuova Bussola* in Italian and the *Daily Compass*, entitled *Trafficking of aborted fetuses, finally online videos Kamala Harris cached* - was the subject of fact-checking by David Puente, a journalist from *Open*.

In summary, let us recall that our article concerned the official publication, on 30 July this year, of five videos secretly filmed (between 2014 and 2015) by pro-life activists from the Center for Medical Progress (CMP) and which show - we repeat - the involvement of some Planned Parenthood executives in the collection and trade of tissues and organs of aborted children, complete with an agreement on the price. These are five videos subpoenaed during a hearing held by the US Congress on 19 March 2024, videos whose release was blocked for 8-9 years - along with other compromising footage - with the complicity of, among others, the office of then California Attorney General Kamala Harris and part of the US judiciary: judges, that is, who handled the case both civilly and criminally. The article then pointed out that these videos had, finally, already been online for a fortnight, but without the liberal media mentioning them.

The misleading old news about Kamala Harris' "cover-up" videos of alleged "trafficking in aborted fetuses" (16 August 2024). Accompanying Puente's article is a *Wikipedia* line, marked with a discredit rate: "Missing context". In other *Wikipedia* *Open* has opted for a more serious rate, i.e. "false", so we could almost say we were pardoned... joking aside, the "missing context" stamp already reveals the absolute arbitrariness of this type of judgement, which could be given to any article, just because it lacks - for example - the indication of some place, date or character.

But let us go to the contents of the fact-checking, anticipating our response: Puente's long article does not in fact contain any denial of ours, as anyone can verify on the basis of the documents, reports, trial decisions, videos published by the CMP, all news to which the *Daily Compass/Nuova Bussola* has devoted several articles since the beginning of the affair, in 2015.

In his fact-checking, Puente mixes information that serves more to prove a pre-packaged thesis of his own (*The misleading old news*), which, however, misses the target of what we have pointed out. For instance, the *Open* journalist goes to great lengths to

prove that the aforementioned five videos had long been known to Congress, as shown at least by the excerpt of a conversation in [the 471-page report](#) (a report we had already [written about at the time](#)). But nowhere in our article is it claimed that the five videos were new to Congress, but rather, more simply, that those five videos are now freely accessible to anyone with an Internet connection. The news, as per our headline, is that they are (finally) *online*.

Let us read and comment, in order, on the main points of the *fact-checking* that Puente highlights in his outline "For those in a hurry".

Puente writes: "Republicans in the US Congress, during the Trump presidency, found no evidence to support the allegations against Planned Parenthood, despite having the same footage released in 2024. Congress took 15 months and \$1.59 million to conduct the investigation into Planned Parenthood, releasing a final report on 30 December 2016. In order to analyse the videos, the US Congress obtained the full recordings from the Center for Medical Progress (CMP)".

We answer, first of all, with a minor detail: both the Congressional enquiry and the publication of the report by the Select Investigative Panel on Infant Lives (this is the name of the parliamentary committee that investigated the case) took place before Trump took office as president (20 January 2017). Moreover, and this is the main detail, the Congressional report actually made several allegations against Planned Parenthood, as well as universities, biotech companies, and laboratories variously involved in the buying and selling of aborted baby parts: "The Select Investigative Panel has made numerous criminal and regulatory referrals [followed by a list of 15 referrals] and investigations are ongoing across the country". But the power of the Congressional panel stopped there, as it is the judiciary that must pursue and prove the allegations. This is clearly not easy in a context where Planned Parenthood has managed to block videos for 9 years, pass as the victim and put the perpetrators of the videos in the dock. In any case, the Congressional panel identified four different business models concerning the buying and selling of aborted babies' tissues and organs. And Chairwoman Marsha Blackburn, along with the other Republican members of the panel, demanded that Planned Parenthood no longer be funded with public money.

Returning to Puente's summary, he writes: "The videos provided by the CMP had been edited or manipulated with clear deceptive intent, omitting statements that would have exonerated the organisation". The *Open* journalist, in the body of the article, adds that "the manipulations included the omission of statements in which a Planned Parenthood executive clearly stated that the organisation did not profit from foetal

tissue".

We respond: if that executive had stated otherwise, she would have admitted guilt... In any case, even if that executive's statements were sincere, that does not cancel statements to the contrary - attested to by video footage and emails - made by several other Planned Parenthood executives. In our 13 August article, we cited the names of two of them, Ann Schutt-Aine and Tram Nguyen, who reassured their alleged new clients that at the huge Houston clinic they usually obtained fairly intact aborted fetuses and therefore organs - such as lungs, kidneys, etc. - that were also intact, equally intact. And Schutt-Aine herself then became the protagonist of an email exchange with one of her superiors, to finalise the secret contract proposal received from the client who later - when the scandal broke out - turned out to be a CMP reporter. So, to speak of "edited and manipulated" videos is a pretext, because it is one thing to have a montage that 'breaks up' reality completely, to the point of deforming it; and another to have a montage that shows you, for several minutes at a time, the most significant dialogues. Those who want to, can [watch the videos we have described](#) and reach their own conclusion.

Puente continues: "CMP activists were indicted in 2017 for 15 offences by California Attorney General Xavier Becerra, not Kamala Harris".

We reply: true, but what does this have to do with the *fact-checking* of our article of 13 August 2024? This news website has already written several times about Becerra's role. But in the 13 August article, we simply recalled not that the then California Attorney General, Kamala Harris, had indicted the CMP activists, but that her office - it was March 2016 - had conducted, after a meeting with prominent Planned Parenthood executives, a raid on David Daleiden's home to seize all material concerning the undercover videos. As for the rest, we had already said that Harris was certainly not the only one to favour the abortion giant, but to date she is certainly the most prominent figure, and it should be normal for a newspaper to try to bring out certain shadowy areas related to her conduct.

The last point made by the *Open* journalist: "In 2019, a federal civil jury in San Francisco had ruled that Planned Parenthood should receive a settlement of more than \$2 million".

We reply: true, but Puente does not say that presiding over the case in the San Francisco District Court was William Orrick III, with a heavy conflict of interest (i.e. the presence of a Planned Parenthood facility within the Good Samaritan Family Resource

Center, which he founded), which had prompted the defence of Sandra Merritt, a CMP activist, to ask for the judge to be recused: a request rejected by Orrick himself. As *Life News* reconstructs: "Judge Orrick severely restricted the evidence, and at the end, gave instructions to the jury on how they should rule on critical issues. The jury decided in favor of the abortion giant on each count, including RICO [a law designed to thwart criminal organisations, including the Mafia, *ed*], and awarded more than \$2 million in damages. The court subsequently awarded Planned Parenthood nearly \$14 million in attorney's fees and costs, for a total judgment of over \$16 million. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals [considered among the most liberal courts in the world, *ed*] upheld the decision, and the U.S. Supreme Court declined to review the case without any comment".

In conclusion, Planned Parenthood has so far managed to turn the scandal in its favour, by having the authors of a journalistic investigation indicted, from which its wrongdoings, or rather horrors (so far not recognised as crimes by the judicial system, but that's another matter), emerge. And this is exactly what we have written and which Puentes's 'fact-checking', with its twists and turns, fails to disprove, turning out to be an own goal. An own goal: that on the one hand discredits a truthful article, ours, but on the other - for those who want to see - shows how certain modern-day 'guardians of information' act.