

# Mark Zuckerberg lies about content moderation to Joe Rogan's face

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## The head of Meta cracked under Republican pressure.

I'll spare you the experience of listening to one of the richest men in the world whine and just tell you straight out: [Mark Zuckerberg's interview on The Joe Rogan Experience](#) is full of lies.

Zuckerberg, CEO of Facebook's parent company Meta, sets the tone at the very beginning: "I think at some level you only start one of these companies if you believe in giving people a voice, right?"

Unfortunately I wasn't born yesterday, and I remember Zuckerberg's first attempt at getting rich: [FaceMash](#), a clone of HotOrNot where he uploaded photos of his fellow female students to be rated — without their consent. "Giving people a voice" is one way of describing that, I suppose.

Personally, I'd call it "creep shit."

If you can get away with the small bullshit, you can get away with the big bullshit, right?

Early on in the interview, Zuckerberg tests out the water to see how much pushback he'll get; Rogan is a notoriously soft interviewer — it's like listening to your dumbest stoned friend hold a conversation — but he does occasionally challenge his guests. So Zuckerberg says that there are limits on the First Amendment by saying, "It's like, all right, you can't yell fire in a crowded theater."

"Fire in a crowded theater" makes [every lawyer I know foam at the mouth because it's flat out wrong](#).

It is not the law, and it never has been. And, obviously, you *can* yell "fire" in a crowded theater — especially if, you know, *the theater is on fire*. Rogan says nothing in response to this, and

Zuckerberg knows he's got a willing mark. If you can get away with the small bullshit, you can get away with the big bullshit, right?

For his part, Rogan serves up Zuckerberg a series of softballs, setting his own tone by referring to content moderation as "censorship." The idea that the government was forcing Zuckerberg to "censor" news about covid and covid vaccines, Hunter Biden's laptop, and the election is something of a running theme throughout the interview. When Zuckerberg isn't outright lying about any of this, he's quite vague — but in case you were wondering, a man who was [formally rebuked by the city of San](#)

[Francisco](#) for putting his name on a hospital while his platforms spread health misinformation thinks that “on balance, the vaccines are more positive than negative.” Whew!

Misinformation on Facebook started well before the 2016 election — as early as 2014, [scammers were spreading Ebola lies on Facebook](#). Shortly after the 2016 election, Adam Mosseri — then Facebook’s VP of product management — [said in a statement](#) that Facebook was combating fake news but “there’s so much more we need to do.” Facebook did receive criticism for spreading fake news, including misinformation that benefitted President Donald Trump, but even then, [Zuckerberg wasn’t having it](#). “I do think there is a certain profound lack of empathy in asserting that the only reason someone could have voted the way they did is they saw some fake news,” Zuckerberg said.

“It’s something out of like *1984*.”

Still, [in the 2020 election, Facebook](#) — along with other social media networks — took a harsher stance on fake news, making it harder for [Macedonian teenagers](#) to make a profit off Trump supporters. During his Rogan interview, Zuckerberg now characterizes this intervention as giving “too much deference to a lot of folks in the media who were basically saying, okay, there’s no way that this guy could have gotten elected except for misinformation.”

Facebook implemented [a fact-checking program](#), one that involved partners such as the conservative online magazine *The Dispatch*, Reuters, Agence France-Presse and USA Today. In a concession to Donald Trump’s second presidency, implemented before Trump even took the oath of office, Zuckerberg has said Facebook will end the program. “We’re going to get back to our roots and focus on reducing mistakes, simplifying our policies and restoring free expression on our platforms,” Zuckerberg said in the video announcing the move.

On the Rogan show, Zuckerberg went further in describing the fact-checking program he’d implemented: “It’s something out of like *1984*.” He says the fact-checkers were “too biased,” though he doesn’t say exactly how.

The problem wasn’t that the fact-checking was bad; it was that conservatives are more likely to share misinformation and get fact-checked, [as some research has shown](#). That means conservatives are also more likely to be moderated. In this sense, perhaps it wasn’t Facebook’s fact-checking systems that had a liberal bias, but *reality*.

The biggest lie of all is a lie of omission

Well, Zuckerberg’s out of the business of reality now. I am sympathetic to the difficulties social media platforms faced in trying to moderate during covid — where rapidly-changing information about the pandemic was difficult to keep up with and conspiracy theories ran amok. I’m just not convinced it

happened the way Zuckerberg describes. Zuckerberg whines about being pushed by the Biden administration to fact-check claims: “These people from the Biden administration would call up our team, and, like, scream at them, and curse,” Zuckerberg says.

“Did you record any of these phone calls?” Rogan asks.

“I don’t know,” Zuckerberg says. “I don’t think we were.”

Many of the controversial moderation calls Facebook made in the pandemic were during the Trump administration

Rogan then asks who, specifically, was pressuring Facebook. And Zuckerberg has no answer: “It was people in the Biden administration,” he says. “I think it was, you know, I wasn’t involved in those conversations directly, but I think it was.”

But the biggest lie of all is a lie of omission: Zuckerberg doesn’t mention the relentless pressure conservatives have placed on the company for years — which has now clearly paid off. Zuckerberg is particularly full of shit here because [Republican Rep. Jim Jordan released Zuckerberg’s internal communications](#) which document this!

In his letter to Jordan’s committee, Zuckerberg writes, “*Ultimately it was our decision whether or not to take content down.*” Emphasis mine. “Like I said to our teams at the time, I feel strongly that we should not compromise our content standards due to pressure from any Administration in either direction – and we’re ready to push back if something like this happens again.”

Those emails also reveal Zuckerberg wanted to blame the Biden White House for how Facebook chose to moderate the “lab leak” conspiracy theory of covid origins. “Can we include that the WH put pressure on us to censor the lab leak theory?” he asked in a WhatsApp chat. His former president of global affairs, Nick Clegg, responded, “I don’t think they put specific pressure on that theory.”

Joel Kaplan, the former George W. Bush advisor who has now replaced Clegg, said that blaming the White House for Facebook’s behavior would “supercharge” conservatives who believed the social media giant was “collaborating” with the Biden administration. “If they’re more interested in criticizing us than actually solving the problems, then I’m not sure how it’s helping the cause to engage with them further,” Zuckerberg wrote. This doesn’t seem to show that the Biden administration successfully censored anything.

Facebook was widely and obviously targeted by Republican lawmakers

In fact, many of the [controversial moderation calls](#) Facebook made in [the pandemic](#) were [during the Trump administration](#). Take, for instance, [the “Plandemic” video hoax](#): Facebook removed the

video in 2020. Joe Biden took office in 2021. If Zuckerberg was dealing with an administration pressuring him about this, *it was the Trump administration*. The Biden White House may well have engaged in similar outreach, but it was joining what was [already an active discussion about Facebook moderation](#).

Facebook was widely and obviously targeted by Republican lawmakers, including Jordan, [Senator Ted Cruz](#), [Florida governor Ron DeSantis](#), [Texas governor Greg Abbott](#), [Senator Marsha Blackburn](#), and [incoming Vice President JD Vance](#). It was mostly conservatives who threatened him during the [interminable and pointless](#) Congressional hearings Zuckerberg sat through for years – often asking him to comment directly on conspiracy theories or demand that individual trolls be reinstated to his platforms.

But Zuckerberg didn't mention any of that to Rogan. Instead, he was upset that the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau started [investigating him for improperly using financial information to target ads](#). What does Zuckerberg say about this? Well, let me give it to you straight:

They kind of found some theory they wanted to investigate. And it's like, okay, clearly they were trying really hard, right? To like, to like, find, find some theory, but it, like, I don't know. It just, it kind of, like, throughout the, the, the, the, the party and the government, there was just sort of, I don't know if it's, I don't know how this stuff works. I mean, I've never been in government. I don't know if it's like a directive or it's just like a quiet consensus that like, we don't like these guys. They're not doing what we want. We're going to punish them. But, but it's, it's, it's tough to be at the other end of that.

This is a compelling demonstration that jujitsu and MMA training (or hunting pigs in Hawaii or making your neck real thick or whatever) isn't going to help you act aggressive if you're constitutionally bitchmade. Blaming the CFPB for a witch-hunt when we've all watched *Republicans* target Facebook really is something! That's what this whole performance is about: getting Trump, Vance, Jordan and the rest of the Republican party to lay off. After all, the [Cambridge Analytica scandal cost Facebook just \\$5 billion](#) — chump change, really. If Zuckerberg plays ball, his next privacy whoopsie could be even cheaper.

In fact, Zuckerberg even offers Republicans another target: Apple. According to Zuckerberg, the way Apple makes money is “by basically, like, squeezing people.” Among his complaints:

- [Apple's 30 percent commission on App Store sales](#)
- [Airpods work better with Apple phones than all other headphones](#)

- Apple wouldn't let Zuckerberg's Meta Ray-Bans connect to iOS using the same quick-setup protocol AirPods use
- iMessage is a walled garden, and groupchats go wonky if there's a person with an Android phone in there
- "I mean at some point I did this like back of the envelope calculation of like all the random rules that Apple puts out. If you know, if they didn't apply, like I think you know, it's like — and this is just Meta, I think we'd like, make twice as much profit or something."

At least some of these Apple issues actually matter — there is a [legitimate DOJ antitrust case against the company](#). But that isn't what's on Zuckerberg's mind. The last point is the important one, from his perspective. He has a longstanding grudge against Apple after the company [implemented anti-tracking features](#) into its default browser, Safari. Facebook [criticized those changes](#) in newspaper ads, even. The policy cost social media companies [almost \\$10 billion](#), according to *The Financial Times*; Facebook lost the most money "in absolute terms." You see, it turns out if you ask people whether they want to be tracked, the answer is generally no — and that's bad for Facebook's business.

Zuckerberg wants us to believe this isn't about politics at all

But Zuckerberg wants us to believe this isn't about politics at all. Getting Rogan's listeners riled up about Zuckerberg's enemies and finding Republicans a new tech company target is just a coincidence, as are the changes to allow more hate speech on his platforms happening now, changes that just happen to pacify Republicans. All of this has *nothing* to do with the incoming administration, Zuckerberg tells Rogan. "I think a lot of people look at this as like a purely political thing, because they kind of look at the timing and they're like, hey, well, you're doing this right after the election." he says. "We try to have policies that reflect mainstream discourse."

And did this work? Did Zuckerberg's gambit to talk about how social media needed more "masculine energy" win over the bros? Well, Barstool's Dave Portnoy isn't fooled by this shit.

Zuckerberg is such a spineless jellyfish. Somebody from Biden's team (unnamed) told his team to take stuff down so he rolled over. Trump gets elected and suddenly he's a new man. 🙄 [pic.twitter.com/ZOIKJkrLvs](https://pic.twitter.com/ZOIKJkrLvs)

— Dave Portnoy (@stoolpresident) [January 10, 2025](#)

I don't know. I did think it was pretty funny that after all these complaints about government "censorship," Zuckerberg didn't say a word about Trump and the Republicans' efforts at it. After all, Trump, the incoming president who has on occasion [threatened to put Zuckerberg in prison](#), was recently asked if the Facebook changes were in response to his threats.

“Probably,” Trump said.