

# Trump's bombardment of dishonesty: Fact-checking 32 of his false claims to Time

 [cnn.com/2024/05/04/politics/fact-check-trump-time-magazine/index.html](https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/04/politics/fact-check-trump-time-magazine/index.html)

Daniel Dale

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Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump speaks during a rally on May 1, 2024 in Waukesha, Wisconsin.

Scott Olson/Getty Images  
*Washington CNN* —

Former President Donald Trump delivered a bombardment of dishonesty in his interviews with Time magazine.

Trump, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, made at least 32 false claims in the two April interviews that Time released this week. His serial inaccuracy spanned a wide range of subjects, including the economy, abortion, the NATO military alliance, the January 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol, his legal cases, his record as president and the 2020 election he has relentlessly lied about for more than three years.

Time published its own fact check of some of the 32 claims on Tuesday, when it released its cover story on Trump. Here is an in-depth CNN debunking.

## Trump's record as president

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### Terrorism during Trump's presidency

Trump claimed that, during his presidency, “there was very little terrorism. We had none. I had four years of — we had no terrorism. We didn't have a World Trade Center knocked down.”

**Facts First:** *While it's true, of course, that Trump's presidency didn't feature anything comparable to the 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, his claim that “we had no terrorism” isn't true. There were a variety of terrorist attacks on the US during his term.*

Trump's own Justice Department alleged that a mass murder in New York City in 2017, which killed eight people and injured others, was a terrorist attack carried out in support of ISIS; Trump repeatedly lamented this attack during his presidency. Trump's Justice Department also alleged that a 2019 attack by an extremist member of Saudi Arabia's military, which killed three US servicemembers and injured others at a military base in Florida, “was motivated by jihadist ideology” and was carried out by a longtime “associate” of al Qaeda.

There were various additional terrorist attacks during Trump's presidency. Notably, Trump's Justice Department said it was a “domestic terrorist attack” when one of Trump's supporters mailed improvised explosive devices to CNN, prominent Democratic officials and other people in 2018.

In 2019, a White supremacist pleaded guilty to multiple charges in New York, including first-degree murder in furtherance of an act of terrorism, for killing a Black man in March 2017 to try to start a race war. And Trump's Justice Department described a 2019 shooting massacre at a Walmart in Texas as an act of domestic terrorism; the gunman who killed 23 people was targeting Latinos.

### Border wall construction

Talking about his wall on the border with Mexico, Trump said, “I completed what I said I was going to do, much more than I said I was going to do.”

**Facts First:** *This is false; Trump didn't achieve nearly as much wall construction as he had pledged on the campaign trail in 2015 and 2016.*

Trump repeatedly said in 2015 and 2016 that “we need” 1,000 miles of wall to protect the southern border, with another 1,000 miles already protected by natural barriers. But not even close to 1,000 miles were built during his presidency; official federal statistics put the total

construction at 458 miles, and only 52 miles of that total was new “primary” wall built where no barriers had previously existed. When Trump left office, there were about 280 miles of the border where wall construction had been planned but not executed.

### **The departure of Attorney General William Barr**

Asked why voters should trust him with a second term when many of the people who worked closely with him during his first term now say he doesn't deserve another term, Trump said, “Well, they don't because I didn't like them.

Some of those people I fired. Bill Barr, I fired Bill Barr. I didn't want him.”

**Facts First:** *This is false. Barr resigned as attorney general in December 2020; he was not fired, as a White House official confirmed to CNN at the time. Trump had been frustrated with Barr over Barr's public rejection of his lies about mass election fraud and had been seriously considering firing Barr the same month, but Trump did not do so — and he made a positive public statement about Barr upon the resignation, writing on social media: “Just had a very nice meeting with Attorney General Bill Barr at the White House. Our relationship has been a very good one, he has done an outstanding job! As per letter, Bill will be leaving just before Christmas to spend the holidays with his family.”*

### **The US military presence in South Korea**

Trump claimed that, before he negotiated a better deal, South Korea was paying far too little “for 40,000 troops that we had there.”

**Facts First:** *Trump's “40,000” number is inaccurate. As of December 31, 2016, less than a month before Trump took office, the US had 26,878 military personnel in South Korea, including 23,468 on active duty, according to official statistics from the Pentagon's Defense Manpower Data Center. As of December 31, 2018, less than two months before the Trump administration signed a new deal with South Korea, the total was 29,389 US military personnel in South Korea, including 26,311 on active duty.*

### **The US financial arrangement with South Korea**

Trump claimed that he got South Korea to agree to pay the US “billions of dollars” for its military presence there, but “now probably now that I'm gone, they're paying very little.” He continued, “I don't know if you know that they renegotiated the deal I made. And they're paying very little. But they paid us billions, many billions of dollars, for us having troops there. From what I'm hearing, they were able to renegotiate with the Biden Administration and bring that number way, way down to what it was before, which was almost nothing.”

**Facts First:** *Trump made two false claims here. First, it's not even close to true that the Biden administration permitted South Korea to pay "almost nothing" for the US military presence there. In fact, as Time noted in its own fact check, South Korea agreed under President Joe Biden to pay more than it had been paying during the Trump era. Completing negotiations that began under Trump, South Korea agreed in March 2021 to a 2021 payment increase of 13.9% — meaning its payment that year would be about \$1 billion — and then additional increases in 2022 through 2025 tied to increases in South Korea's defense budget.*

Second, it's also not true that South Korea paid "almost nothing" for the US troop presence before Trump came along. South Korea agreed to pay the US about \$867 million in 2014 and, through 2018, to increase the payments annually based on the rate of inflation. The Congressional Research Service wrote in a 2023 report: "In the past, South Korea generally paid for 40%-50% (over \$800 million annually) of the total non-personnel costs of maintaining the U.S. troop presence in South Korea."

### **Trump's popularity in Israel**

After boasting about what he did for Israel during his presidency, Trump said, "The people of Israel appreciate it. I have like a 98% — I have the highest approval numbers."

**Facts First:** *Trump does not have a 98% approval rating in Israel. Tamar Hermann, an expert on Israeli public opinion who is a political science professor and a senior research fellow at the Israeli Democracy Institute, said in an email to CNN this week: "Indeed in certain segments of the Jewish public (mainly the Right) Trump was very popular during his presidency. However, in no serious survey did he hit 98% as far as the general public was concerned."*

A 2018 poll found that 59% of Jewish Israelis had a favorable view of Trump. A poll late in the 2020 presidential election found that 70% of Jewish Israelis thought a Trump victory would be best for Israel's interests (versus 13% who chose Biden). A poll released this March found that 44% of Israeli adults wanted Trump elected in 2024, 30% wanted Biden and 26% were unsure.

Hermann said President Bill Clinton was more popular in Israel during his presidency than Trump was during his, and that "Trump has lost much of his popularity here after leaving the White House because of his hectic/sometimes antagonistic statements."

### **Trump and the law on monument destruction**

Trump repeated his familiar claim that he had passed a law, or revived an old law, to give an automatic 10-year prison sentence to anyone who desecrates a monument.

He said, "I mean, if you look at what happened in Washington with monuments, I passed the law. I took an old law, brought it into effect that you get a minimum of 10 years without any adjustment if you do anything to desecrate a monument and everything was immediately set up... I signed into effect a law that gives you 10 years, not one day less than 10 years of prison if you desecrate a monument. You know, that was very effective."

**Facts First:** *Trump's claims are false. He didn't "pass" any "law" about damage to monuments, and he did not impose an automatic 10-year sentence for damaging monuments. In fact, the executive order he issued on the subject, in 2020, did not create any mandatory minimum or even require any increase in sentences.*

Rather, the executive order simply directed the attorney general to "prioritize" investigations and prosecutions of monument-destruction cases and declared that it is federal policy to prosecute such cases to the fullest extent permitted under existing law – including one that allowed a sentence of *up to* 10 years in prison for willfully damaging federal property if the damage exceeds \$100. The executive order did nothing to force judges to impose a 10-year sentence.

## Trump, Minneapolis and the National Guard

Trump spoke of his willingness to use the military to assist with the massive deportation initiative he has promised. He said, "When we talk military, generally speaking, I talk National Guard. I've used the National Guard in Minneapolis. And if I didn't use it, I don't think you'd have Minneapolis standing right now, because it was really bad."

**Facts First:** *Though Trump has repeatedly claimed that he is the person who deployed the National Guard in Minneapolis during the unrest that followed the murder of George Floyd in 2020, Minnesota Democratic Gov. Tim Walz, not Trump, is actually the person who did so. Walz first activated the Minnesota National Guard more than seven hours before Trump publicly threatened to deploy the Guard himself.*

Trump claimed in 2020, as he has since, that he deployed the Guard in Minnesota because the Democratic governor was unwilling to do it. That's not true, either. In addition, Walz's office told CNN in 2020 that the governor activated the Guard in response to requests from officials in Minneapolis and St. Paul — cities also run by Democrats.

You can read more details here.

## NATO

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### The US share of NATO funding

Criticizing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military alliance and its funding structure, Trump said, "I went, I looked at the numbers, and I said, wait a minute, the United States is paying for NATO. We're paying for close to 100% of NATO."

**Facts First:** *Trump's claim is false. Official NATO figures show that in 2016, the last year before Trump took office, US defense spending made up about 71% of total defense spending by NATO members – a large majority, but not "close to 100%." And Trump's claim is even more inaccurate if he was talking about the direct contributions to NATO that cover NATO's organizational expenses and are set based on each country's national income; the US was responsible for about 22% of those contributions in 2016.*

The US share of total NATO military spending fell to about 65% in 2023. And the US is now responsible for about 16% of direct contributions to NATO, the same as Germany. Erwan Lagadec, an expert on NATO as a research professor at George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs and director of its Transatlantic Program, said the US share was reduced from 22% "to placate Trump" and is a "sweetheart deal" given that the US makes up more than half of the alliance's total GDP.

### **NATO countries' military spending**

Trump said of NATO members: "I just want them to pay their bills." He added, "I don't need to renegotiate the terms of the treaty. All I need to do is have them pay their bills. They don't pay their bills."

**Facts First:** *Trump's claim is false. NATO's target of having its members each spend 2% of their gross domestic product on defense is a self-described "guideline" that does not create "bills." In fact, the guideline doesn't require payments to NATO or the US at all; it simply requires each country to spend on its own defense programs. And Trump's categorical claim that NATO members "don't pay their bills" is now inaccurate in an additional way. While a majority of NATO members have traditionally not met the 2% target, NATO's chief said in February that 18 of the 31 members subject to the guideline were expected to hit the target this year.*

### **NATO's funding and stability**

Trump said, "I did a hell of a job getting money for NATO because nobody else — NATO had no money. NATO couldn't have even prosecuted what they're doing right now. They had no money." He also said, "They had no cash, they were dying."

**Facts First:** *While NATO chief Stoltenberg did give Trump partial credit for prodding member countries to increase their defense spending, it's just not true that "NATO had no money" before Trump became president. Defense spending by NATO members other than the US was about \$262 billion in 2016, certainly not nothing. (It rose to about \$314 billion in 2020,*

*Trump's last full year in office.) And there's simply no basis in reality for the claim that NATO was "dying" before Trump came along; Lagadec noted to CNN in 2023, when Trump made similar comments, that the only NATO member that had given "any sign" in recent years that it was thinking about leaving the alliance "was... the US, under Trump."*

## The cost of NATO's headquarters

Continuing to criticize NATO, Trump claimed that, before his presidency, "All they were doing was building stupid office buildings. They built a \$3 billion office building."

**Facts First:** *Trump's \$3 billion figure, which he has used before, is not close to accurate. NATO told CNN in 2020 that the headquarters building in Brussels, Belgium, was constructed for a sum under the approved budget of 1.178 billion euro, or about \$1.26 billion at Wednesday exchange rates — certainly an expensive facility, but less than half what Trump has repeatedly claimed.*

## The Covid-19 pandemic

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### Perceptions of pandemics

Speaking of his response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Trump said, "Everybody thought of a pandemic as an ancient problem. No longer a modern problem, right?"

**Facts First:** *It's not true that "everybody" thought of pandemics as an "ancient problem" that was not a problem in the "modern" age. As CNN noted when Trump made similar false claims in 2020, the US intelligence community, public health experts and officials in Trump's own administration had warned for years, prior to Covid-19, that the US was at risk from a pandemic. Some of their warnings specifically mentioned the possibility of a coronavirus pandemic.*

For example, the US intelligence community wrote in its 2018 worldwide threat assessment, and again in its 2019 assessment, of the risk to the US posed by a potential future influenza or coronavirus pandemic. The 2019 version said, "We assess that the United States and the world will remain vulnerable to the next flu pandemic or large scale outbreak of a contagious disease that could lead to massive rates of death and disability, severely affect the world economy, strain international resources, and increase calls on the United States for support."

During Trump's first year as president, officials from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention participated in a pandemic simulation with officials from other countries; a World Bank official told the Washington Post at the time that the simulation's purpose was "to prepare much more systematically to be ready for the 100 percent probability we will be dealing with this again. Probably sooner than we expect."

In response to similar Trump claims in 2020, Harvard University epidemiology professor Marc Lipsitch, director of Harvard's Center for Communicable Disease Dynamics, told CNN: "This was foreseeable, and foreseen, weeks and months ago, and only now is the White House coming out of denial and heading straight into saying it could not have been foreseen."

## Pandemic supplies

Speaking about his response to Covid-19, Trump repeated a claim he made repeatedly in 2020 — that "the cupboards were totally bare" and that the US had no supplies for dealing with the pandemic. Among other things, he said, "We had no ventilators. We had nothing."

**Facts First:** *It's not true that the US had "no ventilators" or "totally bare" cupboards when the pandemic hit, though it's true that some communities experienced early-pandemic shortages of some critical supplies and that the federal Strategic National Stockpile's supplies of some items, such as high-quality masks, were low. CNN repeatedly debunked this "no ventilators" claim in 2020.*

A spokesperson for the Trump-era Department of Health and Human Services told CNN in June 2020 that, when the pandemic hit, there had been about 19,000 ventilators in the federal Strategic National Stockpile for "many years," including 16,660 ventilators that were ready for immediate use in March 2020 — far more than the Trump administration had actually ended up distributing during the first three months of the crisis. The spokesperson confirmed that none of those 16,660 were purchased by the Trump administration.

Trump invoked the Defense Production Act in the spring of 2020 to accelerate the manufacturing of additional ventilators, and his administration sent thousands of ventilators to other countries in 2020.

## Trade and the economy

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### The trade deficit with China

Talking about his proposal for a significant tariff on US imports from China, Trump said, "China was going along making \$500 to \$600 billion a year and nobody was ever even mentioning it until I came along." Trump has used such language for years when speaking about the trade deficit with China, the annual difference between what the US imports from and exports to China.

**Facts First:** *Trump's claim is false. The US has never had a \$500 billion or \$600 billion trade deficit with China even if you only count trade in goods and ignore the services trade in which the US traditionally runs a surplus with China. The pre-Trump record for a goods deficit with China was about \$367 billion in 2015.*



The goods deficit hit a new record of about \$418 billion under Trump in 2018 before falling back under \$400 billion in subsequent years (and under \$300 billion under Biden in 2023, the lowest since 2010).

### **Past presidents and tariffs on China**

Defending his tariffs on Chinese products, Trump said, "Look, I took in billions of dollars from China. Nobody else ever did anything on China."

**Facts First:** *Temporarily leaving aside the fact that study after study has found that Americans, not China, overwhelmingly paid for Trump's tariffs on Chinese products, it's not true that "nobody else ever did anything on China." The US has had tariffs on goods from China since the late 1700s; as president, Barack Obama imposed new tariffs on goods from China; FactCheck.org reported that the US generated an "average of \$12.3 billion in custom duties a year from 2007 to 2016, according to the U.S. International Trade Commission DataWeb."*

This Trump claim to Time was a vaguer version of his oft-repeated false claim that no previous president generated even "10 cents" from tariffs on China.

### **Trade with the European Union**

Talking about trade policy, Trump said, "The E.U. is very tough with us.

They don't take our foreign products. They don't take our cars. We take Mercedes-Benz and Volkswagen and BMW. They don't take our cars." He said at another point in the interview, "They don't want anything from us. It's like a one-way street."

**Facts First:** *It's not true either that the European Union won't take American products in general or won't accept American cars in particular, though some US exports face EU trade barriers and though US automakers have often had a hard time gaining popularity with European consumers. The US exported about \$369 billion in goods to the European Union in 2023 (while importing about \$577 billion from the EU that year), federal figures show. According to a December 2023 report from the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association, the EU is the second-largest market for US vehicle exports — importing 271,476 US vehicles in 2022, valued at nearly 9 billion euro. (Some of these are vehicles made by European automakers at plants in the US.) The EU's Eurostat statistical office says that car imports from the US hit a new peak in 2020, Trump's last full year in office, at a value of about 11 billion euro.*

### **Moody's and the Trump-era economy**

Cortellessa told Trump that while there's no doubt the economy was strong during his presidency, "Moody's did say that your trade war with China cost the U.S. economy \$316 billion and [almost] 300,000 jobs." (Time noted in the transcript that the \$316 billion figure was actually from Bloomberg Economics.) Trump responded, "Yeah. Moody's doesn't know what they're talking about. We had the greatest economy in history. And Moody's acknowledges that."

**Facts First:** *Moody's does not "acknowledge" that Trump had the greatest economy in history. "It's not something I said or believe," Moody's Analytics chief economist Mark Zandi said in an email to CNN this week.*

Zandi continued: "The economy was weakening in 2019 going into 2020 under the weight of the higher tariffs. Manufacturing and agriculture were contracting. The yield curve had inverted, suggesting 2020 would be an even tougher year even if the pandemic had not hit. And inflation was sub-optimal at the time, as the Fed was working hard to lift inflation. So, I would not characterize it as 'the greatest economy of all time.'"

Zandi spoke in the fall of 2019 about Moody's modeling that found that Trump was likely to win in 2020 if the economy held up. Of course, the economy was then devastated by the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020.

## The January 6 attack

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### January 6 deaths

Talking about the riot at the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, when Trump supporters tried to prevent the certification of Joe Biden's election victory, Trump said, "And whether you like it or not, nobody died other than Ashli." He was referring to rioter Ashli Babbitt, a Trump supporter who was shot to death by a US Capitol Police officer as she tried to climb through a broken window into the Speaker's Lobby outside the House of Representatives.

**Facts First:** *Trump's claim that "nobody died other than Ashli" is false. Three other Trump supporters who were at the Capitol on January 6 died in medical emergencies, two from natural causes and one from accidental amphetamine intoxication, according to the chief medical examiner for Washington, DC.*

In addition, Capitol Police officer Brian Sicknick, who was attacked with pepper spray during the riot, died after suffering strokes the next day. The medical examiner found that Sicknick died of natural causes, but also told the Washington Post that "all that transpired played a role in his condition"; experts subsequently noted to CNN that stressful or traumatic events can lead to strokes.

### The Jan. 6 committee and Trump's 'peacefully and patriotically' comment

Defending his conduct on January 6, 2021, Trump told Time, “Number one, I made a speech that was peaceful and patriotic that nobody reports. Nobody talks about it: peacefully and patriotically. Nobody talks. You know, the committee never used those words. They refused to allow those words.”

**Facts First:** *It's not true that the House select committee that investigated the attack on the Capitol “never used” or “refused to allow” the part of Trump’s pre-riot speech in which he said, “I know that everyone here will soon be marching over to the Capitol building to peacefully and patriotically make your voices heard.” The committee explicitly mentioned the “peacefully and patriotically” comment in its official final report — though the committee also noted that this remark was at odds with much of the rest of the speech.*

The report said: “President Trump used the phrase scripted for him by his White House speechwriters, ‘peacefully and patriotically’ once, about 20 minutes into his speech. Then he spent the next 50-or-so minutes amping up his crowd with lies about the election, attacking his own Vice President and Republican Members of Congress, and exhorting the crowd to fight.”

## **Nancy Pelosi and January 6**

Speaking about the attack on the Capitol, Trump repeated his familiar claim about the supposed failures of Democratic Rep. Nancy Pelosi, who was the speaker of the House of Representatives at the time.

He said, “I’m the one that tried to stop it. I offered 10,000 soldiers and Nancy Pelosi turned me down.” After calling himself “a very innocent man,” Trump added, “Nancy Pelosi is responsible, because she refused to take the 10,000 soldiers or National Guardsmen that I offered. She refused to take them.”

**Facts First:** *It's not true that Pelosi turned down a Trump offer of 10,000 soldiers on January 6. In fact, she would not even have had the power to turn down such an offer if she had received one — which she has said she never did.*

Pelosi’s office has explicitly said she was never presented with an offer of 10,000 troops, telling CNN in 2022 that claims to the contrary are “lies.” In addition, the speaker of the House has no authority to prevent the deployment of the District of Columbia National Guard, which reports to the president (whose authority was delegated, under a decades-old executive order, to the Secretary of the Army). And contrary to Trump’s repeated claims, the speaker of the House is not in charge of Capitol security. Capitol security is overseen by the Capitol Police Board, a body that includes the sergeants at arms of the House and the Senate.

The House select committee that investigated the attack on the Capitol found “no evidence” Trump gave any actual order for 10,000 Guard troops. Christopher Miller, Trump’s acting defense secretary at the time of the attack on the Capitol, testified to the House select committee that Trump had, in a phone call on January 5, 2021, briefly and informally floated the idea of having 10,000 troops present on January 6 but did not issue any directive to that effect. Miller said, “I interpreted it as a bit of presidential banter or President Trump banter that you all are familiar with, and in no way, shape, or form did I interpret that as an order or direction.”

## Trump’s legal cases

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### Biden and Trump’s New York trial

When Time reporter Eric Cortellessa told Trump, “I just want to say for the record, there’s no evidence that President Biden directed this prosecution against you,” Trump responded, “Oh sure there is.” He said Cortellessa’s assertion is “so wrong.”

**Facts First:** *Cortellessa is right, Trump is wrong. There is no evidence that Biden has had any role in launching or running Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg’s prosecution over Trump’s alleged falsification of business records — and Bragg is a locally elected official who does not report to the federal government.*

As Trump has in the past, he invoked a lawyer on Bragg’s team, Matthew Colangelo, to support his claim to Time; Colangelo left the Justice Department in 2022 to join the district attorney’s office as senior counsel to Bragg. But there is no evidence that Biden had anything to do with Colangelo’s employment decision. Colangelo and Bragg had been colleagues before Bragg was elected Manhattan district attorney in 2021.

Before Colangelo worked at the Justice Department, he and Bragg worked at the same time in the office of New York’s state attorney general, where Colangelo investigated Trump’s charity and Trump’s financial practices and was involved in bringing various lawsuits against the Trump administration.

### Trump’s comment about the district attorney

When Cortellessa told Trump that “you said Alvin Bragg should be prosecuted,” Trump said, “When did I say Alvin Bragg should be prosecuted?” Cortellessa said, “It was at a rally.” Trump responded, “I don’t think I said that, no.”

**Facts First:** *Trump said it. In an April 2023 speech after he was indicted by a grand jury in Bragg’s prosecution, Trump said, “The criminal is the district attorney, because he illegally leaked massive amounts of grand jury information. For which he should be prosecuted. Or,*

*at a minimum, he should resign.” (It wasn’t clear what Trump was referring to; there is no evidence that Bragg committed a crime.)*

## Trump and Russia

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### Trump’s 2016 comment about Russia

Asked about his remark late last year that he would not be a dictator “other than day one” of his next presidency, Trump said he was just joking when he said it. He then invoked a controversial comment he made during his 2016 campaign, in which he asked Russia for help obtaining thousands of deleted Hillary Clinton emails.

He said to Time: “It’s like ‘Russia, if you’re listening.’ Remember ‘Russia, if you’re listening?’” He said, “That was said in the exact same vein. ‘Russia, if you’re listening.’ Everybody knows that was said sarcastically. But they cut off the laughter. You know, they cut it off immediately. As soon as it was — immediately, it was cut off. But that was said, sarcastically, a joke, it was in jest.”

**Facts First:** *Trump’s claim that the media “cut off the laughter” after his “Russia, if you’re listening” remark is false. He made the remark at a news conference in July 2016, with a straight face, and the full footage shows no audible laughter in the room.*

### Media coverage of the Trump campaign and Russia

Decrying media coverage of his 2016 campaign’s connections to Russia, Trump said, “You know, I have a lawsuit against the Pulitzer Foundation over the Russia, Russia, Russia hoax, because they talked about it for two and a half years and it turned out to be a total scam. And then certain writers got Nobel Prizes.”

**Facts First:** *As Time noted in its own fact check, no journalist involved in the Pulitzer-winning coverage has received a Nobel Prize.*

The Pulitzer, in the National Reporting category, was awarded to the staffs of the New York Times and the Washington Post for “deeply sourced, relentlessly reported coverage in the public interest that dramatically furthered the nation’s understanding of Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election and its connections to the Trump campaign, the President-elect’s transition team and his eventual administration.”

The Pulitzer Prize Board said it commissioned two independent reviews of the winning work after complaints from Trump and others; the board said in a 2022 statement that the separate reviews both found “that no passages or headlines, contentions or assertions in any of the winning submissions were discredited by facts that emerged subsequent to the conferral of the prizes.”

## The 2020 election

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### The legitimacy of the 2020 election

Trump repeated his usual lies about the 2020 presidential election, claiming to have “proof” it was “stolen” and also that opponents “used Covid to cheat and lots of other things to cheat.”

**Facts First:** *All of this remains false. The 2020 election was not rigged, Trump lost fair and square to Biden by an Electoral College margin of 306 to 232, his opponents did not cheat, and there is no evidence of any fraud even close to widespread enough to have changed the outcome in any state.*

### Trump's post about the 2020 election and the Constitution

Time reporter Eric Cortellessa asked Trump, “You once wrote on Truth Social that you might have to terminate parts of the Constitution. What did you mean by that?” Trump responded, “I never said that at all. I never said that at all. When I talk about certain things, we are, there is nothing more important than our Constitution.”

**Facts First:** *Trump's claim that “I never said that at all” is false. He wrote on his social media platform Truth Social in December 2022: “Do you throw the Presidential Election Results of 2020 OUT and declare the RIGHTFUL WINNER, or do you have a NEW ELECTION? A Massive Fraud of this type and magnitude allows for the termination of all rules, regulations, and articles, even those found in the Constitution.”*

One can quibble about whether Trump was saying he personally might have to terminate parts of the Constitution if elected president again or whether he wanted others to immediately ignore parts of the Constitution. But his categorical denial that he had said any such thing went way too far.

## Assorted other claims

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### Legal scholars and Roe v. Wade

Speaking about the Supreme Court's 2022 reversal of the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision that had guaranteed abortion rights across the country, Trump said, “Every legal scholar, Democrat, Republican, and other wanted that issue back at the states. You know, *Roe v. Wade* was always considered very bad law. Very bad.”

**Facts First:** *Trump's claim that “every legal scholar” wanted the issue of abortion law returned to the states — in other words, wanted Roe v. Wade overturned — is false. Many legal scholars wanted Roe preserved, as several of them reiterated to CNN when Trump made a similar claim in April.*

“Any claim that all legal scholars wanted *Roe* overturned is mind-numbingly false,” Rutgers Law School professor Kimberly Mutcherson, a legal scholar who supported the preservation of *Roe*, said Monday.

“Donald Trump’s claim is flatly incorrect,” said another legal scholar who did not want *Roe* overturned, Maya Manian, an American University law professor and faculty director of the university’s Health Law and Policy Program.

Trump’s claim is “obviously not” true, said Mary Ziegler, a law professor at the University of California, Davis, who is an expert on the history of the US abortion debate. Ziegler, who also did not want *Roe* overturned, said in a Monday interview: “Most legal scholars probably track most Americans, who didn’t want to overturn *Roe*. ... It wasn’t as if legal scholars were somehow outliers.”

It is true that some legal scholars who support abortion rights wished that *Roe* had been written differently; the late liberal Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was one of them. But Ziegler noted that although “there was a cottage industry of legal scholars kind of rewriting *Roe* – ‘what *Roe* should’ve said’ — that isn’t saying *Roe* should’ve been overturned. Those are very different things.”

You can read more here.

## **Migrants from China**

Talking about illegal immigration, Trump claimed that “we have a major force that’s forming in our country, when you see that over the last three weeks, 29,000 people came in from China, and they’re all fighting age, and they’re mostly males.”

**Facts First:** *There’s no basis for the claim that 29,000 Chinese migrants have entered the country “over the last three weeks.” Official federal data from US Customs and Border Protection shows that through the first half of the 2024 fiscal year, up to the end of March, 24,376 Chinese nationals had been encountered at the southern border. That’s a smaller number than the one Trump used, and it’s for six months rather than “three weeks.” The official data shows 41,970 total nationwide border encounters with Chinese nationals in the first six months of the fiscal year, again nowhere close to the pace Trump described.*

Official border data for April is not yet available, but there’s no public reporting about the April 1-12 period that would corroborate Trump’s claim about the three weeks prior. Also, there is no evidence for Trump’s repeated suggestions that Chinese migrants are trying to form some sort of military force in the US.

## Crime

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### Biden and crimes

Trump claimed that if the Supreme Court rules that presidents don't have criminal immunity, "Biden, probably nothing to do with me, he would be prosecuted for 20 different acts, because he's created such. You take a look at not only his criminal acts of taking a lot of money and being a Manchurian Candidate." (Trump went on to describe what he portrayed as Biden's foreign policy failures.)

**Facts First:** *This claim is nonsense. House Republicans' investigation into Biden and his family members has not found any evidence of the president committing crimes or illegally receiving any money. (They have found he received checks from his brother James Biden, which is not illegal, and the evidence strongly suggests those checks were loan repayments, as James Biden has said they were.) There is no basis for the claim that Biden is a "Manchurian Candidate," a term often used to describe a candidate who is controlled by a foreign adversary such as China.*

### Violent crime in 2023

Trump claimed that figures published by the FBI that show a roughly 6% drop in violent crime in 2023 (and a roughly 13% drop in homicides) are "fake numbers." He added that "the FBI gave fake numbers," "the FBI fudged the numbers and other people fudged numbers," and that "it's a lie" - insisting that "there is no way that crime went down over the last year."

**Facts First:** *Trump's claims are false. All available data makes clear that violent crime did decline last year. The 2023 quarterly statistics reported by the FBI are not "fake," though they are preliminary figures subject to future revision and they do not cover every community in the country.*

Crime data expert Jeff Asher said in an email to CNN this week: "While it is not clear just how precise the FBI's quarterly numbers will be when the final numbers are released in October, the quarterly figures released by the FBI come from more than 13,000 agencies and almost certainly accurately represent the scope and direction of crime trends in the US in 2023." (Asher said about 16,500 law enforcement agencies are eligible to report data.)

It's true that the preliminary 2023 data is not the final data; Asher, co-founder of the firm AH Datalytics, said the final numbers could certainly show a decline smaller than the currently reported decline of 5.7%. It's also true that the preliminary data has various shortcomings, including the fact that some agencies haven't yet provided their figures to the FBI (some may not submit at all). And Asher said the preliminary data includes some apparent errors that will be fixed later.



But none of this means the FBI has deliberately “fudged” the data as Trump suggested, nor that there was actually a crime increase last year.

Asher noted that other data sources – including city-by-city murder data collected by his firm, publicly published crime data from more than a dozen states, and provisional Centers for Disease Control and Prevention mortality data – all point to the same broad conclusion: “a large decline in murder/homicide and a smaller decline in violent crime in 2023.”

“Given the multitude of data sources pointing to the same widespread decline I’d say the FBI quarterly data is trustworthy in terms of the overarching trend while there still being a fair amount of uncertainty as to how large the declines in murder and violent crime may have been,” Asher said.