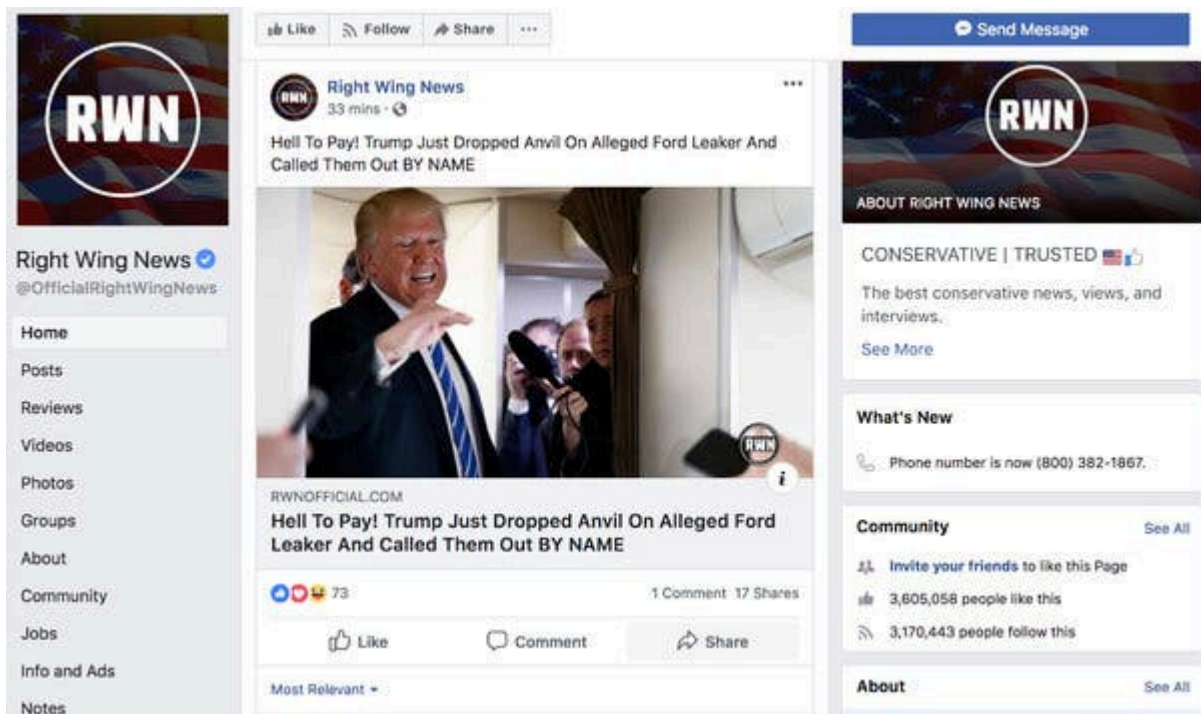


Made and Distributed in the U.S.A.: Online Disinformation | The New York Times

By Sheera Frenkel

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A screenshot of Right Wing News's Facebook page.

SAN FRANCISCO — When [Christine Blasey Ford testified before Congress](#) last month about Justice Brett M. Kavanaugh's alleged sexual assault, a website called Right Wing News sprang into action on Facebook.

The conservative site, run by the [blogger John Hawkins](#), had created a series of Facebook pages and accounts over the last year under many names, according to Facebook.

After Dr. Blasey testified, Right Wing News posted several false stories about her — including the suggestion that her lawyers were being bribed by Democrats — and then used the network of Facebook pages and accounts to share the pieces so that they proliferated online quickly, social media researchers said.

The result was a real-time spreading of disinformation started by Americans, for Americans.

What Right Wing News did was part of a shift in the flow of online disinformation, falsehoods meant to mislead and inflame. In 2016, before the presidential election, state-backed Russian operatives exploited Facebook and Twitter to sway voters in the United States with divisive messages. Now, weeks before the [midterm elections](#) on Nov. 6, such influence campaigns are increasingly a domestic phenomenon fomented by Americans on the left and the right.

“There are now well-developed networks of Americans targeting other Americans with purposefully designed manipulations,” said Molly McKew, an information warfare researcher at the New Media Frontier, a firm that studies social media.

Source: [Made and Distributed in the U.S.A.: Online Disinformation - The New York Times](#)