

Misinformation about coronavirus abounds. Correcting it can backfire | Los Angeles Times

By Melissa Healy

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The plot had all the elements of a big-budget thriller: Put an untested gene therapy technology in the hands of unscrupulous scientists. Make them soldiers of a greedy pharmaceutical company. Then give them the protection of a secretive and authoritarian government that will stop at nothing to achieve world domination.

They will, of course, unleash a deadly new virus on the world.

On Twitter last week, more than 2.5 million followers of the financial blog ZeroHedge saw this plot spun as the origin story of the new coronavirus from China that is spreading across the globe.

The rumor circulated briefly on several social media platforms before Twitter shut down the ZeroHedge account for violating its [rules](#) against “deceptive activity that misleads others.” But by then, it had been posted, shared or commented upon more than 9,000 times, according to the [Digital Forensic Research Lab](#).

[...]

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