



## Is it Permissible to Question U.S. / Israeli Claims Made About October 7th?

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**Glenn Greenwald (GG):** I think it's quite common for Americans to understand that oftentimes when the United States wants to go to war, it begins issuing a series of falsehoods and lies in order to sell the war to an American public, that in poll after poll makes clear that they think the United States is involved in too many wars. That we go to war too easily and too often, and oftentimes for unnecessary ends in a way that harms the United States. So issuing lies that manipulate the public on an emotional level is extremely important to sell every new war. But there's another type of lying that's a little bit more subtle, but I would say just as insidious, which is that whenever the United States does something short of war that might be questionable ethically or legally, the government will immediately disseminate all sorts of lies, again, intended to manipulate the emotions of the public so that the immediate perceptions that the public has of those events is exactly what the government wants it to be in. When those lies get debunked later on, as they always do, the die is already cast, and people really don't end up changing their opinion about that because the emotional reaction that they had was so potent. So obviously there are examples too well known to have to document the way in which the government lied about the Gulf of Tonkin incident in order to spark the Vietnam War, to get the Senate to overwhelmingly approve the use of combat force in Vietnam. Obviously, the selling of the WMD lies and the nuclear weapons program of Iraq and the alliance with al-Qaida were critical to selling the Iraq War, a country that had nothing to do with 9/11. But there are also several others that may not be as well known. When the United States wanted to go to war with Iraq in the first Bush administration over their invasion of Kuwait, that was accomplished by all kinds of emotionally manipulative lies, one of which the primary of which was documented by The New York Times in January of 1992 headlined: *Remember Nayirah, Witness for Kuwait?* Quote, "Some claims were no doubt true, but the most sensational one", the one about Saddam Hussein's evil and brutality, namely, "that Iraqi soldiers removed hundreds of Kuwaiti babies from incubators and left them to die on the hospital floors – was shown to be almost certainly false by an ABC reporter, John Martin, in March of 1991, directly after the liberation of Kuwait". So you see the lies get told to sell the war, the war then gets sold after it's done, the debunking of those lies begins, but

by then it's too late. Quote, "He interviewed hospital doctors who stayed in Kuwait throughout the occupation. But before the war, the incubator story seriously distorted the American debate about whether to support military action. Amnesty International believed the tale, and its ill considered validation of the charges likely influenced the seven U.S. Senators, who cited the story in speeches supporting the Jan. 12 resolution authorising war. Since the resolution passed by the Senate by only six votes, the question of how that incubator story escaped scrutiny – when it really mattered – is all the more important. (Amnesty International later retracted its support for the story). Americans would have been interested to know the identity of "Nayirah", the 15 year old Kuwaiti girl who shocked the Congressional Human Rights Caucus on Oct. 10, 1990, when she tearfully asserted that she had watched 15 infants being taken from incubators in Al-Adan Hospital in Kuwait City by Iraqi soldiers who, quote, 'left the babies on the floor to die'. The chairman of the Congressional group, Tom Lantos, a California Democrat, and John Edward Porter, an Illinois Republican, explained that her identity would be kept secret to protect her family from reprisals in occupied Kuwait. But there was a better reason to protect her from exposure: Nayirah, her real name, was the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador to the U.S."

So obviously Kuwait wanted the United States to go to war with Saddam Hussein. In order to get the American population to support it, they had to turn Saddam Hussein into an even worse monster than he actually was. He was a monster. So, again, it was unnecessary to make up lies and fabrications, but they needed to go so far to really manipulate the public. And not only did they invent a story about Iraqi soldiers pulling Kuwaiti babies out of incubators, they produced a completely fraudulent witness whose identity was supposedly hidden when in fact she was the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador. And it was only after the war that that all got debunked. And of course, by then it was too late. We also saw the same thing happen when first France and the UK, and then warhawks inside the Obama administration, like Susan Rice and Samantha Power and Hillary Clinton persuaded Barack Obama to involve the United States in a NATO war that was supposedly designed to protect the people of Benghazi from the massacre that Gaddafi promised not to do regime change. But of course, it was about regime change, and that was the result. The selling of that war was filled with lies. From the Guardian in April of 2011. *Gadhafi, quote, 'supplies troops with Viagra to encourage mass rape', claims diplomat.* "US ambassador Susan Rice said, without offering evidence that Iran was helping Syria to suppress dissent". None of that was ever proven. None of that was ever documented. There were no real witnesses who suggested that was true. It turned out that it was just a total fabrication. Similar to the more the weapons of mass destruction one. But this one was about Gaddafi.

Now, one of the events that I particularly recall, because I did a lot of reporting on at the time was when the Obama administration located where Osama bin Laden was inside Pakistan, and they sent a Seal team group supposedly to arrest him, but with orders that they were authorised to use violence if necessary to protect themselves. Now, if they had gone in and just shot Osama bin Laden, regardless of the circumstances, a lot of Americans would have been happy with that, would have been fine with it, they wouldn't have cared what the circumstances were, even if he were just sleeping on a street corner, and US soldiers walked

up to him and pumped bullets into his head, there would have been a lot of Americans fine with that, but a lot of Americans would have wondered, Well, why didn't we put Osama bin Laden on trial if we could have taken him alive? And a lot of the international community as well would have been asking those same questions, because obviously no government has the right to just go murder somebody out of suspicion that they did something, especially if they're not using violence to resist. And as a result, there were all kinds of lies told by the Obama administration in the immediate aftermath of the Osama bin Laden raid. In the 24 to 48 hours, things like, he was armed and in a firefight with the troops that we sent. They said that he had taken one of his wives and used her as a shield to prevent himself from being killed, sacrificing her life to protect himself, to make them seem like this massive coward willing to even use his wife. And all of that turned out to be false. But in the immediate aftermath of the raid on Osama bin Laden, it gave Americans, even ones who would have wanted to know what happened, enough rationale to emotionally support that raid.

Here from the Guardian, May 5th, 2011. *Osama bin Laden, quote, 'was not armed when killed'*. "New York Times reports US Navy Seals killed sole gunman at the start of the raid", there was one gunman that they killed, "while Pakistan angrily defends its record on terror". Quote, "Further doubts have emerged about the official US account of the raid in which Osama bin Laden was killed, with reports saying US navy Seals were fired on only at the very beginning of the operation and that four of the five people who died, including the al-Qaida leader, were not armed. This is a markedly different version of events to that released by the Pentagon, which said the US forces were, quote, 'engaged in a firefight throughout the operation'." Now, again, you may support the killing of Osama bin Laden, but nobody should be tolerating having our government deliberately feed lies to manipulate public opinion about its conduct. Here from the Guardian in August of 2012. Quote: *Navy Seal account of Bin Laden raid contradicts White House claims*. Quote, "No Easy Day, to be published next week, raises questions over whether Osama bin Laden presented a clear threat to US forces". "Bin Laden apparently was hit in the head when he looked out of his bedroom door into the top hallway of his compound as Seals rushed up a narrow stairwell in his direction, according to a former Navy Seal. Owen writes that Bin Laden ducked back into a bedroom and the Seals followed, only to find the terrorist crumpled on the floor in a pool of blood with a hole visible on the right side of his head and two women wailing over his body".

Now in May of 2011, I wrote an article summarising everything that we knew about the raid, and how it completely contradicted so many of the core claims that the Obama administration deliberately released in the immediate aftermath that made most of the population unwilling to question anything. And here's part of what I wrote in the citations that I included. Quote, *In bin Laden killing, media – as usual – regurgitates false government claims*. "Several of the key assertions framing the narrative of the killing turned out to be false". Quote, "Yesterday, it was widely reported that bin Laden, quote, 'resisted' his capture and, quote, 'engaged in a firefight' with U.S. forces (leaving most people, including me, to say that his killing was legally justified because he was using force)." And that was the first article I wrote saying, okay, if he was actually shooting at the troops, obviously they have the right of self-defence to then kill him based on the claim that he was armed and shooting at American soldiers.

Quote, "It was also repeatedly claimed that bin Laden used a woman – his wife – as a human shield to protect himself, and that she was killed as a result. That image – of a cowardly, though violent-to-the-end bin Laden – framed virtually every media narrative of the event all over the globe. And it came from many government officials, principally Obama's top counter-terrorism adviser, John Brennan. Those claims have turned out to be utterly false. From the TPM, the pro-Democrat-pro-Obama Talking Points Memo, quote: 'It was a fitting end for America's most wanted man. As President Barack Obama's Deputy National Security Advisor, John Brennan, told it, a cowardly, Osama bin Laden used his own wife as a human shield in his final moments'. Except that apparently wasn't what happened at all. Hours later, other administration officials were clarifying Brennan's account. Turns out the woman that was killed in the compound wasn't bin Laden's wife. Bin Laden may not have even been using a human shield. And he might not have even been holding a gun. Politico's Josh Gerstein adds, quote: 'The White House backed away Monday evening from key details in its narrative about the raid that killed Osama bin Laden, including claims by senior U.S. officials that the Al-Qaida leader had a weapon and may have fired it during a gun battle with U.S. forces'. Gerstein added, quote, 'a senior White House official said bin Laden was not armed when he was killed'."

Now, why would the US government, having done something that I'm certain most Americans would have supported, regardless of the circumstances, felt the need to inject into the discourse and into the bloodstream obvious lies to justify what they did. And the reason is because the way that human beings react to things is not usually rational, but emotional. We are emotional beings, and if we hear that Osama bin Laden was actually shooting at our soldiers and resisting being captured, we're naturally going to say, Oh, of course that was justified. And as I noted, I said that based on that claim as well. And if we believe that Osama bin Laden picked up his wife and held her and sacrificed her own life to protect his own, we're going to think this is a monster of such evil that you just go and kill him no matter what the circumstances are. And that is a very emotional response that will get the public to then support what Obama did. And then in the days and weeks later, when journalists and others debunk the lies, it doesn't matter, those perceptions are fixed. And this is a tactic that the government uses all the time. And I say all that as the context for understanding why it is that both the Israeli government and the American government told a multitude of lies, serious lies, impactful and consequential lies about what happened in Israel on October 7th. Even though, had they told the truth, it would have been clear that Hamas committed crimes and engaged in atrocities inside of Israel. They really did. They did not need to fabricate these stories in order to demonstrate that Hamas acted criminally. Hamas did, in a way that they killed a lot of civilians, but that wouldn't have been enough to turn Palestinians into unprecedented subhumans and to get the world to be so emotionally enraged, blindly enraged, that they would have decided that Palestinians in Gaza basically are animals, which is what Israeli officials repeatedly called them. That they were worse than ISIS, that this attack was worse than 9/11, that it was the worst thing the world had seen since the Holocaust. Those lies that were told, which ended up shaping media accounts for not just days, but weeks and months, because everybody was afraid to question it, even though a lot of it had no evidence and there was much evidence that disproved it ended up shaping how

October 10th and the subsequent Israeli war was understood. And to this day, even with all of this debunking that we're about to show you continues to be how so much of this was debunked. Now, here you can watch in real time, this is on October 10th, so three days after the Hamas attack inside Israel. By this point, the Israelis were massively bombing Gaza, dropping an amount of bombs on them that was just unprecedented for that amount of time for a densely packed population. And here is how one of the most viral lies, one of the most consequential lies, that I guarantee you many Americans and Westerners and people around the world believe to this very day, even though it was a complete lie. Here's how this started. This is from i24News. This is a journalist who is on the ground inside of a kibbutz. And you see the graphic on the stream: *Horror scenes at kibbutz that is liberated from Hamas*. And here's what she said.

**Journalist:** Really, all of these soldiers are doing their best to protect us, the journalists, who are also out here, because they want us to see exactly what's happening and what they've been witnessing with their own eyes for these past three days, many of them coming here Saturday night. And they knew that no other soldiers had been here yet. And so they kind of knew an idea of what was happening. But no one could expect that it would be like this. The horrors that I'm hearing from these soldiers, as as I mentioned earlier, about 40 babies, at least, were taken out on gurneys.

**GG:** Did you hear that? First of all, note the melodramatics. This is three days after Hamas' attack. There's no further fighting in Israel, but they're all wearing the press vest, as they're in grave danger. And she just slips this in here. And what she said was so shocking that the anchor interrupted her and had to confirm. He couldn't believe what he was hearing, and he had to confirm that that's really what she meant. And then she confirmed that it was. Listen to what she said.

**Journalist:** And as I mentioned earlier, about 40 babies at least...

**GG:** 40 babies. Dead babies were taken out on gurneys, 40 dead babies.

**Journalist:** ...were taken out on gurneys. Still, right now they're going house to house. Still evacuating dead bodies. Citizens who were killed inside their home.

**Anchor i24News:** It is such a shocking, jarring statement there. And just for our viewers, we're in a new hour here in the broadcast, who very likely weren't with us last hour to understand that you've come in there to find this small community littered with the dead and slaughtered bodies of Israeli civilians, primarily. And you're saying 40 babies, dead babies?

**Journalist:** That is what one of the commanders told me.

**GG:** Now, first of all, she said, at least 40 babies were killed just in that part alone. And that's an extraordinary thing to hear. And that's why the anchor interrupted her. And then she said, yeah, that's what some commander told me, but she put it out in the air. She had no idea if it was true, but some person with the Israeli military told her that, and then she felt justified as a journalist and going and repeating it without having the slightest idea whether it was true. She

said it multiple times because he interrupted her to ask, is that really what you mean to say? And she said, yes. And it is hard to overstate how far and wide that claim was repeated for days and weeks that 40 babies were killed, although it turned into something much worse, as we're about to show you, all of which were complete lies. Now, here's the official account of the State of Israel, the government of Israel. And here's what they said. They put a trigger warning on the tweet, and they wrote the following quote. "Listen to the eyewitness accounts of the eight burned babies and one beheaded baby, which were butchered by Hamas terrorists on October 7th. Pure evil". And here is the video that they promoted by a colonel at the IDF.

**Col. Golan Vach:** I found two couples, two men and women. And inside we found eight babies burned in this corner. Among them, other people burned in the house.

**GG:** Okay, so a total of eight babies just in this one house. Eight babies burned solely in this house. Now, let's listen to what else he says.

**Col. Golan Vach:** In total, 19 people. We knew where it was. I pointed to the house.

**Interviewer:** Did you see that baby?

**Col. Golan Vach:** I evacuated the mother and the baby.

**Interviewer:** So you saw it?

**Col. Golan Vach:** Yeah, I saw it. I saw that baby.

**Interviewer:** Beheaded?

**Col. Golan Vach:** Beheaded.

**Interviewer:** That must have been absolutely awful.

**Col. Golan Vach:** Yes, it was.

**GG:** So here we have two claims promoted by the State of Israel, the official account of the State of Israel. Number one, that just in that one house alone, there were eight burned babies. And number two, one of them was beheaded. Now, these claims took on a whole new level of credibility in the eyes of many when Joe Biden claimed that he saw the proof that this was true. Listen to what he said.

**President Biden:** Thank you for the intensity of your support. It matters. It matters that Americans see what's happening. I mean, I've been doing this a long time. I never really thought that I would see and have confirmed pictures of terrorists beheading children. I never thought I'd ever...

**GG:** And then he kind of faded out. His brain started turning off. Forgot what he was saying and went onto something else, what he usually does. But that was his claim. And he repeated it multiple times after this as well, that he saw the photos of the multiple babies that were

beheaded by Hamas on October 7th inside Israel. Now what this claim became very quickly, and it could have been a morphing of that original claim from that reporter that she knows for sure there were 40 dead babies burned in that place where she was, combined with the claims of beheaded babies, it quickly turned into: Hamas beheaded at least 40 babies inside Israel on October 7th. Even NBC news, generally unbelievably loyal to President Biden and everything that he says, questioned that almost immediately – to their credit. This is on October 7th, this specific claim. You see the headline there: *Unverified reports of, quote, '40 babies beheaded' in Israel-Hamas war in flames social media*. Quote, "No photo evidence has been made public as of Thursday morning corroborating claims that babies had been beheaded. Israel has published photos of dead infants after the terrorist attack". Quote, "A series of shocking reports have spread horrific claims of baby beheadings by Hamas militants across social and mainstream media in recent days, adding a particularly incendiary element to an already violent and bitter war. The most high-profile claim came Wednesday night when President Joe Biden said he had seen photographic evidence of terrorists beheading babies. The White House later clarified that Biden was simply referring to news reports about beheadings, which had not included or referred to photographic evidence at all. On Wednesday, a spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told CNN that babies and toddlers were found with their 'heads decapitated' in southern Israel after Hamas' attack. By Thursday morning, an Israeli official told CNN the government had not confirmed claims of beheadings. Many of the reports appear to have originated from Israeli soldiers and people affiliated with the Israeli Defence Force. 'Stranger Things' star Noah Schnapp" – who is a young actor with a huge following and a vehement supporter of Israel – "posted the shocking claim about 40 beheaded babies to his 25 million Instagram followers. Quote: '40 babies were beheaded and burned alive in front of their parents by Hamas.'" That's what he posted. "Senator Ted Cruz, the Republican of Texas, mentioned the beheaded babies in a post on X, and Congressman Mike McCaul, the Republican from Texas, who's the chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, echoed those allegations on CNN. Jones found that the, quote, '40 beheaded babies' claim had over 44 million impressions on X alone, with over 300,000 likes and more than 100,000 reposts. The main accounts propagating the claims were i24News and the official Israeli account, Jones' data showed." So we analysed how this claim virilised, and it came from that original news report combined with the Israeli claims about beheaded babies.

**GG:** Now, on December 4th, one of the most comprehensive and important investigations was published, journalistic investigations, by the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, that is an Israeli newspaper, editorially supported the war in Gaza, and they took all the available evidence that was public, but that they also got from sources inside the Israeli government, and they separated fact from fiction, or at least they did their best to, based on what was known as of December 4th. And this report made very clear that so many of the most prominent claims that emanated from the Israeli government and from Joe Biden and from the media of both countries about October 7th, were absolute and complete fabrications. Here was that article, quote: *Hamas Committed Documented Atrocities. But a Few False Stories Feed the Deniers*. So you see them trying, you know they're inside Israel, almost the entire country supports the war, so they're trying to frame this as like, look, we're publishing these false and debunk

claims not because we want to undermine the war effort, but because by lying constantly about what happened, it feeds the ability of those who want to deny all atrocities on October 7th. That's how they framed it. The journalism, though, was what was most important. And here's what they wrote, quote, "The extensive evidence of crimes against humanity committed by Hamas terrorists on October 7th should not be contaminated by unverified stories disseminated by Israeli search and rescue groups, army officers and even Sara Netanyahu", the wife of the prime minister. Quote, "According to a reporter for i24News, an army commander told her that at least 40 babies had been killed, some of them beheaded. The report was then later quoted on social media, often referenced as, quote, 'dozens of beheaded babies', though sometimes it was 'burnt babies' or 'hanged babies'. For example, the Israeli Foreign Ministry published an account by Colonel Golan Vach from the Home Front Command, who said that in one house he found the bodies of eight burnt babies. The X account of the Prime Minister's Office, also referred to the murder of infants and showed very graphic pictures. According to the tweet, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu showed the pictures to US Secretary of State Antony Blinken. Last week Ishay Coen, a journalist for the ultra-Orthodox website Kikar Hashabbat, interviewed Lieutenant Colonel Yaron Buskila of the Israeli Defence Forces's Gaza Division. Buskila talked about babies who had been hung on clotheslines; his remarks were cited by a host of Twitter personalities around the world. Coen wrote that he was later informed that the story was inaccurate and deleted the post. Quote, 'Why would an army officer invent such a horrifying story? I was wrong', he added." So you had this claim that went viral, and then afterward, after it did its damage, even the person who spread it said, whoops, I got that wrong. Now, many of the lies came from a person named Eli Beer, who is with the United Hatzalah of Israel, and he spoke to the Republican Jewish Conference in the United States on October 28th, 2023. Listen to the amount of lies that he was able to spread in just a minute.

**Eli Beer (EB):** We saw the most horrific things, I saw with my own eyes a woman who was four months pregnant. She was in a little village, a little kibbutz. They came into her house in front of her kids. They opened up her stomach. She was pregnant. They opened up her stomach, took out the baby and stabbed the little tiny baby in front of her. And then shot her in front of her family.

**GG:** Okay, so he saw with his own eyes, there was a pregnant woman, these Hamas terrorists came in, they cut her stomach open and took out her unborn baby and stabbed it to death in front of her other kids, and then shot her after they did that. That was the first claim that he said he saw with his own eyes. Then he goes on, say this.

**EB:** And then they killed the rest of the kids. These are not regular enemies. These are not regular situations. I saw little kids who were beheaded. We didn't know which head belonged to which kid. I was crying for five days straight. I couldn't stop crying. See, little children. Some of them had grandparents who were Holocaust survivors, and they were murdered in a Holocaust in Israel in 2023. Little babies. Little children. You couldn't even recognise if there were kids. We couldn't even recognise it, we saw a little baby in the oven. They put him in,



these bastards, put these babies in an oven and put on their oven. We found the kid a few hours later.

**GG:** I mean, can you believe this? He's just making things up as he goes along, trying to think of whatever the worst thing he could possibly imagine is. And obviously, when Jewish people and Israelis talk about putting Jewish babies in an oven, it's obviously designed, obviously, to invoke the Holocaust. And as he said, these are not regular enemies, these people, they are monsters of the kind we've never seen before. They're subhuman. They cut a woman's womb open and stabbed her unborn baby in front of them. And then they took a baby and baked it in an oven. The long time American neoconservative John Podhoretz, who inherited Commentary Magazine from his dad and is, needless to say, an ardent Israel supporter, went on to X and tweeted this on October 30th: "They baked a baby. In an oven. They baked the baby in an oven. They baked the baby in an oven. Say ceasefire one more time, you fucking baby-murdering-loving-ghouls". I mean, this was the discourse. And it was based on complete fabrications. Now, even the Israeli media was doing a better job than the American media of investigating and then debunking these claims. Here from The Jerusalem Post, which is not a left wing newspaper, to put that mildly, on November 8th. So barely a month after the Hamas attack, a month and a day, had this headline, quote: *Controversy surrounds reports of an Israeli baby found burned alive in an oven*. The media watchdog "FakeReporter continues to maintain that it has not yet been able to independently verify the story of the baby burned in an oven". Now let's go back to that Haaretz article. The one that I said was the most comprehensive investigation up until that date, December 4th. And there you see the headline and then this is what it goes on to say. "According to sources including Israel's National Insurance Institute, kibbutz leaders and the police, on October 7th, one baby was murdered" – on October 7th, according to their data, their sources, and even, they say, Israel's National Insurance Institute, as well as kibbutz police, and the police said that on October 7th, a grand total inside Israel of one baby was murdered. This is when we were hearing that there were eight babies burned in a single house. That babies were hung from clotheslines. That there were 40 beheaded babies. The Haaretz investigation proved, and then many investigations subsequent to this have also affirmed that the number of babies killed inside Israel on October 7th, was one. She was ten month old Mila Cohen. She was killed with her father, Ohad on Kibbutz Be'eri. "In another incident, on the morning of October 7th, a heavily pregnant Bedouin woman was on her way to Soroka Medical Centre because her contractions had begun. Terrorists shot her in the stomach. Later hospital staff delivered the baby girl, who died a few hours later." So that's about as close as anyone could find to this claim that terrorists had, Hamas had, cut open a woman and took out of her womb and stabbed it to death in front of the whole family. Quote, "According to the National Insurance Institute, five other children aged six or under were murdered, including Omar, Simon, Tov at the age of two, and his six year old twin sisters, Arbel and Shacher, who were killed on kibbutz Nir Oz. There was also a five year old from Arara in the southern Negev, who was killed in a Hamas rocket strike, and five year old Eitan Kapshetae, who was murdered with his parents and his eight year old sister, Aline. There is no evidence that children from several families were murdered together, rendering inaccurate Netanyahu's remarks to US President Joe Biden that Hamas terrorists, quote, 'took dozens of children and tied them up, burned

them and executed them'. In another story that spread a few weeks ago, United Hatzalah President Eli Beer, that was the speech we just showed you, told of a baby girl that was placed in an oven and burned to death. Beer made the remarks at a donor conference in the United States. The British newspaper the Daily Mail changed it from, quote, 'baby' to 'babies'. But this story also is not true. Ten month old Mila Cohen was murdered in the massacre, along with the baby still in the womb of her mother, who died after her mother was shot on the way to the hospital. The police have no evidence showing that other babies were killed". So you had that one 10 month old baby, the other baby that was unborn on its way to the hospital, and no other babies in Israel killed. "A source that United Hatzalah said a volunteer mistakenly interpreted a case at the Shure base and passed the inaccuracy on to Beer. Another doubtful claim" – doubtful claim, meaning a lie – "was made by the prime minister's wife, Sara Netanyahu in a letter to US First Lady Jill Biden. Sara Netanyahu wrote that one of the women was in her ninth month of pregnancy when she was abducted into Gaza, where she gave birth. People on social media published a photo of the hostage who was a Thai citizen. In a magazine interview, her friends, employer and family denied that she was pregnant. Munkan was released over a week ago; she was not pregnant and had not given birth. The army currently has no information about an abducted pregnant woman, and defence officials consider the story an unsubstantiated rumour. The Prime Minister's Office did not respond".

Now, you would think that maybe in response to some of this affirmative, definitive debunking of these lies that some officials involved in spreading them would have the humility or at least the strategic sense to admit that they were spreading false claims. Definitely not the case for our president, Joe Biden. Here in The Intercept in December of 2023 by my former colleague Jeremy Scahill, documented, quote: *Joe Biden keeps repeating his false claim that he saw pictures of beheaded babies*. Who knows if Biden believes that he saw those pictures? There's no way to know. His brain doesn't work. It's very possible that it got put into his brain at some point, and then he fabricates some memory of it. But the fact that he claimed to see photos multiple times of things that didn't happen should be disturbing enough on its own, not only about his willingness to lie, but also his cognitive abilities. Quote, "Many atrocities were committed during the Hamas led attacks on October 7th. Yet the president of the United States continues to repeat debunked falsehoods". Now, as I said, subsequent investigations continue to document just how many lies were told, how deliberately they were constructed, and how widespread they became. Here is the French newspaper Le Monde, just in April of this year. Quote: *'40 beheaded babies': Deconstructing the rumour at the heart of the information battle between Israel and Hamas*. This is not a rumour. This was something that official Israeli accounts repeated over and over. And Le Monde does a good job in doing an autopsy on exactly how this lie began, how it spread, and all the reasons why it's a lie. Quote, "On October 10th, official Israeli accounts relayed a sordid but unfounded allegation. Six months later, it continues to circulate, fuelling accusations of Israeli disinformation. But amidst this flood of accounts of murder, looting and mutilation, one rumour took an extraordinary proportions: 40 decapitated babies were allegedly found in Kfar Aza kibbutz, one of the communities most impacted by the attack. This story and its variants went viral like never before, going as far as being mentioned by the

White House. However, in the horror of this massacre, in which 38 minors, including two infants were killed, there were never 40 decapitated babies".

**GG:** So note again, on all of October 7th, and this is now in April of 2024 by a French newspaper – the French government is very pro-Israel – a total of 38 minors were killed on October 7th, meaning people under 18, and that includes two infants. Presumably they're counting the baby that was close to being born on its way to the hospital, and his mother was shot, as well as the ten month old that Haaretz documented. And then they just simply state there were never 40 decapitated babies. Now, again, as they know there were terrible acts by Hamas. So why do they have to invent all these lies? The reason is because people who go to war, ordinary people who are engaging in violence, political violence against a country, don't go around beheading babies. Only the worst monsters would do that. And that's what they needed to have people believe about not just Hamas, but Palestinians in general, because they knew they were going to destroy all of Gaza. And so they needed people to believe that these were not human beings, that Israel was about to go murder and kill in huge numbers and destroy their society. That these were worse than ISIS. That's what they said, worse than ISIS. That's what these lies were for. They were not the confusion or fog of war. They were very deliberate and purposeful.

Here from the Times of Israel in December of 2023. Just to give you an Israeli newspaper, which again, is far hardly anti-war or far from the left, an up to date breakdown of October 7th victims that we know about. "The age, gender data for most civilian victims of the Hamas onslaught, based on the media tally, provides a picture authorities aim to complete as they continue efforts to identify bodies". Here's what they said: "Almost two months after the unprecedented Hamas onslaught on southern Israel, which left some 1200 people dead, the exact data on those killed in the biggest terror attack in Israeli history is still shrouded in uncertainty. Authorities have identified a total of 274 soldiers and 859 non-soldiers killed during the brutal assault. The latter figure includes 57 Israeli police and 38 local security officers. It is unclear which of these individuals were on duty when killed. Removing those victims leaves a figure of 764 civilians." Which is also very close to the definitive final total offered by Haaretz about the number of civilians killed in Israel on October 7th. We were told at first that 1400 civilians were killed. That was then lowered to 1200. It only weeks later turned out that a very significant portion of those people were actually members, active duty members of the military on legitimate military targets, and that the ratio of civilians to military and soldiers killed was a little bit over one to one. That was the ratio for every civilian that was killed a little less than one military target was also killed, as well, a soldier or a combatant. None of that was part of the discourse for weeks, if not longer.

Now, the Times of Israel went on, quote, "Partial data by Hebrew media covering the civilians – killed by thousands of invading terrorists and some of the thousands of rockets fired that day at Israeli cities – reveals that they include two infants". So there you see again, the confirmation that only two babies died on October 7th. When I say only, I'm not minimising the horror of that, I'm simply comparing it to the claims that were made to show what not even minimal lies, but massive lies were told. "12 other children under the age of

ten", a grand total of 14 children under the age of ten to infants, were killed, "36 civilians aged 10 to 19 and 25 elderly people over the age of 80, accounting for 75 of the 764 civilians".

The next article here is from France 24, in December of 2023. You see: *Israel's Social Security data reveals the true picture of October 7th deaths*. Quote, "On October 14th, Israeli authorities announced a preliminary toll of more than 1400 people killed by, quote, ' Hamas terrorists'. On December 10th, the Foreign Ministry published a, quote, 'updated estimate', saying the number, quote, 'murdered in cold blood' was around 1200 people, without further details. The final death toll from the attack is now thought to be 695 Israeli civilians, including 36 children, as well as 373 security forces and 71 foreigners, giving a total of 1139. The data also gives a clear picture of the scale of the atrocities at the Supernova musical festival in Reim, where 364 people were killed. But it also invalidates some statements by Israeli authorities in the days following the attack... Testimony called into question was that on October 27th by Colonel Golan Vach, head of the army's search and rescue unit, who told a group of journalists, including one from AFP, that he quote 'personally' transported a quote, 'decapitated baby' found in the arms of his mother in the Beeri of a kibbutz. According to Bituah Leumi, only one baby was killed in Beeri: the ten month old Miel Cohen, whose mother survived". Just lie after lie after lie after lie; people claiming they saw this with their own eyes, so they were clearly lying on purpose.

Here from the American Prospect in March of 2024. I think this says a lot of the most important points well. It's entitled, quote: *What Really happened on October 7th?* Quote, "And why, wonders a new Al-Jazeera documentary, did the media go to such lengths to concoct gruesome X-rated versions of an attack that was harrowing enough to begin with?" Quote, "The Israeli regime and its noxious mouthpieces in Washington have spouted so many lies about what Hamas did on October 7th that the conversation is often driven toward rebutting the charges that the group, quote, 'beheaded 30 babies' or sliced a four month old foetus out of a dead woman, or gouged the eyes and breast of a mother and father before moving on to the fingers and toes of the son and daughter they executed at an invaded kibbutz, as Secretary of State Antony Blinken testified before Congress in the weeks after the attack. Indeed, it is almost as though the Israelis channelled all of the efficiency and efficacy that failed their military on October 7th into the deployment of a vast edifice of insta-mythology designed to bolster a notion of Palestinians as inherently subhuman people. Which brings us to one of the incomprehensibly less scrutinised parts of the disaster explored on October 7th: the hundreds of civilians, dozens of their cars and numerous homes and buildings charred beyond comprehension on the day of the attack. Hamas had some rockets, but did it really have the weaponry capable of mounting that level of destruction? By November, the IDF conceded that it had actually deployed Apache helicopters and tanks to the Nova musical Festival, that, quote, 'may' have killed, quote, 'some' of the Nova festival concertgoers, in accordance with something called the Hannibal Directive, a doctrine named for a Carthaginian general who poisoned himself rather than be questioned by his Roman captors, whereby the Israeli army is ordered to fire upon its own troops to prevent the enemy from taking those troops hostage. Around noon on October 7th, according to Israeli

newspapers cited in the documentary, the IDF may have invoked a version of the Hannibal directive expanded to include Israeli civilians. And in accordance began by opening fire with rockets and helicopter gunships on any person or vehicles seen moving across the border with Gaza. In particular, the documentary visits Kibbutz Be'eri, which looks a bit like present-day Gaza in parts, with a munitions expert who demonstrates strong evidence that some of the houses had been hit with IDF tank fire. It was Israeli troops, not Hamas, quote, 'murderers', according to one resident, who killed 12 long time residents there".

Now, there was a recent story that we intended to cover about how Israeli officials have been meeting with Big Tech to demand more and more censorship of what they call anti-Israel disinformation. And there's now actually a report out that suggests that Israel adopt EU style censorship laws online that would require platforms to remove anti-Israel disinformation and to punish them if they don't. And one of the primary examples of anti-Israeli disinformation that this report cites is the claim that the IDF killed dozens of civilians on October 7th. Even though there is ample evidence to prove that that's exactly what happened. Things that the Israeli government is calling disinformation that have to be removed from online. Now, we haven't spent a lot of time delving into one prong of all of these conflicts, which is the issue of mass rape and the like. There are other people who have covered that extensively. But just to give you a little bit of a perspective on this. The New York Times ended up publishing what it thought would be the definitive article, proving once and for all that Hamas engaged in mass rape of Israeli women. It was written by Jeffrey Gettleman, who is a long-time reporter for the New York Times. But then it was also written by Anat Schwartz, who really isn't a journalist at all. She's an Israeli activist and someone named Adam Sella. And it turns out that he also has some very sketchy credentials, clearly is a pro-Israel activist as well. It was titled: *'Screams Without Words': How Hamas Weaponized Sexual Violence on October 7th*. And it reported to say the following, quote: "A Times investigation uncovers new details showing a pattern of rape, mutilation and extreme brutality against women in the attacks on Israel". "A video was shot in the early hours of October 8th by a woman searching for a missing friend at the site of the rave in southern Israel, where the day before, Hamas terrorists massacred hundreds of young Israelis. One family knew exactly who she was – Gal Abdush, mother of two from a working class town in central Israel, who disappeared from the rave that night with her husband. Based largely on the video evidence – which was verified by The New York Times – Israeli police officials said they believed that Ms. Abdush was raped, and she became a symbol of the horrors visited upon Israeli women and girls during the October 7th attacks".

Now, immediately upon publication of this definitive article proving mass rape on October 7th by Hamas in Israel, people quoted in the article and family members of alleged victims, said the New York Times got everything wrong, including identifying certain victims of rape who were not in fact raped. It then caused a massive conflict within the New York Times newsroom. It was supposed to be the lead story on the very popular New York Times podcast, The Daily, and it ended up never being included on that podcast because of concerns over its journalistic integrity. All sorts of outlets have affirmatively debunked that New York Times article. When it came time to submit the Pulitzer articles about Israel that the New York

Times wanted to win, a Pulitzer for their coverage of Israel, they notably did not include what was supposed to be the definitive document. They then subsequently announced that an Anat Schwartz would never work with the paper again, because the Twitter account Zei squirrel had found that she had liked all kinds of genocidal, anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian statements, that she was clearly far from any kind of anything that resembled an objective reporter. Today, a comprehensive UN report was issued, and its bottom line was that Hamas committed war crimes on October 7th and Israel has committed multiple war crimes in Gaza in its response to that October 7th attack. But it also said this, quote, *Factual findings: acts committed by the Hamas Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades and other Palestinians armed groups on 7th October 2023, in Israel*: "The Commission found indications that members of the military wing of Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups committed gender based violence in several locations in southern Israel on October 7th. The Commission has reviewed testimonies obtained by journalists in the Israeli police concerning rape, but has not been able to independently verify such allegations, due to a lack of access to victims, witnesses and crime sites, and the obstruction of the investigation by Israeli authorities. The Commission was unable to review the unedited version of such testimonies. For the same reason, the Commission was also unable to verify reports of sexualised torture and genital mutilation. Additionally, the Commission found some specific allegations of rape to be false, inaccurate, or contradictory with other evidence or statements and discounted those from its assessment".

The New York Times article from today summarising that comprehensive UN report, – which again, there's a lot of institutions that criticise Israel, and pro-Israel advocates are trained to say that every institution willing to criticise Israel is an anti-Israel and inherently even anti-Semitic, and the UN is obviously one. Even though the UN report concludes that Hamas is also guilty of war crimes. Here was the headline in the New York Times about this report. Quote: *U.N. Report Accuses Both Israel and Palestinian Groups of War Crimes*. "A commission produced the United Nations most detailed examination of the October 7th attacks and the subsequent wars in Gaza. Quote, "A United Nations commission investigating the October 7th attacks on Israel and the subsequent conflict in Gaza has accused both Palestinian armed groups and Israel of committing war crimes, and the panel said that Israel's conduct of the war included crimes against humanity. The commission also reviewed allegations by journalists and the Israeli authorities that Palestinian militants had committed rape, but it said that he had 'not been able to independently verify such allegations', because Israel had not cooperating with the inquiry. The report cited, quote, 'a lack of access to victims, witnesses, and crime sites and the obstruction by the Israeli authorities'. Crimes against humanity committed by Israel in Gaza, the commission said, included, quote, 'extermination, murder, gender persecution targeting Palestinian men and boys, forcible transfer of the population, torture and inhuman and cruel treatment'. The panel said Israeli forces used sexual and gender based violence, including forcing nudity and sexual humiliation as, quote, 'an operating procedure' against Palestinians in the course of forced evacuations and detentions. 'Both male and female victims were subjected to such sexual violence', the report said, 'but men and boys were targeted in particular ways'. The treatment

of men and boys was intentionally sexualised as an act of retaliation for the attack, it added, referring to October 7th."

Now, there was just a report in the New York Times that had traced and tracked what a lot of human rights organisations have been documenting for a long time. Israel has detained thousands of people in Gaza with no trial, and has long been imprisoning residents of the West Bank with no due process at all. And people get out of those prisons and they say they were abused, sexually assaulted, tortured in all kinds of extreme ways. And the New York Times investigation essentially confirmed that all of those things are, in fact, happening. That indeed, when it comes to, for example, beheaded babies, we see a lot of videos and a lot of evidence and documentation of beheaded babies in Gaza, from Israeli bombs and other kinds of attacks. And we see the widespread use of sexual violence and sexual assault inside these Israeli dungeons, these places where people get put by the thousands and disappeared with no right to any contact with the outside world, with no ability to speak with lawyers. That is the massive torture system, the massive assault and abuse and sexualized violence system that is actually documented. Now again, none of this is to deny that there are horrors committed by Hamas inside Israel on October 7th. That's beyond debate. We said that the very first night. We came on the air on October 9th, and we talked about this for the first time, as well as making very lengthy arguments about why that attack by Hamas could not be justified because of the civilian targeting that it entailed, although a lot of that analysis was based on claims that have turned out to be false about what Hamas did inside Israel. And whatever your views are, you might support Israel, you might support the US financing and arming of the war in Israel, but whatever else is true, you should never tolerate being manipulated and propagandised with deliberate lies that come from the government and the media. And that is exactly what happened over and over in the most consequential ways that not only shaped the world's perception of what happened on October 7th, the subsequent Israeli attack in Gaza, but continues to shape it to this very day.

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**END**

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