

## **Fear and Fox News**

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Fear is a powerful tool. It can be used to keep people at bay and can be used to sway opinions. Organizations that have massive influence and credibility use fear to keep people scared. Ronna McDaniel (2022) in, “Deadly Fentanyl Puts Our Kids on the Front Lines of Biden’s Border Crisis” tries to highlight the dangers of “Rainbow Fentanyl” and how American children are at risk. McDaniel says that there is a rise in overdose deaths and now a risk of children being exposed to fentanyl. Open borders are allowing for drugs to come into the country, putting children at risk. With Halloween approaching, McDaniel and parents like her are terrified that the drug cartels will be targeting their children with fentanyl that looks like candy. This is a serious matter in her eyes; however, the Left and the Liberals are not taking it seriously. She wants it to be known that there is a crisis and that everyone on both sides of the aisle needs to acknowledge this issue. McDaniel and Fox News have been making it clear that there is a rising issue with drugs and especially drug overdose deaths currently in this country. They would be right about this; the rates of overdoses have been increasing over the last couple of years. The issue is with how McDaniel and Fox News as a whole deal with situations like these. They use fearmongering to keep their loyal viewers and readers constantly scared, and they paint a picture that the world is out to get everyone. So even though Fox News can be correct about some issues, like the drug crisis they also use methods like emotional language to strike fear into the public. The “Rainbow Fentanyl” crisis is an example of the fearmongering and misrepresentation that they use.

McDaniel (2022) begins her article by making a statement, “Let’s get some facts straight: we have a fentanyl crisis in this country.”. This is one of the main points that pursues throughout

this piece. She gets the point across that there have been more deaths due to fentanyl and that this is an issue being swept under the rug by the Left. In fact, unfortunately there has been a rise in the overdoses of synthetic opioids like fentanyl over the last couple of years. The CDC (2021) reports an increase of 28.5% deaths in the United States. McDaniel and Fox News do then have a point; we do have an issue with drugs in this country. Thousands of Americans have had to deal with either their own or witnessed loved one's battle with an addiction. Even hitting home, fentanyl has reared its ugly head in Minnesotans. The Minnesota Department of Health (2022) explains this increase in overdose deaths in Minnesota in 2021 they reported an increase of deaths by 22%. So, with this latest information of the rising deaths due to fentanyl, what is this rainbow fentanyl that is a concern for McDaniel? Rainbow Fentanyl are colored fentanyl pills that are being used to target children and teens (McDaniel 2022). Is the cartel really using bright colored pills to target children?

McDaniel and others at Fox News are telling worried parents that cartels are targeting their children. Adam Sabes (2022) of Fox News like McDaniel, also is pushing the idea of the fentanyl pills being made to look like candy. The idea of drug dealers handing out these deadly pills to trick or treaters is one that I find very outlandish. Drug dealers are in the business of selling drugs for one purpose, to make money. It would not be a wise financial decision to be handing out your product for free. Brain Mann (2022) of NPR makes some good points in relation to this topic. There have been no experts that believe cartels are targeting children with drugs (Mann 2022). He also discusses why the pills are rainbow colored. They are colored the way they are so that the product can be identified in the market (Mann 2022). The issue of this rainbow fentanyl also only seems to be concerning to those on the Right and the GOP. Nikki McCann Ramirez (2022) makes this same observation and goes on to offer some explanation of

the situation. A group of Republican senators shared videos making claims of the targeting of children with rainbow fentanyl despite the experts stating that it is not the case (Ramirez 2022). The midterm elections which are drawing near could have some involvement with this entire situation. By mentioning immigration and an open border potentially harming children, Americans may be swayed to vote Republican in the coming elections. These extreme claims and hyperboles show the tactic Fox News uses to keep its influence, fear.

The case of rainbow fentanyl is not the first time Fox News has tried to keep people afraid, this is a common pattern with them. After spending hours scrolling through story after story on the Fox News website, I noticed a pattern. Most articles use language and headlines that would raise enough concern to be clicked on and read. I will provide some article titles and some headers that should help the reader to understand my point. Danielle Wallace's (2022) article "NY DEA largest 'rainbow fentanyl' bust to date uncovers candy-colored pills in LEGO children's toy box" has the header under the title as, "DEA says seizure of 15,000 fentanyl pills from LEGO box in Manhattan part of Mexican cartels' disturbing marketing". Wallace (2022) goes ahead and makes the claim yet again that these pills are a marketing tactic to target children. This is language in the headline to get people scared and get them to want to read. Fox News knows that fear will gain clicks and the more they do it, the more they can push their right-wing agenda. It is obvious that Fox News is a biased media outlet. They are known to be the Republican and right-wing news source. One would be hard pressed to find any article praising the Left for anything. Using fear, they attempt to keep their readers voting red by villainizing the Left and Democrats. McDaniel (2022) in her title to her article "Deadly Fentanyl Puts Our Kids on the Front Lines of Biden's Border Crisis" uses Biden as the cause of the problem harming the kids. She mentions how the Liberal party created this issue by not being strict on border security

(McDaniel 2022). It is a common theme to use the Democrats as the scapegoat and the source of American problems. By always bombarding their readers with these messages they allow for them to be fearful of the other side. Fox News adds to the polarization of this country by making Americans fear the other side of the political aisle.

To put it in brief, Fox News likes to keep their readers scared. By overexaggerating and using scary language they keep their viewers fearful of the world. Media outlets like Fox News are dangerous because of the influence they have over the masses. The media is supposed to show the truth and to show the world for how it is regardless of political affiliation. Fox News keeps the idea that the other side is coming to hurt you. They have a clear and biased goal of keeping their readers voting red. Spreading fear and hate is what leads to conflict and the current tension felt currently in America. Individuals view Fox News as the sole media outlet that tells the truth and the rest as fake news. Constantly believing the other side is downright evil shuts down the possibility of having discussions with people who think differently than us. So, when you are being told the same message repeatedly, when do you stop and think that you might be being deceived?

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