

Argument: 9/11 caused infamous erotica novel *Fifty Shades of Grey* to be written

Broader Argument: How the existence of the Domino Effect has warped people's understanding of causation vs correlation and furthermore how mass media encourages these false misconceptions.

**By Olivia Bessey-Nolan
and
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[News Channel Intro, news channel music is playing]

Haley:

And that, folks, is how Paris Hilton's influence over 2000s pop culture and media led to the creation of the McRib.

Olivia:

[laughs] Oh why yes it is, Haley. Now onto why the Dancing Plague of 1518 was people just making up an excuse to have fun so they didn't have to read the Bible—oh-wait [Olivia touches earpiece]. Haley it seems as though I'm receiving breaking news.

[Cuts to frame of Breaking News picture with alarming breaking news music]

Haley:

Researchers at Yale University have just now reported a groundbreaking finding stating that 9/11 caused the infamous 2011 erotica novel *Fifty Shades of Grey* to be written.

Olivia:

Well now that's an interesting jump, isn't it? Let's see how these two are connected. More on the story now with Bob Bobbinson.

[Camera cuts to Haley wearing a mustache, playing Bob Bobbinson]

Bob Bobbinson (Haley)

Thank you, Olivia. The story goes as follows: On this dreary, rainy morning in New Haven, Connecticut, 23-year-old Yale student Britney Spears was in her

Neurosciencebiologicalchemicalnuclearengineering class not paying attention when she stumbled upon her old Tumblr page spattered with posts of My Chemical Romance fanfiction. As she scrolled through giggling and cringing at her old self, she stumbled upon a mysterious link. When she clicked on it, it transported her to an archived post detailing a timeline of

events from 9/11 to the present day. As she researched more, the gears in her head started ticking which, as a Yale student, does not happen often. As her research concluded, she discovered a horrifying line of events: 9/11 caused *Fifty Shades of Grey* by E.L. James to be written. How you may ask? Well let's ask the source.

Britney? Are you there?

[Screen is glitching, Britney is yelling HELLO? in a valley girl accent over and over again while Bob Bobbinson is attempting to say he can hear her. Eventually he yells loud enough where she hears him, interview begins]

Good morning, Britney. Would you please explain the timeline to our viewers?

Britney (Olivia):

Of course, Bob. So essentially, the timeline goes as is: On September 11, 2001, 4 American planes were hijacked with one crashing into the west side of the Pentagon, one into a field in Pennsylvania, and the other two, of course, into New York City's twin towers, resulting in 2,977 people dying. Now, here's where the story picks up so Bob, you MUST pay attention.

Bob Bobbinson:

Of course Britney we are all listening attentively-

Britney:

SHHHHHHHHHH! I said be quiet Bobby. Anyways, a certain man named Gerard Way witnessed this attack on live television and, as many people were, became traumatized from the incident. As the musical man he is, Mr. Way decided to take this trauma and translate it into art. This art is currently known as international emo band My Chemical Romance, speaking of which, why did you guys have to expose my old MCR fanfictions that's so shi-

Bob Bobbinson:

Britney. Back to the story.

Britney:

Sorry, Mr. Bobbinson. Moving on, a woman named Stephanie Meyer was inspired by this emo punk rock music and created a silly little novel called *Twilight*, a drama-romance novel detailing the love triangle between a human girl, a sexy werewolf, and a mysterious vampire. As this cultural phenomenon took the world by storm, another writer became inspired by Ms. Meyer's writing. E.L. James's imagination was sparked by this writing, leading her to, wait for it, drumroll please

Bob Bobbinson:

We don't have drum rolls here, it's a news studio-

Britney:

E.L. James wrote *Fifty Shades of Grey*! And there it is. 9/11 caused *Fifty Shades of Grey*.

Bob Bobbinson:

It sounds like some sort of domino effect, yes? Where 9/11 caused *Fifty Shades of Grey* to be written?

Britney:

That is exactly right Mr. Bobbinson.

Bob Bobbinson:

Well you heard it here first. Thank you Britney, this is an ongoing story and more information will be told as we get it.

Back to you Olivia.

Olivia:

Thank you Bob and Britney! Now to Brooke Baker for the weather forecast.

[Someone yells "Cut!" Olivia and Haley stop broadcasting and begin to talk to each other]

Wow. I am floored. Never in my 30 years of news broadcasting have I heard such an-

Haley:

Amazing story!

Olivia:

Amazing? [scoffs] Try farfetched.

Haley:

Are you insane? This story is groundbreaking!

Olivia:

No, Haley, you don't understand. This type of news is so detrimental to our society. So many people see stuff like this and when they connect it, it can downplay the actual events that took place and furthermore cultivate a false narrative that distorts history. Knowing the difference between causation and correlation is imperative to the well-being of our society! It gives the mass media too much power!

Haley:

Causation and who? Also are we not in the mass media as news reporters or-

[Breaking News sound plays again and cuts back to Bob Bobbinson]

Bob Bobbinson:

More information unfolding on the 9/11 causing *Fifty Shades of Grey* story, we now bring you to John J Johnson who will be interviewing the victims of those who have been informed of this knowledge.

[Voiceover: For the privacy of our interviewee, their voice has been digitally distorted and lowered to preserve anonymity.]

John J Johnson (Olivia):

Good morning.

Anonymous (Haley):

Good morning. [laughs] Hehe my voice sounds funny.

John J. Johnson:

Where were you when you found out this information and how did it affect you?

Anonymous:

I was at my mother's house, doing facials with her pug Noodle.

We were 5 minutes into our girls day and my phone started ringing like there was no tomorrow. I answered the phone and it was my friend, Ryan Rossenbloom. He just could not stop sobbing.

So I of course asked him, "What's wrong?" He started going on about the news that 9/11 caused *Fifty Shades of Grey* to be written.

John J. Johnson:

Why did this correlation cause Mr. Rossenbloom so much distress?

Anonymous:

Well you see, Mr. Rossenbloom has been personally affected by the events this theory details and, having seen the aftermath of these events, was deeply disturbed by their falsity.

John J. Johnson:

What do you mean by "their falsity"? Are you implying these events are not actually connected to one another?

Anonymous:

According to Ryan, no, they are not. He feels that the amount of attention this breaking story has gotten takes away the severity of the traumas he has gone through. Diminishing one traumatic event by connecting it to other "joke" ones saying that they are related and that we needed one to have another, is, as he says, "offensive and insensitive". As a result, he hasn't been able to sleep since the story broke and even ran away. I tried asking him to join Noodle and I for our girls day but he hasn't even been able to bring himself to do that—it's awful.

[begins to cry]

Come back home Ryan, Noodle misses your homemade sugar scrubs.

John J. Johnson:

Thank you so much for sharing that truly heartfelt story. Back to you, Bob.

[cuts back to Bob crying and wiping his tears with reporting papers]

Bob Bobbinson:

Oh, we're back on the air?

[A startled Bob snuffles, wipes his tears away, and gets back to reporting]

Thank you John and thank you to our brave guest. We will be right back to keep you updated on this unfolding story.

[Bob begins to uncontrollably sob]

[Random person yells, "CUT"]

[cuts back to Olivia and Haley, Olivia gives Haley a look of "I told you so"]

Haley:

Don't look at me like that.

Olivia:

Look at you like what? I'm not looking at you in any type of way. It's not like I told you that stories like these affect people in ways we don't even realize and that people blurring the lines between causation and correlation is dangerous.

Haley:

[rolls eyes]

Oh please, it was only one person. They're just using a sob story to get more people to tune in; You know that, it's news-
101!

Olivia:

It's not just one person. People out there have been trying to warn against these dangerous domino effects and false news claims for years. You know how fast news spreads these days, with social media and all that, plus don't even get me started on social algorithms.

Haley:

Social allergies? What are those? Are they contagious?![Quickly covers her nose and mouth with her shirt]

Olivia:

What, no. [scoffs in annoyance] Social AL-GOR-ITH-MS are what big social media platforms use to keep us interested online.

They sometimes cause more harm than good because these algorithms tend to show us what we want to hear or see.

Haley:

What's so bad about that? I want to watch videos of puppies wearing dresses so they advertise videos of kittens wearing dresses. It's still cute either way.

Olivia:

You're obviously not getting this. These algorithms can divide society very quickly and harmfully. There is no hearing the other side, it is only what you want to hear. Zero overlap. See, just look at these exam-

[news channel music comes back on again]

Bob Bobbinson:

Hello folks, we're back with John J. Johnson and his next interviewee who has been affected by the 9/11 causing *Fifty Shades of Grey* story.

[touches earpiece]

Also, I have been informed by the network to tell you all that I was not, in fact, crying after our last interview, but simply that it is allergy season and I am severely allergic to pollen.

Now, John J. Johnson.

Haley:

There's no pollen in the office?

Olivia:

Shhhh! Listen to this story and don't say I didn't warn you.

[camera cuts to John J. Johnson and his new interviewee]

John J. Johnson:

Welcome back. This is John J. Johnson. Next on our journey into understanding this story is yet another individual who has

fallen victim to the news: Young mother and failed acrobat,
Cariah Marry. Good afternoon, Ms. Marry.

Cariah Marry (Haley):

[speaks with a stereotypical New Jersey accent, think Snooki
from Jersey Shore]

Good to be here, Johnny. You can call me Cariah.

[blows into her tissue and with tears in her eyes, Cariah Marry
shakes John J. Johnson's hand with tissue still in hand. John J.
Johnson wipes hand off in disgust]

John J. Johnson:

So, Cariah, tell me how this news has impacted your life.

Cariah Marry:

Of course, John. SO, basically I was sittin' on the couch doing
my nails, watchin' Jersey Shore where Snooki was doin' her
thing, minding her own business. Then, all the sudden the news
channel decided they couldn't handle theirs and so it flashed up
on my TV. I looks up at it against my will and this is what I
see? That 9/11 caused that disgusting erotica novel *Fifty Shades
of Grey* to be written? Then Ms. Britney comes on the screen and
tells about the events that caused such awful things to happen.

So immediately [begins to sniffle and choke up] I begin to
recall all the events she mentioned and I simply could not take
it. [begins to sob hysterically, blowing her nose as loud as
possible]

John J. Johnson:

It's alright Cariah, take your time.

[He pats her leg half-heartedly as he is repulsed by her blowing
her nose so loudly that it feels like an earthquake is about to
ensue]

Cariah Marry:

Oh thank you Johnny. You're too good to me. Anyways, [still
choked up but more composed now) those events were extremely
rough on me as you can imagine. I've seen theories like this one
before but I never knew they were actually true, you know? Like

I didn't know they caused each other, and that has caused me great distress. Knowing that this is how history went, I feel like my world has been turned upside down. It makes me so angry, Johnny, that the world can be so cruel. Honestly the connections between the two don't even really make sense, but I guess since the mass media is saying it did, it must be true.[begins to sob] oh I can't do this anymore! [blows nose loudly while sobbing and runs out]

John J. Johnson:

Uhhhh. Well, it seems as though this news story has truly hurt some people and altered their lives. Back to you, Bob.

Bob Bobbinson:

Ma'am, please calm down.

[Cariah is seen frantically running around in the background, sobbing, blowing her nose, throwing papers, and all-around causing chaos, Cariah is then tackled to the ground]

That was John J. Johnson. Thank you and we'll be right back with more updates.

Haley:

Wow. I'm actually speechless.

[Olivia raises an eyebrow to Haley as to signal her saying "I told you so"]

Oh, come on, don't do that to me.

Olivia:

What did I tell you? Reporting this story that one major event caused another is hurting people. Fake news stories have caused such a divide nowadays.

Haley:

I guess you're right but what are we supposed to do about it? We're not the ones who control what's going on TV.

Olivia:

Or are we?

Haley:

No. We're not.

Olivia:

Or *ARE* we?

Haley:

We're literally not.

Olivia:

Ok no, maybe we're not, but we could be.

Haley:

Oh god, Olivia, what are you thinking of doing?

Olivia:

What if next time we go on air, we take over the show and argue why this news story is so bad?

Haley:

What about Bob?

Olivia:

We'll just lock him in his office or something.

Haley:

How are we meant to get him in there in the first place?

Olivia:

We'll just tell him that the network feels that he's doing such a great job as head anchor that they put a taco bar in his office.

Haley:

Bob can't resist his tacos, can he?

Olivia:

No, he cannot.

[both laugh]

[montage of Haley and Olivia luring Bob into his office and then locking him in there plays]

[Olivia and Haley hear the cue that the show is about to go on air again and they run hurriedly back to where Bob's desk is, they sit down]

[someone begins to countdown from 10]

John J. Johnson

What are you two doing here? Where's Bob?

Haley:

He's not feeling too well. Too many tacos. You know how he gets.
[rubs stomach and makes sick face]

[news channel music plays and show begins]

Olivia:

Good afternoon people of KuPenn Geneva! This is Olivia and Haley with your updates on this day's breaking news.

Haley:

After much research on 9/11 causing *Fifty Shades of Grey* to be written, Olivia and I have come to the conclusion that such information has proven to be false. How do we know this to be true? Well let's look at 3 main pieces of evidence: the media, the domino effect, and the difference between causation and correlation.

Olivia:

Starting off with the domino effect, we must look at how such an idea functions. Essentially, the domino effect is a theory that asserts when one event happens, it sets off a proceeding series of occurrences that are related to one another in some way. In the case of 9/11 causing *Fifty Shades of Grey* to be written, there are countless inconsistencies with the most damning being

that they truly did not have any connection to one another. Each event had inspiration from one, but it was not causal, bringing us to our next point. Would you, Haley?

Haley:

Yes, of course! One of the largest misconceptions in events like these is the difference between causation and correlation. As we've been hearing about all day, people believe that 9/11 *CAUSED* *Fifty Shades of Grey* to be written. There are countless other theories such as this one that support such a notion including but not limited to: Joe Biden being responsible for a lot of modern pop music, how 9/11 ended Ellen's popularity, how a sandwich caused WWI, and much more. These so-called "historical domino effects" thrive off the lack of knowledge between causation and correlation. For all of these events that took place, they do have *correlations*. Correlations are two or more things that have a mutual connection between them. In today's top news story, we saw through our guest Britney's explanation of this "phenomenon" that there are connections between the events. Gerard Way was (allegedly) inspired by the trauma 9/11 had on him which caused him to form famous 2000s band My Chemical Romance, leading to inspiration for Stephanie Meyer to write *Twilight*, and furthermore for E. L. James to write *Fifty Shades of Grey*—these events did not, however, cause each other to happen. They have connections, but did not have an entirely direct step in causing one another. *Fifty Shades of Grey* may still have been written without *Twilight* having been. The lack of one piece of this story does not mean the rest wouldn't have happened, and the media's push of these events without acknowledging the differences between the two words is extremely detrimental.

Olivia:

Beautifully put Haley. This point leads us to our last piece of the argument: the mass media has far too much power over society. Today we have heard from numerous people who have fallen victim to the media's grasp: Britney Spears, Anonymous, Ryan Rossenbloom, Noodle the Pug, and Cariah Marry. What these few of many victims have in common is that they were manipulated by the media's push of a harmful false narrative. Social Media

platforms have given us a way to communicate in seconds but this also means false news can be spread far and fast in just the blink of an eye. As American citizens, we have been conditioned to believe that what we see and hear on the news is true. We ask ourselves, "Well it's on the news, so why would it be fake?" Instead of looking further into the issue, we take it at face value from news outlets who have biases. They use these biases to push a certain political, cultural, or social agenda onto the public so that they believe what the media wants them too and most times it works. Having this strong of an outreach on society is incredibly dangerous, leaving people angry, confused, polarized, and left like tonight's poor victims were. To add onto that, news on TV isn't even the only form of media that helps push these false stories as the internet plays a big part in that too! Mass media as a whole has many consequences that leave those indulging any type of media (such as the internet) in the same vulnerable position. Granting the media the ability to promote these white lies and stretches of the truth is harmful to our society and moreover something we, the public, must be aware to look out for.

Haley:

Very eloquently put. Ultimately, all we warn you about are the dangers of believing everything you see in the media, the media's ability to push false narratives into the brains of all those who consume it, the differences between causation and correlation, and the domino effect. Thank you. Up next [squints eyes], how the McRib caused the death of Martin Luther King Jr.? Are you kidding me? Did we not just talk about this?

Olivia:

That one doesn't even make any sense either.

[Haley agrees, nodding her head]

Bob Bobbinson:

[runs in room in a panic]

Have I missed my cue? There were no tacos. I couldn't get out of my room!

[sees Haley and Olivia at his desk, becomes angry and runs over,
Haley and Olivia look scared]

What in tarnation is going on here? Are you two the ones up to
this?

Haley:

It was her idea! [points to Olivia]

Olivia:

[rolls her eyes and yanks Haley's arm down] Look, Bob, you need
to go watch what we just said because it makes a lot more sense
than the story you were reporting on.

Haley:

Yeah, the news you were putting out there did a lot more harm
than good and I don't think you realize it.

Bob Bobbinson:

You think *I* caused harm? Look what you did to me—I was falsely
locked inside of my office for a whole news segment without any
tacos!

Olivia:

Listen Bob, we're really sorry about that, but just watch this,
alright? It was a necessary evil.

[Olivia hands Bob a phone, he watches the segment]

Bob Bobbinson:

Huh, maybe you girls really were onto something. I hate being
wrong and all but, I can't really deny the facts. I didn't even
think about any of this stuff when I was reporting on the story.
Those really are serious topics and I should learn to keep my
journalistic integrity. Time to make a Twitter apology I
suppose.

Haley and Olivia:

Oh Bob you silly mustache man! [laughs]

[Full House credit music begins to play]

FIN.