

# **This is who FACEBOOK has hired to morally decide which news to CENSOR for you!**

## **EXCLUSIVE: Facebook 'fact checker' who will arbitrate on 'fake news' is accused of defrauding website to pay for prostitutes - and its staff includes an escort-porn star and 'Vice Vixen domme'**

- Facebook has announced plans to check for 'fake news' using a series of organizations to assess whether stories are true
- One of them is a website called Snopes.com which claims to be one of the web's 'essential resources' and 'painstaking, scholarly and reliable'
- It was founded by husband-and-wife Barbara and David Mikkelson, who used a letterhead claiming they were a non-existent society to start their research
- Now they are divorced - with Barbara claiming in legal documents he embezzled \$98,000 of company money and spent it on 'himself and prostitutes'
- In a lengthy and bitter legal dispute he is claiming to be underpaid and demanding 'industry standard' or at least \$360,000 a year
- The two also dispute what are basic facts of their case - despite Snopes.com saying its 'ownership' is committed to 'accuracy and impartiality'
- Snopes.com founder David Mikkelson's new wife Elyssa Young is employed by the website as an administrator
- She has worked as an escort and porn actress and despite claims website is non-political ran as a Libertarian for Congress on a 'Dump Bush' platform
- Its main 'fact checker' is Kimberly LaCapria, whose blog 'ViceVixen' says she is in touch with her 'domme side' and has posted on Snopes.com while smoking pot

By [Alana Goodman For Dailymail.com](#)

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One of the websites **Facebook** is to use to arbitrate on 'fake news' is involved in a bitter legal dispute between its co-founders, with its CEO accused of using company money for prostitutes.

Snopes.com will be part of a panel used by Facebook to decide whether stories which users complain about as potentially 'fake' should be considered 'disputed'.

But the website's own troubles and the intriguing choice of who carries out its 'fact checks' are revealed by DailyMail.com, as one of its main contributors is disclosed to be a former sex-blogger who called herself 'Vice Vixen'.

Snopes.com will benefit from Facebook's decision to allow users to report items in their newsfeed which they believe to be 'fake'.

It is asking a number of organizations to arbitrate on items which are reported or which Facebook staff think may not be genuine, and decide whether they should be marked as 'disputed'.



Husband and wife: David Mikkelson is now married to Snopes.com staff member Elyssa Young - but also engaged in a bitter legal battle with his former wife Barbara with whom he set up the site



Wedding: Elyssa Young - who maintains a website offering her services as an escort - and Davik Mikkelson married in November. The wedding party included two other Snopes.com workers

## Donald Trump Threatens to Arrest Alec Baldwin



Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · Now

Jan 21st I will have Alex Baldwin arrested for sedition and SNL cancelled!! Their portrayal of me is very unfair!!

RETWEETS  
4058

FAVORITES  
2380



11:59 PM - 17 Dec 2016 · Details

FACT CHECK

A tweet in which Donald Trump threatened to arrest actor Alec Baldwin was a fake. [More >](#)

2K

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FACT CHECK

3K



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FACT CHECK



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Twitter user Adam Saleh shared a video of what he claimed was his removal from a Delta flight for speaking Arabic. [Read More](#)

By Kim LaCapria

1 hour ago

113

FACT CHECK



### Trump's Budget Director Pick Asked "Do We Really Need Government-Funded Research at All?"

Though it's since been deleted, Mick Mulvaney did pose this question in a Facebook post in response to a scientific study casting doubts on the role of the Zika virus in causing infant microcephaly. [Read More](#)

By Alex Kasprak

15 hours ago

3K

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The Hot List



Arbiter: Facebook announced that Snopes.com was one of the organizations to which it would turn for 'fact-checking' when questions are raised over the veracity of news stories

The others include ABC News, the Associated Press and 'fact-checking' websites including Politifact.com.

Now a DailyMail.com investigation reveals that Snopes.com's founders, former husband and wife David and Barbara Mikkelsen, are embroiled in a lengthy and bitter legal dispute in the wake of their divorce.

He has since remarried, to a former escort and porn actress who is one of the site's staff members.

They are accusing each other of financial impropriety, with Barbara claiming her ex-husband is guilty of 'embezzlement' and suggesting he is attempting a 'boondoggle' to change tax arrangements, while David claims she took millions from their joint accounts and bought property in Las Vegas.

The Mikkelsons founded the site in 1995. The couple had met in the early 1990s on a folklore-themed online message board, and married before setting up the site.

Profiles of the website disclose that for some time before it was set up, the couple had posed as 'The San Fernando Valley Folklore Society', using its name on letterheads, even though it did not exist.

A profile for the Webby Awards published in October describes it as 'an entity dreamed up to help make the inquiries seem more legit'.

David Mikkeleson told the Los Angeles Times in 1997: 'When I sent letters out to companies, I found I got a much better response with an official-looking organization's stationery.'

In 2015, their marriage ended in divorce - but a bitter legal dispute continues.

Both stayed on as co-owners of Snopes - which is registered under its legal name of Bardav, Inc. and were its sole board members.



Staff member: Elyssa Young is also know as Erin O'Bryn and maintains a website advertising her services as an escort with photographs of her over the years



**Erin O'Bryn**  
@ErinOBryn

I am a mature and experienced courtesan, idealist, activist & dreamer.

Las Vegas, Seattle, anywhere

[ErinOBryn.escortwebsite.com](http://ErinOBryn.escortwebsite.com)

Joined October 2009

© Twitter/Erin O'Bryn

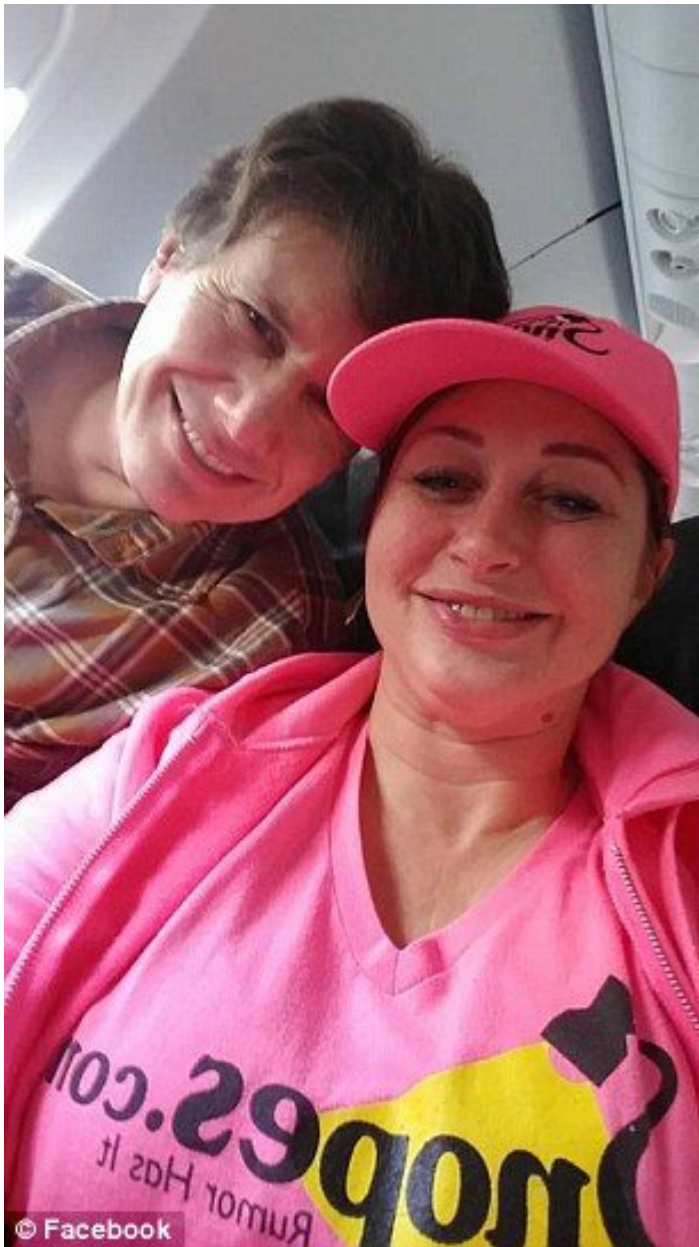




Political: Elyssa Young, under her other name Eryn O'Bryn, keeps her escort website running. An online review of her services was posted in March 2015



© Twitter/Erin O'Bryn



Adult model: Elyssa Young was a model for adult magazines in the 1990s, and appears to have continued posing for photographs until recently. She is now an administrative worker at Snopes.com and travels with her husband David Mikkelson, its co-founder

## Review: ERIN O'BRYN

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### APPY08'S REVIEW OF ERIN O'BRYN

#### appearance

VIP only

#### performance

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#### attitude

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#### atmosphere

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### general details

Spent 2 days and nights with Erin after waiting for a few months for our schedules to match especially since she travels overseas extensively. She is as I expected from her website. Although she is past her time as an adult model, you can still see the same girl in her that you see in the photos on her website from her earlier years. From the first few minutes, we were as comfortable as if we had known each other for years. Don't pursue Erin if you want an impersonal physical encounter, but if you seek a lover, in all that means, you would be very lucky to meet Erin.

### The Juicy Details

Active: The most recent review online of Elyssa Young's services was posted in March 2015

Legal filings seen by DailyMail.com detail a lengthy financial and corporate dispute which stretches long after their divorce, and which one lawyer describes as 'contentious' in court documents.

In the filings, Barbara, 57, has accused her former husband, 56, of 'raiding the corporate business Bardav bank account for his personal use and attorney fees' without consulting her.

She also claimed he embezzled \$98,000 from the company over the course of four years 'which he expended upon himself and the prostitutes he hired'.

When contacted by the Dailymail.com, David said he was legally prohibited from discussing his ex-wife's allegations.

'I'd love to respond, but unfortunately the terms of a binding settlement agreement preclude me from publicly discussing the details of our divorce,' he said. Barbara Mikkelson said: 'No comment.'

In court records, Barbara alleged that her ex-husband removed thousands from their business accounts between April and June of 2016 to pay for trips for him and his 'girlfriend'.

She claimed he spent nearly \$10,000 on a 24-day 'personal vacation' in India this year and expensed his girlfriend's plane ticket to Buenos Aires.

'He's been depleting the corporate account by spending monies from it on his personal expenses,' said Barbara in a filing last June.



First wife: Lawyers in court documents described Barbara Mikkelson's split from David, with whom she co-founded the Snopes.com website, as contentious.

She added that he needed to be suspended from using the company checkbook and debit card 'right away before there are no funds left in the corporate account'.

David and his attorneys countered that the India visit was a legitimate business trip, and that he only expensed a fraction - 22.5 per cent - of the total cost of the excursion.

He said he was considering setting up a fact-checking website in India, and wanted to get a sense of the culture. He also said he went to Buenos Aires to attend an international fact-checking conference.

Meanwhile, his attorneys blasted Barbara as 'a "loose cannon" who simply must have her way'.

One major point of contention was David's 2016 salary – which Barbara was responsible for approving.

David wanted his salary raised from \$240,000 to \$360,000 – arguing that this would still put him below the 'industry standards' and that he should be paid up to \$720,000 a year.

'As I said, based on industry standards and our revenues, my salary should be about 2x to 3x what it is now,' he wrote in an email to Barbara in April 2016. 'I'll settle for \$360K with the understanding that it's to be retroactive to the start of the year.'

Barbara responded that his request was 'not even in the galaxy of reasonable'.

So bitter was the dispute, that they even fell out over the arbiter they had appointed to settle disputes, meaning that Facebook's arbiter cannot even agree on its own arbiter.

The court papers also detail the substantial financial rewards 'fact-checking' brought the former couple - and how they have even fallen out over remuneration.

The divorce settlement stipulated that David Mikkelson receive a salary of \$240,000 a year in 2015, while both of the former couple were due to receive \$20,000 a month as a draw against profits, as well as a share of any net profit the company made after those payments.

The settlement also noted: 'Each party waives his or her claim upon Bardav's revenues received by Husband into his PayPal account and spent by him, accountant's fees for restating tax returns to reflect previously unreported income...'

The nature of those revenues and fees, and of the unreported income is not disclosed.

The settlement saw savings, IRAS and stockholdings of well over \$1.5 million given to Barbara, while she renounced claim on their marital home in Calabasas, California, in return for a payment of \$660,000.

David kept their joint baseball card collection, a savings account with \$1.59 million balance, and other savings worth more than \$300,000. They also agreed to split the company checking account's \$240,000 balance at the end of 2015 after his salary had been paid and a \$50,000 float left.

13. In one of these footnotes, the Court is informed that at the beginning of our separation I transferred marital funds into my sole name, which I did (but a fraction of the amount claimed by Respondent), **but omits that I did so in response to discovering Respondent's embezzlement of \$98,000.00 from our company over the course of four years**, which were monies he expended upon himself and the prostitutes he hired, returning only \$9,000.00 to community funds when compelled to do so by our July 2014 stipulation. I acted to protect our marital assets from further mishandling by Respondent.

Accusation: The claim of embezzlement was made in court documents seen by DailyMail.com

Subject: Re: Bardav status

From:

To:

Date: Wednesday, March 30, 2016 3:49 PM

While I'd normally be open to a phone call, unless there are matters beyond the two already raised, things are better handled via email at this juncture. Regarding salary, I still need to know what you're looking for before it can be determined if further discussion between us would be a good use of our time. Regarding a potential move to Washington state, you're correct about such relocation's being one of the two necessary steps to get us both out from under California personal income tax, but I cannot justify to myself playing any part in a boondoggle, if that's what you have in mind. If you do move to a non-tax state, we could then begin the process of shutting down Bardav and beginning a new corporation in either Washington or Nevada.

If there are further business matters you feel we should discuss by phone, I'm available Friday.

Subject: Re: Salary

From:

To:

Date: Saturday, April 9, 2016 8:19 AM

As I said, based on industry standards and our revenues, my salary should be about 2x to 3x what it is now. I'll settle for \$360K with the understanding that it's to be retroactive to the start of the year.

Contentious exchange: Barbara Mikkelson suggested a plan to relocate Snopes.com might be a 'boondoggle' and David demanded a \$360,000 annual salary

Prior to separation, Barbara wrote off every trip David took that involved visiting historical landmarks, sites, and monuments; or museums; or any other site of pop culture significance (including baseball games), as a business expense.

Nevertheless, post-separation, as Barbara is aware, David has taken a number of international trips which involved significant business activity, but he has not charged the business a penny for any of them (all though he could have based on the standard Barbara herself set). With respect to the India trip (which was chosen specifically for business-building purposes), David only charged 22.5% of the total cost of the trip to the business and shouldered the rest himself, even though he could have written off most of the trip as a business expense.

It is not Barbara's prerogative to decide what is and is not a legitimate business expense. Certainly, Barbara should have asked David about his reimbursements prior to exercising misguided self-help and simply taking a like "draw".

Barbara certainly has a right to bring this issue to an arbiter<sup>2</sup> if she chooses to do so. However, unless and until the matter has been decided by the arbiter, Barbara is not entitled to withdraw funds from the business account and transfer them to her personal account.

The arbiter needs an arbiter: How details of spending were described by Barbara Mikkelson's legal team

They later increased the \$20,000 monthly payment to \$30,000.

That has not ended the difficulty however; court documents show that a decision on David's salary for 2016 became bogged down in legal argument when Barbara referred it to an arbiter, and the appointment of the arbiter became itself a matter of dispute.

Snopes.com will be asked by Facebook to be an arbiter on the veracity of news.

Attorneys for the former husband and wife also conducted a lengthy exchange on what was actually true about the actions of the former couple.

In correspondence his side disputes her right to 'decide what is and is not a legitimate business expense', while her side accused of him of making false claims about the appointment of the arbiter.

In the time since the couple split, David has run the company's day-to-day operations, and authored a number of 'fact checks'.

He has also made hires – including Elyssa Young, 47, an administrative assistant at Snopes.

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She is also a long-time escort and porn star who has worked for decades under the name 'Erin O'Bryn' - and now his wife.

Mikkelson married Young last month in Washington state, and pre-wedding photos show the happy couple traveling the world and posing provocatively with tigers while wearing 'Snopes' hats and t-shirts.

The wedding party included two of the site's workers. The newlyweds honeymooned on the Jungle Cruise at Tokyo Disneyland.

Although Young lists her job as 'administrative assistant at Snopes' on LinkedIn, her escort websites and Twitter accounts still appear to be active. it is unclear if she is still working as one.

She describes herself on her Twitter page as 'a mature and experienced courtesan, idealist, activist & dreamer.'

On her escort website, she calls herself 'an elite and discreet companion' who 'understands that while pleasure and passion may be explored in the bedroom, it is hardly the only place.'

'I only accept a very limited number of new lovers because I'm only seeking long term engagements,' she wrote.

She also wrote: 'Here's the donation I request for my time, companionship, and entertainment', with 'non-negotiable' rates of \$1,200 for her minimum four hours and \$5,000 for 24 hours.





Fact checker: Kim LaCapria is the principal fact checker at the website but also blogged as Vice Vixen and wrote about her 'domme' side and offered sex toy recommendations

Online reviews suggest that she was working in Las Vegas as an escort in March 2015.

While David Mikkelson has denied that Snopes takes any political position, his new wife has a background in politics.

She ran for U.S. congress in Hawaii as a Libertarian in 2004, during which she handed out 'Re-Defeat Bush' cards and condoms stamped with the slogan 'Don't get screwed again'.

## **LUCRATIVE FACTS**

Financial details of Snopes.com disclosed in court papers show that the website appears to be healthily profitable.

In February 2016, it had gross advertising sales of \$216,199 and a gross profit of \$150,599.50.

Expenses were noted as \$2,500 for 'server expense' and \$4,470 to Brooke Binkowski, which was marked as 80 per cent of payroll expenses.

Binkowski described herself as the editor of Snopes.com.

Her remuneration, which would be equivalent to \$53,640 per annum, pales in comparison to that of David Mikkelson.

His 2015 annual salary was \$240,000. On top of that the divorce settlement stipulated a \$20,000-per-month draw on profits, with he and Barbara later upped to \$30,000 - a package that would be the equivalent of \$500,000 a year.

He is seeking a pay rise to '2x or 3x' the \$240,000, court documents show, although he was prepared to settle for \$360,000.

On top of that the court documents show that he had previously been able to charge other things to the company rather than paying for them himself.

In court papers his lawyers said: 'Prior to separation, Barbara wrote off every trip David took that involved visiting historical landmarks, sites, monuments; or museums; or any other site of pop culture significance (including baseball games), as a business expense.'

Further court documents showed some of the details of the couple's personal wealth.

They included: a \$205,000 home in Las Vegas; a \$1,525,000 home in Calabasas, Los Angeles; two savings accounts with \$3,064,993; a cash account with \$81,785 and a stock account with \$47,588; IRAs valued at \$455,101; and a baseball card collection which was not valued.

'Let's face it, I am an unlikely candidate. I fully admit that I am a courtesan,' she wrote bluntly on her campaign website.

Her upstart campaign faced a number of obstacles – including a lack of funding and a bad spot of media attention after Young misspelled her Republican opponent's name on her campaign website.

But Young still managed to get on the ballot without spending any money, an accomplishment she touted on her campaign website.

'NO BULS\*\*\*...I got ON THE BALLOT with the least possible waste,' she wrote, adding, 'Lets get less REAL boobs in office...'

In the end she pulled in three percent of the vote, losing the seat to Democratic incumbent Neil Abercrombie.

She is not the only Snopes employee who is frank online about their sex life.

One of the lead fact-checkers, Kim LaCapria, has also been a sex-and-fetish blogger who went by the pseudonym 'Vice Vixen.'

She described her blog as a lifestyle website 'with a specific focus on naughtiness, sin, carnal pursuits, and general hedonism and bonne vivante-ery.'

She regularly provided intimate advice and reviewed sex toys, including a vibrating wand that 'drives boys mad.'

'If you are doing something to your fella, and you apply this to the base of his cash-and-prizes while you carry on, he will scream and perhaps cry,' she wrote.

She also recommended one book with the review: 'How to Tell A Naked Man What To Do seems like the perfect how-to for the dominatrix-in-waiting, or any girl looking to get in touch with her domme side. Mine, I wish I could shut her up sometimes, but there you go.'

In others posts, LaCapria claimed to be 'addicted to smutty HP [Harry Potter] fanfic.'

Describing her day-off activities on another blog, she wrote that she 'played scrabble, smoked pot, and posted to Snopes.' She added, 'That's what I did on my day "on," too.'

David Mikkelson told the Dailymail.com that Snopes does not have a 'standardized procedure' for fact-checking 'since the nature of this material can vary widely.' He said the process 'involves multiple stages of editorial oversight, so no output is the result of a single person's discretion.'

He also said the company has no set requirements for fact-checkers because the variety of the work 'would be difficult to encompass in any single blanket set of standards.'

'Accordingly, our editorial staff is drawn from diverse backgrounds; some of them have degrees and/or professional experience in journalism, and some of them don't,' he added.

LaCapria did not respond to a request for comment.