

The Integrity Gap

When Good Intentions Undermine Truth

Thirty-Second Meme Audit

A quick decision tool before sharing

Political memes are designed for speed. This audit adds a brief pause - just enough friction to ask whether a meme is accurate, fair, and strong enough to deserve amplification.

Sequence

CLAIM -> EVIDENCE -> CONTEXT -> MECHANISM -> PROPORTION -> ACTION

1. CLAIM

What is the meme actually saying?

- Can I state the factual claim in one sentence?
- Is it making a factual claim, implying causation, or pushing a moral conclusion?

2. EVIDENCE

What supports the claim?

- Is there a source, quote, statistic, document, or verifiable event?
- Does the image actually support the message?

3. CONTEXT

What might be missing?

- Does the meme omit timeframe, scale, comparison, uncertainty, or alternative explanations?
- Is a selective example being presented as typical?

4. MECHANISM

What is doing the persuasive work?

- Emotion, authority, outrage, mockery, visual design, or tribal identity?
- Is persuasion being mistaken for proof?

5. PROPORTION

Is the conclusion stronger than the evidence?

- Does the tone match the level of certainty?
- Would a more careful version sound less dramatic?

6. ACTION

What should I do with it?

- Share it? Share with context? Verify first? Save for later? Don't share?
- Evaluation is not complete until it changes behavior.

Quick Use Worksheet

Question	Notes / answer
CLAIM: What is the meme actually saying?	
EVIDENCE: What supports the claim?	

Question	Notes / answer
CONTEXT: What might be missing?	
MECHANISM: What is doing the persuasive work?	
PROPORTION: Is the conclusion stronger than the evidence?	
ACTION: What should I do with it?	
Decision rule If you cannot answer at least two of these questions clearly, pause before sharing.	
Final principle A meme does not need to be entirely false to be misleading. It only needs to be persuasive enough to travel faster than scrutiny.	