**Irrational Geographic**

**by Kim LaCapria**

***No, National Geographic hasn't begun covering nonsense since their merger with Fox.***

**Kim, since the cover story on the December 2015 issue of National Geographic was "How the Virgin Mary Became the World’s Most Powerful Woman," it seems that it would have been more accurate to say "Yes, National Geographic has begun covering nonsense since their merger with Fox."**

**That is, unless you can produce even one ounce of evidence that National Geo's story about the Virgin Mary has any more validity than any fairy tale taken out of the collection of Hans Christian Anderson or taken from Grimm's fairy tales.**

**Can you do that Kim?**

**If you could, you would be the first person in 2,000 years to do so.**

**(Now the author talks about a special edition issue which came out before the December "Virgin Mary" issue. This special issue is what Snopes is calling "Mostly False."**

**I am not interested in that Red Herring, so I will skip over that part and continue further down the article).**

***Although we were unable to successfully reach anyone in National Geographic's editorial department to confirm precisely how long issues spent in development prior to print, the process is also somewhat standard in the industry.***

**Kim, why don't you get back to us ... when Fox, I mean National Geo, gets back to you?**

**Whatever may be standard in the industry may or may not apply in this case.**

***According to public relations professionals (for whom lead time can be critical), two to three months is on the short end of print publication timetables.***

**Kim, September 9 is more than 2 months before December.**

***Others caution a three to six month wait for print content to hit newsstands.***

**Kim, September 9 *is* almost 3 months before December.**

***Even the actual then-current issue ("Mary") was likely started well before the September 2015 National Geographic Fox deal was announced.***

**Kim, "likely" isn't going to cut it for an organization, like Snopes, dedicated to revealing the truth. You need to do better than that.**

**If you are going to judge the veracity of a claim, you need to do research and obtain facts - not rely on your opinion, based on what you think is "likely."**

***A common complaint aired along with the claim Rupert Murdoch "bought" National Geographic held that the magazine would immediately adopt a climate change denialist stance. However, on November 25, 2015, the "Editor's Picks" on the site's sidebar included articles titled "It’s Not Just Coal and Oil: Forests Are Key to Climate," "Only Three Northern White Rhinos Remain," and "How Could Paris Climate Talks Change Africa’s Future?"***

**Kim, that was the sloppiest reporting I have ever seen at Snopes. You list 3 articles that may or may not cast doubt on climate change and simply assume that those prove that there is nothing shady going on? How do you know without reading them?**

**In fact, the first one "It's not just coal and oil: forests are key to climate" *does* sound like something intended to minimize the scientific consensus on human-caused climate change. But as a Snopes investigator, shouldn't you at least read it first, before assuming that it is not an attack on climate scientists? Especially given that title?**

**The same is true for the third article you listed about the Paris climate talks.**

***Finally, neither the "Mary" issue nor the "Strange But True" issue adopted a meaningfully new stance for National Geographic.***

**Kim, I read the "Mary" feature - did you?**

**It was written so as to avoid any appearance of intending offense towards religious believers. There was nothing scientific or skeptical, whatsoever, in that story. It was obviously targeting National Geo's new base.**

**However, there is one thing that Fox kept in National Geo to keep its circulation up - the ubiquitous, large-breasted, naked African woman that has been a staple of National Geo for over 50 years.**

**What in the world does a large-breasted, naked African woman have to do with the story of the Virgin Mary?**

**Let me know if you figure that one out.**

**It looks like Murdoch may have thrown out the fact-checkers along with hundreds of other employees, but he was smart enough to keep National Geo's most iconic symbol.**