



Epsilon Theory

Does It Make A Sound?

August 13, 2019



This is Hong Kong right now. The image is powerful. The audio is more powerful.

The people in this image and [this video](#) are singing “Do you hear the people sing,” from Les Mis. It is a common protest song, but not the kind of thing that is allowed in 2019 China. If you know the curtain-dropping line from the play, you’ll know why:

*Do you hear the people sing?
Singing a song of angry men?
It is the music of a people
Who will not be slaves again*

– *Les Miserables* (1980)

Here is an article from the South China Morning Post discussing the aggressive use of tear gas to break up the protests.

Hong Kong protests: police under fire as viral video shows elderly residents of Yuen Long care home suffering from effects of tear gas [South China Morning Post]

The article is, of course, pure fiat news, an opinion piece that presents itself as a news update. The headline is selective and emotionally charged. The images are selected to evoke a particular response. Even when we agree with the narrative it is promoting – especially when we agree – fiat news should always give us pause.

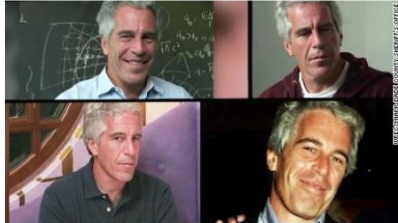
But they aren't the only ones creating narratives here. The protesters are, too. Singing "it is the music of a people who will not be slaves again" is beautiful narrative creation. Standing peacefully, armed against tear gas and bullets with spray guns, umbrellas and plywood shields? Brilliantly disarming tear gas canisters with cones and water guns? This is **Holy, Rough and Immediate** theater, all at once.

And it is amazing.

If you're reading this, you probably know more about what's going on in Hong Kong than just an airport shutdown. Like us, you're probably Very Online, a ravenous consumer of global news. But for most of the country it is a different story.

Here, for example, is the front page of CNN.com as of 7:00 AM CT this morning. Dig a little bit and you'll find something about the Hong Kong protests. Only don't look for a story about self-determination, disenfranchisement or extradition. You've got to look for a story about how this might affect *you*, fellow American. Found it yet?

Who's who of Epstein's powerful friends and associates



Jeffrey Epstein's death ends the criminal case against him, but his associates and possible co-conspirators may not have heard the last of it

Employees at Epstein's prison cite mandatory overtime, 18-hour days as controversy brews

After Epstein's death, prosecutors examine his inner circle

Ana Cabrera: Trump's reaction to Epstein's death is very unsurprising

Opinion: Our conspiracy theorist-in-chief

Today in politics



Analysis

Texas' metro areas may tip America's balance of power

Analysis: Donald Trump gets sick of everyone, except for Donald Trump

Tulsi Gabbard leaves campaign trail for 2 weeks for active duty training

See Trump's note to Trudeau that ambassador thought was a joke

Democrats take aim at the media

Washington Post editor responds to Bernie Sanders: Your 'conspiracy theory' is wrong

Opinion: The US has a 'crimes against democracy' problem

Late night roasts 2020 candidates' snacking at Iowa State Fair

Top stories



Comedian shuts down efforts to extort her over photo

BREAKING Hong Kong airport cancels all departing flights or second straight day

Body found in search for missing teen in Malaysia

Mom brings CNN's Kate Bolduan to tears: This is my reality

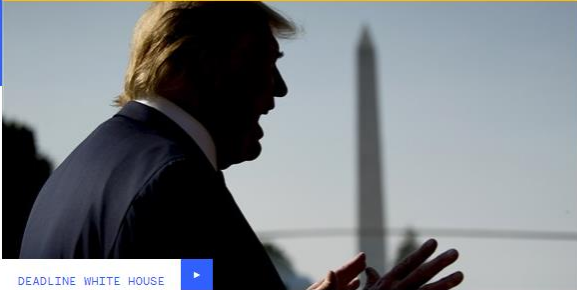
Deadly mishap in Russia's Far North, and a nuke mystery lingers

John Oliver tackles Trump's 'lack of humanity' in response to mass shootings

Canada murder suspects apparently died by suicide, autopsies find

Friend who gave Dayton shooter 100-round magazine and armor faces federal charges

MSNBC's front page has nothing. Zilch. Lots to say about Russia, though.



DEADLINE WHITE HOUSE

The label that stokes fury in Trump



ALI VELSHI

Why Epstein associate is now in the spotlight

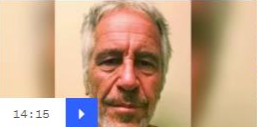
Best of The Rachel Maddow Show



07:02

Trump guts American dream, Endangered Species Act both in one day

RACHEL MADDOW



14:15

Epstein death may put alleged co-conspirators in new legal peril

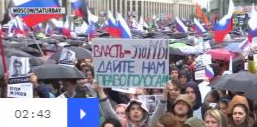
RACHEL MADDOW



05:59

Open questions, alleged accomplices keep Epstein case ongoing

RACHEL MADDOW



02:43

Tens of thousands take to Moscow streets for fair, free elections

RACHEL MADDOW



07:30

Mueller sp begins witi

RACHEL MA

If you're willing to scroll down past fiat news send-ups of Comey and Cuomo, Fox will give you a similar angle to CNN. At least they acknowledge the protests. Unfortunately, in doing so their headline writer unwittingly reveals a bit too much about US missionaries' awareness of the protests: in short, they have not been paying attention to them for the *months*, not *days*, that they have been going on.

GIRLS, MONEY AND POWER

Times reporter reveals disturbing revelations from off-record visit to doomed pervert's Manhattan lair

Federal agents search Jeffrey Epstein's home in Virgin Islands

Celebrities react to Jeffrey Epstein's death with conspiracy theories about Donald Trump, Russia

Gutfeld on those Epstein conspiracy theories

Epstein feared cellmate, a muscle-bound ex-cop charged in murder who was moved before financier's death: report

Jeffrey Epstein used jail cell item to kill himself: report

[CLICK HERE FOR THE LATEST ON THE EPSTEIN CASE](#)



COMEY'S SECRET PLANS?

GREGG JARRETT: FBI was running an operation against Trump, docs show

Ex-FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe sues DOJ over dismissal



DON'T CALL ME FREDO

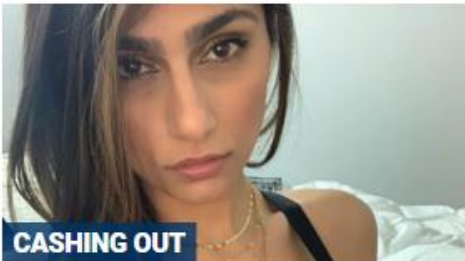
CNN's Chris Cuomo seen in viral confrontation over being called 'Fredo'

Concha: Media will never apologize for anti-Trump rhetoric because there's 'no accountability'



HORRIFIC GUN BATTLE

CHP officer gunned down off highway, 'we know the motive'



CASHING OUT

Ex-porn star from infamous 'hijab' scene reveals shocking career earnings



WORLD

Hong Kong airport delays continue as thousands protest for a fifth day



MEDIA

Hannity: So-called front runner Biden's campaign is in turmoil

The Wall Street Journal puts it figuratively above-the-fold – they've got a good Hong Kong bureau – but again, the headliner news story is how this will affect your travel plans and the next two weeks of volatility in your portfolio. It IS a financial paper, so some grace is warranted here. Many of their reporters are doing good work. If you're looking for someone to follow, @birdyword is a good choice.



1 of 6

Hong Kong Airport Faces Second Day of Disruption

Protesters swamped Hong Kong International Airport for a second straight day, blocking the gates to the security and immigration areas and snarling the busy transit hub. The airport suspended all check-in, and advised people not to go to the airport. 15 minutes ago

- Analysis: Corporate Titans Under Siege
- Hong Kong Police Adopt Tougher Tactics

Stocks Fall as Hong Kong Unrest Fuels Investors' Concerns

Equities dropped around the world as protests in Hong Kong, a political shake-up in Argentina and trade tensions added to investors' concerns about the global economy. 35 minutes ago

- U.S. Stocks Decline Amid Trade Woes

CBS, Viacom in Final Stages of Deal Talks

CBS and Viacom are in the final stages of negotiating a deal that would reunite mogul Sumner Redstone's media empire in the hopes of creating a more formidable competitor to the entertainment industry's giants.

New Tariffs Will Have Bigger Impact on Women's Clothing Than Men's

The Trump administration's next round of tariffs on Chinese imports will for the first time target an array of apparel, and the brunt of that will fall on clothing for women and girls. 9

World Trade Center Still Loses Money

The Port Authority once hoped the World Trade Center would produce a "peace dividend" measured in billions of dollars that could go toward bridges, tunnels and airports. The complex is still losing money. 8

Attorney General Cites 'Serious Irregularities' at Epstein Jail

Investigators probing the apparent suicide of Jeffrey

'My Baby Monitor Is Haunted': Tales of Parental Fright

FAMILY & TECH

25% Tariffs Are Leaving Some Businesses Squirmy

Scooter Operators Race to Remain on Streets of Paris

The New York Times gives the "airport thing" top billing, too, but the nature of their coverage (presented cheerfully next to "What Would Sartre Think about Trump-Era Republicans") would easily pass CCP censors. Every piece and every blurb being promoted is about the disruption being caused by the protests, and about the damage being done by them.

HONG KONG

Protests Disrupt Hong Kong Airport for Second Day

Hong Kong International Airport suspended check-ins as protesters again occupied parts of the departures and arrivals halls.

The demonstration came hours after the city's embattled leader pleaded for order following days of escalating chaos and violent street clashes.

37m ago



Protesters at Hong Kong International Airport on Tuesday. Low Yik Fei for The New York Times

Unrest Is Propelling a Political Union Off the Rails

The protesters are on a collision course with China's ruling Communist Party, with each side staking out increasingly polarized positions.

3h ago

JEFFREY EPSTEIN

Epstein Was Left Alone for Hours in Jail, and One Guard Was a Substitute

Jeffrey Epstein was not checked on for hours in the Manhattan jail where he died, and one of his guards was not a full-fledged officer, officials said.

Attorney General William Barr said Mr. Epstein's suicide would not halt the investigation into others who might have helped traffic girls for sex.

10m ago 1291 comments



Jeffrey Epstein in 2006. Uma Sanghvi/Palm Beach Post, via Associated Press

The Day Jeffrey Epstein Told Me He Had Dirt on Powerful People

Our columnist went to Mr. Epstein's Manhattan mansion last year to talk about Tesla. They ended up discussing much more.

11h ago 74 comments

In tweets about Mr. Epstein, President Trump revisited a favored conspiracy genre: murder. 11h ago

Opinion >

Ross Douthat

Jeffrey Epstein and When to Take Conspiracies Seriously

Sometimes conspiracy theories point toward something worth investigating. A few point toward the truth.

23m ago

Taeku Lee and EunSook Lee

Why Trump Fears Women of Color

The right recognizes their political power. The left takes them for granted.

59m ago



Robert Zaretsky

What Would Sartre Think About Trump-Era Republicans?

Paul Krugman

Useful Idiots and Trumpist Billionaires

Agnes Callard

Why Philosophers Shouldn't Sign Petitions

The Editorial Board

What Happened at Russia's Missile Test Site?

Michelle Goldberg

The Pundit-Defying Idiosyncrasies of Iowa Voters

Harry Reid

The Filibuster Is Suffocating the Will of the American People

Jessica Rich

Give the F.T.C. Some Teeth to Guard Our Privacy

Joe Biden

Don't Trust Donald Trump's Diagnosis of Our Gun Problem

Charlie Warzel

Epstein Suicide Conspiracies Show How Our Information System Is Poisoned

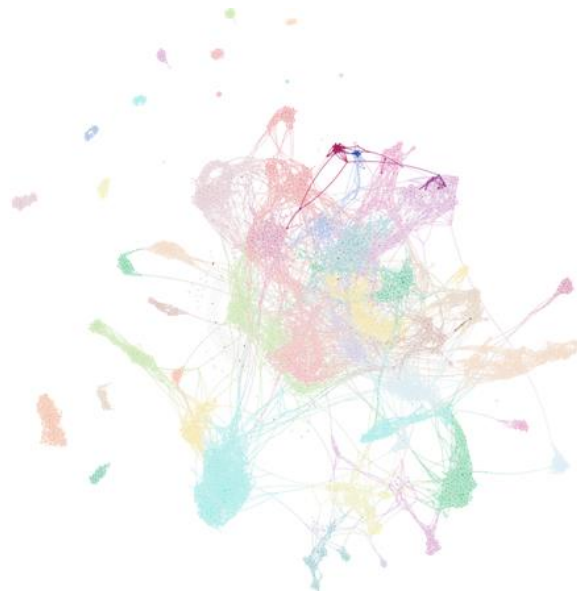
ET followers and subscribers – especially on social media – have been openly predicting over the last few days how quickly the Epstein case or the Hong Kong protest situation will fade from the zeitgeist, from the narratives about what’s going on in our world.

They won’t fade.

No, not because they’re powerful or timeless. **They won’t fade because they don’t exist.**

There is no narrative, no common knowledge in the US about these protests. American media have largely stopped covering them, and they aren’t written about as a “connected issue” for other topics. They have rarely, if ever, been connected to language used to discuss trade disputes with China. They aren’t related to the three or four articles grudgingly discussing the Uighur muslim reeducation villages they’ve set up (shh!). But this isn’t just US media. It’s politicians, too, who seem loath to tie anything of everyday significance to what’s happening over there.

The only reason at all the protests are getting coverage is in context of reports about Asian stocks and reports about flights in and out of Hong Kong. That’s it. From **Quid**, below we present a network graph of the last two days worth of all global news. In bold at the extremity of the northeast quadrant are the entirely peripheral, unconnected, paltry collection of articles about these protests.



Source: Quid, Epsilon Theory

I’m sure we will get a lot of *“isn’t a clear-eyed view of the protests that they are unlikely to be successful”* or *“this will all be counterproductive”* takes, which are very on-narrative responses. They also might not be wrong.

But wherever self-determination and resistance to the encroaching power of the state and oligarchical institutions find expression, there should our full hearts be also.

And our full voices.

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