

The Parallel Universe of BBC Panorama (Disinformation BBC style)

KIT-OFF GUARDIAN—The folks at Panorama LOVE Putin, or at least love to hate him. In the last two years there have been no less than five (five!) episodes devoted to the man, and indeed the myth. January 2016 brought us “Putin’s Secret Riches”, January 2017 “Trump: The Kremlin Candidate”, March of this year brought us two inside a week, “Putin: The New Tsar” and “Taking On Putin!”. As the titles suggest, none of them were especially objective or open-minded. That’s not in the BBC’s remit. The most recent Putin-hit piece aired just last week – in the run up to the World Cup – its rather more mundane title simply: “Putin’s Russia with David Dimbleby”. The documentary, for want of a better word, opens on David Dimbleby wandering through a Moscow market looking at sigh Russian nesting dolls, and it doesn’t get less predictable from there on in. A long time ago, I was taught you construct an argument in three steps – “Statement, Evidence, Conclusion”. Instead Panorama opted to go for the unorthodox “Conclusion, Anecdote, Stock Footage of Nesting Dolls” approach.