



Part 23A: The Role of the Media — The Structure of the Media: What Happened to the Legacy Media?

Frances T. Shure, M.A., L.P.C.
May 11, 2021



Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

— First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

Two overarching influences governing our media keep these news outlets — and thus us — silent about 9/11. The first is the influence of the power brokers on the fourth estate — or what *passes* these days as the news business. The second influence is the very structure of the media itself.

I reached this conclusion after spending hours reading and listening to accounts from award-winning investigative journalists and whistleblowers whose testimonies we explored in [Part 21](#) of this serial essay.

The most powerful censors of news, these journalists testified, are the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), whose influence is inordinate, plus the Pentagon, military intelligence, the White House, the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), owners of media corporations, large advertisers, prestigious family dynasties, and über-wealthy individuals.

In [Part 22](#), I documented how completely entwined the CIA's and Pentagon's top brass are with major media figures, including Hollywood movie makers. I provided ample evidence that the CIA's move to infiltrate big media companies (and academia) began perhaps innocently enough, as a bulwark against the encroachments of Soviet Union communism, which under Stalin was rapidly overtaking Eastern Europe.

I then showed how the CIA — aka the Agency — quickly grew, both within the media and outside it, to become monstrous — a state actor responsible for the deaths and misery of millions of our fellow human beings. How it propped up fascist governments and ideologies worldwide, including at home. How it emerged as an *imperium in imperio*, or a state within a state. How it had the blessing of the U.S. Congress to commit, with impunity, any crime worldwide.¹

I also explained that, although the press *de facto* does not cover those crimes, the CIA's insistence on secrecy is driving its push to secure *du jure* protection for “certain press coverage” of its crimes. If this desire is fulfilled by Congress, I reasoned, the U.S. would slide much farther down the slippery slope toward a closed society, which would bear little resemblance to the open society that most Americans hope for.

In addition, I provided evidence that the propagandizing and censoring institutions — especially the CIA and the Pentagon — are by now so thoroughly integrated into the structure of media that there remains no meaningful distinction between them. Moreover, I made clear that their ability and willingness to both censor and propagandize via the news media have increased dramatically since 9/11.

However, there could well be a dynamic *beyond* the CIA's controlling influence that accounts for the suppression of critical news. That reason is the media's own corporate structure.

Think about it: Doesn't it make sense that the entities promoting propaganda and pulling the levers behind the censorship curtain are none other than the giant media conglomerates themselves — and, by extension, their major shareholders? After all, these same institutional holders of Big Media stocks also own sizable stakes in influence-wielding big banks, Big

Pharma, Big Oil and Gas, and international companies that comprise the military-industrial complex.²

In this essay I will consider the words “fake news,” “false news,” and “propaganda” to have the same meaning and will use them interchangeably. They all refer to deliberately spread ideas or allegations designed to persuade others of an incomplete or outright false narrative to hide aspects of reality and in order to damage a cause, a person, or an institution.³ Propaganda and censorship are two sides of the same coin. Each can only thrive through the backing of the other.

My contention is that the corporate structure of the media plays a large role in mounting propaganda and censorship. Let’s begin at the beginning and flesh that out.

The earliest history of U.S. media

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution provides protection from the government “abridging the freedom of speech or of the press.” To wit, governmental censorship of anything written or spoken, including any attempt to disseminate news, whether by an individual or by a collection of individuals, is expressly forbidden by the highest law of our nation.

Censorship by any entity entails the direct and indirect suppression of information. It can include bias, omission, or underreporting that prevents the public from understanding what is happening in the world.⁴ Censorship acts as a barrier blocking us from learning the facts about events and incidents that potentially affect our decisions and our actions.

The Bill of Rights — the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution — were ratified on December 15, 1791. They established our widely acclaimed “free press.”

In spite of this protection, today we find ourselves far from that ideal. Instead, we are in a “truth emergency.”⁵ This “emergency” was graphically expressed by my hairdresser, who exclaimed in exasperation after our conversation about current affairs and “fake news”: “I just don’t know what to believe anymore! I want to turn off the TV and sequester myself in my own little world!” She and others I know are fast settling into what Micky Huff of Project Censored calls “reality apathy.”⁶

What has changed since the Constitution was ratified?

The ratifiers of the Constitution understood that if officeholders were allowed to outlaw or circumscribe the voices of newspaper editors who dissented from their political views, then opponents running for office would have no access to the public through those newspapers and thus no means of mobilizing popular support. Suppression of contrary points of view would thereby destroy the new nation’s representative democracy and the public debate necessary to the democratic process and return it to a form of government more akin to the monarchy the colonists had left behind.

In the 1800s, however, newspaper owners sided with one political party or another. Hence, the only way readers could hear more than one opinion was to read more than one paper. And

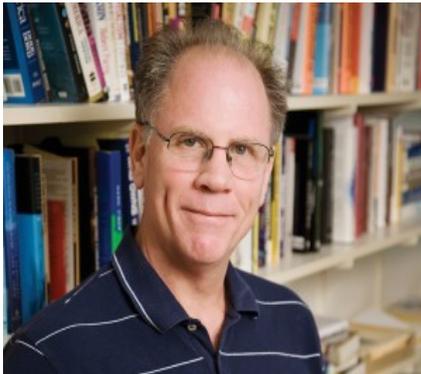
indeed, throughout most of the 19th century, towns and cities had several newspapers — each with its own ideological position on issues both local and national. Combined, they supplied readers who lived in a given community with a broad range of opinions.

These newspapers, which charged six cents for each paper, were soon challenged by the “penny press,” which charged only one cent for each newspaper.

Media literacy professor Nolan Higdon says of the penny press:

“They were able to reduce their costs and increase their profits by selling space to advertisers, adopting new technologies for mass printing, and replacing real journalism with fake news stories that drew the attention of larger audiences. After 1830, penny press fake news dominated the news industry.”⁷

Their owners soon learned that “trash talking,” stories about divisiveness, and fear-laden tales were effective in selling papers. For example, fictitious accounts of planned slave rebellions along with exaggerated reports of real rebellions played on American’s racist attitudes. The resulting fear prompted the population to continue buying papers to keep up with the latest news, thinking that the information would help forewarn and forearm them against the perceived dangers.⁸



Robert McChesney

During the 1800s the press “increasingly became an engine of great profits as costs plummeted, population increased, and ads — which emerged as a key source of revenue — mushroomed,” clarifies media critic and historian Robert McChesney.⁹

The commercial press gradually came under the control of wealthy businessmen, whose political views and newspaper columns benefited their — and their advertiser’s — financial interests. The largest of these companies soon ballooned into multiple-paper monopolies.

Undeterred by the self-interested plutocrats who took no interest in human rights, groups of “socialists, feminists, abolitionists, trade unionists, and radicals” sprang up, McChesney tells us. Pushing back against the larger, established newspapers, they published their own papers, which reached millions of readers in the young nation.¹⁰

This era was characterized by two worlds: the serious social issues that these activists addressed in their news organs and the glittering displays of extravagance flaunted by America’s richest families. These contrasting worlds inspired satirist Mark Twain to scornfully brand the era the “Gilded Age.”

Eventually, small, independent papers, which championed the disenfranchised and the dire social needs of the day, couldn’t compete against these business barons. By the late 19th century,

therefore, all but the largest cities had only one or two newspapers, usually owned by the affluent and influential.¹¹

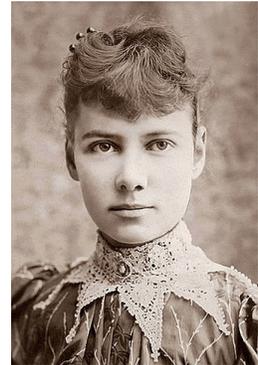
The Golden Age of Journalism

Reformers persevered, nonetheless. They publicly criticized the commercial press for having aims antithetical to a healthy democratic exchange of ideas and the betterment of society. The reformers garnered the most attention during the “Progressive Era,” which spanned the 1890s through the 1920s. Their anti-Gilded Age, anti-monopoly, anti-corruption message ushered in the early 20th-century’s “Golden Age of Journalism,” which lasted only about a decade.¹²

In that mere decade, investigative journalists such as Ida M. Tarbell, Ida B. Wells, Lincoln Steffans, Elizabeth Cochran (whose pen name was Nellie Bly), and Upton Sinclair used their pens to take on the monied and the mighty. Their sleuthing, which culminated in highly descriptive exposés, resulted in social and legislative changes that improved life for millions of downtrodden Americans.

Because they stirred up public antipathy for the “robber barons,” these brave journalists were a thorn in the side of the wealthy and a challenge to the status quo. President Teddy Roosevelt derisively called them “muckrakers” based on what he deemed their strident and sensational reporting.¹³

For example, Nellie Bly feigned insanity so she could be admitted to a mental institution, whose abusive conditions she then proceeded to uncover for her readers.



*Elizabeth Cochran,
"Nellie Bly"*



Ida Tarbell

Ida Tarbell published a serial essay, which later became her book, [*The History of the Standard Oil Company*](#), about the ruthless rise and unfair practices of John D. Rockefeller’s monopoly oil company.

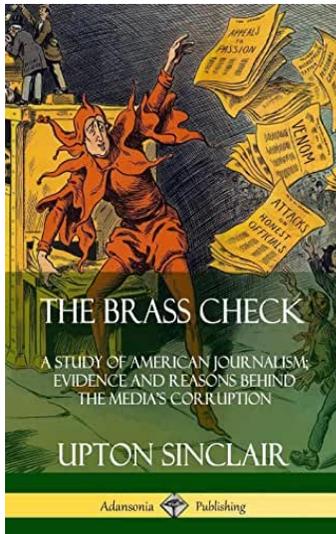
Ida B. Wells, an African American feminist and journalist, led an anti-lynching crusade.

Lincoln Steffans’ writings addressed the corruption commonplace in the cozy ties between city officials and businessmen.

Upton Sinclair’s novel [*The Jungle*](#), about the exploitation of immigrant workers, caused an outcry over the unsanitary conditions of Chicago’s meatpacking industry and resulted in more stringent health and safety regulations.



Ida B. Wells



Sinclair considered another of his social commentaries, [The Brass Check](#), his most direct and deadly swing at unbridled capitalism. In it he skewered American journalism for spurning the poor as it flagrantly served the rich. A brass check was a token purchased by a brothel patron from a madam. By giving that name to his book, Sinclair was comparing journalists to prostitutes who serviced the interests of their “pimp” bosses — and in so doing filled their articles with misrepresentations and inaccuracies.

Professional journalism

Despite the muckrakers’ heroic efforts, the large newspapers continued to propagandize for the benefit of the upper class and to the detriment of commoners. Eventually, though, publishers recognized that such obvious bias would be bad for business. Their journalists needed at least the appearance of neutrality.

For this reason, newspaper owners advocated for journalism schools that would teach the principles of the trade to aspiring reporters. In 1900, no such school existed. But by 1915 a good many journalism schools — which exist to this day — had been launched. A key point the teachers of journalism got across to their students was that there needed to be the figurative equivalent of “separation of church and state,” or, as some journalists call it, a “Chinese wall.” The wall was intended to separate the news operations (reporters and editors) from the commercial interests and politics of the owners and advertisers, so that the former had complete autonomy from the latter. This trend was known in the industry as “professional journalism.”¹⁴

Of course, this “wall” is an ideal — but one that many people believe is still honored in newsrooms across the land. Hollywood movies fortify the iconic image of the intrepid gumshoe reporter who wins the “we should go after this story” arguments with his editor, succeeds in sniffing out “the dirt” and getting “the scoop,” then convinces upper management to bravely publish the scandal, despite the potential for severe blowback.

Recall from [Part 21](#) the urbane man who was convinced that if anything were amiss with the official narrative of 9/11, the “liberal *New York Times*” would surely have reported it. He likely assumed that facts would win the day in the “Old Gray Lady’s” editorial department and that the *Times* editors must be bastions of liberality — especially if the opportunity arose to expose conservative President George W. Bush.

But to return to our 20th century tale: The halls of these early schools of journalism were filled with idealists who dreamed of emulating Upton and the Idas — Tarbell and Wells. This description fits with what we read in [Part 21](#) about journalism in the U.S. experiencing its peak approval rating of 72% in 1976 — a few short years after a few members of the mainstream press courageously took on the unpopular Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal.

What a fall from grace has taken place in the nearly half-a-century since. Today, polls show that only one third of readers trust the fourth estate. Notably, genuine investigative journalists such as

Abby Martin, John Pilger, Michel Chossudovsky, Kristina Borjesson, James Corbett, Whitney Webb, Glenn Greenwald, Aaron Maté, Max Blumenthal, Jeremy Hammond, and Chris Hedges do not work for the major print or broadcast companies.

Why? Hedges forthrightly attests:

I did not choose to leave the mainstream media. I was pushed out. And once anyone is pushed out, the ruling elite is relentless about discrediting the few platforms left willing to give them, and the issues they raise, a hearing.¹⁵

To my dismay, not all of these journalists are courageous when it comes to 9/11. But, if they lose their courage when it comes to 9/11, at least they *do* bravely report on many other sensitive subjects for which they should be recognized. Obviously, the “ultimate third rail issue” of 9/11 intimidates some, as Kristina Borjesson affirms in [Part 21](#).

In spite of the ideals that journalism professors teach, there remain three built-in biases among journalists, media critic McChesney observes:

- 1) A tendency to avoid controversy by selecting only stories that are based on something that is said or done by government officials or prominent public figures;
- 2) A predilection for choosing stories that have a “news hook” that justifies telling them; and
- 3) An inclination to convey through the news the attitudes, beliefs, and political leanings held by that media outlet’s owner and advertisers.¹⁶ Obviously, this bias is in direct competition with the industry’s “separation of church and state” principle.

According to McChesney, the ideals of professional journalism were realized most fully between the 1950s and early 1980s. Journalists in those decades had relative autonomy and were given greater resources to investigate corruption and pursue in-depth stories that collided with the political leanings and financial interests of the owners. Nonetheless, McChesney writes, in addition to the three biases, professional journalism was hampered by this general rule:

If the elite, the upper 2 or 3 percent of society who control most of the capital and rule the largest institutions, agree on an issue then it is off-limits to journalistic scrutiny. Hence, the professional news media invariably take it as a given that the United States has a right to invade any country it wishes for whatever reason it may have¹⁷

Corporate blowback

Returning to the muckrakers: Reacting to these journalists’ criticisms of corporate America, newspaper owners went on both the offensive and defensive by hiring public relations (PR) firms, which became powerful propagandistic vehicles for these owners, vehicles designed to discredit these forerunners of investigative journalism.¹⁸

According to Project Censored founder Carl Jensen, the Golden Age of Journalism came to a sorry end when PR manipulation of corporate news crushed the idealistic journalists and when the threat of World War I loomed.¹⁹

During this same period in the early 20th century, the corporate-owned newspapers were, nonetheless, gradually adopting the aforementioned principles of “professional journalism.”

But even during professional journalism’s heyday — the 1950s through the 1980s — it had self-created limitations. As McChesney explains, “Even at its best, professional journalism was biased toward the status quo.”²⁰

This media critic also reminds us that “organizations obsessed with smashing labor, deregulating business, and putting corporations firmly in command of society” nevertheless bankrolled — with wealthy conservatives’ dollars — the meme of “liberal journalism,”²¹ a meme that was anchored in our American psyche as recently as 2005, as seen in the urbane American described in [Part 21](#).

McChesney, nonplussed at the success of this meme, writes, “One need only look at The *New York Times*’ coverage of Ralph Nader in the 2000 presidential campaign — his treatment was roughly similar to how *Pravda* regarded [nuclear physicist and peace activist] Andrei Sakharov in the 1970s — to see how left-wing and radical the news media are.”²² McChesney does admit, though, that journalists during the era of professional journalism tended to be more liberal than their bosses, especially on social issues.²³

I will add that one need only look more recently at the corporate media’s aggressive sidelining of Sen. Bernie Sanders and Rep. Tulsi Gabbard in the 2020 Democratic Party presidential primary — both of whom were the only candidates with the values and courage to call out the inordinate influence on most politicians of the military-industrial complex — to see how left-wing the news media are. Still, I have yet to hear the word “U.S. empire” from the lips of any presidential candidates, much less uttered by the corporate media.

Although Democrats Sanders and Gabbard were the only presidential candidates to call out the military-industrial complex during the 2020 campaigns, not all right-leaning citizens are in favor of America’s imperial wars and many left-leaning citizens actually support them. Those citizens who defend the destructive 9/11 wars — which have killed and maimed millions of our fellow human beings and made refugees of many millions more²⁴ — have been thoroughly propagandized by the corporate press (on the right by Fox News and on the left by MSNBC, CBS, and CNN).

Fox News takes an overt pro-war position and is mainly watched and trusted by those on the ideological right. Nothing unusual there. But it is a puzzlement that left-leaners, who usually identify as pro-peace, continue to turn to MSNBC for news and analysis: The channel that began as an antiwar voice has since purged its progressive, antiwar voices. Those reporters — all of whom had high viewer ratings — included Phil Donahue, Ed Schultz, Keith Olbermann, Cenk Uygur, Ashleigh Banfield, and Krystal Ball.²⁵

My guess is that today's MSNBC viewers are older and have stuck with the channel out of habit and loyalty, whereas younger progressives look to independent internet sources for their news. Indeed, as of 2015, a majority of millennials rely on social media platforms — 83% on YouTube, 50% on Instagram²⁶ — for news and political opinions.

Here's a curiosity: Why would MSNBC purge anchors who had such high ratings? Don't ad revenues correspond with ratings? And isn't money-making the main motivation of the corporate media?

No, apparently money is not the *only* bottom line, according to highly-rated-but-booted Phil Donahue, who remembers the pressure exerted from MSNBC's owners when he questioned the 2003 Iraq invasion. "They were terrified of the anti-war voice. And that is not an overstatement."²⁷ And just who was MSNBC's owner at the time? None other than General Electric (GE), a company positioned to earn billions of dollars from Iraq War contracts.²⁸

Cenk Uygur, too, recalls that MSNBC's top management appeared willing to sacrifice high ratings to please "people in Washington."²⁹

The ideal of objectivity

Let's return to the early 20th century and the establishment of journalism schools.

Media critics who sought to elevate journalism to professional standards advocated for the notion of "objectivity" — that is, the practice of reporting with truthfulness, neutrality, and detachment.³⁰ Advertisers, too, pushed for an unbiased presentation of facts without partisan commentary. They believed neutrality would increase circulation of papers and thus maximize their ad revenues.

Any steps taken toward fair and balanced reporting are commendable, but journalistic objectivity, then and now, remains an ideal. It wasn't easy then, and it's no easier now, to put that ideal into practice.

Furthermore, objectivity can often be misused — even abused. Consider:

1) When covering a story about corruption, oppression, or murder, a reporter's neutrality becomes complicity. For example, many journalists reported on the lynching of thousands of African-Americans in the 1890s with complete detachment.³¹ Their obvious insensitivity to the injustice and brutality of the crimes was immoral, thus complicit. "Objectivity" was too often confused with the absence of moral judgement. As Howard Zinn famously said, "You can't be neutral on a moving train."

2) No matter how unbiased journalists aspire to be, they inevitably bring their own personal and political ideology to the story they are covering. Also, being immersed in the corporate media culture tends to slant their reporting. They either consciously or unconsciously choose words that reflect their biases — and these words cannot help but shape readers' opinions.

3) Meanwhile, editors are equally caught up in the corporate media mentality. And, since they are just as human as the reporters, editors have their own personal and political biases, which are reflected in everything from their wording of headlines to their choice of top stories. Whatever they don't broadcast early on or feature on the front page is either buried, or worse, not released at all.

4) Objectivity often turns into “stenography” — a “he-said-she-said” style of reporting. This principle can become an excuse for lazy reporting by news corporations that must avoid controversy as well as churn out stories quickly if they are to serve their profit motive. Lost in those goals is the ideal — the ideal that sees truth as the ultimate aim of objectivity and its only real standard. Truth cannot be found without digging deeply, patiently, persistently, into an issue. And in many cases truth cannot be reached without the use of wise discernment and moral judgment.

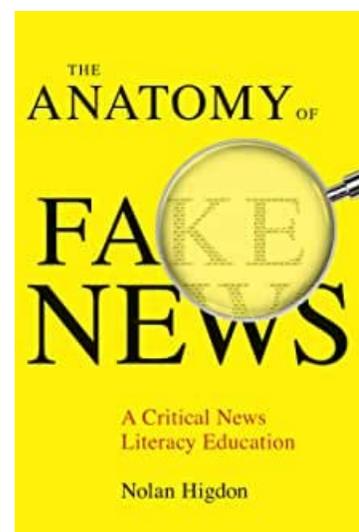
5) Some media critics argue — convincingly — that when we accept a journalist's-and-editor's version of reality, we are assimilating only one viewpoint. Thus, if we accept *prima facie* the objectivity of a news article, we can be deceived into adopting its author's and/or editor's worldview. Missing from such one-sided reporting is the robust debate of the blatantly partisan newspapers of the 19th century. That old-time debate enabled readers to actively search for information in order to determine the real facts. Willingness to sort out facts from opinions has always been vital to the functioning of any democratic political system.³²

Harking back to the lively 19th century one-sided newspapers are the biases of today's digital blogs and news sites, each with their authors' own take on the issues. The downside of these diverse opinions is that, without the fairness doctrine and its two corollary rules (explained below), many of us tend to listen solely to those with whom we already agree ideologically and avoid the news outlets and blogs with which we disagree, which creates more rancorous divisiveness in our society. Like it or not, we all have a tendency toward confirmation bias, that all too human proclivity to embrace information that validates our worldview while ignoring or rejecting information that casts doubt on it.

The University of Pennsylvania's Political Science Professor Matthew Levendusky's research³³ concludes that Americans who watch partisan programming become more entrenched in their beliefs and less willing to consider the merits of opposing views. He calls them “motivated reasoners” and says they have two broad — and conflicting — classes of goals:

- accuracy goals, which enable us to reach the correct conclusion, and
- directional goals, which enable us to reach our *preferred* conclusion, which supports our existing beliefs (this is confirmation bias)³⁴

In *The Anatomy of Fake News*, media critic Nolan Higden points out that our proclivity toward confirmation bias is well illustrated by “satirical news”:



Satirical fake news is entertaining content and social commentary presented in a news format. Rather than appeal to the logical preponderance of evidence, as is the case with journalism, satirical fake news appeals to emotion through humor. . . . In the early twenty-first century, younger audiences were increasingly getting the majority of their news content from satirical news programs. In fact, by 2008, the most popular satirical news programs, like Comedy Central's *The Daily Show*, hosted by Jon Stewart, garnered audiences comparable to Fox News Channel and PBS.³⁵

Stewart's ratings success was not lost on the corporate-owned stations, such as Fox, which launched its own satirical talk show, *Red Eye*.³⁶ This "infotainment," says Higdon, "ridicules ideological enemies," thus offering "a simplistic view of the world" and convincing viewers that their "ideological position is morally superior to that of their opponents."³⁷

Even though some actual news may seep through the ridicule, awareness of this psychological dynamic can encourage us to venture out of the comfort zone of our ideological silos, try to understand others' worldviews, and hopefully think more critically. Otherwise, we will tend to remain rooted in mass groupthink. (Please [see Part 7 for the dangers inherent in groupthink.](#))

Some media critics have suggested alternatives to the above-mentioned conventional understanding of objectivity. For example, Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR)³⁸ maintains that a reporter can take sides on an issue as long as the facts presented are accurate and complete and the other side is given a chance to respond.³⁹ On the whole, FAIR's media critiques live up to its acronym, with the gross exception of its censorship of the facts of 9/11, which run counter to the official 9/11 fantasy.

Before leaving the subject of objectivity, I'll make a closing observation: Despite the plethora of newsworthy facts that call into question the official 9/11 narrative,⁴⁰ the major media's coverage of this topic for the past two decades has been far from truthful, neutral, detached, fair, or accurate.

What happened to the fairness doctrine?

In the early 20th century, the scarcity of public airwave frequencies and the concern about private parties monopolizing those airwaves resulted in a set of rules and regulations encoded in 1949 by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) called the "fairness doctrine." It lays out the requirements for the lessees of frequencies. They must (1) cover controversial issues and (2) present contrasting viewpoints on these issues.⁴¹

Challenges to the fairness doctrine over the years resulted in two corollary rules. The "personal attack rule" required broadcasters to allow opportunities for rebuttals to personal attacks. The "political editorial rule" held that broadcasters who endorsed a candidate for political office had to give the candidate's opponent a reasonable opportunity to respond.⁴² Both rules were codified by the FCC in 1967 and upheld by the Supreme Court in 1969.⁴³

Unlike the privately owned printing press companies that were protected by the First

Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, airwave bandwidths are a limited resource understood to be publicly owned. Those who hold a license to broadcast, therefore, are required to strike a balance between their own commercial interests and serving the public interest, meaning whatever knowledge will contribute to citizens' welfare. The FCC took its charge seriously, so that adhering to the fairness doctrine's rules became the *sine qua non* for granting or renewing a license.

Broadcasters became the chief opponents of this doctrine. They claimed it impinged on their freedom of speech and was therefore unconstitutional. Despite this argument, the fairness doctrine survived Supreme Court challenges, whose prevailing opinion held, "It is the right of the viewers and listeners, not the right of the broadcasters, which is paramount."⁴⁴

Nonetheless, in the era of deregulation in the 1980s, the FCC — staffed with President Ronald Reagan's appointees — favored little or no regulation on broadcasting. This agency saw the fairness doctrine as hurting the public interest and violating the First Amendment. In August 1987, the FCC abolished the fairness doctrine in a 4–0 vote.⁴⁵

In June 1987, Congress, feeling their will to maintain these regulations was being circumvented by the FCC, tried to preempt the demise of the fairness doctrine. The legislative body sent to President Reagan the Fairness in Broadcasting Act of 1987, which would have enshrined the doctrine into law. Unsurprisingly, Reagan vetoed it. In 1991, Congress attempted a second time to revive the doctrine, but President H. W. Bush threatened to veto it.⁴⁶

In 2000, both the "personal attack rule" and the "political editorial rule" were repealed.⁴⁷ At that point, broadcasters were free to attack anyone without providing to the subject either a full transcript of the attack or a forum for rebuttal.

I'm surely not the only one who believes that our political commentary has devolved into sectarian divisiveness due to the demise of the fairness doctrine. Who can watch conservative mouthpiece Fox News or neoliberal advocates MSNBC, CNN, or CBS these days and not wonder where all the fairness has gone and why news has been supplanted by puerile, petty bickering?

By the way, I am *not* referring here to talk shows, where the opinions of hosts and guests have not been regulated by the fairness doctrine ever since these shows began to be aired in the early 20th century.⁴⁸ I am strictly referring to purported news programs.

We are stuck with a corporate media whose news in no way resembles the principles of fairness, balance, and accuracy.

While it may be advisable to reframe the fairness doctrine, in light of the advancements made in technology in the intervening years, this does not mean we should accept the current corrupted state of our media as inevitable or shy away from setting standards.

Arguably, not the regulation of content, but the lack of regulation of gigantic monopolies, has been the predominant reason for the sorry state of corporate media.

Media consolidation — a structural issue — explains why we haven't heard a peep from the corporate-funded media about a multitude of censored subjects, most notably the abundance of 9/11 scientific evidence that soundly refutes the official story.

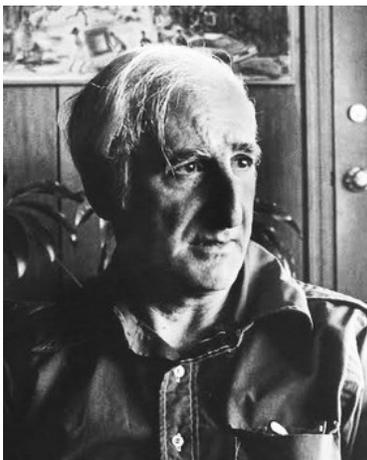
Monopoly

As we have learned in this essay, a combination of influential advertisers, propaganda-producing public relations firms, and a determined drive to deregulate have become embedded in the industry, bringing to a close anything resembling the Golden Age of Journalism. With the termination of the fairness doctrine, the federal government has morphed, in the past 40 years, from being a protector of the individual *consumers* of news into a protector of the big *business* of news.⁴⁹

This steady trajectory toward monopoly did not end with Reagan. Mergers mushroomed after President Bill Clinton signed the Telecommunications Act of 1996. By dramatically reducing FCC regulations on cross-ownership, the legislation paved the way for the already mega-sized media corporations to buy up thousands of other media outlets across the country. TV and radio stations; film studios; publishers of newspapers, magazines, books, music, and video games; and online platforms — all were targets for the ever-acquisitive media giants. (Unsurprisingly, Big Media had ardently lobbied for the bill, resulting in only three percent of Congress voting against it!)⁵⁰

The consequence of this bipartisan deconstruction of a federal act has been a vast expansion of the corporate media's control of information that flows within the U.S. and out of it to the rest of the world.⁵¹

The world of publicly traded companies is complex. Within the context of this essay, we need to understand that a “conglomerate” is a combination of entirely different individual companies, corporations, limited liability companies, and sometimes state-owned enterprises.⁵² These individual entities are called subsidiaries, and they operate under one corporate group. Conglomerates tend to be large and multinational, and they usually involve a “parent company,” which by definition owns enough voting stock in each of the subsidiaries to control their management and operations by influencing or electing their boards of directors.⁵³



Ben Bagdikian

In his classic book, *The New Media Monopoly*, Ben Bagdikian measures the extent of media consolidation over the last several decades in two ways.

The first measures the diversity of newspaper availability. In 1910, more than half of all U.S. cities with newspapers had “local daily competition, typically five or six papers.” By 2000, “99 percent of cities with newspapers had only one newspaper management.”⁵⁴

The second measures corporate ownership. In 1983, the

majority of U.S. media was owned by 50 major corporations. By 2003, five corporations dominated the industry.⁵⁵ As of 2020, a mere *four* conglomerates control the media in terms of revenue. They are Comcast, The Walt Disney Company, AT&T, and ViacomCBS.⁵⁶

Radio has not escaped this fate. In 1995, a single company could not own more than 40 radio stations. Since passage of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, iHeartMedia (formerly Clear Channel)⁵⁷ has grown from 40 stations to 1,240 stations.⁵⁸

The frenzy of megamergers, hostile takeovers, sell-offs, and bidding wars continues unabated,⁵⁹ so that the already gigantic media corporations continue to expand and then become subsidiaries of parent companies.⁶⁰ For example, as mentioned above, General Electric, a weapons manufacturer, was for many years the parent company and majority stakeholder of NBC.⁶¹

The bigger and wealthier the media companies become, the more influence they wield over elected officials in the form of considerable campaign contributions, whether directly to the candidate or indirectly to the candidate's political party. Needless to say, this is an unhealthy state of affairs for a republic founded on the rule of law.

Not that influence peddling by the press is only a recent phenomenon. More than 50 years ago, the president and chief executive officer of the Hearst Corporation, Richard E. Berlin, sent a letter to President Richard Nixon, imploring him to pull whatever strings would ensure passage of the Newspaper Preservation Act of 1970. The act allowed for two newspapers in a city to combine yet maintain separate news operations and remain competitors, at least ostensibly. Berlin knew that Nixon, like Lyndon Johnson before him, was against the bill because it would compromise antitrust legislation. So, his letter included veiled threats that, if the act failed to pass, there would be negative political consequences for Nixon. Of course, he made the *opposite* outcome equally clear: Nixon's vigorous support, Berlin implied, would garner glowing reviews in the media, boosting his chances of re-election.⁶²

The end result? The Nixon administration dutifully reversed its antitrust position and announced it favored the bill, which was then promptly passed by Congress.

Caving on the major media's demands had huge ramifications for the President. In spite of the breaking Watergate stories in the summer of 1972 disclosing the deep corruption of the White House, every Hearst, Cox, and Scripps-Howard paper endorsed Nixon. He handily won reelection with the highest newspaper support of any candidate in U.S. history.⁶³

Today's media conglomerates are far more prosperous and exert much more influence in society than the publishing companies and broadcasters of the early 1970s. Just imagine their power over our politicians now.

Since the corporate media do not serve the average American, do they serve anyone or anything *besides* their own bottom line? According to professor Peter Phillips, former director of Project Censored, "corporate media have become the monolithic power structure that serves the interests of empire, war, and capitalism," in other words, the "transnational capitalist class."⁶⁴ This chilling analysis gives insight into a major reason there has not been a peep from corporate

media about the scientific evidence that demolishes the official narrative of what happened on September 11, 2001.

Given that nearly all of the traditional news companies have been swallowed up by the handful of vast corporate empires, management of the media arm in each is always under pressure to generate the same sort of return as comes from the film, music, and amusement park divisions of these behemoths. What has this rapid change in structure meant for professional journalism?

For one, the invisible wall dividing editorial and business interests crumbled. When Big Pharma, for example, pays billions of dollars for direct-to-consumer advertisements⁶⁵, it no longer makes economic sense to keep the two sides separate. That now-ancient principle of journalistic integrity gets “sacrificed on the altar of profit.”⁶⁶

For another, as the price of a corporation’s stock becomes the sole focus, the information that the public has a right to know takes a back seat. This emphasis on profit is hardly new. More than 20 years ago, John Wilson, a member of the BBC’s editorial policy team, declared, “News is a way of making money, just as selling bread is a way of making money. No one believes that news and journalism are simply a service to democracy.”⁶⁷

Third, people in charge of editorial content are pressured into worrying about ratings and demographics, eclipsing their judgment on whether or not a story is newsworthy.

Fourth, editors fear airing deeply controversial issues that could result in costly legal battles.

Fifth, news divisions, ordered to cut costs, are laying off reporters, closing down smaller and overseas bureaus, and slashing funding for investigative journalism. The slimmed-down staffs are being driven to produce more content with even less turnaround time, as corporate owners add “the new imperative of speed” with the advent of news websites,⁶⁸ notes Nick Davies in his book *Flat Earth News*.

Sixth, owners and editors, prioritizing the financial needs of their parent corporation and advertisers, pour more resources into covering news that interests upscale consumers and investors. Thus, fewer resources are allocated to report news that is important to the average person.

Seventh, both print and online newspapers shave costs further by depending on wire services such as the Associated Press (AP) and Reuters for news that would be too expensive to gather themselves. “Under this system,” writes Simon Wood in a *MintPress News* piece, “statements from government officials and agencies are published verbatim and uncritically.”⁶⁹ This kind of stenographic coverage appeals to print, broadcast, and digital media owners and editors who also seek to sidestep controversy.

Eighth, yet another way to trim costs is to prioritize inexpensive-to-produce trivial and sensational stories.⁷⁰ Often this copy is churned out by public relations firms. Indeed, surveys show that the PR industry is responsible for creating anywhere from 40 to 70 percent of the “news.”⁷¹

Just as the owners of the long-ago “penny press” learned that topics creating schisms and raising alarm sold papers, today’s PR propagandists know that people are attracted to sensational and fear-based stories. This type of poor journalism, Nolan Higdon writes, “results in fake news content that is so divisive, hateful, and inflammatory that it engenders fear, anxiety, moral panic, and war.” In contrast, “when done properly,” he says, “journalism equips citizens with the knowledge to control their system of government.”⁷²

Higdon’s words echo the sentiments of Carl Jensen, founder and director emeritus of the aforementioned Project Censored. BIRTHED in 1976, Project Censored has the mission of scouting out systematic censorship of certain subjects in the U.S. press. When it engages in censorship, Jensen maintains, the fourth estate dodges its role of serving as a warning system. Only if the press alerts its audience to wrongs needing righting can informed and aware citizens demand that their elected representatives — or some other relevant entity — act on their behalf to solve the problem. Jensen bemoans the fact that “there has been a breakdown in America’s early warning system.”⁷³

While it is true that substantial issues affecting the health of our world — personal health, political health, economic health, environmental health, etc. — are presented and debated on the internet and in the small, independent press, we rarely find these issues discussed in any real depth in the corporate print and broadcast media. When we do find such reporting, due to its infrequency, it can be noteworthy.

As was pointed out above, when the corporate media swallowed the small, independent press, professional journalism lost the imaginary wall between the editorial and the business departments. Money, ratings, and the “people in Washington” became the only publication benchmarks. Professional journalism thus became even more biased toward the status quo than it had been, which in the U.S. means supporting American imperial designs, at home and abroad.

Media critic McChesney notes that “professional journalism equates the spread of ‘free markets’ with the spread of democracy” — an absurd assumption for any journalist to make. When the U.S. empire invades other countries for resources, its frequent pretext is “to spread democracy.” In reality, elitists who are often behind these invasions tend to equate “democracy” with their personal ability to maximize profits in the invaded country.⁷⁴

For example, the Iraq War, begun in 2003, was ostensibly to protect the world from weapons of mass destruction and to rescue Iraq from the Saddam Hussein’s dictatorial grip, bringing democracy to this country. In reality, the primary motivation was the benefit of corporations by increasing the global flow of oil. The secondary goal was the profit of reconstruction corporations.⁷⁵ The media, rather than question the propaganda from the Bush administration, became the cheerleader of this massive atrocity, selling the invasion to the public.

With the corporatization of media, the values of Big Media and Big Business have become identical — in two words, “unfettered capitalism.” Big Media, no less than Big Business, lives for profits. It matters not that the profit incentive, when it is the sole goal, puts millions of people

around the planet in harm's way and destroys ecosystems — especially in resource-rich Third World countries that the world's multinational corporations plunder.

And by choosing the trivial, more sensational stories rather than issues of substance that help us understand the reality of our world, “the media companies claim they are responding to demand,” says McChesney. “It is a circular argument, especially when no other viable alternatives are on the ‘ballot.’”⁷⁶

It is not only a circular argument, but a sham claim. For example, when the documentary *9/11 Explosive Evidence: Experts Speak Out* aired on PBS.org in September 2012, its first few days as the “most watched” and “most shared” video surpassed the popular “Downton Abbey” series as well as the presidential election coverage. Even after *Experts Speak Out* was relegated from national PBS to the local station that originated it, [Colorado Public Television, Channel 12](#), viewers in 186 countries played it over 1.2 million times from this local site.⁷⁷ I would hazard a guess, therefore, that when real and substantial issues are presented, the public is very interested indeed.

Why, then, aren't the majority of Americans following the many online sources of in-depth news and views? After all, there are thousands of independent news-and-opinion websites, blogs, internet radio stations, and video platforms available to the Western world. And many of them are devoted to finding and sharing truth. Yet most of the populace is still consuming the pabulum coming from traditional sources — the publishers and broadcasters owned by the giant media conglomerates we've already identified. Why is that?

If we look at the media superficially, we remain unaware of the hypnotic spell cast by the propaganda experts who are pumping out PR, CIA, and government press releases 24 hours a day. If this seems too harsh, please review Parts [21](#) and [22](#) as a reminder that very little information that the public needs to know to accurately understand our world will fall through the CIA and Pentagon's net. When millions of people unwittingly allow their worldviews to be manipulated, the result is that their resulting “fear and moral panic” lead them to agree to — if not cheer for — official decisions to invade weaker countries, causing the deaths and disruption of millions.

Since propaganda cannot be successful without censorship, these mouthpieces for official narratives must also operate as censors. While some isolated facts slip through, Big Media does not follow up and investigate them further, so consumers of news are unable to challenge distorted and deceptive official narratives.

Thus, by their deafening silence about the scientific evidence contradicting the official 9/11 narrative, the media have become accomplices in the cover-up of one of the greatest crimes against humanity and one of the greatest State Crimes Against Democracy (see [Part 13](#)) in the history of humankind.

In contrast, the same media have not been silent about the so-called “Global War on Terror,” which is ongoing to this day, 20 years later. Instead, they have been cheerleaders of those enormous crimes, in which millions of innocents have been killed and millions more turned into

refugees fleeing U.S. bombs.

In fact, in the face of the massively unpopular 9/11 wars in the Middle East, AOL Time Warner's CNN had to resort to a contortionist's act to maintain credibility with its various global audiences. While shocked U.S. citizens were reacting with jingoistic zeal to their military's destroying the "terrorists" who allegedly attacked America on 9/11, international audiences were getting a much more critical take on these invasions from their newspapers and other sources. They would have seen through the propagandistic nature of the U.S. media's enthusiastic support of the Bush administration's warmongering. Since CNN is the leading global cable and satellite news network, it could not have maintained credibility with both audiences if it had fed them identical reports. Writes McChesney:

CNN president Walter Isaacson solved this dilemma by authorizing CNN to provide two different versions of the war: a more critical one for global audiences and a sugarcoated one for Americans. Indeed, Isaacson instructed the domestic CNN operation to be certain that any story that might undermine support for the war be balanced with a reminder that the war on terrorism was a response to the heinous attacks of September 11.⁷⁸

Mark Crispin Miller, a professor of media, culture, and communication at New York University and himself a decades-long student of the media, says that today's level of censorship and propaganda reminds him of how the German people were kept misinformed before and during World War II. Miller does not make this comparison lightly: He knows how distasteful it is to Americans to be compared with the gullible citizenry of Nazi Germany.⁷⁹

Advertisers

As exemplified by the Hearst Corporation's successful manipulation of President Nixon to promote a law that would allow further media consolidation, today's media giants, rather than remaining neutral reporters of news and truth, are political creatures who know only too well how to play — and cash in on — the back-scratching game. In addition to outright manipulation, super-wealthy mega-media companies and their CEOs send large donations to political parties and to specific politicians.⁸⁰ To secure their jobs, politicians are forced to respect the voice of Big Media by promoting whatever bills and policies these corporations desire for purposes of enlarging their size, wealth, and influence.

Politicians and political parties thus become more and more beholden to media corporations. Media, in turn, answers to the entities I identified in Parts [21](#) and [22](#) — to reiterate, the CIA, FBI, Pentagon, military intelligence, the White House, owners of media corporations, prestigious family dynasties, über-wealthy individuals, and large advertisers.

Let us now look at how media answers to advertisers.

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Ben Bagdikian explains the media-advertiser connection this way:

Corporate demands on television programs underlie what many consider the most grievous weakness of American television—superficiality, materialism, blandness, and escapism. The television industry invariably responds that the networks are only giving people what the people demand. But it is not what the public says it wants: It is what the advertisers demand.⁸¹

"What the advertisers *demand*"? That's a strong word. Is Bagdikian accurate — or indulging in hyperbole?

In his book, *The New Media Monopoly*, Bagdikian describes how the early days of television produced many outstanding, serious programs, including live, original drama. But advertisers preferred one-half hour programs full of lightness and fantasy that induced a “buying mood” in the audience. For example, the 1977 TV mini-series *Roots*, based on Alex Haley's 1976 novel about Southern slavery, received high ratings and won numerous awards but, in the eyes of advertisers, did not create a “buying mood.”⁸²

According to Bagdikian, large advertisers control media content in two ways. The first, directly, by requiring certain restrictions on the news content they sponsor. The second, indirectly, by withdrawing ads if they disapprove of the news content. Both broadcast and print media are subject to this control. Examples abound. Here's a sampling:

* In 1965, Proctor and Gamble revealed to the FCC the directives it had established for the programs P&G would sponsor. One directive: “[I]n dealing with war, our writers should minimize the ‘horror’ aspects [A]ny scene that contributes negatively to public morale is not acceptable.”⁸³

* In 1976, *The New York Times* published a series on medical malpractice. Angered by this news series, the pharmaceutical companies threatened to withdraw 260 pages of ads from *Modern Medicine*, a periodical owned by the New York Times Company, which would have been a loss of \$500,000. The Times Company subsequently sold its magazines that carried medicine-related ads.⁸⁴

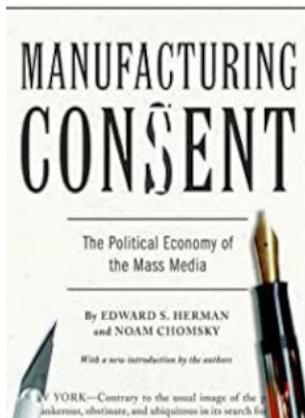
* Fast forward to 1997, when direct-to-consumer advertising was legalized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) with a simple rule change. Many of us remember the time when advertising drugs was illegal. This is still the case in every industrialized country except the U.S. and New Zealand. Drug advertising in the U.S. soon became a multi-billion-dollar source of income for media corporations.⁸⁵ Now, says Dr. Joseph Mercola, “if an advertiser doesn’t want the public to know about a particular finding, all they have to do to influence the reporting is to threaten to withdraw its advertising, which will hurt the media company’s bottom line.”⁸⁶ (Keep this in mind regarding Big Media’s slavish adherence to the official line on the COVID-19 pandemic and the official narrative regarding the “safe and effective” vaccines — addressed in the next essay.)

These demands by advertisers are not lost on owners of media companies or on their editors. Fearing lost ad revenue, they self-censor what they choose to air or print. They also make it clear to journalists not to cross this line. In 1991, a columnist for the *Arkansas Democrat* (now the

Democrat-Gazette) was told not to criticize the paper’s bread and butter. The managing editor explained, “We do not hire opinion writers to trash advertisers. . . . No newspaper would do that.”⁸⁷

A vice president of sales and marketing for the *Houston Chronicle* admitted to the newspaper’s advertiser-friendly policy of 40 years ago with the blunt remark, “We do nothing controversial. We’re not in the investigative business. Our only concern is giving editorial support to our ad projects.”⁸⁸

The propaganda model



Drawing on decades of research, professors Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky⁸⁹ dissect U.S. media coverage against their “propaganda model.” In their scholarly *Manufacturing Consent*, published in 1988, they explained that the “societal purpose” of the media is to “defend the economic, social, and political agenda of privileged groups . . . and the state.”⁹⁰ Propaganda campaigns, they wrote, are introduced by government, but also “by one or more of the top media firms.”⁹¹

Propaganda is the rule for what passes as news stories. Herman and Chomsky tell us that exceptions to this rule are exceedingly rare and do not even include the reporting on the Vietnam War or the Watergate scandal.⁹²

They demonstrate that even in these two cases, the media adhered tightly to elite concerns and values. In the case of the Vietnam War, in which the popular understanding is that the media “lost the war,” the authors successfully argue that media actually fully supported the war and changed their focus from supportive war coverage to the Paris Peace Agreement *only when elites became split on the wisdom of that infamous war* — not because it was immoral, but because it had become too costly.⁹³

As long as media personnel have adapted to the system’s master narratives— which mainly stipulate that the U.S. has noble intentions, even in all its warring escapades — reporters “will be able to assert, accurately, that they perceive no pressures to conform.”⁹⁴

Thus, we see into the dynamic of self-censorship by reporters. As we learned in [Part 21](#), when courageous journalists depart from an elite consensus, they are forced out of the corporate-media system and its ubiquitous propaganda.

From Herman and Chomsky’s “propaganda model” alone, we can grasp that elite and state concerns would not tolerate fair reporting on the scientific evidence that so clearly shows we were lied to by our government about 9/11. Why? The evidence and the lies point strongly to complicity in, and cover-up of, the 9/11 attacks by both elite and state actors.

In the next essay in this series, “The Structure of the Media, Part B, Digital Media and the ‘Warp

| Speed' of Censorship_in the Covid Era," I'll jump ahead into the twenty-first century to address the relationship of the world wide web with truth, propaganda, and censorship.

¹ CIA agents have *de jure* impunity as long as they are acting under orders from their superiors. For further information see “The Whistleblower Newsroom – Guest Doug Valentine” at <https://thewhistleblowernewsroom.podbean.com/2019/02>.

Douglas Valentine is the author of *The CIA as Organized Crime: How Illegal Operations Corrupt America and the World* (Clarity Press, Inc., 2017).

² Jon Hellevig, “Extreme Concentration of Ownership in the United States,” *Jon Hellevig’s Blog*, May 13, 2019, <http://blogengine.hellevig.net/post/2019/05/13/Extreme-concentration-of-ownership-in-the-United-States-.aspx>.

³ See <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/propaganda>; and <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/the-real-story-of-fake-news>.

⁴ Kristina Borjesson, *Into the Buzzsaw: Leading Journalists Expose the Myth of a Free Press*, ed. Kristina Borjesson (Prometheus Books, 2004), Carl Jensen, “What Happened to Good Old-Fashioned Muckraking?” 419.

⁵ “Truth Emergency” is a catchphrase devised by Project Censored to describe the state of our media. For many articles and speeches using this concept, do a search at <https://www.projectcensored.org>.

⁶ Mickey Huff, “Fake News and the Truth Emergency—A speech by Mickey Huff,” April 17, 2018, <https://www.projectcensored.org/fake-news-and-the-truth-emergency-a-speech-by-mickey-huff>.

⁷ Nolan Higdon, *The Anatomy of Fake News: A Critical News Literacy Education* (University of California Press, Oakland, CA, 2020) 35.

⁸ Higdon, *Anatomy of Fake News*, 35 – 36.

⁹ Borjesson, *Buzzsaw*, Robert McChesney, “The Rise and Fall of Professional Journalism.” 437.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ McChesney, “Rise and Fall.”

¹² Jensen, “What Happened to Good Old-Fashioned Muckraking?” 418.

¹³ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_American_journalism.

¹⁴ McChesney, “Rise and Fall,” 439; also see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_wall.

¹⁵ Chris Hedges, "The Ruling Elite's War on Truth," *Consortium News*, November 23, 2020.

¹⁶ McChesney, "Rise and Fall," 441.

¹⁷ McChesney, "Rise and Fall," 442.

¹⁸ Borjesson, *Buzzsaw*, Jensen, "What Happened to Good Old-Fashioned Muckraking?" 422.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ McChesney, "Rise and Fall," 441 – 442.

²¹ McChesney, "Rise and Fall," 443.

²² McChesney, "Rise and Fall," 444.

²³ McChesney, "Rise and Fall," 443.

²⁴ PSR, "Body Count: Casualty Figures after 10 Years of the 'War on Terror,'" <https://www.psr.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/body-count.pdf>.

Jake Johnson, "'Horribly Catastrophic': Report Finds So-Called US War on Terror Has Displaced as Many as 59 Million People," *Waking Times*, September 8, 2020, <https://www.wakingtimes.com/2020/09/08/horribly-catastrophic-report-finds-so-called-us-war-on-terror-has-displaced-as-many-as-59-million-people>.

²⁵ Michael Calderone, "MSNBC Cancels Three Shows as Ed Schultz, Other Hosts Depart," *Huffpost*, July 30, 2015, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/msnbc-cancels-the-cycle_n_55ba8b1de4b06363d5a17bd3;

Jason Easley, "Report: MSNBC to Ditch Liberal Hosts and Move Away from 'Left-Wing' TV," *PoliticusUSA*, February 20, 2016, <https://www.politicususa.com/2015/02/20/report-msnbc-ditch-liberal-hosts-move-left-wing-tv.html>;

Tommy Christopher, "MSNBC Now Openly Bragging about Abandoning its Liberal Brand in New Ad," *Mediaite*, June 2, 2016, <https://www.mediaite.com/online/msnbc-now-openly-bragging-about-abandoning-its-liberal-brand-in-new-ad>.

Danielle Ryan, "Former MSNBC Journalists Expose the Channel's 'Pro-Establishment Bias,'" *RT Question More*, April 23, 2018, <https://www.rt.com/op-ed/424873-msnbc-journalism-establishment-war>.

²⁶ "How Millennials Get News: Inside the Habits of America's First Digital Generation," *American Press Institute*, March 16, 2015, <https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/publications/reports/survey-research/millennials-news>.

²⁷ Ryan, "Former MSNBC Journalists."

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Journalistic_objectivity.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Scott London, (Review of Christopher Lasch's "The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy") 1996, <https://scott.london/reviews/lasch.html>.

James Corbett, "The Myth of Journalistic Objectivity," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7ax7paIbXM>.

³³ Matthew Levendusky, *How Partisan Media Polarize America*, (University of Chicago Press, September 2013).

³⁴ Higdon, *Anatomy of Fake News*, 53.

³⁵ Higdon, *Anatomy of Fake News*, 51.

³⁶ Higdon, *Anatomy of Fake News*, 52.

³⁷ Higdon, *Anatomy of Fake News*, 53.

³⁸ See <https://fair.org/about-fair>.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ See <https://911truth.org/category/case-for-complicity> for a great many of these newsworthy facts.

⁴¹ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FCC_fairness_doctrine.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ "Joint Statement of Commissioner Susan Ness and Commissioner Gloria Tristani Concerning the Political Editorial and Personal Attack Rules" (Gen. Docket No. 83 – 484), https://transition.fcc.gov/Speeches/Ness/States/stsn819.html#N_22.

⁴⁴ "Legal Definition of Fairness Doctrine," *The Free Dictionary*, <https://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Fairness+Doctrine>.

Original source is "Red Lion Broadcasting Co. v. Federal Communications Commission," http://www.epic.org/free_speech/red_lion.html.

⁴⁵ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FCC_fairness_doctrine.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ "In Defense of the Fairness Doctrine — Defending a More Equal Media," *Views Across the Pond*, January 18, 2011,

<https://viewsacrossthepond.wordpress.com/2011/01/18/in-defense-of-the-fairness-doctrine-defending-a-more-equal-media>.

⁴⁹ Ben H. Bagdikian, *The New Media Monopoly* (Beacon Press, 2004) 14.

⁵⁰ Michael Cocoran, "Democracy in Peril: Twenty Years of Consolidation Under the Telecommunications Act," *Truthout*, February 11, 2016,

<https://truthout.org/articles/democracy-in-peril-twenty-years-of-media-consolidation-under-the-telecommunications-act>.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conglomerate_\(company\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conglomerate_(company)), and <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subsidiary>.

⁵³ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parent_company.

⁵⁴ Bagdikian, *New Media Monopoly*, 185.

⁵⁵ Bagdikian, *New Media Monopoly*, 27.

⁵⁶ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concentration_of_media_ownership.

⁵⁷ See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IHeartMedia>.

⁵⁸ Cocoran, "Democracy in Peril."

⁵⁹ Craig Aaron and Joseph Torres, "Consolidation Won't Save the Media," *The Guardian*, March 26, 2009,

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/cifamerica/2009/mar/26/pelosi-media-consolidation>.

⁶⁰ Adam Hayes, "Parent Company," *Investopedia*, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/p/parentcompany.asp>.

⁶¹ Ryan, "Former MSNBC Journalists."

James Chen, "Conglomerate," *Investopedia*, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/conglomerate.asp>.

"Who Owns CNN? or MSNBC? ABC?" *Los Angeles Indymedia: Activist News*, April 10, 2003, <https://la.indymedia.org/news/2003/04/47530.php>.

⁶² Bagdikian, *New Media Monopoly*, chap. 10; and see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newspaper_Preservation_Act_of_1970.

⁶³ Bagdikian, *New Media Monopoly*, chap. 10.

⁶⁴ Peter Phillips, "How Mainstream Media Evolved into Corporate Media: A Project Censored History," *Project Censored*, February 7, 2019, https://www.projectcensored.org/how-mainstream-media-evolved-into-corporate-media-a-project-censored-history/?mc_cid=3b0cc707c2&mc_eid=6a4f830f84.

⁶⁵ Lisa L. Gill, "Spending on Consumer Drug Ads Skyrockets," *Consumer Reports*, January 13, 2019, <https://www.consumerreports.org/drug-advertising/spending-on-consumer-drug-ads-skyrockets>.

⁶⁶ McChesney, "Rise and Fall," 445.

⁶⁷ Nick Davies, *Flat Earth News: An Award-Winning Reporter Exposes Falsehood, Distortion and Propaganda in the Global Media* (Vintage Random House, 2008) 135.

⁶⁸ Davies, *Flat Earth News*, 73.

⁶⁹ Simon Wood, "The Gatekeepers: How Mainstream Media Hides the Truth," *Mint Press News*, June 8, 2015, <https://www.mintpressnews.com/MyMPN/the-gatekeepers-how-mainstream-media-hides-the-truth>.

⁷⁰ These points are from numerous sources, including Davies, *Flat Earth News*, and the following articles found in Borjesson, *Into the Buzzsaw*: Robert McChesney, "Rise and Fall"; Maurice Murad, "Shouting at the Crocodile"; Philip Weiss, "When Black Becomes White"; and Charlotte Dennett, "The War on Terror and the Great Game for Oil: How the Media Missed the Context."

⁷¹ McChesney, "Rise and Fall," 441.

⁷² Higdon, *Anatomy of Fake News*, 48.

⁷³ Jensen, "What Happened to Good Old-Fashioned Muckraking?" 418 - 419.

⁷⁴ McChesney, "Rise and Fall," 442.

⁷⁵ Nafeez Ahmed, "Iraq Invasion Was about Oil," *The Guardian*, March 20, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/earth-insight/2014/mar/20/iraq-war-oil-resources-energy-peak-scarcity-economy>.

⁷⁶ McChesney, "Rise and Fall," 445.

⁷⁷ Private email from Shari Bernson of CPT12.org quoting Google Analytics.

⁷⁸ McChesney, "Rise and Fall," 452.

⁷⁹ "Project Censored Interviews Dr. Mark Crispin Miller: On Media, Censorship, and State Propaganda," *Lumpenproletariat*, August 12, 2016, <https://lumpenproletariat.org/2016/08/12/project-censored-interviews-dr-mark-crispin-miller-on-media-censorship-and-state-propaganda>.

⁸⁰

Rebecca Shapiro, "Money, Politics and The Press: Media Political Donations to Democrats," *HuffPost*, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/media-political-donations-democrats_n_1855502?slideshow=true#gallery/5bb5989ee4b0ab084685dc5f/8.

⁸¹ Bagdikian, *New Media Monopoly*, 240–241.

⁸² Bagdikian, *New Media Monopoly*, 242–243.

⁸³ Bagdikian, *New Media Monopoly*, 238.

⁸⁴ Bagdikian, *New Media Monopoly*, 245.

⁸⁵ Dr. Michael Wayne, "Drug Ads on TV — A Brief History," <https://drmichaelwayne.com/blog/drug-ads-on-tv-a-brief-history>.

⁸⁶ Dr. Joseph Mercola, "Sharyl Attkisson on Media Bias," <https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2020/11/22/sharyl-attkisson-media-bias.aspx>.

⁸⁷ Bruce Horowitz, "Advertisers Influence Media More, Report Says: News: Center for the Study of Commercialism Says the Recession is Pushing Some Media Outlets to Alter Coverage to Protect Their Advertising Revenue," *Los Angeles Times*, March 12, 1992, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1992-03-12-fi-5411-story.html>.

⁸⁸ Bagdikian, *New Media Monopoly*, 249.

⁸⁹ I find it ironic that Noam Chomsky, so familiar with the propaganda function of media, is a prime example of a person who became silent — nay, worse than silent — about 9/11. We have yet to hear any semblance of authenticity from him on this issue. However, his major contributions in other areas are well regarded.

⁹⁰ Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent* (Pantheon Books, New York, 1988, updated in 2002), 298.

⁹¹ Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, 33.

⁹² Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, 301 and elsewhere in book.

⁹³ Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, chap. 5.

⁹⁴ Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, 304.