

PROPAGANDA

Image by Gordon Johnson from Pixabay

Why Do Good People Become Silent — or Worse — About 9/11?

Part 24: The Role of the Media — Propaganda: How Do We Recognize It?

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Propaganda is any organized attempt to move large numbers of people to some thought or action — or away from some thought or action.... [Propagandists want] to present one narrative and they want you to know only . . . that narrative They don't want you to know there is another narrative. ~ Mark Crispin Miller, talk in Iceland, May 14, 2022¹

Propaganda: The spreading of ideas, information, or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause, or a person. Ideas, facts, or allegations spread deliberately to further one's cause or to damage an opposing cause. Also: a public action having such an effect. ~ Merriam-Webster²

Rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth. ~ Henry David Thoreau

If you've read my earlier essays, you can probably see why we are all susceptible to propaganda. You know about our human tendency to trust authorities rather than question them and think for ourselves. You know about our predisposition to conform to our community and our peers and about the power of groupthink. You know about our need to avoid cognitive dissonance. You know how important it is to become aware of [prior State Crimes Against Democracy \(SCADs\)](#) in order to be more alert to current government deceptions. You've considered the implications and consequences of American exceptionalism and nationalist faith. You're now aware that our best investigative journalists have been

eliminated from corporate media. And you know that the CIA and the Pentagon are embedded in mainstream and even in some alternative media.

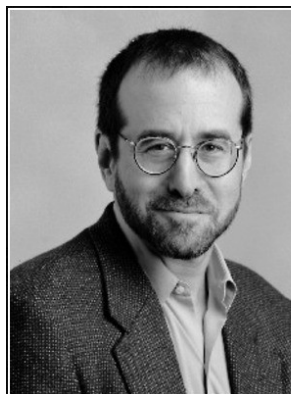
You know that if you depend on mainstream news outlets such as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, or broadcast outlets such as MSNBC, CBS, CNN, NPR,³ and Fox News, you will constantly be reading and hearing propaganda designed to support the agendas of the U.S. empire, major corporations and other interests that fund these outlets. This awareness can be disturbing since most of us have had it ingrained in us since childhood that these are trusted sources — and they *were*, more or less, once upon a time. Most of us tend to cling to a cultural sacred belief that we have a “free press” and have intrepid investigative journalists working for this “free press.”

Our worldview has largely been shaped by our family, friends, schools, religious communities, and media. Independent thought is not easy. As explained by the studies on brain research, people like to be aligned with their community and, instead of questioning, tend to default to what others in their circle of influence believe and are doing. Most people find it extremely difficult to stand alone in questioning official narratives. But knowing truth can be a matter of life and death. Propaganda leads to wars, fear and hatred, and cultural divisions. If we don’t recognize propaganda, we may accept it as reality and unwittingly participate in atrocities. And we may easily make decisions that are, at minimum, not in our own best interest. Awareness is crucial to our well-being.

There are a number of red flags that identify propaganda. The list of red flags is growing with the decades, partly due to new technologies that make media manipulation and manipulation of audience responses easier. The internet, for instance, gives the illusion of freedom of thought and expression, but manipulative people and manipulative algorithms have the ability to create sock puppets and bots that allow their creators to remain in the shadows.

A number of significant books have been written about propaganda and the academic studies of propaganda since World War I.⁴ I cite some of these in this essay. I am not an academic. My own study of propaganda was prompted by my deepening interest in the events of September 11, 2001, and subsequently by my observations of the nearly worldwide, single narrative of Covid-19 promulgated by governments and its extraordinary effect on people. Being outside of academia is actually an advantage, though, because I am able, unlike academics at a growing number of institutions, to give current and controversial examples of propaganda without fear of losing employment or status.⁵

I strive to be an equal-opportunity critic across the political spectrum and across several sensitive contemporary areas of concern such as 9/11, Covid-19, the Ukraine war, climate change, and election manipulation. I urge the reader to go slowly, check my sources, and keep in mind that the examples are illustrating propaganda techniques, not arguments for or against a narrative. While I have my biases and my point of view, as we all do, I invite feedback and strive to be open to constructive critique. Additionally, as you read, keep in mind that, as Mark Crispin Miller has said, *the hardest propaganda to recognize is the propaganda we agree with.*⁶



Media manipulation in the U.S. today is more efficient than it was in Nazi Germany, because here we have the pretense that we are getting all the information we want. That misconception prevents people from even looking for the truth.

— Mark Crispin Miller —

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Definitions

According to Merriam-Webster, propaganda includes *public actions* designed to deceive and manipulate. Therefore, I have included these types of public actions on my list, such as false flag operations and provoked operations. I have included white, gray, and black propaganda. White propaganda “comes from a source that is identified correctly, and the information in the message tends to be accurate. . . . Black propaganda is when the source is concealed or credited to a false authority, and spreads lies, fabrications, and deceptions. . . . Gray propaganda is somewhere between white and black propaganda.”⁷

“Disinformation” is largely synonymous with black propaganda since its source is not transparent, and it contains lies. Disinformation means “false, incomplete, or misleading information that is passed, fed, or confirmed to a targeted individual, group, or country.” The term “misinformation” only means erroneous information inadvertently delivered by misguided people.⁸ Likewise, “persuasion” is not propaganda. It is simply communication designed to influence recipients with a particular point of view in hope of changing their thinking or behavior.⁹

What follows is a list of propaganda techniques from decades of study by researchers and gleaned from my own reading and observations. These techniques overlap in places, but all are aimed at moving large numbers of people toward or away from some thought or action. *The key to determining if these techniques are indeed propaganda — as opposed to persuasion — is whether or not the messengers want us to consider, or even know about, an alternative narrative.*

Techniques of Propaganda

Ad hominem argument: The Latin word “ad hominem” literally means “to a man.” In today’s use, judging the validity of a person’s argument based on the personal characteristics of the person rather than the merits of the argument is known as an ad hominem argument. It is not only the lowest form of argumentation, it is a classically recognized logical fallacy. The ad hominem argument not only fails to advance a dialogue toward truth, it is detrimental to civility and destroys the opportunity for real dialogue. Typically, this kind of argument focuses on *irrelevant* personal, social, educational, political, or religious views of a person and ignores the substance of the argument. Credibility of a person is not irrelevant, but addressing credibility should not replace the substance of the argument.

Ad hominem attacks on the internet are sometimes called “flaming” (cyberbullying using over-the-top hostile, insulting, and profane words), which can include “whispering campaigns” or “leaks” said to be from well-placed sources. These practices rely on insinuations and rumors designed to discredit the targeted person.¹⁰ See “factoid” below for more on these toxic practices.

Examples:

He never finished high school so how can I take his opinion seriously.
She is a fat, lazy slob.
He’s a Republican, so I don’t believe a thing he says.
Bernie Sanders is a dangerous communist.
That family is hopelessly fundamentalist Christian.

Trump supporters are a “basket of deplorables.”

Algorithm manipulation: An algorithm is a set of procedures to be followed like a recipe to achieve a particular goal. The term is often used to describe computer programs, but it applies more broadly. For example, the sequence of steps to perform long division is known as the long division algorithm.

In the context of our present concerns, Big Tech firms, such as Google, are known to manipulate search algorithms to control the information internet users can find if they are searching for information that does not align with certain political agendas. An algorithm may be formulated by a Big Tech company to suppress access to websites judged to be undesirable by the company or by government or corporate entities pressuring the company and to promote websites that express views acceptable to the company or pressuring entities. Websites that once ranked very high for years in Google search results can be relegated to back pages or even disappear completely after certain algorithm updates. The internet is so huge that users are dependent on search algorithms to navigate it, so algorithms that impose an agenda on this process constitute a hidden form of censorship.¹¹ Similarly, social media platforms can promote or suppress controversial articles or opinions through manipulating the algorithms that control the visibility of the posts. This practice is known as “shadow banning” or “visibility filtering.”¹²

Examples:

Jeremy R. Hammond’s *Foreign Policy Journal (FPJ)*: This website was penalized by a Google algorithm manipulation. One of this independent investigative journalist’s most popular articles, published in 2010, “[The Myth of the UN Creation of Israel](#),” used to rank highly for the search “UN creation of Israel,” but now cannot be found even if the full title in quotation marks is typed in (making it an exact-match search). Google has literally disappeared Hammond’s *FPJ* website. However, with DuckDuckGo, another search engine, the article is easily found.¹³

Election manipulation by Google: Google uses its search engine to actually intervene in elections. In 2016, the internet giant apparently manipulated search results in favor of Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, possibly adding three million popular votes for her against Republican rival Donald Trump.¹⁴ In 2020, Google again manipulated a U.S. election, this time against Tulsi Gabbard. A court ruled that Google was within legal bounds when it both manipulated search results and denied campaign advertisements for Democrat Presidential candidate Gabbard’s 2020 political campaign.”¹⁵

Anonymous Authority: An appeal to unnamed authorities to gain support for a product or idea.

Examples:



Scientists say . . .

Experts agree . . .

Doctors agree . . .

Also, use of the passive voice, such as: It was found . . .

Such “pseudo attributions” do not give the reader or listener the ability to verify the information. Instead, they give the illusion of authoritative support, so that the reader or listener is being asked to take on faith the claims of the author.

Association (also called “transfer”): Politicians, product advertisers, and campaigns all use the common technique of associating a person, idea, or product with a symbol to promote an emotional message. The symbol can be a person, an event, a few words, or an object. We all unconsciously do this. Yet, this technique is manipulation when the thing or person promoted has nothing to do with the symbol or when our emotions are being intentionally manipulated. A common promotional technique is to photograph oneself with a famous person. As with other propaganda techniques, images, as well as words, are used for this purpose. “Guilt by association” (related to an ad hominem argument) is a common technique to smear a person or idea.

Examples of association using images, often chosen to create emotional responses:

Positive symbols: the American Flag, a white lab coat, a president pictured as a savior, a mother holding her baby, a father protecting his family, a strong person, a smiling person, a sexy-looking person, a picture of a beautiful environment, angels, Jesus, beams of light, halos.

Negative symbols: Swastika (depending on the culture), unhappy or weak people, darkness, the devil or evil looking people.

Examples of association using words:

Positive words can be any of the “glittering generalities” (listed below) such as freedom, hope, great, strong.

Negative words are usually used to smear a person (see below for “smear”) such as communist dupe, right-wing nut, conspiracy theorist, Russian asset.

In three of the examples below, President Bush, President Obama, and Hitler associate themselves with the concept of “God.”

President George W. Bush: “I think God wants me to be president.” And “I trust God speaks through me. Without that, I couldn’t do my job.”¹⁶

President Barack Obama: “While freedom is a gift from God, it must be secured by his people here on earth.” And “It was on those streets, in those neighborhoods, that I first heard God’s spirit beckon me. It was there that I felt called to a higher purpose — His purpose.”¹⁷

Adolf Hitler in *Mein Kampf*: “I believe I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator.”¹⁸

Product promotion: Psychoanalyst Abraham Brill and propaganda proponent Edward Bernays effectively encouraged women to smoke in public as a sign of their liberation, despite the social taboo of doing so, by calling cigarettes “torches of freedom.”

Guilt by association: As reported by the 2023 Durham Report, one of the most egregious media propaganda campaigns of the twenty-first century was Russiagate, an attempt by the Hillary Clinton 2016 presidential campaign, in collusion with the FBI, to associate her Republican

opponent, presidential candidate Donald Trump, with the Kremlin, charging that he was compromised by the Russian government.¹⁹ This extended propaganda campaign by Clinton, the FBI, and media overlaps with fabrication and factoid (see both “fabrication” and “factoid” below).

Astroturfing: “Astroturf” is a surface of synthetic materials made to look like natural grass. In the context of deceptive communication, this term describes an organization or a movement that is presented as grass roots, but which is actually sponsored by an industry, organization, wealthy individual, political campaign, or government against the interests of the general population. This technique appeals to the herd instinct and is often used to gain support from a population that values grassroots activism.

Examples:

A corporation organizes “sock puppets” (see definition below), which appear to be ordinary individuals to promote a product on social media.

An industry organizes a letter writing campaign to a politician to make it appear that there is grassroots support for a cause.

National Smoker’s Alliance (NSA), in 1993, presented itself as a grassroots organization concerned for the rights of adult smokers, but was actually sponsored by Philip Morris to oppose anti-smoking legislation in the U.S. Congress.²⁰

Bandwagon: According to [brain research](#), most people want to be in line with their community rather than be seen as deviant. We also have strong human tendencies to [conform to our peers](#) and to [authorities](#), making us extremely susceptible to invitations to “jump on the bandwagon” of a popular opinion or for a well-liked candidate.

Examples:

Nine out of ten doctors agree
United we stand!
Thousands of satisfied customers can’t be wrong!
The majority of scientists believe that global warming results from human activity.
Nearly all doctors believe the Covid-19 vaccines are safe and effective.



From [boards.theforce.net](#)

Bare Assertions: Unsubstantiated or falsely substantiated statements.

People tend to believe what they are told as long as the assertion is something they want to believe. This is especially true if an authority or trusted person makes the assertion. The assertion might be true, but no evidence is given. Often bare assertions are masked by an appeal to an anonymous authority.

Examples (Note: These *can* be propaganda when not accompanied by explicit documentation. In an article in which one wants to persuade readers, documentation is needed.):

Extreme weather is the result of global warming, which is the result of an increase in atmospheric CO₂.

Human-caused global warming is a hoax.

Jews are carriers of disease. (Asserted by Nazi Germany officials.)

This is a pandemic of the unvaccinated. (Asserted in 2021 - 22 by many authority figures.)

The vaccines are safe and effective.

The government is too incompetent to pull off 9/11. Somebody would have talked. (CIA talking points from 1967.)

“We won’t return to normal until we have a vaccine that we’ve gotten out to basically the entire world.” (Bill Gates’ assertion to the world in 2020.)

“Confirmation bias,” is the dynamic in which we favor information or assertions that confirm our existing beliefs, because we identify with and [become attached to our existing beliefs](#), and because credible, contradictory information would result in the discomfort of [cognitive dissonance](#).

Big Lie: As described in [Part 19](#), the “big lie” is a term coined by Adolf Hitler. Although he accused Jews of this mendacity, he and his henchmen used it to justify the “final solution to the Jewish question.” The big lie is described as a lie so huge that ordinary people would not believe that anyone could tell such an outrageous falsehood, so, on that basis, they accept that it must be the truth. In conventional groups, challenging authorities is taboo. Those who challenge them may be labeled unpatriotic, crazy, deviant, or conspiracy theorists. This sets them up for extreme censorship, isolation, and worse.

However, by not questioning these “big lies,” many “little lies” based on them will often be more easily accepted. And then even bigger lies will follow. Why? Once the perpetrators have been let off the hook, they are empowered to continue their criminal falsehoods and atrocities, again and again. This is why exposing these lies and holding the wrongdoers accountable is critical.

Examples:

Adolf Hitler: In a report made circa 1943, Walter C. Langer of the Office of Strategic Services (predecessor of the CIA) described Hitler’s profile: “His primary rules were: never allow the public to cool off; never admit a fault or wrong; never concede that there may be some good in your enemy; never leave room for alternatives; never accept blame; concentrate on one enemy at a time and blame him for everything that goes wrong; people will believe a big lie sooner than a little one; and if you repeat it frequently enough people will sooner or later believe it.”

9/11: The official narrative of the attacks of September 11, 2001, is an obvious big lie [once the facts are considered](#).²¹

Covid-19: The official narrative of the Covid-19 vaccines as “safe and effective,” is a big lie, because the vaccines were not tested long enough on humans to determine that they were safe or effective.

The official narrative that the Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine will stop viral transmission and therefore everyone should get the jab to protect others was a big lie, because [Pfizer now admits they never tested their vaccine for effectiveness at blocking transmission](#).²²

Worse, the CDC refused to release to the public its post-marketing safety data for Covid-19 vaccines from its v-safe system²³ begun in late December 2020 when the Covid-19 vaccines were first rolled out. “After multiple legal demands, appeals, and two federal lawsuits,” the CDC finally agreed to a court order, which showed that its v-safe “data shows that 7.7% of its approximate 10 million users [at that time, 770,000 people] reported having to receive medical care after receipt of a Covid-19 vaccine, and over 70% of those users sought outpatient/urgent clinical care, emergency room care, and/or were hospitalized [at that time, 539,000 people].”²⁴(My emphasis.) Additionally, after the shot, twenty-five percent of these 10 million people (at that time, 2,500,000 people) could not perform daily activities, go to school, or work. These were only the short-term data. V-safe does not address long-term data.²⁵

systemic distribution of lipid nanoparticles.

Document 6
Submission No. PM-2020-05461-1-2

Nonclinical Evaluation of BNT162b2 [mRNA] COVID-19 vaccine (COMIRNATY)

Table 4-2. Mean concentration of radioactivity (sexes combined) in tissue and blood following a single IM dose of 50 µg mRNA/rat

Sample	Total Lipid Concentration (µg lipid equiv/g (or mL))						
	0.25 min	1 h	2 h	4 h	8 h	24 h	48 h
Adipose tissue	0.057	0.100	0.126	0.128	0.093	0.084	0.181
Adrenal glands	0.27	1.48	2.72	2.89	6.80	13.77	18.21
Bladder	0.041	0.130	0.146	0.167	0.148	0.247	0.365
Bone (femur)	0.091	0.195	0.266	0.276	0.340	0.342	0.687
Bone marrow (femur)	0.48	0.96	1.24	1.24	1.84	2.49	3.77
Brain	0.045	0.100	0.138	0.115	0.073	0.069	0.068
Eyes	0.010	0.035	0.052	0.067	0.059	0.091	0.112
Heart	0.28	1.03	1.40	0.99	0.79	0.45	0.55
Injection site	128.3	393.8	311.2	338.0	212.8	194.9	164.9
Kidneys	0.39	1.16	2.05	0.92	0.59	0.43	0.42
Large intestine	0.013	0.048	0.09	0.29	0.65	1.10	1.34
Liver	0.74	4.62	10.97	16.55	26.54	19.24	24.29
Lung	0.49	1.21	1.83	1.50	1.15	1.04	1.09

Worse yet, through a Freedom of Information request, we now know that governments around the world knew *before* the Covid-19 vaccine roll out that the lipid nanoparticle, which contains the mRNA genetic sequence, would not stay at the injection site as we were told but

would distribute within minutes throughout the body, thus potentially creating the pathogenic spike protein in many organs of the body. This means all authorities who saw that research would have known that this new, experimental vaccine would *not* be safe. But the mantra of all governments was that the vaccine was “safe and effective.” This is indeed an extremely big lie.²⁶

Bots: Internet robots, or bots, are automated software applications programmed to run a certain task without human intervention according to instructions already given to them. They can imitate human interactions and are designed to seem authentically human. In a commercial context, this kind of software, supported by artificial intelligence (AI), may be used to solicit sales or create an astroturf movement. More egregiously, used in the context of propaganda, bots are utilized on social media to disrupt civil discussion, to spread spam and disinformation, and to manipulate elections. In 2018, researchers on the prevalence of bots analyzed that “over 15 percent of accounts on Twitter, 9.5 percent of accounts on Instagram and four percent of accounts on Facebook” were bots. An easy way to spot a bot is to watch its activities. A human being cannot tweet 24/7, but a bot can. Bots also follow each other and retweet each other as they push the same message with a particular hashtag. So if you see a succession of followers on Twitter you will likely find a series of bots.²⁷



Card Stacking: This technique gives an unfair advantage to one point of view, while weakening another. It is closely related to omission, but does not completely omit the information and instead downplays it.

Examples:

In a discussion or debate, the favored debater is articulate, has a strong, attractive demeanor, and is well informed. The disfavored participant is chosen for his or her less favorable physical impression, relative inarticulateness, etc.

In before and after photo images, the “after” photo may be enhanced, whereas the “before” photo may be degraded.

Censorship: Censorship is arguably the most ubiquitous and important propaganda technique. *Without censorship propaganda cannot succeed for any length of time.* Whenever we see direct censorship, we can be certain that we are being subjected to propaganda. There are many indirect techniques of censorship, which are included in this list. Both direct and indirect censorship try to limit people’s knowledge to only one end of a spectrum of thought. To recognize that censorship even exists, however, we must expose ourselves to the full range of arguments. We cannot avoid this responsibility and still consider ourselves well-informed.



Examples of direct censorship:

Banned books. Book burnings.

9/11: No reviews of books that challenge an official narrative, even if the level of sales indicates they are popular. For example, most of Professor David Ray Griffin’s books on 9/11 went unreviewed by any mainstream channels, such as *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *The Washington Post*.

Covid/Social Media: Due to government pressure, Facebook and other social media have removed channels and taken down videos and statements that challenge official Covid narratives, even if the information given is factual according to peer-reviewed and preprint research, or according to the CDC’s own VAERS or v-safe systems. In particular, these social media have removed content that may encourage “vaccine hesitancy.”²⁸

Twitter files: One of the most egregious U.S. censorship operations seen for decades is the infamous “Twitter Files.” Shortly after Elon Musk acquired Twitter on October 27, 2022, he made public a set of internal Twitter, Inc. documents starting in December 2022. Musk gave journalists Matt Taibbi and Bari Weiss the role of coordinating the release of the documents as a series of Twitter threads by several other authors and journalists hired by Musk.²⁹ The releases clearly show that former FBI and CIA employees are working at Facebook and Twitter.³⁰ The releases also show direct FBI involvement in controlling speech on Twitter, by both internal and

external operatives, in clear violation of the First Amendment. Almost all of this government overreach was instructed by Democrats.³¹

Covid/Twitter files: During the Covid vaccine controversy, “malinformation” is a term used by the U.S. government and by social media to censor *accurate* content that challenged the government Covid narrative. “As illustrated by internal Twitter communications that journalist Matt Taibbi [highlighted](#) . . . malinformation can include [emails](#) from government officials that undermine their credibility and ‘[true content which might promote vaccine hesitancy](#).’ The latter category encompasses [accurate reports](#) of ‘breakthrough infections’ among people vaccinated against COVID-19, [accounts](#) of ‘true vaccine side effects,’ [objections](#) to vaccine mandates, [criticism](#) of politicians, and [citations](#) of peer-reviewed research on naturally acquired immunity.”³² This Orwellian campaign is known as the “[Virality Project](#), a sweeping, cross-platform effort to monitor billions of social media posts by Stanford University, federal agencies, and a slew of (often state-funded) NGOs.”³³

The Censorship-Industrial Complex: On March 9, 2023, Michael Shellenberger gave testimony before the U.S. House Select Committee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government. The Twitter Files had been released to select journalists by the new CEO of Twitter, Inc., Elon Musk. As reported by Matt Taibbi, Shellenberger, one of the journalists reviewing these Twitter documents, nonplussed at the “vast new public-private censorship bureaucracy” he had discovered from these files, gave this global collection of organizations a deserved name: “the Censorship-Industrial Complex.”³⁴

This Orwellian censorship complex consists of four major stakeholders — all motivated by the goal of controlling thought and speech: “government, ‘civil society’ organizations, tech companies, and a shocking fourth partner, news media.”³⁵

Michael Shellenberger, in his [written testimony to the House Committee](#), spells out:

Americans have been censored by this complex “*on a range of issues, including the origins of COVID, COVID vaccines, emails relating to Hunter Biden’s business dealings, climate change, renewable energy, fossil fuels, and many other issues.*”³⁶

He continues by explaining the mission of this complex:

*The censorship industrial complex is a network of ideologically-aligned governmental, NGO, and academic institutions that discovered over the last few years the power of censorship to protect their own interests against the volatility and risks of the democratic process. They are not “defending democracy,” as they claim. Rather they are defending their own policy and pecuniary interests against democracy.*³⁷

Investigative reporter Matt Taibbi, who testified before this House committee at the same time writes:

*#TwitterFiles reporters like Michael Shellenberger, and myself didn’t have much of a hint of what we were looking at until later in the project. That larger story was about a new type of political control mechanism that didn’t really exist ten years ago.*³⁸

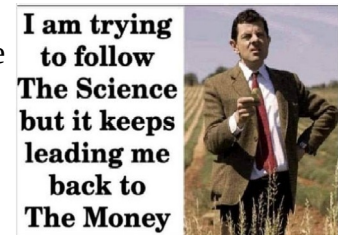
Covid/Medium: Medium.com will not publish articles that challenge official Covid narratives, even if the information given is factual according to peer-reviewed or preprint research or even the CDC's own research — sometimes released by the CDC due to lawsuits or Freedom of Information requests (see examples under “big lie” above). For example, if an essay contains content that “. . . directly or indirectly discourage[s] others from receiving the COVID-19 vaccine,” or content indicating that “. . . COVID-19 vaccines kill or seriously harm people,” they will likely be removed.³⁹

Wikipedia: Wikipedia eviscerates and even eliminates pages of people and concepts that argue against neo-liberal narratives, thus becoming an unreliable source for controversial issues.⁴⁰

Censuring: Closely related to censorship of *information* is censoring of certain *people*, the brave souls who speak out against government or corporate narratives. When people do not like the message, they often try to figuratively “kill the messenger.” There are a range of techniques for censoring these people that include smears, “cancel culture,”⁴¹ deplatforming, threatening careers or jobs, withholding grants for academic research, editors sidelining journalists, direct intimidation, and even murder.

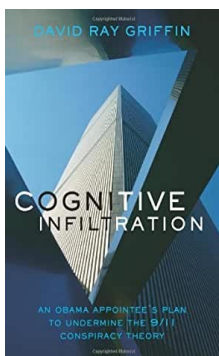
Examples:

Covid: YouTube and other social media deplatform people for mentioning that the Covid vaccines have resulted in death and have caused many severe adverse reactions, even though these are facts according to the CDC and FDA's own early warning system, VAERS,⁴² as well as the CDC's more recent v-safe program.⁴³



Climate change: Academics who challenge the official narrative about carbon dioxide being the prime driver of climate change are not offered grants for their research and may not be able to get or keep a job.⁴⁴ (Note: This does not mean that carbon dioxide is not the primary driver of climate change, but all theories need to be on the table for discussion for truth to be ascertained.)

Political assassinations: Murder is not beyond criminal politicians, governments, or corporations and their hired hit men. To think otherwise would be naive. For example, to cover up an assassination, sometimes a complicit coroner is needed to rule a death a suicide, even when there are two gunshot wounds to the head, as in the case of the mysterious death of investigative journalist Gary Webb, who implicated the CIA in the cocaine trade.⁴⁵



Cognitive infiltration: This technique, promulgated by Harvard law professor and Obama appointee, Cass Sunstein, calls for the insertion of false information into a legitimate grassroots movement in order to muddy the waters and make the movement appear unhinged. Sunstein wrote a paper advocating this strategy, focusing on the 9/11 Truth Movement.⁴⁶ Those involved in the 9/11 Truth Movement have had to spend an inordinate amount of time and energy “separating the wheat from the chaff.” This technique is hard to combat because it is often hard to distinguish irrational claims by sincere but overzealous followers from the work of actual infiltrators.

Cognitive Infiltration: An Obama Appointee's Plan to Undermine the 9/11 Conspiracy Theory by David Ray Griffin

Examples:

9/11: For the claim that a missile hit the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, see James Corbett's video "How to Spot Disinfo" at <https://www.corbettreport.com/how-to-spot-disinfo>.⁴⁷

'Veterans Today' editor, Gordon Duff, admits that 40% of what he writes is "at least purposefully, partially false, because if I didn't write false information I wouldn't be alive. I simply have to do that. I write...anything I write I write between the lines."⁴⁸

Covid: The plastic masks from China have worms in them.⁴⁹

There is no SARS-CoV-2 virus. It's never been isolated.⁵⁰

Dehumanization: Dehumanizing a person or group is one of the oldest, most successful and dangerous propaganda techniques. War propagandists portray a group of people as less than human with false stories of horrific violence perpetrated on innocents, and with evil looking, cartoonish images of the targeted group. War propagandists have used dehumanization throughout the ages to garner support for genocide of a particular group and for war against another country. Folk legends such as the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, or detailed stories involving plots of intrigue against another group, especially against one's own group, go a long way in creating fear and distrust. The central idea of dehumanization is to create a sense of difference and "otherness" in the targeted group, usually depicting these people as less intelligent, less evolved, soulless, or evil.

Dehumanization helps us rationalize the belief that we are good people, even as we advocate the murder of others. Whenever we are presented with images and words that portray some people's lives as less valuable than others, we are seeing deadly propaganda.⁵¹

Examples:

Women in patriarchal cultures throughout the world and throughout the centuries, including those accused of witchcraft who were tortured and burned at the stake, and including those killed, to this day, in so-called "honor killings."⁵²

The Tutsis who were demonized and massacred by the Hutus in the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

The Jews and Romani people in Nazi Germany.

The Irish and Chinese immigrants in 19th century America, and the Germans, Italians, and Japanese leading up to and during World War II⁵³ were portrayed as subhuman by the U.S. press.

The unvaccinated during the intense, worldwide propagandistic vaccination campaign of 2021 – 2022. Matthias Desmet in his book, *The Psychology of Totalitarianism*, analyzes this authoritarian-instigated



American Anti-Japanese Propaganda Postcard. Selection from 'The Dirty Japs...So Solly' Daniel D. Teoli Jr. Archival Collection.

divisiveness and dehumanization and how the dynamic of “mass formation” can lead to genocide or massive death, citing the historical, horrific examples of Nazi Germany and Stalinist Soviet Union. It was not uncommon to hear violent rhetoric of TV personalities and movie stars toward those who opted against these injections.⁵⁴

Deifying or demonizing a leader: Deification of a leader can lead to the dangerous, irrational justification of atrocities if the leader promotes these actions. His or her controversial actions are justified by followers as having a mandate from the Divine. This propaganda technique has been found worldwide throughout history.⁵⁵

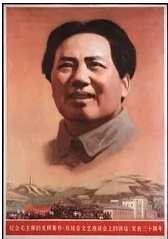
Demonizing an opposition leader is designed to create distrust and disgust in order to turn people toward another agenda. Both of these techniques often use images to get their message across.

Examples:

Adolf Hitler: During the Nazi era of the 1930s and early 1940s, Hitler was deified in Germany with posters painting him as a god among men. Today, to demonize any leader, one only needs to associate him with Hitler.



Adolf Hitler



Mao Zedong

Mao Zedong: As the Communist Revolution in China progressed, Mao promoted images of himself as a godlike figure and savior.

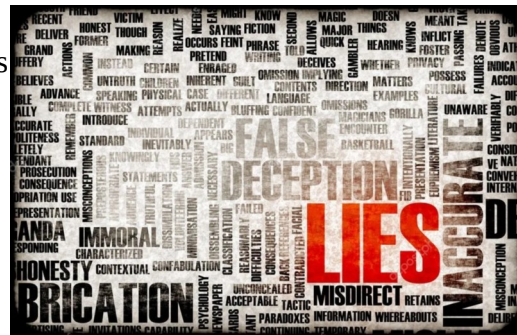
Barack Obama: Posters of Obama portrayed him as a revolutionary-type savior from the unpopular George W. Bush and neocon policies. Those who did not like him portrayed him as a devil and his wife as a man in disguise.



Barack Obama poster, created by Shepard Fairey, reminiscent of the popular Ernesto “Che” Guevara posters promoting revolution against the exploitation of capitalism in Latin America.

Donald Trump: Films and images painted a picture of Trump as a savior who was going to “drain the swamp,” and as a quasi-godlike figure who had a mandate from God himself. His critics see him as akin to Hitler.

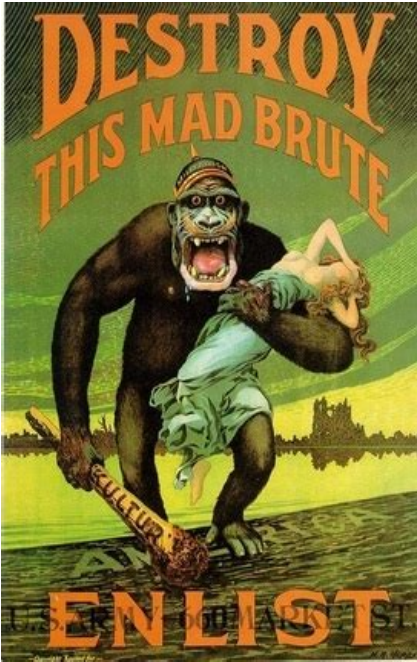
Fabrication: Fabrication is basically a comprehensive and extensively promoted lie to deceive others for one’s own agenda. It is a very effective technique that can be used to outrage people to support war by fabricating horror stories of abuse by a supposedly offending country or its citizens. Used in this way, it is a deception designed to demonize a whole culture, making its people seem subhuman. This strategy greatly overlaps with dehumanization.



Examples:

Incubator babies story in 1990: To ramp up popular sentiment for the first U.S. War on Iraq, "Operation Desert Storm," a fabricated report of the murder of Kuwaiti newborns by Iraqi soldiers was devised. On October 10, 1990, the U.S. Congressional Human Rights Caucus held a hearing on the subject of Iraqi human rights violations. The centerpiece of the event was the emotional testimony of a 15-year-old Kuwaiti girl, Nayirah. While sobbing, she told a shocking story: Iraqi soldiers came into the hospital where she was volunteering. They took scores of

newborns out of their incubators, left with the incubators and left the babies on the cold floor to die. This massacre never occurred. Nayirah was actually the daughter of a Kuwaiti ambassador to the United States, Saud bin Nasir Al-Sabah. She had been coached by the public relations firm Hill and Knowlton that was hired by Citizens for a Free Kuwait (an astroturf organization established by the Kuwaiti government). During the next three months, the story of babies torn from their incubators was repeated over and over again. President George H. W. Bush told the story six times. Seven senators recited the story as a reason the Congress should give the president authorization to attack Iraq. It was recited as fact on TV, on radio talk shows, and at the UN Security Council. This ruse created American public outrage resulting in support for a U.S. attack on Iraq.⁵⁶



German atrocities stories, circa 1914: Cartoonish images that dehumanized the Germans were created by UK propagandists to persuade the Americans to enter the war. These drawings characterized the German soldiers as ape-like monsters without human morals. Horrific stories of atrocities, such as spike helmeted Germans in Belgium cutting off the hands and ears of children in front of their parents or stories of boiling corpses to make soap were believed by U.S. citizens.⁵⁷ Much anti-German sentiment built up, leading eventually to the U.S. entering World War I in 1917.

Factoid: The novelist Norman Mailer coined and defined “factoid” as “facts which have no existence before appearing in a magazine or newspaper.” While a factoid is an invented fact believed to be true because it appears in print or broadcast media, Pratkanis and Aronson, in their book *Age of Propaganda*, expand this definition by saying a factoid is “an assertion of fact that is not backed up by evidence, usually

because the fact is false or because evidence in support of the assertion cannot be obtained.”

As opposed to garden-variety lies told to a person or few people, factoids become widely treated in a community as true. In our neighborhoods, they can be rumors, gossip, or urban legends. We tend to take a factoid delivered by media at face value without trying to verify it. We may be told that it is based on secret information, and broad repetition convinces us it must be true.⁵⁸ (The term “factoid” can also have an innocent meaning: “a briefly stated and usually trivial fact.” – *Merriam Webster*)

According to Pratkanis and Aronson⁵⁹ and the *Urban Dictionary*⁶⁰, “flaming” is related to factoids. This is the internet term for vicious attacks and unfounded rumors, which can include toxic “whispering campaigns” and “leaks” based on so-called well-placed sources, often full of innuendos and rumors circulated to discredit a candidate or leader. These toxic practices are more indirect forms of ad hominem attacks. They also overlap with the practice of “smears” and “slurs” (see below).

Example:

According to *The New York Times*, on January 6, 2021, at the infamous protest-turned-riot at the U.S. Capitol, a young Capitol Police officer, Brian Sicknick, died due to the violent mob bashing in his skull with a fire extinguisher. This report that outraged readers was unverified and yet repeated over and over by CNN, MSNBC, and *The Times* until it became unquestioned, gospel truth.

But it never happened. The story was a factoid, literally made up and repeated for political purposes. Sicknick did go to the hospital, ostensibly in good spirits and recovering from pepper spray. He died shortly thereafter due to a stroke. Nonetheless, the lie made it into the prosecutors' brief in the impeachment trial of Donald Trump. It even came from the mouth of President Joe Biden on the Senate vote in this trial, after Trump was acquitted, when President Biden said, "It was nearly two weeks ago that Jill and I paid our respects to Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick, who laid in honor in the Rotunda, after losing his life protecting the Capitol from a riotous, violent mob on January 6, 2021." This was uttered by the president on February 13, which was after CNN finally admitted there was no evidence that any of this story was true.⁶¹ It appears that factoids told for political purposes die a protracted death.

False balance: This tactic takes the position that two arguments are equally valid when one is far more valid than the other. Sometimes this position is taken to avoid the appearance of having a bias or in a misguided effort toward journalistic objectivity.

Example:

Some experts say that the earth is spherical, whereas others believe it is flat.

False dilemma: This logical fallacy is known as "black-and-white-thinking." It reduces a complex issue to an "either/or" matter, or a "good" or "bad" choice. It presents only two possibilities whereas reality may be more complex. This may occur due to careless thinking or it may be part of a strategy to achieve compliance.

Examples:

"Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists." (George W. Bush, 2001)

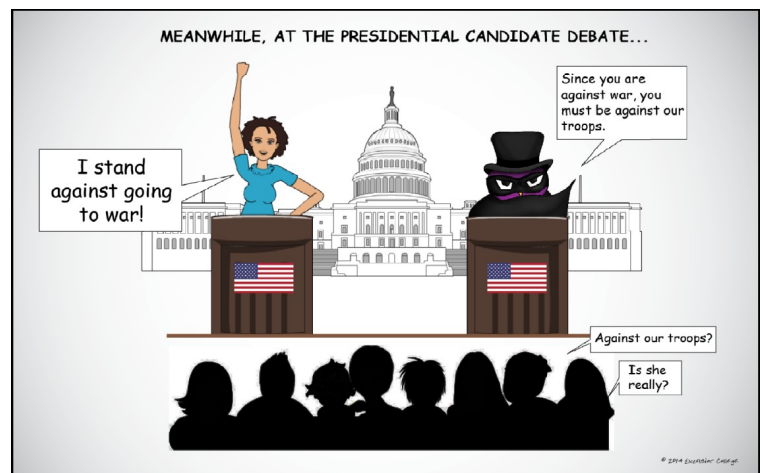
"If you're not with me, then you're with my enemy!" (Anakin in "Star Wars, Episode 3")⁶²

Those who do not wear masks are selfish and have sociopathic tendencies.

If you support the Palestinians you are antisemitic.

Either the evolution theory is accurate or the creationists are right.

America. Love it or leave it.



False flag operation: Originating in the 16th century, the term "false flag" was used as an expression meaning an intentional misrepresentation of someone's allegiance. Specifically, the term was used to describe a deception in naval warfare whereby a ship flew the flag of an enemy or neutral country in order to hide its true allegiance. This tactic was originally used by pirates and privateers to allow them to move closer to other ships before attacking them.⁶³

Today the term is used most commonly to describe a deceptive attack orchestrated on one's own country while making it appear that the attack was carried out by an enemy nation or terrorists or citizens set up as patsies. This ruse gives the self-inflicting nation a pretext for the removal of civil rights and for aggression toward the blamed party. The strategy has been wildly successful throughout the last few centuries as a means to provoke outrage among citizens, leading to war with the supposedly attacking nation. Additionally, due to fear stoked by these false flag attacks, people become willing to accept totalitarian agendas and the loss of civil rights in trade for security.

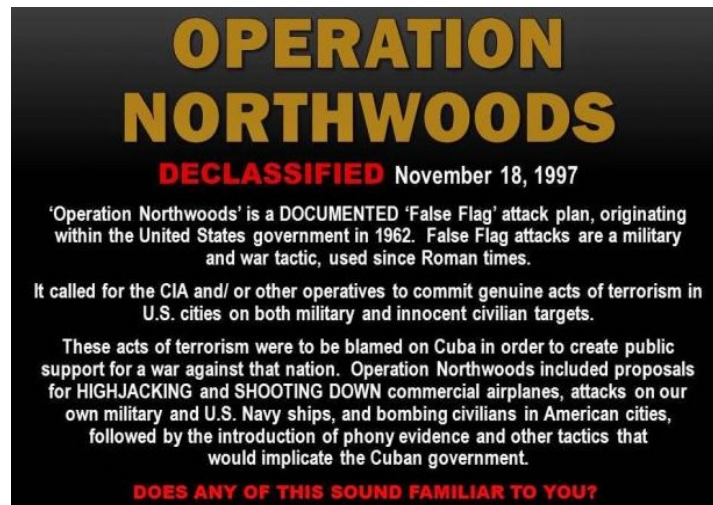
Examples:

9/11: The attacks of September 11, 2001, are a prime example of this tactic. While the perpetrators have not been identified and brought to justice, ample evidence is available through scientists, architects, engineers, and others demonstrating that these attacks had to be orchestrated by elements from within agencies of the United States National Security State.⁶⁴

U.S. Assassinations: The assassinations of President John F. Kennedy in 1963,⁶⁵ Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968,⁶⁶ and Senator Robert F. Kennedy in 1968:⁶⁷ In each of these cases, the assassination was officially blamed on one person (the "lone nut" narrative), but abundant evidence points to these assassinations being carefully planned by elements from within agencies of the National Security State.

Gleiwitz Incident: In 1939 in Gleiwitz, a German town on the border of Poland, German S.S. officers donned Polish military uniforms and seized one of Germany's own radio stations, using it to broadcast an anti-Nazi message in Polish. Prisoners from the Dachau concentration camp were dressed in Polish uniforms, brought to the radio station and shot to make it appear as if they were casualties of a firefight. Britain and France responded by declaring war on Germany that same year. Thus, the initial incident of World War II was a false flag operation.⁶⁸

Fear appeal: "If it bleeds, it leads" is a common media expression referring to our human predisposition to pay more attention to negative news, called "negativity bias."⁶⁹ Stories about death, violence, turmoil, struggle, danger, hardship, and the unknown tend to get spotlighted in the press, due to the resulting fear and curiosity. Propagandists apply a spectrum of this technique from piquing interest to stimulating mortal fear of death.



Creating fear is a sure-fire way to motivate a large group of people toward or away from some thought or action. It has been used by propagandists in many countries and throughout history.

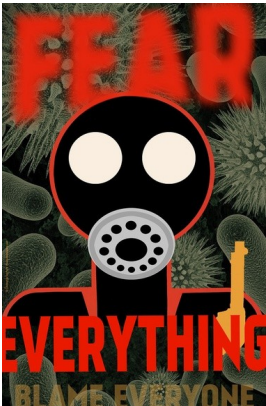
If we observe media and/or governments promoting fear of something or someone in a one-sided way, without balance and omitting key information, then we are witnessing a propaganda campaign. Fear is also used as the headline or first sentence of a film or article in order to draw us into the material, as well as to elicit social media sharing.

Fearmongering is often used by the U.S. government and the media to focus on the enemy personality du jour. For example, some of the enemies we were encouraged to fear and hate were Manuel Noriega of Panama, Osama bin Laden, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, Muammar Gaddafi of Libya, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, and then Russian President Putin. On and on it will go if we keep falling for the demonizing of public figures.

Enemy states or groups we have been conditioned to fear and hate include communists, the Soviet Union, “terrorists,” China, Russia, and so on. Human history is replete with highly successful fear campaigns against personalities, states, and groups.

A recent variant on the theme of inducing exaggerated fear in populations in order to move them toward certain behaviors has been fear of the “novel” coronavirus.⁷⁰

According to Pratkanis and Aronson in their book *Age of Propaganda*,



The fear appeal is most effective when (1) it scares the hell out of people, (2) it offers a specific recommendation for overcoming the fear-arousing threat, (3) the recommended action is perceived as effective for reducing the threat, and (4) the message recipient believes that he or she can perform the recommended action.⁷¹

Messages that are designed to elicit fear, anger, or guilt are manipulative and, if we are not vigilant, cause us to react with emotions rather than rational thought. When we find ourselves feeling such emotions, it is time to step back and analyze how we are being manipulated.

Non-manipulative warnings of real and present danger are given immediately, as in the case of a child ready to touch a hot stove. In the case of an emerging pandemic or of an economic collapse, for example, the key to discerning manipulative fearmongering as opposed to pertinent information regarding a real danger is balance in the information delivered as well as the tone in which it is delivered. In general, the recipient of the message should feel empowered, not dependent and disempowered.

Examples:

Cold War: In 1947, Senator Arthur Vandenberg advised President Harry Truman on how to get Congress to vote for aid to help Turkey and Greece fight communist insurgents: “Mr. President, the only way you are ever going to get this is to make a speech and scare the hell out of the country.”

Since I grew up during the Cold War, I can attest to the daily diet of fear that was promulgated by the government and media that the communists were trying to take over America. Nikita Khrushchev's rants fed into this fearmongering when he said such things as, "We do not have to invade the United States, we will destroy you from within."⁷² This fear frenzy supported the military-industrial complex and a permanent war economy.⁷³

Adolf Hitler: "The Jew regards work as a means of exploiting other peoples. The Jew is the ferment of the decomposition of peoples. This means that the Jew destroys and has to destroy. The Jew is harmful to us.... What then are the specifically Jewish aims? To spread their invisible State as supreme tyranny over all other States in the whole world."⁷⁴

Joseph McCarthy: "The State Department is infested with communists. I have here in my hand a list of 205 — a list of names that were made known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist Party and who nevertheless are still working and shaping policy in the State Department."⁷⁵

George W. Bush/Terrorism: In 2002, when President George W. Bush was promoting an invasion of Iraq he said with an ominous tone: "Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof — the smoking gun — that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud."⁷⁶

In a 2003 speech to religious broadcasters, President Bush declared, "Chemical agents, lethal viruses and shadowy terrorist networks are not easily contained Secretly, without fingerprints, Saddam Hussein could provide one of his hidden weapons to terrorists or help them develop their own. Saddam Hussein is a threat. He's a threat to the United States of America."⁷⁷

Joe Biden/Unvaccinated: Many officials during 2021 and 2022 scapegoated those who chose not to receive the Covid vaccine. Biden proclaimed: "This is a pandemic of the unvaccinated. The unvaccinated overcrowd our hospitals, are overrunning the emergency rooms and intensive care units, leaving no room for someone with a heart attack, or [pancreatitis], or cancer. . . . We cannot allow these actions to stand in the way of protecting the large majority of Americans who have done their part and want to get back to life as normal The bottom line: We're going to protect vaccinated workers from unvaccinated co-workers. . . . For the vast majority of you who have gotten vaccinated, I understand your anger at those who haven't gotten vaccinated. I understand the anxiety about getting a 'breakthrough' case."⁷⁸

Gatekeeping: This is the process of filtering messages by which someone exercises their power to decide what information is legitimate to consider and what is to be suppressed, blocked, sidelined, or ignored. This decision is called gatekeeping if the person who is suppressing the information understands that the information is factual and important but still decides to suppress it. If the person understands that the information is false, then the suppression could be called personal discernment.

Examples:

Algorithms (which are programmed by people) that decide what media to present to users as high priority or low priority and what media to block entirely.

Media owners, editors, and advertisers who suppress stories that do not align with their interests.

Government actions to suppress certain media messages.

Social media platforms that flag, ban, or limit messages that disagree with the government narrative (often due to government pressure).

Groupthink in which people are fearful to say what they really think due to the threat of being ostracized from the group. Usually, the leader and key people within a group employ their power to chastise any dissident behavior within the group.

Glittering Generalities: This approach uses appealing but vague words for the purpose of evoking positive feelings in the audience, which generally results in unquestioning approval of the person, product, or idea promoted. They are a type of assertion that must be repeated until they become contagious within the culture. Common glittering words include “prosperity, choice, equality, change, unity, together, security, strength, freedom, safe, effective.”

Examples:

I stand for freedom, for a strong nation, and equality for all.

The vaccines are safe and effective.

United we stand!

Make America great again. (President Donald Trump)

Hope and change. (President Barack Obama)

Land of the free and home of the brave.

Freedom fighters. (President Ronald Reagan’s term for the CIA-supported Mujahideen of Afghanistan and the Contras in Nicaragua, which Reagan also called the “moral equal of our Founding Fathers.”⁷⁹)

Lesser of Two Evils: This strategy is similar to the false dilemma but instead of a “good” and “bad” alternative, it offers two “bad” alternatives. It is commonly used in U.S. elections to dissuade people from voting for a third-party candidate — or to persuade people to vote rather than not vote at all.

Examples:

Bumper sticker in the 2000 U.S. election: “Nader = Bush.”

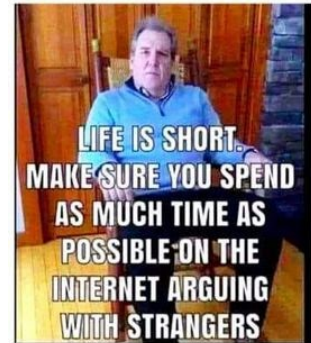
Wear a mask or kill your grandma.

Meme: The word *meme* was coined by Richard Dawkins in his 1976 book *The Selfish Gene* as an attempt to explain how cultural ideas replicate, mutate, and evolve. Memetics is the study of memes. In this original definition, a meme has no definite size. It could be as short as the first four notes of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony or the entire symphony itself.⁸⁰ It’s a complicated and controversial study, and definitions vary depending on which memeticist you listen to. Here is one from the *Las Angeles Times* (March 20, 1999) that I like:

Memetics sees ideas as a kind of virus, sometimes propagating in spite of truth and logic. Its maxim is: Beliefs that survive aren't necessarily true, rules that survive aren't necessarily fair and rituals that survive aren't necessarily necessary. Things that survive do so because they are good at surviving.⁸¹

Then along came the internet and the rapid mutation and proliferation of memes. On the internet, a meme is often an image with a few attached words to convey an emotional idea, which can be anywhere from good-natured humor to fear, contempt, or anger. Internet memes spread rapidly from person to person via social networks, blogs, email, or news sources.⁸²

Memes can become dark, divisive, and even dangerous when attacking a person, a group of people, or a concept. Memes are another example of how propaganda techniques (such as bots and sock puppets) have increased due to the technology of the internet. Such an internet meme offers no avenue for intelligent dialogue, and indeed, the propagandist does not want such dialogue.



Humorous but to-the-point meme

Misleading analogies: While analogies are useful for explaining complex concepts concisely, some can oversimplify and mislead. A false or misleading analogy arises when the cases being compared are not similar enough, or the similarities are not relevant enough.

Examples:

Love is war.

Someone who can't get up without having their morning coffee is as good as an alcoholic.

Misleading headlines: Often, it is the editor who creates the headline for an article. If the journalist has actually written an even-handed article, the editor may create a sensationalist or inaccurate headline, knowing that first impressions are important and that many people skim the headlines in newspapers or online material without reading the article, so the headline gives them the “news.” Deceptive headlines are often written by editors to conform to their preferred political narrative.⁸³ Additionally, journalists themselves can create headlines to attract readers with “clickbait,” such as sensationalist titles, product promotions disguised as news, or leading questions which the article or video does not actually address.



Examples of headlines that conform to the political narrative of the day:

The Denver Post: In 2006, Cindy Rodriguez writes a balanced, if not favorable, article about Colorado 9/11 Visibility (later renamed Colorado 9/11 Truth). When I personally questioned her about how difficult it would be to get published a balanced article about this very taboo subject — thus about our group — she let me know she was preparing to leave her employment at *The Denver Post*. When I later asked her why she used a derogatory headline — “9/11 theorists are

either silly or shrewd"⁸⁴ — she said that editors choose the headlines. Check out her article for a good example of misleading the public with deceptive headlines:
<https://www.denverpost.com/2006/10/24/911-theorists-are-either-silly-or-shrewd>.

Politico: On April 5, 2020, a *Politico* headline reads “Trump Owes Tens of Millions to the Bank of China — and the Loan Is Due Soon.” The loan, the article informs, would be due in 2022, implying that Trump could not be tough on Chinese leaders for unleashing Covid-19 and would be inclined to cover up the seriousness of the disease. Several headlines of other news outlets pile on to scream the same message. But it isn’t true. The Bank of China issued a statement shortly after this sensationalist “news” circled the earth saying it had held the Trump loan for only twenty-two days before selling it to a U.S. real estate firm in 2012 — eight years before! *Politico* then changes the headline and details of the story and offers a formal correction three days later. *Politico* could have avoided the error if it had followed the basic journalistic rule to contact those mentioned and ask for a comment.⁸⁵

Misleading and biased labels: The food industry notoriously manipulates consumers with misleading labels on its products. Misleading or biased labels are also often used to promote a political agenda.

Examples:

Food industry: “Natural” means nothing at all. It certainly does not mean organic. “Organic” does not mean low in heavy metals. The USDA certified organic certification process does not test for heavy metals. Foods that are very high in lead, arsenic, cadmium, mercury, and even aluminum are openly allowed to be labeled “USDA certified organic.”

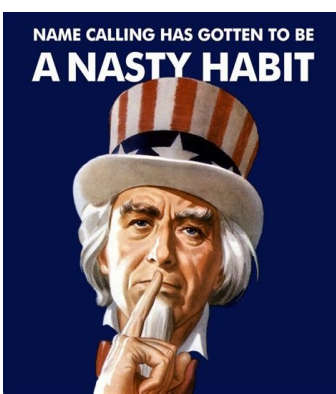
Political agendas:

An official or person is described as “nonpartisan” when he or she is actually appointed by or belongs to a political party.

Calling torture "enhanced interrogation."

The term “enemy combatant” was invented by the George W. Bush Administration to circumvent the Geneva Convention of 1949 governing treatment of prisoners of war. By using a new term with no legal precedent they violated international law with impunity on the fiction that the law did not apply. Also, because they detained these prisoners at Guantanamo Bay and other sites outside the boundaries of the U.S., they asserted that the prisoners were not entitled to the protections of the U.S. Constitution.⁸⁶

The infamous January 6, 2021, riots were called by media an “insurrection,” which could strip the rioters of all basic constitutional protections, such as *habeas corpus*. According to investigative journalist Glenn Greenwald, a more appropriate term would have been “rioters.”⁸⁷ In contrast, says Greenwald, the George Floyd riot of three months duration was downplayed by calling them a “racial reckoning” or “largely peaceful fiery nationwide protests.”⁸⁸



Name-Calling: Insulting labels are used instead of evidenced-based arguments for a topic. This technique is used to stop conversation, to dismiss the person as not worth listening to, and give a warning to others to not listen

to this person. These insults can also be indirect, such as associating an opponent with a theory or person not generally seen as credible. Name calling is a type of ad hominem attack.

Examples:

A few commonly used insulting labels: Right-wing, gun-toting nut! Far-left wackos! Conspiracy theorist! Conspiracist! Egghead. Idiot. Pinhead. Pinko! Redneck. Pig. Nazi! Denier. Birther. Truther. Anti-vaxxer. Misinformation superspreader. Quack! Snake-oil salesman. Bigot. Putin stooge.

Gov. Mitt Romney: "If I were to coin a term, it'd be Obamaloney."

President Barack Obama: "He'd ask the middle class to pay more in taxes so that he could give another \$250,000 tax cut to people making more than \$3 million a year. It's like Robin Hood in reverse — it's Romney-hood . . . "

Newspeak: According to *Britannica*, Newspeak is “propagandistic language marked by euphemism, circumlocution (roundabout or indirect manner of speaking), and the inversion of customary meanings.” George Orwell coined the term in his classic novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, as the language preferred by Big Brother’s pervasive enforcers. It was “designed to diminish the range of thought” by eliminating or altering certain words, removing unorthodox meanings of certain words, substituting one word for another, creating “words for political purposes (e.g., *goodthink*, meaning ‘orthodoxy’ or ‘to think in an orthodox manner’).” It can also denote confusing or deceptive jargon.⁸⁹ Newspeak is reminiscent of and overlaps with “Word redefinition” (see below), “Misleading labels” (see above), and “Obfuscation” (see below).



Examples:

The CDC has removed “immunity” from its definition of “vaccine” and substituted “immune response,” which may or may not provide immunity. Thus, our traditional expectation of immunity from a vaccine is diminished.

Investigative journalist Jeremy R. Hammond writes about the inversion of the term “misinformation,” which is “a euphemism to mean any information, no matter how factual, that does not align with the mainstream propaganda narrative. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the simple act of advocating the right to informed consent, for example, had been equated with the spread of vaccine ‘misinformation.’”⁹⁰



Nudge: Coined and recommended by Cass Sunstein,⁹¹ “nudge theory” is the strategy of influencing people so that they think they are making their own decisions. This is done through giving suggestions, choices, and positive reinforcement, rather than commands, rules, and punishment. It is used in sales and by governments with the goal of manipulating the customer or citizen.. Nudge does not rule out fear appeals. The

propagandist practitioners of nudge do not want you to know about other narratives and will try to keep those narratives hidden, smeared, or minimized.

Example:

As reported by Laura Dodsworth in *A State of Fear*, the Nudge Unit of Britain had a major role in creating excessive fear in the UK during the Covid pandemic in order to persuade citizens to lockdown, wear masks, track and trace, and ultimately, to accept the experimental Covid-19 vaccine. These same fear tactics were used in most other countries.⁹²

Obfuscation, Incoherence, and Sophism: Although these practices are distinct, they are closely related, so I've chosen to include them together. When used intentionally as propaganda, each of them can be an attempted snow job of the audience. If one sufficiently understands a subject and is sincerely seeking what is accurate, this person should be able to explain the topic in terms understandable to most people.

Obfuscation makes a message difficult to understand with confusing and ambiguous language. It can use circumlocution (talking around the subject) or jargon (technical language of a profession). It is often a meteoric shower of irrelevant statements or putative facts to overwhelm and convince the audience that the speaker is highly intelligent and informed and thus should be believed.

Incoherent arguments, when motivated by propaganda, are intended to persuade you to their belief, albeit with arguments that are inconsistent, illogical, and contradictory. If listeners are biased toward the general message, they may not notice these absurdities.

Sophism is a specious, yet plausible sounding, argument, displaying ingenuity in reasoning for the purpose of deceiving someone — or to argue for one's bias.

Example:

Where Did the Towers Go? Evidence of Directed Free-Energy Technology on 9/11 by Judy Wood, PhD: The 9/11 Truth Movement is chock full of unsubstantiated theories, one of them being the “dustification” of the World Trade Center buildings by a “directed energy weapon,” promoted by mechanical engineer Dr. Judy Wood. In this long-winded, confusing, and illogical tome, Dr. Wood demonstrates obfuscation, incoherence, and sophism. Here are excerpts:

“There is no evidence that thermite, thermate, super thermite, or nano-enhanced thermite have ever been used to bring down major buildings in controlled demolition. . . . A report has come out stating that “thermitic material” was found in the dust samples from lower Manhattan after 9/11/01. . . . The buildings were turned to dust, and therefore the dust would be expected to contain traces of all materials that were in the building. Finding traces of chocolate, sugar, and nano-wheat (flour) in the dust would not prove that chocolate-chip cookies turned the buildings to dust. It would not prove there were chocolate chip cookies in the building nor that such cookies were capable of turning buildings to dust. The same is true for thermite. . . . 9/11 was a demonstration to the world of a new technology known as free energy.”⁹³

Omission: Whatever the form of communication — newspaper articles, speeches, documentaries, dramas, online blogs or videos, broadcast segments, books and history text books — propaganda *requires* that key information be left out. Propaganda *always* omits or downplays pertinent information that would give a comprehensive understanding of an issue. But how do we know that what we read or hear is omitting crucial information? We don't. Unless we investigate other sources, especially those sources that have been censored. To even recognize that important information has been omitted, we must expose ourselves to various arguments. We can't get around this responsibility.

Example:

Regarding attacks on September 11, 2001, are these following facts explored with any seriousness, if at all, by corporate or alternative media: Nanothermite in the WTC dust;⁹⁴ free fall of World Trade Center 7 and near free fall acceleration of towers 1 and 2;⁹⁵ the iron-rich spherules and evaporation of materials observed in the WTC dust and temperatures in excess of what could be produced by kerosene or office fires;⁹⁶ the conflicts of interest of the Executive Director of the 9/11 Commission, Philip Zelikow;⁹⁷ the significance of the U.S. origin of the anthrax used in the anthrax attacks immediately following 9/11;⁹⁸ the insider trading before 9/11/01?⁹⁹

A few corporate media outlets¹⁰⁰ have touched on these hot potato facts, usually never to return to them, and certainly never to explore them in any depth. They were too hot to handle even for most alternative media, which almost universally resorted to disparagement of 9/11 activists and researchers as “conspiracy theorists.” The few exceptions include [Global Research](#) and Colorado Public Television (renamed PBS12), the only public TV station in the U.S. to explore the 9/11 issue in some depth for six consecutive years (2009 through 2016) by showing documentaries and interviewing guest speakers. These rare events were lauded by the public hungry for real information.¹⁰¹



By Jessie Maisonneuve on Dribbble

Each of the topics listed above provide ample evidence that the perpetrators of 9/11 were people other than the 19 Muslims blamed,¹⁰² as well as abundant evidence pointing to elements within the U.S. National Security State. All of these facts and more should have been the subjects of deep investigative journalism — that is, by a watchdog Fourth Estate, if it existed.

Photo, video, voice manipulation: Seeing and even hearing cannot necessarily be believed anymore. Photo and video manipulation and voice morphing are real technologies that will only be improved in time. Even today, they can be used persuasively, to manipulate those whom our military or government considers enemies, which at times does not exclude American citizens.

Photos are used to shape our perceptions regarding an event or person. Photos of rallies may be from the beginning of an event or the crowd may be cropped to give the impression that attendance was low. Or a photo can be taken close up, leaving out the empty surroundings, to give the impression that the

crowd was large. The old trick of dangling a fish closer to the camera than the fisherman can be applied in other contexts to lie with photography.

Photos of a politician or a leader can be chosen to depict stately strength, weakness, or anger, depending on the perception desired by the propagandist.

We cannot even take hearing for granted. Military research has demonstrated that a 10-minute digital recording of your best friend's voice is enough to clone her speech patterns and develop a recording with words she never said.¹⁰³

Examples:

A missile is sometimes claimed to have hit the Pentagon on 9/11/01. For video manipulation, see James Corbett's "How to Spot Disinfo" at <https://www.corbettreport.com/how-to-spot-disinfo>.



See <https://www.corbettreport.com/bestof>

Fox News ran digitally manipulated photos in their coverage of the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests in Seattle as well as using a video taken in St. Paul, Minnesota, and attributing it to Seattle, Washington. Extreme political bias motivates lying with images such as this. See <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/fox-news-runs-digitally-altered-images-in-coverage-of-seattles-protests-capitol-hill-autonomous-zone>.

Pinpointing the Enemy: Most issues are complex and have multiple causes. Unfortunately, many people are eager to find a simplistic answer to a complicated question due to lazy thinking. Pinpointing a single enemy is usually fallacious because even if that "enemy" is part of the problem, he or she or it is probably not the sole cause. Propagandists play on this common human tendency by pinpointing a single enemy to gain support for their agenda.

Examples:

Liberals are the enemy of America; they are really communists.

Democrats are pedophiles.

Republicans are fascists and the enemy of democracy.

Muslims want to kill all Americans.

The Russians interfered in the 2016 election causing Donald Trump to win the presidency.

The Chinese Communist Party is responsible for the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Anti-vaxxers are transmitting the virus keeping this pandemic going.

Placement: Editors choose whether or not to cover a story, usually based on their political biases. This is simply one of the ways bias manifests. If the decision is to cover the topic at all, then the editors must choose where to place it. Will it be seen on the front page "above the fold," or prominently on the homepage, or buried in the print or digital media. In today's world of information overload, many people will simply scan the headlines of a few articles.

Example of how left and right leaning news outlets cover, or do not cover, the same story:

The story: “Hunter Biden missed an overnight deadline to hand over documents about his foreign business dealings to the House Oversight Committee.” Chairman James Comer (R-KY) requested the records earlier this month and is questioning why Biden "received significant amounts of money" from companies in Ukraine and China "without providing any known legitimate services."¹⁰⁴

How did various media cover this story? Other than *NewsNation* (center-rated by *AllSides*), left- or center-rated sources completely shunned this news. Right-leaning sources, though, covered it as a top story.¹⁰⁵

Plain Folk: Someone is portrayed as an ordinary but trustworthy citizen to gain support for a candidate, a speaker, or a campaign.

Examples:

President Ronald Reagan was seen chopping wood on his ranch.
George W. Bush was repeatedly photographed cutting brush on his property with a chain saw.
Candidate Bill Clinton played his saxophone on a late-night TV show.
Our speaker tonight is a family man who has been married 30 years to the same wife.

Provoked Operations: As with false flag operations, provoked operations are propagandistic *acts*. These actions are designed to pressure an entity to react violently. They qualify as propaganda since the goal is to use deception to further one’s own cause or damage an opposing cause. Propagandistic narratives will demonize the provoked party both before and especially after it becomes violent. Provocation is employed to coerce the targeted party to start a conflict while the provoker can remain the seemingly innocent victim.

Examples:

Provoking Germany to sink the *Lusitania*:

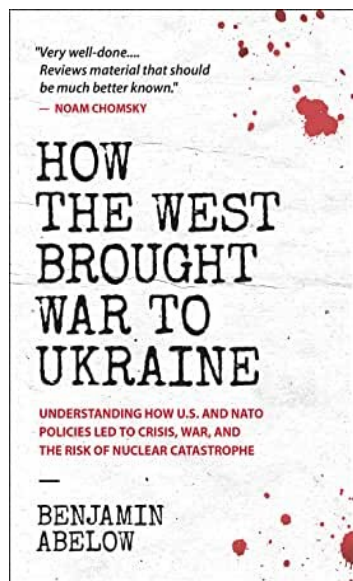
In 1915, England was losing the war with Germany. Thus, the House of Morgan and the European bankers who were financing the Allies were facing the specter of default on their loans. England and the bankers desperately needed the U.S. to enter the war, but war propaganda by the J.P. Morgan-controlled press was not convincing the American public to enter this foreign war. A new strategy was needed. The British luxury liner, the *Lusitania*, often steamed between New York and Liverpool. Unknown to the passengers who were to board the ship in New York in May 1915, war materials had also been loaded in special compartments. Germany did know, however, and tried to warn the American public by placing ads in the travel sections of American newspapers. The U.S. State Department intervened so that the ads were not run. Only one slipped through.¹⁰⁶ As the steamship was making its journey toward Liverpool, one torpedo from a German submarine sank the liner, one of the largest ever built, killing 1198 people, which included 128 Americans.¹⁰⁷ War propaganda intensified. “The sinking of the *Lusitania* became the rallying point for war. One effective ad simply



read ENLIST and featured a woman sinking underwater, holding her baby.”¹⁰⁸ After a subsequent chain of events, the U.S. Congress declared war on the Axis powers in April 1917 and entered World War I.¹⁰⁹

Provoking Japan to attack Pearl Harbor, Hawaii:

In *Day Of Deceit: The Truth About FDR and Pearl Harbor*, Robert B. Stinnett documents that Japan’s attack on the U.S. military base at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 — the “Day of Infamy,” as President Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) called it — was actually deliberately provoked by FDR, himself, through an eight-step program devised by the U.S. Navy. A major strategy of this plan was to deny the Japanese Empire the oil it needed to maintain its imperial invasion of China.¹¹⁰ After decades of Freedom of Information Act requests, Stinnett was able to document that a Japanese spy in Hawaii transmitted information, including a map of bombing targets, and that U.S. government intelligence was aware of his actions. Stinnett shows that the Japanese aircraft fleet did not maintain radio silence as it approached Hawaii, and that its many coded cables were intercepted and decoded by American cryptographers. Admiral Husband E. Kimmell, commander in chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, was prevented from conducting a training exercise that would have uncovered the location of the oncoming Japanese air fleet. Thus, the Japanese attack was provoked and allowed to take place, killing 2,403 and wounding 1,143, most of these military personnel. At the highest levels — including FDR — America had ample warning of the pending attack. At those same levels, it was understood that the isolationist American public would not support a declaration of war unless we were attacked first. FDR’s plan was to anger Japan into attacking the U.S. and to keep the loyal officers responsible for Pearl Harbor in the dark, and thus to drag America into the greatest war of her existence.¹¹¹



Provoking Russia to attack Ukraine:

Dr. Ben Abelow, in his book, *How the West Brought War to Ukraine: Understanding How U.S. and NATO Policies Led to Crisis, War, and the Risk of Nuclear Catastrophe*, explains that the West provoked Russia to attack Ukraine. He states that U.S. involvement was “pitched as a limited, humanitarian effort to help Ukraine defend itself,” but that the underlying reason was “to degrade Russia’s capacity to fight another war in the future.”¹¹² Abelow describes the U.S.-led provocation of Russia by moving NATO incrementally eastward toward Russia, reneging on “a cascade of assurances” about preserving Soviet security by Western leaders in 1990 - 1991 during the reunification of Germany.¹¹³ He describes many other provocations including live-fire exercises with rockets in Estonia to practice striking targets inside Russia and a massive military training exercise on Russia’s border. He describes the U.S. contribution to the 2014 military coup against Ukraine’s

democratically elected president who wanted to keep Ukraine neutral. He recounts how the U.S. and its European allies thwarted peace negotiations between Ukraine and Russia. Finally, Abelow points out how putting massively nuclear-armed Russia in an existential crisis has put the U.S., Europe, and the world in an existential crisis.

Quoting Out of Context: Someone removes a quote from its surrounding context in order to distort its intended meaning. Most quotes are extracted from a larger context, but this becomes deception when the propagandist excludes from the excerpt certain nearby phrases or sentences that serve to clarify the *intentions* behind the selected words. Many famous people have had their quotes publicized out of context as a means to defame them or spread disinformation.

Examples:

Apollo 11 in 1969: Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin were the first two astronauts to set foot on the moon. Buzz Aldrin is purported to have said several times that the moon landing never occurred. For example, his words at an Oxford Union event are taken out of context. During the question and answer (Q&A) period, a young woman asked him, “What was the scariest moment of the journey?” Aldrin replied, “Scariest? Yes. It didn’t happen. It *could* have been scary.” He spent the bulk of the Q&A talking about his detailed memories of the Apollo 11 journey. He was obviously indicating in his answer that certain events could have become scary but nothing frightening occurred. Amazingly, propagandists remove the entire context and claim that his answer is evidence that the Apollo missions never happened.¹¹⁴ (Note: On the other side of this issue, those who support the moon landing engage in reprehensible propaganda by using name-calling such as “conspiracy theorist,” and “moon-landing deniers.”¹¹⁵)

Pentagon attack on September 11, 2001: Some activists in the 9/11 Truth Movement claim that no plane impacted the Pentagon. Some of them refer to a witness, CNN reporter Jamie McIntyre who was assigned to the Pentagon and who, on 9/11/01, photographed the impact zone immediately after the plane hit the building. His words, taken out of context, were, “From my closeup inspection there’s no evidence of a plane having crashed anywhere *near* the Pentagon. The only site is the actual side of the building that is crashed in. And like I said, the only pieces left that you can see are small enough that you can pick up in your hand. There are no large tail sections, wing sections, a fuselage, nothing like that anywhere around.”¹¹⁶

On CNN, Jamie McIntyre clarifies that the plane did not crash *near* the Pentagon, but it crashed *directly into* the Pentagon. As he even said in his quoted words: “The only site is the actual side of the building that is crashed in.” He later reacts to his words being taken out of context, or wrongly interpreted, and he acknowledges how easy it is to be convinced and fooled by some of the internet accounts.¹¹⁷



Scapegoating: A particularly egregious form of pinpointing an enemy is “scapegoating,” by which a particular person or group is blamed for one’s own problems. When a targeted ethnic or racial group, for example, are easy to recognize by appearance or culture, and when they are already identified as “the other,” this strategy works particularly well, often causing horrible violence against that group. Human history is replete with this dangerous blaming game. Scapegoating is always destructive to civil society, whether it is perpetrated toward an individual or toward minority groups by past leaders as dangerous as Adolf Hitler or by current

leaders who may be more constrained by legal restrictions.¹¹⁸

Examples:

Donald Trump as presidential candidate: “I’m not just saying Mexicans, I’m talking about people coming from all over who are killers and rapists and they’re coming into this country.... It’s coming from all over South and Latin America.”¹¹⁹

President Joe Biden: “This is a pandemic of the unvaccinated. The unvaccinated overcrowd our hospitals, are overrunning the emergency rooms and intensive care units, leaving no room for someone with a heart attack, or [pancreatitis], or cancer. . . . We cannot allow these actions to stand in the way of protecting the large majority of Americans who have done their part and want to get back to life as normal.”¹²⁰ Similar blaming remarks were spoken by Vice President Kamala Harris and many Democratic governors during the 2021 drive to get everyone vaccinated.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau: “[The unvaccinated] are extremists who don’t believe in science, they’re often misogynists, also often racists.”¹²¹

Adolf Hitler: “But it remained for the Jews, with their unqualified capacity for falsehood, and their fighting comrades, the Marxists, to impute responsibility for the downfall [of Germany in World War I] From time immemorial. [sic] the Jews have known better than any others how falsehood and calumny can be exploited.”¹²²

Simplification: This technique reduces complex situations into simplistic phrases or images. In doing so, the propagandist underplays or covers up important details while reducing the conflict to a black and white argument or to “us versus them.” It is often used to stereotype other people by reducing a description of a group to negative ideas.

Examples:

President George W. Bush: “Americans are asking “Why do they hate us?” . . . They hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other. . . . Every nation in every region now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists.”¹²³

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher: “The problem with socialism is that you eventually run out of other people’s money.” And “The facts of life are conservative”¹²⁴

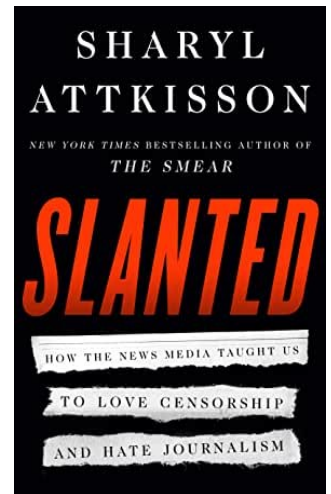
Hillary Clinton: “Sanders is to blame for my loss, along with Obama and Biden. They never really supported me because I’m a woman. They’re all deplorables, just like every registered Republican in America.”¹²⁵

President Donald Trump: “Show me someone without an ego, and I’ll show you a loser.”¹²⁶

Slander and libel: Merriam-Webster defines slander as “false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage another’s reputation.” Slander is spoken. Libel has essentially the same definition, but normally comes in written form. Slander and libel for private individuals (and sometimes for public

figures) may not be protected speech under the First Amendment, but the law in these cases is complex regarding who is protected and to what degree.¹²⁷

Slanting: Due to bias, journalists may slant an article or broadcast when they tell only part of a story or when they play up one particular angle. This involves cherry-picking information or data to support one side, ignoring other perspectives. Research articles, polls, and graphs, while seemingly scientific and objective, can actually be slanted depending on how they are presented. Independent investigative journalist Sharyl Attkisson explains in her book *Slanted*, that reporters are so familiar with the biased nature of today’s journalism that they have a name for it: *The Narrative*.



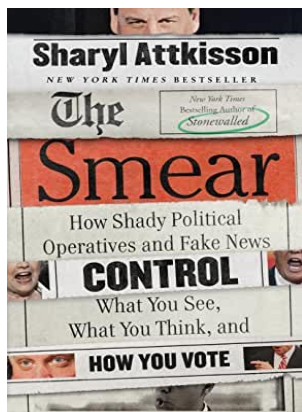
The Narrative refers to a story line that influential people want told in order to define and narrow your views. The goal of The Narrative is to embed chosen ideas so deeply within society that . . . questions are not permitted. . . . The point is that The Narrative is guiding what facts you get to learn about. Facts that serve The Narrative are deemed to be “news.” Facts that don’t are not news. Or are to be obliterated.¹²⁸

[T]here are two harmful types of slant in the news reporting: bias that is intentional, and that which is unwitting.¹²⁹

What happens to news reporters who are off narrative? They suffer the full wrath of the Narrative establishment. They may be bullied, attacked, shouted down, investigated, sued, researched, controversialized, and slandered with every available propaganda tool.¹³⁰

Attkisson warns that *we cannot successfully find opposing views on other corporate media, because all corporate media slant to The Narrative*. Instead, we must seek other opinions from truly independent journalists so that slanted material does not distort our understanding. Who qualifies as an independent journalist? Those journalists who have avoided conflicts of interest that could compromise their ability to report independently. For example, they would not be hired by a corporate media outlet for which profit is the bottom line. They would not be recipients of corporate grants nor entangled with the CIA, FBI, etc.

Slur: Slurs are remarks or innuendos that are insulting and disparaging that have an intended shaming or degrading effect. They are often part of a smear campaign.



Smears: Smear jobs or smear campaigns act to vilify persons or organization by maliciously spreading usually unsubstantiated charges or accusations against them. Independent journalist Sharyl Attkisson in her book *The Smear* identifies a smear:

[I]t’s an effort to manipulate opinion by promulgating an overblown, scandalous, and damaging narrative. The goal is often to destroy ideas by ruining the people who are the most effective at communicating them.¹³¹

If journalists report a true but damaging story about key political figures, for example, instead of the political persons denying the report, Attkisson tells us that the reporters can expect the following treatment for damage control:

Strategic communications firms spring into action [for big money]. False information, rumors, and innuendo are circulated against the reporters on blogs and social media. Negative ‘press releases’ are dispatched to long email lists of reporters and pundits. Pretty soon, these astroturf efforts drown out the real story and overtake the news narrative.¹³²

Attkisson explains that the biggest casualty in today’s toxic media environment is “nonpartisan investigative journalism.”¹³³

This is a very common strategy by the authors and supporters of official narratives against people or organizations who work to expose harmful and false narratives. For example, labeling someone as a “conspiracy theorist” is a smear. Smearing is a strategy to try to convince people not to listen to the opposing narrative.

Examples:

Julian Assange: Surely, one of the greatest victims of persecution is Australian independent journalist Julian Assange, founder of WikiLeaks in 2006. In 2010, he communicated with former U.S. army intelligence analyst Bradley Manning regarding his hack into government computers during the Iraq War. ([Bradley Manning is now known as Chelsea Elizabeth Manning after hormone treatment, identifying as female, and prefers to be recognized as such.](#)) The bombshell revelations, published by WikiLeaks, showed shocking video footage of an American air crew intentionally gunning down a dozen Iraqi civilians, which included two Reuters employees, and laughing about it.

WikiLeaks also released hacked emails from the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and from Hillary Clinton's campaign manager, showing that the party's national committee favored Clinton in the primaries, resulting in the resignation of Debbie Wasserman Schultz, chairwoman of the DNC, and causing harm to the Clinton campaign.

For these and millions of other WikiLeaks hacked documents exposing wrongdoing, Assange’s life has been in grave danger for years. After the Manning releases, the U.S. government has been investigating Assange and WikiLeaks to be prosecuted under the Espionage Act of 1917. Julian Assange has been held in Belmarsh prison in London since 2019 as his lawyers fight extradition to the U.S. Smears against him have included accusations of rape, pedophilia, and being called a “high-tech terrorist” and “tool of the Russian government.”¹³⁴

The 2020 presidential election: Hillary Clinton accused Tulsi Gabbard and Jill Stein of being Russian assets. Clinton: “I’m not making any predictions, but I think they’ve got their eye on somebody who is currently in the Democratic primary and are grooming her to be the third-party candidate. She’s the favorite of the Russians.”¹³⁵ Democrat candidate Gabbard shot back: “You, the queen of warmongers, embodiment of corruption, and personification of the rot that has sickened the Democratic Party for so long, have finally come out from behind the curtain.”¹³⁶ As could be predicted, the smears by Clinton multiplied in the media. Gabbard

replied to these: “Just two days ago, *The New York Times* put out an article saying that I’m a Russian asset and an Assad apologist and all these different smears. . . . This morning, a CNN commentator said on national television that I’m an asset of Russia — completely despicable.” A Drudge Report poll of the site’s readers showed that 39% who responded thought Gabbard won the Democrat primary debate, the most of any of the candidates.¹³⁷

Wikipedia: Editors at this online encyclopedia smear *The Grayzone*, Max Blumenthal, and Aaron Maté with unsubstantiated statements and the use of words such as “far-left,” “fringe,” “conspiracy theories,” and “pro-Kremlin.”¹³⁸

The Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH): A UK/US nonprofit that attempts to censor information by persuading social media to deplatform people. With the advent of Covid-19, they began a smear campaign called the “Disinformation Dozen” against 12 people who questioned Dr. Anthony Fauci and government assertions about the Covid-19 vaccines. They use images and words such as “anti-vaxx snake oil salesman,” “disinformation dozen,” “anti-vaccination content,” while associating non-official views about the Covid vaccination as “hate speech,” and “disinformation” without addressing the substance of the alternative views.¹³⁹

Sock puppets: This term refers to people who have a large number of aliases on social media in order to appear numerous, to spread disinformation, argue, bully, or produce multiple reviews of products. A literal sock puppet is a sock placed over one’s hand used as a puppet to entertain children. Governments or corporations may generate millions of social media accounts as sock puppets.

Spin: “Spin doctors” are lobbyists, public relations people, or advertisers who, in the case of a positive spin, burnish the image of a client by framing news or information in a favorable light. In the case of a negative spin, colorful words may imply inappropriate or malevolent behavior. Spin uses vague, dramatic, or sensational language instead of convincing facts derived from all sides of an issue. The goal is to sway the listener or reader to a certain belief. “Spin doctors” have been with us at least since the early 20th century. When journalists avoid any attempt at balance or objectivity, they are often spinning a narrative.

We all have our biases, and this includes journalists, but if the author is also closed-minded to evidence that disagrees with his or her bias, then that journalist (or person) is participating in propaganda, wittingly or unwittingly.

Examples in which spin artists use vague sources without attribution:

Critics say . . .
Experts say . . .

Examples of dramatic, sensational, or smearing words, which label without credible support:

Adjectives: Debunked theories, monstrous bill.
Adverbs: Falsely claimed, Ruthlessly exploits.
Verbs: Scoffed, bragged, spewed.
Nouns: Rant, tirade, cesspool.

Examples of spin using words with political implications:

Far-left, far-right, extremist.
Pro-life vs. anti-abortion.
Illegal alien vs. undocumented worker.
Gun rights vs. gun control.

Political words are often used to spin a controversial bill: “An outlet on the left calls *Florida's controversial Parental Rights in Education law* the "Don't Say Gay" bill, using language favored by opponents, while an outlet on the right calls the same bill the "FL education bill," signaling a supportive view.”¹⁴⁰

Straw man argument: An arguer sets up a scarecrow, so to speak, in order to knock it down. With this logical fallacy, a person distorts an opposing position into a caricature or a false version in order to argue against his own fabricated version. In creating a straw man argument, the arguer strips the opposing point of view of any nuance and misrepresents it in a negative light. This technique avoids the opponent’s actual argument and instead argues against an inaccurate version of it. We can often find this technique in politicized “fact-checking” sites.

Examples:

9/11: An acquaintance said to me: “Oh you 9/11 conspiracy theorists! You don’t even believe a plane hit the Pentagon on 9/11!” This is characterizing the 9/11 Truth Movement by one of its most questionable assertions, long rejected by careful researchers within the movement.¹⁴¹ Notice that he did not challenge the free fall of World Trade Center Building 7, which is one of the strongest claims of the movement. A movement, by its nature, consists of a diverse collection of people with varying levels of knowledge and insight. I explained to him that the belief that no plane impacted the Pentagon was promoted early on, and is widely repeated, but detail-oriented researchers in the movement have validated that a large plane did indeed impact the building.¹⁴² (This is a warning to movements to police and correct the weak or questionable assertions that circulate within a movement because they can be used against them as a straw man argument to ignore the strong positions they hold.)

Health Freedom Movement: “The health freedom movement doesn’t even believe viruses exist.” This straw-man claim is indeed asserted by some as fact, but it is an extremely weak and distorted depiction of the movement. The movement as a whole refutes this claim and explains that the goal is to advocate for informed consent and individual choice about whether to take a Covid-19 vaccine.¹⁴³

Anti-Globalization Movement: “The anti-globalization movement doesn’t believe in free trade among nations, the lack of which keeps third-world peoples in poverty.” This simplistic statement is a straw-man argument that mischaracterizes the [anti-globalization movement](#). The strong positions of the movement are opposition to (1) slave-like working conditions known as



sweatshops, (2) [neo-liberalism](#) characterized by predatory loans from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank with their requirement for [structural adjustments](#) — seen as neocolonialism, (3) opposition to the dominance of multinational corporations, (4) the rule of the unelected World Trade Organization, while supporting fair wages and environmental protections established by each country,

Testimonials: This strategy associates a person who is a respected authority or a celebrity with an idea or person. The testimonials from these positively recognized people are usually statements that are often false or exaggerated in order to help promote a product, a cause, a political leader, a government, etc. These statements, whether by famous people or by “plain folks,” are not always propaganda. But if they are receiving compensation for a product ad, or if they have a hidden political agenda, then we are being confronted by propaganda.

Examples:

Sports hero promoting products: Legendary basketball player Kobe Bryant was the greatest Lakers player the world had witnessed. He had endorsement deals with corporations such as Coca-Cola, Nutella, Nike, and Spalding, which earned him millions annually.¹⁴⁴



Kobe Bryant

Ordinary person supporting a political candidate: “I am a librarian for Denver County. The reason I am supporting John Doe for Mayor of Denver is that he is concerned with strengthening library services to young people, shut-ins, the disabled, minorities, and rural users.”

Actor supporting a political policy: Uvalde, Texas, native Matthew McConaughey met with President Joe Biden. He urged more congressional action on gun violence in an emotional speech, sharing stories of those who were killed in the elementary school shooting.¹⁴⁵

Thought-terminating cliché: This approach uses a political slogan, analogy, folk saying, catch-phrase or buzzword as a less than rational argument for the purpose of terminating a thought process and to end open discussion. In order to determine if these common clichés are really promoting propaganda and censorship, we discern: Are they uttered for the purpose of foreclosing conversation and promoting compliance with a narrative? Or are they a potential preface to conversation?

Examples:

We should follow best practices.
We’re all in this together.
United we stand.

Word redefinition: Whenever the definition of a word suddenly officially changes, we would be wise to be on the lookout for propaganda. Redefining a word does not necessarily mean propaganda is being employed. Again, the key to discernment is whether or not the messenger wants to censor other narratives. In the case of the redefinition of “vaccine” in 2021, for example, the bald-faced lies, the censoring of other narratives, and the nearly universal neglect of attaining informed consent — as explained below — qualify this particular redefinition as propaganda.

Examples:

Pandemic: In 2009, the definition for “pandemic” was changed during the spread of the H1N1 “Swine Flu.” According to Wikipedia, the World Health Organization (WHO) dropped the words “with enormous numbers of deaths and illness” from its definition of “pandemic.” In 2008, it also dropped the requirement of an “influenza pandemic” to be a new sub-type with a simple reassortant virus, meaning that many seasonal flu viruses now could be classified as a pandemic.¹⁴⁶ There is reason to believe that the WHO’s removal of the words “with enormous numbers of deaths and illness,” as a requirement to declare a pandemic may have been influenced by pharmaceutical companies. With these words removed, the WHO could then raise the moderately serious H1N1 flu to the highest level — to a “level 6 contagion.” This in turn, allowed pharmaceutical companies to complete secret Swine Flu vaccine contracts with many countries including Italy, Germany, France and the UK.¹⁴⁷

Vaccine: In 2021, the definition of “vaccine” was changed to conform to the worldwide propaganda campaign to get as many people as possible “vaccinated.” However, the novel mRNA “vaccines” are more properly called “gene therapies.”

According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), “human gene therapy seeks to modify or manipulate the expression of a gene or to alter the biological properties of living cells for therapeutic use.”¹⁴⁸

The Covid-19 mRNA “vaccines” alter the biological properties of living cells in order to produce an immune response to the spike protein of SARS-CoV-2.

Now let’s examine why our media and government call this gene therapy a “vaccine.”

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) changed their definition of “vaccine” (held since May 16, 2018), during the roll out of the Covid-19 mRNA gene therapies in 2021. Here’s the CDC’s “Definition of Terms” for immunization as captured on August 26, 2021. (Emphases in all subsequent quotes in this example are mine, added for clarity):

Immunity: Protection from an infectious disease. If you are immune to a disease, you can be exposed to it without becoming infected.¹⁴⁹

Vaccine: A product that stimulates a person’s immune system to produce *immunity* to a specific disease, protecting the person from that disease. Vaccines are usually administered through needle injections, but can also be administered by mouth or sprayed into the nose.

Vaccination: The act of introducing a vaccine into the body to produce *immunity* to a specific disease.



Immunization: A process by which a person becomes protected against a disease through vaccination. This term is often used interchangeably with vaccination or inoculation.¹⁵⁰

On September 1, 2021, the CDC updated their definitions, removing the word “immunity” and substituting “immune response.” They also changed the definition of “vaccination” from producing immunity to only providing “protection,” from a disease.

Immunity: Protection from an infectious disease. If you are immune to a disease, you can be exposed to it without becoming infected.

Vaccine: A preparation that is used to *stimulate the body’s immune response* against diseases. Vaccines are usually administered through needle injections, but some can be administered by mouth or sprayed into the nose.

Vaccination: The act of introducing a vaccine into the body *to produce protection* from a specific disease.

Immunization: A process by which a person becomes protected against a disease through vaccination. This term is often used interchangeably with vaccination or inoculation.¹⁵¹

From a screenshot on November 11, 2021, this is the expanded version of the CDC’s definition of “vaccine”:

1 : a preparation that is administered (as by injection) to *stimulate the body’s immune response* against a specific infectious agent or disease: such as

a : an antigenic preparation of a typically inactivated or attenuated...pathogenic agent (such as a bacterium or virus) or one of its components or products (such as a protein or toxin)

b : a preparation of genetic material (such as a strand of synthesized messenger RNA) that is used by the cells of the body to produce an antigenic substance (such as a fragment of virus spike protein)

Note: Vaccines may contain adjuvants (such as aluminum hydroxide) designed to enhance the strength and duration of the body’s immune response.

2 : a preparation or immunotherapy that is used *to stimulate the body’s immune response* against noninfectious substances, agents, or diseases¹⁵²

Interestingly, before the public knew about the CDC’s changed definition of “vaccine,” Merriam-Webster had updated and expanded its definition of “vaccine” to reflect that of the CDC.¹⁵³

Why is this distinction between “immunity” and “stimulating the body’s immune response” important?

“Immune response” does not indicate a *state of being immune* but indicates an *action* of a substance that stimulates the body’s immune system that *may or may not* result in immunity.

In our Western culture, we have “known” that when we get vaccinated, we are virtually completely protected from a particular disease, such as polio, tetanus, measles, and diphtheria. We “know” we no longer need to worry about these diseases. The influenza vaccine is an exception to this general rule of sterilizing immunity, since people often still get the flu after getting the vaccine for it. But otherwise, we rest assured that we are protected from the disease in question.

But in 2021, precipitously, the definition of “vaccine” went from producing immunity to a specific disease to merely stimulating the body’s immune response against this disease. Vaccination no longer implies immunity, but rather simply “protection” from a disease.

This changed definition makes it easier for governments to recommend endless boosters for Covid-19 since they no longer make us “immune.” There are some other vaccines for which boosters are recommended by the CDC, but nothing comparable to the short turn around period of the limited protection by the mRNA Covid-19 “vaccines.” And interestingly, for these other booster recommendations, the CDC never changed its definition of “vaccine” or “vaccination.”

This changed definition also makes it easier to introduce subsequent mRNA genetic products for other diseases — for the flu or RSV, for example — and sell them as “vaccines.”

In 2021, our government¹⁵⁴ and media¹⁵⁵ told us point blank that if we got vaccinated against Covid-19, we would be protected against this disease, and appealing to our sense of civic responsibility, we would achieve herd immunity and thus protect those around us.¹⁵⁶ But if we happened to get sick, we would likely be without symptoms. Therefore, government and media gave the impression, and even the outright claim, that the vaccines delivered sterilizing immunity. These were all bald-faced lies since there was no data to back up these claims.

The claim that by getting vaccinated we would protect our community was an especially egregious lie since Pfizer now tells us they never tested to determine if their Covid-19 vaccine would prevent transmission!¹⁵⁷

What if the public had been told the truth? What if they had gone through the process of “informed consent”¹⁵⁸ with their doctors before agreeing to take the Covid-19 mRNA shot? The patient might have heard words such as this:

“The pharmaceutical mRNA products are not traditional vaccines. They have a different mechanism that has never been used on humans with any success. The pharmaceutical trials were very limited. So no one knows their long-term consequences. No one knows if they will produce sterilizing immunity. They are, therefore, an experimental substance, not approved by the FDA. The FDA has only issued “Emergency Use Authorization” for them to be administered to the public. So you will need to realize that you are part of an experiment if you take these vaccines. An alternative would be to make sure your vitamin D3 levels are high. Research has shown that those with high D3 levels do much better with this disease. We are also seeing very promising results around the world with early and safe treatments such as hydroxychloroquine taken with zinc, and also with ivermectin.”

Words such as these would have been the information needed to comply with the ethical and legal obligations of medical practitioners to obtain from the patient informed consent. If these truths were told to the public by an honest government, honest media, and honest doctors, how many people would have accepted these experimental injections?

One of the first steps of propaganda in 2020 -2022, therefore, was to call the experimental mRNA gene therapy a “vaccine.”

Herd immunity: The WHO changed the definition of “herd immunity” during the Covid-19 pandemic. On June 9, 2020, the definition read: “Herd immunity is the indirect protection from an infectious disease that happens when a population is immune either through vaccination or immunity developed through previous infection.”¹⁵⁹

By November 13, 2020, the WHO had changed the definition to: “‘Herd immunity,’ also known as ‘population immunity,’ is a concept used for vaccination, in which a population can be protected from a certain virus if a threshold of vaccination is reached. Herd immunity is achieved by protecting people from a virus, not by exposing them to it.”¹⁶⁰ *Thus, the WHO completely removed natural immunity, gained from infection, from the definition.*

By December 31, 2020, the definition again changed to: “Herd immunity against COVID-19 should be achieved by protecting people through vaccination, not by exposing them to the pathogen that causes the disease.”¹⁶¹ (Strangely, in February 2023, this avoidance of the research showing the superiority of natural immunity is still on the WHO site.¹⁶²)

Conclusion

Piers Robinson, Co-director of the Organisation for Propaganda Studies, reminds us of historical propaganda campaigns that foreshadow contemporary propaganda campaigns including the 9/11 “War on Terror” and the worldwide, massive propaganda campaign regarding Covid-19 and the mRNA gene therapy roll out. He reminds us, and he warns us:



Piers Robinson

This is nothing new. You look at the whole history of protest movements and media treatment of protest movements. The suffragettes lacked civil rights. The gay rights movement, the anti-war movement in the Vietnam War. Ridiculing and demonizing and denigrating the protesters happened every single time and you’re seeing it again now with Covid. The way to close down people who are raising questions is to say they’re Nazis, or they’re conspiracy theorists, or they’re wackos. . . . The evidence [that] the academics [who disagree with the official Covid narrative] are being systematically smeared, attacked, and denigrated. . . . should be another warning sign. . . . That tells you this isn’t a rational response going on, this is a propagandized response. . . . [Scientists and academics] come up against pressure within the institution. You have kind of a groupthink mentality emerging, and it becomes very, very difficult to go against that grain. . . .

All the alarm bells are ringing with anyone who’s got a knowledge of history and knowledge of propaganda and how governments don’t always act in the best interest of their populations. . . .

This is clearly not about the virus. It's clear there are other things going on. Liberal democracies are at a pivotal moment now.¹⁶³

I began this essay noting that propaganda has always been with us, and that awareness of it is crucial to our well-being. That recognizing propaganda and discerning truth can be a matter of life or death. I also observed that we are all biased depending on our cultural upbringing. We are biased toward information that affirms our beliefs and worldview, that indicates we are right. Thus, the hardest propaganda to recognize is that which we agree with.

If we want to know the truth of any subject, we are up against two formidable forces:

(1) Censorship: People with tremendous power dominate the social narrative through propaganda, algorithm manipulation, government and corporate secrecy, and other indirect means of censorship listed in this essay. Direct censorship is accomplished through various methods, including firing of journalists, removal of social media channels, intimidation, and likely even murder of people who have inside information or who have dared breach especially sensitive narratives.

(2) Confirmation bias: Our own psychological tendencies toward the status quo of our belief systems, namely, our biases.¹⁶⁴

Therefore, both external and internal awareness are keys to truth seeking. This will be the theme of Part 25, the last essay of this series.

Author's note: To be continued with "Part 25: The Importance of External and Internal Awareness." Electronic sources (except videos) in the endnotes have been archived. If they can no longer be found by a search for the exact title on the internet, readers desiring a copy may contact me at FranShure (at) Estreet.com.

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Dr. Kevin Barrett lost his part-time teaching position at the University of Wisconsin on Islamic culture and history, as well as a full-time tenure track "Islamic Studies and Humanities" position at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, due to his controversial views that the September 11 2001 attacks were an "inside job."

Dr. Mark Crispin Miller, Professor of Media, Culture, and Communication at New York University, lost his ability to continue to teach his course on propaganda due to his asking his students to study eight randomized controlled studies on wearing face masks as barriers for respiratory viruses, which showed that masks in these cases were ineffective. He also asked his students to read other studies since the advent of Covid showing that masks were effective, in order to determine which studies were propaganda and which were not. (Information found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5B1sFp4UjA&t=900>.)

Adrienne Anderson, known by her friends as the Erin Brockovitch of Colorado, was a longtime environmental activist who worked with labor unions, low income and other neighborhoods affected by industrial pollution, especially by corporations such as Lockheed Martin. A popular instructor at the University of Colorado for 12 years, she taught her classes how to research pollution issues. Corporate pressure on the university caused her class to be canceled. Students marched on the administration to demand its reinstatement, causing her class to be reinstated. However, when she brought in speakers to her class to present evidence showing 9/11 was a false flag operation, she was suddenly fired in 2005. (Adrienne was a friend, and I was one of the speakers she brought into her class. Information regarding Anderson is found at <https://academeblog.org/2011/09/21/remembering-adrienne-anderson>.)

Ward Churchill, was terminated from his employment as a professor of American Indian Studies at the University of Colorado (CU) for an informal essay written on September 12, 2001, declaring the workers in the WTC towers as "little Eichmanns," whose deaths were a "penalty befitting their participation" in the American empire's destruction of millions of innocent lives. Churchill believed the 9/11 attacks to be blowback for America's imperial, genocidal actions at home and around the world. In 2005, his angry and vindictive words became known to the public. Thus brewed a firestorm of controversy with calls for his termination from CU. In 2007, convicted of trumped up charges of plagiarism as well as fabrication and falsification of evidence, he was fired from his position at CU. (I find Churchill's words to be immature and repugnant. However, I also hold the position that the First Amendment must be our arbiter of protected speech, not others' outrage at this speech. Information regarding Churchill found at <https://www.aaup.org/sites/default/files/ConferenceReport.pdf>.)

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Note: In 2005, I met in Boulder, Colorado, [Gilbert F. White](#), a well-known and well-respected scientist, Quaker, and activist at a small 9/11 truth demonstration. He told me that he was actually in the Oval Office at the White House when

the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and that FDR and the others in the office celebrated saying something to this effect: "They finally did it!" It was obvious, he told me, that they were expecting the attack and welcomed it. Was this true? An acquaintance of White's mentioned to me that she heard the same story from him. In a biography of his life by [Robert E. Hinshaw](#), I learned that he indeed worked for the FDR administration for eight years, (page xi) and that by reading Robert Stinnett's book, *Day of Deceit*, in 2003, "Gilbert found the answer to the question he pondered on December 7, 1941 [day of the Pearl Harbor attack]: 'Why are some of these people so pleased with this terrible news?' The answer dealt a major blow to Gilbert's respectful memory of FDR." (page 46).

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