

May 1, 2021: Zoom #2

Mark Dery (MD) interviews Mark Crispin Miller (MCM)

MARK CRISPIN MILLER That turned out to be untrue. The authors of that letter that you read are a group of doctoral students, not one of whom has ever taken my course. There's not specifics. Who were these dangerous people I've invited to come speak to my students. "And as for *Epoch Times* and *Zero Hedge*, you judge the content of an article not by the venue it appears in, I mean, in our first conversation you parenthetically noted that something I had posted had originated with Fox News. Well, that doesn't necessarily mean it's false, you see? I mean, I have a lot of problems with the veracity of *The New York Times*, these days. You know, I don't know how to respond to that.

I teach, my view is there's always been media studies is kind of an essential discipline and really more important for its public resonance than for one's status or standing within a particular field. I never took a communications course. My doctorate is in English. I got into the study of media entirely on my own. You know, I drifted over from film study which I also did on my own to writing about the media. And I did not want to write for an academic audience. I wanted to write for a public audience and I was hired at NYU as a public intellectual. In teaching propaganda you are inevitably going to deal with controversial matters. That's the nature of the beast. So I'm not surprised but I'm kind of baffled by these attacks because I don't know who they're referring to vis-à-vis dangerous speakers and it's a wild exaggeration to say that the positions that I generally take have all been debunked by every academic and I forget the exact wording

MARK DERY That is not in fact what that letter said. It says that the speakers you invited, they characterize them – and these are their words, not mine – are single issue speakers whose viewpoints have been dangerous, factually disprove and without educational value to students. And that many of the sources you site, presumably in your lectures or classroom remarks, they say you routinely share information from sources that have been discredited and debunked by nearly every journalist and academic institution. So those were their words.

MCM Yeah but, for example . . .

MD First of all, it's not my job to trans-channel them. So let's pivot from that quote to my perception. This last charge rings true to me because while it is occasionally the case on your blog, on Facebook, on Twitter and elsewhere, that you will cite the Washington Post, the New York Times and so forth, I have been surprised to note your willingness

to quote from sources like Zero Hedge, World Net Daily, Epoch Times and you and I part company on that point.

There's a kind of curious flattening effect here. I mean to say that you have deep suspicions about the New York Times. So does Noam Chomsky. So does Edward S. Herman. So do many on the left and not even far left, progressive, so-called bourgeois liberals. But there's a lot of daylight -- I mean I hope you would concede. Perhaps you won't. And that would really be the nut of the argument here if you don't. But to my mind there's a lot of day light between the New York Times and Epoch Times which is, I mean, a marvelous opportunity for you to deconstruct as propaganda. It is full throatedly a propaganda outlet of Falun Gong. It is a major contributor to Trump advert . . . second biggest contributor to Trump advertising on Facebook.

Now if one likes Trump, and I know you are not a great Trumpophile, but the point is, if one likes Trump, that's not dispositive, right? They could still be factually accurate and merely pro-Trump. The two are perfectly commensurate. But in point of fact they are almost universally regarded as a retailer of misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theory. So there's a flattening effect here that I perceive in your arguments where the New York Times is as rotten with falsehoods as the Epoch Times is. I simply don't believe that. And I believe it's widely held that there is a lot of mileage between those two outlets. And parenthetically, I am no great devotee of the New York Times. But I think we have to distinguish between invalid and valid sources.

There's a question lurking here, let me get to it. My question is: Do you make that distinction, or, as you just said, do you consider all sources to be equally legitimate in terms of the value of any given story, or are they not tainted by their track records?

00:06:17 MCM Actually, let's get specific here. *Epoch Times* is certainly a propaganda outlet; it's tied to Falun Gong indeed, and I've never shared anything they have to say about China, for example, because they are stridently anti-Chinese; that's their bias. But we're living in topsy-turvy times, now, as far as the media is concerned. For example, I've long been as critical as anyone, if not more critical, of Fox News. However, I've found that over the last year or two some of the people working for Fox have been more reliable and outspoken on important issues than anyone at CNN or MSNBC and specifically, as far as the *Epoch Times* goes, and you're talking to someone who's done a lot of very serious work on election theft, their coverage of this last election and the subsequent hearings and investigations and audits has been exemplary.

I also have a few a couple of friends who now write for *Epoch Times* because it makes room for points of view and approaches and the investigation of certain subjects that you can't bring up in legacy media.

MD Who are they?

MCM Hang on. The same is the case with *RT*. You can say, and may say, 'You keep using that locution 'it is widely understood,' 'it is universally regarded'; I think that mainly means within particular circles that is the verdict. But the fact is that the *Times* is losing a lot of credibility. I wrote the forward to a new book called *The Gray Lady Winked*, which is a study of 10 examples of the *Times's* shocking failures, journalistically, and fabrications, from their coverage of the Nazis up to the 1619 Project. It's something of a scandal, it has changed radically over the last several years, since they bought out something like 113 journalists, so it has much less content **in it** than it used to, but its standards are sort of laughable.

So I don't think you can simply look at the title of a publication and say, 'Well, I'm not gonna read that; they suck,' you know? You'll find solid reporting in the most unlikely places and I think that dismissing things out of hand because of the affiliations or even the past history of a publication without looking into the content and checking it to make sure that it's solid, I think you're limiting yourself and there's valuable information you're not gonna have."

MD Well, that would certainly be the case if I were quote unquote "dismissing it out of hand" which in point of fact I am not doing. And once again, I want to avoid pitting you against me. I mean both of us I'm sure like the cut and thrust of debate but that's kind of a fool's errand here because I don't think we should be about moving the needle of other's opinions but I will take this opportunity to correct an error of fact. I have in fact done a deep dive into *Epoch Times* and I've been astonished by the crudity of their propagandistic slant, by the vulgarity of their sub-Tucker Carlson tendentiousness and ideological tub thumping. Just intellectually I find it risible and coarse. So at least when it comes to *Epoch Times* I know whereof I speak. And the same holds true for *Zero Hedge* and *World Net Daily*. Every time you dip your dipper into a poisoned well and it comes up toxic, you know, how many times do you have to do that before you decide you have to be ??? at what you are looking at?

MCM Hold on. When have I ever dipped my dipper into a poisoned well?

MD No, I mean "one," not you. Like oneself as a reader. In other words, none of us has the luxury of reading the *Weekly World News*, every page of it, every day under

the presumption that some day, on some page, there may be a useful truth. Life is short. We live in an attention [deficit?] economy. We have to cut our losses. So it turns out that branding does matter. Let's pivot back to RT and Epoch Times. Passingly you mentioned that a few friends of yours now write for Epoch Times. Would you care to mention their names?

00:11:31 MCM One of them is Celia Farber who probably is the target of that paragraph in that letter you read from the doctoral students because I invited her and several other journalists to my class The Cultural Industries which is about the pressures people face trying to do good work in those industries and each week there was a different panel of people whose experiences was enlightening to help the class understand how difficult it can be to report certain stories, get certain books published, get certain movies made. So I've had a lot of very different people come and speak and she was in . . . we had a panel on the issue of journalists tackling controversial stories and coming under attack. She was there. Christina Borgesson was there, the woman who edited the book Into the Buzzsaw. She was a former CBS producer who was sort of squeezed out for digging into a story – I can't remember which one. And Steve Jiminez who wrote The Book of Matt. He actually came upon the awful truth that Matthew Shepherd's murder and came under sustained attack by Media Matters and other organizations like that.

MD And what is that "awful truth"?

MCM Well, it was not a hate crime. He knew his attackers, one of whom was bisexual and had had sex before with Matt. But the important point is that the horrible crime had everything to do with the meth trade in Wyoming, and Steve who is gay actually went out to Laramie to do the research out of genuine interest in the murder which he took at face value when he read about it, as we all did. And he found it was a far more complicated story and he has stuck with it since. There's a second edition coming out with a preface by Andrew Sullivan.

Those three offered some really fascinating accounts of what it's like to be really violently assailed and vilified and Celia came under that attack because of a piece she wrote for Harpers in the 90s about the scandal over AZT and it's really horrible testing regimen and its toxicity. And she gave some respect and space to the microbiologist Peter Dusberg who was arguing from the beginning that HIV does not necessarily cause AIDS which he thinks has a different mechanism, and that is actually now an acceptable thesis, although we never hear about it in the media, but it has a lot of solid scientific support. But because she was sort of the first to go public with that thesis from him, she was vilified. If anyone whom I have invited to my classes fits the description that's in

that letter you read, it would probably be her, or it could be Andrew Wakefield who I had come to a couple of other classes to talk about his experiences being 'controversialized' for raising inconvenient data. In his case, it was just a correlation between the MMR vaccine and autism. All he did was note the correlation and call for further study. As you probably know, the rest is history: he lost his license, and so on."

I've always given a forum to people like that. Not just in the classroom, but I ran a monthly bookchat series at McNally Jackson bookstore for about eight years here, on Prince Street, and I always made it a point to welcome people whose books had been blacked out or distorted in the press.

My original interest in media reform sprang out of the fact that more and more books were being variously killed sometimes by their own publishers. I wrote several essays on this and came to realize that the intensifying corporate concentration of the media was drowning out a lot of important voices and that's when I sort of shifted from doing these highly wrought close readings of different media techs to the larger issue of the structure of the media. I guess that's when I became sort of an activist in that regard. I don't know if I've answered your question.

00:17:05 MD

You've answered part of it. But I'm going to shepherd us back doggedly and with wilful myopia to this question of epistemological presumptions. In sifting through your social media transmissions, in talking to you in our first zoom and then transcribing that conversation, and in listening to not a few of your podcasts interviews, I've noticed that an evergreen theme is this notion of consensus. And just now you seem to view with deep dyed suspicion phrases like "it is universally held to be the case," "it is widely regarded as," "the preponderance of opinion is that" and then conversely you seem to view the very notion of consensus, of majority opinion, which often equates to establishment opinion, or credentialed experts or official mouthpieces or authorities in any form, right? Epistemological authorities who separate the sheep from the rams, right? So that seems to have a negative valence in your mind in an a priori sense.

Also a priori you seem to regard outliers as kind of wrapped in a mantle of insurgent intellectual courage and tenacity and by definition veracity. So, for example, you talked about Farber being reviled. You talked earlier when we spoke by zoom about an academic who had stood up against climate change and lost her job as a result. In many specific instances consensus may be wrong and the lone voice in the wilderness howling the truth may be right.

MCM Right

MD But we can't assume that's the case until we know what's inside the black box.

MCM Right. I get your point.

MD The problem is you seem to approach things . . . in other words, these people may be reviled for good reason, right?

MCM Right. Mark, please give me some credit. I don't approach these things in an a priori way. It is not my assumption, for example, that anything deemed a conspiracy theory is righteous. That's insane. I don't believe that. I believe you have to look at each one in depth and determine whether there's something to it or not. In the case of Celia Farber this is a story I know intimately. I know it very well. I looked at it. I studied it. I talked to her. I had her come to the class. She told her story. Students asked questions.

00:20:17 MCM

It's not like I heard she was under fire and thought oh she's righteous, sometimes people come under fire for good reason, there are examples of people I would never welcome into my classroom, it really is entirely based on examining a specific case. Consensus, broad consensus, I mean, we get a very clear sense, a kind of an inescapable sense, or feeling a sense, of consensus from the media nowadays, which all tend to say the same thing at the same time, which all tend to attack the same counternarratives at the same time. That's kind of worsened over the years as the media has become ever more concentrated and ever closer to certain authorities, sponsors (Big Pharma, for example), just the way the media were too close to the tobacco industry for a long time. I don't think ~~we you~~ can be complacent about the legitimacy of consensus; we have to ask ourselves, 'Who is telling us that this is the case? Who are these people?'

00:21:36 MCM

You know there are certain subjects that scientists cannot get funding to research, right? I've talked to some of them. They want to study the long term consequences of Fukushima, for example. Remember that? That was what going on 7 years ago? There are local reports by citizen journalists and a few fertile (??) scientists to the effect that that radiation hemorrhage on Japan has really been having alarming effects on the West coast of Canada and the United States. It is impossible for these people to get any funding to do a study like that.

I was just watching a talk by an Australian doctor named Tess Lawrie at the end of a conference on ivermectin and she spoke very powerfully of the way in which large scale randomized trials are now structured to favor corporate sponsors so that those closest

to those sponsors are at the top of the pyramid and the actual disinterested experts and physicians are at the bottom. She called for a radical rethinking of the whole operation because it has become cash driven in her view, and the view of many other doctors, corrupt, OK? But that kind of power does translate into a consensus.

You will say to me with perfect confidence correct me if I'm wrong, that there's no connection between vaccines and autism because that's the consensus from the media and woe betide anyone who bucks that consensus. But that is actually highly controversial. There is copious—I think, over 30 studies, finding connections between the MMR and autism and a whole host of other neurological injuries and not just from that particular vaccine but others like Gardasil. Increasingly, as we speak, there's a chasm opening up between the consensus that the media univocally gives us, on many issues, and then what the rest of us think—not just nuts, not just Trumpers, not just Falun Gong followers or whoever, but all kinds of people. It's a crisis, the likes of which I've never really seen before and I don't know how it's gonna shake out but the fact is, whenever you say 'consensus,' I say, 'Whose consensus? Who's not being heard from?'

I mean, democratic procedures have never been followed during this COVID crisis, there've never been any kind of open congressional deliberations, including people on all sides of the issue, to study things like the mask mandates, to study things like these vaccines, it's been driven from on high, from the beginning—the heads of agencies, governors of states have simply put out diktats, people like Bill Gates have an inordinate amount of power.

So I think that implicitly in what you're saying is a kind of anti-democratic inclination, I don't believe you can reject every consensus out of hand, but I also don't think you can assume any consensus is correct just because it is the consensus. I think the consensus is and should be always open to question and if that means sometimes straying over to read, say, the post-election coverage in *Epoch Times*, so be it.

I know a number of people who are on the Left as I am—have always been—who find themselves now having to write for *The Federalist* or are giving stories to Tucker Carlson to report because they can't get their stories told in any other way.

MD Are those the same individuals you cited earlier, or are these new names you are referring to?

MCM This is a whole range of people.

MD I mean if you can provide a few names. And some sense of why you feel they have been banished from or cancelled from left or progressive or mainstream media, that would be instructive.

00:26:46 MCM

Take Jennifer Billeck, for example, an old-time Left environmentalist: she wrote about the funding of the transgender movement. She discovered that the movement is funded by the likes of Warren Buffet, George Soros, this came out in *The Federalist*, much to her bemusement because nobody else would take it. Talk to Meghan Murphy, the Vancouver feminist who came under fire for organizing a panel discussion at the Seattle public library about the impact of transgenderism as a movement on women's rights. She can also talk about the inhospitable character of much Left media on that issue.

MD OK, Mark. May I interject? I'm sort of cutting you off. But I do feel that I am not making my point clearly enough. I tried to zero in on the question of epistemological presumptions. You said, "I don't approach these things with an a priori presumption, that all consensus is bad, that all outliers, that all lone voices in the wilderness are good." And then you seem to go on to contradict that. I mean just a moment ago you said, "I do think we have to question every consensus." You seem to suggest that because people don't get funded that they are truth tellers being actively suppressed by the power elite. One can grant your point, the point you made a moment ago, that corrupt funding is corrupting the sciences to some arguable degree and that it is regrettable that too much funding comes from corporations, especially regarding Big Pharma, although many vaccines are underwritten by tax payer dollars. That's why it's a scandal that people don't hold copyright and they are not available for pennies whether you agree with vaccines or not. I'm simply talking about the political economy of vaccinology in America under capitalism.

But the simple fact that a scientific project is not funded is not an argument for its sobriety and its validity. Cold fusion isn't funded either and for good reason – it's pseudo science.

00:29:30 MCM Wait a minute. Simply studying, measuring the effect of radiation from Fukushima is like cold fusion?

MD No. No.

MCM These people, all they want to do is, the point is they want to do research to determine what the effect is.

MD I'm not arguing that specific instance. I'm arguing your subpoint which is that because a given individual, regardless of what he is proposing as his research project, bracket that out, remove that from the discussion. You seem to be suggesting that when ever a voice is suppressed, whether it is Andrew Wakefield, Celia Farber or someone proposing studying Fukushima, some of them may be right, some of them may be wrong, all of them may be wrong, but the fact that they're not having been given a media platform or the fact of them not having received funding is not a persuasive argument for the validity of their views. Will you at least agree with me on that?

MCM Well, of course, that in itself does not prove the validity of their views. And again, I don't assume their views are valid just because they've been suppressed.

MD But you seem to imply that again and again and again.

MCM No no no because in every case – this is something you seem not to be able to take in. In every single case I've familiarized myself carefully with the story. With Wakefield's story I read a great deal about it. I read all the stuff pro and con. The same with Celia. They weren't just suppressed and denied a platform. They were demonized. They were vilified. The word in the intelligence community is that they were controversialized. Same thing happened to Gary Webb when he broke the story in the 90s about the cocaine trade.

MD I'm familiar with his story.

MCM That's another story I looked into very carefully. I even had the director of the film Kill The Messenger, Mike Cuesta, come to my class, twice, to tell about how the marketing of that film was subverted. It was really very interesting.

Some people find themselves almost destroyed, if not literally destroyed, for telling the wrong story. This is the case with Julian Assange. But I wouldn't look at him, see that he's in prison and without ever reading a word about the case, say, "Well, he probably broke the law. It doesn't matter."

MD So you're making your decisions on a case by case basis. I take that point.

MCM Always. Always.

MD So help me understand a point you made in our earlier interview and have made in some of your other interviews that you repeatedly said to me in response to my questions, "Mark, I'm not a virologist. I'm not a vaccinologist. I'm not an

immunologist. I would never presume to not only present myself as a credentialed expert in those fields but really to joust with experts in those fields.” However, and I don’t want to go too far down this rabbit hole. I don’t want to debate the veracity of Wakefield’s claim. I want to conduct a meta-discussion. I want to make some claims about his claims, about your response to his claims. Very briefly, so this is an interesting test bed.

00:33:03 By your own rights, you are not a vaccinologist, immunologist, virologist, epidemiologist. And yet you are persuaded at the facticity of Wakefield’s claim. In instances like this, I’m simply curious to know, to return to the question of consensus, and whether a priori we are demonizing consensus, viewing it askance, or casting a jaundiced eye on it. In an instance like that where you are not fluent in any of these highly technical scientific fields, and contrary to your email to me, it’s not that’s I’m on bended knees to these epistemological authorities, I simply grant that they are more knowledgeable in policing their own disciplines. In an instance like this does it not give you pause that there is near universality about the utter erroneousness of Wakefield’s claims.

MCM Wait, Mark, what claim? What are the claims you are referring to?

MD In essence, that vaccines cause autism.

MCM No, that’s not what he said. That’s not what he was attacked for.

MD Let’s not get technical.

MCM No. No. You can’t bring this up and say we’re going to have a meta conversation and I don’t want to get into the weeds with this, etc. and then base your whole question on something that requires that I respond. All he [Wakefield] claimed in that controver . . . two of them wrote this piece. All they did was note a correlation. That’s all he noted. The study convinces me that the correlation was there.

MD Right. But since then, since then, correct me if I’m misunderstanding. You’ve done a deep dive and so you have it top of mind. I mean I had printed out all my notes we could have a discussion about Wakefield. I believe that’s a fool’s errand. But that’s neither here nor there. The point is, regardless of what his specific claims were and whether or not he was merely noting – and I don’t really understand why any scientist, any medical scientist, would merely note correlation when the implication is clearly causation and ever since then he has doubled down on causation. In other words, what

value is there in your field epistemologically when you say, “I noted a correlation but I’m not saying there’s a causation.” No scientist does that.

MCM That’s absolutely untrue. You should read the ????. All it says is, this correlation demands further study. He didn’t say it’s causative. He said we should discuss whether it’s causative. That’s all, OK?

MD But in *Vaxxed* he is present suggesting that there is a causative relation.

MD Yes, subsequently to his ordeal he has indeed become more convinced that there is a causal relationship. Mark, he’s not the only one to make that point.

00:36:28 MCM No, he’s not the only one. Moreover, the movie *Vaxxed* is important primarily for one thing, which none of the attacks on it ever mentioned, which is that the CDC’s researchers fudged their own data in order to eliminate the evidence of MMR as a causative agent [of autism] in the case of a number of young African-American boys. That’s what the findings were—that there *is* some kind of causal relationship, and William Thompson, the lead scientist in that study, in anguish, confessed this in a phone conversation, which we hear in the movie.

So here is the CDC which we all respect and which drives, I think exclusively drives the consensus on countless medical issues. It is extremely powerful. It is extremely influential and it works very closely with the media. And they fudged the data in that study. This is not an unimportant matter. We’re talking about a vaccine schedule that is extremely heavy from birth on. It should be open to discussion. The Wakefield story functions as almost a kind of warning to people to stay away from that hot button issue and it’s not the only topic like that. Those are precisely the topics that most interest me.

MD That’s fair enough. You can be interested in whatever you’d like to be interested in. Our discussion is not an attempt to constrain your inquiry. Not that I have – I don’t flatter myself that I have the power to do that. Even rhetorically within the bounds of this exchange. Forgive me. I going to take one last lunk headed ham fist ed swipe at this and then we’ll move on because I don’t want to exhaust you. I don’t want to belabor the point. And I don’t want to waste your time. Again. Please correct me if I am wrong. Setting aside a Wakefield specific claims. They are irrelevant to what I am about to say. He could be claiming what David Ickes claims for all that it matters to this point.

It is my understanding that he remains in the eyes of the medical establishment a pariah in his field. That his claim, whatever it is, the specifics again do not matter, is seen as

demonstrably untrue by a significant majority – I would say the vast majority – of credentialed experts in his field. If that's true, and you'll tell me in a moment if it is not, if that premise is true, does it give you no pause as a non-expert whose domain is media studies, not vaccinology and immunology, does it give you no pause that it is a very small minority of voices in this field with who you are siding? What do you make of that?

00:40:01 MCM I know a number of doctors around the country who have either come under attack for questioning vaccine orthodoxy and refusing to give certain vaccinations. They are either under attack or they perform their function very furtively because they can lose their licenses. They can have other physicians assigned to them as minders. This is quite common, alright? The whole medical establishment – you invoke this

MD But respectfully Mark you are not answering the question.

MCM No. no . no. I am answering the question. The point is that we have a consensus by those that you call the medical establishment, most of whose members don't really study vaccinology. This is well known. If medical students get a half a day of instruction in vaccinology, that's rare.

It is not questioned because there is a tremendous amount of money at stake. Huge contracts that sustain this edifice that is constantly absorbing babies and children and giving them millions of vaccinations and there are a growing number of children injured by them. I myself lost a grand nephew and I must have a dozen friends with vaccine injured children. There's an extensive literature on all this. It may meet with the disapproval of the medical establishment, the American Medical Association may disapprove, but it doesn't really require a medical degree to see what's going on here and to understand the experience of doctors who think there is something problematic about the vaccine schedule I can read the statistics on these sky rocketing rates of all kinds of neurological disorders among this generation of children. I can read the literature on the ingredients in many of these vaccines. I think, not to sound corny, but as citizens of a democratic republic, we really are obliged to remain open to dissident points of view.

Let me just say this Mark, the questions you are asking me, you could have asked about Semmelweis in the 19th century who really bucked the prevailing wisdom of the medical establishment by saying that maybe doctors should wash their hands before assisting in birth because so many women won't be dying of childbirth fever. He was absolutely right. And he was committed to an insane asylum and was dead a week

later. Surgeons, doctors resisted this at first. There is something heroic about the image of the blood spattered doctor. He was right though. There's a society that's been formed in his honor The Semmelweiss Society. You could ask me the question about many different moments in history, about many different consensuses. I think it is important not to be cowed by them and to look sort of closely at the financial status and connections of these authoritative figures, especially at this moment in time.

MD But there's a lot of day light between being cowed and being given pause and you didn't really answer my question which was not Are there a few doctors sprinkled across the country or around the world who for fear of losing their licenses, or as they say in England as was the case with Wakefield, being struck off the medical register, lie low or fly below radar coverage about their position on what you would call "vaccine safety." The problem Mark is that there are always outliers. You can always find in a field – look at your own field.

I'm going to weave this out of whole cloth but my guess is that there is somewhere in the ranks of academe there lurks a media studies professor who is also a Holocaust denier. Alright, I'm fabricating this. But we can always find – every iceberg has a tip and to focus on the tip, rather than the 9/10ths below waves seems to be a bit perverse. Semmelweiss was not correct because he was a lone voice. He was correct because the science supported him.

If Wakefield were correct, the imperial evidence would ultimately out – the way science is done is not, as you say, the medical scientists working closely with the media has imposed its view. The media has taken has taken its cues from those within Wakefield's field, not [from] general practitioners who are functionally illiterate as you and I are in the hairy details of vaccinology and immunology. No, it's credentialed experts in that very field who overwhelmingly dismiss his truth claims. Is that not so.

00:46:00 MCM

There is abundant scientific evidence backing up [Wakefield's] position. If you want I can send you a list of links, it's not that he came up with this crazy notion and a few other crackpots out there think the same thing and they've been definitively debunked by subsequent studies. Vaccines are not even safety-tested, they're exempted from the requirement for safety testing because they're classified as biologics and not as drugs, I mean, it's unimaginable that you would release a drug that hadn't been safety tested although they're perfectly capable as in the case of Biox of selling hundreds of thousands of prescriptions of this drug and as many people dying before they finally get around to pull it off the shelves. Vaccines are not safety-tested.

MD To my point of how you, as a non-expert, make the decision to side with a minority who've persuaded you of the facticity of their claims —

MCM Because I've read their story, I've read their work, I've read the attacks, so I make my judgment on that basis, I mean, throughout this conversation, you're trying to suggest that I have an a priori approach. Again, I don't accept any so-called conspiracy theory because it is a conspiracy theory, I don't do that. I don't automatically side with somebody who's being persecuted or silenced without looking into what they have to say. I certainly don't approve of Holocaust denial, for example, and David Irving was subjected to that kind of censorship. I don't believe in censorship. I don't think his book on Goebbels should have been pulled from the shelf before it came out. I read that book and it had something of value in it, although it was completely warped. It sounded like Goebbels himself wrote it. I am careful, I'm selective, I believe in studying these things, again to use your words, on a case-by-case basis. That's what I teach my students to do, and that's what I do myself.

MD OK Fair enough. So let's pivot away from that and here's something that has bemused or befuddled me to use the word bemused correctly for once, not amused, bemused. You chose, in the class that so outraged Julia Jackson, you to focus on the messaging at media narratives please correct me and select the language most congruent you're your motivations and approach to the class. So it's my understanding that in a course on propaganda you chose to look at media narratives surrounding the COVID pandemic and public-health messaging or you would call it propaganda related to the pandemic and societal responses to it.

Looking at the students' papers you sent, and listening to you in podcast and reading through the courtroom exhibits, I'm struck again and again by the fact that in this course, as in past courses where Del Bigtree and Vaxxed, you seemed to focus on debating issues like the efficacy of masks, whether they present a health threat, lockdowns, and yet you seem not to do what a professor in a course on propaganda would do, which is focus on the motivation for the propaganda drive.

Your focus seems to be on, Do vaccines work? Do masks work? What are their potential health effects? unlike, say, and I'll wrap up quickly, unlike say if you were talking about Ivy Lee or Edward Bernays or Roger Ailes or Lee Atwater, you would look at their propaganda campaigns and then you would look at the motivation behind it. ...

Here's an example. The claim that during the first Persian Gulf war that the Iraqis were bayonetting babies in the hospital wards of Kuwait

MCM throwing them out of incubators.

MD OK and the woman who testified before the Senate Sub-committee was shown to have ties with Kuwaiti, and obviously that was to build support on the home front during the war

MCM Right

MD and to demonize the Iraqis.

MCM Right

MD just as you've talked about the evil Hun bayoneting babies in WWI. If you're going to analyze a propaganda campaign, necessarily you need to point out why it is factitious, it's simply not true ~~you have to talk about its facticity [or lack thereof]—why it's not true~~—but then, crucially, you would have to analyze in the classroom what the motivations are, what the real story is I'm just curious to know, you say on your website that you want them to pay special attention to possible financial links between those who defend masking and Big Pharma and the Gates Foundation.

You're not coy in your interviews about your belief in the Great Reset, and you often linked all the issues that you dealt with in your classroom on this unit to the Great Reset ... Did you ever talk to your students about what you believe to be the motivations of the Gates Foundation, and did you ever link those motivations to the Great Reset in the classroom?

MCM Well, the Great Reset was not as evident an issue last fall as it's become since. I think the Time magazine issue on the Great Reset, it may have come out late last year. The fact is it wasn't on the radar so much, so I didn't go there.

MD Okay, so that's a red herring. But the point is, you're telling your students [this public-health messaging and these media narratives around the pandemic are propaganda], what you see isn't what you get, in other words don't believe your ears, there are all these narratives about masks and lockdowns and vaccines and the first line of attack is to say I believe are demonstrably untrue and here's why. But in a course on propaganda shouldn't the professor then say what the hidden agenda is and did you in fact say that?

00:53:24 MCM Well I mean I did, we did have that kind of conversation in class eventually I mean you know masking was really not something that we studied last

semester. I have ~~like~~ to make this clear I only brought it up the first week as an example of the kind of thing that one might study at one were to study the covid crisis ~~is as~~ propaganda OK I mean in masking imperative was pounded home through every available medium 24/7 the classic example of propaganda which is ubiquitous inescapable, ~~it's which~~ repetitions, it's 1 sided and there is another side to that story and indeed you know until April of last year the CDC itself echoed the consensus of those prior studies and so did The Who until early June.

I use this as an example OK that's it it was in class I encouraged them to read those studies. I did not assign them OK so that's that and we moved on to other things you know and talked about different propaganda drives and eventually you do have to come up against the question of the motivation who's driving it and to what end and you know there are various credible answers to the question as to what's driving the mask mandates, I mean my view is that it was at the service of the vaccine rollout you know it was a way of sort of extending lockdown to every person's individual body and and saying essentially you'll get your life back when you had the shots right that's what I think. In class we would we would have this discussion and ~~we~~ we would see where the discussion leads. I mean you know it's very very conversational class was and usually is the way I teach. That's why it's not so much fun on zoom because the sense of a group in a room is just missing. I don't know if I've answered your question

MD In fact you haven't because what ~~In fact you have it because what~~ I'm not understanding is you're not you're not picking media narratives at random. You're picking media narratives that arouse your suspicion that they may in fact be propaganda drives. Maybe we can take a step or two backwards. Maybe we can rewind the tape a little bit intellectually or conceptually speaking and let me let me ask you a related question.

You know again I am sorry to bang away incessantly at this point but it really does sound like an embedded presumption to me when you say whenever you hear univocality and a relentless ball peen hammer banging away at a ~~and~~ given point, right, that's straight out of ~~this~~, you would ~~his union~~ say the imperial playbook ~~quote~~ We hear ~~we're~~ total unanimity and tireless repetition of the message that you ought to wear your seat belt. That it's not good for pregnant women to drink alcohol...

00:56:36 MCM Wait a minute.

MD . . or smoke cigarettes.

MCM Those messages are certainly not pounded home in every newspaper, on every TV, on radio, online, in movies.

MD They are pounded on every cigarette carton, on every bar.

MCM That's not comparable. I mean those are public service ads. They are a form of propaganda. They are not inaccurate. They are not deceptive. The purpose is to promote people's health and welfare. But when you have – there's no comparison between the occasional PSA that you might see on . .

MD Let's choose a more innocuous example. It's received wisdom in the establishment media that capitalism and democracy go hand in glove, that they are joined at the waist, and that socialism is Reds under the bed, right? It's simply beyond the pale, the Overton window of the genteel Mandarins at the PBS News Hour, NBC Nightly News or whatever it is, would never seriously consider having a revolutionary socialist on to debate Wall Street's latest move with some hedge fund manager.

MCM Right. Right.

MD So that's absolutely univocality. It is driven home on every business page of every paper in this nation day after day after day, but you don't choose to focus on that. So my question is . . .

MCM We actually devote a class to this discussion. What you just invoked is a point of ideology and ideology is sort of embedded in a whole lot of material on TV and of course has everything to do with what's not there.

MD Right.

MCM That is not – ideology and propaganda are two different things. Propaganda is based on and reflects aspects of an ideology because if it doesn't work, if it doesn't tell people what they want to hear and is in any way a message unfamiliar to them. So that's not comparable to propaganda drive that as Jacques Ellul points out in his book on propaganda. It must use every available medium full-time so that it's inescapable, a propaganda drive that has the urgency of a catastrophic emergency, which is what the COVID crisis was. It's what characterized post-9/11 coverage of the War on Terror, it certainly characterized World War I, and subsequent drives. \

So there are two things that are characteristic of or indicative of propaganda: one is the ubiquitousness and relentlessness of the message, throughout all the media, and,

crucially, a simultaneous censorship of every counternarrative, every other point of view, every kind of dissent. That's all blacked out or, in some cases, those who dissent are vilified and attacked as a menace, as a danger, as a threat. That seems to me to be adequate grounds for considering what we're being bombarded with a propaganda drive, because propaganda does not want any argument."

MD Yeah, I suppose, respectfully that I'm not entirely an undergraduate on these matters. I've read a lot of the same things you have and I know that low boat well ????. I would distinguish between passive propaganda and an aggressive propaganda. There is a propaganda through osmosis that is part of the slow drip drip drip that permeates American discourse from the day we're born and it's subtle and yet no less coercive than more vulgar or crude or fixed bayonet propaganda that is clearly part of a hard charging campaign around a specific issue. But I take your point. Let's move if we may . . . I don't know how much time you have left, but if you have a few more minutes for me I'd like to move to simply the question of the Great Reset and

01:01:26 MCM

I just want to make one point that occurred to me. I'll make this brief. Your point about revolutionary socialism is well taken. It's definitely a fundamental point about American ideology and I would suggest that it's instructive to consider the fact that that point of view does find expression in the left wing media, left press, Democracy Now, etc. What's striking about all those outlets over the course of this past year is that they have repeated exactly what we get from the New York Times and other media. Even Chomsky has echoed this. So there has been a totality to *that* propaganda that I have never seen before, which is exactly why if one can find verifiable information on Zero Hedge, for example, one doesn't just dismiss it out of hand because that's where it appears. I just want to make that point.

MD Again and I have to go against my own tendency to dog away at the other point, again, listening to that point, it simply occurs to me, how do we distinguish between what you would say is the dorsal fin of a propaganda campaign? One of the distinguishing characteristics that we should be unsleepingly vigilant about in your opinion is univocality, incessant repetition and the demonization of wrong thinkers.

MCM Right.

MD But the problem is there's a logical fallacy here, and that's why I invoked the image of the black box before. It's sort of like the Turing Test – from the outside legitimate consensus in which the truth is so obvious that voices far left and far right agree on that truth, if they can agree on nothing else, and outliers or lone voices are

demonized not because of a repressive hegemony wants to muzzle them but because they are so far beyond the pale as is with the case of the obvious case of Holocaust denial. You and I can at least agree about David Irving, as unsubtle as that example is, it is a very useful one because his predicament fulfills troublingly all of your requirements for a backlash of the hegemony, and yet we both agree he deserves every rebuke he's gotten and he deserves his de-platformed pariah status. My question again, yet again, is: In a situation where you have univocality, incessant repetition and the universal rebuke of voices who countervail the prevailing opinion, how do we know we're not in a David Irving situation?

MCM We study all the available evidence and base our opinion on that. What else can I say? I would suggest that the distinction between right and left is now passé. It's really irrelevant because the very rich have never been so rich and powerful. The billionaire caste has never possessed so much material wealth and has enjoyed so much influence and power as it does now. And what we used to call the working class has broken down and is melting into an ever growing underclass of have-nots.

At this point, Karl Marx isn't terribly helpful and the distinctions between right and left I think only help befuddle people. Propaganda wise, Trump served the purpose, whether wittingly or not, probably not, of utterly polarizing the population so that those who worshipped him believed utterly every word he said, and those who hated him believed the opposite of everything he said. And that really did impede a rationale understanding of certain issues, like hydroxychloroquine. Trump touts it. Fauci puts his hand on his forehead and looks aggrieved and every liberal and progressive thinks it's poison. That's it. Let's move on. But it's a very important issue. He didn't help ever, and hasn't helped since.

So I just don't – the question you keep pounding away at you pose in the abstract. Is there a case where I think is comparable to Holocaust denial and I should just give it up and go with the flow. That sound like what you are saying.

MD Mark, respectfully before you expend any more wind answering, I want you to be, to understand the question correctly. I wasn't asking you to root around in the grab bag of your ideas and pull out one that just might possibly be wrong. Rather I was saying that from the outside, both the David Irving affair and the Andrew Wakefield affair, in all their particulars, look identical. In other words, both meet your own requirements as a propaganda drive.

MCM They're not identical because as I said before the connection between vaccines and autism has been reconfirmed in I think maybe 38 studies. I can't think of any studies that have confirmed David Irving's thesis about the Holocaust.

MD Actually on the far right, there are . . .

MCM Those aren't clinical studies in the medical journals or historical journals. They have their own journal.

MD Right.

MCM The Journal of Historical Review. That's a Holocaust denial machine. But they're not comparable. That really is an unfair equation. It may look to you, from where you sit, I take the point that it looks to you like they're the same, but

01:08:48 MD Actually I was simply trying to apply your own standard, your own epistemological yardstick to measure the contours of both of these how they look from the outside before we know whether or not they are empirically true or not and I was simply trying to articulate the notion that if what should trip our red flags are univocality of expert sources, incessant repetition of a single message and marginalization or demonization of critics, then those three requirements are fulfilled in the instance of David Irving just as they are in my point is that that epistemological framework may not be the most reliable way to determine what is a propaganda campaign and I'm again I'm simply underscoring the point you seem to come at this whole question with the presumption that univocality is by definition something that it should trigger our suspicions. Whereas maybe it is simply the result of something that is so irrevocably and overwhelmingly and instantaneously self evidently true that most people rise up and say yes this is the case.

MCM What about the fact that nobody gets to argue with it? What about the fact that there are other experts with very different views who are granted no access to the media?

MD I think the question would be: how long do we argue? If we're fighting a rearguard action against germ theory to pick an example you chose earlier in the 21st century, chances are most people regard that as a settled question. Also to the question of critics, at a certain point it becomes a numbers game; as I said earlier, there will always be outliers. There will always be critics.

MCM The implication of your question is that sometimes we hear the same thing over and over again, everywhere we turn,

MD Yeah

MCM and hear no contradiction or dissent or qualification,

MD Yeah

MCM We can't hear it and indeed we even come to think that anyone who raises objections or questions is dangerous. You're implying that in some cases it's just that way because what they're all saying is true. What I'm trying to tell you is that I believe it should be questioned and examined.

MD Fair enough.

01:11:37 MCM

All those adverbs you just used to qualify what is true—'universally,' 'self-evidently,' blahblahblah—I wouldn't be so confident that that truth is necessarily true just because we're hearing it all over the place and we're even punished if we don't promote it or if we question it or deny it. You could say the same thing to me in Germany in 1936, [when] everywhere you looked in the press it [was] the same story and you'll actually get in trouble if you use your shortwave radio and listen to an American or British broadcast.

MD I take your point. My apologies for cutting you off, but I take your point and I do know your time is precious. I think one thing that concerns me and again this goes to the question of epistemological rigor, the tendency I note in you, and I noted it even in our first zoom exchange, to hedge, to embrace the technique that's used in other questions --- just throwing it out there, just asking, just raising questions. I know you to be at least my experience of your past writings, a thinker of considerable rigor, and yet when I asked you about the Parkland shooting and there's a quote here from you, I think it's in one of the courtroom exhibits, where you say, I mention that there's some troubling scholarship around this question. In other words, that doesn't really answer the question of what do you think happened? What do you believe and what don't you believe?

1:13:30 MD You seem rather evasive on many questions, you seem to believe that it's a virtue unto itself to say 'some people are saying' as they often do on Fox News, 'some people are questioning this.' Again, there will always be someone out in the weeds, out

in the wilderness, questioning something. My question to you, to go back to David Hogg and Parkland, I reviewed our notes and I looked at the transcript of our conversation, and all you seem to be saying is, 'It's not my job to make a decision about the facticity of these claims; I believe there's an inherent value to providing a platform for, or recirculating questions raised by others, right?? I personally am not persuaded that is an intellectual virtue, and I'm surprised that you would not be moved to sort out those competing truth claims, rather than just recycle them, to say, John Doe says X. I've looked into it, it's true. He's really on to something. Or John Does says X and it's really hogwash.

01:14:43 MCM First of all, you know, what I post online is not, like, excerpts from a work in progress. I'm not planning ever to write a book on Parkland, but, you know, things would come up about it, conflicting accounts of what happened, certain oddities about the whole affair, you know. I've been in touch with a lot of people with military backgrounds who were making points to me about, you know, the visual evidence of wounds, that kind of thing, and it it all struck me as worthy of, you know, deeper study. That's all I'm going to say in my casual capacity as someone who keeps a website going, I'm not writing about it but I do think it's, you know, worth considering the possibility that there's something more to it than what we're told and as I said to you the first time it could indeed have something to do with gun-control measures, you know, I wouldn't rule that out.

If that's being evasive maybe I just shouldn't weigh in at all on ongoing controversies. There's a difference between what one posts online and and what one commits to print, you know? I don't know if you read my essay on masks. It's very thoroughly sourced and yet my colleagues, as an exhibit, included a screenshot of the title, as if it were self-evidently false and dangerous, but they didn't grapple with a single point I made in the piece. Nothing. They just looked at the title the way you look at an *Epoch Times* article I suppose, and they say, "Look at this. This is just self-evidently false." Well, they didn't grapple with it. Now, if I were to write something about Parkland, it might be very different from the things that come my way and strike me as interesting.

01:16:45 MD But even if you are simply spouting off on social media, I'm concerned that in this moment, in our conversation here and now, to discern what you really believe. I want to follow through. I want to follow the thread of your thought. Do you really believe there are hidden actors who would stage a shooting as a pretext for a crackdown on gun rights? Or do you believe it was a hoax, a false-flag to provide the political impetus for a crack down on gun rights. [restrictions on gun ownership]? I mean, 17 people ~~who~~ were "supposedly" shot; their relatives seem to believe they were killed. Do you actually grant the possibility that that is a fabrication? Is my

understanding correct, is that what you were saying—that it's even within the realm of possibility that [the Parkland shootings] were a flat-out hoax?

MCM Well, if you study the history of how the CIA has operated worldwide for decades, if you read about Operation Gladio, for example, you know that such staged events are not unimaginable. I'd hate to think that any of those things was a hoax because it would be such a grotesque fraud but there are things about certain [aspects] of those incidents that are very problematic and I believe it's permissible to discuss that.

Here is an outlier. This is James Fetzer [and Mike Palecek] did this book *Nobody Died at Sandy Hook: It was a FEMA Drill to Promote Gun Control*—very provocative title—and Amazon banned it, they won't sell it. There's also stuff about the trial or trials of the author and so on. I don't think these things should be banned; I think these things should be available and people should read them. I think David Irving's book should have been published.

MD That's a separate point, and you have many allies on on that point; Noam Chomsky famously wrote a preface for a work of Holocaust denial. Radical-left libertarians and far-right libertarians agree on that point. There are free-speech absolutists for whom the only antidote to bad speech is more good speech. But that's a separate point. When you recirculate on [your blog], *News From Underground*, an item titled -- I don't know if this is your title or the Blog -- "Sandy Hook Show Trial: Two forensic experts found that Noah Pozner's death certificate is FAKE all in screaming uppercase—and so the judge suppressed their testimony," Do you believe that you, as a media scholar and a respected public intellectual, are doing the legitimate work of public intellectualism by recirculating a claim that one of the children shot at Sandy Hook whose father has been hounded by conspiracy theorists and barraged with death threats—

MCM: You're throwing at me now, the meme of

MD It's a quote from your blog and it relates directly to this question of

01:20:45 MCM Excuse me; the judge *did* suppress that testimony, and I corresponded with Fetzer about it. It's *true*; it's not made up. That's the whole point of the article: that two highly qualified hand writing experts, sorry, document experts, experts on forgery examined, this death certificate [and] said it was fake, that was the foundation of Fetzer's defense and the judge suppressed it. *Why?* Why couldn't they testify? That's not worth pointing out?

MD: Right, but the implication or the insinuation is clear. It wasn't a birth certificate, I think you misspoke. It was a death certificate. Any less scrupulous thinker than yourself (of whom there are obviously millions out there) would take the implication to be Noah Pozner was not really killed. You're somebody doing intellectual work in the public arena; you're out there in the public sphere, speaking extramurally which is your right and is protected by academic freedom and its overlap with the First Amendment.

So, my question to you is not a legal one; it has to do with intellectual ethics and the epistemological standards of your field. Do you believe you are acting responsibly as a public intellectual and media scholar by recycling, recirculating an article that gives aid and comfort to those who believe it was a false-flag operation and that Noah Pozner wasn't really killed?

MCM Well, how do we know that's *not* true? Let me ask you this. Have you read Fetzer's book?

MD I have not read Fetzer's book.

MCM Okay, well, I did and it's rather compelling, and its troublingly compelling and there are a number of documentaries online about this some are poor ... and some basically affirm Fetzer's thesis. Now, there could be counter explanations, right, but we're not going to know if we respond to it the way you're responding to it, in high dudgeon, with outrage and now you're talking about conspiracy theorists.

MD No, I'm in perfectly legitimate moral horror. Let's put it this way, Mark: many things are 'troublingly compelling' that do not move the needle of our opinion—I may find things you say compelling but I may not be persuaded by them, compelling enough to give them a fair hearing but at the end of the day I do what you have done in your best scholarship, and what all scholars and public intellectuals must do, which is, ultimately, I believe and perhaps you don't share this presumption, I believe we are ethically bound to come to a conclusion. I believe we're ethically required to do that. So you've read the Fetzer book, you've watched documentaries, you've corresponded with Fetzer: what is your conclusion?

01:24:10 MCM I think that incident was, um, I think that it was, I suspect it was staged and it was some kind of an exercise; that's my suspicion.

MD So none of the children who were not reportedly killed . . .

MCM I have no reason to believe that [the children] really were there, or were killed.

MD So all of the children in Sandy Hook who were claimed to have been killed in the media narrative were not in fact killed?

MCM Well I wasn't there, OK, so I can't say that for sure but I'm saying that the . . . there is considerable evidence that suggests as much. Listen, I'm not happy to say that, OK?

MD Last question or two. It's now 3:30. Can I have 5 more minutes of your time? You talked over an hour ago about a phenomena I call –my term, not yours – the epistemological vertigo of our moment. You talked the way left or right no longer make sense. You talked about the ways in which previously self-identified progressives and liberals now have to find safe harbor in right leaning or right libertarian or so-called conspiratorial publications. You talked about a burgeoning unwillingness to accept, I think your term “on faith,” establishment consensus in media narratives.

With all of that in mind, I'm struck by the fact that there are others like yourself who have, and I'm really striving to put this as value neutrally as I can, so if I offend, correct me. There are others like yourself who have evolved epistemologically and seem to be conducting an analysis based on an epistemological undergirding that differs from your past world view. That's as neutrally as I can put it. Others who fall into that category are, most notably, Naomi Wolf and RFK, Jr.

And so Naomi Wolf, best known as a feminist and now I guess you would term her a vaccine safety advocate. She seems to share some of your skepticism about the messaging surrounding lockdowns and masking. Certainly RFK, Jr. went from being an environmental activist to being the public face of, again, what you would call, vaccine safety advocacy. Again, all three of you have taken cuffs and kicks from your former colleagues, from those fellow travelers former left or progressives or liberal phalanx, call it what you will, academic colleagues.

Do you feel that you are part of a cultural trajectory, a trend, and if so, what are the factors giving rise to what I am calling epistemological vertigo and what you would probably characterize as something else. But whatever is inspiring you, Wolf, RFK, Jr. to break from your former world view, however you characterize it, and morph into or evolve into or embrace this this other world view, however you characterize *that*. What I'm trying to put my finger on is, something's happened. It's bigger than you. How do you see it?

01:28:05 MCM First of all let me say that that's the first question you've asked that has made me feel a certain pride because I consider both of them good friends of mine, and I have worked with both of them for some time. And we all, I guess I agree, I don't want to speak for them, but I can I guess attest to Bobby's agreement with me and I think Naomi agrees with me, that the left is no longer recognizable to *us*, who were always primarily anti-war, suspicious of corporate power, interested in saving the environment, committed to equal rights, etc.

The left has now turned into something different. I mean it used to be a left position to oppose censorship. The ACLU famously defended the right of the Nazis to march in Skokie which is the home to many Holocaust survivors. Because the point was, no matter how odious we find it, other speech is sacrosanct and should be free. That's not the left we are confronted with today. So all three of us have been variously slandered and vilified primarily by people who really have not studied what we've written or how we teach. The students who wrote that letter you read from at the beginning are a perfect example. I have not taught doctoral students at NYU ever. I've only had one who I advised. Those are all doctoral students who are basing their rather strident attack on me on hearsay as I hope you noticed did my colleagues in their exhibits. Generally responding to what student or other had come calling to complain about. None of them ever called me. None of them ever asked me to tell my side of the story. They just shared the gossip with others in their group who obviously have been on my case behind my back for years. This is all news to me.

But to answer your question again, the political world has changed radically around me, and Naomi and Bobby and others so that we can't really any longer consider ourselves part of it. It's too censorious. It's too authoritarian. It seems to be uninterested in the problem of war, the war machine. So if that answers your question, I think that will shed some light on my epistemological framework. But it's also changed because I've broadened my view.

I've broadened my focus since the 70s and 80s when I wrote those early pieces to take a look at the larger structure of the State and the media and its advertisers. And having been myself, as I told you last time, unexpectedly tarred as a conspiracy theorist for writing that book on the 2004 election. I was then impelled to study the provenance of that phrase and in so doing I started to dig deep into the Kennedy assassination which I'd never really studied.

I'm a co-producer of a forth-coming documentary project called *Four Died Trying* which is about killings of JFK, Malcolm, Martin Luther King and Bobby. And you should like it, Mark, because it's primarily concerned with answering the question Why were they

all killed? There's some . . . looks into the weeds of the logistics and all that but it's really about what they all had in common that made them a danger.

01:32:48 And lastly, my ongoing project for year has been the Marlboro Man, the history of the Marlboro Man which I started working on I think in 2004. It started out as something like one of my early pieces writ large, so it was close readings of mostly Marlboro ads but it has become more and more complicated and interesting and the story has taken bizarre turns. I wrote 200 pages of this manuscript based on oral histories with the participants and the campaign held forth, only to discover that most of what they said was bullshit.

I don't know if people in advertising really respect the difference between truth and fabrication, but I started to dig deeper, interviewed people, had correspondence going. It is really a much more interesting story than I realized and in the current climate when masculinity itself is treated as a kind of sin, and that figure would strike many on the left as representing the worst of toxic masculinity, I think the book will be extremely interesting and probably controversial when it finally does come out. That represents a certain continuation in my career.

MD That actually does sound fascinating. We won't agree about the demonization of masculinity because that's a talking point on the right. But we can at least agree that there is a pathological masculinity, what I call hysterical masculinity that is in fact being demonized and I think deservedly so. But that actually brings us to my two last questions. One is more an observation than a question, but I will ask you. I can't resist asking you. And you'll forgive the Learning Annex Freudianism of this, the vulgar psychobiography, but it does seem to be a generational salient that older boomers – and I am myself a boomer but a younger boomer – view the JFK assassination as the primal scene. It would be too pat, too flippant of me to suggest what I call the epistemological vertigo, the beginning of the death of the master narratives, the beginning of our lack of faith in institutions and authorities, but is it?

MCM Is it the beginning? Is that what you're asking?

MD Is it? And yeah, personally for you. Can you talk about your relationship to the JFK assassination and what facilely is called the end of innocence, the death of belief in consensus and all that.

MCM From time to time there is some incident that is then called the "death of American innocence" that is routinely recycled. But there is some truth to it regarding Dallas because that did actually have the effect of deeply shaking core beliefs of a

number of intrepid researchers who dug into it. Americans have been subjected to intensive propaganda drives before but this was the murder of a president in broad daylight and we could talk for quite some time about all the consequences of that murder, what flowed from it. I have actually said and do believe in a way 2020 is the culmination of something that started in 1963. Primal scene, kind of a distasteful comparison.

MD Not if you're Paul Krasner.

MCM No, that sort of makes sense.

MD I'm joking obviously.

MCM Yeah, but no, I think it is. That's why I always devote a week to it in the propaganda course.

MD I'm asking about your personal response to it. How it resonated, whether or not it was the catalytic spark for a profound and radical doubt on your part that has deepened over time. Let's call it a radical skepticism about authority sois-disant and about consensus. That's all I'm asking.

01:37:48 MCM No, it didn't start there for me because as I say, I mean, I was 13 when it happened. I was just a kid. It was upsetting but life went on and it was the 60s, right? I Didn't really return to it and give it much thought – well I did think about it somewhat when I saw the Oliver Stone film in the 90s, but as I told you the other day, or maybe I didn't, just now, it's something I really started to examine only after I ~~it when he~~ became interested in the provenance of the conspiracy theory meme which began as an attempt to protect the Warren Report narrative. And then I was drawn to study that incident and the media's role in it, then and ever since. That was fairly recent. So it didn't have that kind of effect on me.

MD Alright. Last question and I promise it really will be the last question. I've listened to several of your interviews but specifically the Gary Null interview in which you really do a deep dive into eugenics and you link that to the Great Reset. You say at one point that it's a "plan to inventory and control everything on the planet, including *you*." And you invoke Bill Gates, George Soros, the Rockefellers, Ted Turner. You talk about a eugenicist – and these are my words, not a direct, it's a paraphrase – a eugenicist plot or cabal globalist group to eradicate the mass of humanity through eugenics measures so that the 1% can essentially have the planet all to themselves maintaining what I understand to be a small slave class. Your term is neo-feudal and

you also use the term bio-fascist economy. Can you just explain to me the reason that eugenics looms so large in your theory of what the Great Reset is really about and how what you call the transgender ideology fits into that?

01:40:17 MCM Well, you threw this in at the end. It really requires some time to answer that. I did do a deep dive into the study of the eugenics movement when I wrote my essay on masks which actually has a second half which I'm still working on and will eventually put up because having gone over the mask issue meticulously from many different points of view, it raised the question that you were pushing a moment ago, Why is this happening? I wanted to address this question. And that prompted me to look into the history of eugenics from the beginning, around the turn of the last century when the Rockefellers and Harrimans and Carnegies were subsidizing eugenics research both here and in Germany. This is covered extensively by Edwin Black in *War Against the Weak* and whole shelf of other books.

It was an extremely influential movement that was heartily endorsed by some stellar figures. Planned Parenthood did actually come out of it. Bill Gates' dad was very close to all that and an intimate of the Rockefellers. I believe that the Holocaust gave it a bad name because throughout the 30s these people were cheering for the fact that there was finally a national leader who understood their philosophy and was taking steps to realize it. That didn't play so well when people saw the footage of the death camps when they were liberated. So it kind of went underground until 1952 with the formation of the Population Council which the Rockefellers started. Now it had a new guise as a movement for population reduction to save the planet. There's much more to say about the documentary evidence about this but it is actually no secret.

In 2009, this was covered by the London Sunday Times, there was a meeting at the home of the president of Rockefeller University - he was in Europe - that David Rockefeller and Bill Gates organized this meeting of extremely wealthy people including Ted Turner and they called themselves the Good Club. It was so secret that even their schedulers didn't know what the topic of discussion was going to be. It turned out to be reducing global population. They didn't want this to get out because they thought people would get upset. Ted Turner held forth at length at this meeting. He is sort of out of control about this subject of population reduction because he thinks between 80-90% of the planet's population should be eliminated. He has five children. The people had the meeting didn't like - but they very much liked Bill Gates' way of talking about it. And the following year he [Gates] did say in his TED talk on the environment that the population of the world should be reduced by 10-15% using vaccines. There were a couple of other things in that sentence. He mentioned vaccines very quickly as a means of reducing global population.

MD Mark just to fully understand the implications of what you just said because I do feel sometimes you skate over these things – you are alleging that Bill Gates and . . . it would require quite large – and the term is adequately evidenced – a quite large conspiracy of medical professionals and field workers to euthanize through fatal or toxic vaccines. Is that what you are alleging?

MCM Yeah. And I'm not the only one. Mike Dr. Michael Yeadon Y E A D O N former vice president of Pfizer, their Chief Scientist, so this is in no way an anti-vaxxer, has gone public with this as loudly as he can, saying precisely what I am saying. I mean I'm emboldened to be his explicit to you in part because of people like him. He said that he believes this vaccination program is part of the depopulation agenda and he said he couldn't think of a more benign way of characterizing it. And Dr. Sucharit Bhakdi, B H A K D I very very eminent scientist has just done an interview, she [sic] says essentially the same thing. There are people deeply concerned about these vaccines and their safety.

MD Give me a quick – let's leap into a time machine and teleport ourselves a century or two into the future after which they have achieved their end game. What does the planet look like? What is the political sociological structure? What is the environmental implications of this plot or plan or cabal or conspiracy or call it what you will. I mean I think we can agree you are describing a conspiracy to

MCM Sure. Of course.

MD And so a century hence, if they achieve their ends, what will humankind, the planet and society, extant society, look like. Give me a panoramic view of this.

01:46:18 MCM

Well, I mean there are a number of dystopian novels and films that would do justice to what I think they have in mind. I don't believe it's possible. I think it is too grandiose and there's going to be too much resistance to it. There already is growing resistance to it in the oddest of places. But I mean if, look, the biggest landowner in the country is Bill Gates. The second biggest landowner in the country is Ted Turner. Between the two of them they own an amazingly big swath of the country's farmland. I think Turner also owns extensive farm lands in Argentina. Gates is now talking at the same time as radically altering our diet. I don't know if you've been following this but he wants us to be eating fake meat. He's talking about extracting drinking water from human feces. I mean it's on camera. I'm not making it up. And they are interested in making fungi and insects edible. I don't think that they plan to eat that way.

So his talk about getting rid of animal agriculture, it sounds very green. It sounds like he's concerned for the poor animals and he wants to save the planet from pollution. I think whatever the future holds, if it should hold what they want it to hold, they will basically own the land, there will be no nation states because as David Rockefeller points out with pride in his autobiography he is a globalist who believes in a One World government which sounds like the fevered dream of some right winger but he says it explicitly in his autobiography. There's a movement to go beyond national boundaries and I believe they do want to depopulate the planet radical and I believe they do not want a population that is going to question them or resist them in any way. So if everyone in the world is injected for covid 19 which is what Gates has said he wants to do, there really is no telling what the effects will be.

MD Mark, what is bio-fascism? Can you define that term for me?

MCM Yeah, well fascism represents a merger of state and corporate power and we have so-called public private partnerships which now fulfill that requirement with the help of Gates Foundation and so on, which is really a profit making venture in fact, and the big pharmaceutical companies are basically working on realizing a kind of what I call biofascism, which is a system in which we are exquisitely tracked and monitored which everyone's health becomes data that is centrally gathered. So the possibility for surveillance and control, the requirement that people carry vaccine passports, these are really alarming developments. Vaccine passports will create an underclass of people who have chosen not to be vaccinated. Naomi Wolf talks about this. It would be a very simple matter to make it impossible to withdraw money from your bank account, to work, to travel, to go out to dinner, if you don't have that vaccine passport. This disease, this virus, has been used to create such fear that people will willingly go along with this, either fear or exhaustion. People are fed up with masks and lockdowns and they want to go back and see their grandchildren or grandparents.

01:50:29 MD And how does the transgender [air quotes] ideology fit into this eugenicist plot?

MCM Well I have I have speculated that -- let me put it this way there's something very striking about the way in which trans gender transgenderism has been promoted and idealized but the oddest players. You know I was first struck by this when I saw that Sprite commercial which featured a mother breast binding her daughter which is kind of an odd way to sell a soft drink. I don't believe the Coca Cola company has any kind of altruistic or idealistic motive I don't think Coca Cola which is a notorious corporate felon really cares about inclusion and diversity. This is called a civil rights

movement. This is the only civil rights movement in history that sprang instantly into the media spotlight in a positive way, notably different from the evolution of the depiction of black people in the movies and on TV, very different from change in the representations of women in movies and TV. You know very different from the representation of gay people in the media. All those changes took place after decades of arduous grassroots struggle. Now all of a sudden Hollywood, TV, movies, advertising campaigns are celebrating transgenderism and I believe that it is partly driven by the fact that it's an extremely lucrative branch of let's call it medicine because the hormone therapy is the puberty blockers and the surgery is extremely expensive.

Jennifer Bilek who wrote the article exposing that elite funding of the movement -- which I distinguished from transgender persons -- have had significant interests in medical you know enterprises. So there's that motivation. But I also think we put it in the context of other ways to discourage people from having children which is a kind of important subtheme of Greta Thunberg's activism and an Extinction Rebellion which imply that humanity is the worst pollutant on the planet and there's got to be some way to cut that back and that comes out of you know Paul Ehrlich's book The Population Bomb which is itself a kind of warmed over version of Thomas Malthus' you know philosophy. So you know the fact that these therapies are irreversible is troubling because often kids will go through something phase side there in the opposite sex. There seems to be a certain kind of pressure now to rush those kids into a therapy often has catastrophic consequences for them. This is one of those subjects I think we need to talk about. Doctors said this needs to be debated and they can't talk about. It's dismissed his hate speech. But I don't see it as such a stretch. Once we understand the intensity of Gates' belief in eugenics and others like Turner I don't think it's a stretch to say that part of the motivation could be a desire to further lessen human procreation.

MD Fair enough. Mark, I have long past overstayed my welcome. So I'm going to turn you loose to the tender mercies of your family this Saturday afternoon. And I do appreciate your generosity with your time.

MCM Well, I appreciate, well I think I appreciate your interest. We'll see when we read what you write. I'm bracing myself.

MD Always wise with journalists.

MCM Are you going to transcribe these.

MD I am going to transcribe them. I will only obviously given the length of our conversations, which I'm not implying that I regret that in the least, but I will

necessarily cherry pick relevant and important and quotable passages to transcribe. So we're not talking a court room transcript here. We're talking selective transcription. Of course when I'm done with the transcriptions I'll be happy to send copies of both zooms if you like.

MCM That'd be great.

MD I'll do that using the free secure and easy to use file sharing service WeTransfer.com because the video files are simply too large to squeeze between the measly pipe of Verizon. So when you see it, and "Invite" from me to download the files from WeTransfer, that's what it will be.

MCM OK, and your deadline is this week?

MD Deadline is this week. I don't have a publication date yet, but as a courtesy I'm happy to send it to you when my editor gives it to me.

MCM OK. Alright. Well, good luck.

MD Thank you so much for your time, Mark. OK bye.