

“Facing Clear Evidence of Peril” in a Country of Lies. “Money is the Dirty Secret of all News”

Wealth and power are the main drivers of media chicanery

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Global Research, March 29, 2023

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

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“In my seventy-plus years from 1946 to now, the chorus of fear-mongering bullshit has never ceased – only grown louder. The joke is on us. Ha Ha Ha.” – Oliver Stone, Chasing the Light

Perhaps silence is the best response to the endless cavalcade of official lies that is United States history. The Internet and digital technology have allowed those lies to increase exponentially in number and frequency with the result that people's minds have become like 7-Eleven stores, open 24/7 for snack-crap “news.”

But once you become conscious that it's lies night and day, it sets your head aswirl and plunges your soul into depths of despair. You are tempted to retreat from such knowledge and talk of trees and trivia. But you are ashamed of your country. It's hard to laugh. You feel you are drowning. You flounder and gasp for air. You look around and wonder why most people are able to go their merry ways believing the lies and whistling in the dark. Junk news nation, indeed.

Yes, there are alternative voices who tell the truth, but their audiences and monetary support are very small or non-existent compared to the corporate mainstream media and those who shout and scream across the Internet as they take in a lot of money from naive followers.

The recent revelations about Alex Jones's wealth probably don't bother his diehard fans, but they should. Likewise, the funding sources for websites and writers of various persuasions are important to know, for they reveal possible biases in their work. Snake oil salesmen are commonplace, and there are many naive customers lining up for their wares.

Wealth and power are the main drivers of the media chicanery that has captured so many minds. Writers, of course, should be fairly paid for their work, but in this Internet age, most

are not. As with the movies and book publishing, the income gap between the big names – the celebrity stars – and less well-known writers, even if their work is excellent, is huge.

Some sites and writers make a lot of money, but who they are is a guessing game. No one's talking. Some regularly tell their readers that if they don't receive enough contributions, they will be unable to continue to write or publish, even when the sites do not pay their contributors. Whether this is good marketing or income-by-threat is up for grabs. Whichever it is, it seems to work, as far as I can tell, for these writers and websites don't disappear.

Money is the dirty secret of all news and commentary. To paraphrase someone: It is very difficult to get truth from writers whose income is dependent on pleasing those who fund them.

You may have noticed how many former military officers, CIA agents, mainstream journalists, pharmaceutical company executives, and sundry other government and corporate bigwigs appear in the mainstream and alternative media to support or oppose government policies. The mainstream ones doing the propaganda they always did, while the alternative ones appear as converts to the dissident faith. No one ever explains how and by whom these people are financed or how their lucrative pensions affect their consciences. "Former" is a funny word. Ha Ha Ha.

Confidence "men" come in all shapes and sizes with no one talking money.

So let me fess up. I received about \$200 in support last year for edwardcurtin.com, my website. Nothing before that and not a cent over the last 5-6 years for many hundreds of articles that have appeared very widely across the Internet. Before the Internet, publications paid for work, mine and others. Not now, at least for me. How much money writers are receiving, and who is supporting their sites, is a taboo subject.

So I am thinking about selling mugs at my site with my name and mug shot on them and a line of supplements that will increase one's testosterone and estrogen in equal measure to make sure no one takes offense in this era of delicate feelings. Ha Ha Ha. Yes, the joke is on us. I identify as a man since I am one. Don't be offended.

Jokes aside, as Leonard Cohen sang:

"Oh, like a bird on the wire
Like a drunk in a midnight choir
I have tried in my way to be free"

If you are stubborn enough and have the good fortune to find inspiration from those brave dissidents who have gone before us and those who continue to lead us on, you realize silence is betrayal and that you must speak, even if all seems hopeless at times. Even when no one is paying you, or maybe more accurately, because no one is paying you. Even though it is hopeless, even though it isn't. This is another secret. There are many.

It's been twenty years since the U.S. brutally invaded Iraq. When George W. Bush, at a staged pseudo-event in Cincinnati on October 7, 2002, as he set Americans up for the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, said, "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," no one laughed him out of the house. His claim was simply an evil joke that was reported as truth.

It was all predictable, blatant deception. And the media played along with such an absurdity, which is their job and what they always do. I pointed it out at the time in a newspaper column, but who listened to a hick writer in a regional newspaper.

Iraq obviously had no nuclear weapons or the slightest capability to deliver even a firecracker on the U.S. But the mainstream media, Senator Joe Biden, politicians galore, celebrities like Oprah Winfrey with her guest, the eventually disgraced Judith Miller of the New York Times, the despicable Tony Blair, et al., all supported Bush's blatant lies. Soon Colin Powell, the "hero" of George H. W. Bush's 1991 made-for-TV Gulf War of aggression against Iraq, would do his Pinocchio act at the United Nations and the U.S. military was off to get Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden's evil twin, both the latest Hitlers until Vladimir Putin replaced them. I guess I skipped some others such as Muammar Gaddafi and Bashar Al-Assad. New Hitlers proliferate so fast it's hard to keep track of them. Ha Ha Ha. The joke is on us.

As everyone knows, or should, more than a million Iraqis died because of George W. Bush, but how many cared? How many cared when once Bush was gone, Barack Obama, aided and abetted by the cackling Hilary Clinton, destroyed Libya and ignited the war against Syria? You want examples? There are too many to name here. But let it be said these lies span all American administrations, whether it's Bill Clinton continuously bombing Iraq and Serbia through Trump bombing Syria and Somalia, up to the present day with Biden attacking Russia via Ukraine, etc. All these presidents are liars, but their followers treat them otherwise. Biden says Jimmy Carter asked him to deliver his eulogy. What does that tell you? Shall we laugh? Sing?

On the clear understanding
That this kind of thing can happen
Shall we laugh?
Shall we laugh?
Shall we laugh?

Shall we laugh harder if I mention the Covid-19 propaganda and all those writers who have failed to even address it, as they have failed to question 9/11 and other obvious official lies? Is it not evident that if they did so, their money flows might dry up? Here and no further is a widespread rule, for they must adhere to the boundaries imposed by "responsible thought" and the "no go" zones with which they tie their own hands in order to keep their wallets full.

If you are lucky, as I was, when you are young you discover how fearful of free thought and how corrupt our institutional authorities are. You don't spend decades feasting off the spoils of those institutions only to "wake up" once you have made your name and secured your fortune, which seems to be the way of so many wise luminaries of the Internet Age who are either trying to ease their consciences as they get ready to kick the bucket or are perhaps putting us on.

When I was twenty-four years-old, I accepted my first teaching job at a small Catholic college where I taught theology. I had been trained in the latest and best scholarly work of the most renown international theologians. Rather than indoctrinating my students with rote learning, I taught them to read widely and think deeply in the tradition of a liberal arts education. To seek out the best scholarship.

But doing so became quickly apparent to the college and Church authorities who were stuck

in the inquisitorial age of obedience or else and no thinking allowed. Although my students loved my courses and felt freed up for the first time to think about their spiritual lives, I was hounded to correct my heretical teaching, which of course I refused to do.

At one point when I was at lunch in the cafeteria, a nun who was a professor, stole my brief case with my notes and left the cafeteria. One of my students saw her do this and chased her into the ladies' room where the nun hid in a stall. The nun kept flushing the toilet to scare the student away, but the student wouldn't let her out until she returned the briefcase. Ha Ha Ha. It sounds funny to recount but was an example of my experience at this college. Someone vandalized my office door and ripped down anti-war posters that were on it. I was gone from that college soon thereafter. It taught me a lot. Obey or else.

Heresy: The Latin word is from Greek *hairesis*, a taking or choosing for oneself, a choice.

At another teaching job a year or so later, I had a more chilling experience. I was known as an anti-war activist, a conscientious objector from the Marines, etc., and one day, a late Friday afternoon when few were around, an administrator asked to meet me on a deserted stairwell where he proceeded in hushed tones to try to convince me to join him in Army Intelligence to spy on others. He said I would be perfect for the job since I was known as an anti-war dissident. I told him to fuck off, but I was shocked by his double life and his request.

I have since learned that this guy the spy was not an anomaly, for government confidence men are widespread.

I've had many other such early experiences for which I am very grateful, even though when I was fired from jobs and lost income it was traumatic at the time. By my thirtieth year, I knew the system was corrupt to its core and subsequent experience has only ratified that conclusion. I got the joke.

I recount these incidents not because my experiences are singular and I'm special, for others have suffered the same youthful fate. But such good fortune can fortify you for life or break your spirit. If the former, you don't wait to retire to push back against all the lies or regret your past. You find that it's all good and life has set you on the heretic's path of freedom and choice. You realize that what you went through is absolutely nothing compared to people around the world who have and continue to suffer at the hands of the U.S. military industrial complex. You realize your experiences are trivial in the larger scope of things and that your government's conduct is beyond condemnation. It is an abomination. You feel ashamed to live in a land where killing is a game.

The sociologist Peter Berger puts it well in his little classic, *Invitation to Sociology*, when he discusses experiences that lead to seeing through the play-acting nature of social life:

Experiences such as these may lead to a sudden reversal in one's view of society – from an awe-inspiring vision of an edifice made of massive granite to the picture of a toy-house precariously put together with papier mâché. While such metamorphosis may be disturbing to people who have hitherto had great confidence in the stability and rightness of society, it can also have a very liberating effect on those more inclined to look upon the latter as a giant sitting on top of them, and not necessarily a friendly giant at that. It is reassuring to discover that the giant is afflicted with a nervous tick.

Notice the giant George W. Bush's clicking eyes as he delivers his "facing clear evidence of peril" lies for the invasion of Iraq. He and his presidential good friends are cardboard cartoon characters whose eyes reveal their evil intentions. "It's a Barnum and Bailey world/Just as phony as it can be," but it would all fall to pieces if it weren't for you and me failing to see through all the bad actors, not just presidents but the whole cast of characters that populate the Spectacle of news and opinion.

The Russians are coming! Ha Ha Ha. Yes, Oliver, the joke's on us.

But it's not really funny, except in the most sardonic and dark way, for we now do really face clear evidence of peril as a result of Biden and his crazy predecessors who have run U.S. foreign policy for so long. They have brought us to the edge of nuclear war with Russia by surrounding Russia with NATO bases and nuclear weapons, while doing the same to China.

Bertolt Brecht was right in his poem "To Those Born After":

Truly I live in dark times!
Frank speech is naïve. A smooth forehead
Suggests insensitivity. The man who laughs
Has simply not yet heard
The terrible news.

What kind of times are these, when
To talk about trees is almost a crime
Because it implies silence about so many horrors?
When the man over there calmly crossing the street
Is already perhaps beyond the reach of his friends
Who are in need?

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This article was originally published on the author's blog site, [Behind the Curtain](#).

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