



Scripts.com

# Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media

By Unknown

Three, two, one, take two.

Good morning.

Welcome to Erin Mills town centre.

Home of the world's largest, permanent,  
point-of-purchase video wall installation.

My name is Kelvin Flook

and I'm your video host all day here at EMTV.

I want to take this opportunity to extend  
a special and warm welcome  
to the film crew from Necessary Illusions.

We've got an excellent line-up  
of television programming today,  
so... let's get on with it.

So, how long have they been working  
on this documentary?

Gosh, they've been working on it

I don't know how long.

Every country I show up, they're always there.

They're in England, they're in Japan.

All over the place.

Jesus.

They must have 500 hours of tape.

Bet they put together a really doozy  
when they're done, huh?

I can't imagine who's going to want  
to hear somebody talk for an hour.

But I guess they know what they're doing.

So, where are you all from?

Florida.

- Florida?

Yeah, Gulf Coast.

You all talk like in chorus.

We're making a film about Noam Chomsky.

Does anybody know who Noam Chomsky is?

No!

Good afternoon and welcome  
to Wyoming Talks.

My guest today is well-known intellectual  
Noam Chomsky.

Thank you for being on our programme today.

Very glad to be here.

I know probably the main purpose for your trip  
to Wyoming

is to discuss thought control

in a democratic society.

Now, all right, say I'm just Jane USA.

And I say, "Well, gee, this is a democratic society, what do you mean - thought control?"

"I make up my own mind.

I create my own destiny".

What would you say to her?

Well, I would suggest that Jane take a close look at the way the media operate, the way the public relations industry operates.

The extensive thinking that's been going on for a long, long period, about the necessity for finding ways to marginalise and control the public in a democratic society.

But particularly to look at the evidence that's been accumulated, about the way the major media,

The agenda-setting media,

I mean, the national press,

and the television and so on,

the way that they shape and control

the kinds of opinions that appear.

The kinds of information that comes through, the sources to which they go.

I think Jane will find some very surprising things about the democratic system.

I'd like to welcome all of you to this lecture today.

Several years ago,

Professor Chomsky was described in The New York Times Book Review

**as follows:**

"Judged in terms of the power, range, novelty and influence of this thought, Noam Chomsky is arguably the most important intellectual alive."

Professor Noam Chomsky.

I gather there are some people behind that blackness there.

But if I don't look you in the eye, it's because I don't see you, all I see is the blackness.

Perhaps I ought to begin

by reporting something that's never read.

The line about "arguably the most important intellectual in the world," and so on comes from a publisher's blurb and you got to watch those. If you go back to the original, you'll find that that sentence is actually there. This is in The New York Times. But the next sentence is, "Since that's the case, how can he write such terrible things about American foreign policy?" They never quote that part. If it wasn't for that second sentence, I'd begin to think that I'm doing something wrong. And I'm not joking about that. It's true that the Emperor doesn't have any clothes but he doesn't like to be told it. The Emperor's lap dogs, like The New York Times, will not enjoy the experience if you do. Good evening. I'm Bill Moyers. What's more dangerous: The big stick of the big lie? Governments have used both against their own people. Tonight I'll be talking with a man who has been thinking about how we can see the developing lie. He says that propaganda is to democracy what violence is to a dictatorship. But he hasn't lost faith in the power of common people to speak up for the truth. You have said that we live entangled in webs of endless deceit, that we live in a highly indoctrinated society, where elementary truths are easily buried. Elementary truths such as... Such as the fact that we invaded South Vietnam. Or that we're standing in the way of significant, and have for years, of significant moves towards arms negotiation. Or the fact that the military system is to a substantial extent, not totally, but to a substantial extent, a mechanism by which the general population

is compelled to provide a subsidy  
to high-technology industry.  
Since they're not going to do it if you ask them  
to, you have to deceive them into doing it.  
There are many truths like that.  
We don't face them.  
Do you believe in common sense?  
Absolutely.  
I believe in Cartesian common sense.  
I think people have the capacities to see  
through the deceit in which they're ensnared.  
But you got to make the effort.  
It seems a little incongruous  
to hear a man from the ivory tower  
of Massachusetts Institute of Technology,  
a scholar... a distinguished linguistics scholar,  
talk about common people  
with such appreciation.  
I think scholarship, at least the field I work in,  
has the opposite consequences.  
My own studies in language and human  
cognition demonstrate to me, at least,  
what remarkable creativity  
ordinary people have.  
The very fact that people talk to one another  
just in a normal way, nothing particularly fancy,  
reflects deep-seated features  
of human creativity,  
which separate human beings  
from any other biological system we know.  
Tonight, scientists talk to the animals.  
But are they talking back?  
The Journal with Barbara Frum  
and Mary Lou Finlay.  
Communicating with animals  
is a serious scientific pursuit.  
This is Nim Chimpsky.  
Nim, jokingly named after  
the great linguist Noam Chomsky,  
was the great hope of animal communication  
in the 1970s.  
For four years Pettito and others coached him  
in sign language,  
but in the end they decided it was a lost cause.

Nim could ask for things, but not much more.  
I would have loved  
to have a conversation with Nim  
and understand how he looked at the universe.  
He failed to communicate that information to  
me, and we gave him every opportunity.  
Noam Chomsky,  
theorist of language and political activist,  
has had an extraordinary career.  
I can think of none like it in recent American  
history and few anywhere any time.  
He has literally transformed  
the subject of linguistics.  
He also has become one of the most consistent  
critics of power politics in all its protean guises.  
Scholar and propagandist, his two careers  
apparently reinforce each other.  
In 1957, he published his *Syntactic Structures*,  
which began what has frequently been called  
the Chomskyan Revolution in Linguistics.  
Like a latter-day Copernicus,  
Chomsky proposed a radically new way  
of looking at the theory of grammar.  
Chomsky worked out the formal rules  
of the universal grammar  
which had generated the specific rules  
of actual or natural languages.  
The general approach I'm taking seems to me  
rather simple minded and unsophisticated,  
but, nevertheless, correct.  
Later he came to argue that such systems  
are innate features of human beings.  
They belong to the characteristics  
of the species  
and have been, in effect, programmed  
into the genetic equipment of the mind  
like the machine language in a computer.  
One needn't be interested in this question.  
Of course, I am interested in it.  
The interesting question from this point of view  
is what is the nature of the initial state?  
That is, what is human nature in this respect?  
That in turn explains the...  
...astonishing.

Try the next one.

Fa-cki-li-ty

- Facility.

- Facility.

That in turn explains the astonishing facility children have in learning the rules of natural language, no matter how complicated, incredibly quickly, from what are imperfect and often degenerate samples.

- Compli...

- Complicated.

It's a complicated word.

Do you know what "complicated" means?

It means it's complicated.

If in fact our minds were a blank slate and experience wrote on them, we would be very impoverished creatures indeed, so the obvious hypothesis is that our language is the result of the unfolding of a genetically determined programme.

Well, plainly there are different languages.

In fact, the apparent variation of languages is quite superficial.

It's certain - as certain as anything else is - that humans are not genetically programmed to learn one or another language.

So, you bring up a Japanese baby in Boston, and it'll speak Boston English.

You bring up my child in Japan, it'll speak Japanese.

And that means that... From that it follows from that it simply follows by logic that the basic structure of the languages must be essentially the same.

Our task as scientists is to try to determine exactly what those fundamental principles are that cause the knowledge of language to unfold in the manner in which it does under particular circumstances.

Incidentally,

I think there is no doubt the same must be true of other aspects of human intelligence, and systems of understanding

and interpretation,  
and moral and aesthetic judgement, and so on.  
The implications of these views  
have washed over the fields of psychology,  
education, sociology, philosophy,  
literary criticism, and logic.  
In the '50s and '60s  
the bridge between your theoretical work  
and your political work seems to have been  
the attack on behaviourism,  
but now behaviourism is no longer an issue,  
or so it seems,  
so how does this leave the link  
between your linguistics and your politics?  
Well, I've always regarded the link... I've never...  
really perceived much of a link,  
to tell you the truth.  
Again, I would be very pleased to be able to  
discover intellectually convincing connections  
between my own anarchist convictions  
on the one hand,  
and what I think I can demonstrate,  
or at least begin to see  
about the nature of human intelligence  
on the other.  
But I simply can't find intellectually satisfying  
connections between those two domains.  
I can discover some tenuous points of contact.

**FOUCAUL:**

If it is correct, as I believe it is,  
that a fundamental element of human nature  
is the need for creative work,  
or creative inquiry for...  
...for free creation without the...  
...arbitrary, limiting effects of coercive  
institutions,  
then of course it will follow that a decent society  
should maximise the possibilities  
for this fundamental human characteristic  
to be realised.  
Now, a federated, decentralised...  
...system of free associations incorporating  
economic as well as social institutions



would be what I refer to as  
anarcho-syndicalism,  
and it seems to me that  
it is the appropriate form of social organisation  
for an advanced technological society  
in which human beings do not have to be forced  
into the position of tools, of cogs in a machine.  
Since the 1960s  
Noam Chomsky has been the voice  
of a very characteristic brand  
of rationalist libertarian socialism.  
He's attacked the abuses of power  
wherever he saw them,  
he's made himself deeply unpopular  
by his criticism of American policy,  
the subservience of the intelligentsia,  
the degradation of Zionism,  
the distortions of media,  
and self-delusions of prevailing ideologies.  
Under the liberal administration of the 1960s  
the club of academic intellectuals  
designed and implemented the Vietnam war,  
and other similar, though smaller, actions.  
This particular community is a very relevant one  
to consider at a place like MI  
because of course you're all free  
to enter into this community.  
In fact,  
you're invited and encouraged to enter it.  
The community of technical intelligentsia,  
and weapons designers,  
and counter-insurgency experts,  
and pragmatic planners of an American empire,  
is one that you have a great deal of inducement  
to become associated with.  
The inducements, in fact, are very real.  
The rewards in power, and affluence,  
and prestige, and authority...  
Jamie?  
This came with the mail.  
Be with you in a second.  
Oh, God, they've still got their cameras.  
OK?  
We'll start.

In your essay Language and Freedom,  
you write, "Social action must be animated  
by a vision of a future society".  
I was wondering what vision of a future society  
animates you?  
I have my own ideas  
as to what a future society should look like.  
I've written about them.  
I mean, I think that we should...  
At the most general level, we should be  
seeking out forms of authority and domination,  
and challenging their legitimacy.  
Sometimes they are legitimate -  
that is, let's say they're needed for survival.  
So, for example, I wouldn't suggest  
that during the Second World War...  
the forms of authority...  
We had a totalitarian society, basically.  
I thought there was some justification for that  
under wartime conditions.  
And there are other forms of...  
Relations between parents and children,  
for example, involve forms of coercion  
which are sometimes justifiable.  
But any such... Any form of coercion and...  
control requires justification,  
and most of them are completely unjustifiable.  
Now, at various stages of human civilisation  
it's been possible to challenge some of them,  
but not others.  
Others are too deep-seated,  
or you don't see them, or whatever,  
so at any particular point you try to  
detect those forms of authority and domination  
which are subject to change, and which...  
do not have any legitimacy,  
in fact which often  
strike at fundamental human rights,  
and your understanding  
of fundamental human nature and rights.  
Well, what are the major things, say today?  
There are some  
that are being addressed in a way.  
The feminist movement is addressing some.

The civil rights movement is addressing others.  
The one major one  
that is not being seriously addressed  
is the one that's really  
at the core of the system of domination,  
and that's private control over resources.  
And that means an attack  
on the fundamental structure of state capitalism.  
I think that's in order.  
That's not something far off in the future.  
Your life work.  
The alphabet has only 26 letters.  
With these 26 magic symbols, however,  
millions of words are written every day.  
Nowhere else are people so addicted  
to information and entertainment  
via the printed word.  
Every day the world comes thumping  
on the American doorstep,  
and nothing that happens anywhere  
remains long a secret  
from the American newspaper reader.  
It comes to us pretty casually, the daily paper,  
but behind its arrival on your doorstep  
is one of journalism's major stories.  
How it got there.  
There is a standard view about democratic  
societies, and the role of the media within them.  
It's expressed for example  
by Supreme Court Justice Powell  
when he spoke of the crucial role of the media  
in effecting the societal purpose  
of the First Amendment,  
namely enabling the public to assert  
meaningful control over the political process.  
That kind of formulation  
expresses the understanding that  
democracy requires free access  
to information, and ideas, and opinion,  
and the same conceptions hold  
not only with regard to the media,  
but with regard to educational institutions,  
publishing, the intellectual community generally.  
It is basic to the health of a democracy

that no phase of government activity  
escape the scrutiny of the press.  
Here reporters are assigned to stories  
fateful not only to our nation, but to all nations.  
"Congress", says the First Amendment,  
"shall pass no law  
abridging the freedom of the press".  
And the Chief Executive himself  
throws open the doors of the White House  
to journalists representing papers  
of all shades of political opinion.  
But is worth bearing in mind  
that there is a contrary view,  
and in fact the contrary view is very widely held,  
and deeply rooted  
in our own civilisation.  
It goes back to  
the origins of modern democracy,  
to the 17th-century English revolution  
which was a complicated affair  
like most popular revolutions.  
There was a struggle between Parliament  
representing largely  
elements of the gentry and the merchants,  
and the Royalists  
representing other elite groups,  
and they fought it out.  
But like many popular revolutions,  
there was also a lot of popular ferment going  
that was opposed to all of them.  
There were popular movements  
that were questioning everything -  
the relations between master and servant,  
the right of authority altogether...  
All kinds of things were being questioned.  
There was a lot of radical publishing - the  
printing presses had just come into existence -  
and this disturbed all the elites  
on both sides of the Civil War.  
So as one historian pointed out at the time  
in 1660...  
He criticised the radical democrats,  
the ones who were calling for  
what we would call democracy, because...

Now, underlying these doctrines  
which were very widely held  
is a certain conception of democracy.  
It's a game for elites.  
It's not for the ignorant masses  
who have to be marginalised,  
diverted and controlled  
of course, for their own good.  
The same principles were upheld  
in the American colonies.  
The dictum of the founding fathers  
of American democracy that:  
"People who own the country  
ought to govern it",  
quoting John Jay.  
Fire!  
Now, in modern times for elites,  
this contrary view about the intellectual life,  
and the media, and so on,  
this contrary view in fact is the standard one,  
I think, apart from rhetorical flourishes.  
From Washington DC,  
he is intellectual, author and linguist  
Professor Noam Chomsky.  
Manufacturing Consent -  
what is that title meant to describe?  
Well, the title is actually borrowed from a book  
by Walter Lippmann written back around 1921  
in which he described  
what he called the manufacture of consent  
as a revolution in the practice of democracy.  
What it amounts to is a technique of control,  
and he said this was useful and necessary  
because the common interests, the general  
concerns of all people, elude the public.  
The public just isn't up to dealing with them,  
and they have to be the domain  
of what he called a specialized class.  
Notice that that's the opposite  
of the standard view about democracy.  
There's a version of this expressed  
by the highly respected moralist and theologian  
Reinhold Niebuhr  
who was very influential

on contemporary policy makers.  
His view was  
that rationality belongs to the cool observer,  
but because of the stupidity of the average  
man, he follows not reason but faith,  
and this nave faith  
requires necessary illusion  
and emotionally potent over-simplifications  
which are provided by the myth maker  
to keep the ordinary person on course.  
It's not the case, as the nave might think,  
that indoctrination  
is inconsistent with democracy.  
Rather, as this whole line of thinkers observes,  
it's the essence of democracy.  
The point is that in a military state,  
or a feudal state,  
or what we would nowadays  
call a totalitarian state,  
it doesn't much matter what people think,  
because you've got a bludgeon over their head,  
and you can control what they do.  
But when the state loses the bludgeon,  
when you can't control people by force,  
and when the voice of the people can be heard,  
you have this problem -  
it may make people so curious and so arrogant  
that they don't have the humility  
to submit to a civil rule,  
and therefore you have to  
control what people think.  
And the standard way to do this  
is to resort to what in more honest days  
used to be called propaganda.  
Manufacture of consent.  
The creation of necessary illusions.  
Various ways of  
either marginalising the general public,  
or reducing them to apathy in some fashion.  
The oldest of two boys,  
Avram Noam Chomsky was born in  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1928.  
As a Jewish child,  
the anti-Semitism of the time affected him.

Both parents taught Hebrew,  
and he became fascinated by literature,  
reading translations  
of French and Russian classics.  
He also took an interest  
in a grammar book written by his father  
on Hebrew of the Middle Ages.  
He recalls a childhood  
absorbed in reading curled up on the sofa,  
often borrowing up to 12 books at once  
from the library.  
He is married to Carol,  
and they have three children.  
I don't like to  
impose on my wife and children a form of life  
that they certainly  
haven't selected for themselves,  
namely one of public exposure,  
exposure to the public media.  
That's their choice, and I don't believe  
they themselves have selected this.  
I don't impose it on them,  
and I would like to protect them from it, frankly.  
The second sort of perhaps principled point  
is that I'm rather against the whole notion  
of developing public personalities...  
...who are treated as stars  
of one kind or another,  
where aspects of their personal life  
are supposed to have some significance.  
Take one in the reception room.  
You said you were just like us -  
you went to school, got good grades.  
What made you start being critical, you know,  
and seeing the different...  
What started the change?  
Well, you know, there are all kinds  
of personal factors in anybody's life.  
Don't forget I grew up in the Depression.  
My parents actually happened to have jobs,  
which was kind of unusual.  
They were Hebrew school teachers,  
so lower middle class.  
For them,

everything revolved around being Jewish.  
Hebrew, and Palestine in those days,  
and so on.  
I grew up in that milieu, so I learned Hebrew,  
went to Hebrew school,  
became a Hebrew school teacher,  
went to Hebrew college, led youth groups,  
summer camp, Hebrew camps...  
The whole business.  
The branch of Zionist movement  
that I was part of  
was all involved in socialist bi-nationalism,  
and Arab-Jewish cooperation,  
and all sorts of nice stuff.  
What did they think of you  
hopping on a train, going up to New York,  
and hanging out at anarchist book stores  
on Fourth Avenue, and talking to...  
They didn't mind, because...  
I don't want to totally trust  
my childhood memories, obviously,  
but the family was split up.  
Like a lot of Jewish families,  
it went in all sorts of directions.  
There were sectors that were super-Orthodox.  
There were other sectors  
that were very radical, and very assimilated,  
and working-class intellectuals,  
and that's the sector  
that I naturally gravitated towards.  
It was a very lively intellectual culture.  
For one thing, it was a working-class culture,  
had working-class values.  
Values of solidarity, socialist values, and so on.  
There was a sense  
somehow things would get better.  
An institutional structure was around, a method  
of fighting, of organising, of doing things  
which had some hope.  
And I also had the advantage of having gone  
to an experimental progressive school,  
to a Deweyite school which was quite good,  
run by a university there, and you know,  
there was no such thing as competition.



There was no such thing  
as being a good student.  
Literally, the concept of being a good student  
didn't even arise until I got to high school.  
I went to the academic high school,  
and suddenly discovered I'm a good student.  
I hated high school, because I had to do  
all the things you have to do to get into college.  
But until then,  
it was kind of a free, pretty open system,  
and lots of other things as well.  
Maybe I was just cantankerous.  
As a historian,  
I have read with interest and amazement  
your long review article  
of Gabriel Jackson's Spanish Civil War.  
It's a very respectable piece of history.  
I appreciate how much work goes into it.  
You know when I did that work?  
I did that work in the early 1940s  
when I was about 12 years old.  
The first article I wrote was right  
after the fall of Barcelona in the school paper,  
and it was a lament  
about the rise of Fascism in 1939.  
I guess one of the people who was  
the biggest influence in my life was an uncle  
who had never gone past fourth grade,  
had a background in crime,  
and let-wing politics, and all sorts of things.  
But he was a hunchback,  
and as a result  
he could get a newsstand in New York.  
They had some programme  
for people with physical disabilities.  
Some of you are from New York, I guess.  
Well, you know the 72nd Street kiosk?  
Yes!  
That's where I got my political education.  
At 72nd Street - where you come out of the  
subway, everybody goes towards 72nd Street.  
There were two newsstands on that side  
which were doing fine,  
and there's two on the back.

Nobody comes out the back,  
and that's where his newsstand...  
But it was a very lively place.  
He was a very bright guy.  
It was the '30s. There were a lot of migrs.  
A lot of people were hanging around there,  
and in the evenings especially  
it was sort of a literary-political salon.  
There were, kind of, guys  
hanging around arguing and talking, and...  
as a kid, like 11, 12 years old,  
the biggest excitement  
was to work the newsstand.  
You write in Manufacturing Consent  
that it's the primary function of the mass media  
in the United States  
to mobilise public support  
for the special interests  
that dominate the government  
and the private sector.  
What are those interests?  
Well, if you want to understand  
the way any society works,  
ours or any other,  
the first place to look is who makes...  
who is in a position  
to make the decisions  
that determine the way the society functions.  
Societies differ, but in ours  
the major decisions  
over what happens in the society -  
decisions over investment, and production,  
and distribution and so on -  
are in the hands of  
a relatively concentrated network  
of major corporations and conglomerates,  
and investment firms, and so on.  
They are also the ones who staff the major  
executive positions in the government,  
and they are the ones who own the media,  
and they are the ones who have to be  
in a position to make the decisions.  
They have an overwhelmingly dominant role  
in the way life happens,

you know, what's done in the society.  
Within the economic system,  
by law and in principle, they dominate.  
The control over resources,  
and the need to satisfy their interests  
imposes very sharp constraints  
on the political system  
and the ideological system.  
When we talk about manufacturing of consent,  
whose consent is being manufactured?  
To start with, there are two different groups.  
We can get into more detail,  
but at the first level of approximation,  
there's two targets for propaganda.  
One is what is sometimes called  
the political class.  
There's maybe 20 per cent of the population  
which is relatively educated,  
more or less articulate.  
They'll play some kind of role  
in decision making.  
They're supposed to sort of participate  
in social life,  
either as managers, or cultural managers,  
like, say, teachers, and writers, and so on.  
They're supposed to vote.  
They're supposed to play some role in the way  
economic and political and cultural life goes on.  
Now, their consent is crucial.  
That's one group that has to be  
deeply indoctrinated.  
Then there's maybe 80 per cent  
of the population  
whose main function is to follow orders,  
and not to think, you know.  
Not to pay attention to anything,  
and they're the ones who usually pay the costs.  
All right, Professor Chomsky, Noam,  
you outlined a model - filters propaganda  
is sent through on its way to the public.  
Will you briefly outline those?  
It's basically an institutional  
analysis of the major media,  
what we call a propaganda model.

We're talking primarily about the national media, those media that set a general agenda that others more or less adhere to, to the extent that they even pay much attention to national or international affairs.

Now, the elite media are the sort of agenda-setting media.

The New York Times, The Washington Post, the major television channels, and so on.

They set the general framework.

Local media more or less adapt to their structure.

World news.

It's a sound bite, that says there's a beach head...

I think 628 is a good one.

This is the operative sound bite for us.

Got a minute for all the times.

I love this sound bite.

And they do this in all sorts of ways, by...

Two and a half minutes to air.

There is an unusual amount of attention today on the five nations of Central America.

This is democracy's diary.

Here, for our instruction, are triumphs and disasters,

the pattern of life's changing fabric.

Here is great journalism,

a revelation of the past, a guide to the present, and a clue to the future.

The New York Times is certainly the most important newspaper in the United States, and one could argue,

the most important newspaper in the world.

The New York Times plays an enormous role in shaping the perception of the current world on the part of

the politically active, educated classes.

Also, The New York Times has a special role, and I believe its editors probably feel

that they bear a heavy burden

in the sense that

The New York Times creates history.

What happened years ago may

have a bearing on what happens tomorrow.  
Millions of clippings  
are preserved in the Times' library,  
all indexed for instant use.  
A priceless archive of events,  
and the men who make them.  
That is, history is what appears in  
The New York Times archives.  
The place where people will go to find out  
what happened is The New York Times.  
Therefore it's extremely important,  
if history is to be shaped in an appropriate way,  
that certain things appear, certain things do not,  
certain questions be asked, others be ignored,  
and that issues be framed  
in a particular fashion.  
Now, in whose interests  
is history being so shaped?  
Well, I think that's not very difficult to answer.  
The process by which  
people make up their minds on this  
is a much more mysterious process  
than you would ever guess  
from reading Manufacturing Consent.  
There is a saying about legislation,  
that legislation is like making sausage.  
The less you know about how it's done,  
the better for your appetite.  
The same is true of this business.  
If you're in a conference  
in which decisions are being made  
on what to put on page one, or what not,  
you would get, I think, the impression  
that important decisions were being made  
in a flippant and frivolous way,  
but in fact, given the pressures of time  
to try to get things out,  
you resort to a kind of a shorthand,  
and you have to fill that paper up every day.  
It's curious in a kind of a mirror image way that  
Professor Chomsky is in total accord  
with Reed Irvine  
who at the right-wing end of the spectrum  
says exactly what Chomsky does

about the insinuating influence of the press,  
of the big media  
as "agenda setters", to use  
one of the great buzz words of the time,  
and, of course,  
Reed Irvine sees this as a let-wing conspiracy,  
of foisting liberal ideas in both domestic  
and foreign affairs on the American people.  
But in both cases,  
I think that the premise really is an insult  
to the intelligence of the people  
who consume news.  
Now, to eliminate confusion, all of this has  
nothing to do with liberal or conservative bias.  
According to the propaganda model, both  
liberal and conservative wings of the media,  
whatever those terms are supposed to mean,  
fall within the same framework of assumptions.  
In fact, if the system functions well, it ought  
to have a liberal bias, or at least appear to,  
because if it appears to have a liberal bias,  
that will serve to bound thought  
even more effectively.  
In other words, if the press is indeed adversarial  
and liberal, and all these bad things,  
then how can I go beyond it?  
They're already so extreme in their opposition  
to power that to go beyond it  
would be to take off from the planet,  
so therefore it must be that the presuppositions  
that are accepted in the liberal media  
are sacrosanct.  
Can't go beyond them.  
And a well-functioning system  
would in fact have a bias of that kind.  
The media would then serve to say, in effect:  
Thus far and no further.  
We ask what would you expect of those media  
on just relatively uncontroversial,  
guided-free market assumptions?  
And when you look at them,  
you find a number of major factors  
entering into  
determining what their products are.

These are what we call the filters -  
so one of them, for example, is ownership.  
Who owns them?  
The major agenda-setting media,  
after all, what are they?  
As institutions in the society, what are they?  
Well, in the first place  
they are major corporations.  
In fact, huge corporations.  
Furthermore, they're integrated with, and  
sometimes owned by, even larger corporations,  
conglomerates, so, for example,  
by Westinghouse, GE and so on.  
What I wanted to know was  
how specifically the elites control the media.  
That's like asking,  
"How do the elites control General Motors"?  
Why isn't that a question?  
I mean, General Motors is an institution of the  
elites. They don't have to control it. They own it.  
Except I guess, at a certain level I think...  
Like, I guess... I work with student press,  
so I know, like, reporters and stuff...  
Elites don't control the student press,  
but I'll tell you something -  
you try in the student press  
to do anything that breaks out of conventions,  
and you're going to have the whole business  
community around here down on your neck,  
and the university's going to get threatened,  
and you know...  
Maybe nobody'll pay any attention to you.  
That's possible.  
If you get to the point  
where they don't stop paying attention to you,  
the pressures'll start coming.  
Because there are people with power,  
there are people who own the country,  
and they're not going to  
let the country get out of control.  
What do you think about that?  
This is the old cabal theory that somewhere  
there's a room with a baize-covered desk,  
and there are a bunch of capitalists

sitting around pulling strings.  
These rooms don't exist.  
I hate to tell Noam Chomsky this.  
- You don't share that view?  
- It's the most absolute rubbish I've ever heard.  
It's the fashion in the universities.  
It's patent nonsense,  
and I think it's nothing but a fashion.  
It's a way that...  
intellectuals have of... of feeling like a clergy.  
There has to be something wrong.  
So, what we have in the first place  
is major corporations  
which are parts of even bigger conglomerates.  
Now, like any other corporation, they...  
they have a product which they sell to a market.  
The market is advertisers,  
that is, other businesses.  
What keeps the media functioning  
is not the audience.  
They make money from their advertisers, and  
remember, we're talking about the elite media,  
so they're trying to sell a good product,  
a product which raises advertising rates.  
And ask your friends in the advertising industry.  
That means  
that they want to adjust their audience  
to the more elite and affluent audience.  
That raises advertising rates.  
So what you have is institutions, corporations -  
big corporations -  
that are selling relatively privileged audiences  
to other businesses.  
Well, what point of view  
would you expect to come out of this?  
Without any further assumptions,  
what you'd predict is  
that what comes out is a picture of the world,  
a perception of the world,  
that satisfies the needs,  
and the interests, and the perceptions  
of the sellers, the buyers, and the product.  
Now, there are many other factors  
that press in the same direction.



If people try to enter the system  
who don't have that point of view,  
they're likely to be excluded  
somewhere along the way.  
After all, no institution is going to  
happily design a mechanism to self-destruct.  
That's not the way institutions function,  
so they all work to exclude, or marginalise,  
or eliminate dissenting voices,  
or alternative perspectives and so on  
because they're dysfunctional.  
They're dysfunctional to the institution itself.  
Do you think you've escaped  
the ideological indoctrination  
of the media and society that you grew up in?  
Have I? Often not.  
I mean, when I look back,  
and think of the things that I haven't done  
that I should have done, it's...  
it's very...  
it's...  
not a pleasant experience.  
So, what's the story  
of young Noam in the school yard?  
Yeah, another...  
I mean, that was a personal thing for me.  
I don't know why it should interest anyone else,  
but I do remember...  
- You drew certain conclusions.  
- It had a big influence on me.  
I remember when I was about six, I guess,  
first grade, there was the standard fat kid  
who everybody made fun of,  
and I remember in the school yard,  
he was on a...  
you know, standing right outside  
the school classroom,  
and a bunch of kids outside sort of taunting him,  
and... you know, and so on,  
and one of the kids actually brought over  
his older brother  
from third grade instead of first grade.  
Big kid.  
And he was going to beat him up or something,

and I remember going up to stand next to him,  
feeling somebody ought to... help him,  
and I did for a while, and then I got scared,  
and I went away,  
and I was very much ashamed of it afterwards,  
and sort of felt, you know...  
"I'm not going to do that again."  
That's a feeling that's stuck with me -  
you should stick with the underdog.  
And the shame remained.  
I should have stayed there.  
You were already established, you were a  
professor at MIT, you'd made a reputation,  
you had a terrific career ahead of you.  
You decided to become a political activist.  
Now, here is a classic case of somebody the  
institution does not seem to have filtered out.  
I mean, you were a good boy up until then,  
were you?  
Or you'd always been a slight rebel?  
Pretty much. I had been pretty much outside.  
You felt isolated and out of  
sympathy with the currents of American life,  
but a lot of people do that.  
Suddenly, in 1964,  
you decide, "I have to do something about this".  
What made you do that?  
That was a very conscious,  
and a very uncomfortable, decision,  
because I knew  
what the consequences would be.  
I was in a very favourable position.  
I had the kind of work I liked,  
we had a lively, exciting department,  
the field was going well, personal life was fine,  
I was living in a nice place, children growing up.  
Everything looked perfect,  
and I knew I was giving it up,  
and at that time, remember,  
it was not just giving talks.  
I became involved right away in resistance,  
and I expected to spend years in jail,  
and came very close to it.  
In fact,

my wife went back to graduate school in part  
as we assumed  
she would have to support the children.  
These were the expectations.  
And I recognised  
that if I returned to these interests  
which were the dominant interests  
of my own youth,  
life would become very uncomfortable.  
Because I know that in the United States  
you don't get sent to psychiatric prison,  
and they don't send a death squad after you  
and so on,  
but there are definite penalties  
for breaking the rules.  
So these were real decisions,  
and it simply seemed at that point  
that it was just hopelessly immoral not to.  
I'm Noam Chomsky, I'm on the faculty at MIT,  
and I've been getting  
more and more heavily involved  
in anti-war activities for the last few years.  
Beginning with writing articles,  
and making speeches,  
speaking to congressmen  
and that sort of thing,  
and gradually getting involved more and more  
directly in resistance activities of various sorts.  
I've come to the feeling myself  
that the most effective form of political action  
that is open to a responsible  
and concerned citizen at the moment  
is action that really involves direct resistance,  
refusal to take part in  
what I think are war crimes,  
to raise the domestic cost  
of American aggression overseas  
through non-participation, and support  
for those who are refusing to take part,  
in particular,  
direct resistance throughout the country.  
I think that we can see quite clearly  
some very, very serious defects and flaws  
in our society,

our level of culture, our institutions  
which are going to have to be corrected  
by operating outside of the framework  
that is commonly accepted.

I think we're going to have to  
find new ways of political action.

I rejoice in your disposition  
to argue the Vietnam question,  
especially when I recognise  
what an act of self-control this must involve.  
It really does.

- You're doing very well.

- You're doing very well.

- I lose my temper. Maybe not tonight.

Maybe not tonight...

because if you would

I'd smash you in the goddamn face.

That's a good reason for not losing your temper.

You say, "The war is simply an obscenity,  
a depraved act by weak and miserable men."

Including all of us.

Including myself. That's the next sentence.

Oh, sure, sure, sure.

Because you count everybody  
in the company of the guilty.

- I think that's true in this case.

- It's a theological observation.

No, I don't think so.

If everybody's guilty of everything,  
then nobody's guilty of anything.

No, I don't believe that.

I think the point that I'm trying to make,  
and I think ought to be made,  
is that the real...

at least to me -

I say this elsewhere in the book -

what seems to me a very, in a sense, terrifying  
aspect of our society and other societies  
is the equanimity and the detachment  
with which sane, reasonable, sensible people  
can observe such events.

I think that's more terrifying than  
the occasional Hitler or LeMay that crops up.  
These people would not be able

to operate were it not for the...  
this apathy and equanimity,  
and therefore I think that it's in some sense  
the sane, and reasonable, and tolerant people  
who share a very serious burden of guilt  
that they very easily  
throw on the shoulders of others  
who seem more extreme and more violent.  
New York City's so-called Canyon of Heroes.  
Americans were officially welcoming  
the troops home from the Persian Gulf war.  
It worked out really great for us.  
It just goes to show that we're a mighty nation,  
and we'll be there no matter what comes along.  
It's the strongest country in the world,  
and you got to be glad to live here.  
So, tell me what you feel  
about media coverage of the war.  
It was good. It got to be a bit much after a while,  
but I guess it was good to know everything.  
In Vietnam you didn't know a lot  
that was going on,  
but here you're pretty much  
up to the moment on everything,  
so... I guess it was good to be informed.  
For the first time,  
because of technology, we have the ability  
to be live from many locations  
around the globe,  
and because of the format -  
an all-news network -  
we can spend whatever time is necessary  
to bring the viewer  
the complete context  
of that day's portion of the story.  
And by context, I mean the institutional memory  
that is critical to understand why and how,  
and that's those who are analysts,  
and do commentary,  
and those who can explain.  
Slug that last piece...  
...1TN-Israel Post War.  
David Brinkley once said  
that you step in front of the camera,

and you get out of news business,  
and into show business,  
but nonetheless  
that should not in any way subtract or obscure  
the need for the basic standards  
of good journalism.  
Hang tight. Let me  
give you a lead for Salinger right now, OK?  
President Bush  
and Prime Minister Major have...  
...closed, or have almost rejected...  
the Soviet peace talk...  
peace efforts in Saudi Arabia.  
The door is being let open.  
Rick Salinger is standing by live in Riyadh.  
- All but closed.  
- Yeah. All but closed.  
Right.  
Accuracy, speed, a fair approach,  
honesty and integrity within the reporter  
to try and bring the truth,  
whatever the truth may be.  
Going to war is a serious business.  
In a totalitarian society, the dictator just says,  
"We're going to war", and everybody marches.  
And with this weapon  
of human brotherhood in our hands  
we are seeing the war for men's minds  
not as a battle of truth against lies,  
but as a lasting alliance pledged in faith  
with all those millions driving forward  
to create the true new order-  
the world order of the people first,  
the people before all.  
is, if the political leadership is committed to war  
they present reasons, and they've got  
a very heavy burden of proof to meet.  
Because a war is a very catastrophic affair,  
as it's been proved to be.  
Now, the role of the media at that point is to...  
is to present the relevant background.  
For example,  
the possibilities of peaceful settlement,  
such as what they may be,

have to be presented,  
and then to offer a forum... in fact encourage  
a forum of debate over this very dread decision  
to go to war, and in this case  
kill hundreds of thousands of people,  
and leave two countries wrecked, and so on.  
That never happened.  
There was never...  
Well, you know, when I say never,  
I mean 99.9 per cent of the discussion  
excluded the option of a peaceful settlement.  
To Washington's Office of War Information  
falls one of the most vital and constructive tasks  
of this war.  
This is a people's war,  
and to win it, the people ought to  
know as much about it as they can.  
This office will do its best to tell the truth,  
and nothing but the truth,  
both at home and abroad.  
The first weapon  
in this worldwide strategy of proof  
is the great machine of information  
represented by the free press  
with its powers of moulding public thought,  
and leading public action,  
with all its lifelines  
for the exchange of new ideas  
between fighting nations  
spread across the earth.  
Every time Bush would appear  
and say, "There will be no negotiations",  
there would be a hundred editorials  
the next day  
lauding him  
for going the last mile for diplomacy.  
If he said, "You can't reward an aggressor",  
instead of cracking up in ridicule  
the way people did in civilised sectors  
of the world like the whole Third World,  
the media still...  
"man of fantastic principle", you know.  
The invader of Panama, the only head of state  
who stands condemned

for aggression in the world,  
the guy who was head of the CIA  
during the Timor aggression,  
he says, "Aggressors can't be rewarded",  
the media just applaud it.  
The motion picture industry with  
its worldwide organisation of newsreel crews,  
invaluable for bringing into vivid focus  
the background drama  
and perspectives of the war.  
Mobilised too in this all-out struggle  
for men's minds are the radio networks,  
with all their experience in the swift reporting  
of great occasions and events.  
From every strategic centre  
and frontline stronghold  
their reporters are sending back  
the lessons of new tactics,  
new ways of war.  
The result was it's a media war.  
There's tremendous fakery all along the line.  
The UN is finally living up to its mission.  
"A wondrous sea change",  
The New York Times told us.  
The only wondrous sea change  
was that for once  
the United States didn't veto a Security Council  
Resolution against aggression.  
People don't want a war  
unless you have to have one,  
and would've known  
you don't have to have one.  
The media kept people from knowing that,  
and that means we went to war  
very much in the manner of a totalitarian state,  
thanks to the media subservience.  
That's the big story.  
Now, remember I'm not talking about  
a small radio station in Laramie.  
I'm talking about  
the national agenda-setting media.  
If you run a radio news show in Laramie,  
chances are very strong that you pick up  
what was in The Times that morning,



and you decide that's the news.

In fact, if you follow the AP wires,  
you find it in the afternoon.

They send across tomorrow's front page  
of The New York Times.

That's so that everybody knows  
what the news is.

The perceptions and perspectives  
and so on are sort of transmitted down,  
not to the precise detail, but the general picture  
is pretty much transmitted elsewhere.

The foreign news comes here  
to the Foreign News desk.

The editor is Bob Hanley.

Bob, I suppose you get far more foreign news  
than you can possibly use in the paper.

Yes, we do. We get a great deal more  
than we can accommodate in a day.

Your job is to weed it out, I suppose.

This is the selection centre, as it were,  
and when I have selected it

I pass it across the desk  
to one or the other of the sub-editors.

It comes back to me,  
and on this chart I design the page.

That is page one and page two.

Fine, Bob. Thank you very much.

- Why do you want to make a film about Media?

- Well...

Such a nice, quiet town.

It's a beautiful town.

We're making a film about the mass media,  
so we thought what a good place to come.

Want to know where they got the name?

Maybe you could start  
by introducing yourself.

Yes, I'm Bodhon Senkow.

I'm the main street manager and executive  
director of the Media Business Authority,  
and we are in Media, Delaware County,  
in the southeastern part of Pennsylvania.

Media is called "Everybody's hometown".

The motto was developed  
as a way to promote the community.

We're a very high  
promotion-conscious community.  
When you walk through Media,  
you'll be treated very well,  
and you find that people have taken the idea  
of being everybody's hometown to heart.  
The local paper, The Talk of the Town...  
The Town Talk.

- Do you read that?

- Yes, I read The Town Talk.

What do you think the difference is between  
The Wall Street Journal and The Talk?

Well, I mean, The Town Talk  
is completely local news,  
and it's fun, it's nice to read, it's interesting.  
You read about your neighbours, see what's  
going on in the district, and things like that.  
We're in business to make bucks,  
just like the big daily newspapers,  
and like the big radio stations,  
and we do quite well,  
and rightfully so, cos we work very hard at it.  
I just wanna show you a copy of the paper here,  
the way it is this week.

It's plastic-wrapped on all four sides.

Weatherproof,  
and hung on everybody's front door.  
And many times you'll find this paper runs  
well over 100 pages a week.

You have to remember there are five editions.

This happens to be  
the Central Delaware County edition,  
which is the edition  
that covers Media, Pennsylvania.

What you see here  
is the advertising and composition department.

- Say hello, guys, will you?

- Hi.

And what we're doing now is we're putting  
red dots, green dots, and yellow dots  
up on the map wherever there is a store.

The red dots are the stores  
that don't advertise with us at all.

The green dots are the ones

that advertise with us every week,  
and the yellow dots  
are the ones that run sporadically.  
Now, we have computer print-outs  
of every one of these stores,  
and what we do is we take the print-outs  
of all the red dots which are the bad guys,  
and our idea is to turn these red dots into yellow  
dots, and turn the yellow dots into green dots,  
and eventually make them all green dots,  
so 100 per cent of the stores  
and 100 per cent of the merchants and service  
people advertise in our paper every week.  
That way, we won't have any more red dots.  
I guess there'll always be a few,  
but I have high hopes  
there'll be a lot more green ones  
than red when we're finished.

Hi, I'm Jim Morgan.

I'm with the Corporate Relations Department  
of The New York Times,  
and I'm here to take you on a tour  
of The New York Times, so... let's begin.  
So, they're just taking audio in here, yeah.  
They're taking audio in here.  
Audio. No cameras, no still.  
We went over this quite thoroughly.  
They don't even take a still camera in here.  
We're in the composing room.  
This is where the pages are composed.  
This is the typographical area.  
This might seem big, but it is average.  
In fact, below average.  
Our 60 per cent might include on some days  
maybe...  
where the rest of the newspaper  
is weighted much heavier news to advertising,  
but the paper in its entirety every day,  
large or small,  
is 60 ads, 40 news.  
Well, that completes our tour  
of The New York Times,  
and I hope you found it informative, and...  
...I hope that you read The New York Times

every day of your life from now on.  
There are other media too  
whose basic social role is quite different.  
It's diversion.  
There's the real mass media, the kinds  
that are aimed at the guys who... Joe Six-pack.  
That kind. The purpose of those media  
is just to dull people's brains.  
This is an over-simplification,  
but for the 80 per cent or whatever they are,  
the main thing for them is to divert them,  
to get them to watch National Football League,  
and to worry about the... you know...  
mother with child with six heads,  
or whatever you pick up in the... you know...  
in the thing that you pick  
up on the supermarket stands, and so on.  
Or, you know, look at astrology, or get involved  
in fundamentalist stuff, or something.  
Just get them away, you know.  
Get them away from things that matter.  
And for that,  
it's important to reduce their capacity to think.  
The sports section is handled  
in another special department.  
The sports reporter must be a specialist  
in his knowledge of sports.  
He gets his story right at the sporting event,  
and often sends it in to his paper play by play.  
Sports.  
That's another crucial example  
of the indoctrination system in my view.  
For one thing, because it... you know,  
it offers people something to pay attention to  
that's of no importance.  
- That keeps them from worrying about...  
...keeps them from worrying  
about things that matter to their lives  
they might have some idea  
about doing something about.  
And in fact, it's striking to see the intelligence  
that's used by ordinary people in sports.  
You listen to radio stations where people call in.  
They have the most exotic information

and understanding  
about all kinds of arcane issues,  
and the press undoubtedly does a lot with this.  
I remember in high school - I was pretty old -  
I suddenly asked myself at one point,  
"Why do I care  
if my high school team wins the football game?"  
I mean, I don't know anybody on the team,  
you know.  
It had nothing to do with me.  
I mean, why am I cheering for my team?  
It doesn't make any sense.  
But the point is, it does make sense.  
It's a way of building up irrational attitudes  
of submission to authority,  
and, you know, group cohesion behind...  
you know, leadership elements.  
In fact, it's training in irrational jingoism.  
That's also a feature of competitive sports.  
I think...  
If you look closely at these things,  
I think, typically, they do have functions,  
and that's why  
energy is devoted to supporting them,  
and creating a basis for them,  
and advertisers are willing to pay for them.  
I'd like to ask you a question  
about the methodology  
and study in the propaganda model,  
and how would one go about doing that?  
Well, there are a number of ways to proceed.  
One obvious way is to try to find  
more or less paired examples.  
History doesn't offer true controlled  
experiments,  
but it often comes pretty close.  
So one can find atrocities or abuses of one sort  
that on the one hand are committed  
by official enemies, and on the other hand  
are committed by friends and allies,  
or by the favoured state itself.  
By the United States, in the US' case.  
The question is whether the media  
accept the government framework,

or whether they use the same agenda,  
same set of questions,  
the same criteria for dealing with the two cases  
as any honest outside observer would do.  
If you think America's involvement  
in the war in Southeast Asia is over, think again.  
The Khmer Rouge are the  
most genocidal people on the face of the earth.  
Peter Jennings

Reporting From The Killing Fields.  
Thursday.

I mean, the great act of genocide  
in the modern period is Pol Pot.  
That atrocity...

I think it would be hard to find any example  
of a comparable outrage and outpouring of fury,  
and so on and so forth,  
so that's one atrocity.

It just happens that in that case,  
history did set up a controlled experiment.

Ever heard of a place called East Timor?

- I can't say that I have.

- Where?

- East Timor.

- No.

Well, it happens that right at that time  
there was another atrocity.

Very similar in character,  
but differing in one respect -  
we were responsible for it, not Pol Pot.

Hello. I'm Louise Penney,  
and this is Radio Noon.

If you've been listening to the programme  
fairly regularly over the last few months,  
you'll know East Timor has come  
into the conversation more than once,  
particularly when we were talking about foreign  
aid, and also the war, and a new world order.

People wondered why,  
if the UN was serious about a new world order,  
no-one was doing anything to help East Timor.

The area was invaded by Indonesia in 1975.

There are reports of atrocities  
against the Timorese people,

and yet Canada and other nations  
have consistently  
voted against UN Resolutions  
to end the occupation.  
Today, we're going to take a closer look  
at East Timor,  
what's happened to it, and why the international  
community is doing nothing to help.  
One of the people who have been most active  
is Elaine Brire,  
a photojournalist from British Columbia.  
She's the founder of  
the East Timor Alert Network,  
and she joins me in the studio now.

- Hello.

- Hi.

One tragedy compounding a tragedy  
is that a lot of people  
don't know much about East Timor.

- Where is it?

- East Timor is just north of Australia.

About 420 km, and it's right between  
the Indian and Pacific oceans.

Just south of East Timor is a deep-water sea  
lane perfect for US submarines to pass through.  
There's also huge oil reserves there.

One of the unique things  
about East Timor is that  
it's truly one of the last surviving  
ancient civilisations in that part of the world.

The Timorese spoke  
amongst a group of 700,000 people.

Today less than five per cent of the world's  
people live like the East Timorese.

Basically self-reliant, they live really outside  
of the global economic system.

Small societies like the East Timorese are much  
more democratic and much more egalitarian,  
and there's much more sharing  
of power and wealth.

Before the Indonesians invaded,  
most people lived in small rural villages.

The old people in the village  
were like the university.

They passed on tribal wisdom  
from generation to generation.  
Children grew up  
in a safe, stimulating, nurturing environment.  
A year after I left East Timor, I was appalled  
when I heard Indonesia had invaded.  
It didn't want a small, independent country  
setting an example for the region.  
East Timor was a Portuguese colony.  
Indonesia had no claim to it,  
and in fact stated that they had no claim to it.  
During the period of colonisation,  
there was a good deal of politicisation  
that different groups developed.  
A civil war broke out in August '75.  
It ended up in a victory for Fretilin,  
which was one of the groupings,  
described as populist Catholic in character,  
with some typical leftist rhetoric.  
Indonesia at once started intervening.  
What's the situation?  
When did those ships come in?  
They start arriving since Monday.  
Six, seven boats together,  
very close to our border.  
They're not there just for fun.  
They're preparing a massive operation.  
Something happened here  
last night that moved us very deeply.  
It was so far outside our experience  
as Australians  
that we'll find it very difficult  
to convey to you, but we'll try.  
Sitting on woven mats under a thatched roof  
in a hut with no walls  
we were the target of a barrage of questioning  
from men who know they may die tomorrow,  
and cannot understand  
why the rest of the world does not care.  
That's all they want -  
for the United Nations to care about  
what is happening here.  
The emotion here last night was so strong  
that we, all three of us, felt we should



be able to reach out into the warm night air  
and touch it.

Greg Shackleton, at an unnamed village  
which we will remember forever  
in Portuguese Timor.

Ford and Kissinger visited Jakarta,  
I think it was December 5th.

We know that they had requested that  
Indonesia delay the invasion until after they let  
because it would be too embarrassing.

And within hours, I think, after they let,  
the invasion took place on December 7th.

What happened on December 7th in 1975,  
is just one of the great evil deeds of history.

Early in the morning  
bombs begin dropping on Dili.

The number of troops that invaded Dili that day  
almost outnumbered

the entire population of the town.

And for two or three weeks,  
they just killed people.

This Council must consider Indonesian  
aggression against East Timor  
as the main issue of the discussion.

When the Indonesians invaded,  
the UN reacted as it always does,  
calling for sanctions and condemnation  
and so on.

Various watered-down resolutions  
were passed,

but the US were very clearly  
not going to allow anything to work.

So the Timorese were fleeing into the jungles  
by the thousands.

By late 1977, '78

Indonesia set up receiving centres  
for those Timorese

who came out of the jungle waving white flags.

Those the Indonesians thought more educated,  
or suspected of belonging to Fretilin or other  
opposition parties were immediately killed.

They took women aside,  
and flew them off to Dili in helicopters  
for use by the Indonesian soldiers.

They killed children and babies.  
But in those days their main strategy  
and their main weapon was starvation.  
By 1978,  
it was approaching really genocidal levels.  
The church and other sources  
estimated about 200,000 people killed.  
The US backed it all the way.  
The US provided 90 per cent of the arms.  
Right after the invasion,  
arms shipments were stepped up.  
When the Indonesians  
actually began to run out of arms in 1978,  
the Carter administration moved in  
and increased arms sales,  
and other western countries did the same.  
Canada, England... Holland...  
Everybody who could make a buck  
was in there,  
trying to make sure  
they could kill more Timorese.  
There is no western concern  
for issues of aggression,  
atrocities, human rights abuses and so on  
if there's a profit to be made from them.  
Nothing could show it more clearly  
than this case.  
It wasn't that nobody had heard of East Timor.  
Remember there was plenty of coverage  
in The New York Times and elsewhere  
before the invasion.  
The reason was there was concern  
over the break-up of the Portuguese empire  
and what that would mean.  
There was fear it would lead to independence,  
or Russian influence, or whatever.  
After the Indonesians invaded,  
the coverage dropped.  
There was some,  
but it was strictly from the point of view  
of the State Department  
and Indonesian generals.  
Never a Timorese refugee.  
As the atrocities reached their maximum peak

in 1978,  
when it really was becoming genocidal,  
coverage dropped to zero  
in the United States and Canada,  
the two countries I've looked at closely.  
Literally dropped to zero.  
All this was going on at exactly the same time  
as the great protest of outrage over Cambodia.  
The level of atrocities was comparable.  
In relative terms  
it was probably considerably higher in Timor.  
It turns out that right in Cambodia in the  
preceding years, 1970 through 1975,  
there was also a comparable atrocity  
for which we were responsible.  
The major US attack against Cambodia  
started with the bombings of the early 1970s.  
They reached a peak in 1973,  
and they continued up till 1975.  
They were directed against inner Cambodia.  
Very little is known about them,  
because the media wanted it to be secret.  
They knew it was going on. They just  
didn't want to know what was happening.  
The CIA estimates about 600,000 killed  
during that five-year period,  
which is mostly either US bombing,  
or a US-sponsored war.  
So that's pretty significant killing.  
Also, the conditions  
in which it let Cambodia were such  
that high US officials predicted that about  
a million people would die in the aftermath  
just from hunger and disease  
because of the wreckage of the country.  
Pretty good evidence  
from US government and scholarly sources  
that the intense bombardment  
was a significant force - maybe a critical force -  
in building up peasant support for the Khmer  
Rouge who were a pretty marginal element.  
Well, that's just the wrong story.  
After 1975,  
atrocities continued,

and that became the right story -  
now they're being carried out by the bad guys.  
Well, it was bad enough.  
In fact, current estimates are... well, they vary.  
The CIA claim 50,000 to 100,000 people killed,  
and maybe another million or so  
who died one way or another.  
Michael Vickery is the one person  
who's given a really close, detailed analysis.  
His figure is maybe  
Others like Ben Kiernan suggest higher figures,  
but so far without a detailed analysis.  
Anyway, it was terrible.  
No doubt about it.  
Although the atrocities - the real atrocities -  
were bad enough,  
they weren't quite good enough  
for the purposes needed.  
Within a few weeks  
after the Khmer Rouge takeover,  
The New York Times  
was already accusing them of genocide.  
At that point, maybe a couple of hundred  
or a few thousand people had been killed.  
And from then on,  
it was a drum beat, a chorus of genocide.  
The big bestseller on Cambodia and Pol Pot  
is called Murder of a Gentle Land.  
Up until April 17th, 1975,  
it was a gentle land of peaceful, smiling people,  
and after that some horrible holocaust  
took place.  
Very quickly,  
a figure of two million killed was hit upon.  
In fact,  
what was claimed was that the Khmer Rouge  
boast of having murdered two million people.  
Facts are very dramatic.  
In the case of  
atrocities committed by the official enemy,  
extraordinary show of outrage,  
exaggeration, no evidence required.  
Faked photographs are fine, anything goes.  
Also a vast amount of lying.

I mean, an amount of lying  
that would have made Stalin cringe.  
It was fraudulent,  
and we know that it was fraudulent  
by looking at the response  
to comparable atrocities  
for which the United States was responsible.  
Early '70s Cambodia, and Timor too -  
very closely paired examples.  
Well, the media response was quite dramatic.  
Back in 1980,  
I taught a course at Tufts University.  
Well, Chomsky came around to this class,  
and he made a very powerful case  
that the press underplayed the fact  
that the Indonesian government annexed  
this former Portuguese colony in 1975,  
and that if you compare it for example with  
Cambodia where there was acreage of things,  
this was a communist atrocity, whereas  
the other was not a communist atrocity.  
Well, I got quite interested in this,  
and I went to talk to  
the then deputy foreign editor of The Times,  
and I said, "You know,  
we've had very poor coverage on this".  
He said, "You're right. There are a dozen  
atrocities around the world we don't cover.  
This is one for various reasons", so I took it up.  
I was working as a reporter and writer for  
a small alternative radio programme  
in upstate New York,  
and we received audio tapes  
of interviews with Timorese leaders,  
and we were quite surprised  
that given the level of American involvement  
that there was not more coverage,  
indeed practically any coverage,  
of the large-scale Indonesian killing  
in the mainstream American media.  
We formed a small group of people  
to try to monitor the situation  
and see what we could do over time  
to alert public opinion

to what was actually happening in East Timor. There were literally about half a dozen people who simply dedicated themselves with great commitment to getting this story to break through.

And they reached a couple of people in Congress.

They got to me, for example. I was able to testify at the UN and write some things. They kept at it, kept at it, kept at it. Whatever is known about the subject mainly... essentially comes from their work. There's not much else.

I wrote first an editorial called An Unjust War in East Timor.

It had a map, and it said exactly what had happened. We then ran a dozen other editorials on it. They were read, entered in the Congressional Record, several Congressmen took up the cause, and something was done in Congress as a result. The fact the editorial page of The New York Times on Christmas Eve published that editorial put our work on a very different level, and it gave a great deal of legitimacy to something that we were trying to... advance for a long time, and that was the idea and the reality that a major tragedy was unfolding in East Timor.

If one takes literally various... theories that Professor Chomsky puts out, one would feel that there is a tacit conspiracy between the establishment press and the government in Washington to focus on certain things, and ignore certain things.

So that if we broke the rules that we would instantly get a reaction, a sharp reaction from the overlords in Washington who would say, "Hey, what are you doing speaking up on East Timor?"

We're trying to keep that quiet".  
We didn't hear a thing.  
What we did hear, and this was quite interesting,  
is that there was a guy named Arnold Kohen,  
and he became a one-person lobby.  
I appreciate the nice things  
that Karl Meyer said about me in his interview,  
but I object to the notion that a one-man lobby  
was formed, or anything like that.  
I think that if there weren't a large network  
composed of  
the American Catholic Bishops' Conference,  
composed of other church groups,  
human rights groups,  
composed of simply concerned citizens,  
and others, and a network of concern  
within the news media,  
I think it would have been impossible  
to do anything at all at any time,  
and it would have been impossible to sustain  
things for as long as they've been sustained.  
Professor Chomsky and many people  
who engage in this kind of press analysis  
have one thing in common - most of them  
have never worked for a newspaper,  
many of them know very little  
about how newspapers work.  
When Chomsky came around, he had with him  
a file of all the coverage  
in The New York Times, The Washington Post,  
and other papers of East Timor,  
and he would go to the meticulous degree  
that if, for example, The London Times  
had a piece on East Timor,  
and then it appeared in The New York Times,  
that if a paragraph was cut out,  
he'd compare, and he'd say,  
"Look - this key paragraph right near the end  
which is what tells the whole story  
was let out  
of The New York Times' version  
of the London Times' thing."  
There was a story in The London

Times which was pretty accurate.  
The New York Times revised it radically.  
They didn't just leave a paragraph out.  
They revised it,  
and gave it a totally different cast.  
It was then picked up by Newsweek,  
giving it The New York Times' cast.  
It ended up being a whitewash,  
whereas the original was an atrocity story.  
So, I said to Chomsky at the time,  
"Well, it may be that you're misinterpreting  
ignorance, haste, deadline pressure, etcetera,  
for some kind of determined effort  
to suppress an element of the story."  
He said, "Well, if it happened once,  
or twice, or three times  
I might agree with you,  
but if it happens a dozen times,  
Mr Meyer,  
I think there's something else at work".  
It's not a matter of happening one time,  
two, five, a hundred. It happened all the time.  
I said, "Professor Chomsky, having been  
in this business, it happens a dozen times.  
These are very imperfect institutions".  
When they did give coverage,  
it was from the point of view of...  
it was a whitewash of the United States.  
Now, you know, that's not an error.  
That's systematic, consistent behaviour,  
in this case without even any exception.  
This is a much more subtle process...  
...than you get...  
...in the kind of sledgehammer rhetoric  
of the people that make an A to B equation  
between what the government does,  
what people think, and what newspapers say.  
That...  
That sometimes what The Times does  
can make an enormous difference.  
At other times, it has no influence whatsoever.  
So...  
one of the greatest tragedies of our age  
is still happening in East Timor.



The Indonesians have killed  
up to a third of the population.  
They're in concentration camps.  
They conduct large-scale military campaigns  
against the people who are resisting,  
campaigns with names like Operation  
Eradicate,  
or Operation Clean Sweep.  
Timorese women are subjected  
to a forced birth control programme,  
in addition to bringing in a constant stream  
of Indonesian settlers to take over the land.  
Whenever people are brave enough  
to take to the streets in demonstrations  
or show the least sign of resistance,  
they just massacre them.  
It's sort of like Indonesia, if we allow them  
to continue to stay in East Timor -  
the international community -  
they will simply digest East Timor  
and turn it into...  
they're trying to turn it into cash crop.  
I mean, this is way beyond just demonstrating  
this subservience of the media to power.  
I mean, they have real complicity in genocide  
in this case.  
The reason that the atrocities can go on  
is because nobody knows about them.  
If anyone knew about them,  
there'd be protests and pressure to stop them.  
So therefore, by suppressing the facts,  
the media are making a major contribution  
to some of... probably the worst act of genocide  
since the Holocaust.  
You say that what the media do is to  
ignore certain kinds of atrocities  
that are committed by us and our friends,  
and to play up enormously atrocities  
that are committed by them and our enemies.  
And you posit that  
there's a test of integrity and moral honesty  
which is to have  
a kind of equality of treatment of corpses.  
I mean, every dead person should be in

principle equal to every other dead person.  
That's not what I say.  
- I'm glad it's not, because it's not what you do.  
Of course it's not what I do.  
Nor would I say it. In fact, I say the opposite.  
What I say is we should be  
responsible for our own actions primarily.  
Because your method is not only  
to ignore the corpses created by them,  
but also to ignore corpses  
that are created by neither side,  
that are irrelevant to your ideological agenda.  
- That's totally untrue.  
- Let me give you an example.  
Um... one of your own causes that you take very  
seriously is the cause of the Palestinians.  
And a Palestinian corpse  
weighs very heavily on your conscience,  
and yet a Kurdish corpse does not.  
That's not true at all. I've been involved  
in Kurdish support groups for years.  
That's... It's simply false.  
Just ask the Kurdish...  
Ask the people who are involved in...  
You know, they come to me,  
I sign their petitions, and so on and so forth.  
If you look at the things we've written.  
Let's take a look...  
I'm not Amnesty International.  
I can't do everything.  
I'm a single human person.  
But if you read... Take a look, say, at the book  
that Edward Herman and I wrote on this topic.  
In it we discuss three kinds of atrocities -  
what we call benign bloodbaths,  
which nobody cares about,  
constructive bloodbaths,  
which are the ones we like,  
and nefarious bloodbaths,  
which are the ones the bad guys do.  
The principle that I think we ought to follow  
is not the one that you stated.  
You know, it's a very simple, ethical point.  
You're responsible for

the predictable consequences of your actions.  
You're not responsible for the predictable  
consequences of somebody else's actions.  
The most important thing for me and for you  
is to think about  
the consequences of your actions.  
What can you affect?  
These are the things to keep in mind.  
These are not just academic exercises.  
We're not analysing the media on Mars,  
or in the 18th Century, or something like that.  
We're dealing with real human beings who are  
suffering, and dying, and being tortured,  
and starving because of policies  
that we are involved in.  
We as citizens of democratic societies  
are directly involved in and are responsible for,  
and what the media are doing is ensuring  
that we do not act on our responsibilities,  
and that the interests of power are served,  
not the needs of the suffering people,  
and not even the needs of the American people  
who would be horrified  
if they realised  
the blood that's dripping from their hands  
because of the way they're allowing themselves  
to be deluded and manipulated by the system.  
What about the Third World?  
Well, despite everything,  
and it's pretty ugly and awful,  
these struggles are not over.  
The struggle for freedom and independence  
never is completely over.  
Their courage, in fact, is really remarkable.  
Amazing.  
I've personally had the privilege,  
and it is a privilege, of witnessing it a few times,  
in villages in Southeast Asia  
and Central America,  
and recently in the occupied West Bank,  
and it is astonishing to see.  
And it's always amazing -  
at least to me it's amazing.  
I can't understand it.

It's also very moving and inspiring.  
In fact, it's kind of awe-inspiring.  
Now, they rely very crucially  
on a very slim margin for survival  
that's provided by dissidence and turbulence  
within the imperial societies,  
and how large that margin is  
is for us to determine.  
In today's On The Spot assignment,  
we're going to see  
just what's behind the making of movies.  
The director and the crew  
are shooting a documentary film.  
Let's take a closer look.  
Bob, this word "documentary",  
what would you say is the difference between  
a documentary film and a feature movie?  
Well, there are a good many differences.  
One would be length. Generally speaking,  
documentaries are shorter than feature films.  
Also, documentaries have something to say  
in the way of a message.  
They are informational films.  
Also, another term that's used interchangeably  
with documentary is the word "actuality".  
Bob, is this the thing you hold up  
in front of the camera before each scene?  
This is a clapperboard, yes.  
This identifies on the visual camera  
the scene number and the take number.  
And also, as you heard, on the soundtrack,  
the editor back at the studio  
puts the two pieces of film together,  
matches where the lips of the clapper meet,  
and there you are in synch.  
Before the break, you were mentioning  
the media putting forth the information  
that the power elite want.  
I'm not sure if I understand.  
How does the power elite do this?  
Why do we stand for it?  
Why does it work so well?  
Well, I think...  
I mean, there are really two questions here.

One - is this picture of the media true?  
And there, you have to look at the evidence.  
I've given one example,  
and that shouldn't convince anybody.  
One has to look at a lot of evidence  
to see whether this is true.  
I think anyone who investigates it will find out  
that the evidence to support it  
is simply overwhelming.  
It's probably one of the best supported  
conclusions in the social sciences.  
The other question is, how does it work?  
- Noam Chomsky?  
- I'm the... I'm the media guy.  
What would you like?  
I got you an International Herald Tribune.  
Anything in a Western language which doesn't  
include Dutch. What have you got?  
- Financial Times.  
- Financial Times, absolutely.  
That's the only paper that tells the truth.  
You get the one  
where they've been debating back and forth?  
NRC Handelsblad.  
Handelsblad?  
- Train to?  
- Ammerswurth.  
Well, this evening's programme  
is scheduled as a debate,  
which puzzled me all the way through.  
There are some problems.  
One problem is that  
no proposition has been set forth.  
As I understand "debate",  
people advocate or oppose something.  
Rather more sensibly,  
a topic has been proposed for discussion.  
Er... the topic is manufacture of consent.  
It's unusual  
for a member of the government  
to debate with a professor in public.  
It hasn't happened in Holland before.  
I don't think it often happens elsewhere.  
Mr Bolkestein, the floor is yours.

Now, we all know  
that a theory can never be established  
merely by examples.  
It can only be established  
by showing some internal, inherent logic.  
Professor Chomsky has not done so.  
Professor Chomsky?  
He's right to say you can't just pick  
examples. You have to do them rationally.  
That's why we compared examples.  
The truth is that things are not as simple  
as Professor Chomsky maintains.  
Another of Professor Chomsky's case studies  
concerns the treatment that  
Cambodia has received in the Western press.  
Here, he goes badly off the rails.  
We didn't discuss Cambodia.  
We compared Cambodia with East Timor,  
two very closely paired examples.  
And we gave approximately  
in Political Economy of Human Rights,  
including a reference to every article  
we could discover about Cambodia.  
Many Western intellectuals  
do not like to face the facts  
and balk at the conclusions  
that any untutored person would draw.  
Many people are very irritated  
by the fact that we exposed  
the extraordinary deceit over Cambodia  
and paired it with the simultaneous suppression  
of the US-supported,  
ongoing atrocities in Timor.  
People don't like that.  
For one thing, we were challenging  
the right to lie in defence of the state.  
For another thing, we were exposing  
the apologetics and support  
for actual ongoing atrocities.  
That doesn't make you popular.  
Where did he learn  
about the atrocities in East Timor  
or in Central America,  
if not in the same free press

which he so derides?

You can find out where I learned about them  
by looking at my footnotes -  
from Human Rights reports,  
from church reports, from refugee studies,  
and extensively, from the Australian press.  
Nothing from the American press -  
it was silenced.

Chairman, this is an attempt  
at intellectual intimidation.

These are the ways of the bully.

Professor Chomsky uses  
the oldest debating trick on record.

He erects a man of straw  
and proceeds to hack away at him.

Professor Chomsky calls this  
the "manufacture of consent".

I call it "the creation of consensus".

In Holland, we call it "Draagvlak",  
which means "foundation".

Professor Chomsky thinks it is deceitful.

But it is not.

In a representative democracy,  
it means winning people for one's point of view.

But I do not think

that Professor Chomsky believes  
in representative democracy.

I think he believes in direct democracy.

With Rosa Luxemburg,

he longs for the creative, spontaneous,  
self-correcting force of mass action.

That is the vision of the anarchist.

It is also a boy's dream.

Those who believe in democracy and freedom  
have a serious task ahead of them.

What they should be doing, in my view,  
is dedicating their efforts to helping

the despised common people

to struggle for their rights

and to realise the democratic goals

that constantly surface throughout history.

They should be serving not power and privilege  
but rather their victims.

Freedom and democracy are, by now,

not merely values to be treasured.  
They are quite possibly  
the prerequisite to survival.  
It's a conspiracy theory, pure and simple.  
It is not borne out by the facts.  
Mr Chairman, I have to go to Amsterdam.  
If you'll excuse me, I'm leaving.  
One thing is sure.  
Their consent has not been manufactured  
tonight.  
There is nothing more remote from  
what I'm discussing than a conspiracy theory.  
If I give an analysis  
of, say, the economic system,  
and I point out that General Motors tries  
to maximise profit and market share,  
that's not a conspiracy theory.  
That's an institutional analysis.  
That has nothing to do with conspiracies.  
And that's precisely the sense  
in which we're talking about the media.  
The phrase "conspiracy theory"  
is one that's constantly brought up.  
And I think its effect, simply,  
is to discourage institutional analysis.  
You think there's a connection  
about what the government wants us to know  
and what the media tell us?  
It's not Communism,  
but I think, to a certain point,  
it is sensitised.  
They don't always tell the truth,  
the way it goes, huh?  
You got that right.  
Do you think the information you're getting  
from this paper is biased in any way?  
Oh, yeah.  
I think, by and large, it's well done.  
You get both sides of the stories.  
You get the liberal side  
and the conservative side, so to speak.  
I don't think you get a very balanced picture  
because they only have 20 seconds  
for a news item, or whatever,



and they're going to pick out, a highlight.  
Every network is going to cover the same  
highlight. And that's all you're going to see.  
You get what they want you to hear.  
You think they're biased in some way, then?  
Nah.

Here we go.

See you later.

Is it possible for the lights to get a little brighter  
so I can see somebody out there?

Yeah, for the last hour and 41 minutes,  
you've been whining about how the elite  
and how the government have been...

using thought control  
to keep radicals like yourself  
out of the public limelight.

Now, you're here.

I don't see any CIA men waiting to drag you off.  
You were in the paper. That's where everyone  
here heard you were coming from, in the paper.  
I'm sure they're going to publish your comments  
in the paper.

In a lot of countries, you would have been shot  
for what you have done today.

So, what are you whining about?

We are allowing you to speak.

I don't see any thought control.

First of all, I haven't said one word  
about my being kept out of the limelight.

The way it works here is quite different.

I don't think you heard what I was saying.

The way it works here is,

that there is a system of shaping and control,  
which gives a certain perception of the world.

I gave one example. I'll give you sources  
where you can find thousands more.

And it has nothing to do with me.

It has to do with marginalising the public  
and ensuring that they don't get in the way  
of elites who are supposed to run things  
without interference.

In a review of *The Chomsky Reader*,  
it was written that,

"As he's been forced to the margins,

he's become strident and rigid."  
Do you feel this categorisation  
of your later writings is accurate  
and that you've been a victim  
of this sort of process you've been describing?  
Well, the business about being forced...  
Other people will have to judge  
about the stridency. I won't...  
I don't believe it.  
But that's for other people to judge.  
But the matter of being forced  
to the margins is one of fact.  
The fact is the opposite of what is claimed.  
The fact is, it's much easier to gain access  
to even the major media now  
than it was 20 years ago.  
You've dealt in such unpopular truths  
and have been such a lonely figure  
as a consequence of that.  
Do you ever regret  
either that you took the stand you took,  
have written the things you have written,  
or that we had listened to you earlier?  
Er... I don't. I mean, there are particular things  
which I would do differently.  
Because you think about things differently.  
- But, in general, I would say I do not regret it.  
- Do you like being controversial?  
No, it's a nuisance.  
Because this medium pays little attention  
to dissenters,  
not just Noam Chomsky,  
but most dissenters do not get  
much of a hearing in this medium.  
It's understandable. They wouldn't be  
performing their societal function  
if they allowed favoured truths to be challenged.  
Now, notice that's not true  
when I cross the border anywhere.  
So I have easy access to the media  
in just about every other country in the world.  
That's for a number of reasons.  
One is that I'm primarily talking about the US.  
And it's much less threatening.

Your view there is that the militarisation of the American economy essentially has come about because there are not other means of controlling the US people. In a democratic society. It may be paradoxical, but the freer the society is, the more it's necessary to resort to devices like induced fear.

OK, I'll go along with that. Arguably, he is the most important intellectual alive today. And if my programme can give him or three-quarters of a million people listening, I'll be delighted.

OK, Professor, in your own time. Wartime planners understood that actual war aims should not be revealed. A part of the reason why the media in Canada and Belgium, etc are more open is that it just doesn't matter that much what people think. It matters very much what the politically articulate sectors of the population, those narrow minorities, think and do in the United States, because of its overwhelming dominance on the world scene.

But that's also a reason for wanting to work here. ...what we might call the fifth freedom - the freedom to rob, exploit, and dominate and to curb mischief by any feasible means. It's "conclude", not "include".

From the top. The United States is ideologically narrower in general than other countries. Furthermore, the structure of the American media is such as to pretty much eliminate critical discussion. Our guests are as far apart on the Contra question as American intellectuals can be. If we had the slightest concern

with democracy,  
which we do not, in our foreign affairs,  
and never have,  
we would turn to countries  
where we have influence like El Salvador.  
Now, in El Salvador,  
they don't call the Archbishop bad names.  
What they do is murder him.  
They do not censor the press.  
They wipe the press out. They sent the army in  
to blow up the church radio station.  
The editor of the independent paper was found  
in a ditch, mutilated, and cut to pieces.

- Don't...

- May I continue? I did not interrupt you.

Don't you want to put a time value  
on anything you say  
or do you want to lie systematically on TV?

- I'm talking about 1980.

- You are a systematic liar.

- Did these things happen or not?

- Not in the context which you suggested.

You are a phoney, mister, and it's time  
that the people read you correctly.

It's clear why you want to divert me  
from the discussion.

No, it's not. We're getting tired of rubbish.

- But let's continue with...

- Except we can't. We're out of time.

Let me thank you,  
John Silver and Noam Chomsky.

OK.

Last time you were here,  
you spoke about how, when you go overseas,  
you are given access to the mass media.  
But here, that doesn't seem to be the case.  
Has that changed at all?

Have you ever been invited  
to appear on Nightline or Brinkley?

Yes, I have a couple of times  
been invited to speak on Nightline.

I couldn't do it.

I had another talk and something or other.  
To tell you the honest truth,

I don't really care very much.  
FAIR, the media monitoring group,  
published a very interesting study of Nightline.  
It shows that their conception of a spectrum  
of opinion is ridiculously narrow,  
at least by European or world standards.  
Let me tell you a personal experience.  
I happened to be in Madison, Wisconsin,  
on a listener-supported radio station,  
a community radio station, a very good one.  
It was an interview with the news director.  
I'd been on the programme dozens of times,  
usually by telephone.  
And he's very good, he gets all sorts of people.  
He started the interview by playing for me  
a tape of an interview that he had just had  
and had broadcast with a guy who's...  
some mucky-muck in Nightline.  
I think his name is Jeff Greenfield  
or some such name.  
Does that name mean anything?  
I'm Jeff Greenfield from Nightline in New York.  
We've got just a selection of guests  
to analyse things.  
Why is Noam Chomsky never on Nightline?  
I couldn't begin to tell you.  
He's one of the world's  
leading intellectuals.  
I have no idea.  
I mean, I can make some guesses.  
He may be  
one of the leading intellectuals who...  
...can't talk on television.  
You know,  
that's a standard that's very important. To us.  
If you've got a 22-minute show,  
and a guy takes five minutes to warm up...  
Now, I don't know  
whether Chomsky does or not.  
...he's out.  
One of the reasons  
why Nightline has the usual suspects is,  
one thing you have to do  
when you book a show

is know that the person can make the point  
within the framework of TV.  
If people don't like that,  
they should understand  
it is as sensible to book somebody  
who takes eight minutes to answer  
as it is to book somebody  
who doesn't speak English.  
In the normal given flow,  
that's another culture-bound thing.  
We've got to have English speakers  
and concision.  
So Greenfield or whatever his name is  
hit the nail on the head.  
The US media are alone  
in that you must meet the condition of concision.  
You've got to say things  
between two commercials  
or in 600 words.  
And that's a very important fact.  
Because the beauty of concision,  
you know, saying a couple of sentences  
between two commercials...  
The beauty of that is  
that you can only repeat conventional thoughts.  
I was reading Chomsky  
Didn't he co-author a book called Engineering  
Consent or Manufacturing Consent?  
I mean, some of that stuff, to me,  
looks like it's from Neptune.  
This is the first time the Neptune system  
has been seen clearly by human eyes.  
These pictures,  
taken only hours ago by Voyager-2,  
are its latest contribution.  
You know, he's perfectly entitled  
to say I'm seeing it through a prism, too.  
But my view of his notions about the limits  
of debate in this country is absolutely wacko.  
Suppose I get up on Nightline, say.  
And I'm given whatever it is, two minutes.  
And I say Gaddafi is a terrorist,  
Khomeini is a murderer, you know, etc, etc.  
The Russians, you know, invaded Afghanistan.

All this sort of stuff.

I don't need any evidence. Everybody just nods.

On the other hand, suppose you say something that just isn't regurgitating conventional pieties.

Suppose you say something that's the least bit unexpected or controversial. You say:

The biggest international terror operations that are known are the ones that are run out of Washington.

Or suppose you say:

What happened in the 1980s is, the US government was driven underground.

Suppose I say the United States is invading South Vietnam, as it was?

The best political leaders are the ones who are lazy and corrupt.

If the Nuremberg laws were applied, then every post-War American President would have been hanged.

The Bible is probably the most genocidal book in our total canon.

Education is a system of imposed ignorance.

There's no more morality in world affairs than there was in the time of Genghis Khan.

There are just different... You know, there are just different factors to be concerned with.

Noam Chomsky, thank you.

Well, you know, people will quite reasonably expect to know what you mean.

"Why did you say that?"

I've never heard that before.

If you said that, you'd better have a reason, better have some evidence.

In fact, you'd better have a lot of evidence because that's a pretty startling comment".

You can't give evidence if you're stuck with concision.

That's the genius of this structural constraint.

And in my view, if people like, say, Nightline, MacNeil, Lehrer and so on were smarter,

if they were better propagandists,

they would let dissidents on,

let them on more, in fact.

The reason is that they would sound like

they were from Neptune.

Then our conversation  
on the Middle East crisis  
with the activist, writer and professor,  
Noam Chomsky.

Again, there has been an offer on the table  
which we rejected,  
an Iraqi offer of last April...

OK, I have to...

...to eliminate their chemical  
and other unconventional arsenals  
if Israel were to simultaneously do the same.

- We have to end it there.

- That should be pursued as well.

Sorry to interrupt. I have to end it. That's the  
end of our time. Professor Chomsky, thanks.

AT&T has supported  
the MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour since 1983  
because quality information  
and quality communication  
is our idea of a good connection.

AT&T - the right choice.

- Thank you.

- Could you just sit there for half a second?

It's just for a two-shot, that's all.

Then we can do anything else with that. OK.

Yeah, what about the mic? Is that a problem?

OK, right.

The idea of this one is it's just a shot  
where I'm seen talking to you.

I'll ask you, though, not to speak to me or move  
your lips, so I can be seen to ask a question.

The reason for the shot is simply this.

OK, just don't talk to me and I'll keep going.

The reason for the shot - I'll explain it  
because I find that's the easiest way to do it -  
is I need a shot where you're sitting and seeing  
and listening while I'm asking you a question.

We can use the shot to introduce you, explain  
who you are, where you fit into my piece.

But if you don't speak to me, I can also use...

Got it? OK, thanks for your time.

If there is a narrower range of opinion  
in the United States



and it is harder to express  
a variety of different opinions,  
why do you live in the US?  
Well, first of all, it's my country,  
and secondly, it's in many ways -  
as I said before -  
it's the freest country in the world.  
I think there's more possibilities for change here  
than in any other country I know.  
But again, comparatively speaking,  
it's the country  
where the state is probably most restrictive.  
Isn't that what you should look at comparatively  
rather than in absolute terms?  
You don't give that impression.  
Maybe I don't give the impression.  
I say it often enough.  
What I've said over and over again,  
I've said it tonight, I've written it a million times,  
is that the United States is a very free society.  
It's also a very rich society.  
Of course, the United States is a scandal  
from the point of view of its wealth.  
Given the natural advantages  
that the United States has,  
in terms of resources  
and lack of enemies and so on,  
the United States should have a level  
of health and welfare and so on  
that's, you know, on an order of magnitude  
beyond anybody else in the world.  
We don't. The United States is last among  
That's a scandal of American capitalism.  
And it ends up being a very free society  
which does a lot of rotten things  
in the world, OK?  
There's no contradiction there.  
Greece was a free society  
by the standards of Athens, you know.  
It was also a vicious society  
as regards its imperial behaviour.  
There's virtually no correlation - maybe none -  
between the internal freedom of a society  
and its external behaviour.

You start your line of discussion  
at a moment that is historically useful for you.

- But you picked the beginning.
- The grand fact of the post-war world  
is that the Communist imperialists,  
by the use of terrorism,  
by the use of deprivation of freedom,  
have contributed to the continuing bloodshed.  
The sad thing about it is,  
not only the bloodshed,  
but the fact that they seem to dispossess you  
of the power of rational observation.  
I think that's about five per cent true.  
Or maybe ten per cent true. It certainly is true...

- Why do you give that?
- May I complete a sentence?

It's perfectly true that there were areas  
of the world, in particular, Eastern Europe,  
where Stalinist imperialism...  
very brutally took control  
and still maintains control.  
But there are also very vast areas of the world  
where we were doing the same thing.  
And there's quite an interplay in the Cold War.  
What you just described is, I believe,  
a mythology about the Cold War.  
It may have been tenable ten years ago but  
it's inconsistent with contemporary scholarship.  
Ask a Czech.  
Ask a Guatemalan, ask a Dominican.  
Ask the president of the Dominican Republic,  
ask a person from South Vietnam, ask a Thai.  
Obviously, if you can't distinguish between  
the nature of our venture in Guatemala  
and the nature of the Soviet Union's in Prague,  
we have difficulties.  
Er... now, what about making the media  
more responsive and democratic?  
Well, there are very narrow limits for that.  
It's kind of like asking, "How do we make  
corporations more democratic?"  
Well, the only way to do that is get rid of them.  
I mean, if you have concentrated power...  
I don't want to say you can do nothing.

Like the church can show up  
at the stockholders' meeting  
and start screaming  
about not investing in South Africa.  
And sometimes that has marginal effects.  
I don't want to say it has no effect.  
But you can't really affect the structure of power.  
Because to do that would be a social revolution.  
Unless you're ready for a social revolution,  
that is, power is going to be somewhere else,  
the media are going to have their present  
structure and represent their present interests.  
That's not to say  
that one shouldn't try to do things.  
It makes sense  
to try to push the limits of a system.  
It only takes one or two people  
that think they have integrity as journalists  
to give you some good press.  
That's important. That goes back  
to something that came up before.  
There are contradictions.  
You know, things are complex.  
It's not monolithic. I mean, the mass media  
themselves are complicated institutions  
with internal contradictions.  
So, on the one hand, there's the commitment  
to indoctrination and control.  
But on the other hand,  
there's the sense of professional integrity.  
She works alone,  
as her own boss,  
writing newspaper columns  
and producing radio commentaries  
for a hodgepodge of small clients  
across the country.  
This so-called leather-lunged Texan  
has been firing questions at our chief executive  
for almost 40 years.  
Many a young man in this country  
is disillusioned  
by his government these days.  
Well, this is a question which you very properly  
bring to the attention of the nation.

It's not that we haven't held press conferences.

I was just waiting for Sarah to come back.

Mr President, that's very nice of you  
and I appreciate it.

Sir, I want to call your attention to a real  
problem we've got in this country today.

The unique, terrifying McClendon  
questions reflect her desire to get information.

I want to ask your new man what he feels...

- Here.

With enough know-how and persistence,  
she usually gets her man.

What would you do

if you were in a situation

where you were trying to be an honest reporter

and you were worried sick about your country

and you saw how sick it was,

and you were facing this weak White House

and a weak Congress,

as a reporter, what would you do?

I think there are a lot of reporters

who do a good job.

I have a lot of friends in the press

who I think do a terrific job.

I know they are. They want to...

Well, first of all,

you have to understand what the system is.

And smart reporters do understand what it is.

You have to understand

what the pressures and commitments are,

what the barriers are

and what the openings are.

Right after the Iran-Contra hearings,

a lot of good reporters understood, "Things are

going to be more open for a couple of months".

So they rammed through stories

they couldn't even talk about before.

- And after Watergate.

- The same after Watergate.

Then it closes up again.

Most people, I imagine,

simply internalise the values.

That's the easiest way

and the most successful way.

You just internalise the values and then you regard yourself, in a way correctly, as acting perfectly freely.

All right, let's get to the White House now where I think veteran correspondent Frank Sesno can tell us a little bit about self-censorship.

That internal guidance system's always going on, isn't it?

- Is there any formal censorship there?

- There's no self-censorship.

If somebody tells me something, I'll pass it on, unless there's a particular, compelling reason not to.

I can't deny that I'd like to have access to the Oval Office and all the same maps the President's looking at.

But that's not possible, it's not realistic, and probably not desirable.

Hello. How are you?

Go and sit down there, please.

Welcome to Holland.

I'll introduce you first with a few lines.

Professor Chomsky, Noam Chomsky.

Chomsky has been called the Einstein of modern linguistics.

The New York Times has said he's arguably the most important intellectual alive today.

But his presence here has sparked a protest.

This book has poisoned the world.

All lies are in there.

As the Vietnamese people, we come here to burn the book.

He said that in Vietnam there is no violation of human rights and no crime in Cambodia - it's wrong.

Chomsky using his profession, he using that to poison the world.

And we come here to protest that.

I don't mind the denunciations, frankly.

I mind the lies.

Intellectuals are very good at lying.

They're professionals at it.

Vilification is a wonderful technique.

There's no way of responding.

If somebody calls you an anti-Semite,  
what can you say? "I'm not an anti-Semite"?

If somebody says,

"You're a racist, you're a Nazi",

you always lose.

I mean, the person who throws the mud  
always wins,

because there's no way of responding.

Professor Chomsky seems to believe  
that the people he criticises fall  
into one of two classes - liars or dupes.

Consider what happens when I discuss  
the case of Robert Faurisson.

Let me recall the facts.

- Let's not go into details.

- The details happen to be important.

Yes, but I have only one question for you.

- Do the facts matter or don't they?

- Of course.

Well, let me tell you what the facts are.

Faurisson says that the massacre of the Jews  
in the Holocaust is a historic lie.

- Can we have the next question?

- No.

No, this is an important one.

It has a lot to do with the topic.

Get off!

Your views are very controversial.

Perhaps one of the things

that has been most controversial

and you've been most strongly criticised for

was your defence of a French intellectual

who was suspended from his university post

for contending that there were

no Nazi death camps in World War II.

My name is Robert Faurisson.

I am 60.

I am a university professor in Lyons, France.

Behind me,

you may see the courthouse of Paris,

Le Palais de Justice.

In this place,

I was convicted many times  
at the beginning of the '80s.  
I was charged by nine associations,  
mostly Jewish associations,  
for...  
...inciting hatred,  
racial hatred,  
for racial defamation,  
for damage by falsifying history.  
Professor Chomsky and a number  
of other intellectuals signed a petition  
in which Faurisson is called  
"a respected professor of literature  
who merely tried to make his findings public".  
Perhaps we can start with just the story of  
Robert Faurisson and your involvement.  
More than 500 people signed...  
Maybe 600.  
Mostly... universitaires.  
Scholars.  
And what happened to the other 499 of them?  
How come we only hear  
about Chomsky's signature?  
Well, I think it's because Chomsky has,  
in himself, a kind of political power.  
I signed a petition  
calling on the tribunal to defend his civil rights.  
At that point, the French press,  
which has no conception of freedom of speech,  
concluded that  
since I had called for his civil rights,  
I was therefore defending his thesis.  
Faurisson then published a book  
in which he tried to prove  
that the Nazi gas chambers never existed.  
What we deny is that there was  
an extermination programme  
and an extermination, actually.  
Especially in gas chambers or gas vans.  
The book contains a preface  
written by Professor Chomsky  
in which he calls Faurisson  
"a relatively apolitical sort of liberal".  
A Communist is a man, a Jew is a man,

a Nazi is a man.

I am a man.

Are you a Nazi?

I am not a Nazi.

How would you describe yourself politically?

Nothing.

- The preface that you wrote...

- No, that's not the preface that I wrote.

Because I never wrote a preface  
and you know that I never wrote a preface.

He's referring to a statement of mine  
on civil liberties

which was added to a book  
in which Faurisson...

- Excuse me.

You're a linguist

and the language you use has meaning!

And when you describe Faurisson

as an "apolitical liberal",

or as someone whose views can be dignified  
by the words "findings" or "conclusions",

that is a judgment

and that is a favourable judgment of his views.

On the contrary.

- May I continue with the facts?

- You can continue with the facts for hours.

But there are a few facts that... Yeah, OK.

Let's get to the so-called preface.

I was then asked

by the person who organised the petition  
to write a statement on freedom of speech.

Just banal comments about freedom of speech,  
pointing out the difference between defending  
a person's right to express his views  
and defending the views expressed.

So I did that. I wrote a rather banal statement  
called "Some Elementary Remarks  
on Freedom of Expression".

And I told them, "Do what you like with it".

So Pierre produced a book

in which all the arguments of Faurisson  
were to be put in front of the court.

And we thought it wise

to use the text of Noam Chomsky



as a kind of warning, a forward,  
to say that it was  
a matter of freedom of expression,  
freedom of thought, freedom of research.

Why did you try at the last moment  
to get it back from the book?

That's the one thing I'm sorry about.

- But that's the real important thing.

- No, it's not.

You mean that I tried to retract it?

- With that, you said it was wrong of you to do it.

- No. Take a look at what I did.

I wrote a letter, which was then published,  
in which I said,

"Look, things have reached a point  
where the French intellectual community  
simply is incapable of understanding the issues.

At this point,

it's just going to confuse matters even more  
if my comments on freedom of speech are  
attached to a book which I didn't know existed.

So, just to clarify things,  
you'd better separate them".

Now, in retrospect, I shouldn't have done that.

I should have just said, "Fine. Let it appear,  
because it ought to appear".

But apart from that,

I regard this as not only trivial,  
but as compared with other positions I've taken  
on freedom of speech, invisible.

I do not think the state ought to have the right  
to determine historical truth

and to punish people who deviate from it.

I'm not willing to give the state that right,  
even if they...

- Are you denying the gas chambers existed?

- Of course not.

I'm saying, if you believe in freedom of speech,  
you believe in freedom of speech  
for views you don't like.

Goebbels was in favour of freedom of speech  
for views he liked, right? So was Stalin.

If you're in favour of freedom of speech,  
that means you're in favour of freedom

of speech precisely for views you despise.  
Otherwise you're not in favour  
of freedom of speech.  
There's two positions you can have on freedom  
of speech. You can decide which you want.  
With regard to my defence  
of the utterly offensive,  
the people who express utterly offensive views,  
I haven't the slightest doubt  
that every commissar says,  
"You're defending that person's views".  
No, I'm not.  
I'm defending his right to express them.  
The difference is crucial.  
And the difference has been understood  
outside of fascist circles since the 18th century.  
Is there anything like objectivity,  
scientific objectivity, reality?  
- As a scientist, where do you stand on this?  
- I'm not saying I defend the views.  
If somebody publishes a scientific article  
which I disagree with,  
I do not say  
the state ought to put him in jail, right?  
- But you don't have to support him...  
- I don't support him.  
...and say, "I support him just for the sake  
of anybody saying what they want".  
Suppose this guy is taken to court  
and charged with falsification?  
- Then I'll defend him.  
- But he wasn't taken to court.  
- Oh, you're wrong.  
- But when did you write the support?  
When he was brought to court.  
And, in fact, the only support that I gave him  
was to say he has a right  
of freedom of speech, period.  
There is no doubt in my mind  
that the example I gave about the story,  
that the Holocaust did not exist,  
is very, very typical.  
I'll give you another example of this.  
How much of the American press believes

that Faurisson has anything to say?  
How much of the press in France...  
What percentage would you say?  
Is it higher than zero?  
Is it higher than zero? Have you ever seen  
anything in any newspaper or any journal  
saying that this man  
is anything other than a lunatic?  
I'll try to answer.  
- I just follow the case...  
- That's a simple question.  
I follow the case five or six years ago.  
I happened to see  
that Noam Chomsky was in for strong criticism  
even from some of his supporters  
for doing something which could be interpreted  
only in terms of a campaign against Israel.  
Going back years, I am absolutely certain  
that I've taken far more extreme positions  
on people who deny the Holocaust  
than you have.  
For example, you go back to my earliest articles  
and you will find that I say that  
even to enter into the arena of debate  
on the question  
of whether the Nazis carried out such atrocities  
is already to lose one's humanity.  
So I don't even think you ought to discuss  
the issue, if you want my opinion.  
But if anybody wants to refute Faurisson,  
there's certainly no difficulty in doing so.  
I'm not interested in...  
...freedom of speech and all that.  
I have to win. And that's the question.  
And I shall win.  
Cut.  
I'm just an ordinary mum  
who just thinks in terms of...  
I don't want to some day  
be holding my grandchildren  
and watching something horrible happen  
and feel like I didn't do anything.  
And I mean, it's obvious what you're doing.  
My question is, on a practical level,

where do you see the most practical place  
to put your energy?  
Tonight, I feel I'm overwhelmed.  
I feel like it's too big, it's too much,  
to even make a dent in.  
The way things change is because  
lots of people are working all the time.  
You know, they're working in their communities,  
in their workplace or wherever they are.  
And they're building up the basis  
for popular movements  
which are going to make changes.  
That's the way  
everything has ever happened in history.  
Whether it was the end of slavery,  
whether it was the democratic revolutions,  
or anything you want, you name it,  
that's the way it worked.  
You get a very false picture of this  
from the history books.  
In the history books, there's a couple of leaders.  
You know, George Washington,  
or Martin Luther King or whatever.  
And I don't want to say  
those people are unimportant.  
Martin Luther King was important,  
but he was not the Civil Rights Movement.  
Martin Luther King can appear  
in the history books  
cos lots of people  
whose names you will never know  
and whose names are all forgotten  
and who may have been killed and so on,  
were working down in the South.  
When you have active... activists,  
and people concerned and people devoting  
themselves and dedicating themselves  
to social change or issues or whatever,  
then people like me can appear.  
We can appear to be prominent. But that's only  
cos somebody else is doing the work.  
My work,  
whether it's giving hundreds of talks a year  
or spending 20 hours a week

writing letters or writing books,  
is not directed to intellectuals and politicians.  
It's directed to what are called  
"ordinary people".  
What I expect from them is, in fact,  
exactly what they are.  
That they should try to understand the world  
and act in accordance  
with their decent impulses.  
And that they should try to improve the world.  
Many are willing to do that.  
But they have to understand.  
As far as I can see, in these things,  
I feel that I'm simply helping people develop  
courses of intellectual self-defence.  
What did you mean by that?  
What would such a course be?  
I don't mean go to school,  
because you'll not get it there.  
It means you have to develop  
an independent mind and work on it.  
That's extremely hard to do alone.  
The beauty of our system is  
it isolates everybody.  
Each person is sitting alone in front of the tube.  
It's very hard to have ideas or thoughts  
under those circumstances.  
You can't fight the world alone.  
Some people can, but it's pretty rare.  
The way to do it is through organisation.  
So courses of intellectual self-defence  
will have to be in the context  
of political and other organisation.  
And it makes sense, I think,  
to look at what the institutions are trying to do  
and to take that almost as a key.  
What they're trying to do  
is what we're trying to combat.  
If they're trying to keep people  
isolated and separate, and so on,  
then we'll try and do the opposite,  
bring them together.  
So, in your local community,  
you want to have sources of alternative action,

people with parallel concerns,  
maybe differently focused,  
but, at the core, sort of similar values  
and a similar interest in helping people defend  
themselves against external power  
and taking control of their lives  
and reaching out your hand  
to people who need it.

That's a common array of concerns.

You can learn about your own values  
and you can figure out how to defend yourself  
in conjunction with others.

Erm... are there one or two publications  
that I, as an average person, a biologist,  
can read to bypass this filter of our press?

Now, if you ask, "What media can I turn to  
to get the right answers?"

First of all, I wouldn't tell you that,  
because I don't think there's an answer.

The right answers are what you decide  
are the right answers.

Maybe everything I'm telling you is wrong.

It could perfectly well be. I'm not God.

But that's something for you to figure out.

I can tell you what I think happens to be right.

But there isn't any reason

why you should pay any attention to it.

What impact do you feel alternative media is  
currently having or could potentially have?

I'm actually a little more interested  
in its potential.

And just to define my terms,

by alternative media, I'm referring to media  
that are or could be citizen-controlled  
as opposed to state or corporate-controlled.

That's what's kept people together.

To the extent that people are able

to do something constructive,

it's because they have some way of interacting.

I've always felt it would be a very positive thing  
and it should be pushed as far as it can go.

I think it's going to have a very hard time.

There's just such a concentration  
of resources and power that...

...alternative media,  
while extremely important,  
are going to have quite a battle.  
It's true there are things  
which are small successes.  
But it's because people have just been willing  
to put in an incredible effort.  
Like, say, take Z Magazine.  
I mean, that's a national magazine  
which literally has a staff of two  
and no resources.  
Tell us a little about Z Magazine,  
what it is and what makes it different.  
Go ahead.  
Go ahead? Thank you.  
We just wanted to do a magazine  
that would address all the sides of political life.  
Economics, race, gender,  
authority, political relations.  
And we wanted to do it in a way  
that would incorporate  
attention to how to not only understand  
what's going on,  
but how to make things better, what to aim for,  
and to provide, at the same time,  
humour, culture.  
A kind of magazine that people could relate to  
and get a lot out of and participate in.  
What we wanted to do, which we didn't think  
was provided by the existing magazines,  
was to give it a real activist slant.  
So that it could be very useful  
to the variety of movements in the country.  
We just felt there wasn't a magazine  
that reflected that, that inspired people,  
and that gave people a strategy  
and perhaps even a vision  
of how things could be better.  
South End Press  
has sort of made it.  
That is, they're surviving.  
It's a small collective, again with no resources.  
They've put out a lot of good books.  
But for a South End book to get reviewed

is almost impossible.  
Editorially and business-wise,  
we make decisions based on a politics  
that no corporate publisher can really advocate  
because of their ties to corporate America.  
We can solicit manuscripts based on  
what we feel is the relevance for the movement.  
And we can make our business decisions  
based on whether we feel  
people can afford our books,  
whether we feel that  
a book might not make that much money  
but it needs to be out there,  
and maybe there is 1,000 people  
who would buy it.  
And those are criteria  
that we feel are very precious  
in this day of corporate mergers.  
And likewise, our structure about sharing work  
and continuing our training process  
as long as we're at the press.  
There are losses there in terms of productivity,  
but in terms of empowerment,  
all of us are then able to say...  
"My perspective is different from yours".  
Then all of our intelligence gets used  
in making those decisions,  
and not just whoever happens  
to have done it the longest,  
whoever happens to have graduated  
from the best schools  
in order to be the best editor,  
making all the decisions  
and only using his or her intelligence.  
Citizen-supported radio in the United States  
has undergone a remarkable growth  
in the last decade.  
It's perhaps the fastest-growing  
alternative media.  
There are many reasons for this.  
First and foremost  
is that it's enormously economical.  
It reaches communities that have not been  
served by community radio before.



In Boulder,  
we see with someone like Noam Chomsky,  
who's been there, I believe,  
three times in the last six years,  
he has a tremendous audience.  
And KGNU is partly responsible for that.  
Because we play his tapes on a regular basis.  
We play his lectures and his interviews.  
So, when he does come to Boulder  
and people hear what he has to say,  
they're able to tune in, it's not something exotic  
or esoteric he's talking about.  
It's material that they're very familiar with.  
He's noted this, incidentally.  
If there's a listener-supported  
radio station,  
it means that people can get daily, every day,  
a different way of looking at the world.  
Not just what the corporate media  
want you to see,  
but a different picture,  
a different understanding.  
Not only can you hear it,  
but you can participate in it.  
You can add your own thoughts.  
You can learn something, and so on.  
Well, that's the way people become human.  
That's the way you become human participants  
in a social and political system.  
Hello, I'm Ed Robinson  
and this is non-corporate news.  
What is non-corporate news  
and why is it necessary?  
I didn't want to just show another film  
at a library or something.  
I wanted to make my own statement.  
I thought it'd be more fun to do.  
Perhaps I'd get others involved in a project.  
Besides showing a film,  
we could make a film or a video.  
The local cable station's hooked up to three  
communities - Lynn, Swampscott and Salem.  
So that's 30,000 people,  
or 30,000 homes.

I'm not sure. But I'm sure...  
a lot of people see it and it'll be the kind  
of people who don't go out to see a film.  
It'll go right into their houses.  
So, if they're flipping through their channels,  
they might be able to get  
a completely new idea of the world.  
So there's kind of networks  
of co-operation developing.  
I mean, like here, for example.  
There's a collection of stuff  
from a friend of mine in Los Angeles  
who does careful monitoring  
of the whole press in Los Angeles  
and a lot of the British press, which he reads.  
And he does selections.  
So I don't have to read the movie reviews  
and the local gossip and all this kind of stuff.  
But I get the occasional nugget  
that sneaks through  
and that you find if you're carefully, intelligently  
and critically reviewing a wide range of press.  
There are a fair number of people who do this  
and we exchange information.  
We wrote this two-volume work.  
We saw one another for a couple of weeks  
when we were getting started.  
But then we wrote two volumes,  
essentially without seeing one another.  
Just by phone, by mail,  
and exchanging manuscripts.  
But this takes a lot of communication by mail.  
My Chomsky file is a couple of feet thick.  
The end result is that  
you do have access to resources  
in a way which I doubt that  
any national intelligence agency can duplicate,  
let alone scholarship.  
So there are ways of compensating  
for the absence of resources.  
People can do things.  
For example,  
I found out about the arms flow to Iran  
by reading transcripts of the BBC

and by reading an interview somewhere  
with an Israeli ambassador in one city  
and reading something else in the Israeli press.  
OK, the information is there.  
But it's there to a fanatic.  
You know, somebody who wants to spend  
a substantial part of their time and energy  
exploring it and comparing today's lies  
with yesterday's leaks, and so on.  
That's a research job.  
And it just simply doesn't make any sense  
to ask the general population  
to dedicate themselves to this task  
on every issue.  
I'm not given to false modesty.  
There are things that I can do.  
I know that I can do them reasonably well,  
including...  
...analysis and, you know...  
...study, research.  
I know how to do that. I think I've a reasonable  
understanding of the way the world works,  
as much as anyone can.  
And that turns out to be a very useful resource  
for people who are doing active organising...  
...trying to engage themselves  
in a way which will make it  
a little bit of a better world.  
And if you can help in those things,  
or participate in them,  
well, that's rewarding.  
I wonder if you can envision a time  
when people like myself,  
and again, the nave people of this world  
can again take pride in the United States?  
And is that even a healthy wish now?  
Because it's maybe this hunger  
for pride in our country  
that makes us more easily manipulated  
by the powers that you talk about.  
Er... I think you first of all have to ask  
what you mean by your country.  
Now, if you mean by "the country"  
the government,

I don't think you can be proud of it  
and I don't think you could ever be proud of it.  
- Or be proud of any government.  
It's not our government.  
And you shouldn't be.  
States are violent institutions.  
The government of any country, including ours,  
represents a domestic power structure  
and it's usually violent.  
States are violent to the extent  
that they're powerful. That's roughly accurate.  
You look at American history,  
it's nothing to write home about.  
Why are we here? We're here because some  
ten million native Americans were wiped out.  
That's not very pretty.  
Until the 1960s,  
it was still cowboys and Indians.  
In the 1970s, for the first time, really,  
it became possible, even for scholarship,  
to try to deal with the facts as they were.  
For example, to deal with the fact that  
the Native American population was far higher  
than had been claimed.  
Millions higher, maybe as many as ten million  
higher than was claimed.  
That they had an advanced civilisation,  
and that there was something akin to genocide  
that took place.  
Now, we went through 200 years of our history  
without facing that fact.  
One of the effects of the 1960s  
is it's possible to at least begin  
to come to think about the facts.  
Well, that's an advance.  
Do you think  
that this activism 20 years ago  
has made a difference  
in how our society operates now?  
It has not changed the institutions  
in the way they function.  
But it has led  
to very significant cultural changes.  
Remember, these movements of the '60s

expanded in the '70s  
and expanded further in the '80s.  
They reached into other parts of the society  
and different issues.  
A lot of things that seemed outrageous  
in the '60s are taken for granted today.  
So, for example, take the feminist movement,  
which barely began to exist in the '60s.  
Now it's part of general consciousness  
and awareness.  
The ecological movements began in the '70s.  
The Third World solidarity movements  
were very limited in the '60s.  
It was really Vietnam.  
And in the '60s also,  
it was a student movement, as you say.  
Now it's not. Now it's mainstream America.  
If there is more dissidence now  
than you can remember,  
why do you go on to write  
that the people feel isolated?  
Because I think  
much of the general population recognises  
that the organised institutions do not reflect  
their concerns and interests and needs.  
They do not feel that they participate  
meaningfully in the political system.  
They do not feel that the media are telling them  
the truth or even reflect their concerns.  
They go outside  
of the organised institutions to act.  
We see more of our elected leaders and know  
less of what they do. This medium does that.  
It's very striking.  
The Presidential elections are  
almost removed from the point  
where the public takes them seriously  
as involving a matter of choice.  
What do you think about what goes on  
in the White House?  
It's kept too private, I think.  
Yeah, they should come out  
and talk to the people.  
- Yeah.

- Who should talk to the people?

George Bush!

Well, it means that

the political system increasingly...

increasingly functions without public input.

It means, to an increasing extent,

not only do people not ratify decisions

presented to them,

but they don't take the trouble of ratifying them.

They assume that the decisions are going on

independently of what they do in the poll booth.

Ratification would be what?

Ratification would mean there are

two positions presented to me, the voter.

I go into the polling booth

and I push one or another button,

depending on which of those positions I want.

That's a very limited form of democracy.

Really meaningful democracy would mean that

I play a role in forming those decisions,

in creating those positions.

That would be real democracy.

We're very far from that.

We're even departing from a point

where there is ratification.

When you have stage-managed elections,

with the public relations industry determining

what words come out of people's mouth,

candidates deciding what to say on the basis of

tests that determine what the effect will be

across the population,

somehow people don't see how profoundly

contemptuous that is of democracy.

The solemn moment is near.

But first, the swearing-in of Dan Quayle.

Please move to your seats.

For the first time in this century,

for the first time in perhaps all history,

Man does not have to invent a system

by which to live.

We don't have to talk late into the night

about which form of government is better.

We don't have to wrest justice...

...from the kings.

We only have to summon it  
from within ourselves.  
This is a time when the future seems a door  
you can walk right through  
into a room called Tomorrow.  
Great nations of the world  
are moving toward democracy  
through the door to freedom.  
The people of the world agitate  
for free expression and free thought  
through the door to the moral  
and intellectual satisfactions  
that only liberty allows.  
We know how to secure a more just  
and prosperous life for men on Earth.  
Through free markets,  
free speech, free elections,  
and the exercise of free will  
unhampered by the state.  
I've spoken of 1,000 points of light,  
of all the community organisations  
that are spread like stars throughout the nation  
doing good.  
To the world, too,  
we offer new engagement  
and a renewed vow.  
- We will stay strong to protect the peace.  
The offered hand...  
...is a reluctant fist.  
America is never wholly herself  
unless she is engaged in high moral principle.  
We, as a people, have such a purpose today.  
It is...  
to make kinder the face of the nation  
and gentler the face of the world.  
Referring back to your earlier comment  
about escaping from  
or doing away with capitalism,  
I was wondering what scheme,  
workable scheme, you would put in its place.  
Me?  
- Well, what I would...  
What would you suggest to others who might be  
in a position to set it up and get it going?

Well, I mean, I think that what used to be called, centuries ago, wage slavery is intolerable. I don't think people ought to be forced to rent themselves in order to survive. I think that the economic institutions ought to be run democratically by their participants, by the communities in which they exist, and so on, and I think basically through various kinds of free association. Historically, have there been any sustained examples on any substantial scale of societies which approximated to the anarchist ideal? There are small societies, small in number, that have, I think, done so quite well. And there are a few examples of large-scale libertarian revolutions which were largely anarchist in their structure. As to the first, small societies, extending over a long period, I myself think the most dramatic example was perhaps the Israeli Kibbutzim, which, for a long period - it may or may not be true today - really were constructed on anarchist principles. That is, of direct worker control, integration of agriculture, industry, service, personal life, on an egalitarian basis with direct and quite active participation in self-management, and were, I should think, extraordinarily successful. A good example of a really large-scale anarchist revolution, or largely anarchist revolution, the best example to my knowledge, is the Spanish Revolution in 1936. In fact, you can't tell what would have happened. That anarchist revolution was simply destroyed by force.



But during the period in which it was alive,  
I think it was an inspiring testimony  
to the ability of poor working people  
to organise and manage their affairs extremely  
successfully, without coercion or control.  
How far does the success of libertarian  
socialism or anarchism as a way of life  
really depend on a fundamental change  
in the nature of man,  
both in his motivation, his altruism,  
and also in his knowledge and sophistication?  
I think it not only depends on it  
but, in fact, the whole purpose of libertarian  
socialism is that it will contribute to it.  
It will contribute to a spiritual transformation.  
Precisely that kind of great transformation  
in the way humans conceive of themselves  
and their ability to act, to decide,  
to create, to produce, to enquire.  
Precisely that spiritual transformation that...  
social thinkers from the Let-Marxist tradition,  
from Luxemburg, say, on over through  
anarcho-syndicalists, have emphasised.  
So, on the one hand,  
it requires that spiritual transformation.  
But also, its purpose is to create institutions  
which will contribute to that transformation.  
You've written that,  
in looking at contributions of gited thinkers,  
one must make sure  
to understand their contributions,  
but also to eliminate the errors in them.  
And, of your ideas, what would you guess  
would be discarded  
and what would be assimilated  
by future thinkers?  
Well, I would assume  
virtually everything would be discarded.  
For example...  
Here, we have to distinguish.  
The work that I do in my professional area...  
If I still believed what I believed ten years ago,  
I'd assume the field is dead.  
So I assume,

next time you read a student's paper,  
you're going to see something that has to be  
changed and you continue to make progress.  
In dealing with social and political issues,  
in my view, what is at all understood  
is pretty straightforward.  
There may be deep and complicated things.  
But, if so, they're not understood.  
The basic... To the extent that we understand  
society at all, it's pretty straightforward.  
And I don't think those simple understandings  
are likely to undergo much change.  
The point is that you have to work.  
That's why  
the propaganda system is so successful.  
Very few people are going to have  
the time or the energy or the commitment  
to carry out the constant battle that's required  
to get outside of, you know...  
MacNeil/Lehrer  
or Dan Rather, somebody like that.  
The easy thing to do... You come home  
from work, you're tired, have had a busy day.  
You're not going to spend the evening  
carrying out a research project.  
So you turn on the tube  
and say it's probably right.  
You look at the headlines in the paper  
and then you watch the sports.  
And that's basically the way  
the system of indoctrination works.  
Sure, the other stuff is there,  
but you're going to have to work to find it.  
Modern industrial civilisation  
has developed within a certain system  
of convenient myths.  
The driving force  
of modern industrial civilisation  
has been individual material gain,  
which is accepted as legitimate,  
even praiseworthy,  
on the grounds that private vices yield  
public benefits in the classic formulation.  
Now, it's long been understood very well

that a society that is based on this principle  
will destroy itself in time.  
It can only persist  
with whatever suffering and injustice it entails,  
as long as it's possible to pretend  
that the destructive forces that humans create  
are limited,  
that the world is an infinite resource  
and that the world is an infinite garbage can.  
At this stage of history,  
either one of two things is possible.  
Either the general population  
will take control of its own destiny  
and will concern itself with community interests,  
guided by values of solidarity and sympathy  
and concern for others.  
Or, alternatively, there will be no destiny  
for anyone to control.  
As long as some specialised class is  
in a position of authority,  
it is going to set policy  
in the special interests that it serves.  
But the conditions of survival, let alone justice,  
require rational social planning  
in the interests of the community as a whole.  
By now, that means the global community.  
The question is whether privileged elites  
should dominate mass communication  
and should use this power  
as they tell us they must -  
namely, to impose necessary illusions,  
to manipulate and deceive the "stupid majority",  
and remove them from the public arena.  
The question, in brief,  
is whether democracy and freedom  
are values to be preserved  
or threats to be avoided.  
In this possibly terminal phase  
of human existence,  
democracy and freedom  
are more than values to be treasured.  
They may well be essential to survival.  
Thank you.  
He's up there thinking for himself.

And he's deciphering this tremendously  
overweighted body of information,  
which he puts into an order  
and gives you the feeling  
that you can do the same thing,  
that the whole thing is decipherable.  
And he also gives you the sense  
that there is a source,  
there is a centre to the...  
...to a dissenting population,  
although we feel that there's no centre.  
And I think that is what reactivated in me...  
...a desire to get back...  
get reacquainted with the political scene  
after 30 years of alienation from it.  
You do hundreds of interviews and lectures.  
And you're dealing with massacres  
in East Timor  
and invasions of Panama, etc.  
Pretty horrific stuff- death squads.  
What keeps you going?  
Don't you get burned out on this material?  
It's mainly a matter of whether you can look  
yourself in the mirror, I think.  
Got to go,  
- get these people into town.  
- Maybe you could say, "All aboard", for us?  
All aboard!  
Bye-bye!  
Bye!  
No, couldn't see it!  
Just hit the microphone.  
Thank you. Goodbye, Canada.  
Goodbye, Canada.  
Bye!  
I think I've gone past the hour  
that you agreed to.  
In your introduction,  
you said that he's from Harvard.  
Oh, I heard that.  
Oh, yes, that is true. We'll bleep it.  
Sorry about making you answer that  
in such a short time!  
It worked. Did we hit it in two minutes?

Well, we did pretty well, actually.  
That means less sports and that's fine with me.  
The people don't know what's going on.  
If the people knew what you say here today,  
they'd happily change.  
Thank you.  
On that optimistic note, Professor Chomsky,  
thank you very much indeed.  
So, how did it go?  
I thought it was sort of technical-sounding.  
But...  
There wasn't much of a rhythm.  
- Did you ever think of running for President?  
If I ran for President, the first thing I'd do  
is tell people not to vote for me.  
This guy's got to go home, he really does.  
And people still believe  
the politics of the world changes.  
- Why don't you let him go home?  
- Thanks.