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How American Journalism Became A Mouthpiece Of The Deep State

The intelligence community uses the media to manipulate the American people and pressure elected politicians.



The Washington Post's David Ignatius (Wikimedia Commons)

MAY 24, 2021 | 12:01 AM

[HTTPS://WWW.THEAMERICANCONSERVATIVE.COM/ARTICLES/SPIES-JOURNALISTS-AND-INFO-OPS-AGAINST-AMERICA/#DISQUS_THREAD](https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/spies-journalists-and-info-ops-against-america/#DISQUS_THREAD)

[PETER VAN BUREN \(HTTPS://WWW.THEAMERICANCONSERVATIVE.COM/AUTHOR/PETER-VAN-BUREN/\)](https://www.theamericanconservative.com/author/peter-van-buren/)

SERVANTS OF THE DEEP STATE: HOW AMERICAN JOURNALISTS BECAME A MOUTHPIECE OF THE DEEP STATE
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NEW YORK TIMES: 'AMERICAN JOURNALISTS BECAME A MOUTHPIECE OF THE DEEP STATE'
JOURNALISTS AND INFO OPS AGAINST AMERICA
S-AND-INFO-OPS-AGAINST-AMERICA-2021-05-24-12-01-AM-READ-MORE-3-EREAD-MC

Reporters joke that the easiest job in Washington is CIA spokesman. You need only listen carefully to ques say, “No comment,” and head to happy hour. The joke, however, is on us. The reporters pretend to see only one side of the CIA, the passive hiding of information. They meanwhile profit from the other side of the equation, active information operations designed to influence events in America. It is 2021 and the CIA is running an op against the American people.

Leon Panetta, once director of CIA, explained bluntly (https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-06-21/cia-interferes-foreign-elections?utm_medium=promo_email&utm_source=lo_flows&utm_campaign=registered_user_welcome&utm_term=email) that the agency influenced *foreign* media outlets ahead of elections in order to “change attitudes within the country.” The method was to “acquire media within a country or within a region that could very well be used for being able to deliver a specific message or work to influence those that may own elements of the media to be able to cooperate, work with you in delivering that message.” The CIA has been running such ops to influence (<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/17/sunday-review/russia-isnt-the-only-one-meddling-in-elections-we-do-it-too.html>), foreign elections continuously since the end of WWII.

The goal is to control information as a tool of influence. Sometimes the control is very direct, operating (<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0163443708088615?journalCode=mcsa>) the media outlet (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB105044775030990000>), yourself. The problem is this is easily exposed, destroying credibility.

A more effective strategy is to become a source for legitimate media such that your (dis)information inherits their credibility. Most effective is when one CIA plant is the initial source while a second CIA plant acts seemingly independently as a confirming source. You can push information to the mainstream media, who can then “independently” confirm it, sometimes unknowingly, through your secondary agents. You can basically write tomorrow’s headlines.

Other techniques include exclusive true information mixed with disinformation to establish credibility, using official sources like embassy spokesmen “inadvertently” confirm sub details, and covert funding of research and side gigs (<https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2021/05/17/nyt-fails-to-disclose-columnists-side-gig-at-pro-israel-advocacy-group/>), to promote academics and experts who can discredit counter-narratives.

From the end of WWII to the Church Committee in 1976, this was all dismissed as a conspiracy theory. Of course the U.S. would not use the CIA to influence elections, especially in fellow democracies (<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2006/07/20/national/u-s-admits-cia-gave-ldp-money-in-1950s-1960s/>). Except it did. Real-time reporting on intelligence is by nature based on limited information, albeit marked with the unambiguous fingerprints of established tradecraft. Always give time a chance to explain.

Through Operation Mockingbird (<https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/hearings/ciasuseofjournal00unit.pdf>), the CIA ran over 400 (http://www.carlbernstein.com/magazine_cia_and_media.php) American journalists as direct assets.

Almost none have ever discussed their work publicly. Journalists performed these tasks (http://www.carlbernstein.com/magazine_cia_and_media.php) for the CIA with the consent of America’s leading news organizations. The *New York Times* alone willingly provided cover (<https://www.theamericanconservative.com/privacy-policy/>). (http://www.carlbernstein.com/magazine_cia_and_media.php) for ten CIA officers over decades and kept quiet about it.

Long term relationships are a powerful tool, so feeding a true big story to a young reporter to get him promoted is part of the game. Don't forget the anonymous source who drove the Watergate story was an [FBI](https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/deep-throat-is-revealed) (<https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/deep-throat-is-revealed>), official who through his actions made the careers of cub reporters Woodward and Bernstein. Bernstein went on to [champion](https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-met-carl-bernstein-trump-1103-chicago-inc-20171101-story.html) (<https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-met-carl-bernstein-trump-1103-chicago-inc-20171101-story.html>), Russiagate. Woodward became a Washington hagiographer. Ken Dilanian, formerly with the Associated Press and now working for NBC, still [maintains](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/la-times-disowns-reporter_b_5770388) (https://www.huffpost.com/entry/la-times-disowns-reporter_b_5770388) a “[collaborative relationship](https://theintercept.com/2014/09/04/former-l-times-reporter-cleared-stories-cia-publication/) (<https://theintercept.com/2014/09/04/former-l-times-reporter-cleared-stories-cia-publication/>)” with the CIA.

That's the tradecraft. The problem for America is once again the tools of war abroad have come home, just the same as when post-9/11 the NSA turned its antennas inward. The intelligence community is currently operating against the American people using established media.

Some of it can't be more obvious. The CIA always [planted](https://www.cato.org/commentary/how-national-security-state-manipulates-news-media) (<https://www.cato.org/commentary/how-national-security-state-manipulates-news-media>), stories abroad for American outlets to pick up. To influence public opinion they lied to journalists in the run up to the 2003 Iraq war. The agency works directly with Hollywood to [control](https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2016/07/operation-tinseltown-how-the-cia-manipulates-hollywood/491138/) (<https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2016/07/operation-tinseltown-how-the-cia-manipulates-hollywood/491138/>), movies about itself.

Turn on any of the advocacy media outlets and you see [panels](https://twitter.com/mtaibbi/status/1382856410443186179) (<https://twitter.com/mtaibbi/status/1382856410443186179>) of former CIA officials. None however is more egregious than John Brennan, former director, who for years touted Russiagate when he knew from information gathered while he was still in office that it was all fake. Brennan probably leaked the foundational lie alleging Trump was dirty with Russia to the press in January of 2017 as the kickoff event to the [info op](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/09/opinion/inspector-general-report.html?action=click&module=Opinion&pgtype=Homepage) (<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/09/opinion/inspector-general-report.html?action=click&module=Opinion&pgtype=Homepage>), still running today.

Brennan's role is more than speculation. [John Durham](http://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/23/us/politics/john-durham-fbi-russia.html) (<http://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/23/us/politics/john-durham-fbi-russia.html>), the U.S. attorney leading the ongoing “how it happened” Russiagate investigation into the intelligence community, has requested Brennan's emails and call logs from CIA. Durham is also examining whether Brennan [changed](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/19/us/politics/durham-john-brennan-cia.html) (<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/19/us/politics/durham-john-brennan-cia.html>), his story between his public comments (not under oath: say anything) and his May 2017 testimony to Congress (under oath: watch out for perjury) about the dossier. Reporter Aaron Mate is less delicate, laying out the [evidence](https://www.realclearinvestigations.com/articles/2019/11/15/the_brennan_dossier_all_about_a_prime_mover_of) (https://www.realclearinvestigations.com/articles/2019/11/15/the_brennan_dossier_all_about_a_prime_mover_of) was “a central architect and promoter of the conspiracy theory from its inception.” Even blunter is Senator Rand Paul, who directly [accuses](https://www.newsweek.com/rand-paul-steele-dossier-john-brennan-1378437) (<https://www.newsweek.com/rand-paul-steele-dossier-john-brennan-1378437>) Brennan of trying “to bring down a sitting president.”

How that worked helps show how info ops intertwine with covert ops. Justice Department Inspector General Michael Horowitz's [report](https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/can-we-impeach-the-fbi-now/) (<https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/can-we-impeach-the-fbi-now/>), shows the FBI unleashed a full-spectrum spying campaign with the primary document of the information op, the [Steele Dossier](https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/the-primordial-ooze-of-the-collusion-conspiracy/) (<https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/the-primordial-ooze-of-the-collusion-conspiracy/>), as an excuse. Dossier author and ex-British intel officer Christopher Steele also created a textbook [information loop](https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/christopher-steele-) (<https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/christopher-steele->

[the-real-foreign-influence-in-the-2016-election/](#)) to publicize his work, secretly becoming his own [corroborating \(https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/christopher-steele-the-real-foreign-influence-in-the-2016-election/\)](https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/christopher-steele-the-real-foreign-influence-in-the-2016-election/) source.

The Horowitz report also shows it was a [5 Eyes \(https://www.dni.gov/index.php/ncsc-how-we-work/217-about/organization/icig-pages/2660-icig-fiorc\)](https://www.dni.gov/index.php/ncsc-how-we-work/217-about/organization/icig-pages/2660-icig-fiorc) team effort; Australian diplomat Alexander Downer, a man with ties to his nation's [intel services \(https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-curious-case-of-mr-downer-1527809075\)](https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-curious-case-of-mr-downer-1527809075), arranged a meeting with Trump staffer George Papadopoulos to set in motion FISA surveillance. [British GCHQ \(https://www.cnn.com/2017/04/13/politics/trump-russia-british-intelligence/index.html\)](https://www.cnn.com/2017/04/13/politics/trump-russia-british-intelligence/index.html) monitored Trump officials and passed info to the NSA. The op used CIA assets, shadowy academics Stefan Halper and Joseph Mifsud, as dangles. There was even a [honey trap \(https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/15219/durham-indictments\)](https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/15219/durham-indictments), with a female FBI undercover agent inserted into Israeli-arranged social situations with a Trump staffer.

It was all based on nothing but disinformation and the American press swallowed every bit of it to falsely convince a vast number of citizens their nation was run by a Russian asset. [Robert Mueller \(https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/it-was-all-a-lie/\)](https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/it-was-all-a-lie/), whose investigation was supposed to propel all this nothing into impeachment, ended up exercising one of the last bits of political courage Americans will ever see in walking right to the edge of essentially a coup and refusing to go one step more.

The CIA is a learning institution, and it recovered well from Russiagate. Details can be investigated. That's where the old story fell apart. The Steele Dossier wasn't true. But the a-ha discovery was the realization that since you'll never formally prosecute anyone, you don't need to bother with evidence when you can just throw out accusations. The new paradigm let the nature of the source—the brave lads of the intelligence agencies—legitimize the accusations. Go overt and let the unexpected prestige of the CIA as progressive heroes substantiate things. It worked.

So in December 2017 CNN [reported \(https://theintercept.com/2017/12/09/the-u-s-media-yesterday-suffered-its-most-humiliating-debacle-in-ages-now-refuses-all-transparency-over-what-happened/\)](https://theintercept.com/2017/12/09/the-u-s-media-yesterday-suffered-its-most-humiliating-debacle-in-ages-now-refuses-all-transparency-over-what-happened/). Donald Trump, Jr., had advance access to the WikiLeaks archive. Within an hour, NBC's Ken Dilanian and CBS both claimed independent confirmation. It was a complete lie. How do you confirm a lie? Ask another liar.

In February 2020, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) [briefed \(https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/20/us/politics/russian-interference-trump-democrats.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/20/us/politics/russian-interference-trump-democrats.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage), the House Intelligence Committee the Russians were election meddling again to favor Trump. A few weeks earlier, the ODNI [briefed \(https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/bernie-sanders-briefed-by-us-officials-that-russia-is-trying-to-help-his-presidential-campaign/2020/02/21/5ad396a6-54bd-11ea-929a-64efa7482a77_story.html\)](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/bernie-sanders-briefed-by-us-officials-that-russia-is-trying-to-help-his-presidential-campaign/2020/02/21/5ad396a6-54bd-11ea-929a-64efa7482a77_story.html). Bernie Sanders the Russians were also meddling in the Democratic primaries in his favor. Both briefings were leaked, the former to the *New York Times* to [smear \(https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/the-intelligence-community-is-the-real-election-meddling-threat/\)](https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/the-intelligence-community-is-the-real-election-meddling-threat/), Trump for replacing his DNI, the latter to the *Washington Post* ahead of the Nevada caucuses to damage Sanders. Who benefits is always a good question. The answer was Joe Biden.

In June 2020 the *New York Times* stated [\(https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/26/us/politics/russia-afghanistan-bounties.html\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/26/us/politics/russia-afghanistan-bounties.html), the CIA [\(https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-cia-used-to-infiltrate-the-media-now-the-cia-is-the-media.html\)](https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-cia-used-to-infiltrate-the-media-now-the-cia-is-the-media.html), concluded the Russians “secretly offered bounties to

Taliban-linked militants for killing coalition forces in Afghanistan — including targeting American troops.” The story ran near another claiming Trump had spoken disrespectfully (<https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/trump-and-the-troops-the-medias-latest-self-satisfied-grift/>), about fallen soldiers. Neither was true. But they broke around Trump’s announcement about withdrawing troops from Afghanistan and were aimed at discouraging pro-military voters.

Earlier this month the *Washington Post*, citing (<https://greenwald.substack.com/p/corporate-news-outlets-again-confirm>), anonymous sources, claimed (<https://twitter.com/michaeldweiss/status/1388114235083968515/photo/1>) the FBI gave a defensive (<https://greenwald.substack.com/p/corporate-news-outlets-again-confirm>) briefing to Rudy Giuliani in 2019, before he traveled to Ukraine. Giuliani supposedly ignored the warning. The story was “independently confirmed” by both *NBC* and the *New York Times*. It was totally false (<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/05/01/media/washington-post-new-york-times-retraction-giuliani/index.html>).

We are left to wonder how all these media outlets keep making the same mistakes with sources and only in disfavor to Trump, et al., and never the other way. They have become a machine as trustworthy as the spies they rely on.

The American system always envisioned an adversarial role for the media. One of the earliest challenges to freedom of the press was the colonial-era Peter Zenger (<https://www.ushistory.org/US/7c.asp>) case, which established the right of the press to criticize politicians free from libel charges. At times when things really mattered, men like Edward R. Murrow worked their craft to preserve democracy. Same for Walter Cronkite reaching his opposition to the Vietnam War, and the *New York Times* reporters weighing imprisonment to publish the Pentagon Papers.

In each of those instances the handful of reporters who risked everything to tell the truth were held up as heroes. Seeing the *Times* fighting for its life, the *Washington Post* co-published the Pentagon Papers to force the government to make its case not just against a rival newspaper, but the 1A itself.

Not today. Journalism is devoted to eliminating practitioners (<https://thefederalist.com/2021/05/13/the-intercept-attacks-conservative-journalists-for-reporting-on-violent-black-lives-matter-riots/>), unwilling to play the game. Few have been targeted more than Glenn Greenwald (with Matt Taibbi (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGz2GzaxF6s>) as runner up.)

Greenwald exploded into a journalistic superhero for his reporting on Edward Snowden’s NSA archive, founding the Intercept to serve as a platform for that work. Then something very, very odd made it appear the Intercept outed (<https://wemeantwell.com/blog/2017/06/06/hey-intercept-something-is-very-wrong-with-reality-winner-and-the-nsa-leak/>) one of its own whistleblower sources. Evidence (<https://wemeantwell.com/blog/2017/06/06/hey-intercept-something-is-very-wrong-with-reality-winner-and-the-nsa-leak/>) suggests the source was a patsy, set up by the intel community, and exposed via Matt Cole, one of the Intercept journalists on this story. Cole was also involved in outing (<http://www.politico.com/blogs/under-the-radar/2012/04/more-journalists-linked-to-case-charging-ex-cia-officer-with-leaks-about-interrogators-120047>), CIA officer John Kiriakou as a source on torture. Whistleblowers were made to think twice before turning to the Intercept.

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Greenwald’s later criticism of the media for accepting Deep State lies as truth, particularly concerning (<https://www.theamericanconservative.com/privacy-policy/>), Russiagate, turned him into a villain for progressives. MSNBC banned (<https://observer.com/2018/08/glenn-greenwald-says-msnbc-banned-him-after-he-criticized-rachel-maddow/>) him, and other media outlets ran

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/13/business/media/the-intercept-source-reality-winner.html>), smear stories. He recently quit the Intercept after it refused

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/29/business/media/glenn-greenwald-leaving-intercept.html>), to publish his article (<https://greenwald.substack.com/p/my-resignation-from-the-intercept>), on Hunter Biden's ties to China unless he deleted portions critical of Joe Biden.

Greenwald wrote (<https://greenwald.substack.com/p/journalists-learning-they-spread>).

the most significant Trump-era alliance is between corporate outlets and security state agencies, whose evidence-free claims they unquestioningly disseminate... Every journalist, even the most honest and careful, will get things wrong sometimes, and trustworthy journalists issue prompt corrections when they do. That behavior should be *trust-building*...

But when media outlets continue to use the same reckless and deceitful tactics — such as claiming to have “independently confirmed (<https://greenwald.substack.com/p/corporate-news-outlets-again-confirm>)” one another's false stories when they have merely served as stenographers for the same anonymous security state agents while “confirming” nothing — that strongly suggests a complete indifference to the truth and, even more so, a willingness to serve as disinformation agents.

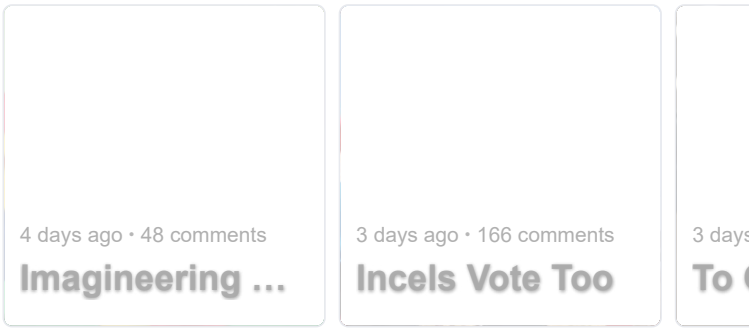
After decades of success abroad with info ops, the CIA and others turned those weapons on us. We are seeing the Deep State meddle (<https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/real-takeaway-the-fbi-influenced-the-election-of-a-president/>), in presidential politics, simultaneously destroying (albeit mostly with their cooperation) the adversarial media while crushing faith in both our leaders and in the process of electing them. Democracy has no meaning here.

Peter Van Buren is the author of We Meant Well: How I Helped Lose the Battle for the Hearts and Minds of the Iraqi People (https://www.amazon.com/We-Meant-Well-American-Project/dp/0805096817/ref=as_li_ss_tl?_encoding=UTF8&pd_rd_i=0805096817&pd_rd_r=041744ad-c052-4957-bf1a-50e7b18cfa77&pd_rd_w=643gW&pd_rd_wg=Hl8Pe&pf_rd_p=b65ee94e-1282-43fc-a8b1-8bf931f6dfab&pf_rd_r=VJWESRQR1G93S3YP6FF3&psc=1&refRID=VJWESRQR1G93S3YP6FF3&linkCode=sl1;20&linkId=e0aab9e79ecd342a1884b44493a89&language=en_US), Hooper's War: A Novel of WWII Japan (https://www.amazon.com/Hoopers-War-Peter-Van-Buren/dp/1941311121/ref=as_li_ss_tl?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1492091853&sr=1-1&keywords=hoopers+war&linkCode=sl1&tag=wemeanwelles-20&linkId=08faeac970fc9c56948080226d38739&language=en_US), and Ghosts of Tom Joad: A Story of the 99 Percent (https://www.amazon.com/Ghosts-Tom-Joad-Story-Percent/dp/1935462903/ref=as_li_ss_tl?_encoding=UTF8&pd_rd_i=1935462903&pd_rd_r=041744ad-c052-4957-bf1a-50e7b18cfa77&pd_rd_w=643gW&pd_rd_wg=Hl8Pe&pf_rd_p=b65ee94e-1282-43fc-a8b1-8bf931f6dfab&pf_rd_r=VJWESRQR1G93S3YP6FF3&psc=1&refRID=VJWESRQR1G93S3YP6FF3&linkCode=sl1;20&linkId=621b0617b2d773ec4fb33e0147e10349&language=en_US).

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Why no mention of the Plame Affair in this? Via Valeria Plame and Joseph Wilson, some members of the CIA warned the nation that the Bush administration was lying about Iraq's WMD. Eventually Plame was outed by Cheney as a CIA agent in retribution, ruing her intelligence career.

Sorry, but the evidence is that conservative politicians manipulate and attack government institutions. There is no "deep state" just a non-reality based community

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Like in public policy, the game's stewards must see beyond the dollars and cents.



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In the conflict between Athens and Sparta, the Melians tried in vain to maintain their neutrality. As Thucydides apprises us, the Athenians were rather blunt about the issue: "Right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must." [...]



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