The List of CONSPIRACIES

Marriagh and the Tree Marr

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Have you ever seen a magician performing a magic trick? They are super fun to watch, and a good one will leave you wondering how it actually happened.

One tool that most magicians use is called misdirection—the act of drawing your attention to something unimportant (like their other hand or an object in front of you). Why would they do this?

Misdirection is used to distract you from what the magician is doing—the actual trick. By looking at something unimportant, you're less likely to focus on what's actually important. It's an act of deception to fool you into believing something is real that actually isn't. And it works very well—people can be very gullible, and they are susceptible to having their attention manipulated by others.



Sadly, tricks like these aren't just used by magicians. They are also used by those in power who want to get away with their conspiracies and corruption without people like you being aware of them. Their success relies on keeping you distracted and in the dark. So what can the average person do about this to stop it from happening?

Like with all our work, it starts with education. If we don't know what's real and true, then we won't be able to figure out the right solutions to the many problems in our world.

As it turns out, many people believe things that simply aren't true! They believe what they were told by the media, or what the government said, or what they read in an official report. But these people often lie. Many world events feature true conspiracies and happened in a different way than what the public now thinks.

Our goal in the chapters ahead is to help you realize just how frequently misdirection happens in our world today. We want you to realize how often our own government has conspired to do bad things, so that together we can stop it from happening in the future. We need to learn these truths if we're going to

fight for a freer future.

Ready to begin?

—The Tuttle Twins





NAYIRAH and the Iraq War

A 15-year-old's tearful testimony swayed a nation, but secrets lurked behind her words, igniting a war based on deception.



It was October 1990. The cloudy autumn air was warm as members of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus walked up the steps of the Capitol and made their way to their seats. President George H. W. Bush had been pushing Congress to authorize the United States to enter the conflict between Kuwait and its invading neighbor, Iraq, but so far he hadn't had much success in convincing them that US military action was warranted. He hoped the testimony the caucus members were about to hear would help change their minds.

As they sipped their coffee and shuffled their papers, their attention shifted to a young lady approaching the podium. She was small and thin with deep olive skin and dark, almond-shaped eyes. Her brown hair was pulled back in a single braid down her back, and she wore a white sweater with a black collar.

With a quivering voice, Nayirah began her testimony. She held back tears as she detailed how her summer vacation took a terrible turn when the Iraqi army forced their way into Kuwait City. The caucus members were in awe of her bravery as she recalled how her older sister, with her newborn baby, had escaped just in time, but how she, at only fifteen years old, had volunteered to stay in the occupied city to help at the local hospital.

They were sickened as she detailed how she was forced to stand by helplessly as Iraqi soldiers unplugged the oxygen supply, removed premature babies from their lifesaving incubators, and callously left them on the cold floor to die. She explained that they then took the incubators and shipped them back to Iraq, leaving the ravished city without lifesaving equipment.

As she continued, the committee learned that her friends had been brutally tortured too. She and her family had to dodge gunfire and suffer physical and verbal abuse—often actually running for their lives—as they fled Kuwait. Eventually, they made their way to the safety of the United States.

News channels all across the country aired her testimony. Americans were deeply impacted by what they heard. Politicians, including President Bush, were outraged, citing Nayirah's testimony repeatedly in their calls for military action against Iraq.

In August 1990, two months prior to Nayirah's testimony, only 17 percent of Americans said they supported US involvement in the clash between Saddam Hussein's Iraq and Kuwait. Just two months after her testimony, nearly half of Americans thought the United States needed to act, and in January 1991, Congress voted to authorize the deployment of American troops to fight against Iraq. The Senate passed their resolution by a margin of only five votes; seven senators cited Nayirah's testimony as directly impacting their decision to vote in favor of going to war.

Things Aren't Always What They Seem

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Nayirah's harrowing story was shared by human rights organizations and governments around the world. Her bravery was heralded far and wide. There was just one problem.

Everything she said was a lie.

Nayirah's story began to unravel when it was revealed that her last name wasn't being kept secret to protect her from potential harm. Her full name was Nayirah Al-Sabah, and her father was... the Kuwaiti ambassador to the United States!

Naturally, some journalists had questions about this story—not everybody accepted it as true. And as questions were asked, without good answers in response, Nayirah's story began to fall apart. When human rights groups entered the Al Adan Hospital after the war ended, they found the NICU intact. There was no evidence showing Iraqi soldiers had done what they had been accused of. As Nayirah's narrative came crashing down, the real story began to emerge.

On August 11, 1990, just nine days after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, a group organized by the Kuwaiti government called Citizens for a Free Kuwait sent \$10.8 million to the American public relations firm Hill & Knowlton. Their goal was to drum up support for US intervention in the war. They knew they had a much better chance at ousting the occupying Iraqi army if the United States entered the fray.

So the best and brightest minds at Hill & Knowlton began coaching the ambassador's daughter and arranging for her appearance before the congressional committee. They taught Nayirah what to say. They coached her on how to hold her hands when she spoke, what gestures to make, when to cry, and when to speak with sternness. Like an actress practicing for an important performance, Nayirah spent countless hours practicing her lines and rehearsing her movements. When it was time for the show, her acting paid off—her performance was very convincing.

It is still unknown just how much President George H.W. Bush knew about Nayirah's true identity. What has been verified is that Democratic Senator Tom Lantos, who chaired the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, knew who Nayirah was but chose not to tell his fellow committee members. What is certain is that the president wanted Congress to authorize a war against Saddam Hussein, and he used Nayirah's testimony several times in speeches and meetings to drum up support for his cause.

President Bush got his war, and a decade later George W. Bush followed in his father's footsteps, once again sending US soldiers to war with Iraq.

Nayirah never spoke publicly again. She disappeared from the public eye just as quickly as she had appeared, and no one was ever held responsible for fabricating her ten-million-dollar tall tale or the wars that followed because of it.

Cui Bono?

It is fair to say the people of Kuwait benefited by not having their country permanently annexed by Iraq. Saddam Hussein was a brutal dictator who oppressed his own people and sought to control the Kuwaiti people as well. The international community feared that failure to contain Hussein after his invasion of Kuwait would embolden him, possibly even resulting in him invading other neighboring countries and causing a "destabilization" in the Middle East.

But was it our fight to fight? And why did the United States choose *this* dictator and *this* conflict when examples of harsh rulers and acts of aggression are abundant all around the world?

Military writers and historians call the Gulf War a booming success. They tout the shortness of the war as an example of the swiftness with which the US military was able to meet a foe and vanquish them with relatively little loss of life or equipment. It's true that conflict was short—a mere forty-three days of which only about one hundred hours were ground combat. But calculating the actual length and loss of life and equipment varies, depending on how far we are willing to "zoom out" on the lens through which we are looking at this war.

Military leaders cite the Gulf War as a turning point in US warfighting. It was the first conflict in which all branches of service fought as a unified, centrally commanded force and not as individual, branch-specific operators. The lessons, they say, helped shape the US military into a force that was able to respond to the events of 9/11 and the following decades of continuous warfighting in multiple theaters. They view the Gulf War as a live-fire training exercise that prepared the military for the types of battle they would see in coming years.

But there are many who wonder if we would have avoided the prolonged and costly wars in the decades since if we had simply left Kuwait and its ally neighbors to fight a regional battle against a local aggressor. Surely, they would have been able to remove Saddam to his proper borders within his own country and hold him there. How many American and allied lives have been lost in wars and conflicts committed to using the Gulf War as a template and an encouragement?

In the years following Nayirah's testimony, the expansion of the US military and its defense industry exploded to

never before seen size and scope. In 2021, the United States spent more than \$800 billion on defense. War has become a multi-billion-dollar industry, and many see the United States as having become hawkish—circling the globe with an eye for conflicts to involve itself in. War, it seems, became a sort of business to be planned and managed by bureaucrats and politicians with an eye on their investment portfolios and their retirement accounts. The human cost of war has been practically ignored.

Would this have happened if Nayirah hadn't testified and US public opinion hadn't been shifted to support intervention in a conflict between two small countries half a world away?

Why Does This Matter?

Since the Gulf War, the ease with which the United States has committed troops and resources to armed conflict has only increased. The Gulf War acted as a type of warfighting Pandora's box—loosing the power and might of the US military (and the US dollar) and applying it to seemingly endless conflicts and causes.

There is always a plea from one small country or another asking for an international commitment of troops or funding to its regional conflict. At the writing of this book, the small country of Ukraine, led by a professional actor and comedian-turned-president, has succeeded in securing over \$75 billion in funding from the United States to assist in its conflict with Russia. There have been claims that many of the videos used to increase support for Ukraine—videos showing bombed-out neighborhoods and civilian casual-

ties—have actually been created in Hollywood-style studios and circulated to news networks around the world in order to garner international sympathy and support for Ukraine.

One thing is certain: once a tool of manipulation is proven effective, it is unlikely it will be abandoned. If, clear back in 1990, governments knew that all it took was a sympathetic actor, a little coaching, and a chunk of money to change public opinion to favor committing US assets and lives to a war that wasn't theirs to fight, it is safe to assume these methods are still being used today and will be used in the future.

What We Learned

- 1. The government will knowingly spread lies if it helps them get the public to agree to something.
- 2. Manipulating voters' emotions will shift their opinions.
- 3. When politicians lie, they often suffer no consequences.
- 4. Foreign governments use money and influence to shape American policy.
- 5. Politicians keep secrets not only from the public, but from each other, in order to manipulate a story or shape a narrative.

Nayirah's Testimony

Given to the United States Congressional Human Rights Caucus

October 10, 1990

Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee, my name is Nayirah and I just came out of Kuwait. My mother and I were in Kuwait on August 2nd for a peaceful summer holiday. My older sister had a baby on July 29th and we wanted to spend some time in Kuwait with her.

I only pray that none of my 10th grade classmates had a summer vacation like I did. I may have wished sometimes that I can be an adult, that I could grow up quickly. What I saw happening to the children of Kuwait and to my country has changed my life forever, has changed the life of all Kuwaitis, young and old, mere children or more.

My sister with my five-day-old nephew traveled across the desert to safety. There is no milk available for the baby in Kuwait. They barely escaped when their car was stuck in the desert sand and help came from Saudi Arabia.

I stayed behind and wanted to do something for my country. The second week after invasion, I volunteered at the AlIdar (phonetic rendering) Hospital with 12 other women who wanted to help as well. I was the youngest volunteer. The "other" women were from 20 to 30 years old.

While I was there, I saw the Iraqi soldiers come into the hospital with guns. They took the babies out of the incubators, took the incubators and left the children to die on the cold floor. It was horrifying. I could not help but think of my nephew who was born premature and might have died that

day as well. After I left the hospital, some of my friends and I distributed flyers condemning the Iraqi invasion until we were warned we might be killed if the Iraqis saw us.

The Iraqis have destroyed everything in Kuwait. They stripped the supermarkets of food, the pharmacies of medicine, the factories of medical supplies, ransacked their houses and tortured neighbors and friends.

I saw and talked to a friend of mine after his torture and release by the Iraqis. He is 22 but he looked as though he could have been an old man. The Iraqis dunked his head into a swimming pool until he almost drowned. They pulled out his fingernails and then played [sic] electric shocks to sensitive private parts of his body. He was lucky to survive.

If an Iraqi soldier is found dead in the neighborhood, they burn to the ground all the houses in the general vicinity and would not let firefighters come until the only ash and rubble was left.

The Iraqis were making fun of President Bush and verbally and physically abusing my family and me on our way out of Kuwait. We only did so because life in Kuwait became unbearable. They have forced us to hide, burn or destroy everything identifying our country and our government.

I want to emphasize that Kuwait is our mother and the Emir our father. We repeated this on the roofs of our houses in Kuwait until the Iraqis began shooting at us, and we shall repeat it again. I am glad I am 15, old enough to remember Kuwait before Saddam Hussein destroyed it and young enough to rebuild it.

Thank you.



Operation MOCKINGBIRD

In post-war America, as families relished the comforts of daily life, a hidden web ensnared the nation's conscience. The CIA's clandestine endeavors entangled journalists and artists to puppeteer public sentiment.



How America's Most Powerful News Media Worked Hand in Glove with the Central Intelligence Agency and Why the Church Committee Covered It Up

THE CIA AND THE MEDIA

BY CARL BERNSTEIN

n 1953, Joseph Alsop, then one of America's leading syndicated columnists, went to the Philippines to cover an election. He did not go because he was asked to do so by his syndicate. He did not go because he was asked to do so by the newspapers that The 1950s and '60s were an idyllic time in America. The Second World War was fading into the past and taking with it all the memories of hardship and suffering. There was a general feeling of hope and a promise of prosperity covering most of the country. Husbands went to work in tailored suits and came home to adoring children, tidy homes, and loving wives. There was finally time again for leisure, art, and music, plus movies were flooding even the smallest towns with culture and excitement.

But perhaps the most exciting thing of all was the availability, and affordability, of the black and white television. There had never been an invention that swept the nation and found its way into nearly every home more quickly than this modern communication and entertainment marvel. After supper was eaten and the children were bathed and tucked neatly into their matching beds, mother and father would sit down in front of the television and listen to the trusted news reporter relay the events of the day. It felt good to be home. It felt good to be informed. There was a feeling of belonging, importance, and having your feet planted on solid ground with a clear and accurate picture of the world around you while understanding your place in it.

It felt good to be an American.

Things Aren't Always What They Seem

Beginning in the 1950s, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) started recruiting students, artists, and journalists to influence the attitudes and opinions of average citizens by

controlling what ideas, events, and perspectives they were exposed to in news and entertainment.

Millions of dollars were paid to individuals and organizations that agreed to help the CIA in their mission to control the way Americans thought about the world around them. Sometimes the stories promoted were entirely false—fabrications conjured up in a dim corner of an office at CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia. Other times, the story was true, but the "spin" put on it (the way it was presented) pushed the person reading or listening to see the story from a very specific perspective and come to a very specific conclusion—the conclusion the government had decided best served their purposes.

Designed under the guise of protecting American interests from the threat of communism, Operation Mockingbird turned the propaganda-making might of the US intelligence community inward—focusing it not on enemies abroad but instead on domestic targets: average Americans. The masterminds of Mockingbird were Frank Wisner and Allen W. Dulles (the first civilian director of the CIA). They recruited well-known and trusted American journalists into a news and media-controlling civilian army. Additionally, the CIA funded student groups from college campuses, cultural organizations, magazine editors, and even artists to "unofficially" work for them in their efforts to manipulate and control the clueless populace.

In February 1967, the *New York Times* published an article claiming to have proof of the CIA making payments to some student organizations. A few other articles were published, but they were mostly ignored. In 1973, the *Washington Star* published a report that more than thirty

American journalists were being paid by the CIA. The CIA refused to disclose their names, claiming that to do so would endanger the writers' and reporters' lives. This led many to wonder why, if they weren't actually working for the CIA, it could be dangerous for their names to be known.

Finally, Congress took notice, and a series of congressional investigations followed. The Senate organized the Church Committee—charged with investigating the CIA, FBI, IRS, and NSA for any domestic "government operations and potential abuses." For all the morally and ethically questionable things the CIA and other intelligence agencies did (and do!), it was still against the law for them to operate against citizens of the United States within the country. Senator Frank Church and his colleagues wrote:

In examining the CIA's past and present use of the U.S. media, the Committee finds two reasons for concern. The first is the potential, inherent in covert media operations, for manipulating or incidentally misleading the American public. The second is the damage to the credibility and independence of a free press which may be caused by covert relationships with the U.S. journalists and media organizations.

Meanwhile, the CIA continued to promise Congress and the American people that they would never do anything that would risk influencing domestic public opinion, either directly or indirectly. They claimed they had a standing policy specifically prohibiting the placement of propaganda in the American media. They didn't mention their standing policy of *ignoring their own policies*.

By 1975, the story began to unravel, and the CIA admitted to Congress that they had, for decades, been actively manipulating the American people by using the mainstream media to redirect the thoughts and opinions of American citizens. They acknowledged that they worked with journalists and other media personalities to distort truth in order to fit specific agendas. There were no big announcements made to the American public—most people never even knew that their government had been purposely and actively manipulating them through radio, television, and entertainment for most of their lives.

It wasn't until a *Rolling Stone* article in 1977 that news of the CIA's misdeeds went mainstream. Carl Bernstein's investigative work titled "The CIA and the Media" charged that the CIA "has secretly bankrolled numerous foreign press services, periodicals and newspapers—both in English and foreign language—which provided excellent cover for CIA operatives." He found that journalists not only wrote the stories the CIA asked them to and presented them to Americans as fact, but they often had very close relationships with intelligence officers. They willingly shared their notebooks and actively collaborated with them to disseminate elaborate lies or to put twists on real stories that made them appear entirely different than they actually were.

He also charged that the CIA was not merely manipulating the foreign press, but the domestic press as well, and went as far as to name the networks, publications, and people who had aided the CIA in their efforts. CBS, *Time*, the *New York Times*, the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, ABC, Reuters, NBC, and the Copley News Service were all working for the CIA and being compensated very well financially for their troubles.

Although newly appointed Director of Central Intelligence George H.W. Bush ordered the CIA, in 1976, to cease domestic media manipulation and barred government agencies from "entering into any paid or contractual relationships with any full-time or part-time news correspondent accredited by any United States news service, newspaper, periodical, radio or television network or station," many still suspect that this is happening today.

One estimate suggests that the US government, through Mockingbird, spent hundreds of millions of dollars a year—for more than twenty years—in its efforts to shape and direct the feelings, thoughts, opinions, and tastes of Americans. They were, for the most part, successful in accomplishing their goals.

Cui Bono?

Throughout the world, there are totalitarian governments that strictly limit and control the ability of their people to access news and information. In China and North Korea, Western media is prohibited, and controls are placed on the internet to block unapproved content. Similarly, many Middle Eastern countries strictly limit the types of art, music, news, and media that are accessible by their citizens. It's easy for Americans to look at these heavy-handed approaches to controlling the way people think, and what they know, and judge themselves lucky to be free from such restrictions. But are we really?

It's easier to fool someone than to convince them that they have been fooled, and it seems that the intelligence community has counted on that quirk of human nature as they lay their secret plans. Why use heavy-handed force to ensure your citizenry only sees the world you've approved for them—risking rebellion or regime change amid charges of being antidemocratic—if you can instead convince them that they are free while controlling what they see, hear, and believe? Are people any more free if they willingly place the shackles on their own feet and hand the key to their jailer than if the jailer does the shackling?

Mockingbird shaped the way an entire generation of people grew up to see themselves, their country, and the world around them. No source of information was left unmanipulated. Yet, most of those people still don't know that their worldviews were carefully crafted by men and women who went to great lengths to make them believe they were freethinkers while controlling their most formative experiences.

The people who were manipulated by Mockingbird went on to assume roles in government, business, media, art, and entertainment where they willingly and ignorantly became mouthpieces for government propaganda. The CIA no longer needed to spend billions of dollars to manipulate Americans—they had created an army of civilian operatives through their earlier efforts, and now all they had to do was keep feeding them the "official story"—whatever they decided that story should be—and resting comfortably in the knowledge that their "truth" would fill the airwaves, art galleries, history books, and newspapers.

Why Does This Matter?

What have we seen in recent years that could be compared to Mockingbird? Have there been any times when it

seemed that celebrities, artists, musicians, journalists, and media personalities were all talking about the same things or pushing the same stories or the same versions of events?

Knowing that Mockingbird was real helps us to look at the world around us differently—making us more thoughtful about the things we see and hear in the different types of media we consume and in the news we read and watch. Although the secret program was officially (and allegedly) shuttered in the late 1970s, its influence is still being felt. Most journalists, musicians, artists, and celebrities quickly fall in lockstep with the government when a "bad guy" has been identified or a narrative is being promoted.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, not only did virtually all sources of information and entertainment support what the government was mandating and saying, but those who questioned the "official" story were attacked, deplatformed, fired, disparaged, or in other ways silenced or punished. Are people really free if they can't talk about their own health and the health of their loved ones without being persecuted?

Mark Twain was right: "Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect."

What We Learned

1. The government has a vested interest in controlling the way a country's population views and interprets the world around them, and they are willing to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to influence it.

- 2. Intelligence agencies often operate entirely outside the control and awareness of elected representatives. They are simply not accountable to anyone until something they are doing is discovered and people begin asking questions and demanding accountability.
- 3. Even when it is proven that intelligence agencies have operated against the very people whose interests they are tasked with protecting, there are often no consequences, and worse—the average citizen often doesn't pay attention or care.
- 4. Celebrities, entertainers, and media personalities will sacrifice their credibility and their morals for money and status. They will lie to the people who look up to and trust them if it means increased fame and fortune.

Congressional Report

From the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities

April 26, 1976

About half of the some 50 CIA relationships with the U.S. media were paid relationships, ranging from salaried operatives working under journalistic cover, to U.S. journalists serving as "independent contractors" for the CIA and being paid regularly for their services, to those who receive only occasional gifts and reimbursements from the CIA.

More than a dozen United States news organizations and commercial publishing houses formerly provided cover for CIA agents abroad. A few of these organizations were unaware that they provided this cover.

Although the variety of the CIA relationships with the U.S. media makes a systematic breakdown of them almost impossible, former CIA Director Colby has distinguished among four types of relationships. These are:

- (1) Staff of general circulation, U.S. news organizations;
- (2) Staff of small, or limited circulation, U.S. publications;
- (3) Free-lance, stringers, propaganda writers, and employees of U.S. publishing houses;
- (4) Journalists with whom CIA maintains unpaid, occasional, covert contact.

While the CIA did not provide the names of its media agents or the names of the media organizations with which they are connected, the Committee reviewed summaries of their relationships and work with the CIA. Through this review the Committee found that as of February 1976:

- (1) The first category... appears to be virtually phased out. In at least one case the journalistic functions assumed by a CIA staff officer for cover purposes grew to a point where the officer concluded that he could not satisfactorily serve the requirements of both his (unwitting) U.S. media employers and the CIA, and therefore resigned from the CIA. He maintained contact, however, with the CIA and continued... to report to the CIA.
- (2) Of the less than ten relationships with writers for small, or limited circulation, U.S. publications, such as trade journals or newsletters, most are for cover purposes.
- (3) The third, and largest, category of CIA relationships with the U.S. media includes free-lance journalists... and agents working under cover as employees of U.S. publishing houses abroad... Most are paid by the CIA, and virtually all are witting; few, however, of the news organizations to which they contribute are aware of their CIA relationships.
- (4) The fourth category of covert relationships resembles the kind of contact that journalists have with any other department of the U.S. Government in the routine performance of their journalistic duties. No money changes hands. The relationships are usually limited to occasional lunches, interviews, or telephone conversations during which information would be exchanged or verified. The difference, of course, is that the relationships are covert. The journalist either volunteers or is requested by the CIA to provide some sort of information about people with whom he is in contact.