



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on September 24, 2012

## New York Times a “Propaganda Megaphone” for War, Says Former Reporter

The *New York Times* has essentially become a “propaganda megaphone” to peddle the establishment’s narrative — especially when it comes to war — charged foreign correspondent Daniel Simpson, who resigned from the paper in disgust. According to Simpson, the paper, which is often lambasted and ridiculed by conservatives and libertarians for its blatant “liberal” bias, is actually just a propaganda tool for the ruling establishment.



In an [explosive interview with the Kremlin-funded RT](#) media broadcaster, the former *Times* correspondent, who was based in the Balkans during his stint at the newspaper, offered an inside look at how it all works. What appears to have bothered him more than anything was how the supposed paper “of record” was so determined to sell the Iraq war to the American people, even if it meant basically lying or repeating government lies to do so.

“It seemed pretty glaringly obvious to me that the ‘news fit to print’ was pretty much the news that’s fit to serve the powerful,” Simpson explained, citing the warmongering over Iraq as a prime example. “The way that the paper’s senior staff think is exactly like those in power — in fact, it’s their job to become their friends.”

An ambitious reporter, Simpson joined the paper a decade ago when he was just 27 years old. He had been hired to report on the Balkans, where the U.S. government and other Western powers had intervened in an internal conflict. However, within a few months, disillusioned by the *Times*’ war-mongering, he resigned.

“I was young and naive and idealistic, I suppose. I thought I was going to be holding people in power to account,” said Simpson, who wrote a recently published book about his experiences entitled [A Rough Guide to the Dark Side](#). “It turned out instead that when I joined in 2002, the *New York Times* was very much engaged in doing exactly what those in power wanted them to do, and printing fake intelligence information to start the war in Iraq.”

As the establishment’s propaganda about “Weapons of Mass Destruction” in Iraq was getting in full swing, Simpson said he was asked to report bogus information about Serbians selling WMD delivery parts to Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. The Serbs, however, were actually just selling spare airplane parts, not WMD delivery systems, he explained.

“They were looking for every possible way of getting this weapons-of-mass-destruction story into the news media,” Simpson told RT, adding that the *Washington Post* quickly jumped on the dubious allegations. “So I came under enormous pressure from my bosses to start looking at it the same way, and I couldn’t see any evidence for doing that.”

While the *Times* did apologize for some of its most outrageously bogus WMD “reporting” — or war-mongering, as critics have labeled it — the paper “hasn’t really changed its policy,” Simpson explained.



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Among other problems, he pointed to Howell Raines, the executive editor during his time at the paper, who [wrote a long article in the Atlantic](#) after losing his job in 2004 that offered insight into the way top officials at the paper view its role.

Raines wrote that the *Times* was “the indispensable newsletter of the United States’ political, diplomatic, governmental, academic, and professional communities.” To Simpson, though, the former executive editor was basically admitting that “he sees his newspaper as being this propaganda megaphone for those who run the world.”

RT host Abby Martin agreed, slamming the paper and the “illegal and immoral” war repeatedly. She said the *Times* had indeed become a “propaganda megaphone” by simply reprinting government press releases and official statements — the “establishment line” — as if it were truth. Critics of the paper have been saying that for decades.

Asked about how the censorship over such a vast organization could function, Simpson explained that “there are different processes at work.” Citing his own experience, the self-styled “renegade” correspondent said that even in the Balkans, the *Times* had a pre-determined view of what happened. Editors were not interested in analyzing the tragic effects of Western military intervention, and they certainly were not open to exploring alternative explanations and views.

Reporters, meanwhile, would quickly adapt to their environment and learn to parrot the establishment narrative — at least if they hoped to advance their careers and have their stories published. “I was just so disgusted by this situation that I didn’t want to play the game anymore,” Simpson said, adding that he had previously been “very keen” to “play the game” in order to further his ambitions.

During the interview, Simpson gave various examples of how stories were framed to suit the *Times*’ — or the ruling establishment’s — world view. “You learn, you internalize these little phrases that you apply to other countries, like Serbia is ‘nationalist’ or engaged in ‘extremist policies,’ but the United States is never doing those things, of course — and you wouldn’t put them in a story,” Simpson explained.

*Times* employees are expected to tout the agenda no matter how hypocritical. “You’d never frame a story that said the United States has started a war of aggression, but it’s instead engaged in a ‘foreign policy project,’” Simpson added. “Or you would talk about ‘harsh interrogation techniques’ as opposed to torture. These are things that people just learn to do.”

In a separate interview with *Green Left Weekly*, Simpson [echoed](#) those comments, explaining how reporters themselves learn to accept the situation if they want to move forward. “It only seemed possible to rise higher at the *Times* if I bought their illusions, and having seen through them, this would have been consciously corrupt,” he explained. “Until that point, I’d been unconscious of cooption as a journalist — like most of my peers. But as my eyes lost their scales, I saw my own flaws more clearly, and freaked out.”

In the interest of fairness, it is worth pointing out that the *Times* recently became the first media outlet to admit that much of the establishment press — the *Times* included — was [allowing the Mitt Romney and Barack Obama presidential campaigns to censor news reports](#) about themselves. The *Times* actually published a front-page story about the startling practice, leading to an uproar among media critics that eventually sparked policy changes at newspapers nationwide.

The *Times* also recently ran a column by then-Public Editor Arthur Brisbane [openly admitting](#) that “the paper’s many departments ... share a kind of political and cultural progressivism ... that virtually bleeds



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through the fabric of *The Times*.” Of course, that has long been obvious to honest observers. But the fact that the newspaper was actually willing to publicly acknowledge its bias was celebrated by analysts.

On the other hand, the paper has been complicit in covering up some of the worst atrocities in human history. Pulitzer Prize-winning “journalist” Walter Duranty, for example, [played a key role in hiding Josef Stalin’s mass murder of millions of Ukrainians](#) while serving as the *Times*’ chief correspondent in Moscow. Other savage tyrants have [benefited](#) from the paper’s “reporting,” too.

Of course, the *Times* is hardly the only establishment news outlet to peddle propaganda as truth. Amber Lyon of CNN, for example, recently exposed censorship at the Cable News Network and [accused](#) her employer of “making me put what I knew to be government lies into my reporting.” Former reporters at Fox and other media outlets have made similar accusations.

The largest media companies in the United States — [most of the market is controlled by just a handful of mega-corporations](#) — are regularly deceiving hundreds of millions of Americans through lies, omissions, self-censorship, and by unquestioningly parroting government claims no matter how absurd. And they are starting to [pay the price](#).

Less than one fourth of Americans trust TV news programs, and newspapers across the nation are dying as readers flock to alternative media sources online. In fact, a new Gallup survey just [found that distrust in the media hit a new high](#), with 60 percent of Americans saying they have little or no trust in the mass media to report the news.

As the Founding Fathers knew when they enshrined freedom of the press in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, if the American people hope to remain free, they must have a free press to keep them informed. Today, with much of the “mainstream” press [serving as a propaganda megaphone for the establishment](#), it appears increasingly likely that the alternative media will have to fill the void.

*Photo: AP Images*

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