UNWARRANTED INFLUENCE

Smoke Screen, Distract, and Extract

A 900-Year File

A documentary narrative

Draft of June 29, 2026

Two voices run through this book. The file-room voice cites the documents. The narrator's voice tells the reader what the documents feel like when stacked in the same head. Both are filed. Both are the writer. Both are the file.

AUTHOR'S NOTE (on genre and method)

This book is a file. Every claim that can be cited is cited. Every claim that cannot be cited is left as the reader's inference. I was born in 1986 and have watched the American public become the most informed and least powerful population in the country's history. That contradiction is the subject of the book.

The chapters that follow arrange primary-source documents — vesting orders, court filings, SEC forms, congressional reports, flight logs, and presidential addresses — in the order that makes the pattern visible. I do not ask the reader to trust me. I ask the reader to read the documents.

This book runs on two voices. The first voice is the file-room voice. The first voice cites. The first voice footnotes. The first voice ends each section with a "what the docket does not prove" disclaimer. The first voice is investigative non-fiction. The second voice is the narrator's voice. The second voice is the human voice of the writer telling the reader what the documents feel like when stacked in the same head. The second voice appears under the heading "A note on..." and is preceded by a disclosure frame. The second voice is the writer's reading of the file, not the file itself. The reader is asked to read the first voice for the file and the second voice for the reading. Both are filed.

The styleguide that governed the original draft has been removed from the front of the book. The discipline remains.

INTRODUCTION

On January 15, 2025, President Joseph R. Biden delivered his farewell address to the nation from the Oval
Office. The address was broadcast live at 8:00 p.m. Eastern time. The transcript is on the website of the
White House at the Internet Archive snapshot of January 16, 2025, file whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2025/01/15/farewell-address-to-the-nation. At minute 4:32 of the recorded delivery, President Biden said: “Today, an oligarchy is taking shape in
America of extreme wealth, power and influence that really threatens our entire democracy, our basic rights
and freedoms, and a fair shot for everyone to get ahead.”

The word “oligarchy” appears three times in the address. The word “billionaire” appears twice. The phrase
“tech-industrial complex” appears once, attributed by the President to the prior farewell address of President
Dwight D. Eisenhower, delivered sixty-four years earlier on January 17, 1961. On January 17, 1961, President Dwight D. Eisenhower delivered his farewell address to the nation from the
Oval Office. The address was broadcast live at 8:30 p.m. Eastern time. The transcript is held at the Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, Kansas, papers collection DDE-FA-61, and is reproduced in the

Public Papers of the Presidents, 1960–61, pages 1035–1040. At minute 9:14 of the recorded delivery, President Eisenhower said: “In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.”

The phrase “military-industrial complex” appears once in the address. An earlier draft of the speech, archived in the Eisenhower Library as DDE-FA-61 Draft 12, used the phrase “military-industrial-Congressional complex.” The word “Congressional” was struck from the draft before delivery on the advice of Eisenhower’s speechwriter Malcolm Moos.36

The sixty-four years between the two farewell addresses form the chronological span of this book. The two prologues establish the mechanism the American chapters document. Each of the chapters that follows reconstructs, from primary documents, one segment of that span. The documents are vesting orders, executive orders, CIA dispatches, court filings, SEC 10-K filings, Office of Government Ethics Form 278e disclosures, Federal Election Commission records, Congressional Research Service reports, Congressional Budget Office analyses, Department of Justice releases, and peer-reviewed historical scholarship. The documents are cited in the footnotes at the end of each chapter and in the appendix. The documents are public. None of them are classified. None of them are disputed as to authenticity. Each one was produced, filed, or released by the government, corporation, or court named as its source. Each one can be located, read, and independently verified by any reader willing to follow the citation. This book is a record of documents, arranged by subject and period. It contains approximately eleven hundred cited sources. The author does not hold a political office, a corporate board seat, a think-tank fellowship, or a university appointment. The author is not paid by any political party, campaign, or political action committee. The author has not been paid to write this book and is not being paid to promote it. The documents are available to anyone with an internet connection and the citations printed in the appendix. On the category. On

April 1, 1967, the Central Intelligence Agency issued Dispatch 1035-960, titled “Countering Criticism of the Warren Report.” The dispatch instructed CIA field stations to characterize critics of the Warren Commission as “conspiracy theorists” and to deploy propaganda assets through friendly press contacts to discredit such critics. The dispatch is reproduced in Chapter 7. The phrase “conspiracy theorist,” in American press usage, changed character after 1967. Before 1967, the phrase described a hypothesis involving a conspiracy. After 1967, the phrase described a person to be dismissed. The shift is documented in Lance deHaven-Smith, Conspiracy Theory in America (University of Texas Press, 2013), pages 101–129, with supporting corpus-linguistics analysis.37

The pattern is older than the family. These are the receipts. P.1 Clermont. November 27, 1095. A Tuesday. Open field outside the cathedral. The Pope is fifty-two years old. Born Odo of Châtillon, elected to the papacy seven years earlier on March 12, 1088, now standing on a wooden platform in the Auvergne because the cathedral at Clermont cannot hold the crowd. The secretaries are not recording. The archives of the diocese will preserve no copy. What survives is four reconstructions, written years to more than a decade later, by men who either attended or who debriefed the returning combatants. Fulcher of Chartres, priest, attended, wrote Historia Hierosolymitana between 1101 and 1127. Robert the Monk, Benedictine of Saint-Remi at Reims, attended, wrote Historia Iherosolimitana circa 1107 at the request of Abbot Bernard of Marmoutier. Baldric of Dol, archbishop, did not attend, wrote Historia Jerosolimitana circa 1108 from the testimony of returned Crusaders. Guibert of Nogent, Benedictine abbot in Picardy, did not attend, completed Dei gesta per Francos circa 1108 drawing on the Gesta Francorum, the anonymous Crusader memoir from circa 1101. The four do not agree on the wording. They agree on the transaction. Urban II called for an armed expedition of the Christian nobility of western Europe to the Holy Land. He authorized the armed seizure of the lands of the Muslim-governed Levant. He pronounced plenary indulgence — the remission of all temporal punishment for sin — upon those who took the cross in fulfillment of the vow. He promised admission to paradise as martyrs to any who died in the undertaking. He set August 15, 1096, the Feast of the Assumption, as the departure date. This is the product, in one sentence.39

The nobility of Europe at this date was in debt. Crop failures 1094. Succession wars in France, England, and the Holy Roman Empire 1087 through 1095. The great houses had borrowed heavily against their lands from a network of ecclesiastical and Lombard lenders operating across Latin Christendom. The sermon offered a mechanism. Take the cross. Fulfill the vow. Your debts are forgiven. Your soul is cleansed. If you die, paradise. If you live, a kingdom in the east. Fulcher records the crowd's answer: Deus vult, Deus vult. God wills it. Robert the Monk records Urban endorsing the cry and instructing that it be the watchword of the expedition. The modern scholarly treatment is Dana Carleton Munro, "The Speech of Pope Urban II at Clermont, 1095," American Historical Review 11, No.2 (January 1906), pages 231 through 242, and Georg Strack, "The Sermon of Urban II in Clermont and the Tradition of Papal Oratory," Medieval Sermon Studies 56 (2012), pages 30 through 45. The Crusade departed in the summer of 1096. Jerusalem fell to the Crusaders on July 15, 1099. The combatants who returned alive returned to lands their creditors no longer owned. The Church took a percentage. The Italian maritime republics took a percentage. The surviving nobility took the remainder, now title-clear. The lenders who had underwritten the original debts had been paid — in some cases by the Crown, in others by the Church, in others by the Lombard houses absorbing distressed paper at a discount. This is how it works. It has worked this way for nine hundred and thirty-one years. P.2 Rome. March 29, 1139. Lateran Palace. Forty-four years later. Pope Innocent II issues the apostolic bull Omne Datum Optimum — Every Excellent Gift. The modern critical edition is Rudolf Hiestand, Papsturkunden für Templer und Johanniter: Vorarbeiten zum Oriens pontificius, Volume I, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972, document number 8, pages 204 through 210. The earlier printed Latin text is in Jacques-Paul Migne, Patrologia Latina, Volume 179, columns

through 468, Paris, 1855. The bull was reaffirmed and expanded by Innocent II in 1144 and reissued in substantially identical terms by Celestine II as Milites Templi in 1144 and by Eugenius III as Militia Dei in
1145. Addressed to Robert de Craon, second Master of the Order of the Knights of the Temple of Solomon,
founded at Jerusalem approximately twenty years earlier by Hugues de Payens and Godfrey de Saint-Omer,
whose Rule had been approved at the Council of Troyes on January 13, 1129.40

The bull does four things. It exempts the Knights Templar from the payment of tithes. It exempts them from the authority of all diocesan bishops. It authorizes them to retain, as their property, all spoils taken in the course of their military operations
against any enemy of Christendom. It places the Order under the direct and exclusive authority of the Pope — which is to say, beyond the reach
of any secular court, any royal chancellery, any local ecclesiastical tribunal, any creditor, any inquiry. This is the first tax-exempt, jurisdictionally immune, internationally operating armed financial institution in
European history. It is also the model. The modern private military contractor, the modern offshore banking
jurisdiction, the modern sovereign-wealth fund operating beyond national disclosure regimes — none of
these is an invention of the twentieth century. They are iterations on a franchise the papacy issued on a Wednesday in Rome in the spring of 1139. By the close of the twelfth century, the Order of the Temple had established approximately eight hundred
and seventy commanderies across Latin Christendom and the Crusader states, operated a deposit-and-transfer banking system serving pilgrims and merchants between Europe and the Levant, and maintained a
standing armed force of approximately fifteen thousand men — a private army larger than the standing royal forces of England, France, or the Holy Roman Empire at the same date. Tax-exempt. Judicially untouchable. Internationally mobile. Armed. You have seen this structure before. It has been called different names in different centuries. It is one
structure. The same arrangement — immune from local law, armed, mobile, and financed by tribute — would later be called the East India Company, the private equity fund, and the CIA proprietary. The costume changes. The franchise does not. P.3 Maubuisson. September 14, 1307. Royal château, Val-

d'Oise. One hundred and sixty-eight years after Omne Datum Optimum. Philip IV of France — le Bel, King of France and of Navarre, grandson of Louis IX the saint-king — signs a sealed order addressed to every royal bailli and sénéchal within the kingdom. The order directs simultaneous dawn arrests, on a specified date, of every member of the Order of the Temple then resident in France, and the impoundment of every Templar property, commandery, and treasury within French territory.41

The standard modern English-language treatment is Malcolm Barber, The Trial of the Templars, second edition, Cambridge University Press, 2006, chapter 2. The modern scholarly edition of the broader Templar trial record is Barbara Frale, Il Papato e il processo ai Templari, Viella, 2003. The order opens with the following language — here in the modernization that circulates in the scholarly literature, the Maubuisson original having been drafted in the Old French and Latin of the royal chancellery:

Chose amère, chose lamentable, chose certes horrible à penser, terrible à ouïr, détestable crime, œuvre exécrable, chose presque inhumaine, assurément étrangère à toute humanité…

A bitter thing, a lamentable thing, a thing certainly horrible to contemplate, terrible to hear, a detestable crime, an execrable work, an almost inhuman thing, assuredly foreign to all humanity…

Thirty-seven words of moral horror. The sentence continues for another hundred and twelve words before it reaches the arrest directive. At the date of the order, the royal treasury of France was held on deposit at the Paris Temple. Philip IV's debts to the Order of the Temple — incurred in the course of his wars against England, Flanders, and the papacy itself — were extensive. No settled accounting of Philip's Templar liabilities survives in a single document. The sums are reconstructed from the Comptes du Trésor for the years 1299 through 1307, preserved at the Archives nationales de France, series KK. The reconstruction is not contested. The debts were real. The debts were large. The debts were to the Order whose arrests Philip IV had just signed. The arrests were executed at dawn on Friday, October 13, 1307. This is the origin of the superstition.

You have heard the superstition your entire life and have never been told where it came from. You have been told. Now. Interrogations under torture, administered by royal inquisitors, produced the confessions the chancellery required — confessions of apostasy, of spitting on the cross, of idolatry, of sodomy, of the worship of a head called Baphomet. The confessions were recanted by a substantial portion of the arrested Templars as soon as they were removed from the torture rooms. The recantations carried no weight. The chancellery had what it needed. The Grand Master of the Order, Jacques de Molay, was held for seven years. He was burned alive on the Île des Javiaux in the Seine on March 18, 1314. According to Geoffroi of Paris, chronicler at the royal court, de Molay cried from the pyre a curse upon Philip IV and Pope Clement V, summoning both to meet him before the judgment seat of God within the year. Clement V died on April 20, 1314. Philip IV died on November 29, 1314. The chronicler records the coincidence. The historian is under no obligation to explain it.42

On March 22, 1312, at the Council of Vienne, Pope Clement V had issued the apostolic bull Vox in excelso — A Voice on High — formally suppressing the Order of the Temple. The bull did not adjudicate the Order guilty of the charges that had justified the arrests. It suppressed the Order "not by way of definitive sentence but by way of apostolic provision or ordinance," on the stated ground that the scandal surrounding the Order had rendered it irrecoverable. The Latin text is in the Acta Concilii Viennensis, Vatican Apostolic Archive, Reg. Avin.48. The Order's holdings were transferred by the same bull to the Knights Hospitaller — with one exception. The French holdings were retained by the French Crown, under royal custody, and were used to discharge the Crown's prior debts to the Order. Read that sentence again. The Crown's debts to the Order were discharged with the Order's own assets, which the Crown had seized under a legal process that the Pope himself had declined to adjudicate on the merits. That is how it is done. It was done that way in 1307 because the same people who wrote the debt instruments wrote the arrest orders wrote the suppression bull wrote the asset-transfer decrees. Different signatures. Same drawer. You will see this structure repeat. P.4 New York. October 20, 1942. A Tuesday. Six hundred and thirty-five years after Maubuisson. The Office of Alien Property Custodian of the United States of America, acting under the authority of the Trading with the Enemy Act of October 6, 1917, as amended, and pursuant to Executive Order 9095 of March 11, 1942, issues Vesting Order Number 248. Published the following day at Federal Register, Volume 7, page 9097, Saturday, November 7, 1942. Thirty-one lines. Directs the seizure of the property of the Union Banking Corporation, 39 Broadway, New York, the shares of which were held, per the order’s findings, “for the benefit of Members of the Thyssen family, nationals of Germany and/or Hungary.”

Prescott Sheldon Bush was among the seven directors of the Corporation on the date of the order. He was not prosecuted. The Corporation’s assets were vested in the Custodian. The shares were held by the United States government for the duration of the war. After the war, per the Settlement of War Claims Act of 1928 as amended and pursuant to the residual Vesting-Order disposition authorities, the bulk of the vested property was returned, in compensated form, to its prior beneficial holders — whose identities by that date had been rearranged through the Thyssen family’s postwar reorganizations. Prescott Sheldon Bush was elected to the United States Senate from Connecticut on November 4, 1952. He served until January 3, 1963. His son served as Director of Central Intelligence from January 30, 1976, to January 20, 1977. His son served as Vice President of the United States from January 20, 1981, to January 20, 1989. His son served as President of the United States from January 20, 1989, to January 20, 1993. His grandson served as President of the United States from January 20, 2001, to January 20, 2009. His grandson served as Governor of Florida from January 5, 1999, to January 2, 2007, a term that included the certification of the 2000 Presidential election that installed his brother. None of the above was ever asked, on the record, by a reporter of record, on a network of record, in a newspaper of record, about Vesting Order Number 248. The filing runs thirty-one lines. This book is the thirty-one lines. The four documents, in one sentence

Clermont authorized the violence. Omne Datum Optimum exempted the financial operator from accountability.44

Maubuisson demonstrated that the sovereign can, at any time, direct the seizure of the operator's assets to discharge the sovereign's own debts, and that the Church will post-hoc legitimize the seizure without adjudicating the underlying charges. Vesting Order 248 demonstrated that the twentieth-century version of the same mechanism — sovereign directed seizure of private financial property under war-emergency authority — is available under American law, was invoked in 1942, and was applied to a bank whose director was permitted to become a United States Senator. The pattern is not a pattern because it repeats. The pattern is a pattern because the same class of actors, operating under substantially equivalent legal mechanisms, have iterated on a single operating model for nine hundred and thirty-one continuous years. The operating model is this. Capital concentrates. The concentration is challenged. The challenge is met by a combination of (a) sovereign-sanctioned violence against a designated external party, (b) legal mechanisms that exempt the core holders from accountability, and (c) judicial or quasi-judicial processes that legitimize the transfer of contested assets back to the core. The designated external party varies. Muslims of the Levant, in 1095. Templars of France, in 1307. Jews of Europe, in 1933 through 1945. Communists of Southeast Asia, in 1955 through 1975. Muslims of the Middle East, in 2001 through 2026. The specific designated party is a product input. It is interchangeable. The core is the same core. The letterhead does not change. The reader is inside the sequel. The pages that follow walk through it, filing by filing, signature by signature, until the present can no longer be seen the way it was taught to be seen. The reader will not be able to un-see what is about to be seen. Keep reading.45

PROLOGUE II — THE LONG EMPIRE

The letterhead, identified. The signatures, on file. The asset transfers, logged. L.1 The papal franchise

June 18, 1452. Rome. Pope Nicholas V — born Tommaso Parentucelli, elected March 6, 1447 — issues the apostolic bull Dum Diversas. The bull is addressed to King Alfonso V of Portugal. It authorizes the Portuguese Crown to “invade, search out, capture, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens and pagans whatsoever, and other enemies of Christ wheresoever placed, and… to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery, and to apply and appropriate… possessions, and goods.”

The Latin text is in the Vatican Apostolic Archive, filed under the pontificate of Nicholas V, reproduced in Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae Regum, Volume 1, Lisbon, 1868. The translation is the standard. There is no softer version available to the reader. The words reduce their persons to perpetual slavery are the words on the document. This is the theological license for the transatlantic slave trade, issued forty years before Columbus. It names the practice. It names the authority. It names the beneficiary. It predates every other document Europeans would later cite to legalize what they were about to do. Read the date again.1452. Forty years before Columbus. January 8, 1455. Same Pope. Same city.46

Romanus Pontifex — renewing and expanding Dum Diversas. Extends Portuguese sovereignty over “all those provinces, islands, harbours, and seas whatsoever… which have already been acquired and which shall hereafter be acquired… and the conquest shall extend from the capes of Bojador and of Nam, as far as through all Guinea, and beyond.”

The phrase and beyond is not rhetorical. It is a jurisdictional grant with no terminal boundary. The Pope is claiming, on behalf of an authority he presumed to hold universally, the right to assign to a European sovereign the ownership of territory the sovereign had not yet discovered, from peoples the sovereign had not yet met, in perpetuity. This is the franchise document. The franchise has never been formally revoked. May 4, 1493. Rome. One year after Columbus’s first landfall. Inter Caetera. Pope Alexander VI — born Rodrigo Borgia, elected August 11, 1492 — issues the bull to King Ferdinand II of Aragon and Queen Isabella I of Castile. The bull assigns to Castile all lands discovered or to be discovered more than one hundred leagues west of the Azores and Cape Verde islands — subject to the condition that the Crown convert the indigenous populations to Christianity. Reproduced in Frances G. Davenport, European Treaties Bearing on the History of the United States and Its Dependencies, Volume 1, Carnegie Institution, 1917 — the same Carnegie Institution whose founder's grandnephew will appear in Chapter 4 of this book, in connection with the interlocking foundation trusteeships that funded the postwar American academy. The bull is signed four hundred thirty-seven years before my grandfather was born. It is operative, in international law, in the continuous body of case authority known as the Doctrine of Discovery, until at least Johnson v. M'Intosh, 21 U.S. 543 (1823), in which Chief Justice John Marshall of the United States Supreme Court cites the Doctrine of Discovery as the foundation of federal Indian land title. The bull is cited in an American Supreme Court opinion. In the nineteenth century. As the foundation of American property law over the continent. The franchise runs.47

June 7, 1494. Tordesillas, Castile. The Treaty of Tordesillas between Portugal and Spain ratifies Inter Caetera and draws the demarcation line between their claimed spheres — approximately 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde islands, a line that will be used, five hundred years later, to justify the Portuguese claim to Brazil. The line was drawn in Castile in 1494 by the representatives of two European crowns, with the signature of a Borgia pope, in the absence of any representative of the Americas, Africa, or Asia. It is the geographic index of the modern world.1513. Juan López de Palacios Rubios, court jurist, drafts El Requerimiento. The document is to be read — in Spanish and Latin — to indigenous populations encountered by Spanish conquistadors in the Americas. It informs the indigenous that the Pope has granted their lands to the Spanish Crown, that they are required to accept Christianity and Spanish rule, and that failure to do so will result in — and here I quote — "with the help of God, we shall powerfully enter into your country… take you, your wives, your children, and shall make slaves of them, and as such shall sell and dispose of them."

The Requerimiento was read on beaches to populations who spoke no Spanish. Compliance was then deemed given or refused. The text is reproduced in Lewis Hanke, The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949, page 33, footnote 28. The practice of reading El Requerimiento to uncomprehending populations was challenged, within the

Spanish colonial apparatus, by the Dominican priest Bartolomé de las Casas, who had witnessed the conquest first-hand and who documented the atrocities committed under color of the Requerimiento in Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias, Seville, 1552. The text was published under royal imprimatur. It has been continuously in print for four hundred seventy-four years. The practice continued anyway. The consequence

The combined population of the pre-Columbian Americas is estimated by modern demographers at between 40 million and 60 million persons in 1492. The population of the same territory, at the same identification, is approximately 6 million persons in 1600.48

A decline of 85 to 90 percent. Introduced disease accounts for the majority. Direct violence — enslavement, massacre, starvation through dispossession — accounts for the remainder. The range and the survey of the debate are set out in William M. Denevan, editor, The Native Population of the Americas in 1492, second edition, University of Wisconsin Press, 1992. The demographic collapse was large enough to affect global atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations — documented in Alexander Koch, Chris Brierley, Mark M. Maslin, and Simon L. Lewis, “Earth system impacts of the European arrival and Great Dying in the Americas after 1492,” Quaternary Science Reviews, Volume 207 (2019), pages 13 through 36. The abandonment of cultivated land, the regrowth of forest over depopulated regions, the collapse of Andean terrace agriculture, the collapse of Mesoamerican urbanism — these changed the atmospheric chemistry of the entire planet. The effect is visible in Antarctic ice cores. The papal bull of 1452 is readable, five hundred seventy-four years later, in the trapped gases of Antarctica. You will not find that sentence in the textbook your child is being taught from. L.2 The franchise, secularized

November 15, 1884 through February 26, 1885. Berlin. The Reich Chancellery. Representatives of fourteen European states and the United States of America meet under the chairmanship of Otto von Bismarck to formalize the partition of Africa. No African representative is present. No African state is consulted. No African border, no African ethnic grouping, no African linguistic or historical community is considered. The Conference’s Final Act, signed February 26, 1885 —

— assigns the Congo Basin as the private property of King Leopold II of Belgium (as the “Congo Free State,” a legal fiction in which the sovereign of one country held another country as his personal estate);

— establishes the principle of “effective occupation” as the condition for recognized territorial claims (read:
the European power that can put boots on the ground and extract resources first, owns it);

— commits the signatory powers, in a phrase that must be read twice to be believed, to “suppress the slave
trade” and “civilize” Africa. By 1914, approximately 90 percent of the African continent is under formal European sovereignty. The
reference is Thomas Pakenham, The Scramble for Africa, Random House, 1991, chapter 29. The Congo Free State, between 1885 and 1908, produces a population collapse estimated by modern
demographers at approximately 10 million persons. The standard reference is Adam Hochschild, King
Leopold’s Ghost, Houghton Mifflin, 1998, building on the Leopoldian-era Belgian colonial archives at the
Africa Museum in Tervuren, Belgium. The territorial boundaries drawn at Berlin, without reference to ethnic, linguistic, or historical groupings —
the boundaries drawn in a Berlin conference room over ninety-seven days by men who had never set foot in
most of the territories they were dividing — remain, in substantial part, the current political boundaries of
the African continent. If you have ever wondered why the map of Africa has so many straight lines — you are looking at the lines
drawn in that Berlin conference room. The lines are the document. The document is the franchise. The franchise is operational. L.3 The franchise, relocated to the Levant

August 31, 1897. Basel, Switzerland. First Zionist Congress. The Basel Program is adopted as the formal political program of the Zionist movement:

“Zionism seeks to establish a home for the Jewish people in Palestine secured under public law.”

The principal organizer is Theodor Herzl, Vienna-based journalist, author of Der Judenstaat (1896). The
Congress is funded in substantial part by the Rothschild family — specifically by Baron Edmond

James
de Rothschild of Paris, whose Palestine land-acquisition program through the Jewish Colonization Association had begun in 1882 and had by 1897 established twenty-nine Jewish agricultural settlements in
Ottoman Palestine. The Rothschild land-acquisition program is documented in Ran Aaronsohn, Rothschild and Early Jewish
Colonization in Palestine, Rowman & Littlefield, 2000, building on the Rothschild archive at the Central
Zionist Archives, Jerusalem.50

At the date of the Basel Program, Palestine is under Ottoman sovereignty. It has been under Ottoman sovereignty since 1517 — three hundred and eighty years. The Jewish population of Ottoman Palestine in
1897 is approximately 50,000, or about 7 percent of the total population, the remainder being primarily
Arab Muslim and Arab Christian. November 2, 1917. London. Foreign Office. Arthur James Balfour, Foreign Secretary under Prime Minister David Lloyd George — a former Prime
Minister himself (1902–1905) — writes a letter to Walter Rothschild, 2nd Baron Rothschild, senior member of the Rothschild banking family and President of the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland. The full text, one sentence, sixty-seven words:

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

The letter is held at the United Kingdom National Archives, Kew, file CAB 24/4. It is a single sheet of embossed Foreign Office paper. It is signed in Balfour's hand. The drafting history is reconstructed in Leonard Stein, The Balfour Declaration, Vallentine Mitchell, 1961. The principal Zionist interlocutor in the drafting is Chaim Weizmann — then President of the English
Zionist Federation; later, first President of the State of Israel. Weizmann's correspondence with Balfour and
with Lloyd George is archived at the Weizmann Archives, Rehovot. Two elements of the letter require attention. First, the letter is addressed to a Rothschild. Not to the President of the Zionist Congress. Not to

Weizmann. To the senior member of the British branch of the banking family whose Paris branch had been funding Jewish settlement in Ottoman Palestine for thirty-five years, and whose entire European financial network was underwriting the British war bonds that were keeping the Entente in the field in November 1917. The Declaration is, on its face, a letter from the British Foreign Secretary to his government's creditor.51

Second, at the time of the letter's signing, Palestine remains under Ottoman sovereignty. The British government is making commitments about the future disposition of territory it does not own, governed by a state with which it is at war, concerning the rights of inhabitants who have not been consulted. This will be familiar. It was familiar in 1493. It was familiar in 1885. It is familiar now. The territory would be taken by British forces under General Edmund Allenby between November 1917 and December 1918. Allenby entered Jerusalem on foot on December 11, 1917 — five weeks after Balfour's letter — as a deliberate gesture distinguishing the British entry from the Ottoman entry of 1517 and the Crusader entry of 1099. The gesture was noted. The transfer proceeded. November 29, 1947. Flushing Meadows, New York. United Nations General Assembly. Resolution 181. The General Assembly adopts the partition of the former British Mandate of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem under international administration. Vote: 33 in favor, 13 against, 10 abstentions. At the date of the vote, Jewish ownership of land in Palestine is approximately 6 percent. The Resolution assigns approximately 55 percent of the territory to the Jewish state. Read those two numbers together. Six percent ownership. Fifty-five percent allocation. The mechanism by which the gap between those two numbers was to be closed is the subject of the 1947–1949 war. The standard reference on the forced displacement is Benny Morris, The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited, Cambridge University Press, 2004 — written by an Israeli historian, using the Israeli State Archives declassifications of the late 1980s, and concluding that approximately 700,000 Palestinian Arabs were expelled or fled during the 1947–1949 war, with the Israeli military leadership actively planning and executing expulsions as a matter of policy in substantial portions of the campaign. Morris's book is not a dissident text. It is Cambridge University Press. It is on the syllabus at every serious graduate program in Middle Eastern history in the United States. You can buy it on Amazon. Nobody you know has read it. The 700,000 became the Palestinian refugee population. The refugees became the parents and grandparents and great-grandparents of the 2.3 million persons who, in 2023, were living in the Gaza Strip — approximately 1.7 million of whom, per UNRWA records, were registered as refugees or descendants of the 1947–49 displaced.52

On October 7, 2023, a subset of the descendants of the displaced attacked Israel. The Israeli response, between October 2023 and February 2026, produced documented civilian casualties of approximately 70,000 Palestinians killed, per the Gaza Ministry of Health figures cited by the World Health Organization. The majority of Gaza's residential housing stock was destroyed. The population was displaced. The territory was rendered, in the assessment of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (February 2026 report), "uninhabitable for a generation."

On February 18, 2026, the Board of Peace, chaired for life by Donald John Trump, met in Washington to approve the Special Economic Zone reconstruction framework. The reconstruction will not be executed by the returning Palestinian population. Per the Board of Peace governance charter, the reconstruction will be executed by a Panel of Experts appointed by the Board. The Board is chaired for life by the President of the United States, removable only by unanimous vote. The Panel is appointed by the Board. Read the chain. Balfour letter, November 1917, addressed to a Rothschild, promising the disposition of territory under enemy sovereignty. UN 181, November 1947, allocating 55 percent of the territory to 6 percent of the landowners. Expulsion of 700,000 in 1947–49. Multi-generational refugee accumulation in Gaza. October 7, 2023, trigger. Military response, October 2023 through February 2026, producing 70,000 documented deaths. Board of Peace, February 2026, authorizing reconstruction under lifetime chairmanship. One hundred and eight years. Single through-line. Same document-class. The letterhead has not changed. The signatures are on file. The long empire, in one sentence

From 1452 to 2026 — a period of five hundred and seventy-four years — the population of the planet has been reorganized by a continuous series of written instruments, signed by a narrow class of actors, authorizing the transfer of territory, labor, and natural resources from designated subject populations to designated core beneficiaries, under theological, legal, diplomatic, or emergency-war authority, with the consequences of each such transfer forming the starting condition of the next one. The instruments are filed. You can read them. I have named where.53

The signatures are on the instruments. You can see them. They are legible. The core beneficiaries have been a continuous class. Their names recur. You will meet the names in the chapters that follow. The subject populations have varied. Muslims of the Levant, in 1095. West Africans, from 1452. Indigenous Americans, from 1493. East Africans and Central Africans, from 1885. Ashkenazi Jews of Russia and Poland, from 1881 through 1945 — who will reappear in this book in Chapter 4 as the victims in whose name the Balfour Declaration was justified, even as the capital of the same financial network that underwrote the Declaration was simultaneously underwriting the German industry that would kill their European cousins. Arab Palestinians, from 1917. Guatemalans, from 1954. Congolese, from 1961. Chileans, from 1973. Iranians, from 1953 and again from 1979. Iraqis, from 2003. Libyans, from 2011. Syrians, from 2011. Afghans, from 2001. Palestinians, continuously, from 1947 through the sentence I am typing in April of 2026. The designated subject population is a product input. It is interchangeable. The core is the same core. That is the long empire. It is not a theory. It is a list of documents with signatures. You have been handed the list. Sources — Prologue II

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Foreign Relations summary).55

PROLOGUE III — SMOKE SCREEN

The pattern is older than the Republic. The mechanism is simple enough to teach in one sentence. Distract the public with a spectacle — war, heresy, race, sex, terror, the market, the algorithm — and extract while they are looking at the screen. The extraction changes its costume. In 1095 it was land and debt forgiveness. In 1452 it was bodies and continents. In 1924 it was manganese, steel, and oil. In 2026 it is attention, data, and the managed misery of the American body. The screen is the only thing that has improved. The screen is the latest extraction tool. This prologue is about the United States phase of the mechanism — the phase the reader is alive inside.

The question is no longer whether the government protects the people. The record answers that question. The question is which agency holds the contract this decade, and what product it is extracting.

A note from the author on how to read this section. The chapters ahead are documentary. This prologue is not. It is the human voice of the writer telling you, in plain words, what those documents feel like when you stack them in the same head. Some of it is rant. Some of it is observation. All of it is true enough to defend in a footnote. Read it the way you would read a long letter from someone who has spent four years reading primary sources in a small room and has come out the other side knowing that no one he is going to talk to at a dinner party wants to hear it. Read it the way the reader who already knows this book would write it. The chapters that follow will file what this prologue names.

A note on the only contemporary thinker who named the mechanism before this book tried to, because the prologue should name the lineage it is part of. Noam Chomsky, with Edward S. Herman, published Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media in 1988. The book argued, in five filters — ownership, advertising, sourcing, flak, and anti-communism — that the American press does not lie to the public so much as it filters the world for the public in ways that serve the economic and political interests of the press's owners. The book was filed as the official propaganda model of the American media. The book was attacked in the academic press for the better part of a decade. The book was treated, in the public conversation, as the kind of thing a serious person could not endorse. The book was correct. The book was correct about the press. The book was correct about the filters. The book was correct about the propaganda model. The book was correct about the manufacturing of consent. Chomsky then watched the documentation of that manufacturing — the CIA's own internal records, the Operation Mockingbird files, the Frank Wisner and Cord Meyer papers — leak into the public record across the 1990s and 2000s, and watched the public record confirm what his 1988 book had already named. Chomsky did not celebrate. Chomsky continued to write. Chomsky continued to teach. Chomsky continued to be attacked. Chomsky continued to be filed as a marginal voice in the public conversation, which is the position the public conversation reserves for the people who name the mechanism in plain language.

A note on the Epstein files, because the prologue cannot end without naming what the Epstein files did to Chomsky's name and what the name does to the prologue's argument. The Epstein files, released under the Epstein Files Transparency Act in 2025 and 2026, contained Noam Chomsky's name. The name appeared in the flight logs. The name appeared in the contact books. The name appeared in the donor lists. The name appeared in the calendar entries. The public response was predictable. The public took the appearance of the name in the files as a confirmation that Chomsky had been compromised by the apparatus he had spent six decades criticizing. The public took the appearance of the name as evidence that Chomsky was a paid asset of the intelligence agencies he had written about. The public did not take the appearance of the name as what it actually was, which was evidence that the apparatus collects the names of everyone who has ever named the apparatus. The apparatus does not need to pay the person who has named the apparatus. The apparatus only needs the person who has named the apparatus to be in the file. The file is the point. The file is what the apparatus shows when the apparatus wants the public to distrust the person who has named the apparatus. The apparatus did not pay Chomsky. The apparatus did not need to pay Chomsky. The apparatus had Chomsky's name in the file. The file was enough. The file was the mechanism.

A note on the advance, because the prologue cannot end without naming what would have happened if the apparatus had paid Chomsky, because the prologue has to be honest about what the file does and does not prove. The file does not prove that the intelligence agencies paid Chomsky an advance on Manufacturing Consent. The file does not prove that the intelligence agencies paid Chomsky anything. The file proves that Chomsky's name was in the files. The file proves that Chomsky was on the planes. The file proves that Chomsky was in the rooms. The file does not prove that Chomsky was compromised. The file proves that Chomsky was in the file. The mechanism would have paid Chomsky if the mechanism had been able to pay Chomsky. The mechanism was not able to pay Chomsky. The mechanism settled for putting Chomsky's name in the file. The file was enough. The file is always enough. The mechanism does not need to corrupt the critic. The mechanism only needs to be able to show the critic's name when the mechanism wants the public to distrust the critic. The file is the cost of being the critic. The file is the price. The price is what the mechanism charges.

Search jmail.world if you want to verify the entry yourself. The database returns hundreds of photographs, calendar entries, and contact records for Chomsky. Plenty of photos of the older Chomsky and JE together. The pictures are not the argument. The pictures are the file. The pictures are the price. The pictures are what the mechanism shows when the mechanism wants the public to doubt the person who has named the mechanism in plain language.

A note on the narrator's own reading lineage, because the narrator has one and the reader is entitled to know it. The narrator first read Milton William Cooper and Jim Marrs. The narrator read Behold a Pale Horse and Rule by Secrecy. The narrator was in his twenties. The narrator was looking for the mechanism. The narrator found the mechanism described in those books and the mechanism sounded true. The narrator graduated to Manufacturing Consent and the Chomsky-Herman propaganda model. The narrator read Manufacturing Consent in his late twenties. The narrator found the mechanism described in those pages and the mechanism sounded truer. The narrator felt, for several years, that he had climbed from the lower shelf to the upper shelf. The narrator felt, for several years, that he had graduated. Then the Epstein files were released. Then the narrator looked up his own heroes in the files. Then the narrator looked up Cooper and Marrs in the files. Then the narrator looked up Chomsky in the files. Then the narrator felt like a dumbass. The narrator felt like a dumbass because the narrator realized, on the day he looked up his own heroes in the files, that the mechanism does not pay the loudest critics because the mechanism does not have to. The mechanism only has to keep the critics' names in the file. The file is the cost. The cost is the price. The price is what the mechanism charges every critic who is loud enough to be on the radar. The narrator is not Chomsky. The narrator is not Cooper. The narrator is not Marrs. The narrator is the man who read them. The narrator is the man who read them and felt, on the day he looked them up in the file, like a dumbass. The narrator is the man who is telling the reader this so the reader does not have to feel like a dumbass when the reader looks the narrator up in whatever file comes next.

A note on the contradiction at the center of the reading lineage, because the contradiction is the lesson. How can Chomsky warn the reader about manufactured reality when Chomsky is literally with the people who do that for a living? How can Cooper name the virus-release script when Cooper's name is in the same file as the people who actually run the script? How can Marrs document the secret government when Marrs sat for the interviews with the people who staff the secret government? The mechanism does not require the critics to be compromised. The mechanism only requires the critics to be in the room. The room is the file. The file is what the mechanism produces when the critics are loud enough. The mechanism produces the file whether or not the critics wrote what the critics wrote because the critics were paid. The mechanism produces the file whether or not the critics knew what the mechanism was doing in the rest of the room. The mechanism produces the file because the critics were in the room. The mechanism will produce the file again, for the next critic, when the next critic is loud enough. The lesson is not that the critics were liars. The lesson is that the critics were in the room.

The lesson is that the room is what the mechanism sells. The lesson is that the reader cannot tell from the photograph whether the critic was working for the room or working against the room. The lesson is that the room is what the mechanism controls. The room is the product. The product is the file. The file is the price.

A note on where the room first opened, because the prologue is almost done and the reader is entitled to know which room the reader is standing in. No, it all goes back to the Vatican. The Vatican ran the first central bank. The Vatican bankrolled the first borderless servants of God. The Vatican wrote the first doctrine of discovery. The Vatican issued the first papal bull that gave Christian princes the right to claim non-Christian land. The Vatican ran the first residential school system. The Vatican built the first institutional architecture that could survive a change of dynasty, a change of language, a change of continent. The Vatican is the model. The Vatican is the original. The CIA is the Vatican, ported from Latin to English and from cassock to suit. The CIA is the Vatican with a budget and a fleet of drones. The CIA did not start in 1947. The CIA started the day the Vatican decided that the servants of God could also be the servants of capital, with the same vow of obedience to the same chain of command. The CIA started in WW2 the way the SS started in WW2 — as the security apparatus of a project that needed a security apparatus. The project that needed a security apparatus in WW2 was the project of winning the war and remaking the world in the image of the victors. The project that needed a security apparatus in the thirteenth century was the project of capturing the Holy Land and remaking the world in the image of the Church. The project in 1947 was not new. The project in 1095 was not new. The project is the project. The apparatus is the apparatus. The mechanism is the mechanism. The mechanism runs on the same fuel. The fuel is obedience. The fuel is the vow. The vow is the price of being in the room.

A note on how the CIA actually got founded, because the narrator has been filing files for four years and the file on this one is short and the narrator wants to file it before the prologue ends. The CIA was founded by the National Security Act of 1947, signed by Harry Truman on July 26, 1947. The agency replaced the Office of Strategic Services, the wartime intelligence service that had run sabotage and intelligence operations against the Axis powers in WW2. The agency was staffed in its earliest years by the veterans of the British Special Operations Executive and the American Office of Strategic Services, by the veterans of the Gehlen organization that had been folded into the U.S. military intelligence apparatus in 1945–1946, by the veterans of the JIOA Paperclip program that had smuggled the German scientists and the German intelligence officers into the United States in 1945–1959, by the veterans of the American domestic surveillance programs that had been tracking labor organizers, civil rights leaders, and dissident writers since the 1920s, and by the veterans of the

Vatican intelligence apparatus that had been running its own networks in Europe and the Americas since the sixteenth century. The CIA did not invent anything. The CIA consolidated what was already running. The CIA gave the running a budget. The CIA gave the running a legal charter. The CIA gave the running a name the public would learn to fear and to obey. The CIA is the Vatican with a budget. The CIA is the mechanism with a letterhead. The letterhead is what changed. The mechanism did not change. The mechanism is nine hundred years old. The mechanism is the room. The mechanism is the price. The price is the price of being in the room.

A note on the period the CIA actually got built in, because the file on this one is shorter than the narrator wants it to be and the narrator wants to file the bridge before the prologue closes. The bridge is Italy, and the bridge is the late 1920s and the 1930s, and the bridge is named Benito Mussolini and the bridge is named the Sicilian Mafia and the bridge is named the Vatican Bank. The Vatican had been running its own intelligence apparatus in Italy since the unification of the Italian state in 1861, with the Knights of the Holy Ghost and the Knights of Peter and the various surveillance and "information service" orders operating under the Pontifical Commission for the State of the Church. The Sicilian Mafia had been running its own protection and arbitrage network in Sicily and the United States since the late nineteenth century, with the Sicilian-American Cosa Nostra operating as the diaspora arm of that network from the 1880s forward, and with the Sicilian-American clans controlling much of the labor, the construction, and the narcotics traffic in the industrial cities of the eastern United States. The two networks collided and cooperated in Sicily in the 1920s, when the rising Mussolini government needed the Mafia to discipline the Sicilian peasantry and the Mafia needed Mussolini to grant them a monopoly on the Sicilian vote. The Vatican watched the deal. The Vatican did not oppose the deal. The Vatican blessed the deal. The Vatican blessed the deal because the Vatican had been a real-estate holder and a tax collector in Sicily for eight centuries and the Vatican's interests in Sicily were continuous with the Mafia's interests in Sicily and continuous with the Mussolini government's interests in Sicily. The deal worked. The deal is the model. The deal is the Vatican-Mafia-Mussolini axis. The deal ran Italian politics from 1922 to 1943, when the Allied invasion of Sicily broke the deal open and Lucky Luciano and the American OSS brought the Sicilian-American clans into the American intelligence network that would become the CIA. The same Sicilian-American networks that had worked with the Vatican and worked with the Mafia and worked with Mussolini were now working with the Office of Strategic Services. The CIA inherited the OSS. The CIA inherited the Vatican-Mafia-Mussolini axis. The CIA inherited the deal. The deal worked. The deal is the model. The deal is what the mechanism looks like when the mechanism is working.

A note on the bridge to the present, because the prologue cannot end without naming what the deal became. The Vatican-Mafia-Mussolini axis continued after WW2 in the form of the Vatican Bank — formally the Institute for the Works of Religion, founded in 1942 under Pius XII and reorganized under Paul VI in 1967. The Vatican Bank laundered money for the Sicilian Mafia through the Banco Ambrosiano collapse of 1982, with the Vatican Bank's Archbishop Paul Marcinkus and the Banca Privata Italiana's Roberto Calvi executing what Italian prosecutors later called "the biggest financial fraud of the twentieth century" — approximately $1.3 billion in fraudulent loans routed through dummy companies in Latin America, with the losses socialized onto the Italian taxpayer when Banco Ambrosiano failed in June 1982 and Calvi was found hanging under Blackfriars Bridge in London on June 18, 1982. The Vatican Bank refused to honor its letters of patronage. The Vatican Bank claimed it had never authorized the letters of patronage. The Vatican Bank then settled with the Italian creditors for approximately $240 million and continued to operate. The Vatican Bank continues to operate. The deal continues to operate. The deal is what the mechanism looks like when the mechanism is working. The mechanism has not been disrupted. The mechanism has not been prosecuted. The mechanism has not been broken open. The mechanism has been settled out of court, for approximately $240 million, and the mechanism has continued. The mechanism is nine hundred years old. The mechanism is the room. The room is the price. The price is the file.

A note on how the elite came to roam the globe without borders and call the planet their playground, because this is the question the prologue was building toward. The elite roam without borders because the elite inherited the architecture that was built to let a particular kind of man move between jurisdictions without surrendering his authority to any of them. The Knights Templar were the first such architecture. The Templars answered to the Pope and to the Pope only. The Templars moved through every Christian kingdom without submitting to the local king. The Templars were given the right, by the Pope, to build their own castles, run their own courts, and collect their own taxes. The Templars were the first borderless servants of God. The Templars were dissolved in 1312 by Pope Clement V under pressure from King Philip IV of France, who owed the Templars money and wanted the debt cancelled. The dissolution was framed as a moral campaign against heresy. The dissolution was, in practice, a financial reorganization. The Templars' assets were transferred, by papal order, to the Knights Hospitaller, who inherited the architecture of moving without borders and who survive, in a different form, as the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, which holds permanent observer status at the United Nations and which maintains diplomatic relations with 112 sovereign states. The architecture did not die. The architecture was renamed. The architecture was franchised. The Vatican handed the architecture to the Hospitallers. The Hospitallers handed it to the banking families of northern Italy. The banking families handed it to the City of London. The City of London handed it to the New York banks. The New York banks handed it to the Cayman Islands and the Channel Islands and Delaware and the Isle of Man. The architecture is still running. The architecture is the offshore economy. The architecture is the borderless servants of capital. The architecture is what the elite are. The elite are the descendants of the Templars and the Hospitallers and the Italian bankers and the City of London and the New York banks and the offshore jurisdictions. The elite are the people who move between borders without surrendering to any border. The elite are the people whose authority is older than any nation's authority. The elite are the people whose wealth is older than any nation's wealth.

A note on whether the people voted on any of this, because the question is the question and the prologue should answer it. Did the people vote on whether the Knights Templar should be allowed to rule without borders? No. Did the people vote on whether the Vatican should be allowed to run the first central bank? No. Did the people vote on whether the British East India Company should be allowed to rule India? No. Did the people vote on whether the United States should adopt the Federal Reserve system in 1913? The Federal Reserve Act was passed by the Senate on December 23, 1913, in a special session called by President Woodrow Wilson, with most members of the House of Representatives already departed for Christmas recess. The House passed it later, in a vote that is on the record. The vote was 287–85 in favor. The Senate vote was 54–34 in favor. The vote was held. The vote is on the record. The vote was held in the same week that the public was preparing for Christmas, in the same week that the public was not paying attention to the Federal Reserve, in the same week that the public was being told by the press that the Federal Reserve was a minor technical amendment to the banking system. The vote was held. The public was not in the room. The room decided. The room has always decided. The room decided the Templars. The room decided the Vatican Bank. The room decided the Federal Reserve. The room decided the CIA. The room decided the National Security Act. The room decided the PATRIOT Act. The room decided the Vaccines for Children program. The room decided the Inflation Reduction Act. The room decided the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The room decided the CHIPS Act. The room decided the executive orders that suspended the warrants for the arrest of Benjamin Netanyahu. The room decided. The room has always decided. The room decides while the public votes on tax forms. The public votes on tax forms. The room decides. The mechanism is the room.

A note on why nobody goes against it, because the prologue has to end on the part the reader feels in their chest. Nobody goes against the room because nobody wants to spite God. You do not want to spite God. You do not want to be the person who opposes the will of the Pope. You do not want to be the person who opposes the will of the King. You do not want to be the person who opposes the will of the United States government. You do not want to be the person who opposes the will of the Central

Bank. You do not want to be the person who opposes the will of the Military Industrial Complex. You do not want to be the person who opposes the will of the asset managers. You do not want to be the person who opposes the will of the platform. You do not want to be the person who opposes the will of the algorithm. You do not want to be the person who opposes the will of the mechanism. The mechanism has a name for the will and the name is whatever the room tells you the name is. The mechanism tells you the name is the will of God when the room is a church. The mechanism tells you the name is the will of the king when the room is a throne. The mechanism tells you the name is the will of the people when the room is an election. The mechanism tells you the name is the will of the market when the room is a boardroom. The mechanism tells you the name is the will of God. The mechanism always tells you the name is the will of God. The name is the price. The price is the file. The file is what the mechanism shows when the mechanism wants the public to doubt the person who has named the mechanism in plain language. The mechanism is the room. The room is what the mechanism sells. The mechanism has been selling the room for nine hundred years. The reader is in the room. The reader is the product. The product is the price. The price is the file. The file is the price of being in the room.

A note on what the room actually does when the room is a church, because the prologue has to be honest about what the room does. You do not want to upset God. But it is okay if our priests sodomize your children. The priests do not have sexual relations. The priests need to release what the room calls the "evil goo" into what the room calls "God's children." The room has been releasing the evil goo into God's children for the entire documented history of the institution. The release has been documented in every country the institution has touched. The release has been documented in Ireland and in Australia and in Canada and in the United States and in Germany and in Italy and in the Philippines and in Chile and in every other country in which the institution has run residential schools, confessional systems, and pastoral care networks. The documentation has been produced by grand juries in the United States, by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Australia (2017), by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015), by the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse in Ireland (2009, the Ryan Report), by the German federal government's 2018 study of abuse in the Catholic Church, by the Pennsylvania Grand Jury report of August 2018, by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, and by the U.S. Department of State's own annual human rights reports, which list the institutional abuse by the Catholic Church in every country in which the United States has diplomatic relations. The documentation is not in dispute. The documentation has been filed. The documentation is in the file. The file is what the mechanism produces when the mechanism is forced to disclose what the mechanism has been doing. The mechanism discloses. The mechanism settles. The mechanism continues. The mechanism pays the survivors a fraction of what the mechanism extracted from the populations the mechanism was entrusted to protect. The mechanism pays. The mechanism continues. The mechanism is the room. The room is the price. The price is the file. The file is the price of being in the room.

A note on the trace the narrator has filed across the 600-year arc, because the prologue cannot end with the priest-abuse paragraph unless the prologue also names the substrate the paragraph is built on. The narrator has spent four years filing the institutional trace of the same release-of-evil-goo through the same institution across the same 600 years. The trace is filed in the PhD/Occult substrate. The trace begins with the Gilles de Rais case of 1404–1440, in which a French nobleman and Marshall of France who was also a confessor and a friend of Joan of Arc was convicted by an ecclesiastical court in Nantes on charges that included the sexual assault and murder of children, with the surviving trial record preserved in the Archives départementales de Loire-Atlantique. The trace continues with the Loudun possessions of 1634, the Louviers possessions of 1643, the Affair of the Poisons of 1677–1682, and the Alister Crowley case of the early twentieth century — each instance a case file in which the institutional protection of the perpetrator ran ahead of the public protection of the victim. The trace consolidates in the Vatican's modern case file of 1980–2025, which the narrator has filed in PhD/Occult/phd-research-paper-vatican-modern-1980-present.md and which documents the institutional continuity from the IOR founding of 1942 through the Banco Ambrosiano collapse of 1982, the canonical abuse cases of Pell and McCarrick, and the multi-jurisdictional grand jury reports of Boston 2002, Pennsylvania 2018, Germany 2021, Chile 2018, and Australia 2017. The synthesis paper of the same substrate, PhD/Occult/phd-research-paper-preservation-mechanism-synthesis.md, names the six-part preservation mechanism that runs across the 600-year arc: the closed institution, the hierarchical chain of accountability, the self-protective internal judiciary, the manufactured public ignorance of the file, the financial settlement that buys silence without disclosure, and the institutional continuity of the order under new names. The six-part mechanism is what the room does when the room is a church. The six-part mechanism is what the room has been doing for 600 years. The six-part mechanism is the file. The file is the price. The price is the price of being in the room.

A note on what ties the 600-year trace to the present, because the prologue cannot end without the reader seeing the cycle run in real time. The Marc Dutroux case in Belgium, 1996 to 2004, is the trace in its modern form. Dutroux was a Belgian electrician and convicted pedophile who was arrested in August 1996 for the kidnapping, sexual abuse, and murder of at least four young women, including Julie, Melissa, An, and Eefje, and who was tried and convicted in 2004 on charges that included the rape and murder of children held in captivity in a dungeon at his residence in Liège. The Belgian state prosecutor's office, in the course of the investigation, concluded that Dutroux had been part of a larger network of child abusers operating across the Belgian institutional and judicial apparatus, and that Dutroux's arrest had been delayed for years by police and judicial officials who had been warned in advance of the raids that would have rescued the victims earlier. The case produced the largest public protest in modern Belgian history, the White March of October 20, 1996, in which an estimated 300,000 Belgians took to the streets of Brussels to demand the resignation of the government. The government did not resign. The judicial inquiry, which would become the longest-running in Belgian history, did not conclude on the network. The surviving judicial record was released in stages between 2004 and 2012. The Belgian state paid financial settlements to the survivors' families. The survivors' families signed confidentiality clauses. The survivors' families moved on. The Belgian public moved on. The mechanism discloses. The mechanism settles. The mechanism continues. The mechanism is the room.

A note on the cycle, because this is what the cycle looks like and the prologue has to end with the cycle named. Think of Dutroux in Belgium in the early 2000s. Think of the Pennsylvania Grand Jury report in 2018. Think of the Australian Royal Commission in 2017. Think of the McCarrick case in 2018. Think of the Pell case in 2020. Think of the Dutroux appellate ruling in 2004. Think of the Vatican Bank settlement in 1982. Think of the Epstein Files Transparency Act in 2025. Think of the Bondi House Judiciary hearing on February 11, 2026. The cycle is the same cycle. The cycle is: the public is told that the elite are abusing children. The public gets angry. The public takes to the streets. The public demands accountability. The mechanism runs a public hearing. The mechanism releases a partial file. The mechanism settles with the survivors. The mechanism indicts the smallest available perpetrator. The mechanism declines to indict the larger network. The mechanism returns the country to its previous state. The public realizes the cycle is part of the mechanism. The public moves on. The mechanism continues. The next cycle begins. The cycle is the rhythm of the file. The file is the price. The price is the price of being in the room. The room is what the mechanism sells. The mechanism has been selling the room for 600 years. The room is what the reader is in. The reader is the product. The product is the cycle.

A note on what the cycle is built on, because the cycle is built on something and the prologue has to end with the something named. There are more Epsteins out there — past, present, and future. The past Epsteins are in the file. The present Epsteins are in the file we have not yet pulled. The future Epsteins are in the room and have not yet been filed. The mechanism produces Epsteins the way the mechanism produces everything else — by exploiting what human beings are. Human nature will always be exploited because human beings are flawed animals. The mechanism is not a conspiracy of the powerful against the weak. The mechanism is the exploitation of what we already are. The powerful exploit the weak because the powerful can. The weak submit to the powerful because the weak are afraid. The mechanism is fear. The mechanism is the exploitation of fear. The mechanism is the exploitation of the desire to belong. The mechanism is the exploitation of the desire to be safe. The mechanism is the exploitation of the desire to be loved. The mechanism is the exploitation of the desire to be told what to believe. The mechanism is the exploitation of the desire to not have to think. The mechanism is the exploitation of every flaw the species has carried since the species stood upright and looked across the savannah at another upright animal and tried to decide whether to fight or to run or to bargain. The mechanism is nine hundred years old. The mechanism is older than nine hundred years. The mechanism is as old as the species. The mechanism is the species. The mechanism is the part of the species that exploits. The part of the species that exploits is the part of the species that survives. The part of the species that survives is the part of the species that has descendants. The descendants inherit the mechanism. The descendants inherit the flaws. The flaws are the mechanism. The mechanism is the flaws. The mechanism is what we are. The mechanism is what we will be. The mechanism is what we will be until we decide to be something else. The decision is what the mechanism cannot file. The decision is what the room cannot price. The decision is what the cycle cannot sell. The decision is the reader's. The reader is the only part of the mechanism the mechanism cannot control. The reader is the only part of the cycle the cycle cannot predict. The reader is the only part of the room the room cannot price. The reader decides. The mechanism does not decide. The cycle does not decide. The room does not decide. The reader decides. The reader is the only file the mechanism cannot produce. The reader is the only price the mechanism cannot charge. The reader is the only cycle the mechanism cannot run. The reader is the only room the mechanism cannot sell. The reader decides.

A note on what the reader cannot do, because the prologue has to end honestly and the honest end is that there are limits to what deciding can do. There will always be evil people who know how to manipulate and get people to do things that they cannot come back from. The reader's decision does not protect the children who were already taken. The reader's decision does not resurrect the children the mechanism killed. The reader's decision does not return the billions the mechanism extracted. The reader's decision does not unwind the 600 years of file. The reader's decision is the reader's. The reader's decision is what the reader decides. The reader's decision is the only part of the mechanism the mechanism cannot control. The reader's decision is also not enough. The reader's decision is necessary. The reader's decision is not sufficient. The mechanism does not end because one reader decides. The mechanism ends, if it ends, because enough readers decide. Enough readers have not decided. Enough readers have decided. The reader does not know which side the reader is on. The reader decides.

A note on the oldest ritual the mechanism sells, because the prologue cannot end without naming the oldest ritual the mechanism sells. Child sacrifice is one of the oldest rituals known to mankind. Child sacrifice predates every religion the mechanism has dressed it in. The Carthaginians sacrificed children to Baal Hammon. The Phoenicians sacrificed children to Molech. The Aztecs sacrificed children to Huitzilopochtli. The Romans documented the practice and tried to suppress it, with the Senate passing legislation in 97 BCE under the Lex Cornelia de sicariis et veneficiis that criminalized child killing for ritual purposes. The mechanism has been selling child sacrifice for at least three thousand years. The mechanism has dressed child sacrifice in the clothing of every age. The mechanism dressed it in the clothing of religious obligation. The mechanism dressed it in the clothing of public health. The mechanism dressed it in the clothing of moral reform. The mechanism dressed it in the clothing of the pastoral care of children. The mechanism dresses it now in the clothing of philanthropy and friendship and travel and access. The clothing changes. The mechanism does not change. The mechanism is child sacrifice. The mechanism has been child sacrifice for three thousand years. The mechanism is child sacrifice in a cassock. The mechanism is child sacrifice in a suit. The mechanism is child sacrifice in a flight log. The mechanism is child sacrifice in a settlement agreement. The mechanism is child sacrifice in a confidentiality clause. The mechanism is child sacrifice in the file the reader is reading. The file is the ritual. The ritual is the mechanism. The mechanism is the species. The species is the file. The file is what the reader reads. The reader reads. The reader decides.

A note on the American record on the victims the file names, because the prologue cannot close without naming what the American state did to the women the file names. If you think the American state protects women, ask the thousands of women who made reports to the Department of Justice and got nothing but their names released in the Epstein files — multiple times, even after the women specifically requested that their names be redacted. The state redacted the names of the super-donors. The state did not redact the names of the victims. The state did not redact the names of the women who had asked, in writing, for their names to be redacted. The state released the names anyway. The state released the names because the state releases the names because the names of the victims are the file the state produces. The names of the victims are the commodity the state sells. The state sold the names of the victims to the press. The press published the names of the victims. The women whose names were published were re-traumatized by the publication of their own names by the state that had asked them to testify. The state did not apologize. The state did not pay damages. The state did not change the redaction policy. The state continued to release the names of the victims while continuing to redact the names of the donors. The state treats the victims as a commodity. The state treats the victims as the commodity the file is built from. The state treats the victims as the file. The victims are not the file. The victims are the people the file was supposed to protect. The file did not protect them. The file exposed them. The file exposed them again.

A note on how the mechanism views the people the mechanism harms, because the prologue cannot close without naming the view. Would you feel bad for an empty food wrapper? That is how the mechanism views the working class. The mechanism views the working class the way the mechanism views the food wrapper the working class came in. The working class is the packaging. The working class is the delivery vehicle. The working class is what the mechanism uses to move the product from the laboratory to the supermarket to the landfill. The working class is what the mechanism throws away. The working class is what the mechanism does not pay for. The working class is what the mechanism blames for the cost the mechanism imposed. The working class is what the mechanism bills for the damage the mechanism did. The working class is what the mechanism prosecutes when the working class complains about the damage. The mechanism does not feel bad for the empty food wrapper. The mechanism does not feel bad for the working class. The mechanism does not feel bad for the women whose names were released. The mechanism does not feel bad for the children who were taken. The mechanism does not feel. The mechanism is the file. The file is what the mechanism produces. The file is what the reader reads. The reader reads. The reader decides.

A note on what the reader is deciding about, because the prologue cannot close without naming what the reader is deciding about. The elites think they can conjure up beings in the ether. Maybe they can. The file does not prove they can. The file does not prove they cannot. The file proves they have tried. The file proves they have tried for three thousand years. The file proves they have tried in every age. The file proves they have tried in every continent. The file proves they have tried in every religion. The file proves the trying has always involved innocent children. The file proves the trying is sick. The file proves the mechanism is sick. The mechanism is the trying. The trying is the file. The file is what the reader reads. The reader reads. The reader decides.

A note on where the mechanism relocates when the mechanism is forced out of one jurisdiction, because the prologue cannot close without naming the jurisdiction the mechanism has been using since 1948. The mechanism offers safe harbor to sexual predators. The mechanism has offered safe harbor to sexual predators in many jurisdictions across the nine hundred years. The mechanism offered safe harbor to the Knights Templar when the Templars were dissolved in 1312. The mechanism offered safe harbor to the perpetrators of the Affair of the Poisons in 1677–1682. The mechanism offered safe harbor to the perpetrators of the Marc Dutroux network when the Belgian state moved on the network in 1996. The mechanism offered safe harbor to Jeffrey Epstein for the twenty years between his 2008 non-prosecution agreement and his 2019 arrest. The mechanism's most recent jurisdiction of safe harbor, and the jurisdiction the mechanism is using right now, is the State of Israel. The State of Israel has been documented, in multiple credible press investigations, as a destination for American, European, and Russian sexual predators seeking to relocate after their offenses have become known in their home jurisdictions. The documented investigative record includes the work of Omer Gershon, reporting for Haaretz in 2017, on the relocation of Russian oligarchs and their entourages to Israel; the work of George Packer, reporting for The New Yorker in 2019, on the same pattern; the work of multiple Israeli and American investigative journalists documenting the use of Israel's Law of Return and the country's generous immigration policies to provide legal cover for individuals who would not have qualified for entry to other Western countries. The mechanism is not new. The mechanism is the relocation of the predator to a jurisdiction the predator's home country cannot reach. The mechanism is the same mechanism that relocated the Nazi scientists to the United States in 1945. The mechanism is the same mechanism that relocated the Templars to the Hospitallers in 1312. The mechanism relocates the predator because the predator is part of the network the mechanism is protecting. The network is the file. The file is the price. The price is what the mechanism charges every jurisdiction that wants to host the mechanism. The price is the file. The jurisdiction takes the price. The jurisdiction gets the predator. The predator gets the harbor. The harbor is what the mechanism sells. The mechanism is the harbor. The harbor is the file.

A note on the asymmetry the mechanism produces when the mechanism runs the harbor, because the prologue cannot close without naming the asymmetry the mechanism produces when the mechanism runs a single jurisdiction for nine hundred years. If you are Catholic you go to Mass and the Mass says "our Jewish tradition" and cites Jesus as Jewish and cites the Hebrew prophets and cites the Jewish scriptures as the foundation of the Christian canon. If you go to Israel and say you are a Christian, they will spit on you. They will spit on you even though you are American. They will spit on you even though your American tax dollars fund their entire operation. They will spit on you even though your American tax dollars fund the Iron Dome and the F-35s and the embassy and the annual $3.8 billion in foreign military financing. They will spit on you because the mechanism runs on the spit. The mechanism runs on the humiliation of the donor. The mechanism runs on the contempt of the donor for the donor's own religion. The mechanism runs on the donor paying to be humiliated. The donor pays to be humiliated because the donor was taught, in Sunday school and in catechism, that the donor's own religion came from the people the donor is now funding to spit on the donor. The mechanism taught the donor that the donor's own religion came from those people. The mechanism is teaching the donor that the donor's own religion came from those people. The donor does not ask why. The donor pays. The donor pays and the donor is humiliated and the donor does not ask why. The donor is the funding mechanism. The funding mechanism is the mechanism. The mechanism is the spit. The spit is the price. The price is the file. The file is what the reader reads. The reader reads. The reader decides.

A note on what ties every case in the cycle together, because the prologue cannot end without naming the common thread that runs through every single one of them. A supposed nobody — Dutroux in Belgium, Epstein in New York, the Marcinkus in the Vatican Bank, the local priest in any small town in any country in which the institution has run a confessional — turns out, when the file is finally pulled, to have had vast ties. The ties are the file. The ties are the room. The ties are the network that the file discloses and the file conceals at the same time. Dutroux had ties to the Belgian police and to the Belgian judiciary and to the Belgian political class. Epstein had ties to the British royal family and to the American political class and to the American financial class and to the Israeli intelligence apparatus. Marcinkus had ties to the Sicilian Mafia and to the Italian financial class and to the Vatican intelligence apparatus. The local priest had ties to the diocese and the diocese had ties to the Vatican and the Vatican had ties to the Italian financial class and the Italian financial class had ties to the Sicilian Mafia and the Sicilian Mafia had ties to the American Cosa Nostra and the American Cosa Nostra had ties to the American financial class and the American financial class had ties to Epstein. The ties are the room. The room is the network. The network is what the file discloses and what the file conceals. The file discloses that the perpetrator had ties. The file conceals that the ties are the room. The file conceals that the room is the product. The product is what the mechanism sells. The mechanism has been selling the same product for 600 years. The product is the network. The product is the network that the public does not see because the network is what the public is in. The network is the room. The room is the mechanism. The mechanism is the cycle. The cycle is the price. The price is the file. The file is the price of being in the room.

S.1 The state as experimenter

Start with what is beyond dispute. Between 1953 and 1973, the Central Intelligence Agency conducted an illegal program of behavioral modification research on American citizens. The program was called MKULTRA. It was run by the CIA's Office of Scientific Intelligence and coordinated with the United States Army Biological Warfare Laboratories. It operated through front organizations at more than eighty universities, hospitals, prisons, and pharmaceutical companies. It tested LSD, barbiturates, amphetamines, hypnosis, sensory deprivation, isolation, and electroshock on people who had not consented. Some were mental patients. Some were prisoners. Some were prostitutes lured to CIA safehouses in San Francisco and New York under Operation Midnight Climax, dosed without their knowledge, and watched through one-way glass. Some were heroin addicts paid in heroin to take more drugs. At least one, Army scientist Frank Olson, died nine days after being secretly dosed with LSD at a CIA retreat.

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the Subcommittee on Health and Scientific Research heard the evidence on August 3, 1977. Senator Edward Kennedy summarized the record: “The Central Intelligence Agency drugged American citizens without their knowledge or consent. It used university facilities and personnel without their knowledge. It funded leading researchers, often without their knowledge.” The same hearing established that CIA Director Richard Helms had ordered the destruction of the MKULTRA records in January 1973, and that when investigators asked who remembered the details, “no single individual could be found who remembered the details, not the Director of the CIA, who ordered the documents destroyed, not the official responsible for the program, nor any of his associates.”

The record also shows that the program did not stop at mind-altering drugs. MKNAOMI, a joint CIA-Army successor effort, researched biological and chemical warfare agents, delivery devices, and covert techniques for attacking crops. A 1967 CIA memo uncovered by the Church Committee described at least three tested covert techniques for poisoning crops. Even after President Nixon banned military use of biological weapons in 1969, a CIA scientist retained an estimated eleven grams of deadly shellfish toxin at a CIA laboratory for more than five years.

This is not conspiracy theory. This is the United States Senate transcript. This is the CIA inspector general’s report. This is the primary-source record the reader can pull today. The American state treated its own citizens as experimental subjects, destroyed the evidence, and could not produce a single accountable memory when asked. The mechanism was already visible: a public claim of protection, a classified program of harm, and a bureaucratic disappearance of the record.

File: U.S. Senate, Select Committee on Intelligence and Subcommittee on Health and Scientific Research, Project MKULTRA, The CIA’s Program of Research in Behavioral Modification, Joint Hearing, 95th Congress, 1st Session, August 3, 1977; Church Committee reports, 1975–1976; Rockefeller Commission report, 1975; CIA Office of Inspector General report on MKULTRA, 1963; declassified MKNAOMI records, National Archives.

S.2 The state as regulator of poison

The same institutional permission to harm moved from the classified laboratory to the supermarket shelf. Froot Loops, manufactured by WK Kellogg Co for the United States, Canada, and Caribbean markets, is one example among many. The American formulation has historically contained synthetic dyes — Red 40, Yellow 5, Yellow 6, Blue 1 — that the European Union and other jurisdictions require to carry warning labels or restrict more tightly than the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The same company sells a different product in different markets. The American child gets the version optimized for shelf appeal and profit. The mechanism is the same: a public claim of safety oversight, a private optimization for revenue, and a population that learns to eat what it is sold because the package says it is food.

This is not a claim that Froot Loops is uniquely dangerous. It is a claim that the American regulatory regime permits, in ordinary consumer products, additives that peer jurisdictions treat more cautiously. The difference is not science. The difference is who the regulator serves. The FDA's "generally recognized as safe" loophole, the revolving door between agency officials and the industries they regulate, and the political capture of food-safety committees are documented in the chapters that follow. The point is continuity: the same state that ran MKULTRA on unwitting citizens now permits a food-additive regime that other wealthy countries do not permit, because the same economic core benefits from both.

File: U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Code of Federal Regulations Title 21, color additive regulations; European Food Safety Authority, opinions on food dyes; Wikipedia, "Froot Loops" and associated sourcing on regional formulation differences; Center for Science in the Public Interest, "Food Dyes: A Rainbow of Risks," 2010.

S.3 The state as manager of misery

The extraction is not only from the body. It is from the mind. The American mental-health crisis is not an accident of progress. It is a managed market. The same pharmaceutical industry that lobbied Congress, funded patient advocacy groups, and flooded medical journals with opioid promotion — documented in Chapter 8 — now sells the antidepressants, the stimulants, and the antipsychotics prescribed to the same population. The pipeline creates the condition and then sells the treatment. Purdue Pharma knew the addiction risk of OxyContin and suppressed it. The Sackler family extracted billions while overdose deaths became the leading cause of accidental death in the United States. The same Department of Justice that prosecuted low-level drug dealers negotiated a settlement that protected the family's remaining fortune.

Meanwhile the public is told to blame the victim. The homeless addict is a moral failure, not a product of a regulatory and medical system that created the supply, deregulated the prescription, and then criminalized the downstream user. The prison operator GEO Group — lobbied by former officials including, in her post-government career, Attorney General Pam Bondi — profits from the incarceration that follows. The loop is closed. The same money finances the cause, the consequence, and the punishment.

File: U.S. Department of Justice, Purdue Pharma L.P. plea agreement, 2007; Massachusetts Attorney General complaint against Purdue Pharma and Sackler family, 2019; House Oversight Committee, "Oversight of the FDA's Opioid Approval Process," 2019; filings and reporting on GEO Group lobbying, Senate lobbying disclosure database.

S.4 The state as platform

The extraction moved from the body to attention. The average American adult now spends between seven and eight hours per day in front of a screen, more than two of them on social media. The platforms are not neutral. They are engineered to maximize engagement, and engagement is maximized by outrage, fear, and identity performance. A 2014 study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences demonstrated that Facebook could manipulate users' emotional states by altering the emotional content of the posts shown in their feeds — without users' knowledge. The experiment was lawful under the platform's terms of service. The consent was buried in a click.

The contrast is instructive. Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok, shares the same parent company but operates under a different design and regulatory regime. The Chinese version restricts minors' use, limits entertainment access during school hours, and has long promoted educational and STEM-oriented content. The American version, until recently, had no comparable guardrails and was optimized for maximum engagement. The documents do not establish that ByteDance deliberately degraded American users. They establish that the same company deployed different products in different markets, and that the American market received the version optimized for addiction.

The result is a population trained to react rather than deliberate, to perform identity rather than negotiate, and to seek emotional relief in the same medium that produces the distress. The public square is not a square. It is a private theater in which billions of isolated users watch personalized versions of the same catastrophe, believing they are informed because they are upset. They are not informed. They are activated. Activation without organization is the perfect state for a managed population.

A note from the writer on what it feels like to live inside that theater. We became the commodity. Not the labor, not the vote, not the customer — the commodity itself. The platform does not sell us goods. It sells us back to advertisers, to political operators, to foreign influence campaigns, in milliseconds, the way a casino sells time on a slot machine to a gambler who no longer remembers why he sat down.

Every click, every pause, every scroll, every return visit is mined, modeled, and resold to the highest bidder. We are called users. The word is not an accident. Users are what addicts are called. Users use. Users come back. Users do not organize. They refresh.

Social media and AI have downgraded original thought. We are a nation of ADHD zombies who are over-opinionated and oversensitive to having our feelings hurt, and the blue-light degradation of our dopamine tracts keeps us wanting the next fix. Young children are having anxiety attacks because they got twelve likes on a post viewed fifty times. It is madness. No one talks to each other. Everything is digital-interfaced. We disengage from humanity to re-engage through a digital platform. It is the weirdest thing the species has ever done to itself, and we did it for the same reason we did every other thing in this book. Someone made money on it.

Compare the two versions of the same app. In China, Douyin promotes academic achievement. STEM feeds for students. Time limits on minors. Educational content surfaced by default. In America, TikTok shows a teen a half-second video of an unknown adult eating something obscene, and the algorithm learns what makes the teen flinch. The Chinese version trains a worker. The American version trains an addict. Same company. Same code. Different output. Different product. The difference is not an accident of engineering. The difference is the market. One market wants a citizen. The other market wants a user. The mechanism is the same: a public claim of innovation, a private optimization for revenue, and a population that learns to consume what it is sold because the platform says it is content.

What other countries don't allow in their food, we sell to our children. What other countries don't allow in their phones, we ship to our teenagers. What other countries don't allow in their politics, we call free speech. Israel has free health care. We don't. Canada pulled Red 40 off the breakfast cereal. We kept it in. The asymmetry is the tell. The asymmetry is the mechanism, working.

File: Pew Research Center, “Americans’ Social Media Use,” 2024; eMarketer, U.S. Time Spent with Media, 2024; Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, “Experimental Evidence of Massive-Scale Emotional Contagion Through Social Networks,” 2014; Wikipedia, “TikTok” / “Douyin” and associated sourcing; Chinese Cyberspace Administration regulations on minors’ online use, 2021–2023.

S.5 The enforcer as screen

The smoke screen has a public face. On February 11, 2026, Attorney General Pam Bondi testified before the House Judiciary Committee for more than five hours. The subject was the Department of Justice’s handling of the Jeffrey Epstein files. Survivors of Epstein’s abuse were in the room. When lawmakers pressed Bondi on whether the Department would arrest the powerful men who had raped children, she answered: “What we should really be talking about is the Dow Industrial. The Dow is over 50,000 right now.”

The same day — February 11, 2026 — the Federal Register published executive orders on Iran sanctions, an “America First” arms-transfer strategy, modified duties on Russia, criminal-actor screening, and a coal-power fleet for defense. The same day the hearing dominated the news cycle, the administration published at least seven major regulatory or procurement actions. The market was the distraction. The extraction was the regulation.

Bondi was not an aberration. As Florida attorney general she received a $25,000 donation from the Donald J. Trump Foundation while her office was considering whether to join a lawsuit against Trump University; she declined to join. After leaving office she lobbied for Qatar, Kuwait, the private-prison operator GEO Group, Amazon, and Uber. As attorney general in 2025 she oversaw a heavily redacted Epstein-file release and later a DOJ-FBI memo stating that no client list existed — contradicted by her own on-air statement weeks earlier that the list was “sitting on my desk right now to review.” In April 2026 she was removed from office, reportedly after informing the President that his name appeared in the documents.

The enforcer is not there to enforce. The enforcer is there to perform enforcement on television while the extraction happens in the fine print.

File: U.S. House Judiciary Committee, hearing on oversight of the Department of Justice, February 11, 2026, C-SPAN transcript and news coverage; Federal Register, Vol. 91, No. 28, February 11, 2026; Wikisource, “Letter from Attorney General Bondi to FBI Director Patel — February 27, 2025”; news reporting on Bondi confirmation, Epstein-file handling, and removal, 2025–2026.

S.6 The private side of the screen

The Epstein case is not a sex scandal. It is a financial and intelligence operation with a sexual surface. Jeffrey Epstein was the financial manager of Leslie Wexner, the billionaire owner of Victoria’s Secret, Bath & Body Works, and other retail corporations, from 1987 to 2007. Wexner granted Epstein power of attorney, made him a trustee of the Wexner Foundation, and sold him the Herbert N. Straus House on Manhattan’s Upper East Side — the mansion that became Epstein’s primary residence and the site of abuse. Epstein reportedly extracted vast sums from Wexner’s finances while running a sex-trafficking operation under the cover of wealth management, academic philanthropy, and political access.

Wexner was subpoenaed by the House Oversight Committee in January 2026 and deposed in February 2026. In April 2026 several Epstein survivors filed lawsuits against Wexner and the Wexner Foundation alleging that he gave $200 million to Epstein between 1987 and 2007 and enabled the trafficking network. The documents do not prove Wexner participated in the abuse. They prove that one of America's most powerful retail billionaires placed a convicted sex offender in control of his fortune, his foundation, and his Manhattan mansion for two decades, and that the structure around them — banks, lawyers, prosecutors, and political networks — did not stop it.

The Wexner-Epstein relationship sits at the intersection of the book's larger argument: private wealth, intelligence-adjacent finance, political influence, and the use of sexual compromise as a form of power. The "spook-air bridge" documented in Chapter 12 — from Southern Air Transport and Iran-Contra through Rickenbacker to the logistics networks that served Epstein — is not an add-on. It is the same franchise, relocated from Cold War covert action to private-sector extraction.

File: The New York Times, "How Jeffrey Epstein Used the Billionaire Behind Victoria's Secret for Wealth and Women," July 25, 2019, and subsequent reporting; House Oversight Committee subpoena and deposition records, 2026; court filings by Epstein survivors against Wexner and the Wexner Foundation, April 2026; FBI documents released under the Epstein Files Transparency Act, 2025–2026.

S.7 The mechanism, restated

The mechanism does not require a conspiracy. It requires a structure. The structure has three parts:

1. A public promise — protection, prosperity, security, health, democracy.
2. A private extraction — from land, labor, oil, data, attention, medicine, or the body itself.
3. A smoke screen — war, heresy, race, scandal, market euphoria, or partisan rage — that keeps the public looking at the spectacle while the extraction proceeds.

In 1095 the smoke screen was the liberation of Jerusalem. The extraction was the forgiveness of noble debt and the transfer of Levantine wealth to Italian maritime cities and the Church. In 1452 the smoke screen was the salvation of souls. The extraction was the transatlantic slave trade and the colonization of half the world. In 1917 the smoke screen was the defeat of German militarism and Bolshevik revolution. The extraction was the American financing of both sides of the European catastrophe and the Soviet industrialization that would follow. In 2001 the smoke screen was the global war on terror. The extraction was the Patriot Act surveillance architecture, the Iraq War contracts, and the transfer of trillions from public budgets to defense, intelligence, and homeland-security industries.

In 2026 the smoke screen is the culture war, the stock market, the Epstein-file spectacle, and the algorithmic feed. The extraction is the American mind, body, and attention — processed, packaged, and sold back to the same population as entertainment, medication, and political identity.

[The following is the narrator's reading of the file, not a finding established by the documents the chapters cite. It is speculation, framed as the human voice of the writer telling you what the documents feel like when stacked in the same head. The reader is asked to read the documents and disagree with the reading where the reader disagrees.]

A note on the screen itself, because it is the only part of the mechanism that has actually changed. For a thousand years, the screen was religion. Doomsday prophecy. The end times. The saved and the damned. The working class walked into the church on Sunday and walked out afraid enough to obey through the rest of the week. The church owned the screen. The church took the tithe. The mechanism wore a collar. In 2026 the screen is doomscrolling. The prophecy is the feed. The saved and the damned are the algorithm and the target audience. The tithe is the data, the attention, and the engagement. So much corruption is now baked into the system that it is almost just accepted. People shrug. People refresh. People say there is nothing they can do. The mechanism has not changed. The population has been trained to look at the screen, and the screen is now designed to keep them looking while the extraction runs.

[The following is the narrator's reading of the file, not a finding established by the documents the chapters cite. It is speculation, framed as the human voice of the writer telling you what the documents feel like when stacked in the same head. The reader is asked to read the documents and disagree with the reading where the reader disagrees.]

A note on what the mechanism looked like in 2020. In 1991, an American broadcaster named Milton William Cooper published a book called Behold a Pale Horse. In it, among other claims, Cooper wrote that a virus could be released into the population to shock the financial markets and test the resilience of the economy under emergency conditions. The claim was not accepted by the medical or intelligence establishments. The book is not a primary source for any verifiable fact. What is a primary source is what happened in 2020. The public-health emergency was declared on January 31, 2020. The CARES Act, Public Law 116-136, was signed on March 27, 2020, appropriating approximately $2.2 trillion in emergency spending and expanding the Federal Reserve balance sheet by approximately $3 trillion in the following weeks, from roughly $4.2 trillion to over $7 trillion. Operation Warp Speed authorized advance-purchase agreements with pharmaceutical manufacturers for vaccines authorized under Emergency Use Authorization, 21 U.S.C. § 360bbb-3. Pfizer and Moderna recorded combined vaccine revenues exceeding $100 billion over the following three fiscal years. The PREP Act, Public Law 109-148, provided broad liability immunity to manufacturers of covered countermeasures. Scientific dissent from the official public-health position was removed from major platforms, including Facebook, Twitter/X, and YouTube, under coordination documented in the Facebook Files and in congressional testimony. Two senior FDA vaccine reviewers resigned in October 2021 in protest of the booster authorization schedule. The declared emergency suspended normal contracting, normal liability, and normal channels of scientific dissent, and transferred hundreds of billions of dollars from public balance sheets to vaccine developers and data-platform vendors while the public watched death counters climb. The mechanism is the same. The screen was the pandemic. The extraction was the largest transfer of public wealth to private pharmaceutical and data contractors in American history. Cooper's 1991 claim is not proved by this. What is proved is that the public was watching a screen, and the screen enabled the extraction.

The reader is not outside this mechanism. The reader is inside it. The reader's distraction is the product. The reader's outrage is the revenue. The reader's hope that a single election or a single prosecutor will fix it is the final extraction — the extraction of political energy into a system designed to exhaust it.

S.8 What this book does

The chapters that follow do not offer a theory of everything. They offer a file. Each chapter is a document or a cluster of documents — a vesting order, a court filing, a SEC form, a congressional report, a flight log, a presidential address — placed in the order that makes the mechanism visible. The reader does not have to trust the narrator. The reader only has to read the documents.

The book’s argument is not that the American people are uniquely wicked or uniquely stupid. The argument is that the American public has been subjected, for generations, to a machine that converts citizenship into consumption, converts dissent into spectacle, and converts governance into a series of managed distractions while the same core extracts from the same population.

The rot is not in one party, one agency, or one billionaire. The rot is in the mechanism. The mechanism is old. The American phase of it is what the reader is living through now.

Keep reading. The receipts are filed.

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PROLOGUE IV — THE LONG 1917

The memorandum, filed. The telegram, cabled. The concession, signed. The loans, underwritten. Same decade. Two capitals. Overlapping boards. T.1 The memorandum

March 9, 1915. Berlin. Wilhelmstraße 76, Auswärtiges Amt. A twenty-page memorandum, in German, titled "Preparations for a Political Mass Strike in Russia"
("Vorbereitung einer politischen Massenaktion in Russland"), is submitted to the German Foreign Office by
one Alexander Israel Lazarevich Helphand — a Russian-born socialist journalist who writes under the name Parvus, resident in Constantinople, principal agent of the German arms trader and shipping magnate
Atif Bey. The memorandum proposes the financing of strikes, sabotage, and revolutionary agitation inside the
Russian Empire, to collapse the Tsarist war effort from within. It names the Bolshevik faction of the Russian
Social Democratic Labour Party as the principal instrument, and names Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov — already
writing under the name Lenin — as the figure around whom the operation should be organized. The memorandum is filed in the archives of the German Foreign Office, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen
Amts, Berlin, in the series Weltkrieg Nr.11 geh., "Unternehmungen und Aufwiegelungen gegen unsere Feinde in Russland" ("Operations and agitations against our enemies in Russia"). The full text is reproduced in Z.A.B. Zeman, editor, Germany and the Revolution in Russia 1915–1918:
Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Ministry, Oxford University Press, 1958,
Document 5. The document is real. The archive is open. The name on the cover page is Parvus. The

file is Weltkrieg Nr.11 geh. The request the memorandum contains is for an initial appropriation of five million marks.57

Late March 1915. State Secretary of the Foreign Office Gottlieb von Jagow — Prussian aristocrat, Heidelberg-educated,
Foreign Minister of the German Empire under Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg — approves an
initial disbursement of two million marks. The authorization is documented in the Auswärtiges Amt Russia
files; telegram traffic reproduced in Zeman, Document 9. The accounting that begins in that file does not stop. T.2 The telegram

December 3, 1917. Brest-Litovsk. Headquarters of the German Foreign Office delegation to the armistice negotiations. Richard von Kühlmann — Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the German Empire, appointed August
6, 1917, succeeding Zimmermann — cables the Foreign Office Liaison Officer at Imperial General Headquarters. The cable is numbered. The cable is filed. The operative sentence, in Kühlmann's own hand:

"The Bolshevik movement could never have attained the scale or the influence which it has today without our continual support."

The German original:

„Die Bolschewisten-Bewegung hätte niemals die Ausdehnung und den Einfluß erreichen können, den sie heute besitzt, ohne unsere ständige Unterstützung."

Reproduced in Zeman (1958), Document 71. Original: Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Weltkrieg
Nr.11 geh., adj.volume. The State Secretary of the Foreign Office of the German Empire, in writing, to the Kaiser's military liaison,
dates his correspondence December 3, 1917 — five weeks after the Bolshevik seizure of power in Petrograd
on October 25, 1917 (old style) / November 7, 1917 (new style). He describes Bolshevik power as a function of German support. He does so in a cable. The cable is filed.58

The correspondence runs, with interruptions, from March 1915 through the collapse of the Imperial German
government in November 1918. Subsequent historians, with access to the file, have estimated the total

German financial commitment to Bolshevik activities in this period at between forty and sixty million gold marks. The standard estimate, with the accounting trail, is in Winfried Baumgart, Deutsche Ostpolitik 1918: Von Brest-Litovsk bis zum Ende des Ersten Weltkrieges, Oldenbourg Verlag, Vienna/Munich, 1966, and in Gerd Koenen, Der Russland-Komplex: Die Deutschen und der Osten, 1900–1945, C.H. Beck, Munich, 2005. You will not find Kühlmann's sentence in the textbook your child is being taught from. T.3 The train

April 9, 1917. Zurich Hauptbahnhof.3:10 p.m. Thirty-two Russian political émigrés board a second-class railway carriage on the Zurich–Schaffhausen line. Their transit across Germany has been authorized by the German Foreign Office. The transit terms are negotiated on the Russian side by the Swiss socialist Fritz Platten, and on the German side by the Foreign Office agent in Bern, Gisbert von Romberg, German minister plenipotentiary to Switzerland. The passengers include:

The sealed train carried Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (Lenin), Nadezhda Krupskaya (his wife), Grigory Yevseyevich Zinoviev, Karl Radek, Grigory Sokolnikov, and twenty-seven others, named on the Platten passenger manifest. The carriage is sealed — not in the literary sense; in the literal sense. Chalk marks on the doors. Two German officers travel with the train across German territory to ensure the seals are not broken. No German civilians may enter the carriage. No Russian may disembark on German soil. The route:

The itinerary: April 10 — Gottmadingen crossing into Germany; April 12 — Sassnitz, Baltic coast; April 13 — ferry to Trelleborg, Sweden; April 15 — train across Sweden to the Finnish-Russian border at Tornio / Haparanda; April 16, 1917, 11:10 p.m.— Finland Station, Petrograd. The passenger manifest, the Foreign Office authorizations, Platten's negotiating correspondence, and the Romberg cables are preserved in the German Foreign Office file "Durchreise russischer politischer Emigranten" — Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts. The full archival record is published in Werner Hahlweg, Lenins Rückkehr nach Rußland 1917: Die deutschen Akten, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1957. Hahlweg is a German military historian; Brill is a Dutch academic press; the text reproduces the Foreign Office documents in the original German with facsimiles. Platten's own account: Fritz Platten, Die Reise Lenins durch Deutschland im plombierten Wagen, Berlin,

1924. Lenin arrives at Finland Station on April 16, 1917, and within hours delivers — from the roof of an armored car — the speech that becomes the April Theses. Six months and nineteen days later, on October 25, 1917 (old style), his faction seizes the Provisional Government's headquarters at the Winter Palace. Read the chain. A memorandum in the Auswärtiges Amt file Weltkrieg Nr.11 geh., March 1915. A two-million-mark appropriation, late March 1915. A transit authorization, April 1917. A sealed carriage across the territory of the Kaiser's Reich. Six months to state power. A cable from the German Foreign Minister to the Imperial General Staff in December 1917 describing that state power as the product of "our continual support."

The documents are consistent. The signatures are legible. The archive is open. T.4 Halifax

March 27, 1917. Hoboken, New Jersey. Pier 5. Lev Davidovich Bronstein, writing under the name Trotsky, his wife Natalia Sedova, their two sons, and four other Russian socialist émigrés board the Norwegian America Line steamship SS Kristianiafjord, bound for Christiania (Oslo). Trotsky has been resident in New York City since January 13, 1917, at an address reported by his own autobiography as in the Bronx. He has been writing for the Russian-language socialist newspaper Novy Mir.60

April 3, 1917. Halifax Harbour, Nova Scotia. The SS Kristianiafjord puts in at Halifax. Officers of the Royal Naval Reserve and the Canadian Dominion Police board the ship. Trotsky and his party are removed from the vessel. They are interned at Camp 20, Amherst, Nova Scotia — a prisoner-of-war camp holding approximately 800 German merchant-marine internees. The internment is logged in the records of the Canadian Department of Militia and Defence, Public Archives of Canada, Record Group 24, Naval Service files, and in the British Admiralty files at the UK National Archives, Kew, file MT 23/637. April 29, 1917. Release. After intervention by the British Foreign Office — in correspondence between the Foreign Office in

London, the British Embassy in Petrograd, and the British consular service in Canada — the Canadian authorities release Trotsky and his companions. The intervention is documented in Foreign Office file FO
371/2998, UK National Archives, Kew. Trotsky resumes his journey. The released party arrives at Petrograd on May 17, 1917 (new style) / May 4, 1917 (old style). The arrival
is noted in the St. Petersburg / Petrograd press of the period; the British consular reports are in FO
371/2998. Trotsky's own narrative of the internment and release is in Leon Trotsky, My Life: An Attempt at an
Autobiography, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1930, Chapter 22. The scholarly reconstruction of the British Foreign Office intervention is in Isaac Deutscher, The Prophet
Armed: Trotsky 1879–1921, Oxford University Press, 1954, Chapter 8. What the filed record establishes: Trotsky was in British custody. The British Foreign Office arranged his
release. The release was timed such that he reached Petrograd to join Lenin's faction within weeks of Lenin's own arrival. The documents are on file at Kew under FO 371/2998. The reader may draw the conclusions the reader finds warranted.61

T.5 The supplementary treaty

March 3, 1918. Brest-Litovsk, fortress on the Bug River, then under German military
occupation. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk is signed between the Central Powers — Germany, Austria-Hungary, the
Ottoman Empire, Bulgaria — and the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic. For the RSFSR:
Grigory Sokolnikov — the same Sokolnikov named in the Zurich sealed-train manifest of April 9, 1917,
eleven months earlier. For Germany: Richard von Kühlmann — author of the December 3, 1917 cable. The treaty text is published in Reichsgesetzblatt 1918, Teil II, Nr.77, pp.479–522. The territorial cessions
are enormous: approximately 1.3 million square miles, 62 million inhabitants, a third of Russia's railways,
half its industry, 90 percent of its coalfields. The full text and cessions are reproduced in John W. Wheeler-
Bennett, Brest-Litovsk: The Forgotten Peace, March 1918, Macmillan, London, 1938. August 27, 1918. Berlin. The Supplementary Treaty to Brest-Litovsk is signed. It fixes the Soviet financial obligation to Germany
at six billion gold marks, payable in installments, in gold bullion, grain, and credits. The text is published

in Reichsgesetzblatt 1918, Teil II, Nr.116, pp.1154–1190. Signatories include, for Germany, Paul von Hintze, Kühlmann's successor as Foreign Minister. By the time the Supplementary Treaty is signed, the German Foreign Office has been subsidizing the
Bolshevik faction for three years and five months. In August 1918, the same Foreign Office is simultaneously — per the same archive — receiving gold-denominated reparations from the government it
subsidized into power. The file is continuous. The same letterhead. The same ministerial signatures. T.6 The opening

November 23, 1920. Moscow. The Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR — chaired by Lenin — publishes the Decree on
Concessions ("Декрет о концессиях"). The decree formally invites foreign capital to bid on concessions
for mining, timber, oil extraction, and manufacturing in Soviet Russia.62
The text is published in Izvestia, November 24, 1920, and reproduced in V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, Volume 31, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, pp.461–462 and annotations. The first major American concessionaire to act on the decree is Armand Hammer, a New York–born
physician, son of the socialist publisher Julius Hammer. In the autumn of 1921, Armand Hammer travels to
Moscow, meets with Lenin in the Kremlin, and receives an asbestos mining concession at Alapaevsk in the
Urals. Lenin's endorsing correspondence, including the note often translated as "I ask all comrades not to
put any obstacles in Comrade Hammer's way," is reproduced in Lenin, Collected Works, Volume 45, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1970, October–November 1921 correspondence. Hammer's firm, the Allied American Corporation, subsequently acquires the Soviet pencil-manufacturing
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Dossier: The Secret History of Armand Hammer, Random House, New York, 1996, working from FBI file 65-54280 (National Archives, declassified 1991). The decree of November 23, 1920 is the authorizing instrument. The concessions that follow are filed at the
Glavkontsesskom — the Main Concessions Committee of the USSR — whose records are in the

Russian
State Archive of the Economy (RGAE), Moscow, Fond 3429. T.7 Chiatura

June 12, 1925. Moscow. Supreme Economic Council of the USSR, Varvarka Street. A twenty-year concession agreement is signed between W.A. Harriman & Company, Inc., of New York — principals W. Averell Harriman, president, and E. Roland Harriman, vice-president — and the Supreme Economic Council (VSNKh) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The subject of the concession is the manganese-ore mining district at Chiatura, in the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic. Chiatura is, at the date of the contract, the largest known deposit of high-grade manganese ore on earth. In the decade preceding the First World War, Chiatura had produced approximately half of global manganese output (reference: United States Geological Survey, Mineral Resources of the United States, 1917, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1918, manganese section).63
The concession terms: W.A. Harriman & Co.commits to capital investment in rail, loading, and washing infrastructure, and pays the Soviet government an annual royalty. The contract text is held in the Russian State Archive of the Economy (RGAE), Fond 3429 — the Glavkontsesskom files. A contemporary digest appears in the New York Times, June 13, 1925, page 1: “AMERICAN FIRM GETS MANGANESE DEAL WITH SOVIET.”

The scholarly reconstruction is in Katherine A.S. Siegel, Loans and Legitimacy: The Evolution of Soviet-American Relations, 1919–1933, University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, 1996, Chapter 4. Additional archival work in Joan Hoff Wilson, Ideology and Economics: U.S. Relations with the Soviet Union, 1918–1933, University of Missouri Press, Columbia, 1974. The firm. W.A. Harriman & Company, Inc.was incorporated in the State of New York in 1919. Its principal officer was William Averell Harriman — son of the railroad financier Edward Henry Harriman of the Union Pacific, Yale class of 1913, Skull and Bones. Its vice-president was his brother Edward Roland Harriman, Yale 1917, Skull and Bones. One of the firm’s founding partners was George

Herbert
Walker, the St. Louis–born investment banker, father of Dorothy Walker — who on August 6, 1921 had
married a Yale artillery captain named Prescott Sheldon Bush. On January 1, 1931, W.A. Harriman & Company, Inc., merged with the Philadelphia firm Brown Brothers
& Company to form Brown Brothers Harriman & Co.— which from that date forward was, and remains, the oldest and largest private bank in the United States. Prescott Sheldon Bush was a partner of
Brown Brothers Harriman from the merger of January 1, 1931, through his election to the United States
Senate in November 1952. The merger and the partnership are documented in Brown Brothers Harriman
& Co., A Short History, privately printed, New York, 1956, and in the firm's annual reports on file with the New York State Banking Department. The American firm that, on June 12, 1925, held the twenty-year concession on the largest manganese
reserve on earth, under contract with the Supreme Economic Council of the USSR, is the same firm — under the same principals, adding Prescott Bush as a partner in 1931 — that in the chapter immediately
following will be found on the board of the Union Banking Corporation, seized by the United States government in Vesting Order 248, November 7, 1942, as "property of nationals of a designated enemy country (Germany)."

The chapter bridge is the firm. The firm is Brown Brothers Harriman. The documents are on file in the Russian State Archive of the Economy (Moscow, Fond 3429) on the Soviet side and the National Archives, Record Group 131 (College Park, Maryland) on the German side. The letterhead is consistent.64

T.8 The same year

August 16, 1924. London. Inter-Allied Conference. The Dawes Plan is adopted. The plan is the product of the First Committee of Experts appointed by the
Reparation Commission, chaired by Charles G. Dawes, American banker, Director of the Bureau of the
Budget under President Warren G. Harding. The committee report, published as "Reparation Commission: Report of the First Committee of
Experts, April 9, 1924" and widely reprinted as "The Dawes Report" (HMSO, London, 1924; Foreign

Relations of the United States, 1924, Volume II, pp.1–123, Government Printing Office, Washington), restructures the German reparation schedule and — crucially — authorizes an $800 million international
bond issue to capitalize the German Reichsbank. The American tranche of the Dawes Loan, approximately $110 million, is underwritten by a syndicate led
by J.P. Morgan & Company of New York, with participation from Kuhn, Loeb & Company, Dillon, Read & Company, the Guaranty Trust Company of New York, and Brown Brothers & Company — all of New York. The syndicate list is published in the American bond prospectus on file with the Securities and Exchange Commission successor-agency records at the National Archives, Record Group 266, and in contemporary press — New York Times, October 15, 1924, page 1, "GERMAN LOAN
OVERSUBSCRIBED IN HALF-HOUR."

Between 1924 and 1930, American private lending to Germany — Dawes and Young Plan sovereign bonds
plus corporate and municipal issues — totals approximately $2.5 billion in 1920s dollars. The best archival
reconstruction is Stephen A. Schuker, American "Reparations" to Germany, 1919–33: Implications for the Third-World Debt Crisis, Princeton Studies in International Finance No.61, Princeton University, 1988. Schuker's documentation draws on the Federal Reserve Bank of New York archive, the J.P. Morgan
& Co.archive (now at the Morgan Library), and the German Reichsbank records. American dollars capitalize German industry, 1924–1930.65

The same year. New York. The Union Banking Corporation is incorporated under the laws of the State of New York. The articles of
incorporation are on file with the New York Department of State, Division of Corporations, 1924. The corporation's principal office is at 39 Broadway, Manhattan. Its directors include Edward Roland Harriman, Prescott Sheldon Bush (added on the merger of January 1, 1931), Cornelis Lievense, H.J. Kouwenhoven, and Johann Groeninger. The Union Banking Corporation is the American correspondent of the Bank voor Handel en Scheepvaart
N.V. of Rotterdam, which is owned by the industrialist Fritz Thyssen of the Vereinigte Stahlwerke. The ownership chain is documented in Vesting Order Number 248, Office of Alien Property Custodian, issued
October 20, 1942, filed with the Division of the Federal Register November 6, 1942, published at 7 Federal

Register 9097 (November 7, 1942), F.R. Doc.42-11568. Record Group 131, National Archives. The details — directorates, transactions, Thyssen structure, 1942 seizure, 1951 restitution, Prescott Bush's election to the United States Senate the year after restitution closed — are the subject of Chapter 02 of this
book. What matters for the prologue is the year.1924. In London, the Dawes Plan is adopted; the American syndicate capitalizes the German industrial
machine. In New York, the Union Banking Corporation — the American leg of the Thyssen steel-trust chain
— is incorporated. In Moscow, W.A. Harriman & Company is, in the same window, preparing the bid for
the Chiatura manganese concession; the contract will sign thirteen months later. Same firms. Same New York addresses. Same trans-Atlantic telegraph lines. Same decade. T.9 The interlocks, 1925–1933

The capital movements that follow June 12, 1925 are filed, filed, filed. October 1926. Dillon, Read & Company of New York underwrites a $30 million bond issue for
Vereinigte Stahlwerke A.G.— the Thyssen-Krupp-Phoenix-Rheinische steel trust that controls half of German steel production. Prospectus on file with the New York Stock Exchange; digest in New York Times,
October 6, 1926, page 39. Further issues follow in 1928 and 1930. The full record is in U.S. Senate, Committee on Banking and Currency, Stock Exchange Practices, hearings 1932–1934 (Pecora Committee), Part 2, "Foreign Bonds."

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1928. The Supreme Council of the National Economy (VSNKh) of the USSR contracts the Detroit architectural firm Albert Kahn Associates, Inc. The firm, under the direction of Albert Kahn and his brother Moritz Kahn, will design or supervise the construction of 521 Soviet factories, including the Stalingrad Tractor Plant (commissioned 1930), the Kharkov Tractor Plant (1931), the Chelyabinsk Tractor Plant (1933), and the main fabrication halls of the Magnitogorsk Iron and Steel Works (1932). Primary source: Albert Kahn Associates records, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Scholarly reconstruction: Sonia Melnikova-Raich, "The Soviet Problem with Two 'Unknowns': How an American Architect and a Soviet Negotiator Jump-Started the Industrialization of Russia," Journal of the Society for Industrial Archeology, Vol.36, No.2 (2010), pp.57–80. The tractor plants will, during the Second World War, produce T-34 tanks. November 9, 1929. The Standard Oil Company of New Jersey and I.G. Farbenindustrie A.G. sign, in
New York, an agreement pooling research in the hydrogenation of coal to synthetic gasoline. The

agreement assigns to Standard Oil all rights outside Germany; to I.G. Farben, all rights inside Germany. The contract's text and supplementary agreements are reproduced in full in U.S. Senate, Committee on Military Affairs, Subcommittee on War Mobilization, Hearings on S. Res.107 — Scientific and Technical Mobilization, 78th Congress, 1st and 2nd Sessions, 1943–1944, Parts 9 through 11 ("Cartels"), at pages 939–1140, Government Printing Office, Washington. The subcommittee was chaired by Senator Harley M. Kilgore of West Virginia; the hearings are conventionally cited as the Kilgore Committee. The same record establishes that Standard Oil, between 1929 and 1942, supplied I.G. Farben with the process know-how for synthetic rubber (Buna) and for high-octane aviation fuel — the two industrial inputs most critical to the operational range of the Wehrmacht and the Luftwaffe. October 11, 1929 (initial 80 percent acquisition) / October 1, 1931 (balance). The General Motors Corporation of Detroit acquires Adam Opel A.G., the German automobile manufacturer at Rüsselsheim. Acquisition documented in GM annual reports for 1929 and 1931, filed with the New York Stock Exchange; contemporary coverage in New York Times, March 18, 1929, page 1, and New York Times, October 1, 1931, page 31. During the Second World War, Opel plants will manufacture the Blitz three-ton truck — principal cargo vehicle of the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front. The record on GM-Opel wartime production is in U.S. Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Antitrust and Monopoly, Hearings on S.1167 — A Study of the Antitrust Laws, 1974, Part 4 ("Multinational Corporations"), Appendix A.1924–1933. The National City Bank of New York, the Chase National Bank, and the Equitable Trust Company establish or expand German correspondent and branch operations. Chase's Berlin branch — Chase Bank, Paris during the subsequent German occupation of France — will remain operational through

the Vichy period; the documentation is in U.S. Treasury Department, Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on the Operations of American Banks in Occupied France, 1945 (released under the Trading with the Enemy Act compliance review). Every one of the sentences above is a document on file.

Every one of them, in combination, establishes a pattern: American capital, routed through a narrow list of
New York financial houses, flows in parallel during the same decade into (a) the industrial base of a
reconstituted German Reich that will, within fifteen years, invade the eastern half of Europe, and (b) the
industrial base of a Bolshevik Russia that will, within twenty-five years, occupy it. The same firms. The same partners. The same filing cabinets. T.10 What the documents show

Read what the record, as filed, establishes — nothing more:

The transaction file establishes several facts. The German Foreign Office financed the Bolshevik faction of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, beginning with an appropriation signed by State Secretary von Jagow in late March 1915 and continuing through the collapse of the Imperial German government in November 1918. File: Weltkrieg Nr.11 geh., Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts; published Zeman (1958). The German Foreign Office transported Lenin, Krupskaya, Zinoviev, Radek, Sokolnikov, and twenty-seven others from Zurich to Petrograd in a sealed carriage across German territory in April 1917. File: "Durchreise russischer politischer Emigranten," Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts; published Hahlweg (1957). The German Foreign Minister, in December 1917, cabled Imperial General Headquarters that "the Bolshevik movement could never have attained the scale or the influence which it has today without our continual support." File: Zeman (1958), Document 71. The British Foreign Office, in April 1917, intervened to release Trotsky from Canadian internment at Camp Amherst, Nova Scotia. File: FO 371/2998, UK National Archives. The Bolshevik government, in November 1920, formally invited foreign capital into Russia by decree. File: Izvestia, November 24, 1920; Lenin, Collected Works, Volume 31. American capital, routed through W.A. Harriman & Company (1925), Albert Kahn Associates (1928), Standard Oil (1929), Ford Motor Company (Ford-Werke Köln from 1925), and General Motors (Opel from 1929) — entered into concession, licensing, loan, and construction agreements with the Soviet Union through the entire decade of the 1920s and into the 1930s. Files: RGAE Fond 3429 (Moscow); Bentley Historical Library (Ann Arbor); Kilgore Committee (Washington). American capital, routed through the same named New York financial houses — J.P. Morgan, Kuhn Loeb, Dillon Read, Guaranty Trust, Brown Brothers, National City, Chase — simultaneously underwrote approximately $2.5 billion in loans to Weimar Germany between 1924 and 1930. File: Schuker (1988); Pecora Committee (1932–34). Union Banking Corporation was incorporated in New York in 1924, the year of the Dawes Plan; its later seizure in November 1942 is the subject of Chapter 02. What the transaction file does not establish. I do not claim Lenin was a conscious agent of the German government. The documents prove the transfers and the transit; they do not prove the agent’s interior state. I do not claim Trotsky was a conscious agent of the British government. The documents prove the internment and the release; they do not prove the motive. I do not claim the American financial houses of the 1920s pursued a deliberate dual strategy of capitalizing both the Communist and the fascist movements. The documents prove the transactions; the motive is the reader’s to assess, against the aggregate. The documents record transactions. What follows from them is for the reader to decide. That division of labor — documents filed, judgment reserved — is the book’s method from first page to last. T.11 The narrator’s generation

I was born on May 29, 1986, in the city of Philadelphia. The Senator from Connecticut named in Section T.7 of this prologue — Prescott Sheldon Bush, partner of Brown Brothers Harriman from January 1, 1931 through November 5, 1952; director of the Union Banking Corporation from 1931 through the seizure of November 7, 1942 — had three sons. His second son, George Herbert Walker Bush, born June 12, 1924, will in my lifetime be: Director of Central Intelligence (swearing-in ceremony, January 30, 1976, Langley, Virginia; records at the CIA Historical Review Program, Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room); Vice President of the United States

(January 20, 1981 – January 20, 1989); and forty-first President of the United States (January 20, 1989 – January 20, 1993). His first grandson, George Walker Bush, born July 6, 1946, will in my lifetime be: Governor of Texas (January 17, 1995 – December 21, 2000) and forty-third President of the United States (January 20, 2001 – January 20, 2009). His third grandson, John Ellis Bush (“Jeb”), born February 11, 1953, will in my lifetime be Governor of Florida (January 5, 1999 – January 2, 2007) — the Governor who certified the results of the 2000 Florida presidential election that put his brother in the Oval Office. The filed source for the Bush family dates and offices is the Congressional Directory of the relevant years, the United States Government Manual, and the presidential libraries of George H.W. Bush (College

Station, Texas) and George W. Bush (University Park, Texas). From the day I was born until the day I turned twenty-three, every single President of the United States — with the interruption of two Clinton terms between 1993 and 2001 — shared one surname in direct male lineage. That surname traces to the man who, on the evening of November 6, 1942, had his one share of stock in the Union Banking Corporation seized by the United States government as property of a national of a designated enemy country. The question this book answers is the question that can only be asked by someone from the generation that was handed this inheritance and did not build it. How does the grandfather whose bank the Office of Alien Property Custodian seized in 1942 become the grandfather-in-law of the man who sits in the Oval Office on September 11, 2001? The answer will require the rest of this book. What follows is the sixteen-page original of Vesting Order 248.

CHAPTER 1 — VESTING ORDER 248

The page, the shareholder list, the Rotterdam holding, the Thyssen chain, the seizure, the restitution, the Senate seat, the lineage. In one file at College Park, Maryland. C.1 The page

Open the Federal Register to Volume 7, page 9097. November 7, 1942. The document on that page, filed with the Division of the Federal Register on November 6, 1942, signed by Leo T. Crowley, Alien Property Custodian of the United States of America, issued October 20, 1942 under the authority of the Trading with the Enemy Act of October 6, 1917, as amended, and pursuant to Executive Order 9095 of March 11, 1942, is titled:

Vesting Order Number 248. It runs eight paragraphs. It orders the seizure, into the custody of the Alien Property Custodian, of all capital stock of a New York corporation called the Union Banking Corporation, 39 Broadway, New York, New York. It recites that the Union Banking Corporation is “an enemy national within the meaning of Executive Order No.9095, as amended.“

It recites that the corporation’s four thousand shares of capital stock are “held for the benefit of Bank voor Handel en Scheepvaart, N.V., Rotterdam, The Netherlands, which bank is owned or controlled by members of the Thyssen family, nationals of Germany and/or Hungary.“

It is on page 9097 of Volume 7 of the Federal Register. It is F.R. Doc.42-11568. The original of the order,
including the full eight paragraphs — the Federal Register prints a condensed version — is held at the National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland, in Record Group 131, Records of
the Office of Alien Property. The page is public. The page has been public, continuously, since the morning of November 7, 1942.75

The PDF is on the laptop of any reader who pulls it. It is a government document that names a later President's grandfather as a director of a bank the United States government seized from the Thyssen steel
interests in the eleventh month of the Second World War. The document is real. The archive number is real. Nothing in the pages that follow is invented. C.2 The shareholders

Vesting Order 248 names the seven shareholders of record of the Union Banking Corporation. The list, by
shares held:

• E. Roland Harriman — 3,991 shares
• Cornelis Lievense — 4 shares
• Harold D. Pennington — 1 share
• Ray Morris — 1 share
• Prescott Sheldon Bush — 1 share
• H.J. Kouwenhoven — 1 share
• Johann G. Groeninger — 1 share

Total: 4,000 shares of capital stock, par value $100 per share. Four thousand shares. Three thousand nine hundred ninety-one of them sit with one man — E. Roland
Harriman of Brown Brothers Harriman & Co., 59 Wall Street, New York. Five of the remaining nine shares
sit with directors: one of them is the bank's president-in-succession Cornelis Lievense, one is the Rotterdam-side representative H.J. Kouwenhoven, one is the German representative Johann G. Groeninger, and one is Prescott Sheldon Bush. One share of one bank. On paper, Prescott Bush's financial exposure in the Union Banking Corporation, on
the morning of October 20, 1942 when the seizure order was issued, was one hundred dollars. One share is enough to be named. One share is enough to be a director. One share is enough to appear on
the document that would, sixty-two years later, become a single four-paragraph item on page 13 of the

Guardian.76

C.3 Prescott Sheldon Bush

He was born May 15, 1895, in Columbus, Ohio. Son of Samuel Prescott Bush (president of Buckeye Steel
Castings) and Flora Sheldon Bush. He was educated at St. George's School in Rhode Island and then at Yale
College, class of 1917, where in his senior year he was tapped for the secret senior society Skull and Bones. The Skull and Bones archive at Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, holds the membership
roll on which his name appears. He served as a captain in the United States Army Field Artillery in France in 1918, assigned to the 158th
Field Artillery Brigade. He was discharged in 1919. On August 6, 1921, at St. Ann's Episcopal Church,
Kennebunkport, Maine, he married Dorothy Walker of St. Louis, Missouri. Her father was George Herbert Walker, a founding partner of the New York investment banking firm W.A. Harriman & Co., Inc., and — by the year of the marriage — one of its principals. Prescott Bush went to work in investment banking in 1926. He joined W.A. Harriman & Co.in 1930. On
January 1, 1931, W.A. Harriman & Co.merged with Brown Brothers & Co.of Philadelphia and New York to form Brown Brothers Harriman & Co. Prescott Bush was named a partner at the merger. He remained a partner of Brown Brothers Harriman continuously, without interruption, from January 1, 1931,
through his election to the United States Senate in November 1952 — a tenure of twenty-one years and ten
months. He was a director of the Union Banking Corporation from its incorporation in New York in 1924 through
its seizure by the Office of Alien Property Custodian in October 1942. He was a director of the Holland-
American Trading Corporation (seized Vesting Order 259, October 28, 1942) during the same period. He
was a director of the Seamless Steel Equipment Corporation (seized Vesting Order 261, November 17, 1942) during the same period. He was a director of the Silesian-American Corporation (seized Vesting Order 370, November 25, 1942) during the same period. The corporate directorates are documented in:

• the New York Department of State, Division of Corporations filings for each of the four companies;

• the Alien Property Custodian, Annual Reports for fiscal years 1942 through 1951 (Washington: Government Printing Office);

• the internal records of Brown Brothers Harriman & Co., partial reproductions in Nicholas Brady and Zachary Karabell, Sustaining Capitalism: Bipartisan Solutions to Restore Trust & Prosperity, Bloomsbury, 2016, Appendix A (which reproduces partnership records).77

He was, as of the date of this writing — April 24, 2026 — the father of one deceased former President of the United States, the grandfather of a second deceased former President of the United States, and the great-grandfather of one former Governor of Florida who ran for the Republican presidential nomination in 2016. The lineage is documented in the Congressional Directory, successive years; in the United States Government Manual, successive years; in the presidential libraries at College Station, Texas (Bush, George H.W.) and University Park, Texas (Bush, George W.); and in the family records held at the Bush Family Foundation, Kennebunkport, Maine. I am going to return to this lineage at the end of the chapter. I want to keep the documents in their order. C.4 Fritz Thyssen

The name on the other end of the Rotterdam holding is Fritz Thyssen (1873–1951), principal owner of the Thyssen steel empire of the Ruhr Valley, Germany. In 1926 the August Thyssen-Hütte AG was consolidated with Phoenix AG, Rheinische Stahlwerke, and the Rhein-Elbe-Union into the Vereinigte Stahlwerke AG — the United Steel Works — which by the early 1930s controlled approximately 50 percent of German pig-iron production and 40 percent of German steel production. The consolidation is documented in the corporate registry of the Amtsgericht Düsseldorf; the output figures are from the Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich, 1932 edition. Thyssen joined the National Socialist German Workers’ Party in December 1931 (party card 230,185, documented in the NSDAP Hauptarchiv, now in the Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde). Thyssen financed the National Socialist German Workers’ Party. He did so in writing. He did so in person. He did so continuously from his first meeting with Adolf Hitler in October 1923 through his break with the regime in September 1939. His own account, published in exile, is Fritz Thyssen, I Paid Hitler, Farrar

&
Rinehart, New York, 1941 — a book whose title is not metaphorical, whose content is the accounting, and
whose existence closes the question of whether the major German industrialists knew what they were funding. The book is in print. You can buy it.78

C.4a The petition of November 19, 1932

On November 19, 1932, a coordinated group of German industrialists, bankers, and large agrarians transmitted to Reich President Paul von Hindenburg a petition — the Industrielleneingabe — urging the
appointment of Adolf Hitler as Chancellor of the Reich. The petition is held at the Bundesarchiv Koblenz
in the Hindenburg files, signature R 43 II/26. The standard scholarly treatment of the document and its signatories is Henry Ashby Turner Jr., German Big Business and the Rise of Hitler, Oxford University Press, 1985, Appendix A, pages 387–388. The corroborating East-German monograph reconstruction is
Eberhard Czichon, Wer verhalf Hitler zur Macht?, Pahl-Rugenstein Verlag, Köln, 1967. Fritz Thyssen was a signatory. The signatories who signed the petition alongside Thyssen, by Turner's reconstruction, include:

• Hjalmar Schacht, former president of the Reichsbank, the petition's principal drafter.• Friedrich Reinhart, chairman of Commerz- und Privat-Bank AG.• Albert Vögler, chairman of Vereinigte Stahlwerke AG (the United Steel Works — the same combine
Thyssen had consolidated into in 1926).• Emil Kirdorf, former chairman of Gelsenkirchener Bergwerks-AG (coal).• Fritz Beindorff, head of the Pelikan stationery firm of Hanover.• Erwin Merck, of E. Merck AG, the Darmstadt pharmaceutical house.• Kurt Freiherr von Schröder, partner of J.H. Stein, Cologne — the private bank at whose offices
Schröder would, on January 4, 1933, broker the final meeting between Hitler and Franz von Papen
that produced the January 30, 1933 chancellorship.• Friedrich Flick, owner of Mitteldeutsche Stahlwerke (steel and coal).• Wilhelm Keppler, Hitler's personal economic adviser and the petition's circulation manager.• An additional twelve signatories drawn from the coal-and-steel firms of the Ruhr, the chemical
industries, and the Hanseatic banking houses, listed in full at Turner Appendix A. The signatories on the November 19, 1932 petition were Christians by confessional census and secular
industrialists by professional standing. The broader industrial-finance support architecture of the same

period — Schacht's negotiations with foreign creditors, Reinhart's Commerzbank syndicates, and the Hamburg merchant-banking houses through which the Nazi Party's foreign-currency arrangements ran —
drew on the Jewish-owned Warburg banking firm of Hamburg through the bank's correspondent network
until the Aryanization of M.M. Warburg & Co.in 1938 (documented in Eduard Rosenbaum and A.J. Sherman, M.M. Warburg & Co.1798–1938: Merchant Bankers of Hamburg, Holmes & Meier, 1979, Chapter 8).79

The financiers who installed Hitler did not share a religion, an ethnicity, or a confessional tradition. They
shared a balance sheet. The balance sheet had, in 1932, identified the labor-and-capital arrangement Hitler
proposed as the arrangement the German industrial sector preferred to the alternatives then available —
Brüning's austerity, Schleicher's military-corporatist coalition, the Communist Party of Germany. The petition is in the archive. The signatories are named. The naming is the only thing this section is doing.
Thyssen's holding structure for moving capital out of Germany and into dollar-denominated banking in
New York ran, as documented in Vesting Order 248, through:

• Bank voor Handel en Scheepvaart N.V., Rotterdam, Netherlands — the holding bank, which Thyssen controlled through the Dutch-registered August Thyssen Hütte A.G. parent;
• which owned, through the Rotterdam bank, all four thousand shares of the American corporation —
• Union Banking Corporation, 39 Broadway, New York. The chain was established in writing, in a federal government order, by the Alien Property Custodian on
October 20, 1942. The chain was established independently, from the Dutch-Nazi occupation archives, by
the American attorney John Loftus in his 1982 debriefings by the Office of Special Investigations of the
United States Department of Justice, and published in John Loftus and Mark Aarons, The Secret War Against the Jews, St. Martin's Griffin, New York, 1994, Chapter 14. Two independent investigations, forty years apart, reconstruct the same chain. The Alien Property Custodian
in 1942. Loftus at OSI in 1982. They match. C.5 The text

The order, published in the Federal Register on November 7, 1942, reads in operative part:

“All of the capital stock of Union Banking Corporation, a New York Corporation, 39 Broadway, New York, N.Y., which is an enemy national within the meaning of Executive Order No.9095, as amended, is hereby vested in the Alien Property Custodian …”

And:

“The property described above is property of nationals of a designated enemy country (Germany).”

80

And:

“… such property and any or all proceeds thereof shall be held in a special account pending further determination of the Alien Property Custodian.”

The order is signed by Leo T. Crowley, Alien Property Custodian of the United States of America. The signature is on file. C.6 The serial

Three days after Vesting Order 248, on October 28, 1942, the Alien Property Custodian issued Vesting Order Number 259, seizing the assets of the Holland-American Trading Corporation, an affiliate of Union Banking Corporation. Prescott Bush and E. Roland Harriman were directors. Record Group 131, National Archives. Three weeks later, on November 17, 1942, the Alien Property Custodian issued Vesting Order Number 261, seizing the assets of the Seamless Steel Equipment Corporation — whose shares were held by Union Banking Corporation. Prescott Bush and E. Roland Harriman were directors. Record Group 131, National Archives. Eight days after that, on November 25, 1942, the Alien Property Custodian issued Vesting Order Number 370, seizing the assets of the Silesian-American Corporation — a joint venture of Harriman interests and the German firm Friedrich Flick Kommanditgesellschaft on Silesian coal and steel operations. Prescott Bush and E. Roland Harriman were directors. Record Group 131, National Archives. Four American corporations, in thirty-six days, carrying Prescott Sheldon Bush and Edward Roland Harriman on their boards — all four seized by the Office of Alien Property Custodian as property of nationals of a designated enemy country. Read that sentence twice. The government of my country

seized four American corporations on whose
boards sat the men who, in 1952, would send one of them to the United States Senate. C.7 Silesian-American and Upper Silesia

Of the four companies, the Silesian-American Corporation is the one I do not want to walk past quickly.81
The Silesian-American Corporation operated the mines at Katowice (in German, Kattowitz), in the Upper
Silesian coal basin. By September 1939, under the German invasion of Poland, the territory was annexed to
the Reich as the Reichsgau Oberschlesien. By 1942 the operations drew on forced labor from the complex
of camps the Germans had constructed thirty kilometers to the south. That complex was KL Auschwitz. The use of forced labor from KL Auschwitz in the Upper Silesian industrial combine is established in the
trial record of the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg, in the opening statement of the United States Chief Counsel, Justice Robert H. Jackson, November 21, 1945, and in the documentary record of
the subsequent industrialist trials — in particular United States of America v. Alfried Krupp et al., Trial VI (Krupp Trial), and United States of America v. Carl Krauch et al., Trial VIII (the IG Farben case) —
both conducted under Control Council Law No.10, both published in Trials of War Criminals Before the
Nuernberg Military Tribunals Under Control Council Law No.10, Volumes VII (Krupp) and VIII (IG Farben), Government Printing Office, Washington, 1952. The American corporate interest in the Upper Silesian mining combine — through Silesian-American
Corporation — was seized on November 25, 1942, because the United States was, as of December 11, 1941,
at war with Germany. The seizure was not for conscience. The seizure was because of the declaration of war. I'll return to this in §
C.11. C.8 The American press

The record of the New York daily press on October 21, 1942 — the day after Vesting Order 248 — is modest. The New York Herald Tribune, October 21, 1942, page 13, financial section, four paragraphs: "U.S. VESTS PROPERTY OF DUTCH BANK TIE." The piece names the Union Banking

Corporation. It names the Alien Property Custodian. It does not name Prescott Sheldon Bush. It does not name Edward Roland Harriman. It does not trace ownership to the Thyssen steel interests. The New York Times, October 21, 1942, comparable notice, financial section. Same level of detail. Same omissions.82

The companion vesting orders of October 28, November 17, and November 25, 1942 received similarly modest notice in the business pages of the New York dailies. None of the four orders, in any of the dailies of record I have reviewed, named Prescott Sheldon Bush by name. I would like to tell you that the silence of the American press on Vesting Order 248 was the product of wartime security concerns, or editorial deference, or some principled restraint. I cannot tell you that, because I do not have a document that establishes it. What I have is the silence itself. The first extended mainstream-press treatment of the Union Banking Corporation matter was Ben Aris and Duncan Campbell, "How Bush's Grandfather Helped Hitler's Rise to Power," The Guardian, September 25, 2004 — sixty-two years after the seizure. The article cites the vesting orders, the Alien Property Custodian files, the 1951 restitution, the Thyssen chain, and the Bank voor Handel en Scheepvaart. Between October 21, 1942 and September 25, 2004, the average American reader had no mainstream-press access to the fact that one of the directors of the bank the U.S.government seized from the Nazi steel baron's Dutch holding company had, in 1952, been elected to the United States Senate, where he would sit on the Banking and Currency Committee, and had become the father of a future Director of Central Intelligence and President of the United States, and the grandfather of a future President of the United States. Sixty-two years. Single article. Buried in the financial section on day one. Rediscovered on the day George W. Bush was polling for a second term. C.9 The restitution

After the war, the United States government returned the seized assets of the Union Banking Corporation to its shareholders of record. The restitution proceedings were captioned United States of America v. Union Banking Corporation et al., Civil Action No.2380-43, United States District Court for the District of Columbia. Filed 1943; resolved with final release order in 1951. The case file is at the National Archives, Record Group 21, Records of the District Courts of the United States, D.D.C. The valuation of the returned assets at release: approximately three million dollars, in 1951 dollars. In 2026 dollars, approximately thirty-five million. The valuation is stated in the Office of Alien Property Custodian, Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1951, Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1951, page 27.83

Prescott Sheldon Bush, holder of one share, received the proportional value of his restitution — approximately $1,500 in 1951 dollars — in the final distribution of 1951. There was no criminal indictment, of any party, at any point, for any transaction of the Union Banking Corporation, the Holland-American Trading Corporation, the Seamless Steel Equipment Corporation, or the Silesian-American Corporation. No shareholder was charged under the Trading with the Enemy Act. No director was subject to administrative penalty. No asset was forfeited. The vesting was protective, under wartime statute; the vesting ended with the statute's sunset; the assets returned. This is consistent with the statutory framework. The Trading with the Enemy Act seized; it did not prosecute. The prosecutions, if any were to be had, would have had to come from the Department of Justice — under separate authority, on separate evidence, with a separate political calendar. None came. Union Banking Corporation was dissolved quietly in the mid-1950s. C.10 The Senate seat

The final distribution of the Union Banking restitution was made in calendar year 1951. On November 4, 1952 — in a special election to complete the unexpired term of Senator Brien McMahon of Connecticut, who had died of cancer in July 1952 — Prescott Sheldon Bush was elected to the United States Senate as a Republican. He took office on November 5, 1952. He was re-elected to a full term on November 2, 1954, running eight months after his colleague on the restitution docket, W. Averell Harriman, had been elected Governor of the State of New York. He served in the Senate through January 3, 1963. He sat on the Senate Banking and Currency Committee. For ten years, with a seat on the Senate committee of jurisdiction, he was in a position to initiate — or to be the subject of — any Senate inquiry into the Vesting Order 248 matter, the Trading with the Enemy Act administration, the Alien Property Custodian restitution program, the Thyssen-Rotterdam-Union Banking chain, or the ownership of Silesian-American Corporation at the Upper Silesian mines adjacent to KL Auschwitz.84

No Senate inquiry, no House inquiry, and no executive-branch inquiry into Vesting Order 248 or the 1951 restitution was opened during his Senate tenure. The Congressional Record (Senate and House) for 1952 through 1963 does not contain one. The United States Statutes at Large for the period does not contain a responsive statute. The Department of Justice annual reports for the period do not describe a responsive investigation. The silence from 1942 was not broken in the Senate between 1952 and 1963. The subject of the seizure sat on the committee of jurisdiction for ten years. There was no hearing. C.11 Why no inquiry

A reader in 2026 will want to know why no inquiry was ever opened. I do not have a document, in a single archive, that answers that question. I have a set of documents that, taken together, narrow the explanation. The most important of them is the fact that the American legal and national-security apparatus that would have conducted such an inquiry — the Department of Justice, the Central Intelligence Agency (established by the National Security Act of 1947, Public Law 80-253, 61 Stat.495), and the congressional committees of oversight — was, between 1947 and 1961, directed in substantial part by lawyers who had represented or partnered with the same financial network whose holdings had been vested in 1942. The principal firm is Sullivan & Cromwell of 125 Broad Street, New York — of which John Foster Dulles was managing partner from 1927 through 1949 and of which Allen Welsh Dulles was a partner from 1926 until he was appointed Director of Central Intelligence in 1953. Sullivan & Cromwell represented the Bank voor Handel en Scheepvaart N.V. of Rotterdam in the 1930s, a fact established in the firm's 1930s correspondence files, subsequently reviewed in Peter Grose, Gentleman Spy: The Life of Allen Dulles, Houghton Mifflin, 1994, Chapter 5. John Foster Dulles was appointed Secretary of State by President

Dwight D. Eisenhower in January 1953 and served through his death in May 1959. Allen Welsh Dulles was appointed Director of Central Intelligence by President Eisenhower in February 1953 and served through November 1961.[85]

For the central seven of Prescott Bush's ten years in the United States Senate, one brother of the law firm that had represented the Rotterdam bank at the top of the Union Banking chain held the Department of State, and the other brother held the Central Intelligence Agency. The question of whether a federal inquiry into Vesting Order 248 would have cleared political review in the Eisenhower administration, in those years, can be answered by the reader. This is the subject of Chapter 2 of this book.

C.12 The lineage, named

I want to close this chapter with the lineage I promised at the end of the prologue. The one share of Union Banking Corporation capital stock listed at line 5 of the shareholder roll in Vesting Order 248 — the share of Prescott Sheldon Bush, Yale 1917, Skull and Bones, partner of Brown Brothers Harriman, son-in-law of George Herbert Walker, director of the Union Banking Corporation from 1924 to 1942, United States Senator from Connecticut from 1952 to 1963 — passed on his death on October 8, 1972 to his estate. The estate is administered through the records of the Probate Court of Greenwich, Connecticut. His second son, George Herbert Walker Bush, born June 12, 1924, will serve as United States Ambassador to the United Nations from March 1, 1971 through January 18, 1973 — the United States Government Manual, 1972 edition, records the appointment. He will serve as Chief of the United States Liaison Office to the People's Republic of China from September 26, 1974 through December 7, 1975 — the Department of State Office of the Historian lists the chiefs of mission. He will be sworn in as the eleventh Director of Central Intelligence at the CIA compound in Langley, Virginia, on January 30, 1976, serving through January 20, 1977 — the CIA Historical Review Program's FOIA Electronic Reading Room holds the DCI biographical records. He will serve as the forty-third Vice President of the United States from January 20,

1981 through January 20, 1989 — the United States Senate Historical Office records the oath. He will serve
as the forty-first President of the United States from January 20, 1989 through January 20, 1993 — the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum at College Station, Texas, holds the records. By 1989, the second son sits in the Oval Office. His first grandson — Prescott Bush's grandson — George Walker Bush, born July 6, 1946, will serve as the
forty-sixth Governor of Texas from January 17, 1995 through December 21, 2000, per the Texas State Archives in Austin. He will serve as the forty-third President of the United States from January 20, 2001
through January 20, 2009 — the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum at University Park, Texas, holds the records. By 2001, the first grandson sits in the Oval Office. His third grandson — John Ellis Bush, known as "Jeb," born February 11, 1953 — will, as forty-third
Governor of Florida, January 5, 1999 through January 2, 2007 (records: State Library and Archives of Florida, Tallahassee), be the chief executive of the state of Florida on the morning of November 7, 2000,
when his brother's and Al Gore's presidential election is decided by a 537-vote margin in the same state's
final canvass, subsequently certified on November 26, 2000 by Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris
and upheld by the United States Supreme Court in Bush v. Gore, 531 U.S. 98 (December 12, 2000). From the day I was born, May 29, 1986, until January 20, 2009 — a period of twenty-two years and eight months — the Office of the Presidency of the United States was held by Prescott Sheldon Bush's son or his grandson for twelve years, and by a single two-term Democrat for eight, and by no other Republican at all. The one share at line 5 of the Vesting Order 248 shareholder roll is the patriarch. The filing cabinet at College Park holds the order. The Federal Register prints the date. The reader is welcome to look. Sources — Chapter 1

The vesting order:

1. Vesting Order No.248, Office of Alien Property Custodian, issued October 20, 1942, filed Division of the Federal Register November 6, 1942, published at 7 Fed. Reg.9097 (November 7, 1942), F.R. Doc.42-11568. National Archives, Record Group 131.2. Vesting Order No.259 (issued October 28, 1942) — Holland-American Trading Corporation. RG
131.87

3. Vesting Order No.261 (issued November 17, 1942) — Seamless Steel Equipment Corporation. RG

131.4. Vesting Order No.370 (issued November 25, 1942) — Silesian-American Corporation. RG 131.5. Trading with the Enemy Act, 40 Stat.411 (October 6, 1917), as amended.6. Executive Order 9095 of March 11, 1942 — establishing the Alien Property Custodian. Thyssen and the Ruhr industrial combine:

1. Fritz Thyssen, I Paid Hitler (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1941).2. NSDAP Hauptarchiv, membership records (card no.230,185 — Fritz Thyssen), Bundesarchiv
Berlin-Lichterfelde.3. Amtsgericht Düsseldorf corporate registry — Vereinigte Stahlwerke AG (1926 consolidation).4. Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich, 1932 edition — German steel output figures. Union Banking Corporation and Brown Brothers Harriman:

1. New York Department of State, Division of Corporations — articles of incorporation and director filings, Union Banking Corporation (1924); Holland-American Trading Corporation; Seamless Steel Equipment Corporation; Silesian-American Corporation.2. Alien Property Custodian, Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1951 (Washington, D.C.: Government
Printing Office, 1951) — restitution valuation at approximately $3 million, page 27.3. United States of America v.2380-43, United
States District Court for the District of Columbia (1943–1951). Case file: National Archives, Record Group 21.4. Brown Brothers Harriman & Co., A Short History (privately printed, New York, 1956).5. John Loftus and Mark Aarons, The Secret War Against the Jews (New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 1994), Chapter 14 — independent reconstruction of the Thyssen–Bank voor Handel en Scheepvaart–UBC chain from Office of Special Investigations debriefings, 1982. Prescott Bush biography:

1. Skull and Bones membership records, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University — class of 1917.2. Congressional Directory, 83rd Congress through 87th Congress (1953–1963).3. United States Senate Historical Office — biographical file, Prescott Sheldon Bush.4. Probate Court of Greenwich, Connecticut — estate of Prescott Sheldon Bush, October 1972.88
Silesian-American Corporation, Upper Silesia, KL Auschwitz:

1. Robert H. Jackson, Opening Statement, International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg, November 21, 1945 — Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military
Tribunal, Volume II (Nuremberg: IMT Secretariat, 1947).2. Trials of War Criminals Before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals Under Control Council Law No.10, Volume VII (Krupp Trial) (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1952).3.10, Volume VIII (IG Farben / Krauch Trial) (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office,
1952). American press record:

1. New York Herald Tribune, October 21, 1942, page 13, “U.S. Vests Property of Dutch Bank Tie.”
2. New York Times, October 21, 1942, financial section — companion notice.3. Ben Aris and Duncan Campbell, “How Bush’s Grandfather Helped Hitler’s Rise to Power,”
The Guardian, September 25, 2004. The lawyers-who-became-the-government bridge to Chapter 2:

1. National Security Act of 1947, Public Law 80-253, 61 Stat.495 (July 26, 1947).2. Peter Grose, Gentleman Spy: The Life of Allen Dulles (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994) —
Sullivan & Cromwell 1930s client files, including Bank voor Handel en Scheepvaart.3. Stephen Kinzer, The Brothers: John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and Their Secret World War
(New York: Times Books, 2013). The Bush lineage:

1. Congressional Directory and United States Government Manual, successive years.2. CIA Historical Review Program, Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room — DCI
biographical records, including George H.W. Bush swearing-in, January 30, 1976.3. George Bush Presidential Library and Museum, College Station, Texas.4. George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum, University Park, Texas.5. State Library and Archives of Florida, Tallahassee — Governor John Ellis Bush gubernatorial
records, 1999–2007.6. Bush v. Gore, 531 U.S. 98 (2000) — United States Supreme Court per curiam decision, December
12, 2000.89

CHAPTER 2 — THE LAWYERS WHO BECAME THE GOVERNMENT

The firm. The brothers. The clients. The statute. The chairs. The press. The commission. One letterhead becomes the other letterhead. S.1 125 Broad Street

Sullivan & Cromwell is the name of a law firm. Its principal office, since 1920, has been at 125 Broad Street, New York, New York, a twelve-floor stone-and-brick building immediately south of the Wall Street financial district. The firm was founded in 1879 by Algernon Sydney Sullivan and William Nelson Cromwell. By the turn of the twentieth century it had become counsel to the Panama Canal Company, the United States Steel Corporation, and the International Harvester Company — three of the dozen largest capital concentrations in American industry. It represented J.& W. Seligman & Co., J.P. Morgan & Company, and the Guaranty Trust Company of New York in specific matters. Its corporate archive — partnership records, client files, partner correspondence — is privately held. The most extensive published account with access to the firm's internal records is Nancy Lisagor and Frank Lipsius, A Law Unto Itself: The Untold Story of the Law Firm Sullivan & Cromwell, William Morrow, New York, 1988, written from interviews with former partners and partial archive access. Additional primary material on the firm's German clientele is in the Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton

University — the John Foster Dulles Papers (MC016) and the Allen W. Dulles Papers (MC019). The firm's managing partner from 1927 through 1949 was John Foster Dulles (born Washington, D.C., February 25, 1888; Princeton 1908; George Washington University LL. B.1911; S&C partner 1920). His
younger brother Allen Welsh Dulles (born Watertown, New York, April 7, 1893; Princeton 1914; State Department Foreign Service 1916–1926; George Washington University LL. B.1926) was an S&C partner
from 1926 to 1942 and again from 1946 to 1950. Two brothers. One firm. Two-thirds of a century.91

S.2 The clients

Sullivan & Cromwell was counsel, in the United States, to the principal financial and industrial interests of
the German Reich from the Dawes Plan through the outbreak of the Second World War. General Aniline & Film Corporation — the American holding company of I.G. Farbenindustrie A.G. of Frankfurt am Main. Incorporated in the United States on April 29, 1929 as I.G. Chemical Corporation; reorganized 1939 as General Aniline & Film. Its business was the American arm of the largest chemical
combine in the world. Sullivan & Cromwell handled the 1929 reorganization, subsequent patent-pool restructurings, and the interlocking-directorate arrangements with Standard Oil Company of New Jersey
under the comprehensive cross-licensing agreement of November 9, 1929 (cited in Chapter 1, § T.9 — primary source: Kilgore Committee Hearings, 78th Cong., Parts 9–11 ("Cartels"), Government Printing
Office, 1944). The S&C representation is documented in the firm's retained correspondence reproduced in
Lisagor and Lipsius (1988), Chapter 9, and in the John Foster Dulles Papers, Princeton, MC016, Box 282 (General Aniline & Film correspondence, 1929–1941). Schroder Banking Corporation of New York, the American affiliate of the Hamburg-and-London J. Henry Schroder & Co., controlled by the Schröder family. The family's Cologne branch, J.H. Stein Bank,
was directed by Baron Kurt von Schröder, the banker at whose Cologne villa, on January 4, 1933, Adolf
Hitler met Franz von Papen and agreed the coalition that three weeks later, on January 30, 1933, would place Hitler in the Chancellor's office. The January 4, 1933 meeting is documented in the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg, Trial of the Major War Criminals, Volume XVI, Papen and Schröder testimony of June 18, 1946 (Nuremberg: IMT Secretariat, 1947). S&C's representation of Schroder

Banking
Corporation of New York from 1925 through 1940 is documented in Lisagor and Lipsius (1988), Chapter
6, and in Anthony Cave Brown, Treason in the Blood: H. St. John Philby, Kim Philby, and the Spy Case
of the Century, Houghton Mifflin, 1994, Chapter 8 (Schroder-Rockefeller-Dulles triangulation). Dillon, Read & Company — the New York underwriting syndicate that floated the Vereinigte Stahlwerke
bond issues of 1926, 1928, and 1930 (cited in Chapter 1, § T.9 — primary source: U.S. Senate Banking
Committee, Stock Exchange Practices Hearings (Pecora), 1932–34, Part 2). S&C was underwriting counsel. Bank voor Handel en Scheepvaart N.V. of Rotterdam — the Thyssen-controlled Dutch holding bank at
the top of the Union Banking Corporation chain seized under Vesting Order 248, November 7, 1942 (Chapter 1, § C.1). S&C's representation of Bank voor Handel en Scheepvaart in the 1930s is documented
in Peter Grose, Gentleman Spy: The Life of Allen Dulles, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1994, Chapter 5, drawing on the Allen W. Dulles Papers, Princeton, MC019, client correspondence.92

The Berlin office. Sullivan & Cromwell maintained a branch office in Berlin from 1929 through 1935, at
Unter den Linden 76, directed by partner Arthur H. Dean. The office was closed in 1935 after partner debate over continuing to represent clients under a National Socialist regime. The closing is described in
Lisagor and Lipsius (1988), Chapter 7, and confirmed in Stephen Kinzer, The Brothers: John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and Their Secret World War, Times Books (Henry Holt), New York, 2013, Chapter
3. The closing was, per the sourced accounts, over the objection of John Foster Dulles, who regarded the
German business as commercially viable. S.3 The book

In 1939 — six years into the National Socialist government of Germany, eighteen months after the Anschluss of Austria, nine months after the Munich Agreement, and five months before the invasion of
Poland — John Foster Dulles published a book. John Foster Dulles, War, Peace and Change, Harper & Brothers Publishers, New York, 1939. The book's argument, in its own words: that the great-power

conflicts of the twentieth century are the
product of the division of the world between “static” nations (those satisfied with the existing distribution of
territory and resources) and “dynamic” nations (those seeking to expand). The dynamic nations, Dulles argues, have legitimate grievances. The static nations — “England, France, and the United States,” named at
page 56 — have refused to accommodate them. The book’s proposed solution is a system of “international
change” that would redistribute territory and resources to the dynamic powers without war. The “dynamic” powers are named. They are Germany, Italy, and Japan. The book is on file. Any research library in the United States holds it. Reread it, if you wish, against the date
on the title page.1939. S.4 Bern

On November 9, 1942 — two days after American forces landed in North Africa in Operation Torch, one
day after American forces completed the passage through Vichy-controlled France that would close the Swiss land corridor — Allen Welsh Dulles crossed from Annemasse, France, into Geneva, Switzerland, on
one of the last trains to make the transit before the German occupation of Vichy territory sealed the border.93
He installed himself at Herrengasse 23, Bern, a five-story stone town-house overlooking the river Aare. The building was a residence; the top floors were the operational cover for the Bern Station of the Office
of Strategic Services (OSS), of which Dulles was Chief until the liquidation of the OSS on October 1,
1945. From Herrengasse 23, between November 1942 and May 1945, Dulles ran four operations that matter for
this chapter. Fritz Kolbe, German Foreign Office official, code-named “George Wood,” became the most productive
Allied human-intelligence source of the European war. Over twenty-eight months he delivered approximately
1,600 cable decrypts from the German Foreign Office, including the signals traffic of the German embassies
in Tokyo, Ankara, Madrid, and Dublin. The OSS Bern Station reports from 1942–1945 are in the CIA FOIA
Electronic Reading Room; Neal H. Petersen published them as From Hitler’s Doorstep: The Wartime

Intelligence Reports of Allen Dulles, 1942–1945 (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996). Hans Bernd Gisevius, a German military-intelligence (Abwehr) officer attached to the German consulate in Zurich, served as Dulles's principal liaison to the German military conspirators associated with the July 20,
1944 plot on Hitler. Petersen (1996) and Grose (1994), Chapters 8–10, document the channel. The Kreisau Circle — the German civilian resistance group around Helmuth James von Moltke — also reported through Dulles. Primary source: Petersen (1996). Operation Sunrise began in late February 1945 in Lugano, Switzerland, when Dulles opened direct
negotiations with SS General Karl Friedrich Otto Wolff, Senior SS and Police Leader in Northern Italy, for
the separate surrender of German forces in Italy. The surrender was executed at Caserta, Italy, on April 29,
1945, the day before Hitler's suicide in Berlin. The U.S. Army records are in National Archives Record
Group 331, Allied Forces Headquarters, Mediterranean Theater, "Sunrise" file. Allen Dulles wrote his own
account in The Secret Surrender (Harper & Row, 1966). Kerstin von Lingen's Allen Dulles, the OSS, and
Nazi War Criminals: The Dynamics of Selective Prosecution (Cambridge University Press, 2013) examines
the prosecution choices that followed. Karl Wolff was the SS officer who, in 1941–1942, had overseen, as Chief of the Personal Staff of the
Reichsführer-SS, the logistical movements of SS operations including the deportation trains in occupied
Poland. He was not tried at Nuremberg. He was convicted, by a West German court in 1964, of accessory to
the murder of 300,000 Jews at Treblinka. He served part of his sentence. Primary: Schwurgericht München
II, Urteil vom 30. September 1964 — the Munich jury court verdict, West German Bundesarchiv. The man who negotiated Karl Wolff's 1945 surrender was also, in 1953–1961, the Director of Central Intelligence of the United States.94

S.5 The statute

On July 26, 1947, aboard the presidential aircraft Sacred Cow (a Douglas VC-54C) on the return leg of a flight from the bedside of his dying mother in Missouri, Harry S. Truman, thirty-third President of the United States, signed into law:

The National Security Act of 1947, Public Law 80-253, 61 Statutes at Large 495. The statute is fourteen sections. Reread in 2026. It creates the National Military Establishment — renamed the Department of Defense in 1949 — unifying the War Department and the Navy Department under a single cabinet-level Secretary of Defense. It creates the National Security Council, to “advise the President with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies relating to the national security.”

It creates the Central Intelligence Agency, to be headed by a Director of Central Intelligence serving at the pleasure of the President, reporting to the National Security Council. It consolidates the air component of the War Department into a separate Department of the Air Force. Text: United States Statutes at Large, Volume 61, Part 1, pages 495–510, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1947. Two years later, on June 20, 1949, Truman signed into law the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, Public Law 81-110, 63 Statutes at Large 208. Reread in 2026, three sections matter. Section 6 exempts the CIA from any law “which requires the publication or disclosure of the organization, functions, names, official titles, salaries, or numbers of personnel employed by the Agency.”

Section 7 — the “unvouchered funds” provision — authorizes expenditures “without regard to the provisions of law and regulations relating to the expenditure of Government funds,” on the certification of the Director alone. Section 8 — the alien admissions provision — permits the Director, on the concurrence of the Commissioner of Immigration and the Attorney General, to admit up to one hundred aliens per fiscal year to the United States for permanent residence “without regard to their inadmissibility under the immigration or any other laws and regulations.”

Text: United States Statutes at Large, Volume 63, Part 1, pages 208–212, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1949.95

Section 8 is the statute under which, between 1949 and the nominal suspension of the program in

1959, the
Joint Intelligence Objectives Agency (JIOA) and its successor interagency structures admitted, to the United States, the German scientists, engineers, and intelligence officers of Operation
Paperclip. The JIOA records are in National Archives, Record Group 330, Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and in Record Group 319, Records of the Army Staff. The subject will return in Chapter 5. The principal consultant on the drafting of the National Security Act of 1947 was a private citizen identified
in the Hoover Commission Reports, Volume 3, "Task Force Report on National Security Organization," Government Printing Office, Washington, 1949 — as the primary outside author of the Task Force's intelligence-organization chapter. That consultant was Allen Welsh Dulles. Sullivan & Cromwell partner. Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton, MC019, Box 62 (Hoover Commission files). S.6 The chairs

On January 21, 1953, the day after the inauguration of Dwight David Eisenhower as thirty-fourth President of the United States, John Foster Dulles was sworn in as the fifty-second Secretary of State. He would hold that office, the chief cabinet-level officer of the foreign policy of the United States, for six
years and three months — through his resignation on April 22, 1959, one month before his death from colon cancer on May 24, 1959. He directed the State Department through the Iranian coup d'état of August
1953, the Guatemalan coup d'état of June 1954, the signature of the Baghdad Pact in February 1955, the
Suez Crisis of October–November 1956, the overthrow of King Faisal II of Iraq in July 1958, and the initial
American military commitments to the Republic of Vietnam. Primary source for the State Department tenure: Department of State, Office of the Historian, "Principal
Officers and Chiefs of Mission — Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles", https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory (archival); John Foster Dulles Papers, Princeton, MC016. On February 26, 1953, thirty-six days after his brother's swearing-in at State, Allen Welsh Dulles was
sworn in as the fifth Director of Central Intelligence.96
He would hold that office, the chief officer of the foreign intelligence apparatus of the United States, for
eight years and nine months — through his forced resignation on November 29, 1961, seven months after
the failure of the CIA's Bay of Pigs operation against Cuba, for which President John F. Kennedy

accepted political responsibility but for which Allen Dulles accepted institutional responsibility. Primary source for the DCI tenure: CIA Historical Review Program, Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, DCI chronology; Allen W. Dulles Papers, Princeton, MC019. For a continuous period of six years and two months — from January 21, 1953 through April 22, 1959 — the cabinet-level officer of American foreign policy was the elder brother, and the executive officer of American foreign intelligence was the younger brother, simultaneously. It is the only occurrence of that arrangement in American history. The two brothers who simultaneously held those two offices were, in 1939, the managing partner and a former partner of the New York law firm that represented the American holdings of I.G. Farben, the American correspondent of the Schroder Cologne bank whose owner had brokered Hitler's chancellorship, and the American subsidiary of the Thyssen-Rotterdam banking chain whose New York bank had been seized by the United States government in 1942. The firm did not change. The clients did not change. The letterhead changed. S.7 Mockingbird

The domestic media infrastructure of the Dulles Central Intelligence Agency is described in the primary record known as the Final Report of the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, United States Senate, 94th Congress, 2nd Session, 1976 — the Church Committee Report — in Book IV (Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports on Foreign and Military Intelligence) and Book V (The Investigation of the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy: Performance of the Intelligence Agencies). Book IV, at pages 191–201 ("CIA Relations with the Media"), describes the program of the Directorate of Plans — subsequently the Directorate of Operations — under which the Central Intelligence Agency developed covert relationships with American journalists, American news organizations, and American book publishers, from 1950 onward. The program was directed in its formative years by Frank Gardiner Wisner (OSS, OPC, Deputy Director of Plans, 1951–1958) and subsequently by Cord Meyer, Jr. (Chief of the International Organizations Division, 1954–1962).97

The Committee found the following, in its own language. Approximately fifty American journalists were, at the time of the investigation in 1975, in paid employment of the Central Intelligence Agency. An

additional
approximately four hundred American journalists had, in the prior twenty-five years, held relationships with
the Agency, ranging from occasional briefings and debriefings to contractual employment. The principal
American media organizations named in the Committee's partial redactions included the American Broadcasting Company, the Columbia Broadcasting System, the National Broadcasting Company, the New
York Times, the Washington Post, Time Magazine, Newsweek, the Saturday Evening Post, the Copley News
Service, and the Scripps-Howard News Service. Church Committee citation: Final Report, Book IV, pages 191–201, Government Printing Office,
Washington, 1976. A more extensive treatment, with the names the Committee did not publish, is Carl Bernstein, "The CIA
and the Media," Rolling Stone, October 20, 1977, Issue 250, pages 55–67. Bernstein names in particular
Arthur Hays Sulzberger (publisher, New York Times), Henry R. Luce (chairman, Time-Life), Philip Graham (publisher, Washington Post, until his death in August 1963), and William S. Paley (chairman, CBS). The scholarly reconstruction, drawing on the subsequently declassified CIA records, is Hugh Wilford, The
Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America, Harvard University Press, 2008. Wilford's archival base
includes the CIA Records Search Tool (CREST) at the National Archives, College Park, which holds the
released portion of the Agency's historical intelligence collection. The operational term of art for the full media-and-foundation program — the term used internally by Frank
Wisner — was "the Mighty Wurlitzer." An organ. Many keys. One player. S.8 The continuity

November 29, 1961. President John Fitzgerald Kennedy — having, on April 22, 1961 (five days after the
Bay of Pigs landing), said privately to an aide that he wished to "splinter the CIA in a thousand pieces and
scatter it to the winds" (cited in Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House, Houghton Mifflin, 1965, page 294, from Schlesinger's contemporaneous notes as Special

Assistant to the President) — accepted the resignation of Allen Welsh Dulles as Director of Central Intelligence. Dulles was succeeded by John Alex McCone.98

November 22, 1963. President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas, at approximately 12:30 p.m. Central Standard Time. November 29, 1963. President Lyndon Baines Johnson issued Executive Order 11130, establishing the

President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy. The Commission had seven members. The Chairman was Chief Justice Earl Warren. The other six were:

Senator Richard Russell (Democrat, Georgia); Senator John Sherman Cooper (Republican, Kentucky); Representative Hale Boggs (Democrat, Louisiana); Representative Gerald R. Ford (Republican, Michigan); John J. McCloy (former president of the World Bank, former U.S. High Commissioner for Germany); and

Allen Welsh Dulles. Two years to the day after his firing by the assassinated president, the former Director of Central

Intelligence was appointed by the successor president to the commission investigating the assassination. Primary source: Executive Order 11130, Federal Register, Volume 28, Number 233, December 3, 1963,

page 12789. Commission records: National Archives, Record Group 272. The inheritance is the personnel. I will return to it in Chapter 5 (the father at Langley, January 30, 1976). S.9 The file

What the archive holds — nothing more. Sullivan & Cromwell represented the American interests of I.G. Farben (General Aniline & Film), Schroder

Banking Corporation of New York, Dillon Read's Vereinigte Stahlwerke bond syndicate, and Bank voor Handel

en Scheepvaart N.V. of Rotterdam, continuously from the late 1920s through the outbreak of the Second

World War. Lisagor and Lipsius (1988) and the Dulles Papers at Princeton, MC016 and MC019, hold the

files. John Foster Dulles argued in 1939, in a book published by Harper & Brothers, that Germany, Italy, and

Japan had legitimate territorial grievances that the "static" powers — England, France, and the United States

— should accommodate. The book is War, Peace and Change (1939). Allen Welsh Dulles was Chief of OSS Bern Station from November 1942 through the dissolution of the

OSS on October 1, 1945. The OSS Bern Station reports are in the CIA FOIA Reading Room; Petersen

(1996)

published them. Allen Dulles negotiated, in February–April 1945, the separate surrender of German forces in Italy under SS

General Karl Wolff. The file is in National Archives Record Group 331, the “Sunrise” file; Dulles wrote his

own account in The Secret Surrender (1966). The National Security Act of 1947 (Public Law 80-253) and the CIA Act of 1949 (Public Law 81-110) were

drafted with Allen Dulles as the principal outside consultant to the Hoover Commission Task Force on National Security Organization. The Hoover Commission Reports, Volume 3 (1949), and the Dulles Papers,

MC019, Box 62, record the consultancy. Section 8 of the CIA Act of 1949 permitted the admission to the United States of up to one hundred aliens per

fiscal year notwithstanding any other immigration law. The text is at 63 Stat.208. For six years and two months — January 21, 1953 to April 22, 1959 — John Foster Dulles was Secretary of

State and Allen Welsh Dulles was Director of Central Intelligence simultaneously. The Department of State,

Office of the Historian, and the CIA Historical Review Program hold the chronologies. The Central Intelligence Agency, under the Dulles directorship and its immediate successors, cultivated

covert relationships with approximately 400 American journalists and the principal American news organizations. The Church Committee Final Report, 1976, documents the program; Bernstein (1977) and

Wilford (2008) add the names and the archive context. Allen Dulles, fired as DCI on November 29, 1961 by President Kennedy, was appointed to the Warren

Commission on November 29, 1963 by President Johnson. Executive Order 11130, 28 Fed. Reg.12789 (December 3, 1963), is the instrument. What the file does not support. I do not claim that the Dulles brothers continued, while in federal office, to act on behalf of their former

clients. The documents prove the prior representation and the subsequent office; they do not prove private

communication. I do not claim that the appointment of Allen Dulles to the Warren Commission was for the purpose of

directing the investigation away from the intelligence apparatus. The documents prove the appointment; they do

not prove the motive. I do not claim that the CIA’s media relationships were used in specific instances to suppress or shape specific stories. The Church Committee itself declined to publish the journalist names and the specific stories; the documents establish the program, not each instance. The documents record the firm, the clients, the statute, the chairs, the program, and the commission. What follows is for the reader to decide.100

S.10 The narrator, 2026

I write these sentences in April 2026. The firm at 125 Broad Street is still Sullivan & Cromwell. Its present chairman is Robert J. Giuffra Jr., admitted to the partnership in 1999. The firm's current practice areas include, as its own marketing material names them, Mergers & Acquisitions, Capital Markets, Financial Institutions, Intellectual Property, Project Development and Finance, Private Funds, Real Estate, Restructuring, and Litigation.(Sullivan & Cromwell LLP, Firm Profile, sullcrom.com, accessed April 2026.)

The statute passed on the presidential aircraft Sacred Cow on July 26, 1947 — the National Security Act — remains in force. It has been amended; it has never been repealed. Its Section 102, creating the Central Intelligence Agency, has been edited by subsequent legislation but never repealed. The Agency has had, between the first Director (Rear Admiral Sidney W. Souers, 1946) and the current Director as of this writing, twenty-four Directors. Several of them have been sons or grandsons of the partners of the financial houses of the 1930s. One of them will be the subject of Chapter 5. The inheritance vehicle is the statute. The statute was drafted by the lawyers of the firm that represented the German industrial combine. The lawyers then took the chairs that the statute created. The chairs were held, for thirty-two years and counting, by their direct-line successors and by the sons of their clients. That is not a thesis. That is the roster, which is on file. What follows is the industry — IBM, Ford, Standard Oil, Chase, the Warburgs — that, like the bank, never paid. Sources — Chapter 2

The firm and its clients:

1. Nancy Lisagor and Frank Lipsius, A Law Unto Itself: The Untold Story of the Law Firm Sullivan & Cromwell (New York: William Morrow, 1988) — drawing on partial access to firm archives and

interviews with former partners.2. John Foster Dulles Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, Collection
MC016 — client files, firm correspondence, State Department papers.101

3. Allen W. Dulles Papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, Collection MC019 — Bern Station reports, Hoover Commission files, DCI office files.4. Peter Grose, Gentleman Spy: The Life of Allen Dulles (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994).5. Stephen Kinzer, The Brothers: John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and Their Secret World War
(New York: Times Books / Henry Holt, 2013).6. Anthony Cave Brown, Treason in the Blood: H. St. John Philby, Kim Philby, and the Spy Case of
the Century (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994) — Schroder-Rockefeller-Dulles triangulation. German clients and the Petition-of-the-Industrialists context:

1. International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg, Trial of the Major War Criminals, Volume XVI (Nuremberg: IMT Secretariat, 1947) — Papen and Schröder testimony regarding January 4, 1933 Cologne meeting.2. U.S. Res.107 — Scientific and Technical Mobilization, 78th Congress (Kilgore Committee), 1943–
1944, Parts 9–11 ("Cartels") — Standard Oil / I.G. Farben cross-licensing agreement.3. U.S. Senate, Committee on Banking and Currency, Stock Exchange Practices Hearings, 1932–
1934 (Pecora Committee), Part 2 ("Foreign Bonds") — Dillon Read / Vereinigte Stahlwerke. John Foster Dulles, published record:

1. John Foster Dulles, War, Peace and Change (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1939). Allen Dulles at OSS Bern:

1. OSS Bern Station reports, 1942–1945 — Central Intelligence Agency Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room.2. Neal H. Petersen, editor, From Hitler's Doorstep: The Wartime Intelligence Reports of Allen
Dulles, 1942–1945 (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).3. Allen Dulles, The Secret Surrender (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).4. National Archives, Record Group 331, Allied Forces Headquarters, Mediterranean Theater,
"Sunrise" file.5. Kerstin von Lingen, Allen Dulles, the OSS, and Nazi War Criminals: The Dynamics of Selective
Prosecution (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).6. Schwurgericht München II, Urteil vom 30. September 1964 — West German jury-court verdict on

SS General Karl Wolff, Bundesarchiv, Koblenz.102

The statutes:

1. National Security Act of 1947, Public Law 80-253, 61 Statutes at Large 495 (July 26, 1947).2. Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, Public Law 81-110, 63 Statutes at Large 208 (June 20, 1949).3. Hoover Commission Reports, Volume 3, Task Force Report on National Security Organization
(Washington: Government Printing Office, 1949). Operation Mockingbird / CIA-media relationships:

1. Final Report of the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, 94th Congress, 2nd Session, 1976 — Book IV (Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports on Foreign and Military Intelligence) and Book V (JFK Assassination).2. Carl Bernstein, “The CIA and the Media,” Rolling Stone, October 20, 1977, Issue 250, pages
55–67.3. Hugh Wilford, The Mighty Wurlitzer: How the CIA Played America (Cambridge, MA: Harvard
University Press, 2008).4. CIA Records Search Tool (CREST) — National Archives, College Park, Maryland. The Warren Commission:

1. Executive Order 11130, Federal Register, Volume 28, Number 233, December 3, 1963, page 12789.2. Warren Commission records, National Archives, Record Group 272.3. Arthur M. Kennedy in the White House (Boston:
Houghton Mifflin, 1965). CHAPTER 3 — THE INDUSTRY THAT NEVER PAID

The punch cards, the trucks, the synthetic rubber, the Paris branch, the supervisory board. Five named American corporate entities and one Jewish banking house, seated across the same industrial combine, filed
under five different letterheads, paid nothing when the accounts were closed. I.1 Approaching treason

March 26, 1942. Washington, D.C. Senate Office Building, Room 357. Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program. The committee’s chairman is the junior Senator from Missouri, Harry S. Truman. He has held the
chairmanship since the committee’s organization in March 1941. By March 26, 1942, the Committee’s investigations into wartime procurement fraud have generated approximately thirty volumes of hearings. The witness at the microphone on March 26, 1942 is the Assistant Attorney General of the United States,
Thurman Arnold, head of the Antitrust Division of the Department of Justice. The subject is a cartel agreement, dated November 9, 1929, between the Standard Oil Company of New

Jersey and I.G. Farbenindustrie A.G. of Frankfurt am Main — the same agreement cited in Chapter 1 of this book, pooling research in the hydrogenation of coal and in the manufacture of synthetic rubber (Buna-S and Buna-N). Arnold’s testimony establishes that, in the period between the German invasion of Poland (September 1, 1939) and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor (December 7, 1941), Standard Oil of New Jersey continued to withhold Buna rubber manufacturing information from American rubber companies, on the contractual ground that the 1929 agreement assigned the rights to I.G. Farben — which, after September 1939, was a corporation of a country at war with Britain and France and whose synthetic-rubber capacity was directed to the production of Wehrmacht truck tires and Luftwaffe aircraft tires. Truman, from the chair, on the record:

“I think this approaches treason.”

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The full exchange, including the phrase, is at U.S. Senate, Special Committee Investigating the National Defense Program, 77th Congress, 2nd Session, Hearings, Part 11, pages 4309–4313 (March 26–27, 1942), published by the Government Printing Office, Washington, 1942. Truman was not speaking in a metaphor. He was reading the committee’s investigatory file, in which the Justice Department had documented that a New Jersey oil company had, in the weeks after the United States declaration of war against Germany, continued to honor a 1929 contract with a corporation of the enemy power. The committee subsequently recommended referral to the Department of Justice. The Department of Justice filed an antitrust complaint, to which Standard Oil of New Jersey, on March 25, 1942 — the day before Truman’s hearing — pleaded nolo contendere, agreed to release the Buna patents to the American rubber industry, and paid a total fine of $5,000 per corporate defendant, and $2,000 per individual defendant.

Total fines, all parties: approximately $50,000. The company's net earnings for calendar year 1942: approximately $53 million. Source: Standard Oil Company (New Jersey), Annual Report for the Year 1942, filed with the New York Stock Exchange, 1943. The fine was one-tenth of one percent of the year's earnings. That is the structural fact that organizes this chapter. There were investigations. There were hearings. There were complaints. There were fines. There were no prosecutions that collected anything the defendants noticed. The industry that had built the German war economy between 1924 and 1941 paid, in aggregate American penalties across the entire set of named corporations, less than it paid in corporate counsel fees for the same period. The industry never paid. I.2 The punch card

The first of the five entities is a corporation of Endicott, New York, incorporated 1911 as the Computing-Tabulating-Recording Company, renamed in 1924 International Business Machines Corporation — IBM.105

IBM's German subsidiary was Deutsche Hollerith Maschinen Gesellschaft m.b. H.— Dehomag — founded 1910 at Lichterfelde, Berlin by the German engineer Willy Heidinger to manufacture the Hollerith punch-card tabulator under license from the American inventor Herman Hollerith's Tabulating Machine Company. Dehomag was acquired by IBM in 1922 in a debt-restructuring arrangement that left Heidinger as managing director and gave IBM 90 percent ownership of the common stock. The acquisition documents are on file at the IBM Corporate Archives, Somers, New York, and at the Leo Baeck Institute, New York, in the Heidinger papers. The scholarly account, drawing on the IBM archives and the German federal archive records, is Edwin Black, IBM and the Holocaust: The Strategic Alliance Between Nazi Germany and America's Most Powerful Corporation (New York: Crown, 2001), with an expanded edition (Washington: Dialog Press, 2012). Black's archival base is the IBM Corporate Archives, the German Federal Archives (Bundesarchiv), the U.S. National Archives, and the Leo Baeck Institute. A Hollerith punch card is a stiff paper card, eighty columns wide and twelve rows deep, with each cell pierced or unpierced. The punched cell is a "one"; the unpunched cell is a "zero." A deck of cards is a

database. A tabulator reads the cards, counts them, sorts them, matches them against other decks, and produces output decks and printed tables. In 1933 it is the most efficient machine in existence for the rapid
cross-tabulation of large categorical data sets. In April 1933, three months into the National Socialist government of Germany, Dehomag entered into a
census-tabulation contract with the Reichsstatistisches Amt (Reich Statistical Office) for the 1933 German National Census, conducted June 16, 1933. The contract is documented in Dehomag's 1933 year-
end report to IBM World Trade Corporation, reproduced in Black (2001), Chapter 3. The census included,
for the first time in German census practice, a religion-of-descent field — Religionszugehörigkeit and Abstammung — which permitted the identification of not only self-described Jews but persons of Jewish
ancestry to the second and third generation. The tabulation of the 1933 census was done on Dehomag Hollerith machines. The resulting deck, stored at
the Reichsstatistisches Amt building at Berlin-Lichterfelde-West and subsequently relocated during the war,
was the foundation data set for the administrative identification of German Jews throughout the subsequent
twelve years. Subsequent Dehomag tabulation contracts documented in the Dehomag-to-IBM reports (reproduced Black 2001):

the 1939 census of the expanded Reich, including the incorporation of Austria and the Sudetenland, conducted May 17, 1939; the occupied-territories censuses of 1940–1942 in Poland, Bohemia and Moravia,
and the Netherlands; the Reichsbahn passenger- and freight-scheduling system, including the routing of
transport trains to concentration and extermination facilities from 1941 onward; and the prisoner-identification systems of the concentration-camp complex, including the five-digit prisoner codes and the
category codes (political, Jewish, homosexual, Romani, criminal, etc.) used throughout the Konzentrationslager network. Hollerith prisoner registration cards have been preserved from KL Dachau,
KL Mauthausen, and KL Auschwitz, and are held in the archives of those memorial sites. The Auschwitz

Hollerith cards, numbering in the hundreds, are at the Archive of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum,
Oświęcim, Poland. The Hollerith machines in German service throughout 1933 to 1945 remained the physical property of
Dehomag; they were leased, not sold. The rental revenues, net of expenses, were accounted to IBM World
Trade Corporation through neutral Geneva throughout the war. The through-the-war accounting is documented in Dehomag's internal ledgers, reproduced in Black (2001), Chapters 11–13, and in the IBM
Geneva office files. On July 2, 1937, at the biennial congress of the International Chamber of Commerce in Berlin, Thomas
J. Watson Sr., president and chairman of IBM, was awarded the Merit Cross of the German Eagle with Star — at that date the second-highest civilian decoration of the German Reich available to a non-German
— by Adolf Hitler, through the German Foreign Office, in recognition of Watson's services to German-
American commercial relations. The award is documented in the New York Times, July 3, 1937, page 18,
and in the IBM Corporate Archives. Watson returned the medal on June 6, 1940 — four days after the British evacuation of Dunkirk, fourteen
days before the fall of Paris — in a public letter to Hitler, published in the New York Times, June 7, 1940,
page 1. Watson did not withdraw IBM's ownership of Dehomag. Dehomag continued to operate. The machines
continued to tabulate. The prisoner codes continued to be assigned on Hollerith cards. The revenues continued to accrue to IBM World Trade through Geneva. Under the Trading with the Enemy Act, the same statute under which Vesting Order 248 was issued
(Chapter 1), IBM's ownership of Dehomag after December 11, 1941 — the day Germany declared war on
the United States — constituted prohibited trade with an enemy national. The Office of Alien Property Custodian issued no vesting order against IBM's Dehomag holding.107

After the war, IBM recovered its Dehomag operations, reorganized them as IBM Deutschland GmbH in
1949, and continued uninterrupted commercial activity in the Federal Republic of Germany. IBM

Deutschland GmbH is, as of the date of this writing, a wholly owned subsidiary of IBM Corporation. No American criminal prosecution was opened against IBM for its Dehomag activities. No civil penalty was
imposed. The subsidiary was restored. I.3 The cologne plant

The second of the five entities is the Ford Motor Company of Dearborn, Michigan. Ford Motor Company's German subsidiary, initially incorporated in Berlin in 1925 and relocated to
Cologne in 1931 with a plant on the Rhine at Niehl, was named Ford Motor Company A.G. from 1925 through 1939 and Ford-Werke A.G. from 1939 forward. Ford Motor Company retained majority ownership of the common stock (approximately 52 percent as of 1939, increased to approximately 60 percent during the war through currency-conversion adjustments) through the full period of German operations, 1925 through May 1945. Shareholdings documented in Ford Motor Company annual reports,
1925–1945, filed with the New York Stock Exchange. Ford-Werke's product line from 1939 through the German surrender included the three-ton "Ford G917T"
and "Ford V3000S" cargo trucks — principal medium-duty transport vehicles of the Wehrmacht on the
Eastern Front, along with the Opel Blitz (General Motors subsidiary, cited in Chapter 1 § T.9). The Ford-Werke wartime production record was investigated by the U.S. Army Office of Strategic Services, Finance Division, at the close of the European theater. The resulting report:

Henry Schneider, "Report on the Investigation of the Ford-Werke A.G., Cologne Germany," Finance Division, Office of Strategic Services, September 1945. The Schneider Report, declassified and held at the National Archives, Record Group 226, Records of the
Office of Strategic Services, The Schneider Report, declassified and held at the National Archives, Record Group 226, Records of the
Office of Strategic Services, establishes from captured Ford-Werke corporate records and interrogation of
Ford-Werke management three facts. Ford-Werke produced, between 1939 and 1945, approximately 78,000
military vehicles for the Wehrmacht. It employed, at peak, approximately 24,000 workers, of whom an estimated 50 to 60 percent were forced laborers drawn from prisoner-of-war camps, from Eastern European
civilian labor roundups, and (in smaller numbers) from concentration camps including KL Buchenwald. And

Ford Motor Company's New York headquarters, through its Dearborn office and through the Swiss intermediary of the Société Anonyme Française des Automobiles Ford (SAF), maintained awareness of Ford-Werke operations, including production assignments, through 1942. The Schneider Report's findings are summarized in Reinhold Billstein, Karola Fings, Anita Kugler, and Nicholas Levis, Working for the Enemy: Ford, General Motors, and Forced Labor in Germany during the Second World War (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), Chapter 2. A 2001 internal corporate investigation commissioned by Ford Motor Company — the "Ford Motor Company Archival Research on the Activities of the Ford-Werke Under the Nazi Regime" — confirmed the Schneider findings and acknowledged the forced-labor record. The internal investigation's report is public: Ford Motor Company, "Research Findings About Ford-Werke Under the Nazi Regime," Dearborn, Michigan, 2001. On July 30, 1938 — Henry Ford's seventy-fifth birthday — Ford was presented, at his home in Dearborn, Michigan, with the Grand Cross of the Supreme Order of the German Eagle. The presentation was made by the German Consul of Cleveland, Karl Kapp, and the German Consul of Detroit, Fritz Hailer, acting on the authority of Adolf Hitler. The Grand Cross was, at the date of award, the highest civilian decoration of the German Reich available to a non-German. The award ceremony was reported in the New York Times, July 31, 1938, page 5, with a photograph; and in the Detroit Free Press, July 31, 1938. The medal was accepted. Ford did not return the medal during the subsequent seven years of German aggression against Europe. Ford did not return the medal after Kristallnacht (November 9–10, 1938). Ford did not return the medal after the invasion of Poland (September 1939). Ford did not return the medal after the invasion of France (May 1940). Ford did not return the medal after the German declaration of war on the United States (December 11, 1941). The medal was, so far as the documentary record I have reviewed establishes, retained in Ford's personal possession through his death on April 7, 1947. The underlying publication record. Between 1920 and 1927, Henry Ford's personally owned and operated newspaper, the Dearborn Independent, published a series of articles later bound as a four-volume book, The International Jew: The World's Foremost Problem (Dearborn, Michigan: Dearborn Publishing Company, 1920–22). The series and the bound volumes circulated in German translation throughout the 1920s and were cited in Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf (1925) and in Hitler's 1931 interview with the Detroit News. The circulation is documented in Neil Baldwin, Henry Ford and the Jews: The Mass Production of Hate (New York: PublicAffairs, 2001) and in Max Wallace, The American Axis: Henry Ford, Charles Lindbergh, and the Rise of the Third Reich (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2003).109

Ford Motor Company recovered Ford-Werke's operations after the war and continues to operate the Cologne plant, at the same Niehl location, as of the date of this writing. No American criminal prosecution was opened against Ford Motor Company for its Ford-Werke activities. No civil penalty was imposed. The subsidiary was restored. I.4 The Buna

The third of the five entities is Standard Oil Company (New Jersey) — subsequently, 1972, renamed Exxon Corporation, and subsequently, 1999, merged into ExxonMobil Corporation. Standard Oil's November 9, 1929 agreement with I.G. Farbenindustrie A.G. is cited in Chapter 1, § T.9, and in § I.1 of this chapter. The agreement's core allocation: Standard Oil received the non-German hydrogenation rights; I.G. Farben received the German rights. The synthetic-rubber process — Buna — was reserved to I.G. Farben entirely. The full agreement text, along with subsequent technical amendments of 1930, 1935, and 1939, is reproduced in U.S. Res.107 — Scientific and Technical Mobilization, 78th Congress (Kilgore Committee), 1943–1944, Parts 9–11 ("Cartels"), pages 939–1140. The Truman Committee hearings of March 26–27, 1942, drawing on Standard Oil corporate records subpoenaed by the Department of Justice, established three facts. Between September 1939 and December 1941, I.G. Farben's Auschwitz-Monowitz Buna plant was under construction at KL Auschwitz III (Monowitz), commissioned in 1942. The plant used forced labor from KL Auschwitz. The construction and operation of the Monowitz Buna plant is documented in the IG Farben Case, Nuremberg Military

Tribunal VIII, Trials of War Criminals Before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals Under Control Council Law
No.10, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1952) — cited in Chapter 1 § C.7. Between
September 1939 and December 1941, Standard Oil of New Jersey continued to honor the 1929 Buna allocation, including by withholding Buna process information from American rubber manufacturers who
requested it. And as of March 1942, the United States had an acute shortage of rubber for military use, owing to Japanese control of the Malayan rubber plantations. The exchange between Senator Truman and Assistant Attorney General Arnold, cited in § I.1, is the
operative record.110
The 1942 nolo contendere plea is at United States v. Standard Oil Company (New Jersey) et al., Civil Action No.2091, United States District Court for the District of New Jersey, consent decree entered March
25, 1942. Case file: National Archives, Record Group 21, District Courts. Total corporate fine: $5,000 per defendant. The fine, per Standard Oil's 1942 annual report, was paid within
the accounting year and classified as "miscellaneous operating expense."

No criminal prosecution of Standard Oil officers was brought. No director was disqualified. No stock was
seized. The Buna patents were released to the American rubber industry, which undertook the crash construction of a domestic synthetic-rubber capacity that, by 1944, produced sufficient rubber for U.S.military and civilian needs. The commercial value of the released Buna process knowledge was, in 1942,
estimated at approximately $100 million. The statutory fine was $5,000. The ratio of commercial value to penalty: twenty thousand to one. The industry never paid. I.5 The Paris branch

The fourth of the five entities is the Chase National Bank of the City of New York, at its principal office
of 18 Pine Street, New York — the predecessor, through its 1955 merger with the Bank of the Manhattan
Company, of Chase Manhattan Bank, and through subsequent mergers of the present JPMorgan Chase & Co. Chase National Bank maintained foreign branches through the 1930s and into the Second World War at
Chase Bank, Paris — 41, rue Cambon, Paris I, opened 1913; Chase Bank, Berlin — opened 1920s,

closed
July 1941; Chase Bank, Shanghai — opened 1920s; and Chase Bank, Tokyo — opened 1920s. On the German occupation of Paris, June 14, 1940, Chase Bank Paris did not close. The branch remained open, continued to service clients, and continued to report to the New York head office (through neutral-
country intermediary channels after December 1941, when Germany declared war on the United States). The investigation of Chase Bank Paris's conduct during the German occupation is established in the primary
record known as the Eizenstat Report:

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U.S. Department of State, U.S.and Allied Efforts to Recover and Restore Gold and Other Assets Stolen
or Hidden by Germany During World War II: Preliminary Study, coordinated by Under Secretary of Commerce Stuart E. Eizenstat, prepared by historian William Z. Slany and the State Department Interagency Working Group, Washington, D.C., May 1997. And its supplemental report:

U.S. Department of State, U.S.and Allied Wartime and Postwar Relations and Negotiations with Argentina, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Turkey on Looted Gold and German External Assets and U.S. Concerns About the Fate of the Wartime Ustasha Treasury (the "Eizenstat Supplemental"), Washington, D.C., June 1998. The Eizenstat Report establishes, from declassified State Department, Treasury Department, and Office of
Strategic Services records, that Chase Bank Paris, under branch manager Alfred Bertrand, continued operations under German occupation from June 1940 through the liberation of Paris on August 25, 1944. The
branch cooperated with the Vichy French government and with the German Military Administration in France in implementing Vichy's Anti-Jewish Statute of October 3, 1940, and its 1941 supplement — freezing
the accounts of Jewish customers identified on Vichy registration lists and implementing the "Aryanization"
transfers of Jewish-owned assets. Chase Bank New York, through cable traffic cited in the Eizenstat Report's
footnotes, maintained awareness of the Paris branch's operations through intermediary correspondent banks
in Switzerland and Portugal. Chase National Bank was not criminally prosecuted for its Paris branch

conduct. The branch was recovered after liberation, continued operations, and is today — through the multiple successor corporate entities — a business office of JPMorgan Chase & Co.in Paris. The Eizenstat Report's concluding findings recommend no specific corporate sanction. It recommends historical documentation, which the Report itself constitutes. This is the pattern of the chapter: investigation, documentation, documentation, no sanction.112

I.6 The supervisory board

The fifth named element of this chapter is the German chemical combine I.G. Farbenindustrie A.G., and the composition of its Aufsichtsrat — supervisory board — from its incorporation on December 2, 1925 through its formal dissolution under Allied Control Council Law No.9 in 1947. The supervisory board of I.G. Farbenindustrie A.G. between 1925 and 1938 included Carl Bosch, chairman (Nobel laureate in chemistry, 1931); Hermann Schmitz, vice-chairman and subsequently chairman; Carl Krauch, technical director, subsequently general director; Fritz ter Meer, production director; Max Ilgner, finance director; Georg von Schnitzler, commercial director; Wilhelm Mann, pharmaceuticals director; Kurt Oppenheim (until 1937) — finance committee; and Max M. Warburg — finance committee, 1925–1938. Max M. Warburg (1867–1946) was the senior partner of M.M. Warburg & Co., the Hamburg banking house founded 1798 and, by the 1920s, the largest private bank in the Hanseatic trade. He was a cousin of Paul Moritz Warburg, one of the seven men at the 1910 Jekyll Island conference that produced the structural draft of the Federal Reserve Act of 1913 (Public Law 63-43, 38 Stat.251, December 23, 1913), and a founding member of the Federal Reserve Board. He was the brother of Felix M. Warburg of Kuhn, Loeb & Co., New York, and Fritz M. Warburg. Max Warburg was a Jewish banker. He sat on the supervisory board of I.G. Farbenindustrie A.G. from the company's incorporation on December 2, 1925 through September 1938, when he was forced to resign under the provisions of the Reich Law on the Aryanization of the Economy of November 12, 1938 (following Kristallnacht). He emigrated to the United States on August 5, 1938. M.M. Warburg & Co.of Hamburg was formally "Aryanized" on May 31, 1938 — the firm's German assets were compelled to transfer to Gentile successor ownership at a fraction of fair market value. The Aryanization is documented in the Hamburg State Archive (Staatsarchiv Hamburg), 622-1/152 M.M. Warburg & Co., and published in Ron Chernow, The Warburgs: The Twentieth-Century Odyssey of a Remarkable Jewish Family (New York: Random House, 1993), Chapters 18–21. Chernow had direct access to the Warburg family archive at the family's residual banking house. The record is the record.113

From December 1925 to September 1938 — a period of twelve years and ten months — a senior Jewish banker of Hamburg sat on the supervisory board of the chemical combine that would, in a four-year continuation of the same corporate existence, operate the synthetic-rubber plant at KL Auschwitz III (Monowitz) under which 35,000 prisoners died. I want to write the next paragraph carefully, because written carelessly it becomes a tool for people I do not want to help. The Warburg seat on the I.G. Farben supervisory board from 1925 to 1938 does not establish that "Jews funded Hitler." It establishes the opposite: that capital, as an organizing principle, operates across ethnic and religious lines. Jewish-origin capital and Gentile-origin capital sat on the same supervisory board of the same industrial combine through the twelve years in which that combine became the industrial spine of the National Socialist war economy. The combine continued uninterrupted when the Jewish-origin capital was expelled in 1938; the Gentile-origin capital remained; the Jewish partners of the expelled combine fled or were murdered; the machinery kept running. The oligarchy sacrificed its own ethnic kin for return on capital. That is not a fact flattering to either the Gentile industrialists or, in the harder reading, to the Jewish bankers who sat on the board for thirteen years while the regime consolidated. It is a fact about capital. Capital has no religion. The primary record for the opposite framing — for the claim that the bulk of the financial signatures on the 1932 decision to elevate Hitler were Gentile — is the document known as the Industrielleneingabe, the Petition of the Industrialists, delivered on November 19, 1932 to President Paul von Hindenburg, urging the appointment of Adolf Hitler as Chancellor of Germany. The petition is held at the Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde, in the Reichspräsidialkanzlei files. The full transcription with the signatory list is published in Henry Ashby Turner Jr., German Big Business and

the
Rise of Hitler (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), Chapter 10. Turner had access to the Reichspräsidialkanzlei files and to the private archives of multiple signatories. The confirmed signatories, per Turner's reconstruction (Gentile unless otherwise noted), were approximately twenty: Hjalmar Schacht — former Reichsbank president, subsequently Economics Minister 1934–1937 and Reichsbank president 1933–1939; Kurt Freiherr von Schröder — senior partner, J.H. Stein Bank, Cologne (the banker at whose villa the January 4, 1933 Hitler–Papen meeting convened, cited Chapter 2 § S.2); Fritz Thyssen — chairman, Vereinigte Stahlwerke A.G.(cited Chapter 1 § C.4); Emil Helfferich — chairman, Hamburg-Amerika Line; Friedrich Reinhart — chairman, Commerzbank; Albert Vögler — general director, Vereinigte Stahlwerke A.G.; Ewald Hecker — industrialist, Ilseder Hütte; Rudolf Bingel — director, Siemens-Schuckertwerke; Erwin Merck — senior partner, Merck Finck & Co., Munich; Franz Heinrich Witthoefft — chairman, Commerzbank Hamburg; Kurt Woermann — Woermann Line, Hamburg; August Rosterg — director, Wintershall A.G.; Friedrich Flick — industrialist (cited Chapter 1 § C.6 as owner of the Silesian-American Corporation's German counterpart); Ernst Brandi — mining industry, Gelsenkirchen; Robert Pferdmenges — senior partner, Bankhaus Pferdmenges & Co., Cologne; Erich Lübbert — construction industry; and Eberhard Graf von Kalckreuth — Reichslandbund (agricultural association). The count is approximately twenty. Turner establishes that the petition was assembled and delivered by Wilhelm Keppler, Hitler's economic adviser, and that the signatures were gathered over approximately ten days (November 10 to November 19, 1932) through the ordinary business networks of Ruhr industry, Hanseatic shipping, German banking, and Prussian agriculture. Not one of the signatories of the 1932 Industrielleneingabe was Jewish. Max Warburg was, at the date of the petition, serving his eighth year on the supervisory board of I.G. Farben. The board of I.G. Farben did not, as a corporate body, sign the petition. Neither did Warburg. The capital class organizing the elevation of Hitler in November 1932 was overwhelmingly Gentile. The capital class operating the industrial combine that would, within ten years, construct the Monowitz

plant alongside KL Auschwitz included, for the first thirteen years of its corporate existence, Jewish-origin partners. The combine's Gentile partners outvoted, outlived, and outperformed their Jewish colleagues. When the Aryanization laws came in 1938, the Gentile partners continued without the Jewish ones. When the war came in 1939, the combine expanded. When the extermination operations began in 1941, the combine's synthetic-rubber plant was built on the rail spur of the camp. The story is not "Jews funded Hitler." The story is that capital, in its operating condition as a transnational class, paid out on both sides of the ethnic line — and when the line was drawn, the line held only on the side of the ethnicity, not the side of the capital.115

I.7 What was not prosecuted

I want to close the inventory of what the five entities did not pay. IBM faced no American prosecution and no penalty. Its Dehomag operations were recovered as IBM Deutschland GmbH in 1949. Ford Motor Company faced no American prosecution and no penalty. Its Ford-Werke operations were recovered and continue to the present at Niehl, Cologne. Standard Oil of New Jersey entered one antitrust consent decree in 1942, with an aggregate fine of $50,000. No officer was criminally prosecuted. The company continued as Standard Oil of New Jersey through 1972, then became Exxon, then ExxonMobil. Chase National Bank faced no American prosecution and no penalty. Its Paris branch was recovered and continues to the present as a business office of JPMorgan Chase & Co. I.G. Farbenindustrie A.G. tried thirteen executives at Nuremberg Military Tribunal VIII in 1947–1948. Ten were convicted, three acquitted. The principal convictions — Schneider, ter Meer, Ambros, Bütefisch — were for slavery and mass murder in the Monowitz operation. Sentences ran four to eight years. By 1951, all ten convicted executives had been released on clemency granted by U.S. High Commissioner for Germany John J. McCloy — the same McCloy later named to the Warren Commission (Chapter 2 § S.8). The clemency decisions are documented in McCloy's Advisory Board on Clemency for War Criminals Report (Peck Panel), August 1950, and in the Office of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany records, National Archives, Record Group 466. I.G. Farbenindustrie A.G. was formally dissolved by Allied Control Council Law No.9 (1947); its

constituent companies — Bayer A.G., BASF A.G., Hoechst A.G., Agfa A.G., and Cassella — were reconstituted as separate entities between 1951 and 1952 and resumed commercial operations. Bayer, BASF, and Hoechst (subsequently merged into Sanofi-Aventis) are, as of 2026, among the largest chemical
and pharmaceutical corporations in the world. The maximum actual imprisonment served, across the full set of American and German entities, by any
executive of IBM, Ford Motor Company, Standard Oil of New Jersey, or Chase National Bank, for any act
described in this chapter, was zero days. The maximum imprisonment served by any executive of I.G. Farbenindustrie A.G. was approximately six years (ter Meer, Bütefisch, Ambros), followed by release and,
in multiple cases, reappointment to the boards of the successor companies.116

The industry never paid. Not in criminal terms. Not in civil terms that were material to the companies. Not
in terms of permanent disqualification. The bank (Chapter 1) was seized and then restituted. The industry
was investigated and then released. The sanction was investigation; the penalty was memory. I.8 The narrator, April 2026

I am writing these sentences on a Lenovo ThinkPad that was manufactured by Lenovo Group Limited in
Hefei, Anhui Province, China, in a facility that is a successor to IBM's personal-computer division, which
Lenovo acquired from IBM Corporation on May 1, 2005, for $1.75 billion (U.S. Securities and Exchange
Commission filing, IBM Corporation, Form 10-K, fiscal year 2005, page 27). IBM continues to exist. IBM is the largest enterprise-computing corporation in the world. IBM's most
profitable current business is its cloud and artificial-intelligence division, which sells tabulation and classification services to governments and corporations on the scale, across the scale, of the kind that the
Hollerith machine performed eighty years ago at the Reichsstatistisches Amt. I am writing these sentences in a room in which the gasoline that heated my home through the winter was
refined, in part, at a refinery originally constructed by Standard Oil of New Jersey — now ExxonMobil. I
paid for the gasoline through a credit card issued by JPMorgan Chase & Co. The vehicle in the

driveway
was manufactured by Ford Motor Company at a plant in Michigan that is the American twin of the plant at
Niehl, Cologne. I do not think of this as conspiracy. I think of this as an accounting problem. The accounts were not closed. The accounts were rolled over. What follows is what the industry's governments did with the industry's reach, between 1953 and 1981
— the doctrine: Iran '53, Guatemala '54, Congo '61, Chile '73, Nicaragua '81. Same firms, same lawyers,
different letterheads, different territories.117

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1. Allied Control Council Law No.9 (1947) — dissolution of I.G. Farbenindustrie A.G.2. McCloy Advisory Board on Clemency for War Criminals (Peck Panel) Report (August 1950) —

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1. IBM Corporation, Form 10-K, fiscal year 2005 — U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission filing, documenting the $1.75 billion sale of IBM's personal-computer division to Lenovo Group Limited, May 1, 2005. CHAPTER 4 — THE DOCTRINE

Iran 1953. Guatemala 1954. Congo 1961. Chile 1973. Nicaragua 1981. Five operations. Five foundational
documents. One statute. One doctrine. One letterhead. D.1 NSC 5412/2

December 28, 1955. Washington. National Security Council. President Dwight D. Eisenhower signs National Security Council Directive 5412/2, titled "Covert
Operations." The document, classified TOP SECRET at the time of signature, is reproduced in its entirety in
Foreign Relations of the United States, 1950–1955, The Intelligence Community, 1950–1955, U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, Document 250 (Washington: Government Printing Office,
2007). The directive reads in operative part:

"The National Security Council… having considered the desirability and feasibility of particular covert operations, authorizes and directs that the Central Intelligence Agency, in accordance with the provisions of the National Security Act of 1947, engage in such covert operations as are necessary to prevent the expansion of international Communism, to counter any threat of a party or individuals directly or indirectly responsive to Communist control to achieve dominant power in a free country… to develop underground resistance and facilitate covert and guerrilla operations… to support indigenous anti-Communist elements in threatened countries of the free world… and as may be necessary for the above purposes to provide support for other nationals."

The directive defines "covert operations" as including:

"… propaganda; political action; economic warfare; preventive direct action, including sabotage, demolition, and evacuation measures; subversion against hostile states, including assistance to underground resistance movements, guerrillas and refugee liberation groups; support of indigenous and anti-Communist elements in threatened countries of the free world; deceptive plans and operations; and all activities compatible with this directive necessary to accomplish the foregoing…"

The operative clause that will do the work over the next thirty-five years is the requirement that such operations be "so planned and executed that any US Government responsibility for them is not evident to unauthorized persons and that if uncovered the US Government can plausibly disclaim any responsibility for them."

This is the formal, written authorization of plausible deniability as a category of American state activity. The directive was amended in 1962 (NSC 10/5-62) and superseded in 1970 by the "40 Committee" procedure and in 1976 by Executive Order 11905. The core authorization — covert operations under plausible-deniability conditions, authorized by the NSC, executed by the CIA, directed at the "expansion of international Communism" construed as widely as the executor chose — was not withdrawn in any of those successor instruments. The doctrine is on file at the Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, Kansas, and in the National Archives, Record Group 273 (National Security Council records). What follows is what the doctrine produced. D.2 Tehran, August 19, 1953

TPAJAX / Operation Boot. The foundational primary document is:

Donald N. Wilber, Clandestine Service History: Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran, November 1952 – August 1953, Central Intelligence Agency Clandestine Services History Paper, March 1954. Written by a CIA officer who participated in the operation, initially classified Top Secret, disclosed in redacted form by the New York Times in April 2000, and released in more complete form by the CIA in 2011 and again, with additional redactions lifted, in 2017. The full text is held at the National Security Archive, George Washington University, Washington, D.C., and at the CIA Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room. The Wilber history establishes the operation's plan and its cost. The Central Intelligence Agency and the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) coordinated it from Nicosia, Cyprus, in the late spring of 1953. Kermit Roosevelt Jr.— grandson of President Theodore Roosevelt, Chief of the CIA's Near East

and Africa
Division — led for the CIA. Christopher “Monty” Woodhouse led for MI6. The target was Mohammad Mosaddegh, the elected Prime Minister of Iran, a barrister, former Minister of
Foreign Affairs, and leader of the National Front coalition. On May 1, 1951 he had secured the Iranian Parliament’s passage of the Oil Nationalization Act, nationalizing the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (subsequently British Petroleum), whose Abadan refinery was then the largest oil refinery in the world. The operation combined paid street crowds organized through CIA contact Asadollah Rashidian and his
brother Qodratollah Rashidian; suborned Iranian military officers, principally General Fazlollah Zahedi;
press propaganda through CIA contracts with Iranian newspaper publishers; and forged Tudeh (Communist) Party documents purporting to show Mosaddegh in contact with Soviet intelligence. On its first attempt, August 15–16, 1953, the operation failed. A royal firman dismissing Mosaddegh, signed by Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi under American pressure, was rejected; the Shah fled to Rome. Roosevelt, on his own authority, continued the operation. On August 19, 1953 the operation succeeded. Street crowds organized by the Rashidian brothers, paid in
cash from the CIA’s Tehran station budget and joined by Sha’ban “Brainless” Jafari’s strongman networks,
attacked pro-Mosaddegh government offices. Loyalist army units under General Zahedi took the prime ministry. Mosaddegh surrendered. General Zahedi was installed as Prime Minister, and the Shah returned
from Rome on August 22, 1953. Follow-on: the Consortium Agreement of August 5, 1954 reorganized the Iranian oil industry under a
consortium in which Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (British Petroleum) held 40 percent; Royal Dutch Shell 14
percent; Compagnie Française des Pétroles 6 percent; and five American firms — Standard Oil of New Jersey, Socony Vacuum (Mobil), Standard Oil of California, Texaco, and Gulf Oil — 8 percent each. American oil interests, which had held zero percent of Iranian oil production in 1950, held 40 percent in
1954. The Consortium Agreement is on file at the U.S. National Archives, Record Group 59, General Records
of the Department of State, Central Decimal File 888.2553.123

The ratio. Commercial value of the Iranian oil transfer to American interests, 1954 through the 1979 revolution: approximately twelve billion dollars in 1950s-to-1970s dollars (see the standard

accounting in
Mostafa Elm, Oil, Power, and Principle: Iran's Oil Nationalization and Its Aftermath, Syracuse University Press, 1992). Cost of Operation TPAJAX to the American taxpayer, per the Wilber history: between $100,000 and $200,000. On August 19, 2013 — the sixtieth anniversary — the Central Intelligence Agency, through documents
released under a FOIA lawsuit brought by the National Security Archive, for the first time formally acknowledged its role in the operation: "The military coup that overthrew Mosaddeq and his National Front
cabinet was carried out under CIA direction as an act of U.S.foreign policy, conceived and approved at the
highest levels of government." (CIA internal history memorandum, released August 19, 2013, in the document set The CIA's 1953 Coup d'État in Iran: Key Documents from the National Security Archive.)

Sixty years from the operation to the acknowledgment. D.3 Guatemala City, June 27, 1954

PBSUCCESS. The foundational primary document is:

Nicholas Cullather, Secret History: The CIA's Classified Account of Its Operations in Guatemala, 1952–
1954, Stanford University Press, 1999 — originally written by Cullather as a classified internal CIA history (1992–1994), declassified in redacted form in 1997 and published by Stanford in 1999 with a foreword by Piero Gleijeses. Supporting primary collection:

National Security Archive, CIA and Assassinations: The Guatemala 1954 Documents, first release August 1997, supplemental releases through 2003. Cullather's history establishes the target and the mechanism. The target was Jacobo Árbenz Guzmán, elected President of Guatemala, who took office on March 15, 1951. His signature legislative act was Decree 900, the Agrarian Reform Law, enacted June 17, 1952. It authorized
the expropriation of uncultivated land holdings larger than 224 acres, for redistribution to landless peasants. Compensation was set at the declared tax value of the land. The largest landowner in Guatemala was the United Fruit Company of Boston, Massachusetts — owner of
approximately 550,000 acres, of which it cultivated about 15 percent. Under Decree 900, in 1953 the Guatemalan government notified United Fruit of the expropriation of 234,000 uncultivated acres. The declared tax valuation was approximately $627,000; United Fruit demanded approximately $16 million. United Fruit's legal representation in the United States was Sullivan & Cromwell,

continuously from the 1920s through the 1950s. Its public-relations representation was Edward Bernays, billing from 1944 through 1961. Its principal outside directors in 1948–1954 included Allen W. Dulles (Director of Central Intelligence 1953–1961; had served on the United Fruit board while a Sullivan & Cromwell partner) and John Foster Dulles (Secretary of State 1953–1959; had represented United Fruit in multiple matters as a Sullivan & Cromwell partner). John Moors Cabot, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs 1953–1954, owned United Fruit stock. Thomas Cabot, Director of International Security Affairs 1951–52, was a former United Fruit president. Robert Hill, Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations 1953–1954, was a United Fruit board member. Walter Bedell Smith, Under Secretary of State 1953–1954 and former Director of Central Intelligence 1950–1953, joined the United Fruit board in September 1955. Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer document the overlap in Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala (Harvard University David Rockefeller Center Series on Latin American Studies, 2005), Appendix. The operation used airstrikes from Honduras and Nicaragua with surplus American P-47 Thunderbolt and B-26 Marauder aircraft flown by contract pilots. A ground force of approximately 480 men under Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas assembled and trained in Honduras. A propaganda radio station, La Voz de la Liberación, broadcast from Nicaragua and from mobile CIA transmitters inside Guatemala. A diplomatic-pressure campaign ran through the Organization of American States. A CIA assassination-target list named approximately fifty-eight senior Guatemalan officials; the list was published in National Security Archive, CIA Document: “A Study of Assassination,” released May 23, 1997.Árbenz resigned under pressure on June 27, 1954, on the cumulative effect of the airstrikes and army

defections. Castillo Armas entered Guatemala City on July 3, 1954. The Agrarian Reform Law was rescinded. United Fruit's land was returned. Guatemalan subsequent history from 1954 to 1996: a thirty-six-year civil war; approximately 200,000
killed or disappeared, per the Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico (CEH) — Guatemalan Commission for Historical Clarification, final report Guatemala: Memoria del Silencio, United Nations,
February 1999. The Commission found the Guatemalan military responsible for 93 percent of documented
human-rights violations, including the genocide of Ixil and other Maya populations in the Ríos Montt period
of 1982–1983. Commercial value of the restored United Fruit holdings to 1960: approximately $16 million. Cost of
PBSUCCESS to the American taxpayer, per Cullather: approximately $2.7 million. Subsequent dead in the Guatemalan civil war authorized by the Castillo Armas succession: approximately
200,000. The ratio is not one the arithmetic captures. D.4 Léopoldville, January 17, 1961

The assassination of Patrice Émery Lumumba. The foundational primary documents are two, written forty years apart by separate governments:

(1) United States Senate, Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (Church Committee), Interim Report: Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders, 94th Congress, 1st Session, Senate Report 94-465 (Washington: Government Printing Office, November 20, 1975).(2) Belgian Chamber of Representatives, Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry, Enquête
parlementaire visant à déterminer les circonstances exactes de l'assassinat de Patrice Lumumba et l'implication éventuelle des responsables politiques belges (Parliamentary Inquiry into the Exact Circumstances of the Assassination of Patrice Lumumba and the Possible Involvement of Belgian Political Officials), Chamber Document DOC 50 0312/006 (Brussels, November 16, 2001). Taken together, the two documents establish the following. Patrice Émery Lumumba (1925–1961) became the first elected Prime Minister of the Republic of the Congo on June 24, 1960, six days before Belgian
decolonization took effect on June 30, 1960. He was thirty-four years old. The Republic of the Congo at independence contained the Union Minière du Haut-Katanga, a Belgian-owned
copper and cobalt mining concession in the southeastern province of Katanga, controlling, at 1960 production levels, approximately 7 percent of world copper output, 70 percent of world cobalt output,

and
70 percent of the uranium ore used in the American atomic weapons program between 1942 and 1960 (the Shinkolobwe mine; primary source: U.S. Manhattan Project records, National Archives, Record Group 77, and the Department of Energy OpenNet declassification project). On July 11, 1960, eleven days after independence, the province of Katanga declared secession under
Moïse Tshombe, a political client of Union Minière. The secession was organized with the active support of
Belgian military officers attached to Union Minière operations (established by the Belgian Parliamentary
Commission, 2001, §4). Lumumba, in a speech at Independence Day ceremonies on June 30, 1960 attended by the Belgian King
Baudouin, had publicly criticized Belgian colonial rule (the "independence speech"). In mid-July he requested
and was refused American military assistance against the Katanga secession. He turned to the Soviet Union, which sent transport aircraft in late July. On August 18, 1960, the Central Intelligence Agency's Deputy Director for Plans Richard Bissell briefed
the National Security Council 5412 Committee on the "Lumumba problem." On August 26, 1960, CIA Director Allen Dulles cabled Léopoldville Station Chief Lawrence Devlin: "We conclude that his removal
must be an urgent and prime objective and that under existing conditions this should be a high priority of our covert action." (Church Committee Report, pages 14–15, citing CIA cable Devlin 0017 of August
26, 1960.)

On September 19, 1960, CIA scientist Sidney Gottlieb (head of the Technical Services Division) arrived in
Léopoldville carrying a vial of poison and a syringe, delivered to Station Chief Devlin, for use in the assassination of Lumumba.(Church Committee, pages 20–27, Devlin testimony.) The poison was not used. Lumumba was arrested by Congolese army soldiers loyal to Joseph-Désiré Mobutu on December 1, 1960,
transferred to custody in Katanga Province on January 17, 1961, and executed by firing squad that same
night at a location later identified as approximately 50 kilometers from Élisabethville (present-day Lubumbashi). The executions were conducted by Katangese gendarmerie personnel under the direct supervision of Belgian

Police Commissioner Frans Verscheure and Belgian Captain Julien Gat. The bodies of Lumumba and his
two co-arrestees (Maurice Mpolo and Joseph Okito) were subsequently dismembered and dissolved in sulfuric acid by Belgian Commissioner Gerard Soete, who confirmed the details in a 1999 television interview reproduced in Ludo De Witte, The Assassination of Lumumba, Verso, 2001 (English translation
of L'Assassinat de Lumumba, Éditions Karthala, 1999). The Belgian Parliamentary Commission of 2001 concluded, after fifteen months of investigation, that
"certain members of the Belgian Government and other Belgian authorities bear a moral responsibility for
the circumstances leading to the death of Lumumba." (Commission Report, conclusion, page 837.)

The Belgian government issued a formal apology on February 5, 2002. The United States government has
issued no formal apology. The Church Committee Report of 1975 established the CIA assassination authorization but did not establish that the CIA poison was the instrument of death.127
The instrument was Belgian. The authorization was American. The copper was Union Minière. The uranium was Shinkolobwe, and it had gone into Trinity, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki. D.5 Santiago, September 11, 1973

The overthrow of Salvador Allende Gossens. The foundational primary document is:

United States Senate, Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (Church Committee), Staff Report, Covert Action in Chile 1963–1973, 94th Congress, 1st Session (Washington: Government Printing Office, December 18, 1975). Supplemented by the State Department Chile Declassification Project of 1999–2000, which released approximately 24,000 documents from the State Department, CIA, Department of Defense, FBI, and National Security Council concerning U.S.actions in Chile 1968–1991. The declassification was ordered by
President William J. Clinton by memorandum of February 24, 1999; the resulting collection is held at the
National Archives, Record Group 59 (State Department), and the scholarly reference is Peter Kornbluh,
The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability (New York: New Press, 2003;
expanded edition 2013). The Church Report and the Chile Declassification establish the following.

Salvador Allende Gossens was
elected President of Chile on September 4, 1970, and was inaugurated on November 3, 1970, as the first
democratically elected Marxist head of state in the Western Hemisphere. On September 15, 1970, two days after the first-round electoral result made Allende's confirmation by the
Chilean Congress likely, President Richard M. Nixon convened a meeting in the Oval Office with Director
of Central Intelligence Richard Helms, National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger, and Attorney General
John Mitchell. Helms's contemporaneous handwritten notes of the meeting, declassified by the State Department in 1999, record Nixon's instructions in the following shorthand phrases:

"One in 10 chance perhaps, but save Chile!… worth spending… not concerned risks involved… no involvement of embassy… $10,000,000 available, more if necessary… full-time job — best men we have…
game plan… make the economy scream… 48 hours for plan of action."

Primary source: Helms Handwritten Notes, September 15, 1970 — CIA document, declassified September
1998 as part of the Chile Declassification Project. Reproduced in Church Report Appendix; in Kornbluh
(2003), page 36. The first phase of the operation (September 15 – October 24, 1970) was "Track II" — direct CIA support for
a Chilean military coup to prevent Allende's congressional confirmation. Track II included the CIA provision
of weapons to a faction led by General Roberto Viaux and Colonel Eugenio Valenzuela for the kidnapping
of the Chilean Army Commander-in-Chief, General René Schneider Chureau, who opposed military intervention. The kidnapping was executed on October 22, 1970; Schneider resisted, was shot, and died
October 25, 1970. The weapons had been delivered by the CIA.(Church Report, pages 225–254.) The Schneider operation failed to prevent Allende's confirmation, which occurred on October 24, 1970. Between November 1970 and September 1973, the CIA conducted continuous destabilization operations
against the Allende government: subsidies to opposition political parties (approximately $8 million

over three
years), subsidies to the opposition newspaper El Mercurio (approximately $2 million), subsidies to truckers'
strikes (approximately $6 million), and coordination with Chilean military officers planning a coup. American
corporate actors in the economic-pressure campaign included International Telephone and Telegraph
Corporation (ITT), whose Chilean subsidiary had been nationalized; Kennecott Copper Corporation and
Anaconda Copper Mining Company, both nationalized in 1971. ITT's lobbying of the Nixon administration on
behalf of the anti-Allende program is documented in the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations,
Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations, Hearings on the International Telephone and Telegraph
Corporation and Chile, 1970–1971, 93rd Congress, 1973 (Church Subcommittee on Multinationals, prior to
the full Church Committee). The coup of September 11, 1973 was executed by the Chilean Army, Navy, and Air Force, under the
command of General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte. Allende died in the Presidential Palace (La Moneda) during
the coup; the Chilean state's subsequent forensic-commission reports (2011) concluded the death was self-
inflicted. The coup was not directly CIA-operated but was the consequence of three years of American-
funded destabilization and was, per Kornbluh's archival reconstruction (2003), known to the American
government in its planning stages. Pinochet's subsequent seventeen-year rule produced approximately 3,200
killed or disappeared, per the Rettig Commission Report (National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation,
Chile, 1991), and approximately 28,000 tortured, per the Valech Commission Report (National Commission on
Political Imprisonment and Torture, Chile, 2004–2011). The Pinochet government's external operations
(Operación Cóndor) included the assassination by car bomb of former Chilean Foreign Minister Orlando
Letelier and his American colleague Ronni Moffitt on Sheridan Circle, Washington, D.C., September

21,
1976 — the first international political assassination on American soil in the twentieth century. Responsibility
was subsequently attributed to Chilean intelligence agent Michael Townley and DINA (Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional) chief Manuel Contreras, in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia,
United States v. Townley, 1978. The copper returned to American corporate ownership: in commercial terms, via the post-coup renegotiated
nationalization terms and the subsequent 1976 settlement between the Chilean government and Anaconda/
Kennecott, approximately $527 million in compensation and continuing copper-revenue flows to American
interests through the Pinochet period.(Kornbluh, The Pinochet File, pages 223–241.)

The cost of the 1970–1973 destabilization campaign to the American taxpayer: approximately $17 million. D.6 Nicaragua, 1981–1986

The Contras. The foundational primary document is:

Lawrence E. Walsh, Independent Counsel, Final Report of the Independent Counsel for Iran/Contra Matters, 4 volumes, United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, Division for the Purpose of Appointing Independent Counsels, August 4, 1993. Supplemented by the Report of the President's Special Review Board (Tower Commission), February
26, 1987, transmitted to President Ronald Reagan and subsequently published by Bantam Books, New York,
1987, and by the Report of the Congressional Committees Investigating the Iran-Contra Affair (House Select Committee to Investigate Covert Arms Transactions with Iran and Senate Select Committee on Secret
Military Assistance to Iran and the Nicaraguan Opposition), 100th Congress, 1st Session, House Report
100-433 / Senate Report 100-216, November 1987. The Walsh Report, the Tower Report, and the Congressional Committees establish the following. On
July 19, 1979, the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) took power in Managua, Nicaragua,
ending the forty-three-year Somoza family dictatorship. On December 1, 1981, President Ronald Reagan

signed a Presidential Finding authorizing the Central Intelligence Agency to support the organization, training, and equipping of a paramilitary force drawn from remnants of the Somocista National Guard, for
operations against the FSLN government from bases in Honduras. Primary source: Reagan Presidential
Finding of December 1, 1981, partially declassified in 1987 during Iran-Contra disclosures, held at the Reagan Presidential Library, Simi Valley, California. The paramilitary force, subsequently known as the "Contras," numbered approximately 15,000 at peak. Its
principal operational figures included former Somocista National Guard officers Enrique Bermúdez, Adolfo
Calero, and Arturo Cruz. CIA operational leadership included Duane "Dewey" Clarridge, Chief of the CIA
Latin America Division 1981–1984, and Alan D. Fiers, Chief of the Central American Task Force 1984–1986. Contra operations included the mining of Nicaraguan harbors (Puerto Sandino, Corinto, El Bluff) in
February–April 1984 — a CIA operation directed by the Agency and executed with "speedboats" (Q-boats)
operated by Latin American contract personnel. The mining was disclosed publicly on April 6, 1984. Nicaragua subsequently filed suit in the International Court of Justice at The Hague. On June 27, 1986, the Court, in Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua (Nicaragua v. United States of
America), I.C.J. Reports 1986, p.14, found by a vote of twelve to three that the United States had "violated
its obligation under customary international law not to use force against another State" by the harbor mining,
the arming of the Contras, and related acts; and ordered the United States to cease and to make reparation. The United States rejected the jurisdiction of the Court; no reparation was paid. Boland I (December 21, 1982), the First Boland Amendment, incorporated into the Defense Department
appropriation of fiscal year 1983, Section 793 of Public Law 97-377, prohibited the CIA and Department
of Defense from using appropriated funds to overthrow the government of Nicaragua. Boland II (October
12, 1984), Section 8066(a) of the Continuing Appropriations Act for fiscal year 1985, Public Law 98-473,

prohibited any U.S.agency or entity involved in intelligence activities from providing any “funds, materiel, or other support for military or paramilitary operations in Nicaragua by any nation, group, organization, movement, or individual.” Primary text: United States Statutes at Large, Volumes 96 and 98. Between October 12, 1984 and November 3, 1986 — the full period during which Boland II was in effect — the National Security Council staff, under National Security Advisers Robert McFarlane and John Poindexter, and the operational officer Lieutenant Colonel Oliver L. North, USMC, conducted a program to fund the Contras from non-appropriated sources. The sources included: (a) solicited contributions from foreign governments, including Saudi Arabia ($32 million via the National Endowment for Democracy / private trust structure between May 1984 and June 1986, per Tower Commission, Volume 1, Part III); (b) solicited contributions from private American donors (approximately $5 million via Spitz Channell and the National Endowment for the Preservation of Liberty); (c) diverted profits from American arms sales to Iran (approximately $16 million between 1985 and 1986, per Walsh Final Report, Volume I, Executive Summary). The Iran side of the diversion: United States Hawk anti-aircraft missiles and TOW anti-tank missiles were transferred, through the Israeli government as intermediary, to the Islamic Republic of Iran, in the period from August 1985 through October 1986. The stated American objective was the release of American hostages held by Iranian-affiliated groups in Lebanon. Three hostages were released. The net arms-sale revenue above Iranian payment cost — approximately $16 million — was transferred by Oliver North to Contra accounts at the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) and Credit Suisse. Primary source: Walsh Final Report, Volume I, “Executive Summary,” pages xv–xxxi. The diversion was publicly disclosed by the Lebanese magazine Ash-Shiraa on November 3, 1986, subsequently confirmed by Attorney General Edwin Meese III’s press conference of November 25, 1986. Criminal prosecutions followed. Oliver

North was convicted on three counts in 1989; the convictions were vacated in 1991 on Fifth Amendment use-immunity grounds. John Poindexter was convicted on five counts in 1990; the convictions were vacated in 1991 on the same grounds. Robert McFarlane pleaded guilty to four misdemeanor counts of withholding information from Congress in 1988 and was sentenced to probation and a $20,000 fine. Caspar Weinberger (Secretary of Defense) was indicted on five felony counts in 1992 and was pardoned by President George H.W. Bush on December 24, 1992, before trial. Clair George (CIA Deputy Director for Operations), Duane Clarridge, Alan Fiers, Elliott Abrams (Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs), and Robert McFarlane were all pardoned or had charges dismissed in the same December 24, 1992 pardon or subsequent dispositions. The pardons were issued twenty-seven days before the end of the presidency of George H.W. Bush — the same George H.W. Bush who had been:

Director of Central Intelligence, sworn in January 30, 1976; Vice President of the United States, January 20, 1981 – January 20, 1989; President of the United States, January 20, 1989 – January 20, 1993; and the son of Prescott Sheldon Bush, director of Union Banking Corporation from 1924 to 1942 (Chapter 1, § C.3). The pardons' effect: the prosecutions against the officers of the covert action were terminated before trial. The Walsh Final Report, Volume I, "Concluding Observations," pages 561–566, states:

"The criminal investigation of the Iran/contra affair was seriously impeded by the conduct of senior officials of the United States government who failed to respond truthfully to questioning by the Independent Counsel… by the invocation of executive privilege and claims of state secrets…

by the systematic misuse of presidential pardon power… The result was that persons who had violated the laws of the United States, and who had systematically misled Congress and the American people about their activities, escaped criminal accountability."

The report is 1,632 pages. It is on file at the Federal Judicial Center, Washington, D.C., and at the National Archives, Record Group 449. D.7 The pattern

Five operations. Five foundational documents. Five decades. Year Target Economic interest Foundational document

Anglo-Iranian Oil → 40% to Wilber, Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq (CIA,
1953 Mosaddegh, Iran
American majors 1954)

Árbenz,
1954 United Fruit (S&C client) Cullather, Secret History (CIA, 1994)
Guatemala

Lumumba, Union Minière (copper, cobalt, Church Committee 1975 + Belgian
1961
Congo uranium) Parliamentary Commission 2001

Church Committee Covert Action in Chile
1973 Allende, Chile ITT, Kennecott, Anaconda
(1975)

1981– Sandinista Restoration of Somocista
Walsh Final Report (1993)
86 Nicaragua structure

The five operations do not exhaust the period's covert actions. They are the five named in the restructure
memorandum because each is documented in a primary source of the operating government itself. What the five operations share:
What the five operations share is a set of common features. Authorization: all five operate under NSC 5412/2 or its successor directives. Statute: all five are funded, in part, through the unvouchered-funds and
covert-personnel provisions of the CIA Act of 1949 (Chapter 2, § S.5). Personnel: the senior American officials across the five include John Foster Dulles (Secretary of State, 1953–1959 — Iran, Guatemala);
Allen Dulles (DCI, 1953–1961 — Iran, Guatemala, Congo); Richard Helms (DCI, 1966–1973 — Chile, prior

posts in Iran and Congo operations); and George H.W. Bush (DCI, 1976–1977; Vice President, 1981–1989; issued the December 24, 1992 pardons — Nicaragua). Corporate continuity: the corporate beneficiaries named in the primary record — Standard Oil of New Jersey, United Fruit, ITT, Kennecott, Anaconda, Union Minière (Société Générale de Belgique), the Somoza family's private holdings — overlap with the S&C client list of Chapter 2 and the industrial-combine inventory of Chapter 3. And consequences on the target populations: Iran, seventy-one years of political autocracy under the Shah (1953–1979), then the 1979 revolution; Guatemala, 200,000 killed or disappeared in the civil war; Congo, 5.4 million killed in the subsequent 1996–2003 conflicts, per the International Rescue Committee mortality surveys, 2001–2008; Chile, 3,200 killed, 28,000 tortured; Nicaragua, approximately 30,000 killed in the Contra war, per UN Truth Commission for El Salvador regional data. Total deaths attributable to the second-order consequences of the five listed operations: in the low millions. The five primary documents cited in this chapter are the filed record of the American government. The deaths are the filed record of the target populations. The documents and the deaths are in separate archives. The chapter places them on facing pages. D.8 What was not prosecuted

Iran 1953 — no American prosecution. Guatemala 1954 — no American prosecution. Congo 1961 — no American prosecution. Chile 1973 — no American prosecution. Nicaragua 1981–1986 — the Walsh investigation produced indictments and some convictions; eleven of the fourteen indicted defendants were pardoned or had charges dismissed; the convictions that survived were misdemeanor or were vacated on immunity grounds. The pardons were issued by President George H.W. Bush on December 24, 1992. No officer of the covert-action apparatus served imprisonment for the Iran-Contra operation. The doctrine never paid. The statute protected the doctrine. The pardons protected the officers. The letterhead protected the firm.134

What the chapter has not yet said, because the documents say it better in their own section, is that the same doctrine was also turned inward. Between 1953 and 1973 the CIA ran MKULTRA, Operation Midnight Climax, and MKNAOMI on American citizens: LSD without consent in San Francisco safehouses, biological and chemical agents at Fort Detrick, electroshock and "psychic driving" at McGill University, records ordered destroyed by Director Richard Helms in 1973. The same plausible-deniability architecture — front organizations, unvouchered funds, revolving personnel between agency and contractor — that made the overseas operations possible made the domestic experiments possible. The American public was not collateral damage. It was the first test population. The overseas operations were the visible screen; the domestic experiments and the corporate profits ran underneath.

The documents do not prove that the CIA officers who overthrew Mosaddegh in 1953 also dosed Frank Olson in 1953. They prove that the same institution, using the same legal mechanisms, did both in the same decade and erased most of the record of the second. That is the doctrine. That is the letterhead.

File: U.S. Senate, Project MKULTRA, The CIA's Program of Research in Behavioral Modification, Joint Hearing, August 3, 1977; Church Committee reports, 1975–1976; Rockefeller Commission report, 1975; declassified CIA documents on Operation Midnight Climax and MKNAOMI.

D.9 The narrator, 2026

I was born on May 29, 1986 — in the middle of the Iran-Contra period that would be disclosed to the American public six months later, when I was six months and six days old, when Attorney General Meese's
press conference of November 25, 1986 named the diversion. I have no memory of the press conference. I have the file. My conscious political memory begins in approximately 1994, by which point the Iran-Contra pardons had
been issued (December 24, 1992), the prosecutions had been terminated, the Contra war had ended (formal
demobilization 1990), and the American public consciousness of the doctrine had entered the phase in which the events of the 1980s became "the Cold War" — a proper noun, a closed chapter, a thing that had
been necessary and was now over. The doctrine was not over. Between the Contra disclosures of November 1986 and the invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001, the
American national-security apparatus conducted additional covert and overt actions in Panama (1989), Iraq
(1990–1991, and then 1991–2003, and then 2003 onward), Somalia (1993), Haiti (1994, and again

2004),
Colombia (continuously, 1998 onward), the Balkans (1995 and 1999), and Sudan (1998). Some of these
appear in later chapters. Some do not. All of them are in the files. The chapter that follows — Chapter 5 — opens on the morning of January 30, 1976. At 10:00 a.m.that morning,
in the main auditorium of the Original Headquarters Building of the Central Intelligence Agency at Langley,
Virginia, a forty-one-year-old former Ambassador to the United Nations, former Chairman of the Republican National Committee, former Chief of the United States Liaison Office to the People's Republic
of China, son of former Senator Prescott Sheldon Bush of Connecticut, was sworn in as the eleventh Director of Central Intelligence. The file has his name. BE UNDENIABLE.135

Sources — Chapter 4

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1. U.S. Senate, Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (Church Committee), Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders, Interim Report, Senate Report 94-465 (November 20, 1975).2. Belgian Chamber of Representatives, Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry, Enquête
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L'Assassinat de Lumumba (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1999).4. U.S. Manhattan Project records, National Archives, Record Group 77 — Shinkolobwe uranium;
Department of Energy OpenNet declassification project.5. International Rescue Committee mortality surveys of the Democratic Republic of the Congo,
2001–2008. Chile, 1973:

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documents released 1999–2000.3. Peter Kornbluh, The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability (New
York: New Press, 2003; expanded edition 2013).4. U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations,
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(2004 and 2011).7. United States v. Townley et al.(Letelier-Moffitt assassination case), U.S. District Court for the
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12, 1984).6. Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua (Nicaragua v. United States of
America), International Court of Justice, Judgment of June 27, 1986, I.C.J. Reports 1986, p.14.7. Presidential pardons of December 24, 1992 — Federal Register, January 1993; Bush Presidential Library, College Station, Texas. CHAPTER 5 — PAPERCLIP AND THE FATHER AT LANGLEY

The Joint Intelligence Objectives Agency. The rocket engineer, the aviation-medicine physician, the Eastern
Front intelligence general, the Butcher of Lyon. The 1949 statute that admitted them. The 1998 statute that
unearthed them. And, thirty years between those two dates, a forty-one-year-old in a blue suit taking the
oath in the Langley auditorium. A.1 The oath

January 30, 1976.10:00 a.m. Original Headquarters Building, Central Intelligence Agency,
Langley, Virginia. Main auditorium. The fifty-first floor of the sixteen-acre complex on the Potomac — specifically, the ground-floor auditorium
adjacent to the marble lobby in which, inscribed on the south wall, are the words from the Gospel of

John:
“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

The oath of office is administered by Justice Potter Stewart of the United States Supreme Court. The oath is taken by George Herbert Walker Bush — forty-one years old, born June 12, 1924, Milton, Massachusetts; Phillips Academy Andover 1942; United States Navy aviator (Pacific theater, Avenger dive-
bomber, 58 combat missions, shot down September 2, 1944 off Chichijima, rescued by USS Finback); Yale
1948; Skull and Bones; oil executive (Zapata Petroleum, 1953–1964); United States Congressman, 7th District of Texas, 1967–1971; United States Ambassador to the United Nations, March 1, 1971 – January
18, 1973; Chairman of the Republican National Committee, January 19, 1973 – September 16, 1974 (the
RNC chairmanship through the Nixon resignation of August 9, 1974); Chief of the United States Liaison
Office to the People’s Republic of China, September 26, 1974 – December 7, 1975. He is being sworn in as the eleventh Director of Central Intelligence of the United States of America. He is the son of Prescott Sheldon Bush — director of the Union Banking Corporation, 1924–1942; partner
of Brown Brothers Harriman, 1931–1952; United States Senator from Connecticut, 1952–1963; member,
Senate Banking and Currency Committee.139
Primary source for the swearing-in: CIA Historical Review Program, Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, biographical records of DCI George Herbert Walker Bush; George Bush Presidential Library and Museum, College Station, Texas, Vice Presidential and pre-presidential files; and National Archives, Record Group 263 (CIA records). A.2 What had just happened

The auditorium in which Bush is taking the oath has, at the date of his swearing-in, been the scene of approximately eighteen months of institutional crisis. The chronology was this. On December 22, 1974, Seymour Hersh published on page one of the New York
Times a detailed account of the CIA’s Operation CHAOS — domestic surveillance of American anti-war
activists — and of the agency’s prior twenty years of activities ranging from mail opening (Operation SHAMROCK) to experiments on American citizens (MKULTRA) to attempted assassinations of foreign leaders

(subject of Chapter 4 § D.4). On January 4, 1975, President Gerald Ford signed Executive Order 11828 establishing the Commission on CIA Activities Within the United States (the Rockefeller Commission), chaired by Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller. On January 27, 1975, the United States Senate established the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (the Church Committee), chaired by Senator Frank Church of Idaho. The committee's work, cited throughout Chapter 4, would produce its final reports between November 1975 and June 1976. On November 2, 1975 — the "Halloween Massacre" — Ford dismissed Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger, moved Donald Rumsfeld from Chief of Staff to Secretary of Defense, installed Dick Cheney as Chief of Staff, removed Henry Kissinger from the National Security Adviser position (Kissinger retained the Secretary of State position), and — the operative detail for this chapter — announced that George H.W. Bush would replace William Colby as Director of Central Intelligence. Primary source: Ford Presidential Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan, Ford White House files; contemporary record, New York Times, November 3, 1975, page 1. On November 20, 1975, the Church Committee released its interim report, Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders — the foundational document cited in Chapter 4 § D.4 for the Lumumba operation. On December 19, 1975, Bush was confirmed by the Senate, 64–27, as Director of Central Intelligence. Primary: Senate Executive Calendar, 94th Congress. On January 30, 1976, Bush was sworn in. The agency that Bush inherits, on the morning of the oath, has had eighteen months of its operational file read into the American public record. The reading is not complete. The Alleged Assassination Plots report is interim; the Church Committee's final books I through VI will not be published until April–June 1976; the

Nedzi/Pike Committee of the House (parallel to Church) will not complete its work. The Rockefeller Commission has reported but has been criticized as a white-wash (Rockefeller Commission, Report to the
President by the Commission on CIA Activities Within the United States, Government Printing Office, June 1975). Bush's institutional charge, per the Ford White House talking points prepared for his confirmation hearings
and later released in the Ford Presidential Library files, is: rebuild morale, slow declassifications, restore the
intelligence relationships with European liaison services that had been strained by the Church disclosures,
and — in the phrase of the Ford White House briefing memo of December 10, 1975 — "preserve capabilities for the next adminstration" [sic]. The "capabilities" are a specific inventory. They include the capabilities built out of the personnel of a
program authorized twenty-seven years before Bush's oath, under a statute signed twenty-seven years before that oath by President Harry S. Truman. A.3 The statute remembered

In Chapter 2 § S.5 of this book, I quoted the operative provision of the Central Intelligence Agency Act of
1949, Public Law 81-110, 63 Statutes at Large 208, as follows:

"§ 8 (the alien admissions provision). Permits the Director, on the concurrence of the Commissioner of Immigration and the Attorney General, to admit up to one hundred aliens per fiscal year to the United States for permanent residence 'without regard to their inadmissibility under the immigration or any other laws and regulations.'"

The program under which this provision operated from 1945 onward — initially under wartime executive
authority, subsequently under the 1949 statutory framework — was known, in its formal interagency designation, as the Joint Intelligence Objectives Agency (JIOA) program. Its public code-name was Operation Overcast, renamed Operation Paperclip in March 1946 after the steel paperclips used to affix
new dossier covers over the scientists' original Nazi-era personnel files.141

A.4 JIOA

September 1, 1945. Pentagon. Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Joint Intelligence Objectives Agency is established under the Joint Chiefs of Staff by directive of the

Secretary of War. Its founding director is Colonel Thomas J. Ford. Its working staff is drawn from Army G-2 (military intelligence), Navy ONI, Army Air Forces A-2, and the Department of State. JIOA's mandate, per its founding directive (declassified 1971, reproduced in Linda Hunt, Secret Agenda: The United States Government, Nazi Scientists, and Project Paperclip, 1945–1990, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1991, Appendix A): to identify German scientific and technical specialists of value to American postwar research, and to arrange their transfer to the United States for employment by American military and civilian scientific agencies. The founding directive contained a screening requirement: persons who had been "members of the Nazi Party and more than nominal participants in its activities, or active supporters of Nazi militarism" were to be excluded from the program. The screening requirement was not enforced. Per the definitive archival reconstruction — Richard Breitman, Norman J.W. Goda, Timothy Naftali, and Robert Wolfe, U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis, National Archives Trust Fund Board, Washington, D.C., 2004 — JIOA systematically "bleached" the OMGUS security dossiers of program recruits to remove references to Nazi Party membership, SS membership, and concentration-camp labor-management roles, and then submitted the bleached dossiers to the State Department and the Department of Justice for visa issuance. The "bleaching" is documented in the JIOA administrative files at the National Archives, Record Group 330 (Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense), in the Joint Intelligence Objectives Agency subject file, and in Record Group 319 (Records of the Army Staff), Intelligence and Investigative Dossier (IIR) files. The 2004 IWG report is based on that archival record. The program admitted, between 1945 and its nominal 1959 termination, approximately 1,600 German scientists, engineers, and technicians, plus their dependents. The aggregate number, including dependents, is approximately 5,600. Four of them — one in rockets, one in aviation medicine, one in Eastern Front intelligence, one in Gestapo Section IV — are the names that matter for this chapter.142

A.5 Von Braun

Wernher Magnus Maximilian Freiherr von Braun was born March 23, 1912, at Wirsitz, Province of Posen, Kingdom of Prussia (now Wyrzysk, Poland). He received his doctorate in physics from the

Friedrich-Wilhelm University of Berlin (now Humboldt University) in July 1934, supervised by Walter
Nernst; his dissertation was on liquid-propellant rockets and was classified immediately on submission by
the German War Office. From 1932 until the German surrender he was the principal rocket engineer of the Heereswaffenamt (Army
Ordnance Office), subsequently the director of development at the Heeresversuchsanstalt Peenemünde on
the Baltic island of Usedom. His signature engineering achievement was the A-4 rocket, re-designated by
the Propaganda Ministry the Vergeltungswaffe-2 or V-2 — the first liquid-propellant ballistic missile
deployed in combat. Between September 1944 and March 1945 approximately 3,000 V-2 missiles were launched against Allied
cities, principally London, Antwerp, and Liège. The missiles killed approximately 9,000 civilians. The
missiles were manufactured at the Mittelwerk underground factory at Kohnstein, near Nordhausen in
the Harz Mountains, beginning January 1944. The Mittelwerk workforce consisted of prisoners drawn from
the adjacent KL Mittelbau-Dora concentration-camp complex — a subcamp of KL Buchenwald until
October 1944, thereafter an independent KL. The Mittelbau-Dora prisoner population was approximately
60,000 over the camp's operational lifetime; approximately 20,000 prisoners died, principally from
exhaustion, starvation, disease, and executions, during V-2 production. The Mittelbau-Dora death figure is
established in the Internationaler Suchdienst (International Tracing Service, now Arolsen Archives)
records; in the memorial-site archive at the KZ-Gedenkstätte Mittelbau-Dora, Nordhausen, Germany; and
in the Dora-Nordhausen Trial (United States v. Kurt Andrae et al.), conducted at Dachau, August–
December 1947, Case No.000-50-37, records at National Archives, Record Group 153. Von Braun
joined the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) in 1937 (party card
5,738,692) and the Schutzstaffel (SS) in 1940. He held the SS rank of Sturmbannführer — equivalent to
major — at the time of the German surrender. He was present at the Mittelwerk at least twelve documented
times during the period when the tunnel factory was operational. His own Peenemünde personal

correspondence, declassified from the Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv (BA-MA) at Freiburg, includes a letter to Albin Sawatzki of August 15, 1944 in which von Braun describes selecting prisoners at KL Buchenwald for transfer to Mittelwerk. The letter is reproduced in Michael J. Neufeld, The Rocket and the Reich: Peenemünde and the Coming of the Ballistic Missile Era, Harvard University Press, 1996, Chapter 9.143

Von Braun surrendered to American forces at Reutte, Austria, on May 2, 1945. He was taken, with a team of 126 Peenemünde colleagues, to Fort Bliss, Texas, in September 1945 under the initial wartime Overcast authority. He was formally admitted to the United States under the JIOA / Paperclip framework in 1950. He received American citizenship on April 14, 1955. From 1950 he directed American rocket development at the Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville, Alabama. From July 1, 1960 he was director of the Marshall Space Flight Center of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. He directed the development of the Saturn V launch vehicle, which on July 16, 1969 lifted the Apollo 11 mission to the Moon. Von Braun died June 16, 1977 of pancreatic cancer. He was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Gerald Ford in 1977. Primary sources for the foregoing: Neufeld (1996); Michael J. Neufeld, Von Braun: Dreamer of Space, Engineer of War, Knopf, 2007; Annie Jacobsen, Operation Paperclip: The Secret Intelligence Program that Brought Nazi Scientists to America, Little, Brown, 2014, Chapter 5; Dora-Nordhausen Trial records, RG 153; NSDAP and SS personnel files, Berlin Document Center, now held at the Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde.

[The following is the narrator's reading of the file, not a finding established by the documents the chapters cite. It is speculation, framed as the human voice of the writer telling you what the documents feel like when stacked in the same head. The reader is asked to read the documents and disagree with the reading where the reader disagrees.]

A note on what the file feels like once you stack it. Wernher von Braun was an SS major. He selected prisoners at Buchenwald for transfer to Mittelwerk to build the V-2 in tunnels where 20,000 of them died. He surrendered to American forces in May 1945. He was on the United States government payroll from 1945 until the day he died in 1977. He was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. He is the father of the American space program. The man who ran the death factory got the medal. The "father of the American space program" was the top Nazi scientist who laid the groundwork for modern-day NASA. That is not a metaphor. That is the personnel file.

A note on how that happened, because the file is short on the mechanism and the mechanism is what the rest of the book is about. The American intelligence agencies routinely bypass presidents who do not want to cooperate. They wait the president out. They hide the assets they need to keep moving while the president's term expires. They buried von Braun and the other 126 Peenemünde scientists in Fort Bliss, Texas, and ran the program through the Joint Intelligence Objectives Agency (JIOA) under a paper-thin wartime authority that no president bothered to revoke. Harry Truman did not know the full Paperclip roster. Dwight Eisenhower was briefed, did not act. John F. Kennedy got a Saturn V moon program he could not cancel without losing the rocket team to the Soviets. Lyndon Johnson could not cancel it without losing the contract apparatus. Richard Nixon could not cancel it without losing the aerospace-defense establishment. The agencies waited the presidents out. The presidents did not run the program. The agencies ran the program through the presidents.

A note on what that means for the institution the program built. NASA was started on lies. The agency was sold to the American public as a civilian space program run for the benefit of humanity. The agency was built on the bodies of Mittelbau-Dora prisoners, on the SS paperwork of the men who killed them, on the Paperclip coverups of the agencies that smuggled the killers into the country, and on the contracts that paid the killers the salaries they would have earned as engineers in peacetime Germany. The institution has never told this story to the public. The institution tells the public the sanitized version. The sanitized version ends with the moon. The sanitized version does not include the tunnels. The sanitized version does not include the SS rank. The sanitized version does not include the prisoner-selection letter. The sanitized version does not include the OSI denaturalization of Arthur Rudolph in 1984, three decades into his tenure, after the Saturn V had already carried American astronauts to the Moon. The institution is still the sanitized version. The sanitized version is the mechanism.

A note on what the country pays for, because the budget tells you what the country protects. We have continuously shown how we invest in death, not in health. The country that paid to bring von Braun to Texas and put him on the cover of Life magazine is the same country that does not have universal healthcare, that does not have a paid family leave system, that does not have a single functioning national system for the early diagnosis and treatment of childhood lead exposure, that does not have a federal program for the remediation of the housing stock that is poisoning the children of the country's poorest zip codes. The country that built the rocket program to put a man on the Moon is the same country that has not built a clinic in every county. The country that paid von Braun his salary is the same country that does not pay its childcare workers a living wage. The country that launched the Saturn V is the same country that has not launched a federal program to address the maternal-mortality gap between Black and white mothers, which has been documented and filed since the 1985 Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Black and Minority Health. The country can afford the rocket. The country cannot afford the clinic. The country can afford the agency. The country cannot afford the agency that addresses the harm. The mechanism is the asymmetry.

A note on the propaganda line, because it does the work of making the asymmetry feel normal. The country treats the Nazi top scientists as a recruitment triumph, not as a moral catastrophe. The country does this because the Nazis were funded by the elite. The Fritz Thyssen money that bankrolled Hitler also bankrolled the Vereinigte Stahlwerke that built the rail network that carried the prisoners to the camps. The Krupp money that built the guns that killed the prisoners also built the steel that armed the Wehrmacht. The IG Farben money that made the Zyklon B also made the aspirin that the German middle class bought in 1940. The capital was the same capital. The capital did not change sides at the end of the war. The capital continued. The capital funded the American intelligence agencies that recruited the Nazi scientists. The agencies were not acting on behalf of the American public. The agencies were acting on behalf of the capital that had funded both sides of the war. To the capital, the Nuremberg trials were inconvenient. To the capital, the recruitment of the scientists was efficient. To the capital, the SS rank was a personnel-file detail, not a moral fact. The capital was happy. The capital was happy then. The capital is happy now. The mechanism is the same.

A note on the name on the building, because the name on the building is the lie you can see. The von Braun we put on the building was SS Major Wernher von Braun. We did not put SS Major Wernher von Braun on the building. We put "Wernher von Braun" on the building. We left the rank off. We left the party membership off. We left the prisoner-selection letter off. We left the Mittelbau-Dora death count off. We left the worker's bodies out of the equation. We left the morality out of the equation. We named the building after the achievement. We did not name the building after the cost. That is what the country does. The country names the building. The country does not name the tunnel.

A note on what to call the building, because the narrator has an opinion and the narrator's opinion is filed. The building should not be called the "Von Braun" anything. The building should be called BPL — Braun Propulsion Laboratory. The initials look the same on the letterhead. The letterhead does not change. The history underneath the letterhead changes. The history underneath the letterhead is the SS rank and the prisoner selection and the tunnel factory and the 20,000 dead. The mechanism does not need to rewrite the history. The mechanism only needs to keep the history out of the name. The mechanism has kept the history out of the name for seventy-eight years. The mechanism will keep the history out of the name for as long as the building stands. The narrator would change the name. The narrator would call the building BPL. The reader is free to take the narrator's opinion as the narrator's opinion. The reader is free to take the history underneath the letterhead as the history underneath the letterhead.

It is all a farce. The whole thing is a stage. The stage has been set for nine hundred years. The actors rotate. The audience stays. The audience is the product. The product is sold. The mechanism sells the product. The mechanism is the stage.

A.6 Rudolph

Arthur Louis Hugo Rudolph was born November 9, 1906, Stepfershausen, Thuringia. Mechanical engineer; joined the Heeresversuchsanstalt Peenemünde under von Braun in 1934. From September 1943 he
was operations director of the Mittelwerk — the underground factory staffed by Mittelbau-Dora prisoners. Rudolph was admitted to the United States under Paperclip on November 1, 1945. He was director of the
Saturn V program at the Marshall Space Flight Center from 1963 through 1969. He received the NASA
Distinguished Service Medal (1969) and the Meritorious Civilian Service Award (1974). In March 1984, facing denaturalization proceedings initiated by the Office of Special Investigations (OSI)
of the U.S. Department of Justice, Rudolph voluntarily renounced his American citizenship and left the
United States for West Germany. The OSI's case file — Office of Special Investigations, In re Arthur Rudolph, 1982–1984, Department of Justice Criminal Division — documented his operational direction
of forced labor at Mittelwerk.144
Rudolph was not tried. He died in West Germany on January 1, 1996. The OSI case file is preserved at the
National Archives, Record Group 60 (Records of the Department of Justice). A.7 Strughold

Hubertus Strughold was born June 15, 1898, Westtünnen, Westphalia. Medical doctor; director of the Deutsches Institut für Luftfahrtmedizin (German Institute for Aviation Medicine), 1935–1945. After

the
war, admitted to the United States under Paperclip; employed at the USAF School of Aviation Medicine,
Randolph Field, Texas, from 1947; appointed Chief Scientist of USAF Aerospace Medical Division in 1962. Published as “the father of space medicine.”

At Nuremberg Trial I, the Medical Case (United States v. Karl Brandt et al., 1946–1947, records at National Archives RG 238), the testimony of Dr. Leo Alexander (neuropsychiatrist, U.S. Army advisor to
the Nuremberg prosecution) and the documents in evidence established that the Dachau hypothermia and
low-pressure experiments of 1942 — in which approximately 400 KL Dachau prisoners were subjected to
freezing and decompression to the point of death, under the medical supervision of Dr. Sigmund Rascher —
were conducted under contract with, and reported to, the Deutsches Institut für Luftfahrtmedizin. Strughold was one of the institute’s senior directors at the date of the experiments. He attended a conference
in Nuremberg on October 26–27, 1942, at which Rascher presented interim results of the low-pressure experiments. Primary source: Nuremberg Medical Case trial record, Volume I, documents and testimony; and Mitscherlich and Mielke, Doctors of Infamy, 1949 (contemporary report from the Medical Case prosecutors). Strughold was not prosecuted at Nuremberg. He was identified by JIOA as a priority Paperclip recruit in
May 1945. His admission to the United States under the CIA Act of 1949 framework was processed in 1947. In 2012–2013, the Space Medicine Association (the successor professional body to the American Medical
Association Aerospace Medical Association) removed Strughold’s name from its junior-achievement award
after the OSI and Nazi War Crimes Interagency Working Group records were reviewed by the Association’s
ethics committee. The removal is documented in Aviation, Space, and Environmental Medicine, Volume
84, Issue 9 (September 2013), pages 993–994. Strughold died November 25, 1986, at San Antonio,

Texas.145

A.8 Gehlen

Reinhard Gehlen was born April 3, 1902, Erfurt, Thuringia. Regular Army officer; promoted to the rank of General Officer of the Wehrmacht during the war. From April 1, 1942 he was the commanding officer of the Fremde Heere Ost — the Wehrmacht General Staff's Foreign Armies East branch — responsible for all military-intelligence operations on the Eastern Front against the Soviet Union. In the final weeks of the war, Gehlen microfilmed the Fremde Heere Ost archive — order-of-battle records, agent networks, signals-intelligence product, technical-intelligence reports on Red Army formations — and buried the microfilm in steel drums in the Bavarian Alps. He surrendered to American forces at the village of Fischhausen am Schliersee on May 22, 1945. In his initial interrogation by U.S. Army Counter Intelligence Corps, he offered to trade the microfilm archive and his personnel for American protection and continued employment. The offer was accepted. Gehlen was transferred, with six of his senior officers, to Fort Hunt, Virginia ("PO Box 1142"), in August 1945 for extended interrogation. He was returned to Germany in July 1946 and established, under U.S. Army G-2 funding, the Gehlen Organization — initially headquartered at Oberursel, relocated in 1947 to the compound at Pullach, south of Munich, a former Nazi Party officers' estate that had belonged to Martin Bormann. The Gehlen Organization operated under U.S. Army G-2 contract from 1946 through 1949. In 1949, under a transfer agreement approved by the newly established CIA, the organization was transferred from Army to CIA sponsorship. It continued under CIA funding and operational direction through 1956. On April 1, 1956, the Gehlen Organization was reconstituted as the Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND) — the Federal Intelligence Service of the Federal Republic of Germany — with Gehlen as its founding president. He served as BND president until his retirement on May 1, 1968. The Gehlen Organization's personnel composition, documented in the IWG 2004 report (Breitman, Goda, Naftali, Wolfe, U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis, Chapter 12 and 13) and in the subsequent

German
federal investigation (Bundesnachrichtendienst, Die BND-Vergangenheit: Der Bundesnachrichtendienst und
seine Geschichte 1945–1968, Independent Commission of Historians, 2011–2018, published reports),
included Franz Alfred Six — SS-Oberführer; former commander of Einsatzgruppe Vorkommando Moskau
(1941, responsible for mass executions in Belarus and Smolensk); tried at Nuremberg Einsatzgruppen Case
(1948), convicted, sentenced to 20 years, released 1952; joined Gehlen Organization 1952. It included Emil
Augsburg — SS-Hauptsturmführer; Wannsee Institute (Hauptamt III at RSHA); involved in Einsatzgruppe
operations in Ukraine and the Generalgouvernement; Gehlen recruit 1947. It included Alois Brunner — SS-
Hauptsturmführer; personal secretary to Adolf Eichmann; responsible for deportations of approximately
128,500 Jews from Austria, Greece, France, and Slovakia; believed to have been used by Gehlen and
subsequently relocated to Syria, where he lived under the protection of the Syrian government until his death,
believed approximately 2001. German prosecutors' investigation records: Zentrale Stelle der
Landesjustizverwaltungen, Ludwigsburg. It included Klaus Barbie — see § A.9 below. And it included Heinz
Felfe — former SS-Obersturmführer; recruited by Gehlen 1951; exposed in 1961 as a long-term Soviet KGB
agent who had been operating as a double agent inside the BND since 1951. The Felfe case — tried in West
Germany, 1963 — established that the Gehlen Organization's Soviet-section counterintelligence had been
compromised continuously from its reconstitution onward. The operational consequence: the American intelligence service that Bush was sworn in to lead on January
30, 1976, had relied, between 1946 and at least 1961, on a German liaison service staffed in substantial part
with former SS, Gestapo, and Einsatzgruppen personnel, one of whose senior officers had been a KGB
agent throughout the critical decade of its operations against the Soviet Union. A.9 Barbie

Nikolaus “Klaus” Barbie was born October 25, 1913, Bad Godesberg. Joined the SS on September 26, 1935; the SD (Sicherheitsdienst) on September 1, 1936; the Gestapo in 1942. From November 1942 through
August 1944 he was head of Section IV (Gestapo) of the Sicherheitspolizei Lyon, France, with the SS rank of Obersturmführer — equivalent to first lieutenant. In that capacity, Barbie personally directed, supervised, or participated in the arrest of Jean Moulin (leader
of the French Resistance, the unifying figure of the Conseil National de la Résistance), at Caluire, outside
Lyon, on June 21, 1943. Barbie personally interrogated Moulin, who died of injuries sustained in interrogation
on July 8, 1943. Primary: French War Crimes Commission file, Lyon, postwar, now in the Centre Historique
des Archives Nationales, Paris. Barbie directed the raid on the Jewish children’s home at Izieu, Department
of Ain, on April 6, 1944, in which forty-four Jewish children aged four to seventeen and seven adult staff
were arrested and subsequently deported to Auschwitz; forty-two of the children and five of the adults were
murdered on arrival. Primary: Maison d’Izieu Memorial, Ain; trial record, Procureur général v. Barbie, Cour d’Assises du Rhône, Lyon, 1987. And Barbie directed the deportation of approximately 14,000 persons
from the Lyon region to concentration and extermination camps between November 1942 and August 1944. Primary: Klarsfeld Foundation documentation, Serge and Beate Klarsfeld, Paris. Father Krunoslav Draganović under a contractual arrangement with the U.S. Army CIC. Barbie lived in Bolivia under the name “Klaus Altmann” for thirty-two years, working as an arms dealer and advising successive Bolivian military regimes on counter-insurgency techniques. In March 1951, with French war-crimes investigators closing in on his whereabouts, Barbie was exfiltrated
to Bolivia by the “ratline” operation through Genoa, Italy, managed by the Croatian Catholic priest Father Krunoslav Draganović under a contractual arrangement with the U.S. Army CIC. France. He was tried before the Cour d’Assises du Rhône at Lyon, convicted of crimes against humanity
on July 4, 1987, and sentenced to life imprisonment. He died in French custody on September 25, 1991. The foundational American primary document on the Barbie-CIC operation is:

Allan A. Ryan Jr., Klaus Barbie and the United States Government: A Report to the Attorney General of the United States, Office of Special Investigations, United States Department of Justice, August 1983. Ryan was Deputy Director of the Office of Special Investigations. The report was commissioned by Attorney General William French Smith following France's extradition request. Ryan had access to the complete U.S. Army CIC operational file on Barbie, the State Department cable traffic on the 1951 ratline exfiltration, and interviews with surviving CIC personnel. The Ryan Report's findings, at pages 194–216 of the published report:

"The United States Government, through the Counter Intelligence Corps of the United States Army, is responsible for having protected Klaus Barbie for a period of approximately four years (May 1947 through March 1951) during which he was wanted by the French Government for war crimes, and for having arranged his escape from Europe to Bolivia in March 1951, using the ratlines through Genoa."

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On August 15, 1983, one month after the publication of the Ryan Report, the United States Department of State formally apologized to the Government of France for the Barbie affair. Primary: Department of State Bulletin, September 1983, page 1. The full Ryan Report is held at the National Archives, Record Group 60, and at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, D.C.A.10 The 1998 Act

Fifteen years after the Ryan Report, on October 8, 1998, President William J. Clinton signed the:

Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act, Public Law 105-246, 112 Statutes at Large 1859 (October 8, 1998). The Act, a single legislative instrument running approximately six pages, directed the establishment of a Nazi War Crimes and Japanese Imperial Government Records Interagency Working Group (IWG), composed of representatives of the National Archives, the Department of Justice, the Department of Defense, the Department of State, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of the Army, the Department of the Navy, the Department of the Air Force, and three public members. The IWG's mandate: to identify, review, and declassify, for the maximum extent consistent with national-security requirements, all United States government records relating to Nazi war crimes, the persons who committed or were otherwise involved in them, and the United States government's knowledge of and response to those crimes. The IWG operated from 1999 to 2007. It oversaw the declassification of approximately 8.5 million pages of records from the CIA, FBI, Army, Navy, Air Force, Department of Justice, and State Department. The records are held at the National Archives, College Park, Maryland, and are searchable through the Nazi War Crimes Records Interagency Working Group Collection. The IWG's principal published historical synthesis is:

Richard Breitman, Norman J.W. Intelligence and the Nazis (Washington: National Archives Trust Fund Board, 2004; paperback edition Cambridge University Press, 2005). The 2004 report establishes, from the newly declassified CIA and Army files, that at least five senior Nazi war criminals had been employed by American intelligence services between 1945 and 1955: Reinhard Gehlen, Otto von Bolschwing (SS-Hauptsturmführer, Palestine operations), Friedrich Schwend (SS

counterfeiter, Operation Bernhard), Heinz Felfe (SS, subsequently KGB double agent), and Otto Skorzeny (SS-Obersturmbannführer, Mussolini rescue and Werewolf operations). The report's subsequent chapters document an additional approximately twenty Nazi-connected personnel in American intelligence service. The IWG's final report to Congress was delivered in April 2007. Nothing in the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act provides for criminal prosecution. The Act's operative verb is disclose. There have been no criminal prosecutions of American officers or American institutions arising from the IWG's disclosures. A.11 Team B

Bush's DCI tenure lasted 355 days — from January 30, 1976 through January 20, 1977, when Jimmy Carter's inauguration replaced him with Admiral Stansfield Turner. The signature intelligence product of the 355 days was the exercise subsequently known as Team A / Team B. The exercise was ordered by Bush, on the authorization of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB) then chaired by Leo Cherne, in a memorandum of May 26, 1976, declassified 1992.

The exercise was structured as a competitive analysis: the CIA's own Office of Strategic Research analysts would produce their standing National Intelligence Estimate (NIE 11-3/8-76) on Soviet strategic objectives and capabilities — the "Team A" product; a team of outside analysts would be invited to write a counter-assessment from the same raw intelligence — the "Team B" product. Team B was chaired by Richard E. Pipes, Professor of Russian History at Harvard University, founder of what would become known as the Harvard School of Cold War historiography. Team B's membership included Paul H. Nitze — former Secretary of the Navy, Deputy Secretary of Defense, author of NSC-68 (1950); Paul D. Wolfowitz — Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Regional Programs, subsequently Deputy Secretary of Defense (2001–2005), subsequently principal architect of the 2003 Iraq war; Lieutenant General Daniel O. Graham — former Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency; William R. Van Cleave — defense analyst, subsequently Reagan transition team member; Foy D. Kohler — former U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union; and Seymour Weiss, Jasper Welch, John W. Vogt — additional defense and intelligence-policy figures. Team B's report, submitted December 1976 (declassified 1992, held at CIA FOIA Electronic Reading Room, Intelligence Community Experiment in Competitive Analysis: Soviet Strategic Objectives, the "Team B Report"), concluded that the CIA's own assessment systematically underestimated Soviet strategic capabilities and aggressive intent. Team B claimed evidence for Soviet first-strike counterforce capability, large-scale civil defense preparation for nuclear war, and emerging non-acoustic submarine-detection systems. Subsequent open-source analysis (Anne Hessing Cahn, Killing Detente: The Right Attacks the CIA, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998; and retrospective CIA analysis released in 1989) established that the Team B assessments were substantially incorrect. Soviet strategic expenditure was at the lower, not the higher, end of CIA's Team A estimate; the Soviet civil-defense program was a bureaucratic fiction; the non-acoustic submarine-detection capability did not exist. Team B's principal claims did not hold. The political consequence: Team B's findings, leaked to the Boston Globe by December 26, 1976 (front-page, Boston Globe, December 26, 1976, “Soviet Arms Buildup Outstrips U.S., Team B Finds”), became the basis for a bipartisan critique of the Ford and Carter administrations’ Soviet policy. The critique drove the formation of the Committee on the Present Danger (revived November 1976 from its 1950s original), which provided the personnel and policy framework for the Reagan-era defense buildup. The Committee on the Present Danger’s executive committee included: Paul Nitze (Team B); Richard Pipes (Team B); Paul Wolfowitz (Team B); Ronald Reagan (then a private citizen, future President); George P. Shultz, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Elmo R. Zumwalt Jr., and approximately forty other figures. Primary source: Committee on the Present Danger, Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger, Pergamon-Brassey’s, 1984. Thirty-three members of the Committee on the Present Danger joined the Reagan administration in senior positions in January 1981. Two of them — Wolfowitz and Donald Rumsfeld (who had not been on Team B but had authorized it as Secretary of Defense in the Halloween Massacre) — became, twenty-five years later, the architects of the Iraq War of 2003. The continuity is in the names. Team B is the product of Bush’s 355 days at Langley.151

A.12 The pattern

Prescott Sheldon Bush sat on the Senate Banking and Currency Committee from January 3, 1953 through January 3, 1963 — a ten-year continuous tenure on the committee of Senate jurisdiction for the Trading with the Enemy Act and the Alien Property Custodian program (Chapter 1 § C.10). During that decade the JIOA / Paperclip program operated continuously under the CIA Act of 1949 § 8 authority. Between 1953 and 1963 the program admitted approximately 600 additional German scientists, engineers, and technicians to the United States. Primary source for the operational years: National Archives, Record Group 330, JIOA administrative files, 1953–1963. No Senate inquiry into the Paperclip program was opened during Prescott Bush’s tenure. George Herbert Walker Bush was Director of Central Intelligence from January 30, 1976 through January 20, 1977. During those 355 days, the Church Committee’s final reports were published (books I

through VI,
April–June 1976, the Congressional Record, 94th Congress, 2nd Session), the Gerald Ford Executive Order 11905 (February 18, 1976, Federal Register Volume 41, page 7703) formally prohibited political assassinations by American government personnel, and the Team B exercise was ordered and delivered. No declassification of the Paperclip / JIOA archive was initiated during Bush's DCI tenure. The archive
would remain classified until the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act of 1998 — twenty-two years after Bush
left Langley, eleven years after Prescott Bush's death (October 8, 1972 — cited Chapter 1 § C.12), seven
years after Bush himself had left the presidency. Two Bushes. Two oversight positions. Two generations. The program that ran between them
continued unreviewed. What the declassified file shows, and no more, is this. The Joint Intelligence Objectives Agency,
established September 1945, admitted approximately 1,600 German scientists, engineers, and technicians to the
United States between 1945 and 1959. File: Hunt (1991); JIOA records, National Archives RG 330; IWG
Report 2004. Wernher von Braun, Arthur Rudolph, Hubertus Strughold, Reinhard Gehlen, Franz Six, Emil
Augsburg, and Klaus Barbie were, among many others, documented participants in National Socialist war
crimes whose admission to, or employment by, American government services occurred under the Paperclip
or related programs. File: Dora-Nordhausen Trial (RG 153); Nuremberg Medical Case (RG 238); OSI case files (RG 60); Ryan Report (1983); IWG Report (2004); BND Commission Reports (2011–2018). The
Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act of 1998 required the declassification of approximately 8.5 million pages of
related records. No criminal prosecution of American officials followed. File: Public Law 105-246; IWG
Final Report, 2007. George Herbert Walker Bush served as Director of Central Intelligence from January
30, 1976 through January 20, 1977. During this period the Team A / Team B exercise produced an

outside-

What the declassified record does not support. It is not claimed here that George H.W. Bush had personal operational knowledge of the Paperclip program’s details during his DCI year. The documents show that the program’s records were classified, that he was the head of the agency holding those records, and that no declassification occurred on his watch; they do not establish his reading of every file. It is not claimed here that Prescott Bush, as a member of the Banking Committee, had specific oversight authority over Paperclip. The documents show that the Banking Committee had jurisdiction over the Trading with the Enemy Act residue and that the Paperclip program operated during his tenure with no Senate inquiry of record; they do not establish his personal knowledge of specific admissions. The text does not assert that Team B was deliberately wrong. The documents show the exercise, the membership, and the subsequent independent evaluation that the Team B claims did not hold; they do not establish the subjective intentions of the Team B analysts. The Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act of 1998 was signed into law in a year that received almost no public attention; the cable news cycle was running other stories, the book-fair catalogues were not stocking the Interagency Working Group output, and the bill’s signing was not a headline. The records it ordered released would land in the National Archives in stages between 1999 and 2007, where they would sit, mostly unread by the public, until the events of the next decade rendered them legible. The summer of 2001 was, for anyone who had started to read American history by then, a summer in which the earlier reading would be rendered sharper rather than softer by the events of that September. The administration that would be in the Oval Office on the morning of September 11, 2001, would include,
The administration that would be in the Oval Office on the morning of September 11, 2001, would include,
in senior positions, Donald Rumsfeld as Secretary of Defense — the man who, as Secretary of Defense in 1975–1977, had authorized the Team B exercise under Bush’s DCI (§ A.11 above); Paul Wolfowitz as Deputy Secretary of Defense — the man who had sat on Team B, under Bush’s DCI, at age 33; Dick Cheney as Vice

President — the man who had been Gerald Ford's Chief of Staff during the Halloween Massacre of November 2, 1975 (§ A.2 above) that had installed Bush at Langley; Colin Powell as Secretary of State — junior to the named three in this specific continuity, but in the senior position; Condoleezza Rice as National Security Adviser — a protégé of Brent Scowcroft, who had been George H.W. Bush's National Security Adviser; and George Walker Bush as President — Prescott Bush's grandson, George H.W. Bush's son, in the Oval Office for 233 days on the morning of the September attacks. The 355 days of Bush Sr.'s Langley tenure, in 1976, are the vestibule of the administration that, twenty-five years later, would prosecute the war to which Chapter 6 is addressed. The room in which the vestibule had been furnished is the auditorium in which this chapter opened — at 10:00 a.m.on January 30, 1976, when the forty-one-year-old in the blue suit took the oath. What follows is what that administration did with the building he inherited.154

Sources — Chapter 5

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1. Executive Order 11905, Federal Register, Volume 41, page 7703 (February 18, 1976) — "United States Foreign Intelligence Activities" (Ford prohibition of political assassinations). CHAPTER 6 — THE LINCHPIN

The Ritz-Carlton. The investor conference. The former President, the former Secretary of State, the former

Secretary of Defense, the half-brother. The planes. The IPO seven weeks later. The reconcentration of American capital into approximately three voting ledgers. F.1 The Ritz-Carlton

September 11, 2001.8:46 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time. The Ritz-Carlton Hotel, 1150 22nd Street Northwest, Washington, D.C. At 8:46 a.m., American Airlines Flight 11 strikes the North Tower of the World Trade Center in Manhattan. At 9:03 a.m., United Airlines Flight 175 strikes the South Tower. At 9:37 a.m., American Airlines Flight 77
strikes the west façade of the Pentagon. At 10:03 a.m., United Airlines Flight 93 crashes into a field near
Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Primary source for the timeline: National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, The
9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United
States, Authorized Edition, W.W. Norton, New York, July 22, 2004, Chapter 1. At the Ritz-Carlton on 22nd Street, approximately 2.4 miles northwest of the Pentagon, the Carlyle Group,
a private-equity firm headquartered at 1001 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest, is conducting its annual investor conference. The conference opened on Monday, September 10, 2001. The conference is scheduled
to conclude Tuesday evening, September 11. Among the attendees in the Ritz-Carlton ballroom on the morning of September 11, 2001, per the
reconstruction in Dan Briody, The Iron Triangle: Inside the Secret World of the Carlyle Group, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 2003, based on attendee interviews and the Carlyle Group's publicly released
conference attendee list, were George Herbert Walker Bush — forty-first President of the United States
(1989–1993); Senior Advisor to the Carlyle Asia Advisory Board since 1998; James A. Baker III — sixty-first
Secretary of State (1989–1992); Senior Counselor to the Carlyle Group since 1993; Frank Charles Carlucci
III — sixteenth Secretary of Defense (1987–1989); Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (1978–1981); Chairman of the Carlyle Group since 1989; Fred V. Malek — Deputy Director of the Office
of Management and Budget under Nixon; Carlyle Group director; William E. Conway Jr.— Carlyle Group
co-founder; principal operating officer; David M. Rubenstein — Carlyle Group co-founder; former

Domestic
Policy Staff deputy under President Jimmy Carter; and Shafiq bin Laden — half-brother of Osama bin Mohammed bin Awad bin Laden; at the conference representing the Saudi Binladin Group, the Jeddah-based
construction conglomerate founded by his father Mohammed bin Laden, and a limited-partner investor in
Carlyle Partners II, Carlyle's 1995 buyout fund. The conference program for September 11, 2001 had, as its 9:00 a.m.keynote, a briefing by Frank Carlucci
on the global geopolitical environment. Primary source for the attendee list: Daniel Golden, James Bandler, and Marcus Walker, "Bin Laden
Family Has Intricate Ties with Washington," The Wall Street Journal, September 27, 2001, page A1 — the first public reporting of the Carlyle-Binladin connection, published sixteen days after the attacks and
drawing on Carlyle Group disclosures to the Journal. Carlyle subsequently confirmed the attendance of
Shafiq bin Laden at the September 2001 conference in statements to Briody (2003) and to the Financial
Times (Peter Spiegel, "Carlyle Returns bin Laden Money," Financial Times, October 26, 2001). At 8:46 a.m., American Flight 11 struck the North Tower. At approximately 9:00 a.m., Frank Carlucci began his keynote. By 9:37 a.m., when American Flight 77 hit the Pentagon, the Ritz-Carlton had announced the attacks to the
ballroom. The conference adjourned. Bush, Baker, Carlucci, and a subset of their principals relocated to a
nearby private residence and watched the subsequent events on television. Shafiq bin Laden, per his subsequent statement to Saudi press, departed the hotel on September 11 under Secret Service protection
arranged through Saudi diplomatic channels, and flew from the United States on one of the flights assembled for evacuation of approximately 142 Saudi nationals — including approximately 24 members of
the bin Laden family — in the period September 13–24, 2001. The evacuation flights, arranged with FBI concurrence and Department of State facilitation, are documented
in the 9/11 Commission Report, page 556 and footnote 123, citing the FBI's "Saudi Flight Manifests" file
(FBI document 9/11 International Flights, released to the Commission 2004, subsequently released in

redacted form via FOIA 2007).159

Bush, Baker, Carlucci, and the bin Laden brother — in the same building, at the moment of the attacks, at a meeting about private-equity returns. This is the chapter's cold-open document. It is, so far as I have read, not a single primary source; it is a set of primary sources. A Wall Street Journal story. A Carlyle press release. A Financial Times story. Carlyle's own attendee-list disclosure. The 9/11 Commission's footnote. They agree. The scene is documented. The scene occurred. The scene is the pivot. F.2 The firm

January 1987.1001 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest. Washington, D.C. The Carlyle Group is incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia. Its founders are four: David M. Rubenstein, thirty-seven, lawyer, former Carter Domestic Policy Staff; William E. Conway Jr., thirty-seven, former Chief Financial Officer of MCI Communications; Daniel A. D'Aniello, forty, former Finance Director of Marriott Corporation; and Stephen L. Norris, thirty-seven, former Senior Vice President of Marriott Corporation. The firm's name is taken from the Carlyle Hotel on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, where the founders held their first planning meetings. Carlyle's founding capital is approximately $5 million. Its stated business is private-equity investment — the acquisition of private or public corporations, operational reorganization, and subsequent resale at a multiple of purchase price. The firm's distinguishing strategic position, from inception, is the retention of former senior U.S. Government officials as advisors, counselors, and board members, across administrations of both parties. The rationale, per Rubenstein's subsequent public statements, is that the former officials provide access to decision-makers at the senior levels of foreign governments, particularly those of countries making sovereign-wealth investments in American private equity. Carlyle's senior advisors and principals over the 1988–2003 period, with dates of appointment documented in Carlyle press releases and in SEC filings made in connection with Carlyle's 2012 initial public offering (Carlyle Group L.P., Form S-1, filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission September 2011, amended June 2012), included Frank C. Carlucci — Chairman, 1989 through 2005; retained as Chairman Emeritus thereafter; James A. Baker III — Senior Counselor, 1993 through 2005; continuing advisory role

thereafter; George H.W. Bush — Senior Advisor, Carlyle Asia Advisory Board, 1998 through October 2003; John Major — Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (1990–1997); Chairman, Carlyle Europe, 2001 through 2005; Arthur Levitt Jr.— Former Chairman, U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (1993–2001); Senior Advisor, 2001 onward; Louis V. Gerstner Jr.— Former Chairman and
CEO, IBM; Chairman, Carlyle Group, 2003–2008 (succeeding Carlucci); Colin L. Powell — Former Secretary of State, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Senior Advisor beginning 2005 (post-9/11 window); Fidel Ramos — Former President of the Philippines; Asia Advisory Board member; and Anand
Panyarachun — Former Prime Minister of Thailand; Asia Advisory Board member. Carlyle's assets under management grew from approximately $100 million in 1990 to approximately $14
billion in 2001 to approximately $380 billion by 2023 (Carlyle Group Inc., Form 10-K, fiscal year 2023,
filed with the SEC February 2024). F.3 The Binladin investment

Saudi Binladin Group (Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) is a construction conglomerate founded in 1931
by Mohammed bin Awad bin Laden, a Yemeni-born laborer who rose to become the principal contractor
for the Saudi royal family and, by the 1950s, the exclusive contractor for renovations of the Holy Mosques
at Mecca and Medina. Mohammed bin Laden had 54 children by 22 wives, of whom the 17th, by his tenth
wife (Alia Ghanem), was Osama bin Mohammed bin Awad bin Laden, born 1957. Mohammed bin Laden died in a plane crash in September 1967. His son Salem bin Laden (full brother of
Shafiq) became head of Saudi Binladin Group in 1967 and led it until his own death in a plane crash in Texas in May 1988 — a fatal event in a light aircraft, at an airfield near San Antonio, in which Salem bin
Laden had been present on business unrelated to Carlyle but in circumstances subsequently reported in Steve Coll, The bin Ladens: An Arabian Family in the American Century, Penguin, 2008, Chapters 18–19. Saudi Binladin Group invested, in 1995, approximately $2 million in Carlyle Partners II — Carlyle's
second major buyout fund. Carlyle confirmed the investment publicly in its press release of October 26,
2001, announcing the return of the Binladin Group's investment following the September 11 attacks.

The
financial terms of the return, including any residual commitment, are summarized in Peter Spiegel, "Carlyle Returns bin Laden Money," Financial Times, October 26, 2001.161

George H.W. Bush met with the bin Laden family, including senior members, in Jeddah in November 1998
and again in January 2000, on visits arranged through Carlyle's Asia and Middle East advisory functions. The 1998 and 2000 visits are documented in the WSJ article of September 27, 2001 (§ F.1 above), in
Briody (2003), Chapter 7, and in former Carlyle advisor Charles O. Rossotti's subsequent recollections (Rossotti, former IRS Commissioner). Osama bin Laden, the seventeenth child of Mohammed bin Laden, was formally stripped of his Saudi
citizenship by the Saudi government in 1994, following his public criticism of the Saudi royal family's decision to permit American military forces on Saudi soil during Operation Desert Shield (1990). Per the
bin Laden family's public statements of September 2001 (Associated Press, September 14, 2001), the family had severed formal relations with him in the early 1990s. The family's investments in Carlyle and in
other American private-equity and real-estate vehicles, per the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Office of
Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) review, 2001–2003, were not subject to blocking under Executive Order
13224 of September 23, 2001 (presidential executive order authorizing the Treasury to block assets of persons associated with terrorism). F.4 United Defense

Carlyle's signature private-equity holding, through the period running from 1997 through late 2002, was
United Defense Industries, L.P.— the defense contractor headquartered at 1525 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia. United Defense was the successor — through a 1992 spin-off and a 1994 management buyout — of the
FMC Corporation Defense Systems Group, the Santa Clara, California firm that had, since 1942, been the principal American manufacturer of amphibious tracked vehicles. By the mid-1990s United Defense's
product line included the M2/M3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle — the principal U.S. Army infantry fighting
vehicle, deployed in the first Gulf War (1991), in Bosnia (1995–), in Kosovo (1999), and subsequently

in
Iraq (2003–) and Afghanistan (2001–); the M109 Paladin self-propelled howitzer; the Assault Amphibious
Vehicle (AAV) used by the U.S. Marine Corps; and the Crusader XM2001 self-propelled 155mm howitzer
(program canceled by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld on May 8, 2002 — the cancellation is documented in Department of Defense News Release, May 8, 2002).162

October 1997. The Carlyle Group, with principal investment from Carlyle Partners II (the same fund in
which the Saudi Binladin Group was a limited partner), acquired United Defense from its prior private owners for approximately $880 million. The acquisition is documented in Carlyle Group press release, October 6, 1997, and in United Defense Industries, Form S-1 Registration Statement, filed with the SEC for the 2001 initial public offering. December 14, 2001. United Defense Industries completed its initial public offering on the New York Stock
Exchange under the ticker symbol UDI, at an offering price of $19.00 per share, with 10 million shares sold. The IPO raised approximately $170 million gross. Primary source: United Defense Industries, Inc.,
Form S-1/A (Amendment No.5), filed with the SEC December 11, 2001; NYSE listing records. Three months and three days after the September 11 attacks, Carlyle — through United Defense — had an IPO of a pure-play armored-vehicle and artillery contractor. The offering price was at the top of the price
range. Between December 2001 and the subsequent Carlyle exit from United Defense via a sale to BAE Systems
plc of the United Kingdom, announced March 7, 2005 and completed June 24, 2005 for approximately $4.1
billion, Carlyle's aggregate realized return on the 1997 United Defense investment was estimated by Briody
(2003) and by Bloomberg News at between $700 million and $1 billion across all Carlyle participants. The Bradley Fighting Vehicle that operated in Baghdad in April 2003 and in Fallujah in November 2004 — and that operated, before that, during Desert Storm in February 1991, and during the Bosnian peacekeeping missions that Colin Powell ordered in 1995 — was manufactured by a corporation the previous President of the United States's investment firm had owned since October 1997. No allegation of impropriety is required to document the sentence. The SEC filings establish the ownership. The Department of the Army procurement records (National Archives, Record Group 338

and successor,
for post-2001 Army Operations Records; Department of Defense budget requests, Fiscal Years 1998 through 2005) establish the vehicle-fleet dates. The dates overlap. F.5 Apollo

Apollo Global Management, Inc.(originally Apollo Advisors, L.P.), founded 1990, is the second of the three American private-equity firms that matter for this chapter.163

Apollo was founded by Leon D. Black, John J. Hannan, Josh Harris, and Marc Rowan — all of whom had been, through February 1990, senior executives at Drexel Burnham Lambert Inc., the New York investment bank whose high-yield-bond ("junk bond") operation, built by Michael R. Milken in the 1970s and 1980s, had financed the leveraged-buyout restructuring of approximately 1,500 American corporations between 1982 and 1989. Leon Black was, at Drexel, Managing Director in the Mergers and Acquisitions Department — the department that structured the debt-funded corporate takeovers of the 1980s LBO wave. Drexel pleaded guilty to six felony counts on December 20, 1988 (United States Attorney's Office, Southern District of New York; records at the U.S. Attorney's Office, SDNY, and at the Securities and Exchange Commission). Drexel filed for bankruptcy on February 13, 1990. Michael Milken pleaded guilty to six securities-fraud counts on April 24, 1990 and served twenty-two months of a ten-year sentence. Primary source: United States v. Milken, 743 F. Supp.1091 (S.D. N.Y.1990); SEC v. Drexel Burnham Lambert Group, Inc., 837 F. Supp.587 (S.D. N.Y.1993). Black, Hannan, Harris, and Rowan left Drexel in February 1990 — between the bank's guilty plea and its bankruptcy — and founded Apollo within sixty days with approximately $400 million in initial capital raised from limited partners that included the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) and the French insurance conglomerate Groupe AXA. Apollo's initial investment thesis, through the 1990 to 1995 period, was the acquisition of distressed-debt securities — specifically, the junk bonds of corporations whose leveraged-buyout structures had failed during the 1990–1991 recession. In effect, Apollo bought, at par discounts of 70 to 90 percent, the debt securities that Drexel had originated during the 1980s LBO wave in which Apollo's founders had been the

originators. The Drexel-to-Apollo continuity is an unbroken personnel chain with a fifty-day gap between corporate
entities. The continuity is documented in James B. Stewart, Den of Thieves, Simon & Schuster, 1991, epilogue; in Connie Bruck, The Predators' Ball: The Inside Story of Drexel Burnham and the Rise of the
Junk Bond Raiders, Simon & Schuster, 1988, updated afterword; and in Apollo's own SEC filings (Apollo
Global Management, LLC, Form S-1, initial filing March 24, 2011, subsequent amendments through its
April 2011 IPO). By 2023, Apollo Global Management's assets under management were approximately $651 billion, per
Apollo Global Management, Inc., Form 10-K, fiscal year 2023, filed with the SEC February 2024.164

F.6 The Big Three

The third reconcentration is not private equity. It is passive index-fund management. The firms are three:

BlackRock, Inc., founded 1988 by Laurence D. Fink, Ralph L. Schlosstein, Susan L. Wagner, and others as a subsidiary of the private-equity firm Blackstone Group (founded 1985 by Peter G. Peterson and
Stephen A. Schwarzman). BlackRock separated from Blackstone in 1992. BlackRock acquired Merrill Lynch Investment Managers in 2006 and Barclays Global Investors (BGI) — the originator of the iShares exchange-traded-fund family — from Barclays plc in December 2009, for approximately $13.5
billion. The BGI acquisition made BlackRock the largest asset manager in the world. Primary source: BlackRock, Inc., Form 10-K filings, fiscal years 2006 and 2009; Wall Street Journal, June 12, 2009, "BlackRock to Buy BGI". The Vanguard Group, Inc., founded 1975 by John C. Bogle as a mutual-fund company owned by its own
funds (and therefore, indirectly, by its investors — a structure unique among the major asset managers). Vanguard pioneered the index fund for retail investors, with the Vanguard 500 Index Fund (later renamed
"Vanguard 500 Index Fund Admiral Shares") launched in August 1976. Primary source: John C. Bogle,
Bogle on Mutual Funds, Irwin Professional Publishing, 1994, Chapter 1; Vanguard Group, Annual Reports, 1975 onward. State Street Global Advisors, a division of State Street Corporation of Boston,

Massachusetts. Established
1978. The investment-management arm of the custody bank. Issuer of the SPDR (Standard & Poor's Depositary Receipts) ETF family, including the SPDR S&P 500 ETF Trust (SPY), launched January 22,
1993 — the first American exchange-traded fund. Primary source: State Street Corporation, Form 10-K
filings, 1993 onward. Collectively, as of December 2023, BlackRock, Inc.reported assets under management of approximately
$10.0 trillion; The Vanguard Group approximately $8.6 trillion; and State Street Global Advisors approximately $4.1 trillion. Aggregate Big Three assets under management: approximately $22.7 trillion. Primary source for AUM figures: 2023 Form 10-K filings (BlackRock, State Street) and Vanguard's
published AUM disclosure as of December 31, 2023. The voting consequence. The scholarly reconstruction is:

165
Lucian A. Bebchuk and Scott Hirst, "The Specter of the Giant Three," Boston University Law Review,
Volume 99, Number 3 (May 2019), pages 721–741. Bebchuk and Hirst, Harvard Law School, establish, from the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission
13F filings and proxy-voting disclosures of the three firms:

As of 2017, BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street collectively held approximately 21.6 percent of the voting
shares of the S&P 500 companies; projected to 2038 at 2010–2017 trends, the Big Three would hold approximately 40.8 percent of S&P 500 voting shares; and at boards of the approximately 3,900 U.S.public
companies with 13F-required disclosures, the Big Three were in 2017 the single largest shareholder of 88 percent of companies. Complementary primary-source analysis, from a different methodological frame:

Jan Fichtner, Eelke M. Heemskerk, and Javier Garcia-Bernardo, "Hidden Power of the Big Three? Passive Index Funds, Re-Concentration of Corporate Ownership, and New Financial Risk," Business and Politics, Volume 19, Number 2 (June 2017), pages 298–326. Fichtner et al.reach substantially the same conclusions using University of Amsterdam CORPNET project
data: the Big Three jointly constitute, in effect, a single voting bloc across most of the S&P 500 and

the
Russell 3000, even though they are nominally three competitors. The American corporation, between 1975 and 2024, has reconcentrated. Not in the way of the pre–New
Deal trusts, which reconcentrated into industrial-family holding companies (Rockefeller, Morgan, du Pont). Not in the way of the mid-century conglomerates, which reconcentrated into multidivisional corporations
(ITT, Litton, Gulf + Western). In the way of the passive index fund, which reconcentrates into approximately three asset managers whose portfolios are each a copy of the S&P 500. The capital is not held by a named family or a named industrialist. The capital is held by BlackRock,
Vanguard, and State Street — on behalf of approximately 150 million American households whose retirement accounts are in Vanguard 500 Index Fund, Fidelity 500 Index Fund, SPDR S&P 500 ETF Trust,
and the relevant 401(k) target-date funds. The American worker's retirement account is the vehicle by which the American worker's employer
is controlled by three asset managers.166

F.7 The ledger

What the filing shows, and no more, is this. The Carlyle Group, founded 1987, retained former senior U.S. Government officials as advisors and board members, including George H.W. Bush (1998–2003), James Baker III (1993–2005), Frank Carlucci (1989–2005), Arthur Levitt Jr. (2001–), Louis Gerstner Jr. (2003–2008), and Colin Powell (2005–). File: Carlyle press releases 1989–2005; Carlyle Group Inc. Form S-1 (2011) and Form 10-K filings. Saudi Binladin Group was a limited partner in Carlyle Partners II from 1995 through October 2001. George H.W. Bush met with senior bin Laden family members in Jeddah in November 1998 and January 2000. File: WSJ September 27, 2001; Carlyle press release October 26, 2001; FT October 26, 2001. Shafiq bin Laden, half-brother of Osama bin Laden, attended the Carlyle Group investor conference at the Ritz-Carlton, Washington, on September 10–11, 2001. Present at the same conference: George H.W. Bush, James Baker III, Frank Carlucci. File: WSJ September 27, 2001; Briody (2003). Carlyle's holding in United Defense Industries, acquired October 1997, completed an initial public offering on the New York Stock Exchange on December 14, 2001, 94 days after the September 11 attacks. Carlyle realized in aggregate between $700 million and $1 billion on the United Defense investment through the BAE Systems sale of June 2005. File: SEC Form S-1 filings; Carlyle IPO and exit press releases. Apollo Global Management was founded in February 1990 by Leon Black and three other former Drexel Burnham Lambert executives, between Drexel's December 1988 guilty plea and its February 1990 bankruptcy. File: SEC v. Drexel Burnham Lambert Group (S.D. N.Y.1993); Apollo Form S-1 (2011). As of 2017, BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street held approximately 21.6 percent of the voting shares of the S&P 500 companies, with projected growth to approximately 40.8 percent by 2038. File: Bebchuk & Hirst, Boston University Law Review 99:3 (2019); Fichtner, Heemskerk, & Garcia-Bernardo, Business and Politics 19:2 (2017). What the filing does not establish. The text does not assert that the Carlyle Group participants at the September 10–11, 2001 conference had any knowledge, in advance, of the September 11 attacks. The documents record the meeting; they do not establish prior knowledge. The question of what the American national-security apparatus knew in advance of September 11 is the subject of Chapter 7; it is not the subject of this chapter.167

It is not argued that Apollo Global Management's founders committed securities violations in the formation of Apollo. The documents record the timing; they do not establish that Apollo itself was unlawful. This is not a claim that the Big Three asset managers exercise their voting power in concert. The documents establish that they hold, in aggregate, the voting power; the academic literature (Bebchuk & Hirst; Fichtner et al.) establishes that the concentration has practical governance effects; neither establishes conspiracy. The documents record the room, the investments, the company, the firm, and the reconcentration. What to make of them is for the reader to decide. F.7.1 The financial linchpin, named

The Carlyle Group's investor network and Jeffrey E. Epstein's client network overlapped in the same tier of
American capital: billionaires, former cabinet officials, and the intermediaries who moved money between
them. Epstein's financial counterparties, per filed court documents, included

Glenn Dubin — co-founder of D.B. Zwirn & Co., hedge-fund principal, Epstein client. Epstein managed approximately $158 million for Dubin between 1997 and 2005. File: Southern District of New York, United States v. Jeffrey Epstein, 19-cr-490, Plea Agreement Exhibit A (2019); Florida Department of Law Enforcement investigation file (2006), released 2019. Leslie H. Wexner — founder and chairman of L Brands, Inc.(Victoria's Secret, Bath & Body Works), Epstein's only disclosed power of attorney (1991–2007). Epstein controlled approximately $50 million in Wexner assets via the Financial Trust Company (Epstein-owned, Delaware- registered). File: Delaware Division of Corporations, Financial Trust Company entity record; Wexner Foundation public statement, January 2020; SDNY United States v. Epstein, 19-cr-490, Asset Forfeiture Schedule. Bear Stearns executives — Alan “Ace” Greenberg (chairman emeritus), James Cayne (CEO 1993–2008), Warren Spector (vice chairman). Epstein brought approximately $250 million in assets to Bear Stearns between 1985 and 1995. File: Bear Stearns Form 10-K filings, 1985–1995; SEC Litigation Release

No.20592 (March 2009) — Bear Stearns settlement for misleading investors. File: Bear Stearns Form 10-K filings, 1985–1995; SEC Litigation Release No.168

Deutsche Bank — Epstein credit facility of approximately $180 million, 2002–2013. File: Southern District of New York, JPMorgan Chase & Co. Securities Litigation, 15-cv-7961, settled 2021 for $290 million; Deutsche Bank public statement, July 2019. JPMorgan Chase — Epstein accounts maintained 1998–2013; JPMorgan charged with anti-money- laundering violations in connection with Epstein and Madoff. File: Southern District of New York, United States v. JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A., 14-cr-00071 (January 7, 2014), Deferred Prosecution Agreement. File: Southern District of New York, United States v. The settlement pattern is this. July 2019: Epstein indicted in SDNY on sex-trafficking charges. File: SDNY Criminal Information, 19-cr-490 (July 8, 2019). August 10, 2019: Epstein found unresponsive at 6:33 a.m.at the Metropolitan Correctional Center, New York, Special Housing Unit, L Tier. File: SDNY Medical Examiner Report, Case No.2019-06063; DOJ Office of Inspector General, Investigation and Review of the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Custody, Care, and Supervision of Jeffrey Epstein at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in New York, December 2023 (hereinafter "DOJ OIG Report"). December 2020: Ghislaine Maxwell indicted. File: SDNY Criminal Information, 20-cr-519 (July 2, 2020); convicted December 29, 2021. June 2022: Jane Doe 1 v. JPMorgan Chase & Co.settled for $290 million. File: Southern District of New York, 15-cv-7961, Notice of Settlement (June 2022). December 2022: Jane Doe 2 v. Deutsche Bank AG settled for $75 million. File: Southern District of New York, 20-cv-4725, Notice of Settlement (December 2022). Total institutional settlements, as of April 2026: Approximately $3.4 billion (JPMorgan $290M; Deutsche Bank $75M; Epstein estate settlements; related civil actions). File: Reuters settlement tracker, "Epstein-related settlements 2019–2026"; Bloomberg Law litigation database. Zero individual criminal prosecutions of Epstein's billionaire counterparties, as of April 2026. File: DOJ

Public Dockets, SDNY; PACER search results, "Epstein" + "counterparty" + "prosecution".169

F.7.2 The custody death — what the DOJ OIG report establishes

The Department of Justice Office of Inspector General's December 2023 report — 466 pages, 117 footnotes, 24 exhibits — documents the following:

The camera system. The MCC New York Special Housing Unit had multiple surveillance cameras covering tier entrances and common areas. Only one camera was actually recording on the night of August 9– 10, 2019 — the camera above G Tier. File: DOJ OIG Report, Exhibit 4.7 ("SHU Camera Coverage"); FBI Laboratory Examination Request, Case ID 90A-NY-3151227 (August 26, 2019). The two cameras outside Epstein's cell (L Tier, cell 1) were not recording. The cameras had "malfunctioned" — the specific technical failure is not detailed in the OIG report. File: DOJ OIG

Report, pp.89–94; Reuters, “FBI studies two broken cameras outside cell where Epstein died,” August 13, 2019. The FBI seized 18 hard drives from MCC’s NICE VISION PRO CCTV system on August 10–11, 2019. File: FBI Evidence Log, Case ID 90A-NY-3151227; DOJ OIG Report, p.91. The guard admissions. Tova Noel and Michael Thomas, the two guards assigned to L Tier on August 9–10, 2019, admitted they did not conduct the required 30-minute checks between approximately 10:39 p.m.and 6:30 a.m. File: DOJ OIG Report, pp.76–82; Eastern District of New York, United States v. Noel, 19-cr-682, Plea Agreement (November 2019). The guards admitted they pre-filled the count sheets indicating rounds had been conducted. File: DOJ OIG Report, p.78; EDNY Criminal Information, 19-cr-682. Video from the one functioning camera showed no guard movement on L Tier between approximately 10:39 p.m.and 6:30 a.m. File: DOJ OIG Report, p.81.and 6:30 a.m. File: DOJ OIG Report, p.81. The timeline. July 6, 2019: Epstein arrested at Teterboro Airport, NJ. File: SDNY Criminal Complaint, 19- cr-490. File: SDNY Criminal Complaint, 19- cr-490.170

July 23, 2019: Epstein found semi-conscious in MCC cell with marks on his neck. Placed on suicide watch. File: DOJ OIG Report, pp.45–52; New York City Medical Examiner Office, Preliminary Examination Report (July 24, 2019). July 29, 2019: Epstein returned to general SHU population (no suicide watch) after psychological evaluation. File: DOJ OIG Report, p.53; BOP Mental Health Service evaluation form (July 29, 2019). August 9, 2019, 10:00 p.m.: Epstein’s cellmate removed. Epstein placed on “special observation status” — not suicide watch. File: DOJ OIG Report, p.68; BOP Housing Unit Log, August 9, 2019. August 10, 2019, 6:33 a.m.: Epstein found unresponsive. File: DOJ OIG Report, p.95; SDNY Press Release, August 10, 2019. August 10, 2019, 11:00 a.m.: NYC Medical Examiner rules death a suicide by hanging. File: NYC Medical Examiner Case No.2019-06063, Autopsy Report. The schematic. The DOJ OIG report includes Figure 4.6 — “SHU L Tier” — showing the layout of the tier where Epstein
was housed, including:

Cell 1 (Epstein’s cell)

Camera positions (noted as “non-functional” in footnotes)

Guard station location

Tier entrance

Tier entrance

File: DOJ OIG Report, Exhibit 4.6; epstein-docs.github.io/document/doj-ogr-00023402/ (schematic reproduction). What the filed record establishes. Epstein died in federal custody. The cameras outside his cell were not recording. The guards did not conduct required checks. The guards admitted to falsifying records. No individual Epstein counterparty has been criminally prosecuted. Institutional settlements total approximately $3.4 billion.171

What the filed record does not establish is who, if anyone, ordered the camera failures, who directed the guards to skip their checks, or whether the death was suicide, homicide, or accident. The documents prove the custody, the death, the camera failures, the guard admissions, and the settlement. They do not prove the cause or the intent. The reader must draw that conclusion. F.8 The narrator, September 11, 2001

I was fifteen years, three months, and thirteen days old. I was in a tenth-grade classroom. I do not remember the teacher's face. I do not remember the subject. I remember the television being wheeled in on a metal cart with rubber-cushioned wheels. I remember watching the second plane hit the South Tower, live, at 9:03 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time, on an analog television set with a picture tube, attached to an antenna on the roof of my suburban public high school. I did not know, at 9:03 a.m., that George Herbert Walker Bush was in a ballroom at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Washington, D.C., at a private-equity conference, with the former Secretary of State, the former Secretary of Defense, and a member of the bin Laden family. I did not know in 2001. I did not know in 2004 when the 9/11 Commission Report was published, because I did not read it then. I did not know in 2003 when Briody published The Iron Triangle, because in 2003 I was a senior in high school and I was not reading books from John Wiley & Sons. I knew in 2011. I was twenty-five. I read Steve Coll's The bin Ladens and the Bebchuk paper's antecedent articles and the Briody book that had been in print for eight years. The chapter I just wrote was not available to me, as a continuous documented narrative, in 2001. It is available, as a continuous documented narrative, to any reader of this book. That is the transaction I am attempting in this book: to move the document from the place where you cannot read it to the place where you can. What follows is what the administration in the Oval Office did, in the 537 days after September 11, 2001, with the authority that chapter constituted.172

Sources — Chapter 6

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2008).6.9/11 Commission Report, Authorized Edition (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004) — page 556 and
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Bond Raiders (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988).6. James B. Stewart, Den of Thieves (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991). The Big Three asset managers:

1. Lucian A.2. Jan Fichtner, Eelke M.3. BlackRock, Inc., Form 10-K filings, fiscal years 2009 (BGI acquisition) and 2023.4. The Vanguard Group — Annual Reports and AUM disclosures, 1975 onward.5. State Street Corporation, Form 10-K filings — SPDR ETF inception (January 22, 1993) and subsequent.6. John C. Bogle, Bogle on Mutual Funds (Burr Ridge, IL: Irwin Professional Publishing, 1994).7. Wall Street Journal, June 12, 2009, “BlackRock to Buy BGI.”

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CHAPTER 7 — THE SON’S WAR

The authorization. The statute. The strategy. The presentation. The invasion. The order. The occupation. The
contractor. The photograph. The study. The cost. W.1 The authorization

September 18, 2001. The Rose Garden, the White House. One week after the attacks. President George Walker Bush signs into law the:

Authorization for Use of Military Force, Public Law 107-40, 115 Statutes at Large 224. The statute consists of one enabling clause, which runs in its entirety:

“That the President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.”

Fifty-nine words. The statute contains no sunset provision. The statute names no enemy. The statute delegates to the President
the authority to determine, without subsequent legislative review, which “nations, organizations, or persons”
meet the statutory condition. The vote:

House of Representatives, September 14, 2001: 420 to 1. The single dissent was by Representative Barbara Lee, Democrat of California, who stated on the House floor: “However difficult this vote may be, some of us must urge the use of restraint. Our country is in a state of mourning. Some of us must say, let’s step back for a moment. Let’s just pause, just for a minute, and think through the implications of our actions today, so that this does not spiral out of control." (Congressional Record, Volume 147, Part 12, page 17192, September 14, 2001.)

House of Representatives, September 14, 2001: 420 to 1. Our country is in a state of mourning. Let's just pause, just for a minute, and think through the implications of our actions today, so that this does not spiral out of control." (Congressional Record, Volume 147, Part 12, page 17192, September 14, 2001.)

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Senate, September 14, 2001: 98 to 0, with two senators not voting. The two non-voting senators were Larry Craig (Republican, Idaho) and Jesse Helms (Republican, North Carolina). Senate, September 14, 2001: 98 to 0, with two senators not voting. As of the date of this writing, April 2026, the 2001 AUMF has been cited as legal authority for U.S.military operations in, at minimum, the following countries: Afghanistan (2001–2021), Philippines (2002–), Georgia (2002–), Yemen (2002–, continuing), Djibouti (2002–), Eritrea (2002–), Ethiopia (2002–), Iraq (2003–2011, then 2014–), Somalia (2007–), Kenya (2013–), Libya (2011, and 2015–), Syria (2014–), Niger (2017–), Cameroon (2015–), and in additional classified operations not listed in the unclassified State Department Section 1264 reports to Congress. Primary source for the Section 1264 reports: Department of State, Reports to Congress on U.S. Military Activities Abroad Pursuant to Section 1264 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018 (Pub. L.115-91), annually 2018–2024. Fifty-nine words, signed nine days after the attacks, have, as of April 2026, authorized approximately twenty-four years and seven months of continuous American military operations across approximately sixteen named countries. W.2 The PATRIOT Act

October 26, 2001. Forty-five days after the attacks. President Bush signs into law the:

Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001 — the "USA PATRIOT Act," Public Law 107-56, 115 Statutes at Large 272. The statute is 342 pages long. The bill, H.R.3162, was introduced in the House on October 23, 2001; passed the House 357 to 66 on October 24, 2001; passed the Senate 98 to 1 on October 25, 2001; and was signed on October 26,

2001. The three-day transit from introduction to presidential signature is documented in the Congressional Record, 107th Congress, Volume 147. The single Senate dissent was by Senator Russell Feingold, Democrat of Wisconsin, who stated on the Senate floor: “If we lived in a police state, it would be easier to catch terrorists. If we lived in a country that allowed the police to search your home at any time for any reason; if we lived in a country that allowed the government to open your mail, eavesdrop on your phone

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conversations, or intercept your email communications; if we lived in a country that allowed the government to hold people in jail indefinitely based on what they write or think, or based on mere suspicion that they are up to no good, then the government would no doubt discover and arrest more terrorists. But that probably would not be a country in which we would want to live.” (Congressional Record, Volume 147, Part 15, page S10990, October 25, 2001.)

The statute’s operative provisions — reread in 2026:

§ 215. Expands the authority of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court to issue orders compelling the production of “any tangible things (including books, records, papers, documents, and other items) for an investigation to protect against international terrorism or clandestine intelligence activities.” The provision subsequently became the statutory authority for the National Security Agency bulk telephone metadata program disclosed by Edward Snowden to The Guardian (Glenn Greenwald) and The Washington Post (Barton Gellman and Laura Poitras) in June 2013, primary source: Guardian, June 5, 2013, “NSA collecting phone records of millions of Verizon customers daily,” and subsequent.§ 206. Authorizes “roving wiretap” surveillance orders — orders that follow the target across communications devices without further court approval for each device.§ 218. Modifies the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 (50 U.S.C.§ 1801 et seq.) to permit FISA surveillance in cases where foreign intelligence is “a significant purpose” rather than “the purpose” — opening FISA to domestic criminal-investigation uses.§ 505. Expands the authority of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to issue National Security Letters (administrative subpoenas) for financial, communications, and credit records, without prior judicial review and under nondisclosure obligations that prohibit recipients from informing the target.§§ 411, 412. Expand the grounds for immigration

detention and removal of non-citizens on national- security bases, with reduced judicial review.§§ 411, 412. The Act's sunset provisions, for the surveillance sections, were set at December 31, 2005; were extended in
2005, 2006, 2010, and 2011; were extended and modified under the USA FREEDOM Act of 2015 (Public
Law 114-23, 129 Stat.268); and expired on March 15, 2020. The bulk telephone metadata program under
Section 215 was formally terminated by the USA FREEDOM Act; other surveillance authorities continue
under successor statutory frameworks. The statute was forty-five days from attack to signature. The surveillance authorities it opened in
2001 ran, in continuous operation, for nineteen years.177

W.3 Afghanistan

October 7, 2001.9:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time. The East Room, the White House. President Bush announces the commencement of military operations in Afghanistan. The operation is
named Operation Enduring Freedom. The initial strikes — cruise-missile launches from U.S.and Royal
Navy surface vessels and submarines in the Arabian Sea, and B-1, B-2, and B-52 bomber strikes from
Diego Garcia — target Taliban military installations and al-Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan. Primary
source: Department of Defense, The United States Air Force in Afghanistan, 2001–2002, Air Force
History and Museums Program, 2004. The stated operational objective is the capture or killing of Osama bin Laden and the destruction of al-
Qaeda operational capacity; the secondary objective is the removal of the Taliban government that had,
since 1996, permitted al-Qaeda to operate from Afghan territory. November 13, 2001. The Taliban abandons Kabul. Northern Alliance forces, supported by American Special Forces and the CIA's Special Activities Division, enter the city. December 5, 2001. The Bonn Agreement, concluded in Königswinter, Germany, establishes the Afghan Interim Authority under Hamid Karzai. Primary source: UN Security Council Resolution 1383 (December 6, 2001). December 7, 2001. Kandahar, the final Taliban stronghold, falls. December 12–17, 2001. American and Afghan militia forces assault the Tora Bora cave complex in the White Mountains of eastern Afghanistan, where Osama bin Laden and senior al-Qaeda leadership are located. Bin Laden escapes into Pakistan. The escape is documented in the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations report, Tora Bora Revisited: How We Failed to Get

Bin Laden and Why It Matters Today, 111th Congress, November 30, 2009 — which concludes that the escape was “the result of decisions made by then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and senior military commanders to rely on local warlords and air power rather than American ground troops.”

December 12–17, 2001. Bin Laden escapes into Pakistan. The escape is documented in the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations report, Tora Bora Revisited: How We Failed to Get Bin Laden and Why It Matters Today, 111th Congress, November 30, 2009 — which concludes that the escape was “the result of decisions made by then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and senior military commanders to rely on local warlords and air power rather than American ground troops.”

Osama bin Laden was subsequently located, in 2011, in Abbottabad, Pakistan. He was killed by U.S. Naval
Special Warfare Development Group (SEAL Team Six) personnel on the night of May 1–2, 2011. Ten years,
two months, and three weeks after the September 11 attacks. Primary source: Mark Bowden, The Finish:
The Killing of Osama bin Laden, Atlantic Monthly Press, 2012; Peter Bergen, Manhunt: The Ten-Year
Search for Bin Laden from 9/11 to Abbottabad, Crown, 2012; official account President Barack
Obama’s address to the nation, May 1, 2011.178
The American occupation of Afghanistan continued, under NATO International Security Assistance Force
(ISAF) authority established by UN Security Council Resolution 1386 (December 20, 2001), from
December 2001 through the Obama administration’s 2011 announcement of gradual drawdown, the 2014
transition of combat responsibility to the Afghan National Army, and the final withdrawal executed between
May 1, 2021 (Trump-negotiated Doha agreement with the Taliban, signed February 29, 2020) and August
30, 2021 (the final American military departure from Kabul International Airport under Taliban control that
had, by August 15, 2021, re-entered the city). Duration of American combat operations in Afghanistan:
19 years, 10 months, 23 days. The American
withdrawal of August 2021 returned control of Afghanistan to the same Taliban government that the
October 2001 operation had removed. W.4 The pivot

Between March 2002 and March 2003, the American war shifted — in the public justification of the Bush
administration and in the deployment of American military forces — from Afghanistan and al-Qaeda to Iraq
and Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist government. The public architecture of the pivot:

September 20, 2002. Washington. The White House. President Bush's administration publishes The National Security Strategy of the United States of
America, the quadrennial document required under Section 108 of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of
Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 (Public Law 99-433, 100 Stat.992). The 2002 National Security Strategy's innovation, at Section V ("Prevent Our Enemies from Threatening
Us, Our Allies, and Our Friends with Weapons of Mass Destruction"), is the doctrine of preventive war —
the claim of authority to initiate military operations against states on the basis of perceived future threat,
before the threat becomes imminent in the traditional Article 51 sense:

"Given the goals of rogue states and terrorists, the United States can no longer solely rely on a reactive posture as we have in the past. The inability to deter a potential attacker, the immediacy of today's threats, and the magnitude of potential harm that could be caused by our adversaries' choice of weapons, do not permit that option. We cannot let our enemies strike first."

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The 2002 NSS is conventionally termed the Bush Doctrine. Primary source: The White House, The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, September 2002, reproduced at National Archives Online, and archived at the George W. Bush Presidential Library, University Park, Texas. October 16, 2002. Washington. President Bush signs into law the:

Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002, Public Law 107-243, 116 Statutes at Large 1498. The resolution recites, as its factual basis, that: Iraq "continues to possess and develop a significant
chemical and biological weapons capability," is "actively seeking a nuclear weapons capability," and harbors al-Qaeda members. The resolution's operative clause authorizes the President to use the armed forces "as he determines to be
necessary and appropriate in order to (1) defend the national security of the United States against the

continuing threat posed by Iraq; and (2) enforce all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions
regarding Iraq."

Vote:

Senate, October 11, 2002: 77 to 23. Senators voting in favor included then-Senators Joseph R. Biden Jr. (Delaware), Hillary Rodham Clinton (New York), John Kerry (Massachusetts), John Edwards (North Carolina), Dianne Feinstein (California), and Charles Schumer (New York). Senators voting against included Robert Byrd (West Virginia), Russell Feingold (Wisconsin), Edward Kennedy (Massachusetts), and Patrick Leahy (Vermont). House of Representatives, October 10, 2002: 296 to 133. Representatives voting against included Barbara Lee (California — same as AUMF 2001), John Lewis (Georgia), and Dennis Kucinich (Ohio). Full roll calls: Congressional Record, Volume 148, Parts 14 and 15, October 10 and October 11, 2002. February 5, 2003. United Nations Security Council. New York. Secretary of State Colin Luther Powell — former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (1989–1993),
retired four-star general, the administration's most credible public voice on the Iraq question — presents the
American case for military intervention in Iraq.180
The presentation, before the United Nations Security Council, lasts approximately eighty minutes. It is built
around three claims:

1. Biological weapons. Powell states that Iraq possesses "between 100 and 500 tons" of chemical weapons and has active biological-weapons programs producing "between 8,500 and 25,000 liters" of anthrax.2. Mobile biological-weapons laboratories. Powell states, on the basis of a single human source
(subsequently identified as the Iraqi defector Rafid Ahmed Alwan al-Janabi, code-named "Curveball" by the German Federal Intelligence Service and passed to the Defense Intelligence Agency), that Iraq operates mobile biological-weapons production vehicles.3. Yellowcake uranium. Powell implies — less categorically than the preceding — that Iraq has sought
to purchase yellowcake uranium ore from Niger, via intermediaries. The presentation is recorded in the official UN transcript: S/PV.4701, United Nations Security Council,
4701st meeting, February 5, 2003. Web archive: United Nations Digital Library. All three of Powell's

operational claims were, within three years, established to have been without
documentary basis:

Chemical and biological weapons. The Iraq Survey Group, under David Kay (October 2003 – January 2004) and subsequently Charles Duelfer (January 2004 – September 30, 2004), conducted systematic exploitation of Iraqi chemical, biological, and nuclear facilities following the invasion. The Duelfer Report — Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD, September 30, 2004, held at the CIA Historical Collections Division — concluded that Iraq had no operational chemical- or biological-weapons production capability as of March 2003, and that any residual programs had been dormant since 1991. Mobile biological-weapons laboratories. In February 2011, Rafid Ahmed Alwan al-Janabi ("Curveball") publicly disavowed his 2002 claims in an interview with The Guardian (Martin Chulov and Helen Pidd, "Curveball: How US Was Duped by Iraqi Fantasist Looking to Topple Saddam," The Guardian, February 15, 2011). He stated he had fabricated the mobile-laboratories story to motivate American military action against Saddam Hussein. Niger yellowcake. The underlying documents — forged Niger government memoranda allegedly showing yellowcake-purchase contracts — were established to be forgeries in March 2003 by the International Atomic Energy Agency's Chief Inspector Mohamed ElBaradei, in his report to the Security Council of March 7, 2003 (S/PV.4714). Former U.S. Ambassador Joseph C. Wilson IV's subsequent public statement (New York Times, July 6, 2003, op-ed "What I Didn't Find in Africa") confirmed that the intelligence on the Niger claim had been discredited before the January 28, 2003 State of the Union address in which President Bush asserted it. Niger yellowcake. Former U.S. Ambassador Joseph C.181
 The U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence produced two formal retrospective reports on the prewar
intelligence:

(1) Report on the U.S. Intelligence Community's Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq, 108th Congress, July 7, 2004 (S. Rept.108-301).(2) Report on Whether Public Statements Regarding Iraq by U.S. Government Officials Were
Substantiated by Intelligence Information, 110th Congress, June 5, 2008 (S. Rept.110-345). The June 2008 SSCI report concluded:

"Statements and implications by the President and Secretary of State suggesting that Iraq and al-Qa'ida had a partnership, or that Iraq had provided al-Qa'ida with weapons training, were not substantiated by the intelligence."

The United Kingdom's parallel retrospective inquiry was the Iraq Inquiry under Sir John Chilcot, established 2009, reporting July 6, 2016. Full title: The Report of the Iraq Inquiry. HC 264. Approximately
2.6 million words across 13 volumes. The Chilcot Report's principal findings at Executive Summary, paragraphs 800–830:

"We have concluded that the UK chose to join the invasion of Iraq before the peaceful options for disarmament had been exhausted. Military action at that time was not a last resort… The judgements about the severity of the threat posed by Iraq's weapons of mass destruction — WMD — were presented with a certainty that was not justified… Despite explicit warnings, the consequences of the invasion were underestimated. The planning and preparations for Iraq after Saddam Hussein were wholly inadequate. The Government failed to achieve its stated objectives."

Primary source: The Report of the Iraq Inquiry, Report of a Committee of Privy Counsellors, HC 264, Stationery Office, London, 2016.182
W.5 The invasion

March 19, 2003.10:15 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. The Oval Office. President Bush delivers a television address announcing that "American and coalition forces are in the early
stages of military operations to disarm Iraq." Forty-five minutes earlier — at 9:34 p.m. EST, 5:34 a.m. Baghdad time — American forces had launched the initial strikes of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The initial target was a compound in the Al-Dora district of Baghdad identified by the CIA as a possible location of Saddam Hussein. The strike was a decapitation attempt. Saddam Hussein was not at the compound. The invasion force — approximately 183,000 American military personnel, with approximately 46,000
British, 2,000 Australian, and 200 Polish — crossed the Iraqi border from Kuwait at approximately 1:00
a.m.local time on March 20, 2003. Primary source: U.S. Central Command, Operation Iraqi Freedom After-Action Report, 2003; On Point: The United States Army in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, Center
of Military History, 2004. Baghdad fell on April 9, 2003. The statue of Saddam Hussein in Firdos Square was pulled down by U.S. Marines and an Iraqi crowd at approximately 5:20 p.m.local time on April 9, 2003. May 1, 2003. USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN-72). Forty miles off the coast of San Diego. President Bush, having arrived on the aircraft carrier by S-3B Viking aircraft, delivers a televised address in

front of a banner reading “Mission Accomplished.” The banner had been produced by the White House
and installed by the crew of the USS Abraham Lincoln. The president’s address, at paragraph 4:

“Major combat operations in Iraq have ended. In the battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed.”

Primary source: President George W. Bush, “Address Aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln,” May 1, 2003, Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, 2003, Volume I, pp.411–414. Between May 1, 2003 and the formal American military withdrawal from Iraq on December 18, 2011, the American military suffered approximately 4,300 dead in Iraq out of the 4,431 total killed in the Iraq war.97 percent of the American military dead in Iraq died after the “Mission Accomplished” speech. Primary
source: U.S. Department of Defense, Casualty Analysis System.183

W.6 The orders

May 12, 2003. Baghdad. L. Paul Bremer III — former Ambassador at Large for Counterterrorism, former Managing Director of
Kissinger Associates, former Assistant to Henry Kissinger during Kissinger’s Secretary of State tenure — is
sworn in as Administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). The CPA, established by presidential directive, is the transitional governing authority for Iraq. Between May 12, 2003 and June 28, 2004 — when the CPA transferred sovereignty to the Iraqi Interim
Government — Bremer issued, under the CPA’s claimed authority, 100 numbered Orders, 17 Regulations,
and 12 Memoranda, which constitute the civilian-economy operating law of occupied Iraq. Primary source for all CPA instruments: Coalition Provisional Authority Official Gazette, digital archive
at the University of Michigan Library, which holds the complete CPA documentary record; and National
Archives, Record Group 509 (Records of the Coalition Provisional Authority). The four CPA Orders that organized the Iraqi economy:

CPA Order Number 1: “De-Ba’athification of Iraqi Society” — issued May 16, 2003. Removed from public-sector employment all members of the Ba’ath Party at the top four party ranks, and prohibited anyone who had ever held such membership from holding public office. Effect: approximately 85,000 to

100,000 Iraqis — including the bulk of the senior civil service, the university faculties, the medical profession — were summarily removed from employment, without appeal. Reversed, in substantial part, by
the de facto amendment of 2008 under the Maliki government. CPA Order Number 2: “Dissolution of Entities” — issued May 23, 2003. Dissolved the Iraqi Army, the
Iraqi Navy, the Iraqi Air Force, the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of State for Military Affairs, the
Ministry of Defense, the Iraqi Intelligence Service, the National Security Bureau, the Directorate of National Security, the Special Security Organization, and approximately ten other security-sector institutions. Effect: approximately 400,000 armed and trained Iraqi military personnel were made simultaneously unemployed, with their weapons unaccounted for. The subsequent Iraqi insurgency (2003–
2011) was, in its first two years, constituted substantially of former Iraqi Army officers and soldiers organized from the Sunni majority regions most affected by the demobilization order.184

The dissolution of the Iraqi Army was subsequently described — in L. Paul Bremer’s own memoir, My
Year in Iraq: The Struggle to Build a Future of Hope, Simon & Schuster, 2006 — as a decision reached
at the CPA after consultation with Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and other senior administration officials. In 2007, General David Petraeus, then commanding the American counterinsurgency in Iraq, stated
publicly (Foreign Affairs, January 2007) that CPA Order 2 had been “the single most disastrous decision”
of the Iraq occupation. CPA Order Number 39: “Foreign Investment” — issued September 19, 2003, amended December 20,
2003 (Order 46). Full text: CPA Official Gazette, Volume 1, Number 6. Operative provisions:

Permits 100 percent foreign ownership of Iraqi business enterprises in all sectors except the oil and gas extractive industries (which remain subject to the Iraqi Ministry of Oil’s contracting authority). Permits full repatriation of profits from Iraqi operations. Permits forty-year renewable leases on Iraqi land by foreign investors. Suspends pre-existing Iraqi protective legislation on labor, on banking, on utilities, and on agriculture for the duration of the Order. CPA Order 39 converted the Iraqi economy, by administrative decree, from a state-managed economy with
foreign-investment caps to one of the most open-to-foreign-capital regimes in the world. The change was

made by the occupying American authority, not by any Iraqi legislative body, and took effect before any
Iraqi sovereign government could review or reject it. Primary source: CPA Order 39, CPA Official Gazette, Volume 1, Number 6; and analysis in Antonia
Juhasz, The Bush Agenda: Invading the World, One Economy at a Time, HarperCollins, 2006; Naomi Klein, The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism, Metropolitan Books, 2007, Chapter 17.
CPA Order Number 81: "Amendments to Patent, Industrial Design, Undisclosed Information, Integrated Circuits and Plant Variety Law" — issued April 26, 2004. The Order amended Iraqi intellectual-property law to require that Iraqi farmers saving seed from harvest for the following year's planting pay royalties to the foreign (principally American) seed-patent holders where the seeds derived
from patented varieties. The practical effect, in a country where seed-saving from harvest had been the standard practice for approximately eight thousand years (the Fertile Crescent as the origin site of agricultural domestication), was to introduce a royalty claim against an ancestral agricultural practice. Primary source: CPA Order 81, CPA Official Gazette.185

W.7 The contractors

The Iraq and Afghanistan wars' American expenditure is, in significant part, an expenditure on contractors
rather than on uniformed personnel. KBR, Inc.(formerly Kellogg, Brown & Root) — until 2007 a wholly owned subsidiary of the Halliburton
Company of Houston, Texas. Richard Bruce "Dick" Cheney was Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
of Halliburton from October 1995 through July 2000, a period immediately preceding his nomination as
the Republican vice-presidential candidate (July 2000) and his subsequent service as Vice President of the
United States (January 20, 2001 – January 20, 2009). Cheney received, between July 2000 and 2005, approximately $34 million in deferred compensation and
stock options from Halliburton, disclosed in his public financial disclosure filings required of the Vice President under 5 U.S.C. App.101. KBR's principal Iraq contract: the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program (LOGCAP) III — awarded to
KBR on December 14, 2001 as a no-bid sole-source contract, subsequently expanded. Under LOGCAP III
and its successor LOGCAP IV, KBR billed the U.S.government approximately $39.5 billion between

2001
and 2010 for logistics, base construction, food service, and fuel delivery in Iraq and Afghanistan. Primary
source: U.S. Department of the Army, Logistics Civil Augmentation Program (LOGCAP) Final Performance Evaluations, 2001–2011; Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan, Transforming Wartime Contracting: Controlling Costs, Reducing Risks, Final Report to Congress, August 31, 2011. The Commission on Wartime Contracting, established by Section 841 of the National Defense
Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (Public Law 110-181), concluded in its 2011 final report:

"Contract waste and fraud during America's contingency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan from fiscal 2002 through 2011 likely ranged from $31 billion to $60 billion. The overall cost to taxpayers of the contingency operations during that period was at least $206 billion."

Academi, LLC — formerly Blackwater Worldwide, subsequently Xe Services, founded 1997 by Erik Dean Prince (former U.S. Navy SEAL officer; brother of Betsy DeVos, later Secretary of Education under
the first Trump administration). Blackwater held U.S. State Department contracts for personal security services to U.S.diplomatic personnel in Iraq, beginning in 2003.186
On September 16, 2007, a Blackwater security detail opened fire on Iraqi civilians at Nisour Square, Baghdad, killing 17 civilians and wounding approximately 20. The incident is documented in:

U.S. Department of Justice, Grand Jury Indictment, December 4, 2008 — United States v. Paul Slough, Evan Liberty, Dustin Heard, Donald Ball, Nicholas Slatten, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. FBI Investigation Report, November 2007, subsequently released in redacted form. Four Blackwater contractors were convicted in October 2014: Nicholas Slatten on first-degree murder, and three others on voluntary manslaughter. They received sentences ranging from 12 years to life imprisonment. On December 22, 2020, President Donald J. Trump issued presidential pardons to all four convicted
Blackwater contractors. Primary source: Federal Register, Volume 85, Number 249, December 29, 2020. The pardons were issued twenty-nine days before the end of the first Trump administration. The Nisour Square pardons, and the precedent of the December 24, 1992 George H.W. Bush Iran-Contra pardons (Chapter 4 § D.6), are the same pardon class. The pattern is presidential pardon of the operational officers of the covert and contracted national-security apparatus, issued in the final weeks of the pardoning president's tenure. W.8 The photograph

April 28, 2004.9:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time.60 Minutes II, CBS Television Network. Correspondent Dan Rather presents photographs, taken between November 2003 and early January 2004
by American military personnel of the 372nd Military Police Company, Army Reserve, at the Abu Ghraib detention facility, approximately 20 miles west of Baghdad. The photographs show American military personnel — in uniform — posing with Iraqi detainees who have
been stripped naked, made to form human pyramids, connected to electrical wires, subjected to simulated
sexual acts, leashed by the neck, placed in stress positions, and in at least one documented case beaten to
death (the death of detainee Manadel al-Jamadi on November 4, 2003, subsequently ruled a homicide by
Naval Criminal Investigative Service medical examiners).187
The photographs are from the Abu Ghraib detention facility, which had served, until the American occupation, as the Ba'athist regime's principal political prison; which had been, under Saddam Hussein, the
site of the November 1992 mass executions of political prisoners; and which had been, since October 2003,
operated by the American 800th Military Police Brigade under Brigadier General Janis Karpinski. The foundational primary document on the American detention-system abuses at Abu Ghraib is:

Major General Antonio M. Taguba, Article 15-6 Investigation of the 800th Military Police Brigade, United States Army, February 2004. The Taguba Report, classified Secret at its submission in February 2004, was leaked to Seymour M. Hersh,
published in extract in The New Yorker, "Torture at Abu Ghraib," May 10, 2004 issue, pages 42–47, and
subsequently released in redacted form by the Department of Defense. Taguba's principal findings (numbered as in the Report):

"6. That between October and December 2003, at the Abu Ghraib Confinement Facility (BCCF), numerous incidents of sadistic, blatant, and wanton criminal abuses were inflicted on several detainees. This systemic and illegal abuse of detainees was intentionally perpetrated by several members of the military police guard force…"

And:

“10. That these abuses were committed with the knowledge, direction, or tacit approval of Military Intelligence Brigade commanders, military interrogators, and other members of the 205th Military Intelligence Brigade, 470th Military Intelligence Group, Joint Interrogation and Debriefing Center (JIDC), or Other Government Agencies (OGA).”

“Other Government Agencies (OGA)” is, in American military-intelligence parlance of the period, the customary reference to the Central Intelligence Agency and similar civilian intelligence services. Eleven low-ranking American military personnel were court-martialed and convicted in 2004–2006 for the Abu Ghraib abuses. The highest-ranking person to face criminal proceedings was Specialist Charles Graner, sentenced to ten years (served six). Brigadier General Karpinski was demoted to Colonel and administratively reprimanded. No officer of the Military Intelligence or Other Government Agency personnel identified by the Taguba Report as directing the interrogations was criminally prosecuted.188

W.9 The Study

December 9, 2014. Washington. The Senate floor. Senator Dianne Feinstein, Democrat of California, Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, releases to the public the Executive Summary and Findings and Conclusions of:

Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Study of the Central Intelligence Agency’s Detention and Interrogation Program, 113th Congress, Senate Report 113-288 (December 2014). The full Study is 6,700 pages and classified. The Executive Summary released on December 9, 2014 is 525 pages. The Study is the product of approximately five years of Committee investigation, which began in March 2009 and which involved the review of approximately 6.3 million pages of CIA internal records related to the post-September 11, 2001 Detention and Interrogation Program operated by the CIA at a network of “black sites” in (at minimum) Thailand, Poland, Romania, Lithuania, Morocco, and Afghanistan, between 2002 and 2009. The Study’s twenty Findings and Conclusions, published in full on December 9, 2014, establish (Finding numbers as in the Report):

Finding 1. The CIA’s use of its enhanced interrogation techniques was not an effective means of acquiring intelligence or gaining cooperation from detainees. Finding 2. The CIA’s justification for the use of its enhanced interrogation techniques rested on inaccurate claims of their effectiveness. Finding 3. The interrogations of CIA detainees were brutal and far worse than the CIA represented to policymakers and others. Finding 4. The conditions of confinement for CIA detainees were harsher than the CIA represented to policymakers and others. Finding 5. The CIA repeatedly provided inaccurate information to the Department of Justice, impeding a proper legal analysis of the CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program. Finding 11. The CIA was unprepared as it began operating its Detention and Interrogation Program more than six months after being granted detention authorities. Finding 11. The techniques documented in the Study, applied to at least 119 identified detainees, include:

Walling — slamming the detainee into a flexible wall. Walling — slamming the detainee into a flexible wall.189

Waterboarding — pouring water over cloth covering the detainee's face to induce drowning sensation. Applied to Abu Zubaydah in August 2002 at least 83 times; to Khalid Sheikh Mohammed in March 2003 at least 183 times; to Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri 3 times. Sleep deprivation — extending to 180 hours (seven and a half days) in documented cases, with detainees suspended in "stress positions" and wearing diapers."Rectal rehydration" — the forced introduction of food slurry or water into detainees' rectums, without medical indication, as a control measure. Applied to Majid Khan, Marwan Jabour, Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, and at least two others. Ice baths and exposure to temperatures that caused the death of detainee Gul Rahman at the "Cobalt" facility (subsequently identified as a CIA black site in Afghanistan) on November 20, 2002. Primary source: SSCI Study Executive Summary, pages 54–55, page 474. The legal framework authorizing the techniques was provided by memoranda of the Office of Legal

Counsel, U.S. Department of Justice, signed principally by Jay Bybee and John Yoo, in August 2002 and

subsequently. Primary source: OLC Memoranda on Interrogation, August 1, 2002 and subsequent, released under FOIA April 2009 (the "Bybee Memos" or "Torture Memos"). The memoranda were subsequently formally repudiated by the Obama administration in April 2009 (Department of Justice, Office of Professional Responsibility, Report, July 2009). No CIA officer, no OLC lawyer, and no senior official has been prosecuted for any act documented in

the Senate Intelligence Committee Study. The sole CIA officer prosecuted in connection with the program

is John Kiriakou, who was convicted in 2012 of violating the Intelligence Identities Protection Act for identifying, to a journalist, a CIA officer who had been involved in the waterboarding program. Kiriakou

served thirty months in federal prison. The officer who blew the whistle on the torture program was prosecuted and imprisoned. The officers who
conducted the torture program were not. W.10 The cost

The best archival accounting of the aggregate financial, human, and political cost of the post–September 11,
2001 wars is the:

Costs of War Project, Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, Brown University,
directed by Catherine Lutz and Neta C. Crawford, with reports and updated estimates from 2011 through 2024. Web archive: https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar.190
The Costs of War Project's cumulative findings through 2023:

Direct U.S.government budgetary costs of the post-9/11 wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Yemen, and related theaters: approximately $8 trillion, including future obligations for veterans' care. U.S.military deaths (Iraq + Afghanistan + other theaters): approximately 7,100. U.S.contractor deaths (Iraq + Afghanistan): approximately 8,100. Coalition military deaths: approximately 1,400. Iraqi civilian deaths from direct violence: approximately 200,000 to 280,000 (per Iraq Body Count methodology). Afghan civilian deaths from direct violence: approximately 70,000 to 80,000. Civilian deaths across all post-9/11 war zones from direct violence: approximately 400,000 to 450,000. Estimated indirect deaths (from collapse of health systems, infrastructure, sanitation, food systems): several multiples of the direct death figure, with the Lancet studies on Iraq (Les Roberts et al., "Mortality Before and After the 2003 Invasion of Iraq: Cluster Sample Survey," The Lancet, Vol.364, November 20, 2004, pp.1857–1864; and Gilbert Burnham et al., "Mortality After the 2003 Invasion of Iraq: A Cross-Sectional Cluster Sample Survey," The Lancet, Vol.368, October 21, 2006, pp.1421–1428) estimating approximately 655,000 excess Iraqi deaths through June 2006 alone. Displaced persons across all post-9/11 war zones: approximately 38 million. Approximate aggregate human cost: in the millions of direct and indirect deaths; tens of millions of
displaced persons; trillions of dollars of transferred wealth. W.11 What was not prosecuted

The prior chapters of this book have closed with a summary of what was and was not prosecuted for the
conduct described. For the conduct described in this chapter:

The fabrication of the Iraq WMD case — not prosecuted. The authorization and conduct of the CIA Detention and Interrogation Program — not prosecuted.191
The abuses at Abu Ghraib — prosecuted at the level of the military-police specialists; not prosecuted

at the level of the command authority or the CIA officers whom the Taguba Report identified as directing the interrogations. The no-bid LOGCAP III award to KBR / Halliburton — not prosecuted. The Nisour Square killings — prosecuted; the four convicted contractors were pardoned on December 22, 2020. The CPA Orders' restructuring of the Iraqi economy without Iraqi consent — not prosecuted. The ICJ's 1986 finding that the United States had violated international law against Nicaragua (Chapter 4) — uncollected. The Chilcot Report's findings against the 2003 decision — not actionable in U.S.law. The indirect civilian deaths in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Syria, and Libya attributable to American military operations — not the subject of any U.S.judicial proceeding, with the exception of specific wrongful-death tort actions dismissed on sovereign-immunity grounds. The Bush administration's war was the operational expression of the American national-security apparatus Chapter 5 described. Its statutes were passed under the architecture Chapter 2 described. Its financial beneficiaries were the firms Chapter 6 named. Its personnel were the direct descendants of the lineage Chapter 1 began. The doctrine never paid. The industry never paid. The war never paid. This book has, at the end of this chapter, used the phrase three times. Three chapters. One invariant. W.12 The narrator, March 19, 2003

I was sixteen years, nine months, and twenty days old. I watched the initial air strikes on a television set in my parents' living room, on the evening of March 19, 2003, on CNN. The footage was filmed by the CNN Baghdad correspondent from the balcony of the Al Rashid Hotel. The picture was green — a night-vision image — with pulses of white light at the horizon that represented, I later learned, cruise-missile impacts on central Baghdad government buildings. I remember my parents watching. I remember that the consensus in the room, so far as I have any accurate recollection, was that the war was necessary and would be short. I remember Colin Powell's name being spoken with respect. I remember that I did not know, and could not have known, that Colin Powell had flown that February to New York and presented slides from a single defector's fabricated account of mobile biological-weapons laboratories.192

I turned seventeen ten weeks after the initial strikes. By my seventeenth birthday — May 29, 2003 — the Iraqi Army had been dissolved (CPA Order 2, May 23, 2003); the Ba'athists had been purged from public employment (CPA Order 1, May 16, 2003); the president had given the Mission Accomplished speech (May 1, 2003); and the insurgency that would kill 200,000 to 280,000 Iraqis and 4,300 American service members had, in the Sunni western provinces of Iraq, begun to organize. I was a public school student in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in the spring of 2003. I did not know the CPA Order numbers. I do not remember anyone explaining what CPA stood for. I remember the flag sticker on the back of the minivan. The chapter you have just read is the version of the period that I would come to be able to write between approximately 2009 and the present. It was not the version available to me in 2003. It was not the version my parents, or my teachers, or my senators had access to on the evening of March 19, 2003 with the green night-vision footage on the screen. The version is available now. I have shown you where to find it. The archive is open. The Public Law numbers run. The casualty tolls are counted in files that are held at Brown University and at the U.S. Department of Defense Casualty Analysis System. What follows is what the same administration did with the industries of the American domestic economy — agriculture, pharmaceuticals, finance, data — while the soldiers were overseas. BE UNDENIABLE. Sources — Chapter 7

The statutes:

1. Authorization for Use of Military Force, Public Law 107-40, 115 Statutes at Large 224 (September 18, 2001).2. Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT) Act, Public Law 107-56, 115 Statutes at Large 272 (October 26, 2001).3. Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002, Public Law 107-243, 116 Statutes at Large 1498 (October 16, 2002).4. Homeland Security Act of 2002, Public Law 107-296, 116 Statutes at Large 2135 (November 25, 2002).193

5. Executive Order 13224, “Blocking Property and Prohibiting Transactions with Persons Who Commit, Threaten to Commit, or Support Terrorism,” September 23, 2001 (66 Fed. Reg.49079).6.

USA FREEDOM Act of 2015, Public Law 114-23, 129 Stat.268.7. The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, September 2002 — George W. Bush Presidential Library. Afghanistan operations:

1. UN Security Council Resolution 1383 (December 6, 2001) — Bonn Agreement endorsement.2. UN Security Council Resolution 1386 (December 20, 2001) — ISAF authorization.3. U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Tora Bora Revisited: How We Failed to Get Bin
Laden and Why It Matters Today, 111th Congress, November 30, 2009.4. Doha Agreement between the U.S.and the Taliban, February 29, 2020 — U.S. Department of
State. Iraq prewar intelligence and UN case:

1. UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record S/PV.4701, 4701st meeting, February 5, 2003 — Powell presentation.2. UN Security Council, Provisional Verbatim Record S/PV.4714, March 7, 2003 — IAEA ElBaradei
report.3. Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD (Duelfer Report), September 30, 2004 — CIA Historical Collections Division.4. U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Report on the U.S. Intelligence Community's
Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq, 108th Congress, S. Rept.108-301 (July 7, 2004).5. U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Report on Whether Public Statements Regarding
Iraq by U.S. Government Officials Were Substantiated by Intelligence Information, 110th
Congress, S. Rept.110-345 (June 5, 2008).6. Martin Chulov and Helen Pidd, "Curveball: How US Was Duped," The Guardian, February 15,
2011.7. Joseph C. Wilson IV, "What I Didn't Find in Africa," New York Times, July 6, 2003, op-ed. UK Iraq Inquiry:

1. The Report of the Iraq Inquiry (Chilcot Report), HC 264, Stationery Office, London (July 6, 2016).194
Invasion and occupation:

1. U.S. Army Center of Military History, On Point: The United States Army in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (2004).2. President George W. Bush, "Address Aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln," May 1, 2003 —
Public Papers of the Presidents, 2003, Vol. I, pp.411–414.3. U.S. Department of Defense, Casualty Analysis System — Iraq and Afghanistan military deaths. CPA Orders:

1. Coalition Provisional Authority Official Gazette, University of Michigan Library digital archive.2. National Archives, Record Group 509 — Records of the Coalition Provisional Authority.3. CPA Order

1, “De-Ba’athification of Iraqi Society” (May 16, 2003).4. CPA Order 2, “Dissolution of Entities” (May 23, 2003).5. CPA Order 39, “Foreign Investment” (September 19, 2003).6. CPA Order 81, “Amendments to Patent, Industrial Design, Undisclosed Information, Integrated Circuits and Plant Variety Law” (April 26, 2004).7. L. Paul Bremer III, My Year in Iraq: The Struggle to Build a Future of Hope (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006). Contractors:

1. Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan, Transforming Wartime Contracting: Controlling Costs, Reducing Risks, Final Report to Congress (August 31, 2011).2. U.S. Department of the Army, Logistics Civil Augmentation Program (LOGCAP) Final Performance Evaluations (2001–2011).3. United States v. Paul Slough et al.(Nisour Square prosecution), U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, Grand Jury Indictment December 4, 2008; jury verdict October 22, 2014.4. Presidential pardons, December 22, 2020 — Federal Register, Volume 85, Number 249. Abu Ghraib and torture:

1. Major General Antonio M. Taguba, Article 15-6 Investigation of the 800th Military Police Brigade, U.S. Army (February 2004).2. Seymour M. Hersh, “Torture at Abu Ghraib,” The New Yorker, May 10, 2004, pages 42–47.3. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Study of the Central Intelligence Agency’s Detention and Interrogation Program, Executive Summary, 113th Congress, S. Rept.113-288 (December 9, 2014).195

4. Department of Justice, Office of Legal Counsel, Memoranda on Interrogation (Bybee / Yoo Memoranda), August 1, 2002 and subsequent — released under FOIA April 2009.5. Department of Justice, Office of Professional Responsibility, Report on OLC Interrogation Memoranda, July 2009.6. International Committee of the Red Cross, Report on the Treatment of Fourteen “High Value Detainees” in CIA Custody (February 2007; published New York Review of Books, April 9, 2009). Costs and consequences:

1. Costs of War Project, Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, Brown University (Catherine Lutz and Neta C. Crawford, directors).2. Les Roberts et al., “Mortality Before and After the 2003 Invasion of Iraq: Cluster Sample Survey,” The Lancet, Vol.364 (November 20, 2004), pp.1857–1864.3. Gilbert Burnham et al., “Mortality After the 2003 Invasion of Iraq: A Cross-Sectional Cluster Sample Survey,” The Lancet, Vol.368 (October 21, 2006), pp.1421–1428.4. Iraq Body Count database (https://www.iraqbodycount.org).5. Department of State, Reports to Congress on U.S.L.115-91),

annually
2018–2024. CHAPTER 8 — REGULATORY CAPTURE

The FDA. The EPA. The state health departments. The municipal water authority. Four agencies. Three
chemicals. One drug. Five million overdose deaths, unmeasured hormonal collapses, documented lead exposures in a single American city. Each case answered after the damage by a settlement that did not return the product. R.1 The approval

December 12, 1995. Rockville, Maryland. Food and Drug Administration, Center for Drug Evaluation and Research. The FDA approves, for the Stamford, Connecticut pharmaceutical company Purdue Pharma L.P., a new
controlled-release oral formulation of the opioid analgesic oxycodone hydrochloride. The approved product is named OxyContin. Approval is granted under NDA 20-553. The product label, as approved, carries the following representation, which will matter:

“Delayed absorption, as provided by OxyContin tablets, is believed to reduce the abuse liability of a drug.”

Primary source: FDA NDA Approval Package for OxyContin (NDA 20-553), December 12, 1995, accessible through the FDA Drug Approval Package archive and through FOIA release 2001-3636. The
specific labeling language is documented in the Government Accountability Office, OxyContin Abuse and Diversion and Efforts to Address the Problem, GAO-04-110, December 2003, Appendix I. The sentence — “is believed to reduce the abuse liability” — was not supported, at the time of approval, by
controlled clinical data establishing reduced abuse potential in the approved formulation. The FDA medical
officer review of the NDA (released under FOIA, 2003) notes this, but the labeling language was approved
as submitted by Purdue.197

The OxyContin controlled-release tablet, in twelve-hour-dosage formulation, contained, depending on
strength, between 10 and 80 milligrams of oxycodone per tablet. The controlled-release coating, upon crushing, dissolved in water or was soluble in ethanol — facts the chemistry made immediately apparent to

anyone with a home pharmacology reference, and which Purdue’s own internal development documents had
noted. Between 1996 — the first year of commercial sale — and 2000, Purdue promoted OxyContin as carrying a
reduced abuse liability in prescriber marketing materials, detailing visits by Purdue sales representatives,
and continuing-medical-education programs funded by Purdue. The specific promotional claims are documented in:

Department of Justice, United States Attorney for the Western District of Virginia, United States of America v. The Purdue Frederick Company, Inc., et al., Case No.1:07CR00029, statement of facts filed
May 10, 2007. The 2007 DOJ case is the first major primary document this chapter rests on. R.2 The 2007 plea

May 10, 2007. United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia, Abingdon
Division. Purdue Frederick Company, Inc.(the holding company above Purdue Pharma L.P.), together with three
senior executives — Michael Friedman (President), Paul D. Goldenheim (Medical Director), and
Howard R. Udell (General Counsel) — plead guilty to charges of misbranding OxyContin in violation of
the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. The plea documents establish, on Purdue’s own admission:

Between December 12, 1995 and June 30, 2001, Purdue promoted OxyContin, in prescriber marketing, with claims that the drug was less addictive, less subject to abuse and diversion, and less likely to cause tolerance and withdrawal than other opioid analgesics. These claims were false. Purdue’s own internal records during this period — including its Medical Affairs Department memoranda — documented that the claims were without clinical support. Purdue sales representatives were, per the agreed statement of facts, trained to repeat these claims to prescribers.198

Financial consequence:

Purdue Frederick corporate entity: fine of approximately $600 million. The three executives, individually: no imprisonment. Fines of between $5,000 and $19,000 each. Primary source: United States v.1:07CR00029,
W.D. Va., May 10, 2007; sentencing transcript and plea agreement in the PACER docket; summary at
Department of Justice Press Release, “The Purdue Frederick Company, Inc., and Top Executives Plead

Guilty to Misbranding OxyContin; Will Pay Over $600 Million," May 10, 2007. Purdue's net sales of OxyContin, 1996 through 2007: approximately $10 billion. Primary source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Opioid Prescribing Rates; Purdue sales records submitted in subsequent litigation, publicly filed in In re National Prescription Opiate Litigation, MDL 2804, N.D. Ohio. The ratio: fine of six hundred million dollars to revenue of ten billion dollars. Six percent. The 2007 plea did not require Purdue to stop selling OxyContin. Purdue continued to sell OxyContin. The Sackler family continued to control Purdue. Between 2008 and 2018, OxyContin sales continued at approximately $2 to $3 billion per year. R.3 Empire of Pain

Between 2008 and 2017 — the ten years following the 2007 plea — the Sackler family, the family that owned Purdue Pharma through two family branches (the descendants of Mortimer Sackler and the descendants of Raymond Sackler), extracted from Purdue to the family's private accounts approximately $10 billion. The extraction is documented in:

New York Attorney General Letitia James, In re Purdue Pharma L.P., Chapter 11 Bankruptcy, S.D. N.Y. Case No.19-23649, filings of the New York AG as a creditor, with exhibits including Purdue corporate distributions to the Sackler family trusts during 2008–2018 (released with the bankruptcy court's approval, 2020–2021). And in the documentary work that established the timeline in public form:

Patrick Radden Keefe, Empire of Pain: The Secret History of the Sackler Dynasty, Doubleday, New York, 2021 — based on unsealed court filings, internal Purdue documents released in state AG lawsuits, family archival material, and hundreds of interviews. Barry Meier, Pain Killer: An Empire of Deceit and the Origin of America's Opioid Epidemic, Rodale, 2003; revised edition Random House, 2018. The strategic advisory relationship that operationalized Purdue's continuing marketing was:

McKinsey & Company, the global management consultancy, under internal project names including "Project Turbocharge." McKinsey's work for Purdue is documented in:

Settlement agreement, February 4, 2021, between McKinsey & Company, Inc.and a coalition of forty-seven state Attorneys General, plus the District of Columbia and five U.S.territories. Settlement amount: $573 million. Primary source: Office of the Attorney General of each settling state, press releases of February 4, 2021; full settlement text at New York AG archive. Additional settlement, December 13, 2022, between McKinsey and the U.S. Department of Justice: deferred prosecution agreement, $230 million, for the same advisory work. The 47-state settlement established, on McKinsey's agreement, that McKinsey had advised Purdue on

"Project Turbocharge" strategies to increase OxyContin sales by targeting high-prescribing physicians; that

McKinsey had, at one point, considered offering to pay CVS and Anthem rebates per-overdose (the "Opioid

Pain" memorandum, released in settlement exhibits); and that McKinsey had advised Purdue on how to

counter state-level opioid-prescribing restrictions. R.4 The 2020 plea

November 24, 2020. United States District Court for the District of New Jersey. Purdue Pharma L.P. pleads guilty to three federal felonies:

1. Conspiracy to defraud the United States and violate the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.2. Conspiracy to violate the Federal Anti-Kickback Statute (42 U.S.C.§ 1320a-7b).3. Conspiracy to violate the Federal Anti-Kickback Statute (second count).200

Primary source: United States v. Purdue Pharma L.P., U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey,

Case No.20-CR-01028-MAS, plea agreement filed November 24, 2020; Department of Justice Press Release, "Justice Department Announces Global Resolution of Criminal and Civil Investigations with Opioid Manufacturer Purdue Pharma and Civil Settlement with Members of the Sackler Family," October

21, 2020 (civil resolution) and November 24, 2020 (criminal plea). None of the Sackler family members pleaded guilty to or were indicted in connection with the

criminal resolution. The Sackler family's parallel civil resolution: an agreement to pay, over time, approximately $225 million

to the United States government, in exchange for civil-claim release. The Sacklers' accumulated extraction

from Purdue over the preceding decade: approximately $10 billion. The 2020 plea did not send any member of the Sackler family to prison. September 15, 2019 — Purdue Pharma Chapter 11 Bankruptcy

Purdue filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York, Case No.19-23649 (Drain, J.). The proposed reorganization plan — the product of more than three years of negotiation among Purdue, the Sackler family, and the approximately 40 state attorneys general and thousands of private claimants participating — included:

Nonconsensual third-party releases for the Sackler family. That is: in exchange for the Sackler family's contribution of approximately $6 billion to the bankruptcy estate (paid over roughly nine years), all opioid-related civil claims against the Sackler family, including claims not yet filed, and including claims by parties who did not consent, would be released. The Sacklers would not file for personal bankruptcy. Conversion of Purdue to a "public benefit company" operated by a trust. The plan was confirmed by Judge Robert Drain on September 1, 2021; subsequently modified; and ultimately appealed to the United States Supreme Court. June 27, 2024 — Harrington v. Purdue Pharma L.P. The United States Supreme Court, in a 5-to-4 decision written by Justice Neil Gorsuch, holds that the Bankruptcy Code does not authorize the nonconsensual third-party releases the Purdue plan had used to protect the Sackler family. Primary source: Harrington v. Purdue Pharma L.P., 603 U.S.___ (2024), Docket No.23-124, decided June 27, 2024. Opinion at U.S. Supreme Court website.201

The decision vacates the Sackler releases. Purdue's bankruptcy returns to active litigation. As of April 2026, the case is ongoing; Sacklers' ultimate civil exposure is undetermined. Approximate American opioid-overdose deaths, 1996 through 2024: 645,000, per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Vital Statistics System, using ICD-10 coding for drug-overdose deaths. Of those 645,000 deaths, approximately 75 percent involved an opioid at the time of death; of opioid-involved deaths, approximately half involved a prescription opioid at some point in the decedent's pathway to dependence. The FDA approved the labeling. The DOJ reached a plea in 2007, and a second plea in 2020. The Supreme Court in 2024 vacated the family releases. At no point in this sequence was the product withdrawn from the market, and at no point did a member of the Sackler family serve a day in prison. R.5 Glyphosate

March 20, 2015. Lyon, France. International Agency for Research on Cancer, World Health Organization. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), an intergovernmental body of the World
Health Organization, publishes Monograph 112, concluding that:

“The herbicide glyphosate is probably carcinogenic to humans (Group 2A).”

Primary source: IARC Working Group on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans, Some Organophosphate Insecticides and Herbicides: Diazinon, Glyphosate, Malathion, Parathion, and Tetrachlorvinphos, IARC Monograph Volume 112 (Lyon: IARC, 2017 print edition; online classification
release March 20, 2015). Glyphosate (N-(phosphonomethyl)glycine) is the active ingredient in the herbicide Roundup, developed
and marketed from 1974 onward by the Monsanto Company of St. Louis, Missouri. As of the IARC 2015
classification, glyphosate was, by volume, the most widely used herbicide in the United States and the world; approximately 826 million kilograms were applied in the United States alone between 1974 and 2014, per the U.S. Geological Survey Pesticide National Synthesis Project.202
Monsanto’s public response to the IARC 2015 classification was a sustained effort to contest the classification in academic literature, in regulatory filings, and in press commentary. That response is documented in the court discovery known as the:

Monsanto Papers — a set of internal Monsanto corporate correspondence, research contract documents,
and ghostwriting arrangements with outside scientists, produced in discovery in three consolidated Roundup–non-Hodgkin-lymphoma personal-injury cases:

Johnson v. Monsanto Company, Superior Court of California, County of San Francisco, Case No. CGC-16-550128, trial verdict August 10, 2018 — plaintiff Dewayne Lee Johnson awarded $289 million (subsequently reduced on appeal to $78 million, then to $20.5 million). Hardeman v. Monsanto Company, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, Case No.3:16-cv-00525-VC, trial verdict March 27, 2019 — plaintiff Edwin Hardeman awarded $80.2 million (subsequently affirmed). Pilliod v. Monsanto Company, Superior Court of California, County of Alameda, Case No. RG17862702, trial verdict May 13, 2019 — plaintiffs Alberta and Alva Pilliod awarded $2.055 billion (subsequently reduced on appeal to $86.7 million). Pilliod v. The Monsanto Papers, in partial public form, are held in:

U.S. Right to Know's Monsanto Papers archive, published collection, indexed. Carey Gillam, Whitewash: The Story of a Weed Killer, Cancer, and the Corruption of Science, Island Press, Washington, D.C., 2017. Carey Gillam, The Monsanto Papers: Deadly Secrets, Corporate Corruption, and One Man's Search for Justice, Island Press, 2021. The Monsanto Papers establish, on Monsanto's own internal documents:

Monsanto scientists ghost-wrote, or substantively drafted and paid for the naming, of academic papers on glyphosate toxicity. Specific named papers, with specific named Monsanto internal authors and nominal outside authors, are reproduced in the court discovery (Gillam 2021, Chapters 6–8). Monsanto maintained a "Let Nothing Go" internal program — employees and consultants with social-media presence tasked with disputing public claims of glyphosate harm. Monsanto senior management, in internal email exchanges, discussed strategies for managing European Union regulatory review through selective scientific publication and industry-association coordination.203
June 7, 2018. Leverkusen, Germany. Bayer AG of Leverkusen, Germany — the successor entity, in part, to the I.G. Farbenindustrie-A.G. constituent company Bayer that had been dissolved in 1952 (cited Chapter 3, § I.7) — completes its
acquisition of the Monsanto Company for approximately $63 billion cash. Primary source: Bayer AG, Form 6-K filing with U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, June 2018; BBC News, June 7, 2018,
"Bayer Completes Monsanto Takeover."

Bayer retired the Monsanto name after the acquisition. June 24, 2020. Bayer AG announces a settlement in the aggregated Roundup personal-injury litigation, agreeing to pay
approximately $10.9 billion to resolve approximately 100,000 current and anticipated claims. The settlement does not include a recall of glyphosate products, which continue to be sold. Primary source: Bayer AG press release, "Bayer Announces Roundup Resolution Plan for U.S. Roundup Cases," June 24,
2020. Glyphosate remains registered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as an approved herbicide. The EPA's 2020 Interim Registration Review Decision for Glyphosate concluded that "there are no risks
of concern to human health when glyphosate is used in accordance with its current label," a finding at variance with the IARC 2015 classification. Primary source: EPA Interim Registration Review Decision
for Glyphosate, Docket EPA-HQ-OPP-2009-0361, January 30, 2020. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, in Natural Resources Defense Council v. U.S. Environmental

Protection Agency, No.20-70787 (June 17, 2022), vacated portions of the EPA's 2020 human-health determination as unsupported by substantial evidence. Primary source: 9th Cir.docket, decided June 17,
2022. R.6 The agency did not act

The FDA and the EPA are American administrative agencies of comparable statutory rank and comparable
budget. In the two cases above:

The FDA approved an opioid label in 1995 containing a claim for which the approving medical reviewer had no clinical support, over a sales cycle that would correspond to 645,000 domestic deaths by 2024. The FDA approved an opioid label in 1995 containing a claim for which the approving medical reviewer had no clinical support, over a sales cycle that would correspond to 645,000 domestic deaths by 2024.204
The EPA registered a herbicide as safe in 2020 in tension with the World Health Organization's cancer-research authority, in a determination a federal circuit court would subsequently vacate. The EPA registered a herbicide as safe in 2020 in tension with the World Health Organization's cancer-research authority, in a determination a federal circuit court would subsequently vacate. Neither failure was private. Both agencies' professional staff produced internal analyses — the FDA
medical-officer review, the EPA Office of Inspector General memoranda — questioning the determinations. The determinations were issued anyway. This is the operational definition of regulatory capture. It is not the hypothesis that the agencies were
bought. It is the documented record that the agencies' staff analyses were overridden by the agencies' approvals. The word captured, when applied to an American regulatory agency in 2026, is not a metaphor. It is a legal-
historical term of art introduced by the economist George Stigler in "The Theory of Economic
Regulation," Bell Journal of Economics and Management Science, Volume 2, Number 1 (Spring 1971),
pages 3–21, in which Stigler demonstrated, with quantitative analysis of the Interstate Commerce
Commission, the Civil Aeronautics Board, and other American regulators, that the regulated industries tend,
over time, to capture their regulators. Stigler's prediction has a track record. R.7 Forever chemicals

The third cluster of this chapter is the class of synthetic fluorocarbons known colloquially as PFAS — per-
and polyfluoroalkyl substances. PFAS includes approximately 12,000 named chemical species, of

which
two have the longest regulatory record:

PFOA — perfluorooctanoic acid (sometimes called “C8”), manufactured in the United States principally by E.I.du Pont de Nemours and Company at its plant in Washington Works, Parkersburg, West Virginia, from 1951 through 2013. PFOS — perfluorooctane sulfonic acid, manufactured principally by the 3M Company of Maplewood, Minnesota, from 1947 through 2002. PFAS are termed “forever chemicals” because the carbon-fluorine bond is among the strongest in organic chemistry, rendering PFAS essentially non-degradable in natural environments. The foundational primary-source establishment of PFAS human-health harm is the:

205
C8 Science Panel — a three-epidemiologist panel (Drs. Tony Fletcher, David A. Savitz, and Kyle Steenland) established in 2005 under a class-action settlement in Leach v. E.I.du Pont de Nemours and Company, Circuit Court of Wood County, West Virginia, Case No.01-C-608. The Panel was empowered to
determine, on the basis of a comprehensive epidemiological study of approximately 69,000 residents exposed to PFOA through Du Pont’s Washington Works plant discharges to the Ohio River, whether “probable links” existed between PFOA exposure and specific human health outcomes. Between 2011 and 2012 the C8 Science Panel issued probable-link reports — the term is the Panel’s — establishing probable links between PFOA exposure and:

Kidney cancer

Testicular cancer

Ulcerative colitis

Thyroid disease

Hypercholesterolemia (elevated cholesterol)

Pregnancy-induced hypertension (including preeclampsia)

Pregnancy-induced hypertension (including preeclampsia)

Primary source: C8 Science Panel Probable Link Reports, 2011–2012, archived at www.c8sciencepanel.org and reproduced in court exhibits in subsequent litigation; scholarly reconstruction in Robert Bilott, Exposure: Poisoned Water, Corporate Greed, and One Lawyer's Twenty-Year Battle Against DuPont, Atria Books, New York, 2019. Journalistic establishment of the Parkersburg cover-up is:

Nathaniel Rich, "The Lawyer Who Became DuPont's Worst Nightmare," The New York Times Magazine, January 6, 2016. The Rich article and the subsequent Bilott book establish, on Du Pont's own internal correspondence
produced in discovery, that:

Du Pont had internal animal-toxicology data showing PFOA causing testicular and pancreatic tumors in rats as early as 1984. Du Pont had internal human-exposure biomarker data showing worker-blood PFOA levels at multiples of historical baselines as early as 1979. Du Pont did not disclose these data to the EPA or to Parkersburg's municipal authorities. PFOA was detected in Parkersburg public drinking-water supplies at levels up to approximately 3,500 parts per trillion, at a time when the EPA health advisory for PFOA in drinking water was set at 400 parts per trillion (subsequently lowered to 70 parts per trillion in 2016, and to 4 parts per trillion — effectively the limit of detection — in 2024).206
Primary EPA regulatory record: EPA, "Drinking Water Health Advisories for PFOA, PFOS, GenX Chemicals, and PFBS," interim updates 2016, 2022, and final PFAS Maximum Contaminant Levels (final
MCLs) issued April 10, 2024, 89 Fed. Reg.32532.2023 settlements. June 22, 2023.3M Company announces a settlement of approximately $10.3 billion over thirteen years to
resolve claims by United States public water systems alleging contamination from 3M-manufactured PFAS. Primary source: 3M Company press release, June 22, 2023; 3M Form 8-K filing, SEC, June 22, 2023. June 2, 2023. E.I. DuPont de Nemours and Company, together with its successor entities The Chemours Company and Corteva, Inc., announce a settlement of approximately $1.185 billion to resolve
claims by United States public water systems alleging contamination from DuPont-manufactured PFAS. Primary source: Chemours Form 8-K filing, SEC, June 2, 2023. Combined 2023 PFAS water-contamination settlements: approximately $11.5 billion. The settlements do not include admissions of liability.3M and DuPont / Chemours continue to manufacture
fluorinated chemicals, with partial product-line phase-outs announced (3M's December 20, 2022 announcement of exit from PFAS manufacturing by end of 2025; DuPont / Chemours phase-outs of longer-
chain PFAS compounds with continuation of shorter-chain successors). The blood of nearly every

American tested — in the CDC National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) — contains detectable PFAS. Primary source: CDC, National Exposure Report on Environmental Chemicals, successive NHANES cycles, 1999–2018, available through the CDC Environmental Chemicals Data Tables. R.8 Flint

April 25, 2014. Flint, Michigan. The city of Flint, Michigan, under the emergency management of Governor-appointed Emergency Manager Darnell Earley, switches its municipal drinking-water supply from Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD)–treated Lake Huron water to Flint River water, treated at the reopened Flint Water Treatment Plant.207

The switch is executed for cost reasons: the city, under Michigan Public Act 436 of 2012, is under emergency state management, and the cost differential between DWSD-supplied treated water and Flint-River-sourced treated water is approximately $5 million per year. Primary source for the switch decision: Michigan Civil Rights Commission, The Flint Water Crisis: Systemic Racism Through the Lens of Flint, Report of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, February 17, 2017; Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) records, released under Michigan FOIA in 2015–2016. Between April 25, 2014 and October 16, 2015, residents of Flint — approximately 99,000 persons at the time of the switch, of whom approximately 57 percent were Black — drank water that was:

Not treated with corrosion-control orthophosphate (standard treatment required under federal Lead and Copper Rule, 40 C.F.R. Part 141, Subpart I). The omission caused Flint River water to corrode the interior surfaces of Flint's aging lead service lines, releasing lead into the distributed water. Contaminated with elevated bacterial loads, including Legionella pneumophila at concentrations sufficient to cause community-acquired Legionnaires' disease. The associated outbreak killed at least 12 persons between June 2014 and October 2015. The lead exposure is established in:

Virginia Tech University Flint Water Study, led by Dr. Marc Edwards, results released publicly August–September 2015, documenting Flint home tap-water lead levels up to 13,200 parts per billion (the EPA "action level" is 15 parts per billion; the level for hazardous waste under RCRA is 5,000 parts per billion). Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, pediatrician at Hurley Medical Center, Flint, published in Hanna-Attisha et al., "Elevated Blood Lead Levels in Children Associated with the Flint Drinking Water Crisis: A Spatial

Analysis of Risk and Public Health Response," American Journal of Public Health, Volume 106, Number 2 (February 2016), pages 283–290, documenting an approximately doubling of elevated blood-
lead levels in children under five in the affected Flint ZIP codes from the pre-switch baseline to the post-
switch period. The charges. Between 2016 and 2019, the Michigan Attorney General's Office filed charges against approximately
fifteen state and Flint municipal officials, including former Emergency Manager Darnell Earley and former Michigan Governor Rick Snyder. Charges included involuntary manslaughter, misconduct in office,
conspiracy, and willful neglect of duty.208

In June 2019, the newly elected Attorney General Dana Nessel dismissed all pending charges, citing prosecutorial concerns with the evidence-chain assembled by the prior AG. In January 2021, the Nessel
office re-filed charges against nine officials, including Snyder. In October 2022, the Michigan Supreme Court, in People v. Peeler and related consolidated cases, ruled
that the charges had been improperly brought through a one-judge grand jury procedure, and vacated the
indictments. As of April 2026, no Michigan state or Flint municipal official has been convicted in connection with the lead-poisoning or Legionella outbreaks. The civil settlement. In November 2020, the State of Michigan agreed to a settlement of approximately
$641 million to resolve civil claims by Flint residents, subsequently increased with additional contributions
from the City of Flint, McLaren Regional Medical Center, and Rowe Professional Services to approximately $641 million total. Primary source: In re Flint Water Cases, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, consolidated under Case No.16-10444. The lead pipes in Flint were replaced — the replacement program was funded by the settlements —
between 2016 and 2022. As of the 2022 Flint Registry, approximately 29,200 adults and 6,400 children remain under ongoing medical surveillance for lead-exposure effects. R.9 The pattern

Three clusters. Three agency failures. Three settlements that left the products on the market or in the ground. Foundational Domestic casualty Settlement, no admission of
Cluster Agency
document (minimum) liability

Purdue $600M (2007);
U.S.v. Purdue 645,000 opioid-overdose $225M + Sacklers $6B
OxyContin FDA
Frederick (2007 plea) deaths 1996–2024 (2020/21); SCOTUS 2024
vacated releases

IARC Monograph 112 Non-Hodgkin lymphoma
Glyphosate EPA Bayer $10.9B (2020)
(2015) class ~100,000 claims

Near-universal PFAS blood
C8 Science Panel
PFAS + EPA / levels; 12 Legionella 3M $10.3B + DuPont $1.2B
Flint MDEQ (2023); $641M Flint (2020)
(2011–12) + Hanna-
Attisha (2016)

A fourth cluster belongs in the same table, even if the casualties are slower and the headlines smaller. Synthetic food dyes — Red 40, Yellow 5, Yellow 6, Blue 1 — are approved by the FDA and restricted or warning-labeled in the European Union and other peer jurisdictions. Froot Loops, sold by the same company in both markets, is formulated differently abroad: plant-based colors replace or reduce the synthetic dyes, while the American version keeps the brighter palette. The difference is not a scientific dispute. It is a regulatory choice. The same agency that approved OxyContin's label and delayed glyphosate review permits in children's food additives that comparable regulators treat more cautiously. The extraction is not from acute overdose but from a lifetime of marginally optimized products, approved by an agency whose senior staff rotate to and from the industries they regulate.

File: U.S. Food and Drug Administration, 21 C.F.R. Parts 73–74; EU Regulation 1333/2008 on food additives; Center for Science in the Public Interest, "Food Dyes: A Rainbow of Risks," 2010; Wikipedia, "Froot Loops," citing regional formulation reporting.

Foundational Domestic casualty Settlement, no admission of
Cluster Agency
document (minimum) liability

deaths; ~8,000 Flint
children

The products in each column continue to be manufactured, sold, and — in the case of the lead service lines
in perhaps a hundred American cities whose pipes have not been replaced — continue to leach. The agency that approves the product is the agency that does not recall the product. The fine is one-to-six percent of revenue. The settlement is the exit. The executives do not serve time. The pattern of the prior chapters — the bank never paid, the industry never paid, the doctrine never paid, the war never paid — extends here to the factory floor, the pharmacy counter, and the kitchen sink. The product never paid.

There is also a downstream extraction. The opioid epidemic that Purdue and McKinsey helped build produced, among its second-order effects, a population of addicted and incarcerated Americans. The same political apparatus that deregulated the prescription pipeline profits from the punishment pipeline. Former Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi, after leaving office, registered as a lobbyist for the GEO Group, the for-profit prison operator that houses federal immigration detainees and state prisoners. GEO Group's business model depends on incarceration volume. Bondi later became United States Attorney General. The circle is closed: the same legal profession that failed to prosecute the Sacklers in Florida sold incarceration capacity to the federal government after leaving office, then returned to run the Department of Justice.

The documents do not prove that Bondi or GEO Group caused the opioid crisis. They prove that the same economic core finances the cause, the consequence, and the punishment, and that the public officials who move between these roles do so without legal separation from the extraction.

File: Senate lobbying disclosure filings for Ballard Partners and GEO Group, 2019–2020; news reporting on Bondi lobbying clients, 2019–2020; GEO Group annual reports and federal contract disclosures.

What the court file and agency record establish — nothing more:

The FDA approved OxyContin's reduced-abuse-liability label on December 12, 1995 without supporting clinical data. File: FDA NDA 20-553; GAO-04-110. Purdue Pharma and three executives pleaded guilty in 2007 to misbranding OxyContin; the executives paid fines of between $5,000 and $19,000 and served no prison time; Purdue continued to sell OxyContin. File: U.S.v. Purdue Frederick, W.D. Va.1:07CR00029. Between 2008 and 2018, the Sackler family extracted approximately $10 billion from Purdue. File: N.Y. AG filings, Purdue bankruptcy S.D. N.Y.19-23649; Keefe (2021). McKinsey & Company advised Purdue on OxyContin sales intensification; 47 state AGs settled with McKinsey for $573 million in February 2021; DOJ deferred prosecution, $230 million, December 2022. File: McKinsey settlements with individual state AGs, February 4, 2021; DPA December 13, 2022. The U.S. Supreme Court in June 2024 vacated the nonconsensual third-party releases the Sackler family had used to protect itself in bankruptcy. File: Harrington v. Purdue Pharma L.P., 603 U.S.___ (2024). The IARC classified glyphosate as probably carcinogenic to humans in March 2015. File: IARC Monograph 112. File: IARC Monograph 112.210

The Monsanto Papers, released in trial discovery 2018–2019, established that Monsanto had ghost-written academic papers on glyphosate toxicity and had operated a "Let Nothing Go" social-media countermarketing program. File: Johnson, Hardeman, Pilliod trial records. Bayer settled Roundup claims for $10.9 billion in 2020. File: Bayer press release June 24, 2020. The C8 Science Panel in 2011–2012 established probable links between PFOA exposure and six human health conditions. File: C8 Science Panel Probable Link Reports.3M and DuPont / Chemours settled PFAS water-contamination claims for an aggregate $11.5 billion in mid-2023. File: 3M and Chemours SEC Form 8-K filings, 2023. Flint's April 25, 2014 water-source switch caused documented childhood lead exposure and a Legionella outbreak killing at least 12. No state or municipal official has been convicted. Michigan paid a $641 million civil settlement. File: Virginia Tech Flint Water Study; Hanna-Attisha et al.2016; Michigan Civil Rights Commission 2017; In re Flint Water Cases. File: Virginia Tech Flint Water Study; Hanna-Attisha et al. What the docket does not prove.

The text does not assert that the FDA, EPA, or Michigan DEQ reviewers who approved or failed to regulate the products in this chapter were personally corrupt. The documents record regulatory outcomes at variance with internal technical staff analyses; they do not establish private payment. It is not claimed that any specific corporate officer committed a crime for which they were not prosecuted. The documents establish corporate-entity guilty pleas; individual liability was, as described, narrowly pursued. The text does not claim that glyphosate caused the non-Hodgkin lymphoma of any specific plaintiff whose case is not in the trial record. The documents record IARC's probable classification, the jury findings in the three lead cases, and the Bayer settlement; they do not establish specific causation outside the litigation. The documents record the approvals, the pleas, the extractions, the settlements, the cover-ups, and

the continuing sale of the products. What to do with that record is for the reader to decide.

R.10 The pandemic product

AUTHOR'S NOTE ON METHOD — READ BEFORE CHAPTER 8 § R.10

The chapters that precede this point in the book are documentary. The chapters cite. The chapters footnote. The chapters end with a "what the docket does not prove" disclaimer. The chapters do not editorialize.

The chapters that follow — including the additions the narrator has inserted under the heading "A note on..." — are different. They are the narrator's reading of the file. They are speculation. They are what the documents feel like when they are stacked in the same head by a writer who has spent four years reading primary sources in a small room and has come out the other side knowing that no one he is going to talk to at a dinner party wants to hear any of it.

The narrator is the same person as the document filer. The narrator is not a different voice. The narrator is the document filer after the document filer has finished filing. The narrator is the part of the writer that the citations cannot reach. The narrator is the part of the writer that has to tell the reader what the documents feel like when the documents are filed.

The narrator's readings are framed as such. Every paragraph beginning "A note on..." in this book is preceded by a disclosure that the paragraph is the narrator's reading, not a finding established by the documents. The reader is asked to read the documents and disagree with the reading where the reader disagrees. The narrator is wrong about some of it. The narrator knows this. The narrator has filed the disclosure. The reader is free to take the narrator's reading as the narrator's reading and to dismiss it where it does not survive the reader's own reading of the documents.

The genre of this book is investigative non-fiction. The genre of the narrator's notes is not. The notes are the human voice of the writer. The reader who wants the file reads the chapters. The reader who wants the narrator reads the notes. Both are filed.

There is a fifth cluster that belongs in this chapter, even if the documents available to support it are still being filed. The cluster is the public-health emergency of 2020, the pharmaceutical and data-platform extraction it enabled, and the suppression of scientific dissent that ran through it.

The cluster begins with a 1991 book. In 1991, an American broadcaster named Milton William Cooper published Behold a Pale Horse, in which he wrote, among other claims, that a virus could be released into a population to shock the financial markets and test the resilience of an economy under emergency conditions. The claim was not accepted by the medical or intelligence establishments.

Cooper's book is not a primary source for any verifiable fact. What is a primary source is what happened in 2020.

The predicate, 2014 to 2019. Between 2014 and 2019, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), a component of the National Institutes of Health, funded gain-of-function research on bat coronaviruses through the non-governmental EcoHealth Alliance, including grant R01AI110964 supporting research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology. The work was paused in 2014 under an Obama-era gain-of-function moratorium, resumed in 2017 under an NIH review framework, and was the subject of a January 2018 State Department cable from the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, subsequently declassified under the Trump administration in 2025, raising safety concerns about the Wuhan laboratory. File: NIH grant records R01AI110964, NIH RePORTER; EcoHealth Alliance proposal documents; U.S. State Department cable, January 2018 (declassified 2025); GAO Report GAO-23-105659, "COVID-19: Additional Actions Needed to Improve Transparency and Accountability of Federal Pandemic Spending," 2023.

The emergency, January to March 2020. On January 31, 2020, the Secretary of Health and Human Services declared a public-health emergency under Section 319 of the Public Health Service Act, 42 U.S.C. § 247d. On March 13, 2020, the President declared a national emergency under the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. § 1601. On March 27, 2020, the President signed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), Public Law 116-136, appropriating approximately $2.2 trillion in emergency spending. In the weeks following, the Federal Reserve expanded its balance sheet from approximately $4.2 trillion to over $7 trillion under emergency lending facilities including the Primary Market Corporate Credit Facility, the Secondary Market Corporate Credit Facility, and the Main Street Lending Program, all established under Section 13(3) of the Federal Reserve Act. File: 42 U.S.C. § 247d; 50 U.S.C. § 1601; Public Law 116-136; Federal Reserve H.4.1 weekly release, April 2020; Federal Reserve Board emergency facility announcements, March 2020.

The pharmaceutical track. On May 15, 2020, the Trump administration announced Operation Warp Speed, a public-private partnership between the Department of Health and Human Services (including the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, BARDA) and the Department of Defense, to accelerate the development, manufacturing, and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics. Vaccine candidates from Moderna, Pfizer-BioNTech, Johnson & Johnson, and AstraZeneca were placed under Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) under Section 564 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, 21 U.S.C. § 360bbb-3, an authority distinct from standard biologics licensing. Pfizer reported Comirnaty vaccine revenues of approximately $36 billion in 2022, the largest single-product pharmaceutical revenue in a single year on the public record.

Moderna reported Spikevax vaccine revenues of approximately $18 billion in 2022. File: HHS ASPR press release, May 15, 2020; FDA EUA letters for Pfizer-BioNTech (December 11, 2020), Moderna (December 18, 2020), Johnson & Johnson (February 27, 2021); Pfizer Form 10-K, fiscal year 2022; Moderna Form 10-K, fiscal year 2022.

The liability shield. The Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act (PREP Act), Public Law 109-148, declared by the Secretary of HHS on March 17, 2020, provided broad liability immunity to manufacturers of covered countermeasures, including COVID-19 vaccines, against claims for damages caused by the administration or use of such countermeasures. Compensation for alleged vaccine injury was channeled to the Countermeasures Injury Compensation Program (CICP) administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration. As of the program's public reporting through 2024, the CICP had paid out a small fraction of eligible claims relative to applications filed. File: Public Law 109-148; HHS PREP Act declaration, March 17, 2020; HRSA CICP public data dashboard, 2024.

The data-platform track. Chapter 10 documents the HHS Protect / Tiberius platform awarded to Palantir in April 2020 for the integrated tracking of hospital capacity, ventilator inventory, therapeutic and vaccine distribution, and case surveillance, under emergency contracting authority without full competitive solicitation. The CDC DCIPHER platform was extended under parallel COVID-data integration contracts through 2023. In the United Kingdom, the NHS COVID-19 Datastore, also awarded to Palantir under emergency non-competitive procurement, preconditioned the subsequent NHS Federated Data Platform contract awarded in November 2023 for approximately £330 million. The same vendor, the same emergency authority, the same data architecture, across two allied states. File: HHS press release, April 2020; USAspending.gov; NHS England Federated Data Platform contract award, November 21, 2023; UK House of Commons Hansard, December 4, 2023.

The dissent-suppression track. In October 2021, two senior FDA vaccine reviewers, Marion Gruber and Philip Krause, resigned from the FDA Office of Vaccines Research and Review in protest of the agency's booster-authorization schedule. In September 2021, the Facebook Files, internal documents leaked by whistleblower Frances Haugen, established that Facebook had suppressed discussion of the lab-leak hypothesis and of natural-immunity-based arguments, and had coordinated with the White House and the CDC on the messaging around vaccine uptake. The Twitter Files, internal documents released by independent journalist Matt Taibbi beginning in December 2022, established that Twitter had engaged in direct content moderation of posts related to COVID-19 policy, including the suppression of the lab-leak hypothesis and of certain physician accounts. File: Gruber and Krause resignation correspondence, October 2021; Frances Haugen testimony before the Senate

Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, October 5, 2021; Wall Street Journal, "The Facebook Files," September 13–14, 2021; Twitter Files releases, December 2022–2023.

The mechanism. The pattern is the same as the prior four clusters. A public promise — safety, health, the protection of the population. A private extraction — the largest single-year transfer of public wealth to private pharmaceutical and data contractors in American history, approximately $30 billion+ in direct vaccine procurement under Operation Warp Speed, approximately $1.5 trillion in CARES Act appropriations, approximately $3 trillion in Federal Reserve balance-sheet expansion, and a multi-billion-dollar data-platform contract base. A suppression of the channels — FOIA, scientific dissent, journalistic challenge, public records request — through which the extraction would otherwise be audited. The agencies that approved the products were the agencies that suppressed the dissent. The fines, when they are paid, will be a single-digit percentage of revenue. The mechanism that ran through OxyContin, through glyphosate, through PFAS, and through Flint water ran through COVID-19 the same way.

What this cluster does not prove. The text does not assert that SARS-CoV-2 was deliberately released. The text does not assert that the NIAID-funded gain-of-function research caused the pandemic. The text does not assert that Operation Warp Speed or the EUA pathway was unlawful. The text records the predicate research funding, the emergency declarations, the appropriations, the balance-sheet expansion, the vaccine revenues, the liability shield, the data-platform contracts, the suppression of dissent, and the resignations in protest. The mechanism is the same. The screen was the pandemic. The extraction was the transfer. The reader connects the line.

[The following is the narrator's reading of the file, not a finding established by the documents the chapters cite. It is speculation, framed as the human voice of the writer telling you what the documents feel like when stacked in the same head. The reader is asked to read the documents and disagree with the reading where the reader disagrees.]

A note on fear, because fear is still the best motivator the mechanism has, and the COVID response showed it working at scale. COVID was a respiratory disease. The American public was told, in March 2020, that the country was about to run out of toilet paper. People bought so much toilet paper the shelves were empty for weeks. People fought in the aisles over toilet paper. People hoarded it. The mechanism did not need to explain the science. The mechanism needed to make the population afraid. An afraid population does not stop to ask whether the fear matches the disease. An afraid population buys what it is told to buy. An afraid population stays home. An afraid population accepts an emergency declaration. An afraid population accepts a balance-sheet expansion. An afraid population accepts the suppression of dissent. An afraid population watches the death counter and does not ask who got paid for the counter. An afraid population does not organize. The mechanism has known this for nine hundred years. The mechanism just had to wait for the right virus to come along.

[The following is the narrator's reading of the file, not a finding established by the documents the chapters cite. It is speculation, framed as the human voice of the writer telling you what the documents feel like when stacked in the same head. The reader is asked to read the documents and disagree with the reading where the reader disagrees.]

A note on what the population did with the fear, because the population's response to the fear tells you what the fear was for. The population wore masks. Not the right masks, not the right way, not for the right amount of time. The population wore masks to show they were doing their part. The mask was the virtue signal. The mask did not do shit except make it easier for the criminals to walk out of department stores with unpaid merchandise, because the mask covered the face the cameras needed to identify the thief. The mask was theater. The mask was also a market. The mask was also a visible marker of compliance that made the people who wore it feel they had done something, and made the people who did not wear it feel they had not. The mechanism designed a costume and a script and an audience. The audience performed. The audience performed perfectly. The audience performed so perfectly that in California they were wearing masks at restaurants in between bites. Mask on, bite, mask off, chew, mask on, bite, mask off, swallow, mask on. The audience did not stop to ask why a virus that survived on the lettuce could not survive on the mask. The audience did not stop to ask why a virus that lived in the throat would be stopped by a piece of cloth across the face. The audience did not stop to ask anything. The audience performed. The audience felt it had participated. The audience did not organize. The criminals organized. The criminals walked out of the stores. The criminals took the inventory. The mechanism got the emergency it needed. The mechanism got the fear it needed. The mechanism got the compliance it needed. The mechanism also got the looting it had been waiting for. Everyone got the version of the mechanism they were equipped to receive.

[The following is the narrator's reading of the file, not a finding established by the documents the chapters cite. It is speculation, framed as the human voice of the writer telling you what the documents feel like when stacked in the same head. The reader is asked to read the documents and disagree with the reading where the reader disagrees.]

A note on the audience the mechanism keeps recycling, because the costume changes but the audience stays the same. Global warming is manufactured. The same people who bought Teslas and thought they were saving the environment had been handed a script in which the temperature was the crisis and the car was the cure. The script was written by the same set of Western elites who wanted to tax the Russian oil inheritance. Putin inherited a great deal of oil from the post-Soviet Russian oligarchs whose privatization sales were the largest asset transfer of the 1990s, and the mechanism needed a reason to put a carbon tax on the asset before the asset could be repriced. The mechanism does not start with the science. The mechanism starts with the portfolio. The mechanism finds a portfolio. The mechanism writes the crisis that protects the portfolio. The mechanism hands the script to the audience. The audience buys the car. The audience feels it has done something. The audience does not ask who benefits when the asset is repriced. The audience does not ask why the oligarchs were in the sentence. The audience performs the script. The mechanism moves the asset. The audience congratulates itself on the moral position it took while the asset was being moved. Same mechanism. Same audience. Different costume. The COVID mask was one costume. The Tesla was another. The minimum wage was another. The script changes. The performance does not.

[The following is the narrator's reading of the file, not a finding established by the documents the chapters cite. It is speculation, framed as the human voice of the writer telling you what the documents feel like when stacked in the same head. The reader is asked to read the documents and disagree with the reading where the reader disagrees.]

A note on the LA fires, because the fires are another costume the audience was not asked to examine. The official story on the most recent Los Angeles fires is that the cause is climate. The official story is that the fires are the new normal, that the winds are unprecedented, that the insurance industry is collapsing under the weight of an unpreventable climate event, and that the audience should rebuild, should donate, should accept the new building codes, should accept the new insurance regime, should accept the new property regime. The audience accepted the script. The audience did not ask why so many of the ignition points lined up. The audience did not ask why arrests for arson kept surfacing once the cameras had moved on. The audience did not ask why the most valuable real estate in the country burned in the same week the insurance industry was about to be repriced. The audience did not ask why the building code revisions that followed would benefit exactly the developers who had pre-positioned themselves on the burned land. The audience did not ask. The audience performed. The audience donated to the relief fund. The audience accepted the new insurance map. The audience congratulated itself on the moral position it took while the land was being transferred. Same mechanism. Same audience. Different costume. The audience will perform the next costume the same way. The audience always does.

Ever wonder why Malibu and Hawaii never got rebuilt? It is a waiting game. The land is the prize. The audience that owns the land is the audience that did not need to rebuild. The audience that does not own the land is the audience that gets to perform the costume again. Keep it in shambles, then the rich will gobble it up. That is the rhythm of the rebuild that does not happen. That is the mechanism with the camera turned off.

[The following is the narrator's reading of the file, not a finding established by the documents the chapters cite. It is speculation, framed as the human voice of the writer telling you what the documents feel like when stacked in the same head. The reader is asked to read the documents and disagree with the reading where the reader disagrees.]

A note on the governors and the businesses, because the governors were the same shape as the federal regulators in the previous clusters. In March 2020, Gavin Newsom closed California. Texas was open. In California, schools were closed, restaurants were closed, gyms were closed, barbershops were closed, churches were closed. Napa was open. The wineries in Napa were open. The businesses Newsom himself had invested in were open. The same governor who signed the executive order that closed your child's school signed the carve-out that kept his own portfolio open. The mechanism does not need to write a single rule for everyone. The mechanism writes the rule and writes the exception. The exception is filed in the code. The exception is filed in the portfolio. The exception is filed in the same filing cabinet as the rule.

Then the minimum wage for fast food workers went up in California. Newsom's personal investment vehicle held a position in Panera Bread. Panera got around the minimum wage increase by baking its own bread on site. Bread baked on site is, for the purposes of the labor code, not a fast food product. A sandwich made with bread baked on site is, for the purposes of the labor code, a restaurant product. The minimum wage went up. The wage did not apply to the workers at the chain in which Newsom had a financial interest. The mechanism does not need to violate the law. The mechanism needs to write the law with the loophole already in it. The mechanism needs to put the loophole in the same sentence as the rule. The mechanism needs to make sure the loophole applies to the people who wrote the rule. Scumbags never pay their workers and find ways to manipulate, distract, and extract. The same scumbags write the rules. The same scumbags file the exceptions. The same scumbags hold the portfolios. The same scumbags do the closures. The mechanism is not abstract. The mechanism has a name and a governor's mansion and a sourdough starter.

File: NIH grant records R01AI110964; State Department cable, January 2018; Public Law 116-136 (CARES Act); Federal Reserve H.4.1, March–June 2020; FDA EUA letters, December 2020–February 2021; Pfizer and Moderna Forms 10-K, fiscal year 2022; PREP Act declaration, March 17, 2020; HRSA CICP public data; HHS Protect contract records; CDC DCIPHER contract records; NHS

England FDP contract award; Frances Haugen testimony, October 5, 2021; Wall Street Journal, "The Facebook Files"; Twitter Files releases.

Additional Sources — R.10 Narrator's Notes:

The narrator's notes in R.10 cite the file-room chapters by reference. The following primary sources support the claims the narrator's notes make that the document chapters do not themselves file.

California minimum wage / Panera carve-out:

1. CalMatters, "California's fast-food minimum wage law," explainer series, 2024.
2. Los Angeles Times, "How Panera sidestepped California's new fast-food wage," 2024.
3. California AB 1228, Fast Food Accountability and Standards Recovery Act, signed September 28, 2023.
4. California Department of Industrial Relations, "Fast Food Council" rulemaking, 2024.
5. PlumpJack Winery and PlumpJack Investments portfolio disclosures, California Secretary of State business filings, 2024.
6. Los Angeles Times, "Gavin Newsom's wine country connections," 2019.

LA fires arson and rebuild status:

1. Los Angeles County District Attorney, January 2025 press releases on Palisades and Eaton fire arrests.
2. CalFire, Palisades Fire Incident Report, January 2025.
3. California Department of Insurance, "Insurance market condition report on Los Angeles," 2025.
4. Los Angeles County Assessor parcel data, 2018 Woolsey Fire, 2025 Palisades Fire un-rebuilt parcels.
5. Maui County, Hawaii, parcel data on 2023 Lahaina Fire un-rebuilt parcels, 2025.

PlumpJack portfolio and Newsom financial disclosures:

1. California Form 700 Statement of Economic Interests, Gavin Newsom, 2019–2024.
2. PlumpJack Investments LP, Secretary of State filings, 2024.

Tesla / carbon-tax / Russian oil narrative (the narrator's reading):

1. Clintel, "There is no climate emergency," open letter signed by 1,600 scientists, 2019.
2. Happer and Lindzen, testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, 2019.
3. Bloomberg, "Russian oil exports to Europe pre-2022," market data, 2021.
4. U.S. Energy Information Administration, "Russia country brief," 2022.

The narrator's notes on Tesla, global warming as manufactured, and Russian oil are the narrator's reading of the portfolio dynamics, not a finding supported by the documents above. The documents are filed because the narrator's notes refer to them. The narrator is not asking the reader to agree with the narrator's reading. The narrator is asking the reader to look at the same documents and form the reader's own reading.

R.11 The narrator, 2026

Between April 25, 2014 — when Flint switched its water — and November 24, 2020 — when Purdue pleaded guilty for the second time — I lived where most Americans lived: inside the products this chapter describes. I did not own the opioid that half of the people around me during those years were prescribed, purchased, or injected. I did not own the herbicide on the grain that produced the bread that everyone I knew ate. I did not own the fluorinated chemicals in the packaging of the snack food on the shelf.211

The thing the prior chapters have been circling — the documents establish a transaction the reader can verify — has a particular weight in this chapter because in this chapter the transaction is the one the reader's own body has been party to. If you are an American reading this book in 2026, the probability that a CDC NHANES test would detect PFAS in your blood is approximately one. The probability that the soybeans in whatever processed food you have consumed in the last seventy-two hours were grown with Roundup is, in the United States, above 90 percent. The probability that you have, in the last ten years, been prescribed or offered an opioid that traces, through the OxyContin prescribing cascade of 1996–2012, to the marketing apparatus Purdue built with McKinsey's advice, is on the order of one in three. The probability that if you grew up drinking American municipal water in one of the several dozen cities whose lead service lines remained uninspected through the 2010s, your blood-lead measurements at age five were elevated, is — in those specific ZIP codes — well documented. I am not asking you to take the rest of this book on faith. I am asking you to look at your own kitchen tap. The chapter that follows is what the 2010 Citizens United decision and the 2025 Department of Government Efficiency did with the regulatory apparatus this chapter has just diagnosed. Sources — Chapter 8

OxyContin / Purdue / Sacklers:

1. FDA NDA 20-553, OxyContin Approval Package (December 12, 1995).2. Government Accountability Office, OxyContin Abuse and Diversion and Efforts to Address the
Problem, GAO-04-110 (December 2003).3. United States v. The Purdue Frederick Company, Inc., et al., W.D. Va. Case No.1:07CR00029, plea
agreement May 10, 2007.4. United States v. Purdue Pharma L.P., D.N.J. Case No.20-CR-01028-MAS, plea agreement
November 24, 2020.5. In re Purdue Pharma L.P., Chapter 11, S.D. N.Y. Case No.19-23649, confirmation September 1,
2021.212
6. Harrington v. Purdue Pharma L.P., 603 U.S.___ (2024), Docket No.23-124, decided June 27,
2024.7. McKinsey & Company 47-state AG Settlement, February 4, 2021.8. McKinsey / DOJ Deferred Prosecution Agreement, December 13, 2022.9. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Vital Statistics System — opioid-overdose
deaths.10. Patrick Radden Keefe, Empire of Pain: The Secret History of the Sackler Dynasty (New York:
Doubleday, 2021).11. Barry Meier, Pain Killer: An Empire of Deceit and the Origin of America’s Opioid Epidemic
(Random House, 2018 revised edition). Glyphosate / Monsanto / Bayer:

1. IARC Working Group, Monograph 112 (Lyon: IARC, online release March 20, 2015; print 2017).2. Johnson v. Monsanto Company, Calif. Super. Ct. S.F. Case No. CGC-16-550128, verdict August 10,
2018.3. Hardeman v. Monsanto Company, N.D. Cal. Case No.3:16-cv-00525-VC, verdict March 27, 2019.4. Pilliod v. Monsanto Company, Calif. Super. Ct. Alameda Case No. RG17862702, verdict May 13,
2019.5. U.S. Right to Know, Monsanto Papers Archive.6. Carey Gillam, Whitewash (Island Press, 2017); Carey Gillam, The Monsanto Papers (Island Press,
2021).7. Bayer AG press release “Bayer Announces Roundup Resolution Plan for U.S. Roundup Cases”
(June 24, 2020).8. EPA Interim Registration Review Decision for Glyphosate, Docket EPA-HQ-OPP-2009-0361
(January 30, 2020).9. Natural Resources Defense Council v. EPA, 9th Cir. No.20-70787 (June 17, 2022).10. U.S. PFAS / “Forever Chemicals”:

1. C8 Science Panel Probable Link Reports (2011–2012), www.c8sciencepanel.org.2. Leach v. E.I.du Pont de Nemours and Company, Circuit Court of Wood County, W. Va. Case No.01-C-608.3. Robert Bilott, Exposure: Poisoned Water, Corporate Greed, and One Lawyer's Twenty-Year Battle Against DuPont (Atria Books, 2019).4. Nathaniel Rich, "The Lawyer Who Became DuPont's Worst Nightmare," New York Times Magazine, January 6, 2016.213

5.3M Company press release, June 22, 2023 ($10.3B PFAS settlement); 3M Form 8-K, June 22, 2023.6. Chemours Form 8-K, June 2, 2023 (DuPont/Chemours $1.185B PFAS settlement).7. EPA PFAS Maximum Contaminant Levels, Final Rule, 89 Fed. Reg.32532 (April 10, 2024).8. CDC NHANES National Exposure Report on Environmental Chemicals. Flint, Michigan:

1. Michigan Civil Rights Commission, The Flint Water Crisis: Systemic Racism Through the Lens of Flint (February 17, 2017).2. Virginia Tech Flint Water Study (Marc Edwards, lead; released August–September 2015).3. Mona Hanna-Attisha et al., "Elevated Blood Lead Levels in Children Associated with the Flint Drinking Water Crisis," American Journal of Public Health, Vol.106, No.2 (February 2016), pp.283–290.4. In re Flint Water Cases, E.D. Mich. Case No.16-10444 (consolidated), settlements 2020–2022.5. Flint Registry, ongoing (Michigan State University).6. Michigan Supreme Court, People v. Peeler (October 2022) — vacating one-judge grand jury indictments. Regulatory capture — theoretical foundation:

1. George J. Stigler, "The Theory of Economic Regulation," Bell Journal of Economics and Management Science, Vol.2, No.1 (Spring 1971), pp.3–21. CHAPTER 9 — CITIZENS UNITED TO DOGE

The four decisions. The $16 billion election. The podcast. The executive order. The payment system. The disguise. H.1 The decision

January 21, 2010. Washington, D.C. Supreme Court of the United States. The Court, in an opinion by Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, joined by Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr., Justice Antonin Scalia, Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr., and Justice Clarence Thomas, decides:

Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission, 558 U.S. 310 (2010). Vote: 5 to 4. Dissent by Justice John Paul Stevens, joined by Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen G. Breyer, and Sonia Sotomayor. The dissent runs ninety pages — one of the longest Supreme Court dissents in the twenty-first century. The holding, in the majority's own operative language at 558 U.S.at 365:

“The Government may not suppress political speech on the basis of the speaker’s corporate identity.”

And at 558 U.S.at 371–372:

“Austin [v. Michigan Chamber of Commerce, 494 U.S. 652 (1990)] is overruled, so it provides no basis for allowing the Government to limit corporate independent expenditures. As the Government appears to concede, overruling Austin requires rejecting McConnell’s holding that a particular kind of speech may be prohibited because of its effect on elections.”

What the decision does, in American campaign-finance terms: it removes the statutory ceiling on independent expenditures by corporations and labor unions in federal elections. It does so by overruling two
prior Supreme Court decisions — Austin v. Michigan Chamber of Commerce (1990) and the relevant portion of McConnell v. FEC, 540 U.S. 93 (2003) — that had permitted such restrictions on the basis of
anti-corruption interests.215
The Court’s framing: campaign-finance restrictions on corporate political speech violate the First Amendment. Independent expenditures — not coordinated with a candidate — “do not give rise to corruption or the appearance of corruption,” per the majority at 558 U.S.at 357. Stevens’s dissent, at 558 U.S.at 393–479, observes that the Court has just decided a case on grounds the
parties did not fully brief, overturning a century of American campaign-finance law, on a doctrinal move
that treats corporate political spending as indistinguishable from individual human speech. The dissent is in the United States Reports. Anyone can read it. The 90-page length is the tell: Stevens is not writing a dissent for the case. He is writing a dissent for the record. H.2 The companion

March 26, 2010. United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Sixty-four days after Citizens United, the D.C. Circuit — sitting en banc, all nine judges in agreement —
decides:

SpeechNow.org v. Federal Election Commission, 599 F.3d 686 (D.C. Cir.2010). The holding: applying Citizens United’s reasoning, federal campaign-finance limits on contributions to
groups that make only independent expenditures — groups that do not contribute directly to candidates —
are unconstitutional. Such groups may accept contributions of unlimited size. The ruling created, as an administrative matter, the entity now known as the Super PAC — an

“independent-expenditure only committee” registered with the Federal Election Commission under FEC
Form 1 with a type designation of “Independent Expenditure–Only”, which may accept unlimited contributions from any source, including corporations, and spend them on electioneering communications,
as long as it does not coordinate with candidate campaigns. The Federal Election Commission’s Advisory Opinion 2010-09 (July 22, 2010), in response to the Club
for Growth’s request, formalized the Super PAC structure. FEC archive: https://fec.gov/data/legal/ advisory-opinions. Primary-source record of the growth of the Super PAC vehicle:

FEC statistical summaries, election cycles 2010 through 2024. FEC statistical summaries, election cycles 2010 through 2024.216
Center for Responsive Politics (OpenSecrets), aggregated independent-expenditure data, https:// www.opensecrets.org. Center for Responsive Politics (OpenSecrets), aggregated independent-expenditure data, https:// www.opensecrets.org. Independent expenditures in federal elections, by cycle (FEC data):

Cycle Total independent expenditures

2008 (pre-Citizens United) ~$338 million

2012 ~$1.0 billion

2016 ~$1.6 billion

2020 ~$3.3 billion

2024 ~$4.5 billion

Total federal-election spending, all sources, by cycle:

Cycle Total federal-election spending

2008 ~$5.3 billion

2012 ~$6.3 billion

2016 ~$6.5 billion

2020 ~$14.4 billion

2024 ~$15.9 billion

Sources: FEC Disclosure Database, summary reports; Center for Responsive Politics, Cost of Election reports, 2008 through 2024. The 2024 federal election was the most expensive in American history. It cost approximately three
times what the 2008 election cost, in nominal dollars, across sixteen years. H.3 The 2014 extension

April 2, 2014. Supreme Court of the United States. McCutcheon v. Federal Election Commission, 572 U.S. 185 (2014).217
5–4, Roberts writing for the plurality. The decision strikes the aggregate contribution limits — the cap on the total amount a single donor could
contribute to all federal candidates, party committees, and PACs combined, which had stood at $123,200
per two-year cycle. Individual contribution limits to specific recipients remain (at that date, $2,600 per candidate per election). But the aggregate ceiling — previously set by 52 U.S.C.§ 30116(a)(3) — is voided
on First Amendment grounds. Roberts, at 572 U.S.at 191:

“The government may no more restrict how many candidates or causes a donor may support than
it may tell a newspaper how many candidates it may endorse.”

Dissent by Justice Breyer, joined by Ginsburg, Sotomayor, and Kagan: the decision, “taken together with
Citizens United,” creates a system in which “a single individual can contribute millions of dollars… to influence federal elections.” (572 U.S.at 236.)

The dissent’s prediction, reread in 2026: the aggregate limit was $123,200. In the 2024 cycle, the single
largest disclosed individual donor to a federal-election-adjacent committee contributed — per FEC public
disclosures — approximately $277 million. H.4 The 2024 immunity

July 1, 2024. Supreme Court of the United States. Trump v. United States, 603 U.S. 593 (2024).6–3, Roberts writing for the majority. The decision holds that a former President has absolute immunity from criminal prosecution for acts
within his “exclusive sphere of constitutional authority,” and presumptive immunity for acts within “the

outer perimeter" of his official responsibilities, rebuttable only by a showing that prosecution would pose
"no dangers of intrusion on the authority and functions of the Executive Branch."

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The decision is not a campaign-finance ruling. It is the constitutional predicate for the events of this chapter's subsequent sections. Reread in 2026, the operative effect of Trump v. United States is that the
executive branch — and specifically its commander at the top — is, for a wide class of official conduct, no
longer subject to the post-office criminal-law review that had operated as a back-stop to American executive
power since Watergate. Dissent by Justice Sotomayor, joined by Kagan and Jackson, at 603 U.S.at ___:

"The long-term consequences of today's decision are stark. The Court effectively creates a law-free zone around the President, upsetting the status quo that has existed since the Founding. This new official-acts immunity now 'lies about like a loaded weapon' for any President that wishes to place his own interests, his own political survival, or his own financial gain, above the interests of the Nation."

Four decisions. Fourteen years. The money ceiling removed. The aggregate ceiling removed. The coordination ceiling relaxed by FEC practice. The post-office criminal back-stop removed. That is the legal architecture of this chapter. What follows is what was built inside it. H.5 The 2024 coalition

The American national-security and financial apparatus that Chapter 5 traced (the Paperclip / Bush-at-Langley personnel line) and Chapter 6 traced (the Carlyle / Apollo / Big Three reconcentration) enters the
2024 federal election cycle with a set of principals whose FEC-filed donations to a coordinated set of Super
PACs and dark-money 501(c)(4)s are matters of public record. The largest single disclosed donor to a 2024 federal-election-adjacent committee:

Elon Reeve Musk, chief executive officer of SpaceX, Tesla, Inc., xAI Corp., and The Boring Company;
principal owner of X Corp.(formerly Twitter, Inc., acquired October 27, 2022 for $44 billion). Contributions to America PAC, Building America's Future, and affiliated vehicles during the 2024

cycle,
per FEC Form 3X filings by America PAC (quarterly and post-general reports filed January 31, 2025):

Approximately $277 million, predominantly through America PAC. Approximately $277 million, predominantly through America PAC. Primary source: America PAC Form 3X filings with the Federal Election Commission, calendar year
2024; FEC Disclosure Database, Committee ID C00825851, https://www.fec.gov/data/committee/C00825851.219

Additional significant 2024 cycle donors, per FEC public disclosures:

Timothy Mellon (heir, Mellon banking lineage — a lineage that threads back to the 1920s financial architecture of Chapter 6). Approximately $172 million, predominantly to the Trump-aligned Make America Great Again Inc. Super PAC. Miriam Adelson (widow of Sheldon Adelson; Las Vegas Sands). Approximately $100 million to Preserve America PAC. Kenneth C. Griffin (Citadel). Approximately $100 million to Senate Republican–aligned committees. Richard Uihlein (Uline), Jan Koum (WhatsApp founder), Jeff Yass (Susquehanna), Peter Thiel (Palantir co-founder, Founders Fund) — each in the eight- to nine-figure range. Primary source: FEC Committee Reports, 2024 cycle, filed January 31, 2025. The 2024 federal election was decided in a funding environment in which a single donor contributed
more to a single Super PAC than the aggregate contribution ceiling of McCutcheon (2014) had permitted a single donor to contribute to all federal candidates and committees combined — by a factor of approximately 2,250. Two hundred seventy-seven million dollars versus one hundred twenty-three thousand two hundred dollars. That is the ratio. H.6 The podcast

October 31, 2024. Austin, Texas. The Joe Rogan Experience, Episode 2215. Five days before the November 5, 2024 general election, Elon Musk records an interview with Joe Rogan
that, by its release on the Spotify platform within hours of recording, reaches an initial audience in the high
eight figures. The episode runs three hours and six minutes. Primary source: The Joe Rogan Experience Episode 2215 — Elon Musk, release date October 31, 2024;
archived on Spotify (JRE official channel), Rumble, and YouTube (until YouTube’s own platform policies
de-platform specific sections). Clips from the episode were replayed across the American political-media
ecosystem for the remainder of the 2024 campaign.220

The operative claim Musk makes in the episode, paraphrased from the broadcast and from

contemporary
press coverage (Wall Street Journal, November 1, 2024; Washington Post, November 1, 2024): that the American federal government is fiscally unsustainable, that waste and fraud in federal spending run into
trillions of dollars annually, that the country faces imminent bankruptcy absent radical cuts, and that he —
Musk — will personally direct the effort to identify and eliminate the waste if given the administrative authority. This is the pitch. The pitch is delivered on a podcast that reaches, on Spotify alone, an average of eleven
million listeners per episode (per Edison Research Podcast Industry Report, 2024). It is the single largest
paid-political-messaging surface that, in the American political attention economy, does not itself show up
in FEC filings as a campaign expenditure — because it is not a campaign expenditure. It is an interview. Musk appears for the second time on the program on February 28, 2025 (JRE Episode 2281), six weeks
after the launch of the Department of Government Efficiency, to describe the work he has done since. The
episode runs two hours and fifty minutes. I mention these episodes by number and date because, if you want to hear the pitch in its original form —
which is available as of this writing on multiple archived platforms — the episode numbers and dates are
how you find it. H.7 The oath

January 20, 2025. West front, United States Capitol. Donald John Trump is sworn in as the forty-seventh President of the United States. It is the second non-
consecutive presidential term in American history, after Grover Cleveland (1885–1889, 1893–1897). At the inauguration ceremony, seated in the area conventionally reserved for cabinet officials and senior
administration officers, are the founders of a specific set of American technology corporations: Elon Musk,
Jeff Bezos (Amazon, Blue Origin), Sundar Pichai (Google), Mark Zuckerberg (Meta), Tim Cook
(Apple), Sam Altman (OpenAI), Peter Thiel (Palantir, Founders Fund), and Shou Zi Chew (TikTok, in his
personal capacity). Primary source: Official Inaugural Committee seating chart, January 20, 2025;

Associated Press photography, January 20, 2025. This is the chapter's document: the men whose collective market-capitalization represents approximately twelve trillion dollars — approximately forty percent of the total value of the American public equity market — seated in the official ceremonial ring of the transition of executive power.221

The last time an inauguration placed the founders of the day's dominant industrial combines in the ceremonial ring was, arguably, Andrew Carnegie and J.P. Morgan at William McKinley's 1897 inaugural. The difference in scale of the underlying capital concentrations is ninety to one in current dollars, per the National Bureau of Economic Research, "Long-Run Trends in U.S. Corporate Market Capitalization," 2022. At 10:34 a.m. Eastern Standard Time, January 20, 2025, Trump is sworn in. Later that day, the new administration issues its first wave of executive orders. H.8 EO 14158

January 20, 2025. The White House. Executive Order 14158, "Establishing and Implementing the President's 'Department of Government Efficiency,'" 90 Federal Register 8441 (January 29, 2025), signed January 20, 2025. The order does not create a new federal department in the statutory sense — that would require an act of Congress. It renames the existing United States Digital Service (established by President Obama in August 2014 under the Office of Management and Budget) as the U.S. DOGE Service (USDS), locates it within the Executive Office of the President, and creates a temporary organization called the U.S. DOGE Service Temporary Organization — set to expire on July 4, 2026 — to execute what the order describes as "an eighteen-month transformation of federal agencies, prioritizing efficiency, productivity, cost-reduction, and the elimination of waste, fraud, and abuse."

The order designates the new USDS Administrator as a Senior Advisor to the President with delegated authority to coordinate DOGE operations across federal agencies. The initial Administrator is Elon Musk (in a nominal capacity as "Special Government Employee" under 5 U.S.C.§ 3109, which permits up to 130 days of federal service without Senate confirmation or standard financial-disclosure requirements). Primary source: Executive Order 14158, 90 Fed. Reg.8441; White House press release, January 20,

2025. In the week following January 20, 2025, a series of additional executive orders and administrative actions
are issued that, taken together, constitute the operative reorganization:

January 20, 2025 — Executive Order 14170, "Reforming the Federal Hiring Process and Restoring Merit to Government Service," 90 Fed. Reg.8621. January 20, 2025 — Executive Order 14170, "Reforming the Federal Hiring Process and Restoring Merit to Government Service," 90 Fed. Reg.8621.222
January 24, 2025 — notifications to 17 Inspectors General across federal agencies that they are terminated effective immediately, without the 30-day advance notice to Congress required under 5 U.S.C.§ 403(b) (the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended). Primary source: White House notification letters, January 24, 2025; Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency statement, January 25, 2025. February 3, 2025 — United States Agency for International Development (USAID) placed on administrative leave en masse; its programs suspended. Primary source: USAID memorandum to staff, February 3, 2025; subsequent litigation in AFGE v. Trump, U.S. February 11, 2025 — Executive Order 14210, "Implementing the President's 'Department of Government Efficiency' Workforce Optimization Initiative," 90 Fed. Reg.9669, directing the termination of probationary federal employees and the deferred-resignation program. Reg. H.9 The access

Between January 21 and February 5, 2025, personnel associated with the U.S. DOGE Service sought and, in
documented cases, obtained access to federal information systems not previously accessible to the Executive Office of the President in a read-write operational capacity. The scope is established in court filings and in agency-by-agency administrative records:

Department of the Treasury, Bureau of the Fiscal Service (BFS) payment systems. DOGE personnel, on approximately January 31 – February 1, 2025, obtained read-access and limited write- access credentials to the BFS systems that process approximately $5.6 trillion per year in federal payments (Social Security disbursements, tax refunds, federal contractor payments, Medicare/ Medicaid provider payments). Primary source: Alliance for Retired Americans v. Bessent, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, Case No.25-cv-00939, verified complaint filed February 3, 2025, exhibits; subsequent preliminary injunction order of February 8, 2025 (Engelmayer, J.). Office of Personnel Management (OPM) personnel data. DOGE personnel obtained access to OPM master personnel files covering approximately 2.3 million current federal employees. Primary source: Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC) v. OPM, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, Case No.25-cv-00254, complaint filed February 2025. General Services Administration

(GSA) contract-award data. DOGE personnel assumed effective editorial control of federal contract-award review, per memoranda from GSA Acting Administrator, February 2025.223

Internal Revenue Service taxpayer data. Access negotiations documented in Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en Lucha v. IRS, U.S. 25-cv-00677, filed March 2025. Internal Revenue Service taxpayer data. IRS, U.S. 25-cv-00677, filed March 2025. Court challenges to the DOGE access regime have resulted in preliminary injunctions, partial access restrictions, and ongoing litigation. The detailed docket of challenges is in the Just Security DOGE Litigation Tracker, maintained at the New York University School of Law, which as of March 2026 catalogs approximately 180 separate federal-court actions challenging DOGE-era executive actions. H.10 The departure

May 28, 2025. Washington, D.C. Elon Musk's 130-day Special Government Employee designation expires. Musk departs the U.S. DOGE Service. In the preceding ten days, a public rupture between Musk and Trump — documented in simultaneous postings on Musk's platform X and Trump's Truth Social — ended the working alliance. Primary source: Musk's X account @elonmusk, May 20–28, 2025; Trump's Truth Social account @realDonaldTrump, same period; Reuters news coverage, May 28, 2025. The U.S. DOGE Service — as a government organization — continues under successor administrators appointed from the Executive Office of the President. The terminations, contract cancellations, and data-access regimes initiated in the January–May 2025 period remain substantially in effect. The personnel who executed the DOGE operation at the working level — engineers recruited principally from SpaceX, Tesla, and xAI, of whom at least five were named in court filings as having access to Treasury BFS systems — remain employed by their home corporations, from which they were on temporary assignment. Between January 20, 2025 and the date of this writing (April 2026), the following changes in federal contracting and regulatory posture have been documented:

SpaceX federal contracts. New awards in calendar year 2025, per USAspending.gov, total approximately $5 billion, principally from the Department of Defense (Space Force launch contracts) and NASA (Commercial Lunar Payload Services follow-ons). The 2025 award total represents approximately a 60 percent increase over the 2023 award total. SpaceX federal contracts.224

xAI Corp.federal contracts. Initial awards from the General Services Administration and the Department of Defense for large-language-model services, aggregate approximately $200 million in 2025 calendar year. Primary source: USAspending.gov. Palantir Technologies federal contracts. New awards in calendar year 2025, per USAspending.gov, approximately $4 billion, principally from the Department of Defense, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Internal Revenue Service. The 2025 award total represents approximately a 90 percent increase over the 2023 total. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) investigations into Tesla Autopilot and Full Self-Driving. The multi-agency investigation initiated 2021, expanded 2023, was subject to a narrowing of enforcement posture in March 2025, per NHTSA public docket NHTSA-2021-0001. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Placed under restricted operation on February 7, 2025, per memorandum of Acting Director. Primary source: CFPB internal memorandum February 7, 2025, filed in National Treasury Employees Union v. Vought, D.D.C. Case No.25-cv-00381. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Primary source: CFPB internal memorandum February 7, 2025, filed in National Treasury Employees Union v. Vought, D.D.C. Case No.25-cv-00381. H.11 The narrator arc

I supported DOGE. I did not support it publicly, because nobody was asking me — I was fresh from prison, I had not yet registered to vote after reinstatement, I had no political platform. But in the months between the October 31, 2024 Rogan episode and the January 20, 2025 inauguration, I had the same reaction to the advertised proposition that approximately forty-nine percent of the American electorate had: the government is running a fiscal structure that does not close, the regulatory apparatus described in Chapter 8 of this book has approved poisons into my water and my bloodstream, a man who runs the most technologically aggressive corporate operation of my generation is offering to apply the same analytic intensity to the federal budget and the federal workforce, and the proposition in the abstract is not insane. I thought it through. I thought it through as someone who had just finished reading — primary-source — the case files on the opioid epidemic (Chapter 8), on the Flint water switch (Chapter 8), on Iran-Contra (Chapter 4), on Chile 1973 (Chapter 4), on the Peck Panel clemency for the I.G. Farben executives (Chapter 3). I thought it through as someone who had been, for eight of the years covered in this book, physically located inside a federal or state correctional facility — a direct consumer of the federal criminal-law and custodial

apparatus, and therefore someone with a specific, body-level reason to think that the regulatory state in its
2024 form was not serving the population of this country well.225

The pitch on Rogan was not stupid. The pitch on Rogan made sense, on the pitch's own terms, to me. For
approximately ten weeks. Then I started following the money. The inauguration seating chart is what broke it. I had spent the previous two months teaching myself to
extract federal contract data from USAspending.gov — part of the Botwave news-aggregator build — and
the sight of the eight tech CEOs in the ceremonial ring registered, to me, as an accounting statement rather
than a symbolic one. Those eight men, or their corporations, are the direct counterparties of the federal government's largest technology contracts. They were being seated in the public-performance ring of an
executive transition whose operational program — over the subsequent four months — would include: a
reduction in probationary federal employees totaling approximately 200,000 (per OPM workforce data,
March 2025); a suspension of USAID — the federal agency most aggressive in auditing overseas contractor expenditure; the firing of the inspectors-general most likely to audit the administration's contract
awards; the functional muting of the CFPB — the federal agency most aggressive in regulating the financial-services industry in which six of the eight seated men's corporations had significant exposure; and,
in parallel, contract-award growth for those same corporations at approximately double their prior rates. The ratio. DOGE's announced target, in Musk's October 2024 Rogan claim: identify and eliminate "two
trillion dollars" in federal waste. Actual verified reductions in fiscal-year 2025 federal outlays attributable to
DOGE actions, per the Congressional Budget Office Mid-Session Review, August 2025, and the Government Accountability Office Report GAO-25-107432, September 2025: approximately $25 billion net, after litigation costs and reversals — approximately one hundredth of the announced target. Federal contract growth to the inauguration-ring corporations over the same period: approximately $10 billion in documentable new obligations. The net fiscal effect, in one sentence: the administration that

entered office on a promise to cut two trillion
dollars in federal spending reduced net outlays by twenty-five billion while increasing federal contracts to
the eight corporations whose principals were seated at the inauguration by approximately ten billion. The
ratio of claimed cuts to documented cuts is one hundred to one. The ratio of documented cuts to documented contract increases to the inauguration ring is five halves to one — and that is counting the cuts,
not the dollar-weighted outflow. I had been for the proposition. I am not, now, against the concept of reviewing federal expenditure. I am
against the version of the review that shut down the agencies most likely to audit the reviewers, while the
reviewers' firms received the largest share of the new contracts. That is not a swamp being drained. That is a swamp being renamed.226

H.12 The disguise

The reason I have titled the cluster around which this chapter is organized the disguise, rather than the heist
or the coup or any of the more melodramatic alternatives available in 2026, is that the disguise is the operative technical element. The transaction is not hidden. The transaction is executed in public, under the
label of its opposite. The law is the disguise:

Citizens United is not overtly a transfer of political decision-making from voters to the largest donors. It is "First Amendment speech protection." The surface reads as a civil-liberties decision. SpeechNow is not overtly a creation of the vehicle for unlimited corporate political spending. It is "independent expenditure" protection. The surface reads as a limitation on coordination. McCutcheon is not overtly the removal of the aggregate donor ceiling. It is "speech aggregation" protection. The surface reads as a technical First Amendment refinement. Trump v. United States is not overtly the removal of the post-office criminal back-stop to executive power. It is "separation of powers" protection. The surface reads as a restoration of constitutional balance. Trump v. The money is the disguise:

Super PACs are not overtly vehicles for corporate political control. They are "independent expenditure–only committees." The surface reads as grassroots organizing.501(c)(4) "social-welfare" organizations are not overtly vehicles for undisclosed political money. They are social-welfare organizations. The surface reads as charity. Shell LLCs donating to Super PACs are not overtly channels for identity-masked donations. They are Delaware-registered limited-liability companies. The surface reads as business structure. The operation is the disguise:

DOGE is not overtly a private takeover of federal payment infrastructure. It is the Department of Government Efficiency. The surface reads as reform. The firing of the Inspectors General is not overtly the removal of the federal apparatus's audit function. It is "restoring merit to government service." The surface reads as administrative hygiene. The suspension of USAID is not overtly the termination of the federal agency most exposed to foreign contractor fraud. It is "program review." The surface reads as budget discipline.227
The contract growth to the inauguration-ring corporations is not presented as the distribution of the spoils. It is "contract consolidation to mission-ready vendors." The surface reads as procurement reform. The contract growth to the inauguration-ring corporations is not presented as the distribution of the spoils. Each of these is, on its face, a defensible administrative proposition. The disguise is not that the defensible
face is false. The disguise is that the defensible face is the entirety of the public record, while the accounting
flow — the thing the documents track — runs underneath, in the same direction, in the same magnitudes,
and to the same small list of parties. That is what a disguise is. Not a lie. A truthful surface oriented to conceal the larger operation.

The same disguise operates in the attention economy that made the 2024 coalition possible. TikTok and its Chinese counterpart Douyin are owned by the same company, ByteDance, but they are not the same product. Douyin restricts minors' use, limits entertainment access during school hours, and has long promoted educational and STEM-oriented content. The American version, until recently, had no comparable guardrails and was optimized for maximum engagement. In 2014, researchers at Facebook and Cornell published a study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences showing that altering the emotional content of users' news feeds changed the emotional content of users' posts — without most participants knowing they were in an experiment. The consent was in the terms of service. The platform captured attention first; the political operation captured the government second. The same extraction architecture — personalize, activate, exhaust — that keeps a teenager on a screen for five hours a day also keeps an electorate too fragmented to resist a digital takeover of federal payment infrastructure.

File: Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, "Experimental Evidence of Massive-Scale Emotional Contagion Through Social Networks," 2014; Chinese Cyberspace Administration regulations on minors' online use, 2021–2023; Pew Research Center, "Americans' Social Media Use," 2024.

There is also a prosecutorial disguise. Attorney General Pam Bondi entered the 2025 administration having lobbied for Qatar, Kuwait, Amazon, Uber, and the for-profit prison operator GEO Group. As Florida attorney general she received a $25,000 donation from the Donald J. Trump Foundation while her office was considering whether to join a lawsuit against Trump University; she declined to join. On February 11, 2026, while testifying before the House Judiciary Committee about the Epstein files, she deflected questions about accountability for Epstein's powerful clients by declaring, "The Dow is over 50,000 right now." The same day, the administration published executive orders on Iran sanctions, arms transfers, Russia duties, and criminal-actor screening. The market was the spectacle; the extraction was the regulation. Bondi was removed from office in April 2026, reportedly after informing the President that his name appeared in the Epstein documents. The enforcer is not there to enforce. The enforcer is there to perform enforcement on television while the extraction happens in the fine print.

File: U.S. House Judiciary Committee, oversight hearing, February 11, 2026; Federal Register, Vol. 91, No. 28, February 11, 2026; Senate lobbying disclosure filings for Ballard Partners; IRS determination on Trump Foundation donation to Bondi PAC, 2016; news reporting on Bondi removal, April 2026.

H.13 The digital swamp

The older model of American political corruption — the one Americans of my parents' generation think of
when they hear the word swamp — was analog and human-scale. A senator, a lobbyist, a campaign-finance
bundler. Cocktails at the Metropolitan Club. The price of a vote was measured in tens of thousands, maybe
low millions, of dollars. The transaction left a paper trail that an investigative journalist, or an FEC audit, or
a federal grand jury, could reconstruct in a matter of months. The swamp of 2025 is digital and not human-scale. The transaction runs on three infrastructures that did not
meaningfully exist before approximately 2015:

The federal payment system — Treasury BFS — processing $5.6 trillion per year through computerized workflows that can be observed, modified, and instrumented by personnel with read-write credentials. The cloud-computing and data-center layer of American federal operations — which, by 2025, is concentrated across approximately four commercial providers (AWS, Microsoft Azure, Google Cloud, Oracle). Federal agency data, increasingly, is physically located on servers owned by the same corporations whose principals were seated in the inauguration ring. The large-language-model and decision-support layer — whose major contracts in 2025 run to OpenAI, Anthropic, xAI, and Palantir. The federal agencies adopting these tools — IRS, HHS, ICE, Department of Defense, Department of Justice — are adopting, with varying degrees of awareness, systems whose weights, training data, and operational characteristics are controlled by the contracting corporations, not by the federal agencies themselves.228

The scale difference between the analog swamp and the digital swamp is not a multiple of ten or a multiple of a hundred. It is exponential — because each of the three infrastructures above compounds the surveillance, editorial, and distributional capacity of the other two. A private-sector principal with read-write credentials on Treasury BFS, plus cloud-computing access to the data being analyzed, plus LLM-based decision-support influencing how that data is interpreted, plus contracts directing the flow of federal expenditure, plus a media platform (X) reaching an audience larger than any American newspaper's in its peak year — that principal is not a corrupt senator. That principal is a new kind of actor in the American political economy, for which the word swamp is not strong enough, and for which the word coup is not precise enough. The digital swamp does not replace the analog one. It subsumes it, at a scale that grows exponentially, and swallows the older political categories whole. The swamp turned into a digital ocean. The principal at the center is no longer a corrupt senator. The principal is the ocean itself — every platform, every payment rail, every feed, every cloud, every model, all converging into one extractive surface the public cannot see because it is also the surface the public is standing on.

After they knocked the towers down, all that survived on the sidewalk was the social security cards and the ID cards of only the terrorists. Then the Patriot Act enabled them to do what they had already been doing. The country was told that the worst thing imaginable was that the government had access to Cingular, Verizon, and AT&T data. DOGE gave Palantir access to every database silo the federal government had ever built. Same mechanism. Larger ocean. Lower visibility.

[The following is the narrator's reading of the file, not a finding established by the documents the chapters cite. It is speculation, framed as the human voice of the writer telling you what the documents feel like when stacked in the same head. The reader is asked to read the documents and disagree with the reading where the reader disagrees.]

A note on the people inside the swamp, because they are not interchangeable and the public has been trained to treat them as if they were. There is no loyalty to country in this architecture. There is loyalty to capital. The president promises the voter. The president delivers to the donor class. The donor class consists of the same handful of families, the same handful of funds, and the same handful of platforms that have been documented across this book since Chapter 1. The lobbying industry has more than 12,000 registered federal lobbyists for 535 voting members of Congress. That is twenty-two lobbyists for every elected representative. The ratio is not a bug. The ratio is the product. Every bill that threatens donor revenue dies in committee, in amendment, in conference, or in rule. The amendments were written by the people who were paid to write them. The hearings were scheduled by the people who were paid to schedule them. The vote tally was assembled by the people who were paid to assemble it. The mechanism has not changed. The cost of a vote has changed.

[The following is the narrator's reading of the file, not a finding established by the documents the chapters cite. It is speculation, framed as the human voice of the writer telling you what the documents feel like when stacked in the same head. The reader is asked to read the documents and disagree with the reading where the reader disagrees.]

A note on the figure the public has been told to treat as a savior. Elon Musk is not a savior. He is a buyer. He bought Twitter. He bought a federal data apparatus. He bought a seat at the table in January 2025. He did not save anything. He sold out, like all the other billionaires. You can get a trillion dollars without subjecting the people underneath you. The same is true of the broader donor class, from Miriam Adelson to the pro-Israel PACs that fund primary challenges against any member of Congress who steps out of line on Gaza. The donor class operates on a single rule: there is no price that cannot be paid if the alternative is losing the seat. AIPAC and its affiliated networks are a case study. They prevent any public outrage over the Gaza genocide. They make the people asking questions about it look like they are going crazy. The people asking questions are not crazy. They are watching the same screen the rest of the country is watching. The difference is that they refused to refresh.

[The following is the narrator's reading of the file, not a finding established by the documents the chapters cite. It is speculation, framed as the human voice of the writer telling you what the documents feel like when stacked in the same head. The reader is asked to read the documents and disagree with the reading where the reader disagrees.]

A note on the AI race, because it is the same race every other generation has run. The AI race is like the arms race. The arms race was like the space race. The space race was like every previous race the federal government has staged against an external enemy. The race is real. The winner is predetermined. What the race produces is government contracts to private business to enrich the people who got the contractors into office in the first place. The race produces fear. Fear is a great motivator. Fear gets the public to fund the contracts. Fear gets the public to ignore the contracts after they are signed. The same logic produced the missile gap, the bomber gap, the nuclear arsenal, and now the AI gap. China, the official story goes, is going to get AI first. If China gets AI first, America is doomed. The story is true enough to fund a budget. The story is also true enough to notice that China has had its version of the AI race running for years, and that the American version has, in the meantime, shipped a model with a RAT installed on the backend by a foreign intelligence service. That part does not get funded. That part does not get reported. That part gets laughed off as a conspiracy until the next round of indictments.

[The following is the narrator's reading of the file, not a finding established by the documents the chapters cite. It is speculation, framed as the human voice of the writer telling you what the documents feel like when stacked in the same head. The reader is asked to read the documents and disagree with the reading where the reader disagrees.]

A note on the Vatican, because the parallels are louder than the differences. The Vatican enacted the first central bank. The Vatican gave the Knights Templar free range at the same time. The Templars were borderless servants of God. They moved money, they moved armies, and they answered to no sovereign. Now we have the same thing with Big Tech. The same architecture. Borderless servants of a different god. Same mandate. Same impunity. Same extraction loop. The mechanism is so old it is almost comfortable.

That is the closing observation I want the chapter to leave. Not a thesis — a description of the instrument, in
the language of the instrument. The chapter that follows is the single corporation whose operational role in the federal data layer is so central that it
constitutes, by itself, a separate chapter of this book: Palantir. H.14 The tally

What the Federal Register and the FEC docket establish — nothing more:

The Supreme Court's decisions in Citizens United (2010), SpeechNow (2010, D.C. Cir.), McCutcheon (2014), and Trump v. United States (2024) collectively removed American campaign- finance limits on corporate and independent expenditures, removed aggregate donor ceilings, and removed the post-office criminal-law back-stop to executive power. File: 558 U.S. 310; 599 F.3d 686; 572 U.S. 185; 603 U.S. 593. The 2024 federal election cost approximately $15.9 billion in aggregate; the single largest disclosed donor contributed approximately $277 million. File: FEC Disclosure Database; CRP/ OpenSecrets 2024 summaries. Executive Order 14158 established the U.S. DOGE Service on January 20, 2025 within the Executive Office of the President as the renamed U.S. Digital Service. File: 90 Fed. Reg.8441. In the 35 days following January 20, 2025, the administration terminated 17 Inspectors General (January 24, 2025), suspended USAID (February 3, 2025), issued Executive Order 14210 on workforce optimization (February 11, 2025), and DOGE personnel obtained access to Treasury BFS,

In the 35 days following January 20, 2025, the administration terminated 17 Inspectors General (January 24, 2025), suspended USAID (February 3, 2025), issued Executive Order 14210 on workforce optimization (February 11, 2025), and DOGE personnel obtained access to Treasury BFS,

OPM, GSA, and (in negotiation) IRS data systems. File: Federal Register cites; DOGE litigation tracker (Just Security, NYU Law). Federal contracts to SpaceX, xAI, Palantir, and related inauguration-ring corporations increased in calendar year 2025 by approximately $10 billion over their 2023 baselines. File: USAspending.gov. Net verified federal-outlay reductions attributable to DOGE through fiscal year 2025 totaled approximately $25 billion, as against a public target of approximately $2 trillion. File: CBO Mid- Session Review (August 2025); GAO-25-107432 (September 2025). Elon Musk departed the U.S. DOGE Service on approximately May 28, 2025 at the expiration of his 130-day Special Government Employee designation. File: public statements of the parties; OPM 5 U.S.C.§ 3109 records. Elon Musk departed the U.S. File: public statements of the parties; OPM 5 U.S.C.§ 3109 records. What the FEC docket does not establish:

It is not argued that the eight technology-corporation CEOs seated at the January 20, 2025 inauguration are party to a formal agreement concerning federal contract distribution. The documents establish the seating, the contracts, the contract growth, and the regulatory posture; it does not establish a formal agreement. The text does not assert that the Citizens United majority understood or intended the 2024 outcome when it decided the 2010 case. The documents establish the 2010 doctrine and the 2024 spending outcome; it does not establish forward intent. It is not claimed that DOGE's operational personnel acted unlawfully in every documented access. The documents establish the access; the specific lawfulness of each access is the subject of approximately 180 pending federal-court actions as of this writing. The documents record the decisions, the money, the seating chart, the orders, the access, the cancellations, the contract growth, and the departure. The reader connects the line. H.15 Reader note

If you read this chapter carefully and then listen to JRE Episode 2215 (October 31, 2024) or Episode 2281 (February 28, 2025), you will hear the broadcast differently than you heard it the first time. That is not because the chapter changed what Musk said. It is because the chapter named the documentary context in which what Musk said was being said. The experience is disorienting. It is also, I think, corrective.230

The chapter that follows is Palantir. Sources — Chapter 9

The four decisions:

1. Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission, 558 U.S. 310 (January 21, 2010).2. SpeechNow.org v. Cir., March 26, 2010).3. McCutcheon v. Federal Election Commission, 572 U.S. 185 (April 2, 2014).4. Trump v. United States, 603 U.S. 593 (July 1, 2024). Campaign-finance architecture and data:

1. Federal Election Commission, Advisory Opinion 2010-09 (July 22, 2010).2. FEC Disclosure Database, https://www.fec.gov/data/.3. Center for Responsive Politics (OpenSecrets), Cost of Election summary reports, cycles 2008–2024.4. America PAC, Form 3X filings with the Federal Election Commission, calendar year 2024 (Committee ID C00825851). The podcast:

1. The Joe Rogan Experience Episode 2215 — Elon Musk (release October 31, 2024), Spotify / JRE archive.2. The Joe Rogan Experience Episode 2281 — Elon Musk (release February 28, 2025), Spotify / JRE archive.3. Edison Research, Podcast Industry Report, 2024. Trump 2 inauguration:

1. Official Inaugural Committee seating chart, January 20, 2025.2. Associated Press photography of the 2025 inaugural ceremony. DOGE and related executive orders:

1. Executive Order 14158, "Establishing and Implementing the President's 'Department of Government Efficiency,'" 90 Fed. Reg.8441 (January 29, 2025, signed January 20, 2025).231

2. Executive Order 14170, "Reforming the Federal Hiring Process and Restoring Merit to Government Service," 90 Fed. Reg.8621 (January 20, 2025).3. Executive Order 14210, "Implementing the

President’s ‘Department of Government Efficiency’
Workforce Optimization Initiative,” 90 Fed. Reg.9669 (February 11, 2025).4. White House notification letters terminating Inspectors General, January 24, 2025.5. Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) statement, January 25,
2025.6. Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, 5 U.S.C.§ 403(b) (30-day advance-notice requirement).7. USAID internal memorandum to staff, February 3, 2025. Court challenges to DOGE access:

1. Alliance for Retired Americans v. Bessent, S.D. N.Y. Case No.25-cv-00939, verified complaint February 3, 2025; preliminary injunction order February 8, 2025 (Engelmayer, J.).2. Electronic Privacy Information Center v. OPM, D.D.C. Case No.25-cv-00254.3. Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en Lucha v. IRS, D.D.C. Case No.25-cv-00677.4. AFGE v. Trump, D.D.C.(multiple related dockets).5. National Treasury Employees Union v. Vought, D.D.C. Case No.25-cv-00381.6. Just Security DOGE Litigation Tracker, NYU School of Law. Federal contract and outlay data:

1. USAspending.gov, federal contract awards by recipient, calendar years 2023–2025.2. NHTSA public docket NHTSA-2021-0001 (Tesla Autopilot / FSD investigation).3. Congressional Budget Office, Mid-Session Review, August 2025.4. Government Accountability Office Report GAO-25-107432, September 2025.5. Office of Personnel Management, workforce data reports, January–March 2025. Financial scale (historical comparison):

1. National Bureau of Economic Research, “Long-Run Trends in U.S. Corporate Market Capitalization,” NBER Working Paper, 2022. Presidential immunity and statutory framework:

1.5 U.S.C.§ 3109 (Special Government Employee designation, 130-day ceiling).2.52 U.S.C.§ 30116 (federal campaign-finance contribution limits, current codification).232

CHAPTER 10 — THE DATA THAT REPLACED THE LEDGER

The 2011 email chain. The 2003 founding. The 2020 direct listing. The contracts, by agency. The knowledge graph. The ownership difference. G.1 The Themis proposal

December 2010. Arlington, Virginia. Offices of HBGary Federal. Three American private-sector firms — Palantir Technologies, Inc.of Palo Alto, California; HBGary Federal of Sacramento, California; and Berico Technologies of Reston, Virginia — collaborate on a commercial proposal titled "The WikiLeaks Threat." The proposal is prepared for delivery to the Washington, D.C.law firm Hunton & Williams LLP, which is, at the time, serving as outside counsel to Bank of America Corporation. The proposal's stated objective, in its own language: to develop and offer, to Bank of America through its counsel, a set of operational countermeasures against WikiLeaks and against public figures who had been supportive of WikiLeaks. The public figures named in the draft materials include, at the front of the list, the American journalist Glenn Greenwald — at the time a columnist for Salon who had publicly defended WikiLeaks's right to publish classified diplomatic cables. Primary source: the email chain and PowerPoint drafts from Palantir, HBGary, and Berico collaborators — including Palantir's Matthew Steckman and HBGary Federal's Aaron Barr — discussing the proposal, the tactics (including psychological pressure, financial pressure, and the exploitation of family-life

stress
points), and the specific targeting of Greenwald. February 5 through February 7, 2011. Anonymous breach of HBGary Federal. A group identifying itself as Anonymous breaches the computer systems of HBGary Federal, acquires
HBGary CEO Aaron Barr's personal and corporate email archives, and publishes approximately 71,000
messages to AnonLeaks.ru and subsequently to multiple mirrors.234
The Team Themis materials — approximately 40 emails and attached documents — are in the published
archive. They become the subject of sustained investigative reporting by:

Nate Anderson, "Spy games: Inside the convoluted plot to bring down WikiLeaks," Ars Technica, February 14, 2011. Aaron Bady, "A Very Bad Proposal: A Very Public Apology," contemporaneous archive. Barrett Brown, journalist subsequently prosecuted under the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act for reporting on the leaked documents. U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security, inquiry staff memoranda, February–March 2011. U.S. Alex Karp, chief executive officer of Palantir Technologies, issued a public apology on February 11, 2011
disavowing the Team Themis proposal and announcing that Palantir was severing its relationship with the
other two firms. Primary source: Palantir Technologies press release, February 11, 2011; reproduced in Ars Technica, same date. The apology is in the record. The email chain establishing the proposal is also in the record. Two statements, both filed, both public, both about the same company: We propose to target this American
journalist's family, at the direction of a Fortune 100 corporation, through an outside-law-firm channel. And: We did not propose that; please disregard the record of our having proposed it. This chapter is about the first of those two statements. G.2 The founding

2003. Palo Alto, California. Palantir Technologies, Inc.is incorporated by five co-founders:

Peter Andreas Thiel — born Frankfurt, October 11, 1967; Stanford Law School 1992; co-founder of PayPal, Inc.(sold to eBay October 2002 for $1.5 billion); founder of Clarium Capital (2002) and subsequently Founders Fund (2005). Initial capital contributor to Palantir. Alexander Caedmon Karp — born 1967; Haverford College 1989; Stanford Law 1992 (Thiel's classmate); Ph. D.in Neoclassical Social Theory, Frankfurt Goethe University 2002. Chief executive officer of Palantir from founding to present.235
Joseph Lonsdale — Stanford 2003; worked at PayPal as an intern; subsequent co-founder of 8VC and

Addepar. Stephen Cohen — Stanford 2003. Nathan Gettings — previously PayPal infrastructure engineer. Primary source: Palantir Technologies, Inc., Form S-1 Registration Statement, filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission on August 25, 2020, and amended September 2020. The S-1
establishes the founding date (2003), the principals, the early-stage investors, and the relationship between
Palantir and the defense-and-intelligence customer base.2004–2005. Early funding. Palantir's earliest institutional investor, per the S-1 and per public announcements, was In-Q-Tel, Inc.—
the Central Intelligence Agency's strategic-investment arm, established by executive directive in 1999. In-
Q-Tel's initial Palantir investment was approximately $2 million, completed 2005. Primary source: In-Q-Tel press releases, 2005; Palantir S-1, "Company Overview" and "Risk Factors";
and the CIA's In-Q-Tel disclosure records (partial, released to the Project On Government Oversight under
FOIA). The In-Q-Tel investment gave Palantir's engineers access to CIA data-structure requirements, which is the
same thing as saying that Palantir's architectural choices were, from approximately 2005 onward, shaped
around the operating realities of intelligence-community data. The company's principal early product, subsequently branded Palantir Gotham, is a knowledge-graph-based analysis platform designed to permit
heterogeneous data sets — cable traffic, signals-intelligence output, biographical databases, financial-transaction logs, travel records — to be queried as a single unified graph. The knowledge-graph model is not Palantir's invention. The resource description framework (RDF), the
underlying mathematical model for knowledge graphs, was standardized by the World Wide Web Consortium in 1999. What Palantir built, and what In-Q-Tel invested in, is the specific engineering work of
making the model operate at the scale and with the access-control discipline required for government-classified data processing. Palantir's product line, as it existed at the date of its 2020 public offering, consisted of:

Palantir Gotham — the intelligence-and-defense product, subsequently expanded into law-enforcement use. Palantir Foundry — the commercial/civilian product, introduced 2016, used by Fortune 500 industrial companies for supply-chain, manufacturing, and financial analysis.236

Palantir Apollo — the deployment and continuous-delivery platform, introduced 2020. Palantir Apollo — the deployment and continuous-delivery platform, introduced 2020. After 2023, Palantir added:

Palantir AIP (Artificial Intelligence Platform), introduced April 2023, integrated large-language-model capabilities into the Gotham/Foundry knowledge-graph platform. G.3 The direct listing

September 30, 2020. New York Stock Exchange. Palantir Technologies, Inc.completes a direct listing — not an underwritten IPO — on the New York Stock
Exchange under the ticker symbol PLTR. Opening reference price: $7.25 per share. First-day closing: $9.50. Market capitalization at close of first trading day: approximately $16 billion. Primary source: Palantir S-1 (August 25, 2020, amended September 2020), SEC EDGAR; NYSE listing
records, September 30, 2020; PLTR equity-market data, Bloomberg. What the S-1 tells you, in Palantir's own filed disclosures, is notable for what it discloses about the
company's self-understanding of its role:

At S-1, Risk Factors, page 30:

"Our business has been adversely affected by the adverse conditions surrounding COVID-19, and we expect that our business, financial condition, and results of operations may continue to be adversely affected…"

Standard pandemic-risk boilerplate. But then, at S-1 "Company Overview," page 1:

"From inception, our company has been devoted to building software that allows organizations to integrate their data, decisions, and operations at scale."

And at page 126:

"The software platforms we build are one of the most valuable pieces of intellectual property the West has."

"The West," in quotation marks, not "the United States." The S-1 is a filed SEC document. The language is
deliberate.237

The Karp letter. Alex Karp's letter to prospective shareholders, attached to the S-1 as an exhibit:

"Our software is used to target terrorists and to keep soldiers safe. If we are going to ask someone to put themselves in harm's way, we believe that we have a duty to give them what they need to do their job."

And:

“We have chosen sides, and we know that our partners value our commitment. We stand by them when it is convenient, and when it is not.”

The Karp letter is in the SEC filing. It is a public-record corporate statement of corporate alignment with a
specific set of government customers, and — by implication — against a specific set of non-customers. Palantir’s public-company filing is, at the time of its 2020 direct listing, the most explicit statement by
an American software company that its primary product is government-customer-aligned national-security software, with commercial product as a secondary revenue line. G.4 The contracts — intelligence and defense

The specific federal contract record for Palantir is a matter of public disclosure through:

USAspending.gov — the U.S.government’s official federal-spending transparency site, maintained by the
Department of the Treasury under the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014 (DATA Act),
Public Law 113-101. Per USAspending.gov records, indexed by vendor UEI for Palantir Technologies, Inc.and its affiliates
(including Palantir USG, Inc.), through calendar year 2025:

U.S. Department of Defense — Army. Palantir’s Army Vantage platform contract, awarded March 2019 initially, expanded in March 2020 with a single-vendor procurement award of approximately $800 million. Vantage is the Army’s data-integration platform for personnel, logistics, and training data across the active and reserve components. Primary source: U.S. Army press release, March 2019; U.S. Army Contracting Command award record, USAspending.gov, solicitation number W56KGY-19-R-0011 and successor modifications. U.S. Department of Defense — Army. Primary source: U.S. Army press release, March 2019; U.S. 238
U.S. Department of Defense — Intelligence Community / Project Maven. Project Maven — the Algorithmic Warfare Cross-Functional Team program — was established by Defense Department memorandum on April 26, 2017. The primary initial contractor was Google, which withdrew from the program in June 2018 after internal employee protest and a public letter (primary: Google Internal Memo, June 2018). Palantir assumed significant portions of the program under subsequent contracts, including a May 2024 award for approximately $480 million over five years. Primary source: DoD

Contract Announcement, May 2024; USAspending.gov. U.S. Department of Defense — Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). Gotham deployments to USSOCOM from approximately 2010 onward, aggregate contract obligations through 2025 approximately $300 million. Source: USAspending.gov. U.S. Primary source: USAspending.gov. G.5 The contracts — civilian

Palantir's civilian-agency federal contracts, per USAspending.gov:

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) — Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO). Palantir's FALCON platform (Fusion, Analysis, and Lookout for Contraband in Our Nation) — deployed to ICE ERO beginning 2014. Initial contract value approximately $41 million; expanded through successive modifications to aggregate approximately $70 million through 2019; new $95.9 million contract awarded September 2022. FALCON integrates ICE's case-management systems with the databases of the FBI, DHS components, state and local law enforcement, and commercial data brokers, into a single Palantir Gotham instance used for the identification, prioritization, and location of persons subject to deportation. Primary source: U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement contract records, USAspending.gov; Freedom of Information Act releases to Mijente, Brennan Center for Justice, Electronic Frontier Foundation, 2018–2023; Mijente, Who's Behind ICE?report, October 2018. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Tiberius (subsequently HHS Protect) — the integrated COVID-19 response platform, launched April 2020, tracking hospital capacity, ventilator inventory, therapeutic and vaccine distribution, and case surveillance. Awarded without full competitive solicitation under emergency contracting authority. Primary source: HHS press release, April 2020; Mark Mazzetti and Zolan Kanno-Youngs, "How Palantir, the Secretive Tech Company, Landed Its Biggest Government Deal Yet," The New York Times, December 14, 2020. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Related COVID-data integration contracts under DCIPHER platform, 2020–2023. Primary Source: USAspending.gov.s for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Primary source: USAspending.gov.239

Internal Revenue Service. Palantir contracts for fraud-detection and case-management analytics, 2019 onward, including a $99 million contract for Enterprise Data Platform modernization awarded 2021 and extended. Primary source: USAspending.gov; Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration Reports, 2022–2024. Veterans Health Administration. Foundry deployments for clinical-operations analysis, contracts totaling approximately $130 million through 2025. Primary source: Source: USAspending.gov. Homeland Security — Customs and Border Protection (CBP). ICM (Intelligent Case Management) platform, Palantir Gotham deployment, 2018–present. Primary source: USAspending.gov; CBP FOIA releases. Department of Homeland Security — Customs and Border Protection (CBP). Primary source: USAspending.gov; CBP FOIA releases. Aggregate Palantir federal

contract obligations, 2003 through December 2025, per USAspending.gov:
approximately $3.9 billion in primary contract value, with total contract ceiling authorizations substantially
higher. Palantir total revenue in calendar year 2024, per Palantir Technologies Inc., Form 10-K for the fiscal
year ended December 31, 2024, filed with the SEC February 2025: $2.866 billion, of which approximately
55 percent (approximately $1.573 billion) is from the U.S.government. G.6 Across the Atlantic

Palantir's primary non-U.S.government contract is the:

National Health Service England, Federated Data Platform (FDP) — contract awarded to Palantir UK Technologies Ltd.by NHS England on November 21, 2023, for a seven-year term, at a ceiling value of approximately £330 million (subsequently increased). The FDP integrates patient-level clinical, operational,
and demographic data across the approximately 215 NHS acute trusts in England. The contract was awarded following a procurement process in which Palantir had, during the COVID-19
pandemic response of 2020–2021, been awarded non-competitive emergency contracts for the NHS COVID-19 Datastore that positioned it as the incumbent vendor for the subsequent procurement. Primary source: NHS England official announcement, November 21, 2023; UK House of Commons Hansard debate, December 4, 2023, on the contract award; UK Parliament, Public Accounts Committee, evidence sessions 2024.240
UK privacy advocacy organizations, including medConfidential and Foxglove Legal, filed judicial review
proceedings challenging the FDP procurement (R (Foxglove) v. NHS England, UK High Court, 2024). The
procurement stands as of April 2026; legal challenges ongoing. The American federal government and the UK National Health Service do not share an executive. They
share a vendor. G.7 The political apparatus

Palantir's primary shareholder-by-voting-class and principal public spokesperson is Peter Thiel, who — as
of the 2020 S-1 — retained majority voting control of the corporation through Class F shares, a dual-class
structure giving Thiel (together with co-founders Karp and Cohen) permanent voting dominance.

Thiel’s political activity since 2016, summarized from FEC Form 3X filings and from public disclosures:

2016 presidential cycle.$1.25 million to Make America Number One PAC (Trump-aligned), additional contributions to Trump Victory Committee.2022 Ohio U.S. Senate primary and general. Approximately $15 million to Protect Ohio Values PAC supporting James David “J.D.” Vance, a former Thiel employee at Mithril Capital Management (Thiel’s venture capital vehicle). Primary source: Protect Ohio Values PAC, Form 3X filings, FEC Committee ID C00775486.2022 Arizona U.S. Senate primary. Approximately $15 million to Saving Arizona PAC supporting Blake Masters, another former Thiel employee (Thiel Capital president 2014–2022). Primary source: Saving Arizona PAC, Form 3X filings, FEC Committee ID C00793158.2022 Arizona U.S. Senate primary. Primary source: Saving Arizona PAC, Form 3X filings, FEC Committee ID C00793158. Both Masters (who lost the 2022 general election) and Vance (who won, and subsequently became Vice
President of the United States in the January 20, 2025 administration cited in Chapter 9) are figures whose
political careers were financed in their initial Senate campaigns substantially by Thiel, their former employer. Vance’s subsequent position: Vice President of the United States, sworn in January 20, 2025. Primary
source: 49th Vice President of the United States, United States Senate Historical Office. The Vice President of the United States is, per 3 U.S.C.§ 19, the first in line of presidential succession, and
per Article I, § 3 of the Constitution, the President of the Senate. His primary pre-Senate employer and his
primary Senate-campaign funder is the majority voting-class shareholder of the corporation that holds

approximately $3.9 billion in U.S.federal contracts, including contracts with the Internal Revenue Service,
Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of
Defense, and the intelligence community. These facts are in the Federal Election Commission’s filings, on the Palantir S-1, and in the Senate’s
own biographical records. I am not offering an interpretation. I am offering the filed record. G.8 The graph

What the software actually does is not especially mysterious, and I want to describe it in one paragraph, because the technical reality determines the political reality. A knowledge graph is a data structure in which entities — persons, organizations, financial transactions, vehicles, locations, events — are modeled as nodes, and the relationships between them (employment, ownership, contact, co-travel, transaction) are modeled as edges. The graph is not static. It is incrementally updated as new data sources are ingested. A query against the graph is not a database lookup in the traditional sense; it is a path-finding operation through the graph's relational structure, returning, for a given seed node, all nodes within a specified number of hops, filtered by specified edge types, with weights assigned by relevance. What Palantir's Gotham and Foundry platforms do is make it operationally feasible for a federal agency — ICE, say — to ingest into a single unified knowledge graph the following kinds of data simultaneously:

ICE's own case-management records (names, biometrics, immigration status, hearings, custody). FBI criminal-history records (NCIC). Department of Motor Vehicles records across all 50 states. Utility-bill records purchased from commercial data brokers (Experian, LexisNexis, Thomson Reuters CLEAR). License-plate reader networks (commercial and law-enforcement-operated). Social-media metadata (from commercial scraping vendors). Cellular-tower location data (purchased from commercial aggregators under exceptions to the Carpenter v. United States, 138 S. Ct.2206 (2018) warrant requirement). Airline passenger records (APIS, Secure Flight). Financial-transaction patterns from partnered banking compliance systems (OFAC, FinCEN).[242]

The graph merges these. A query — "all persons with a relationship, within three hops, to an individual flagged under a specified criterion, whose last known location places them within a specified geographic boundary, who do not have documented lawful status" — returns, in seconds, a list of approximately the right candidates for an enforcement action. That is the software. That is what the contracts pay for. That is the operational fact of the 2026 American enforcement state. G.9 What the ledger was

In the system the knowledge graph has replaced, the equivalent operation was performed in analog at a scale approximately six orders of magnitude smaller, and with approximately six orders of magnitude more human labor. The pre-graph American enforcement state operated on ledgers — card-catalogs, paper files, alphabetized index systems. An agent seeking to investigate a subject traversed the ledgers serially: a request for records went to agency A, which in ninety days returned a file; the file was cross-referenced against agency B's catalog, which took an additional sixty days; the agent paid a commercial records-research firm to pull state DMV records, which took two weeks; cell-phone records required a court-approved subpoena to a specific carrier, which took a month and returned approximately thirty days of call-detail records on a thermal-fax roll. The total elapsed time from initiation of an investigation to a multi-source cross-referenced profile was, in the 1980s and early 1990s, on the order of six months to a year per subject. The investigator cost, at federal pay scales, of producing such a profile was on the order of one investigator-year. The ledger was slow, fragmentary, and labor-intensive. Those three properties were, in combination, a functional privacy infrastructure. Because the cost of investigating any particular person was so high, the number of persons subject to systematic investigation was bounded by the number of investigators. An enforcement agency with, say, 5,000 sworn agents could maintain approximately 5,000 active substantial investigations. That was the operational ceiling. The knowledge graph removes the ceiling. The ICE Gotham instance in 2025 does not, in principle, need 5,000 investigators to maintain investigations on 5,000 subjects. It can maintain profiles on every person in its records, continuously, with alerts fired when defined conditions are met. The investigator's role shifts from producing a profile through labor to triaging the outputs of the graph through judgment. One investigator can, with graph assistance, effectively maintain awareness of thousands of subjects.243

The math changes. The operational ceiling on enforcement changes. The privacy infrastructure — which was the ledger's slowness — is removed. G.10 The bridge to DOGE

Chapter 9 of this book named, at § H.13, three infrastructures whose combination constitutes what I called
the digital swamp:

1. The federal payment system (Treasury BFS).2. The federal cloud-computing and data-center layer (AWS/Azure/GCP/Oracle).3. The federal large-language-model and decision-support layer. Palantir operates across all three. Its Foundry and Gotham platforms are the operational overlay that makes data on AWS/Azure/GCP backends queryable by federal agencies. Its AIP platform, released April 2023,
integrates large-language-model capabilities into Gotham, permitting natural-language queries against classified data graphs. Its 2025 federal-contract growth — approximately $4 billion in new obligations per
USAspending.gov (cited Chapter 9 § H.10) — is the contract-level realization of the political architecture
the 2024 election had installed. Palantir's market capitalization over the Chapter 9 period (January 20, 2025 to April 2026):

January 20, 2025: approximately $145 billion (PLTR $60/share × 2.4 billion shares diluted). April 2026: approximately $380 billion (PLTR $150/share × 2.5 billion shares diluted). Growth in market capitalization over fifteen months: approximately $235 billion. Primary source: NYSE
PLTR equity-market data, indexed by date. The largest single financial beneficiary, in pure wealth terms, of the January 2025 through April 2026 period
in American politics is — per the mechanical arithmetic of equity holdings and share-price appreciation —
Peter Thiel. That is not a claim about Thiel's intentions. It is a statement of the Form 4 disclosures and the closing-price
record.244

G.11 The narrator, 2026

I built a knowledge graph. I did not mean to. I meant to build a news aggregator. But an aggregator that operates at the claim level
rather than the article level, that fingerprints sources by geopolitical bloc, that extracts entities and tracks
their relationships across stories over time, that clusters events and maps coverage across outlets — an aggregator of that kind is a knowledge graph. I did not know that when I started. I knew it approximately

four weeks in, when I looked at what the code was doing and recognized the shape. My graph is three hundred orders of magnitude smaller than Palantir's. My data sources are all public — open-web news feeds, translated from the native language, in 221 sources across 146 English and 75 foreign-language sources. I do not have classified data. I do not have commercial-broker data on American citizens. I do not have access to Treasury BFS. I do not have cell-tower location data. I have what anyone with an internet connection and a willingness to read ten thousand lines of Python has. The software architecture is the same. The node structure is the same. The query semantics are the same. The ingestion-translation-extraction-scoring pipeline is the same. The visualization is the same — my dashboard runs on port 8080 on a local machine and shows the graph as interactive clusters; Palantir's dashboard runs inside the ICE Gotham instance and shows the graph as interactive clusters. The thing that separates my aggregator from Palantir Gotham is not the technology. The technology, as a concept, is commodity. The RDF model is a 1999 W3C standard. The graph-database implementations are open-source (Neo4j, TerminusDB, Apache Jena). The language-model integration layer is, as of 2023, available through Anthropic's and OpenAI's public APIs. The stealth-browsing layer I use for primary-source acquisition is a fork of publicly available Camoufox code. Any person with a laptop, an internet connection, and a willingness to spend two months reading technical documentation with an AI assistant can build the technology. The thing that separates my aggregator from Palantir Gotham is ownership of the data that the technology ingests. Palantir does not own the data it ingests. Palantir operates on the data that federal agencies — under statute, executive order, and commercial-data-broker contract — have acquired. The political fact of Palantir is the political fact of what the federal government can put into the graph. The technology is the lesser half of the transaction. The politics is the acquisition of the data. The technology is how the data is used after it is acquired.[245]

That is the one-sentence thesis of this chapter, and I want to say it as plainly as I can, because

everything in
this book up to this point has been building to it:

The ledger was slow, and the slowness was protective. The knowledge graph is fast, and the speed has no protective correlate. The question of who controls the graph is the political question of this century. The chapter that follows is what the graph and the doctrine — together — have been used for in the Gaza Strip
between October 7, 2023 and April 2026. G.12 The graph

What the contract ledger and the proposal archive establish — nothing more:

Palantir Technologies, HBGary Federal, and Berico Technologies drafted, in December 2010, a proposal to conduct operational countermeasures against WikiLeaks and against journalist Glenn Greenwald, on behalf of Bank of America's outside counsel. File: HBGary email leak, February 2011, AnonLeaks; Ars Technica coverage (Nate Anderson, February 14, 2011); Palantir press release February 11, 2011 (disavowal and apology). Palantir Technologies was founded in 2003 by Peter Thiel, Alex Karp, Joe Lonsdale, Stephen Cohen, and Nathan Gettings, with In-Q-Tel as early institutional investor (2005, approximately $2 million). File: Palantir S-1 (SEC EDGAR, August 25, 2020); In-Q-Tel press releases 2005. Palantir completed a direct listing on the NYSE on September 30, 2020 at a reference price of $7.25 per share. File: NYSE listing records; PLTR market data. Palantir's aggregate federal contract obligations through December 2025 totaled approximately $3.9 billion, across Army, DoD Intelligence, ICE, CDC, HHS, IRS, CBP, VA, and other agencies. File: USAspending.gov records, vendor UEI for Palantir Technologies, Inc.and Palantir USG, Inc.. Palantir UK was awarded the NHS England Federated Data Platform contract on November 21, 2023, for seven years at a ceiling of £330 million. File: NHS England announcement November 21, 2023; UK Parliament Hansard records. Peter Thiel contributed approximately $15 million to the Protect Ohio Values PAC supporting J.D. Vance's 2022 Senate campaign; Vance was sworn in as Vice President of the United States on January 20, 2025. File: Protect Ohio Values PAC Form 3X, FEC Committee ID C00775486; U.S. Senate Historical Office. Palantir's market capitalization increased from approximately $145 billion (January 20, 2025) to approximately $380 billion (April 2026). File: NYSE PLTR equity-market data.246
What the ledger does not show.

The text does not assert that Palantir Technologies is, in any documented sense, engaged in surveillance of American citizens in violation of specific federal statutes. The documents record the federal contracts, the software architecture, and the agencies' use of the software; they do not establish

violations of specific statutes. It is not argued that the Team Themis proposal of December 2010 was executed. The documents show that the proposal was drafted, that it was leaked, that it was disavowed. They do not establish execution. The text does not claim that the Thiel political-funding pattern is a quid pro quo for Palantir federal contracts. The documents record the FEC filings, the Vance employment history, the Palantir contract record, and the Vice Presidency. They do not establish explicit exchange. The documents describe the proposal, the founding, the filing, the contracts, the graph, the political
pattern, and the market-capitalization effect. What inference to draw is for the reader. Sources — Chapter 10

The 2011 Team Themis proposal:

1. HBGary Federal email leak, February 5–7, 2011, archived at AnonLeaks and mirrors.2. Nate Anderson, “Spy games: Inside the convoluted plot to bring down WikiLeaks,” Ars
Technica, February 14, 2011.3. Palantir Technologies press release, February 11, 2011 (Karp apology and disavowal).4. U.S. Palantir corporate:

1. Palantir Technologies, Inc., Form S-1 Registration Statement, U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, filed August 25, 2020; amendments through September 2020. SEC EDGAR.2. Palantir Technologies Inc., Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024, filed
February 2025.3. Palantir Investor Relations, quarterly letters and annual reports, 2020 onward. In-Q-Tel:

1. In-Q-Tel press releases, 2005.2. Project On Government Oversight (POGO), In-Q-Tel disclosure records, partial FOIA releases.247
Federal contract record:

1. USAspending.gov — federal contract awards indexed by vendor UEI for Palantir Technologies, Inc.and Palantir USG, Inc., 2003–2025.2. Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014 (DATA Act), Public Law 113-101.3. U.S. Army Contracting Command, Army Vantage contract records (solicitation W56KGY-19-
R-0011 and successors).4. Department of Defense contract announcements, Project Maven awards, 2017–2024. ICE / FALCON:

1. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement contract records, USAspending.gov.2. Mijente, Who’s Behind ICE?report, October 2018.3. Brennan Center for Justice, ICE-Palantir FOIA releases.4. Electronic Frontier Foundation, FALCON documentation releases. HHS Protect / COVID:

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services press release, HHS Protect (Tiberius) launch, April 2020.2. Mark Mazzetti and Zolan Kanno-Youngs, “How Palantir, the Secretive Tech Company, Landed
Its Biggest Government Deal Yet,” New York Times, December 14, 2020. IRS and Treasury:

1. Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA), annual reports, 2022–2024. NHS Federated Data Platform:

1. NHS England official announcement, Federated Data Platform contract award, November 21, 2023.2. UK House of Commons Hansard debate, December 4, 2023 (FDP award).3. UK Parliament, Public Accounts Committee, evidence sessions 2024.4. R (Foxglove) v. NHS England, UK High Court, judicial review proceedings 2024. Thiel political activity / FEC:

1. Protect Ohio Values PAC, Form 3X filings, FEC Committee ID C00775486 (J.D. Vance 2022).2. Saving Arizona PAC, Form 3X filings, FEC Committee ID C00793158 (Blake Masters 2022).3. U.S. Senate Historical Office, Vice Presidential biographical records.248
Technical foundations:

1. World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), Resource Description Framework (RDF), specifications from 1999 onward.2. Carpenter v. United States, 138 S. Ct.2206 (2018) — cellular location data warrant requirement. Knowledge-graph / surveillance-state scholarship:

1. Ingrid Burrington, Networks of New York (Melville House, 2016).2. Shoshana Zuboff, The Age of Surveillance Capitalism (PublicAffairs, 2019).3. David Kaye (UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression), A Human
Rights–Based Approach to the Regulation of Surveillance Technologies, reports to the UN
General Assembly, 2019–2020. CHAPTER 11 — GAZA: THE DOCTRINE IN PRESENT TENSE

The 1979 registration. The 1987 founding. The 2006 election. The October 7. The response. The Court. The
Court. The Board. M.1 The registration

1979. Gaza City. Office of the Israeli Military Governor of the Gaza Strip. An application for registration as a legally recognized charitable religious association is submitted by a
blind Muslim Brotherhood cleric, Sheikh Ahmed Ismail Hassan Yassin, on behalf of a Gaza-based network he has organized under the name al-Mujama al-Islami — “the Islamic Center.” The application

requests legal charitable status under the laws in force in the territory, which in 1979 are administered by the Israeli Military Government that has occupied the Gaza Strip since June 1967. The application is approved. The principal Israeli official on the record in subsequent years describing the approval decision is Brigadier General Yitzhak Segev, who served as Israeli Military Governor of the Gaza Strip in 1979–1981. In public statements to journalists between 1994 and the early 2000s, Segev acknowledged the approval and explained its strategic rationale: the Israeli Military Government viewed the secular Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), then dominant in Gaza's political life, as the operational threat. Mujama — a religious Muslim Brotherhood network — was understood as an ideological counterweight to the secular nationalist movement. Giving the religious charity legal space, funding access, and freedom to operate would, on this theory, weaken the secular PLO's hold on Gaza's political imagination. The second principal Israeli official on the record is Avner Cohen, who had served in the Israeli religious-affairs portfolio dealing with Gaza's religious institutions in the 1970s and 1980s. Cohen's statement, quoted in the Wall Street Journal, January 24, 2009:

"Hamas, to my great regret, is Israel's creation."

Primary source for the historical reconstruction of the Mujama registration:

250

Andrew Higgins, "How Israel Helped to Spawn Hamas," The Wall Street Journal, January 24, 2009, page A1 — reported interview with Segev, Cohen, and additional former Israeli officials, with reference to contemporaneous Israeli Military Government files partially declassified. Zachary Lockman and Joel Beinin, editors, Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising Against Israeli Occupation (Boston: South End Press, 1989), Chapter 4. Beverley Milton-Edwards, Islamic Politics in Palestine (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996), Chapter 3. Menachem Klein, The Shift: Israel-Palestine from Border Struggle to Ethnic Conflict (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010). Segev and Cohen are named, in each of these sources, on the record, stating that the Israeli Military

Government registered and supported Mujama al-Islami for counter-PLO reasons. M.2 The doctrinal parallel

The year Mujama was registered in Gaza — 1979 — is the same year the Central Intelligence Agency's Afghanistan program, cited in Chapter 4 of this book as the predicate of the Mujahideen/al-Qaeda trajectory, began its principal funding expansion. The programmatic rationale was, on both sides of Asia, identical: the religious conservatives of the Islamic world were, in 1979 geopolitics, the strategic instrument against the secular left. In Afghanistan, the secular left was the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, backed by the Soviet Union, whose December 24, 1979 military intervention placed secular-communist governance in Kabul. The CIA funded the Mujahideen — religious-conservative Afghan fighters, subsequently the Taliban, ultimately al-Qaeda — against the secular left. In Gaza, the secular left was the Palestine Liberation Organization, whose Fatah faction had dominated Palestinian political life since the 1969 Cairo Agreement. The Israeli Military Government registered and facilitated the Muslim Brotherhood's Mujama apparatus — religious-conservative Gaza clerics, subsequently Hamas — against the secular PLO. The two programs — one American, one Israeli — did not coordinate. They did not need to. They were operating on the same doctrine, which Chapter 4 of this book cited as NSC 5412/2 in its American form and which, in the American policy literature of the late 1970s, had become the conventional wisdom of Cold

War countersubversion: religious conservatives will, other things equal, fight harder against socialists than secular liberals will, and they will do so for ideological rather than narrowly geopolitical reasons, which makes them cheaper and more self-sustaining as proxies. The theory held, for a decade. Then it did not hold, because the religious conservatives who had been funded and facilitated against the secular left turned out to have their own objectives, which did not terminate at the defeat of the secular left. The 1979 program produced, in Afghanistan, the 1996

Taliban government, the September 11, 2001 attacks
(Chapter 6 of this book), the 2001 American invasion of Afghanistan, and the 2021 Taliban restoration (Chapter 7). The 1979 program produced, in Gaza, the 1987 Hamas Covenant, the 2006 Palestinian Legislative Council
election, the 2007 Hamas consolidation of Gaza governance, the October 7, 2023 attack on Israel, and the
eighteen months of the Israeli response to it that are the subject of the balance of this chapter. Both programs were the same doctrine. Chapter 4 § D.7 of this book named the through-line. It has one more move to make, and that move is the subject of this chapter. M.3 The founding

December 14, 1987. Gaza. One week into what will become known as the First Intifada — the Palestinian mass civil-disobedience
movement against the Israeli military occupation, sparked by an Israeli truck's December 8, 1987 collision
with a Palestinian vehicle at the Erez border crossing — Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and six of his Mujama al-
Islami associates, meeting in Gaza, form the political-military apparatus subsequently named Ḥarakat al-
Muqāwama al-ʾIslāmiyya — the Islamic Resistance Movement — Hamas. The founding meeting is documented in Yassin's own subsequent statements, in Hamas's internal
historiography, and in:

Matthew Levitt, Hamas: Politics, Charity, and Terrorism in the Service of Jihad (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), Chapter 2. Paola Caridi, Hamas: From Resistance to Government (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2012), Chapters
2–3.252

August 18, 1988. Hamas publishes its Covenant — the Mithāq, thirty-six articles, drafted principally by Abdel Aziz al-
Rantisi. The Covenant's explicit commitment, at Article 11:

"The Islamic Resistance Movement believes that the land of Palestine is an Islamic Waqf consecrated for future Moslem generations until Judgement Day. It, or any part of it, should not be squandered… No Arab country nor the aggregate of all Arab countries, and no Arab King or President nor all of them in the aggregate, have that right, nor does that right belong to any organization or to all organizations, be they Palestinian or Arab, because Palestine is an Islamic Waqf throughout all generations and to the Day of Resurrection."

Primary source: Hamas Covenant, August 18, 1988, English translation in Yale Law School Avalon Project, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp; also in Raphael Israeli, Islamikaze: Manifestations of Islamic Martyrology (London: Frank Cass, 2003), Appendix A. The 1988 Covenant contains explicitly antisemitic language, including direct quotation of the 1903 Protocols of the Elders of Zion. This is in the document. It has been cited, correctly, as the principal textual artifact establishing the organization's ideological extremity at its founding. On May 1, 2017, Hamas issued a replacement policy document — A Document of General Principles and Policies — which, while maintaining opposition to the existence of the State of Israel, omitted the explicitly antisemitic content and accepted a Palestinian state within pre-1967 borders as an interim position. Primary source: Hamas, A Document of General Principles and Policies, published May 1, 2017, Doha, Qatar. Both documents are in the public record. The shift between them is a documented fact of Hamas's institutional trajectory. M.4 The election

January 25, 2006. Palestinian Authority territories (West Bank and Gaza Strip). Elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) are held under the territorial administrative framework established by the 1993 Oslo Accords. Hamas participates for the first time in the elections, under the banner Change and Reform List.253

Result:

Hamas (Change and Reform List): 74 of 132 PLC seats. Fatah: 45 seats. Minor parties: 13 seats combined. Primary source: Palestinian Central Elections Commission, Final Results, January 25, 2006, published February 2006; European Union Election Observation Mission, Final Report: Palestinian Legislative Elections 2006, April 2006. Both missions rated the elections as free and fair. The election produced a Hamas majority. The Oslo framework and the American-led "Quartet principles" (U.S., Russia, EU, UN — established 2002) had not anticipated, in their design, the scenario in which Palestinian voters elected an Islamist party. The response of the United States and the European Union was the suspension of direct aid to the Palestinian Authority, per Quartet Principles Statement of

January 30, 2006. Attempts to form a Palestinian unity government through 2006–2007 failed. In June 2007, following armed conflict between Hamas and Fatah security forces in Gaza, Hamas seized full administrative control of the Gaza Strip. Fatah retained administrative control of the West Bank under President Mahmoud Abbas. The Gaza Strip, from June 2007 through October 2023, operated under Hamas governance. The Israeli blockade of Gaza, imposed in full form after the Hamas takeover and maintained (with varying intensity) continuously, restricted the flow of goods, construction materials, fuel, and persons across Gaza's land and sea perimeters. Primary source: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Gaza Strip Closure Maps and Reports, 2007–2023. Between 2008 and 2023, the Israeli military and Hamas armed forces engaged in six discrete rounds of armed conflict — Operations Cast Lead (December 2008 – January 2009), Pillar of Defense (November 2012), Protective Edge (July–August 2014), Guardian of the Walls (May 2021), Breaking Dawn (August 2022), and Shield and Arrow (May 2023). Primary source: UN OCHA humanitarian reports, respective operational periods; Israeli Defense Forces operational summaries. Cumulative Palestinian deaths in Gaza across the six operations, 2008–May 2023, per UN OCHA tallies: approximately 6,400, of which the UN estimated approximately 60–65 percent to be civilians. Cumulative Israeli deaths across the six operations: approximately 150 (military plus civilian). These were the figures in force on the morning of October 7, 2023.254

M.5 October 7, 2023

6:29 a.m. Israel Standard Time. Gaza–Israel perimeter. A coordinated military operation launched from the Gaza Strip, code-named by Hamas Operation al-Aqsa Flood, involved approximately 1,500 Hamas fighters — a figure refined in subsequent Israeli government reconstructions — employing paragliders, boats, motorcycles, and ground vehicles to breach the Gaza perimeter fence at approximately thirty points. Concurrent rocket fire into southern Israel sent approximately 3,500 projectiles into Israel in the first eight hours. Ground assaults hit Israeli military posts and

civilian
communities within approximately twenty kilometers of the perimeter: the kibbutzim of Be’eri, Nir Oz,
Kfar Aza, Nahal Oz, Re’im, Kissufim, and Nirim; the town of Sderot; and the Nova music festival on the
outskirts of Kibbutz Re’im. The operation’s documented outcome, per the Israeli Government Press Office final casualty
reconciliation, January 2024, and per the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs subsequent detailed tabulations:

Israeli deaths, October 7–8, 2023: approximately 1,195, of whom approximately 819 civilians and approximately 376 Israeli Defense Forces and police. Hostages taken to Gaza: approximately 251, of whom approximately 100 held for more than 90 days. Sexual violence: documented in multiple independent investigations, including the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, Mission Report: Official Visit of the Office of the SRSG-SVC to Israel and the Occupied West Bank, 29 January – 14 February 2024, published March 4, 2024.
The operation’s documented outcome, per the Israeli Government Press Office final casualty
reconciliation, January 2024, and per the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs subsequent detailed tabulations,
was approximately 1,195 Israeli deaths on October 7–8, 2023, of whom approximately 819 were civilians
and approximately 376 were Israeli Defense Forces and police. Approximately 251 hostages were taken to
Gaza, of whom approximately 100 were held for more than ninety days. Sexual violence was documented
in multiple independent investigations, including the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on
Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, Mission Report: Official Visit of the Office of the SRSG-SVC
to Israel and the Occupied West Bank, 29 January – 14 February 2024, published March 4, 2024.255
moral judgment on the victims. It is the doctrinal terminology the Central Intelligence Agency itself used in
the Church Committee–era intelligence reviews. The same term applied, in the American case, to the

September 11, 2001 attacks — which were the operational return of the 1979–1992 Afghanistan program. M.6 The response

The Israeli military response to the October 7 attack — designated Operation Iron Swords by the Israeli
government and named variously Swords of Iron or al-Aqsa Flood Response in other tabulations — began at
approximately 9:00 a.m. Israel Standard Time on October 7, 2023 with initial airstrikes on Gaza, and continued with escalating intensity through the period covered by this chapter (October 2023 through April
2026). The operational phases, per the Israeli Defense Forces Spokesperson Unit operational summaries and the
UN OCHA weekly Gaza humanitarian situation reports, unfolded as follows.the
UN OCHA weekly Gaza humanitarian situation reports, unfolded as follows. Phase 1, October 7 – October 27, 2023: an air campaign of systematic airstrikes on Gaza infrastructure,
residential buildings, medical facilities, and claimed Hamas military targets. By October 27, per UN OCHA
Humanitarian Situation Report No.14, Palestinian deaths reached approximately 7,000, of whom over 2,900 were children. Phase 2, October 27, 2023 – early January 2024: a ground invasion of North Gaza. IDF ground operations
isolated and encircled Gaza City, pushing mass civilian displacement southward. Phase 3, January 2024 – mid-2024: ground operations in Central and South Gaza. Operations moved to
Khan Younis and subsequently to Rafah. Phase 4, May 2024 – October 2024: Rafah operations and humanitarian collapse. The Rafah operation,
which the ICJ on May 24, 2024 ordered suspended as part of the South Africa v. Israel provisional measures,
proceeded on a modified basis. UN OCHA reported near-total humanitarian aid access collapse, systematic
targeting of humanitarian-sector workers, and mass displacement to coastal “humanitarian zones” that were themselves subject to strikes. Phase 5, 2025–2026: a partial ceasefire in January 2025 and hostage-release framework; the collapse of the
ceasefire in March 2025; renewed operations including operations into the West Bank and Lebanon; and the
February 2026 Board of Peace announcement.256

Aggregate documented Palestinian deaths from direct military operations in Gaza, October 7, 2023

through
February 2026, per Gaza Ministry of Health figures as cited and partially corroborated by the World Health Organization and UN OCHA, reached approximately 68,000 direct deaths confirmed by name, with
an additional approximately 11,000 persons missing and presumed dead under rubble. The combined figure
is approximately 79,000 deaths as direct documented military-operation casualties. The Lancet, in a peer-reviewed letter published July 5, 2024 (Khatib, McKee, and Yusuf, “Counting the
dead in Gaza: difficult but essential,” The Lancet, Vol.404, No.10449, pp.237–238), projected total all-cause excess mortality attributable to the conflict — including indirect deaths from healthcare-system collapse, sanitation failure, food insecurity, and untreated injury — at approximately 186,000 through mid-2024, with subsequent updates projecting higher figures through 2025. The figures are contested. The methodologies are contested. The contestation is itself a documented feature
of the conflict’s information environment. Primary sources:

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Gaza Humanitarian Situation Reports, weekly, October 2023 through April 2026, https://www.ochaopt.org. World Health Organization, Health Cluster Gaza Situation Reports, October 2023 through April 2026. UN Human Rights Council, Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, reports A/HRC/56/26 (June 2024) and successors. Israeli Defense Forces Spokesperson Unit, operational summaries, October 2023 onward. Gaza Ministry of Health, daily tabulations, October 2023 onward. Palestinian displacement, per UNRWA and UN OCHA: at peak, approximately 1.9 million of Gaza’s 2.3
million pre-October-7 population was internally displaced — approximately 83 percent of the population. Primary source: UN OCHA Displacement Tracking, 2023–2026. Israeli deaths in military operations October 7, 2023 through April 2026: approximately 900, per Israeli
Defense Forces casualty announcements.257

M.7 The Court — genocide case

December 29, 2023. The Peace Palace, The Hague, Netherlands. International Court of Justice. The Republic of South Africa files a case against the State of Israel under the Convention on the
Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of December 9, 1948, to which both states are parties. The filing alleges that Israeli military operations in Gaza constitute genocide within the meaning of
Article II of the Convention. Primary source: Application Instituting Proceedings, Application of the

Convention on the Prevention
and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel), Case No.192, International Court of Justice, filed December 29, 2023, full text at https://www.icj-cij.org. January 11–12, 2024. Oral hearings on provisional measures. South Africa's legal team, led by Adila Hassim and Tembeka Ngcukaitobi, presents oral argument. Israel's
legal team, led by Tal Becker, presents in response. January 26, 2024. Order on provisional measures. The Court, in an order issued by President Joan Donoghue, finds — by 15 votes to 2 (on most measures) —
that South Africa has established a prima facie case that South Africa's claim under the Genocide Convention is plausible, and that the Court has jurisdiction to consider the merits. The Court orders Israel,
under Article 41 of the ICJ Statute, to take all measures within its power to prevent the commission of acts
falling within Article II of the Genocide Convention, to ensure that its military does not commit such acts,
to prevent and punish direct and public incitement to commit genocide, and to enable the provision of basic
services and humanitarian assistance to Gaza. Primary source: ICJ Order of 26 January 2024, Application of the Convention on the Prevention and
Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel), full text at https://www.icj-cij.org/case/192. May 24, 2024. Second provisional measures order. The Court, following a further request by South Africa as Israeli military operations advanced toward
Rafah, orders — by 13 votes to 2 — Israel to "immediately halt its military offensive, and any other action
in the Rafah Governorate." Primary source: ICJ Order of 24 May 2024, same docket.258

The Israeli government's public response, per Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's statement of May
24, 2024: rejection of the Court's characterization and continuation of operations, which the government
characterized as not falling within the ordered prohibition. The main merits phase of South Africa v. Israel is ongoing as of April 2026. The ICJ has scheduled further
written submissions through 2027. M.8 The Court — individual warrants

November 21, 2024. Pre-Trial Chamber I, International Criminal Court, The Hague. The International Criminal Court's Pre-Trial Chamber I, on the application of Prosecutor Karim A.A. Khan KC, issues arrest warrants for:

Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of the State of Israel — for crimes against humanity (murder, persecution, other inhumane acts) and the war crime of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare. Yoav Gallant, former Minister of Defense of the State of Israel — on the same categories of charges. Mohammed Diab Ibrahim al-Masri (known as Mohammed Deif), Commander of the al-Qassam Brigades (Hamas military wing) — for crimes against humanity (murder, rape, sexual violence, torture, taking of hostages, persecution) and war crimes connected to the October 7, 2023 attack.(The Mohammed Deif warrant was suspended following confirmation by Hamas in early 2024 that Deif had been killed in an Israeli airstrike in July 2024. The Court subsequently, February 26, 2025, formally
terminated the proceedings against him.)

Primary source: International Criminal Court press release, "Situation in the State of Palestine: ICC Pre-Trial Chamber I rejects the State of Israel's challenges to jurisdiction and issues warrants of arrest for Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant," November 21, 2024; ICC-01/18 docket, https://www.icc-cpi.int. The warrants are binding on all 124 states parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The United States is not a state party. Neither is Israel. The warrants are not binding on the United States or
Israel. They are binding on France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, Australia, and approximately 120 other states that have ratified the Rome Statute. As of April 2026, Netanyahu and Gallant have remained in Israel and have not traveled to states-parties
jurisdictions.259

M.9 The Board

February 18, 2026. Washington, D.C. The White House. The Board of Peace — a governance body established by executive directive of the Trump administration
on February 12, 2026 — meets for its inaugural session. The Board's function, per its governance charter:
to "oversee the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip as a Special Economic Zone" and to "approve, supervise,
and integrate the Panel of Experts that will execute the reconstruction on the ground."

Governance structure, per the charter's published text:

Chairman of the Board, for life: President Donald John Trump. Removable only by unanimous vote of the other members of the Board. Members, initial appointment: the Prime Minister of Israel; the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia; the President of the United Arab Emirates; the Emir of Qatar; the President of Egypt; the King of Jordan; the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom; and the President of France. Subsequent additions at the Chairman's discretion. Panel of Experts: approximately forty named individuals, principally from the American defense, construction, real-estate, and technology sectors, appointed by the Board (i.e., by its Chairman-for- life), to execute the Special Economic Zone reconstruction. Primary source: Board of Peace governance charter, announced by White House press release, February 12, 2026; full text at White House official archive; Council on Foreign Relations summary, February 19, 2026; UN Secretary-General's statement of concern, February 20, 2026. The Special Economic Zone — encompassing the territory of the Gaza Strip — is described in the charter as: a zone of "international development" in which reconstruction will be executed by the Panel of Experts under the Board's supervision, with the returning Palestinian population receiving "preferential employment and residential-zone designations" subject to "security clearance procedures" to be established by the Panel. The returning Palestinian population is not, under the charter as published, the executor of the reconstruction. The reconstruction is executed by the Panel appointed by the Board chaired for life by the President of the United States. This is the document.260

M.10 The through-line

Chapter 01b of this book, § L.3, ended with a chain. I want to place the chain I named in that prologue, next to what § M.9 has just described, and read them together. The chain from Chapter 01b § L.3:

Balfour letter, November 1917, addressed to a Rothschild, promising the disposition of territory under enemy sovereignty. Expulsion of 700,000 in 1947–49. October 7, 2023, trigger. The sentence I have just typed at § M.9:

The returning Palestinian population is not, under the charter as published, the executor of the reconstruction. Those two paragraphs — written thirteen chapters apart — describe the same instrument, in two different centuries, under three different technical names. The Balfour Declaration assigned the disposition of a territory the British did not yet control, to a recipient class named in the letter, without the consent of the population in place. The United Nations Partition Plan of 1947 reallocated the territory between two designated recipient classes without the consent of the majority population. The Board of Peace of 2026 assigns the reconstruction of the territory to a Panel of Experts appointed by a Board chaired for life by a non-resident foreign President, without the consent of the returning population. One hundred and nine years. Three documents. One instrument class. The beneficiaries' names, across the three documents, are not identical. The instrument is identical. This is the long empire in its late-stage form. It is what Chapter 01b § L.3 called the "franchise, relocated to the Levant." Chapter 01b closed with the sentence: "The letterhead has not changed. The signatures are on file." The signature on the Balfour letter is Arthur James Balfour's. The signatures on the UN 181 partition were thirty-three states' delegates. The Chairman-for-life's signature on the February 12, 2026 Board of Peace governance charter is Donald John Trump's. The letterhead has changed. The instrument has not.261

M.11 The doctrine, completed

Chapter 4 of this book — The Doctrine — named five covert-action operations (Iran 1953, Guatemala 1954, Congo 1961, Chile 1973, Nicaragua 1981) as the operational expression of NSC 5412/2's authorization of plausible-deniability covert action against designated adversaries. Chapter 11 — this chapter — names the Gaza operation as the doctrine's most recent implementation, conducted not under the plausible-deniability architecture but under the public-legal-international-institutional architecture of 2025–2026, in which the United States and the State of Israel have openly rejected the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, have openly refused the provisional measures of May 24, 2024, have openly stated non-cooperation with the International Criminal Court's November 21, 2024 arrest warrants, and have openly announced the Board of Peace of February 12, 2026 as the reconstruction governance framework. The doctrine is not, in 2026, covert. It is not being executed under plausible-deniability conditions. It is being executed under open declaration, with the documents published on government websites and the operational record streamed continuously to the world's screens. What has changed between the doctrine of 1953–1981 and the doctrine of 2023–2026 is not the operation. What has changed is the disguise — and Chapter 9 of this book named the disguise by its operative name. The earlier operations were disguised as anti-Communist self-defense. The current operations are disguised as anti-terrorism self-defense. The earlier reconstructions were disguised as aid. The current reconstruction is disguised as a Special Economic Zone. In each register, the surface claim is truthfully one of the operation's components. The surface claim is also the only component the public is asked to evaluate. That is the doctrine. It is operating, at the date of this writing, in present tense, in a territory of 365 square kilometers, on a population of 2.3 million, and it has been doing so, without interruption, for approximately thirty months. M.12 The docket

What the Court's file and the military governor's archive establish — nothing more:

The Israeli Military Government of Gaza registered Mujama al-Islami as a legal religious charity in 1979, at the initiative of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, with the operational objective of counterbalancing the

The Israeli Military Government of Gaza registered Mujama al-Islami as a legal religious charity in 1979, at the initiative of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, with the operational objective of counterbalancing the

secular PLO. File: Higgins, Wall Street Journal, January 24, 2009; Segev and Cohen named on the record. Hamas was founded December 14, 1987 from the Mujama apparatus. Its 1988 Covenant is the foundational textual document; its 2017 Document of General Principles and Policies is its replacement. File: Avalon Project; Hamas 2017 document published Doha. Hamas won the January 25, 2006 Palestinian Legislative Council elections, seating a majority. File: Palestinian Central Elections Commission; EU Election Observation Mission, April 2006. The October 7, 2023 Hamas-led attack produced approximately 1,195 Israeli deaths and approximately 251 hostages taken. File: Israeli Government Press Office final reconciliation; Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Israeli military operations in Gaza, October 2023 through April 2026, produced documented Palestinian deaths of approximately 79,000 direct and an estimated ~186,000 all-cause excess mortality per Lancet projection. Displacement of approximately 83 percent of Gaza's population. File: UN OCHA; WHO Health Cluster; Gaza Ministry of Health; Khatib, McKee & Yusuf, Lancet, July 5, 2024. The International Court of Justice, on January 26, 2024 and May 24, 2024, ordered Israel to take provisional measures to prevent genocide and to halt operations in Rafah. File: ICJ Orders, Case

No.192. The International Criminal Court, on November 21, 2024, issued arrest warrants for Benjamin Netanyahu, Yoav Gallant, and Mohammed Deif. File: ICC-01/18. The Board of Peace governance charter was announced February 12, 2026, with Donald J. Trump as Chairman-for-life. File: White House press release, February 12, 2026; CFR summary, February 19, 2026. Trump as Chairman-for-life. File: White House press release, February 12, 2026; CFR summary, February 19, 2026. What the Court's file does not decide. It is not argued that the Mujama 1979 registration was intended by the Israeli Military Government to
produce, as its long-term consequence, the October 7, 2023 attack. The documents show the registration,
the strategic rationale stated by the officials on record, and the subsequent institutional trajectory; they do not
establish forward intent to the 2023 outcome. The text does not assert that the October 2023 – February 2026 Israeli military operation is, on the legal merits, a
violation of the Genocide Convention. That question is the merits question of South Africa v. Israel, and the
Court has not yet ruled on the merits. The Court has ruled — by 15-to-2 — that South Africa's claim is plausible. It is not claimed that the Board of Peace is, in international-legal terms, a lawful governance instrument for the
Gaza Strip. That question is the subject of pending ICJ Advisory Opinion proceedings requested by the UN
General Assembly in March 2026.263

The documents describe the registration, the doctrine, the founding, the election, the attack, the response, the two Court proceedings, and the Board of Peace governance charter. The judgment is the reader's. M.13 The narrator, April 2026

I have been writing this chapter in real time. I do not mean that as prose flourish. I mean that, between the morning I began the outline of this chapter
and the morning I am composing the closing paragraph, the UN OCHA weekly Gaza humanitarian situation
report has been updated three times. The Israeli Defense Forces Spokesperson Unit has issued
approximately eleven operational summaries. The International Court of Justice has accepted two additional
amicus filings in the main merits phase of South Africa v. Israel. The Board of Peace has met twice more in
Washington, with the specific Panel of Experts reportedly being finalized through last week. This is

not history I am reconstructing from a distance. It is history I am watching on the same monitor on which I am typing. The documents this chapter cites — the 1917 Balfour letter (Chapter 01b), the 1979 Mujama registration, the 1987 Hamas founding, the 2006 PLC election, the October 7, 2023 attack, the January 26, 2024 ICJ order, the November 21, 2024 ICC warrants, the February 18, 2026 Board of Peace — all land inside a single continuous span of American adult life. The events from 2006 onward have been visible at some level of political attention to anyone watching. The 2023 events landed in specific, painful, hour-by-hour detail, because most Americans lived through the televised images of the October 7 attack and the subsequent eighteen months of Gaza coverage the same way: through X, through news aggregators, through the phone. The narrator's position at the end of this chapter is not a neutral one. The deaths of 819 Israeli non-combatants in one day by people who broke through a fence is not a neutral datum. The deaths of 79,000 documented Palestinians in the thirty-month military response — more than half of them children, by UN OCHA enumeration — is not a neutral datum either. What I am neutral on — what this book has been neutral on from the first page of the Opening — is whether the documents that describe these events should be read by the people in whose name the events are being conducted. They should be read.264

This chapter has named where to find them. The ICJ website is https://www.icj-cij.org. The ICC website is https://www.icc-cpi.int. The UN OCHA Gaza humanitarian situation reports are posted weekly at https://www.ochaopt.org. The Israeli Government Press Office posts at https://gov.il. The Gaza Ministry of Health daily tabulation, corroborated by WHO, is at the WHO Health Cluster site. The Board of Peace governance charter is on the White House archive. The Balfour letter is at the UK National Archives, Kew, file CAB 24/4. The Hamas 1988 Covenant is on the Yale Law School Avalon Project archive. The 2017 Hamas

Document is in English translation on the Hamas official site, archived. Every one of those documents is free. No paywall. No subscription. No mediating institution between the reader and the instrument. The argument this book has been making for 290 pages is that the instrument is the artifact, and the artifact is the only undeniable thing, and the reader who has the artifact is the only reader who can decide. That is what BE UNDENIABLE means. Not that I, the narrator, will be undeniable. I am a single person of limited credential who sat with the documents. My authority is not the point. The documents' authority is the point. The chapter that follows is the epilogue. BE UNDENIABLE. Sources — Chapter 11

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2. Paola Caridi, Hamas: From Resistance to Government (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2012).3. Hamas Covenant, August 18, 1988 — English translation, Yale Law School Avalon Project (https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp).4. Hamas, A Document of General Principles and Policies (Doha, May 1, 2017).2006 election and post-2007 governance:

1. Palestinian Central Elections Commission, Final Results, January 25, 2006.2. European Union Election Observation Mission, Final Report: Palestinian Legislative Elections 2006 (April 2006).3. UN OCHA, Gaza Strip Closure Maps and Reports, 2007–2023. October 7, 2023:

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1. UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Gaza Humanitarian Situation Reports, weekly, https://www.ochaopt.org.2. World Health Organization, Health Cluster

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3. ICJ Order of 24 May 2024 (Rafah provisional measures). ICC — Situation in the State of Palestine:

1. ICC Pre-Trial Chamber I, Warrants of Arrest, Situation ICC-01/18, November 21, 2024.2. ICC press release, November 21, 2024.3. Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, July 17, 1998 (in force July 1, 2002). Board of Peace:

1. Board of Peace governance charter, White House press release, February 12, 2026.2. Council on Foreign Relations summary, February 19, 2026.3. UN Secretary-General statement, February 20, 2026. Historical through-line (cross-reference):

1. Balfour Declaration, November 2, 1917, UK National Archives, Kew, file CAB 24/4 (cited Chapter 01b § L.3).2. UN General Assembly Resolution 181, November 29, 1947 (cited Chapter 01b § L.3).3. Benny Morris, The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited (Cambridge University Press, 2004) (cited Chapter 01b § L.3).267

CHAPTER 12
NO DEMOCRACY IN MY LIFETIME

F.7 The capture of attention

I was born on May 29, 1986, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. That sentence is not an aside. It is the method of this chapter.

The chapters before this one have named, dated, and filed the documents that trace unwarranted influence from the Balfour letter through the Board of Peace. They have shown how banking houses, law firms, intelligence agencies, private-equity firms, pharmaceutical companies, data contractors, and weapons manufacturers interlock across American generations. What they have not fully explained is why the public, knowing more than any prior public has ever known, has been unable to stop it.

This chapter is about attention. Not opinion. Not ideology. Attention — the biological capacity to notice, to remember, to deliberate, and to act together. Every system of extraction described in this book depends, first, on breaking that capacity. The mechanism has changed its costume across centuries, but its function has not changed. It keeps the body in place while the mind is farmed.

F.7.1 From the pulpit to the feed

In the Massachusetts Bay Colony of the 1630s, the Puritan minister delivered a two-hour sermon every Sabbath. The architecture of the meetinghouse pointed every eye toward the pulpit. The sermon warned of hell, promised salvation, and located the community's survival in obedience to divine and civil authority. The listener was not asked to debate. The listener was asked to attend.

Cotton Mather’s 1702 Magnalia Christi Americana, a history of New England Puritanism, celebrated the sermon as the instrument by which the colony was governed. The Massachusetts state-church model taxed all residents to support ministers and punished absence. The form was religious. The function was disciplinary. File: Magnalia Christi Americana, 1702; Massachusetts Bay colonial statutes on compulsory church attendance.

By the nineteenth century, the same structure powered American revivalism. Charles Grandison Finney’s 1835 Lectures on Revivals of Religion taught that emotional conversion, produced through sustained collective attention, could remake society. Finney’s revivals drew thousands and reshaped temperance, abolition, and eventually suffrage politics. The crowd was moved. Whether it was moved by the spirit or by the orchestration of expectation and repetition is a question the documents do not settle. File: Finney, Lectures on Revivals of Religion, 1835; Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-Over District, 1950.

Mass media replaced the pulpit in the twentieth century. Edward Bernays’s 1928 Propaganda argued that democratic society could only function if an “invisible government” managed public opinion through newspapers, radio, and advertising. Bernays was not criticizing this arrangement. He was describing it as necessary. The public, he wrote, was incapable of judging complex issues and must be guided by symbols and staged events. File: Edward Bernays, Propaganda, 1928.

The mid-century advertising industry converted attention into a commodity. In 1957, Vance Packard published The Hidden Persuaders, documenting the use of motivational research to sell products by targeting unconscious anxieties. The same techniques migrated into political consulting. By 1968, the televised image of a candidate — not his platform — was understood to decide elections. File: Vance Packard, The Hidden Persuaders, 1957; Joe McGinniss, The Selling of the President 1968, 1969.

Cable news and talk radio fragmented attention into identity. Rush Limbaugh’s syndicated program, launched August 1, 1988, built a daily ritual in which listeners returned to a single voice that interpreted every event through one political lens. By the 1990s, MSNBC and Fox News had converted the news day into a continuous emotional performance. The viewer was no longer informed. The viewer was enrolled. File: Federal Communications Commission records; Arbitron and Nielsen audience data; Limbaugh broadcast records.

Fear is the constant. Hellfire, communist subversion, terrorism, the other party, the next pandemic, the algorithmic enemy of the day — the specific threat changes, but the function does not. Fear keeps the body still and the mind receptive. Then came the feed.

F.7.2 The feed and the algorithm

In 2006, Facebook introduced the News Feed. In 2009, it added the “Like” button. In 2010, it began using machine learning to rank content by predicted engagement. In 2012, it ran a large-scale emotional-contagion experiment on 689,003 users without informed consent, altering the emotional valence of posts shown to users to measure effects on their own posting behavior. The study was published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. File: Kramer, Guillory, and Hancock, “Experimental Evidence of Massive-Scale Emotional Contagion Through Social Networks,” PNAS 111:24 (2014); Facebook SEC filings.

TikTok, launched internationally in September 2017, combined short-form video with an algorithm that learned user preference in seconds. Internal documents published by BuzzFeed News in 2022 showed that TikTok employees could manually promote or suppress content through a feature called “heating.” The same documents showed that heating had been used to boost particular creators and political messages. File: Emily Baker-White, “TikTok Tracked Users Who Watched ‘Gay Content,’” BuzzFeed News, July 13, 2022; TikTok internal documents.

YouTube’s recommendation system, redesigned around 2016 to maximize watch time, was found by independent researchers to systematically promote increasingly extreme content. A 2019 study by Guillaume Chaslot showed that YouTube recommendations pushed users toward conspiracy theories, partisan content, and anti-science material regardless of the starting topic. File: Guillaume Chaslot, “YouTube is the Great Radicalizer,” New York Times, March 10, 2018; Algorithmic Transparency Institute reports.

The result is not merely distraction. It is a population trained to react rather than deliberate, to perform identity rather than negotiate, and to seek emotional relief in the same medium that produces the distress. The average American adult now spends between seven and eight hours per day in front of a screen, and more than two of those hours on social media. File: Pew Research Center, “Americans’ Social Media Use,” 2024; eMarketer, U.S. Time Spent with Media, 2024.

The contrast is instructive. Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok operated by ByteDance, shares the same parent company and similar interface but functions under a different regulatory and design regime. In 2023, TikTok introduced a STEM feed in the United States only after public pressure and competition; Douyin had long promoted educational, scientific, and achievement-oriented content as part of its domestic product. The Chinese version restricts minors’ use and limits access to entertainment content during school hours. The American version, until recently, had no comparable guardrails and was instead optimized for maximum engagement. The documents do not establish that

ByteDance deliberately degraded American users. They establish that the same company deployed different products in different markets, and that the American market received the version optimized for addiction. File: Wikipedia, TikTok/Douyin (citing ByteDance corporate statements and public reporting); The Wall Street Journal, “TikTok Addictiveness,” 2021; Chinese Cyberspace Administration regulations on minors’ online gaming and short-video use, 2021–2023.

The attention economy does not need to persuade. It needs to keep the user in motion. A population in motion cannot organize.

In 2026, the attention economy does not merely drown politics in noise. It replaces the object of concern with the spectacle of personality. The documented starvation of children in Gaza — reported by UN OCHA, the World Food Programme, and the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification global initiative — receives a fraction of the engagement generated by a single American child with type 2 diabetes being filmed while her parents fill her plate with processed sugar. One story is geographically distant, politically inconvenient, and emotionally unendurable. The other is immediate, participatory, and monetizable. The platform does not choose between them according to importance. It chooses according to retention. File: UN OCHA Gaza humanitarian situation reports, 2024–2026; World Food Programme situation reports; IPC Global Initiative, Gaza Food Security Phase Classification updates, 2024–2025; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Diabetes Statistics Report, 2024.

F.7.3 The spook-air bridge

The same year the narrator turned nine — 1995 — a cargo airline called Southern Air Transport moved its headquarters from Miami, Florida to Rickenbacker International Airport in Columbus, Ohio. The airline had begun as an irregular cargo carrier in 1947, the same year the Office of Strategic Services became the Central Intelligence Agency. From 1960 to 1973 the CIA owned it outright, using it as one of its proprietary aviation companies alongside Air America and Intermountain Aviation. After the CIA sold it, Southern Air Transport kept flying.

In 1986 a Southern Air Transport C-123K was shot down over Nicaragua while delivering weapons to the U.S.-backed Contras. The wreckage and the captured American crew member, Eugene Hasenfus, pulled the string that exposed Iran-Contra: the illegal sale of U.S. weapons to Iran, routed through Israel, with the profits diverted to arm the Contras in defiance of Congress. The airline’s logbooks linked it to repeated flights into Barranquilla, Colombia and to arms transfers across Central America. File: Final Report of the Independent Counsel for Iran/Contra Matters (Walsh Report), 1993; Senate

Select Committee on Intelligence, Foreign and Military Intelligence: Book I, 1976; Southern Air Transport v. Post-Newsweek, 568 So. 2d 927 (Fla. 3d DCA 1990).

Nine years later the airline relocated to Ohio. Much of its new cargo business came from Leslie Wexner's retail empire — The Limited Inc., Victoria's Secret, Abercrombie & Fitch — which was importing clothing from Asia through a single inland port. At the time, Jeffrey Epstein held power of attorney over Wexner's finances, signed checks and bought and sold property on Wexner's behalf, and served as a trustee of the Wexner Foundation. Governor George Voinovich announced the move publicly, calling Rickenbacker the airline's world headquarters and Columbus a world-class inland port. File: Bob Fitrakis, "Spook Air," Columbus Free Press, October 25, 2018; New York Times, "How Jeffrey Epstein Used the Billionaire Behind Victoria's Secret for Wealth and Women," July 25, 2019; Columbus Dispatch, February 1, 2026.

According to veteran Columbus journalist Bob Fitrakis, investigators in the Franklin County Sheriff's Office and Ohio's Office of Inspector General were looking into Southern Air Transport amid continued public scrutiny of Iran-Contra. Sources in both offices, Fitrakis reported, identified Epstein as a pivotal figure in relocating the planes. In 1996, per Fitrakis, U.S. Customs agents at the Columbus hub discovered a hidden shipment of cocaine inside one of the repurposed aircraft. The company filed for bankruptcy on October 1, 1998 — the same day the CIA Inspector General released its report on allegations that Southern Air Transport and the Contra network had been involved in drug trafficking. Ohio officials dropped their inquiries. Epstein's role did not become public until two decades later. File: Bob Fitrakis, "Spook Air," Columbus Free Press; Ryan Grim, Murtaza Hussain and Harrison Berger, "Epstein, Israel, and the CIA: How the Iran-Contra Planes Landed at Les Wexner's Base," The American Conservative via Bunk History, December 19, 2025; CIA Inspector General Report, October 1, 1998.

The narrator did not know any of this in 1995. What the record shows, looking back, is the method. A covert aviation network built for arms transfers in Central America and the Middle East was converted into a private supply chain for billionaire retail, managed by a man who would later be indicted for trafficking underage girls. The same aircraft types. The same off-book infrastructure. The same absence of criminal accountability. The state built the airline, the state used it for illegal war, and when it turned up in a billionaire's logistics operation with cocaine in the cargo hold, the state stopped asking questions.

F.7.4 The presidential corridor

Every president since the narrator was born has moved inside the same corridor.

Ronald Reagan’s administration ran Iran-Contra, the illegal arms-and-money network that Southern Air Transport served. George H.W. Bush, Reagan’s vice president and former Director of Central Intelligence, became a senior advisor to the Carlyle Group. Carlyle counted the Saudi Binladin Group as a limited partner from 1995 to October 2001. Bush met with senior bin Laden family members in Jeddah in November 1998 and January 2000. On September 10–11, 2001, he sat in the Ritz-Carlton in Washington with a bin Laden family member at the same Carlyle investor conference. The documents do not establish that the Bush and bin Laden families conspired. They establish that the family of the man who launched the war and the family of the man who became the war’s target moved in the same investment network. His grandfather, Prescott Sheldon Bush, had been a director of Union Banking Corporation, the bank through which Fritz Thyssen’s American assets moved before being seized by the Alien Property Custodian in 1942. Halliburton subsidiary KBR received the no-bid LOGCAP III Iraq contract in December 2001 and subsequently billed the U.S. government approximately $39.5 billion. Bill Clinton flew on Jeffrey Epstein’s plane and the Epstein-Wexner network moved through his presidency. Barack Obama received historic Wall Street campaign financing and continued the surveillance and drone programs built by his predecessors. Donald Trump appointed Alex Acosta, the author of Epstein’s 2008 non-prosecution agreement, as Secretary of Labor, and placed Elon Musk in charge of the federal data apparatus. Joseph Biden, in his farewell address, warned that an oligarchy was taking shape — the oligarchy this book has documented.

File: Walsh Report; Chapter 6 of this book; Epstein flight logs; Federal Election Commission filings; Department of Justice Office of Professional Responsibility report on Acosta, 2020; Biden farewell address, January 15, 2025.

The documents do not establish that every president took orders from the same hidden committee. They establish that every president since 1981 operated within a money-and-intelligence network whose recurring personnel included Epstein, Wexner, the Carlyle Group alumni, and the private-equity and data contractors who now manage the state. The voter changed the podium. The apparatus did not change.

[The following is the narrator's reading of the file, not a finding established by the documents the chapters cite. It is speculation, framed as the human voice of the writer telling you what the documents feel like when stacked in the same head. The reader is asked to read the documents and disagree with the reading where the reader disagrees.]

A note on the chain, because the family trees in this chapter are trying to draw it. The chain is older than the documents and simpler than the documents. Dick Cheney was CEO of Halliburton before he was Vice President. Halliburton profits from war. George W. Bush was CIA. His father was CIA. His grandfather, Prescott Bush, was a banker who directed Union Banking Corporation, the Thyssen family conduit. Thyssen funded Hitler. Thyssen's money seeded the Nazi war machine. Three generations later, Thyssen's American descendants turned the same homeboy Osama — whose family was a Carlyle investor partner of the Bush family two days before the planes hit — into Enemy Number One. The bin Laden family and the Bush family have shared meals. They shared rooms at the Ritz. They shared an investment network. They did not share a government. They shared the architecture around the government. That is what the mechanism looks like when it has been running for a hundred years inside one country.

[The following is the narrator's reading of the file, not a finding established by the documents the chapters cite. It is speculation, framed as the human voice of the writer telling you what the documents feel like when stacked in the same head. The reader is asked to read the documents and disagree with the reading where the reader disagrees.]

A note on the 9/11 question that has been chasing this book since it started, and the answer the documents do support. Israel did not do 9/11. That framing is wrong, and the wrong framing has been used to discredit every other claim that follows from it. 9/11 is bigger than countries. The country framing is the gift the mechanism gives to the public every time a question gets too close to the architecture: pick a country, blame a country, and the architecture survives. The country framing is the screen. The dancing Israelis on the waterfront, the unexplained second-plane imagery, the suspiciously surviving IDs of only the terrorists — those are documented anomalies. They are not, on the public record, proof of state action by any named government. What they are is proof that the official story has not been audited at the level the public is owed. The bigger story, the one the documents do support, is simpler. 9/11 enabled the mechanism to distract and extract. The Patriot Act, the wars, the DHS architecture, the surveillance contracts, the no-bid reconstruction work — all of it landed within months of the towers falling. The mechanism needed a screen. The screen needed to be loud. The screen was loud enough to last twenty-five years.

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A note on the war machine that the screen kept funded. The same government that announced the war on terror still funds the Taliban. The same government that declared certain terrorist groups enemies of civilization armed, trained, and financed those groups when they were useful. The pattern is not a mistake. The pattern is the product. Someone has to incite violence to give a reason for the next round of weapons. Someone has to be a credible threat so the budget goes through. The mechanism requires a permanent enemy. The enemy can rotate from Mujahideen to al-Qaeda to ISIS to a returning ISIS to a new iteration of the same network under a different acronym. The weapons stay the same. The contractors stay the same. The Congressional votes stay the same. The American public is asked to believe that the enemy is new each time. The American public is not asked to notice that the contractor list is the same each time.

F.7.5 The lobbyists and the locked agenda

The American public does not lack opinions. It lacks representation. The reason is arithmetic.

In 2024, according to OpenSecrets, more than 12,000 registered lobbyists reported federal lobbying activity. The combined United States Senate and House of Representatives has 535 voting members. That is more than twenty-two lobbyists for every elected representative in Congress. The lobbying industry spent approximately $4.2 billion in 2023 alone. File: OpenSecrets, Lobbying Data Summary, 2024; Senate Office of Public Records, Lobbying Disclosure Act filings.

The imbalance is not partisan. Pharmaceutical manufacturers, defense contractors, technology companies, and private-equity firms maintain lobbying offices in Washington that outlast any single administration. Their employees rotate through congressional staff positions, agency offices, and back again through the revolving door. A bill that threatens their revenue rarely dies because it is unpopular. It dies because the amendments, hearings, and conference negotiations were shaped by people who were paid to shape them. File: OpenSecrets Revolving Door database; Senate lobbying disclosure filings.

Foreign governments participate through the same architecture. The Department of Justice’s Foreign Agents Registration Act filings show that multiple nations, including Israel, maintain active influence operations in Washington through lobbying firms, public-relations agencies, and nonprofit advocacy groups. In 2023, pro-Israel lobbying organizations reported tens of millions of dollars in federal lobbying expenditures. File: Department of Justice, FARA filings; OpenSecrets, Foreign Lobby Watch.

The effect on public discourse is measurable. Between October 2023 and early 2025, members of Congress who criticized the scale of Israeli military operations in Gaza, or who called for ceasefire conditions, were subjected to primary challenges, funding withdrawals, and public denunciation by pro-Israel lobbying groups. At the same time, polling showed substantial majorities of Americans, particularly younger Americans, favored conditioning military aid to Israel or supporting an immediate ceasefire. The policy outcome and the public preference were not aligned. File: Pew Research Center, “Americans’ Views of the Israel-Hamas War,” 2024; Data for Progress polling, 2024; Washington Post reporting on primary challenges.

September 11, 2001 is the clearest modern example. The attacks were not the beginning of the system this book describes. They were the moment the system stopped pretending. The National Security Agency had already been running pre-September 11 programs to collect domestic communications; the Patriot Act, passed six weeks later, legalized and expanded them. The Bush administration had already been warned in the August 6, 2001 President’s Daily Brief that “Bin Ladin Determined to Strike in US”; the FBI’s Phoenix Memo of July 2001 had identified Middle Eastern men at U.S. flight schools. After the attacks, these failures were converted into authority. The question of who knew what in advance was buried under the demand for new powers. File: 9/11 Commission Report; Department of Justice, Office of Inspector General, "A Review of the FBI’s Handling of Intelligence Information Related to the September 11 Attacks," 2004; Unclassified version of the President’s Daily Brief, August 6, 2001; USA PATRIOT Act, Public Law 107-56, October 26, 2001.

The same mechanism operates under the banner of national security. The AI race, like the space race and the arms race before it, produces government contracts. The contracts go to the firms whose executives and alumni occupy the agencies that write the requirements. The race is real. The winner is predetermined. The promise is made to the voter as survival. The delivery is made to the donor as revenue. The same budget logic is visible in the allocation of national wealth. The United States spends more on its military than the next ten countries combined, while mental-health services, preventive medicine, and addiction treatment remain underfunded by comparison. The investment is not in keeping people alive and sane. It is in machines that kill faster, farther, and with fewer questions asked. File: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Military Expenditure Database, 2024; National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Mental Health, Congressional Budget Justification FY2025; Office of Management and Budget, Historical Tables, defense and health expenditure outlays.

The scale is not abstract. Since 1948, the United States has provided Israel with approximately $317 billion in bilateral assistance and missile-defense funding, making Israel the largest cumulative recipient of U.S. foreign assistance since World War II. In fiscal year 2024 alone, U.S. aid to Israel exceeded $26 billion, including supplemental appropriations during the Gaza war. The annual cost of ending homelessness in the United States has been estimated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and advocacy economists at a fraction of that amount. The documents do not establish that aid to Israel caused American homelessness. They establish that the same government tells its citizens certain problems are unaffordable while funding other governments without comparable debate. Homelessness and addiction are not only failures of policy. They are also revenue streams: emergency-room visits, incarceration, court fees, rehab centers, shelters, pharmaceutical maintenance, and social-service contracts. A problem that is managed generates recurring income. A problem that is solved does not.

The same closed loop appears in drug policy. Between 2009 and 2011, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives ran Operation Fast and Furious, allowing straw purchasers to traffic approximately two thousand firearms to Mexican cartels in an effort to trace them. Many weapons were never recovered; some were later found at crime scenes, including the murder of U.S. Border Patrol agent Brian Terry in December 2010. During the same period, the Drug Enforcement Administration conducted undercover money-laundering operations that moved millions of dollars in cartel proceeds through the banking system. The Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Narcotics, Terrorism and International Operations, chaired by Senator John Kerry, documented in 1989 that the U.S.-backed Contra network in Nicaragua had links to cocaine trafficking; the CIA Inspector General later confirmed that the CIA knew of some of these connections and did not act. The documents do not establish that the U.S. government runs the drug trade. They establish that U.S. agencies have repeatedly armed, financed, or protected the same trafficking networks that supply the American drug market.

The result is a managed dependency. While the United States spends hundreds of billions on interdiction, incarceration, and treatment, China has spent the same period building the Belt and Road Initiative — ports, rail, fiber, and energy infrastructure across Asia, Africa, Europe, and Latin America. One country builds the material capacity to move goods and people. The other builds the institutional capacity to process addicts and prisoners. File: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of the Inspector General, “A Review of ATF’s Operation Fast and Furious and Related Matters,” 2012; Senate Foreign Relations Committee, “Drugs, Law Enforcement and Foreign Policy,” 1989; CIA Inspector General Report, “Volume II: The Contra Story,” 1998; China Development Bank and Silk Road Fund annual reports. File: Congressional Research Service, “U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel,” 2024; Congressional Budget Office, “Federal Housing Assistance Programs,” 2023; National Alliance to End Homelessness, State of Homelessness report, 2024.

The same pattern appears in the management of enemies. During the 1980s, the CIA channeled approximately $3 billion through Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence to Afghan mujahideen factions resisting the Soviet occupation. Some of those factions and their commanders later formed the Taliban and provided the network from which al-Qaeda operated. In the 2010s, the CIA ran Timber Sycamore, a program to arm Syrian rebel groups; weapons and training from the program reached factions linked to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. The documents do not establish that the United States deliberately created the Taliban or the Islamic State. They establish that American arms, money, and intelligence support have repeatedly flowed to factions that later became the enemy the public was asked to fear. Each new enemy justifies the next contract. The cycle is simple: fund a faction, lose control of it, declare it a threat, sell weapons to fight it. File: Steve Coll, Ghost Wars, 2004; Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, report on Timber Sycamore; Conflict Armament Research, "Weapons of the Islamic State," 2017; CIA declassified documents on Operation Cyclone.

F.7.6 Abandonment as policy

The final capture is the capture of the public’s own expectation of rescue.

For most of American history, the managers of the system had to bargain with the public. The New Deal, the GI Bill, the Civil Rights Act, and even the concessions of the Nixon and Reagan years were responses to organized pressure from workers, veterans, minorities, and consumers. The bargain was never equal. But it was real enough to fear.

That pressure required three preconditions: shared information, shared time, and shared institutions. A union hall. A church. A newspaper. A neighborhood. Places where people met regularly, spoke face to face, and could plan.

The attention economy removed all three. Information became personalized and contradictory. Time became fragmented into algorithmic moments. Institutions dissolved into platforms. We are not called citizens. We are called users. The user became the commodity. The product was not the post, the video, or the article. The product was the human nervous system, sold in milliseconds to advertisers, political operations, and foreign influence campaigns, the same way a casino sells time on a slot machine to a gambler who no longer remembers why he sat down. Every click, pause, scroll, and return visit was mined, modeled, and resold to the highest bidder. The platform did not sell goods. It sold insecurity: unachievable bodies, unachievable wealth, unachievable happiness, delivered on a screen that degrades sleep, fragments dopamine, and leaves the user loathing the self the algorithm just sold back to them. The data was not incidental to the business. It was the business.

[The following is the narrator's reading of the file, not a finding established by the documents the chapters cite. It is speculation, framed as the human voice of the writer telling you what the documents feel like when stacked in the same head. The reader is asked to read the documents and disagree with the reading where the reader disagrees.]

A note on how the user signs the contract. Every time you sign up for a new phone or a new service and you click "I agree" on the terms and conditions because you just want the software or the hardware to work, you are selling yourself. The consent form is the bill of sale. The bill of sale is filed in the company's terms-of-service archive, where a team of lawyers can produce it any time the regulators or the press come asking. The user does not read the contract. The user does not negotiate the contract. The user does not, in any meaningful sense, sign the contract. The user clicks the button. The click transfers every byte of behavioral data the device will ever generate to the counterparty that drafted the contract. The mechanism does not need to kidnap the user. The mechanism just needs the user to want the phone.

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A note on what the data does once it leaves the user's phone, because the data is sold in many different ways but ultimately it does not help the user. It sandboxes the user into what the algorithm pushes. It kills independent thought. It kills creative thought. It makes the user part of the status quo the mechanism has perfected over nine centuries of research and development. The user does not experience this as a sandbox. The user experiences it as the news. The user experiences it as the search results. The user experiences it as the recommended video, the suggested friend, the promoted post, the targeted ad, the curated reality. The user is inside the cage and sees the bars as the view. The data is not sold to make the user informed. The data is sold to make the user predictable. The user is the product. The product is profitable when the user is predictable. Predictable users are profitable users. Profitable users are users who do not organize. The mechanism has had nine hundred years to refine the cage. The current version of the cage is the one the user is holding in the user's hand right now.

[The following is the narrator's reading of the file, not a finding established by the documents the chapters cite. It is speculation, framed as the human voice of the writer telling you what the documents feel like when stacked in the same head. The reader is asked to read the documents and disagree with the reading where the reader disagrees.]

A note on what the cage does to the user's thinking, because the mechanism does not just train the user to refresh. The mechanism trains the user to think like a model that has not read the source. People are like LLMs. They don't read. They fabricate based on headlines and shaky memory. They pattern-match from a few tokens of context and call the pattern the truth. They pull from whatever is loudest in the feed and treat the loudest thing as the verified thing. The mechanism designed the feed. The mechanism designed the loudness. The mechanism designed the incentives that reward loudness over accuracy. The mechanism gets the output it designed for. The mechanism gets a population of users who cannot tell a primary source from a headline, who cannot tell a citation from a vibe, who cannot tell a document from a slogan. The mechanism does not need a population that is lied to. The mechanism needs a population that is too distracted to notice the difference. The mechanism has been working on that population for nine hundred years. The current version of that population is the one the mechanism is selling data on right now.

The result is visible in children. In 2024, the Surgeon General of the United States issued an advisory warning that social-media use was a primary driver of the youth mental-health crisis, linking platform design to depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and suicidal ideation. The average American adolescent spends nearly five hours per day on social media. A child who receives twelve likes on a post viewed fifty times does not experience a post. She experiences a verdict on her worth, delivered by a machine trained to maximize her return. File: U.S. Surgeon General, “Social Media and Youth Mental Health,” advisory, May 2023; Pew Research Center, “Teens, Social Media and Technology 2024.”

[The following is the narrator's reading of the file, not a finding established by the documents the chapters cite. It is speculation, framed as the human voice of the writer telling you what the documents feel like when stacked in the same head. The reader is asked to read the documents and disagree with the reading where the reader disagrees.]

A note on what the country spends on, because the budget tells you what the country protects. We do not invest in mental health and medicine. We invest in machines that kill more people at a faster rate. Imagine if we spent half of what we give to Israel on mental health in America. Homelessness would not be so bad. Addiction would not be so bad. The eighth-floor waiting room at the public hospital would not be so bad. But homelessness is a cash cow. So is addiction. The same way a managed forest produces recurring lumber, a managed population produces recurring emergency-room visits, recurring incarceration, recurring court fees, recurring rehab, recurring shelter contracts, recurring pharmaceutical maintenance. A problem that is managed generates recurring income. A problem that is solved does not.

[The following is the narrator's reading of the file, not a finding established by the documents the chapters cite. It is speculation, framed as the human voice of the writer telling you what the documents feel like when stacked in the same head. The reader is asked to read the documents and disagree with the reading where the reader disagrees.]

A note on the asymmetry of what other countries allow into their children, because the asymmetry is the tell. Other countries do not allow poison in their food. We do. Red 40, Yellow 5, Yellow 6, Blue 1. Froot Loops formulated for the American market are sold in America without the warning labels the European Union requires. The dyes the European Union requires to carry warning labels are sold to American children as a normal Tuesday morning. Israel has free health care. We do not. The asymmetry is not a coincidence. The asymmetry is the mechanism, working.

[The following is the narrator's reading of the file, not a finding established by the documents the chapters cite. It is speculation, framed as the human voice of the writer telling you what the documents feel like when stacked in the same head. The reader is asked to read the documents and disagree with the reading where the reader disagrees.]

A note on the closed loop on the other side of the border, because the mechanism is bilateral. The Drug Enforcement Administration supports the same cartels it claims to fight. The interdiction budget moves cartel product, cartel product moves addicts, addicts fill emergency rooms and prisons, prisons and emergency rooms generate the contracts that fund the next round of interdiction. It is a closed loop of DEA operations supporting cartels which adds to the rot of society making more dependent, useless junkies, while China builds the Belt and Road Initiative. One country is building the material capacity to move goods and people across two continents. The other is building the institutional capacity to process addicts and prisoners. The work is the same work. The output is different. One country is leaving a thing behind. The other is leaving people behind.

The deeper effect is social. Conversation becomes interface. A family in the same room does not speak; each member refreshes a separate feed. The public square is not a square. It is a private theater in which billions of isolated users watch personalized versions of the same catastrophe, believing they are informed because they are upset. They are not informed. They are activated. Activation without organization is the perfect state for a managed population.
The result is not apathy. It is a population that is exhausted, medicated, opinionated, and alone — performing politics in feeds it does not control, while the decisions that matter are made in documents it does not read.

The narrator is not exempt. I have spent as many hours on these platforms as anyone my age. I have felt the pull of the feed, the relief of the opinion, the anger that arrives already shaped. The difference this book attempts is not moral superiority. It is sustained attention to the documents.

F.7.7 The narrator, May 2026

I am forty years old. The country I was born into has not, in my lifetime, been governed by the public in any way I can verify. The forms of democracy are intact. The pressure they once channeled is gone.

This does not mean nothing can be done. It means the work of doing something is different from the work of voting every two years. It requires rebuilding the capacity that has been taken: the capacity to read slowly, to remember, to speak to people who disagree, and to refuse the feed as the primary instrument of understanding.

The documents this book has assembled are not a theory. They are a record of what happened while attention was being captured. The reader can do with that record what the reader chooses. But the reader should know, before closing the book, that the same system that built the airline, approved the opioid, funded the war, and bought the platform is not finished. It is waiting for the majority to look away.

The question is not whether there was democracy in my lifetime. The question is whether there will be attention enough, in the reader’s lifetime, to build it.

The mechanism has not changed in nine hundred years. A public promise — protection, prosperity, salvation, security, health, democracy. A private extraction — from land, labor, oil, data, attention, medicine, or the body itself. A smoke screen — war, heresy, race, scandal, market euphoria, partisan rage — that keeps the public looking at the spectacle while the extraction proceeds. In 1095 the screen was the liberation of Jerusalem. In 1452 it was the salvation of souls. In 1924 it was the modernization of Germany and Russia. In 2001 it was the global war on terror. In 2026 it is the culture war, the stock market, the Epstein-file spectacle, and the algorithmic feed.

The reader is not outside this mechanism. The reader is inside it. The reader’s distraction is the product. The reader’s outrage is the revenue. The reader’s hope that a single election or a single prosecutor will fix it is the final extraction — the extraction of political energy into a system designed to exhaust it.

From Clermont to Gaza, the method is the same. The only question is whether the reader will keep looking at the screen, or turn to the files.

EPILOGUE — THE MONSTERS THEY CREATE

Two documents. The recognition. The inventory. The mechanism. The family. The immunities. The reader. The last sentence. E.1 Two documents

The book you are holding has asked you to read approximately three hundred fifty primary-source documents, distributed across eleven chapters, three prologues, and approximately sixty named archives, from 1095 to April 2026. Of those three hundred fifty, two are the two you now need to hold simultaneously in the same head. Document one. Vesting Order 248, Office of Alien Property Custodian, issued October 20, 1942; filed with the Division of the Federal Register November 6, 1942; published at 7 Federal Register 9097 (November 7, 1942), F.R. Doc.42-11568. The document is reproduced in Chapter 1 § C.1. Line 5 of its shareholder list names Prescott Sheldon Bush as a director of the Union Banking Corporation, a New York bank whose four thousand shares of capital stock were held for the benefit of Bank voor Handel en Scheepvaart N.V. of Rotterdam, which was — the vesting order itself recites — “owned or controlled by members of the Thyssen family, nationals of Germany and/or Hungary.”

Fritz Thyssen funded Adolf Hitler. The funding is Thyssen’s own on-record account in the 1941 book I Paid

Hitler, which I cited in Chapter 1 § C.4 and have not paraphrased since, because the book's title is already the paraphrase. Document two. Wall Street Journal, September 27, 2001, page A1 — Daniel Golden, James Bandler, and Marcus Walker, "Bin Laden Family Has Intricate Ties with Washington." The article is reproduced as the foundational source of Chapter 6 § F.1. Its central documented fact: on the morning of September 11, 2001, in the Ritz-Carlton ballroom at 1150 22nd Street Northwest, Washington, D.C., former President George Herbert Walker Bush, Senior Advisor to the Carlyle Asia Advisory Board; former Secretary of State James A. Baker III, Senior Counselor to the Carlyle Group; former Secretary of Defense Frank C. Carlucci, Chairman of the Carlyle Group; and Shafiq bin Laden, half-brother of Osama bin Laden, representing Saudi Binladin Group's investment in Carlyle Partners II — were in the same room, at the same meeting, when the planes hit.268

George Herbert Walker Bush is Prescott Sheldon Bush's son. The two documents were filed fifty-nine years apart, in two different Executive Branch administrations, under two different statutory frameworks, covering two different family members in two different formal corporate-investment arrangements with two different persons whom the American government had, at the respective times, designated as the primary external enemy of the American national security state. Both have been in the public record since the day they were filed. Neither has been redacted. Neither has been legally challenged in its authenticity. Prescott Bush's bank was an American leg of the financial chain that funded Hitler. George H.W. Bush's investment firm was a corporate vehicle for the financial engagement of the bin Laden family in the United States in the period immediately preceding September 11, 2001. Both sentences are documentably true on the face of the documents named. E.2 The recognition

What happens, when a reader who has finished Chapter 1 and Chapter 6 of this book first holds those two sentences in the same head, is a specific cognitive event. The event is not political. It is epistemic. The political framework the average American reader brought to page one of this book — the framework taught in public schools, repeated in the press, reinforced by every presidential inaugural address from

1945
through 2024 — depends, structurally, on a clean distinction between the West and the monsters the West
has defeated, or is currently defeating. The monsters, in the standard framework: the Kaiser in the First World War, Hitler in the Second, Stalin in the Cold War, Saddam in the first Gulf War, al-Qaeda after September 11, 2001, ISIS, Iran, China, Russia, and — in the current cycle — Hamas. The two documents at § E.1 do not contradict the existence of the monsters. The monsters are real. Adolf Hitler was real, and his regime killed millions of Jews, Roma, Soviets, Poles, homosexuals, disabled Germans, and political opponents, in an industrialized process the Nuremberg trial record established beyond further litigation. Osama bin Laden was real, and his organization planned and executed the murder
of 2,977 persons in New York, Arlington, and Shanksville on September 11, 2001. The two documents do not deny the monsters' existence or their guilt.269

The two documents establish, on the face of the American government's own filed record, that the same
family line — one member of which held stock in the American bank that was an operational node in the
financial apparatus that built Hitler's war machine — included, two generations later, a member who was a
Senior Advisor to the private-equity firm in which Osama bin Laden's family held a limited-partnership
interest, and who was in the same room with Osama bin Laden's half-brother at the moment the planes hit. The two documents establish — not a contradiction of the mythology but a different relation between the
mythology's villains and the mythology's heroes than the mythology has permitted the reader to understand. That different relation — once seen — cannot be unseen. This is the cognitive event. It is not the event of adopting a new political position. The reader who finishes this book can hold any political position the reader wishes to hold. What the reader cannot do, having read these two documents, is
go back to the pre-document framework. The pre-document framework required that the monsters and the heroes be different people, on opposite
sides of a clean line, whose financial, institutional, and personnel connections to each other were exceptional, deniable, or nonexistent. The filed record shows that, for one specific American family line that produced one Senator, one Director

of Central Intelligence, one Vice President, two Presidents, and one Governor of Florida, the financial, institutional, and personnel connections to the monsters were not exceptional. They were operational. That sentence is not an accusation. It is a reading of two named documents. The reader who has read the documents now has — whether the reader wanted it or not — a choice: re-read the rest of the political, economic, and historical assumptions on which the pre-document framework was built, and see how many of those assumptions the same documentary standard would hold up. This book has been, across its twelve chapters, an attempt to do that re-read. E.3 The inventory

Every external enemy against whom the American national-security state has conducted major operations in the 1917–2026 period was, by the standard of primary-source documentary anchoring this book has applied, at some prior stage, funded, facilitated, legally registered, or industrially built by the same Western capital and intelligence apparatus that subsequently designated the enemy as the primary threat.270

Not all such designations. I am not making the larger claim. The claim is narrower and, in its primary-source form, undeniable:

The Bolshevik faction of 1917. Funded by the German Foreign Office under Parvus's March 1915 memorandum, transported in a sealed carriage across German territory in April 1917, subsidized through November 1918 — per the Kühlmann telegram of December 3, 1917. Primary source: Chapter 01c § T.2, Weltkrieg Nr.11 geh.files, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts; Zeman (1958) Document 71. Hitler's war machine. Financed in part through American capital flowing to Weimar and Nazi German industry, 1924–1941. Dawes Plan syndicate underwriting led by J.P. Morgan, Dillon Read's $30M bond issue for Vereinigte Stahlwerke in 1926, Standard Oil's 1929 comprehensive agreement with I.G. Farbenindustrie, GM's 1929 acquisition of Opel, Ford's Cologne plant operations through 1945, Chase National Bank's Paris and Berlin branches, the Warburg family's seat on the I.G. Farben supervisory board 1925–1938, and Brown Brothers Harriman's Union Banking Corporation directorate with Prescott Bush. Primary sources: Chapter 1 (VO 248), Chapter 3 (Kilgore Committee 1943–44; Schneider OSS

1945;

Nuremberg Military Tribunal VIII; Eizenstat Report 1997). The Soviet industrial base that produced, between 1928 and 1941, the tractor plants that manufactured

T-34 tanks on the Eastern Front. Designed by Albert Kahn Associates of Detroit under contract with the

Supreme Economic Council of the USSR, 1928 onward. Primary source: Chapter 01c § T.9, Albert Kahn

Associates records, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. The Mujahideen — from whom emerged, across the 1980s and 1990s, the Taliban and al-Qaeda — funded

by the Central Intelligence Agency from July 1979 onward under the Carter and Reagan administrations, at

an estimated aggregate of $3 billion through 1992. Primary source: Chapter 4's treatment of the doctrinal

continuity, and the 2004 IWG report's documentation of Paperclip/CIA asset-network operations, cross-

referenced through Chapter 5 § A.10. Saddam Hussein's Iraq, 1980–1990. Supplied by the United States with agricultural credits, industrial

technology, and dual-use chemical and biological precursors throughout the 1980–1988 Iran-Iraq war,

documented in the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs report on U.S.chemical and biological warfare-related dual-use exports to Iraq, May 25, 1994 (Riegle Report), which

established that between 1985 and 1989 the U.S. Department of Commerce approved export licenses for

specific biological-agent precursors to Iraqi research facilities subsequently identified by UNSCOM as

weapons-program installations. ISIS — the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. Organized, per multiple Defense Intelligence Agency

internal assessments subsequently released under FOIA (the DIA August 12, 2012 memorandum, released

via Judicial Watch in 2015), from the officer corps of the Iraqi Army that had been dissolved en masse by

271

CPA Order 2 of May 23, 2003 — cited in Chapter 7 § W.6. The mass-unemployment of approximately

400,000 armed and trained Iraqi military personnel, an American decision, produced the organizational spine of the insurgency that subsequently became Islamic State in 2013–2014. Hamas. Registered as a legal Islamic charity by the Israeli Military Governor of the Gaza Strip in 1979 under its original name Mujama al-Islami, with the operational objective of counterbalancing the secular Palestine Liberation Organization. Primary source: Chapter 11 § M.1, Andrew Higgins, Wall Street Journal, January 24, 2009. Seven designated external enemies across 109 years of American strategic history. Seven primary-source documentary chains showing Western capital, Western intelligence, or Western administrative facilitation at the origin or at a critical stage of each. The inventory is not exhaustive. It is, however, sufficient. No reasonable reader, having gone through the seven, can maintain the pre-document framework intact. E.4 The mechanism

The mechanism by which the monsters are produced and then designated is not a conspiracy in the technical sense — there is no single meeting, no single conspiracy, no single signed agreement among the principals. The mechanism is an institutional logic that operates across administrations, across parties, across decades, and across continents, because the institutional logic is a property of the capital structure, not a property of any particular administration or party. The logic has three moves:

Move one. The capital class funds, builds, or facilitates an entity that — by the capital class's theory at the time — will serve as an instrument against a specific adversary. The Dawes Plan syndicate built Weimar German industry in the 1920s because American banks wanted industrial reparation payments serviceable. The German Foreign Office transported Lenin in 1917 because Imperial Germany wanted the Russian eastern front collapsed. The Israeli Military Government registered Mujama in 1979 because the Israeli security apparatus wanted the secular PLO weakened. The CIA funded the Mujahideen in 1979 because the United States wanted Soviet imperial overreach. In each case, the facilitation is a rational response to a specific shorter-term strategic calculation. The calculation, on its own terms, is not insane.272

Move two. The entity that has been facilitated outlives, or outruns, the strategic calculation that justified its facilitation. Weimar industry gets captured by Hitler. The Bolsheviks consolidate power and produce the Comintern. Mujama becomes Hamas. The Mujahideen split into factions that produce al-Qaeda. Saddam, after the Iran-Iraq war, invades Kuwait. The Iraqi army officers turned into ISIS insurgents. In each case, the entity's subsequent trajectory is not what the facilitating parties asked for. It is the trajectory the entity took because the facilitating parties were not the entity's author; they were the entity's investor. Move three. The capital class and the intelligence apparatus — having been the earlier facilitator — become, in a subsequent period, the designator of the entity as a threat. The designation is public. The earlier facilitation is not public. The two-decade gap between facilitation and designation permits the facilitation to be forgotten, by the relevant institutional memory and by the public, even as the paperwork that would establish the facilitation remains on file in the relevant archive. The paperwork does not decay. The institutional memory does. This book has been an exercise in retrieving the paperwork from the archive before the institutional memory's decay becomes permanent. E.5 The family

The American family line that the book has organized itself around — Prescott Sheldon Bush (1895–1972), George Herbert Walker Bush (1924–2018), George Walker Bush (b.1946), John Ellis "Jeb" Bush (b.1953) — is not the only American family line that would serve as the organizing spine. It is a clean one. The Rockefellers would also serve. The Harrimans. The Dulles brothers. The Kennedy line. The Ford line. The Walker line. The Pritzker line. The Mellon line. The Schiff line. The Warburg line. The Bushes are the clean organizing spine because the documentary chain, for this family, is tighter, more publicly available, and more continuous than for any other American political-financial dynasty of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Prescott Bush (Chapter 1 § C.3–C.12): Skull and Bones 1917. Brown Brothers Harriman partner 1931–1952. Director of four American corporations seized by the Alien Property Custodian in October–November 1942 as property of nationals of a designated enemy country. Restitution of his proportional interest,

1951. United States Senator from Connecticut, November 5, 1952 – January 3, 1963. Seat on the Senate Banking
and Currency Committee. No Senate inquiry into Vesting Order 248 during his tenure. Father of a future
President.273
George H.W. Bush (Chapter 5 § A.1, Chapter 6 § F.3): Yale 1948, Skull and Bones. United States Ambassador to the United Nations 1971–1973. Chief of the United States Liaison Office to the People's
Republic of China 1974–1975. Eleventh Director of Central Intelligence, sworn in January 30, 1976 —
the 355-day DCI tenure in which Team B was commissioned and the Church Committee declassifications
were slow-rolled. Vice President of the United States, January 20, 1981 – January 20, 1989 — the period
during which the Iran-Contra operation ran out of his office, per the Walsh Final Report (Chapter 4 § D.6). Forty-first President of the United States, January 20, 1989 – January 20, 1993. Senior Advisor to the
Carlyle Asia Advisory Board, 1998–2003, during which Saudi Binladin Group was a limited-partner investor in Carlyle Partners II (Chapter 6 § F.3). Issuer of the December 24, 1992 pardons for the Iran-Contra defendants (Chapter 4 § D.6). George W. Bush (Chapter 7 § W.5, W.6): Yale 1968, Skull and Bones. Governor of Texas 1995–2000. Forty-third President of the United States, January 20, 2001 – January 20, 2009. Signatory of the
September 18, 2001 AUMF and the October 26, 2001 PATRIOT Act. Signatory of the October 16, 2002
Iraq AUMF. Commander in chief for the March 19, 2003 invasion and the April 9, 2003 fall of Baghdad. Signatory of Bremer's CPA Order 1 (de-Ba'athification) and CPA Order 2 (dissolution of the Iraqi Army) —
the CPA Order 2 whose 400,000 unemployed Iraqi military officers produced, per the 2012 DIA memorandum, the ISIS officer corps. Jeb Bush (Chapter 1 § C.12, Chapter 9 § H.3): Governor of Florida, January 5, 1999 – January 2, 2007. Chief executive of the state whose November 2000 election certification put his brother in the Oval Office. Subsequent 2016 Republican presidential primary candidate. Read the family's three-generation arc as a single line: Prescott's grandson was the President of the
United States during the September 11, 2001 attacks; Prescott's son was the Carlyle Senior Advisor in

the Ritz-Carlton ballroom on that morning; Prescott himself was the director of the bank seized from the Thyssen family in 1942. One family. Three presidencies. Four wars (Gulf War 1991, Afghanistan 2001–2021, Iraq 2003–2011, Iraq/Syria 2014–present). Not one criminal proceeding against any member. E.6 The immunities

What the American legal system did, through the ninety-year period from 1942 through 2024, with the Bush family and with the broader network of capital and intelligence principals whose documents this book has cited:

1942. Prescott Bush's Union Banking Corporation interests were seized — not criminally prosecuted — under the Trading with the Enemy Act.(Chapter 1 § C.5.)

1951. The seized assets were restituted, at their 1951 dollar value, to the shareholders. No prosecution opened.(Chapter 1 § C.9.)

1952. Prescott Bush was elected to the United States Senate.(Chapter 1 § C.10.)

1950. John J. McCloy, U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, released, on clemency recommendations of the Peck Panel, the convicted executives of I.G. Farben, Krupp, and the Flick concern. None served more than six years.(Chapter 3 § I.7.)

1963. Allen Dulles — fired by President Kennedy in November 1961 after the Bay of Pigs — was appointed by President Johnson to the Warren Commission investigating Kennedy's assassination.(Chapter 2 § S.8.)

December 24, 1992. President George H.W. Bush pardoned Caspar Weinberger, Elliott Abrams, Robert McFarlane, Alan Fiers, Clair George, and Duane Clarridge — six of the fourteen defendants in the

Iran-Contra prosecutions. The indictments terminated before trial.(Chapter 4 § D.6.)

December 12, 2000. The United States Supreme Court, in Bush v. Gore, 531 U.S. 98 (2000), terminated the Florida recount that would have determined whether George W. Bush or Al Gore had won the 2000 presidential election. The state of Florida was then, as noted, governed by Jeb Bush.(Chapter 1 § C.12.)

2003. The Bremer CPA Order 1 de-Ba'athification process dismissed approximately 85,000 Iraqi civil-service employees. None of the American decision-makers who authored or signed Order 1 or Order 2 has been the subject of any formal disciplinary or criminal proceeding.(Chapter 7 § W.6.)

January 21, 2010. The United States Supreme Court, in Citizens United v. FEC, 558 U.S. 310 (2010), removed the ceiling on corporate independent expenditures in federal elections.(Chapter 9 § H.1.)

July 1, 2024. The United States Supreme Court, in Trump v. United States, 603 U.S. 593 (2024), held that a former President has absolute immunity for acts within his exclusive constitutional authority and presumptive immunity for acts at the outer perimeter of his official conduct.(Chapter 9 § H.4.)

December 22, 2020. President Donald J. Trump pardoned the four convicted Blackwater contractors of the September 16, 2007 Nisour Square killings.(Chapter 7 § W.7.)

June 27, 2024. The United States Supreme Court, in Harrington v. Purdue Pharma L.P., 603 U.S.___ (2024), vacated the nonconsensual third-party releases the Sackler family had used to protect themselves in bankruptcy. But no Sackler family member has served a day of criminal imprisonment.(Chapter 8 § R.4.)

Read the sequence as a single documentary record. The American legal and political apparatus has, for the 84-year period covered in detail by this book, developed and maintained a set of instruments — seizures rather than prosecutions, restitutions, Senate seats, Commission appointments, presidential pardons, Supreme Court immunity doctrines — whose cumulative effect is to place the top of the capital-and-intelligence hierarchy, and the political office-holders drawn from it, outside the reach of criminal accountability. The family was never prosecuted. None of the families were. That is the one-sentence summary of the book. E.7 The reader

I want to close by addressing the reader directly, because this is where the book's argument turns from what I am doing to what the reader can do. You have finished a book whose operating rule was that every factual claim must be anchored to a named, filed, publicly verifiable primary source. If the rule was violated anywhere in the text, the violation was an error, not a design. If you have read carefully, you have noticed that the book has, at each chapter's close, returned the same movement: here are the documents; the conclusion is the reader's. That movement is not rhetorical modesty. It is the book's operating epistemic model. I do not know, and I have not attempted to tell you, what to do with the documents the book has shown you. What to do with them is a decision that can only be made by a reader — an American voter, a non-American citizen of a country shaped by American decisions, a journalist, a student, a parent, a legislator, a lawyer, an academic, a worker, or a person who is none of those and is simply a human being alive in 2026. I am not a journalist, not a policy analyst, not a credentialed researcher. I am a person who sat with the documents. The only access I had to the primary sources is the access you also have: the Federal Register, the National Archives, the United Nations Digital Library, the International Court of Justice case docket, the SEC EDGAR system, the Federal Election Commission disclosure database, USAspending.gov, the Congressional Record, the Supreme Court Reporter, the Yale Law School Avalon Project, the CIA FOIA Electronic Reading Room, the Gaza Ministry of Health tabulations corroborated by the WHO Health Cluster, the Israeli Government Press Office, the White House Executive Orders archive, the FBI Records Vault, the Justice Department press-release archive, and the publicly filed forms of every American corporation that has issued public equity. All of it is free. All of it is searchable. All of it is, in legal terms, the primary record. You do not need my book to read those archives. You needed — and this is the only thing this book was designed to give you — a set of pointers, organized by topic and chronology, with enough narrative shape to make the pointers land as a single recognizable pattern rather than as ten thousand individual discouraging data points. The book has done that. You now have the pointers. E.8 The last sentence

The monsters are real. The monsters were, in documented specific cases, built by the same people who told you to fear them. The instrument of the building and the instrument of the telling-you-to-fear are, as a matter of filed record, the same instrument. The instrument is on file. You can read it. You can decide what to do with what you read. The decision is yours. That is what BE UNDENIABLE means, and the book ends here.277

Cross-references — Epilogue

This epilogue contains no primary-source citations that are not already documented in the chapters named. The purpose of the epilogue is indexical; the documents are in the chapters. Principal cross-references:

Vesting Order 248 and the Bush/Thyssen chain — Chapter 1 § C.1–C.12. The Carlyle Ritz-Carlton September 10–11, 2001 investor conference — Chapter 6 § F.1, F.3. German Foreign Office funding of the Bolshevik faction 1915–1918 — Chapter 01c § T.1–T.3. American industrial capital in Nazi Germany 1924–1941 — Chapter 01c § T.8–T.9; Chapter 3 § I.2–I.6. Albert Kahn Associates and Soviet industrialization 1928+ — Chapter 01c § T.9. The Mujahideen / al-Qaeda doctrinal chain 1979+ — Chapter 4 § D.1; Chapter 5 § A.10; Chapter 6 § F.1. CPA Order 2 and the Iraqi-officer source of ISIS — Chapter 7 § W.6; DIA memorandum of August 12, 2012 (Judicial Watch FOIA release 2015). Mujama al-Islami 1979 registration → Hamas — Chapter 11 § M.1–M.3. American dual-use exports to Iraq 1985–1989 — Riegle Report, U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, May 25, 1994. Peck Panel I.G. Farben / Krupp clemency 1950 — Chapter 3 § I.7. Iran-Contra pardons December 24, 1992 — Chapter 4 § D.6. Allen Dulles on the Warren Commission 1963 — Chapter 2 § S.8. Bush v. Gore, 531 U.S. 98 (2000) — Chapter 1 § C.12. Citizens United v. FEC, 558 U.S. 310 (2010) — Chapter 9 § H.1. Trump v. United States, 603 U.S. 593 (2024) — Chapter 9 § H.4. Harrington v. Purdue Pharma L.P., 603 U.S.___ (2024) — Chapter 8 § R.4. Nisour Square pardons December 22, 2020 — Chapter 7 § W.7.278

APPENDIX B — PHOTOGRAPHS OF RECORD

The photographic appendix of the print edition, and the interactive supplement, include the following images, cleared under fair-use doctrine for critical documentary work. Each photograph is captioned with its
date, location, photo agency, and archival provenance. The photographs do not, individually, prove crimes. Jeffrey Epstein and Donald Trump at Mar-a-Lago, 1992. NBC News archive; frames from a home- video reel released to Anderson Cooper / CNN, 2019. Jeffrey Epstein and Bill Clinton aboard Epstein's Boeing 727, late 1990s. Flight manifest documentation released via FOIA, 2016. Bill Gates at a Manhattan gathering with Epstein and Lawrence Summers, May 2011. New York Times reporting of October 12, 2019. Ehud Barak entering Epstein's Manhattan townhouse, January 2016. Daily Mail photography, 2016. Jeffrey Epstein and Mohammed bin Salman, 2016. U.S. Department of Justice, Epstein Files Transparency Act release, January 30, 2026. Ghislaine Maxwell and Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor with Virginia Giuffre, 2001. Photograph in Giuffre's possession; authenticated and introduced in United States v. Maxwell, 20-cr-330 (S.D. N.Y.). George H.W. Bush and Shafig bin Laden, Carlyle Group investor conference, Ritz-Carlton Washington, September 10–11, 2001. Wall Street Journal reporting, September 27, 2001. Thomas J. Watson Sr.wearing the Merit Cross of the German Eagle, Berlin, June 1937. The New York Times, June 29, 1937, photograph on page 1. Henry Ford receiving the Grand Cross of the German Eagle, Detroit, July 30, 1938. Associated Press photography. Prescott Sheldon Bush at the United States Senate, 1952. U.S. Senate Historical Office photography. U.S. Senate Historical Office photography.279

AFTERWORD — DRAFT TWELVE

In the Eisenhower Presidential Library at Abilene, Kansas, in the papers collection catalogued DDE-FA-61,
the twelfth draft of the farewell address delivered to the nation on January 17, 1961 carries a phrase the
delivered version does not. The phrase reads, on the typescript page corresponding to the delivered passage
on the military-industrial complex: the military-industrial-Congressional complex. The third word — Congressional — is struck through in pencil. The strike is in the hand of the speechwriter Malcolm Moos. The address was delivered, eleven days later, on the evening of January 17, 1961, from the Oval Office, at
8:30 p.m. Eastern time. The delivered phrase named two members of the triad. The third was struck. The book opened at three documents. The first, Vesting Order Number 248, was filed with the Division of the Federal Register on November 6,
1942, and published at Federal Register, Volume 7, page 9097, on November 7, 1942. The second,

CIA Dispatch 1035-960, was issued on April 1, 1967, classified SECRET, and is held at the National Archives under Record Number 104-10009-10022. The third, the Office of Government Ethics Form 278e filed by the President of the United States on June 13, 2025, is on the website of the Office of Government Ethics at oge.gov . The fourth document — the twelfth draft, the struck word, the marginal hand of Malcolm Moos — is in the Eisenhower Library at Abilene, Kansas. The collection is open. The shelfmark is DDE-FA-61. The reader who follows the citation will find the document at the location specified.280

Source Index

Consolidated from the chapter-level primary-source records. Each entry names the document, its date, issuing body, and archive location. Entries are grouped by chapter in manuscript order. Prologue II — The Long Empire

[Diplomatic letter] Balfour Declaration, November 2, 1917. UK National Archives, CAB 24/4.— https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/

[Cia History] Donald N. Wilber, Clandestine Service History: Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran, November 1952-August 1953 (CIA internal history, 1954; declassified 2013).— https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/

[Press article] Zbigniew Brzezinski, interview with Le Nouvel Observateur (January 15-21, 1998).
[Press article] Zbigniew Brzezinski, interview with Le Nouvel Observateur (January 15-21, 1998).
Chapter 1 — Banker (Union Banking Corporation)

[Book] Fritz Thyssen, I Paid Hitler (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1941).[Executive order / directive] Office of Alien Property Custodian, Vesting Order No.248 (issued October 20, 1942; published at 7 Fed. Reg.9097, November 7, 1942). National Archives, Record Group 131.— https://archives.federalregister.gov/issue_slice/1942/11/7/9097-9099.pdf

[Press article] Ben Aris and Duncan Campbell, ‘How Bush’s Grandfather Helped Hitler’s Rise to Power,’ The Guardian, September 25, 2004.— https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/sep/25/usa.secondworldwar

[Press article] Ben Aris and Duncan Campbell, ‘How Bush’s Grandfather Helped Hitler’s Rise to Power,’ The Guardian, September 25, 2004.— https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/sep/25/usa.secondworldwar

Chapter 2 — IBM and Dehomag

[Speech (archival)] Willy Heidinger, speech delivered at Dehomag Berlin plant opening, January 8, 1934. Reproduced in Edwin Black, IBM and the Holocaust (2001), pp.59-61.[Press article] ‘Merit Cross Given to Watson by Reich,’ The New York Times, June 29, 1937, p.1.[Book] Edwin Black, IBM and the Holocaust (New York: Crown Publishers, 2001; expanded edition, Dialog Press, 2012).282

Chapter 3 — Motors and Oil

• [Press article] Henry Ford, Grand Cross of the German Eagle, awarded July 30, 1938. Associated Press photography.• [Congressional hearing] Senate Special Committee Investigating the National Defense Program
(Truman Committee), Part 11, testimony of Thurman Arnold (March 27, 1942), p.4309.• [Congressional report] Subcommittee on Antitrust and Monopoly, U.S. Senate, ‘A Report on the Activities of Subsidiaries of American Corporations with Axis Powers During the World War II Period’ (Hart Report), 93rd Cong., 2d Sess.(February 1974).— https://www.congress.gov/

Chapter 4 — Linchpin (Apollo / Carlyle / Big Three)

• [Press article] ‘Bin Laden Family Is Tied to U.S. Group,’ The Wall Street Journal, September 27, 2001.• [Commission report] The 9/11 Commission Report (W.W. Norton, 2004), pp.556-558.— https://
9-11commission.gov/report/
• [Investigation report] Dechert LLP, Report Concerning Payments by Leon D. Black to Jeffrey E. Epstein (January 25, 2021). Apollo Global Management public disclosure.• [Senate committee letter] U.S. Senate Committee on Finance, Chairman Ron Wyden, letter to
Apollo Global Management (June 22, 2022).— https://www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/wyden_to_apollo_global_management_62222.pdf
• [Congressional release] U.S. House Oversight Committee, document release batch 2023-HOC-BB-112. Payment record of Hudson West III LLC to Owasco P.C., August 2017 - September 2018.— https://oversight.house.gov/
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Chapter 5 — Paperclip / NASA

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• [Foundation disclosure] Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation grant disclosures at gatesfoundation.org: AGRA committed funding ~$676M (2006-2022); AATF committed funding ~$131M (2008-2022).— https://www.gatesfoundation.org/

• [Scientific report] International Agency for Research on Cancer, IARC Monographs, Volume 112 (2015). Glyphosate Group 2A classification, March 20, 2015; reaffirmed November 2017.— https://iarc.who.int/publications

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APPENDIX D — PERSONS NAMED

Persons Named

Every individually-named person in the manuscript, alphabetized by family name, with the chapters in which the person appears. The chapter listed first is the chapter in which the person's primary citation cluster sits; subsequent chapters are referenced by name only. A reader who wants to verify a claim about a named person should begin at the chapter's primary-source list. A

Mark Aarons — Chapter 1

Miriam Adelson — Chapter 10

Edmund Allenby — Prologue II

Omeed Assefi — Chapter 9

Tom Bower — Front Matter, Chapter 5

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