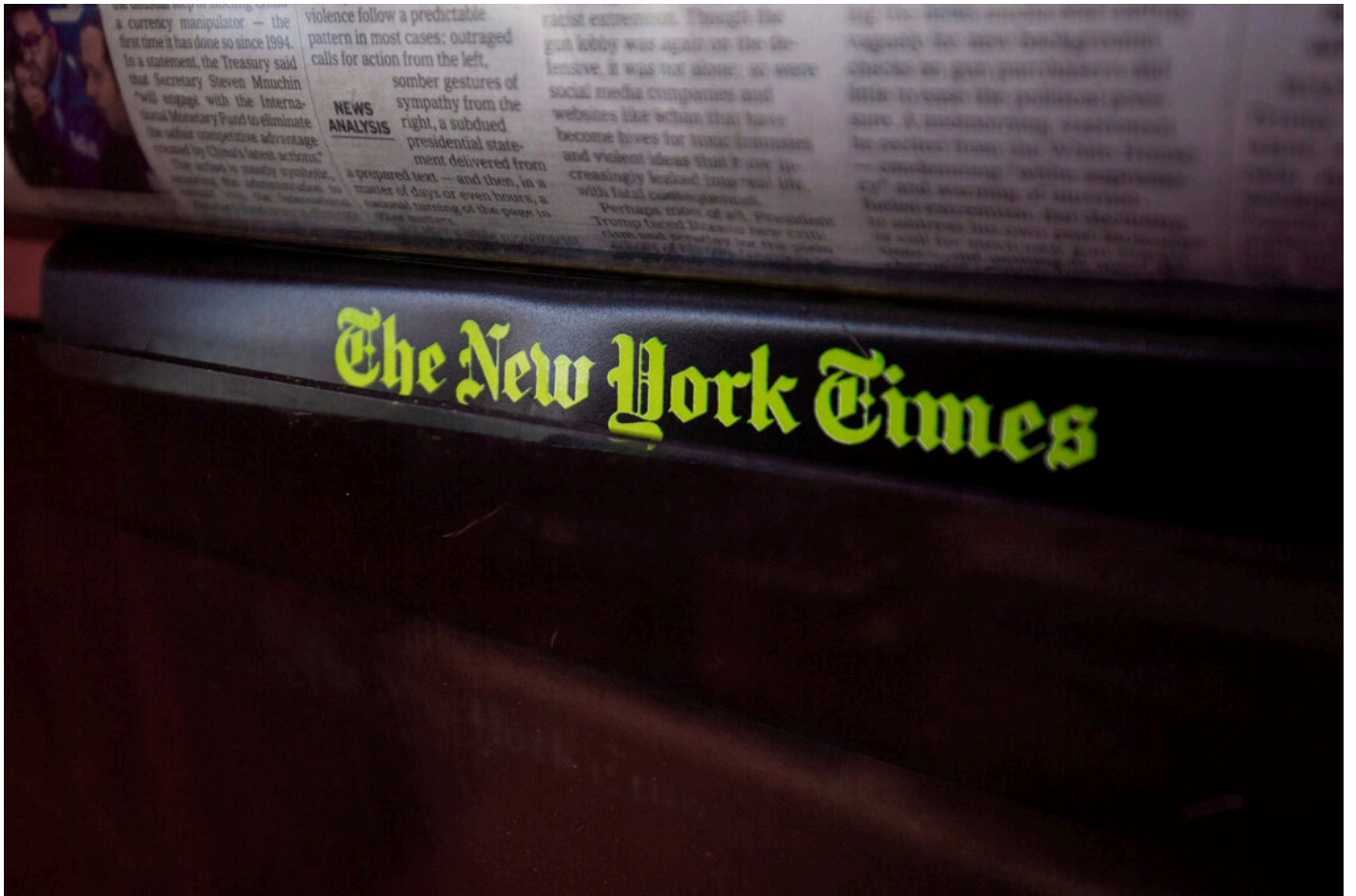


A New Year With Eyes Wide Open

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The New York Times logo is seen on a newspaper rack at a convenience store in Washington on Aug. 6, 2019. Alastair Pike/AFP via Getty Images



By Jeffrey A. Tucker

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Print

Commentary

The biggest change in public culture over five years has been the loss of trust in big media. It's not just that we now see that much of the

spin is just wrong. It's that we see that we are being manipulated for a purpose. Much of it comes with a narrative crafted to shape the public mind in ways that serve a particular interest. This is glaringly obvious in ways that were not present in the past.

When “[Manufacturing Consent](#)” by Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman came out 37 years ago, I read it and appreciated it, not finding much with which to disagree. But for some reason, it did not penetrate my habit of thought. It seemed maybe a bit overwrought, and surely not a daily reality. I went right on reading and believing as I did before.

Indeed, I had developed something of a dependency relationship with the New York Times (NYT), thinking I had discovered the decoder ring to extract value from the institution even with obvious biases. The paper was clearly “liberal” but I chalked that up to normal differences of opinion.

In general, I thought the reporting was civic-minded and fair overall, certainly not reflective of some nefarious agenda. In any case, I had flattered myself that I possessed the intelligence to see through the worst of it and still gain value. Also, by reading it—if I'm going to be perfectly honest with myself—I thereby associated myself with a class to people to which I aspired to belong. Yes, that's pathetic, but having dabbled in this myself, I also understand the motivations and outlook.

Even during the Russiagate nonsense after 2016, when the media cooperated so fully with Trump's enemies to cobble together a huge phony story designed to tangle up the new administration in all sorts of miasmas, I did not fully get what was going on. It wasn't really until the pandemic narrative began that I understood the fullness of the gibberish that was being foisted on us.

For me, the day was Feb. 27, 2020, when the daily podcast, to which I had listened faithfully, used the existence of a pathogen to foment public panic. I knew for sure that this paper had not done this in any past disease wave. In the AIDS crisis, in the H1N1 worries of 2009, in MERS of 2003, and all the way back to 1968–69 and 1957–58, the paper

had always counseled calm and reason. This time was clearly different. And I knew for sure that it was wrong.

I shut off the podcast in shock and amazement. Did they have any idea what they were doing and the effects of it? Surely they did. What could they be thinking? What exactly was going on here? In a few weeks, it was obvious. They had signed up to be the public voice of utter wreckage all structured with a specific political goal to drive Trump out of office along with other populist leaders around the world.

Everything changed for me that day. That was nearly five years ago, and I can never look at mainstream news the same way. Nor do I believe this to be a personal eccentricity of my own. The market share of news that is dominated by the corporate press is on the decline. The scales have fallen from many eyes. We just no longer believe. That's rather shocking but an essential change.

After that day, the NYT leaned hard into what in retrospect looks like a preset narrative, slavishly following the edicts of government agencies. Every exposure became an infection and every infection became a "case," thus obliterating a distinction in language that had been around for 100 years at least. Then we had the profligate testing with wildly inaccurate methods. Then we had the death misclassifications that made everything look vastly worse than it was.

All of this contributed to a wild panic in the country, backed by a complicated network of government agencies from the top all the way to your hometown, all reinforced by a screaming media elite. Anyone who contradicted the main claims was accused of spreading misinformation and banned by social media. Those of us who smelled a rat felt isolated, as if no experts concurred with our doubts.

In the backdrop of all of this was a remarkable change in the voting protocols. Lining up to vote was seen as too dangerous because doing so would spread disease. The CDC very early on announced that the election would have to be through the mail, even though it has been

known for decades that such methods were subject to greater degrees of fraud.

This went exactly as expected and planned: millions of votes appeared out of nowhere. The courts rejected challenges on grounds of standing. To this day, there are widespread doubts about the 2020 election. In saying that, I risk cancellation but it is better to deal with the reality of public doubt. The mainstream press fully cooperated in this, most likely because they did not like the president. That's truly an outrage.

I could keep going with this narrative but you know the story. The shots came next along with the wild exaggerations on the amount of necessary uptake to keep the population safe. Along with that came mass confusion over a range of protocols that never had any scientific basis, from masks to air filtration to social distancing and so on.

After all this, so much of the credibility of the narrative creators has been shot. Perhaps it was never merited in the first place, as Chomsky and Herman pointed out long ago. Regardless, the public is now onto the game. We know how it works and are far less likely to take the bait next time.

And there is always a next time. The latest campaign by the New York Times has been against a wildly popular cultural experience that is part of the dance and music troupe Shen Yun, which has performances all over the United States and the world. It is one of the few and largest arts associations that make a profit despite not accepting any government funds and not enjoying any large foundation support.

The paper has run a huge series of attacks. I've read them all and they have all the earmarks of the Russiagate and COVID coverage: vast amounts of bluster lacking in genuine substance. We know exactly what is going on. Note that Shen Yun's media sponsor for years has been The Epoch Times, which is an industrial competitor to the New York Times.

No question that the media credibility in a range of areas has taken a huge hit. Simply put, no venue can pretend to be independent or free if its main driving ethos is to print the news as scripted by government agencies and corporate sponsors. Now that we know that this has long been the method, it's much easier to see straight through it.

No longer will people sit by passively and accept what is being told to them. Plus, we've entered into a new era of citizen journalism so that there is always a check on the power of the mass media. We've never seen this before. There is no going back from this.

Therefore, we enter into 2025 with eyes wide open and with great anticipation for what might happen under a second Trump administration. And it is not just about Trump: there is a real determination alive in this country and in the world for true cultural renewal taking place on a decentralized basis and rooted in a desire for truth. It's about time, and it makes me very optimistic about the future.

We have all experienced a graduate-level course in how the world really works. It's been painful to experience it but we are all better off as a result.

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