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## Reporters report. Detectives investigate

Career journalists quickly learn the rules, and grasp the acceptable boundaries within which a debate or story may unfold.

Cameron Duodu is right about the manipulation of the media (take the embedded journalists during the Iraq invasion - how sanitized was their perspective?!). On the other hand, we shouldn't underestimate the media's corresponding hunger for a good story - there must be days so horribly desperately dull.... day-dreaming comes into operation. Surely this is the only possible excuse for broadcasting Powell's WMD trailer diagrams, the staged toppling of the statue of Saddam or Bush's 'mission accomplished' presentation.

I don't know where that leaves us. Much of what we read and hear is reported half-truths or [framed tightly](#) so as to avoid the ugly truth which is the honest answer to the question noone dare ask. You can find the information you want if you search hard enough and use a bit of imagination, but this is time-consuming beyond the means of most hard-working people.

Here's something that might change your mind about the role of the mainstream press - a quote regarding its role in the Iran-Contra affair. I quote...

'Several reporters did some outstanding investigative work, but their findings were either ignored or scantily treated by major media organs like the New York Times and the Washington Post... '

'journalists (and politicians) remain reluctant to squarely address the recurring CIA-drug problem. One exception is Gary Webb\*, whose stories on the CIA, Contras, and cocaine... appeared in the San Jose Mercury News in August 1996. After they received national attention through talk radio and the World Wide Web, his stories were soon attacked, at extraordinary length, in the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, and Washington Post. Attacks on his stories soon became attacks on his personal integrity. As we go to press, Webb has been demoted...'

From Cocaine Politics (Peter Dale Scott and Jonathan Marshall) 1998

Given the imminent flooding of the UK with cheap heroin from [Afghanistan](#) (at a time when the UK military are tasked with overseeing the eradication of the poppy harvest), why do you suppose nobody is writing about these money flows?

If Iran-Contra is anything to go by, we'll need to wait at least another 4 years to find out more.



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\*On Friday, 10 Dec 2004 , 49 year old Gary Webb was found dead with a gunshot wound to the head.

Quote:

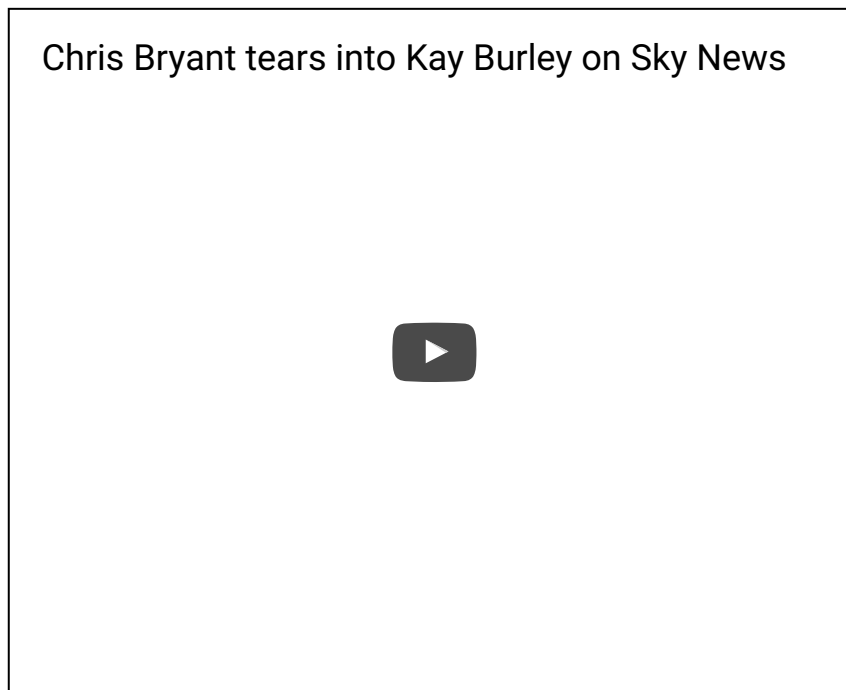
"There is no freedom of information in this country; there's no public right to know. There's a commonsense idea of how to run a country and Britain is full of commonsense people... Bigger the public's right to know. The game is the security of the state - not the public's right to know"

Bernard Ingham, Margaret Thatcher's press secretary, to American journalists in an off-the-record briefing, 1986

Essential Reading:

Flat Earth News by Nick Davies

Related Video:



Note how the Murdoch media empire - which owns The Sun, News of the World, The Times and 39% of Sky TV - responds to MP Chris Bryant's questioning on why his phone was illegally tapped. Also listen to BBC Today discussion on who pays who and how the promised police investigation came to nothing...

### **July 2011: Tabloid Phone Hacking Cover Up exposed**

Phone hacking is back in spotlight after police all but closed investigation in 2009. Thanks largely to the court actions of hacking victims and persistent coverage by Nick Davies in The Guardian, the cover up continues to unravel. With News Corporation anxious to proceed with a deal that would allow it to take 100% ownership of BSkyB and the Government ready to green light this, the Murdoch empire has been forced into a major damage limitation exercise - rapidly shutting down The News of the World. This now begs the question whether a deal between Cameron and Murdoch was struck prior to the elections. If this deal proceeds the Prime Minister may now be in trouble. He has admitted to 26 meetings with Murdoch

executives since the election, some about the BSkyB bid. Sean Hoare, journalist and whistleblower of the phone hacking scandal was found dead days after making fresh allegations.

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