



## **Paul Jay Interview (EVENT 15.01.2017)NO**

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**INTRO:** Paul Jay is the CEO and senior editor of the Real News Network and leads a staff of 40 people covering international and US news. The RealNews Network is a non-profit, viewer supported daily video news and documentary service. It doesn't accept advertising, government or corporate funding. He is now heading up an initiative to create a global climate bureau that will produce daily news about the urgency of and solutions to the climate change crisis. Jay is also an award-winning filmmaker and was founding chair of HotDog International Documentary Film Festival and executive producer for ten years of the CBC daily current affairs show Counterspin. Ladies and gentlemen: Paul Jay

**Zain Raza:** Let's start with some definitions. What is mainstream media and what is independent media?

**Paul Jay:** Mainstream media, because of the direct control now [should say now (?)] far less indirect, more direct control by billionaires and corporations over the state and you can see in - I can go into this later - the Trump presidency is the most extreme example of how billionaires are directly controlling the state. The same thing is true for corporate media. As the Democratic and Republican Party are now, are integrated into the state itself, so is corporate media. And so, I don't use the word mainstream media. I use the word corporate media although one can include to a large extent public broadcasting that's dependent on corporate media. So they won't cover things, that the state doesn't want them to cover. And I can give you some - if you ask me - I'll give you some concrete examples

**Zain Raza:**

Let's touch on that in a bit. But people consume news almost everyday whether it's a headline on facebook or now in Munich. I think they have in the subway these screens where they're repeating news all the time or at 8 pm when the main channels broadcast. We talk a lot about what the mainstream or corporate media - as you called it - do wrong but what is the responsibility of the reader and the viewer. What should he or she take into consideration when consuming news?

**Paul Jay:** There is no generalization for who the reader is. Like everything else, we live in a class society and so we have to think about who we are talking about. You have a... the people that actually follow news in a regular way are actually a very small segment of the American population. Most people don't watch the news every day and when they do it's usually local news about their city. There's a stratum in America which is people who are relatively well educated from the elites - or the upper middle class if you want - , they're more tuned into the election... the media in between elections. Now during the elections of course more people pay some attention because they are sort of a drama and you're inundated with election information. But even then something like 40, 45 even more percent of the population doesn't even vote. On the day of the big presidential debate, one where they got big numbers because Trump was such a sensation. Normally, most people don't even watch the debates. But there is still a power in news and in daily news and it's the power of repetition. So what happens is: a major story breaks and corporate media frames it for people. So Putin is the bad guy, America is the good guy, I mean you could go through any number of stories. Is that repetition every day the same way they sell soap that makes it so powerful, which is why we are trying to develop a daily opposition to that. As far as the responsibility of people, of course it's people's responsibility to be skeptical and to try to find out more but if you work two jobs and you come home exhausted and your kids have to get fed and you're and you're living in a city like we are in Baltimore, I would say the majority of people's... one of their primary concerns is they want to be able to get out on the street and not get mugged or get shot at or if you are worried about unemployment and all the anxiety that goes with that, you know, it's not so easy to reach beyond the mainstream media. In Baltimore at least a third of people in Baltimore are not even connected to the Internet, it may be higher than that. People have stuff on their phones but... and also it seems so overwhelming, the information flow and it makes people feel impotent. So, our responsibility is we have to break through that and one of the first things we have to do as independent media is stop talking to each other so much. The widest sections of the white working class in the United States vote for Trump and clearly his policies are against their interests. You know, you don't need to know very much to know that, but people are cut off from this kind of information and we in the independent media, we are not making enough effort to go where the people are, to speak to them. Like one thing we are going to do, we are setting up a unit to start kind of an experiment... is one of the reasons we came to Baltimore frankly, to start talking to the ordinary people who are suffering most and we are also going to set up a production team in a swing district in Southern Pennsylvania and try to talk to people that voted for Trump and learn how to speak to that section of the people, because this is where change is going to come from. We can talk to each other until we are blue on the face but we don't get to the people who are suffering the most and don't really have.. you know, the sea of information, they actually don't really get to it and we have to help with that.

**Zain Raza:** Okay, so you were talking [applause] so there are a number of ways how information can be distorted, is not just always a straight up lie. Error of omission, you leave out some context, misrepresentation, minimization, exaggeration and so on and so forth. Can you talk about some cases where news have been distorted?

**Paul Jay:** I'll give a few that I think are critical and they relate to this issue of why there is a Trump presidency. I'll start with one: the coverage of 9-11 and why 9-11 took place, how it took place. Certainly on a historic level one of greatest failures of any sense that mainstream corporate news plays a role as journalists. First and foremost, during the whole critical period following 9-11, the months leading up to the invasion of Afghanistan and afterwards. It was practically banned to talk about US foreign policy and I ran this show on CBC at the time, Counterspin and we had an actual debate four days after 9-11 and we were... the morning we did the show the newspapers, English speaking newspapers all across the world, I can't speak for non-english speaking, because of my ignorance, because I can't read other newspapers. But, there was an editor that said: if you try to connect US foreign policy to the events of 9-11, if you talk about "blowback", you are capitulating to terrorism and you are blaming the victims. Well, that was... we, we had that debate, we defied it, you could say. We were one of the very few in that initial few months that didn't cave under the pressure to that, but that created this whole narrative of Islamic terrorism is the enemy. Worse than that, the worse part of the narrative was that we were fighting evil. It became a great morality play that corporate media more or less bought into because they were terrified of the pressure from the White House. A president... most people don't even remember this, there was a TV show on American television prior to 9-11 called "That's my bush". It was a satire about the Bush family while they were in the White House. That's: he was a subject of ridicule! After 9-11 all of the sudden he's a great hero. Number two: that was the 9-11 piece. There was evidence then and there's been great amount of evidence since, that at the very least the Bush-Cheney administration sat on information and didn't act. Information that might have led to preventing 9-11, at the very least. We did an interview with Bob Graham a year ago, another one more recently. Bob Graham was the co-chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee and in that interview I asked him: Do you think that Bush-Cheney deliberately created a culture of not wanting to know in the American intelligence agencies? and he said: Yes! He said: if all the players on a football field are running in the same direction there has to be a head coach. I asked him later even more directly: Is Bush-Cheney responsible for deliberately, not through confusion or miscommunication of the intelligence agencies. And if people want to look into this, so look at our interviews. There's any number, at least 8, 9, 10 concrete pieces of intelligence, if acted on would have prevented 9-11. Anyway, corporate media: no reporting. We after interviewing Bob Graham, sent an email message to all the major news organizations in the United States giving free access to our interview with Bob Graham. This is a serious guy, you know? Co-Chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, means: he's an insider in American intelligence. Not a single news organization responded. So, if they had gone after 9-11 with any seriousness and... who knows if there'd be a Republican Party now. Number three: the Iraq War, I'll do this quickly. the Iraq War was clearly illegal, the mainstream media should ... any journalism worth any kind of journalistic salt would have pursued that. This is an illegal war, which means: it's a war crime, which means when President Obama was elected, at least he should have investigated Bush-Cheney for war crimes and frankly for the 9-11... [applause] What would be left of the Republican Party if he'd have done that? I'll quickly do two more if you...

**Zain:** We are running out of time, I have to move on, with the next question...

**Paul Jay:** Let me [?]. ... very fast...

**Zain:** All right, I'll give you...

**Paul Jay:** Ok, the financial meltdown, the power of finance, the extent to which how parasitical capital has become and their power over politics. You cannot cover the events of the 07/08 crash, the Wall Street Obama team, that saved it and who they saved it for. You cannot talk about all this without dealing with that and corporate media simply didn't deal with the power of finance in a serious way and of course the most important thing: this is why I insisted on continuing, is climate change. If there had been any kind of serious journalism covering climate change and covering the ridiculousness of the denial of climate change science, how do Americans possibly elect a climate denying administration? It's the number one crime of mainstream media. Is the lack of coverage of climate change and how serious and urgent the crisis is. [applause]

**Zain:** So we've got under 5 min left, I would like to talk to you and make that quick please, about the way the mainstream media covered the election cycle. I'm talking about the campaigns of Hillary Clinton and the election of Donald Trump

**Paul Jay:** Well, of course the main thing they did wrong was not cover the things I just talked about. Yes, they gave Trump a lot of free media, but who? Everyone...

**Zain Raza:** Do they have a role in Trump's election?

**Paul Jay:** Yeah, of course! I mean they gave him an enormous amount of free media by covering his buffoonery instead of covering maybe the most outrageous issue: his climate denial. That should have been the number one story of the election: electing a climate denial administration. They barely mentioned it. I mean, one of the reasons they barely mentioned it, is because Hillary Clinton barely mentioned it. So, I mean of course the Obama administration economic policy so greatly exaggerated the economic inequality which set the table for Trump. Hillary promises to continue the Obama legacy, so of course she becomes a defender of the status quo and then the media doesn't play its own role, because its own role should be informing the American public. That should be its responsibility, not just repeating what the various campaigns said, but the American media they get more than six billion dollar in political advertising. It's in their interest to have a horse race and to cover the horse race and frankly they don't give a damn about the actual fate of their people or the world. So, you know, the coverage of... I mean, everyone understands how bad the coverage was...

**Zain Raza:** So, I have a question from the public. Do you have plans of expanding your community center format to other cities beyond Baltimore, including New York City?

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**Paul Jay:** Yeah, definitely. Baltimore is a pilot project. We hope it becomes self-funding. At any place there's a group of people who want to start establishing a local RealNews chapter. We want to work with them and try to start the seeding. Of course, it comes back to money. We need... we are a professional news organization, you can do a certain amount with volunteers but you really need for a professional... you need to pay salaries and you need to be able to do this, you know, day and day and night and day. The second thing that I really want to stress is: we are trying to create a global climate change bureau. So, you know, before getting to the whole community model we can start at least having journalists in cities I hope all around the world. There is nothing more important right now than framing everything from the... within the framework of what's happening to the planet and the climate. We are being told that in 2050 we will hit 2 degrees if every country lives up to its pledge at Paris. Well, that was said before Trump, so now it's clear the United States is not going to fulfill any of its pledges, it's going in the other direction. So, we could be looking at 2 degrees what in 2040?, 2035? I mean: it's around the corner! This is not some future event, we are living in the most decisive days of human civilization. I don't think it is an exaggeration. So, we better get all our heads around framing everything we are talking about within the issue of saving the planet and we know that means to change who has power. We know that means a change who... how wealth is dealt with. But it's a complicated issue, what kind of forces one can unite within this and we better be careful how we talk about it, because we need the broadest front possible to affect this kind of change

**Zain:** Paul Jay, founder of the RealNews Network, thank you for joining us today

**END**