

**Stonewalled: The Fight for Truth Against
the Forces of Obstruction, Intimidation, and Harassment
A Special Interview with Sharyl Attkisson**

By Dr. Joseph Mercola

DM: Dr. Joseph Mercola

SA: Sharyl Attkisson

DM: You can ignore reality, but you can't choose to ignore the consequences of ignoring reality. Most of us rely heavily on the media for information and don't realize that 90 percent of it is controlled by six media giants. Hi, I'm Dr. Mercola, helping you take control of your health. Today we are joined by one of my heroes, Sharyl Attkisson, who's a five-time Emmy Award winning investigative journalist, whose television career span more than three decades before she left CBS recently to pursue other investigative journalism. Her recent book, *Stonewalled*, exposes what goes on behind the scenes in the media that gives you the information that you think is true and real.

Thank you so much for joining us today. I appreciate that you're willing to participate in the interview.

SA: Thanks for having me.

DM: I'm wondering if you can give us a bit of a background as to when you left CBS, what you've been doing since then, and why you wrote the book.

SA: I left about a year ago when it just seemed to me I had met with so many dead ends in trying to continue the original investigative reporting that I've done for so many years there. My producer and I just kept hitting a bunch of brick walls in the last two years or so in trying to get this reporting on television. We certainly weren't alone. Reporters are complaining about this across the board at many print organizations and broadcast outlets.

Shortly after I left CBS News, two investigative reporters left other networks I think largely for the same reasons. The watchdog reporting that the government values so much is simply not desired for a variety of reasons as much as it once was at the national level. I think also this is a problem in local news

DM: One of my favorite shows that I've watched since it started, I think over 40 years ago – Don Hewitt started it in CBS – is 60 Minutes. I think CBS, even before 60 Minutes, had a reputation of being one of the premier networks for providing investigative journalism. It seems like through the years, especially since... I mean, you were there for 30 years or three decades, the...

SA: A little over 20 years.

DM: Twenty years, okay.

SA: And before that I was with CNN and some other places.

DM: Okay, so 20 years. But you saw the decline. I was particularly intrigued with... It seems that one of the anchors there (I'm not sure if that's the correct term) Scott Pelley, once he joined, there seemed to be a transition towards minimizing the ability to present truthful reporting.

SA: I'm not really a student of 60 Minutes. I agree with you that over time, it has been just one of the most premier and wonderful programs for all kinds of journalism; sometimes investigative journalism and sometimes features and interviews. But I would say that it's likely that that broadcast, while it still does a great work, tends to reflect these national trends that I've discussed, which tend to want to do less of that tough watchdog reporting that sometimes kowtows to commercial interest or corporate interest and is not quite doing the job that I think we ought to be doing day in and day out for the public.

DM: What variables or factors do you think contributed to that? Because it seems to be a progressive movement in that direction that you just described.

SA: It's complicated. But I would say, in my experience, there were a couple of things that changed suddenly from the network really encouraging these sorts of stories and being very proud of the award-winning work that I and other journalists did in that area to, in my view, not wanting really almost any of it. Part of that is I think commercial concerns. There were more commercial and corporate influences playing on the media. There have always been those sorts of tensions, but I think it's gotten worse as media outlets have grown to accept the commercialization as part of the news process. That made me...

They may say, "Well, maybe I don't overtly allow a sponsor to do something on the news, but I call it soft censorship." The idea when you know you have a sponsor and you know it's important to the corporation, are you really going to offend the sponsor by going after stories or allowing your reporters to go after stories that they don't like? But I do think it's more overt than that sometimes. The sponsors explicitly complain and argue at the corporate level that certain stories and topics shouldn't be done. We know this is true based on one anecdote I put in the book, but there are other anecdotes and experiences that reporters have had, where they've been told that this is the case.

Additionally, there are political factors. There were managers I found at CBS in those last two years that inserted their ideology into the reporting of producers and reporters, who by and large were very, very fair. That can change the whole tone of the reporting.

Lastly, I think overall, this giant pushback and astroturf campaigns, which have become so sophisticated, by the forces that really don't want us to report on certain topics, and we know had a pushback at the media who make them comfortable for us. A lot of managers would just rather avoid all that, or they succumb to the propaganda campaign and they come to believe some of it.

DM: I neglected to thank you, first of all, for your incredible integrity and commitment to honesty in really providing the truth to the public. You're really one of the few journalists I know in the traditional media that's committed to that. So, thank you for that.

There are a large number of illustrations that you provide in the book – or examples – that illustrate what you just mentioned. I'm wondering if you'd be willing to share one of them because it's difficult to understand that in abstraction, but it's so much easier to grasp that once you give a specific example.

SA: Gosh, there are so many that discuss political influences. I can discuss political influence or commercial influence. What would you be most interested in?

DM: Well, I thought it was... This may be on a different tangent, but one of the examples in the book that really hit home for me is when Hillary Clinton was running against Obama for president, and she had mentioned... Actually Brian Williams had a similar recent example where he exaggerated the truth of

what we had done in a war zone. She had a more egregious statement that the media widely accepted, and [I'm] interested on what you shared.

But you were on the campaign with her. The example she had shared was like 10 years previous at least, and then you had the records to disprove that. Maybe that might highlight some interest and examples of what happens.

SA: This was a story about CBS doing something right in time, years ago, when I think we were doing fantastic reporting and I had a boss at the time, who although he's an associate of the Clintons, was able to suspend his personal relationships and use his journalism judgement and understand this was a big story and he did so fairly. That changed in the last couple of years.

But the story was Hillary Clinton was on the campaign trail saying that she had dodged sniper fire on a trip as First Lady, 12 years before when she visited Bosnia. I and other journalists had been on that trip, and certainly, we did not dodge sniper fire. In fact, I looked at my video now, because I actually still have the video tape and notes from it, and was able to show her and Chelsea getting off the plane, reading to young school children, smiling, greeting troops, and posing for photographs. It couldn't be farther from the truth, the idea that we had been shot up by sniper fires.

We covered that for two days in a row because of her explanation, much like Brian Williams', when she tried to explain it away and said, "Then I ran. After the video you saw, I ran." That will be the second-day story, and I said, "No, after the video that you saw, she continued to pose for pictures and walk leisurely to the vehicle." That's never been fully explained. Was she – there are a couple of choices – just being untruthful for her own benefit or was she delusional, which is a little frightening. But I think the public, they kind of got past that because they accepted her as the Secretary of State.

But yes, Brian Williams, I think there are similarities between the two, except that I think a Hillary Clinton has held much more important positions in the public than Brian Williams who's a TV anchor. I mean, we're just people who appear on TV and try to do a good job reporting for the public, but that's not nearly as important as the Secretary of State.

DM: It seemed to derail her campaign for the presidency though.

SA: It's like the last nail in the coffin at the time when she was under attack. Yes.

DM: And that was thanks to you. Congratulations for bringing the truth out.

SA: Ironically, at the time, the Obama people concluded, I think, that I was their friend, because they didn't understand the concept that this is a story, just a story for no personal reasons. They really embraced me, emailed me, tried to give me other stories against candidates, and talked to me a lot after that for a period of time until I think they realized that I'm just covering the story. It's not that I wanted Obama to win or lose, or Hillary to win or lose, that was just the story that was presented.

DM: She's obviously going to be a candidate for the next election. Do you think that that story might come back to haunt her, or because of the shift in the control of the media, that might be buried?

SA: It depends on what the media wants. I'm using that term to include all the bloggers and the non-mainstream media that influence opinion now. That if they want Hillary as a candidate, I think they will largely overlook that. If they decide they want another Democrat as a candidate, they could pull that back up and decide to make it important again.

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DM: Well, that's another point that you make very effectively in the book, that there's this collaboration with the media that if one agency picks it up, then they all run the same story. You can watch the nightly news on every different channel, and it'll pretty much all be the same. It doesn't matter which station or network you are watching. Maybe you can comment on that a bit because that's an interesting story.

SA: Well, in that case, I don't think it's so much a formal collaboration as the idea that the broadcast use similar decision-making processes to decide what goes into the news and what comes out of the news on a given night, and therefore, they end up with similar programs. They copy one another, and they seem to feel (the certain managers) relieved that one didn't have anything particularly different from the other. Whereas, I think, a good manager would want to have something different from the other broadcast so they can show that they're bringing viewers a reason to watch.

But too often, I think they're all thinking these days they don't want to cover controversy, a major controversy unless others have already covered it like the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post*, then it's safe. They don't want to cover certain stories for ideological reasons. They don't want to cover certain stories against corporate partners that might harm corporate relationships.

They're very big on weather stories. They're very big on animal stories, nature stories, positive features, and things like that. Nothing is wrong with those things. Those things can all be newsworthy, but I would argue as we see the declining audience going to the evening newscast. That's one reason. Those things that they're putting on are not going to bring new viewers in if you're not telling them different things that they've been able to see all day and all week on the Web and other sources.

DM: Largely because of your experience in providing this type of investigative journalism, you became a target. I'm not sure of the timing, whether or not this was before Edward Snowden released his NSA files. I think it was before that. It isn't in the public consciousness as much. It was a bit more startling when it happened to you. But maybe you can discuss that, because you were actually... Your computer was hacked. It was waking you up in the middle of the night. Your phone lines were hacked. It's an interesting story of how they had the audacity to hack your system to try to find out what you were working on, and then the whole cover-up that occurred after that.

SA: Let me say that I assume (and I said this when I reported it to CBS initially and my manager agreed) that I'm not the only one. It dawned on me. I assume there are a handful of journalists who do that sort of critical reporting on the government, and on this administration in particular, that they wanted to watch.

They never dreamed I would luck upon or any of us would luck upon the contacts and the resources to have the computer examined by the right kind of experts that could find the software that they have deposited in my computer, which is proprietary, untold to a government agency, either the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), National Security Agency (NSA), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), or Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

But I would never have known that, again, if I hadn't lucked upon the right resources who came to me before we knew the government was doing all these aggressive actions against journalists before we knew about Edward Snowden, and before we knew that the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) Director James Clapper had given false information to Congress about the monitoring of citizens. Some sources had come to me and suggested that I was likely being monitored for my reporting, and one thing led to another.

I was able to have my computer looked at by an inside expert who immediately confirmed. He knew things such as times and dates in which things occurred in my computer. That they have my keystroke data, keystroke program, and this could monitor all my keystrokes. They could look at all my files. They used Skype audio – I didn't know this was possible – but they could turn it on invisibly, without you

knowing it, to listen into conversations. They could also exfiltrate files using Skype. They accessed the CBS system and many more things than that.

Again, we have a lot of specific information, because although they came in when we began to discover this and tried to remove their tracks forensically and remotely; they tried to wipe, and they did wipe clean some files, that in and of itself leaves tracks and evidence, which is good. To the course of several technicians, including a CBS technician that looked at that computer and my personal laptop, we were able to confirm these highly sophisticated long-term, remote intrusions.

And yes, it's shocking to think. Even though, as a journalist, you always assume someone could look at your computer, whether it's your bosses who can do so legally or someone who just gets in your computer and wants to see what you're working on, you kind of have that at the back of your mind. But the confirmation that it actually happened and the evidence is being presented to you like that is pretty startling. It sounded very far-fetched initially, but now with all the other revelations about the government, confiscating personal phone records of AP reporters, targeting a Fox News reporter in a leak investigation, and so on, it makes perfect sense.

DM: It seemed to be going further than that because I believe there was a collusion between your Internet service provider. The technicians who came to your house to investigate actually confiscated some of the evidence.

SA: One of them did, and I can't say whether that's collusion. I just recounted that chronologically what happened when someone from Verizon came to my house to look at a stray fiber optics line, dangling from the back of the home, which has never been explained by anybody, that technician seemed to want to take that piece of evidence or that cable. I asked him to leave it, but it later disappeared. He was then unavailable even though he had told me when he introduced himself I could call him anytime. I was never able to reach him again when I tried to find out what happened to the cable. He never returned my calls. That could just be incompetence on the part of Verizon.

DM: Well.

SA: It coincided with these other things, which is why I've included that as part of the story.

DM: Yeah. I could understand that from some other cellular service providers. Verizon tends to be one of the best in the country, if not the best. There's an interesting book, I don't know if you have a chance to review it, but it's called *Future Crimes: Everything Is Connected, Everyone Is Vulnerable, and What We Can Do About It* by the author Marc Goodman. It goes into this in great detail, discusses how this type of hacking can occur, and more importantly, what simple measures we can do to protect ourselves.

So anyone whose concern about this, they well should be because it's a reality. If they're doing it to top-notch investigative reporters like yourself, certainly everyone is a candidate. There are simple things that can be done even to protect yourself from malicious, not necessarily snooping but the overtaking of your computer to be used in the denial of service attacks for malicious purposes. Again, there are simple measures that can be done. The book, *Future Crimes*, is really a great read.

Now, you mentioned astroturf earlier. I suspect the majority of people listening don't know what that is. I'm wondering if you could expand on that and give us some of the examples that show some of the egregious conflicts of interest that you found.

SA: Sure. Astroturf is the effort on the part of special interest, corporate interest, and political interest to sway public opinion surreptitiously and make it seem as though these are grassroots efforts. That there's a groundswell of opinion for or against certain agenda when maybe there is not. That they can turn to things like social media – Facebook and Twitter – using pseudonyms and multiple accounts to spread things

around. They use their partners who blog for them, write things, and pick up on one another's work until sometimes it's been picked up in the mainstream media as if it's a fact.

It's all intended to make you feel as though if you hold a certain opinion that they don't want you to have, you're the outlier. Everybody else agrees with "X" except you, and that may not be the truth. This is a huge business. It's become in Washington. I think people know astroturf only in terms of they've seen it and maybe they've suspected there are these propaganda efforts but they're not sure what's behind it. There are actually PR firms that specialize in these sorts of tactics.

Astroturfing is now more important, I am told by lobbyists and these PR firms, to many clients than the direct lobbying of Congress because it's so effective to reach out to the public. They may have someone write a letter to the editor and you don't know that person's being paid by a special interest to advance a certain opinion. They may start as a nonprofit without saying out front that they're behind the nonprofit. The nonprofit may then look like a charity that's advancing a certain opinion, which is actually acting on behalf of the corporate interest or the special interest. Again, it's very widespread.

I used one example in a speech that I gave that I feel this is astroturf although I don't have the anatomy of this particular one, but it's about the Washington Redskins' name. And I'm not taking a position on the controversy on whether that should be the name or not. But if you watched the news in past year, read social media, by and large, you would have to conclude that most Americans think that the name is offensive and that it ought to be changed. But something like over 70 percent total of Americans think the name should not be changed.

So why is it that everything you see when you're exposed in the media makes you think otherwise? I think that's a sign of an astroturf campaign.

Astroturfers, also they use key language I found, such as crank, crack, nutty, pseudo, conspiracy, and other language that's effective with the public to try to make you dismiss an argument that they don't like.

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They tend to attack those who are questioning authority rather than themselves questioning authority. They would go after reporters who are exposing the truth, whistleblowers who dare to step forward, and people asking the tough questions. All these hallmarks are things that you can look for that are often signs of an astroturf campaign.

DM: Yeah. It's important to be aware of [those], because it really does have a profound influence on our perception of reality. It's the whole concept. I mean, there seems to be this concerted effort to distort that or put it through a filter that's going to benefit this certain group.

Now, I wanted to reflect back on a previous time that we connected. It was nine years ago, when we talked about swine flu. I'm assuming at that time, I think it was 2006. You had a major exposé. There was this massive fear that was being instilled by the government to concern people that this was going to kill all these individuals and to get their swine flu shots. And then you broke the story that...

I think it was you that broke it from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) records. They stopped diagnosing with serological blood test and just used clinical means, which is virtually useless. You actually interviewed me about that story. It was nine years ago. I'm wondering if you can expand on that and comment on the suppression that caused you to eventually leave, which was not present at the time

SA: I'm not sure it was nine. I won't... I'm probably woozy on dates, but I feel like it was a little later. But whenever, it was the year that the big swine flu scare happened. I got two tips from two different sources: one in government and one in...

DM: I think it was 2009 now that I'm thinking back. I just had the dates mixed up.

SA: I got two tips from people who said, "We've been instructed not to test for swine flu anymore. We're just to assume that all the cases that come forward that look like the flu are swine flu." Both of them thought it was strange because if we were seeing an emerging epidemic (this was sort of found when they were developing an emergency vaccine), why would we want to know the true patterns and the true incidences of swine flu.

Both of them said to me, including one of my government sources, that they either want to overcount the numbers or undercount the numbers. That was his theory. He said, "Your job is to figure out which it is." I called CDC and asked for the actual lab test results up until the point that they have been testing. The states would send them these results, and you could tell the states testing the most severe unlikely cases of swine flu were going for official lab testing. And so what were the results showing and why were they stopping doing this?

CDC wouldn't give me the information. That's public information. We paid for it. We're entitled to it. But as often as the case these days, the federal government treats it proprietarily as if it belongs to them, as if they're some private corporation. My intern and I went state by state to all 50 states, asked for – in some cases, demanded – the information, and got it.

DM: You physically traveled to each of the states?

SA: No. We called.

DM: Okay. Sorry.

SA: In most cases, the states were fine about trying it over a couple of times. When they would argue the point or say they weren't sure if they would give us the information, we would say, "Yes, you are." And they did, to their credit. What it showed was a startling pattern that almost all the cases that have been tested to that point, which were the most likely cases of swine flu that have gone through lab testing, we're not only not swine flu according to the lab test, but they weren't any sort of flu at all. They were some sort of other, other unrelated upper respiratory infection. This was sort of shocking.

It may be blended to the idea that CDC wanted these not to be counted anymore because they saw that there were so few cases, but they had ordered the emergency development of a vaccine that they wanted people to take. We all know that the government is tied in very heavily to the vaccine industry. The best interpretation I could have of their motivations for not wanting the public to know swine flu wasn't as bad is maybe they still wanted to fire up and see how an emergency development of a vaccine in an emergency scenario would work. And maybe they wanted the public to go through that just because someday, we may have to do that for real for reasons of terrorist attack or disease outbreak.

But whatever the reason, I went to CBS. This was at a time when most of my investigative reporting was clearing quite easily on television. The bosses thought it was a valuable story and one of the few original stories they've seen about swine flu. But before it could make air, there was just a change in feeling about it that maybe we shouldn't air it. A reason wasn't given. It was just... Some said it wasn't that interesting. I thought of publishing it online with [inaudible 24:58], and it got widely circulated. I still think it's a very important story.

DM: So it never made the actual video? It was just online, on a written form.

SA: But that was sort of an anomaly at the time. As the years passed, more and more stories like that, which I thought were very important, which are very well-documented, which were approved by our legal department, and so on, came to be blocked or... They never said they weren't airing them for particular reasons; they would just act as though the day was too busy or there was too much of news and things like that. That happened more and more often in those last two years.

DM: Yeah. With swine flu, the projections were hundreds of thousands, if not millions of people were going to die. I believe, if I'm not mistaken, that no one in the US died from swine flu. There was zero death.

SA: Nothing.

DM: Yeah. It was a lot of scare about nothing. But let's just say, it could certainly be a preparatory exercise for some future implementation. This is a type of response that sounds like it progressively escalated through the years since then, in the following five years. That eventually caused you to make the decision to leave investigative journalism with a traditional network like CBS, is that correct?

SA: That's right. There was no point. I mean, I was never in a position to turn up better stories. I have more information, more sources, more whistleblowers, and more I felt might produce terrific stories than ever before after 20 years in CBS News, and yet, utterly lacked the ability to get any of it on television. I could've stayed and have done weather stories and stories of the day but that's just not where my interest was.

DM: Yeah. You're obviously passionate about it and you're very, very skilled at what you do. To me, that's the essential point of the whole book: that authentically and sincerely committed investigative journalists like yourself are essentially barricaded. They're blocked. They're unable to present this information to the public because of the structures that have evolved over time and seem to have progressively worsened. I think that's the message, and you illustrated it so well with so many examples. But ultimately, that's what happened.

SA: Unless the topic is something for some reason that the powers that be in the best places, yes, they will still air. There still is good investigative report being aired and being published. It's just harder fought. I think many more of the reports, based on my discussions with colleagues, are going on the cutting room floor, as they say. They're making it unknown to the public.

DM: There's been this merger of media, too. As I mentioned in the beginning, there are really six media giants to control 90 percent of the media. It wasn't like that when you first started. It progressively merged and merged. What type of influence do you think that has on the suppression of this type of information that's contrary to corporate or government interest?

SA: It's hard to say for me because I'm not privy to those discussions at that level that may happen where the influence between the corporations and the news division happens. But one can only suspect that's going on, and in some cases, that was confirmed.

There's a story in my book about former executive producer of mine who was a great EP, who was the one who assigned me to look into vaccines side effects (something I knew nothing about at the time), and who got a phone call from the sales division, which was very inappropriate. A phone message in fact where he said the sales person from CBS was kind of screaming at him because we've been doing a lot of stories, looking at side effects and problems with the very popular and billion-dollar-selling cholesterol-lowering drugs, statins.

The advertisers didn't like that. Therefore, someone from the CBS corporate apparently didn't like that, and called down and said something like, "If you keep doing these stories, it's going to be really, really

bad for CBS.” Now, what’s an executive producer supposed to do when he’s called by a corporate official and told that the reporting that we’re doing is influencing the corporation’s ability to make a profit and that nobody likes it? I think that happens more often than we knew explicitly. But this time, it was followed by what I see as all of the media, backing down on pharmaceutical-related stories.

We were doing very aggressive coverage of problems within the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) – not just me, but all the networks and a lot of print publications – about vaccines side effects, and about other medical issues. That all has virtually stopped on those outlets. You can almost point to a time period when it seems like it’s almost as if someone made a phone call and said, “That’s it guys. That’s it fellas. There are advertisers.” And you won’t see these stories now even when there’s a billion-dollar criminal settlement against drug companies for mismarketing drugs that are commonly...

DM: or multi-billion.

SA: You won’t see that as commonly used... I mean, that’s a huge story that should be leading the news in my opinion. Most people probably never heard of it because I think those are things that offend the sensibilities of advertisers, who now control to some degree the editorial content of networks, publications, and print publications that are advertising.

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As you know, they have several lobbyists for every number of Congress on Capitol Hill so they can make sure certain hearings don’t happen. As recently as last year, they were able to stop a planned hearing, a vaccine-related hearing. The control is almost total in my view. That’s just one example of a corporate influence.

DM: I suspect you’re still passionate about the news and keep updated on them. I’m wondering what other current health-related issues might be happening right now that you believe investigative journalists or the media are not reporting or could do a better job if they weren’t being suppressed by the people who authorize the release of that information?

SA: If people were simply covering in terms of news value, facts, and fairness, they would have given way more coverage to vaccine side effects, autism, attention deficit disorder (ADD), and all the immune disorders that have [inaudible 30:58], but that’s been made untouchable by this environment that I’ve discussed with you.

I also think there are other emerging health issues that we don’t know enough about. For example, Enterovirus EV-D68 is a polio-like virus, but it’s not polio. That came in the scene in a huge way last year, last fall. Thousands of people got it. It appears to be linked to cases of paralysis. At least a dozen children died from it. You didn’t hear about this on the news because it was not, unlike measles, something the government was promoting.

And too often, reporters wait for the government to tell them what’s a story and what’s not a story. They won’t do the digging on their own, which I think is a very bad trend. But I tried to find out about this and asked CDC some questions to which they told me they didn’t gather certain data. I searched on the web and found that CDC had published a paper with the data that I’ve asked for. That was completely false that they told me they didn’t have certain information.

That’s just one example. I think there are a lot of health issues out there, but unless the government wants it on the front burner of the American public – and often they don’t – then we don’t hear about it because reporters aren’t doing, too often, their own digging. That’s just one example.

DM: Okay. Well, thank you. Now, you've finished this phenomenal book, *Stonewalled*. For anyone who is interested in this topic and for more specific details, I would strongly recommend getting a copy of the book. It's an excellent read and really exposes so much of the inside strategies that go on to suppress this type of information.

But you've completed that book. What are your current plans? I mean, you're not with CBS. You're not writing. You may be writing another book, I don't know. It's obvious and very clear that investigative journalism is something you're really passionate about. I suspect that you'll be continuing to venture in that direction. I'm wondering what you'll be doing.

SA: That's fascinating. I've been publishing more really in the last year than I did in the last couple of years at CBS News. I've been freelancing for outlets that simply agreed that yes, they can put stories with the normal editorial process, but they can't shake them unnaturally. They can't take out facts or put in information that's not true. I mean, that's just where we start from.

I've been able to publish stories, such as the unethical consent forms in a government study on a huge group of premature babies conducted at prestigious research institutions by the government across the country. It resulted in the deaths of some of these babies. The study had to be stopped. It was deemed by the government's own ethics body that the consent form was unethical because it didn't tell the parents even if they had read the consent form. Most of them were in an emergency C-section or birth situations, and they just weren't told. Actually, they weren't even told their babies were being entered into a study. They said they were just told, "This is good for your baby."

The babies are randomized into high-oxygen, low-oxygen groups, not what was best for them individually but they were just kept in these groups. Parents didn't know that. They were placed on oxygen machines, which under the protocol of the study, have been disabled to give false readings. Parents didn't know that. That wasn't... These sorts of stories are super important. I published that. I published this story about the...

DM: Wait, where did you publish that?

SA: That story was published in Daily Signal, which is a heritage foundation news organization that started last year. They've done some excellent reporting and haven't tampered with whether my stories have been, I guess, what people would consider liberal-leaning or conservative-leaning. They haven't tampered with them at all, which is great.

I published in www.BlueForceTracker.com, which specializes in military interest stories about whatever happened to the marines urinating on the Taliban case and some alleged influence on the law or improper command influence by the head of the marines on that case. We got an exclusive interview with the judge who handled the case and made these allegations against his own commander.

I'm continuing to try to find an outlet for stories that are untouchable or that the public doesn't get to see as much of in other places, or angles on stories that the public doesn't get to see elsewhere. Because who else can do them if the reporters are being stirred at many main organizations?

DM: Certainly. Any other items you'd like to comment on that we haven't discussed?

SA: Well, just briefly. I think www.HealthCare.gov has not gotten proper coverage. The government is still hiding public documents that have been under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) for a long time. The media, for some reasons, seem to just believe or report whatever the government says even though the government has gotten caught providing false information, including to Congress under oath, and we have no real documents to show us the truth of what they are saying.

For millions of Americans, I think, this law is turning out to be disastrous and too expensive for people. There's now a new class of uninsured people who had insurance, but who've been bumped off or have gone off because they can't afford it now. The insurance isn't covering what people need. Certainly, there are people who have benefitted, people who couldn't get insurance before. So, there's no doubt about that. That's going to be reported on, but what are not going to be reported on are the many people who are suffering the severe consequences of this.

DM: You know, I believe you commented in your book, too, about the development of the whole HealthCare.gov and what a catastrophe that was. It might have been another... Did you review that in your book? Yeah, I thought you did. That was a whole exposé on that. Incredibly interesting story. For more information, definitely go to the book.

I can't thank you enough for your incredible commitment to integrity and for really forming a watchdog conscious for the government and these federal regulatory agencies that really need to be held accountable. If you're not able to do it through outlets like CBS, these other newer ones are certainly a source. The world needs people like you to be a better place. Thank you for everything you've done.

SA: One more little thing. I donated money, proceeds from *Stonewalled*, some of them to the University of Florida. We just finished a Freedom of Information forum with the donations, where we put together for professionals and for students some sort of brainstorming about how to make the government more responsive to public information request; how to fix the FOIA, the freedom of information process, which is entirely pointless and useless now.

I'm just saying that if you buy the book, part of that money is going towards something I'm trying, in a small way, to influence future students and help make government more open to try to solve some of these problems that we have.

DM: That's great. Because you've got to pass it on to the next generation. Obviously, none of us are here forever so we've got to bring up the rear guard. That's an important measure. Thanks for doing that.

[END]