

Communication Scholars Oral History Project  
Annenberg School for Communication Library Archives  
University of Pennsylvania  
Philadelphia, PA

# MONROE E. PRICE

interviewed and transcribed by

JEFFERSON POOLEY

recorded by

ANDRES SPILLARI

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*May 17, 2018*

Philadelphia, PA

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## BIOGRAPHY

Monroe E. Price (1938–), retired associate faculty at the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, is a distinguished scholar of international communication. Price has made notable contributions to a variety of fields over five decades of legal and communication scholarship, teaching, and institution-building, including Native American law, freedom of expression, media reform, and cross-border communication in the global system. Price was born in Vienna into a middle-class Jewish family, soon after the *Anschluss* annexation of Austria by Germany. Price and his immediate family escaped to New York City in 1939, before resettling in Macon, Georgia, and, three years later, Cincinnati, Ohio, where he remained through high school. As an undergraduate at Yale, Price was an enterprising journalist for the *Yale Daily News*, with reporting trips to the UK, Moscow, and Cuba. After his Yale graduation in 1960, Price briefly worked for the American Heritage Publishing Company in New York City, before joining Robert Wagner’s mayoral campaign as an advance man. In 1962, after a year at the University of Virginia Law School, Price transferred to the Yale Law School, where he was exposed to Native American and communications law. The summer after his 1964 law school graduation, Price worked on the Warren Commission report, before assuming a clerkship with Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart. The next year Price served as assistant to W. Willard Wirtz, Secretary of Labor, before moving to Los Angeles to take up a law school post at UCLA in 1966. Price conducted extensive work on, and scholarship about, Native American law through the 1970s, including a decade-long representation of the Alaskan Cook Inlet Region group. At UCLA, Price revived his interest in communications law, after serving on the President’s Task Force on Communications Policy (1967–1968). He soon served as deputy director of the Sloan Commission on Cable Communications (1970–1971), and established a Communications Law Program at UCLA (1972). Price published extensively on First Amendment, cable, and satellite issues in the 1970s and ‘80s, and was active in media reform initiatives. In 1982 Price was named dean of the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University in New York City, where he created the Howard M. Squadron Program in Law, Media and Society. He stepped down as dean in 1991, just as the Cold War global order was in transition. Over the subsequent three decades, Price traveled extensively for international communication projects, commissions, and centers. In the 1990s and early 2000s, much of Price’s work and organization-building occurred in the post-socialist states of Central Europe, the Balkans, and Russia. Price helped establish the Oxford Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy in the mid-1990s, the first of a number of such centers he helped to launch around the world in this period. Price led a series of projects for the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the Markle Foundation, and a handful of NGOs, many of them resulting in edited volumes. He developed influential arguments around the “market for loyalties,” cross-border media technology, and sovereignty in a trio of solo-authored books: *Television, the Public Sphere, and National Identity* (1996), *Media and Sovereignty* (2002), and *Free Expression, Globalism, and the New Strategic Communication* (2015). In 2004 Price joined the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, where he

founded the Center for Global Communication Studies in 2006. Under the Center’s auspices, Price helped lead a series of projects in Iran, China, Jordan, Darfur, and Mexico, among others. Price, who retired from the Annenberg School in 2020, is married to noted art historian Aimée Brown Price.

## ABSTRACT — Session Four (May 17, 2018)

The interview covers Price’s turn to international projects after he stepped down as dean of the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law in 1991. Price describes his travel, scholarly projects, and relationships to research centers in Central Europe, the Balkans, Russia, India, and elsewhere, in the 1990s and early 2000s. The establishment of the Oxford Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy in the mid-1990s is discussed. Price recounts his close collaborations with Andrei Richter, Peter Krug, and Stefaan Verhulst. He describes projects for the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the Carter Center’s Commission on Radio and Television Policy, and the Markle Foundation. Price’s concept of the “market for loyalties” is discussed, in relationship to freedom of expression, media technologies, and sovereignty, and in relationship to a pair of single-authored book—*Television, the Public Sphere, and National Identity* (1996), *Media and Sovereignty* (2002)—and a number of edited volumes.

## RESTRICTIONS

None

## FORMAT

Interview. Video recording at the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, 3620 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, USA.

## TRANSCRIPT

Transcribed by Jefferson Pooley. Audited for accuracy and edited for clarity by Jefferson Pooley. Transcript reviewed and approved by Monroe E. Price, Jefferson Pooley, and

## BIBLIOGRAPHY AND CITATION FORMS

### Video recording

**Bibliography:** Price, Monroe E. Interview by Jefferson Pooley. Video recording, May 17, 2018 (session four). Communication Scholars Oral History Project, Annenberg School for Communication Archives, University of Pennsylvania. **Footnote example:** Monroe E. Price, interview by Jefferson Pooley, video recording, May 17, 2018 (session four), Communication Scholars Oral History Project, Annenberg School for Communication Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

### Transcript

**Bibliography:** Price, Monroe E. Interview by Jefferson Pooley. Transcript of video recording, May 17, 2018 (session four). Communication Scholars Oral History Project, Annenberg School for Communication Archives, University of Pennsylvania. **Footnote example:** Monroe E. Price, interview by Jefferson Pooley, transcript of video recording, May 17, 2018 (session four), Communication Scholars Oral History Project, Annenberg School for Communication Archives, University of Pennsylvania, pp. 34-35.

# Transcript of Interview conducted May 17, 2018, with MONROE E. PRICE (session four)

Philadelphia, PA

Interviewed by Jefferson Pooley

Q: This is session four of an oral history interview of Monroe Price conducted by Jefferson Pooley at the Annenberg School in Philadelphia. The interview is part of the Oral History Project of the Annenberg School for Communication Library Archives, and the date is May 17, 2018.

Thanks for joining me, Monroe. We ended the last session talking about your book *Shattered Mirrors*, published in 1989.<sup>1</sup> That already was a departure, in a way, from legal scholarship. So two years later, it was 1991, you ended your term as the dean of the [Benjamin N.] Cardozo Law School [Yeshiva University]. Your career in the 25 years since then hadn't looked the same as it had before. The biggest change—at least it seemed to me—is that you turned your attention to international themes. Of course this was a period when the Berlin Wall fell and the Soviet Union dissolved. So I guess I just was curious if you could talk about that period from 1989 to the early 1990s, as it affected your career.

PRICE: Well, as I ended my deanship the question was, What would I focus on? What would I be interested in? At that time I did a kind of victory lap to Hong Kong. We had set up a number of summer schools at Cardozo, and I visited them in Amsterdam, Moscow, China, etc., and that helped launch me into thinking about issues more on an international sphere. I certainly thought about it before, but this intensified it. I think the combination of the development of information technology and the change—geopolitical considerations—opened up this tremendously interesting space.

I think one of the first things I remember had to do with efforts by USAID [United States Agency for International Development] or USIA [United States Information Agency], even at that time, to bring people from Central Europe to the United States. In a sense this helped develop their

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<sup>1</sup> Monroe E. Price, *Shattered Mirrors: Our Search for Identity and Community in the AIDS Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

appetite and their skills in “democracy building.” Democracy building became the flavor of the day.

A group came from Hungary—and Hungary was an interest of mine. So I spent some time with Hungarian dissidents, now politically interested, and hosted them in New York. That was one of the first things, and that got me also interested in USAID. USAID made available—sort of sprinkled and fertilized the ground for thinking about the relationship between U.S. institutions and transitional institutions.

Q: When was the Hungarian gathering? Was that around 1991 or '2?

PRICE: Yes it was, exactly. For example, even now I'll be visiting András Sajó, who's just retired from the European Court of Human Rights. He was on one of these trips. He was helping to develop corporate law in Hungary, and spending time at Cardozo studying it. He's now gone on to very distinguished grounds, as have other people from that period.

Q: So you were already getting linked up with folks in the post-socialist Central Europe arena, but how did you get involved in Russia itself? Was it through the Carter Center's Commission on Media Law and Policy [*sic*: Commission on Radio and Television Policy]?

PRICE: I had had some summer schools in Russia, in which I developed contacts with Russia—developed ways of thinking about the relationship between law—even in the Soviet Union—and law in the United States. But the Carter Commission was a real breakthrough. It was a very bizarre effort by Jimmy Carter and [Mikhail] Gorbachev—I guess, originally—to create an environment in which executives and programmers from Russia—or the Soviet Union, as it then was—could meet with counterparts in the U.S. and have a dialogue about this stuff. It was in connection with Ted Turner and CNN [Cable News Network], which was flowering.

It was an intriguing fiction of a moment to have this kind of commission that was supposedly ten Americans and ten Russians and post-Soviet guys. I was, in a sense, brought in by the Markle Foundation, which helped to fund a lot of this. It was thrilling for me to witness this effort that was fictively cross-cultural. It was very hard to understand what relationship there would be between media practices in the United States and media practices in all these developing institutions. That became a really interesting theme all the way through, which is, How mimetic was it? Was the idea to create equivalents of *Good Morning America* or other things and transpose those to other broadcasting environments? But that was a great thing, and it met every year in alternative years in Russia and in Atlanta, Georgia [laughs].

Q: You mentioned that the Markle Foundation both helped support that effort and that supported your particular involvement. How far back did that Markle Foundation—?

PRICE: I think it went pretty far back into the early '80s. Edith Bjornson was the program officer there, and Lloyd Morrisett was kind of the director of the effort. He stood for broadcast reform, broadcast policy change in the United States, and supported it. He supported some efforts even at UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles] when the UCLA media law program was dealing with the FCC [Federal Communications Commission], etc.—that kind of thing.

Q: The Carter [Center] Commission on Radio and Television Policy—you mentioned that it met every year in alternating locations. Did your previous work on commissions like the Sloan [Commission on Cable Communications] back in 1971 resemble this at all?

PRICE: They helped, but they couldn't have the same outcome. It wasn't a commission that was going to say, This is what should happen to broadcast television either in Russia or in the United States. By the way, it led to my developing one of my favorite things, which was the *Post-Soviet Media Law and Policy Newsletter*. That was a vehicle designed to inform me and also maybe inform other members of this commission about what was actually happening.

It used facilities like the BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation] effort to gather news about broadcasting from around the world—used in a certain sense. It was an aggregator, as it were. It was a primitive aggregator of information. So I and Peter Yu, who was my assistant, helped develop this newsletter, which I think for a while served as a kind of warehouse of information that people used.

Q: Can you say more about how it emerged from the commission? So you were involved in 1991—or 1990 even—when it got established, but the newsletter was started in 1993. Was there a relationship forged along the way?

PRICE: I think it had to do with my sense that no one knew what the hell they were talking about. In other words, there were these efforts to discuss relationships. There was also efforts like—Internews was just being founded at the time, IREX [International Research & Exchanges Board] was getting started—as efforts to help shape media in these then-developing countries, as it were. I think there was not enough of a factual basis of what was happening on the ground. So the effort was to try to remedy that to some extent.

Q: What about the actual particulars of the newsletter's launch? Was it something that was helped by Markle itself? Did the idea get hatched at one of these commission meetings?

PRICE: I don't think so. I think it was just a clumsy way, which had, really, in my view, some wonderful output—of providing an information base for people who wanted information. Now, not everybody wanted—most people thought they knew what they were doing, and they had a

vision for what the media should become, and they had a [vision] of what the dynamics were. So it was not necessary necessarily for them to get more information about it.

But at least it was my view that it would be good to try to track forms of censorship, or follow the making of media laws in Russia. This ended up in a volume. We basically took issues of the *Post-Soviet Media Law and Policy Newsletter* and created a book, which was in a certain sense an anthology of this—was with Peter Yu and Andrei Richter.<sup>2</sup>

Q: Maybe you can say something about your meeting Andrei Richter in particular. I presume it was through the commission that you got to know him. And what your early collaboration was.

PRICE: Before that, I remember, one of the great things was what was going to happen to the fabulous state television entity. So you had Russia's Channel One, which had thousands—tens of thousands—of employees, and Channel Two and Channel Three. One became, in a certain sense, [Boris] Yeltsin's channel. One—there was an independent entrepreneur, who I'll never forget meeting one day at a commission meeting in St. Petersburg, who said—we were talking about how to get better television on Russian television—he said, I want *Miami Vice*. What I want is material that will prod the Russian people, and make them more entrepreneurial and individualistic. I don't want soap operas. Soap operas is what we've had, they're designed to put people to sleep, to make people accommodate. So my goal in independent television is to provoke, and *Miami Vice* is the exactly right vehicle for doing this.

Andrei Richter was a young associate of the commission, of Ellen Mickiewicz, who was the American anchor of the commission. He and I became fast friends and remain so. He helped to found a center on media law and policy [Media Law and Policy Institute] at Moscow State University, and then has worked for the Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe [OSCE], [as] the Representative on Freedom [of] the Media. We had stayed in very close touch, and I think the Moscow center was an example of a kind of center-mania on my part, which was—especially after Oxford [Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy]—to create a kind of set of these centers, in a variety of contexts, that would interact and would be a network, as it were.

Q: Well, I definitely want to return back to that idea of a network of centers and Oxford and the rest. Before that, I guess, if I could even go back and ask a question that might be unfair in a way. But it seems, just reading through your published work in the 1990s and 2000s, that you shifted away from a narrowly legal form of scholarship, even though you already had been pretty expansive, and that you also moved from the United States primarily, though you'd done

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<sup>2</sup> Monroe E. Price, Andrei G. Richter, and Peter K. Yu, eds., *Russian Media Law and Policy in the Yeltsin Decade: Essays and Documents* (Alphen aan den Rijn, Netherlands: Kluwer Law International, 2002).



some work outside the United States, to a much more international focus. I guess my question is, that shift to comparative media law and policy, was that conscious? Was it something you decided to shift into, or was it more the result of circumstances, like being asked to join this commission and meeting Andrei and the rest?

PRICE: Well, I think it was always there, in the sense that—ever since I'd gotten involved early on with the International Broadcasting Institute, and recognized that there were not enough scholars in the United States who were thinking in a non-exceptional state. That is, most people thought the United States had it all. This was the story of broadcasting and the story of television and radio—maybe there was the BBC, but that's it, basically. There was a need—there was an opportunity—to think more creatively about it. I think the book that I did on television in the public sphere and national identity was earlier.<sup>3</sup> I can't remember when.

Q: It was in 1996. So it was in this period.

PRICE: It was in this period. So, I think a lot of it was influenced by my year at Oxford. Some of it had been influenced by my sabbatical in Paris in '72, and basically getting a sense of French television and Dutch television at that time. So I would say the basis with this was even in '72, basically.

Q: OK, good. You mentioned, before, that there was this kind of USAID, but much wider than that, interest in democracy promotion. Media assistance was sort of a subset of it, you could say, and that you got involved in it through the [Carter] Commission, but also in a number of other projects over the next decade, many of them in transitional countries, like the post-socialist states of Central Europe. I was curious about what—if you recall a project that stood out in that period that was funded by USAID or another—?

PRICE: Well, there was the book *Democratizing the Media, Democratizing the State* [*Media Reform: Democratizing the Media, Democratizing the State*] with Stefaan [G. Verhulst] and Beata [Rozumilowicz].<sup>4</sup> So that was an effort to collect essays that had something to do with the relationship between media change and changing the state. So you basically had this idea of the '90s—certainly in the early '90s more on Hungary, Poland, etc., then later on the post-Soviet period. So this became a kind of fertile ground for seeing the development of the institutions that thought about these kinds of questions.

There were a lot of, as I recall, lonely visits to Montenegrin villages or Polish towns or Ukraine, etc. There was a kind of repetitive incantation, and, it seemed to me, the duty of the local

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<sup>3</sup> Monroe E. Price, *Television, the Public Sphere, and National Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

<sup>4</sup> Monroe E. Price, Beata Rozumilowicz, and Stefaan G. Verhulst, eds., *Media Reform: Democratizing the Media, Democratizing the State* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

agents were to round up people to come and hear this recitation, as it were, as to what should happen—how to have recognition of human rights and more democratic media.

Q: Yes. There is this wonderful essay from 2009 you wrote, that I think it's called "Media Transitions in the Rear-View Mirror."<sup>5</sup> But you're recounting some of that experience in the 1990s and asking whether the, as you put it, industry of democracy promotion and the media assistance subdivision of that actually made a difference. You talk about market interventions and local conditions perhaps being more important than any expert-driven advice that was supplied along the way.

I was really curious about the fact that you were doing, during this stretch of time and into the period in the 2000s, on-the-ground work, at least as parts of grants, to train journalists or to consult on media law and policy in these places. At the same time you were—you had a kind of ability to detach and think about, and comment upon, the process from afar with almost ironic and maybe later jaundiced attitudes. I don't know if that's fair or not. But I'm just curious about that double role of actually partaking as a practitioner and commenting on it from above.

PRICE: It's really interesting. I think you've noticed something—I think I've noticed, but maybe not sufficiently and it continues to this day, I think. It's great to be involved. I think to be involved one has to be partly a believer. But I think this has been true generally, which is both being a believer and being slightly cynical about being a believer. I think these are important qualities, and it's very hard to find the right mix of those qualities. I was just writing an essay for the Center for International Media Assistance, which is coming out in a book, and I think that also captured this. Which was, How can you articulate these deeds in a way that helps them get support from their institutions—Congress, for example—and at the same time maintain some level of integrity and critical observation?

Q: Yes. Among other things, it involves code-switching to some extent, depending on the audience you're writing for, or speaking to, probably. I just was thinking of—there's a great section in that 1990—no, I think it was the 2002 book—about metaphor.<sup>6</sup> You call it, I think, tropes of restructuring, the way that little pieces of language would latch on and be the locus for workshops and conferences and funding, and so on—on the one hand. So you're kind of reflecting on the power of language to shape this policy-intellectual mix. On the other hand you're doing it—you're actually part of it. You are on the ground writing the grants and helping implement the policies.

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<sup>5</sup> Monroe E. Price, "Media Transitions in the Rear-View Mirror: Some Reflections," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 22, no. 4 (2009): 485–96, [http://repository.upenn.edu/asc\\_papers/150](http://repository.upenn.edu/asc_papers/150).

<sup>6</sup> Monroe E. Price, *Media and Sovereignty: The Global Information Revolution and Its Challenge to State Power* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), chap. 3.

PRICE: Well, thank you. That's quite interesting. I like it. Then the question is, Is there some overarching synthetic theory that helps to bring these two things together? So I think it's at least these three levels. One is actually engaging, and doing so not cynically, but recognizing that—even though one may be questioning it, there's some value in the process, in the education, in the exposure, in the theorizing. Yes.

Q: Yes, that makes sense, and it made me—

PRICE: By the way. Hungary, all these places, now become larger texts for this process, because you have enthusiasm and then you have cynicism, then you have aversion, as it were, and a kind of bleak—sometimes bleak—outcome. It's hard to tell where we are now in Poland and Hungary and elsewhere—and in the Soviet Union, in Russia.

Q: Right, especially in relationship to kind of Western expertise—

PRICE: I've wanted to have a conference called What Did It All Mean?—what did that decade mean in post-Soviet environment? Can one look backwards from this point? Also the regular, the kind of turn towards, prohibition of these NGOs [non-governmental organizations] or regulation of them. As if governments looking back on these fifteen years have said, We're not sure that we like the activity of these U.S.-engineered NGOs.

Q: That just reminds me of that book you already mentioned a little bit, the one that was called *Media Reform and Democratizing Media*. It was a collection called *Forging Peace*.

PRICE: It's a different one.

Q: I'm sorry. Yes—I'm confusing that. It was a different collection—excuse me—called *Media Reform*—I had it correct the first time. In that book you do, with your co-editors, seem to say that there's no strong link that can be established between establishing Western-style media with relatively open policy and norms, in the absence of established law and other changes—that the connection between media reform and democratization wasn't clear in every case.

PRICE: Yes. Some of this came from an early thing that I was fortunate to do, which was *The Enabling Environment for Free and Independent Media*.<sup>7</sup> Which tried to suggest—that was more of the Kool-Aid, it was less critical but more inclusive—to say how complicated the institutional environment is that leads to freedom of media. It's something I'm thinking about.

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<sup>7</sup> Monroe E. Price and Peter Krug, *The Enabling Environment for Free and Independent Media: Contribution to Transparent and Accountable Governance* (Washington, DA: US Agency for International Development, Office of Democracy and Governance, 2002), <http://www.usaid.gov/democracy/pdfs/pnacm006.pdf>.

Also [C. Edwin] Ed Baker wrote most clearly about this question, which is, What's the relationship between a theory of democracy and a theory of the media? One could turn that and say, Particular governmental forms are a function of what media systems are available—so the interplay between the capacity, if there is such, to develop media and the form of government is still yet to be explored.

Q: Perhaps the initial NGO/USAID notion that there would be a straightforward connection turned out not to be?

PRICE: Well, it's hard to say—I mean, this goes to China as well or to—I think that's the other rhythm, which goes from the early post-Soviet days, to transitions, to then late '90s, and then the shift from Europe to the Middle East—Afghanistan, etc.—as a further theater for the development of these ideas.

Q: I really do want to follow up about Iraq in particular, maybe in our next session.

PRICE: Yes.

Q: Going back in time a little bit, to the early 1990s, I don't know if you taught a course at Yale at the time. But you published in the *Yale Law Review* [*sic: Journal*] this article on "The Market for Loyalties."<sup>8</sup> It was 1994 and that article, I think, was an important one. But it also, it seems to me, that market for loyalties idea, as you evolved it over the decades, was the spine in some ways of the 1996 book on the public sphere [*Television, the Public Sphere, and National Identity*], the 2002 book on *Media and Sovereignty*, and even, in some ways, the 2015 book that came out recently [*Free Expression, Globalism, and the New Strategic Communication*].<sup>9</sup> I just wondered if you could say how you came to develop this idea of a market for loyalties, and even the context at the time at *Yale Law Review* [*sic: Journal*]. You mentioned at one point a student, Gary Greenstein, who might have helped out a little bit.

PRICE: Yes. He was—you know, the law journals are student-edited. It's one of the great, extraordinary distinctions between law as a discipline and the social sciences, is that these young students helped to shape the articles of the faculty, and the Yale Law [School] students certainly see themselves as equals or superiors [laughs] in this process. So I'm glad you acknowledged him. He was very helpful in the shaping of this article. It, in some ways, goes back to propaganda theory, to work that you've been engaged in, etc., which is how to think

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<sup>8</sup> Monroe E. Price, "The Market for Loyalties: Electronic Media and the Global Competition for Allegiances," *Yale Law Journal* 104, no. 3 (1994): 667–705.

<sup>9</sup> Monroe E. Price, *Free Expression, Globalism, and the New Strategic Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

about both the illusion of the function of media in society and the forces that helped to shape it and link it.

I think there, I was very much affected by the Dutch system, which I learned about in the early—in the '70s, basically. The idea that a media system—however it looks, however the kind of shell of democratization exists—exists, in a way, because of agreements between power centers in the society. The question was how to capture that in a phrase, and a way of thinking about—not looking at it under the umbrella of free expression, but more under the umbrella of how forces think about and alter media and society. The market for loyalties came out of that idea, in some ways.

Q: Could you say what you mean by the notion of market for loyalties?

PRICE: As I say, I think a lot of this did link to my sabbatical in '72 when I was in Paris and learning about the British system, learning about the German system, and seeing the German system being the product of post–World War II compromises—the relationship between the German states and the federal government—about some different agenda than free expression, autonomy, individualism.

So I was trying to think of how that applied in the United States. Was there a market for loyalties here? It seemed clear to me that this was not a goofy idea in thinking about European media systems—certainly wasn't strange thinking about totalitarian systems. The question was, Could one introduce this in thinking about the American system as well?

Q: Then, in the 1994 article, and the book that follows—this book we were already referring to, *Television, the Public Sphere, and National Identity*, in 1996—it's applied not just to the United States but around the world. It's sort of made more interesting because of rapid geopolitical change, on the one hand, and technological change. That book is so interesting because you set up a, I don't know, like a period in which—from maybe the teens, in the twentieth century, to the late '60s—in which there was a more straightforward relationship between the state and the media, broadly speaking, not just the United States. And that with satellites and cable that this relationship or the coupling kind of frayed, and that it was continuing to fray thanks to developments in geopolitics and technology.

PRICE: Right. No, I think this was also related to my work on the President's Commission on Telecommunications Policy [*sic*: President's Task Force on Communications Policy] and the development of satellites. I think I was amazed at seeing this kind of threat to sovereign-based markets for loyalties. It brought into high relief how these markets function and how they could be affected. And then, something that's interesting to me is resilience—that is to say, how do these arrangements reassert themselves—or not, as the case may be.

So satellites presented a great case study in thinking about existing markets for loyalties and how they could be broken and torn asunder. Certainly the post-Soviet period was like this as well. So, looking at Russia, from '91 to the present time, you can see this whole process of existing markets for loyalties; existing cartels; breakup of those cartels; reassertion of them; and new forms of dominance. I'm still puzzled and interested in how the internet—can you talk about this in an internet age as opposed to satellite age, etc.?

Q: I don't know if this is a fair reading, but it seemed to be that you came to believe that states were more resilient and capable of adaptation to these shifts in the markets for loyalty over time—from the '96 book, in which you seemed to be a little bit doubtful that states could adapt well, to more a sense that states were capable of being resilient.

PRICE: Some states can and some states can't, and how that process takes place—so China and Singapore are one end of this. Russia is toward that end, but doing it in a very different way. Then some states—I sometimes think the things that we call failed states are states that have failed to figure out how to be resilient in this way.

Q: Right. OK, that makes sense. That's one way of defining a failed state.

PRICE: It's one way. It's not perfect—

Q: So you've been writing about freedom of expression and freedom of speech throughout your career, and including in this period. It seemed that maybe it does touch on your 1972 sabbatical year, but that I detect a kind of, almost an irritation with the free speech, freedom of expression, free press absolutism as a kind of universalist idea. That continues all the way up through your writing now, both referring to the U.S. context of regulating cable or the international context of exporting freedom of expression and free speech doctrine. Is that fair to say?

PRICE: I think it's fair. It's definitely fair to say. I just edited this book called *Speech and Society in Turbulent Times* with Nicole Stremlau.<sup>10</sup> Nicole has been a big influence on this as well, as a terrific person who tries to think about different conceptions of the role of speech in society. This goes to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [1948], which is slightly critiqued in this book by an Iraqi scholar, who sees the Universal Declaration as a kind of struggle between a Christian idea, and a Islamic idea, of the role of speech and society, looking at Charles Malik, who had been a deputy to Eleanor Roosevelt. So this is a kind of massive task to think, Are

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<sup>10</sup> Monroe E. Price and Nicole Stremlau, eds., *Speech and Society in Turbulent Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

there legitimate alternative ways of thinking about the role of speech and society, and do those alternative roles have the dignity of being alternatives in some way?

There are two different questions here, one is: I'm not, I don't want to, I'm not ready for a lecture on free expression. The question is, Is freedom of expression—to put it in the scholarly framework—is freedom of expression, as an idea, a way of organizing or affecting markets for loyalties? That was the way I dealt with it.

So, for example, to what extent was exporting the idea of freedom of expression, a way of questioning the existing cartel in the foreign environment and allowing American or other Western entities to enter? So freedom of expression plays this role not as an ideal but as an instrument, in some ways. Then the question is, How does it function at home—does it have this instrumental aspect of it?

Q: It might with industry co-optation and good-faith belief.

PRICE: Different interpretations. One of my favorite ideas was whether the First Amendment is a common market, that is to say, it was designed to facilitate the flow of ideas within the United States, but is not a market, is not necessarily. This goes back to the Russian intervention in politics, the idea that it's a free flow across borders is still in question.

Q: It reminds me of that debate in the late '70s around free flow of information and cultural sovereignty and UNESCO.

PRICE: Right, yes, the UNESCO declaration. All these are related to different kinds of markets—the current debate is whether you can be a country if your borders aren't defended from people coming in. Can you be a country without borders that protects ideas from coming in? So this is an element of—interesting to trace in history of the United States.

Q: You follow that thread, that question all the way through to the present, it seems to me. I was just going to ask about, to return back to the mid-1990s. You already mentioned the center-mania, but it seems like, if there was such a thing, that it got underway in the mid-1990s when you co-founded, anyway, the Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy at Oxford. It was 1996, and I think you co-founded it with Stefaan Verhulst.

PRICE: Yes.

Q: Can you tell me how that came about and what was the backstory to the center?

PRICE: Well, I think it started with, certainly in the '70s in my sabbatical I had. But then in '91, after I stepped down as [Cardozo] dean I had a sabbatical at Oxford, and I thought about this

whole process. Then, at the end of that year, I think I gave a talk in which I suggested a kind of approach to scholarship and action which would be like the Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy. Then I started in '96, '97, and with a grant from the Markle Foundation, actually, and hired Stefaan Verhulst as co-director. He's a wonderful guy, and we had a wonderful partnership in trying to develop this Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy. One of the things we did was conceptualize a network of centers that would work together—some of that has come to pass. There are a lot of centers that have come to pass without that.

Q: Did that idea for this network of centers come about early on in the formation of the Oxford program?

PRICE: It was a goal. It was partly unrealized. But we certainly tried to do it in Hungary, in Russia, in a variety of other places, and we still—the tick of doing these centers still exists. As a result of the Moot Court [Monroe E. Price Media Law Moot Court Competition, University of Oxford] there's a center in India called the Centre for Communication Governance that came about through this. Whatever. Yes.

Q: Right. OK.

PRICE: We'll put it in different grant applications as ways of thinking and developing talent.

Q: Yes, it is a kind of scholarly vehicle.

PRICE: Hungary is another place where it still exists. It's now called the Center for Media, Data and Society [Central European University].

Q: That's right. Well, I am curious about that, and it didn't get founded for a few years after this one, I guess. So, back in Oxford, were you spending time in Oxford for much of the year? Where were you located as this got underway? It seems like in this period of '96, '97, '98 you were all over the place. You were in Australia for a semester, if I'm not mistaken. You were at the [Freedom Forum] Media Studies Center in New York City. You were at Princeton, at the Institute for Advanced Study for a year, soon after that. You were at Cornell, at least for a bit, Yale as well.

PRICE: It was fun.

Q: How did you manage, just as a physical human being, to be in all these places at once?

PRICE: I'm not sure. I probably wasn't. It's like the Elihu Katz joke about Isaiah Berlin. God is everywhere. Isaiah Berlin's everywhere but Oxford, where he was supposed to be. I remember



meeting the new chancellor at Central European University, who expected me to be there. I'm hardly ever there, but I'd been on the phone, I'd worked with them a lot in trying to develop their center—and it was great, it was good.

Q: So with the Oxford center or the Oxford program, when you got it started there, was the intention to focus mostly on post-socialist and transitional societies? Was that the interest of Markle and—?

PRICE: It went from being the interests of Markle to more—because Markle then changed. Just at that moment Markle itself changed and Zoë Baird became the director. It became much more American-focused. So I think DFID [Department for International Development (UK)], USAID, the Council of Europe, Bosnia, the Balkan Wars, all these things were really factors of the '90s, etc.

Q: So, as the Oxford program got underway, the shift wasn't, or I should say the focus wasn't, just on the post-socialist Central Europe but instead conflicts in the Balkans and other issues that arose in the international arena? Since we're talking about the Oxford program, how did the Monroe Price Media Law Moot Court [*sic*: Monroe E. Price Media Law Moot Court Competition] come about? I know this isn't around this time—

PRICE: This came later.

Q: —but I'm just curious since we're talking about [Oxford].

PRICE: It was very nice—we had a summer program at Oxford called—which still goes on—now it's called the Annenberg-Oxford Program [*sic*: Annenberg-Oxford Media Policy Summer Institute], and also had media law assistance, in which we brought people from around the world to Oxford for training and study, etc.

There was a kind of local instant moot developed by David Goldberg and Dirk Voorhoof, etc. It's part of this program. They then enlarged it to become a moot court program in Oxford, and they named it after me because I had started the Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy. So that's the evolution of the moot. The moot has then developed grandly.

Q: So just returning to that theme of you globe-trotting and being everywhere—in conferences, workshops, lectures—a kind of frenetic pace. I'm curious if the fact that around this time, the mid-1990s, when the World Wide Web was becoming online and the internet was popularized, whether this played a role in enabling you to be everywhere at once or be placeless in that sense?

PRICE: Well, I think, definitely the internet obviously changed how one thought about oneself and one's set—community as it were. I think it's true for academics generally—academics thinking of themselves as part of an institution, and then suddenly being able to be even more a part of their own network than they were before. It's always important which network they were part of, but this way, enlarged their capacity and facilitated their capacity. I think the internet basically enabled this to happen, to flourish, so to speak.

Q: In particular, in your case, did you feel like—?

PRICE: I definitely felt empowered. I felt it was amazing. I still feel thrilled when I can get up in the morning and communicate with Nicole Stremlau in South Africa, and Andrei Richter in Moscow. It's very exciting. Whether this can build something is another question, and how an institution should use this to build strength, etc.

Q: Around this time in the late 1990s—and you already mentioned this—you were working on an *Enabling Conditions* project that—

PRICE: *Enabling Environment for Free and Independent Media*.

Q: Exactly. Maybe you could just say how that came about and what the project entailed.

PRICE: Well, there are a couple of nice opportunities when people asked me to write something. So the USAID, because it was becoming invested in this area and being looked to, was trying to develop some framework for thinking about how people should think about it. So, I was asked to write a paper and it culminated in this *Enabling*—with Peter Krug—on the *Enabling Environment for Free and Independent Media*. It was translated in a bunch of languages, and I think it had some impact in how people thought about the process.

Somebody else asked me to write something on—and this was an Oxford project—public service media in transition. With Marc Raboy, we looked at different case studies of how outside entities, and inside, were trying to reshape public service media in this transition. That was a very important project to me, for example.<sup>11</sup>

Q: The *Enabling Environments* project before that, was it underwritten, also, by Markle?

PRICE: No, I think it was underwritten by USAID.

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<sup>11</sup> Monroe E. Price and Marc Raboy, eds., *Public Service Broadcasting in Transition: A Documentary Reader* (Alphen aan den Rijn, Netherlands: Kluwer Law International, 2003).

Q: You mentioned somewhere that Ann Hudock—that she was, I think, a Democracy Fellow at USAID at the time, and that that project, in some ways, emerged from conversations with her.

PRICE: Yes, that's definitely the case. She stayed a good friend. I'm not sure where she is at the moment.

Q: What were the conversations, more or less? How did they lead to the project?

PRICE: Well, I think that it was how to be terse. She was helping to educate me and Peter [Krug] on how to package it in a way that would speak in the acceptable language of free and independent media, but recognize the complications and the areas for regulation. So, it had to be direct; it had to be consistent with American policy; it had to be instructive; it had to look possible. These are all interesting limitations—and the whole paper had to be thirty-five pages long, or something like that. It was a great exercise.

Q: So in a way it was its own, to use your phrase, trope of restructuring?

PRICE: Yes, in a way.

Q: It became one. And what was its reception?

PRICE: I think the reception of it was very good—I don't have the metrics that people now have, so I can't say it was cited five thousand times or anything like that. But I got the impression that it was useful. I wouldn't want to overstate it, because that would be giving in too much to the idea that these ideas have consequences.

Q: Which you expressed some doubt about.

PRICE: I have some doubt about that, yes. Actually, in a way, it's consistent and inconsistent with the market for loyalties idea. So you have these two things, as you point out, working at the same time, which is—I don't want to say pretending—with conceptualizing it as if there are processes of change that relate to ideas of freedom of expression, at the same time writing about the notion that these systems are developed by power in the societies, and that this is kind of cosmetic of democracy development.

Q: So to the extent that they're cosmetic, you—in that 2009 paper I mentioned, where you were looking in the rearview mirror about the transitional societies, when you described the drab conference rooms with locals who are rounded up to be participants, the fictitious nature of those gatherings. Is your view that the expertise, and the report writing, and the grant making, and so on, that ultimately other forces were more important in these societies' transitions?

PRICE: Other forces were very important. Ultimately, maybe it's trying to have the other forces—it's a kind of etiquette of media. So the other forces themselves have to come to appreciate the etiquette of free expression. So they can transcend it, they can obliterate it, but they can maintain some sort of nodding familiarity with it.

Q: If the nodding familiarity merely—

PRICE: I think that's very important.

Q: Yes. I mean, is it merely an embrace of the rhetoric of these tropes or do these other forces—adopting that language and notions of freedom of expression—does that change them in some way?

PRICE: I guess you'd have to think of different contexts or symbols. In India and Pakistan, even in China, what's the relationship between these two discourses or other competing discourses? Is there—in thinking about China, it's not necessarily the discourse of free expression, but is it their discourse of—is there a Confucian discourse that affects the media in some way? So, can you look at it in addition to, brutal or not brutal, as otherwise constructive? So, yes, these still remain puzzling, very puzzling questions.

Q: In this same period, you were also getting involved in post-conflict media questions, like those in Rwanda and Bosnia, where it was arguably the case that media enflamed attentions—and in the Rwandan case maybe contributed to the genocide. You were interested in, or brought in, to talk about, and think about, write about the ways in which these post-conflict societies could limit or not media.

PRICE: I think, there again, there was a fortuitous moment when UNESCO asked me—when I was at the Freedom Forum center—

Q: Yes, the Media Studies Center.

PRICE: —Media Studies Center, to write a piece about four conflicts for Free Press Day in whatever year that was. That got me involved, more, in the Balkans—and in this idea of not post-Soviet transitions, but post-conflict transitions. Which became a different body of knowledge, different body of literature, etc. It led to *Forging Peace* and that, I think, has also been a very helpful book.<sup>12</sup> Then that led me to thinking about this in Iraq, which is really exciting, so you have that shift.

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<sup>12</sup> Monroe E. Price and Mark Thompson, eds., *Forging Peace: Intervention, Human Rights, and the Management of Media Space* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

Q: With the work before Iraq, but with Bosnia, the Balkans, and Rwanda—just thinking about the typical or let's say the doctrine that floated around in the 1990s around freedom of expression and Western-style media institutions—how did that bundle of ideas mix with the realities in Rwanda after the genocide or in Bosnia?

PRICE: I'm not sure I can say much about Rwanda, but it, certainly in the Balkans, introduced me to a new kind of cast of characters and new ways of thinking about this. This is also true in the *Forging Peace* post-conflict areas, which is—and led me to think about, in a way—this is odd—but occupation in Japan, the United States and Japan. That is to say, How does one think in a large way about post-transition success and failures, and what mode of governance is most effective?

So I was trying to rehabilitate occupation as a way of thinking about these questions. I was also meeting new figures like Simon Haselock in Bosnia and—through my reading in preparation of the UNESCO project—watching how he tried to reshape, for the [EU] Special Representative for Bosnia-Herzegovina, the media there. Then that led to my interest in his way of thinking about these kinds of questions.

Q: What were his way of thinking?

PRICE: Well, I think he did—I'm not sure how consciously he did this, but pretty consciously. He had this kind of way of wrapping coercion in the mantle of consensus. So the whole notion was that you should have self-regulation instead of government-imposed regulation. So he created entities—this is an odd way of thinking about and I'm not sure he would—in which were kind of imposed self-regulation. That is to say, they were self-regulation in advance of the capacity of the society to self-regulate—was a kind of formula that I think he internally had. So this took place in Kosovo. He went from being the Special Representative's communication director, Bosnia to Kosovo, and then he went to Iraq, etc. So we developed these techniques and this kind of ideology of how to think about the media.

Q: OK. Well, that idea of self-regulation is—

PRICE: It's kind of hallowed in some curious ways. It's still played out in the UK—this is really the Leveson Inquiry, which is, We need to have self-regulation as opposed to government regulation. So the idea is that government threatens coercion—in the British context, until self-regulation takes place. Self-regulation takes place in the shadow of this threat of regulation. In the Kosovo context, it's an imposed institution which we could call a self-regulatory institution but is really imposed, as it were.

Q: Imposed in part because of occupation and also because the institutions haven't yet formed.

PRICE: Yes. Also the appetite for self-regulation isn't there, and the kind of self-conception of the media. So all these things play themselves out in the '90s in these various places.

Q: So I don't know how it was possible that you were also working on this Indian project. When I say Indian, I mean the Subcontinental India. That you were—I think it was for USIA, the US Information Agency, giving a lecture tour in India, but also working on a broadcasting in India project, around this period, in the late 1990s.

PRICE: Yes. Well, that was interesting.

Q: So can you tell me about how that got started and who funded it?

PRICE: Well, the broadcast reform—well, the tour was a USAID tour. The other thing was, I think, funded, curiously enough, by News Corporation, which had an interest in the debate in India over broadcast reform. So I and Stefaan Verhulst were there to think about how to enrich the debate, let's put it that way. That led to this book on *Broadcast Reform in India*, basically.<sup>13</sup> But maybe that was the height ofchutzpah of some sort, which is, How can you enter India, think about the history of broadcasting there and then, in a certain sense, write and make a contribution to it? So that was what we tried to do—I think it also was an effort to—another extension of Oxford, which is how to play in a different global sandbox.

Q: Did you think of your home location as being Oxford in this stretch of time or was it still New York and Cardozo?

PRICE: Well, I definitely was at Cardozo, but in a way I was very much engaged with and thinking about Oxford.

Q: Since a lot of the work in this period was USAID, or foundation funding, or the State Department—we've talked about this before—but the early Cold War period when the U.S. government, in various guises, funded a lot of communication research in the 1950s, especially in conjunction with foundations, I wondered what your reflections were on very very different post-Soviet context of the U.S. government being interested in spreading democracy and other ideals at the same time as being engaged in what at other points you kind of discuss as sort of cross-border strategic communication. So being a scholar who's reflecting on those questions, but also being funded to carry out some of that work, what do you make of that?

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<sup>13</sup> Monroe E. Price and Stefaan G. Verhulst, eds., *Broadcasting Reform in India: A Case Study in Comparative Media Regulation* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998)

PRICE: Well, I think in my enacting it—whatever, thinking and trying to reflect on this, I think I try to hold both these ideas in mind at the same time. I think in some of the things that Oxford did, like the Annenberg-Oxford [Media Policy Summer] Institute, I think we tried to cope with these tensions. We bring people from Pakistan and India, Iran, etc. I think we try to explore these different levels—both maintain the idea of some aspiration, some critical analysis, etc. But I'm not sure that answers your question.

Q: Yes, I don't know. It's just a question in terms of what—I assume that any initiative that is both scholarly and also funded by donors, whether they be foundation, or funders, whether they be government, that you have to either balance or mix, and separate out, work that is of a certain intellectual rigor, from the client-delivered product. I don't know how you—

PRICE: Well, I'm not sure that's the distinction I draw, between intellectual rigor and the USAID-delivered product. I would say, How can I, or people who are playing in this field, advance complicated ideas and further understand the ideological framework in which those ideas have to be furthered, and also pursue good goals as well? I mean, it's not as if my objective is to avoid free expression. It's quite the contrary. So I think it's how to engage in complexity, but with the kind of aesthetic of free expression always being present in some way.

Q: Yes, that makes sense—that especially if there are tropes that you feel like you need to work within, that you can then advance complexity through that framework, inside the limits of your funders' language. Is that fair?

PRICE: Yes, I think that there's—let me reflect on it, I'm not sure.

Q: Yes, it's just that it's an interest of mine, and you were—

PRICE: I think it is an interest that we share. I think this whole—so I've been looking at your essay [on] propaganda and the shaping of communications policy in the United States. So it both tries to find a narrative that isn't obvious from the outset, but it doesn't necessarily defeat another kind of narrative that's taking place. So I'm not sure.

Q: No that makes total sense. At this time you were also, Monroe, doing work on domestic regulation like *The V-Chip Debate*.<sup>14</sup>

PRICE: Yes. But I think the V-chip is of a piece, because V-chip, to me, was an exercise in this tension. First of all, it's in this tension between regulation and free expression, between thinking about cultural outcomes and effect of media on children, and doing so in the context

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<sup>14</sup> Monroe E. Price, ed., *The V-Chip Debate: Content Filtering from Television to the Internet* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998).

of an environment in which “free expression”—I use quotation marks here—dominates and is supposed to underwrite every step, and on the role that Congress plays in all of this. So again, it’s an example of self-regulation in the shadow of regulation.

Stefaan Verhulst and I were engaged in this during the period on the V-chip, and transnationally in the Bertelsmann efforts to develop ideas of self-regulation, on the early internet, as it were—so this had to do with early inquiries into dangerous and offensive speech on the internet.

Q: That came out of the project that you worked on with *The V-Chip Debate*?

PRICE: No, these were parallel.

Q: I see.

PRICE: They all have to do, in some ways, with content, with rethinking the media, with regulation, and combining free expression and regulation in some way.

Q: It seemed like sometime around the late 1990s you were working with Stefaan, too, on a European version or at least a European study that looked at parental control of television?

PRICE: That was all through the Bertelsmann project. Bertelsmann, for several years, brought together scholars who were thinking about these kinds of questions.

Q: It just strikes me—

PRICE: That led to the book that I did with Stefaan on self-regulation.<sup>15</sup> One of my favorite phrases which is, Who is the self in self-regulation?

Q: What was the answer to that?

PRICE: I’m not sure what the answer to that is [laughs], but it was a good phrase.

Q: So that led to the self-regulation volume as well—the Bertelsmann project.

PRICE: Yes.

Q: OK. You’ve done so many edited volumes, especially since 1990 and that period. Is this a form that you particularly like, and does it have a kind of natural connection to conferences and gatherings? Is that why you’ve produced so many, and so many influential edited volumes?

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<sup>15</sup> Monroe E. Price and Stefaan Verhulst, *Self-Regulation and the Internet* (Alphen aan den Rijn, Netherlands: Kluwer Law International, 2005).



PRICE: Well, it's probably a lazy man's way of writing, in some ways. So that's one response, I think, which is that it seems easier to edit than it does to write, but that then turns out not necessarily to be the case. I think it's an important way to collaborate, it's an important way to build networks, it's an important way to reward, to help people along in their careers. I think all those things are true in edited volumes.

Q: In the case of the late 1990s, in this project of thinking about establishing centers—the center-mania—really got underway in the early 2000s, it seems like. One of the first centers that, at least, you founded outside of Oxford, as far as I know, is the Stanhope Centre [for Communications Policy Research] in London. What was the story of that?

PRICE: The Stanhope Center is a funny story. There are two things. The Freedom Forum, which had been a supporter, and I had been at the center in New York, decided one day to pull out of its global efforts. It had a center in Hong Kong, and in New York, and in London, in Argentina, and somewhere else. I always thought that—do you remember the name of the mogul who's the head of the—

Q: Oh, Newman.

PRICE: Allen—

Q: Oh, [AI] Neuharth.

PRICE: Yes. So he had this kind of, in my view, narcissistic idea that the foundation will exist at whatever time zone you're on. So his notion was you'd have a living room with all these clocks—this is going on in Hong Kong, this is going on here, etc. So one day, as rich people do, they just change their mind and said, We're out of this business. They decided—they had existing leases on a variety of real estate. So I called them up, probably at Stefaan's suggestion, and said, The Oxford center, we'll take over all your real estate, and run projects in your unfulfilled leases. They said, No, but you can have the London office. So, the gestation of this was that they had this facility, which was a ballroom and three offices, overlooking Hyde Park. It was incredibly gorgeous property, but there was no money. We had—I don't remember if it was a year or two years, or three year lease.

Q: They gave you the lease?

PRICE: This is just before I came to Annenberg.

Q: Right. Did they give you the lease for free?

PRICE: They just gave me the lease for free, but we didn't have money for toilet paper—actually, toilet paper was a good example of this. I didn't have a grant to run things, so I sort of pasted something together. But it was a wonderful facility, and I shifted, for a period of time, my emphasis from Oxford to the Stanhope Centre.

Q: Were you physically located there in London?

PRICE: Same sort of way. I used to spend the summers there, etc. Christian Sandvig was there, and Nicole Stremlau, who was a graduate student—I met her through the Stanhope Centre. It did some very nice things.

Q: Was it staffed at all or was it mostly postdocs—

PRICE: It was a pick-up. Yes.

Q: —and people who were in the London area who could come and gather?

PRICE: Yes.

Q: At one point I saw something about the Stanhope Werkstatt.

PRICE: This was Christian Sandvig and his friends. They wanted to develop a kind of facility that thought creatively about the role of ideas in product. And so they modeled this after the *werkstatt* [workshop], which was a kind of Viennese or Bauhaus notion of how to think creatively about products and society. So, it was an eccentric—I mean, for example, this is early on, under Christian Sandvig's leadership, he wanted to have—sounds like nothing today—a kind of hotspot in Hyde Park, create a kind of modern equivalent of Speakers' Corner using Wi-Fi potential. So he did that. So that's something that anybody can do now anyway, but it was just a pioneering venture on his part.

Q: So, what was this space like in any given moment? Were there people in there? Like Christian might have been a full-time employee?

PRICE: There were people. There were people who came and spent months there. There were people who spent days there. I think a lot of the work in the Balkans, etc., arose during that time. It was just a way of thinking. It still exists as a kind of charity. It's an idea, and it still has some minor functions.

Q: So it's almost like a way station or a crossroads in a way?

PRICE: Yes.

Q: And not affiliated with a university?

PRICE: It was not—for a long time we tried to figure out how to affiliate it with a university, but we failed. Then, at that time, I was somewhat—I'm not sure why—in exile from Oxford, so it was my English slot.

Q: I see.

PRICE: Now that has changed.

Q: Is Stanhope a benefactor or was there some other reason it was called the Stanhope Centre?

PRICE: It was called Stanhope Centre because it was on Stanhope Place.

Q: OK. So how did it end up getting funded? You have this free lease for a couple of years?

PRICE: Then we ran a number of grants through Stanhope, the overhead, so it still has some funding capability, and so it's available and useful for certain things.

Q: I think one project that might have gone through Stanhope, if I read correctly, is this kind of regional media support in Russia. There was a two-year program in Russia that involved training editors and journalists in regional centers, media outlets, and so on, and that seemed to have gone through Stanhope as a project.

PRICE: It could be. Yes.

Q: I mean, but it also involved the Oxford program, and European Union was a sponsor, I think, Internews.

PRICE: Well, I think a number of the cases, the idea was how to create something that would facilitate achievement of these goals by these institutions by [unclear] places like that.

Q: So it is in a way a kind of technology, if you will, if you use that phrase loosely?

PRICE: What, Stanhope?

Q: Stanhope, yes, as that kind of technology of scholarly policy communication.

PRICE: Yes, it was a facility, as well as—

Q: But a mode maybe, a way of thinking, is what you said.

PRICE: Right. Yes, so this goes on to this day. Nicole Stremmler is trying to think about how to do this in Johannesburg. So, these centers grow up and develop.

Q: So, yes, I really think you already answered this question, but since beginning with the Oxford program and then Stanhope, and eventually Annenberg, and soon after that Budapest, and probably others if you include Beijing and so on—that you began a decade-long, I think of it as, march through the institutes or creation of centers of various kinds, and ended up then stitching them together as a network of centers with some others that you weren't directly—

PRICE: I would say two things about that. One is, I had my own little center-mania, but this is a time in which wonderful centers developed and totally outclassed whatever I was doing, like the Oxford Internet Institute, which Stefaan and I helped them a little bit at the beginning. But it's flourishing. One of the things that's been interesting to me is, What are the things that make institutions strong and survive and sustained? So this may have helped to catalyze some things but they're developing on their own.

Q: At the same time with Berkman [Klein Center for Internet & Society, Harvard University].

PRICE: Yes. Independent of me, Berkman, etc., of course. Some of the centers that I helped to develop became flourishing on their own, like the one in India, etc.

Q: So granting all of that—

PRICE: So, all of that is great. Yes.

Q: So granting all that, I just still am curious about—one thing is that lots of these centers, including the ones given your involvement, that you helped establish, but also Berkman and others came out of law ultimately. Even if they all didn't have that character. I wonder if there's any reason that this particular corner of academia produced this center form, not just you but others in the late '90s and early 2000s. Why law?

PRICE: First of all, let's examine whether that's accurate phraseology. I think one of the questions is, lawyers seem more purposeful and more result-oriented. They may be analytical but the question is, What's the outcome? What's the policy, etc.? I think they get more engaged in the policy debates. How does [this] relate to [Robert W.] McChesney and Victor Pickard—all of a sudden this flurry of centers at Annenberg, which is like, OK, how do we turn this into something that's achievable in the world? So what's the ideology of that? How does that change the academy, in some ways?

So in a way Annenberg is a kind of laboratory for thinking about these questions, and maybe Kathleen Hall Jamieson in the Annenberg Public Policy Center is another example, which is like,

OK—we want to be able to say to our donors, We’ve made this difference in this way. It reminds me of a conversation I had at Oxford in the early ’90s at lunch. I asked somebody what they’d published and they said, That’s just like you Americans. We think. We’re not paid to publish, we’re paid to think. So, now it’s beyond that, we’re not paid just to publish but we’re paid to have an effect, to have a policy outcome, and I think law is a strong motivation in that direction.

Q: Because it strikes me that the centers that you created, and some of these others, they’re outside of traditional academic departments, at least for the most part. They’re self-consciously extra-departmental, and they’re also self-consciously public-facing, and policy-facing. I don’t know if they are in a way some kind of academic form that benefits from being detached and untethered from departments?

PRICE: It’s an interesting question. So I also think they’re kind of gossamer, in some ways. Some of them aren’t, some of them now have buildings and they have endowments and things like that. Some of them are quite fragile. Some of them are—sometimes there’s the heavy hand of the academy, that is to say, the academy has its own tropes of what products should look like, their own vocabulary, which can be quite stultifying in some way. I think that was one of the benefits of Stanhope or the [Oxford] Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy, that it was able to develop its own language, its own approach in that way.

Q: Because it was a form that wasn’t already predefined?

PRICE: Well, it’s also interesting to see whether, in these entities, people are advancing to tenure, and whether they’re measured by tenure standards, or whether they have some different framework for evaluation and self-evaluation. So I would say that’s another reason to be both within and skeptical about relationship to academic departments.

Q: Just thinking about the ten years. Given that—we’ll pick it up in the next session, Annenberg and the Budapest center, and so on—but you did build this network of centers over that decade, and you were traveling around, writing like crazy, lecturing, producing edited volumes, and all the rest. It made me think back to something we talked about in the first session of this oral history, which was *The Confessions of Felix Krull* [Thomas Mann, 1954]. Did you have a sense of, when you went after the Stanhope space for example, have that sense of just creating and then filling it in afterwards?

PRICE: Yes. Definitely. I’m happy to accept the idea—but in a sense it goes back to this multi-level way of thinking about things. The question of being a critic as well as an engaged human being, respecting the academy but trying to be slightly outside of the academy, developing human talent in a way that’s consistent with the disciplines of graduate study and also outside

of that, in some ways. Yes, so I'm not sure how close that gets to [*The Confessions of*] *Felix Krull*, *Confidence Man*, but he hovers, probably, through it all.

Q: Yes, and the ability to be in both worlds at once, in the case of those two modes is—

PRICE: Well. Yes, I guess that's the question. But I think it has its limits, in some ways, and I think that that's another interesting question, which is—so one of the issues is whether this—how this discourse sours in, or has its limits in, Russia and China. So if you look at the '90s and think at the end, basically this discourse is discredited in some way, or barred. That leads to this *Speech and Society in Turbulent Times*, it leads to thinking about—looking at Iraq now, even after the most recent election, which is, What's the shaping of the media system there? I'm not sure how that relates, but I think it relates.

Q: It does provide a bookend for this first session, thinking about the discourse of the '90s, the democracy promotion—

PRICE: Yes, hitting a wall, in some ways.

Q: Hitting a wall. Partly it was the crash, but also just backlash in a way, right?

PRICE: Yes.

Q: Distrust of the West.

PRICE: So, I guess the question is, Was this a discourse of the '90s? Even recently I've been interested in what's called the Freedom Online Coalition, which is countries that further a particular idea of the internet, and the way it should function in society. It's encouraged by the U.S. State Department, under the [Hillary] Clinton administration. That's another Clinton, in the State Department, not Clinton as president. So what happens to the Freedom Online Coalition idea of the internet in the world? How is it justified? How is it furthered, and what wall does it come against, etc.? Does there have to be a new way of thinking about these questions in the future?

Q: If that discourse hits its own wall.

PRICE: Yes.

Q: Yes. Well, thank you for your discussion of the 1990s all the way through to the Freedom Online Coalition—and we will, in our next session, pick up in the early 2000s.

PRICE: OK. Great. Thanks.

END OF SESSION FOUR