

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

*October 18 & November 29, 2017*

*May 17, 2018*

Philadelphia, PA

Creative Commons CC BY-NC 4.0

## 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 Five (May 17, 2018)

The interview is primarily occupied with the period after Price joined the Annenberg School for Communication faculty in 2004. Price recounts the circumstances of his appointment, under then-dean Michael Delli Carpini, and the establishment of the Center for Global Communication Studies in 2006. Price describes his and the Center's projects, including projects in Iran, China, Jordan, Darfur, and Mexico. The themes of strategic communication and the freedom of expression, in the context of cross-border communication among and between states and NGOs, is discussed. Price describes his approach to teaching, mentorship, and networking, including the forms of the research center and the edited book. His relationship to Elihu Katz and other Annenberg faculty is described.

## 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 Samantha Dodd.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY AND CITATION FORMS

Video recording

**Bibliography:** Price, Monroe E. Interview by Jefferson Pooley. Video recording, May 17, 2018 (session five). 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 five), 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 five). 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 five), 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 five)

Philadelphia, PA

Interviewed by Jefferson Pooley

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

So, Monroe, last time we were talking a little bit about the institutes and centers that you had founded and the idea of a network of those institutes and, to back up just a tiny bit, I was curious about your own network. We talked about how the internet itself helped in some ways to expand scholarly reference groups and enabled scholars to have networks that weren't geographically bound. I recall that, somewhere, Michael Delli Carpini, then Dean of the Annenberg School, described you as the most networked person in the world. My question is, How do you generate and maintain such a broad network? I recall that there's this Dunbar number of 150. You've heard of this too, probably, where the human mind is not supposed to be able to keep more than 150 people in mind. So, I guess, even at a practical level, I'm just curious how you are able to generate and then maintain such a far-flung and large network.

PRICE: Let me say, first of all, I think it's somewhat—it's certainly hyperbolic. It may be a substitute for substance. That is to say, [a] network, as a way of developing personality in some way. The other thing is good assistants. I could go back and blame everything on my refugee-ness, which is to say, somehow or other, it's my way of finding an identity and keeping it, holding that identity—or holding on to friendships or something like that. It's something I love to do. I have loved to do it.

I now see myself as having what I call a yellowing Rolodex. That's an interesting characteristic of my present state of mind, either forgetting or not knowing or whatever. But it's also been true that these various instances, even the Moot Court [Monroe E. Price Media Law Moot Court Competition, University of Oxford], the institutes itself, are generating efforts—are ways of identifying loose relationships with lots of interesting people, who then mature in some way. It's a kind of slight educational philosophy as well.

Q: Since you mentioned an educational philosophy, teaching takes place in the classroom, and I do want to ask you about your teaching at Annenberg and elsewhere, but do you feel like you do mentorship in teaching through networks?

PRICE: Somehow or other I feel—I felt this way at law schools as well—that what I was trying to do was, in a certain sense, change the student—not just provide information, but help to shape [them]. It's sort of like an enabling environment. What does it take to become the next stage of being, etc.? How do people come and present themselves at law school or here at the Annenberg School, and how does the institution shape them, etc.? I think Annenberg has been really great at that. It's really important. Many faculty members, maybe all of them, feel that way, that they're helping to create and enrich a next generation, series of scholars, etc. What does it take to do that effectively?

Q: So for your own network creation and maintenance, do you self-consciously bring in younger scholars and invite them to conferences and visiting fellowships and that kind of thing, in order to cultivate something like an enabling environment?

PRICE: It's also sort of the dinner party theory of bringing things together, which is, Who are the people who should be around the table? How do you experiment with getting different mixes of ideas? What kind of experiences build on each other? What's the right mixture?

We're just putting together the class for the Annenberg Oxford [Media Policy Summer] Institute this summer. The question is, How many Americans should there be? How can we go out of our way to make sure they're people from the Middle East? Things like that.

Q: I guess it's a related question, because you are traveling a lot, you're preparing courses, you're communicating with this wide network. You also are writing a lot. I'm curious, even, what your writing practice is. Do you write regularly, is there a set time—you're traveling so much—how do you manage to—

PRICE: I was thinking about this. Frankly, I think I'm at the sharp end of—that's why I'm doing more editing now, less writing. I think that has to do with age, in some part. I don't remember even having a regimen. In other words, the idea sometimes has been to take a period off to write, to write short pieces that I can fit into a daily schedule. But now I think of editing in the same way. I think of the dinner party, putting together an institute, which is, How can different voices be brought together?

Q: Speaking of writing, in 2002 you published this book called *Media and Sovereignty*.<sup>1</sup> I think it did end up having a role in your arrival at Annenberg somehow. But the book itself was both a self-contained work, but it also has evidence of your projects from the mid-1990s through to the early 2000s in it. So is there a way you approach a sole-authored book like that?

PRICE: Well, I think that it becomes partly an accumulation and revision of articles and things that I've written around the way. It also allows me an opportunity to summarize and bring to

---

<sup>1</sup> Monroe E. Price, *Media and Sovereignty: The Global Information Revolution and Its Challenge to State Power* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002).

bear different projects, so, What did I learn in Kosovo? What did I learn in Iraq? What have I learned from different experiences that enrich or alter a kind of overall theory of communications?

Q: So it's a stock-taking, in a way, and updating. Since you wrote in that '96 book about *Television, the Public Sphere and National Identity*.<sup>2</sup> That was '96. By 2002, there had been not just projects that you'd learned from but also massive technical and geopolitical changes. That theme of the "market for loyalties" is picked up in the book. But of course the context is different even from the mid-1990s. How did your sense of the state's adaptation to the changes in their ability to narrate their own societies' legitimacy, how did it change over those years?

PRICE: Well, I bring into this, also, the third book on freedom of expression, globalism, and strategic communication [*Free Expression, Globalism, and the New Strategic Communication*].<sup>3</sup> I think, again, it was shifting more towards purposefulness, state activity, in a sense. I guess thinking of this kind of combination of the internet, and free flow on one hand, and propaganda and power on the other hand. In a certain sense, you've had both of those develop in different ways. So the idea of the internet and social media, and there's this idea of which—I'm not sure who helped think about this—if you think of radio, television, satellite, you go from chaos to confusion to control, and this may be true of different technological developments. The question is, Will that model apply in the internet as well? So, is the internet like radio in 1914, or something like that? So I think these books go through this arc as well. Strategic communication becomes the kind of code word for rethinking about propaganda.

Q: Right. I'm very curious about that idea of strategic communication. It doesn't appear, to my knowledge, in that 2002 book, or if it does, it's not a central theme, at least under that name. But you do talk about this metaphor of cartels.

PRICE: Yes. I'm not sure it's a metaphor.

Q: Ok. It may, in fact, be a literal description. But if there is a theme of kind of states adapting and resilience emerging, how do those cartels work and who make them up? I know it's so specific and it's a shifting constellation, but could you expand on that idea of cartels?

PRICE: Well, I articulate it in terms of who are sellers in the markets for loyalties and who are the buyers. So, the sellers are powerful entities that seek to shape and transform large-scale attitudes in a society. These can be within a national society or now, more and more, across borders. Foreign states themselves can be strategic communicators in third states, which is—I think encapsulated oddly in a phrase—what stake does one state have in the media system of another state? So these sellers in the market for loyalties, these entities that try to transform, are like sellers in other markets, who both compete and collude. I've often thought, if you think about the automotive industry, the dream of competition in the United States is the opportunity to collude and maintain a market share. Can this apply to ideas as well as to objects

---

<sup>2</sup> Monroe E. Price, *Television, the Public Sphere, and National Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> Monroe E. Price, *Free Expression, Globalism, and the New Strategic Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

and commodities? So that's what I sort of explored. It's a bit of a fantasy, but I think there's something to it.

Q: Well, that is the major theme, or one of them, in that book, about how it's not merely competition, but it's collusion and cooperation and coalition-building.

PRICE: An example of this that I like had to do with major religious groups agreeing with networks in the 1950s to allocate the national time so that there'd be a morning show for Catholics and a morning show for fewer minutes for the Jewish community, etc. But nothing for evangelicals or, certainly, for Islam. But evangelicals were an original group that saw collusion or felt collusion, and felt a cartel of major established religions and fought that cartel. So it's an example of an excluded group learning and mastering the system, and then taking advantage of opportunities to break in and reshape it.

Q: That dynamic keeps going on.

PRICE: Yes, that dynamic keeps going on. Yes.

Q: In the Dutch system, you already referenced it last session, but the pillarized—

PRICE: The pillarized system—which isn't as effective anymore because of [the] European transfrontier directive [European Convention on Transfrontier Television] and other technological things—would be a mechanism by which the state, in a sense, organizes as a means of repairing conflict—some mode of sharing and cartelizing time. This is true in Lebanon now, it's true elsewhere, where a resolution of conflict is to allocate power over the media in some way.

Q: And not just power over who holds the presidency and the prime ministership, etc.

PRICE: Yes. It may mean the state holding all the power but it may be deflected in some other way. This is playing out in Lebanon at the moment, which is, Will they shift to different kinds of system—will it be a sectarian, etc.?

Q: Right. One of the themes that you developed in the 1990s but that shows up in the book is about the open and closed terrain of the public sphere. This distinction, which is totally interesting and novel—

PRICE: Yes. I haven't been able to go very far with it. But it's something I think is quite interesting, which is to say that we have a need for a closed terrain where we can communicate with each other in privacy. But we also have a kind of theater of communication in which there is an effort to reach beyond one's own efforts. So, what's the right balance between open and closed terrain of speech, and how is this open and closed terrain defined in some way?

Q: You were also discussing how it might be shifting in the broad sense, maybe thinking across national contexts—that there is a shift toward more closed terrain and less open terrain.

PRICE: Yes. Or how does surveillance play into this? Does surveillance make all closed-terrain speech open? Or is it a different way of defining what's closed and what's open, in some ways?



But it strikes me again, going back to the notion which we hold of free expression, that one of the hidden issues is this closed and open terrain. It doesn't map exactly across freedom of expression.

Q: No, in fact, it kind of complicates it. There was another contrast in the book in 2002, between constitutive and instrumental approaches to media law.

PRICE: I'll try to remember what that is. But I think, again, it may go to cultural identity and diversity, which is, To what extent is media law defining and segmenting and, basically, ensuring—so public service broadcasting, maybe even the Fairness Doctrine, but pumping—I often thought about, if I can remember the aspects of it, the use of force, the use of law, the use of subsidy, the use of negotiation, to shape a media system. So, in that extent, it goes to the constitutive to the instrumental.

Q: You reference in the book a lot about information intervention, which in some ways is a precursor to, maybe, strategic communication—to some extent, right?

PRICE: Yes. You could think of information intervention transnationally, of course—which is, as I say, the United States or some other government recognizing the stake it has in the formation of a media system. If it's trying to forge democracy—building, it intervenes in some ways. But we have many forms now of intervention, including NGOs [non-governmental organizations]. NGOs are now seen as instruments of information intervention and then treated that way by the target society or government in the target society.

Q: Right. Of course, I'm just tempted to ask about your current thoughts—but I'll get there in a way in a moment—about strategic communication and across borders and the shift that's taken place since 2002. But I'm going to resist that temptation. I did want to ask you about something. It's a little off-topic, but in some of your writings you refer to Ithiel de Sola Pool. In passing, I think, you've mentioned *Technologies of Freedom* [Pool, 1983]. I'm just curious whether he's been influential to you.

PRICE: It's an interesting question. Again, I noticed a reference to him in your writings [gestures toward interviewer]. I wasn't close to Ithiel de Sola Pool. I was interested in the fact that he was exploring a lot of the same questions. He was shaping a kind of center to think about these kinds of things at MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology]. I wasn't linking totally to the narrative that you're depicting of a kind of alternative history of communications theory. But I think some of that was attractive to me, without knowing it in the way that you knew it. But it had to do with, probably, this shaping of the International Broadcast Institute community of scholars across different countries, and maybe this relationship to government, which I wasn't, I don't think, privy to it. But it was interesting.

Q: Yes. In his *Technologies of Freedom*—

PRICE: But the *Technologies of Freedom* itself demonstrates this play between the trope of democracy and control, in some ways.

Q: Exactly. OK. So I think we should turn to Annenberg and how you got to Annenberg. Even that very first course that you taught. It may have been in 2002, or 2003. I think it may have even been—

PRICE: It was a class.

Q: It was a class, and it was by the same title of, *Media and Sovereignty*, at Annenberg. Do you know how you were first invited? Was it Michael Delli Carpini?

PRICE: Well, I was first invited prior to Michael Delli Carpini to teach a class. I think it was by Elihu [Katz] and Barbie [Zelizer], who were teaching a seminar, and they invited me down for the seminar. I was teaching the seminar. During it, they got more and more enthusiastic, and they were interested in my having a longer, possible relationship with the school. Nothing happened for a while. Michael became dean, and Elihu suggested that—here was the issue, which is a very Annenberg-like issue. Annenberg prides itself on being the top communication school in all categories. They had just been evaluated, and they ranked first in this, first in that, first in the other thing. But on international issues, they ranked lower than number one or, maybe, number two or number three. This is something which they didn't like. So the question was how to correct for that, how to see internationalization as being a purposeful aspect of the Delli Carpini deanship. So he called me and asked me to help him do that. That led to my coming here.

Q: What year was this, roughly, when you heard from Michael and started talking? Maybe 2004?

PRICE: When I came, it was the year before. In other words, there wasn't a big gap between his talking to me and my coming.

Q: How did the idea for the Project, as it was originally called, for Global Communication Studies come about? Was that his idea, your idea?

PRICE: I think it was an interaction between the two of us. It built on, How could I come? How could there be an organized way for Annenberg to announce and develop in this direction and be a focal point for activity and interest—a kind of way to telegraph to students and to faculty that Annenberg was going to strengthen this area? I think that was Dean Delli Carpini's goal and objective. This is a good way to do it.

Q: Then, when you arrived, you had this title that wasn't like a regular tenured, full-time faculty member—that differed in some way because of your [Benjamin N.] Cardozo [Law School, Yeshiva University] appointment?

PRICE: Yes. Partly it's because—I don't know—it's a weakness on my part, which is, I never can see far enough into the future. Everything looks temporary and, of course, I was already 60-something when I came here, so I wasn't—I thought of this as three or four years. The question was, Was I going to go back to Cardozo, etc.? So that led to my status here. I had a choice of how that would be done.

Q: Got it. Given that you had this project underway, it probably wasn't full-fledged initially, right? I mean, there had been a gap between when you've arrived and when the Annenberg Foundation seeded what would become the full center?

PRICE: Yes, well, I think the dean funded the project, which was fine and could have continued. It so happened that at that time, the foundation, for reasons I was sure about were above my pay-grade or something like that, said to the dean, We'll give you an endowment, you recommend a couple of alternative ways to realize this, and we'll choose. They chose the Center for Global Communication Studies [CGCS].

Q: That happened in, I think, late 2006. It was up and running soon after.

PRICE: Right. Because, when I came, I brought activities that I was already engaged in. The center just heightened what the project was doing.

Q: So what was the model? Was it what you had already helped create at Oxford [Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy] and Stanhope [Centre for Communications Policy Research] and other places? What was your vision for the CGCS?

PRICE: Well, I think what was different about CGCS was that it was partly graduate-student driven. So, you both wanted to enrich the lives of the graduate students, but you wanted to go with their interests. So if there were more graduate students who were interested in the Olympics, we would help to develop projects like that. I say, prior to being here, it was largely my initiatives or my interests. Here, it was a kind of melding of things that I was interested in, subjects that I was interested in, and student-driven interests. And maybe even faculty-driven.

Q: One aspect of that student-driven interest must have at least been expressed in the Annenberg-Oxford [Media Policy] Summer Institute. How did that get underway? Was it already in existence?

PRICE: It was a Cardozo-Oxford—it now became more Annenberg students and even more inflected away from law to law and policy, in some ways.

Q: That remains—

PRICE: It remains. The question—it's now in its 20th year, I think. The Annenberg-Oxford project.

Q: What kind of teaching did you do once you arrived here as a faculty member?

PRICE: I taught a seminar every semester. The seminar, often, was a melding of these different projects in some way, but exploring the larger issues of media, information, and society. So a lot of it was media and sovereignty, I would say, and internet issues. Also, I was trying—I'm not sure this is successful—to supplement other aspects of the curriculum, in terms of making it more international in my definition of what that means—which is different from other people's definition, maybe.

Q: In the system that existed, as like a bucket system, were you—

PRICE: I think I was in the policy bucket.

Q: Yes, the institutional policy bucket. OK. Did you have particular graduate students in those early years that you worked with closely that you—

PRICE: I did and still do to some extent. Yes. Like Chris [Christopher] Finlay, Briar Smith, who was originally a student, then became not a student, up to now, to Sandra Ristovska—various students through the years. Some of them were obviously other people's students as well.

Q: What about how the center was run? I mean, you had staff and you had visiting scholars—

PRICE: In thinking about it at the beginning, I thought, What's the relationship of Annenberg to China, for example? How can, given—even with the endowment—somewhat limited resources—in the Annenberg sense, “was limited” is, well, a relative term. How can one foster, and what should the way of fostering, relations with China be? So it turned out that there's something called the China Scholarship Council, and China sponsors PhD students and young faculty to come to the United States and elsewhere in the world to study many different subjects. We developed a kind of reputation—it's hard to evaluate—with PhD students from China. So every year, towards the end especially, we had three or four PhD students from China. This has created a little community in China, people who are related to Annenberg. Among themselves and with some Annenberg students, I think it affected demand for Annenberg PhD education among Chinese students and improved the application rate and our capacity to evaluate. One of the things that has been interesting was, and is, Annenberg able to attract and properly evaluate candidates from China and did this kind of process change and shift that? So that would be an example of an interest and how to realize it.

Similarly with India, was there a way to expose PhD students at Annenberg to some richer relationship to communications policy and thinking about the media and society—communications policy, but thinking about the real, central aspects of the culture programming at Annenberg, with respect to India, etc.? So how does one do that? How does one change the mix of scholars who lecture here? The geographical spread of students, of faculty, etc.—I think that was all part of Michael [Delli Carpini]'s vision, and I hope that the center helped him to some extent with respect to that.

Q: Did you have staff who helped throughout the years, any particular staff members that were significant?

PRICE: Yes, I started with Susan Abbott, who was someone who I'd worked with very closely at Cardozo and who had helped at CEU [Central European University] in Hungary. She was really instrumental in shaping CGCS, in helping our relationship with thinking about Washington. That's another aspect of it, which is the operating on a demand side. That is to say, this is something which has been interesting to me, and maybe goes back to my, so to speak, refugee background, which was that research—it would be interesting to think of research as a commodity that's marketable. That is to say, I think maybe Kathleen [Hall Jamieson], others think about this as well—Bob [Robert] Hornik and Joe [Joseph] Capella—which is, How can you tell from the demand side what kind of research is needed and wanted?

So the center, notwithstanding the endowment—and I think we tried to [develop] a more self-financing arrangement—what was the world interested in and willing to pay for in terms of thinking about policy-related research? Susan Abbott was key in developing that idea, and then Briar [Smith] was, and Laura Schwartz-Henderson, who is still, amazingly, working on the Internet Policy Observatory.

Q: When there were no opportunities for external funding identified, was it often the case—almost like Paul Lazarsfeld, another Austrian refugee, back in the '30s and '40s and '50s—where he would survey the market for funding in government and commercial funding, and then take advantage, in a way, of what the client wanted. Deliver on that but also, in a resourceful, adaptive way, come up with questions that were his own, and that were stimulating independently of the client?

PRICE: Well, I'm not comparing myself to Paul Lazarsfeld, but I definitely think we were trying to be imaginative, creative, cliché-like boundary-pushing recipients. So, yes, the Iran media grant was a good example of this, where it's not even clear to me that the government knew exactly what it wanted. I can compare this to—I'll talk about in a second. But we were trying to think of creative ways to enrich discourse on media and communications issues within Iran. We had to think very hard about how to do this in a way that wouldn't imperil people in Iran who were dealing with us. We were trying to think of creative ways of redefining what discourse meant.

That was a really rich and interesting experience. I think the output of the Iran media program, which is archived, is probably interesting in this respect. I'm going to compare it to my efforts, believe it or not, to work in North Korea. Because USAID [United States Agency for International Development] had offers for funding, but they were very constrained. There was really no room for creativity. It was all defector-related in some way. So I don't think we presented ourselves as being a very attractive grantee. But it would have been amazingly wonderful to be able to think about those kinds of issues.

Q: Can you even say more about the Iran example and how it unfolded?

PRICE: So the Iran example was a substantial grant during the period of CGCS. It was always difficult to know what "the donor wanted." Because the donor probably wanted richer discourse, but it was very difficult to achieve that. So the question was—my goal, for example, was to think of ways of working with departments of communication in Iran, of having some exchanges of students with Iran, of having more collaborative scholarship. All these things happened to a small extent. But they're very, very difficult to have happen.

But I can tell you, and it's not exactly related, but it's not totally unrelated. The Moot Court, which we have talked about a lot, has teams from all over the world. It had two or three teams from Iran. I think that's related to the fact that we had this interest in Iran media over the years. I've had long discussions with the Iranian students who come to the Moot Court. I think I've seen ways of what we're trying to accomplish being accomplished through that.

Q: Another project that was in the early years, anyway, was around the Chinese Olympics. If I'm not wrong, you had a conference.

PRICE: That was very much related in a certain sense to media events and Elihu Katz. Again, this is a good example of internationalizing, of melding together a number of strengths and trying to overcome weaknesses. So, here the question was looking at the Olympics as a media event. Again, collaboratively trying to get essays on it, etc., and working closely with Daniel Dayan, who was Elihu's collaborator in *Media Events* [Dayan and Katz, 1992].

Q: You two ended up editing a volume on it—

PRICE: We ended up editing a volume.<sup>4</sup> It came together—I'm trying to remember the key phrase—but using Daniel Dayan's theory of palimpsests, of seizure, of capturing, kidnapping the Olympics. I think that was the idea. Again, it gets back to, maybe, the market for loyalties, which is, Here's a platform, the Olympics. Who is trying to capture it—to use it as a way of changing public opinion within China, outside China, etc.? So the book became a series of essays about that problem.

Q: About the kind of narrative and counter-narrative, from Western journalists—

PRICE: Yes, and the mode of contestation and the mode of gaining control, in some ways.

Q: Right. What was the collaboration with the Communication University of China in Beijing?

PRICE: So that was a really good example of the benefits and complexities of trying to work with a Chinese institution. So we had a good relationship with this interesting institution called the Communication University of China. But their emphasis was on the Olympics as a triumphant moment for China. So they were probably less interested in these complexities. Ultimately, we had conferences with them, but they were not collaborators on the book.

Q: But they did end up with some longer-term collaboration with Annenberg?

PRICE: Yes. Although it wasn't in a kind of memorandum-of-understanding way. So there's still collaboration with them. I see scholars from there to this day, and help them in some way, work with them.

Q: So if you don't mind [Price coughs] that we want to just go back a tiny bit, because we haven't really talked about Budapest and how that Center for Media and Communication Studies [Central European University (CEU)] came about. It was 2004. But I'm sure there's a backstory to that, too.

PRICE: Well, actually, I was working with a young, incredibly bright and wonderful deputy to the rector, a guy named Victor Böhm. The question was how to strengthen CEU, how to give it a greater international profile and make it more interesting on some of these issues. So we, together, agreed on helping to shape the Center for Media and Society [*sic*: Center for Media and Communication Studies]—now called [the Center for] Media, Data, and Society. Then we had conferences there. That was, I think, before Annenberg, basically.

---

<sup>4</sup> Monroe E. Price and Daniel Dayan, eds., *Owning the Olympics: Narratives of the New China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009).

Q: Yes, just before—

PRICE: —just before Annenberg, yes.

Q: What was your role?

PRICE: Yes, I think I was called chair of the governing board [*sic*: Advisory Board]. There's still a governing board, and I'm a member of a small governing board. It's now, of course, autonomous. It's self-directed. It's run by a guy named Marius Dragomir. It's one of the more successful enterprises in this regard.

Q: Did you see it, when you were helping to set it up back in 2004, as in the mold of Oxford and Stanhope?

PRICE: Yes, all of these—getting back to the marketing aspect of it—the question was, To create something in the post-Soviet space in Central and Eastern Europe, it could be an attractive hub for donors who are trying to develop institutions relating to the media. So CEU was a natural for this kind of thing. I think it's been helpful to it. I think the center has contributed to CEU in this respect.

Q: It hasn't been an academic department exactly, right? It's always been a center that doesn't grant degrees in media and public policy.

PRICE: [Drinks] Right. I think the question has been—in CEU there's a long debate about, Should there be a communication—was this a way-station to develop a communication department? It might be. CEU has so many different issues and problems, it's hard to know. For a while it became part or related to a department of public policy or school of public policy. That's now under revision, but the center is stronger than ever. But how it interleaves with all these other institutions is still up in the air.

Q: There was a conference there, if I'm right, back in 2005. So right around the time when it was started. It was called Re:Activism, and it had people like Lawrence Lessig and Saskia Sassen and [Yochai] Benkler and Jimmy Wales.

PRICE: In no way would I take credit for that. But there were several—there was an extraordinarily interesting scholar in Hungary named Péter György, who's not at CEU but at Eötvös Loránd University. He had brilliant graduate students at the time, and they helped to shape this Re:Activism program. Julia Sonnevend, who's now a professor at the New School, was one of those forces.

Q: She was one of the graduate students in Hungary?

PRICE: Yes.

Q: OK. I didn't know that.

PRICE: We met in Budapest. She then went to the Yale Law School for a masters degree. Then she applied for a PhD in communication—

Q: —in the Columbia [University] program that I went to.

PRICE: Yes.

Q: That's interesting. She's obviously then been writing about media events in a global context, too.

PRICE: Yes.

Q: I guess I had the sense that, maybe, the notion of a network of centers, especially when CGCS was underway, that Philadelphia was something like a hub.

PRICE: I think one could say—one could emphasize that too much. In other words, in my mind there might have been a hub. But I don't think in the world there was a real hub. Stefaan [G. Verhulst] and I prided ourselves on producing proposals. I wanted to do a book called *The Unfunded Proposals of Stefaan Verhulst and Monroe Price* [smiles]. One of our proposals was for such a network. We never got it funded. We always tried to operationalize it. So it's an idea. As an idea, it has some effect in the world. But none of the nodes think that they're part of some network [smiles], even if in our minds they are part of a network.

Q: Well, I think I read somewhere that, at CEU with the center, that there was an East of West project?

PRICE: There was a journal, I think, which Julia Sonnevend was on the editorial board, called East is West [sic], I think.

Q: East of West. It seemed like it was almost predicated on the idea of creating a network of media and communication research centers in Central Europe.

PRICE: Let me maybe put in a different way, which I'm seeing in different contexts—there's often an illusion or aspiration of rationality, like, Let's have a network. I can see this now in international media law—in fact, the center was involved in this at one stage—which is like, Can we get all international media law together and on a website, or can we bring everything in some rational fashion? There's a project, I think, by Berkman [Klein Center for Internet & Society] to have all the centers of something—

Q: —Internet and Society—

PRICE: —together. To some extent that works, but to some extent it's an illusion that it will ever really work. So I think this idea of a network is just that. It's an idea that's helpful, and there are informal modes of collaboration—but, I think, informal and almost unconscious modes of cooperation. Sometimes they're stronger than conscious ones.

Q: Well, thinking back to Annenberg itself, and over the last—I guess it's been a dozen years or so—are there faculty members that you worked with, or were especially friendly with over the years? Elihu Katz might be one, I'm guessing. Could you talk about Elihu Katz and your relationship with him?



PRICE: Sure. Well, I think Elihu, first, is inspirational. He also brings together for me, I think personally, just many strands in my life—at least emphasizes them in different ways, or accelerates them, or epitomizes them. So bringing together a kind of cultural, religious, political, skeptical—I think that may be one of the most charming aspect of him, the kind of humorous and skeptical, combined with the accomplishment and serious nature. So, these were all models for me and they were really great. Also, I think, he had an understanding of the world and the interconnection of scholarship and regions and things like that that's wonderful.

I was just looking at Marwan Kraidy's postdocs that he's got for next year. I think he has a different vision of this but a really attractive and interesting vision—in a sense, more harmonious with traditional scholarly goals of culture and communications, as opposed to policy and communication. But Marwan was also interesting in that respect. I worked a lot with Barbie [Zelizer], and I think there was a kind of effect of this center on the—even mildly, but to some small extent—on the Annenberg culture scholars [Scholars Program in Culture and Communication], in broadening out Barbie's reach and Barbie's international definition. That's been wonderful. I think it's been interesting to work with other aspects of the university. Kevin Platt and Slavic studies, for example, or [William] Burke-White and now Perry World House. So, one of the interesting things was to watch Penn asserting it "global-ness," and to see how hard that is or what the culture is that makes that really work. And was there a way that Annenberg and the center could contribute to that?

Q: Did you feel like there was an informal community of globally minded—

PRICE: Yes, it was really interesting to see how it changed. At the beginning, it was not as sophisticated as it has become. I think Amy Gadsden and Ezekiel Emanuel and other people have really brought the globalized aspect of it to a new level. It's interesting to see. The Provost's Office was helpful to the center. I think the center is helpful to the Provost's Office in this kind of globalization process.

Q: Just picking up the thread with Elihu Katz. He also has been interested so much in the relationship between media systems in the nation and community, and he has written about how he laments the segmentation of media over time. He's reprised this thesis. The whole "media events" notion itself is concerned with this question, at least the main thread of it is. So, do you have a conversation ongoing with him? Daniel Dayan, obviously, worked with you on this China project. But do you have a conversation with Katz around the relationship of the state and media systems and technology?

PRICE: [Drinks] Hmm. It's an interesting question. I would say it's sporadic but maybe, quietly, it's there. He recently talked to me about your own work and encouraged me to take a greater interest in your work. Maybe it relates to these kinds of issues. It certainly relates to his work in Israeli television and things like that. So I'd say it's an ongoing discussion. It's probably less intensive now than it was when he was here.

Q: That's fair. Yes. One question I had was, since you had been working on media topics of one kind or another, all the way back from after Yale Law School, even at Yale Law School. But you probably—or, I'm curious to hear whether you ever thought of yourself as a communication

scholar? Once you came to Annenberg, whether the fact that there is this madcap, but semi-organized discipline, or would-be discipline, of communication—and people call themselves communication scholars. Did your relationship to that change? Did you ever identify like that?

PRICE: No, I think that's an interesting question for me personally. Going back, since, at some strange point, I thought of myself as a journalist early on and maybe more as a journalist than a scholar, certainly—that helped in this kind of morphing into the communication scholar. UCLA [University of California Los Angeles] didn't have a communications department or journalism department at the time. So I didn't identify with—I never went to the ICA [International Communication Association] or anything like that. I was amazed, coming here, and going to the ICA from here, that I had suddenly become a communication scholar, just by dint of being at the Annenberg School—talk about Felix Krull [Thomas Mann, *The Confessions of Felix Krull*, 1954]. This was a great discovery, which is, it's like putting on a new costume. Like, here I am. I'm not sure how it affected my work or anything like that. But, definitely, I could become a communication scholar, legitimated as such, just by dint of being at the Annenberg School for Communication. That was a privilege. It was a little bit of a—it wasn't a burden. But it's been interesting, even now, going to the ICA and thinking, How am I engaged methodologically, etc.? But, definitely, I'm perceived as a communication scholar.

Q: What about among legal scholars who work in communication policy? Do you still see yourself as a legal scholar?

PRICE: It's interesting. I see less of that. I've been involved in it a little more through the Columbia project on global free expression [Global Freedom of Expression] in the last several years—and maybe want to revive that to some extent. I'm not sure how much. I'm just reading Steve Shiffrin's book on the First Amendment [*What's Wrong with the First Amendment?*, 2016]. I think if [C. Edwin] Ed Baker were still alive, I'd probably do more work with him in this field. But, yes, I also haven't returned to the domestic fold. So most of those people are engaged in domestic issues. It's interesting how—either purposefully or negligently—I've avoided the domestic issues so that I can think of myself more as whatever I am.

Q: So you said either purposefully or accidentally—which is it, or do you not want to say?

PRICE: Well, I'd say some of it is purposefully, because the American issues are such a draw. I was thinking about this with respect to the contest between Comcast [Corporation] and [The Walt] Disney [Company] for control of Sky [Group Limited]. One of the things I was interested in, maybe opportunistically, was what it means for a company that's as American as Comcast to become an international player. What does it require in terms of cultural change for the management? How does it have to rethink its relationship to regulators? So, here's a company that's been amazingly clever at dealing with the FCC [Federal Communications Commission]. How does that relate to dealing with the European Commission, if at all? So, I was just thinking about it as a way of re-entering this field, although I'm not sure I will.

Q: Along only barely related lines, once you started full time at Annenberg, you remained affiliated with and are still a professor at Cardozo.

PRICE: Yes.

Q: What has your relationship been with the law school there, over these last dozen years? Do you still teach there?

PRICE: I'm actually slightly revisiting this at the moment. But the answer is—I'm going to put it this way. As a former dean, I wanted to see myself as an ornament, as like having some—like my portrait is there, I helped to pick Squadron Fellows. I have a couple of kind of superficial relationships. But I have an affection for Cardozo and from time to time I go to talks there and stuff like that, but not enough.

Q: I had never asked you, back two sessions ago or in the last session, about the Squadron program [Howard M. Squadron Program in Law, Media and Society]. So I don't mean to take a detour. But I tried to research when it was established and how and so on. Was this in the 1980s?

PRICE: After I became dean, of course I wanted to develop a media law program there. Howard Squadron was a kind of personage in New York politics. He also represented, famously, Rupert Murdoch and, in fact, represented him on the question of whether Rupert Murdoch was a proper licensee, because he wasn't—he was getting a citizenship. I can't remember what it was. But as a consequence of that, Cardozo raised funds for this program, partly from News Corp.—not from News Corp. but from contacts in the old way that we'd raise money. The program was named for Howard [and Margaret Squadron].

Q: Was it named and funded around the time that you stepped down as dean?

PRICE: No, it was in the middle. It's not heavily funded. I feel, of all the places I tried to develop, it wasn't sufficiently developed there. It's like a law school. So it's partly careerist, which is like, How do students get jobs with television stations, or as in-house counsel at [*The*] *Wall Street Journal* or stuff like that. And that's all interesting, but it was domestic and it also, for some time, served to get some of these initial grants from USAID. We developed this summer institute at Oxford, which now is here [at the Annenberg School].

Q: It started there at Cardozo.

PRICE: Right.

Q: So I was really curious about the Iraqi project and how it started and what it taught you—and even in the context of the evolution since. So how did that Iraqi project get underway? Who was your new sponsor?

PRICE: Who was my what?

Q: Well, sponsor, or I guess there was a national commission for media and communications in Iraq [National Communications and Media Commission of Iraq]?

PRICE: Well, I described part of the evolution of this, which has to do with my observation and then friendship with Simon Haselock, who was a British Marine, who became the special

assistant to the commissioner [Deputy High Representative for Media Affairs in the Office of the High Representative] in Bosnia Herzegovina, then became a Temporary [Media] Commissioner in Kosovo and went on to something else. Then, I think I got a call from Internews, which is this kind of, I guess, the premiere or maybe the second—that's another question, which is the structure of the industry of media support for democratic institutions. So, in this industry, there are two major players, IREX and Internews. Internews started very small, but it's become a huge bandwidth of all that stuff.

I think they called me, and they keep observing when their services are going to be needed where. So after 2003, Internews realized that there was going to be a heavy emphasis on post-occupation or occupation Iraq. I had conversations with them at the time, about a conference that would lead up to whatever happened. So there was a conference, I think in Egypt. I helped Internews, to some extent, think about this. I suggested to them that they call Simon and then Simon became one of their principal advisors.

There was a kind of very complicated—speaking of cartels—arrangement between the US and the UK over who would fund what kinds of activities. Simon got retained to think—for Internews, I believe, though I'm not quite sure—about the future of media policy in Iraq. Building on his journey from conflicts in Bosnia, to Kosovo, to Iraq. Then I became part of the group that helped to support this, over the next several years. That had several components. One was—and this goes back to the structure of democracy development in these institutions—what should the regulatory agency look like? What should the overarching statute look like? What should the public service broadcaster look like? So these were architectural elements of post-conflict reorientation.

Q: The timing vis-a-vis the other institutions being solid in other norms—I'm saying non-media-related institutions—might have been a question. I am just referring to the fact that, in other writings you've discussed how setting up—

PRICE: Yes. You mean like copyright and all that stuff. This here became related to the question of occupation and elections. So this is when the US had a kind of occupation attitude towards—and was setting up institutions, and before turning it over to the legislature prematurely or something like that. So it was very interesting to see—it goes back to all of these questions that we've talked about, because it went to how differentiated can it be? To what extent do you use the same words but have different complications? One of the most amazing elements of the Iraq thing, as far as I was concerned, was that it was hard to find humans who would perform the jobs [smiles], like commissioner of—like the five-person commission. Who decides on who's going to be the members of the FCC? How do you interview them, particularly in this really dangerous time in which the decision-makers—given that they, like the occupation, the Westerners, could hardly go outside of the Green Zone? It was hard to know who people were, and things like that. So amazing elements of that—

Q: Was any of the self-regulation approach attempted, given that you'd been writing about that and thinking about it?

PRICE: I would say, the same kind of—I'm calling it a fiction, but I mean it in the best sense, which was, We're going to set up an agency that will foster self-regulation at such a time as that is possible. But it engaged in, for example, issuing broadcast licenses. So there was a kind of effort to democratize the media in that way. So some of that actually took place—having an entity that gives out broadcast licenses. I didn't deal very much with the press side of it, more the broadcasting side of it.

Q: What kind of staying power did any of the statutes and institutions like that one have? Did they stick around, post-occupation?

PRICE: They stuck around. They still stick around, I believe. I'm not that aware of the details of it. But I was thinking about it. I was going through the names. For example, Muqtada al-Sadr did well. I was trying to think about, Do I have anything to say about this? He was a factor during this time in 2003. He was a young upstart. But I thought he was actually saner and more directed than many of the other, I'm not going to say corrupt, but people who didn't have as much of a kind of ideology and movement behind them as he did. So I was very impressed with Muqtada al-Sadr, actually, at that time. So, yes, I would say that there are elements of these institutions that still exist.

Q: Did you come away from the Iraqi experience, having already done lots of work on media assistance, if you want to call it that kind of thing, more or less confident about—

PRICE: Less.

Q: You used the word pathology.

PRICE: I would say less. By the way, when I came here, one of the first people who came here was someone who's half-Iraqi, half-Iranian [Ibrahim al-Marashi]. But he spent a year here and we worked together. He's taught in Spain and elsewhere, etc. We did a number of things together about the Iraqi media law. So there's a little scholarship about this, but not enough.

By the way, it was such an intriguing time for a variety reasons. One was, as I say, this question of what is the nature of an occupation in changing media law? How did our occupation in Iraq differ from, say, the occupation of Japan in this respect? How ideologically driven was it in different ways?

Q: In different times, even.

PRICE: Also, what was the relationship of the Defense Department to the State Department, in terms of post-transition or transitional governance? What was the relationship between the British participants and the Americans participants in shaping this media system?

Q: It's like Germany, all over again.

PRICE: Yes. What kind of backup—there wasn't a division in that respect, but there was a division of functions like, You get the media, we get something else or something. But I remember very specifically, for example, a task force from *Good Morning America* coming to Iraq and replicating *Good Morning*—saying, OK, here's what you do. You need a show. Here

you're going to have anchors [smiles], and you're going to have jolliness, and you're going to have this kind of set. Stuff like that. So they replicated *Good Morning America* in Iraq. There was a huge, there was a billion dollars for media development in Iraq—almost all wasted funding. It's actually really terrible.

Q: So does that make you disillusioned about media assistance as a project?

PRICE: It makes me, certainly, realistic about it. I'm trying to think of where to think about it now. Is it to think about Syria? What are the victims or subjects? Is it Yemen? So you get this kind of decline from, like, Kosovo, Bosnia, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia. So media development in Somalia is an interesting thing, interesting to see.

Q: It's not post-conflict yet.

PRICE: You mean, the conflict's not over.

Q: Right, and the state's nonexistent.

PRICE: So, yes, it's an interesting subject.

Q: There were a couple of other projects, and I don't think it's necessary, unless you found it to be a really important or interesting one, to talk about each of them. But, speaking of the Middle East, there was another USAID Jordan project that you were involved in and that was, I guess, after Iraq. Or maybe concurrent with it.

PRICE: It was after Iraq.

Q: Yes. OK. 2006.

PRICE: That was interesting. The question again was, Was there something that could grow out of it—that would be useful at Penn and at the Annenberg School, etc.? There it was more media law-related and the question was—we brought some judges here and some professors here. There was some student involvement. But I don't think it developed as strongly as I would have hoped.

Q: There was a Darfur project as well, right?

PRICE: The Darfur project was interesting. Because it was a way of trying to experiment with deliberative democracy. I don't know if you know that project at Stanford?

Q: [James S.] Fishkin?

PRICE: Fishkin. Yes. So we were trying to use the deliberative democracy approach to thinking about compromises in the Darfur crisis. Some of it worked, and some of it didn't work.

Q: Did you actually bring folks into a room in that—

PRICE: We did some smaller versions of it. We never fully did it. But that was, I would say, an example of me trying to be a communication scholar and fuse it on top of all this other stuff. It worked to some small extent, but not sufficiently. But there's still—I don't know. Internews is

now working in South Sudan, for example. It's unclear to me what this means, but one of our alumni from CGCS is now in South Sudan, and is trying to think about media development there. So, again, what this means in a zone which is still highly conflictual, and civil war—but, for example, several people from South Sudan have come to the Annenberg-Oxford seminars. So all these things still operate in a kind of pot of interrelationships.

Q: Even today, yes. There was a Mexican project on transparency and, I think, information access.

PRICE: So that was a project on freedom of information. Mexico had pioneered, with an entity that was kind of an appeals board, to ensure that every department was basically fulfilling the goals of the freedom of information act. This was a novel entity, the Mexican approach. So we were asked by the Hewlett Foundation to evaluate that. Which we did. But that was, again—the question was, Did these add up? Or were they just one-off kinds of things?

Q: What was your opinion?

PRICE: This was more like a one-off.

Q: OK. I noticed that you—speaking of that industry around news and media training, and the NGOs involved with it, like IREX and Internews and so on—that you had done this really interesting edited volume on evaluating the evaluators, basically.<sup>5</sup> This more specifically about kind of the ratings around freedom of the press. Freedom House, Reporters Without Borders. That project sounded really fascinating. I don't know where it came from, or was it also commissioned?

PRICE: It was partly from discussions I had with Susan Abbott, who was working with me at the time. We were basically fascinated with this question. It was also a question of whether the Annenberg CGCS, the Annenberg project, would get involved more in evaluations. Was this a field that fit with the Annenberg idea of communications in society, with methodology? Also, was there a greater need for thinking about evaluations? It also has to do with the issue of fiction or like fiction and reality. So it seemed to me that a lot of the evaluation is built in, almost, in all these projects, but it's not clear what happened to these evaluations.

Evaluations weren't looked at as a source for study like, Should PhD students be looking at evaluations independently to see how they conceptualize the project, whether they were effective, etc.? I think we also were concerned, wanted to have some way of critical purchase on Freedom House evaluations in some way. This goes back to the question of what—Freedom House is largely about the formalities like, What is the media law in the country? Not how much information there is. One of the things that always intrigued me was, In what societies were there informed citizens, and what was the relationship between informed citizenry and the formal system, or the actual system?

---

<sup>5</sup> Monroe E. Price, Susan Abbott, and Libby Morgan, eds., *Measures of Press Freedom and Media Contributions to Development: Evaluating the Evaluators* (New York: Peter Lang, 2011).

So evaluating the evaluators was about many of those kinds of questions. I'd say a later thing that we were involved in, that I was very proud of, was a very small involvement, is in Rebecca MacKinnon's Ranking Digital Rights project, which basically tries to be, not a Freedom House, but a different kind of metric to thinking about major companies in the internet space. We helped at the beginning to nurture that.

Q: I didn't know that.

PRICE: That was related to the evaluating the evaluators project.

Q: Speaking of the internet—and I know we're just going over a lot—but internet governance is a topic that was almost purpose-built for you to get into, I feel like. You, I think with Stefaan, did some work on self-regulation and the internet. Is that correct? In the mid-2000s?

PRICE: Well, we did, I think, partly through the Bertelsmann Foundation. But then, later on, especially Stefaan, ICANN [Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers]. He was very interested in it. Markle [Foundation] was very interested in making sure that there was involvement from around the world in this new civil society of ICANN, etc. They sponsored people coming from Africa or India, etc. They were interested in developing nodes of engagement in these places.

CGCS did some work in that respect as well. Then we had a period in which we were working with the Internet Governance Forum on internet governance questions. We did some work on multi-stakeholder, whatever multi-stakeholderism means. Again, the same kind of question, which is both being slightly cynical about multi-stakeholderism and supportive of the idea of multi-stakeholders.

Q: Yes, I guess CGCS had—the Internet Policy Observatory was its name, the name for that project—

PRICE: The Internet Policy Observatory was, again—I can't remember who, how we invented this idea of an internet policy observatory. It came out of the European Media Observatory [*sic*: European Audiovisual Observatory] in Strasbourg. But the idea would be a kind of place to investigate different issues in internet governance. It's just terminating now. Laura [Schwartz-Henderson] and I have been just working on a number of final papers coming out. I just edited one with Laura, for Laura, on Chile. So this was definitely a CGCS kind of issue. It's been a great networking thing. We've just had four seminars—one in India, one in Africa—on research methods for people in the region to think about internet policy objectives.

Q: It seems like a classic place where there's a discourse of international norms and multi-stakeholder ideals on the one hand, and national and corporate players on the other, and that this dual level that you're talking about—in which sometimes the discourse is seized as a strategic communication instrument, but that it nevertheless matters.

PRICE: Yes. Maybe this is a place where they're replacing the older trope. This is one place where older tropes are being replaced by newer tropes, like multi-stakeholderism and some flourishing of civil society. The question is, How do you bring scholarly approaches to this in



some ways? The Internet Policy Observatory has been a great institution, a wonderful institution. Laura Schwartz-Henderson has made it into something really superlative. It will end in a month or two.

Q: Wow. Well, I was just thinking of the fact that right after that you published the free expression book. It was *Free Expression, Globalism, and the New Strategic Communication*. I don't know if it's fair to think of it as a trilogy, like I mentioned earlier, but I think of that 1996 book on television and the public sphere [*Television, the Public Sphere, and National Identity*] and the *Media and Sovereignty* in 2002—that this is sort of a third installment asking the same questions. We briefly touched on it, but we passed it by, which is the question of how this idea of strategic communication came to occupy the center place of that book. You've been talking about the themes underlying strategic communication, but this is a new label, or new-ish. If you want to say anything about the cross-border nature of your meaning of strategic communication.

PRICE: One way to think about it is to think about Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which uses the phrase the right to “receive and impart information, regardless of frontiers.” The question is, Do we really think that there is a right to receive and impart information “regardless of frontiers”? Is that central to our conception of free expression, that that be true? How does that relate to sovereignty? And how does it relate to abiding ideas of free expression.

So, in part, strategic communication has to do with the effort by large-scale global communicators to, basically, to erode, to engage in persuasion, “regardless of frontiers.” And who that is, who those are, and what are the forms of resistance to that? So, I guess I see, now, both the technology of ensuring some version of “regardless of frontiers,” and I see these kinds of structures of resistance, even in the West, certainly, but before that in Russia and China, etc. So I think this third book tried to explore that to a large extent.

Q: You use this great rephrasing of Max Weber's idea that the state is defined by the monopoly of legitimate use of force, to refer instead to the control of narrative or the control of information flows.

PRICE: Yes. This is a scary idea, but—

Q: How far would you take that as a definition of the state?

PRICE: Yes. Well, how far from whose perspective? I think it's definitely the case that states to some extent are, I think, a collection of stories about themselves. The ability to constrain the narrative—it has to do with monuments. It's getting close to my stuff on art and propaganda, which is, What are the mechanisms to, and to what extent are they necessary, to have this kind of stable, or dynamic narrative, that is a kind of boundary of the mind, in some way. This notion of frontiers—“regardless of frontiers”—is important for that subject in some way.

Q: As a normative question, do you think it follows that states should have some right?

PRICE: This again goes to the question of, What are the mechanisms? So there's more consensus on the idea that the state should help nourish and encourage narratives about itself. This gets back to monuments—a positive side of monuments, in some ways. Or a positive idea of public service broadcasting. So the BBC is a way of cushioning, of pillowing a society against counter-narratives in some way.

Q: Or Netflix.

PRICE: Or Netflix. So that part we like more than the idea of banning things. But this is all over the question of “Did Russia interfere in the 2016 election?”—the idea that much more information intervention, as part of a global sense of conflict.

Q: So that, is the idea of information warfare a good one?

PRICE: Without a specific definition, but it's definitely part of this idea. I don't know how much you know about the China One Road One Belt initiatives [*sic*: Belt and Road Initiative] or something like that, which is a kind of Marshall Plan of the mind. So think of the Marshall Plan as a large-scale initiative to wrap a notion of the US in the world, and think of a Chinese equivalent of that, which is now the One Road One Belt initiative. Which is very important, probably not as understood as it should be in United States. But it's a bid by China to help reshape the way China is perceived and also the way different elements of the world define itself. So I see this happening, this being these kinds of large-scale efforts, currently and in the years ahead. That, I think, is a new form of strategic communication.

Q: OK. I guess as a final question, unless you have something you'd like to bring up, I thought maybe returning it to Annenberg and to also your personal and scholarly life—your wife's art history interests and your own recent teaching and thinking around art and propaganda. You mentioned it a moment ago. You've taught a class at Annenberg this year. Maybe you could speak to how that relates to this longstanding question of the media system, changing technology, and the state.

PRICE: Well, I'm not sure I could do all of that. But there's some small things. I've been, together with Barbie [Zelizer] and Emily [Plowman], I'm thinking about a small exhibit on prints and drawings from East Germany. This has made me think a lot. I've also just returned from an exhibit at the Harvard [Art] Museums on German art from 1943 to 1955 [Inventur—Art in Germany, 1943–55, 2018]. These are all about technology, identity, strategic communication—or not so much strategic communication as identity and persuasion in some ways. I'm attracted by the question of which technology and which form of visual representation works at a particular time in a particular context.

Then, in this course, it's how museums embody this. These are different institutions for thinking about these kinds of questions. Which of these coexist nicely within an institution like Annenberg? Is this mainly about voting and democratic practices? We certainly think about culture and communications. We think less about art museums and art. But these long-term ways of building attitudes and building persuasions, I think, are things that are central to the way I've thought about this stuff, in the way the school thinks about them.

Q: Well, thank you so much. It's actually been an amazing privilege to hear about the arc of what is a remarkable life. Thank you for sharing—

PRICE: It's my pleasure. It's been especially my pleasure talking with you about these kinds of questions. You allow me to think about this and give it new dignity and new order in a life that I think has been filled with disorder [smiles]. So you helped me think of it as having some sort of design. Whether it's intelligent design or not is another issue. Thanks a lot.

Q: Thank you.

**END OF SESSION FIVE**