NATIONAL PRESS CLUB HEADLINERS LUNCHEON WITH
60 MINUTES CORRESPONDENT SCOTT PELLEY

SUBJECT: PELLEY WILL SHARE HIS NEW MEMOIR, "TRUTH WORTH TELLING: A REPORTER'S SEARCH FOR MEANING IN THE STORIES OF OUR TIMES,"

MODERATOR: ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK OF THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

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ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: [sounds gavel] Hi there. Welcome to the National Press Club, the place where news happens. My name is Alison Fitzgerald Kodjak. I'm a correspondent at NPR News here in Washington. I'm also the Press Club's 112th President. We're so pleased today to welcome our Headliner speaker, CBS News correspondent Scott Pelley.

Before we begin, I'd like to ask you all once again to please turn off your cell phones. And if you're following along today on Twitter, you can check the hash tag #NPCLive.

Truth Worth Telling. That's the name of Scott Pelley's new book. It might also be called "History Worth Watching." In his more than two decades at CBS, Pelley has had a front row seat to so many events that have shaped our time, from the Oklahoma City bombing, to Bill Clinton's first Presidential campaign, to the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center in New York. He was so close there, that he was literally covered in ash.

And in his book, he uses those experiences to define the importance of truth. He defends our free speech. And as one reviewer writes, "offers inspiring tales that remind us of the importance of values in our lives." Scott has done it all at CBS. He was a war reporter, a White House correspondent, an evening news anchor, and a 60 Minutes host. The list of honors and awards he's received is far too long to read here. But I will say that he must have a large room in his house to house all that hardware.

So let's just give a warm National Press Club welcome today to Scott Pelley.

[applause]

SCOTT PELLEY: Thank you everyone. You know, Alison, I can't tell you what a treat this is, what a great treat this is. Not the event, but the lunch.

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: The lunch that you had today.

SCOTT PELLEY: Yes. Because I have—My wife and I have a place in Texas, so we go to a lot of Texas restaurants. She never, ever lets me order the chicken fried steak. So today I can tell her, "Honey, that was all they had." So thank you for that.

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: Oh my gosh. [laughter] Can you just start out just set the table. This book is a series of stories, things that you have covered. And you assign each chapter, each story, a sort of value or virtue or word of describing its importance. Can you tell me the concept behind it?

SCOTT PELLEY: Absolutely. It's an unusual kind of memoir. I wanted to write a memoir, but I didn't want to write a memoir about me, because I knew nobody would be interested in that. If I started a book with, "I was born in San Antonio, Texas in 1957," and then there were another 500 pages after that, I mean nobody was going to sit still for that. But it occurred to me that I have met, during the course of my career, the most astounding people, who in many cases exhibited incredible virtues during the most difficult moments of their lives.

So the book is organized, as Alison said, really as an anthology of short stories about people and historic events. And the chapters are titled, for the most part, titled with virtues, such as gallantry, and selflessness, and duty, and valor, and what have you. So the first chapter, for example, is about what I witnessed at the World Trade Center on 9/11. And the name of that chapter is "Gallantry." And it's about the firefighters of the FDNY on that day.

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: That was one of the most compelling retellings of that morning that I have seen. You went into a huge amount of detail. Can you talk a little bit about how much of that was reporting that you did at the time? How much did you reconstruct for this book, did you go back and do additional work to retell that story?

SCOTT PELLEY: There's an enormous amount of research in this book. And, to tell you the truth, that's what I had the most fun doing. Because when you're an eyewitness to an event like the World Trade Center collapsing, the truth is, you don't know very much. You were there. You saw it happen. But you don't know why it happened. You don't know how it happened. You don't know all these things that are only going to be discovered later. For example, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, which is to building failures what the NTSB is to airplane crashes, they spent 10 years producing 53 engineering reports on exactly how the buildings came apart, and why they did.

That was important because never in human history had a steel high-rise ever collapsed because of fire. The World Trade Center Towers were the first to. That's why there

were 343 firemen in those buildings when they collapsed, because the fire command had no experience with a high-rise building collapsing. It had never happened.

And so digging into all of those things, Alison, understanding why the firemen were in there, what the firefighting plan was—They had a very good plan to save the people above the points of impact. And then, going through the 911 calls from people inside the building, going through the fire department radio transmissions, the 911 calls, for example, were sealed by court order for many, many, many years. About ten years after 9/11 those records became publicly available.

So I've been able to scoop up all that stuff that has become known and reported and analyzed over the last many years. It's hard to believe, isn't it? It's almost been 20 years. And then used all of that to inform what I saw with my own eyes.

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: I don't want to focus only on that chapter, but there was one tale you tell about a 911 call. And what I was struck by was that the 911 operator stayed on the telephone with this woman, who was not going to be rescued in the end for about 30 minutes, until she couldn't hear her anymore. And then it was clear that the 911 operator was incredibly personally impacted by this.

SCOTT PELLEY: That was a woman named Melissa Doy. She was a 32 year old financial analyst. She was on the 83rd floor of 2 World Trade Center. And she called 911. And if I may, I'll just read a small piece of that. "At the moment the 911 operator answered her call, Doy can be overheard nearing the end of the Hail Mary prayer. 'Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death.' '911 operator. Good day.' 'I'm on the 83rd floor. I'm on the 83rd floor!' Doy shouted into the phone. The nose of United Flight 175 had hit two floors below her. Part of the right wing had ripped through Doy's 83rd floor. The 24 minute conversation between Melissa Candida Doy and a 911 operator is among the few in which we have the caller's words. The City of New York had released the other 911 recordings, but only, you hear only the voice of the dispatcher in those cases. They took the voices of the callers out. But the reason we have this one, the recording was entered into evidence in the 2006 Federal Trial of Zacharias Moussaoui, a Frenchman, who ultimately pleaded guilty to conspiring with the 9/11 hijackers.

"Moussaoui will spend the rest of his days in the Federal Super Max Prison in Colorado. 'Ma'am, how you doing?' The operator speaking to Missy Doy was a woman. Listening to the recording, I suspect she's middle aged, and experienced. Her voice is earnest and empathetic. 'Are you going to be able to get somebody up here?' Doy asked. I'm struck by the youth in Doy's pleading soprano. 'Of course, ma'am. We're coming up to you.' 'Well, there's no one here yet. And the floor is completely engulfed. We're on the floor, and we can't breathe. And it's very, very, very hot.'"

The rest of that sequence in the chapter details a firefighter named Oriel Palmer. He was a battalion chief. Palmer is leading the entire rest of the FDNY up the only staircase that survived the impact of the aircraft. And no one who heard Palmer's voice was surprised that

it was him, because Oriel Palmer was an accomplished marathon runner, and won the FDNY Fitness Medal every year. He was blazing the trail, rising up towards Missy Doy.

Before Palmer's radio recordings were discovered, they had been lost for a period of time. No one knew they existed. Before they were discovered, it was estimated that no firefighter had gotten higher than the 50th floor. But from Palmer's radio transmissions, we know that he ascended at least to the 79th floor. He was rising toward Melissa Doy at a rate of one floor a minute, telling the firefighters behind him which path to take. And as he encountered survivors, he would tell them how to get down to the 40th floor, which was where the only working elevator was. Anyway, I'll let you read the rest of it in the book. But it's, as we all know, one hell of a story.

[applause]

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: So we got a few questions before you came here. So there are a lot of people who have a lot of things they want to talk about. We'll start with questions about the book, and move down to the state of journalism and to CBS. But this person says, in the book you discussed values, virtues, and vices you see in America. What's the most important value, virtue, and vice you see today?

SCOTT PELLEY: Well character is destiny. That is inescapable. And it's one of the subjects of the book. There's a chapter in the book about the 2016 election, and it's called "Hubris." And it applies to both sides in this case. But what concerns me a great deal right now, Alison, about the state of discourse, is the harshness of the rhetoric, particularly directed against the press by the President, but also harsh rhetoric from the left, as well. I think we're losing our ability to communicate with one another. It's terribly worrying.

When I was anchoring the CBS Evening News, in the President's first term, many of you will remember these were interesting days for us as journalists, because we weren't used to a President that was telling falsehoods every day. And so we're having conversations in our newsroom, just like you did, about, "Well, can we say 'lie'? Can we say that the President lied? Is that okay?" I mean, you know, we were talking about style issues that had never come up before.

So we were very frank, as many people were. But we were very frank on the CBS Evening News about when the President was lying and when he was not. Well then the President called CBS News and others "the enemy of the American people." So I was invited, with some other anchors, to have lunch with the President, a couple of weeks later. And I said, "Mr. President, I'm concerned about the enemy of the American people. I mean attack the press. Please do. But that kind of thing might incite some poor, deranged individual to go into a local TV station, or a newspaper, and shoot the receptionist because she's the enemy of the American people."

And he actually looked up at the ceiling, and thought for a second. And he looked me in the eye, and he said, "I don't worry about that." That's a direct quote. Now I thought, "Okay, he's performing for the table. I get it. There's an audience of 12 people here,

etcetera." So I pulled him aside after the lunch, very privately, and I said, "No, seriously, Mr. President. I'm very concerned about the violence problem. And I hope he'll think about it. And he said, "Okay, I'll think about it." Well, he didn't change any of the rhetoric.

Fast-forward, now, a year, I get a call from the FBI. The FBI is telling me that the guy who mailed all those letter bombs to people he perceived to be enemies of the President, had a file on me and my family in his computer. And he had my home address. So this is too much. And not just—I mean we have the gentleman from the committee to protect right here. You know, we're used to this kind of violence against journalists in some parts of Asia, in some parts of the Middle East. It can't be here. There's no democracy without journalism. That's what the founders knew. When they gave us the power over the government, the founders created free speech and a free press. Because as Madison said, "Freedom of the press is the right that guarantees all of the others." They understood, 230 years ago, that if we could say what we wanted to say, read what we want to read, write what we want to write, then all of our rights would be protected. That's why it's up there in the First Amendment.

And so the political rhetoric right now, I think, really needs to get toned down, particularly with regard to journalists, because journalism is integral to the function of every democracy, and certainly the United States.

[applause]

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: I'll applaud that as well.

SCOTT PELLEY: And I know I'm taking a risk saying something like that at the National Press Club. [laughter] But some things are just harsh. I'm sorry.

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: Well you talk about this in the final chapter of the book, which is "To a Young Journalist." And you talk about the importance of journalism, the importance of truth-telling, and also the dangers of bad information, the proliferation of bad information. Can you talk a little bit more about that?

SCOTT PELLEY: You know, this worries me more, right now in my life, than anything else in terms of a threat to our country. We have gone—and we've all seen it—We have gone from the information age to the disinformation age. And that was a huge departure that I think the American people may not be fully aware of. We live in an age where never before in human history has more information been available to more people. That's a wonderful thing. But we also live in an age where never, in human history, has more bad information been available to more people.

That's where journalism comes in, right. We're the antidote to gossip, right. That's what we're supposed to be. That's where journalism comes in. And so this is a very troubling period. And I tell young journalists that there has been a revolution in distribution, that we all know so well. But that does not mean there's been a revolution in the rules for content. Those rules never change. It doesn't matter if you're working on a stone tablet or a glass tablet, those rules never change. Is it right? Is it fair? Is it honest?

And just because you don't read the newspaper on paper anymore, that doesn't mean our values and ethics as journalists have changed. So that's what I'm trying to tell young people today, because I think it's so very important that they understand the values that all of us in this room share, and carry that forward. Because again, as Madison saw so clearly, it is freedom of the press that guarantees our liberty.

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: And in that chapter, you describe an experiment that you did, where you bought bots on Twitter.

SCOTT PELLEY: Bots. Yeah. We did a story for 60 Minutes about misinformation, disinformation. So we bought—we bought, through an intermediary, 5,000 bots from a Russian source. And the bots masquerade as real people on Twitter or what have you. So we bought—It cost a few hundred dollars to buy 5,000 of these things. Little lines of code, right. What the bots do, is they go out into the internet universe, and collect names and photographs and information. Because of the way our bots were coded, most of them were soccer moms.

So now they pop up with Twitter accounts. There's a face. God knows who it is. There's a name never connected to that face. And a little narrative about who they are, and where they live in America. This is all false. None of this is true. So now we've got 5,000 of them. And then we programmed them to retweet anything that I tweet. So I send out a tweet that says, "What happens when 60 Minutes investigates fake news?" And normally, I would expect to get, you know, 100 retweets in a day, or something like that.

This guy we were working with, our expert, set the bots loose. And the retweets just went up into the thousands. And once it hit a certain point, enough real people began to notice, that they just took over. It was like setting my tweet off on a rocket. So what if my message wasn't so innocuous? And what if I bought a million bots instead of the 5,000 that I bought for a few hundred dollars? This is what the Russian GRU was doing, right. And they have unlimited resources, really.

At one point it was March Madness time. So just for fun, I sent the tweet out again, hash tag March Madness. We instantly became one of the top three trending subjects on the March Madness website. Had nothing to do with basketball except I wrote "#MarchMadness." So these are the kinds of things I think most people don't know about. And we have to become educated about them, because we have enormous responsibilities as journalists, but more than ever before, our readers and our viewers have got to take responsibility for what they're consuming and what they believe. And I don't think 99 percent of the American people realize that, that when they're looking—I'm just making this up off the top of my head—when they're looking at AmericansForAmerica.com, it's a GRU lieutenant in St. Petersburg. I don't think many people understand that.

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: How do we get people to understand that? I mean that seems, to me, the hurdle that is almost insurmountable.

SCOTT PELLEY: Talk about it, report about it, investigate it, investigate it, investigate it. Put it in the real media. When people come to me and say, "Well, what am I supposed to do?" This is very self-serving. And I'm 62 years old, I would say this. But I tell them to go to brand name media, you know. And let it be ABC. Let it be the *Washington Post*. Let it be the *Chicago Tribune*. I don't care what brand name media you're interested in, or where you are on the spectrum. But the one thing you know from brand name media is that there are journalists who are trained working there. They're being supervised by people who have been doing this for 10, 20, 30, 40 years. And most importantly, they have enormous reputational risk if they get something wrong. They really care if they get something wrong.

And so I tell people that, if you see something on the internet, and you are just outraged by this terrible atrocity, go see what CBS News has reported on that subject. Go see what the *Washington Post* has said about that subject, or NPR. You may discover that that thing actually never happened. And the beauty part is, that that has never been easier in human history. You can do that kind of a spot check if you care about a story in a matter of seconds. That's a great thing.

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: I'm going to go back to some of these questions. This person writes, having held the anchor job once occupied by Walter Cronkite, often called, "the most trusted man in America," do you think that era is over in this cynical world in which many people embrace? Is it possible that one journalist or any one person could ever have that level of trust again?

SCOTT PELLEY: Definitely over and definitely a good thing. Cynicism, cynicism is not a good thing. But I write a lot in the book about skepticism, which is something that all of us have been trained to exercise as journalists. I think our viewers and our readers don't exercise skepticism nearly to the degree that we should, that we do. During and after Walter—I mean look at those times, right. Vietnam. Watergate. All of those things that were happening that Walter was reporting about were creating in the American people, unfortunately, a little bit of cynicism about the media, and about the power structures particularly in Washington.

So I think it is a good thing that no single journalist or two or three are going to be considered the most trusted person, especially for all the reasons that we just discussed. We need to earn the trust of the public. And I encourage the public to be skeptical about what they're telling them, and to do their own research.

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: This is a question about local news. There are so few local newspapers, at least with the kind of voice and power that they used to have, regional papers, city papers. How do you think changes like this affect journalism broadly, and affect those communities?

SCOTT PELLEY: Well, it's the communities that I'm concerned about. This is something that we're going to have to find a way to address as a society, because all the things I said earlier about there being no democracy without journalism apply on the local

level. It applies to the City Council, and the City Manager, and the cops in the little town. I mean how was corruption going to be ferreted out in these smaller towns, these small school districts, things like that? How is that going to happen if it isn't for reporters who know that town, and know those people, and are able to dig into those facts?

I have a home in a small New England town called Darien, Connecticut. And Darien, for whatever reason, is about 20,000 people. It has two local newspapers, which is like the most amazing thing. And they just give the school district hell about funding, and where the money goes, and all of that sort of thing. And every time the paper comes in, I think, "Right! Go get them! You know, tell that truth."

And Darien, unfortunately, is a very, very—is a rather unique place in that way. And I very much worry about local papers, local radio, local television stations. I started in Lubbock, Texas, working first for the *Avalanche Journal* newspaper, and then the ABC TV station there. And who is going to ferret out corruption in towns like Lubbock if you don't have robust journalism? It is a question that must be answered.

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: Okay, I'm going to turn a little bit, because somebody mentioned on one of these that you started at the Lubbock *Avalanche*?

SCOTT PELLEY: *Avalanche Journal.*

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: *Avalanche Journal* when you were 15 years old?

SCOTT PELLEY: Lubbock sits on a tabletop mesa, where there is no danger of anything ever rolling downhill. [laughter] And so I asked about the odd name of the newspaper, and I was informed that it was supposed to be an avalanche of news on your doorstep. [laughter] I said, "Oh, well okay then. That makes sense." You know, Alison, my career in search of the truth began with a lie. I wanted to get a job at the paper because I really wanted to be a photographer. I wanted to work at *National Geographic.* But the paper only hired kids that were 16 and above. And I had this temporal problem. I was 15. So I lied about my age.

I got the job as a copy boy working the three to midnight shift after high school, every day after high school classes. My mom was my co-conspirator. She dropped me off a couple of blocks from the paper so that nobody could see I didn't have a driver's license. [laughter] And I worked in the wire room for a period of time, for about a year.

One day, the executive editor of the paper comes in. His name was Dave Knapp. He was a big barrel-chested guy, always wore a white shirt. Had a silver crew cut, and kind of Marine Corps bearing. And I'm in the wire room, working on my high school homework, and Knapp comes in. And he looks down at me, and he says, "Do you want to be a reporter?" And I said, "Well, I don't know. I never gave it any thought." He said, "Well, do you or don't you?" And I said, "Well sure. I guess." And he picked me up, sat me in front of a

typewriter, which I had no idea how to operate. And I've been a reporter ever since. [laughter]

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: So no photography.

SCOTT PELLEY: So that was the end of my photography career. Although it's a cherished hobby. And I may try to publish some of the pictures one day. But yeah, that's what set me on the track to be a reporter.

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: Okay. I'm going to turn back to the book for a moment, because we're talking about lies. Somebody asked about covering the White House. But you've gone into that a little bit already. Here you have a chapter called "Deceit: The Fabulous Mr. Clinton." And I'm interested that you called that chapter "Deceit" when we have Mr. Trump in the White House now. Can you talk a little bit about that choice?

SCOTT PELLEY: Well, you know, only one chapter could be named "Deceit." [laughter] And one chapter could be named "Hubris." And I guess when I wrote them, I just split them up that way. I was the Chief White House Correspondent at the White House during the whole Lewinsky matter. I remember when I first got the job at the White House, naturally very excited about it. I sat in the little booth there that CBS has over in the West Wing behind the briefing room. And I remember sitting there, thinking to myself, "Boy, I hope something interesting happens while I'm here." [laughter] And then six months later.

So Bill Owens, who is now the Executive Producer of 60 Minutes, was my producer at the White House. Bill used to work for me, now I work for him. And so we worked very hard to break stories on the Lewinsky matter. And the President, of course, was working very hard to lie to the country. The difference we have today is that our current President tells falsehoods about just about everything, including policy. Mr. Clinton kind of stuck to one subject matter when he was lying to the country, which, in retrospect, could be considered to be laudable at this point.

But Bill and I broke a lot of stories, and we talk about how we did it in the book, including the story that we broke on the evening news that the President had, for the first time in history, been subpoenaed to testify by a grand jury.

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: One of the things that I found interesting in the chapters that I did read of this were the nuance that you brought to each story, when you're talking now about how people sort of are oppositional, rather than able to see nuance. And the chapter on Ben Bernanke, called "Audacity," I mean there was a lot of anger toward the Fed and the Treasury and the policies that bailed out banks during that time. But you really took a close look at what they were going through in that chapter. And I'm just interested, because it was something I covered at the time as well, you know, how you chose him as an example of audacity.

SCOTT PELLEY: I spoke to him recently, and I told him I had written a chapter about him in my book. And it was entitled "Audacity." And he said, "Well that'll come as a surprise to my wife."

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: He's very mild-mannered.

SCOTT PELLEY: Very, very mild-mannered. I described him in the book as nebbish-y, you know. He's just, he's every inch the economics professor that he is. But here's the lucky accident of history. Late 2007-early 2008, when the world was going to hell in a hand basket, and all of you remember that, Ben Bernanke was Chairman of the Federal Reserve. And, before he was appointed to that job, he had spent his entire life as an academic, as an economics professor, and the head of the Economics Department of Princeton. He was considered to be one of, if not the leading expert in the world, on the causes of the Great Depression in 1929, which is a very complicated thing. It's not as simple as the stock market crashing in October of that year. And the Federal Reserve had a great deal to do in 1929 with turning a garden variety recession into a world cataclysm.

So the reason that I wrote this story about Ben Bernanke is that he recognized what was happening. He said publicly that this was the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. But that is not what he believed. He thought this was going to be the worst financial crisis in human history, because all of the financing for every business, every walk of life, all around the world, was freezing solid.

So Bernanke essentially did the opposite, the 180 degree opposite of everything the Federal Reserve did in 1929. And he flooded the system with money, trillions of dollars. Literally, in an interview with me, admitted he was just printing money, just pouring trillions of dollars on this nuclear pile like water on a nuclear pile. The White House was in gridlock. The Congress had voted against the bailout plan. So they're in gridlock. And Bernanke doesn't need anyone's permission, right. He's the only free player in this whole thing. He didn't need anybody's permission.

When the Banking Act was rewritten in 1935, as a reaction to the Great Depression, there were emergency powers granted to the Federal Reserve, what are called 13C Powers. They had never been invoked, not during the Great Depression, not at any time after that. Bernanke invoked the 13C Powers secretly. He didn't make an announcement about that, because he was afraid it would lead to panic. And then he used those powers, unilaterally, in concert with his Board, but unilaterally, to affect all of this money flow into the world economy, just sent airplane loads of money, federal, to central banks all around the world. Because the dollar is the world currency of trade. And central banks all around the world didn't have any dollars anymore. They couldn't buy a car from America if they wanted to. So he sent money everywhere, all around the world, pumped trillions of dollars into the US economy.

A lot of that debt is still on the Federal Reserve balance sheet today. And one of the big issues is, how do you unwind that? But here is what Bernanke thought. If I don't do this, we're ruined. If I do do this, the economy might improve. And then we can pay for all this.

And that is exactly what happened. All those huge bailouts that you heard about, that made you so mad back in those days, they've all been paid back, with interest. Billions of dollars have flowed into the Treasury in interest payments on those bailout deals that we did to save the car companies and that sort of thing. It turned out to be a huge moneymaker for the American people.

But Bernanke understood that—He understood the Great Depression. He saw it happening again. He saw the White House in gridlock. He saw Capitol Hill in gridlock. And he just went ahead and did what he thought was right. And I believe, reasonable people will disagree, but I believe that Ben Bernanke saved the world.

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: I'm going to just talk about one more chapter, which is called "Objectivity: Learning From Unpleasant Truth." And in that chapter you talk about how, in the precision bombings in Afghanistan, there were a lot of reports of terrorists being killed, enemy fighters being killed, and no reports of civilians being killed, at least official reports out of the United States. And you went to check this out. You were in Afghanistan. And you found that of course lots of civilians were killed.

But then you went further, and I thought this was fascinating, and sort of nuanced. You looked at how the military calculates how many civilians are worth sacrificing to kill foreign fighters or terrorists. And then you went even a step further, and sort of showed the difficulty they had making those decisions on the ground. And I just thought that chapter had so many layers.

SCOTT PELLEY: Well thank you for that. The Central Command was reporting all of these successful bombing runs, and 25 terrorists were killed, and no civilians, etcetera, etcetera. However, we're hearing from the Afghan people that hundreds and hundreds of civilians are being killed in many of these bombing runs. So those two things didn't match up. And I began to wonder about that. Killing a lot of civilians is an enormous problem for our military, because it runs counter to counterinsurgency. We're trying to win the hearts and minds of these people. And instead, we're enraging them against the government that we're trying to support. So this is a huge problem for American strategy.

I sent one of my producers, Solly Granatstein into this. And he discovered that there was one bombing in particular that the Pentagon did not want to talk about, and wouldn't release information on. And so we went to that place in Kapisa Province, with no military support. They wouldn't take us there. We had to hire our own machine gun-toting mercenaries, and put our own convoy together, to get up into Kapisa Province, which is in the foothills of the Hindu Kush, and reach this small town, where we had heard that a family had been killed in the bombing.

Long story short, the facts of the matter were these. A pilot saw two men with rifles running into a home. The response to that was, that the on-scene commander on the ground asked the Air Force to bomb the house. Now the problem with this is that you're stuck with whatever the plane is loaded with. There are planes orbiting overhead all the time, in case our troops need air cover. And whatever is on the plane is what you've got to use. Well, there

was a B1B bomber in the neighborhood, loaded with two 2,000 pound bombs, blockbusters. So they drop them both on a mud house. Killed three generations of a family.

Now when we pounded on the Pentagon to talk to us about it, pounded on them, pounded on them, they would not do it. Total stonewall. Not talking about it. First of all, I don't think they have the right to not talk about it, because it's not that the Pentagon isn't talking to 60 Minutes, they're not talking to the American people. That's the problem. I'm just a conduit for that information.

Finally, for some reason that's obscure, the Air Force finally called back and said, "Okay, we'll talk about it." So we flew to Qatar, where there was a secret US airbase, and interviewed the people who prosecute the airborne. And they described, very legitimately, all of the problems and the rules of engagement and the difficulty that they have in making determinations. You know, there was a time when a bomb would go amiss, and it would hit a target that was unintended. That's not really what happens anymore. With our smart weapons, they hit the thing they're aimed at.

The problem is a problem of intelligence. You're going to hit that building, unfailingly. But do you really know what's in that building? That's the problem. Is it the right building? And so they explained all of those things to us. I kept telling the Pentagon, "Look. You've got a story to tell." And they finally told their story, and it gave us that kind of balance that we wanted.

We also interviewed a guy who was in charge of high value targeting before the war in Iraq. And there was a campaign before the war, before the invasion in 2003, to kill Saddam Hussein with an air strike. The idea was, if we kill Saddam Hussein, then maybe there won't be a war at all. And so they, again, it was a problem of intelligence. But there was a formula, as it was explained to me by the head of High Value Targeting, that they could kill 20 civilians in a strike against Saddam Hussein. If they estimated they were going to kill more than 20, they had to go to the Secretary of Defense or the President for authorization. But they were generally authorized to kill 20 people and less in their estimate if they got Saddam Hussein.

So they did 50 air strikes on suspected locations of Saddam Hussein. And, as we all know, they were 0 for 50. They didn't get him. But they killed something over 200 civilians in the process. Now I know, everybody's shaking their head. I know. But think about this. 2003, we invade Iraq. Three hundred thousand people were killed in the Iraq War. Now if we'd killed Saddam Hussein and killed 200 civilians in the process, these are the problems that the Pentagon has when they're trying to work out these very, very difficult issues.

Can I just read one little thing out of the book?

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: Yeah. And after that, we'll take questions from out here. So you go ahead and read us a bit.

SCOTT PELLEY: So I was Chief White House Correspondent, as you know. Bill Owens was my producer. He's now Executive Producer of 60 Minutes. And we went with President Clinton on a state tour of China. And in going on that trip, we really wanted to interview a Chinese dissident by the name of Bao Tong. Bao Tong was Chief of Staff to the Chinese President before Tiananmen Square. He was dead set against sending the military into Tiananmen Square. In order to send the military into Tiananmen Square, three days before that happened, the Chinese hardliners arrested Bao Tong, the Chief of Staff to the President. Put him in prison. Put him in solitary confinement, where he remained for many years.

When we were traveling with President Clinton to Beijing, Bao had just been released. And we wanted to interview him. Now what are the chances that a guy who's been in solitary confinement for 17 years is going to, after a few months of liberty, sit down with CBS News and criticize the Chinese government? He was eager to do it. But there was a huge problem, he was being watched 24/7 by the Chinese Secret Police. I mean we couldn't set up a camera in a hotel room and have him come to the hotel room. They would never allow it.

So Bill Owens came up with a plan. Bill Owens designed a plan that would unfold in Purple Bamboo Park, a 115 acre oasis of lakes and lawns in Northwest Beijing, an affluent part of the capital, where universities are clustered. When we arrived in the park, summer was blossoming. The sky was gauzed by high cirrus. Families in canopied boats drifted along groves of lotuses, propelled by gondoliers sculling red oars in a lazy rhythm. One boy, pleased with his cleverness, plucked a broad lotus flower and raised it against the sun like a parasol.

Along the edges of the park's concrete trails, bamboo pickets were set up to keep visitors off the carefully tinted greens. The gardens that later became Purple Bamboo Park were originally ordered in the year 1577 by Wanli, the 13th Emperor of the Ming Dynasty. On June 27th, 1998, Bao Tong ambled down one of the pathways in the park, and settled onto a green wooden bench. Across the path, directly opposite Bao, our cameraman, Rolly Malixy[?], sat with a camera hidden in a shoulder bag. I came from the opposite direction and sat with Bao. A nearly invisible wireless microphone pinned inside my shirt transmitted our conversation across the path to Rolly's recorder. There was no telling what would happen next, as this soft spoken man risked everything to test his people's right to be heard.

Bao was 59 when he went into prison for revealing state secrets and counter-revolutionary propagandizing. That's the same ambiguous charge that China uses to jail journalists today. Despite prison, Bao looked younger than his 66 years. He was slender as a reed, nodding in the lake. He wore a teal polo shirt untucked, hanging loosely over black trousers. His smooth face was dominated by outsized silver wire rim glasses.

I had noticed that Bao tended to walk, holding his arms behind his back, as if handcuffed. He surprised me with a complete lack of bitterness about his years in solitary. He said, isolation had liberated his mind from communist party dogma. Bao began, "According to our Constitution, I have the freedom of speech. However, whether I do indeed have the

freedom of speech, I do not know. I think CBS can conduct a test. Let's see whether I get into trouble after your interview with me. If so, it will demonstrate that our government does not respect our own Constitution." "What should Americans understand about the struggle in China?" I asked. "If people can check and balance the power of the government, then the government can become a force that safeguards world peace. Otherwise, it is a dangerous force."

Bao told me that China could not progress politically until the party publicly admitted the Tiananmen Square massacre was wrong. "I feel sad, ashamed, and proud at the same time," he told me, "proud of those students, the citizens of Beijing, the people." After a few minutes, we parted. Bao ambled away. I walked in the opposite direction. That's when I noticed, out of the corner of my eye, another cameraman with a shoulder bag. From the zippered opening protruded an absurdly large lens. He was a member of a Chinese Secret Police Surveillance Team. Bill, Natalie Loo, our Beijing producer, and I, quickened our pace slightly, but deliberately.

A moment later, I saw a furious man sprinting toward us. He was red with rage and closing fast. We began an undignified trot. But the man kept accelerating and screaming, now waving a fist. I began wondering about Chinese jails, as we broke into a full run. The man matched our pace. Natalie and I were falling short of breath, when I shouted, "What's he saying? What's he saying?" "He's saying, 'Keep off the grass!'" [laughter]

As a coda to the story, I learned a lesson about how the Chinese apparatus works. Nothing happened to Bao. We broadcast that. We led the evening news with it. Nothing happened to Bao. Nothing happened to me. And nothing happened to Bill Owens. About three months later, the Secret Police stormed into Natalie Loo's apartment while she was getting her children ready for school, handcuffed her, took all of her materials, and led her away, with no explanation.

I was traveling with the President in Ireland by this time, and I went to the National Security Advisor. And I said, "You know what? You've got to help us out here. We've got to get her out of there." I don't know if that was what did the trick, but a few days after that, Natalie was deported to the United States, where she's had a long and glorious career at Voice of America. So there were consequences, but not the ones we expected.

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: That's a fantastic story. So I'd love to invite you all to participate in the conversation. Does anybody—In the back. Please just make sure you ask a question. [laughter]

SCOTT PELLEY: There should be a question mark at the end of your statement.

Q: She wants to hold the mic for me. Scott, thanks for being here, and coming. Can you hear me okay?

SCOTT PELLEY: I hear you just fine. I just can't see you.

Q: That's because of the light.

SCOTT PELLEY: Oh there you are. I gotcha. Okay.

Q: Gene Tao with Hexagon. Thanks for being here. Susan Zirinsky just made all kinds of changes with CBS News this past week. I'm sure you're aware of that, all your colleagues at 60 Minutes, which by the way, I watch religiously. I'm big fans. Did she call you and ask you for your opinion on what was going on? And was she going to make some changes?

SCOTT PELLEY: Well, you know, that's an interesting question. As a matter of fact, she did. I have known Susan for 30 years. And that's only because I've only been at CBS for 30 years. Dan Rather used to say that Susan was delivered as a baby in a CBS News shipping bag, right into the newsroom. She's been there more than 40 years. She is one size too small for petite, but she is the largest presence in any room. And I'm so excited about her being the President of CBS News. It's the first woman President of CBS News, way overdue.

She has made a number of changes in the anchor spots. And I think they're just terrific. I think Nora O'Donnell is uniquely suited to work at the evening news. She has the leadership capability, which is so important to that job, because you're sort of like the queen in that job. You know, everybody looks to you for leadership, is one thing that I learned in the job. And I think Nora has that innate ability to do that.

And I'm really excited about John Dickerson coming to 60 Minutes. John has the interviewing capability of Mike Wallace and the writing capability of Bob Simon. And boy, that's a sweet combination. And he will fit right into the 60 Minutes cadre of correspondents. So I feel really great. We also have a new Chairman of the CBS Corporation, a guy that I've known for a very long time, Joe Ianello, who I have enormous confidence in. I'm feeling—and now Bill Owens is the Executive Producer of 60 Minutes. So I feel great about our future. I've known all of these people for decades. And I'm thrilled about the changes.

Q: Thank you again. If you only were accountable to the Constitution, what would you do to control social media?

SCOTT PELLEY: Well, those two—the two parts of your question are antithetical, aren't they? The Constitution does not allow control of the media. In the Alien and Sedition Act of 1778, '79, made it illegal to criticize the President or the Congress. [laughter] And that lasted for about two years. And it was when Madison was writing his commentaries on the Alien and Sedition Act that he said that freedom of the press is the only guarantor of liberty. And so the Alien and Sedition Act went away in 1800, and figured in the election of the loss of the election by Adams to Thomas Jefferson. Anyway. So we haven't had control of the media in that way since.

Now, let me get really to the point of your question. We can't control social media. It can't be done. I don't think it can be legislated. I don't think the Constitution would allow it to be legislated. This is freedom of speech in a form that the founders could not have

conceived of. But what the founders did understand very well was human nature. And that, in my view, never changes, no matter what the technology is around us. And that's one of the reasons we have the problems we do, because now everyone is a publisher. Everyone is a publisher, and they have no editor. That's a really big problem. [laughter]

And so our first thought is our best thought these days, which of course is—I counseled young journalists in the book to reflect on things. Don't fire off your first shot, your first thought. So we can't control it. It won't be controlled. So we have to be very smart about this new information ecosystem that we live in.

There are two halves of that, the viewer and the reader has got to take responsibility for what they are consuming and what they believe. We all take care to maybe not smoke, and maybe not eat certain things because it's bad for our body. Well now, we've got serious pollution in the information stream. And we need to make the same kind of judgments that that is not good for my brain. And so there's that half of it.

The other half of it is, as journalists, we are trained to expose falsehood. And we have to do that job with greater vigor than ever before. You know, Zuckerberg, the President and founder of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg, told Congress that—He was being grilled on how the Russians had created so many Facebook posts, and all of this, during the election. And Zuckerberg said, "Well, you know, figuring out what's true is very hard."

Well, yes it is. [laughter] It's so hard that people go to universities and get degrees in figuring out the truth. Those are called journalism degrees. Some people even get Master's Degrees. And I think, instead of artificial intelligence, which too often is artificial stupidity, we need to have human beings in that loop. If Zuckerberg had hired 100 journalists to stand in the middle of the information stream, a lot of that stuff never would have gotten past long, because we're all pretty skeptical. And we go, "Wait a minute. What's the source for that?"

The computer can't do that. Artificial intelligence can't do that. You've got to have a human being in there who's trained to do it. And so I think journalism, we are about to discover, has never been more important in human history.

[applause]

Q: Hi. I'm Diane Signs, former *Washington Post* reporter. There have been reports of problems with voting systems throughout many US states. What can local journalists do to hold Secretaries of State and state legislatures accountable to have some sort of paper backup or a good backup for these election systems?

SCOTT PELLEY: You know, one of the problems with democracy and liberty is that all of the states do their own thing, right. And so that's a great thing. And that's the way our country is organized. But you end up with every state doing something slightly different with regard to election laws and the way they tabulate votes, and the way they register voters, and all those sorts of things. It's amazing crazy quilt, as you know, all across the country.

But local reporters need to be holding their local county officials' feet to the fire. They need to demand explanations. They need to demand documents that supported the purchasing of one system over another. And just dig, dig, dig, dig, dig. I think that's the only way to do that.

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: So we are coming close to the end of our hour here. Before we sign off, I would like to just let you all know of a few upcoming events of the National Press Club. On May 30th, we have a book event with the former US Air Force Secretary, Deborah Lee James. She's the author of *Aim High: Chart Your Course and Find Success.* On June 3rd we have lunch with EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler. And on June 19th we have a Newsmaker event with House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff.

And I would like to present Mr. Pelley with this highly coveted National Press Club coffee mug. [applause]

SCOTT PELLEY: I have—At CBS I'm pretty famous for my weakness of coffee, weakness for coffee. When I got that job at the *Avalanche Journal* when I was 15, the coffee in the newsroom was free. And so yeah, I've had a terrible addiction ever since. So today is a red letter day. I got a chicken fried steak and a coffee mug. And I'm going to come visit more often. Thank you very, very, very much. [applause]

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: So I want to give you our final question, which you may have just answered. CBS Saturday Morning asks visiting chefs who they would like to share a meal with and why. So we would like to ask you those questions. Who would you like to share a meal with? And why?

SCOTT PELLEY: Living or dead?

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: Well, I think you get to decide.

SCOTT PELLEY: [laughter] I mean how small is the universe here? Does it have to be a chef?

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: No.

SCOTT PELLEY: No? I can share a meal with anyone? I can share a meal with anyone. You know, don't groan. I would choose President Trump.

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: Interesting.

SCOTT PELLEY: Because he just fascinates me. I'm serious. What is going on there, right? And I would really like to spend some alone time, with no audience around us, to just try to understand that psyche a little bit. I did an interview with him during the campaign, and he was obfuscating. He was telling outrageous falsehoods in the interview, etcetera, etcetera. But there was one question that I asked him, and for once, his answer was

concise and undeniably true. I said, “Mr. Trump, you love hearing about yourself.” And he said, “I do.” [laughter] So I’d love to know more about him. I really would. I spend a lot of every day thinking about what's going on in that head. So that wouldn’t be a bad one. I guess we’ll have cheeseburgers. [laughter]

ALISON FITZGERALD KODJAK: Probably. [laughter] Thank you very much for being with us. Ladies and gentlemen—

SCOTT PELLEY: So great. Thank you all. Thank you. Thank you, thank you.

[applause]

SCOTT PELLEY: Oh boy, that was fun.

END OF INTERVIEW