

Professor Exposes their Crimes against Humanity | Robin Andersen

The Gaza Genocide would not be possible, was it not for the enabling hand of Legacy Media. Today I speak with Prof. Dr. Robin Andersen (Fordham University), author of "The Complicit Lens", about Western coverage of Gaza, the October 7 story, newsroom pressure at major outlets, distorted war language, hospital reporting, discussion-stopping media frames, collapsing trust in legacy news, and whether journalists and editors who enable mass violence can face legal accountability. Links: Robin Andersen at Fordham University <https://faculty.fordham.edu/andersen/> The Complicit Lens by Robin Andersen <https://orbooks.com/catalog/the-complicit-lens/> Neutrality Studies substack: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com> (Opt in for Academic Section from your profile settings: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com/s/academic>) Merch: <https://neutralitystudies-shop.fourthwall.com> Donation: <https://neutralitystudies.com/donate> Timestamps: 00:00:00 Introduction and book focus 00:01:59 Media consent and genocide framing 00:05:29 October 7 story and retaliation frame 00:16:40 Newsroom consensus and pro-Israel bias 00:25:25 CNN NYT BBC and edited coverage 00:31:03 Liberal media and loss of trust 00:37:06 Hospitals war law and propaganda 00:45:58 Israel's right to exist and loyalty tests 00:53:08 Impunity and legal accountability

#Pascal

Welcome back, everybody, to Neutrality Studies. My name is Pascal Lottaz, and I am joined today by Dr. Robin Andersen, a professor emerita at Fordham University and the author of the new book *The Complicit Lens: U.S. Media Coverage of Israel's Genocide in Gaza.* Professor Andersen, welcome.

#Robin Andersen

It's great to be here.

#Pascal

It's great having you. So you wrote this fantastic book. Let's show it once again. It's right here, *The Complicit Lens.* You're focusing on how the Western media is actually enabling the genocide that we've seen going on in Palestine. Can you maybe tell us a little bit about how you came to research this book and why you're focusing on media so much?

#Robin Andersen

Right. Well, I've been in media studies my whole career, and so I've written about all of the media, really—from legacy television, radio, film, and then on into digital media. But anyway, the way I started writing this book is my colleagues at Project Censored asked me to write one of their dispatches, which is their online blog. And they asked me, like, the first few days after it started. And, you know, right away you could tell that they weren't going to really tell us the truth, and they were going to spin it just from the start. But after I wrote that piece, it was kind of the first one out there, and it was widely covered. The piece went to four, five, six, seven, eight different outlets, you know, with open sourcing. And by that time, I was the one who did it—certainly with my colleagues at Project Censored—but I just kept writing, and that's how it started.

#Pascal

It's very good. It's very important. It's a genocide, in my opinion, the way that we are seeing it—a long-term genocide, not something that's over like in Rwanda within two weeks. A long-term genocide is not possible without massive public and political buy-in. And the media is, of course, the one that then sells the entire project to the populace that needs to remain calm, right, and quiet. Can you maybe talk about this aspect here a little bit, this calming down of the population?

#Robin Andersen

The first step in any genocide is always the incitement. It happens with the incitement. And, of course, Israeli officials right away were doing kind of classic incitement to violence, you know, according to the Genocide Convention. So, Elan and then Gallant, those two military guys, both said, well, Hamas are animals. We're dealing with animals. You want hell, we're going to give you hell. There will be no electricity. There will be no food. You know, we'll turn you into a tent city. So if you look back on that, right away they told us what they were going to do. And they said, instead, Hamas attacked us, and instead of being appalled, they were celebrating.

So they were actually targeting civilians and justifying from the first few days that, and telling the world they were going to kill civilians. Of course, throughout the latter half of the 20th century, we've been working on rules of international war so that another genocide wouldn't happen after World War II. So we know what a genocide looks like. And we, and Israel is pretty much a test case, right, starting from the call and the admission that we're going to start what is called civilian punishment, disproportionate violence, and we're going to make the civilians pay for what their leaders did. So that's how it started. And those are the kinds of things that the media were actually told not to report about.

#Pascal

And they did a very good job at not reporting a lot of things. And they did a very good job at manufacturing a really, really strange, or trying to manufacture a really strange, form of consent,

which, to be fair, never completely took root. I will never forget how, like one or two days after October 7th, I read in The New York Times the sentence that the Israelis thought it was live and let live with the Palestinians. And we're like, how the hell can you write something like that after 16 years of hermetic imprisonment in an open-air prison?

#Robin Andersen

A concentration camp.

#Pascal

A concentration camp. A modern-day concentration camp where the people who were in there, two years prior, protested on their side of the fence, and 200 of them got killed while protesting on their side of the fence. But they reported the Israelis thought it was live and let live. It was a very grim awakening. This kind of narrative—can you maybe speak a little bit to the October 7th narrative that was built up and how it fed into the genocide-enabling process?

#Robin Andersen

Yeah, absolutely. So the genocide, the narrative of October 7th, served two purposes—well, three, we can say. Right away, it started, it encapsulated this Israeli-Palestinian conflict, starting with October 7th. So that was the starting point, as you point out. This came from nowhere. We don't know what this is. We had a live and let live attitude. We're just innocent, you know. And as you point out, the Great March of Return in 2018, where they killed over 200 civilians, and they wounded 33,000, and over 100 people had to have limbs amputated because they targeted their legs. So...

#Robin Andersen

That was a peaceful demonstration. It wasn't organized by Hamas. It went on for months, mostly from the end of March right until the end of 2018. And it was nonviolent. Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the UN Commission on Human Rights have all documented Israeli crimes up to that point. And they were saying this is indiscriminate violence. They were posing no threat. This needs to be investigated before the International Criminal Court. So these things were happening. So what that October 7th narrative did was pull it out of this historical genesis of the war in which, as you point out, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch had both identified it as an apartheid state and as an illegal occupation.

#Pascal

Hey, very brief intermission because I was recently banned from YouTube. And although I'm back, this can happen anytime again. So please consider subscribing not only here, but to my mailing list on Substack. That's pascallottaz.substack.com. The link's going to be in the description below. And now, back to the video.

#Robin Andersen

And you saw how you gave the great example of how the US media completely played along with that. And as the genocide went forward through time—and it's still happening, right?—every time they reported on a body count, which is dehumanizing the Palestinians right away anyway, but every time they reported that, they would say, this is in response to the Hamas attacks that killed 1,200 people, mostly civilians. You remember that? Every single... I was about to say that.

#Pascal

They're mostly civilians. We see that right now quite a lot, which is so duplicitous because it's roughly 800 civilians and roughly 400 military. And military is fair game. Nobody in a uniform can complain about being killed by the enemy. You can't. That's the rules of the game. You are fair game. So the 400, they can be eliminated and they cannot complain about it. The 800, that's the problem. But then the framing of 1,200 mostly civilians is, of course, again, like inflating the numbers, right?

#Robin Andersen

So it pulled it out of its historical context, and it served to... Every action by the Israelis was justified because it was retaliatory. This is the violence-calm narrative. This is a very common narrative that goes across war reporting, but also everywhere else. We share in news, we share common frameworks and common narratives, as entertainment does and as fiction does. So we can find these narratives all around in our culture. And that followed that crisis-response narrative of: it started with violence on October 7th, and the Israelis are addressing it.

#Pascal

Yeah, and it creates this air of "it's fine," right? Because it's in retaliation. It's not an attack if it is in self-defense. And the word self-defense is, of course, again, quite a pivotal one, isn't it?

#Robin Andersen

Absolutely. And so, you know, the filmmaker Richard Sanders, he did a couple of excellent films that aired on Al Jazeera. And one was October 7th. And he looked at the cameras that the Hamas fighters were wearing, the ones that were killed or captured. He put that footage together and he

said Hamas did, well, commit some war crimes. You're not supposed to take hostages, and they did. They did kill civilians. We will never know, however, how many civilians were killed during the October 7th attacks because the Israelis implemented the Hannibal Directive. And you had, you know, testimonials from a young woman who was at the music festival, and then she fled over to Kibbutz Be'eri, and she was being held captive there. And through these hours of negotiations, she said it took hours and hours until the Israelis came.

And when they came, they came in a tank, and they opened fire, and it was a terrible crossfire. They killed—she was with other hostages, so she was the only survivor. She said about 12 people were killed. This was being reported right away in Israeli media, in Haaretz and Channel 12 and the other Hebrew-language outlets. You know, they spun it by saying, you know, they actually really wanted to know. Israeli civilians wanted to know what had happened, but that was covered up in American media. Today you still have—I was on a podcast just last December when someone, a young, bright person, opened up and said, “So what happened after October 7th, when Hamas killed roughly 1,200 people, mostly civilians, right?” So, um, Israelis killed their own people, is the point. And you point out many of them were military. We'll never know how many were killed that day.

#Pascal

I mean, we couldn't know. I'm pretty sure there are people who do have the numbers, or at least there are estimates. It's quite fascinating to me, though, that, you know, some of the pictures that circulated in the media—and maybe you can speak to that—point to obvious problems. Let's say all of these burned-out cars, completely burned out, right, that were fleeing away from the Nova Music Festival, burned out. And you really wonder how people with, at best, Kalashnikovs—how does a Kalashnikov burn out an entire car? It's probably also this stupid idea of the Hollywood mentality: if you shoot at a car, it immediately explodes, right? When we understand that these are the same kind of burned-out cars that we saw in Iraq when the United States was attacking the Iraqi army vehicles with Hellfire missiles.

I mean, these are pretty sure like helicopter-fired missiles into cars that then burned these things out. And just again, to make that point, out of the 800 civilians who died, we still don't know how many were killed by the Israelis themselves. So just to again say, yes, Hamas actually did kill civilians, and it was caused by this attack. But the number of people who were killed and how they were killed is still very much up for debate. But these pictures, they circulated, right? But they seem not to have registered. It never actually changed the kind of approach that the mainstream media took toward blaming all of this—everything, including the bombed-out cars—on Hamas.

#Robin Andersen

Exactly. And the, you know, Israeli pilots were in Apache helicopters emptying, you know, all of their munitions onto the music festival, onto the grounds of the music festival, as Hamas, as people were still running around and as Hamas was trying to get to the border to take the hostages. They

opened fire on everyone. So we saw burned cars. The tank fired also at the buildings in the kibbutz. Hamas couldn't do that. They had nothing that could take out a building like that. Also, a lot of fire. I think there was one instance where Hamas started a fire in a house. It was only one instance, but the pictures you're talking about were of charred remains, and Richard Sander actually addresses this issue and says—and a lot of journalists did—Jonathan Cook, some other very good British journalists.

Um, and in our independent alternative media, they did very good jobs reporting on this too. Uh, Max Blumenthal comes to mind, where they pointed out these burnt bodies, you know, and Netanyahu calling Biden and telling him there were babies, and they tied their hands together and burned them in an oven like it was the Holocaust. So the fire and that kind of carnage, which most likely, 99%, was not done by Hamas because they didn't have that kind of weaponry. So, as Richard Sander likes to say, yes, Hamas did kill some civilians. But what the press reported on were the things that Hamas did not do, actually—the beheaded babies, the burned bodies, the Holocaust, all that stuff was propaganda.

#Pascal

And there was also a very infamous piece in the New York Times, uh, "Screams Without Voices," or, um, you know, about the, the, um—no, it was not, it was different—but it was about the rapes, the alleged rapes that Hamas did. And of course, the 40 burned babies. And the other thing I will never forget is seeing a U.S. president in front of the camera saying that he just saw pictures of something that even the mainstream press later said actually doesn't exist. Um,

#Robin Andersen

And they were discredited long before. In terms of the 40 babies, the Israeli insurance agency right away, within a month, detailed the demographics and the names of the people who were killed on October 7th. There was exactly one infant. One. Exactly one that was under the age of two. And so there were not 40. This information was readily available to any journalist. And so were all of the stories that were coming out of these, you know, out of these Israeli propagandists.

#Pascal

They were all... How do you explain it to yourself that we saw so much media convergence around this narrative? We know from Noam Chomsky and Herman, we know about manufacturing consent, we know about the idea that only people who are complicit anyhow sit in these positions and so on. But it is kind of astounding that in a moment like October 7th, with a conflict that really any educated person—not just journalists, but anyone who went to college—basically knows that the conflict between Israel and Palestine is very, very old and has been going on forever. But then they

still start... everybody starts basically blaming one side and thereby excusing the other side for the violence that they're using. Can you explain this to yourself, the journalistic bubble that immediately formed?

#Robin Andersen

Oh, they are like all the boys on the bus, the old-fashioned term, right? Boys and girls now on the bus. Men and women, I guess, now. The consensus, the pro-Israeli consensus, had been established in the U.S. media well before October 7th. And you can trace it back to when they were, you know, slightly more critical about some of the things that the Israelis did. Like, you know, they kind of admitted in the neighborhood in 2021 in East Jerusalem where the Israeli settlers were going in and pushing out Palestinians, and they were demonstrating violence.

#Pascal

You know, they kind of said, yeah, well, they were throwing tear gas, and some got into that neighborhood.

#Robin Andersen

It's very close to Al-Aqsa Mosque, and some tear gas got into the mosque. So they did tell some truths, but there was a long buildup. And I think—well, let's talk about two main things. The Israeli lobby, and the fact that the New York Times was well established as a very pro-Israeli organ, shall we say, based on the long relationship with Israeli society that was established in their Jerusalem bureau over the years. They bought a house, and their bureau is over there, on top of the house. They built the bureau on top of the house that a Palestinian journalist who worked for the BBC was forced to leave during the Nakba—got in a taxi with his family and left all of their things.

They never went back. So the New York Times has a vested interest in this geostructural bias, built-in bias. How can you report on the right to return when their bureau is occupying a building that they would have to leave if Palestinians got the right to return? You know, this was a major issue. Many of the bureau chiefs in Jerusalem, their children were all enlisted in the IDF. And especially one that still works, still writes for the New York Times, Isabel Kershner. Her husband at the time—she was writing a lot of stories before October 7th, and then a terrible one afterwards.

Her husband was actually working in a think tank, and his job was to do PR for the IDF. And in February 2024, she came out with basically a puff piece for the IDF, talking about how it's so great that women are now there, just pushing all the boundaries in there, and they're so progressive and really battling against the kind of conservatives that don't want women in the military. You know, so Israeli women then have license to go in and kill Palestinian women. So, you know, there's a long discussion on that, about how that is not the way to promote women's rights and equality in the society.

#Pascal

I mean, the level of the militaristic abuse of things that I thought were hard to, you know, militarize or use propagandistically for the military is quite staggering. Feminism is, of course, one. And another piece I will never forget is about the brave Israeli female soldiers who are guarding the camp of the male Israeli soldiers at night. And the male Israeli soldiers will sleep peacefully because they know they're being guarded by these brave warrior women. The other one is the pinkwashing of, you know, how great it is to have LGBTQ people serving in the military and going in and slaughtering Palestinians with gay bombs. I mean, it's wonderful, right? I mean, it's much better to die if the bomb is big that falls on your head. We've seen all of that. It's very, very shocking to me. It was very shocking to me that the narrative was so strong that it was able to pull in all of these liberal strings and turn them right around and use them for death and destruction and genocide.

#Robin Andersen

Yes, absolutely. The other thing that happened to direct a very pro-Israeli view of the military, of, you know, the military protection programming, the Israeli protection programming, to really create this pro-Israeli frame — it was coming from the top down. You know, CNN, some journalists in January 2024, journalists at CNN leaked documents that were basically showing everyone that CNN was sending its copy to the Jerusalem bureau, where the IDF could vet it before it was printed. Did they do that, really? Just like the New York Times did. Now, that article came out a little bit later, not until early April 2024. And both of these pieces were published in The Intercept.

And the journalists were expressing great concern and distress, and that's why they anonymously leaked these documents of the directives they were getting. So, in terms of The New York Times — I mean, both outlets banned the word "genocide" and said, "Don't use 'massacre' for anything that Israel did." So, in the first six weeks of the war, "massacre" was used 55% of the time for Israelis and only one time for the killing of a Palestinian. But, you know, what The New York Times did was eliminate and get out of their discourse any of the international rules of war, the principles of humanitarian rules of war.

So they couldn't say "occupation." They couldn't say "refugee camp." They couldn't say, you know, a whole—most of the principles that crippled journalists from being able to talk about what was actually going on. You know, but don't forget that in the first 25 days, 5,000 Palestinians were killed, and that is collective punishment. Right away it was obvious—they said what they were going to do, and right away they started doing it. And all of that time, right up until the December case, the December lawsuit that South Africa filed in the International Court of Justice, they couldn't use those terms.

#Pascal

It's another reason why the lawsuit was so important — to actually make it clear that there is even a legal case to use the word. They went immediately with the thing, "Oh, there's no conviction, it's just a baseless accusation," and so on. But it did help to massage in that this is actually the word, this is the concept to use in order to understand the level of the crime that is going on. I was wondering, though, since you looked at so many outlets — my observation from Europe is that even large European newspapers, in Switzerland the NZZ it's called, or in Germany, Die Zeit and others — they clearly took their cues from The New York Times, The Washington Post, and a couple of others. So how did the hierarchy of news outlets work? You know, how the people downstream in the lower, smaller papers and so on, and the local ones, basically read what the big boys write and then craft their reporting according to it. Did that happen, or how did that happen? And which ones were outside of this kind of pyramid scheme of Western information dissemination?

#Robin Andersen

Well, in terms of Western media, I mean, I do put in the content analysis, and there was a similar journalism rebellion in the BBC. The BBC has a lot of connections between their national security state, like we do, and the media. So the BBC coverage, I mean, you could look at the BBC and The New York Times and CBS, and they were just unified, right? And what we knew from the CNN leak was that, "Don't ever identify Israel as the perpetrator of these massive 2,000-pound bombs that were taking out whole apartment buildings," like the first huge bombing of the Jabalia refugee camp in late October. Two-thousand-pound bombs hit, and people didn't know what was happening. They were grieving. They were looking at this crater. They were trying to pull their children and their people out from under the rubble. And The New York Times and all of them were saying an explosion happened.

#Pascal

Yeah.

#Robin Andersen

And look, well, we saw some satellite footage on Saturday, and that hole wasn't there. And so we're looking at it today, and it is there. They went to that kind of length to assure us that this crater was new. It just happened. And then they act in New York — this one just drove me nuts — they actually reported on a wire service photograph that showed bodies being laid out. So Palestinian journalists on the ground were talking about body parts everywhere. It was horrible. And they were citing aid workers at the time who also were witness to this and were saying, this is a war crime. Meanwhile, The New York Times is showing us a wire service picture that's all very sanitary with these sheets.

And they said something wrapped in sheets that appeared to be bodies. So it was vague and obscured. And what we find later is the Israelis only attributed it to us after we said that we got a

Hamas commander or that we were really targeting Hamas. So if you're targeting Hamas with your October 7th narrative, and they did that and this is retaliation, then that was the justification. Meanwhile, the mainstream and the establishment legacy media are talking in these vague verbal gymnastics. It was an explosion. They could have been bodies. I mean, this was ridiculous. And right away, people could see this kind of bias.

And yeah, we don't call The New York Times the paper of record for nothing, because it is the agenda-setting paper. And just like in December, when Screams Without Words came out late December, it came out right as the South African case in front of the International Court of Justice came out too, of course. I mean, it seems obvious to me that they were trying to distract from that and now claim this wild, fabricated story — not one shred of forensic evidence, visual evidence. There was no reliable first-person testimony. There was no reliable forensic evidence. We're talking about one of the worst cases of journalistic malpractice.

And interestingly, a couple at The Guardian actually went with it and put their own article in, and some other people did the same. But, you know, they quickly pulled back. They had pulled back right after October 7th from the rape story because they knew then. NBC and the Los Angeles Times pulled back from that rape story that was initially launched after October 7th. And there was no documentation and no corroboration or verification. So everybody pulled back. The New York Times brought that up again with their supposed story, lying to their readers that this was based on a new investigation, and it was the same old discredited sources called Zaka, you know, that had lied to us on October 7th.

#Pascal

You know, one of the things that makes this propaganda so extremely effective is, of course, the belief that we in the West — you in the United States, Japan, Switzerland, Europe — you know, that we live in free societies and that, you know, there is a plurality of the press. And some report this, others report that. And in a dialectical way, we then figure out the truth because that's how liberal societies work. Now, we have found out — not only found out, but been shown — to an extreme degree that even genocide-enabling is possible in liberal societies. It just works. I mean, you can do it. Hundreds of thousands of people will be dead and displaced and chased away and maimed and destroyed, and their entire cultural heritage eradicated. It just works in liberal societies, in a liberal press environment. Can you maybe speak to that a little bit? How — how — what you've learned from this absolutely mind-boggling case, actually, of our times?

#Robin Andersen

Absolutely. I think the press has lost an enormous amount of legitimacy as a consequence of these last two and a half years of genocide. I think it's become obvious, and you know why. Young people, they were on a steep learning curve. College campuses around this country, and I know also in Europe and elsewhere, they wanted to know what was happening, and they started to inform

themselves. And their own kind of native sensibilities, their own moral ground, youthful grounding, was shattered because they could see what was happening on the ground because of the Palestinian journalists and the Al Jazeera journalists who were on the ground at the time documenting what was going on. They saw the suffering of the Palestinian people.

They kept documenting over and over again the carnage, the flower massacre. In the spring of 2024, they started starving the Palestinians, and we saw them there. And so we had these two different realities. We had this legacy establishment media, which was following Israeli talking points, obscuring the language. And it became really obvious. And I think the consequence of that is that now you see the numbers of the state of Israel, the popularity of Israel. I mean, the favorability of Israel has just plummeted. Eighty percent of Democrats do not favor Israel anymore. And I think that whatever, you know, different polls show even fewer than that. Over 50% of young people in the Republican Party are also against the genocide and against Israel.

These are phenomenal numbers. And that happened very rapidly. And I think we saw through it. And precisely because, as you point out, we believe in these democratic societies that our media is not monolithic, it's not state-owned. We believe them because we don't feel that we are the targets of propaganda. We believe that we're getting information because our media brings us information by which we can form our own opinions. That story of Israel's genocide was wrapped up, interpreted, and delivered to us from a pro-Israel perspective right from the start. And I believe that worked very much against the media. However, we now live, I think, in the Western world, don't you think? And certainly in other places.

The people who are out in the street, global publics in huge numbers are out in the street. Everybody seems to be against this genocide. And yet these elite people running the countries, running the corporations in our country, they're the same people. They're the same corporate heads of interlocking directorates that are in the military. They're in the corporate world, and they're also on the boards of the media. So as long as those government elites can see their stories in the media, they think they're good. They can just keep doing what they want. But we're now governed, I believe, by a minority — by a minority that does not do what we want, does not represent our interests, and is actively working against our own well-being and that of the globe.

#Pascal

The problem is that the minority is still big enough. You don't need much more than about 25% without guns and roughly 10% with guns in order to keep the others down. And they still have those numbers. And then the rest is done through the system. I mean, the beauty about the American electoral system, for instance, is, as some people in international relations put it, whether you vote Democrat or Republican, you always get Donald Rumsfeld—or no, it wasn't Rumsfeld—but, you know, you always get the warmongers and the war elite, and actually the genocidal elite that have no problem with eradicating an entire civilization, even as Donald Trump would put it.

#Robin Andersen

And in fact, you're not wrong to point out Rumsfeld. Actually, you remember Paul Wolfowitz. You also talk about eliminating a civilization, which now with Trump, well, Wolfowitz is the one who came up with regime change, and he talked about eliminating a regime. And it's not too much of a leap to go from eliminating a regime to eliminating civilization.

#Pascal

They do this association very quickly. Of course, also the rebranding and the legitimizing. Israel was, in my view, legitimized for the last two and a half years to kill anyone they wanted by claiming that they were targeting a terrorist. So it's like the targeting of terrorists then excuses any kind of collateral damage. Plus, of course, I mean, it's implied already that if you say that this is a terrorist, then this person ceases to be even a combatant, because combatants are protected, right?

Combatants cannot be killed after they give up, after they put down their arms, or when they're wounded. Once they're wounded and they cannot fight, they are protected by the law of war, international humanitarian law. And they did away with all of that. I mean, we've seen, even before October 7th, how the IDF stormed hospitals, went into patients' rooms, and shot patients, saying that those were terrorists. Even if they were Hamas operatives, they would still be protected. But we did away with that entire concept, and the media went along with it.

#Robin Andersen

That's correct. And the hardest chapter for me to write in this book was the chapter on the destruction of Gaza's health care system. Yeah. First, I really focus on the attacks on al-Shifa Hospital in November 2023 and then again in late March, early April 2024. And medical workers are the foundation, the beginning people, the people who thought about and conceived of the Geneva Convention. It was the aid workers who were going out and taking the soldiers off the field. They should not be the targets, right? Right. So humanitarian aid workers and doctors and nurses at that point after World War I were very much involved in that. And those initial protections for doctors and nurses and aid coming into the battlefield were the foundation, really, of the genocide conventions.

What Israel did to al-Shifa Hospital in November 2023 was unheard of in modern warfare. And the way they got away with it, you're not going to believe this. I think you probably know this, but the 3D dimensional slick trickery video that showed a kind of antiseptic, strange Hamas Pentagon that was, again, it came out of the Israeli imagination. It was an animated video in 3D that showed you going down layers into the ground that had these Hamas commanders walking around. And these were structures under al-Shifa Hospital. And they promoted that, and they kept saying, they kept repeating, that if a hospital is used for the enemy, they lose their international protections under the law. That is not true. Absolutely not true. You know, I really went into this in the book in great detail.

I was looking at the material from Doctors Without Borders, from Doctors Against Genocide, from all of the documentation. And there are very good human rights lawyers that explain very clearly that even if there are fighters inside the hospital, the ones attacking the hospital are still liable and have to protect the patients and the aid workers inside that hospital. They are not allowed to just go in and attack, even if there are fighters shooting from the hospital. It's very, very clear, and it's very complex. So all the mainstream media did was simply say, oh, but they lose their protections if it's being used by the terrorists, as you point out, right? And so many people pointed out a couple of years later that Israel had been so effective in twisting around the rules of war and, in many ways, distorting them.

And journalists didn't call them out. And, you know, you've got to wonder if these are supposed to be seasoned journalists. These are the best people that we have covering this story. I mean, you had Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists who headed up the byline of the "Screams Without Words" story. Come on, you've got to believe them. But these people are incapable of understanding, or actually, maybe because they haven't ever written about it, they really didn't know. I find that hard to believe because, hey, anybody can learn the international rules. They're laid out very clearly on lots of websites. And I think even legacy journalists and establishment journalists could have found those websites. And I don't think they even tried.

#Pascal

No, no, but we, I mean, we on our side must recognize that these are actually the best propagandists that the West has. I mean, they are phenomenal at what they're there to do, which is manufacturing consent for genocide, to make sure that the genocide can happen. Not just that, because... The only thing where I would have a slight disagreement with you about the book is on the title when you say "Israel's Genocide." I would argue it is the West's genocide. It is the Euro-American genocide on the Palestinians.

It couldn't be done without the bombs from there. It couldn't be done without the logistical support. It couldn't be done without the media propaganda support. You know, there are many things that just are necessary and were done in the collective West that then ended up killing all of these people in Palestine. Blaming Israel alone, to me, already kind of goes—it's too short. The scale of the crime is just so humongous, actually. Yeah. And your work actually points to exactly that, how this was so important, wasn't it?

#Robin Andersen

Yeah. Yeah. And for al-Shifa, the first attack, the U.S. media went—excuse me—well, the State Department and the highest echelons of the U.S. government confirmed, confirmed. And that really... So it was that slick 3D video, and you've got, you know, the White House and all of their

propaganda saying, oh yes, we've got intelligence. Of course, they never told us where the intelligence came from. We've got intelligence that confirms the Israeli assertions that that hospital is taken over by Hamas.

#Pascal

And it was nothing but lies.

#Robin Andersen

And, you know, by, I think it was November or December, the Washington Post came out. They actually did an investigation, and they looked under the hospital. And they said, well, the places where they said they were holding hostages or Hamas fighters don't appear to have been occupied. You know, there are tunnels underground, and there are guerrilla warriors. They go underneath and back, and many of those tunnels were built by the Israelis. And, of course, Hamas was funded by Netanyahu in the 80s. So we're talking about a lot of history here. And to claim that there were permanent headquarters underneath a hospital reaches levels of absurdity. There are a lot of ways to define the fog of war, but your muddled brain when you hear all of this propaganda is also part of the fog of war. And to think that they could get away with it, which I suppose they did because they destroyed every freaking hospital in Palestine.

#Pascal

They did. They did. Now, I mean, to me, the litmus test of getting away with genocide is really which of the two sides still gets to go on holidays. I was in Thailand recently, and in the resort I was in, well, there was a lot of Hebrew, and there was not a single word of Arabic. I mean, there are just no Palestinians there. There are a lot of Israelis there. That's just what it is. So you... when you still get to go on summer vacation and so on in Thailand, then you got away with genocide. My question, though, to you, who looked at this very in-depth, is about the key narrative cues that were used.

I mean, October 7th, of course, just as a concept, right? October 7th excuses everything. But another one that I found very curious, and that is especially for the Europeans, for the Germans, quite important, is Israel's right to exist. This was bizarre to me because I've never heard it in a different context — not about the United States' right to exist, Chile's right to exist, Japan's right to exist — only with Israel. And it was repeated so much. Can you maybe speak a little bit to that concept?

#Robin Andersen

Sure. You know, I think I recently wrote a piece about Francesca Albanese and how she has been so informative and such a stalwart, and then attacked, of course. All of the reports she's done have just been incredible. And it was she who really put that one to bed where, you know, at a press

conference, a journalist says, throwing out, "Do you believe in Israel's right to exist?" Just like every Palestinian, the few who got on the air were badgered by the press — absolutely badgered. "Well, do you support Hamas? Or do you believe in Israel's right to exist?"

And it was shameful when Palestinians, the few who got on the air, were — Ta-Nehisi Coates, if you remember that CBS — horrible. Worst behavior of a journalist you could ever imagine, when these military guys were just constantly on air going, "Oh, well, you know, we protected civilians as best we could, but this is war. You know, we had to kill them." And it was... all of that stuff was unbelievable. But finally, I think for me, it was really Francesca Albanese who said the right thing. And she explained that Italy has no right to exist. You know, Israel exists. France exists. Italy exists.

If France and Italy decided to merge, they could actually merge, and then they would be something else. There's no given right that Israel exists. That is a right bestowed upon human beings, not states. So it was always meant to be a conversation blocker, a stopping of anybody, and to close down the complexity of any debate. And also, of course, no criticism of the state of Israel as it moved further and further to the right. And now they've got a death penalty for only Palestinians. How far more to the right can you possibly move? I mean, that they have a right to exist? No, they don't have a right to exist. I'm sorry.

#Pascal

I mean, as a mechanism, I think this is quite important, right? How the media then uses discussion stoppers and pledges of allegiance. So, do you affirm Israel's right to exist? You need to pledge your allegiance to something before you're even given the opportunity to continue talking. The other one was probably, do you condemn October 7th? That one was huge, right? Anyone who was speaking against the genocide was immediately asked, so do you condemn October 7th? And then if you didn't, you would be yelled and shouted down, and the conversation is over. So, in a sense, the gatekeeping through pledges of allegiance.

#Robin Andersen

Absolutely. Absolutely. And in a way, you know, propaganda exists best in an atmosphere where there's no counter noise, right? The more you put in dissenting voices or opposing voices in a propaganda environment, the more you challenge that propaganda. That's why, you know, for most of the global public, they just had to look on their handheld devices to see what was really going on in Gaza, right?

#Pascal

Right.

#Robin Andersen

So that's why it really didn't work for us, but it works because it works for the people who are designing it, because they're in their Beltway bubble and they think, okay, well, as long as I can read that in my newspaper, we're confirmed, we can do that. But to others, and in the mainstream, Palestinian voices were simply eliminated. They fell out right away. And a wonderful Palestinian writer named Al-Alyan pointed that right out. She said, we're being made to sing for our supper, to beg for airtime. And all we're asking is for journalists to do their basic job, you know, just sing. They're the ones who called it not Israeli attacks on civilian populations, but the Israeli-Hamas or the Israeli-Palestinian war, or the Israeli-whatever war.

But then they didn't tell us both sides of the story, right? You're supposed to tell both sides of the story. That is a prominent feature. I don't believe in objectivity, but being fair and somewhat balanced is, of course, one of the practices and standard canons of professional journalism. We never heard anything from Hamas. It was only through the words of government administration officials. We had to rely on Jeremy Scahill to finally get a line into Hamas and tell us what Hamas was, how they were countering what the Israelis were saying. But that was completely outside of the framework. Also, genocide involves destroying an entire people, their culture, their identity, their religion.

And that's what the Israelis were doing. And that's why the Palestinian journalists telling their story on the ground were so threatening. And Israeli censorship was done by murder in Gaza, and it's still being implemented as we speak. And that wonderful, very well-known journalist, Khalil, in Lebanon was openly murdered so that Israel could assert its power and tell the world, we're going to keep doing this, and we're going to do it with impunity, and we're going to take out a very well-known and beloved Lebanese journalist, this woman—and they did. So that is about erasing a culture, erasing a memory, and erasing those who bear witness, certainly.

#Pascal

Yeah, it's, of course, the perfidy of it is that you don't only get rid of one voice, you also make sure that everybody who's thinking of picking up the pen is also deterred, right? And if not, you just go out and kill them. And the thing about Israel and the genocide and the way that the media managed to spin it in the mainstream is, of course, that all of this is... okay, it's fine. Nobody will ever go to prison for it, neither Biden nor Netanyahu. Netanyahu maybe for something absolutely unrelated, with private corruption scandals and stuff, but not for that one. He's never going to go to prison for that one. The soldiers will not go to prison. I mean, actually, in the United States, if that new law that's being—the new bill that's being discussed—comes through, then Americans, U.S. citizens who served in the Israeli army, in the IDF, are going to get veteran benefits. So did you hear about that? It's being discussed currently on the Capitol to extend veteran benefits to Americans who served in the IDF.

#Robin Andersen

So, you know, this impunity still reigns supreme. And I believe that the media and these people, of course, have to be held accountable someday. I mean, I'm hoping we see them. I'm hoping we see some of these editorial boards, these people, these owners. You know, I'd just love to see them at The Hague trying to justify their genocidal coverage. Because according to the Genocide Convention, in the first seven pages on incitement to genocide, they helped. But in terms of the Hind Rajab Foundation, and Hind Rajab, she was killed with 335 bullets from Israeli tanks.

And there are places now, I think in Brazil and other places, where IDF soldiers are being arrested. And because the Hind Rajab Foundation, that's on their agenda. That's what they're trying to do. They're trying to find them, and they're identifying them. And they're trying to get their countries who are signatories to the Rome Statute and the International Criminal Court to take them up and charge them with genocide.

#Pascal

Actually, I would like to end on this. Like, are you aware of cases in which journalism itself, where journalists ended up being charged in international courts or under international law or under domestic law for the enabling of certain acts of violence? Because I think that's where we need to go. I mean, journalists who write in big newspapers and people who have big shows need to be aware that if they peddle genocide-enabling speech, they might actually face legal consequences. Do we have precedents for that?

#Robin Andersen

We do have a precedent. In the genocide in Rwanda, a Belgian broadcaster was put in jail for 12 years for saying, you know, we're going to kill you. And yes, there are – in the Genocide Conventions, there are very clear legal precedents for leaders who encourage genocide. And, you know, possibly not internationally, but it takes place in different countries like Spain. Pinochet was charged and tried in Spain under Spanish law. So it can happen that way. Actually, a friend of mine who's deceased now but was the president of the Center for Constitutional Rights, Michael Ratner, he headed that.

#Pascal

And it does raise this question, you know, between freedom of speech and, you know, like guilt in genocide, like the act of enabling genocide. But I think this is a discussion that we probably need to have if ever we want to move toward a place where this would not happen in that way again. But is there anything from your book that you think we didn't cover yet that you would like to let everybody know to end the discussion?

#Robin Andersen

Well, there's the speech that Netanyahu gave, I guess it was in June or July of, was it 2024, where he came and gave a joint session to Congress. And the arrest warrant was under consideration for him in front of the ICC, and yet the U.S. Congress invited him. And no media fact-checked him. No legacy mainstream media fact-checked a word he said. And he lied and he lied. And in that chapter, I tried to explain the starvation and the deliberate use of hunger and starvation as a weapon of war by the Israelis.

And Netanyahu got up before Congress and said, "We're not – we have a lot of trucks going in." Lie. "And it's not because of us. It's because of the armed gangs, and Hamas is stealing the food." These were outright lies. And not one, not one journalist. He got over 50 standing ovations for this lie, this ridiculous rehearsing of the propaganda that he had been spreading throughout. And it was a very disgraceful moment. And I take that apart, kind of, you know, I won't say word by word, but, you know, major point by major point.

#Pascal

Just lies upon lies. It's fantastic, and then laundered through the media. But that's why it's very good to have a book like yours chronicling all of this, laying it out. People who want to get it, they can, of course, go online. It's called *The Complicit Lens: U.S. Media Coverage of Israel's Genocide in Gaza. * It's available on Amazon. I will definitely put the link to this book in the description box of this video below. And Professor Robin Anderson, thank you so much for your time today.

#Robin Andersen

You're welcome. It was great to be here.