



'The War You Don't See' **Pilger Film Banned By Lannan Foundation**

By John Pilger

June 10 2011 "Information Clearing House" -- An open letter to Noam Chomsky and the general public.

Dear Noam

I am writing to you and a number of other friends mostly in the US to alert you to the extraordinary banning of my film on war and media, 'The War You Don't See', and the abrupt cancellation of a major event at the Lannan Foundation in Santa Fe in which David Barsamian and I were to discuss free speech, US foreign policy and censorship in the media.

Lannan invited me and David over a year ago and welcomed my proposal that they also host the US premiere of 'The War You Don't See', in which US and British broadcasters describe the often hidden part played by the media in the promotion of war, notably in Iraq and Afghanistan. The film has been widely acclaimed in the UK and Australia; the trailer and reviews are on my website www.johnpilger.com

The banning and cancellation, which have shocked David and me, are on the personal orders of Patrick Lannan, whose wealth funds the Lannan Foundation as a liberal centre of discussion of politics and the arts. Some of you will have been there and will know the Lannan Foundation as a valuable supporter of liberal causes. Indeed, I was invited in 2002 to present a Lannan award to the broadcaster Amy Goodman.

What is deeply disturbing about the ban is that it happened so suddenly and inexplicably: 48 hours before David Barsamian and I were both due to depart for Santa Fe I received a brief email with a 'sorry for the inconvenience' from a Lannan official who had been telling me just a few days earlier what a 'great honour' it was to have the US premiere of my film at Lannan, with myself in attendance.

I urge you to visit the Lannan website www.lannan.org Good people like Michael Ratner, Jeremy Scahill and Glenn Greenwald are shown as participants in discussion about freedom of speech. I am there, too, but my name is the only one with a line

through it and the word, 'Cancelled'.

Neither David Barsamian nor I have been given a word of explanation. All my messages to Lannan have gone unanswered; my calls are not returned; my flights were cancelled summarily. At the urging of the New Mexican newspaper, Patrick Lannan has issued a one-sentence statement offering his regrets to the Lannan-supporting 'community' in Santa Fe. Again, he gives no reason for the ban. I have spoken to the manager of the Santa Fe cinema where 'The War You Don't See' was to be screened. He received a late-night call. Again, no reason for the ban was forthcoming, giving him barely time to cancel advertising in The New Mexican, which was forced to drop a major feature.

There is a compelling symbol of our extraordinary times in all of this. A rich and powerful individual and organisation, espousing freedom of speech, has moved ruthlessly and unaccountably to crush it.

With warm regards

John Pilger

Updated -

Lannan Foundation Cancels on "Controversial" Speaker

Outspoken investigative journalist 'perplexed' by vague last-minute email

By Paul Weideman

June 10, 2011 "The New Mexican" -- Patrick Lannan, president of the nonprofit Lannan Foundation, on Wednesday night suddenly canceled a speaking engagement for the veteran U.K.-based investigative journalist and documentary filmmaker John Pilger scheduled for June 15.

In an email Thursday morning, Pilger said Lannan had given no reason for his decision. "Just like that. A short e-mail — no explanation whatsoever."

Later in the morning, Pilger wrote, "All I have is an e-mail from Barbara Ventrello (the foundation's Cultural Freedom Special Projects director) saying Patrick Lannan called from California saying cancel all my events. I know Patrick — all very friendly, Lannan has flown me over before. I regarded them as friends. Now they won't even answer their phones ... Am completely perplexed.

After repeated requests for an explanation, Ventrello emailed this statement from Patrick Lannan: "Lannan Foundation regrets the cancellation of Mr. John Pilger's events next week and any inconvenience this may have caused the Santa Fe community members who support our public programs."

The Lannan Foundation had the Pilger event on its schedule for months. Part of its Readings and Conversations series, it was to be a conversation between Pilger and David Barsamian, director of Boulder, Colo.-based Alternative Radio.

Barsamian did not return phone calls Thursday.

While in Santa Fe, Pilger also was expected to attend the U.S. premiere of his new film, *The War You Don't See*, on June 16 at The Screen. Lannan paid the rental fee in advance, but canceled that event as well. Peter Grendle, manager of theater on the Santa Fe University of Art & Design campus, said he was informed about the decision in an email from Ventrello. He said Pilger planned to introduce the film and do a question-and-answer session afterward.

It is not known if the Pilger event was dropped because of topics he might address in his talk, but Lannan is not known for exercising any kind of censorship in the past.

Pilger, the author of eight books and nearly 60 documentary films, has been a fierce and prolific critic of government and the media for more than 40 years.

The War You Don't See opens with upsetting footage of an "unreported Apache gunship attack" on people walking on a Baghdad street in 2007. As the pavement erupts in bullet-sprayed dust and the people fall and scramble, the voice of the commander directs, "Keep shootin'. Keep shootin'. Keep shootin'."

When director Pilger questions Bryan Whitman, the United States' deputy assistant secretary of defense for public affairs, about the attack, Whitman is relatively noncommittal. "These incidences are unfortunate. Every one in which there is a civilian casualty is unfortunate," he says. "But again, it is the enemy who is deliberately trying to inflict civilian casualties and put civilians in harm. It is the NATO forces, it is the U.S. forces that are taking every precaution they can to prosecute the war and prevent civilian casualties."

On the dearth of probing investigations into the truths behind the Iraq war, Pilger grills journalists including David Mannion, editor in chief of ITV News. He asks Mannion about his decision to report uncritically a warning by then-Vice President Dick Cheney that Iraq would soon have nuclear weapons. Mannion says the network "allowed our viewers to make up their minds as to whether this was a man telling the truth or not."

"But that's not fair on viewers, is it?" Pilger says. "Because they may not know what we as journalists know or ought to know: that this was an extremely dodgy politician who was making extraordinary claims."

He gets former CBS correspondent Dan Rather to admit in the film that, "If we had done our job, I do think a strong argument can be made that perhaps we would not have gone to war."

In an email exchange June 1 for a *Pasatiempo* story — now also canceled — about the Lannan event, Pilger said, "The point is journalism. Real journalism, not the kind that takes authority at face value, that is bored with the notion of truth-telling and is besotted by 'celebrities,' famous or not. If those of us paid to keep the record straight don't do our job, who will?"

The War You Don't See was made before the killing of Osama bin Laden. But in an interview with *Pasatiempo*, Pilger said, "The impression I get is that much of the U.S. media rejoiced at the killing of Osama bin Laden. For the victims of 9/11 that would be understandable. But for Maureen Dowd, liberal columnist of *The New York Times*, to say words to the effect that it

was suddenly great to be American again is absurd.

"Why wasn't bin Laden brought back to the U.S. and put on trial? Isn't that the way true democracies behave? Perhaps the reason was that he might have thrown light on his earlier employment by the CIA and Britain's MI6. The victims of 9/11 surely had a right to see him tried. His killing will undoubtedly bring reprisals against innocents, media 'unpeople' in those faraway places whose names we never know, whose faces we never see. That's already happened."

At a little after 9 p.m. London-time Thursday, Pilger sent an email to The New Mexican regarding the cancellation of his Santa Fe appearances that said, "I'm e-mailing Patrick Lannan to ask why. How can he not answer? What's going on? Is the U.S. an open or closed society?"

Contact Paul Weideman at 986-3043 or pweideman@sfnewmexican.com.



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Kathleen · 3 days ago

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Isn't it time to stand up as one and say STOP, ENOUGH! ... ? an entire system, thoroughly entrenched, of capitalist exploitation for profit can never work for the benefit of humanity. We deserve better, our "masters" have stolen their prerogative. Real democracy means Dictatorship of the Proletariat - does anyone want to comment on that?



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capt jim · 3 days ago

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As I was saying in a comment a few days ago here THE MEDIA IS THE PROBLEM--They have been leading us to war for years!

If there were a vibrant PEACE media that was mainstream in the states I would watch it--but at least now there is Press TV--check it out if you are new here--like tony says," it's GREAT!



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bozh · 2 days ago

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i am puzzled about the Left or the 'Left', as i write it.

eg, i am an ultra leftist; i.e., for building an ideally egalitarian society and setting up a timo-pantisocratic governance and antiwar bans me for merely saying that some [or most] 'jews' wld call u an "antisemite" because u posit facts which they don't like.

tnx



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6five · 2 days ago

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The link to

<http://www.lannan.org/>

doesn't work.



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John Hawk · 2 days ago

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Hey Lannan..get TF out of Santa Fe...you are a hypocrite of the highest order. Our progressive community will undoubtedly organize to boycott your self-aggrandizing, so-called progressive presentations in our city. You have shown your true colors...dark, real dark, shamelessly dark!



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aussie · 2 days ago

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As one great Premier of South Australia said in his last speech prior to his death --'There is no difference between the extremes of politics, re-: Capitalism, Communism. The middle ground, a mixed economy with a strong social stucture is close to pure Democracy', or words to that effect. What is going on in the US now proves his point!

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[arcadia11](#) 72p · 2 days ago

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i am confused by pilger's confusion. his letter is to a known left-gatekeeper, and he mentions goodman, probably the most well known gatekeeper of all. democracy now is funded by rockfeller, ford, lannan, pacifica. ford foundation directly funds the bilderbergers, taking up where the cia left off. james petras notes, the cia has a history of using the ford foundation to fund 'cultural fronts' like democracy now.

when you play ball with the globalist fronts, what can you expect? what they do with you, they will do to you. maybe it is time for everyone to get off the payrolls of the evil doers and start over. pilger included. then there will be no more 'confusion'.

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Worldist · 2 days ago

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John Pilger is without question the best video and film Journalist that's come to light in my lifetime. I have always appreciated his honest in-depth reporting from his days in Vietnam to the present. Its because of that that the scum in power, fear his honesty and influence to educate the working-class to the reality we all face. Leading to the awareness of the need for organized, revolutionary, democratic action on behalf of the 95% historically dispossessed immense majority working-class. To abolish the rights of private property and establish democratic Common Ownership of the World and its resources. To voluntarily, establish a money-less, production for USE economy. To freely satisfy the needs and reasonable wants of ALL humanity. Not a form of national, private, corporate and state ownership. With top dpwn, money driven, production for profit economy. As most have been misled to believe is socialism/communism. Just as Democracy Now and other Left Wing Capitalist and Zionist financed organizations promote. That amounts to nothing more than enhancing state controls.. Go for REAL SOCIALISM at; <http://www.worldsocialism.org/>

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humanbeing · 2 days ago

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As a result of the conditions described, the Lanning Foundation will lose members and contributors and Pilger's film will receive a great deal more publicity than it otherwise would have. Maybe that was the goal of the decision makers.

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