

# **Summary and Selected Highlights of the 2019 AG**

for Kansas Sunflower Mensa  
by Larry D. Paarmann and Diane Powell  
January 18, 2020



**The Sheraton Grand Hotel, downtown Phoenix, AZ**

The 2019 AG met in Phoenix, AZ, July 3 – 7, 2019. The AG was hosted by the Sheraton Grand Hotel, a very spacious and attractive facility, located downtown Phoenix. The AG attendance was about 2,000.



**The drive-up entrance of the Sheraton Grand Hotel**



**The lobby of the Sheraton Grand Hotel**



**Another view of the lobby**



**Hotel escalators at the ground floor**



**Hotel escalators at the second floor looking down**



**Hotel escalators at the third floor looking down to the second floor**



**The Hospitality Room at the 2019 AG**

## The AG Presentations

There were over 210 speakers for a little over 280 meetings of various types (not all presentations, some Mensa organizational, debates, games, meet & greets, etc.). At times there were as many as 10 or more things taking place at the same time. Obviously, what is summarized below is highly selective and no doubt somewhat biased.

The presentations summarized below were selected because they were of interest to the authors of this report. Printed below is the verbatim abstract from the printed program for each event, the verbatim biographical sketch for the speaker, and then followed by comments.

### Evangelical Christianity SIG Meet & Greet

**Abstract** This is a time for current members of the SIG to meet and greet and get acquainted, and for prospective members to see what we are about. There is no planned program. Everyone is welcome.

**Biographical Sketch** Larry D. Paarmann is the Coordinator of the Evangelical Christianity SIG. He is retired from a career in electrical engineering, having taught at three universities and having worked in industry as well. He is the LocSec of the Kansas Sunflower Mensa Local Group.



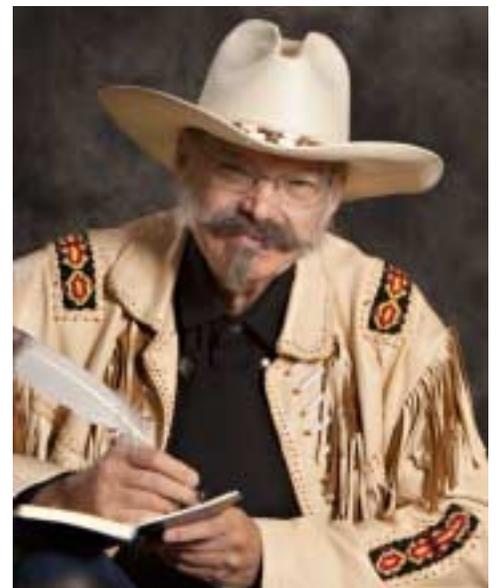
**Most of those present at the Meet & Greet**

**Comments** We began the Meet & Greet by giving an overview of the topic Christ & Culture, motivated in part by the book of H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ & Culture*. It was noted that Niebuhr taught Christian ethics at Yale Divinity School for thirty years, and that some say he influenced more Christian leaders than any other American theologian of the twentieth century. A few quotations were given from Niebuhr's book, including the following: "Ancient spiritualists and modern materialists, pious Romans who charge Christianity with atheism, and nineteenth century atheists who condemn its theistic faith, nationalists and humanists, all seem to be offended by the same elements in the gospel and employ similar arguments in defending their culture against it." We also quoted from D.A. Carson's book, *Christ & Culture Revisited*: "In much of the Western world, despite the fact that Christianity was one of the forces that shaped what the West became (along with the Enlightenment, and a host of less dominant powers), culture is not only moving away from Christianity, it is frequently openly hostile toward it. Christianity can be tolerated, provided it is entirely private: Christian belief that intrudes itself into the public square, especially if it is trying to influence public policy, is most often taken, without examination, as *prima facie* evidence for bigotry and intolerance." We also quoted from William Edgar's book, *Created & Creating: A Biblical Theology of Culture*, for example as follows: "the basic argument of this book is that the Bible teaches that cultural engagement before the living God is, along with worship, the fundamental calling for the human race." During and following the above, the group discussed these things of cultural engagement. This was a good time of discussion and fellowship.

## **Black Legend: George Bascom, Cochise, and the Start of the Apache Wars**

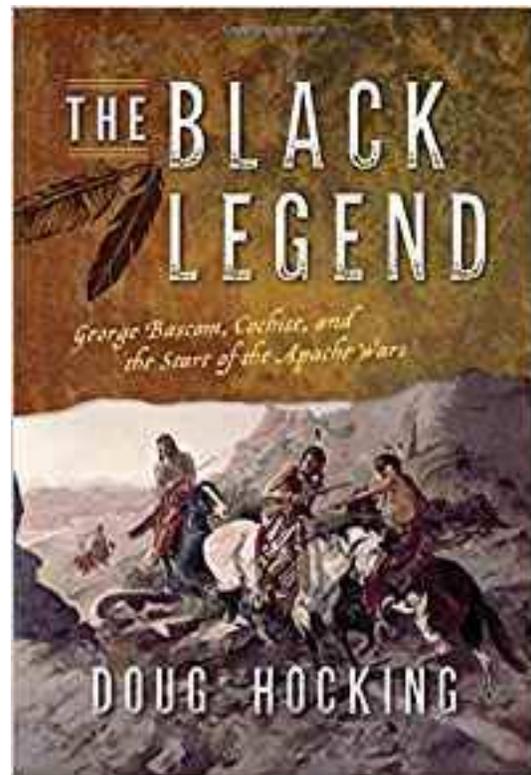
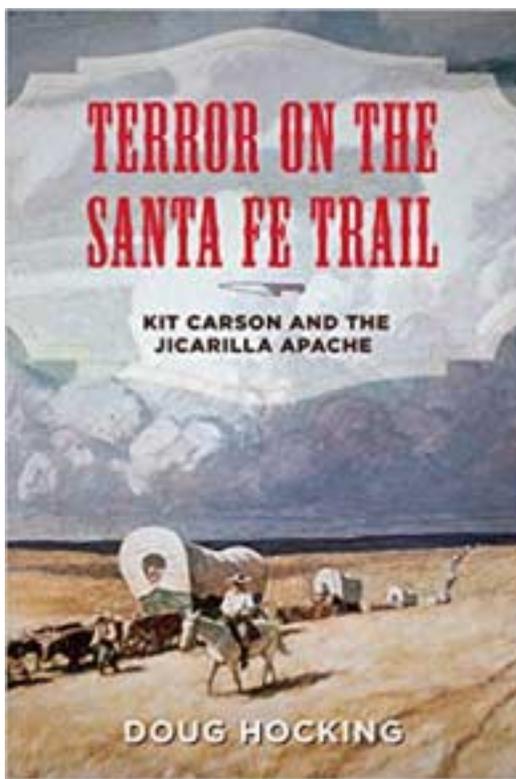
**Abstract** In 1861, Lieutenant George Bascom confronted Cochise concerning the return of a stolen boy, Felix Ward, and his stepfather's livestock. In 1869, a self-promoting officer, Reuben Bernard, started the story that Bascom had done something wrong and that he, Bernard, was a hero who had tried to prevent it. Since then, "popular historians" have blamed Bascom for 11 years of warfare with the Apache. The real story is much more interesting and kinder to Bascom. It includes the story of a flying stagecoach, of the first Medal of Honor, and of Felix Ward, who returned to notice in 1872 as an Apache scout called Mickey Free. For more information, see [doughocking.com](http://doughocking.com) or email [doug@doughocking.com](mailto:doug@doughocking.com).

**Biographical Sketch** An award-winning author and speaker, Doug Hocking is an independent scholar who has completed advanced studies in American history, ethnology, and historical archaeology. After growing up among the Jicarilla Apache and paisanos of the Rio Arriba (northern New Mexico), Doug served as an NCO in military



intelligence, retiring as an Armored Cavalry officer. He is also a board member of the Arizona Historical Society.

**Comments** Hocking is the author of several books, including *The Black Legend*, *Tom Jeffords: Friend of Cochise*, *Massacre at Point of Rocks*, *Mystery of Chaco Canyon*, and more. Hocking grew up on a reservation, lives in southeast Arizona, where he has frequently visited the site of Forts Buchanan and Breckenridge, Cochise's Stronghold, Johnny Ward's Ranch, and Apache Pass seeing them through the eyes of historian, ethnographer and archaeologist. The stories of Cochise are largely fiction, and it is very difficult to discover the truth. According to Hocking, Cochise was a great and forward-looking leader. Hocking is a very good story teller, and his presentation was very interesting.



## **The Lost Dutchman Gold Mine: Fact, Fiction, and Legend**

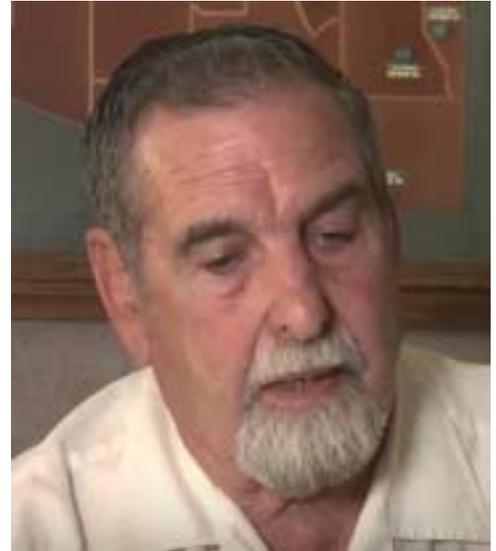
**Abstract** The Lost Dutchman is perhaps the most famous lost gold mine in American history. The mine is named after German immigrant Jacob Waltz (c. 1810–1891), who purportedly discovered it in the Superstition Mountains during the 19th century and kept its location a secret until his death. People have been searching for the Lost Dutchman's mine since at least 1892. According to one estimate, 8,000 people annually participate in the hunt, and it hasn't been found yet.... You could be the one!

Come and hear this fascinating tale of mystery, a buried treasure, and, some say, murder, under the blazing Arizona sun.

**Biographical Sketch** Larry R. Hedrick, a frequent speaker on the Superstition Mountains and the Lost Dutchman Mine, is co-founder of the Superstition Mountain Historical Society. Widely traveled, and originally hailing from Oklahoma, Larry settled permanently in Arizona in 1966. He also founded and commands the Seventh U.S./CS Cavalry, a civil war reenactment organization, which has been seen in several television documentaries and motion pictures. Larry’s research has been accepted by prominent Arizona historians, and he has taught a class in Civil War history, sponsored by Central Arizona College. You can contact him at [larryhedrick75@gmail.com](mailto:larryhedrick75@gmail.com).

**Comments** Jacob Waltz was born in Germany around 1810 and immigrated to America around 1839. Shortly before his death in 1891 he had supposedly revealed some details as to where he had a very rich gold mine in the Superstition Mountains of Arizona, but he left no map. Much speculation about where the mine might be has flourished ever since. Hundreds of people look for it annually, and many people have died trying. Hedrick’s talk documented some of this history. See the Superstition Mountain Museum web site for more details:

<http://superstitionmountainmuseum.org> See the very interesting and well-made 25-minute video documentary:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Exby919-hI>



## Things No One Told You About Space Exploration. There Have Been Challenges That Have Never Been Published.

**Abstract** Dr. Bob Breault, Ph.D., looks like a normal person. He is not. Bob started out as a fighter pilot in the Vietnam War. He left the Air Force and after getting a Ph.D. in space optics at the University of Arizona and became one of the world's leading experts in the invention and operation of software for space telescopes, from the Hubble to the Giant Magellan. This session will be moderated by one of his fighter pilot buddies, Maj. Gen. USAF (Ret.) Don Shepperd. Both are part of a Tucson lunch group called "The Friday Pilots," a group of pilots who flew the old airplanes in the old Air Force. The session will be conducted as an interview, with the moderator asking Bob questions and probing for answers. They will address some of the history of space research and about what really happened, and Bob's answers should be fun to hear! Bob has been exposing the Friday Pilots on some of the latest findings in space research. Dr. Breault has spent most of his life since 1954 penetrating the unknowns of the origin of the universe with the pioneers in the field. Much of it did not evolve as it is recorded.

**Biographical Sketches** Major General Donald W. Shepperd retired from the Pentagon in 1988 as head of the Air National Guard. A combat veteran who flew 247 fighter combat missions in Vietnam, Donald served as a military analyst for CNN and military commentator for ABC radio during wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He is a 1962 distinguished graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy, where he earned a master's degree in personnel management. His book *Bury Us Upside Down*, about the Vietnam War, has been widely acclaimed. His latest book, *The Friday Pilots*, is about a group of 20 retired Tucson pilots who flew the old airplanes, in the old Air Force.



Dr. Robert Breault is a recognized pioneer in space-based research. He has worked with many of the field's trailblazers, participating in the designs of the Hubble, IRAS, DIRBE, ISO, GALILEO, CASSINI, XMM, and LIGO, as well as most of the 8 million-plus ground-based telescopes. He has worked one on one with six Nobel Laureates and key people in space-based exploration.

**Comments** This was a very interesting talk primarily from Dr. Breault, reminiscing about his career in physics, primarily optics, and the implications of his work. Breault claims that due to his influence, Merriam-Webster has changed the definition of a photon. He says a photon is not a particle, the Niels Bohr model of the



atom has no correlation with reality, no one knows what a photon is, and optical waves do not interfere. He also said that our galaxy is among the earliest galaxies, and that he sees no conflict between Genesis and science. He sees the space/time continuum as a complex tensor field.

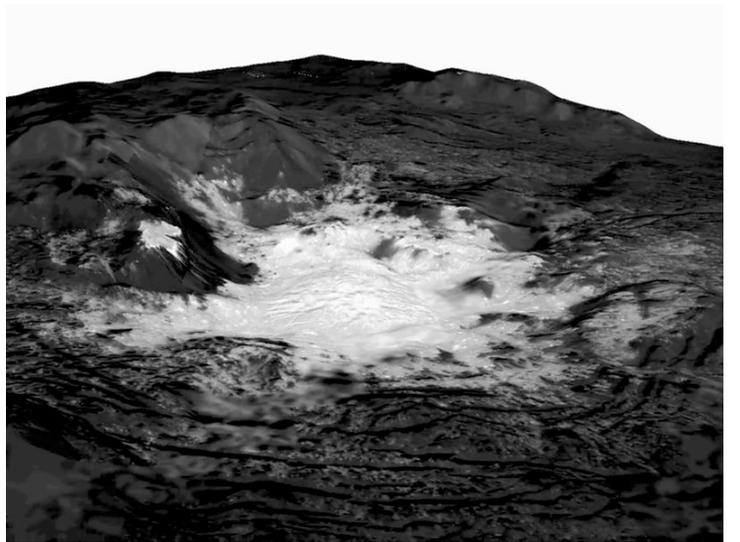
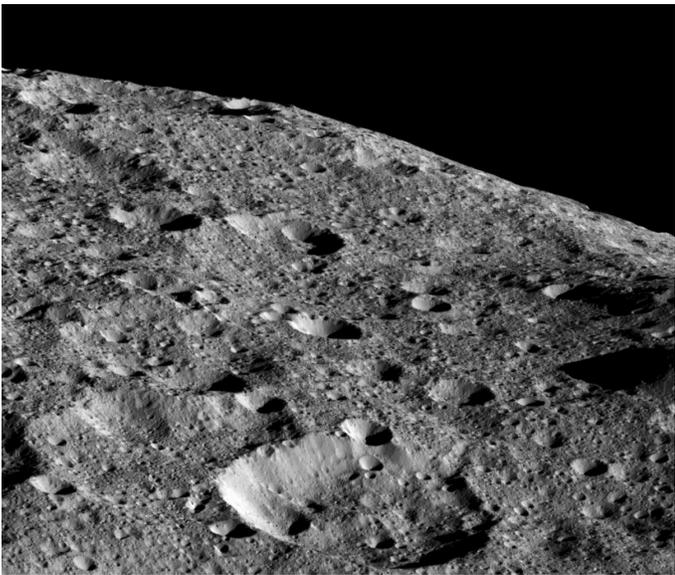
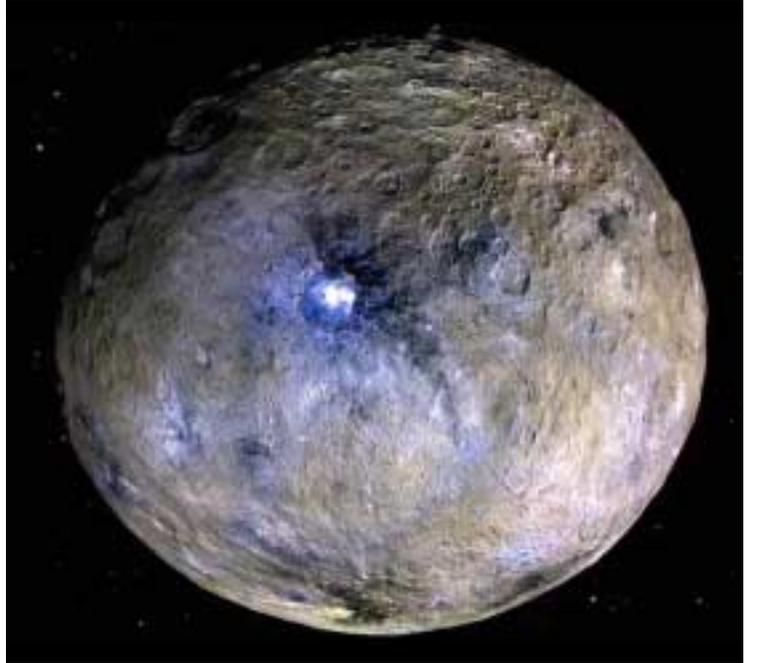
## **Asteroids, Ion Propulsion, and NASA's Dawn Mission to Vesta and Ceres**

**Abstract** Asteroids are the primitive remains from the formation of the solar system, the building blocks of the planets, but for years they were neglected by NASA planetary missions in favor of bigger objects such as Mars and the outer gas giants Jupiter and Saturn. NASA's Dawn mission was the first orbiter sent to Main Belt asteroids, (four) Vesta and (one) Ceres. What did Dawn discover? Join Professor David Williams of ASU's School of Earth and Space Exploration and a member of the Dawn Science Team for a discussion of the results of the Dawn mission and what was learned about the two most massive objects between Mars and Jupiter. For more information, email [David.Williams@asu.edu](mailto:David.Williams@asu.edu).

**Biographical Sketch** David A. Williams is an associate research professor in the School of Earth & Space Exploration as well as director of the NASA Regional Planetary Information Facility at Arizona State University. He researches planetary geology, with a focus on planetary mapping. He was involved with NASA's Magellan Mission to Venus and the Galileo Mission to Jupiter. He is a co-investigator on ESA's Mars Express orbiter and a co-investigator on NASA's Psyche Mission.



**Comments** Ceres was promoted from an asteroid to a dwarf planet, and Pluto was demoted from a planet to a dwarf planet. Pluto is still a planet! Ceres revolves on its axes every 5 1/2 hours, and revolves around the sun every 4 1/2 earth-years. The Dawn mission was launched on a Delta rocket (see picture below) in 2007 propelled by ion engines (after launch). It arrived at Vesta in 2011. In 2015 Dawn went into orbit around Ceres (see picture below), the largest object in the asteroid belt (between Mars and Jupiter). Two pictures of surface details are shown below. The Dawn mission was concluded in November of 2018.



## War Is Decreasing and Societies Are Becoming Less Violent – Why?

**Abstract** Many people believe that war is increasing around the world and that crime is increasing in our society. But that is not true. In fact, we live in a time characterized by low levels of war and rapidly decreasing violent crime. This talk reviews some key data on these issues and engages some explanations for why societies around the world are becoming less violent, at least for now.

**Biographical Sketch** Daniel Rothenberg, Ph.D., is a professor of practice at Arizona State University and co-director of the Center on the Future of War. Email him at [daniel.rothenberg@asu.edu](mailto:daniel.rothenberg@asu.edu).

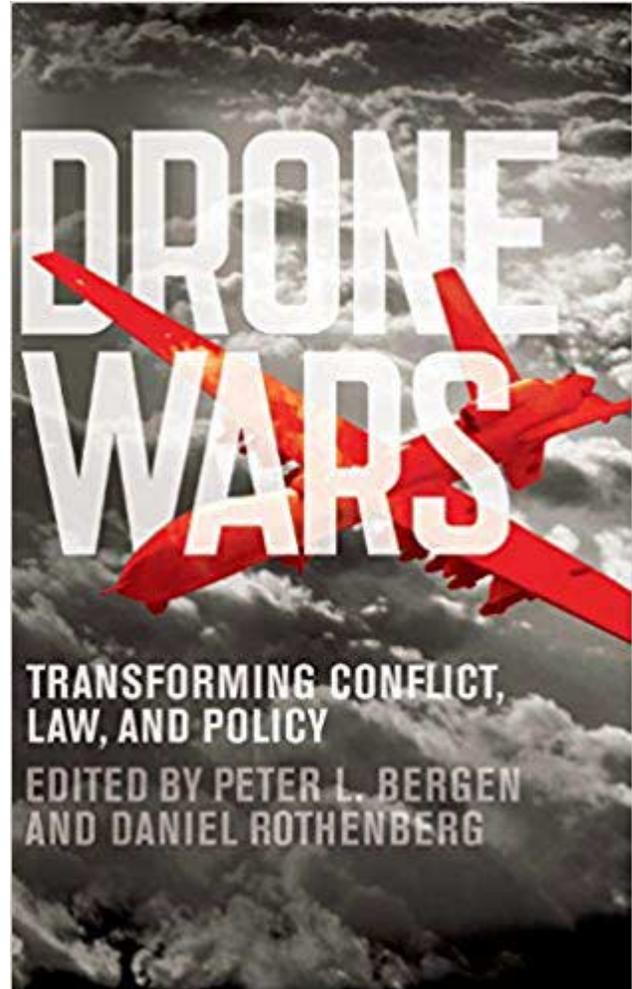
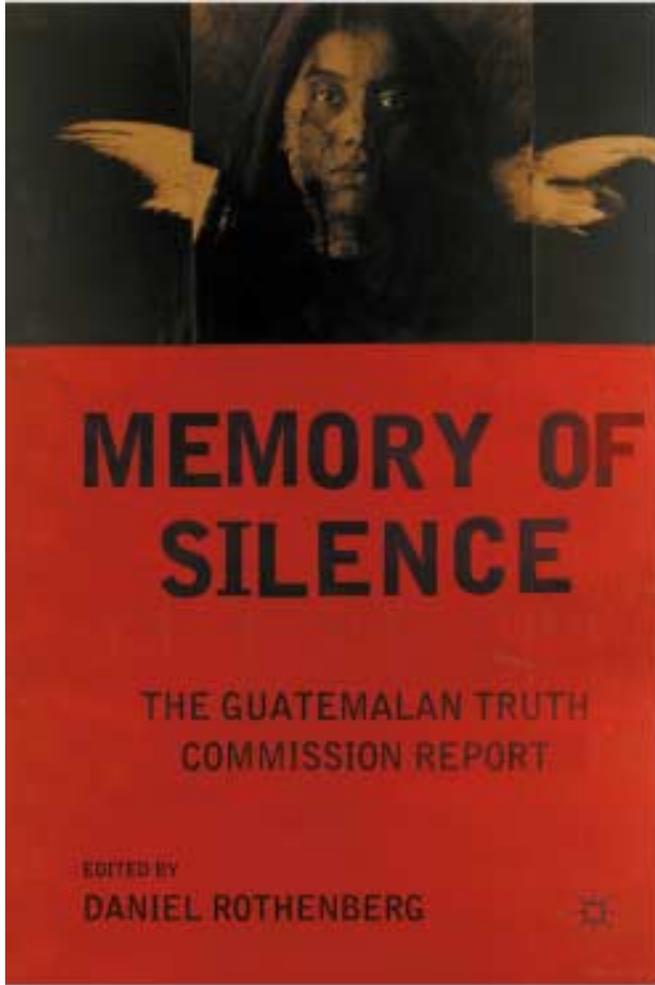
**Comments** To add to his biographical sketch: Rothenberg is Professor of Practice, School of Politics and Global Studies at ASU and a Senior Fellow at New America. He has participated in both founding or holding top managerial positions at numerous institutions including two Colleges of Law as well as working in the area of human rights. He has served as editor for a work entitled *Memory of Silence: The Guatemalan Truth Commission Report* [2012]. It describes the atrocities committed against the Mayan people by the government of Guatemala. Another book published more recently deals with the modernization of war and is called, *Drone Wars: Transforming Conflict, Law, and Policy* [2014], co-authored with Peter L. Bergen.



Coming up with casualty numbers can be quite challenging and evaluating the true impact of war even more difficult. We know from recent conflicts that the casualty count can vary widely depending on the source and circumstances. See, for example, <https://now.tufts.edu/articles/counting-casualties>.

According to Rothenberg, the experts are in agreement regarding the decline of war as represented by conflicts between the major powers during the period from 1500 to 2015. The feature of democratic rule is clearly associated with a decrease in the probability of violence since the number of wars between democratic states was significantly less [0] than that between either democratic and non-democratic states [158] or between two non-democratic states [198]. Statistics such as these do seem to support Rothenberg's claim that war deaths have been reduced in recent years. See the following slides to support these claims: <https://slides.ourworldindata.org/war-and-violence/#/title-slide>

Rothenberg and his co-director Peter L. Bergen preside over ASU's Center on the Future of War. Their class, The Future of War, examines key philosophical and military strategies as well as the impact of emerging technologies such as drones and cyberwar. Every week students hear guest lecturers who may be scientists, military officials or policy makers who have a critical perspective to offer these students. See the following URL for information on the class: <https://futureofwar.asu.edu/students/future-of-war-class>



## The Psychology of Pre-Suasion

**Abstract** In this presentation, Professor Cialdini shines new light on how to be an effective persuader by showing that the secret doesn't lie in the message itself but, instead, in the key moment before that message is delivered. Cialdini shows that the best persuaders spend more time crafting what they do and say before making a request. In this way, they gain a singular kind of persuasive traction by arranging for recipients to be receptive to a message before they encounter it. Cialdini calls this pre-suasion. "To persuade optimally," he asserts, "it's necessary to pre-suade optimally." Accordingly, to change minds most effectively, a pre-suader changes initial states of mind. For more information, visit [influenceatwork.com](http://influenceatwork.com) or email [Bob@InfluenceAtWork.com](mailto:Bob@InfluenceAtWork.com).

**Biographical Sketch** Dr. Robert B. Cialdini is the Regents' Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Marketing at Arizona State University. His book *Influence* has sold more than 4 million copies in 40 languages. His more recent book *Pre-Suasion* was an immediate New York Times bestseller. He

attributes his interest in social influences to being raised in an entirely Italian family, in a predominantly Polish neighborhood, in a historically German city (Milwaukee), in an otherwise rural state.

**Comments** One of the most outstanding presentations at the Phoenix AG this year [2019] was by Robert Cialdini who holds multiple professorships [Stanford/UCA/Santa Cruz], including the position of Regents' Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Marketing at ASU. He credits his interest in persuasion to a diverse ethnic background which includes; Italian, Polish, and German as well as rural American elements.

Understandably, Cialdini's expertise is in high demand. His most well known book, *Influence; The Psychology of Persuasion* [1984], sold over four million copies and has been translated into 40 languages. The material in this book was based on the three years he spent "undercover" applying and taking training at diverse companies such as; used car dealerships, fund-raising operations, and telemarketing firms. These afforded him numerous opportunities to watch the process of persuasion at work. Since then he has written another book, *Pre-suasion* [2018], an immediate New York Times bestseller. He states that he envisioned the earlier work as more of a consumer guide while the later serves more as a how-to manual. Cialdini cautions that these techniques should always be used to inform and enhance others rather than to exploit. He notes that those same employees who don't mind cheating their customers might well one day cheat their company as well.

Based on this research, he determined that persuasion is based on six key principles; reciprocity, commitment and consistency, social proof, authority, liking, and scarcity. Reciprocity represents the sense of obligation we feel when someone has shown us a special favor or given us a small gift. Marketers have learned to use this technique as it has a proven impact on sales. People may speak of "owing" someone who has done them some favor. It is also a well-known strategy in hostage negotiation to give some benefit in order to get some concession back.

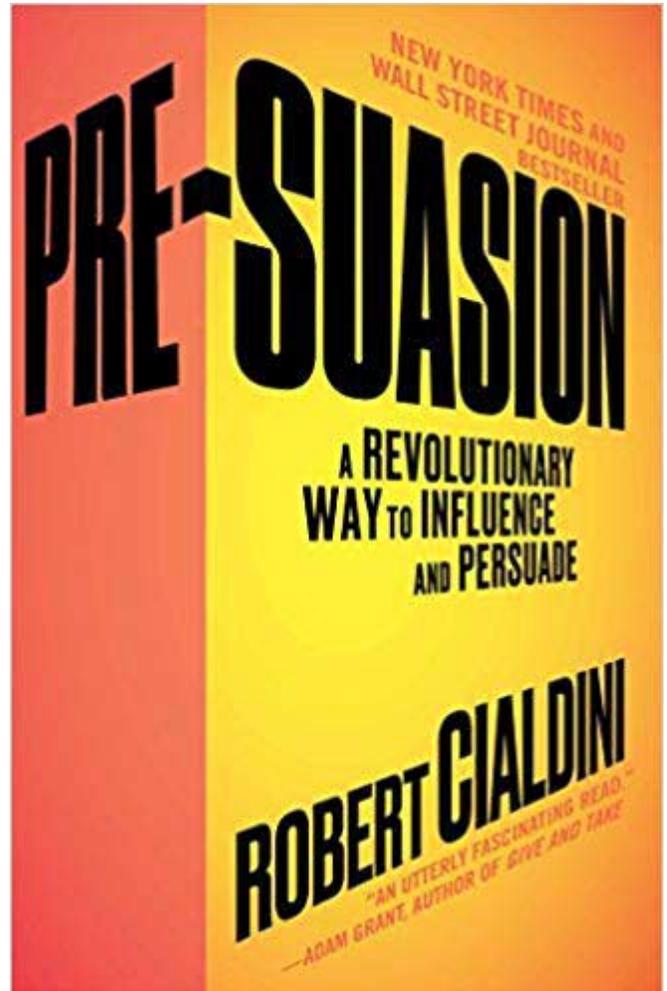
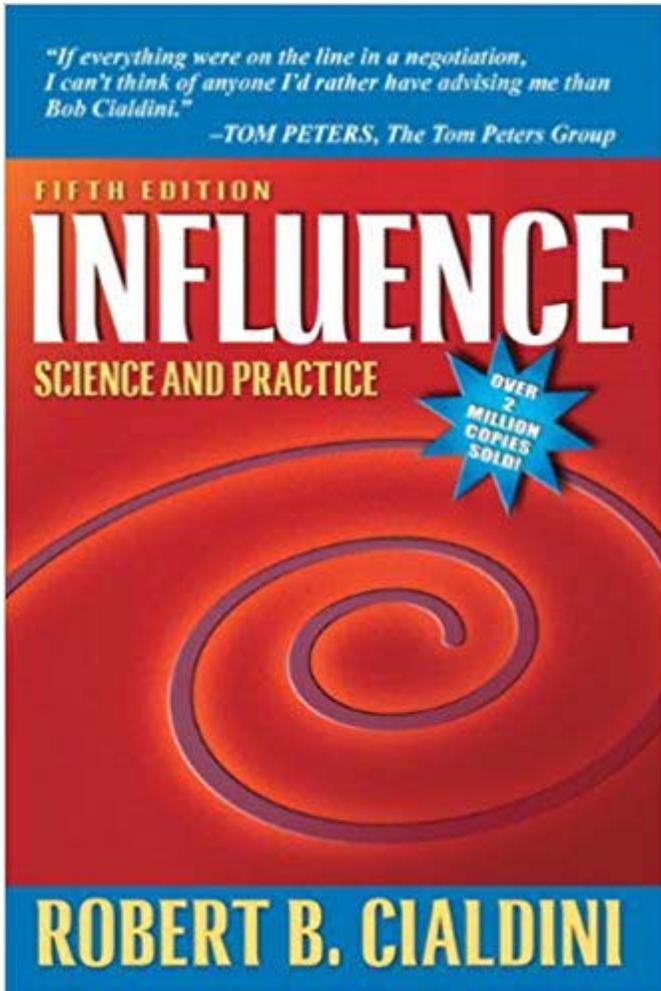
Authority or credibility is another universal. People tend to seek advice from someone they trust – an expert in some matter, be it electricity, fashion or politics. Scarcity is likewise a commonly used principle to motivate sales, and is represented by the commonly seen signs stating "limited time offer" or "only 8 left." Rarity will always increase the value of the item in question. The hoarding of supplies is often seen as a result of an unbalanced supply and demand.

The principle of Commitment and Consistency is associated with one's self-image. Research has shown that after we have affirmed some position publicly we are more likely to continue our commitment to it. In one study neighbors were asked to agree to post a small card in their window in support of the "Drive Safely" campaign. Later, that same group was 4X more likely to agree to put a sign in their yard stating the same if they had already agreed to post the card than those who had not.



This is the same principle in operation when the receptionist asks you to fill out your own appointment card reminder.

For more information, go to the following URL: <https://www.influenceatwork.com/principles-of-persuasion>



## Whistleblowers: An Insider's Look at Risks, Rewards, Laws, Outcomes & Bounties

**Abstract** Whistleblowers at private companies are responsible for uncovering massive swindles on American taxpayers as healthcare providers cheat Medicare, defense contractors cook the books on military contracts, pharmaceutical companies overlook deadly manufacturing errors, and other reprehensible misconduct. Whistleblower lawyer Brian Mahany, whose firm quarterbacked the largest whistleblower case in U.S. history, will look at the U.S. False Claims Act, which provides million-dollar rewards and job protections for citizens who risk career and reputation to stand up to powerful corporations and other entities causing financial harm and health risks, in the reckless pursuit of illegal

profits. A fascinating and illuminating look at one of America's most misunderstood areas of law. Want to be a whistleblower? This is how it works.

**Biographical Sketch** Widely known as America's whistleblower lawyer, Brian Mahany is the author of the Amazon bestseller *Saints, Sinners & Heroes: Covert Ops in the Wars Against the C-Suite Mafia* and helps people use U.S. laws to expose and stop corporate misconduct and earn million-dollar rewards for their heroism. Labeled "The reigning king of whistleblower actions across the U.S." by the *New Haven Register*, Brian is a frequent expert legal commentator for media outlets from the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times, to NPR, CBS, and the Financial Times. A former New Orleans street cop, now a billion-dollar lawyer and winner of the largest settlement in U.S. history at \$16.65 billion, Brian is currently the leading U.S. whistleblower and fraud recovery attorney, with active whistleblower cases in 37 states. He resides in Texas. You can reach him by email at [Brian@mahanylaw.com](mailto:Brian@mahanylaw.com), by phone at 202-800-9791, or through his website, [mahanylaw.com](http://mahanylaw.com).



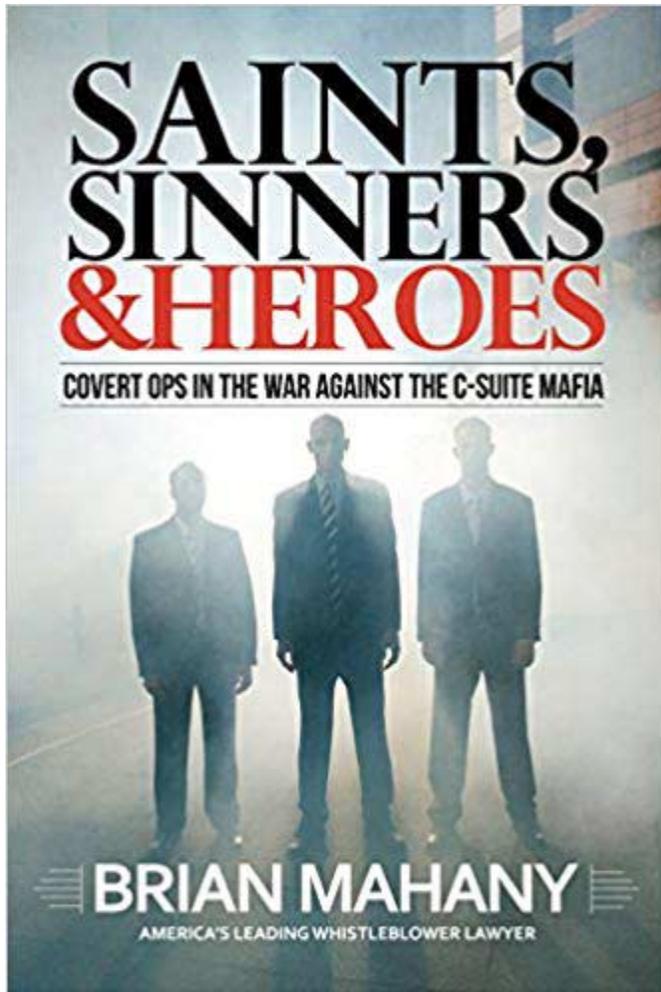
**Comments** Brian Mahany served as MENSA keynote speaker at AG 2019. He is also the bestselling author of *Saints, Sinners and Heroes – Covert Ops in the Wars against the C-Suite Mafia* [2016] and has recently been credited with securing the largest amount ever paid on a whistleblower claim from the Bank of America [\$16.65 billion] a case which involved financial institutions in TX, MA, and NY.

Mahany has become well-known for his significant expertise in the very narrow field of financial and tax cases. He is frequently a legal commentator for various news outlets and currently has 37 open fraud recovery cases from across the country. Many of these cases involve Medicare and Medicaid fraud. According to the FBI, the data for 2010 indicates that the cost of medical fraud in the United States may have been as high as \$260 billion dollars that year, approximately 10 percent of all healthcare spending. As a result, the licensing of new ambulance companies faced a moratorium in 2014 because they could not even keep up with the auditing demands of existing companies. Mahany writes on his newspage: "It's estimated that up to 80% of serious medical errors involve miscommunication between caregivers during the transfer of patients and 86% of general mistakes in healthcare involve some form of administrative error." See the following URL:

<https://www.brianmahany.com/news.php>

The False Claims Act upon which these cases are based has recently had its statute of limitations extended. In the case of Cochise Consultancy, a security company employed by the DOD in Iraq, the Supreme Court held that the time limit for whistleblowers to file claims could be extended from six years to ten. Although the False Claims Act was originally enacted by Abraham Lincoln it has only recently [1989] been empowered as a tool against fraud.

Brian may be reached at [Brian@mahanylaw.com](mailto:Brian@mahanylaw.com), by phone at 202-800-9791, or through his website, [mahanylaw.com](http://mahanylaw.com).



# THE SMART WHISTLE BLOWER'S PLAYBOOK

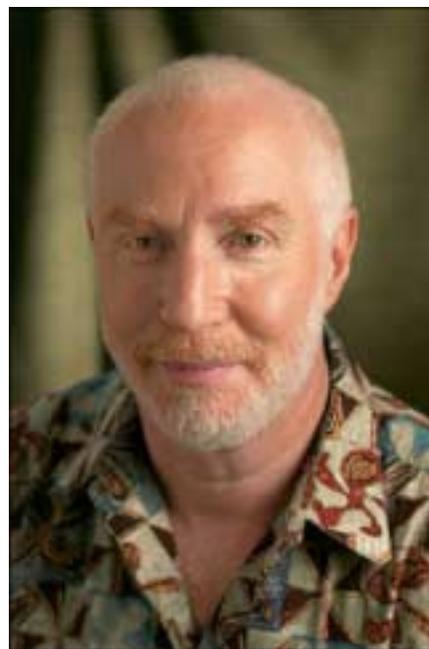
**EARNING FINANCIAL REWARDS  
FOR DOING THE RIGHT THING**

**DAVID KANI & BRIAN MAHANY**  
with **STEVE HOCHFELSEN**

## **Enforcing News Media Ethics**

**Abstract** Have fun learning why mass media is the way it is, instead of shouting at your TV. Learn how “news” is gathered, massaged, and presented, so you can see between the lines, read with “the third eye,” and hear with “the third ear.” Understand at last how the public is carefully manipulated by people who used to follow a Code of Ethics (official copy provided). Specific examples you’ll recognize will be dissected — illuminating everything from the editor’s role, camera angles, story selection, significant missing elements you’ll learn to spot, deceptive word choices (are “mass shootings” and “mass murders” the same thing?), deliberate fakes, and more. Newspapers and your TV will never look the same. You’re not uninformed — you’re misinformed. This harms our nation. Once you learn how it’s done you’ll gain some immunity. Exit programming, become enlightened. Because this subject sparks controversy, please consider reducing caffeine intake beforehand or bringing sedatives. For more information, visit [bloomfieldpress.com](http://bloomfieldpress.com), or email [alan@bloomfieldpress.com](mailto:alan@bloomfieldpress.com).

**Biographical Sketch** Alan Korwin is an award-winning, 30-year member of the Society of Professional Journalists, with 14 books and more than 1,000 radio and TV interviews to his credit. On the Accuracy in Media Speaker's Bureau, he's a national columnist in print and online, with a published newsletter, "PageNine.org," featuring him as The Uninvited Ombudsman since 2006. He has twice been invited to observe cases at the U.S. Supreme Court. His clients have included IBM, AT&T, NYNEX, and others, many with real names.



**Comments** Korwin has a unique and outstanding 25-year track record as an author and businessman. He not only founded it but is also two-term past president of the Arizona Book Publishing Association. Due to his leadership and expertise in this area he has received their Korwin Award which was named in his honor. His projects include the creation of SkyMall as well as Bloomfield Press which has become the largest producer and distributor of gun law books in the country. His tenth book is the unabridged *Supreme Court Gun Case: Two Centuries of Gun Rights Revealed* [2003]. He has twice been invited to observe oral arguments at the U.S. Supreme Court on gun-rights cases. Consequently, he was able to witness the *D.C. v. Heller* case which led to his 11<sup>th</sup> book, *The Heller Case: Gun Rights Affirmed* [2008], co-authored with David B. Kopel.

Korwin spoke on the issue of Journalistic Ethics and provided his audience with a detailed hand-out which affirmed the key values of truth and honesty in reporting as well as minimizing any harm to the public as a result of reporting. Journalists must also avoid conflicts of interest and ensure that their writing is always unbiased. News should always be distinguished from advertising and he recommends that any hybrids designed to blur these lines be strictly avoided. Transparency and accountability are also key principles. Any time it is required journalists must be willing to explain their ethical choices. See his code of ethics at the following URL: <https://www.spj.org/pdf/spj-code-of-ethics.pdf>

Korwin warned his audience against the pervasive bias found in today's news coverage. He challenged his audience to turn off the sound while they are watching TV in order to focus on the message alone. As the captions roll, media bias will become more clearly apparent. Many viewers are exposed to leading questions and word choices which when examined closely reveal an ideological bias on such key issues as; life, guns or race. Korwin notes that the old adage, "Follow the money!" is always good advice since ethical compromises are often committed in pursuit of monetary gain.

