

## Lessons from History

### Interview with Noam Chomsky<sup>1</sup>

*Noam Chomsky*

**Edward Carvalho:** For many years, you've talked at great length about the sociopolitical and economic forces that have contributed to the erosion of freedoms for American citizens and the global citizenry. And I think that what we've seen in recent times—particularly since 9/11—is more of a visible attack on academic freedoms within the university. This seems to be a corollary with what's happening in the current administration, the assault on democratic freedoms and the residual effects of long-standing foreign policy decisions.

**Noam Chomsky:** Well, have you actually found many cases—serious cases of violations of academic freedom? I mean, I know there's kind of a “lingering thread” around, but I can't think of a lot of cases.

**EC:** Well, most visible I think are the Churchill and Finkelstein cases and some of the related fallout.

**NC:** Well, the Churchill case you could say is 9/11, but the Finkelstein isn't. The Finkelstein case is a combination of a very rabid ethnic lobby and a *lunatic* who is trying to protect himself from exposure. If Finkelstein hadn't written the book exposing Dershowitz as a charlatan, none of this probably would have happened. I mean, I don't know if you know Dershowitz, but he's turning over heaven and earth trying to prevent the book [*Beyond Chutzpah*] from being seen. He tried to prevent it from being published—once it got published he went on a kind of *jihad* and tried to destroy the author. He knows he cannot respond at the level of fact and argument, so instead he's resorted to what comes naturally to him: vilification and slander, and not for the first time. But there's no 9/11 issue there.

**EC:** Do you think a more fervent endorsement of the pro-Israeli position came to the fore after 9/11?

**NC:** It is. It is that, definitely. You see it in other cases such as Joseph Massad, and others. But that's the undercurrent, then it was driven into *fanaticism* by Dershowitz. He actually went to the point

**WORKS AND DAYS 51/52, 53/54: Vols. 26 & 27, 2008-09**

of writing a sixty-page letter or something like that to every member of the faculty, including the entire law school, if I remember correctly. The guy's off his rocker and people are intimidated by him.

**EC:** There was also the whole matter with him writing to Governor Schwarzenegger and the University of California Press.

**NC:** He was censured by the university faculty [DePaul], finally. But he gets away with it. *The Boston Globe* worships him these days—unlike the past.

**EC:** I do notice from my experience from undergraduate to post-graduate work that there does seem to be a difference in the kinds of content acceptable to explore within the university in the post-9/11 political climate.

**NC:** It's hard for me to judge how much is related to 9/11 because I think it's always been that way. Take a look at . . . By now there's a *ton* of literature on the Vietnam War. Try to find *anything* anywhere near the mainstream, you know. Not what I write, but *anything* that says there was something fundamentally wrong with invading South Vietnam. It's not a thinkable thought. I mean, the only thing you discuss is "Was it too costly? Did it go wrong? Did they make mistakes?" not "Was it the wrong thing to do, a major crime?"

When we talk about the Russians invading Afghanistan, we don't discuss whether they made mistakes. It was a crime. Or take a current case. There's kind of an interesting current case. Take Chechnya. Technically, it's part of Russia, so it's not formally an invasion. They practically destroyed the place; they turned Grozny into rubble, you know. All kinds of atrocities and crimes. Now they seem to have put it together. You take a look at the American reporters who go there from *The New York Times*. They say Grozny's a booming city. It has electricity. Everything's working. It's run by a Chechen client government. They've achieved what the United States is trying to achieve in Iraq. But do we praise them for it? Do we praise the Germans for having made Vichy run? But when it's us, we can't ask that question. And if you were to try to raise it in a PhD thesis, your faculty wouldn't know what you're talking about.

**EC:** Do you see in the Finkelstein case Dershowitz being given free rein because of a post-9/11, right-wing push? I mean, Finkelstein had been writing in this trajectory for quite some time.

**NC:** For one thing, Finkelstein showed a lot of people up. One of the people who went after him in an extremely *ugly* way is Peter Novick and one of the reasons seems to be that Novick appears to think he owned the topic of Holocaust exploitation. And Finkelstein went well beyond him. Novick was infuriated. You know, there's just an awful lot of academic *pettiness*. And it kind of all combined. If you write . . . if you get near this issue, there's kind of a routine slander machine that starts going into operation: "You're a Holocaust denier; you're an anti-Semite." And you don't even need any facts,

you just shriek. And you can't defend yourself against slander. If some group of people decided to slander you as a child abuser, for instance, what are you going to say? "I'm not a child abuser." And then lie after lie pours on. It should be added, however, that Finkelstein's work has been recognized as very accurate and highly significant by the most outstanding scholars, notably Raul Hilberg, the founder and leading scholar of Holocaust studies, the respected Israeli historian Avi Shlaim, and quite a few others. But to get back to your question, I don't see a specific 9/11 connection.

And Finkelstein can sometimes be pretty abrasive. He's a close friend. I tried to get him to tone down some of the rhetoric. He kind of likes it because it's sharp and funny, and so on. But it gives a peg for his critics to hang him on. They skip the content and pick the comments about Elie Wiesel being a charlatan, omitting the careful explanation.

**EC:** Such as with the "Shoah business" comments, and so on.

Based on the title of this *Works and Days* issue on *Academic Freedom and Intellectual Activism in the Post-9/11 University*, do you sense that there is a post-9/11 ethos? Many scholars are bandying this term "post-9/11" about, but generally don't go beyond the literal articulations. Do you think such an ethos exists, and how has it influenced the production of knowledge in the university?

**NC:** We might recall that the "Shoah business" phrase comes from Israeli diplomat Abba Eban.

I think 9/11 had ambiguous consequences. On the one hand, it did arouse in the country a lot of fear. And a lot of it was engendered. But a lot of it was quite realistic. I expected there was going to be another terrorist attack. I assumed that when the anthrax thing came along, okay, it's probably another terrorist attack. And I think right now we're likely to have a nuclear terrorist attack—I don't think it's a joke.

**EC:** I'm in complete agreement with you on that point.

**NC:** On the other hand, it is whipped up for ugly purposes. It was whipped up to drive home fast-track free trade agreements. It had nothing to do with 9/11—the population was against it, but they rammed it through. I don't know if you followed the exposé in *The Wall Street Journal* on all of the stock options.

**EC:** As far as the terrorism futures market?<sup>2</sup>

**NC:** No, there was a real scandal that *The Wall Street Journal* did a good job on. When 9/11 took place, the stock market closed.

**EC:** Right.

**NC:** And when the stock market closed for a couple of days, everyone knew that stocks would be way down, because people were scared.

**EC:** Which allowed some people to buy in . . .

**NC:** A lot of CEOs took out stock options during that period, figuring they could get them cashed in at the low rate and then pick them up high. And *The Journal* did a substantial exposé of it.

But [9/11] was used for all kinds of scams and frauds. And part of it was to frighten people. You noticed we had flags all over the place and a lot of faux patriotism, and so on. On the other hand, it also opened a lot of people's minds. This is an extremely insular country. Nobody pays any attention to the outside world. They don't know where other countries are. But a lot of people just began to be concerned. I mean, this "*Why do they hate us?*" line actually did ring a bell with people: "Maybe we ought to find out something about the world." In fact, if you'll check—I could see it in my personal experience, but it was the same with everybody—the number of invitations shot up; much bigger audiences from all over the country. Small left bookstores and publishers like South End [of Boston] suddenly had to start reprinting books from the '80s that nobody bought in the first place.

And it also elicited some pretty interesting . . . I don't know what's the right word, but . . . striking "cults." Like the 9/11 Truth Movement, which, for some, has taken on the character of a religious cult. But it's huge and the people are passionate and fanatic and they think they're being very radical, and so on. But I don't know if you ever looked into it.

**EC:** I've seen some of the interview clips, and so forth. To that point, I also wonder about the production of knowledge and how the post-9/11 environment has influenced things that maybe we hadn't seen before. Recently—and I think, if memory serves, MIT was one of the campuses where this took place—the FBI was sending agents out among faculty and student populations advising them to call if they encountered persons interested in specific areas of scientific and technical research. I certainly see this as problematic for academics—is Big Brother going to be looking over our shoulders every time we engage in research or scholarly collaboration?<sup>3</sup>

**NC:** There's much less of that in the United States than in Europe, I think. In England, this has become a *real* surveillance society—cameras on every street corner. I don't know what kind of a chilling effect it has here; I suspect not very much. For one thing, it's always sort of been there. Like MIT was always—since I got here in the '50s—was almost entirely funded by the Pentagon. There wasn't any classified work on campus, but it was two inches off campus. The labs right next door were doing classified work and people were between them all the time. My wife was working in Lincoln Labs and she had to have clearance. But the atmosphere was very free and open. Cases of inappropriate intervention did exist—an undergraduate course of mine on sociopolitical issues was targeted by a comical FBI operation—but they were rare and insignificant.

**EC:** Another one of the questions *Works and Days* editor David Downing and I talked about was the way in which the right uses words such as "freedom," "rights," and "democracy" to subvert academic programs (e.g., David Horowitz and the Academic Bill of Rights). Do you find that this is an extension of political imperialism similar to

your point in 9-11, that is, how terms like “humanitarian intervention” couch overt aggressions of war and conquest? In other words, both Horowitz and the AAUP claim to defend academic freedom, yet they mean very different things by the same terminology.

**NC:** Well, Horowitz is not a fool—he’s just a perfect cynic. He knows *exactly* what he’s doing. He’s defending academic freedom in the same sense that Stalin was defending freedom—he’s picking the terms he knows he can get mileage from. But the idea that the universities have been taken over by liberals and that conservatives are an oppressed group is [laughs] . . . I mean the *audacity* is really mind-boggling.

**EC:** Yes. No doubt. In the book *Power and Terror*, you speak about the silence of Western intellectuals as a form of complicity enabling ideological movements such as the war(s) on terror to come into being (19). It seems that a corollary exists when reflecting on the erosions of academic freedom and intellectual activism within the university. Why do you think so many of our colleagues are reluctant to speak, publish, and resist governmental and corporatized intrusion into the academy?

**NC:** The one word I’m skeptical about is “erosion.” When was it different?

**EC:** I can probably best answer that personally, based upon my academic career, say, from the experiential differences between my undergraduate to post-graduate work.

**NC:** Where were you?

**EC:** As an undergraduate, Western Connecticut State University.

**NC:** In what years?

**EC:** Late ‘80s, early ‘90s.

**NC:** You thought it was more open then?

**EC:** It certainly felt more open then, especially as a creative writing student, which I was at the time. I didn’t feel as though there were subjects . . .

**NC:** . . . taboo . . .

**EC:** . . . taboo, foreign, repressed. Today, I feel as though any manner of encroachment into certain political or religious topics raises administrative hackles. We can take, for example—though, admittedly, an extreme case—the scrutiny placed upon the creative writings of Seung-Hui Cho, the Virginia Tech shooter, such as his plays *Richard McBeef* and *Mr. Brownstone*. Several creative writing professors and students [as well as professional writers in the horror genre] have come out acknowledging that they had written about similar content and context and were never punished for doing so—that creative

impulse was not stifled in any way. And yet, regrettably, though Cho did manifest these written articulations in violent ways, the fact yet remains that a post-9/11 filter of censorship was placed on his person and his academic work. Essentially, the fear here is that if you were to create something based upon a violent theme that your work could be then held to these elevated levels of censor and censure.

**NC:** Well, I'd like to see a real study of it, because I just don't see it. I mean, there's a lot more hysteria about plenty of things. Take religion. On the other hand, people are having no trouble writing best-selling atheist books. Less trouble than, say, [Madelyn Murray] O'Hare had thirty years ago. She was hounded for being an atheist. But Sam Harris is on the best-seller list.

**EC:** What of the political fallout from people supporting Finkelstein and Churchill? Many people who came out in solidarity—who are not tenured professors—certainly felt the punitive effects. Mehrene Larudee stands as one example of a scholar denied tenure at DePaul [for doing so].

**NC:** She was, but that was fallout from the Finkelstein affair. And that, I don't think, was a 9/11 case. That's a Jewish community, and specifically, a Dershowitz case. It's more like Joseph Massad and people like that. There's no 9/11 connection, it's just hysteria about permitting any discussion of Israel. And in fact, see, I've been involved in this for forty years and it's a lot less rabid now than it was.

**EC:** Really?

**NC:** Much less. Well, I can tell you . . . You were a student in the '80s?

**EC:** Yes.

**NC:** Okay. Well, in 1985, I guess it was, I was invited to UCLA to give a week of philosophy lectures—graduate philosophy lectures. And, at that time, the live political issues were mostly Central American. So I was asked to give side talks on Central America, terror—all sorts of stuff.

One professor, whom I knew, asked me if I would give a talk on the Middle East. This guy, who's not Jewish, happened to be teaching six months a year at the time at Tel Aviv University. He was really interested in Israel and he was up and back [in the area], and so on. And he asked me if I could give a talk on the Middle East, and I said, "Sure."

Well, about a couple of days later, I got a call from campus police. They said they heard I was giving a talk on the Middle East and they wanted to have uniformed armed police following me the whole time I'm on campus. So I refused, of course. But they had undercover police following me every minute I was on campus—sitting in on the philosophy lecture, seminar, walking from the faculty club to the library. When they finally had the talk on the Middle East, they put it in a big auditorium—they had airport security; you know, one door open. Women had to open their handbags, things like this.

After I left—the week after I left (which is the usual technique, so as to prevent responses and discussion)—*The Daily Bruin*, the [UCLA] newspaper, started in with a huge violent campaign of denunciation of both me and the professor who invited me, and there was an effort to try and remove his tenure. They didn't make it. But that's giving *one talk* on the Middle East. And that was not unusual in those days. I got to know half the Cambridge and campus cops because they would be sitting in on talks I was giving on the Middle East. That's all gone. I mean, it *very rarely* happens now. Now audiences are more open, more receptive. Much less lunacy.

Matter of fact, the people who are more embattled are the ones who call themselves defenders of Israel—misguided, I think. It's just a shift. Actually, Norman Finkelstein, who senses this a lot because he gives plenty of talks—he's actually writing a book [. . .] about how Israel is losing its support from the general liberal community because people can't tolerate the crimes any longer.<sup>4</sup> And I think there's a sense of that. Well, you can see it in Jimmy Carter's book [*Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*]; it would have never been published years back.

**EC:** Along the same idea, why do you think though your work has been attacked, your position as one of the leading intellectuals on this subject has not?

**NC:** I'm here at MIT.

**EC:** Is it because of the protections MIT offers?

**NC:** MIT is a science-based university. During the '60s, the lab I was with—which was funded by the three armed services—was one of the centers of resistance in the country; not just me, but a couple of us were in and out of jail and organizing: tax resistance, then broader forms of resistance. We never got any hassle from the university. I mean, *they* may have from alumni, but it never did affect us. They have a very good record on academic freedom.

**EC:** Do the governmental connections with MIT provide you with an insular protection?

**NC:** I don't think it's government. It's just a science university. It's probably a more conservative university than Harvard, but there's a lot more political openness here, because it's just not that ideological. You know, "You want to overthrow the government? Okay, just as long as you're doing your work."

When I was hired here in 1955, at the same lab, they asked me to get clearance and I refused. I was the first person to have refused clearance, they said. They didn't force me to.

**EC:** Do you think there are logical connections, say, between power and academic freedom?

**NC:** I think there's just a different attitude in the sciences. Take MIT, again. It was a very quiet, conservative university. But by the late '60s, students were going to blow it up. In 1969, there was a commission established to try and quiet the campus conflict. It was to look into the military labs run by MIT and I was put on it; the students wanted some representative who they thought would be sympathetic to their cause. So I was on the commission.

It was kind of interesting. There had never been a careful look at MIT finances before—just what was its actual contact with the Pentagon. And it turns out that there were two military secret labs—which were probably half the budget—they were technically off-campus, though the relations were very close. As for the academic side of the other half, I think it was about 90 percent funded by the Pentagon. Now, we looked pretty carefully to see if there was any secrecy, any classified work, any war work—anything. It was a faculty committee with representatives—a wide range of representatives. We looked pretty hard; there was nothing, except for the political science department. The political science department had closed seminars—secret seminars. It was doing counter-insurgency research in Vietnam—nobody else.

**EC:** Similar to what was going on, say, with the '50s and '60s—the Cold War university environment—and the government's interest in Latin America?

**NC:** What's going on right now with the embedded anthropologists in Iraq and Afghanistan. Have you been following that?

**EC:** No, I have not.

**NC:** Well, there's a big scandal in the Anthropological Society because the military has decided that it's smart to bring in anthropologists to help them with counter-insurgency by sorting out which clan hates which other clan and how you reach the tribal leader—that kind of thing. So there's a big controversy going on in the anthropological profession, as happened in the '60s, when they discovered they were doing it in Vietnam.

And, you know, the people who work on [such projects] feel very noble about it. They say, "Well, look—we're helping reduce violence; we're explaining how to reach the people."

If you look up the Web site of the American Anthropological Society, I'm sure you'll find a very lively debate going on about this.

**EC:** Your comments allow me to jump ahead a bit to a question I find related in many ways, concerning Martín Espada (whom I'll be interviewing tomorrow) and Latin American studies.

**NC:** I'm not familiar with him.

**EC:** He is a professor at UMass Amherst whose poetics comes out of the Whitmanian tradition of [advocacy] and radical socialism. In his most recent book, *The Republic of Poetry*, he makes what I argue is a conflation with the "little September 11" of the Pinochet dictatorship in 1973 and the American September 11.



**NC:** Oh, he does? I'm interested. Because I've written about that, too. People *cannot* understand. I mean, that wasn't a "little September 11"—it was much worse than this one.

**EC:** Exactly. It's utterly ironic to refer to it as the "little September 11."

**NC:** If you just take per capita equivalents, that's *incomparably* worse than [our] September 11.

Does he manage it [to make the comparison]? Because I've tried it a couple of times and it always falls flat—nobody knows what I'm talking about.

**EC:** There's a short documentary that was started by Bob Madey,<sup>5</sup> I believe, called *Alabanza*—the Spanish word for "praise," which is something that ties into Espada's poetic work as well. The film makes those connections pretty clear. Some of it is a leap, no doubt, which I hope to explore further.

**NC:** That's a very good comparison.

**EC:** Getting back to the question, we talk about diversity all the time in the university. Certainly, one of the "hot-button" cultural curricula today is Latin American studies. Considering the ways in which the universities were used for intelligence gathering of Latin American culture and the spread of socialism during the Cold War, do you sense a kind of return to this "second-Cold War" mentality? For example, with the election of Evo Morales and the very visible presence of Hugo Chávez, the government seems to be investing in Latin American studies in the way you're describing about the Middle East and the Anthropological Association.

**NC:** Interesting. I've looked into some parts of it. I mean, they're undoubtedly worried about Latin America because it's falling out of control. In fact, the kinds of governments they're supporting now, they would have been overthrowing forty years ago. But one thing that's happened is that the training of Latin American military officers has gone way up. I think it's increased by 50 percent, or so, and its funding—also, I think for the first time—for the military in Latin America has exceeded funding for key economic agencies. I don't think that was ever true during the Cold War. Also, the Latin American military training has been shifted from the State Department to the Pentagon, which has some effect. The State Department has some surveillance—not very strong—but theoretically, some human rights conditionalities, and Congress is supposed to look at it, and that sort of thing—torture manuals, that kind of business. When it's in the hands of the Pentagon, there's no surveillance.

They've also shifted the mission. The mission has been shifted to youth gangs [e.g. Mara Salvatrucha or MS-13] and radical populism, which is pretty scary, because radical populism in the Latin American context means increased organizing of peasants, human rights workers—that sort of thing.

Now, I can't prove it, but I *strongly* suspect that there are U.S. efforts to try and spur secessionist movements like in Eastern Bolivia. Maybe the Zulia Province in Venezuela.

**EC:** So the fact that scholars are studying Latin American culture alongside the military trends you describe above, could be a compelling argument [for an association between the two].

**NC:** Could be. It *could be* [related to] Latin American immigration—that's a potential. But it's a very interesting question.

They had a problem and another aspect of it may be what happened in the '80s. Normally, when the U.S. goes to war somewhere—Vietnam or something—they can pick up so-called "experts" from the academic profession who will support whatever they're doing. So if *The Boston Globe* wants pro-war editorials on Vietnam, they'll go to the local university.

It didn't work with the Latin American profession. In the 1980s, when the wars were Central American, the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) wouldn't go along. And they were iced-out—completely. For example, in 1984, Nicaragua had an election, which wasn't supposed to have taken place according to the official party line. But LASA sent a delegation—Latin American specialists on Nicaragua—they spent a couple of weeks there. They investigated it in detail and gave a long report about it and couldn't get it into the media. In fact, if you look back at what happened in the '80s, the journals had to invent a new cadre of experts—Mark Falcoff, Robert Leiken, and others—because they couldn't get the main Latin American people to do it. And the Latin American profession—today, too—is a lot more independent than the others.

**EC:** Right. Just one very brief final question I wanted to ask was in relation to John Negroponete [and his brother Nicholas's One Laptop per Child program, conceived at MIT]. Given that we were just speaking about Nicaragua, do you see any corollaries between John Negroponete—one of the primary architects of the prior war on terror in the '80s—and his brother's efforts to disseminate technologies (and perhaps a socioeconomic knowledge base) to the Third World?

**NC:** I don't know enough about the relationship between the two Negroponetes. Insofar as I know, [his brother] just shares a name with a war criminal. My assumption is that it's pretty innocent. But the other guy—John Negroponete—is a major war criminal. His brother [Nicholas], so far as I know, is just trying to do something decent.

**EC:** Well, it looks like our time is up. Thanks again for agreeing to participate in our volume on academic freedom and also for your time. I really appreciate it.

## Notes

Special thanks to Professor Chomsky's assistant, Bev Stohl, for her help in coordinating this interview.

<sup>1</sup> Interview conducted at Professor Chomsky's office (MIT, Dreyfoos Building, 32 Vassar Street, 32-D836) on 4 Mar. 2008. Interview transcribed by Edward J. Carvalho.

<sup>2</sup> See Hulse.

<sup>3</sup> See Murphy and Bombardieri.

<sup>4</sup> Reference to Finkelstein's forthcoming book *A Farewell to Israel: The Coming Break-up of American Zionism*. See Ain.

<sup>5</sup> See Devineni.

## Works Cited

- Ain, Stewart. "A Pariah in Exile." *The Jewish Week.com*. 2 July 2008. 3 Aug. 2008 <[http://www.thejewishweek.com/viewArticle/c36\\_a12821/News/New\\_York.html](http://www.thejewishweek.com/viewArticle/c36_a12821/News/New_York.html)>.
- Carter, Jimmy. *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006.
- Cho, Seung-Hui. *Mr. Brownstone*. "Cho Seung [sic]-Hui's Plays" *New York Times Online* 17 Apr. 2007. 3 Aug. 2008 <[http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/17/us/17play-one.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/17/us/17play-one.html?_r=1)>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Richard McBeef. "Virginia Killer's Violent Writings." *Smoking Gun.com*. 17 Apr. 2007. 3 Aug. 2008 <<http://www.thesmokinggun.com/archive/years/2007/0417071vtech1.html>>.
- Chomsky, Noam. *9-11*. New York: Seven Stories P, 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Power and Terror: Post-9/11 Talks and Interviews*. New York: Seven Stories P, 2003.
- Devineni, Ram, Bob Madey, and José Ignacio Silva Anguita, dir. *Alabanza (5:56 min. rough cut)*. 2006. Rattapallax Films. 20 Nov. 2008 <<http://www.rattapallax.com/alabanza.htm>>.
- Espada, Martín. *The Republic of Poetry*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2006.
- Finkelstein, Norman G. *Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History*. 2005. Berkeley: U of California P, 2008.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *A Farewell to Israel: The Coming Break-up of American Zionism*. 2009 (forthcoming).
- Hulse, Carl. "Pentagon Prepares a Futures Market on Terror Attacks. (National Desk) (new Internet site established by DARPA, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, offers 'Policy Analysis Market,' in which anonymous speculators will be able to bet on forecasting terrorist attacks, assassinations and coups)." *New York Times* 29 Jul. 2003: A1.
- Murphy, Shelley, and Marcella Bombardieri. "FBI warns colleges of terror threat: Asks more vigilance on theft of research." *Boston Globe* 12 June 2007, 3rd ed., Metro.: B1.



**Martín Espada**  
**IUP 6 O'Clock Series Poetry Reading, 16 Apr. 2007**

Photo Credit: Edward J. Carvalho