Buying the War (Worksheet)

by Bill Moyers & Company

The First Half Hour

Key Figures (know what they did, look them up if you need to – sort out the pro-war ones)

President George W. Bush

Dan Rather  
Walter Isaacson

Osama bin Laden

Saddam Hussein

Roger Ailes

Donald Rumsfeld

Richard Perle

Bill Kristol

Bob Simon

John Walcott, Warren Strobel, and Jonathan Landay

James Bamford

Ahmed Chalabi

Judith Miller

al-Haideri

William Safire

Mohammed Atta  
  
Key News Organizations (know why they are important)

New York Times

Washington Post  
Knight Ridder News Service

PBS  
  
Key concepts (Know what they are)

The INC (Iraqi National Congress)  
  
General Study Questions:

When was this film made

In Bush’s press conference two weeks before the war, in what way was it scripted?

What is Bill Rather’s assessment of the press’ role leading up to the war and what part did he play in that?

What did Walter Isaacson note about the role of the press after 9/11?

Who was responsible for the lack of coverage of civilian casualties due to American attacks in Afghanistan after 9/11?

How long did it take for members of the Bush administration to point fingers of blame for 9/11 at Saddam Hussein?

What did Bill Kristol’s weekly magazine “The Weekly Standard” call for?

Why did Bob Simon not believe there was a link between Saddam Hussein and Al-Qaeda?

Why were Walcott, Strobel and Landay suspicious of the NYT and WaPo’s coverage of the build up to the war?

What was the role of Ahmed Chalabi in the lead-up to the war and why was this ironic?

Where did al-Haideri say Saddam was hiding his biochemical weapons factory and why was this an odd claim?

How did Chalibi and al-Haideri create the sense that their stories were legitimate?

Gave infor to reporters and then to the Bush administration and if the two checked with each other, the stories checked out.

What was the “Prague Meeting” and how was it used by the press?  
 a supposed meeting between Iraqis and al-Qaeda to coordinate – all bogus but the press ran with the story

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The Second Half Hour

Key Figures (know what they did, look them up if you need to – sort out the pro-war ones)

Bob Baer

Ari Fleischer

Karl Rove

Condoleeza Rice

Walter Pincus

Norm Soloman

Tim Russert

Oprah Winfrey

John Kerry

Hillary Clinton

Robert Byrd

Ted Kennedy

Phil Donahue

Scott Ritter

Key Places and Events (know why they are important)

200,000 Peace Demonstration in Washington

Key concepts (Know what they are)

WMD’s

aluminum tubes

UN Weapons Inspectors

National Intelligence Estimate

General Study Questions:

What were the two assertions made about Saddam Hussein that were constantly repeated by the Bush administration in the year leading up to the Invasion of Iraq?

What happened to American popular opinion about Saddam and weapons of mass destruction once it was proven that there were no WMD’s?

How did the UN Weapons Inspectors publish their findings?

What did vice-president Cheney assert which made the Knight-Ridder team highly suspicious of his claim?

What happened when Knight-Ridder reported that there was no credible source to prove that Saddam had weapons of Mass Destruction?

What was the relationship between the Bush administration and the NYT on the issue of nuclear weapons.

What was the difference between the way Tim Russert dealth with the nuclear aluminum tubes and the way Bob Simon dealt with the issue of the aluminum tubes?

On what page of the Washington Post did the refutation of the aluminum tubes story appear?

What was the difference between the pro-war stories and the questioning stories in the New York Times and the Washington Post?

pro-war (pro Bush) stories got priority; questioning stories were buried in the paper

What happened to the member of Oprah’s audience when the validity of the press reports were questioned?

What happened to Democrats that questioned the Bush administration’s story about Saddam?

What was Ted Kennedy’s prophecy about war in Iraq?

How did the media treat Ted Kennedy’s speech about the war?

Journalists who questioned the Bush narrative were considered to be what, by Fox News?

Why could you not have Scott Ritter (who doubted the war) present alone on the Phil Donohue Show?

What happened to coverage of the anti-war demonstrations?

Who received the National Intelligence Estimate?

What was the vote on the Authorization of Force in the House?

Look up: What was the Vote in the Senate?

Look Up: How many Democrats voted for it (which ones?), how many Republicans voted against it (which one)? What information did they have at the time to make their decision?   
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq_Resolution#United_States_Senate>

What was the moral of the story about Knight Ridder’s approach to the WMD and Saddam-Al-Qaeda investigation?

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The Final Half Hour

Key Figures (know what they did, look them up if you need to – sort out the pro-war ones)

Peter Beinart

Colin Powell

Charles Hanley

Thomas Freidman

Charles Krauthammer

Michael Gerson

Key concepts (Know what they are)

truth-squadding

UN Weapons Inspectors

the British Intelligence Dossier

General Study Questions:

What news media format does Peter Beinart disavow?

That is the problem with the pro vs. con media presentations of issues in news media?

According to Tim Russert, what group actually knows what’s going on – and why don’t they get covered?

Why did media stop truth-squadding, according to Walter Pincus?

What was the problem with turning truth-squadding over to the opposition?

What techniques did the weapons inspectors use to investigate Saddam Hussain’s weapons program?

What did Colin Powell ignore in his presentation to the UN?

WHY was Colin Powell’s speech at the UN so important?

What does Moyers point out is the inappropriate favor given by media? To whom is it inappropriately given?

What happened when Phil Donahue questioned the Bush administration’s story about Guantanamo and Iraq?

Donohue points out that opposing the war was not only unpatriotic but is was REALLY…..

What does Dan Rather say is the dominating emotion governing national newsrooms?

Complete Norm Soloman’s phrase: “Being a pro-war pundit means….”

What, overall, has happened to the pro-war pundits?

At the time this film was made, how does Moyer’s describe Iraq? What is Iraq like today?