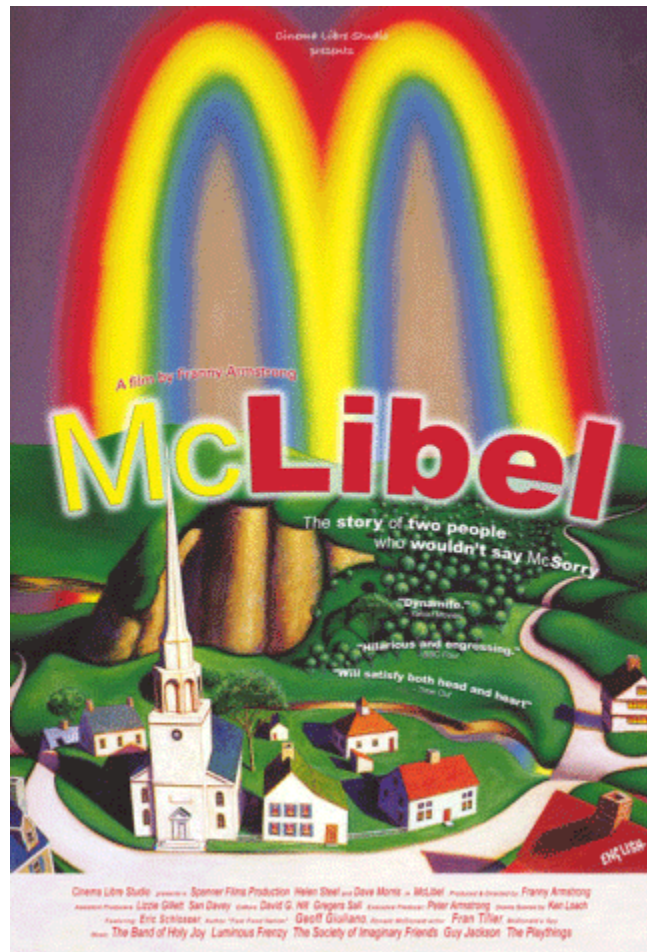


McLIBEL: THE STORY OF TWO PEOPLE WHO WOULDN'T SAY McSORRY -- ILLUSTRATED SCREENPLAY

directed by Franny Armstrong, starring Helen Steel and Dave Morris
© Spanner Films Ltd., 2005

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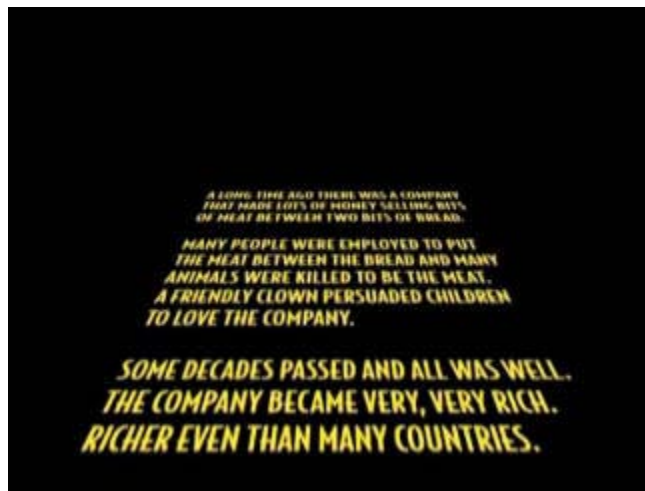


[transcribed from the movie by Tara Carreon]

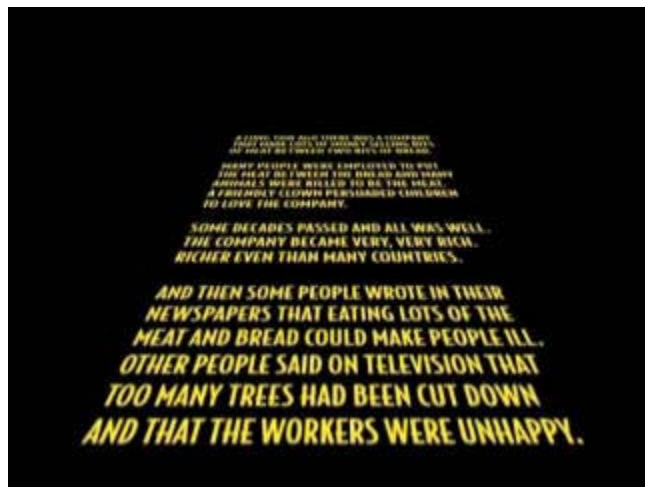


A long time ago there was a company that made lots of money selling bits of meat between two bits of bread.

Many people were employed to put the meat between the bread, and many animals were killed to be the meat. A friendly clown persuaded children to love the Company.



Some decades passed and all was well. The Company became very, very rich. Richer even than many countries.



And then some people wrote in their newspapers that eating lots of the meat and bread could make people ill. Other people said on television that too many trees had been cut down, and that the workers were unhappy.



This made the Company very angry.

The Company looked around the world and saw that in England there existed a special law that could stop people saying things the Company didn't like.



And make them say sorry.



[Barrister for Guardian Newspapers, Ltd.] My Lord, on behalf of Guardian Newspapers, Limited, I endorse all my leaned friend has said. My clients now appreciate that the allegations made in their article were incorrect, and through me wish to express their sincere apologies to McDonald's for the damage done to the Company's reputation.



[Barrister for Today Newspaper] The publishers of Today newspaper accept that their defamatory allegations against the plaintiff were unfounded, should never have been printed, and consequently they withdraw them.



[Barrister for Channel 4 News] On behalf of the defendant, I accept everything my learned friend has said. I would add that Channel 4 welcomes this opportunity to apologize to McDonald's.



[Apologee] We apologize to McDonald's for any embarrassment ...



[Apologee] We apologize for the allegations against McDonald's ...



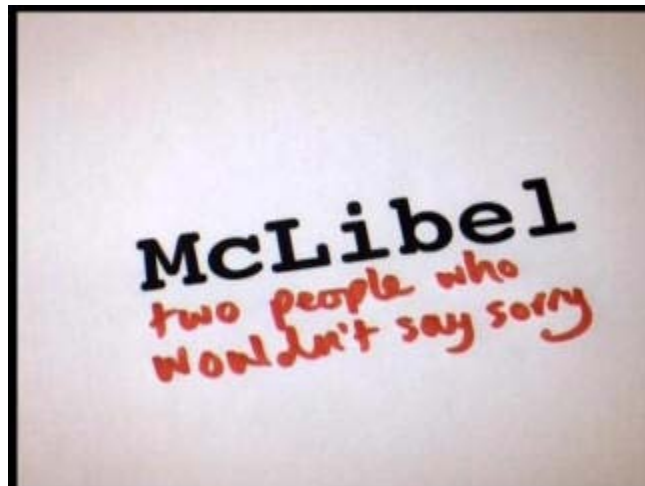
[Apologee] Their practices and policies are beyond reproach ...



[Apologee] The past statement is unfair and untrue ...



[Apologee] We ask you to accept our apologies ...



[McLibel] Two people who wouldn't say sorry.



[Dan Gallin, Intl. Union of Food Workers, Witness] What they've actually done is to hold McDonald's accountable to society on behalf of society. And I think they are heroes of our time.

[Helen] Hold your bag up.



[JUDGE FOR YOURSELF]



[Eric Schlosser, Author of "Fast Food Nation"] It really began with one person, with Helen just saying, "I can't apologize." Just one person saying, "No, I won't bow down."



[Helen Steel] When I was quite young, there was a boy at the end of our street who used to basically bully everyone around. And everyone used to go crying to their moms and their dads. And I think my mom eventually got sort of fed up with it and just said, "Well, hit him back." So I did. And after that, he didn't hassle me anymore.



Well, it's the same with McDonald's really. If somebody's trying to make you do something you don't believe in, then you have to stand up to them and say, "No, I'm not going to do it. I'm not going to give in to your intimidation and bullying."



[Dave Morris] When Charlie was two, I split up with his mom, and really for about the last four years, I've been looking after Charlie on my own, which is obviously a job in itself, full-time, and a big responsibility. I have a responsibility to encourage him to question things for him to be himself, and not just be obsessed with the next power

ranger toys. He is growing up in a very hostile environment. And all the images forced on kids from advertising and the media, it's all bombarding him, telling him the way the world should be.

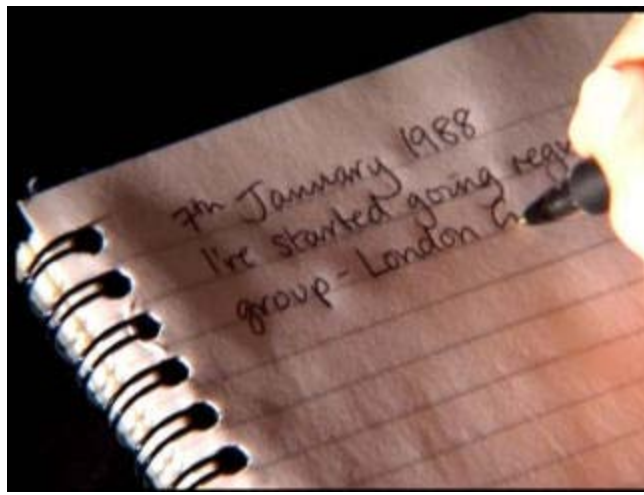


[Helen Steel] Well, me and Dave have been friends since the '80's. I was working as a gardener, and Dave used to be a postman. We share a lot of the same beliefs, and we also both feel it's important to stand up for what you believe in.



[Dave Morris] It's not a personal battle between me and Helen and McDonald's. This is about the public's right to know what the most powerful organizations in the world, which are multi-national corporations, are really doing.





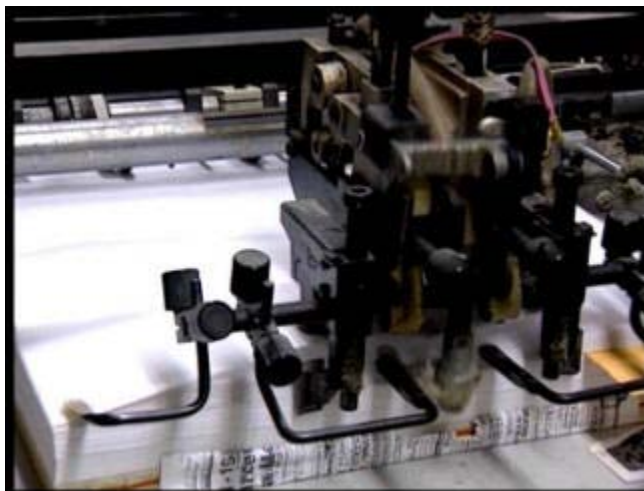
[Helen Steel] 7th of January, 1988. I started going regularly to a local campaign group, London Greenpeace, unrelated to well-known Greenpeace.



We meet once a week in North London to arrange protests on various social and environmental issues.



There have been lots of groups campaigning against McDonald's around the world on specific issues like, you know, rainforest groups in the States and Australia. There were trade unionists fighting for better working conditions. There were nutritionists criticizing McDonald's for the junk food. There were animal welfarists campaigning about the way the animals were reared and slaughtered. But I think it was London Greenpeace that really drew all the criticisms together.





• What's so unhealthy about McDonald's food?

McDONALD's try to show in their "Nutrition Guide" (which is full of impressive-looking but really quite irrelevant facts & figures) that mass-produced hamburgers, chips, colas, milkshakes, etc., are a useful and nutritious part of any diet.

What they don't make clear is that a diet high in fat, sugar, animal products and salt (sodium), and low in fibre, vitamins and minerals – which describes an average McDonald's meal – is linked

...by day, of animals
to be turned into McDonald's
Some of them – especially chickens –
spend their lives in the entirely artificial
of huge factory farms, with no access to
sunshine and no freedom of movement.
Deaths are bloody and barbaric.

MURDERING A BIG MAC

- In the slaughterhouse, animals often
escape. Cattle become frantic as they
animal before them in the lairage.
prodded, beaten, etc.

A recent...

...and more companies in
It's no exaggeration to say that
to a Big Mac, you're helping the
pire to wreck this planet.

...example, is treated with
different chemicals just to keep it
right colour at the right crispness for the
right length of time. It might as well be a bit of
plastic.

• How do McDonald's deliberately exploit children?

NEARLY all McDonald's advertising is aimed at children. Although the Ronald McDonald 'personality' is not as popular as their market researchers expected (probably because it is totally unoriginal), thousands of young children now think of burgers and chips every time they see a clown with orange hair.

THE NORMALITY

- No...

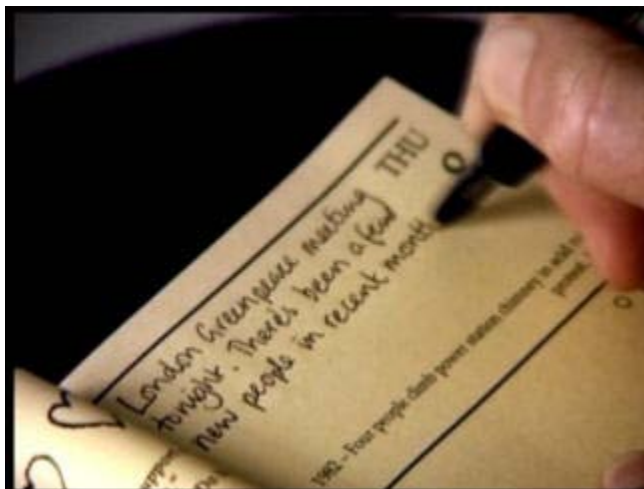




The "What's Wrong with McDonald's?" leaflets focused on the unhealthy food, the working conditions, animal cruelty, plus the environmental damage, and advertising to children.



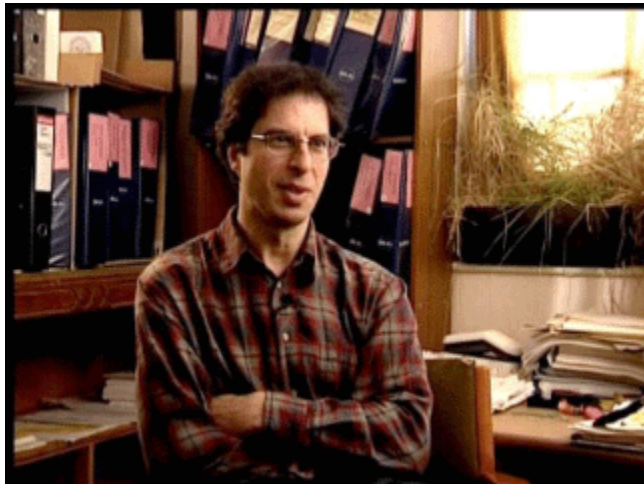
[Dave Morris] The McDonald's campaign has picked on a Company that is so much in the public eye, that seems to symbolize a whole system, a whole way of life. To have a link to an educational campaign against McDonald's, is putting out the alternative point of view. But of course, I just had no idea what it would lead to, that later it would just completely take over my life.



[Helen Steel] 8th of February, 1990. London Greenpeace meeting tonight. There's been a few new people in recent months who don't seem genuine. Who are they?



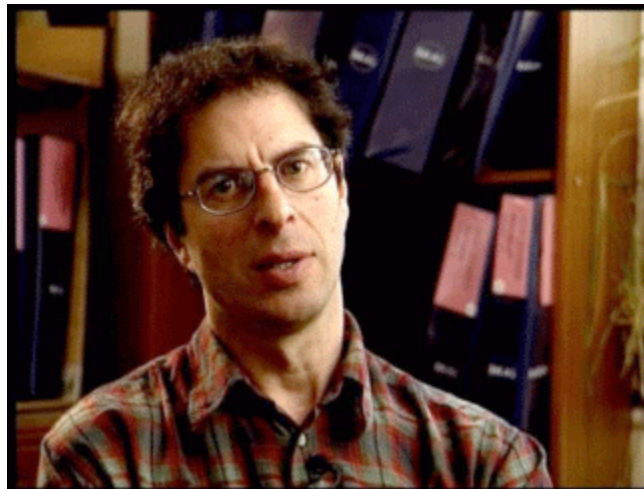
[Helen Steel] This guy turned up at the meetings who didn't quite seem to fit in, you know. He didn't really say that much about what his politics were, but at the time we just sort of thought, "Well, you know, maybe he's a policeman, but we're not doing anything wrong, or illegal or anything. So why worry about it?"



[Dave Morris] I knew that Helen suspected that there were some kind of infiltrators in the group. And I said, "Don't be stupid. That's just something which you read about in books."



[Fran Tiller, Former Private Investigator] My role was actually to notice everything that was happening, where it was being held, describe the place where it was being held in, the people who were there, what they were wearing, what their names were, and everything that was said. And in particular, everything that was said in relation to McDonald's.



[Dave Morris] One of the spies, Allan Clare (Claire), stole letters, broke into the office to take photographs, and followed people home. We were infiltrated for about 18 months by seven different spies from two different agencies. McDonald's hadn't told them about the two firms, so they were spying on each other some of the time. And at some meetings, there were as many spies as there were campaigners.





[Fran Tiller, Former Private Investigator] I was asked to introduce another person into the group. Her name was Michelle Hooker. And I believe she was an ex-policeman. I was quite surprised when she came on for the first time, because I thought I had sort of dressed down, wore sandals, and sort of hippie-type clothes. But she used to drive up in a black BMW. She used to give me a lift.



[Helen Steel] And she got very heavily involved with the group. You know, she organized meetings. She organized pickets. She even had a six-month relationship with somebody in the group, and stayed with his family over Christmas.

...the bill on the gap turned. I have
 the opportunity to go through certain
 documents on the desk. I managed to find
 in a drawer bank statements for London
 Greenpeace. They bank with:
 The Cooperative Bank / Islington
 Ac No: ~~123456789~~
 At the moment they are somewhat like
 £511.00 debit. - The bank wants to see it
 ASAP.
 I also managed to obtain through

[Investigator Agent] I managed to find in a drawer bank statements for London Greenpeace. They bank with the Cooperative Bank in Islington.

...at this point Dave Morris
 went on to the Malt and the
 conversation turned to Dave Morris and
 Tottenham. He has a son who
 was born on ~~1.6.00~~. The
 by the name 'Naz'.

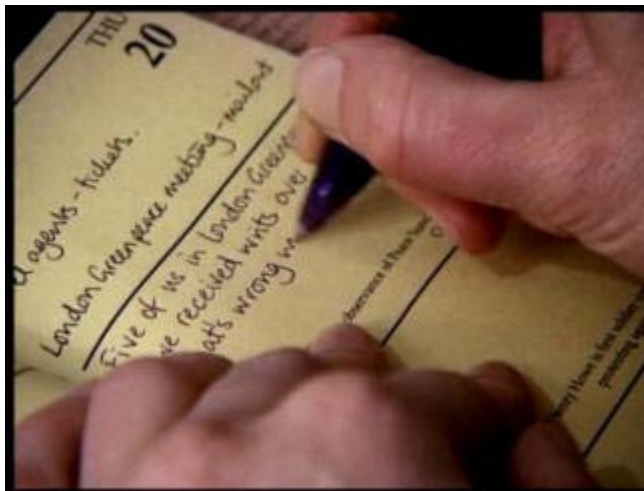
[Investigator Agent] ... while here, the conversation turned to Dave Morris, and I learned he lives in Tottenham. He has a son who is called Charlie.



[Dave Morris] One of them wanted to get my address. And he asked someone in the group what my address was, because he wants to send me some baby clothes for my son Charlie.



And he actually sent these clothes to me, which Charlie wore. It wasn't until several years later that we found out the real reason that they wanted our home addresses.



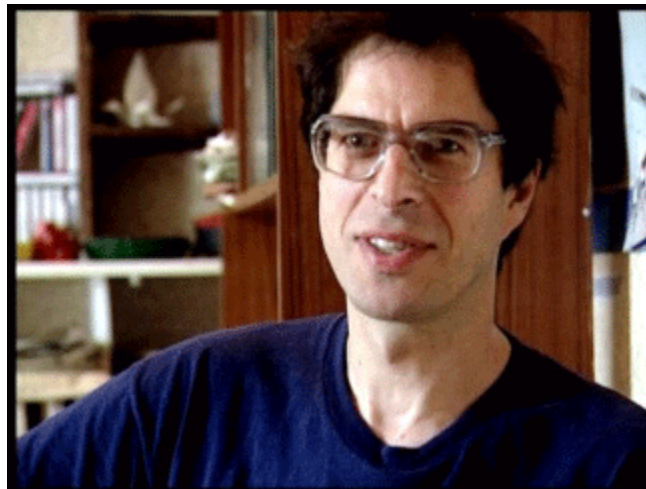
[Helen Steel] 21st of September, 1990. Five of us in the group have received libel writs over the "What's Wrong with McDonald's?" leaflets.



I think it was dark, and there was a guy standing in front of me as I stepped from the van. And he said, "Helen." And I didn't say anything, because I didn't know who he was. And he just threw this envelope at my feet. And when I picked it up and opened it, it was the Writ.



In with the Writ was a letter saying that there would be a court case unless we apologized.



[Dave Morris] After the writs were served, we had two hours of free legal aid, which effectively meant being told you got no chance.



[Helen Steel] The other three people who had the writs, they felt that they didn't really have any choice but to sort of apologize, because of the odds being stacked against us. But for me, it just sort of really stuck in the throat to apologize to McDonald's. I didn't think that we'd done anything that deserved an apology. I thought it was them that should be apologizing to us. Well, not us specifically, but to society for the damage that they do to society and the environment.



[Dave Morris] Really, when Helen said she was going to go for it, I thought, "I'm going to go for it too, because two is better than one."



[Helen Steel] Even though, you know, we were being told it was a virtually impossible battle, me and Dave decided to carry on and fight it anyway, come what may.



[BBC] The world's largest fast-food business, McDonald's, has begun a libel action at the High Court against two environmental campaigners.



[TV News Announcer] Dave Morris and Helen Steel are accused of claiming that McDonald's' products caused ill health, and destroyed rainforests.



[TRIAL DAY 1]

[Dave Morris] McDonald's argued that we should be denied a jury, because a jury would find the issues in the case too complex to deal with.



[Helen Steel] And we just thought that it should be thrown out. It's just so ridiculous. You know, we've got to understand it. We're members of the public. So, you know, why can't a jury understand what's going on? But much to our horror, it wasn't just thrown out. And you know, the judge went along with their argument, and ruled that we wouldn't have a jury.



And basically, that meant we were left presenting the case to a judge on his own: Mr. Justice Bell.



[Dave Morris] McDonald's hired one of the top libel barristers in the country, Richard Rampton, QC. He gets about 2,000 pounds a day. He brought with him a junior barrister, Timothy Atkinson, and also the head solicitor, Patty Brinly-Codd. And a whole team of about seven solicitors and clerks working behind the scenes.

[Helen Steel] And meanwhile, we were defending ourselves.



[TV News Announcer] The fast food Company, McDonald's, has begun a High Court libel action against two environmental campaigners. In Court this morning, counsel for McDonald's said the allegations were totally false.



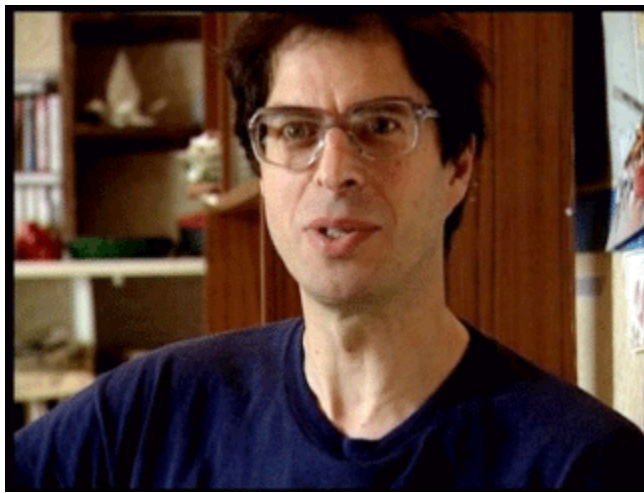
[Richard Rampton, QC] So far as McDonald's is concerned, anybody is free to express his criticism in whatever form he wishes. McDonald's may not like it, but they will never try to prevent it. They cannot, and do not object to fair and reasonable, and honest, criticism of their business or their products.



[Reconstruction from court transcripts]



[Helen Steel] We just had no idea of the procedure, or what we had to say, or when we had to say it. You know, who spoke in what order.



[Dave Morris] We were just treated like, you know, "What are these people doing in my courtroom?" I mean, at the first hearing we asked the judge to explain the procedures, and he said, "If you don't know the procedures, you should be represented." And we said, "Well, there's no legal aid. What are we meant to do?"



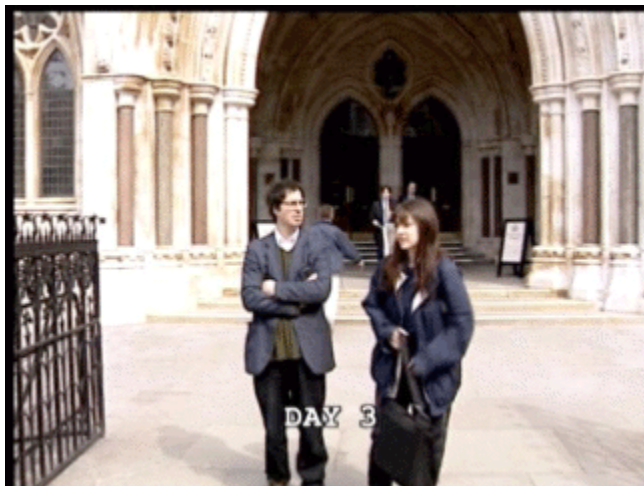
[Keir Starmer, Barrister] We pride ourselves on having a legal system which is the best in the world. And we pride ourselves on the fact that we've all got free speech. But in reality, of course, that simply isn't the situation.



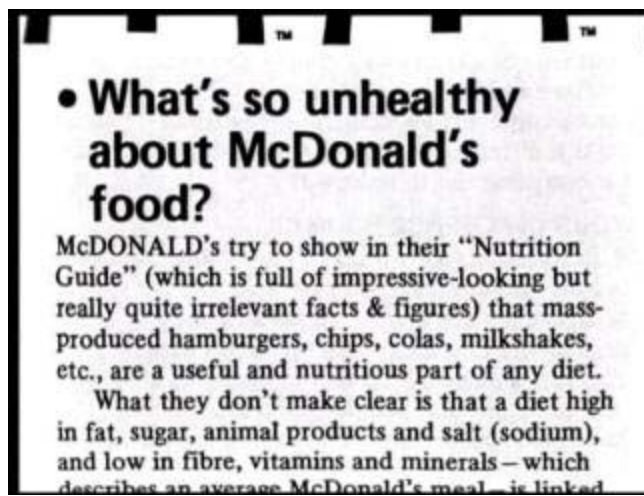
[Dave Morris] You don't get free lawyers for libel cases, so we had to represent ourselves. But luckily, Keir came along early on, and volunteered to help us out with legal advice.



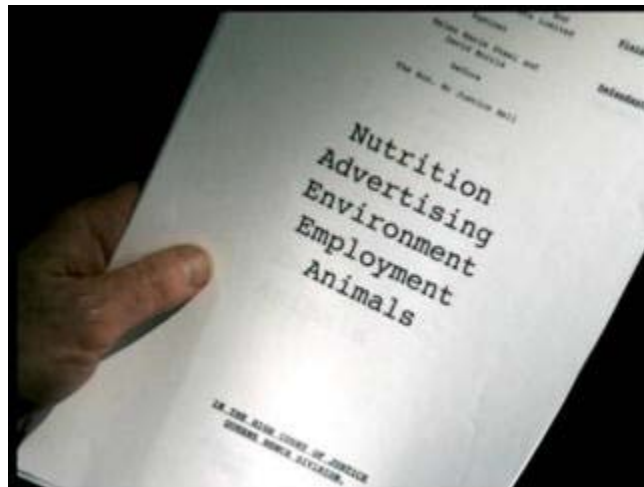
[Keir Starmer, Barrister] I immediately saw that McDonald's had a very strong legal team, and that it was a complicated case, raising all sorts of legal issues. And as soon as I saw the unbalance, I decided that I would do what I could to help them. The libel laws in England were notoriously anti-free speech, because of the burdens they put on defendants to prove so much of the case. So in this case, David and Helen have to prove the truth of everything that's in the leaflet. McDonald's can sit back and prove nothing. That's a huge and disproportionate burden.



[DAY 3]



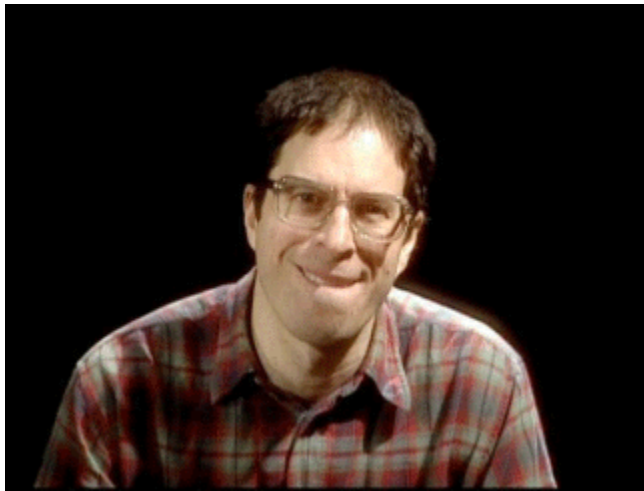
[Leaflet] What's so unhealthy about McDonald's food? McDonald's try to show in their "Nutrition Guide" (which is full of impressive-looking, but really quite irrelevant facts & figures) that mass-produced hamburgers, chips, colas, milkshakes, etc., are a useful and nutritious part of any diet. What they don't make clear is that a diet high in fat, sugar, animal products and salt (sodium), and low in fibre, vitamins and minerals -- which describes an average McDonald's meal -- is linked ...



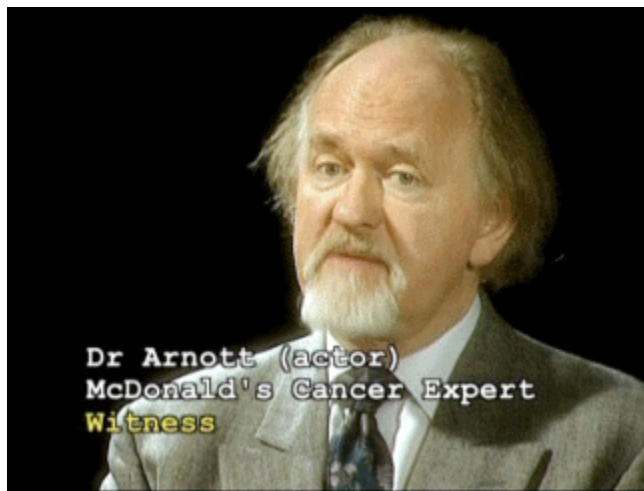
[Richard Rampton QC, McDonald's Barrister] My Lord, the topic is nutrition. The issue as I pose it is this:



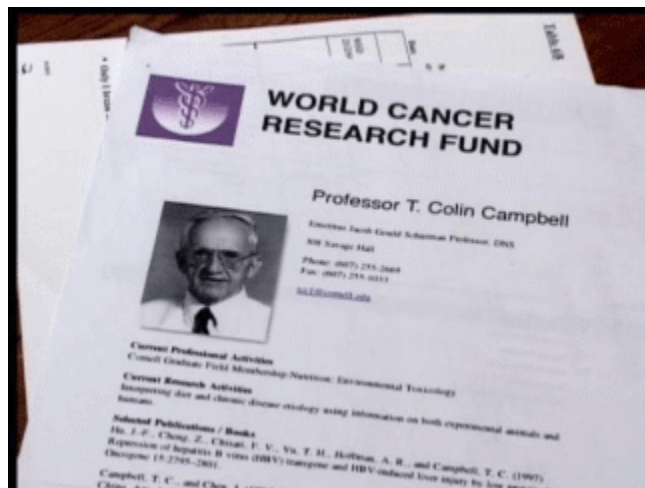
Does the plaintiff's food constitute a significant hazard to human health?



[Dave Morris] Dr. Arnott, is it not a fact that many responsible international governmental and academic organizations have said that they consider that there is a link between diet and cancer, although the fact is not known precisely? Would that be reasonable?



[Dr. Arnott, McDonald's Cancer Expert, Witness] I think what is true to say is people have suggested that there may well be a link between diet and various forms of cancer, although one has not been able to show that in scientifically conducted trials. We have conflicting evidence, some of which suggests there is a relationship between certain items in the diet and cancer, and equally convincing evidence from other studies which fail to demonstrate that.



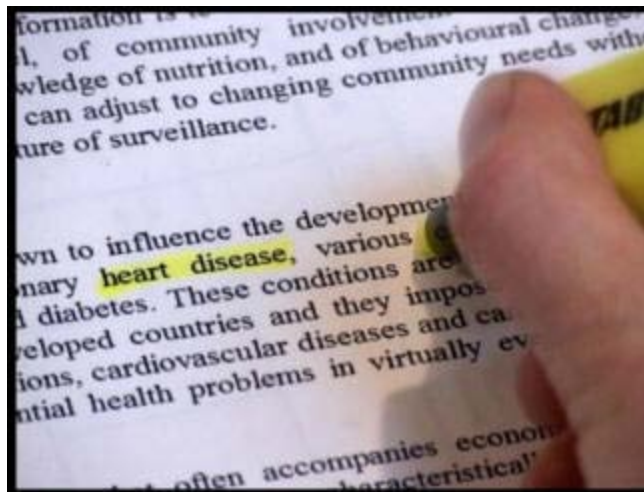
[Helen Steel] One of the first big hurdles we faced was finding witnesses to prove our case, but we soon managed to get a list of about sixty together. Some of the world's top experts on diet and cancer stepped forward to help, including Professor Colin Campbell, who flew over from America to give evidence.



[Professor Campbell, World Cancer Research Fund, Witness] The high fat intake, the high animal protein intake, the lack of these other things, lead into increased risk of cancers of various and sundry kinds, increased risks of various kinds of heart disease, diabetes. And they are the kind of diseases that actually kill upwards of 3/4 of us in Western society before our time. It is clear that the science is really on David and Helen's side. It's not on McDonald's side.



[Helen Steel] The World Health Organization have been saying that people should cut down on the fat in their diet, and eat more fibre, and so on, in order to cut down on their risk of getting heart disease and cancer.



And if bodies such as they are making those statements, then we should be able to say it.



Whether or not you can call some top expert to, you know, prove it conclusively, is irrelevant.



[Eric Schlosser, Author of "Fast Food Nation"] I think worldwide, if you look at the rise in fast-food consumption, it is very closely linked to the rise in obesity. Throughout the Western world, life expectancy is probably going to decline because of the obesity epidemic.



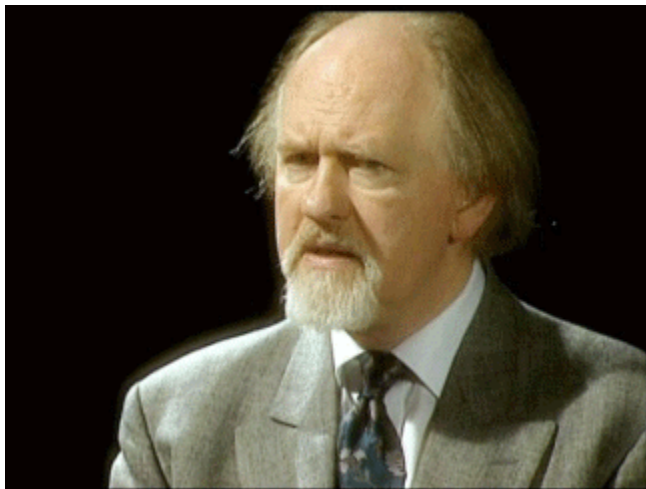


You can point to many causes, complex causes of obesity, but I think there is no question that the amount of fast food and soda that people are consuming is a major cause of obesity. Everywhere that the American fast-food diet goes, people get bigger.



[DAY 22]

[Dave Morris] Well, I want to ask you about another document about advice to the public. A diet high in fat, sugar, animal products, and salt, and low in fibre, vitamins, and minerals, is linked with cancer of the breast, bowel, and heart disease. Is that a reasonable statement?



[Dr. Arnott, McDonald's Cancer Expert, Witness] It has been linked, yes.



[Dave Morris] So, would that be a reasonable statement?

[Dr. Arnott, McDonald's Cancer Expert, Witness] Well, it depends on to whom it is directed.

[Dave Morris] The public.



[Dr. Arnott, McDonald's Cancer Expert, Witness] If it's being directed to the public, then I would say that it is a very reasonable thing to say. But if it's being directed toward the scientific community, then I think one would be a bit more careful in the language that one used.

[Dave Morris] Well, that's actually a direct quote from the London Greenpeace fact sheet, which is the subject of the libel action.



[Helen Steel] Here they were suing us to try and prevent us from saying that diet was linked to heart disease and cancer, and their own expert was saying it's a very reasonable thing to say. I mean, to me that should have been the end of it, and the judge should have said, "Right, well, we don't need any more on this."



[Keir Starmer, Barrister] The cross-examination was devastating as far as McDonald's were concerned, and many top lawyers would have been proud to have got the answers that Dave and Helen managed to get out of McDonald's' experts.



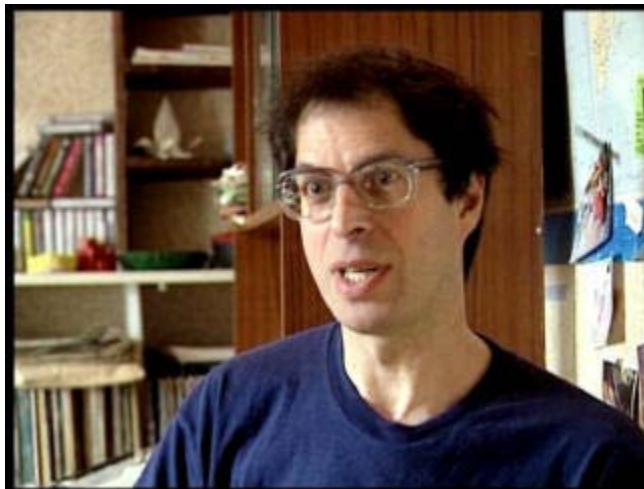
And as a result, Mr. Rampton had to move the goal posts of his case. Instead of saying the particular phrase meant one thing, he now argues that it means something completely different.

[Helen Steel] I'm really exhausted. It was sort of fun, though, really. I mean, it was really stressful.

[Dave Morris] They didn't get anywhere.



[Helen Steel] It's quite funny, because the transcripts, sometimes it comes out that me and Dave have said, "Something, something, something ... My Lords." We've never once said "My Lord," because we believe in treating him with respect, as another human being, but don't believe in deferring, or what have you. We do stand up though.



[Dave Morris] I think Helen and me have a particularly good working relationship, because we have campaigned together on a number of issues for over ten years. We even shared a house at one time with other people as well. But that's about as far as it goes.



There's no sex angle, I'm afraid.

...is full of impressive
...irrelevant facts & figures
...hamburgers, chips, colas,
etc., are a useful and nutritious part
What they don't make clear is that
in fat, sugar, animal products and salt
and low in fibre, vitamins and minerals
describes an average McDonald's meal
th cancers of the breast and heart
ease. This is accepted
ry. Every year
s above



[Richard Rampton QC, McDonald's Barrister] May it credibly be suggested that McDonald's wish to sell food leads them to deceive people as to the composition and the health value of the food?



[Dave Morris] McDonald's spends 2 billion dollars every year creating an image of the Company that's nothing like the reality.



[Sportsgirl] I meant McDonald's.



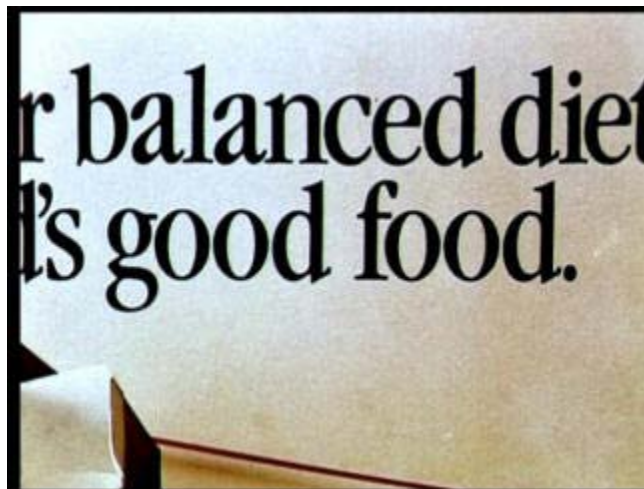
[McDonald's] I'm lovin' it.
The Best Athletes All Hunger For the Same Thing.



[Dave Morris] They are actually selling poor quality food, junk food, but they're advertising it as healthy. We tracked down a witness on this issue who came over from Texas to give evidence.



[Stephen Gardener, Assistant Attorney General, Witness] The point is the entire ad campaign.

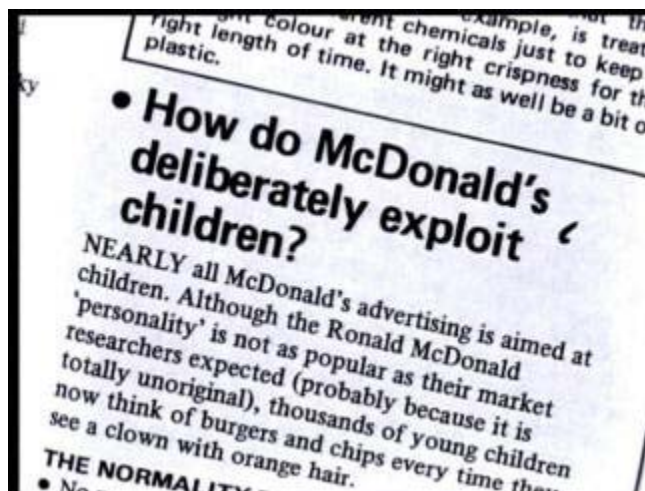


ery dairy product.
ad from local baker
c, nutritious food.
been the foundation
iets for generations

Not one little claim, and one little ad, but the whole campaign, was intrinsically deceptive.



We didn't mind them promoting their foods. We weren't trying to stop them from selling their foods. Our concern was simply that they would be selling it under a false pretext. That they would be telling people, "Don't worry about eating at McDonald's, because you're really eating healthy food." And I do believe that for McDonald's to call its food nutritious is a lie to the public, whether the British public, or the American public.



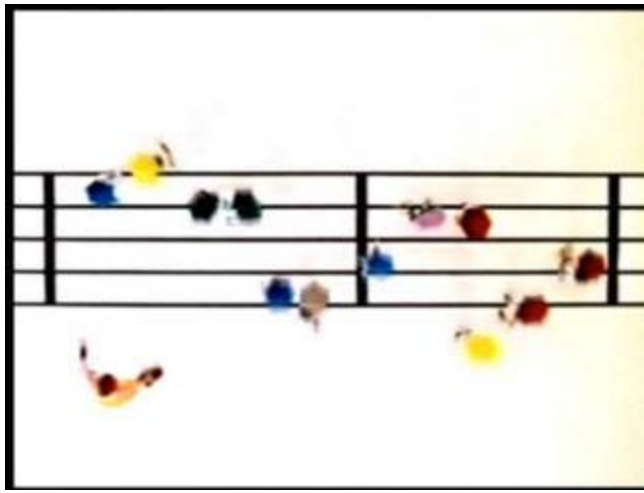
[Leaflet] How do McDonald's deliberately exploit children? Nearly all McDonald's advertising is aimed at children. Although the Ronald McDonald 'personality' is not as popular as their market researchers expected (probably because it is totally unoriginal), thousands of young children now think of burgers and chips every time they see a clown with orange hair.



[DAY 28]

[Richard Rampton, QC, lawyer for McDonald's] Do the plaintiffs aim, and I quote, "nearly all their advertising at children"?





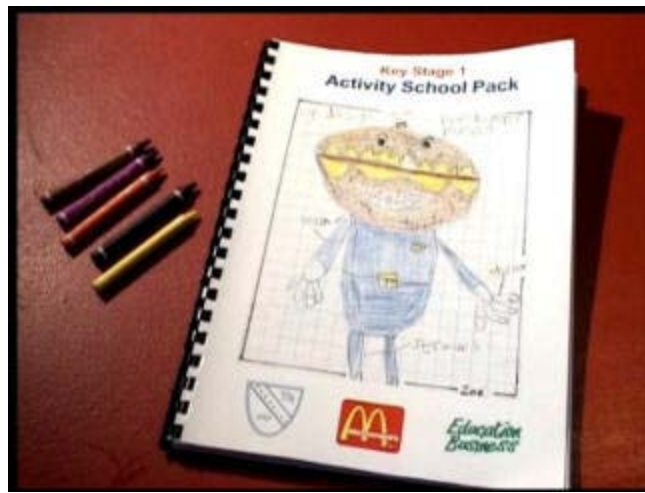
[Ronald McDonald] Let's teach everyone the new McDonald's song.



[Eric Schlosser, Author of "Fast Food Nation"] It was realized pretty early on that people's eating habits are formed in childhood, and that if you've got people eating this food young, they would eat it for the rest of their lives. The average American child sees 20,000 junk food ads per year on television. And that is their nutritional education. That is how children are being taught about food.



There is no aspect of children's conscious life that they haven't tried to infiltrate.





In the home through television, the schools through advertising in schools, from marketing in schools, movies, sports, you name it.



You can't market guns to kids. You can't market alcohol.



And yet these fast food chains, and McDonald's in particular, are targeting children with food that is going to have long term, unhealthy impact on their lives.



[Dave Morris] Because I'm in court every day, I can't pick Charlie up from school. I can't get back in time. So I booked him into a play center after school. Charlie was quite excited about the play center organizing a fun day with the parents, and children taking part.



And suddenly, though, I walked into the Center, and there was a poster of Ronald McDonald on the window. McDonald's, of all people, were taking over my son's fun day. So on the day that Ronald McDonald, and twelve minders, turned up, bringing with them a so-called "donation" of 500 pounds -- but it was obvious it had nothing to do with the community, it was just about great publicity for them.





I don't think I've seen so closely just how pernicious their tactics are in invading the minds of children, and hyping them up, and effectively brainwashing them.



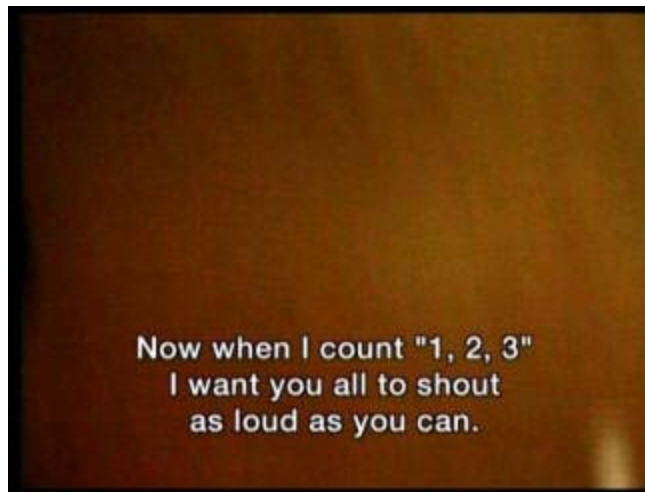
[McDonald's] No videoing.



[Helen Steel] Sorry.



[Ronald McDonald] The magic word that we'll use today is Ronald McDonald.



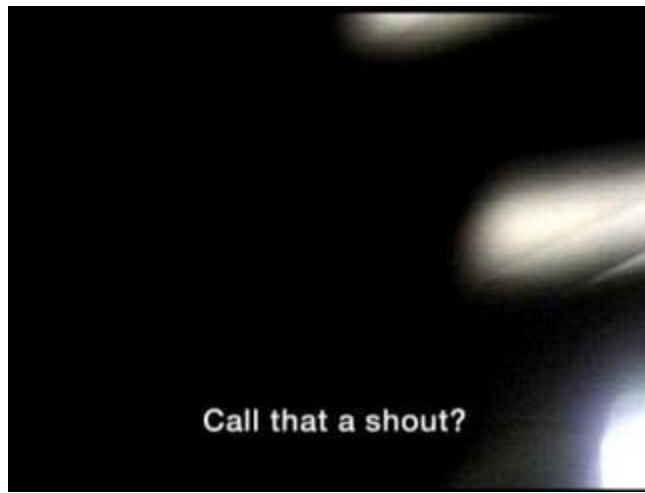
Now when I count "1, 2, 3," I want you all to shout as loud as you can.



"One, two, three."



[Children] Ronald McDonald!



[Ronald McDonald] Call that a shout?



Try again. "One, two, three."



[Children] Ronald McDonald!!



[Dave Morris] What happened today only further convinces me that we've been absolutely right to spend five years of our lives fighting to get over the truth about McDonald's, because they are so dangerous when they target vulnerable children.



And now I'm only angrier, and more determined, to see this case through to the end. For McDonald's to try and justify themselves, to bring in all of their big guns into the witness box, researchers, paid consultants, heads of department, top executives, members of the board of directors ...



[Paul Preston, McDonald's UK President, Witness] We comply with all legislation, all regulatory agencies in our advertising practices.



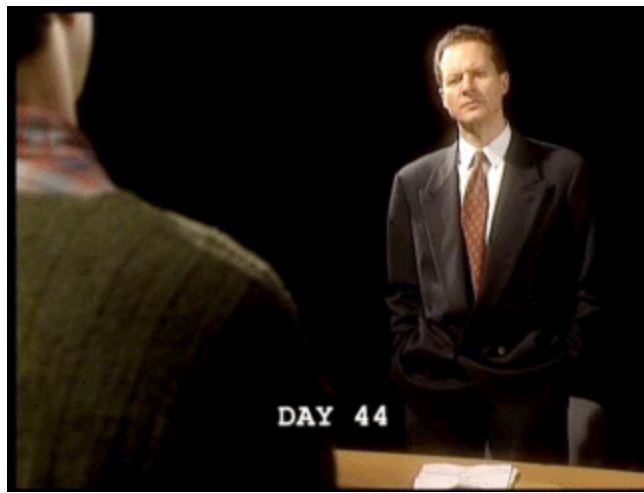
And I stand by those.



[Helen Steel] Normally, if you're campaigning against a multinational, if you ever get to speak to somebody, it's a PR person, and they can just trot out their glib answers. Whereas, when you've got an executive in the witness box, they can't walk away. They have to answer your questions.



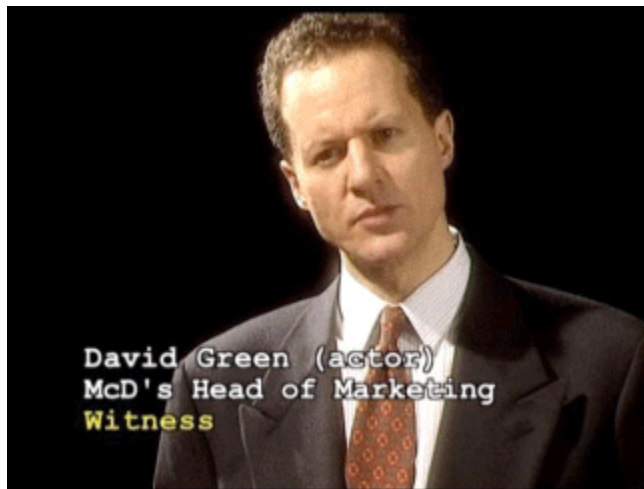
[Sid Nicholson, McDonald's UK Vice President, Witness]



[DAY 44]



[Dave Morris] Why is it necessary for the McDonald's corporation to have that constant bombardment of young children with commercial advertising?



[David Green, McDonald's Head of Marketing, Witness] First of all, I would not agree with your characterization of "bombardment." It is certainly a large marketing effort, and if the children enjoy these activities, we would want them to participate in them. Obviously, we want them to remember McDonald's, and by remembering McDonald's, the next time they have a chance to go out to eat, they might select that over one of our competitors.



[Ronald McDonald] For lots of fun ...

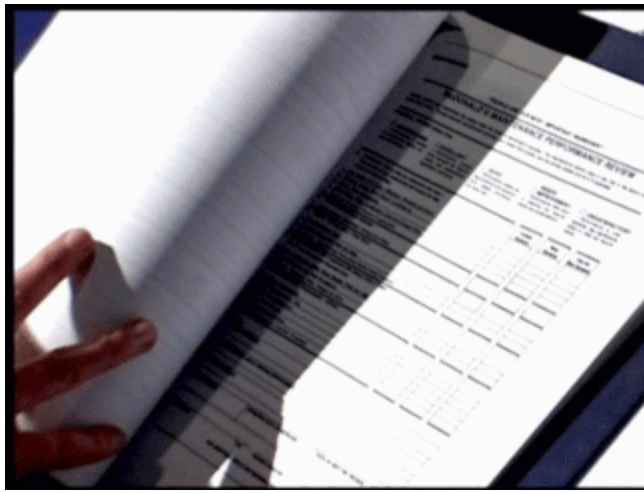


[Boy] Lots of fun for everyone.

[Ronald McDonald] For everyone.



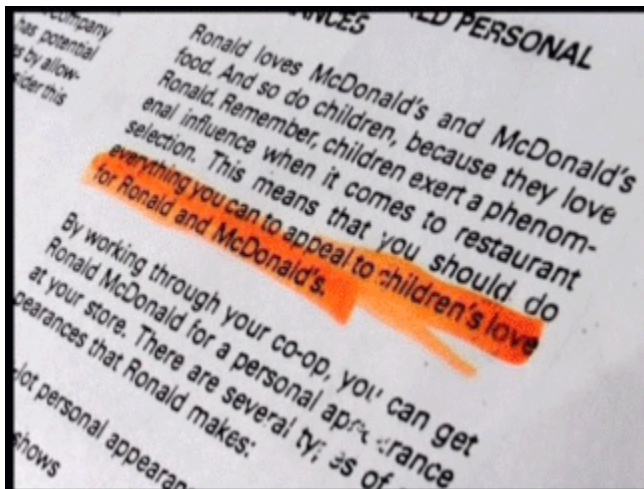
[Sue Dibb, The Food Commission, Witness] Advertisers like McDonald's are very aware of "pester power." "Pester power," as any parent will know, is the ability children have to pester them for something that they want. And they can exert a tremendous amount of influence. And this is being recognized by marketers.



[Helen Steel] One of the biggest battles that we had throughout the trial was getting McDonald's to hand over the relevant documents.



It took literally years before they handed over their operations manual, or "The Bible," as they call it.



[McDonald's Operations and Training Manual] Remember, children exert a phenomenal influence when it comes to restaurant selection. This means you should do everything you can to appeal to children's love for Ronald and McDonald's.



Birthday parties are an important way to generate added sales and profits.



Offering toys is one of the best ways to make children loyal supporters.



[Sue Dibb, The Food Commission, Witness] McDonald's gives away gifts and collectible items with many of their meals, particularly happy meals, which are targeted towards younger children.



And of course, if you want to collect the whole set, you have to go back week after week.



[Ronald McDonald and Child] At the sign that says, "You're welcome," a visit to McDonald's makes your day.





[Geoff Guiliano, Former Ronald McDonald, Witness] *"Hi boys and girls. How you doing today? It's Ronald McDonald, your friend. And boy, gosh-by-golly, we're going to have a lot of fun today."* I was like, who is the guy in the Third Reich who was the propaganda minister? That's what I was, you know. Ronald McDonald. Kids love him.

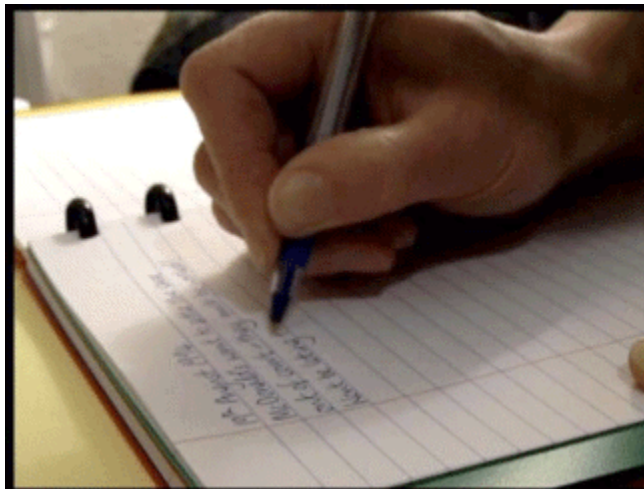
And they don't know why they love him. They love him because they were told to love him, and somebody paid somebody to make them love him. These are adults trying to manipulate little kids to get their parents to spend money in a certain way. And if they were selling the most wonderful health food, maybe you could justify it. But that much time and energy and effort to manipulate children to do something unhealthy, is pretty appalling.



[Boy] I'm drinking cola coka!



[Geoff Guiliano, Former Ronald McDonald, Witness] I mean, anybody can really manipulate a child. This is not that difficult. And I just went home one night and I said, "No, no, no, I cannot do this. I can't live with myself if I continue to do this."



[Helen Steel] 19th of August, 1994. McDonald's wants to settle the case out of court. They must be worried. We're not going to let them off the hook, though. Don't want anyone else to have to go through this ordeal.



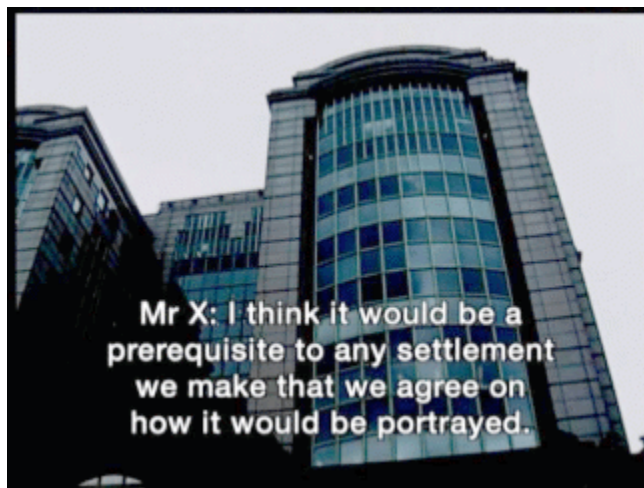
[Dave Morris] We got a note out of the blue that McDonald's wanted to meet us any place, any time. And they would fly over members of their board of directors, which they did, because they wanted to settle the case. And they flew over to have secret talks with us, me and Helen.



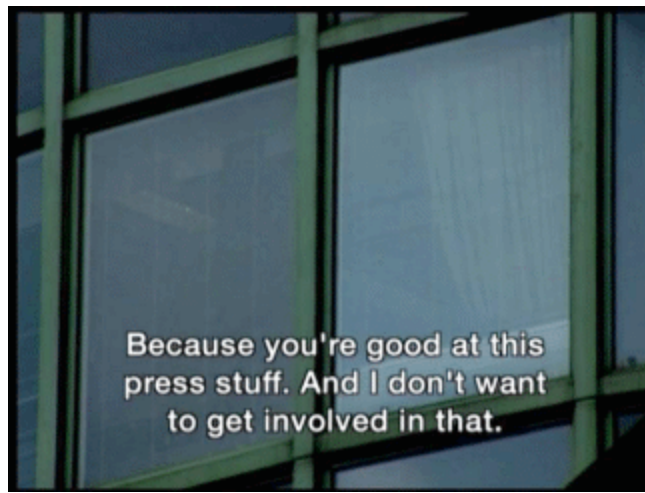
[22nd August, 1994.]



[Secret recording]



[Mr. X] I think it would be a prerequisite to any settlement we make that we agree on how it would be portrayed.



Because you're good at this press stuff. And I don't want to get involved in that. I don't want to have to worry that you're going to go out and say, "This guy flew over from America with a bag full of money" or "privately acknowledged that this is a stupid lawsuit" or something. I can't take a chance on being stung twice. You've got principles. You believe what you did. We're just as highly principled as you are, whether you believe it or not.

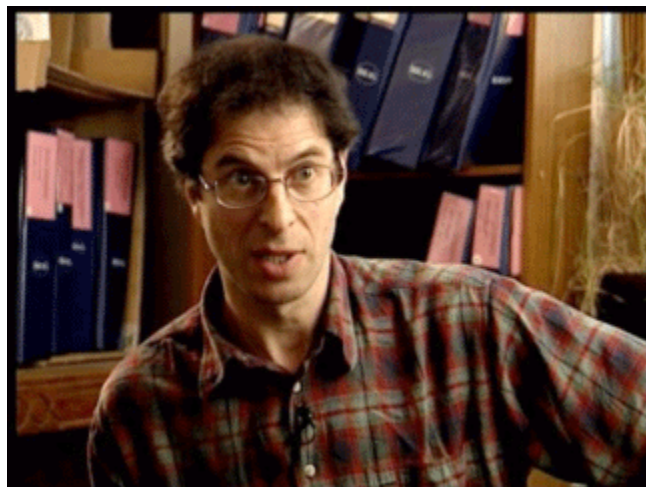
[Mr. Y] Our main motivation, I think, is not to interfere with Freedom of Speech, but to prevent total untruths and irresponsible things from being said.

[Dave Morris] Like that the wages are low.

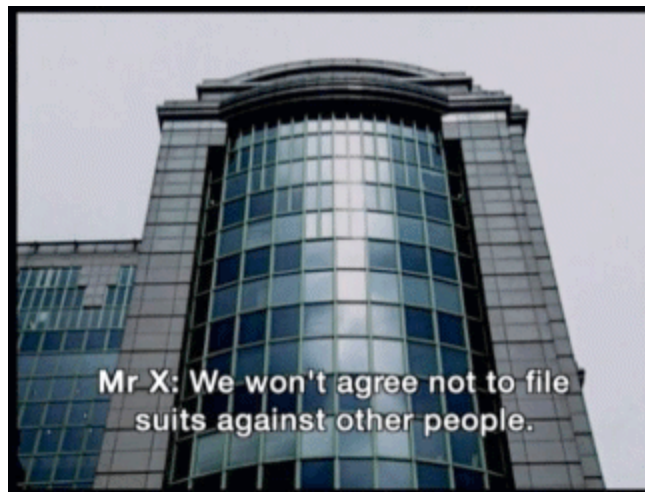
[Mr. Y] We can ...

[Dave Morris] Minimum wage is low pay. Trying to stop people from saying that in this country, to make it illegal speech -- why shouldn't we say things in the UK that people can say in America?

[Mr. X] Because you choose to live in a country where maybe you can't say those things. They are caning people in Shanghai too. That doesn't mean we're going to go cane you. [[If they want to cane people, they'll go to Shanghai!]]



[Dave Morris] We made it absolutely clear that we would only consider allowing them to pull out of the case if they apologized to all of the people they had sued in the past who had made similar criticisms to us, and guaranteed not to sue people in the future.



[Mr. X] We won't agree not to file suits against other people. We will not discuss our going back and apologising, or paying compensation to anybody not in this room.

[Helen Steel] It's quite serious to say to someone "You can't hand out any leaflets full stop."

[Mr. X] I don't think you ought to hand out leaflets about McDonald's. I think you've played that card, Helen. You've done it. You've had your day in the sun.

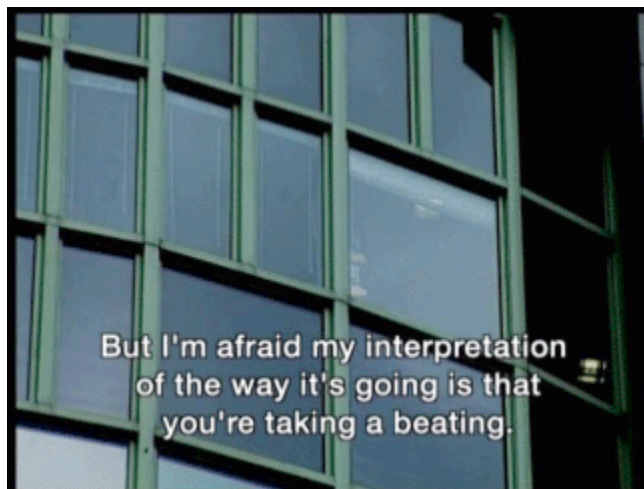


And I'm insisting that any comments you make about McDonald's has to be private.



[Helen Steel] We wrote back a letter saying, you know, we would consider that if they agreed not to run any more advertisements about McDonald's. And said, "Of course, this agreement wouldn't prevent you from privately recommending McDonald's to your friends and neighbors." They didn't reply to that one.

[Mr. Z] I've sat through almost as many court days as you have. And I must say, that I've admired your tenacity, your strength, your courage, and strength in cross-examining.



But I'm afraid my interpretation of the way it's going is that you're taking a beating.

[Helen] Is that what?

[Mr. Z] You're taking a beating, and you're going to lose.

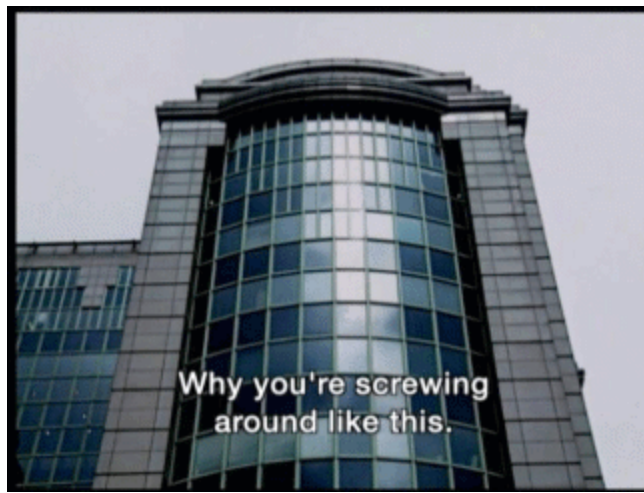
[Mr. X] But if we win this case, and you go out and distribute that pamphlet out on the street again ...



you'll go to jail.

[Dave Morris] Do you think that would be of benefit to the McDonald's Corporation?

[Mr. X] No, but it's not going to be a benefit to you either. And that's what I don't understand.



Why you're screwing around like this.

[Dave Morris] In some ways, I feel sorry for the McDonald's Corporation. Not really, but in some ways I feel that Burger King, Pizza Hut, and everyone else should be getting equal attention. Because we are criticising what corporations in general are doing.



[Mr. X] So why did you have to say those things about us? Say them about Burger King.

[Dave Morris] Well, we want people to be able to say them about anybody.



[Dave Morris] There was really such a gulf between the two sides, they just couldn't bear to accept any of our demands, really. And so it was back to court.



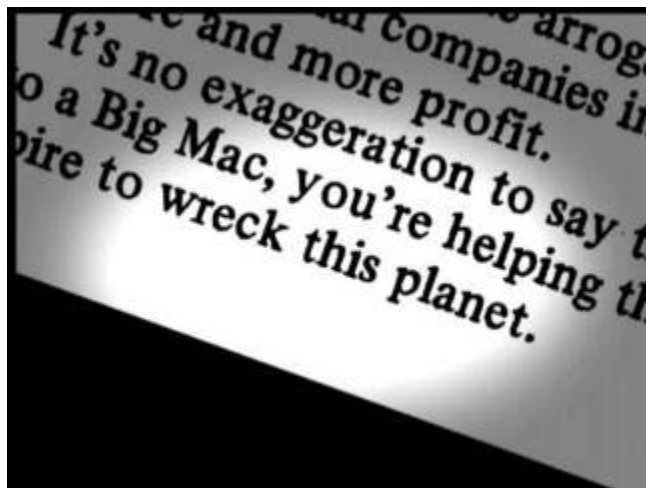
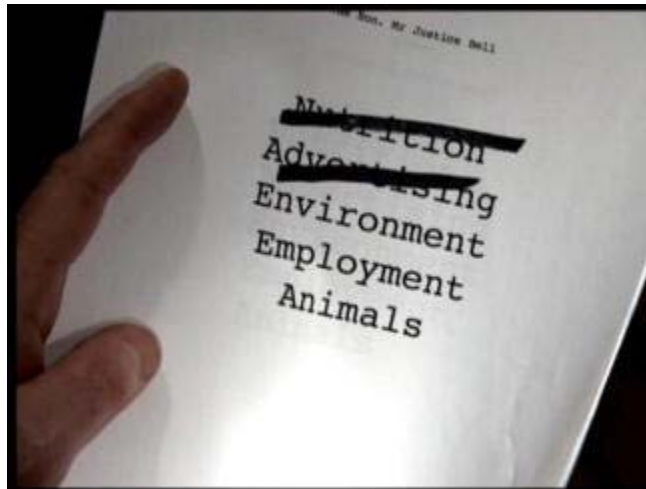
[DAY 56]



[Helen Steel] Good morning.

[Dave Morris] So are you doing the cross-examinations today, or am I doing it? Who's starting?

[Helen Steel] You start. I'm not ready.





[Richard Rampton QC, McDonald's Barrister] I state the issue in this way, and I hope the Lordship will consider it a fair way of stating it:



Is the plaintiff's use of resources significantly detrimental to the environment?



[Charles Secrett, Friends of the Earth, Witness] Any company as large as McDonald's is bound to have a huge, and usually very bad, impact on the environment.



When one thinks of all their tens of thousands of stores worldwide, and the demand that McDonald's as a corporation creates for wood, and paper pulp, and chemicals, and metals, the environmental impact of these production processes is huge.



[Paul Preston, McDonald's UK President, Witness] We take our environmental responsibility very seriously. We take the goals of reduce, recycle, re-use, and apply them wherever practical across the entire business.



McDonald's has absolutely nothing to do with the rainforest in terms of beef production. We never have, and we never will.



[Dave Morris] We always knew it would be an uphill struggle to get evidence of direct involvement by McDonald's in tropical forest destruction.



After all, all the witnesses, and the official documents, and so on, were on the other side of the world. And we didn't have the resources to track them down, and bring them to court.



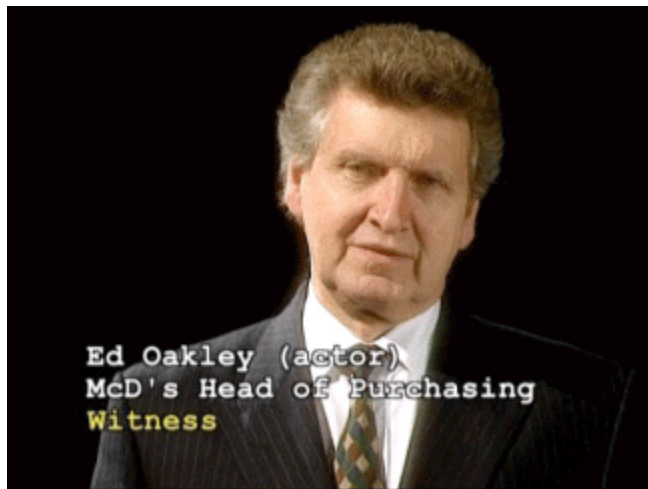
[Keir Starmer, Barrister] When you sit back and think about some of the witnesses that could have come on behalf of David and Helen, but didn't because nobody could pay their airfare, the verdict pales into insignificance. It's meaningless. If both sides had had all the witnesses they wanted there, then a true verdict might have been possible. But with the best will in the world, the judge can only give the verdict according to the evidence. And the evidence costs money.



[DAY 61]



[Dave Morris] Isn't it a fact of life that virtually every main street has a great amount of McDonald's packaging.



[Ed Oakley, McDonald's Head of Purchasing, Witness] It is not a fact of life.

[Dave Morris] Dozens, if not hundreds of items ...

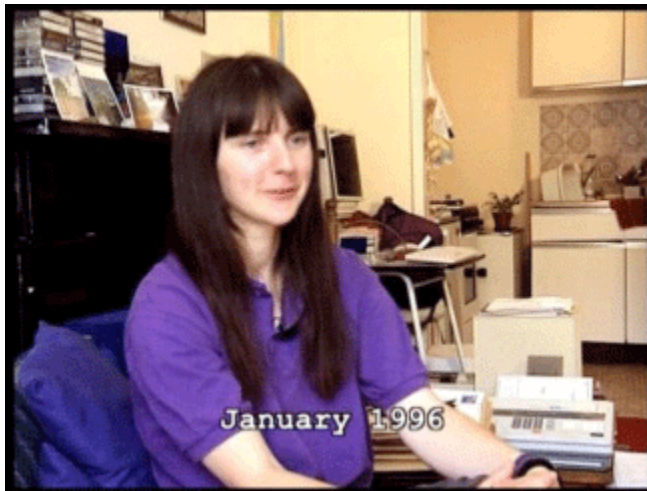
[Ed Oakley, McDonald's Head of Purchasing, Witness] Not a fact of life! I walked through Paddington this morning, I found one McDonald's package which I disposed of. So I think that is a gross overstatement.



[Judge] There were two on Waterloo Bridge this morning. But I didn't dispose of them, I'm afraid.



[Ed Oakley, McDonald's Head of Purchasing, Witness] I would have done.



[Helen Steel, January 1996] During the summer last year, I really felt like I needed to get away from the case, and get away from McDonald's as well. And I went up to Scotland, and I climbed up Ben Lomond one day. You expect that everywhere you go in London, you see their litter, and so on. But I climbed up to the top of this mountain, and it was the last place I expected to be reminded of McDonald's.



And there you are: there's someone sitting at the top with a McDonald's t-shirt. You can't get away from them.



[Helen Steel] The campaign is going to continue.



McDonald's has completely failed to silence the critics.



I'm normally quite a private person, and I actually find it quite hard talking to the media. I feel absolutely fine speaking in court, but put me in front of the camera, and I just want to curl up.



[Dave Morris] We think we've already won, whatever the verdict ...



because McDonald's' efforts to intimidate and silence its critics ...



[Helen Steel] ... have completely backfired. Effectively the tables have been turned ...



[Dave Morris] ... and it's McDonald's and their business practices ...

[Helen Steel] ... that are on trial. ...



McDonald's has had every conceivable advantage that money can buy in this case.



[Dave Morris] The one thing that we believe that we've got that they haven't ...



[Helen Steel] ... is the truth on our side.

[Dave Morris] That's why it's going on so long.



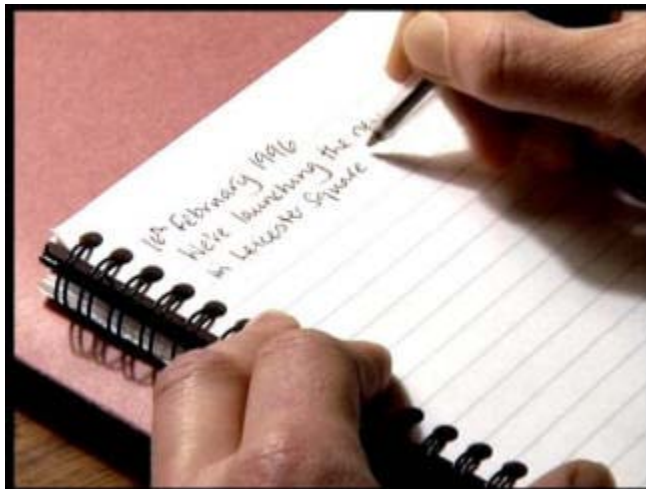
[Helen Steel] It's particularly frustrating when you spend a couple of hours talking to a journalist about all the issues in the case, and then two weeks later you see the article, and it's sort of about your haircut, and what jumper you've got on.



[Dave Morris] We got more and more frustrated with the mainstream media ignoring the real issues.



But then, out of the blue, a solution came along. Some newfangled invention called the Internet.



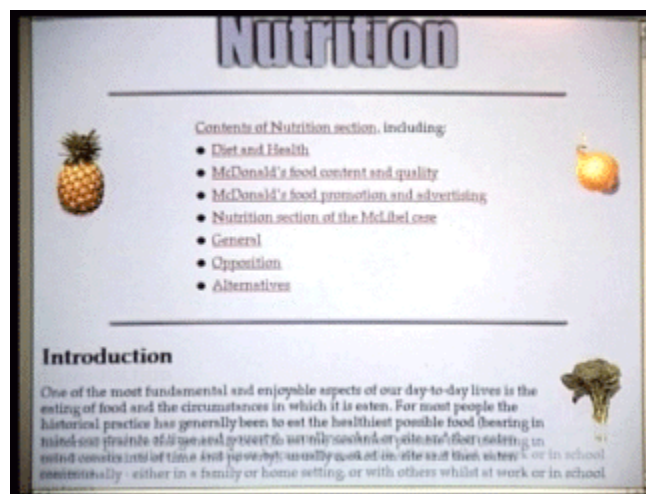
[Helen Steel] 16th of February, 1996. We're launching the new website in Lester Square this morning. Finally, the public will be able to get the real story, the complete story.



[16th of February 1996]



[Dave Morris] This McSpotlight website is a library of information about the McDonald's corporation. All the things they don't want you to know, and all the things they've now failed to stop the public finding out about.





[Jungleburger by Peter Heller]

This Quicktime Movie is a 30-second extract from an interview in 1982 with Sergio Quintana, the Marketing Director of Co-op Montecillos, a huge meat processing factory in Costa Rica - a country whose tropical forests have been devastated in the last 40 years by cattle ranching for export. Co-op Montecillos has been the sole supplier for McDonald's local stores in Costa Rica since the early 1970s. (See transcript of the full, uncut interview)

The clip is an extract from the prize-winning, pioneering documentary 'Jungleburger' made by the German film-maker Peter Heller and widely broadcast since 1983. By interviewing and filming key personnel involved in all links of the chain, it adds up to a devastating expose of how Central and South American tropical forests are being destroyed to be replaced by cattle production for export to the USA and other industrialised countries. There the beef is mixed in with locally raised beef and put on the market for use by the fast food industry. (In the USA, once any beef consignment has entered the country and passed official inspections it is recategorised as 'US beef').

International campaigns in the 1980s by environmentalists and others put the hamburger corporations, banks and governments on the defensive about tropical forest destruction. The clip flatly contradicts McDonald's own propaganda of the 1980s and 90s. In 1989 for the first time the Corporation produced a written 'policy' against the use of ex-rainforest beef. Whether or not this 'policy' is genuine, enforced in reality or even enforceable at all, they remain the world's largest user of beef and they irresponsibly promote increased beef consumption through their annual \$1.5 billion global advertising and promotions budget. It is this massive overconsumption of beef and the consequently huge and unnatural overproduction of beef which is responsible for the destructive pressure on forests, rainforests and soils throughout the world. The cutting down of tropical forests is frequently due to landless peasants and small ranchers being displaced from nearby regions where large scale ranching for big companies has taken over the land.

McDonald's have tried to suppress the showing of 'Jungleburger' in the UK and abroad. However it continues to be broadcast and the clip has been played as evidence in the McLibel trial.

Distribution

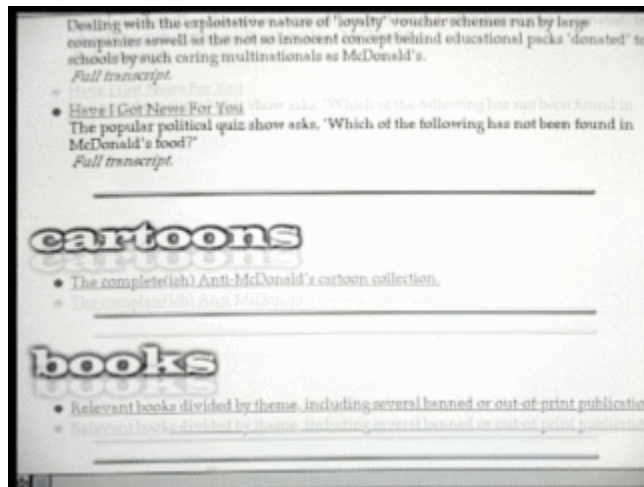
(The following info was found wandering about on the Internet, and as such may be out-of-date.)

"Jungleburger" and its sister-video "McProfit" are available in the USA in VHS format tapes. Unfortunately the price is pretty steep, in fact prohibitive, almost guaranteeing that the movie will not be distributed by video rental places.

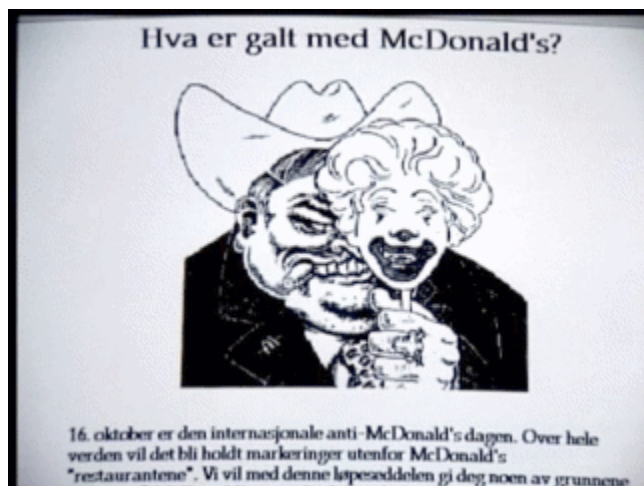
To buy both videos with rights to *show* the video to audiences the cost is \$390.00 (for both) plus \$10 shipping.

To rent the videos as a school, or non profit or other organization the price is \$75.00 each plus \$10 shipping. You need to fax them details of your organization, when and where it will be shown. It might be worth asking your local video store to get or find a copy.

First Run - Icarus International Films
153 Waverly Place
New York NY 10014
Phone 800-876-1710
FAX 212-989-7649]



[Charles O'Leary, McSpotlight] We've taken what Helen and Dave did one stage further, and made this available internationally for all time, never to be censored again.



Now you can have the original leaflet in many different languages, and print it out and distribute it.



[Dave Morris] We are now launching the site.

[Helen Steel] It's coming now.

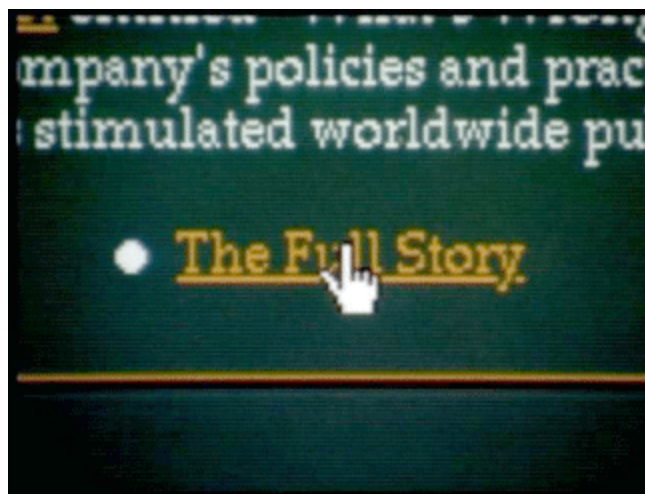
[Dave Morris] I don't know if you can see it, but it's coming up on the screen: McSpotlight.

[Crowd] YEAH!



[McSpotlight: McDonald's, McLibel, Multinationals.]

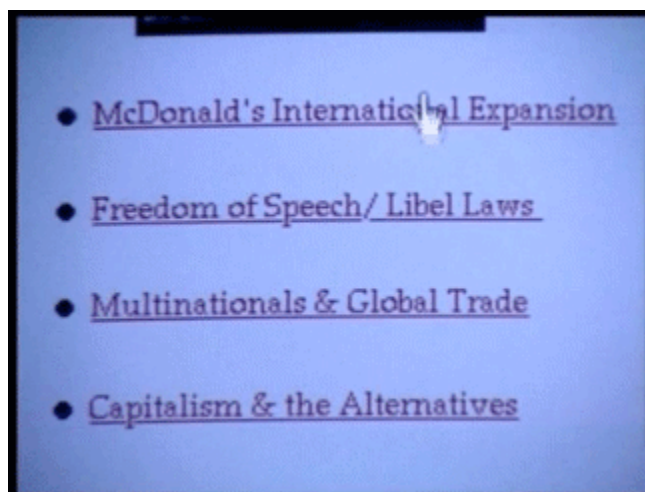




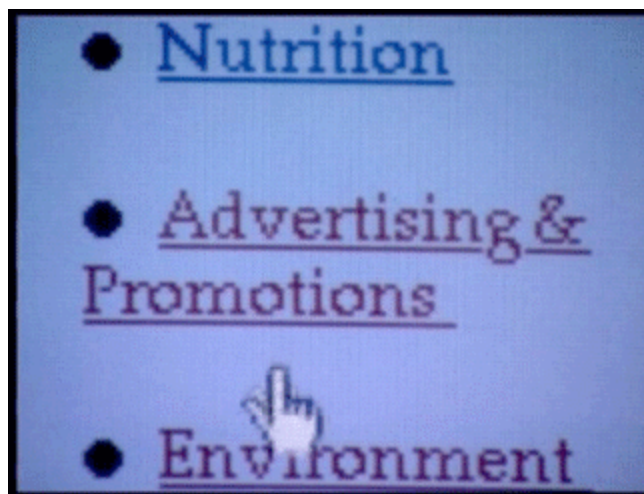
[The Full Story]



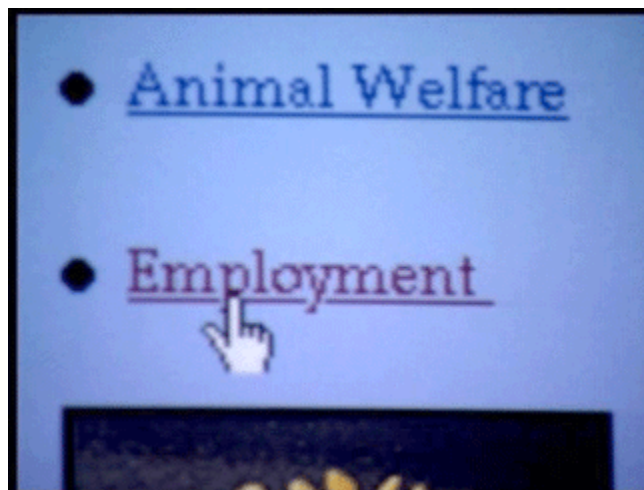
[Dave Morris] We see what we're doing as enabling society to have the information it needs, so that people can choose whether they want multinationals, whether they want junk food, whether they want McJobs. Because they've got the full information to decide for themselves.



[McDonald's International Expansion
Freedom of Speech / Libel Laws
Multinationals & Global Trade
Capitalism & the Alternatives]



[Nutrition
Advertising & Promotions
Environment]



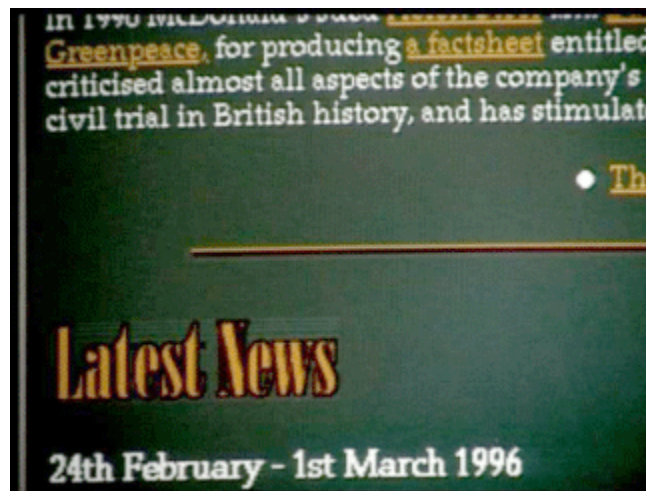
[Animal Welfare
Employment]



[STOP PRESS
20 March '96
McSpotlight: 1,000,000 accesses in the first month!!
No Love lost: "We're not planning any course of action as far as McSpotlight is concerned."]



[Eric Schlosser, Author of "Fast Food Nation"] You do not see, for the most part, strong, outspoken criticism of McDonald's by the major television networks. Because they are so dependent on McDonald's, and the other fast food chains, for the advertising dollars. This was an incredible new way to get around the stranglehold that the corporate media had on information.



[Dave Morris] McSpotlight really pushed things up a year for us. More publicity, more donations, and lots of people coming forward wanting to tell us their experiences with McDonald's.



[This Week in Court
This Week in the Media
This Week's Campaigning
This Week at McDonald's]



[Dave Morris] Sarah! It's about ten past eight.



[DAY 116]



[Dave Morris] We've had a lot of witnesses coming from all over the world, and we had to find a place for them to stay. We couldn't afford hotels, so quite a few of them stayed in this house, upstairs in my spare room.



[Sarah Inglis, McDonald's Worker, Witness] It's been a bit of a culture shock. The first day I got here, and he showed me where the bathroom was, I said, "Where is your shower?"



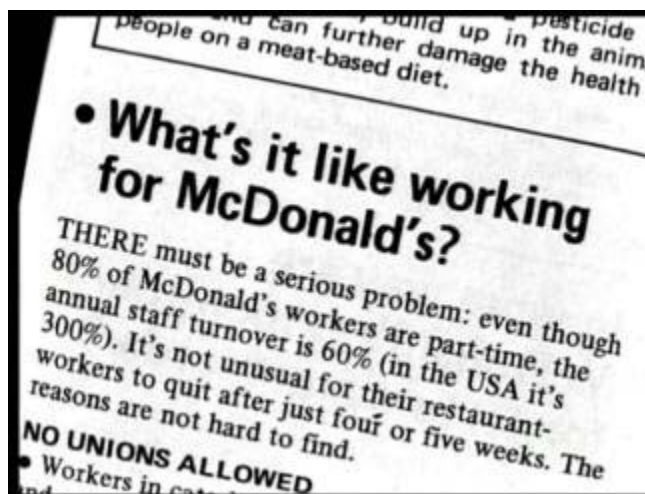
[Dave Morris] I've met so many people, from eminent scientists, to ex-workers from McDonald's from Norway -- and it's just been a fantastic experience.



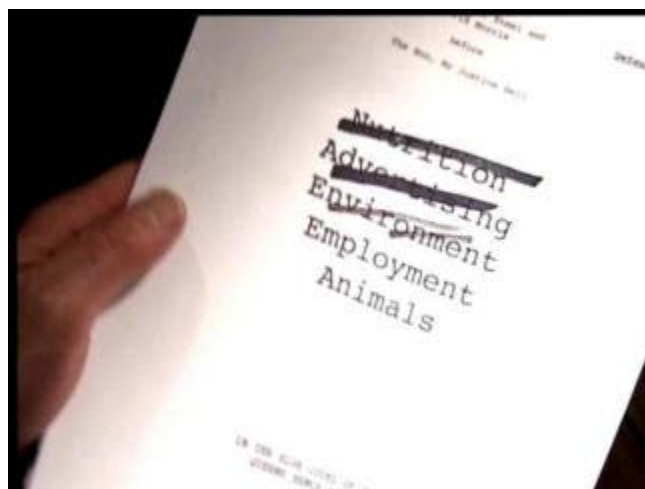
[Sarah Inglis, McDonald's Worker, Witness] A lot of my friends and family think I'm a bit crazy for coming over here, right in the middle of exams almost. A lot of people don't understand my passion about this.



To be able to stand up to a corporation, and let them know what they've done to people like me -- a lot of them think I'm sort of an extremist. But I'm not, really.



[Leaflet] What's it like working for McDonald's? There must be a serious problem: even though 80% of McDonald's workers are part-time, the annual staff turnover is 60% (in the USA it's 300%). It's not unusual for their restaurant-workers to quit after just four or five weeks. The reasons are not hard to find. NO UNIONS ALLOWED.



[Richard Rampton QC, McDonald's Barrister] Then I pass to employment.



The issue I pose here is, "Do the plaintiffs cynically exploit their workforce for the sake of a fast buck? Are the plaintiffs hostile to trade unions?"



[Protest Sign] McDonald's GUILTY OF exploiting workers, destroying the environment, murdering animals. FIGHT BACK NOW.

[Protest Sign] McProfits EXPLOITS WORKERS.



[Protest Sign] BIG MAC BURNT IN TWO YEAR LONG GRILLING.



[Dan Gallin, International Union of Food Workers, Witness] We believe companies should be profitable, but profit cannot be the only consideration. And in the case of McDonald's, it seems to be absolutely the overriding consideration.



The type of work organization promoted by McDonald's, its breaking down of simple repetitive operations, and so forth, it is essentially dehumanizing.



[Eric Schlosser, Author of "Fast Food Nation"] The McDonald's kitchen is deliberately designed to control workers, and have as little initiative, and creativity, and voice to the worker as possible. They are basically treated like cogs in a machine.



[Dan Gallin, International Union of Food Workers, Witness] It enables the worker to be extremely replaceable.



[Eric Schlosser, Author of "Fast Food Nation"] ... interchangeable workers ...

[Dan Gallin, International Union of Food Workers, Witness] .. extreme exploitation of the workforce ...

[Eric Schlosser, Author of "Fast Food Nation"] ... cheap workers ...

[Dan Gallin, International Union of Food Workers, Witness] ... low scale, low pay ...

[Eric Schlosser, Author of "Fast Food Nation"] ... high turnover ...

[Dan Gallin, International Union of Food Workers, Witness] ... high stress ...

[Eric Schlosser, Author of "Fast Food Nation"] ... no benefits ...

[Dan Gallin, International Union of Food Workers, Witness] ... exhausting and unstable jobs.



[Eric Schlosser, Author of "Fast Food Nation"] That's why these are called "McJobs."

[McDonald's Manager] I love the way you turn it. It's great.



[actual speed]





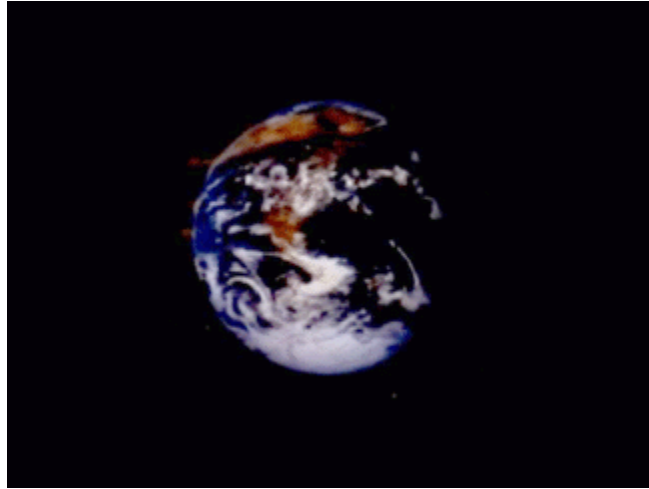
[Eric Schlosser, Author of "Fast Food Nation"] A skilled worker would have to be paid a decent wage. So by having so much elaborate, high-tech machinery in the kitchen, the knowledge is being built into the operating system. And you're not relying on the knowledge of any individual worker. And you can get rid of whomever you want.



[Paul Preston, McDonald's UK President, Witness] People want to be part of a winner. They want to be part of something successful. Hard work doesn't frighten youth today. Not at all. They want to be part of something that's victorious. Something they can see as The Shining Light.







[HERITAGE OF EXCELLENCE]



[McDonald's Robot] Good morning! Welcome to Hamburg[[er]] University.



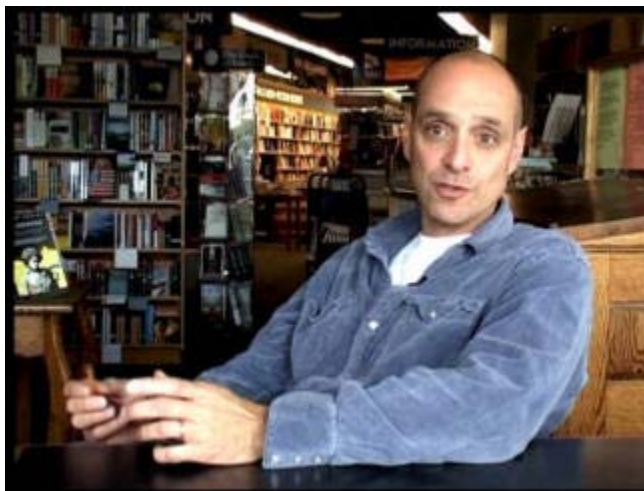
[Eric Schlosser, Author of "Fast Food Nation"] It's no surprise to me that as many as two-thirds of the fast food robberies are inside jobs, either by workers, or former workers, or friends of workers. When you're happy with your job, you don't generally try to hold up your employer at gunpoint.



[Sarah Inglis, McDonald's Worker, Witness] Well, in Ontario there's two minimum wages: there's one for under 18, which is lower than the over 18's ...



and McDonald's seems to hire huge amounts of under 18's, because their wage is a lot lower.



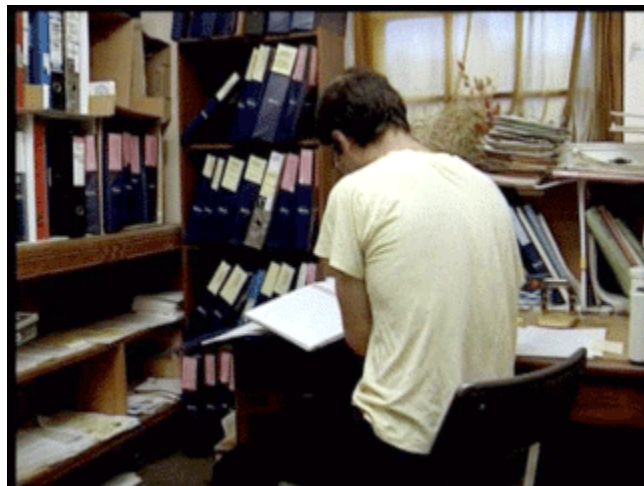
[Eric Schlosser, Author of "Fast Food Nation"] The minimum wage in the United States right now, adjusted for inflation, is the lowest it's been in more than 50 years. So this is a pay cut for the poorest workers in the United States. The fast food industry has played a large role in insuring that the poor get that pay cut, and the ripple effect you can see throughout society.



[Sarah Inglis, McDonald's Worker, Witness] How many billions of dollars do they make profit in a year? I think if they could give maybe half of that back to their employees, it might be better.



[Helen Steel] When we argued that in court, the judge kind of intervened and said, "The Company's owned by shareholders, and if the shareholders don't keep getting these profits, then they won't be shareholders. And then the company will close down." He seemed to be sort of completely judging it on their terms. We are entitled to put forth a different view, and argue that we want a society that's not run for the benefit of shareholders, but that's run for the benefit of everybody.



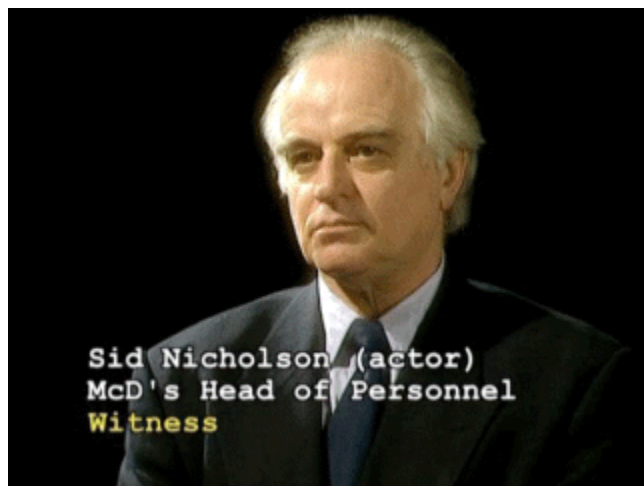


[Dave Morris] When I was a postman, I was secretary of our trade union branch, and very involved in trying to improve conditions at work. I remember delivering letters to a McDonald's store, and when I saw how they used to treat their workers, that's when I first thought that there was something really dodgy about The Company.



[DAY 120]

[Dave Morris] If somebody amongst the crew was a member of the union, or wished to be a member of the union, they would not be allowed to collect subscriptions, would they, from other people in the store?



[Sid Nicholson, McDonald's Head of Personnel, Witness] No, no.

[Dave Morris] They would not be allowed to put any notices on the notice boards.

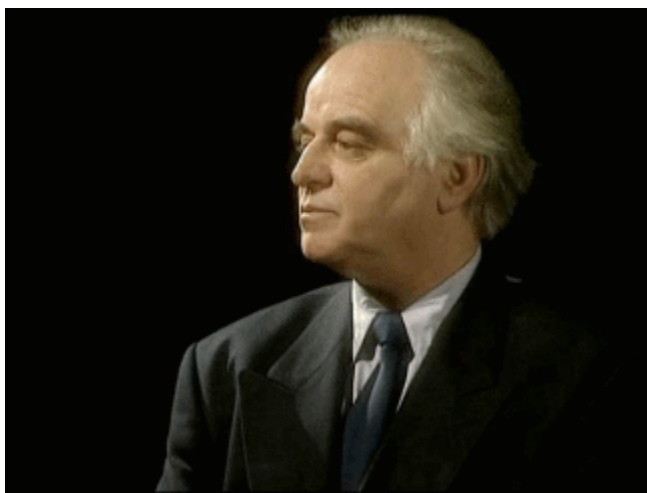
[Sid Nicholson, McDonald's Head of Personnel, Witness] No.

[Dave Morris] They would not be allowed to inform the union about conditions inside the stores.

[Sid Nicholson, McDonald's Head of Personnel, Witness] Well, I don't know how we could stop that, but if we found out about it, yes.



[Judge] Can I summarize it this way? They would not be allowed to carry out any overt union activity on McDonald's premises?



[Sid Nicholson, McDonald's Head of Personnel, Witness] That's absolutely correct, sir.



[Judge] Can you do better than that?

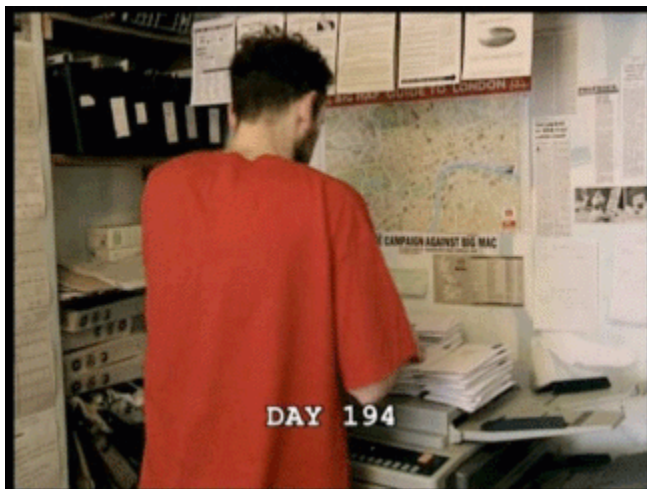




[Helen Steel] I got sort of to the stage where I just felt I was going on a twist, continuously thinking about McDonald's. And believe me, it does get mind-numbing thinking about McDonald's the whole time. It had the effect on me that I ended up dreaming about them as well, which was really horrible. I mean, it's more like nightmares.



I got a job working in a nightclub, which is quite a release from the case, because it's so busy in there. I worked there on Fridays and Saturdays, from ten at night until three in the morning. And I get paid 64 pounds per week. And that's basically what I live on.

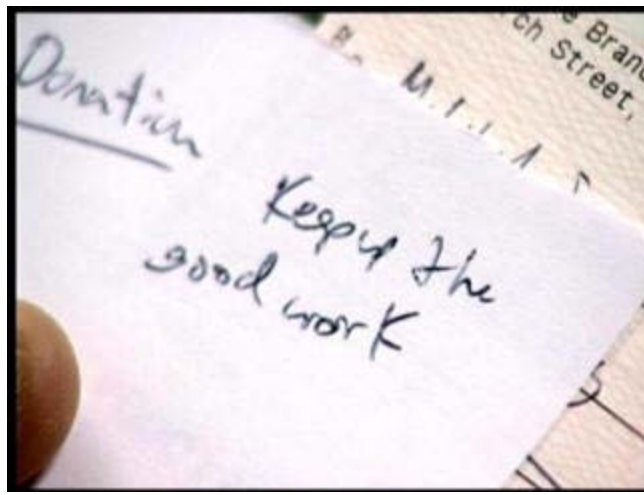


[DAY 194]



[Helen Steel] The McLibel Spot Campaign was set up and run by volunteers on a shoestring from someone's bedroom. And they coordinated publicity and protests against McDonald's throughout the trial.





Well, the campaign has raised about 30,000 pounds so far, all from donations from the public. And that gets spent on witness airfares, and legal costs, and really whatever other expenses come up. I mean, it might sound a lot until you find out that McDonald's has spent about 10 Million pounds.



[Dave Morris] During the time of our trial, McDonald's have made 3.6 Billion dollars profits.



They've opened a new store every four hours, and expanded into 31 new countries.





It's not just what goes on at McDonald's itself that is the problem. It's that key practices that they've pioneered over the last 50 years are spreading throughout society, and becoming the norm.



[Eric Schlosser, Author of "Fast Food Nation"] And those key characteristics would be uniformity, conformity, and control. Control over the worker, control over the consumer, and a very homogenous culture that tries to stamp out genuine iconoclasm, and tries to control what can be said about these companies publicly.

[Dave Morris] We've invested our lives, especially the last three years have been just constant pressure of administration, of the paperwork, preparations, and questioning, and all kinds of legal complexities, all down on us all the time.



[DAY 229]



[Helen Steel] After court on Friday, I went to the doctors and got a certificate saying that I'm totally exhausted, and that I need a break. I just felt totally burnt out, and I wasn't really able to carry on. And so we're going to be making an application for the court to be adjourned for two weeks. There's so much stress, really, that we ended up taking it out on each other.



[Dave Morris] As the case goes on, it's even more difficult just to do the basics in looking after him, because I'm just getting exhausted. And he picks up with it when he's in the way, just being at home and being himself.

[Interviewer] Are you glad your dad did the court case then, or do you wish he didn't?

[Charlie] I'd be doing more things. Have more things as well.

[Interviewer] What more things do you mean?

[Charlie] I'd have a bit more toys as well, I think. And more time to get the toy.



[Helen Steel] The doctor recommended that I should have a two-week rest rate, but the judge basically ignored it, and ruled that the trial had to continue.

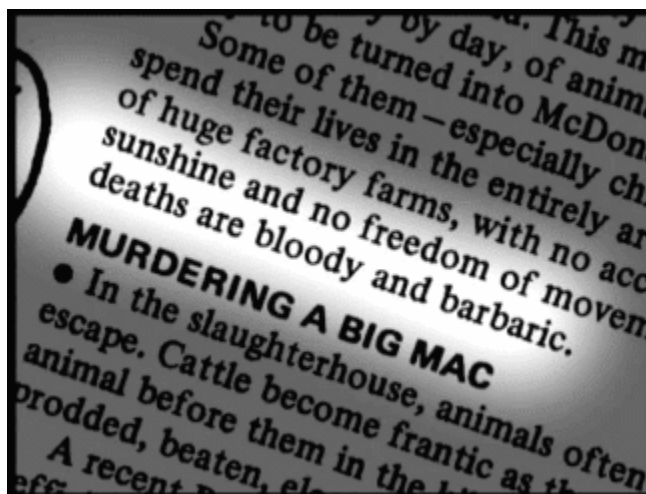
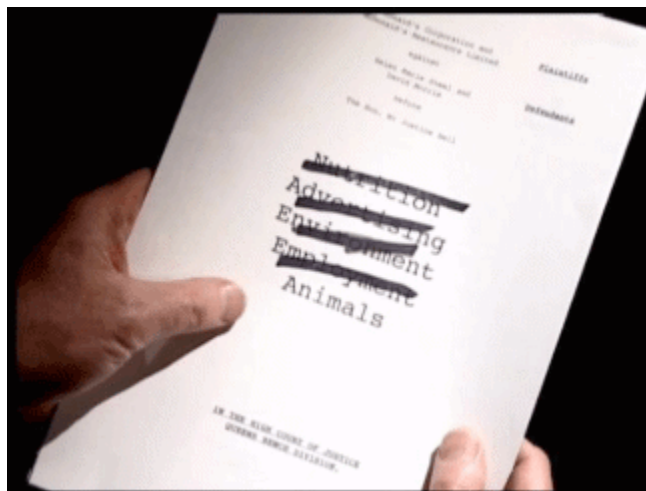


1st of November, 1996. McLibel is now the longest trial ever in English history. It certainly feels like it. Nearly 2-1/2 years already. A bit longer than McDonald's original estimate of three to four weeks. But at least the end is in sight now.

[292 DAYS
LONGEST EVER TRIAL
McWORLD UNDER THE GRILL
SAME McDONALD'S. SAME McLIES.]



[292 DAYS
LONGEST EVER]





[Richard Rampton QC, McDonald's Barrister] My Lord, the rearing and slaughter of animals is next. Here, I express the issue in this way: "Are the methods by which animals to make McDonald's food are reared and slaughtered cruel and inhumane?"

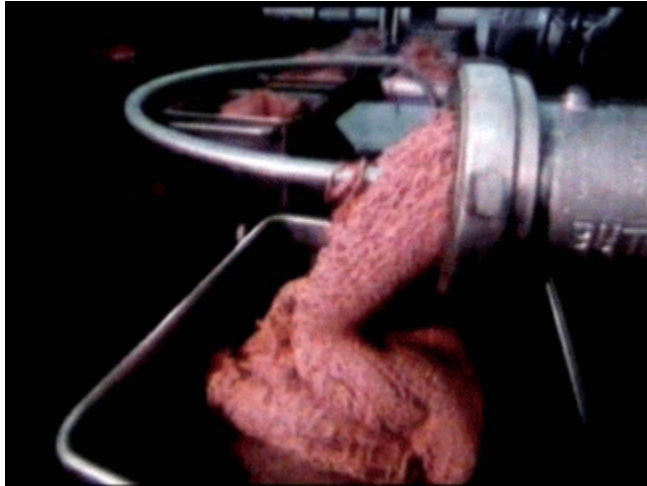


Would you summarize for us what is your attitude to the welfare of animals which are used to produce food for human consumption?



[David Walker, Meat Supplier to McDonald's, Witness] My conceptions are that no animal will put on weight, or grow, unless it is healthy and contented. You can't force an animal to increase its weight.







Though I definitely think we have consideration for animals and their well-being -- I do -- both in terms, or arbitrage, and in terms of farming.



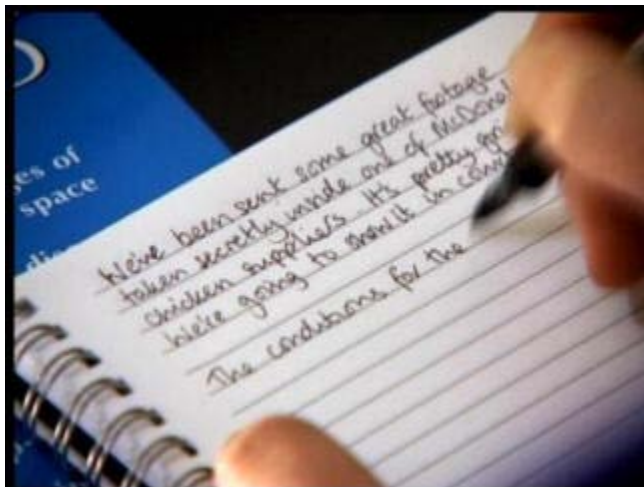
[Howard Lyman, Former Cattle Rancher, Witness] On my farm in Montana, I had 7,000 head of cattle, 12,000 acres of crop, 30 employees, 7 columbines, 20 tractors, 30 trucks. I was buying 1 Million dollars worth of chemicals a year. We'd eliminated the birds, killed the trees. My brother had died of Hodgkin's disease, which we found is caused by [inaudible], and by the weed spray we were using, 2-4-5-T, better known as Agent Orange in Vietnam. The doctor told me I had a tumor on my spinal cord, and if it was inside of the cord, I had less than one chance in a million. Now, when somebody gives you the odds of one in a million, it really gets your attention. And I had to admit that I had done some things on that farm that were not very good. Well, I'm sure that a lot of the meat that I sold ended up in McDonald's.



[Paul Preston, McDonald's UK President, Witness] Our standards exceed minimum legal requirements, and if those legal requirements need to be adjusted, that's really a matter for government, it's a matter for agriculture. But I want to know about it.



[Helen Steel] We've been sent some great footage taken secretly inside one of McDonald's chicken supplies. It's pretty grim. We're going to show it in court today.



The conditions for the poultry are outrageous.



Every day, about 1,300 adult birds have their throat cut while still fully conscious ...



and about 1,000 unwanted chicks are gassed every week.



[Eric Schlosser, Author of "Fast Food Nation"] These creatures have lived for millennia one way, and in a few decades we have transformed how they live, what they eat, how we eat them, and where we eat them.



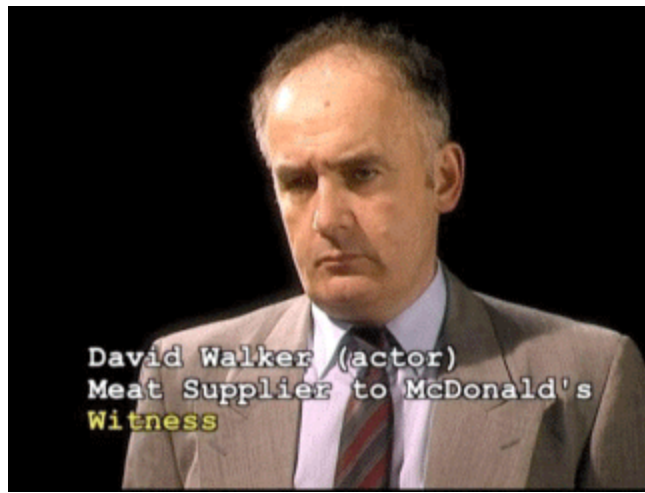
So BSC, and E-Coli, or 0157A7, and now maybe even avian flu, is a logical result of fundamental transformations in how we treat animals, how we have transformed animals from sentient beings into industrial commodities, and units of production.



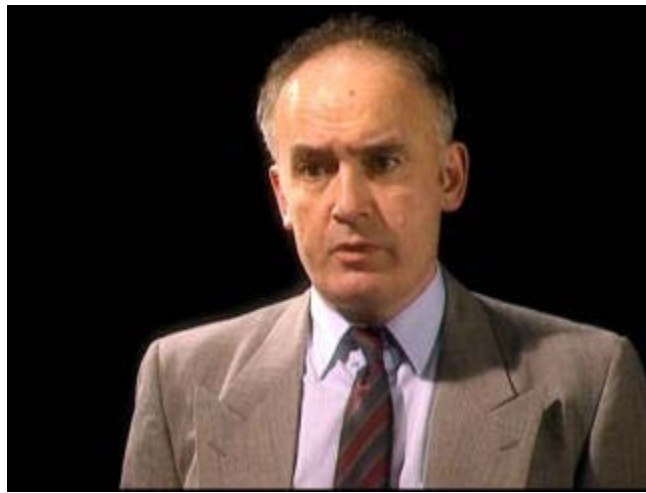
[Howard Lyman, Former Cattle Rancher, Witness] Most people have no understanding at all that animals are being fed to animals.



They have no idea that we are feeding arsenic to chickens. That we end up recycling manure back through the animals. That we feed them cement dust. Most of us have no idea in the world who produced our food, or what they used on it, what it will do to us, the environment, or the animals.



[Helen Steel] The point I was making was that Mr. Walker seemed to be accepting that as a result of the meat industry, the suffering of animals is inevitable. Is that correct?

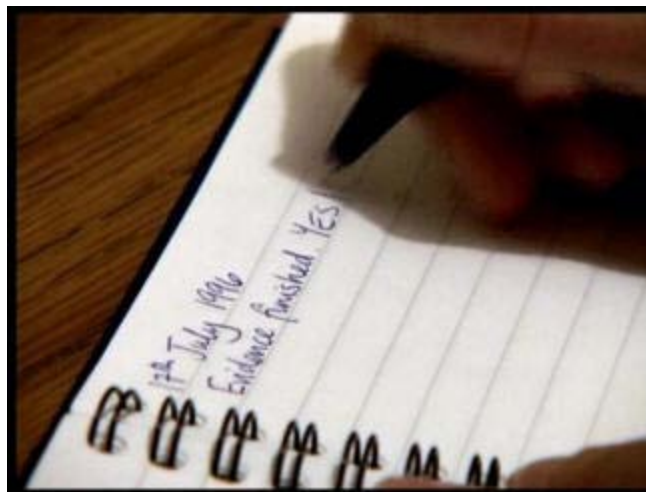


[David Walker, Meat Supplier to McDonald's, Witness] Are you asking me a question? Sorry.

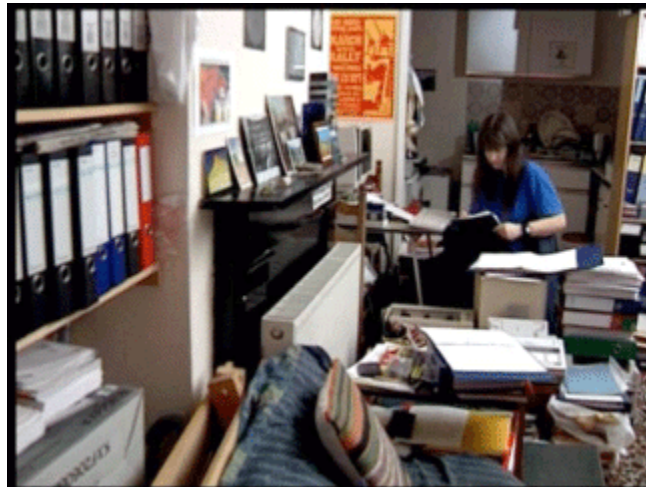


[Helen Steel] As a result of the meat industry, the suffering of animals is inevitable?

[David Walker, Meat Supplier to McDonald's, Witness] The answer to that must be yes.



[Helen Steel] 17th of July, 1996. Evidence finished. Yes!!



Now, somehow we have to condense all of the evidence into a coherent closing speech to convince the judge to rule in our favor.



[Dave Morris] We've got 40,000 documents, 20,000 pages of testimony. It's impossible without a trained team of, you know, ten lawyers, to even read a tenth of it. It's just too much for us. I mean, we're so exhausted, and we're just losing concentration now at this crucial time. And it's quite possible, you know, that we could fail at the last hurdle in this case.



It's just got to the point where I don't have any time for Charlie anymore, and communication has broken down between us. And I just end up shouting at him. I've just got to say to Charlie, "Just go off and play, because I've got work to do." I mean, it's already 2:00 in the morning, and I'm completely knackered. And yet tomorrow morning, I've got to stand up, and we've got to speak for six weeks nonstop in our closing speeches. It's just an impossible task, really.



[Dave Morris] Libel laws are being used in this country as a draconian form of mass censorship which is largely carried out in secret, largely self-censored.



[DAY 309]

[Richard Rampton QC, McDonald's Barrister] The allegations in the leaflet are false. The picture of working life at McDonald's painted by the leaflet is a grotesque ...

[Helen Steel] Ronald McDonald is one stranger parents certainly should warn their children about. We know he has ulterior motives.

[McDonald's Witness] There may be a causal relationship between diet and cancer of the breast and bowel; on the other hand, there may not be.

[Helen Steel] Bearing in mind the similarity between the passage in the fact sheet, and McDonald's own pamphlet, it was extremely ...

[Dave Morris] ... promotion by McDonald's of beef consumption, the huge advertising budget as the world's largest user of beef ...

[Helen Steel] ... is just because they do not like groups such as London Greenpeace drawing these problems to the attention of the public, of the ways in which the fast food industry harm their customers, and animals, and the planet.



[Eric Schlosser, Author of "Fast Food Nation"] One of the reasons the fast food industry grew so quickly, and is still the food of the poor and ordinary working people, is that it's cheap. But it is very similar to smoking and tobacco. The real cost, and the real consequences, doesn't come in the moment. It comes 10 or 20 years later. When you look at the

cost to people's health, when you look at the cost to the environment, when you look at how our labor system has been transformed, and on and on and on, this is not cheap food. This is extremely expensive food. This food is too expensive for our societies to pay for.

[Helen Steel] Because wealthy people and corporations can control all the media, it's very easy for them to shape the way we see the world: buy this product and you'll be happier. And for them to convince us that there is no point in fighting back, and actually everything's okay, and just leave it in their hands ...

[Dave Morris] Human beings are amazing. Look at all their inventiveness, and creativity, at all the great things: art, music. Surely we could come up with something better than this current economic system which allows a few people to get obscenely rich, while half the planet have to live in poverty.



[Eric Schlosser, Author of "Fast Food Nation"] For me, the most important thing is to just be awake, and alert, and alive, and conscious, and not just kind of a captive of these corporate marketing campaigns.





[Howard Lyman, Former Cattle Rancher, Witness] Right now we have governments that are doing the bidding of multinational corporations. And they are in fact the government of the world. Can they totally intimidate individuals? Can they remove our rights and freedoms? That's what this trial is all about. The trial will not be decided in high court, the trial will be decided in the court of public opinion.



[Helen Steel] 19th of June, 1997, Judgment day! The 314th and final day in court.



[Dave Morris] I think I should wear this, even though I look like a vicar. Do I?

[19th June, 1997]



[now read the leaflets and ... JUDGE FOR YOURSELF]









[Judge] My conclusions are as follows: It has not been proved that a diet high in fat and animal products and low in fibre leads to a very real risk of cancer of the breast or cancer of the bowel, although it is possible that it increases the risk to some extent. The leaflet's message of a very real risk of heart disease simply from eating at McDonald's more than just occasionally is not justified. I do find that various of McDonald's advertisements have pretended to a positive nutritional benefit which McDonald's food did not match. The sting of the leaflet, to the effect that McDonald's exploits children by using them as more susceptible subjects of advertising to pressurize their parents into going to McDonald's, is justified. It is true. The blame for litter, which has left McDonald's restaurants as packaging in customer's hands, lies firmly on the inconsiderate customer. Although the expansion of beef cattle production has led to the destruction of rainforests, there was no evidence that McDonald's has taken any active part. McDonald's UK does pay its workers low wages, thereby helping to depress wages for workers in the catering trade. McDonald's are strongly antipathetic to any idea of unionization, but they do not have a policy of getting rid of pro-union workers as the leaflet alleges. I do not judge McDonald's conditions of work other than pay to be generally bad. McDonald's are culpably responsible for cruel practices in the rearing and slaughter of some of the animals which are used to produce their food. That leaves the question of the amounts of damages to be awarded to McDonald's. I assess the damages at 60,000 pounds.



[Dave Morris] We appealed the verdict later, and managed to overturn two of the key rulings. The appeal court ruled that it is fair to say that working conditions are bad, and crucially, eating too much McDonald's food is linked to heart disease. And then they reduced the damages to 40,000 pounds.



[Helen Steel] This is really weird! Hold your bag up.



[News Person] Are you prepared to go to jail?

[Dave Morris] We're prepared to do anything it takes to defend the public's right to criticize multinational corporations.



[Helen & Dave's Press Conference]



[Helen Steel] As far as we are concerned, what would have been a loss is if we hadn't fought this case, and people are being intimidated into silence.

[McDonald's Press Conference]



[Paul Preston, McDonald's UK President, Witness] We are, as you can imagine, broadly satisfied with the judgment given this morning. It's my responsibility to protect our reputation, and that's exactly what we've done. Very serious allegations were made about our Company. They were proven to be false.



[Keir Starmer, Barrister] They had the libel team, the expert team of lawyers, working for the last five years behind the scenes, and in court for them. That's where the victory lies, in the fact that Dave and Helen won almost half this case with those odds stacked against them.



[News Person] But he said you exploit children by using them as more susceptible subjects for advertising, to pressurize their parents into going to McDonald's.



[Paul Preston, McDonald's UK President, Witness] Well, I don't remember the exact words. When I have a chance to read the specifics, I'll be able to comment.

[News Person] What's your response to that?

[Paul Preston, McDonald's UK President, Witness] I don't know that he said that in that context. I'll have to look at the complete document.



[Dave Morris] A judge has ruled in our favor on all those counts. What action is the legal system going to take against McDonald's? That's the question we ought to be asking.



[Paul Preston, McDonald's UK President, Witness] Well, this wasn't a matter of cost. It wasn't a matter of damages. It was a matter of establishing the truth. That's what we set out to do. That's exactly what we did.

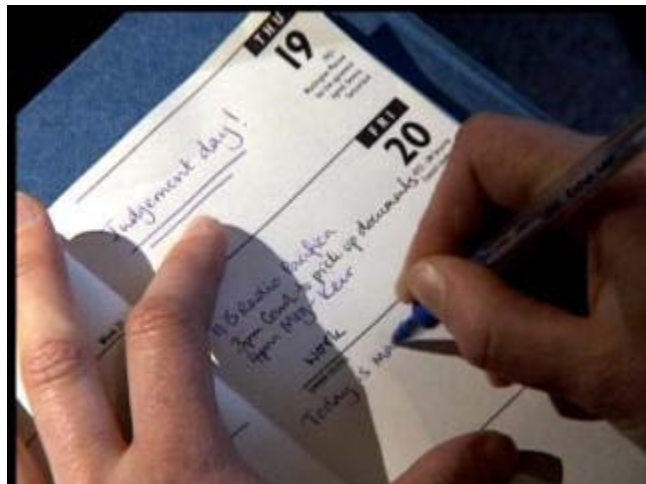


[Helen Steel] We're not going to pay the damages, because McDonald's doesn't deserve a penny. And in any event we haven't got any money.

[Crowd] HIP HIP HOORAY! HIP HIP HOORAY! HIP HIP HOORAY!



[two days later]





21st of June, 1997. Today is mass defiance day. There's going to be protests outside over 500 of McDonald's UK stores, and lots around the world, too. They haven't seen the last of the leaflet.



[seven years later]





[McDonald's to Shut in 10 Nations]



[Huge Profits Dive at McDonald's]



[Eric Schlosser, Author of "Fast Food Nation"] Well, McDonald's had a rough time because of McLibel, and McDonald's experienced its first loss, I think, in 2002. I think in a long-term sense, they're in big trouble. And I think that McLibel had a great deal to do with that in terms of unleashing this torrent of criticism.

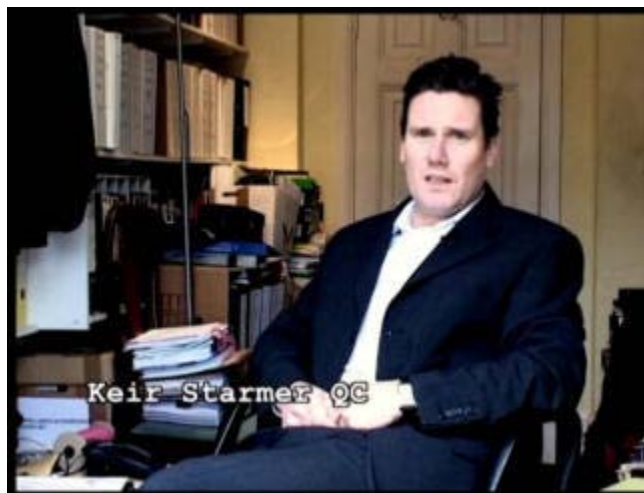


[Super size me song] Super size, super size
The American way
Going down, throwing down
All day, every day
Super size, super size
The American way
Getting fat, getting broke
Either way you're gonna pay
Super size me
Super size me
Super size me
Super size me





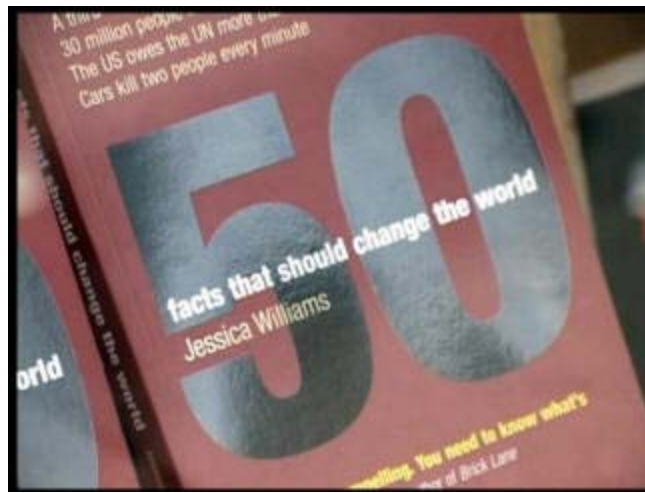
[Eric Schlosser, Author of "Fast Food Nation"] It's not as though people are setting out to tarnish their image, it's just the reality of their business practices are becoming known.



[Keir Starmer, Barrister] Some of the issues that Dave and Helen were raising, such as junk food, and advertising to children, were not widely debated 10, 15, or 20 years ago. But now they are mainstream. The case appears to have altered McDonald's tactics. Since the case, I don't think McDonald's has even threatened anybody with libel proceedings in similar circumstances.



[Book cover] Fat Land, The International Bestseller, by Greg Critser



[Book cover] 50 facts that should change the world, by Jessica Williams



[Book cover] Hard Work – Life in Low-Pay Britain



[Book cover] Fast Food Nation, by Eric Schlosser



[McDonald's] Grilled chicken salad only 3.6% fat. I'm lovin' it.



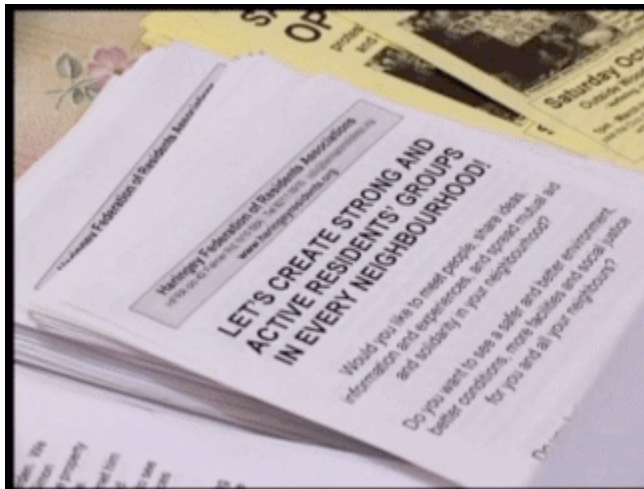
[Helen Steel] Well, I didn't want to go to jail, but I would have been prepared to do it just because otherwise the alternative is to give in to their intimidation. And I think they just realized it would be a complete PR disaster to have us jailed. And it's all about publicity to them, so they gave up. And then on top of that, they've never collected a penny in damages. I mean, obviously we weren't going to pay any, but they haven't even tried to come after us. After the trial finished, I carried on work in a nightclub for several years. And then I spent a couple of years training as an electrician, and qualifying as an electrician. I'm also involved in a housing coop. A group of us got together so that we could have more affordable rents, and more control over our own housing.



And we're in the process of trying to buy a bit of land, and then build our own houses.



[Dave Morris] Excuse me, Fossie. Excuse me. Thank you.



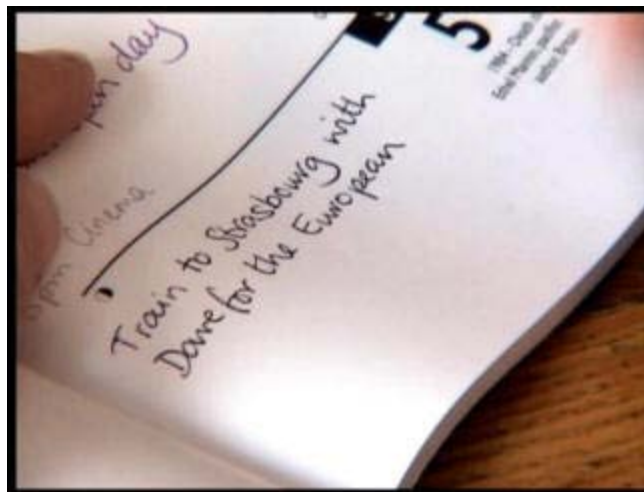
In some ways, McLibel was a bit of a sidetrack for me, because my main activity has always been in my local community.



This is something that we were successful in, getting 1 million pounds for traffic calming throughout this whole estates, so the kids can play in the street, and people can cross safely.



[Charlie] Actually, I'd like to be an actor, because I enjoy acting, and just being creative.



[Helen Steel] 5th of September, 2004. Train to Strasbourg with Dave for the European hearing.



[5th of September 2004]



[Helen Steel] We've beaten McDonald's, now it's the UK Government's turn.



[Keir Starmer, Barrister] Dave and Helen are now taking their case to the European Court of Human Rights, which is the most important court in all of Europe. And we'll seek to argue that UK law is in breach of the European Convention of Human Rights. So the stakes could not be higher. The European Court is going to have to consider a number of fundamental issues about English libel law. The first is the obvious unfairness of a system that allows one party to have huge amounts of resources and lawyers, and the other to have none, without any legal aid. It's only in libel proceedings that you can't get legal aid. In every other kind of legal case, legal aid is there to achieve the balance that's required for justice.



[Eric Schlosser, Author of "Fast Food Nation"] For me, the significance of the McLibel trial is really about this worldwide movement now to oppose entrenched corporate power, and corporate wrongdoing. There's no one person responsible, but there's no question that when Helen said "No," it really fueled the fire. I'm not going to bet you money that McDonald's will vanish tomorrow, or that we will suddenly transform our society into a compassionate and caring and humane one tomorrow. But when I was born, there was segregation in the south, and black people couldn't ride the same buses, or sit at the same tables with white people. And Nelson Mandela was in prison when I was a kid. And so things absolutely can change.



[News Person] Okay, so we know you don't like corporations, but what's the alternative?

[Dave Morris] The alternative is basically taking control of our own lives, our own communities, our own workplaces, and making all of the decisions that affect our lives, and affect the environment. You know, deciding what happens with the resources, deciding what work needs to be done.

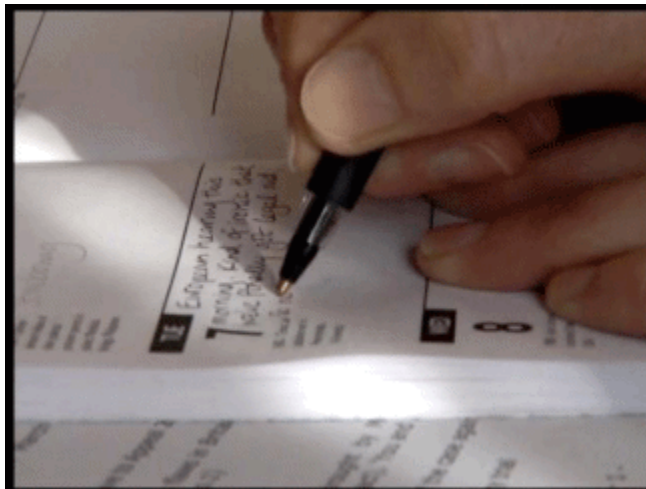
[Helen Steel] People say, "Oh, it could never work. You would just have people going around and murdering, and stealing, and things like that." But actually, that's what happens in this society now. You've got corporations and wealthy individuals that own vast areas of the planet, and deny other people access to them. And it's basically stolen from everybody else.

[Dave Morris] Obviously, there's always going to be problems in any kind of group of people, society, or whatever. But you want to remove all the unnecessary problems. For example, poverty in the midst of plenty. Or some people owning 50 houses, and other people don't have a home to live in.

[Helen Steel] Most so-called antisocial behavior is actually people fighting over the crumbs thrown from the table. The real people who are behaving antisocially are those that control all of the resources, and deprive other people of what should be shared amongst us all.



[Dave Morris] If we remove corporations and governments, who care only about profits and power, and take things into our own hands, obviously, that's basically transforming society. That's a revolution. But not just on a single day, over a period of years. But building up strong grass roots movements, until one day we can take over all the decision-making ourselves, and look after our planet.



[Helen Steel] 7th of September, 2004. European hearing this morning. Kind of ironic that we finally got legal aid. So now we've got a whole legal team with us. Keir has to do all of the talking. We're not even allowed to speak.



This is Parisa Wright, our assistant solicitor.



This is Keir Starmer, our wonderful QC.



And this is Anthony Hudson, our junior barrister.



And this is Mark Stevens, our solicitor.

[Keir Starmer, Barrister] I've put in all the additional bits we discussed last night. I've cut out in order to make it 30 minutes. The bits I've had to cut out are Professor Nicholson in its entirety.

[Dave Morris] I don't think that matters. All those facts and comments that were repeated six times.

[Keir Starmer, Barrister] I never understood that anyway. So we'll leave that out.



[The European Court of Human Rights]



[Keir Starmer, Barrister] It's long been recognized that it would be wrong for central and local government to be able to sue for libel, because it restricts free speech. We're questioning before the European Court whether that rule should be extended to multinationals. They often have more power and wealth than small countries around the world. They can get their message across through the television, through other medium, through advertising. And they don't need to go to court through ancient and unfair libel proceedings.





[News Person] So?

[Helen Steel] Don't start asking me questions.



[News Person] How was it Dave?

[Dave Morris] It was great. I thought the Government was totally on the defensive. Certainly on the lack of legal aid, which they now recognize should be available in defamation cases in exceptional circumstances.



[Helen Steel] The Government referred to that protection of freedom of speech should require that campaigners should put the balance in their leaflet, and put the response of McDonald's, for example. Well, there's no requirement

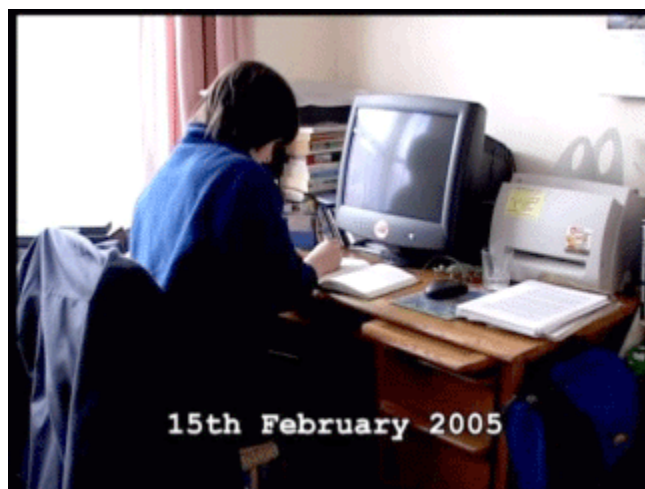
on McDonald's to put the balance in their adverts and say, "Well, actually, our food isn't healthy. You're really better off not eating it."



[Dave Morris] The campaigners are the balance, and we will continue to campaign until there is a just world.



[five months later]



[Helen Steel] 15 of February, 2005. European court verdict arrives today. Hopefully, this is the very last day of the McLibel legal battle. No court hearing, though. Just notified by email. A bit of an anticlimax after 15 years.



[Dave Morris] Hi there.

[Helen Steel] This is such a welcome.

[Dave Morris] It's great to see you!



We're just trying to prepare two press releases so we can get it out as quickly as possible, rather than writing it from scratch. We've got one in case we lose on all points, and another one in case we're victorious.



Control C.

[Helen Steel] Oh, for God's sake, you and your Control C! You're obsessed with it.

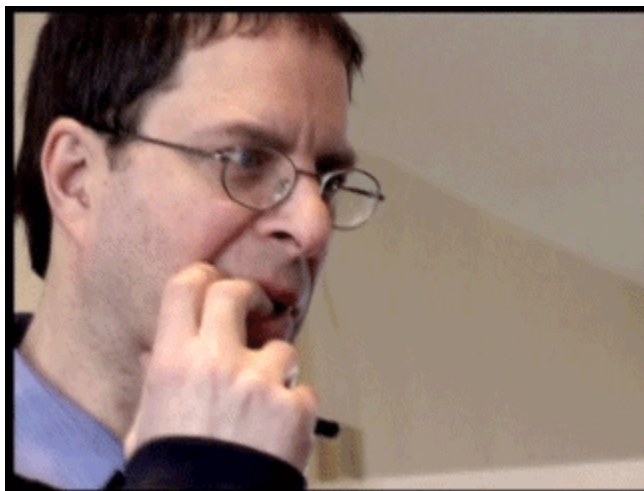


We might as well find out now. It's 9:30.



[Dave Morris] No, we're just checking it right now. Hang on a second. What was that?

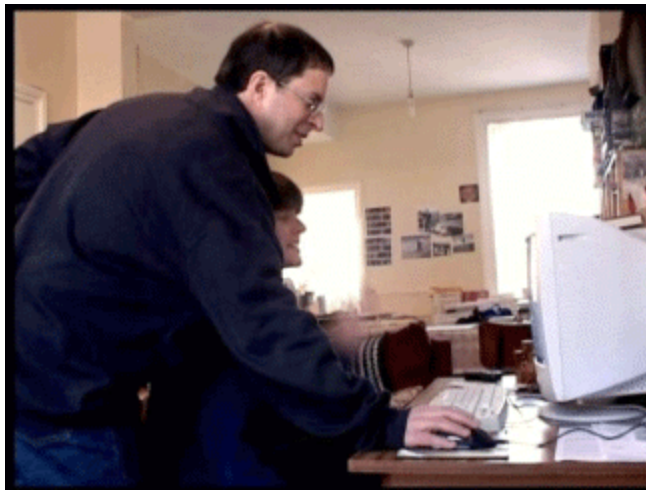
[Helen Steel] No, it's spam, actually. How can you get so much spam in one second? Who are these spammers?



[Dave Morris] 25 till 10, and they haven't sent it yet. I'll phone up the court.

[Helen Steel] I think that might be a little bit impatient.

[Dave Morris] Stop. You see, it's coming in.



[Helen Steel] Don't shut that! Don't shut it!



[Dave Morris] I'm going to phone the court, and see if they've sent it.

[Helen Steel] Just don't! They're probably trying to sort it out. And you making endless phone calls is not going to help.

[Dave Morris] No, you're saying there is a technical problem?
Okay, go on. Here we go. Here we go.

[Helen Steel] For someone who doesn't care about the European Court verdict, he's extremely excited.

[Dave Morris] I'm not excited, I just want to get it over with for God's sake. Actually, I've got an extension, we can...

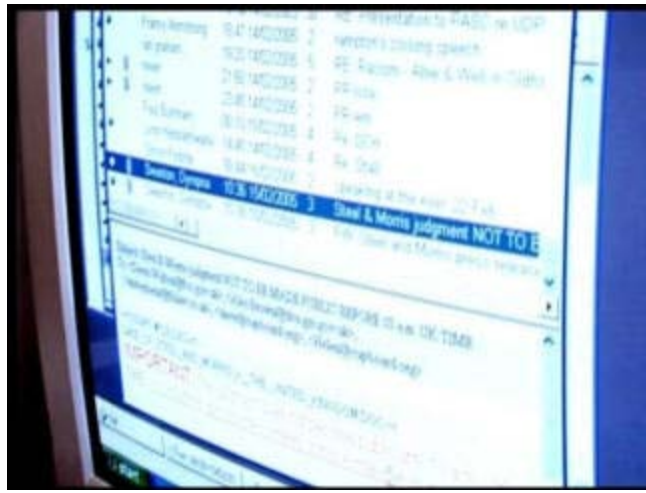
[Helen Steel] It's here!

[Dave Morris] Good!

[Helen Steel] DA DA DA!

[Dave Morris] It'll take a half an hour to download.

[Helen Steel] I know it will.



European Court of Human Rights, press release issued by the registrar.



The European Court of Human Rights has today notified in writing a judgment in the case of Steel and Morris vs. the United Kingdom. The Court held unanimously that there had been a violation of Article 6, rights to a fair hearing of the European Convention of Human Rights, and that there had been a violation of Article 10, freedom of expression, of the Convention.



YEAH!



[Victory for McLibel 2 Against UK Government]

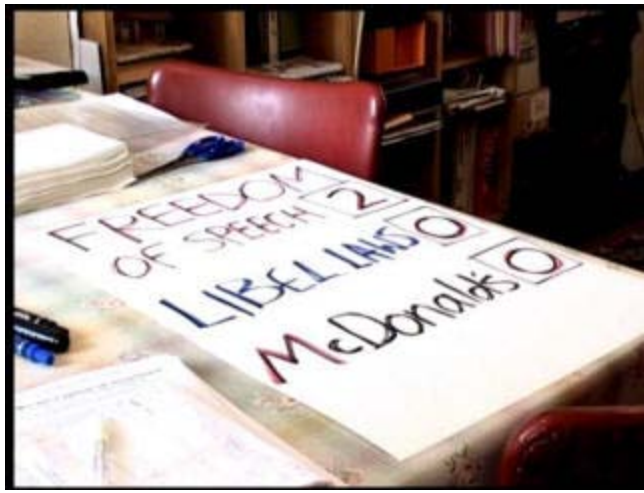


[Dave Morris] There's tons of media interest, so I'm not sure we can get to everybody. So 11:30 at the Strand. Yeah. The email's going out in three or four minutes. We're just doing it now, and then we're going to rush down there.

[Helen Steel] We've actually got to get our press release out on this phone, so ...

[Dave Morris] Well, McDonald's pulled out all of the stops, and brought all of their big guns into the courtroom. You know, heads of departments, and members of their board of directors. They had a full legal team. They spent about 10 million pounds trying to pull the distribution of public criticisms, leaflets, and so on. It actually backfired on them completely.





That was World Service, BBC, which is great. It will go all over the world.



Hello, Keir! Okay, excellent! Good news, then.

Hi Charlie, listen. Just leaving a message on your answer phone: We won our case, okay? I know you're having a good time. Everything's going well. And I'll speak to you later. Okay, bye.



Okay.

produced & directed by
Franny Armstrong

[produced & directed by Franny Armstrong]

[McLibel Case, Sky Reporter Robin Powell, SKY News] He's a single parent, she used to be a gardener. Between them, they secured a landmark legal ruling against one of the world's most powerful companies.



[McLibel Ruling, Paul Davies Reporting] Still protesting after all these years. But today, Helen Steel and David Morris have something to celebrate. So they went back to the pavement outside the fast food store where it all began, to hail what they are calling a landmark legal victory for the little man.

editors
David G Hill
Gregers Sall

editors: David G. Hill and Gregers Sall



[BBC News] The Government says it is studying a court ruling in favor of two environmental campaigners who successfully challenged English libel laws after being sued by McDonald's.



Executive producer: Peter Armstrong; Drama director: Ken Loach.





[Channel 4 News] McDonald's, and any other multinational company, will think very carefully before launching a legal action like it again.

[Channel 4 News] Good evening. They lost to McDonald's, but today they won against the entire English legal system.



Assistant producers: Lizzie Gillett and San Davey; Assistant Editors: Andrew Depledge and Justin Badger.



[News Person] Underneath those golden arches outside the central London branch of a company that must wish it had never taken on these two campaigners, David Morris and Helen Steel said they had no regrets.



Original music: Chris Brierley, Alfie Thomas, Johny Brown, Guy Jackson, Luminous Frenzy, Band of Holy Joy, The Playthings.



[Sky News] Suing over this leaflet cost McDonald's an estimated 10 million pounds. Even before today's ruling, it's been described as the worst corporate PR disaster in history.



[News Person] Appropriate then that two people who would probably never go inside a McDonald's, hold their press conference outside the fast food chain. They say the resistance will continue.



camera: Franny Armstrong, Peter Armstrong, Neve Cunningham, Mick Duffield.



[Helen Steel] The important thing is that people should all stand up and fight for what they believe in, and make the criticisms of the way that society is currently being run.



[News Person] In the David and Goliath situation, you vs. the multinational, despite all those findings against them, fundamentally they won.



[Dave Morris] I don't think so. I think fundamentally they lost. It has been a David and Goliath battle, but not in the way the media has portrayed it. The reality is, it's the public that are the giants in this battle. There's billions and billions of us, and corporations like McDonald's are just a small elite acting in their own interests. When the public begins to stand up, and get organized, and speak out about injustices, then nothing can stop us.

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