INTERVIEW WITH MURRAY BARON AND WARREN HINKLE

BARRY GRAY: "Ladies and gentlemen, tonight's discussion will consist of a debate and then, I would hope, a friendly discussion. Perhaps the debate will evolve itself into a friendly discussion. And in a moment, a few comments about last night's broadcast.

"The program tonight is presenting Murray Baron, a member of the Executive Committee of the American Friends of Vietnam. Mr. Baron is an industrial relations consultant, both in the United States and abroad. He's the founder and vice president of the New York State Liberal Party - the vice chairman, rather.

"And Mr. Warren Hinkle will be with us, executive editor and associate publisher of Ramparts. He graduated from the Jesuit University in San Francisco and he once was a reporter for the San Francisco Chronicle."

GRAY: "And now my guest, Mr. Warren Hinkle, executive editor and associate publisher of Ramparts. He graduated from the Jesuit University in San Francisco and Mr. Hinkle Baron, who's Vice Chairman of the New York State Liberal Party and one of its founders. He's an industrial relations consultant and he's a member of the Executive Committee of the American Friends of Viet Nam.

"And I wonder first, Warren Hinkle, if you can tell me, by way of explaining to the audience why we're here, what this issue of Ramparts on April, 1966 issue of Ramparts, is all about which carries the story - The University on the Haka, Or How MSU - Michigan State University - Helped Arm Mazed Mau."

WARREN HINKLE: "Well, Barry, as you know, Ramparts has been
"And the Central Intelligence Agency which at that time could not act openly was able to mask itself by acting under the aegis of Michigan State University.

"And our purpose in printing that article was to ask the question which is the last line of the article in Ramparts. And the question is this: Given the fact that a university provided cover for an operation of the Central Intelligence Agency, an arm of the United States government, for whatever reasons it had and given the fact that a university project which was supposed to be an academic and institutional project, in fact was principally involved in supplying the guns and ammunition in a police state apparatus to a man later exposed as a dictator; our central question was asked in the last line of the article and the question was this: What the hell is a university doing buying guns anyway? What is American university today? Is it an arm of the government - of the United States government?

"Is it as much a branch of government as the State Department and CIA? Or is it, as most people have an image of the university, an independent institution dedicated to academic research and the truth? That's particularly the question involved in the discussion and why Ramparts printed the article."

GRAY: "Mr. Baron."

BARON: "Yes, I would like very much to engage Mr. Hinkle in due course. But I should like, for the benefit of the audience, to see whether or not Mr. Hinkle and I can define or describe the frame of reference from which our joint concern lest democracy in the United States deteriorate, especially with respect to its support in its foreign policy of dictators stems from the same inspiration or the same frame of reference.

"I'm going to read to the audience a statement made by a co-editor of Ramparts, of Mr. Hinkle, a Mr. Robert Schier (?). Who in the issue of July, 1965, ten months prior to the article, Barry, that you refer to, had this to say about the Viet Cong.

"The Viet Cong are the just man - noble, proud, defiant, idealistic, spiteful, extremely petty, and jealous of their perspectives. One cannot help but hope that they win. Few have so earned their chance at history."

"Mr. Robert Schier is also a leader in the San Francisco and general California area of the committee vigorously opposed to the policy of our government."

HINKLE: "So is Ramparts Magazine."
BARON: "Now just a minute. I didn't interrupt you, sir. I am prepared to discuss Robert Schier, yourself, your financing, Donald Duncan, Dr. Wesley Fishel, your article, and I think you will have another occasion to establish whether or not the Michigan State University contingent and project supplied arms to the Diem government.

"But I think the audience ought to know that if an exponent of broadening American democracy and a proponent of the policy that seeks to block our efforts at assistance of dictators abroad is indeed inspired by a sympathetic understanding and approval of the Communist world, that motivation is quite relevant. Because Mr. Hinkle and his Ramparts board of editors in the publications I have read - and I think I've read every one of them - virtually have avoided any discussion, even if it's assumed they concede the threat, of aggressive Communism.

"With respect to this publication, they have in print asked for a congressional investigation of MSU, its relationship to the CIA, its conduct in Vietnam, and I thoroughly approve and join in that request.

"But I want Mr. Hinkle to tell this audience whether he is prepared to tell the public the source of the financing of this publication and two, whether in print, in Ramparts, which is irregularly published, whether any of his editors or special correspondents have discussed the evils of the North Vietnamese dictatorship.

"Now remember this, Mr. Hinkle is opposed to dictatorship. Now I should like to hear one, does he endorse Mr. Schier's endorsement of the Viet Cong; and, two, does Ramparts and/or Mr. Hinkle oppose the dictatorship of Ho Chi Minh."

HINKLE: "That's like responding to the Gettysburg Address."

GRAY: "That was only two minutes."

(LAUGHTER)

HINKLE: "Did you write that on the back of an envelope?"

BARON: "Well, I hope you're more impressive in your reply in the ensuing two minutes than you've been so far. Will you please reply to the two questions."

HINKLE: "No. I won't reply to any of the questions. This is not a debate, and I'll speak to as many issues as I particularly want to and do care."
BARON: "Mr. Gray, isn't this a debate?"

GRAY: "If the program takes any shape that it does. It has a rather formless attitude. It depends on you, more than on me."

HINKLE: "Fine. Before I begin to reply in kind, allow me to make some misstatements (sic) about Mr. Baron's position in America.

"I think that Mr. Baron and the men who share his -- not only blind, but impractical anti-communism are doing a great disservice to the United States. They're doing a disservice to the United States in two ways.

"First of all, they do not allow people to relish the enjoyment of discussing facts rather than blasphemies or theories. I submit that it may be a fact that the United States is principally, morally, and politically wrong in its involvement in Asia. And for you, Mr. Baron, or for any other American to impugn in a style reminiscent of the sad days of the raging Senator from Wisconsin the quality of disloyalty and un-Americanism and suspicious activities to the rational attempt by any other American to discuss policy in these objective terms, I think is doing a tremendous disservice not only to the traditions of democracy, but the rhetoric of democracy which implies a man can cry out for a debate on facts rather than on blunt and unsubstantiated accusations."

GRAY: "Mr. Hinkle, I'm sorry to interrupt, but we must pause for the news and then we'll come back for another period.

"I'm talking with Mr. Warren Hinkle, the executive editor and associate publisher of Ramparts; and Mr. Murray Baron, member of the Executive Committee of American Friends of Vietnam."

GRAY: "Ladies and gentlemen, my guests are Warren Hinkle, the executive editor and associate publisher of Ramparts and Murray Baron, a member of the Executive Committee of American Friends of Vietnam.

"And, Mr. Hinkle, I interrupted you for the news. Go ahead, sir."

HINKLE: "I was in the difficult position of attempting to give a barrage of distemper similar to that induced upon the
listeners by Mr. Baron in the opening statement. But I would refer not to get..."

GRAY: "Distemper?"

HINKLE: "Distemper."

GRAY: "You've made him sound like a police dog."

(LAUGHTER)

BARON: "I have no rabies."

HINKLE: "I prefer not to get involved in that, but perhaps to orientate our discussion, at least at first, towards the reason we gathered here tonight which was the charges made by Ramparts Magazine about the situation of -- the Central Intelligence Agency involved in Michigan State University, using it as cover with the willingness of the university and the knowledge of the government and subverting the traditional independence of the university.

"And secondly, the incredible-revelation that for six years Michigan State University helped install, finance, operate, and arm the dictatorship of Ngo Dieu Nhu, the man whom Mr. Baron's group - the American Friends of Vietnam - was principally responsible for sustaining their office in the early period of 1955 and 1956 and the man who Mr. Baron's group - the American Friends of Vietnam - presented to the American public in press releases, magazine articles, paid public relations articles as a democrat, as the leader of democracy in Southeast Asia, as the miracle man of Vietnam, in whom in fact all of us Americans found out in 1963 when he was overthrown was in fact a dictator, a tyrant, and we realized that we the American people had been lied to for all these years and we had been lied to by Mr. Baron's organization.

"Now these are the points I think we should address our discussions to here tonight because I think they would perhaps be much more fruitful than trading general charges."

GRAY: "Mr. Baron."

BARON: "Yes. I'm going to meet Mr. Hinkle's limitation in the early part of this program to permit us to go forward, but I will now remain confined to that frame of reference because I do insist that Ramparts is an apologist for the Viet Cong and that's fairly relevant in a discussion of the article concerning Michigan State University.

"Now with respect to that article, let me make certain points
very clear. The article in '65 - July of '65 - was followed by the article under discussion which appeared, I believe, in the April '66 issue of Ramparts.

"Now the restraint and circumspection of Mr. Hinkle regarding the references I made to his implied support of the Viet Cong, which so offended him, ought now to be related to the article in question.

'First, both articles are defamatory of a distinguished authority on Vietnam. Let me read you a reference to Dr. Wesley Fishel in the April '66 article in Ramparts.

"'Dr. Wesley Fishel is referred to as a 'run-of-the-mill academician'. Now that is no complimentary. That is a...."

HINKLE: "That is totally out of context, Mr. Baron."

BARON: "Now, Mr. Hinkle, in this democracy...."

HINKLE: "If you would read the sentence before that, if your selective processes allow that, you'd see that we were speaking of Wesley Fishel in 1951, when he'd just become a professor was a run-of-the-mill academician and that he later, because of his involvement with Diem and with your organization as he was intimately connected with it and as you defended because of his involvement, he later became a very big man and an authority who was totally wrong on Vietnam. And it was specific reference that says when Wesley Fishel began his career in 1951, when he met Diem he was a run-of-the-mill academician and anybody who just got their Ph.D. and hadn't done any work yet, is certainly a run-of-the-mill academician. I mean to be petty, but I do think we should read sentences before and afterwards if we're going to spend time quoting out of context."

BARON: "Mr. Hinkle, I'm going to have to insist that your ad libbing ought to be accompanied by a caution to the audience that what you just said in a complimentary fashion about Dr. Fishel, was not referred to in a publication in April, 1966.

"And in 1965, let me move the discussion on, and let the audience know, that in July of 1965 and again September 27th, 1965, the now distinguished professor - concededly according to Mr. Hinkle - concededly now a distinguished professor - wrote a letter to the Ramparts editors - I have the registered receipt in my hand, and wrote a letter, an interesting letter, a relevant letter, a defensive letter, and an aggressive letter - and twice Dr. Fishel, as of this date, never received the courtesy of a reply. And that letter referring to an article
in which he was being defamed was never published in this organ for democratic expression, so concerned with...

HINKLE: "We read..."

BARON: "Just a minute, Mr. Hinkle. Just a minute, Mr. Hinkle."

HINKLE: "We invited Dr. Fishel to sue us if he likes."

BARON: "Mr. Gray."

GRAY: "That's entirely different from publishing a letter to the editor, isn't it? In suing, the very act of suing, everybody says, 'Well let's sue them.' That costs a lot of money, but a letter costs five cents. I'm curious why you didn't publish the letter."

HINKLE: "We didn't consider it a relevant letter."

GRAY: "Well was he responding, I don't know, was he responding to an attack on him?"

HINKLE: "He responded to an attack on him and we asked him to -- because his letter was as full of total invective and wrongness in terms of the historical facts as Mr. Baron's was. And we asked Dr. Fishel to write an article, if he would like."

GRAY: "Well, what..."

HINKLE: "We told him to explain his position."

GRAY: "And?"

HINKLE: "He never replied."

GRAY: "What of that, Mr. Baron?"

HINKLE: "Do you want me to show you my registered letters?"

BARON: "Barry Gray, may I say that we now have a continuation of the evasion that I'm afraid is going to mark this discussion. I don't want to read this letter which is a page and a half now."

GRAY: "Was he invited to write an article?"

BARON: "He was asked to write an article, limited to a handful of words in reply to a multi-thousand word defamation of
this man's career. And what Mr. Hinkle is not telling the audience...

HINKLE: "An article is usually longer than a letter."

BARON: "And what..."

GRAY: "Was he bound by the number of words, Mr. Hinkle?"

HINKLE: "No, no limitation."

BARON: "I deny, Barry Gray, that any such event ever took place. What we will now have is a demonstration, folks of confession and avoidance. The reason Mr. Hinkle, and I'm not ascribing motivations, quickly replied to the reference to Dr. Fishel at being just a run-of-the-mill academician, is that Mr. Hinkle and Mr. Schier and Mr. Keating and Mr. Shulman and Paul Jacobs know that Dr. Wesley Fishel is one of the three authorities selected by Harvard University to do a monograph. The other two are Ambassador Roi Shower to Japan and John K. Fairbank the distinguished sinologist of Harvard and the third man selected for the Vietnam history, which is Harvard University Press, is Dr. Wesley Fishel.

"And I think the Ramparts editors have learned since publishing this derogatory statement that they did attack a man of outstanding importance in this field.

"Now let me move on further to the Ramparts..."

HINKLE: "Just a moment, just a moment. I think..."

GRAY: "Go ahead, Mr. Hinkle, go ahead."

HINKLE: "...if we're going to discuss Dr. Fishel, we should discuss Dr. Fishel.

"We do not deny that Dr. Fishel is extremely important in the field. In fact we say that he is so important in his field, that he was instrumental in getting the United States government to support the dictatorship of Diem and to get the United States intricately involved in the historical situation that led to the present situation in Vietnam. I don't think how much more important one man can be. So that we think that Dr. Fishel is extremely important, we just think that he is totally wrong.

"And in 1960, as late as 1960, Mr. Baron, I perhaps don't have to remind you, was an apologist. If you like to use this word, but he chauvinistically Diem. He had his letters in the Times in late as 1960, pointing out that a democrat this
man was and why the polite rumblings of criticism should not be made.

"And if you want to speak about evasion, the fact of the matter is that in 1959, Dr. Fishel published an article in the New Leader magazine. The title of that article was Vietnam's One Man Democratic Rule. Interesting title, isn't it? One man democratic rule.

"That kind of sums up the paradox of Diem, the United States supporting a dictator as a democrat. But Dr. Fishel has left that article out of the selective bibliography of readings on Vietnam he gives to his classes at Michigan State University. And that bibliography includes just about every article that's ever been written with the exception of the most embarrassing one of all."

GRAY: "I'll tell you something very unusual, because I asked each of you to come here to explain to me the role of Michigan State University in the Ramparts article, or alleged in the Ramparts' article. And I find myself listening to a discussion about Dr. Wesley Fishel. And I -- you know, I'm sure that they are related, but the basis of the discussion is the Ramparts' article on MSU."

BARON: "Dr. Fishel is central to that story, and I was invited to discuss here - I was not given particulars - I was invited to discuss the Ramparts' article."

GRAY: "Exactly."

BARON: "Yes. And the Ramparts' article has to read -- I'm discussing every aspect of it. The reference to the Viet Cong, for instance..."

HINKLE: "You're talking about another article..."

GRAY: "We don't have -- I don't...."

HINKLE: "Let's talk about the main charge. We say Michigan State University hid the CIA. Do you deny that?"

BARON: "I do."

HINKLE: "Fine."

BARON: "I do deny that. I deny that the MSU project team provided arms to anybody in Vietnam. I deny that Diem was the tyrant he later proved to be in the earlier years as you mentioned in the article. I want to indicate who is being criticized for supporting Diem. Justice William Douglas, John F. Kennedy, the liberal anti-Communist movement..."
HINKLE: "That's right, every one of..."

BARON: "The New Republic, the New Leader..."

HINKLE: "That's right."

BARON: "The whole left of center anti-Communist world was..."

HINKLE: "The New Leader is a right wing magazine."

BARON: "For having supported Diem. Now I'm discussing the article, Barry."

GRAY: "I know, but we don't have, unfortunately, enough time to get into every area that's already been opened up.

"Mr. Hinkle, I'd like to ask you, what is your view of our involvement presently in Vietnam? Or the established editorial view of Ramparts?"

HINKLE: "Our view is that it's historically tragic, immoral, and costly involvement both in terms of the rhetoric and values of American democracy today in terms of the United States to be able to create the type of society that Mr. Johnson called the Great Society, in terms of money, purely."

GRAY: "And what do you suggest we do?"

HINKLE: "Got out."

GRAY: "Just like that?"

HINKLE: "If not tomorrow, on Monday."

GRAY: "And, Mr. Baron?"

BARON: "I support the policy of our government in assisting the South Vietnamese to resist an attempt by the North Vietnamese with southern Vietnamese Communists to forcibly impose the rule of Ho Chi Minh's Communist Party. And I thoroughly support the policy of our government.

"And I want to say that Mr. Hinkle ought to tell the audience that they not only are opposed to our policy, but affirmatively support the Viet Cong and desire to see the Viet Cong, or the National Liberation Front, take over South Vietnam. I want him to deny that."

HINKLE: "That's a preposterous and ridiculous allegation. If we could, I would like to get back to the points of the Ramparts article."
"We said the CIA was involved in this project, Mr. Baron denies it."

BARON: "I did not deny that. You said that the Michigan State University deliberately served as a cover for the CIA. There were five ex-CIA agents out of 75 employees on the project."

GRAY: "What was the project, Mr. Hinkle? Maybe I should have asked that an hour ago."

HINKLE: "Well the project was a project similar to many carried out by American universities abroad in that technical assistance related to the particular areas of expertise within the university to foreign governments.

"And in this particular one, there was a new government in South Vietnam. And Michigan State University was requested by both Premier Diem and by the American government at the particular instigation and request of Wesley Fishel, who was already an advisor to Diem on month after he became premier, to come to South Vietnam and to help them organize their government -- to help them set up a finance system, a system of civil service, to reorganize the police forces and the security forces, to study traffic problems in Saigon -- in other words to get involved really in the whole structure of government.

"The Michigan State project was set up to do just that. And the unfortunate historical thing that happened to the project was that it became primarily a project that was trapped into helping the Premier create what amounted to a police state so that he could control the country. Because as even the most argumentative historians on the situation in Vietnam agree, Premier Diem had no particular broad basis of support when he came to power. He had been out of the country for some years and when he did come to power, he had support among some of the middle class merchants in Saigon and of the Catholic element because he was a Catholic. But, you know, his name was not that broadly known in the country.

"So he had the terrific problem of organizing the government and a very difficult situation with acts of terrorism and bombings. And Michigan State was asked to help this.

"The actual things that happened were this: The United States began paying the army. Shortly before Diem came into power. The army and General Orten Collins (?) advised President Eisenhower not to do this and Eisenhower wavered and this was where Mr. Baron's group emerged when Premier Diem came in, because they brought pressure on the Eisenhower Administration
to keep the army favorable to Diem. That we were paying -- we are still, by the way, today paying every cent to the army of South Vietnam."

GRAY: "Mr. Baron."

BARON: "May I say that I'm reluctant to, but I've been permitted to state that on the press wires tonight is an official statement by Dr. Wesley Fishel, which I prefer not to quote from. But if the hour is close to midnight, I'm told I can refer to it.

"The fact of the matter is that the Ramparts editors are relying on forgettery. In 1955 and '56, the South Vietnamese government was a thin veneer of government, faced by an almost insoluble anarchy.

"Readers who are at all interested in Viet Nam ought to recall that the equivalent of the Mafias were running the police functions of South Vietnam. A murderous gang which Mr. Hinkle will not deny had to be bought out to give up its arms because they were visiting a slaughter upon innocent civilians of whatever political stripe.

"When Diem came into power, this community, this subnation, was already the victim of decades of deprivations and violence. And Diem at that time, was designated as the premier of the country and for the next several years did indeed improve the economy, improve the society, not wholly satisfactorily, but sufficiently so that the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese were precipitated in their assault which is now taking place by the very contrast between the devastation and poverty and insecurity up North in contrast to the burgeoning economy of the South.

"In order to organize a government, no only Michigan State University, but other organizations - international organizations -- were invited in as they are tonight in 50 to 60 countries in this -- on this planet.

"And when this government was organized the specialists were called in to assist in the organization of the whole spectrum of government - tax collections, public sanitation, educational systems, and so on. And thousands upon thousands of young Vietnamese of the South were trained to be their junior civil servants in this early incipient nationhood.

"And what happened to those training, those beneficiaries of the project is that they are dead tonight by the thousands. Because as these projects were proving to be effective, these youngsters, generally youngsters, were sent out into the provinces and into the villages and I would say most of them today are dead as a result of Viet Cong terrorism."
Now with respect to the police training. Several agencies were involved. The Michigan State University Project which was in there together with agricultural experts like Wolf Ladaginski (?) -- if you remember the name, Barry. The great liberal agronomist, who was attacked and sarcastically referred to in these articles in Ramparts, were all attempting to resurrect or reconstruct the economy.

"When it came to the police training, the Michigan State University Project was infiltrated because in taking on applicants the only experts in counter insurgency and the use of arms in order to maintain civil order, proved to be out of approximately 70 employees of the project, five men who had been with the CIA.

"The Michigan State University chief, Dr. Fishel and others, learned later on of the ex-CIA affiliation of these men. And in due course as Diem's government in later periods began to degenerate to theright, the Michigan State University Project was thereafter discontinued.

"And what Ramparts is doing is to create the impression, Barry, that the use of the symbol of CIA is defamatory, derogatory and perjorative for some reason. But what this audience ought to know is that the inspiration for this particular secondary charge is not because we supported Diem, but because the Ramparts board of editors wants to see the Vietcong prevail."

GRAY: "This will be your final statement, Mr. Hinkle, because we're going on to the news."

HINKLE: "Well, Mr. Baron, I'm hesitant to point out that Senator Saltonstall called you a liar two weeks ago. Senator Saltonstall, as you know, from the stories in the New York Times, is on the committee which is the watchdog committee for the CIA, and Senator Saltonstall, who shares some of your political views, was quite concerned, with most of the country, by the revelations in the Ramparts article, and he called the CIA to find out about President Hannah's denials that they knew about the CIA and Professor Fichelle's open flat statement in the New York Times that the CIA was involved right from the beginning of the project and he saw nothing wrong with that and he knew about it.

'Now, if you know Professor Fichelle that well I don't know why you hold that position, but Senator Saltonstall checked with the CIA and made a comment which was published on every wire service on the New York Times, said the CIA involvement in Michigan State was right from the beginning of the project, that everyone in the University knew about it, and that Senator Saltonstall saw absolutely nothing wrong with it, and what was all the fuss about?
"Now, those, unfortunately, are facts, Mr. Baron, and Professor Fichelle himself, when interviewed the day the article came out, said, and contradicted President Hannah, by the way, said that, well, of course, the CIA was involved in this. This was a very essential part of the operation; what's wrong with that?"

GRAY: "Gentlemen, I'm terribly sorry, but our time is up. Perhaps we can do this some time next week, and continue the story because obviously you can't cover it in an hour or for that matter ten hours. Mr. Baron, do you have a brief statement?"

BARON: "Well, may I say that the statement of Doctor Fichelle, about I primarily rely refutes what Mr. Hinkle just said, but I want the audience to know that Mr. Hinkle's publication and several of their editors were asked by that very same New York Times to reveal the source of their funds. I want to say that as of this hour the gentlemen at Ramparts refuse to tell the world where the million and a quarter dollars originated from, and I think that Senator Saltonstall, who is favorably quoted by Mr. Hinkle, and others, would be interested in knowing. We have not learned tonight the source of those funds."

HINKLE: "Well, that's -- may I point out here..."

GRAY: "Yeah, sure."

HINKLE: "That is a -- the source of Ramparts' funds (skip) were printed in the masthead, they are all businessmen, intellectuals, anti-Communists, and Catholics, most of whom reside on the West Coast; most of them have intellectual and credentials as credible as any that Mr. Baron may wish to argue, but I would like to ask another very interesting question."

GRAY: "We don't have time for any answers, I can tell you now."

HINKLE: "Well, we have time for answers that's fair enough for me tonight. But it's very interesting that no one asked questions as to where do the funds come from to provide the campaign that fooled the American public for six years that Diem was a great democrat. The funds came from money raised by people in the American Friends of Vietnam, Mr. Baron's group, who hired a professional public relations man named Howard Orem, who put this whole campaign across to the people of the United States, and I for one -- and that's when I became interested in Vietnam -- was damn shocked to find out when this man was overthrown that the guy I'd read about in almost every magazine and newspaper around the country was 'Our man of
democracy in Southeast Asia' was the guy who kept prison camps there, and Mr. Baron and Michigan State University and the professors and Professor Fichelle, who he so well defends, were the people who in the name of democracy allowed this act of undemocracy, and in that inconsistency lies our argument.

GRAY: "Gentlemen, I'm terribly sorry, but we are out of time; we must go immediately to the newsroom to hear the news presented by Continental Bidet."