



Introduction to Lawrence Wright. 1:52 min. Interview: Raymond Elman.
Post-Production: Lee Skye. Music: Julie Maxwell. **Recorded via ZOOM.**
10/2/2022, Miami & Austin.

Lawrence Wright

Master Storyteller

By Elman + Skye

LAWRENCE WRIGHT is an author, screenwriter, playwright, and staff writer for *The New Yorker* magazine.

He is a graduate of Tulane University, in New Orleans, and the American University in Cairo. He began his writing career at *The Race Relations Reporter* in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1971. In 1980, Wright became a staff writer for *Texas Monthly*. He also became a contributing editor to *Rolling Stone*. In 1992, he joined the staff of **The New Yorker**, where he has published a number of prize-winning articles, including three National Magazine Awards.

He is the author of eleven nonfiction books. His book about the rise of al-Qaeda, *"The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11"* (Knopf, 2006), was published to immediate and widespread acclaim. It has been translated into 25 languages and won numerous awards, including the **Pulitzer Prize for General Nonfiction**. It was made into a series for Hulu in 2018, starring Jeff Daniels, Alec Baldwin, and Tahar Rahim.

"Going Clear: Scientology, Hollywood, and the Prison of Belief" (Knopf, 2013) was a *New York Times* bestseller. Wright and director Alex Gibney turned it into an HBO documentary, which won three Emmys, including best documentary. Wright and Gibney also teamed up to produce another Emmy-winning documentary, for Showtime, about the murder of Saudi dissident Jamal Khashoggi.

Wright has published two novels, *"God's Favorite"* (Simon and Schuster, 2000) which was made into a Showtime movie starring Bob Hoskins; and *"The End of October,"* a bestseller that has been optioned for Ridley Scott to direct.

He co-wrote the screenplay for *"The Siege,"* starring Denzel Washington, Annette Benning, and Bruce Willis, which is based on a story by Wright.

In 2006, Wright premiered his first one-man play, *"My Trip to Al-Qaeda,"* at The New Yorker Festival, which led to a sold-out six-week run off-Broadway, before traveling to Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles. It was made into a documentary film of the same name, directed by Alex Gibney, for HBO.

Wright wrote and performed another one-man show, *"The Human Scale,"* about the standoff between Israel and Hamas over the abduction of an Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit. The Public Theater in New York produced the play, which ran for a month off-Broadway in 2010, before moving to the Cameri Theater in Tel Aviv.

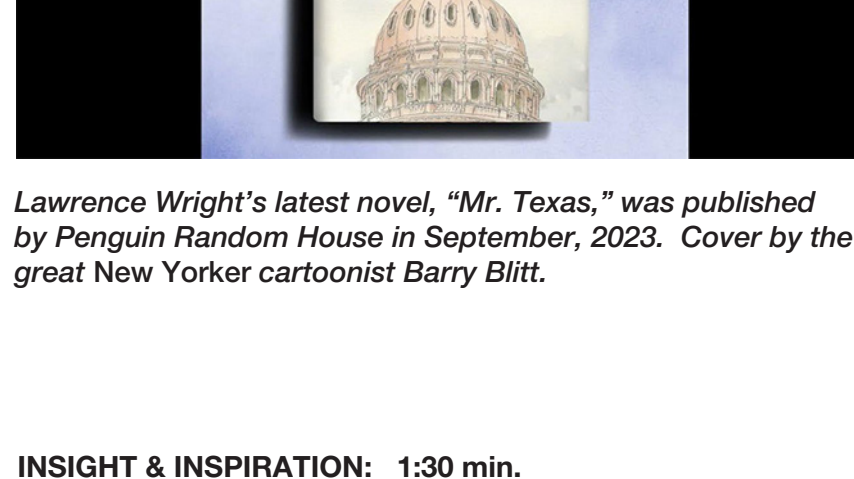
In addition to his one-man productions, Wright has written five other plays that have enjoyed productions around the country, including *"Camp David,"* about the Carter, Begin, and Sadat summit in 1978; and *"Cleopatra,"* about the making of the movie *"Cleopatra."*

Wright is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Society of American Historians, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He also serves as the keyboard player in the Austin-based blues band, WhoDo.

— <https://www.lawrencerwright.com/>

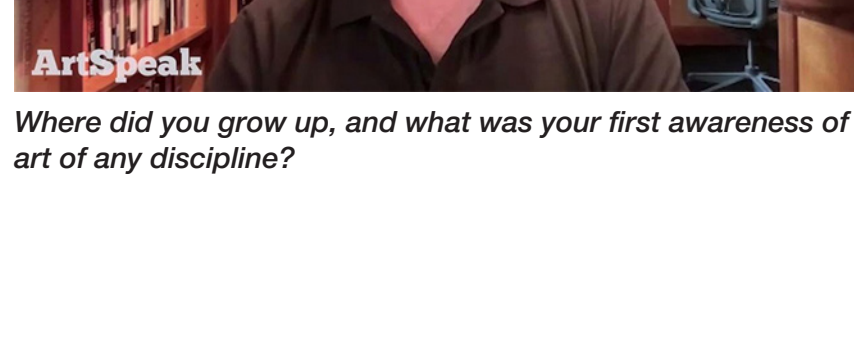
The videos below were **recorded via Zoom**, are organized by Success Factor, and run between 30 seconds and 9 minutes. Click on any video. You must be connected to the Internet to view the videos.

"MR. TEXAS" 0:50 sec.



Lawrence Wright's latest novel, "Mr. Texas," was published by Penguin Random House in September, 2023. Cover by the great New Yorker cartoonist Barry Blitt.

INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 1:30 min.



Where did you grow up, and what was your first awareness of art of any discipline?

DEVELOP A VOICE: 1:01 min.



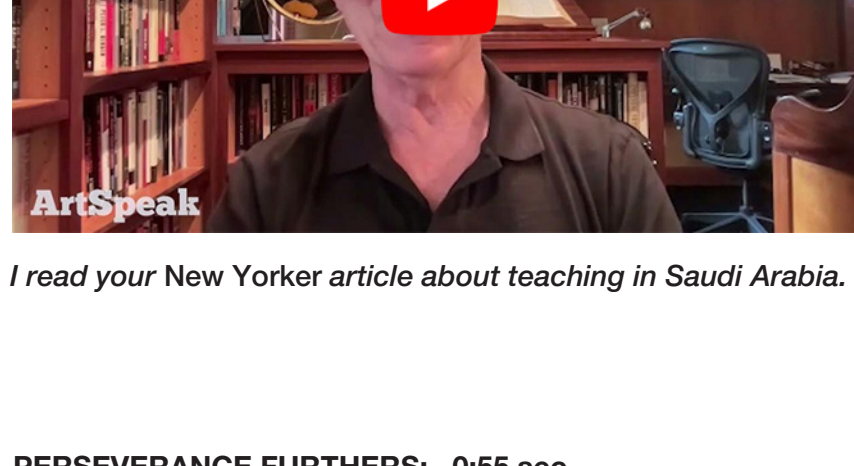
When did you realize that you could write well?

OVERCOMES CHALLENGES TO SUCCEED: 1:58 min.



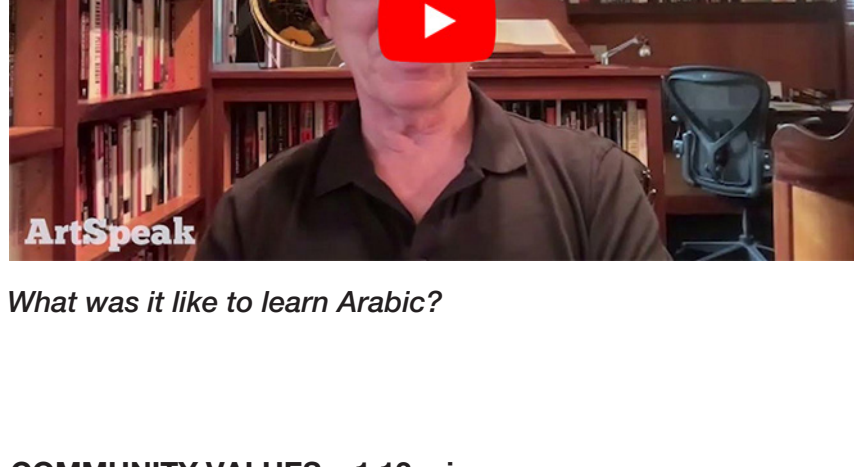
Where did you go to school and what did you learn that still informs you today?

CREATIVE FLEXIBILITY: 1:06 min.



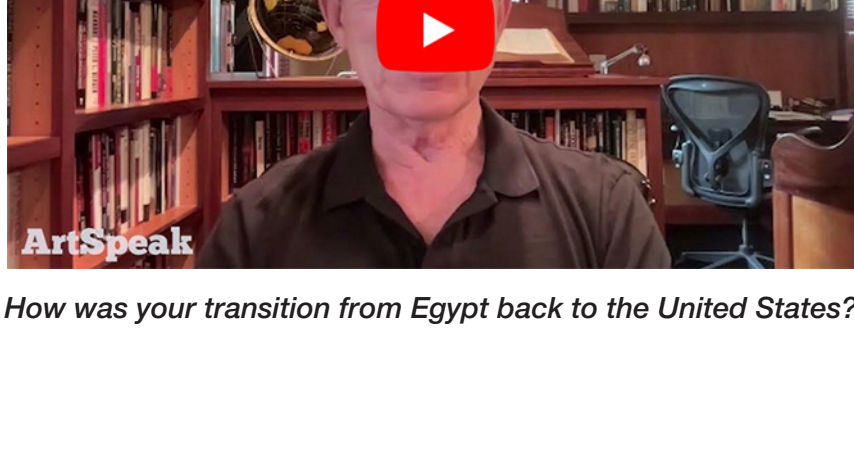
I read your New Yorker article about teaching in Saudi Arabia.

PERSEVERANCE FURTHERS: 0:55 sec.



What was it like to learn Arabic?

COMMUNITY VALUES: 1:13 min.



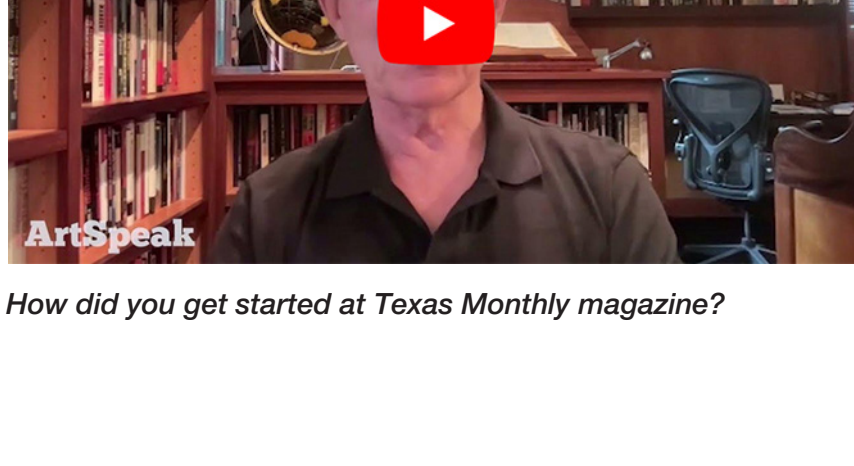
How was your transition from Egypt back to the United States?

BREAKS THE RULES: 2:27 min.



What was your parents' reaction when you became a conscientious objector?.

SERENDIPITY: 2:05 min.



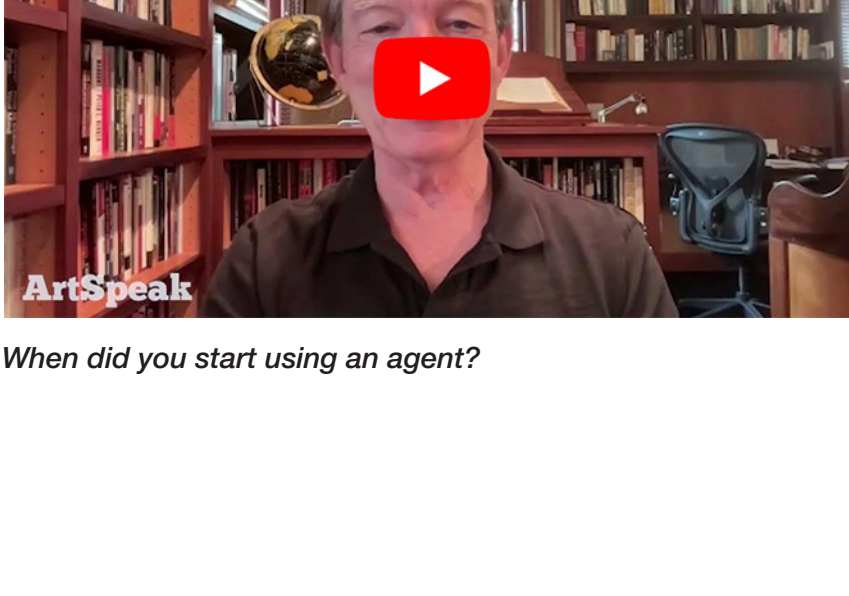
How did you get started at Texas Monthly magazine?

CRITICAL THINKING: 1:26 min.



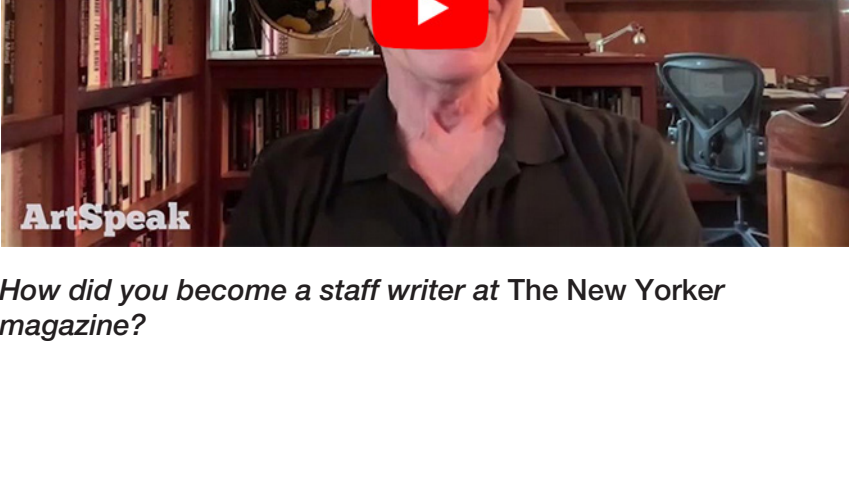
Tell us about Texas.

DEVELOP A VOICE: 1:35 min



When did you start using an agent?

PERSEVERANCE FURTHERS: 3:56 min



How did you become a staff writer at The New Yorker magazine?

OVERCOMES CHALLENGES TO SUCCEED: 5:35 min.



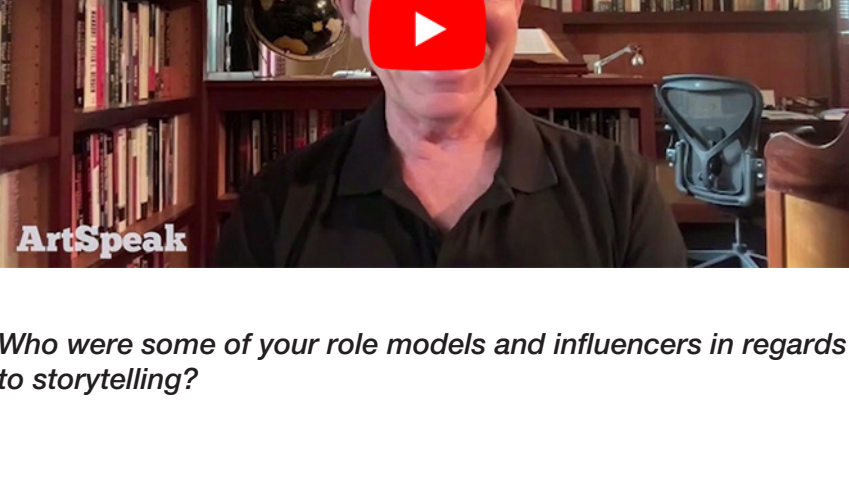
What inspired you to write about Scientology?

CRITICAL THINKING: 1:10 min.



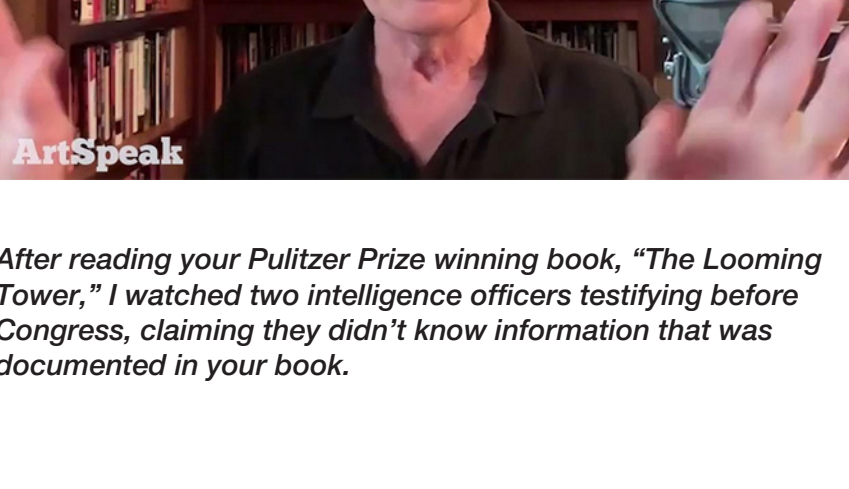
QAnon is almost like a fringe religion.

INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 3:03 min



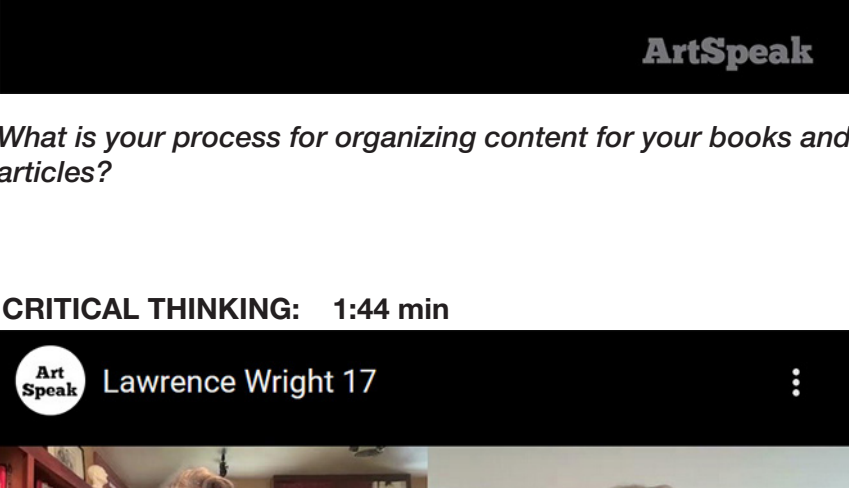
Who were some of your role models and influencers in regards to storytelling?

CREATES A UNIQUE PERSONAL BRAND: 8:57 min.



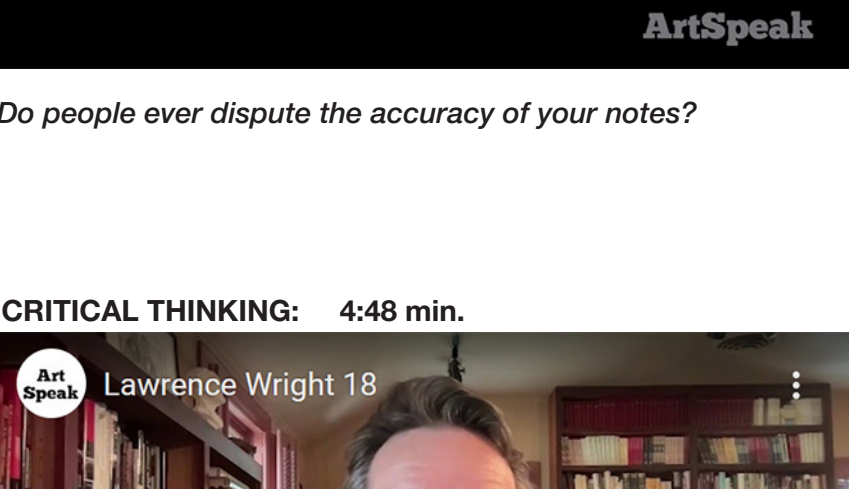
After reading your Pulitzer Prize winning book, "The Looming Tower," I watched two intelligence officers testifying before Congress, claiming they didn't know information that was documented in your book.

CRITICAL THINKING: 4:16 min.



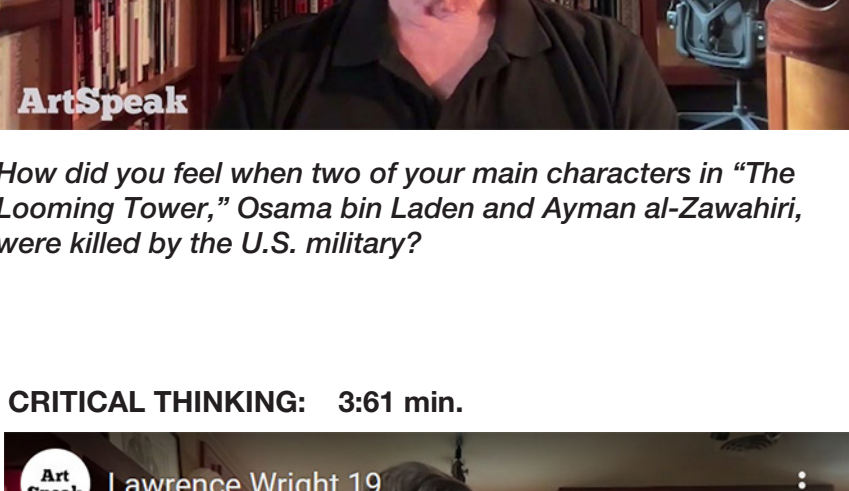
What is your process for organizing content for your books and articles?

CRITICAL THINKING: 1:44 min



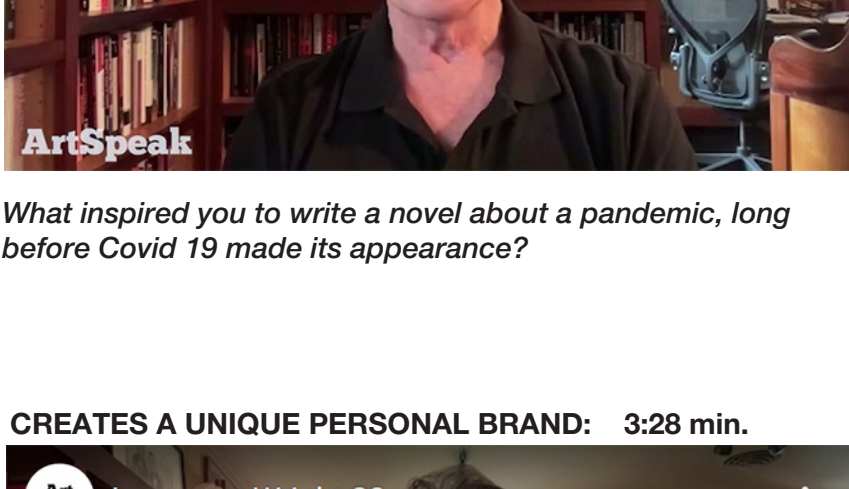
Do people ever dispute the accuracy of your notes?

CRITICAL THINKING: 4:48 min.



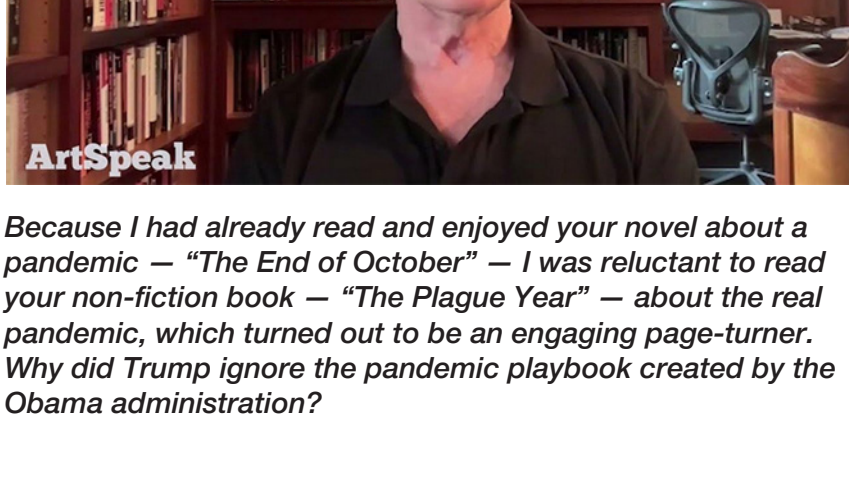
How did you feel when two of your main characters in "The Looming Tower," Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, were killed by the U.S. military?

CRITICAL THINKING: 3:61 min.



What inspired you to write a novel about a pandemic, long before Covid 19 made its appearance?

CREATES A UNIQUE PERSONAL BRAND: 3:28 min.



Because I had already read and enjoyed your novel about a pandemic — "The End of October" — I was reluctant to read your non-fiction book — "The Plague Year" — about the real pandemic, which turned out to be an engaging page-turner. Why did Trump ignore the pandemic playbook created by the Obama administration?