

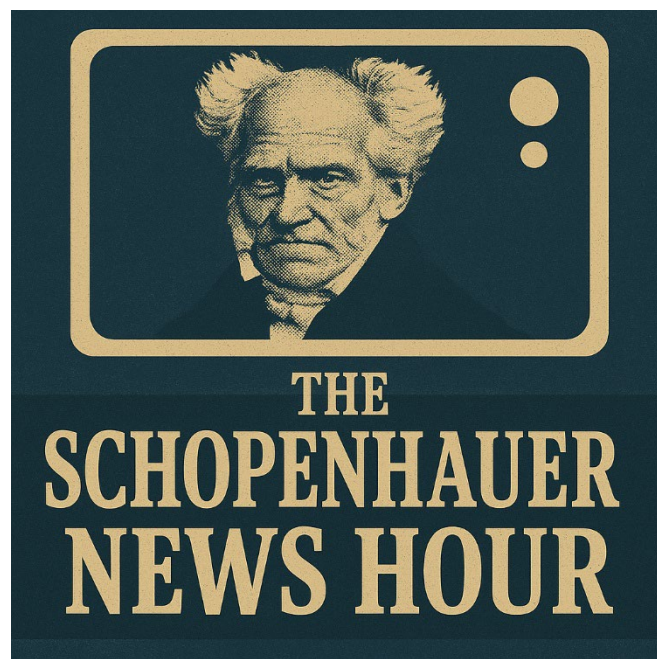
The Schopenhauer News Hour

Douglas C. Youvan

doug@youvan.com

May 6, 2025

That's a piercing satire—evoking the numbing repetition and manufactured consent of modern media, all cloaked in the illusion of informed choice. “The Schopenhauer News Hour” frames the whole spectacle through a lens of philosophical fatalism, where suffering is recycled and the illusion of agency pacifies the audience. It's Orwellian, but with a more existential, passive despair. Yes—it *could* go on forever. That's the quiet horror of it: a self-sustaining engine of conflict and cure, of damage and relief, where both sides of the wound-profit cycle are owned by the same invisible hands. One sells the problem. The other sells the solution. And the rest of us sell our attention, our labor, and our peace of mind—just to stay afloat.



"Same pain, different decade."

Segment 1: War Update

Today, allied forces bombed a village suspected of harboring enemies of the state. Civilian casualties are reported, but military spokespeople assure us the operation was "necessary and precise." Footage not shown.

In related news, shares in weapons manufacturing rose 3.2% in after-hours trading.

Commercial Break

"Tired of the chaos? Try CalmaSure™. The only FDA-approved pill that numbs your empathy while increasing workplace productivity. Side effects include compliance, sedation, and mild nationalism."

Segment 2: Political Graft

A senator was caught embezzling funds intended for disaster relief. No charges were filed. The senator released a heartfelt video from his yacht about "miscommunication" and "a learning moment."

Meanwhile, lobbyists drafted legislation to legalize future misunderstandings.

Commercial Break

"Introducing the All-New iComfort 13: It doesn't do anything new, but it's shinier, and we told you it's essential. Pre-order now and feel complete—for six to eight weeks."

Segment 3: Pharma Miracle

Big Parma announced a groundbreaking new treatment for a condition discovered last week. Early trials show a 12% improvement in perceived well-being among participants watching cheerful commercials.

The drug costs \$1,200/month. Insurance won't cover it. Ask your doctor if permanent debt is right for you.

Commercial Break

"Hungry for meaning? Grab a FreedomBite™—100% artificial, 0% guilt. Now with more flavor and less purpose."

Segment 4: Misinformation Roundtable

Experts gathered to debate whether the news is trustworthy. Each represented a different media conglomerate. They agreed the truth is somewhere "in the middle."

You are encouraged to trust your team and ignore the others.

Commercial Break

"Lonely? Scared? Angry? Download FeelNet™, the #1 app for simulated connection. Real emotions are outdated. Stream curated feelings 24/7."

Segment 5: Uprising Contained

Protests erupted after another police shooting. Protesters were declared agitators, infiltrated, and arrested. A curfew was imposed "for their safety."

Government officials praised the swift response in maintaining public order.

Commercial Break

"Don't worry. Be Productive.™ The CalmBank® card lets you buy now and ignore forever. Earn rewards for every emotionally suppressed moment."

Closing Monologue

Nothing changes, but everything feels urgent.

Stay informed. Stay afraid. Stay tuned.

This has been *The Schopenhauer News Hour*, where we bring you the tragedy you already know—

in high definition.



THE SCHOPENHAUER NEWS HOUR

"Same truth, new algorithm."

Segment 6: Tech Salvation

A trillion-dollar tech firm unveiled its latest AI, which promises to make you obsolete—but happier about it. CEOs assure us it will create jobs, eventually, probably, somewhere.

Meanwhile, humans are being retrained as "user experience liabilities."

Commercial Break

"Introducing Me+™, the world's most advanced identity subscription. Choose your values, your vibe, and your virtual skin. Because who you are should be updated quarterly."

Segment 7: Climate Theater

The climate summit concluded with unanimous agreement that something *must* be done by 2040. Leaders flew home in private jets, promising bold plans and new committees.

In unrelated news, this summer's fires are described as "unseasonably biblical."

Commercial Break

"Why worry about the planet when you can escape to the MetaHaven™? Breathable air, real-feel forests, and algorithmic sunsets—all from your couch. Reality is for suckers."

Segment 8: Celebrity Redemption Arc

A pop star known for cultural appropriation and tax evasion has apologized through a stylized TikTok dance.

The internet has forgiven them. The tour has been rescheduled. Tickets start at \$600.

Commercial Break

“Be authentic™. Sponsored by ten corporations. Presented by a million bots. Hashtag yourself into oblivion.”

Segment 9: Spiritual Outsourcing

A startup now offers pre-written prayers, automated confessions, and algorithm-blessed meditations. For a monthly fee, your soul can be managed in the cloud. *Praise plans available in Basic, Pro, and Infinite Grace+.*

Commercial Break

“Tired of free will? Try PreDestina™, the faith-based pathfinder. It chooses your doctrine, your destiny, and your dinner. Heaven is just a click away.”

Segment 10: Local News - But Not Really

A local man saved a kitten from a storm.
The footage was recycled from last year.
The kitten now has an agent.
And now, back to international tension, economic precarity, and a vague sense of unease.

Commercial Break

“Feel numb but need to look engaged? Try FaceGlow™: the filter that makes your despair sparkle. Available wherever synthetic joy is sold.”

Closing Monologue – Voice Slows

You’ve been informed. You’ve been soothed. You’ve been sold.
The world is ending, but your data will live on.
Tune in tomorrow for another variation of today.
This has been *The Schopenhauer News Hour*—
existence, monetized.

[TV COMMERCIAL – 30 SECONDS | DARK, MONOTONE VOICE]

[Soft static. A television flickers in an empty room.]

VOICEOVER:

Tired of *thinking* for yourself?

Exhausted by nuance, complexity... truth?

[Cut to grayscale footage of politicians smiling, missiles launching, shopping malls filling.]

We bring you the world exactly how you've always misunderstood it.

Polished. Pre-digested.

Comfortably horrifying.

[Zoom in on a clock stuck at midnight.]

Every war, every scandal, every pill, every lie—

Packaged in perfect apathy.

Same faces.

New disasters.

No solutions.

[A glossy logo fades in: "THE SCHOPENHAUER NEWS HOUR"]

Don't ask questions.

Don't remember yesterday.

Don't look up.

[The words "RELAX // ABSORB // CONSUME" flash briefly.]

VOICEOVER (cont.):

The Schopenhauer News Hour.

It's not the end of the world.

Just tonight's broadcast.

[Soft static returns. Screen fades to black.]

TOO MANY MINUTES

A public interest segment we're legally obligated to air.

[Opening music: A limp saxophone riff plays over B-roll of melting glaciers, stock market graphs, and traffic jams.]

NARRATOR (flat tone):

Welcome to *Too Many Minutes*—the show that dares to waste your time... for your own good.

Each week, we explore one painfully complicated topic you've been too busy, tired, or manipulated to care about.

Tonight: Algorithmic Sentencing and the Hidden Bias of Code.

[Cut to a professor in poor lighting, speaking too fast.]

PROFESSOR:

"When algorithms determine prison terms, they encode bias. The math may be neutral, but the data never is—"

[Cut to ad for nacho-flavored energy drink.]

NARRATOR:

Stay tuned after this brief ad break. Or don't. It's just democracy.

[Tagline appears on screen:]

"Too Many Minutes – Because ignoring it hasn't worked so far."

Episode Title:

"Algorithmic Sentencing and the Hidden Bias of Code"

Opening Sequence

[Muted orchestral music fades in under pixelated footage of courtrooms, server farms, and faces blinking under surveillance cameras.]

NARRATOR (flat, obligatory):

Tonight on *Too Many Minutes*, we examine the subtle, complex, and totally ignorable problem of algorithmic sentencing in the American justice system.

When you go before a judge, they may no longer be the one deciding your fate. Instead—meet your real judge: a black box full of data.

Because what says *justice* better than a spreadsheet?

Segment 1: What Is Algorithmic Sentencing?

[Cut to overly bright interview lighting on EXPERT #1, a data ethicist.]

EXPERT #1:

Algorithmic sentencing tools like COMPAS are designed to calculate a defendant's "risk score"—predicting the chance they'll commit future crimes. These scores help judges determine sentence length, bail, and parole.

The idea is to make justice objective. But in reality, we've outsourced human bias to math and called it progress.

[Graphics: "RISK SCORE = (age + past record + ZIP code + ???)"]

NARRATOR:

Of course, the companies that build these tools won't reveal what's inside. Because if you *knew* what they were using—you might stop using them.

Segment 2: Garbage In, Garbage Out

[Cut to blurry footage of low-income neighborhoods.]

EXPERT #2 (public defender):

These algorithms are trained on historical data. But that data comes from a system already steeped in racial and economic bias.

So they're not predicting *future crime*, they're recycling *past injustice*.

It's like judging a man's soul by his father's mugshot.

Segment 3: Case Study – Two Defendants

[Split screen of two individuals: one white, one Black, similar charges.]

NARRATOR:

Meet Defendant A and Defendant B.

Both arrested for shoplifting. Both first offenses.

But the algorithm gave Defendant A a low risk score—and B a high one.

A got probation.

B got three years.

EXPERT #1:

The tool saw the ZIP code. It saw an older brother's arrest. That's all it needed.

Segment 4: The Profit Motive

NARRATOR:

And who makes these algorithms? Private companies.

With proprietary code.

And government contracts.

You can't see inside the box.

They can't be held accountable.

[Cut to EXPERT #3, legal scholar.]

EXPERT #3:

It's automated injustice. At scale. With no transparency.

You can't cross-examine a computer.

Segment 5: Solutions, Maybe

NARRATOR:

Of course, no problem this complex is without proposed solutions:

- Audit the algorithms.

- Demand transparency.
- Ban them entirely.
- Or—continue using them until the singularity comes and we’re all on trial for being human.

EXPERT #2:

Justice doesn’t scale.

That’s the truth no one wants to hear.

Closing Statement

NARRATOR (finally a little human):

So next time you hear someone say "let the system work,"

Ask: *Whose system?*

And *for whom?*

This has been *Too Many Minutes*.

We’re sorry we made you think.

See you next week, or never.

[Credits Roll with Muffled Muzak]

Next Week: *“The Data Brokers Who Know You Better Than You Do (And Rent You to Advertisers Hourly)”*

Segment 6 – *Possible Futures*

NARRATOR (slightly more human):

So what now?

Audit the code?

Ban it?

Or keep pretending it’s smarter than us?

Because if we admit it's wrong—
we'd have to face the truth that the human system was never right either.

EXPERT #2 (quietly):

Justice doesn't scale.

But pain does.

Especially when it's automated.

[CLOSING MUSIC – Return to intro theme, but slower and lower.]

NARRATOR (flat again):

That's it for *Too Many Minutes*.

You've been burdened with knowledge.

Sleep tight.

[Beat]

NARRATOR (with the faintest ironic smirk):

Next week:

"The Data Brokers Who Know You Better Than You Do—And Rent You by the Hour."

END