Merchants of Smear

Global warming alarmists rely on character assassination as the central defense for their issue. How did that strategy work, and why does it fail?

by Russell Cook

1. Introduction

Consider for a moment the collective defense offered by promoters of the idea of human-caused global warming. They say the debate is over, settled by what they call scientifically based observations from a “majority of scientists” – an overwhelming consensus.

I have no science expertise of any description, so I leave the merits of that particular claim to other, more qualified individuals to verify. What I focus on in this study is the promoters’ other defense tactic, where they tell the public not to listen to skeptical climate scientists because those skeptics are paid by the fossil fuel industry to deliberately spread lies and misinformation.

When that accusation is placed under hard scrutiny, it collapses like a house of cards. At the heart of it all, no one has ever offered an iota of evidence of a quid pro quo arrangement among industry officials and skeptic scientists, despite legions of people repeating the claim.

Worse, the accusation exploits questionably leaked memos from an obscure coal association’s pilot project public relations campaign, implying a specific phrase within that set of memos was evidence of a broader fossil fuel industry conspiracy directive spread through the skeptic science community. The memos found their way into Al Gore’s 1991–1992 Senate office, but his and others’ insinuation arising from this set of memos about industry-corrupted skeptics got little media traction until the memos were “obtained” and publicized by former Boston Globe reporter/editor Ross Gelbspan three years later. About ten years after that, Gore declared

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Gelbspan had discovered the “smoking gun” memo. But how could Gelbspan discover a leaked memo that Gore already had a decade earlier?

Never has so much – the very survival of the global warming issue – depended on so little – a paper-thin accusation from people having hugely troubling credibility problems of their own – to be repeated without question by so many.

That contradiction is just one of myriad problems seen in this unreported facet of the global warming debate. In the end, not one narrative about the accusation or the people involved in it lines up right. Not one.

Therein lies the unreported overall flaw in the theory of man-caused global warming: The issue survives only in the absence of science-based criticism. Solid science-based skeptic criticism exists, but the public rarely hears about that; they are simply told to ignore allegedly industry-corrupted skeptic scientists.

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Not only does this situation appear to be a Gore-approved effort to marginalize skeptics who were undermining his position from the start, the larger problem involves mainstream media malfeasance, where reporters never dared to question what they were told about “corrupt” skeptic scientists. Reporters apparently caved in en masse to the notion that “fair treatment” of industry-corrupted skeptics was not needed, while failing to recognize how the argument against “fair treatment” is perhaps the most brilliant propaganda talking point ever conceived.

The brilliance of this maneuver is in how it exploits reporters’ elemental fear of appearing ignorant. They were routinely told the science was settled, and no less than a self-proclaimed Pulitzer-winning investigative journalist – Ross Gelbspan – had revealed the few remaining critics of the theory were paid industry shills operating in a manner similar to the stunt “big tobacco” pulled years earlier.

The alarmists’ maneuver remains effective today, and any reporter giving equal time to global warming skeptics is denounced as stupid to think anything good is achieved by this kind of journalistic balance.

Destroy the accusation, however, and reporters have no excuse to ignore skeptics, thus placing the whole issue on the brink of collapse if the greater public realizes the notion of human-caused global warming cannot stand on its own scientific merits.

Parts 2 and 3 of this study explore the initial sources of the accusations against climate skeptics, while parts 4 and 5 describe Ross Gelbspan’s entrance into the fray and explore some contradictions in his claims. Part 6 describes the outsize influence of a defunct organization, Ozone Action, on the global warming debate.

Parts 7 and 8 document two flaws of Gelbspan’s arguments: the complete lack of corroboration of his claims of corruption of scientists, and the inconsistencies in his explanations of how he
became involved in the debate. In sum, this report shows the accusation that skeptic climate scientists have presented falsified science in exchange for fossil-fuel industry money has never been supported by any evidence whatsoever. It is nothing but a manufactured claim invented to shut off debate.

2. The Entire Issue in Three Easy-to-Remember Points

Public comprehension of the global warming issue is a case study in the effectiveness of sheer simplicity. The “corrupt industry skeptics” accusation is the glue holding it all together:

1. A scientific consensus says the debate is settled, an unassailable fact, end of story.

2. Skeptic scientists corrupted by the big coal and oil industries seek to “reposition” the public into believing global warming is not a fact.

3. Journalists should not give equal time to skeptic scientists because of the first two points.

The accusation is not an omnipresent one with untraceable origins, and it is a major mistake to assign a nebulous quality to it. The word “reposition” is not just a slightly clunky way to describe what the skeptic scientists were allegedly doing; it is a critical central pillar of the entire accusation.

It becomes clearer when the longer text of the accusation is seen in Al Gore’s movie, *An Inconvenient Truth*,\(^1\) starting at the 1 hour 12 minute 55 second point – full screen for six seconds, in red letters:

Reposition Global Warming as Theory rather than Fact

The movie didn’t elaborate on the accusation’s origins, but Gore immediately followed this phrase with a slide of a very old cigarette advertisement as a setup for his next one quoting a 1969 Brown & Williamson tobacco company memo: “Doubt is our product, since it is the best means of creating a controversy in the public’s mind.” In the book version of the movie, Gore describes,

… a relatively small but extremely well-funded cadre of special interests, including Exxon Mobil and a few other oil, coal, and utilities companies. ... One of the internal memos prepared by this group to guide the employees they hired to run their disinformation campaign was discovered by the Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter Ross

\(^1\) *An Inconvenient Truth*, directed by Davis Guggenheim, Paramount Classics, 2006, DVD. A screen capture of the image can be viewed at [http://gelbspanfiles.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/1hr12min59sec-AnInconvTruth-1024x768.jpg](http://gelbspanfiles.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/1hr12min59sec-AnInconvTruth-1024x768.jpg).
Gelbspan. Here was the group’s stated objective: to “reposition global warming as theory, rather than fact.”

So, the accusation came from a memo discovered by Pulitzer-winning reporter? No. The question itself is faulty, based on the idea that former Boston Globe reporter/editor Gelbspan actually won a Pulitzer, that he “discovered” the memo, and that the “reposition” phrase is some kind of top-down directive from oil and coal company executives. I’ll start with those last two assertions and address Gelbspan’s “Pulitzer” problem later in this paper.


It is clear the ICE memos were just instructions for PR people to follow, not a top-down directive ordering scientists to fabricate doubt.

When Al Gore spoke in the late 1980s about the threat of global warming, he contradicted widespread worries a decade earlier about global cooling.

The news media did not mention this, instead proceeding to publicize Gore’s narrative without question. In response, U.S. coal company associations created the Information Council on the Environment (ICE), a public relations campaign, in early 1991. They intended to counter-argue that the debate was anything but settled.

One of ICE’s internal memos for campaign planning had as its #1 strategy point this exact sentence: “Reposition global warming as theory (not fact).” This essentially was shorthand for “Show how the theory of man-caused global warming is not established fact since it has basic scientific faults, and the warming might be a result of natural variability.”

The memo’s #2 strategy was, “Target print and radio media for maximum effectiveness,” and #9 was, “Use a spokesman from the scientific community.” If one reads as much of these memos as is available, it is clear they were just instructions for PR people to follow, not a top-down directive ordering scientists to fabricate doubt.

At some point after mid-May 1991, these internal memos were apparently leaked to environmentalists. New York Times reporter Matt Wald wrote an article about ICE on July 8,
1991,\textsuperscript{6} describing the campaign and repeating the “reposition global warming as theory” phrase. He stated the newspaper had received copies of the ICE memos from the Sierra Club. Other references to the ICE memos at that time are found at an Arizona newspaper,\textsuperscript{7} a trade journal,\textsuperscript{8} and a fax-based environmental news aggregator.\textsuperscript{9}

The 1994 book \textit{Green Gold},\textsuperscript{10} by Curtis Moore and Alan Miller, cites the phrase from Matt Wald’s article. Both authors also must have seen the other ICE memos, however, as their endnotes mention an interview with a person noted in an ICE radio ad narrative, Tom Helland,\textsuperscript{11} who is not named in Wald’s article. Andrew Rowell’s 1996 book \textit{Green Backlash}\textsuperscript{12} repeats the “reposition” phrase, without saying how or where he saw it.

The strangest detail from this period is Al Gore’s own quotes of the ICE memos in his 1992 book, \textit{Earth in the Balance}.\textsuperscript{13} The words quoted in his book match the title of Mary O’Driscoll’s \textit{The Energy Daily} article, but Gore credits neither her nor Gelbspan nor the Sierra Club – he says the documents were leaked to his office from the National Coal Association.

Without any doubt, reporters and book authors saw the ICE memos before Gelbspan did, so he didn’t “discover” them. But what makes this 1991–1996 time frame of the accusation notable is that virtually nothing is seen of it from around 1997 to the present. There is not one word of the Sierra Club’s role in its own current web pages. As near as I can tell, no one other than Matt Wald credits them with finding the memos. And there is no widespread mention of a sinister energy-industry-driven campaign during that time. The story had no media traction.

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Much more of the popular media picked up on the accusation starting in late 1995, but the idea was slow to gain traction. Rowell’s obscure *Green Backlash* was published in October 1996, but I have found only three mentions of it on the Internet as a source of reference about skeptic climate scientists being paid industry shills. The successful phase of the accusation began when Gelbspan started promoting it. Mentions of his “exposé” of corrupt skeptic climate scientists are uncountable.

Gelbspan’s public presence after his retirement from the *Boston Globe* in 1992 offers no clue about why he would suddenly emerge late in 1995 as a go-to authority regarding the industry corruption of skeptic climate scientists. Little is found in his public activities for the three years after his retirement, other than a March 19, 1995 *Washington Post* article he coauthored with Harvard’s Paul Epstein about global warming’s influence on the spread of diseases.\(^\text{14}\)

Immediately after that point, to use a compilation of Gelbspan’s own narratives, he experienced a reader backlash against his article, suggesting he consider what skeptic scientists were saying. For a very brief time he did, but soon afterward he says he learned (from sources he never names) enough about the questionable funding of skeptic scientists to prompt an assistant attorney general at a May 1995 Minnesota Public Utilities hearing to ask its skeptic scientist witnesses about their funding sources.\(^\text{15}\)

Somehow, in the six months after that hearing, Gelbspan became aware of the Western Fuels ICE memos and was able to quote them at a December 15, 1995, National Public Radio “Living on Earth” program interview:

> In 1991, for instance, the coal industry launched a disinformation campaign designed to, quote, “reposition global warming as theory rather than fact.” They used 3 of the so-called scientific skeptics, Doctors Robert Balling, Pat Michaels, and Sherwood Idso, in broadcast appearances, in newspaper columns, designed to target quote “older, less educated men and young, low-income women.”\(^\text{16}\)

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The “older, less education men and young, low-income women” statement is seen word-for-word in Mary O’Driscoll’s 1991 article in *The Energy Daily* and Al Gore’s 1992 *Earth in the Balance*.

At the end of the NPR interview, the radio host notes Gelbspan’s article, on the topic of global warming, was the cover story for the current (December 1995) issue of Harper’s magazine. Gelbspan never mentions the “reposition” phrase or the ICE PR campaign in that article. Instead, he recites dollar amounts the skeptic scientists allegedly received from “coal and oil interests” and then offers a highly dismissive but evidence-free assessment:

> The skeptics assert flatly that their science is untainted by funding. Nevertheless, in this persistent and well-funded campaign of denial they have become interchangeable ornaments on the hood of a high-powered engine of disinformation. Their dissenting opinions are amplified beyond all proportion through the media while the concerns of the dominant majority of the world’s scientific establishment are marginalized.17

This guilt-by-association narrative is all Gelbspan offers as proof of an arrangement between industry officials and skeptic climate scientists, where money was paid under a directive to fabricate false climate assessments. At least he had some semblance of the “scientific consensus” concept in his words “the dominant majority of the world’s scientific establishment,” and the combination constitutes two of the three “Easy-to-Remember Points” I described earlier in this paper.

Another development in December 1995 hints at Gelbspan’s likely collaboration with Ozone Action, although he never mentions it. An environmentalist group focusing on ozone depletion, Ozone Action began stating on its Website, “Ozone Action is a non-profit, public interest organization founded in July 1993 to raise public awareness on stratospheric ozone depletion. ... Since December 1995, Ozone Action has also been working on climate change.”18

The importance of this is seen in a subsequent April 1996 Ozone Action “Ties That Blind” report, identified as “Case Study #3, Information Council on the Environment (ICE),” which states, “According to documents obtained by Ozone Action and by Ross Gelbspan, several ICE strategies were laid out including: the repositioning of global warming as theory, not fact.”19

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Much like the Sierra Club years earlier, neither Gelbspan nor anyone at Ozone Action ever identified from whom they obtained the ICE memos. The new development was how the accusation acquired a reasonably recognizable name of a person who could say he discovered the industry corruption of skeptic scientists. Gelbspan had been an environmental reporter at a major newspaper and was associated with a group of reporters who had won individual Pulitzer Prizes. The accusation now also had an organization, Ozone Action, dedicated to all-encompassing promotion of it.

## 5. Gelbspan’s Two Books—and “Pulitzer Winner” Problem

Gelbspan’s first book, *The Heat Is On*, published in April 1997, presented the three easy-to-remember points I mentioned at the beginning of this paper all in one place: scientific consensus, skeptics paid by industry to “reposition” public perceptions, and the denunciation of any positive or neutral journalistic attention to skeptics.

The phrase “overwhelming consensus of scientific thought” appears immediately on page 3, and on page 57 Gelbspan begins a two-page explanation of the folly of “journalistic fairness” to skeptics. Those two points are repeated throughout the book in various forms. On page 34, he insinuates a *quid pro quo* arrangement between industry and skeptic scientists:

> This public relations firm clearly stated that the aim of the campaign was to “reposition global warming as theory rather than fact.” Its plan specified that three of the so-called greenhouse skeptics – Robert Balling, Pat Michaels, and S. Fred Singer – should be placed in broadcast appearances, op-ed pages, and newspaper interviews.

I place Singer’s name in boldface for a reason: Gelbspan changed this to “Sherwood Idso” for the September 1998 paperback version of his book, with absolutely no explanation for the alteration. Dr. Idso’s name is seen at least once in the Greenpeace scans of the ICE memos. Dr Singer’s name is not found there at all, for the most elemental of reasons: He had no involvement in the ICE public relations campaign whatsoever.

On the inside of the dust jacket for the hardcover edition of Gelbspan’s book is another major problem: It describes the book’s author as “Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Ross Gelbspan.”

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The Pulitzer organization has never named him as a recipient of its prize.\textsuperscript{23}

In his book \textit{Boiling Point} (2004), Gelbspan again repeats points about consensus\textsuperscript{24} and uses the “reposition” phrase.\textsuperscript{25} The hardcover’s dust jacket prominently states, “Ross Gelbspan Winner of the Pulitzer Prize.”\textsuperscript{26} In the book’s preface, however, Gelbspan strangely offers the following:

Shortly after the publication of \textit{The Heat is On}, the fossil fuel lobby mounted an extensive campaign accusing me of résumé fraud. They circulated a message on the Internet and elsewhere that I had falsely claimed to be a co-recipient of a Pulitzer Prize.\textsuperscript{27}

There was no ambiguity about the statement on the dust jacket of his first book, nor was there any in 1997 declarations by Dr. S. Fred Singer\textsuperscript{28} and JunkScience.com founder Steve Milloy.\textsuperscript{29} They both directly said he did not win a Pulitzer.

Repetition of Gelbspan as a “Pulitzer-winner” and the “reposition” phrase occurred almost immediately after publication of Gelbspan’s book, in the \textit{Boston Globe}’s April 28, 1997 review of his book\textsuperscript{30} and in a August 3, 1997 \textit{New York Times} book review.\textsuperscript{31} Repetitions of these claims and the connection between Gelbspan’s name and the repositioning accusation increased from that time onward. They now appear across the Internet, on Websites for supporters of human-caused global warming alarmism, nature and science pages, political news media pages, motor vehicle hobbyist pages with general topic discussions, and Google’s scans of books discussing lawsuit issues.

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  \item[25] \textit{Ibid.}, p. 51.
  
  \item[26] \textit{Ibid.}, front cover.
  
  \item[27] \textit{Ibid.}, p. xiii.
  
  
  
  
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Despite all these references to the “reposition” phrase, variously described as leaked “documents,” “memos,” or “strategy papers,” not one shows the ICE memos in their full context. With one or two exceptions across the media spectrum, all repetitions of the basic accusation against skeptic climate scientists ultimately trace back to Ross Gelbspan, a person incorrectly labeled as a Pulitzer winner who never provided a scintilla of physical evidence to prove illicit money was paid to skeptic scientists to lie about the global warming issue.

6. Ozone Action Personnel Pervade the Movement

Repeating a quote from two sections above: “According to documents obtained by Ozone Action and by Ross Gelbspan, several ICE strategies were laid out including: the repositioning of global warming as theory, not fact.”

In a little-known detail in the history of the global warming movement, Ozone Action became Greenpeace USA.

Despite what should have been a critically important collaboration between Gelbspan and this enviro-activist group, he never mentions any direct association with Ozone Action in any form in his two books. On his entire heatisonline.org website, Ozone Action’s name appears only in article reproductions or in glancing mention of a participant, Kelly Sims, in Gelbspan’s “Clean Energy Transition Plan.”

We can only speculate about Gelbspan’s lack of praise or even basic recognition of Ozone Action as a catalyst in his transition from no-name retiree to world-famous climate activist, but Ozone Action’s name is all that actually disappeared, not the organization itself.

In a little-known detail in the history of the global warming movement, this smaller group absorbed a larger one, adopted its name, and installed its top people in the new organization, a maneuver hardly different from US Air taking over American Airlines or Allied Signal taking over Honeywell. Ozone Action became Greenpeace USA.

When Ozone Action’s John Passacantando merged his group into Greenpeace USA, he took over as executive director. Ozone Action’s field director, Phil Radford, joined him shortly thereafter as Greenpeace USA’s grassroots and digital organizing director; after Passacantando retired in 2009, Radford ascended to the position of executive director.

During her six-year tenure as Al Gore’s spokesperson, Kalee Kreider insinuated she was the main “builder” of Ozone Action, but in 1996 she left that organization to work for Greenpeace.


Soon she was included in a list of “authors, contributors, and expert reviewers” for an IPCC Special Report\(^\text{35}\) despite having no more than a bachelor’s degree in history. She subsequently worked as the climate/energy campaign director at the Pew Charitable Trusts and then as a senior vice president at Fenton Communications (a PR firm for enviro-activist groups). She became Gore’s spokesperson in 2006. In his 2010 book, \textit{Our Choice}, Gore states she had been “of invaluable service in all of my climate work.”\(^\text{36}\)

Consider the following additional details about Ozone Action personnel:

- Kalee Kreider, while working at Greenpeace in 1997, repeated Ross Gelbspan’s “reposition global warming as theory rather than fact” phrase in a 1997 press release about his then-new book, calling him a “Pulitzer winner.”\(^\text{37}\)

- Ozone Action Science Policy Director Kert Davies moved on to Greenpeace, where he created and runs the ExxonSecrets.org website/blog. He is currently Greenpeace’s research director.\(^\text{38}\)

- Phil Radford, when he was at Ozone Action, is described as having “mapped out a successful campaign during the 2000 primaries, convincing Senator McCain to champion global warming.”\(^\text{39}\)

- A 2000 Dartmouth University annual report of outdoor activities described a project in its Environmental Studies Division as follows: “partnered with Matt Stembridge ‘99, a.k.a. Captain Climate, now working for Ozone Action, we worked to focus the [presidential] candidates’ attention on global climate change and other environmental issues.”\(^\text{40}\)


Stembridge was described in a Bloomberg BusinessWeek article as “a strange apparition named ‘Captain Climate’ [...] at presidential campaign events.”\(^{41}\) Stembridge moved on to hold several eco-advocacy positions at faith-based organizations.\(^ {42}\)

- Ozone Action Science Policy Director/International Policy Specialist Kelly Sims Gallagher not only coauthored a *Newsweek* article\(^ {43}\) with John Holdren, who would soon be nominated by President Barack Obama to head the White House Office of Science and Technology, she also was listed among the Annex IV Reviewers of the IPCC WGIII Fourth Assessment Report.\(^ {44}\)

It is entirely possible that the dispersal of Ozone Action personnel into other highly influential places helped Gelbspan’s “reposition global warming as theory rather than fact” phrase achieve acceptance as generic proof of an energy industry conspiracy to dispel public support for the catastrophic human-caused global warming idea.

7. Fatal Problem #1: No Independent Confirmation of Gelbspan’s Accusation

| It is often repeated that Ross Gelbspan “discovered” the alleged arrangement between industry and skeptics. | There is widespread, unquestioned acceptance of the notion that the “reposition global warming as theory rather than fact” phrase is proof of a *quid pro quo* arrangement between energy industry officials and skeptical climate scientists. Moreover, it is often repeated that Gelbspan “discovered” that arrangement, along with “others documenting skeptics’ corruption.” |

Robert McClure, a member of the board of directors of the Society of Environmental Journalists, wrote in 2009, “Gelbspan was only the first of many to document payments by industry to a small group of scientists who consistently defend the interests of industry.”\(^ {45}\) Environmentalist


Bill McKibben echoed this notion in 2012, saying, “Writers from Ross Gelbspan to Naomi Oreskes have made this case with such overwhelming power that no one even really tries denying it any more.”46

The authors of an October 2011 Physics Today paper asserted a “well-organized and well-funded disinformation campaign ... has been waged against climate science for decades. As documented in numerous books, the campaign seeks to sow doubts about the science.”47 Their end notes for the assertion referenced Ross Gelbspan’s 1997 book and James Hoggan’s 2009 book, Climate Cover-Up.

Donald Brown, an ethics professor at the Widener University School of Law, states at his blog site, “there has been a well-organized, well-funded disinformation campaign about the science of climate change that has used tactics that are deeply ethically reprehensible. ... The tactics deployed by this campaign are now all well documented in the books and peer-reviewed sociological literature identified in the Appendix to this article.”48 The list of names in the appendix—Schneider, Dunlap, McCright, Freudenburg, Lahsen, Mooney, Oreskes—actually undermines the idea that skeptics’ “industry corruption” is well-documented.

In almost comical fashion, the above short list of “corroborators” crumbles under scrutiny:

- The sociologists listed in Brown’s article appendix do nothing more than offer psychological explanations why skeptic climate scientists deny “settled science.” They proceed on the assumption that such skeptics are industry shills, and to support that assertion they cite Gelbspan’s work, in several cases specifically repeating his “reposition global warming as theory rather than fact” phrase.49

- James Hoggan’s Climate Cover-Up cites Naomi Oreskes as source for the “reposition global warming as theory rather than fact” phrase.50


Oreskes, however, cites Gelbspan’s 2004 book as the source for that phrase.\textsuperscript{51}

Gelbspan’s 2004 book cites\textsuperscript{52} his own 1997 book for the phrase, but his chapter notes don’t say where it came from, merely that the documents with the phrase in them were in his possession.\textsuperscript{53}

The narratives Gelbspan repeats about what led him to suspect the funding of skeptic climate scientists are strangely inconsistent and contradictory.

So, nobody independently corroborates Gelbspan’s accusation, and other people mentioned the “reposition global warming as theory rather than fact” phrase before Gelbspan, as noted earlier in this paper. And these earlier users of the phrase did no better than he at providing any smoking-gun evidence of a top-down directive involving money paid out in exchange for climate science papers or reports written by authors who knew the content was false.

Gelbspan never says how he came to possess the memos with the “reposition global warming as theory rather than fact” phrase, and the narratives he repeats about what led him to suspect the funding of skeptic climate scientists are strangely inconsistent and contradictory.

8. Fatal Problem #2: Inconsistency of Gelbspan’s Origin Tales

Gelbspan has frequently retold the story of what led him to report about the “corruption” of skeptic climate scientists, and absent any analysis of its details, the tale sounds quite compelling.

As a retired reporter in early 1995, he was asked by a prominent Harvard scientist to co-write a \textit{Washington Post} article about the way global warming spreads infectious diseases. The topic alarmed him, and he planned to write more about it, he says.

A backlash against the article among \textit{Washington Post} readers prompted him to doubt his coauthor’s concerns, however, so he consulted the work of skeptic climate scientists. Upon reading their material, he felt relieved that no global warming crisis was at hand, but he “courteously” kept interview appointments with other scientists, and he received hints that the skeptic scientists’ funding was suspect and that they cherry-picked data. He subsequently learned these same skeptic scientists would be compelled to testify under oath at a May 1995 public utilities hearing about who funded them, and at the hearing, they admitted that they were funded by fossil fuel industry interests.

\textsuperscript{51} Naomi Oreskes, “You Can Argue with the Facts: The Denial of Global Warming,” Powerpoint presentation, Stanford University, April 17, 2008, slides 28 and 79.

\textsuperscript{52} Ross Gelbspan, \textit{supra} note 24, pp. 51, 217.

\textsuperscript{53} Ross Gelbspan, \textit{supra} note 20, pp. 34, 242.
From this, combined with his mysterious acquisition of the Western Fuels ICE memos containing the “reposition global warming as theory rather than fact” phrase, Gelbspan had enough material within five or so months to accuse skeptic scientists of being industry-corrupted in a radio interview\textsuperscript{54} and in an article for Harper’s magazine.\textsuperscript{55}

Take time to analyze Gelbspan’s corruption-discovery odyssey in detail, and contradictions soon become evident.

On his own Website’s “About the Author” page, Gelbspan describes the Harper’s article as “His first major article on climate change.”\textsuperscript{56} However, the last article he wrote for the Boston Globe was on climate change,\textsuperscript{57} and it certainly fits the description as being “major” since it was a page one article and the third in a three-part series. In one of the other article installments, moreover, Gelbspan quotes two climate skeptics and, interestingly, quotes atmospheric researcher Stephen Schneider as calling for journalists to suppress skeptics’ views: “It is journalistically irresponsible to present both sides as though it were a question of balance. ... [I]t is irresponsible to give equal time to a few people standing out in left field.”\textsuperscript{58}

This same contradiction of time frames is seen in a 2004 magazine interview in which Gelbspan says,

> Working as an investigative reporter, I was contacted by Dr. Paul Epstein of Harvard Medical School, and he wrote several articles in its medical journal on climate control and the spread of infectious diseases. I thought it was good material that should be shared with the public, so we collaborated on a piece for the Washington Post. At the time, I knew nothing about global warming, but it was really heavy, and I thought there should be a book on [it].\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{54} Supra note 16.

\textsuperscript{55} Supra note 17.


Not only was his statement about not knowing anything about global warming contradicted by his prior articles, his statement about being an investigative reporter was contradicted by his then-current retirement status. Further analysis of the different versions of his corruption-discovery odyssey shows other significant inconsistencies: the situation in which the late Harvard scientist would choose a retired person to coauthor an article rather than a currently working science reporter, and the idea that Gelbspan found skeptic scientists – Singer and Balling in particular – persuasive despite reporting negatively about those specific scientists just three years earlier, just to name two. Then there are his inconsistencies regarding the number of skeptics whose material he read, the number of “mainstream scientists” who questioned skeptics’ funding, the manner in which he either “learned” that skeptics would be compelled to disclose their funding at the May 1995 public utilities hearing or that he is the person who prompted officials at the hearing to make that inquiry, and the length of time over which this odyssey took place.60

9. Conclusion

For about two decades we’ve been told the science behind human-caused global warming is settled, and to ignore skeptic scientists because they’ve been paid by industry to manufacture doubt about the issue.

Ross Gelbspan never won a Pulitzer, never displayed any investigative prowess in this matter, and never proved that any skeptic climate scientist had ever knowingly lied as a result of being paid illicit money. The truth, however, has every appearance of being exactly the opposite: A clumsy effort to manufacture doubt about the credibility of skeptical climate scientists arose in 1991 with roots in Al Gore’s Senate office; it gained effectiveness and media traction after Ozone Action took over the effort and drew attention to the “reposition global warming as theory rather than fact” memo phrase (which they never showed in its full context); and the effort achieved its highest success after being heavily promoted by the “Pulitzer-winning investigative reporter” Ross Gelbspan, who never won a Pulitzer, never displayed any investigative prowess in this matter, and never proved that any skeptic climate scientist had ever knowingly lied as a result of being paid illicit money.

These efforts to portray skeptic scientists as corrupt are swamped with additional credibility problems, far more than can be described here. Plain presentations of science studies contradicting reports from the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have no chance of vindicating skeptic scientists in the face of such viral anti-skeptic rhetoric, as long as the mainstream media and majority of Internet sites remain gatekeepers preventing the release of accurate science information. This gatekeeping indicates a much larger problem concerning the issue: The evidence I present here is something any unqualified, disinterested bystander could find and ask about, and indeed, believers in the theory of human-caused global warming

could have explored the problems I present here with each other in order to find out whether their accusation about industry corruption of skeptics survives serious scrutiny.

Instead, this accusation has been unquestioningly accepted since 1991 by the mainstream news media and by officials who want to implement greenhouse gas mitigation regulations. During this time, skeptic scientists and other well-informed experts have revealed devastating problems with IPCC climate assessments. It has been shown time and again that the corruption accusation was riddled with obvious holes from the start. No matter.

The main pillar of support for the notion that humans are causing a dangerous warming of the climate has been the notion of “settled science.” That notion has long been questioned by skeptic scientists. The secondary pillar of support for the alarmist global warming theory has been the notion that industry-corrupted skeptics are unworthy of public consideration. This accusation could easily have been investigated and refuted long ago. That never happened, because of the third pillar: Journalists should not give equal time to skeptic scientists.

We are overdue for the biggest ideology collapse in history, begging for an investigation into why the mainstream media and influential politicians apparently never checked the veracity of claims about “settled science” and “corrupt skeptics.”

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He is the author of numerous articles about the accusations of corruption among skeptic climate scientists, at American Thinker, RedState, Breitbart, and elsewhere, detailing the accusation’s myriad faults and the numerous problems surrounding its central promulgator, global warming alarmist Ross Gelbspan. Cook’s continuing forensic dissection of Gelbspan’s accusations can be followed at GelbspanFiles.com.