

Examiner writers attended secret Koch meeting

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Earlier, we [detailed](#) how Glenn Beck credited conservative billionaire Charles Koch for information he used to attack Al Gore -- but not that he received that information at a secret strategy meeting the previous weekend hosted by Koch and his brother, David. But Beck is not the only media figure taking their cues from the Kochs at that meeting.

Also on the guest list (obtained by [Think Progress](#)) of conservative activists at the Kochs' June gathering -- at which strategies for the 2010 midterm elections were plotted -- were two *Washington Examiner* writers, senior political analyst [Michael Barone](#) and senior political columnist [Tim Carney](#). That's a hefty representation for such a lower profile newspaper (*The Wall Street Journal*, by comparison, had only one representative, Steve Moore.) Their attendance presumably had approval from the top; after all, *Examiner* owner Philip Anschutz was there as well, as were executives from Anschutz's oil interests, according to Think Progress.

Interestingly, Carney recently penned a defense of the Kochs. In a September 1 [column](#), Carney wrote that the Kochs and "any of us advocating a free market *are* trying to make the world a better place -- not just for business, but for the poor."

Carney disclosed that, in addition to Charles Koch introducing his speech at a "fancy dinner," "The Koch-created Institute for Humane Studies has, over the past two years, paid me on a few occasions to speak to various audiences (and also to mentor interns). The Koch-funded Heritage Foundation and Cato Institute have also hosted book talks for me." But Carney didn't disclose his attendance at the secret Koch confab two months earlier.

Why? The Kochs didn't want him to. From a *New York Times* [article](#) on the twice-yearly Koch meetings:

The Kochs insist on strict confidentiality surrounding the California meetings, which are entitled "Understanding and Addressing Threats to American Free Enterprise and Prosperity." The letter advises participants that it is closed to the public, including the news media, and admonishes them not to post updates or information about the meeting on the Web, blogs, social media or traditional media, and to "be mindful of the security and confidentiality of your meeting notes and materials."

In an October 20 [blog post](#) responding to the disclosure, Carney admits that the "fancy dinner" he referenced in September was, in fact, the secret Koch retreat, and that he was "invited to speak on the condition of confidentiality."

But should people who purport to be journalists be taking part in events that they've been ordered to keep silent about, even with the imprimatur of their boss? Maybe Carney and Barone should explain why they apparently don't feel bound by the disclosure rules that journalistic ethics demand.

The *Examiner*, of course, has been a [faithful promoter](#) of the [conservative agenda](#), so much so that it overshadows its ostensible function as a "real" newspaper. With Anschutz apparently aligning his political agenda with that of the Kochs -- and, as Barone's and Carney's attendance suggests, the *Examiner's* editorial agenda as well -- it's just one billionaire helping out another.