

A Citizens United conspiracy, complete with two Supremes

It's time to demand answers to the most troubling questions since the Nixon era

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The New York Times is reporting that the billionaire Koch Brothers (pronounced like the soft drink) regularly convene secret conclaves of industrialists aiming to prevent government from regulating business. That wouldn't be unusual, or even unexpected.

But the attendees also include two Supreme Court justices, Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas, and three news agencies who never report on the meetings.

In 2009, the Supreme Court found that a video demonizing candidate Hillary Clinton was protected speech – and also ruled that corporate political donations were protected, private, and unlimited. The court – by a vote of five to four – gutted the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform law. Justices Scalia and Thomas voted with the bare majority. Thomas even wrote that the ruling didn't go far enough.

Arguably, no decision in modern times has given such a big political advantage to the rich. Now that we know Supreme Court justices attended Koch's political planning meetings, it is time to ask some important questions...

What if the purpose of Citizens United's video wasn't to damage Clinton, as claimed by the producers, but to give a conservative Supreme Court the opportunity to overturn campaign finance reform and open the floodgates to unlimited, secret funding in time for the 2010 election?

And what if the funders of Citizens United knew that the conclusion of the SCOTUS was reasonably forgone, because they had been privately told how at least two Justices would vote on such a case?

Sounds crazy right? But these are just some of the questions [raised by revelations](#) that the Koch Brothers hosted industrialists, media types, US Chamber of Commerce reps, and Supreme Court justices to “review strategies for combating the multitude of public policies that threaten to destroy America as we know it” and “change the balance of power in Congress this November.”

Why would two Supreme Court Justices attend meetings aiming to subvert public policy?

And what if a conspiracy was planned? Would it then be possible to engineer a court case on which those two justices could influence a desired outcome?

For a long time now, Charles and David Koch, America's third and fourth richest men, have been at the center of funding right wing causes, from fighting universal health care to the funding tea party puppet-master Dick Armey. They've denied association with the tea party but there is video to prove otherwise.

The Koch fortune comes from the company they inherited, Koch Industries, which specializes in dirty industries like oil, mining, fertilizers and ranching. They also own the logging company Georgia Pacific. They founded the Cato Institute, a conservative marketing firm masquerading as a think tank. Their father (with others) founded and funded the [John Birch Society](#), itself a secretive anti-government cabal – it runs in the family. It's likely that the Kochs had at least a funding role in Citizens United although no proof yet exists due to the ruling itself.

In Jane Mayer's [New Yorker profile](#), she describes the Koch's 1979 attempt to subvert campaign finance laws. They "were backing its Presidential candidate, Ed Clark, who was running against Ronald Reagan from the right. Frustrated by the legal limits on campaign donations, they contrived to place David [Koch] on the ticket, in the Vice-Presidential slot; upon becoming a candidate, he could lavish as much of his personal fortune as he wished on the campaign. The ticket's slogan was 'The Libertarian Party has only one source of funds: You.' In fact, its primary source of funds was David Koch, who spent more than two million dollars on the effort. "

Who funded the creation of the Hillary video and why?

The New York Times is reporting that Fox News, The Washington Examiner and The National Review were also represented at the meetings. They didn't report on them.

Why were these media outlets in attendance?

If they were not there to cover the events, what was their role?

But the real smoking gun might be the attendance of Clarence Thomas. Justice Thomas' wife is now a right-wing operative running a group named "Liberty Central." [Another Koch attendee, Karl Crow, had this to say](#) about the Citizen's United ruling:

A host of new conservative and libertarian groups have been formed since Citizens United was announced. Liberty Central, whose president is Ginni Thomas, wife of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, hired its first staffers and plans to be an online resource for energizing citizens around America's founding principles. It will be a 501(c)(4) grassroots non-profit.

Is Ginni Thomas' nonprofit funded by the Koch Brothers?

How much does she make for heading the group enabled by her husband?

Liberty Central did not respond to two requests for comment on whether Justice Thomas' court decision enabled the founding of Liberty Central. They also failed to disclose Ginni Thomas' compensation or the group's spending. [In 2009 the organization brought in 550,000, spent about \\$30,000 and sat on the rest.](#) According to the Washington Post, there were only two secret donations, one for \$500,000 and one for \$50,000. That's a fairly rarified donor level. At the very least, a Koch donation seems plausible since Justice Thomas has a relationship with the Kochs and his wife's goals exactly match the Koch agenda. Her husband's Supreme Court ruling prevents us from actually knowing.

Right now, there are more questions than answers about Koch tentacles. Some of the questions sound pretty far-fetched. But back in the Nixon era, it seemed crazy that a President – even Nixon – would try to rig an election. It's a lot easier to believe a band of industrialists might; especially the Koch brothers, who seem to have tried it at least once before.

Jimmy Zuma lives in Washington, D.C., where he writes the online opinion journal, [Smart v. Stupid](#), and contributes to Technorati. He spent 5 years in Tucson in the early 80s, when life was a little slower, swamp coolers were a little more plentiful, Tucson's legendary music scene was in full bloom, and the prevailing work ethic was “don't - unless you have to.”