



# Top 10 Lefty and Media Attacks on Business of 2014

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Although 2014 was an election year, venomous attacks weren't just in the campaign commercials. Most recently, anti-business attacks came from protesters across the country in the form of #ShutItDown. And there were many other anti-business views presented by the liberal news media, TV programming and left-wing extremists this year.

Attacks on businesses, executives and certain products were abundant this year. They included a propagandist "McMocumentary" that portrayed McDonald's as heartless, which depicted Ronald McDonald driving over his own sister after she demanded a raise. Industries including agriculture, coal and retail were also under fire.

MRC Business compiled a list of the 10 worst left-wing and media attacks on business from the past year:

## 1. #ShutItDown Endangers Lives, Calls to Shut Businesses

In Ferguson, Mo., 40 businesses were looted, vandalized, burned down or otherwise trashed by rioters following a grand jury's decision not to indict former police officer Darren Wilson, according to [Breitbart](#). Little Caesar's, Walgreens and a host of markets, cell phone stores, boutiques and restaurants were attacked.

Since then, a movement calling itself #ShutItDown has grown and spread around the country purporting to be related to calls for justice in Missouri. Shut It Down protesters continued to target businesses while also blocking roads and even access to medical facilities. Twitchy reported on Nov. 26, that the #shutitdown movement blocked roads that prevented ambulances from being able to get to the Boston Medical Center and a large hospital near Grady, Ga.

The anti-capitalists of Occupy Wall Street were one group that joined #shutitdown, taking over bridges and streets in New York City and calling for people to “[indict America](#)” by taking action at the Union Square Holiday Market, Mall of America, Bloomingdale’s and Whole Foods, according to OWS’s NYC General Assembly website.

Many protests took place in shopping malls and retail areas the day after Thanksgiving and some included staged “die-ins.” Mall protests were peaceful in the St. Louis area, but succeeded in forcing temporary store closures on the extremely busy shopping day, according to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. But near Seattle, some protesters chained doors shut in the Pacific Place mall, according to Associated Press and Reuters. In Oakland, Calif., the #shutitdown crowd disrupted train service with some even chaining themselves to trains.

Think Progress, part of the Soros-funded Center for American Progress, said, hundreds protested in the commercial hub of M Street in Georgetown, D.C. on Small Business Saturday blocking streets for more than an hour chanting “no justice, no profit,” “we shut shit down,” and “out of the shop, into the streets.”

At the Chicago protests, Kristiana Colon, of the Let Us Breathe Collective, told AP it was “a day of awareness and engagement” and said the reason they were protested during the Black Friday rush was, “We want them to think twice before spending that dollar today.”

She said, "As long as black lives are put second to materialism, there will be no peace."

## **2. Eco-Activists: Let’s ‘Buy Up and Shut Down’ Coal for \$50 Billion**

Coal has been despised and maligned by environmentalists and media outlets for years. But in 2014, two eco-lefties proposed a radical scheme to “shut down all the private and public coal companies in the U.S.” for \$50 billion.

Felix Kramer and Gil Friend promoted this in [The Guardian](#) on March 11, arguing billionaire investors who want to help the planet and mitigate climate change ought to spent billions to shutter all U.S. coal plants within 10 years. They claimed this would save money, but the Energy Information Administration (EIA) disagreed saying it would dramatically raise electricity prices.

Kramer and Friend glibly asserted that if renewable energy sources were ramped up those sources would replace coal "with no interruption to electricity supplies, adding only about a penny or two to each kilowatt-hour on electricity bills."

Their proposal itself was very simple, though its implications would be complex and severe. They called on billionaires who had already committed to "donate half of their assets to charity" to instead spend their money buying out the coal industry. They would then be able to "close and clean up the mines" and expand renewable energy to replace it within a decade.

The consequences, according to Gwen Gredehoeft of the EIA, “would be a really extreme impact” on electricity prices.

Chris Warren, press secretary of the Institute for Energy Research, also told MRC Business such a plan “would result in skyrocketing electricity prices. Our grid cannot solely rely on renewable energy sources such as wind and solar because they are unreliable and expensive.”

### **3. Perky Katie Couric Turns Propagandist with ‘Fed Up’ Movie**

Katie Couric, the news anchor who worked for all three broadcast networks before landing at Yahoo! News, admitted to Time magazine in 2014 that she is an [“activist” and “vigorous advocate”](#) when it comes to obesity.

Couric, partnered with environmentalist Laurie David, to attack the food industry in the May 2014 movie “Fed Up.” The Guardian once called Laurie David (the former wife of comedian Larry David) [“America’s foremost ecological campaigner.”](#) She also produced “An Inconvenient Truth.” Couric narrated and helped produce the “Fed Up” documentary that suggested food and sugar industries conspired to feed consumers more sugar. It also argued sugar is addictive showing a comparison between sugar and cocaine in brain scans.

Such comparisons have been promoted by [Dr. Robert Lustig](#) who has called for a war on sugar and garnered media attention from CBS and Dr. Sanjay Gupta for his crusade. But doctors with the American Council on Science and Health (ACSH) said the “toxic” sugar [“argument is entirely unsupported by any scientific evidence.”](#)

ACSH’s Dr. Gilbert Ross said, “While it may seem convincing to viewers to see Dr. Gupta drinking a sugary liquid through a straw and having the reward centers of his brain light up, this in no way serves as anything close to scientific evidence that sugar is dangerous and addictive.”

The film blamed “systematic political failure” for large amounts of sugar in food, while politicians like Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, accused the sugar industry of “lying through their teeth,” in the movie’s trailer. The movie also included a host of food regulation proponents and treated one expert with a different view in an “unfair” manner, [Reason](#) reported. ABC and CBS promoted the film, while newspapers including The New York Times and Washington Post ran glowing reviews.

News consumers should be fed up with such blatant bias by so-called journalists like Couric, and supposed documentaries that leave out facts challenging its arguments.

“It may come as a surprise but the evidence showing sugar to be a major factor in obesity is relatively weak,” said [Dr. T. Colin Campbell](#), a Cornell University professor emeritus and President of the Board for the T. Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies.

He called the movie’s premise that excess sugar is the cause of obesity, therefore sugar should simply be eliminated a “very reductionist idea.”

“Obesity is only one member of a broad spectrum of symptoms and illnesses, which are now known to share the same dietary lifestyle. And further, sugar is only one nutrient-like chemical member of a vast array of nutrient-like substances in food. It is unscientific and irresponsible for

this film to target a specific cause of one outcome while ignoring countless other outcomes that share the same (collective) cause,” Campbell wrote.

#### **4. CNBC’s Jim Cramer Praises Chipotle’s Video Attack on Farmers**

Chipotle is a social media savvy restaurant chain, so it was no surprise that the company created an internet TV series in early 2014 to promote its business. However, the [“Farmed and Dangerous”](#) series it created, infuriated farmers with its negative portrayal of the agriculture industry, even as it earned praise from the news media.

The original online video series presented on Hulu.com was a comedy that pitted a fictitious company, Animoil farm, and its public relations agency, Industrial Food Image Bureau (I.F.I.B. - get it?), against a little guy, “sustainable” farmer Chip Randolph. The laughable storyline included exploding cows. But the overarching message of the series wasn’t funny. It promoted the idea that big agriculture is guilty of nefarious practices harmful to animals and people, without concern for the facts or actual farmers.

Those messages were intentional, according to Chipotle’s communications director Chris Arnold. He told Variety it was the company’s “aim” to create a show that addressed things the company saw as a problem in the food system.

The website for the show called it an “original comedy series that explores the outrageously twisted and utterly unsustainable world of industrial agriculture.”

Of course, the media swallowed Chipotle’s propaganda. CNBC’s Jim Cramer promoted it on Feb. 3 and Feb. 4, on “Mad Money,” calling it “one of the funniest things I’ve ever seen.” “Good Morning America,” also found it “funny” and quoted two spokesmen for Chipotle, but no concerned farmers or farm associations.

Although the national media didn’t include them, Nation’s Restaurant News, farmers and a food economist criticized the series. Jayson Lusk, a food economist and Regents Professor and Willard Sparks Endowed Chair at Oklahoma State University, told MRC Business the latest video series from Chipotle was “fear marketing” because it “leaves the average consumer with the impression that there is something unsafe or unseemly” about the way their food is made.

Lusk also criticized previous videos from Chipotle, including “The Scarecrow,” saying they made it seem like all animals are full of antibiotics and growth hormones. But he said “there is no safety risk from eating animals that were on antibiotics.” The controversy over antibiotics is the possibility of antibiotic resistance and science hasn’t settled that question yet, according to Lusk.

#### **5. Chevron Victory Ignored, Lefty Outlets Continue Assault on Oil Company**

The news media helped prosecute Chevron in the court of public opinion for years, by promoting attorney Steven Donziger and his claims about the responsibility for and extent of pollution in Ecuador.

According to the Wall Street Journal, Donziger sued Texaco in 1993 (Chevron acquired Texaco in 2001) claiming the company had failed to clean up oil pits it had run with PetroEcuador in Lago Agrio, Ecuador. In 1995, the government of Ecuador signed off on a remediation agreement with Texaco in 1995, but that didn't stop Donziger and his team. They filed a new suit against Chevron Texaco in 2003.

Of the three broadcast networks, CBS did the most to promote the case against Chevron. A now infamous "60 Minutes" story on the dispute included six anti-Chevron voices versus just one spokeswoman for the company. It also ignored the incredible corruption of the Ecuadorean courts. Pelley's report also used deceptive video footage – showing not the TexPet sites in question, but the government-run oil pits PetroEcuador was responsible for. "60 Minutes" even won an [Edward R. Murrow award](#) for its assault on the company.

The "60 Minutes" report was so biased, Columbia Journalism Review's "The Audit" took it task for not checking facts and called it "[an exercise in innuendo.](#)" CJR also called CBS out for including Manuel Salinas's complaint that his well had become polluted, since Chevron and Donziger's team had tested the water and found e.coli (fecal matter) contamination, not petroleum pollution.

So it should have been big news on March 4, 2014, when a U.S. District Court ruled against Donziger in a civil racketeering lawsuit filed by Chevron. The judge ruled that the Ecuadorean court victory was "obtained by corrupt means," including ghostwritten documents. The U.S. ruling meant the \$9.5 billion award (which had been lowered from \$19 billion) could not be enforced in this country.

But the [broadcast networks took no notice of the decision](#) and failed to mention it during evening news programming March 4. The networks had time to mention that Niagara Falls had once again frozen, report a trash problem on Mount Everest, to say that rain didn't stop the Mardi Gras party in New Orleans, and to show how people can make money with their home recipes, but not a word about the verdict against Donziger.

Since that time other news outlets have begun reporting the unethical behavior of a [Vanity Fair](#) journalist who covered the Ecuador lawsuit and gave Donziger extraordinary latitude to direct the story. But left-wing outlets like [Rolling Stone](#) continued to paint Chevron as the villain and Donziger as a David fighting Goliath.

## **6. Media Target TurboTax Owner for Tax Code Complications**

Just about anyone who has filed taxes would say the U.S. tax code is complicated. Since the government wrote the code they bear the responsibility for its complexity, but not according to some media outlets.

In April, Bloomberg View, CBS Moneywatch and Vox all [latched on to a left-wing study](#) attacking Intuit, the company which owns TurboTax. Vox is a self-proclaimed news platform started by former Washington Post Wonkblogger and frequent MSNBC guest host, Ezra Klein. It's partly owned by Comcast and has shown great immaturity with [its version of news](#). That

liberal study, from the Soros-funded ProPublica, claimed the company was trying to “stymie” an alternative tax filing system in which taxpayers would just sign off already completed tax forms done by the IRS. It doesn’t take a CPA to realize why that would be good for Big Government and bad for taxpayers.

TurboTax is a software product that talks people through filing their own taxes, without going to an accountant. Intuit spokeswoman Julie Miller told CBS that the proposed new system “minimizes the taxpayers’ voice and instead maximizes revenue collection for the government.” She went on to say that “[t]hat kind of anti-consumer policy does not advance taxpayer rights, citizen empowerment or real simplification of the tax code.”

ProPublica is a left-wing outlet that got more than \$300,000 in funding from liberal billionaire George Soros. It also helped instigate the IRS’ targeting of conservative and tea party groups and continued to defend the IRS after the 2013 targeting scandal became public knowledge.

## **7. Business Bashing: It’s ‘Elementary,’ My Dear Watson**

Even in escapist television, it was impossible to avoid the idea that business people are villains who will stop at nothing, not even the death of children, to make money.

That was a recurring message on CBS’s popular, reinvented Sherlock Holmes show, “Elementary.” ([VIDEO](#)) The show returned for its third season on Oct. 30, and remained [firmly anti-capitalist](#).

In earlier seasons, Sherlock denounced his businessman father for seeking “ever-more obscene profits,” and investigated a company “so poisoned by profits” it ruthlessly silenced “the few good souls” who worked there.

This season, the Nov. 6, episode focused on a toy manufacturer who had been in hiding while awaiting trial for murder over several children’s deaths -- due to the toys he sold. Chemicals used in one of this toys behaved liked GHB when swallowed, according to the plot’s premise. According to the show, the toy maker, Elias Openshaw, knew of the danger but sold the toys anyway.

WATSON: "The FBI charged Openshaw with murder. So, you believe he knew the toys were poison but sold them anyway?"

SPECIAL AGENT BODEN: "We didn't believe, we had proof."

## **8. Left Promotes Taxi Monopolies, Slams ‘Parasitic’ Rideshares Like Uber**

In spite of the left’s history as trust-busting proponents, when it came to the [modern feud of taxi vs. rideshare companies](#), liberals were for union-controlled monopolies and against free market competition.



Dissatisfaction with taxi service, which in many cities were a government-backed monopoly, was part of the reason ridesharing smartphone apps became popular with riders and investors.

Companies like Uber, Lyft and SideCar harnessed technology and created apps to connect people who want a ride, to willing drivers near them. While there have been some concerns, they also had many satisfied customers. The rideshare companies also had a fight on their hands from regulators trying to keep them out of certain cities or states, and from the left-wing websites and economists claiming they are “exploitative” or “terrible for the economy.”

Alternet’s Allegra Kirkland condemned Uber and similar businesses on June 22, complaining about the “5 Traits” in [“Shares with Exploitative Old School Capitalist Companies.”](#) Her left-wing criticisms were used as a source by [Time magazine’s](#) website and republished by [Salon.com](#). Liberal economist Dean Baker also attacked the companies in The Guardian.

Taxi drivers and their unions have protested in cities including Washington, D.C., [London](#), Madrid and Paris. In D.C., the Teamsters union helped clogged streets, but a trade group representing the fleet owners was behind the most “aggressive” protests, The [Washington Examiner](#) said. That fleet owners group has launched a huge national campaign against ridesharing.

In contrast to Kirkland and Baker’s attacks, The Washington Post offered a surprising balanced take on the taxi/ridesharing feud on June 22. Emily Badger’s lengthy business story explained, in great detail, how “a taxicab is a car remade by government, modified dozens of ways by edicts within subsections of articles of the city’s tax code.” She also examined how artificial scarcity was created in cities where government controls the number of taxi medallions.

## **9. Golden Arches Under Fire From Left**

The same left-wing propagandist group behind the “Granny Off the Cliff” video went after McDonald’s and several Republican politicians in May 2014.

In a creepy video called “You Salt My Fry, I’ll Salt Yours,” the [Agenda Project Action Fund](#) alleged that McDonald’s was conspiring with politicians to stop minimum wage hikes, all while being cold and heartless to its employees. In the “McMocumentary,” an actor played a disturbing, executive version of Ronald McDonald smoking a cigar in his limo while calling up politicians.

The faux McDonald clowning around while he complained about minimum wage proposals and lobbied Republican senators to defeat the wage hike. “If I pay her more, I make less. It’s simple McMath,” the clown quipped.

The cigar-smoking clown pushed workers to settle for welfare payments instead of higher wages before hitting his own sister, a minimum wage worker at McDonald’s, with his car. Following that scene, the video concluded with “McDonald’s: Running Over America. One Minimum Wage Worker at a Time.”

The progressives' video also parroted the tired liberal fallacy that businesses would respond to minimum wage hikes by reducing executives' salaries rather than reducing hiring or raising prices.

However, economic research indicates that, far from hurting CEOs, minimum wage laws hurt wage-earners and consumers. The [Congressional Budget Office found](#) in February 2014 that current minimum wage proposals would cost 500,000 jobs. This confirmed the [Cato Institute's 2012 findings](#) that minimum wage laws “[come] at the expense of lower skilled workers who are shut out of the labor market.” Cato also found in that same study that “A decision to increase the minimum wage is not cost-free” because “consumers may also pay for it with higher prices.”

### **10. Grist Tweets Attack on ‘Frightening & Sociopathic’ Former CEO**

Grist staff writer David Roberts delivered a [vicious verbal attack](#) against a businessperson, when he tweeted about Don Blankenship on Oct. 9. Grist is a left-wing website devoted to environmental issues.

Roberts was commenting on an MSNBC interview of the former Massey Energy Co.'s chairman and CEO.

“@chrishayes interviews Don Blankenship, one of the most frightening & sociopathic individuals I've ever covered,” Roberts tweeted. Hayes own MSNBC segment attempted to paint Blankenship as the “dark lord of coal country,” while the former CEO defended America's use of coal.

Roberts had to apologize back in 2006 after he made an inappropriate call for a kind of “climate Nuremberg” for climate skeptics. His apology was for the Nuremberg comparison, although he stood by his view that skeptics should face jail time.