

How to Spin Frienemies and Influence Sheeple, People!

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Yes. It's an op/ed. But if it makes you feel any better I'd prefer to call this a forum as there are limits to my scholarship about macroeconomics and docketed topics of the IMF, World Bank, and the WTO. About constitutional entities like the 2010's Citizen's United Decision and its champion, the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), national chamber of commerce splinter group inspired by the late Supreme Court Justice Lewis Powell Jr. who would write up a memorandum addressed to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, inspired by Ralph Nader in 1965 who'd written up his own paper on GM *Not Safe at Any Speed*, which was a spearhead for the consumer advocate movement.

Nixon had nominated Lewis Powell Jr. to be a SCOTUS justice the same day as William Rehnquist in October 21st of '71. Myself born less than a half year before, I didn't have much of an informed opinion about that. But Powell's good friend and neighbor Eugene B. Sydnor Jr., education director of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce had a few opinions on the leftist swing in America since Roosevelt's sacrilege upon U.S. trade and thought a coronated man like Powell might put a little weight behind such a publication, entitled **Attack on the American Free Enterprise System**. The paper was a clarion call and blue print from corporate America to more aggressively mold the minds of this country toward their way of thinking about the law, government, politics and business in that they should share his vision about a pro-business, anti-socialist, minimally government-regulated business climate that existed in the industrialist nation prior to Roosevelt's pinko-tilting New Deal.

Preceding Powell's nomination to the SCOTUS he owned his own law practice and was one of the directors of Philip Morris's executive board. He was sick and tired of hearing about the mounting scientific evidence that his company's product was causing lung cancer in its many customers, and when the spokespeople at PM spoke out against these scientific authorities PM's corporate officers discovered they had to defend themselves against more of it. Powell felt this was an attack on his company's 1st amendment rights to free speech because, in spite of being a lawyer positioned to sit on the highest court in the nation, apparently he didn't understand how that amendment worked. Here it is in a nut shell: "The answer to free speech you don't like is more free speech." You know who said that? Maybe Marvel Comics most conservative creation: The Punisher. But the way he saw things scientific authorities, like the American Lung

Association, were not entitled to speak out about cigarettes or the companies that profit off spreading carcinogenic substances. They were entitled to shut their pie holes.

At any rate this memorandum wound up marshaling a few key players at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Guys like Sydnor, but also guys like those that came from the Earhardt Foundation, who's money came from good ol' fashioned American Oil, or The Smith Richardson Foundation, who's money was the result of a cough medicine dynasty, or The Carthage Foundation which was run by Richard Mellon Scaife. You read that right. A Mellon heir. ALEC was founded in Chicago, 1973 as the Conservative Caucus of State Legislators, a project initiated by Mark Rhoads, an Illinois state house staffer to counter the Environmental Protection Agency, wage, and price control crowd who were making corporations that were paying U.S. Chamber of Commerce dues somewhat uncomfortable. Conservative legislators thought the word "conservative" was becoming unpopular at the time (whatever for? Vietnam? Watergate?) so, masters of rebranding, the Republican think tank thought American Legislative Exchange Council was vanilla enough to get a pass for a while. Paul Weyrich, zealous conservative activist, who also co-founded the Heritage Foundation (another conservative think tank — why just stop at one?), co-founded ALEC, along with Henry Hyde who became an Illinois R congressman, and Lou Barnett who ran a political action committee for Ronald Reagan who totally didn't bias voters against Jimmy Carter during that Iran hostage fiasco.

These guys found themselves in good company before long if you consider good company a number of state and local politicians who'd go on to statewide office, including Bob Kasten, Tommy Thompson, and Governor Scott Walker of Wisconsin. The same Scott Walker discovered as besties crony with billionaires Charles and the late David Koch, heirs to their father's Russian expedition to develop one of their thirty oil refineries and founder of three more refineries found on Nazi Germany soil. One in Hamburg that definitely fueled the Luftwaffes which took out a minimum of 40,000 people, including civilian targets, according to Google. But why allow sucking Satan's Koch bias your opinion of Wisconsin's pride/joy? There's John Engle of Michigan, Terry Branstad of Iowa, Mitch Daniels of Indiana, and John Boehner (former House Speaker) and Governor Kasich of Ohio. Several members of Congress also hung loose with the organization during its growing years including Rep. Jack Kemp R, former football hero of New York, Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina R., Senator James L. Buckley of New York in case you thought every NY politician carried water for the progressives, Rep. Phil Crane R of Illinois, and Rep Eric Cantor of Virginia, House Whip, and Republican caucus' favorite token Jew. This being a forum, someone refresh me, what was Eric Cantor's totally non-sycophantic response to Donald Trump's comment: "Any Jewish people that vote for a Democrat" shows "either a total lack of knowledge or great disloyalty." Just bi-curious. And, more or less, snarky.

Since the '80s ALEC has also kept itself more than occupied as the conservative think tank most active in climate change denial and the one with the most obvious reason for

embracing this anti-philosophy. As the splinter group of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce they seek to limit the legal liability of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce membership, for which said membership might otherwise be held responsible if not for hiding behind ALEC's aegis. They think there is simply too much money to be sacrificed and lost to vying customers interrupting business as usual with regard to trades that rate highly in their carbon footprint — namely domestic oil companies (including their dangerous offshore rigging activities), hydro fracking companies (including their oil shale counterparts), the refining arms of both these sectors, to say nothing of the the vehicular companies and the housing authorities who both rely on said energy capture. These sectors are all affected by decisions made by the E.P.A., and though I don't dispute it is possible to over-regulate — Justice Lewis Powell's most castrating fear — the corollaries of *under*-regulating risk far more than mere emasculation. The hazard of total and irreversible butchery to the body exists if we're to keep waxing metaphorically here. And, staying with this metaphor, while we may suffer the humiliation of castration in an exercise of over-regulation: A. By hitting the brakes we're more than likely left, at least, an inch with which to piss. And B. SINCE this discourse is in fact mere metaphor I'd remind the quondam Justice Powell as I'd remind *all* die-hard conservatives that your multitude of penises will all regenerate back to their prior length if not beyond in the event of said E.P.A. audit. *That* damage is **not** irreversible.

Whereas, in the event of *under*-regulating an environmental crisis, that is not merely an “act of God” but one provoked by the negligence of human husbandry, our next crisis could be one that floods an area of even higher real estate value than sub-sea level sections of New Orleans. Great sections of Long Island, only forty some odd feet above sea level would be affected, and that Manhattan, only ten feet above sea level, would be affected is a foregone conclusion hence transforming this island into a Venetian experience in mere moments, paling the experience of the 9/11/01 crisis, comparatively. Consider only the subterranean life and operations on this island for some instructive visuals, and you'll digest only a portion of what I mean. The entirety of Florida right up to it's panhandle would become an American Atlantis for which we could charge no customers to tour, and these are but appetizers to other real estate the world round which would be affected by a significant rise of sea levels. A rise, now expected, much more shortly.

On the very day Betty White would shuffle loose this mortal coil (the New Year's Eve preceding 2022 — circle that calendar date, folks!) an even more dire consequence occurred, and, while I'm sure many White fans may find what I say a sacrilege, I'm willing to bet Betty White ***HERSELF*** would have shouted, “*Idiots at the New York Times content management! I'm page 25 news next to what's just happened.*” Indeed, a fragment of Antarctic ice the *size*(and rough *shape*) of Florida broke off from its ice shelf to slowly melt into the sea. News which would be alarming enough if not for the fact that that very glacier section was holding back an AVALANCHE of more glacier now sure to pile out with it in just a handful of months. Yes, our Arctic ice problem is mostly one that's above water. The Greenland glacial melts featured in Al

Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* are due, in great part, thanks to compounding levels of carbon dioxide and methane, the usual suspect greenhouse gasses in atmospheric global warming, however there is a subterranean component as well involving the heating of our oceans and Betty White's convenient shuffling free of this mortal coil covered up that inconvenient inevitability. Rises of at least ten feet were estimated for 2100. Dial that figure a few feet higher and perhaps fifty years closer now. Real Estate companies and all the constituent unregulated shadow bank entities: investment banks, private mutual funds, insurance and reinsurance companies, hedge funds, "Business Development companies," and regulated bank giants take note. About 250 million people who live by the coasts are going to break the internet before long, and you'd best get jiggy with that yesterday.

Despite what a rash of ecological scientists armed with what most would agree was more than enough intellectual ordnance to fire back against the wellspring of conservative think tank "studies" — think tanks who shoot up like rain forest mushrooms after a hearty downpour, who all back one another and support one other's uncredentialed studies as ironclad on conservative media infotainment, to which I'm totally not indicting Roger Ailes Fox News Channel, or Rupert Murdoch's New York Post, or Alex Jones Infowars, or Glenn Beck's The Blaze, or Steve Bannon's Breitbart News — pause for breath — ("studies" endorsed by individuals who boast doctoral degrees but carry obvious water for these institutions when you examine who's funding their bullsh {caff, caff} "research"), who have obvious conflicts of interest regarding the bullshit they're collectively ejecting into the ether to enable the environment's biggest offenders of the relevant but understaffed regulatory agency (i.e. the E.P.A.) to police.

Examine this list I source Google for. These are only the *American* conservative think tanks now. The conservative think tanks in other parts of the worlds are comparatively sparse. Behold all these institutions that get their funding from shell companies with very benign names. Each one of those NPOs has a vague name that could mean anything or nothing to anyone. That's the point. Billionaires hire these propagandists called public relations people to brand both their institutions and their institutions "backers" — there greenbacks given a shell company alias with benign, innocuous names. No where, in the history of America, has there ever been a conservative NPO (other than maybe the NRA?) with a memorable, fearsome name. The idea to the art of invisibility is to be forgotten almost as soon as beheld. So behold:

United States:

- [Heritage Foundation](#)
- [Freedomworks](#)
- Mississippi Center for Public Policy
- [American Enterprise Institute](#)
- [Manhattan Institute for Policy Research](#)
- [Lexington Institute](#)

- [Claremont Institute](#)
- [Hudson Institute](#)
- [Cato Institute](#)
- [Hoover Institution](#)
- [Project for the New American Century](#)
- [Center for Security Policy](#)
- [Foreign Policy Research Institute](#)
- [Center for Immigration Studies](#)
- [Center for Strategic and International Studies](#)
- [The Federalist Foundation](#)

Here. I just tapped on one — The Hudson Institute — and here’s what I found in the body verbatim: The Hudson Institute "is a nonpartisan, independent policy research organization dedicated to innovative research and analysis that promotes global security, prosperity, and freedom."^[1] The Hudson Institute is an American conservative think tank.

Anyone else see the glaring contradiction? I remember something like it when I watched Austin Powers last sequel, Goldmember, wherein Austin’s (and consequently Dr. Evil’s) dad Nigel (played by Michael Caine) utters in his inimically British way, “There are only two things I can’t stand in this world: People who are intolerant of other people’s cultures, and the Dutch.” There you have it. We’re a nonpartisan, independent policy research organization dedicated to innovative research and analysis that promotes global security, prosperity, and freedom — and by the by we’re also a conservative think tank that pisses on progressivism from a great height. Mwah! I blow you kisses for your exquisite bullshit candor, Hudson Institute! May I have another glowing example of manure? Let’s try the Cato Institute! J/K I’ll let you hunt and peck as an appendicular exercise, but every last one of these hyperlinks redirects you to Conservapedia.com. Oh yes.

So armageddon, or at least the non biblical version is on it’s way, some predicting climate changes palpable effect as early as 2040, but there are a few other games that the splinter group of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has rigged, not least of which is the wealthy reserving their right to weaponize their money as influence upon democratically held elections. This ambition came in the form of the U.S. Supreme Court decision Citizen’s United v. the FEC (Federal Election Commission) 2010 that was already enforcing a prior campaign election decision Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 which said it was illegal to make political advertisements for a campaign 30 days before an election. A Republican film criticized 2008 candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton, and then took the FEC to court (something I wasn’t even aware could be done — can I take a police precinct to court to overturn my last speeding ticket?) arguing the first amendment right to free speech was being impinged. The result of this decision? Corporations are people. Labor unions are people. Non profit political action committees are people. And that all these people had the right to free speech. The way these “people” speak is

with cash semaphore, so if the “free” part in speech sounds vaguely Orwellian that’s not an overflow of wax in your ears. You heard that right (though what do I know? It may *be* time to have your ears flushed by your ear/nose/throat doctor anyway. Both things *can* be true. Right?).

This is where that conservative idea that money is speech first took flight. Not long afterward I became aware of a little known banking vice president, registered republican, who responded, “**No.** Money *isn’t* speech. Money is property, taxable and rescindable by the government, under the umbrella of eminent domain.” However his voice was probably 100 to 110 dBs at its loudest whereas hundreds of millions of dollars certainly clear that range without making a peep because, where money is concerned, its silence is deafening. A donor became able to donate any amount they wanted, and was able to do so anonymously. This means that a Russian oligarch (not outing anyone) can and likely has invested in one, many, or *any* campaign contribution in any figure s/he could afford since 2010, hence desecrating our democracy, and, even though it is illegal by virtue of FEC laws for a foreign government or citizen from said foreign government to participate in any of our elections? Thanks to the Citizen’s United decision’s anonymity clause the identity of any contributor isn’t verifiable. The money donated to any campaign might come *only* from foreign sources, and no one would ever know it. Why is the contribution amount an NPO, labor organization, or corporation not mandated to disclose their identities when making pornographic contributions to some state senate or in Idaho? Because (and try to make it through this sentence without smiling) said entities might otherwise feel too intimidated to share their 1st Amendment protected opinions, said opinions made manifest as a Deutsche Bank check. They might feel inhibited, getting into the election process according to... {drumroll/high-hat} ALEC.

The McCain-Feingold bill was all about eliminating privately funded campaigns, to take the money out of politics. Dissolving all the pomp and pageantry that block the civil arteries like a DVT. It would make political campaigning public and flat regarding the amount of money that went into any campaign. Yes, we’d pay for them, but what we’d pay would come out of our taxes as pennies. The exertions politicians put into campaigning wouldn’t have to exceed the exertion they placed into merely showing up for work at the Senate building. Each candidate qualified to run by the bi-laws of the FEC would receive equal funding. Thus they’d be **fair** — which is a dirty word in the political world because *up* is *down* and *Black Lives Matter* only after a slogan saying so is made manifest on network news. Welcome to Washington DC.

I’m indigent. I have only ideas. Not the wherewithal to develop a website or an app or some other glitchcraft that could evolve the bacterial transformation of an idea into a megaphone for people to address their senators and congressperson and stridently advocate for an idea that truly would make America great again. But someone reading this does. Somebody knows a guy behind the guy behind another guy in the biblical sense who knows someone who codes and could get that job done. You now have the ideas. Share this idea with the friends and frienemies. Spin frienemies and influence sheeple, people.

I have many other issues with regard to the nation, its knowledge of civics, the status quo and ALEC's primacy being at the forefront of it/them? Not my only preponderance. This will be the first of what may wind up being many of "You know what grinds my gears?" forums that I invite readers to volley their own opinions and editorials.

Be warned.