

Dynamist Blog

Has Jane Mayer Destroyed the Cato Institute?

by Virginia Postrel • Mar 27, 2012 at 3:51 pm

This [Breitbart article](#) on the ongoing Kochs-vs.-Cato fight makes stronger claims than its evidence supports. (One damning quote doesn't make Ed Crane responsible for Jane Mayer's hit piece.) But it does claim one piece of new reporting, which confirms my own hypothesis that the fight is a direct result of Cato's reaction to Mayer's piece--trying to distance Cato rather than defend the Kochs.

Mayer's New Yorker article prompted a September 2010 phone call between David Koch and Crane. According to a source with direct knowledge of the call, Crane alleged that the damage to the Koch brothers' reputation had been so severe and had generated so much intense (and negative) media scrutiny that the Cato Institute's association with the Kochs had now become a liability. To remedy that, Crane said that Cato's shareholder arrangement should be scrapped. Specifically, Crane said the Kochs ought to forfeit their shareholder rights. Furthermore, Crane proposed radically altering Cato's existing governance structure to that of a "self-perpetuating" board.

If the report is correct, Jane Mayer has probably destroyed the Cato Institute.