

TheModerate Voice

NPR Screws the Pooch

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CONTRIBUTOR, MEDIA, POLITICS, RELIGION, SATIRE.

APR 1ST, 2012

I didn't have to wait long. On Wednesday, I wrote ([Putting the 'cad' in and taking the 'bra' off of 'Abracadabra'](#)):

Hocus pocus: Abracadabra.

And another "profile" of a shadowy *post-Citizens United* figure [Bill Maher] who's ponied up \$1 million is completed. I can't hardly wait for that there [Foster Friess piece](#) [onNational Public Radio].

And then [Saturday's Weekend Morning Edition ran said predicted piece](#): talk about yer instant gratification! (And about hiding the piece from the mass audience by dumping it to the weekend.)[Santorum's Saviour profiled!](#)

And, them what has been holding their breath can let it out now: it's every bit the brown-nosing, down-on-their-knees insult to actual journalism that was expected: an abomination delivered in dulcet and moderate tones.

Consider: the Bill Maher "balance" piece on a "liberal" million dollar donor was focused on the astroturf accusations of a woman-hating spokesmodel from a woman-hating organization claiming that Bill Maher hates women.

Gotcha.

[Here is the sum total of "objections" or "balance," or "equal time" great journalism](#) and digging into Foster Friess, like they "dug" on Bill Maher:

A government affairs lobbyist with the liberal watchdog group Public Citizen says Friess demonstrates just how weak the campaign finance laws have become.

“When you see Foster Friess showing up at Rick Santorum rallies and at the same time providing unlimited funding and presumably direction to the Santorum superPAC, you know it literally means that the contribution limits have been gutted,” said Public Citizen’s Craig Holman.

Friess declined to be interviewed for this piece. One reason was that NPR wouldn’t agree to air the interview unedited.

Oh Boy! What Woodward & Bernstein deep digging and reporting. “**Craig Holman**” is listed [on Public Citizen’s ‘experts’ page](#), so you can see how much digging was done for this piece. (Fortunately, unlike Ms. Nance, Mr. Holman is actually a qualified expert on something.) Here’s part of his citation:

Craig Holman, Ph.D., is the government affairs lobbyist for Public Citizen, serving as the organization’s Capitol Hill lobbyist on ethics, lobbying and campaign finance rules.

Holman is an expert on campaign finance reform, governmental ethics, lobbying practices and the impact of money in politics.

Of course, Holman doesn’t actually know a lot about Friess, per se. He’s commenting on the abomination called “Citizens United,” but you know, there’s plenty of space in this report for peripheral issues and in-depth analysis.

Ha ha. April Fool!

Foster Friess gives \$1.6 million to Santorum’s SuperPAC and pals around with Santorum. That’s it? No responses? No defenses from Friends of Friess?

“And Friess is the fellow standing behind Rick Santorum for his 20-minute “Game On!” quasi-victory speech in Iowa...”

– As reported on this blog on January 6, 2012. A full week or so before anyone in the News Media (save for a Jackson Hole site) noticed. Ah, Morpheus!

Nope.

Anything about Foster’s being the former president of the Council on National Policy?

Nope.

Anything about Friess' connections to the Tea Party?

Nope.

Anything about Foster's \$1 million contribution to the Koch's secret millionaires' club?

Uh, no.*

[* You might remember this from the *New York Times*:

Secretive Republican Donors Are Planning Ahead
By KATE ZERNIKE
Published: October 19, 2010

A secretive network of Republican donors is heading to the Palm Springs area for a long weekend in January, but it will not be to relax after a hard-fought election — it will be to plan for the next one.

[...]

The participants included some of the nation's wealthiest families and biggest names in finance: private equity and hedge fund executives like John Childs, Cliff Asness, Steve Schwarzman and Ken Griffin; Phil Anschutz, the entertainment and media mogul ranked by Forbes as the 34th-richest person in the country; Rich DeVos, the co-founder of Amway; Steve Bechtel of the giant construction firm; and Kenneth Langone of Home Depot.

The group also included longtime Republican donors and officials, including **Foster Friess**, Fred Malek and former Attorney General Edwin Meese III....

The *Mother Jones* story on that meeting, "**Exclusive: The Koch Brothers' Million-Dollar Donor Club**" is [HERE](#).]

Anything about his shadowy connections to The "National Christian Foundation"?

Well, yes, actually:

Friess has sent millions of dollars in donations to Haiti, New Orleans and Asia for disaster relief. **He gives to Christian charities through the National Christian Foundation.**

Oh, you mean THIS National Christian Foundation?

Inside The #1 Religious Right Money Machine

By Michael Reynolds 10/29/2006 10:04:19 PM EST

[...] Millions of dollars flow from NCF into **every major and minor ministry, broadcaster, policy tank and advocacy group on the Christian Right.** Since 1999 James Dobson's Focus On The Family has received more than \$10 million. The Family Research Council, co-founded by Dobson and led by Tony Perkins, was awarded \$4 million.

NCF was even more generous to Campus Crusade For Christ, founded by Religious Right pioneer Bill Bright and to Atlanta's star evangelist, Egyptian-born Michael Youssef's Church of the Apostles and his international broadcast ministry Leading The Way with each receiving \$22 million. The Religious Right legal powerhouses— the Alliance Defense Fund and the American Center for Law and Justice— lapped up \$2.7 million. **Another \$1.5 million was channeled from Atlanta into “creation science” proselytizers—The Discovery Institute, Answers In Genesis and Institute for Creation Research.**

NCF's gift list to the politically charged Religious Right goes on and on—from the predominant groups headed by **Dobson, Chuck Colson, D. James Kennedy, Gary Bauer, Don Wildmon, Ted Haggard, Beverly LaHaye and Jerry Falwell** to the outright theocratic ministries led by **Christian Reconstructionists Gary Demar, Doug Phillips and Mark Rushdoony.**

[...]

Then there are those on NCF's gift list that one might not readily associate with the foundation's pledge to exclusively support groups that proclaim “the gospel of Jesus Christ.” These include **The American Conservative Union, The Heritage Foundation, Cato**

Institute, Free Congress Foundation, Accuracy In Media, The Federalist Society, Judicial Watch, The Center for Public Justice, The Capital Research Institute, the American Foreign Policy Council, The Center for Libertarian Studies and The Ludwig von Mises Institute.

[...]

NCF is also consistently generous to the groups within the State Policy Network, an extension of Weyrich's American Legislative Exchange Council. **The SNP has 40 state-based right-wing organizations in 37 states** that are linked to Focus On The Family, The Heritage Foundation and Free Congress Foundation. **NCF has spread more than \$3 million among 11 of these groups, with half that amount going to the Georgia Public Policy Foundation.**

Note that the NCF is based in [Alpharetta, Georgia](#)

Now, take a look at this:

After reviewing NCF documents, Frances Hill was stunned by the maze. "It may be they are trying to hide money trails," she said. "Such as every time they engage in a transaction there is a fee that benefits a financial advisor or broker. This complexity also is a conflict of interest signal. It's utterly and completely unnecessary. I haven't heard of anything quite like it." **The huge fees paid by NCF to founder and board director Ron Blue's company for investment management astonished Hill. Between 1999 and 2003 RB & Co. was paid at least \$2.4 million, including payments of \$751,584 in 2000 and \$730,481 in 2001.**

Section B. Independent Contractors

1 Complete this table for your five highest compensated independent contractors who received \$100,000 or more of compensation from the organization

(A) Name and business address	(B) Description of services	(C) Compensation
STELLAR FINANCIAL INC 600 Main Street Suite 100 Strousburg, PA 18360	SOFTWARE/CONSULTING	273,882
RONALD BLUE & COMPANY 300 Colonia Center pkwy Roswell, GA 30076	INV MANAGEMENT SERV	420,635
MAKARIOS 401 GLENNEYRE STREET SUITE C LAGUNA BEACH, CA 92651	INVESTMENT ADVISORY	120,000
FRIESS ASSOCIATES P O Box 576 JACKSON, WY 83001	INV MANAGEMENT SERV	873,398
AST CAPITAL TRUST CO P O Box 52129 Phoenix, AZ 85072	Investment Software	126,044

Blue is second from the top in the 2008 tax return. Take a look at who's second from the bottom.

Note that "Friess Associates" is run by Foster's Son in Jackson Hole, a few miles from daddy's house. Much of Foster's money is holdings in "Friess and Associates." Here's his contributions to the NCF, from Foster's Foundation's 2008 Tax Return:

The Lynn & Foster Friess Family Foundation
EIN: 51-0260302
Year Ending: 4/30/08

8,100,000

FORM 990-PF, PART I, LINE 25

Recipient Name and address (home or business)	Show any relationship to any foundation manager or substantial contributor	Purpose of grant or contribution	Foundation status of recipient	Amount
Latino Resource Center PO Box 3382 Jackson, WY 83001	None	Charitable Contribution	501(c)(3)	150
Crescent Project 8445 Keyslone Crossing Blvd Indianapolis, IN 46240	None	Charitable Contribution	501(c)(3)	4,129
Islamic Society for Liberty & Modernity PO Box 2373 Jackson, WY 83001	None	Charitable Contribution	501(c)(3)	10,000
One Nation Under God 640 Kempsville Rd Virginia Beach, VA 23464	None	Charitable Contribution	501(c)(3)	10,000
The Philanthropy Roundtable 1150 17th St., NW Suite 503 Washington, DC 20036	None	Charitable Contribution	501(c)(3)	1,000
Freedom Center 14148 Magnolia Blvd, Ste 103 Sherman Oaks, CA 91423	None	Charitable Contribution	501(c)(3)	618
National Christian Foundation 1100 Johnson Ferry Road, N.E. Suite 900 Atlanta, GA 30342	None	Charitable Contribution	501(c)(3)	8,100,000
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS & GRANTS				8,125,897

They seem to have missed this about “The Biggest Foundation You Never Heard Of” ([bigger than Goodwill Industries](#)):

Investigative reporter [Reynolds explains their finances](#):

Tax law and non-profit experts who reviewed NCF documents and their structure for this story were taken aback by this half-billion dollar, multi-layered money machine. Frances Hill* described it as “a blending of capitalist entrepreneurship, Christian values and political muscle.”

J.J. McNab, a leading charitable and insurance analyst who recently testified before the Senate Finance Committee on donor-advised funds, described NCF as **“Enron-like in its complexity ... Its’ complexity is a big red flag,”** said McNab. **“Why so complex? Why so many layers, so many supporting organizations and murky connections?”**

After reviewing NCF documents, Frances Hill* was stunned by the maze. **“It may be they are trying to hide money trails, ”** she said. **“Such as every time they engage in a transaction there is a fee that benefits a financial advisor or broker.** This complexity also is a conflict of interest signal. It’s utterly and completely unnecessary. I haven’t heard of anything quite like it.”

[* "Dr. Frances R. Hill, a professor at University of Miami School of Law. A tax and campaign finance specialist , Hill has testified numerous times before both House and Senate committees on non-profit abuses." *from the same story*]

But I guess they at least mentioned the NCF, if only at the end of the obligatory list of Phosters Phamous Philanthropy. Well played, NPR!

Anything about Foster’s financial fostering of the creepy *Daily Caller*, whose [Tucker Carlson and his soulmate Andrew Breitbart were working in tandem](#)* at the time of the latter’s demise? No, but we DO get this:

[* NPR would do well [to listen to this](#) before continuing with their series.]

Friess also makes frequent calls for more civility in politics, and more unity.

"I think the wealthy people and the people on the lower income rungs are coming together in a unity, which is exciting, because we're sick and tired of the divisiveness that's been generated in our country," Friess said during his February interview with Reuters TV.

Well, that's sure comforting, and completely at odds with his actions, but hey. Gotta say something in tepid defense of the tepid attacks, right?

And this:

Of course, Romney supporters criticize the Santorum superPAC for the attack ads against Romney, ads that they believe are prolonging the Republican primary fight and making it more divisive.

Ouch! Such criticism must sting like the bitter tears of orphans in disaster-ridden places that Phoster phlies in his philanthropizin.

"NCF has been instrumental in handling the back-office functions of the gift-matching Funds I've set up for the Katrina and Tsunami disasters. A huge administrative burden has been lifted from my shoulders, allowing me to focus on ministry work, instead." – Foster Friess

But not to worry. NPR immediately rescues Friess from **three-quarters of the criticism** (ignoring his "me and my shadow" boosterism and intense behind the scenes work on behalf of Santorum):

Overall, money from Friess accounts for about one-quarter of the superPAC's ads.

Anything about Foster being a long-standing Delaware resident who retired to Wyoming and now pretends to be a cowboy? Well, sort of: