

Cool lies about a hot truth (5)

Doug Craig

April 22, 2012 11:59 PM | [No Comments](#)

"[...] Bjorn Lomborg is like the Oliver Stone of climate change. He has written a book that sets out to support a certain point of view, and, unless you are an expert, you will never know which facts are correct and appropriately used and which are not. You might not be aware that large (and crucial) chunks of the story are skipped altogether. But like a Stone movie, it is a well-told tale and raises some questions that are worth thinking about. So if you are going to read only one book on climate, don't read this one. But if you are going to read ten, reading Lomborg may be worthwhile."

[Brian O'Neill](#)

"I know a lot about nuclear weapons and nothing about climate change."
Freemon Dyson

A friend suggested I watch [Bjørn Lomborg's](#) film, *Cool It*. He is of the mind that much of what we hear from global climate change "**believers**" is pretty negative, depressing and de-motivating. I am sympathetic. If someone tells you the end of the world is coming and there's nothing you can do about it, you probably aren't going to recycle, change your lightbulbs, or write letters to your congressman.

There is another side, of course. And that relates to my "**house-on-fire**" metaphor. If you find yourself in such an emergency, are you an alarmist if you yell at your family to wake up and get out?

What is the appropriate level of alarm when most climate scientists are now telling us we only have a few years left to avoid dangerous climate change?

What do we do when we are told we have only a few years before we cross a point of no return? Continue to deny? Is that really the best we can do?

There are things we can do to fix this problem. Boring, sober scientists have been warning us for 20 years with their measured scientific jargon that this is a crisis and could become a catastrophe.

We have ignored them and their scary reports. Most of us have never read them. And yet what they have predicted is happening. Temperatures are steadily rising. Glaciers are melting. Seas are rising. These are physical effects that some pretend aren't happening. But they are real and will only grow worse as we sit back and leave it "for somebody other than (us) to be the one to care."

I agree Lomborg is an upbeat guy and his film *Cool It* could make us think this global warming thing isn't so bad after all. But how do we know he is right? How do we know we can trust what he says?

One suspicious aspect of *Cool It* is how he allowed two climate change deniers to dominate the film and comment on Al Gore's documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*. Lomborg had just finished telling us that there is a bell curve that represents climate scientists and the vast majority of them believe it is real, is human-caused and will lead to a rise in temperature this century between 3°F and 7°F. We know there are tens of thousands of these guys and gals so how come Lomborg couldn't find one to talk about the Gore movie?

In fact, Gore's main science adviser, NASA's James Hansen was in the Lomborg film. Those facts in *An Inconvenient Truth* come from Hansen! Hansen is familiar with the last time the temperature rose 3°F and 7°F. Sea level was several feet higher than it is now. So why didn't Lomborg have Hansen give us his impressions of the film?

Instead, he turned to two of the most extreme outliers among climate scientists. Freeman Dyson and Richard Lindzen are scientists but their views are in complete opposition to all the science we currently have about our warming climate. They don't believe global warming is a problem. We are not surprised to find them express contempt for Gore and his movie.

Dyson states, "**Al Gore's film. That's a brilliant film. Full of lovely things but the only problem is that a lot of it isn't true and a lot of it that is true is misinterpreted. It's a great piece of propaganda.**"

So why should we believe Dyson? He is not a climate scientist and has not conducted any research in regard to global warming or climate change. Before he retired, the 88-year-old was a "**theoretical physicist and mathematician, famous for his work in quantum electrodynamics, solid-state physics, astronomy and nuclear engineering.**"

Three years ago he gave a talk on "**Climate Disasters, Safe Nukes and Other Myths**" before [the Cato Institute](#), a conservative think tank funded by ExxonMobil and the American Petroleum Institute.

[David Biello](#), a journalist with Scientific American attended this talk [and wrote](#), "**...Dyson's purpose seems to be to throw out 'heretical' ideas that can then spur further debate.**" He quoted Dyson as saying, "**I know a lot about nuclear weapons and nothing about climate change.**"

'I like to express heretical opinions, Dyson said, with an impish gleam in his eye. 'They might even happen to be true.'"

This is Lomborg's expert. This is who he chooses to trust. Now it is our choice. Who do we trust?