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The Powell Memo

By [John Amato](#)

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We already covered BNF and Bernie Sanders great new video about [the Koch Brothers](#) that's like a RWNM 101 primer. We write about it often enough on C&L, but it never hurts to continue the discussion of its influence on the media and the people. Readers new into politics may not understand why Conservative messaging is so powerful.

If you want to know how this all began--check out this article about [The Powell Memo](#), which was authored in 1971. It set the stage for everything we see today.

In 1971, Lewis F. Powell, then a corporate lawyer and member of the boards of 11 corporations, wrote a memo to his friend Eugene Sydnor, Jr., the Director of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The memorandum was dated August 23, 1971, two months prior to Powell's nomination by President Nixon to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Powell Memo did not become available to the public until long after his confirmation to the Court. It was leaked to Jack Anderson, a liberal syndicated columnist, who stirred interest in the document when he cited it as reason to doubt Powell's legal objectivity. Anderson cautioned that Powell "might use his position on the Supreme Court to put his ideas into practice...in behalf of business interests."

Though Powell's memo was not the sole influence, the Chamber and corporate activists took his advice to heart and began building a powerful array of institutions designed to shift public attitudes and beliefs over the course of years and decades. The memo influenced or inspired the creation of the Heritage Foundation, the Manhattan Institute, the Cato Institute, Citizens for a Sound Economy, Accuracy in Academe, and other powerful organizations. Their long-term focus began paying off handsomely in the 1980s, in coordination with the Reagan Administration's "hands-off business" philosophy. Most notable about these institutions was their focus on education, shifting values, and movement-building - a focus we share, though usually with contrasting goals....[read the whole thing.](#)

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 [You can really see what](#)
Ape-Man — 6/23/11 4:30pm

You can really see what phonys they all are. The worst. The M\$M - what a racket. They are all racketeers. Time to drop the hammer on them.

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Evil Empire, evil motives. Koch brothers will do whatever they can to make more money and destroy whoever they please on that road.

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Simon Girty — 6/23/11 6:53pm

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jun/23/u...>

Maybe if Barack Obama would quite unexpectedly... out of nowhere, defeat our worst, most fearsome and intractable foe? <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zfln-bFHPm>

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Alice X - Choms... — 6/23/11 7:02pm

Powell represented the tobacco industry, the worst of the worst. The memo's importance in the modern era should not be understated.

But the mindset goes back much further.

The Australian sociologist Alex Carey did seminal work on the propaganda program of the American Association of Manufacturers dating from the early twentieth century.

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Corporations and propaganda

[Part 1](#) through WWII.

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The aim was to undermine the rise of democracy and promote the power of corporations.

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"Any dictator would admire the uniformity and obedience of the [U.S.] media." Noam Chomsky

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