

## AC 360 "Climategate" Debate

By Heather Tuesday Dec 08, 2009 7:00pm

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Anderson Cooper with a perfect example of what the HuffPo's Matt Osborne wrote about here--[Climategate and the Life-Cycle of Nontroversy](#):

Nontroversy feeds on empty, twisted brains. In this case, a general unfamiliarity with the [language of scientific banter](#) allows the "climategate" nontroversy to overwhelm the consensus on global warming. That consensus is built on literally hundreds of thousands of studies at this point; and indeed, the stolen emails contain a wealth of proof that temperatures are rising. Yet the media stovepipe magnifies, even invents, discrepancies and minimizes evidence, even as the ice melts.

"Consensus" is the key word here. Nontroversy always aims to distort or destroy consensus. Birther sites and ACORN fantasies exist for the sole purpose of undermining the democratic consensus of last November's election; and insofar as they have convinced a majority of Republicans, they have succeeded.

So don't tell me that nontroversy doesn't matter. It really, really matters. We need to understand its biological processes.

[...]

**Pandemic Stage: "Liberal" mainstream media organizations now run the "facts" and narrative pre-established by the right wing noise machine as one side of a controversy.**

**In its effort to show "both sides" and report that controversy, the one thing CNN does not report is the actual science of climate change. The public is left with the impression, however unjustified, that scientists have probably done something wrong, and denialists are given exactly the "fair hearing" they don't get from scientific journals.**

Anyone think Anderson Cooper could have let his audience know who funds Mr. Cato Institute [Patrick Michaels](#) for sharing his opinions. I know... ain't gonna' happen.

[h/t Jamie](#) for pointing out the piece at the HuffPo

Transcript [via CNN](#) below the fold.

COOPER: So was the professor's use of the word "trick" in an e-mail an attempt to climate change deception? What about the scientific data? Do the leaked messages make it tougher to convince people?

Patrick Michaels is one of the skeptics. He's a senior fellow in environmental studies in the Cato Institute. And on the other side a familiar face, Bill Nye, the science guy.

Patrick let me start with you. Just to be clear, you believe that climate change is real and that man contributes to it but not as -- it's not as catastrophic as some fear and it's probably not something man really can reverse. If that's correct, what about these e-mails troubles you?

DATRICK MICHAELS SENIOR FELLOW IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES CATO

PATRICK MICHAELS, SENIOR FELLOW IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES, CATO INSTITUTE: Well a lot of it -- a lot of what troubled me were the attempts to hide things from Freedom of Information Acts. You've got to wonder what's being hidden.

Listen to this one. Phil Jones to Mike Mann -- it's short, don't worry. "Can you delete any e-mails you may have had with Keith (INAUDIBLE) re the latest U.N. report? Keith will do likewise. Can you also e-mail Dean and get him to do the same. We will be getting Casper to do likewise." Oh my God. And the subject line for that e-mail is FOI -- Freedom of Information. What in the world?

COOPER: And you were actually mentioned in some of these e-mails. They were actually talking about you. What did they say about you?

MICHAELS: Well, they did not like the fact that I had a bunch of articles published in the refereed literature and so they decided they would see who the editors were for those journals and try and influence their editorial decisions in the future.

One famous one says, "We may have lost control over climate research. We don't want to lose" -- I think it's "Geophysical Research Letters" -- "lose control." These guys are saying they have control over what goes into the scientific literature and they're going to threaten editors if they publish papers by (INAUDIBLE) apparently few friends.

That's really dangerous because it biases the refereed literature and that's the canon of science that we all rely upon to make our consensual decisions.

COOPER: Bill Nye, What about that? I mean, you've read the hacked e-mail. Patrick seems to have a point. You know, trying to manipulate peer review journals doesn't seem like a particularly ethical thing to do.

BILL NYE, "THE SCIENCE GUY": Well, having read the e-mails to the best of my ability, with regard to the expression "Climate Research" that refers to a specific journal that a specific scientist doesn't especially care for.

So there you go. The world is still getting warmer, humans are still to blame.

The e-mails when you get into it carefully, the e-mails are guys who are generally very, very concerned about the efficacy, about the quality of their research. And their concern is that people like Dr. Michaels are going to scrutinize it so carefully that they will be able to discredit it without really embracing the overall message. So it's a concern.

These e-mails were hacked. People referred to other people as idiots. I'm very confident that each of the three of us has been called an idiot from time to time. But the details in the e-mails are extraordinary. And the work that these people are trying to do, trying to cover so many details, so many millions of data that have to be analyzed over centuries and trying to coordinate is very, very difficult business.

And sure enough, if you go through them carefully enough you find phrases that are out of context.

COOPER: Patrick, in your mind, do you have any questions there was a deliberate attempt to manipulate and skew the data to have particular conclusions?

MICHAELS: Absolutely. They said that they wanted to get -- they wanted to boycott certain journals if they publish certain articles. That means that the editors will all of a sudden certainly view things that might get them a boycott with a little bit of trepidation and, in fact, there were resignations from these journals.

Another one "Geophysical Research Letters"...

NYE: Isn't a boycott good for you, though?

MICHAELS: They thought they had a problem -- not at all. These guys are major contributors to journals.

Anyway, another one, "Geophysical Research Letters" say they had a problem with an editor because he was at University of Virginia. Just because I was there doesn't mean the editor is biased. Then they said the leak was plugged there.

Come on, Bill.

COOPER: For you Bill, this doesn't raise concerns about -- does it raise concerns for you, Bill, about the vast research on climate change that's been produced over the last few years? Not just from this university but just in general?

NYE: When you refer to that university, by the way, right now that university is where those data are stored. They have that responsibility. So no, it doesn't. I think just as the gentleman you had from East Anglia University referred -- made mention, when these things are carefully reviewed, you'll see that there's -- people are chasing ghosts or phantoms. It's not that serious a business.

COOPER: Patrick Michaels, Bill Nye, wish we had more time. But I do appreciate both of your different perspectives on this.

NYE: Still getting warmer and we just have to do something. Thank you, Anderson.

COOPER: All right. Thanks guys.