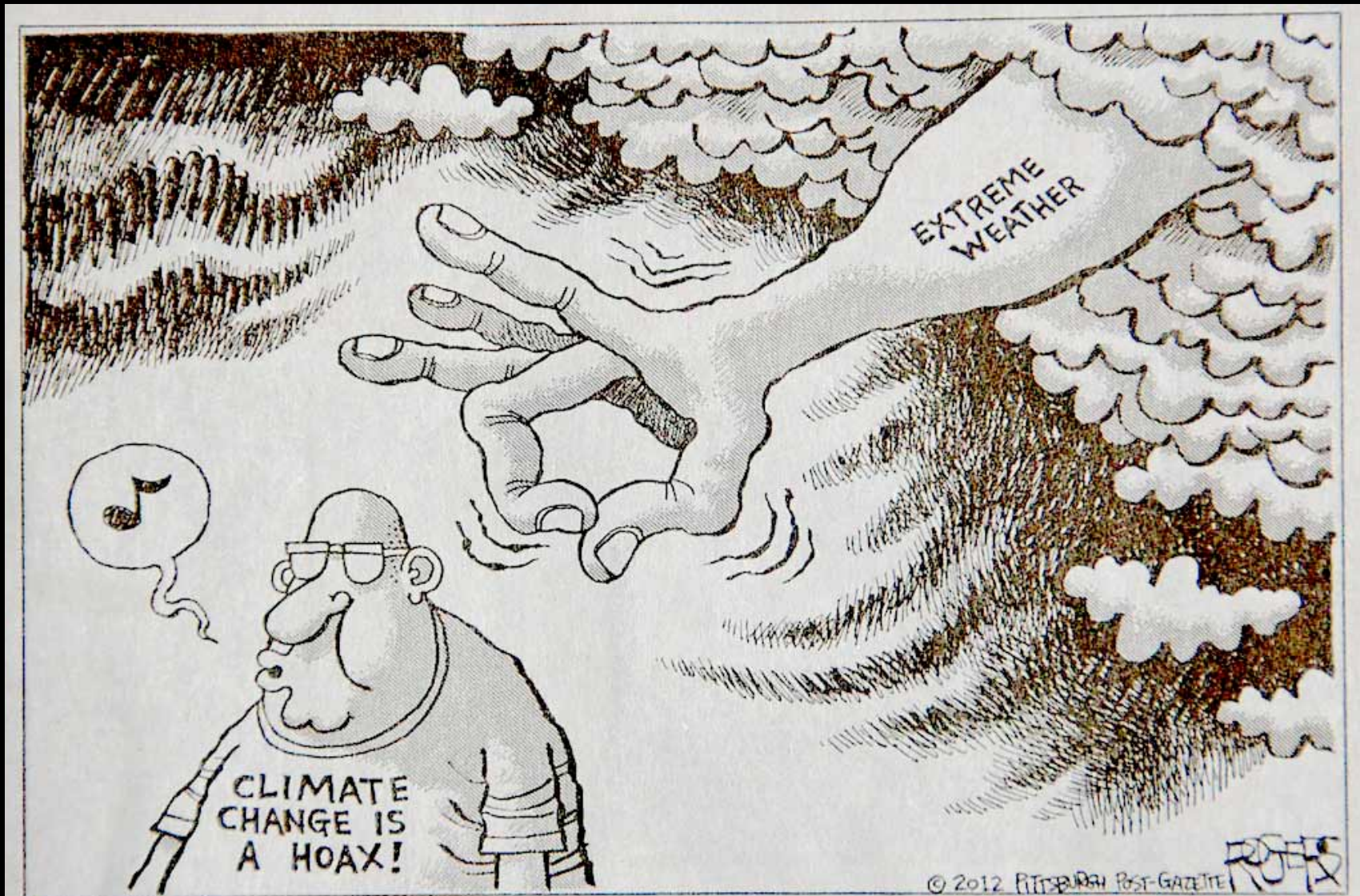


K40: Climate Denialism - Tactics



Climate Denial Among Fossil Fuel Interests Goes Back Decades

- But it wasn't until the popular appeal of Al Gore's [“An Inconvenient Truth”](#) in 2006 that they felt the popular opinion might swing elections against fossil fuel subsidies and lobbyists.
- This launched massive spending of climate denial groups in subsequent years, and the buying of media outlets to suppress the science and sponsor junk science, and the rest

Perhaps THE most Effective Tactic: Corporate Media's Concerted Silence

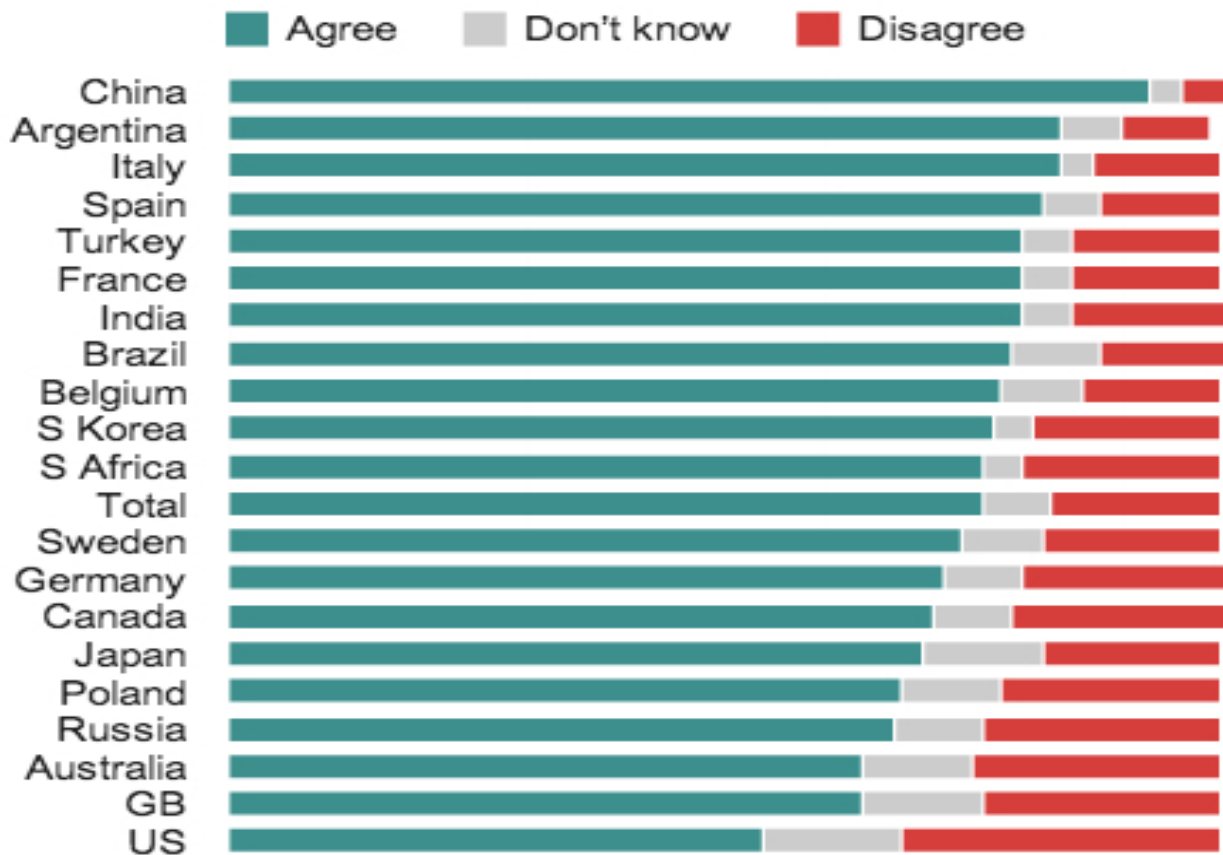
- We are social animals, and all except the most independent thinkers will tend to take their cues of what is alarming from those immediately around them
- Hear “Fire!” yelled in a crowded theater, and if no one else reacts, you probably won't either – fire or no fire.
- Enemies of climate science know this. A powerful way to dumb down the populace in democracies (where brute vote count, at best, is what installs politicians), is to first dumb down the people.

Next, “False Balance”

- News people will treat solid science and ignorant agenda-oriented denialism as two equal sides of a false “debate”. A scientific point is brought up, and they’ll try to go out and find a dissenting “opinion” to present “balance”, as if objective science is no more than “opinion”
- At best, it’s slavish adherence to a false balance in order to not seem “biased”. They care about public perception more than actual adherence to facts
- But the facts of climate change will be crippling to *laissez faire* capitalism’s ways, and they know this – That’s what controls.

The U.S. leads the world... in climate denial. And the 3 worst climate-denying countries (at bottom) have something in common – Rupert Murdoch-controlled media dominance

To what extent do you agree or disagree? The climate change we are currently seeing is largely the result of human activity



Funding Climate Denial Media and Lobbies

- The multi-national oil and coal companies have been trying their hardest to smear scientists who concluded global warming was human-caused (Oreskes – see [Merchants of Doubt](#) and this [excellent UC lecture](#) (53min))
- Big Oil has [spent millions](#) funding climate denialist groups
- This [Union of Concerned Scientists report](#) details and links to the wide range of corporate manipulation of the political dialog on climate
- Fossil fuel companies will even [deny the evidence compiled by their own scientists](#), that global warming is human-caused
- Politicians as well: 2012 Romney campaign chief spokesperson Andrea Saul's previous job was [lobbying to undermine public confidence in climate science - for Exxon Mobil](#)

Oil-funded “Scientists-for-Hire” caught in undercover operation

- US coal giant Peabody Energy paid tens of thousands of dollars to an academic who produced coal-friendly research and provided testimony at state and federal climate hearings, the amount of which was never revealed.
- **Donors Trust**, an organization that has been described as the “dark money ATM” of the US conservative movement, confirmed in a taped conversation with an undercover reporter that it could anonymously channel money from a fictional Middle Eastern oil and gas company to US climate skeptic organizations.

Phony “Peer Review” to get Junk Science published

- Princeton emeritus William Happer laid out details of an unofficial peer review process run by the Global Warming Policy Foundation, a UK climate skeptic think tank, and said he could ask to put an oil-funded report through a similar review process, after admitting that it would struggle to be published in an academic journal.
- A recent report by the GWPF that had been through the same unofficial peer review process, was promoted as “thoroughly peer-reviewed” by influential columnist Matt Ridley - [a senior figure](#) in the organization.

The motivations are clear and the money trail is just as clear.

- If global warming is just “natural variation” as so much corporate money has tried to convince you is true, why are they betting it won't just stop, like any other random variation? This kind of two-faced lying infuriates me.
- They insult your intelligence on the one hand, with back-peddling on science denial while at the same time ramping up lobbying to insure continued CO2 emission-caused climate damage. (here, and on California's climate bill here)

A Study in Dec 1 '15 “*Nature – Climate Change*” Journal...

- By Yale’s Justin Farrell, details the money trail connecting 4,556 individuals with ties to 164 organizations that are involved in pushing anti-climate science views on the public. (described [here](#), w/ link to paper)
- The organizations include a complex network of think tanks, foundations, public relations firms, trade associations, and *ad hoc* groups.”
- Separate [analysis paper by Farrell in PNAS](#)

Farrell's Analysis Showed...

- “After performing a sophisticated semantic analysis, Farrell was able to show that climate denial organizations with ties to those two major funders (Exxon-Mobil and the Koch Brothers) were more successful at getting their viewpoint echoed in national news media. Presidential speeches and debate on the floor of Congress showed less of an impact.”

“According to [Bloomberg](#), Robert Brulle, a sociology professor at Drexel University who has conducted similar research but was not involved in the *Nature: Climate Change* study, said that Farrell's findings beg a very obvious question:”

“Why is the media picking up and promulgating the central themes of climate misinformation?”

Greedy “Scientists”?

- Oil money can also “buy” scientists, although not the good ones these days. They buy mostly those employed by industry.
- Even if the scientists have some integrity, those that don't tow the profits goal are not published. Recent example is Exxon's own scientists publishing internal reports in 1970's predicting pretty much just what we've seen in climate damage, yet Exxon decided to de-fund their scientists and fund climate denialists ([Exxon scandal](#), and [worse from an Exxon insider](#))
- The [Soon & Baliunas scandal](#)

Unlike climate denial claims – no bias in climate science published in peer-reviewed journals

- I have **great respect** for the IPCC scientists publications in peer-reviewed journals, and the rest of climate scientists taken as a whole. New (2017) research once again confirms that there is no bias in climate science published research such as has now made the main-stream media that plagues the money-soaked motivations of bio-medical research.
- I have **little respect** for the IPCC Process, and have advocated on blog sites that the IPCC scientists divorce themselves from the U.N. and published their hard work syntheses independently.

The UN's IPCC – Give the Scientists a Stage and Promise of Affecting Policy, while Muzzling the Science?

- The UN's most powerful nations are also the most carbon-polluting, and governments installed by the rich (Gilens and Page 2014).
- While the climate scientists were thrilled to be able to synthesize the science and present it to the public and policy makers in hopes of generating change... it looks like the motivations were far more diabolical

The UN IPCC's Rules and Mandate:

- Solicit the participation of hundreds of scientists with a “range of views”, to synthesize the current climate science
- Then also invite “volunteers” to be part of the IPCC publication process.
- And insure the political representatives must also be included
- THEN – insist that nothing be published unless ALL will sign off on the wording and conclusions

Insures Dire Science is Suppressed

- The “volunteers” include FF industry people
- And the “range of views” includes FF payrolled “scientists” well known to be doing poor science in service of fossil fuel interests.
- It is THESE people who have veto power over all the good scientists who comprise the majority, and who have done solid work in peer-reviewed journals (which rarely get highlighted in the press)

The Resulting IPCC Official Statements in WG2, WG3 and the “*Summary for Policy Makers*” ...

- ...are “a document of appeasement, not fit for purpose” - IPCC polar scientist Dr. Peter Wasdell
- “the final version approved by governments significantly amended the original (carbon budget) metric to increase the amount of carbon that could still be emitted.” source
- IPCC scientists official statements “err on the side of *LEAST DRAMA*” Brysse et al. 2012

Documentation details of Exxon-Mobil's funding of climate denialism [here](#)

What #ExxonKnew

100%

of Exxon's climate research agree **humans are causing global warming**

What #ExxonDid

Funded

\$31 million

to organisations manufacturing doubt about climate change

Policy Action Has Been Very Effectively Stalled

THE STRAIGHT TALKER
caglecartoons.com
CAGLE



"... NOPE, THAT ONE DIDN'T WORK, EITHER..."

A Half Billion Dollars, Funding Climate Denial as of 2013

- Prof. Robert Brulle at Drexel University estimates that (as of 2013), in the past decade over \$500 million has been given to organizations who are dedicated to slandering the scientists and their science
- \$500 Million will fund a LOT of “Proof by Loud Assertion” Much of it quite ugly...

This is best exemplified by the Heartland Institute

- Heartland - A libertarian “think tank” sponsored by the Koch brothers oil conglomerate with close ties to the signature Libertarian think tank – the Cato Institute
- Heartland lobbied for the tobacco industry against scientific evidence of dangers of smoking
- Now lobbies in favor of climate denialism for the oil industry
- Someone put me (Rick Nolthenius) on the regular distribution for materials from the Heartland Institute. The timing of when these started, and then ended (all w/o any communications from me), is very suspicious about who did this
- Their agenda and methods should outrage everyone...

Part of Heartland's billboard campaign

- "The most prominent advocates of global warming aren't scientists," [Heartland's president, Joseph Bast, said in a news release](#). "They are Charles Manson, a mass murderer; Fidel Castro, a tyrant; and Ted Kaczynski, the Unabomber." He said other "global warming alarmists" include Osama bin Laden and James J. Lee, who took hostages inside the headquarters of the Discovery Channel in 2010.



“Black Ops” by Climate Thugs

- The idealistic world of laissez faire capitalism as praised by Ayn Rand – is a fiction.
- Too many corporations and the people who run them will, as history demonstrates, do almost ANYTHING to separate you from your money.
- Lie, cheat, threaten or buy off your legislators, blast you with the most irrelevant, infuriating ads... (and sometimes, only if they must - actually produce great products an intelligent person would want to buy)
- [Black ops in service of climate denialism and corporate interests](#)

Climate Denialist Tactics

- “Fishing Expeditions” and intimidation demanding private emails from climate scientists under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Some states, like Texas, allow FOIA’s to be submitted for any govt. employee’s emails, without cause.
- Fishing w/o a license!
- [Prof Andrew Dessler’s experience](#)
- Excellent program [“Climate of Doubt”](#)
- [More tactics here](#)

Denialist Writings - Characteristics

- A good start; a paper by [Diethelm and McKee 2009](#) in the European Journal of Public Health, summarized [here](#). Hallmarks are:
 - 1. Conspiracy theories
 - 2. Fake experts
 - 3. Cherry picking small bits of data out of context
 - 4. Ignorance of what science research delivers
 - 5. Misrepresentations (lies) and logical fallacies
- Let's take a look....

“Conspiracy Theory?”

- fake science authors complain “None of the journals will publish my papers!” (maybe the fact your paper is *junk science* is relevant?)
- claims of a vast global conspiracy among scientists to hide or falsify data, empty claims of scientific “group think” mentality, and religious-like zealotry (no evidence supplied to support such claims, but then, evidence is something rational intelligent scientists look for, not the average voter, alas, or politician).

Fake Experts

- e.g. the Oregon Petition; 32,000 “scientists” sign petition denying human-caused global warming (see [my webpage](#) and [9 min video](#)). Very few turned out to be actual scientists, and many actual scientists had their names added w/o their knowledge
- Note that one of the names on that list is... [me! Richard Nolthenius!](#) Obviously I never signed or even knew about this petition back when it was circulated. Apparently they just harvested names off the web and added them to their petition!

Cherry Picking

- e.g. claim global warming has ended by picking just the right space of years (beginning, of course, with 1997/98 El Nino warm year, and ending with a La Nina cooler year) to show minimized temperature rise.
- See my [climate denialism](#) page for more on this as well as the PowerPoint on Denialist Claims.

Ignorance of (or burying knowledge of) what science delivers

- Science builds a “weight of evidence” – it does not typically deliver “proof”.
- Reality is an open system; we do not invent all the laws of physics, we have to discover them. So science can only DISprove, but proofs require not only showing consistency with the observations, but also showing NO other possible explanation can work – very tough (can you ever be absolutely SURE?)
- Denialists claim we require PROOF of what the “business as usual” scenario will do or serious action is too costly to consider. Imagine going to your doctor and saying he has to PROVE to you that your tumor absolutely will kill you within the year, or you’ll take no action and spend no money on treatment.
- See my on-line [Chapter 0](#) and [On Teaching](#) for more

The Disease Vectors and Amplifying Feedbacks...

The Cycle of Climate Denial Delusion

Dodgey Blog posting

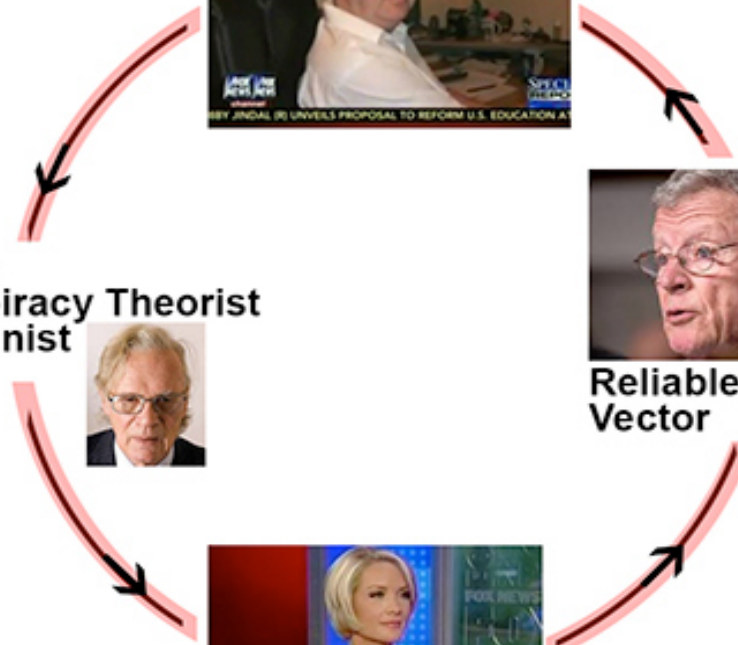


Reliable Political Vector

Fringe Conspiracy Theorist Columnist



Rupert Murdoch Echo Chamber



Misrepresentations (Lies) and Logical Fallacies

- --- Too many to list, but we'll see many in debunking individual junk science claims, which is our next task
- We'll now look at these claims... taken from [my webpage](#) and put into PowerPoint form...

Other Tactics of Climate Denial Groups

- **Slander**: “Climategate” staged right before the Copenhagen Climate Summit of 2009, theft of private emails and gross distortion of their terms and meaning to try to imply data manipulation (numerous inquiries find no data manipulation happened. A mere inspection of the claimed quotes in the actual emails was in fact enough to discredit this slander)
- **Doubt as product** – Doubt is all you need is to prevent policy action, so address efforts at the PUBLIC and at the POLITICIANS, and therefore...
- **Ignore the scientists** – Never acknowledge revealed errors in your claims and charges after actual scientific refutations show them false. Instead, simply go on to the next point of attack. Realize no one listens to the egg-heads, so this is politically considered a low-risk strategy. Never ever will you see **“I apologize”**.
- **Innuendo** – retain “plausible deniability”, especially when implying fraud or other charges which could bring legal charges against the denialist. But communicate the message as often and as hard as you can – *“those climate scientists, you can’t trust ‘em! Alarmists, data manipulators, group-thinking religious zealots”* etc.
- See [Politics and Climate of Science](#) website for many more links, details of this and other tactics

More Black Ops... “Win Ugly or Lose Pretty” – says Big Oil Lobby

- Berman and Co. Consulting’s Richard Berman, secretly taped at a talk he gave to oil executives on winning the climate war. Berman and Co. is one of the chief lobbyists for big corporate interests, especially fossil fuel corporations
- *“Mr. Berman repeatedly boasted about how he could take checks from the oil and gas industry executives — he said he had already collected six-figure contributions from some of the executives in the room — and then hide their role in funding his campaigns.*
- *‘People always ask me one question all the time: ‘How do I know that I won’t be found out as a supporter of what you’re doing?’ ‘ Mr. Berman told the crowd - ‘We run all of this stuff through nonprofit organizations that are insulated from having to disclose donors. There is total anonymity. People don’t know who supports us.’”* ([from New York Times article](#))

When shown you are wrong - Ignore it. Pretend it never happened. Move on to look for the next point of attack. Never give good science and good scientists their due. Institute a “Code of Silence”

- When honesty is the foremost value to be honored, when "the truth above all else" is the #1 priority inside a persons psyche - the honorable thing to do is to admit when you've wronged scientists, and when you have been wrong in your claims and your behavior. Openly, candidly, with a full apology to those you've hurt.
- Clarify to people your new understanding and position
- Have we seen this among climate denialists? **No.** They simply pretend that the direct correspondence, the research, the journal papers debunking their claims... all of it, never happened. They put on blinders and continue looking for more opportunities to engage in the tactics described above.
- An example was an attempt to re-ignite the "climategate" affair (and its debunking) just before the 2011 Durban, South Africa climate conference to reach accords on how to handle climate change (which pretty much ended in failure, just like Copenhagen 2 years earlier). One sees this everywhere. I regard it as one of the defining characteristics of climate denialism and denialism in general.

A Quote From Carl Sagan...

- *“In science it often happens that scientists say: ‘You know, that is a really good argument; my position is mistaken’ and then they would actually change their minds and you never hear that old view from them again. They really do it... change is sometimes painful, but it happens every day. I cannot remember the last time that happened in politics or religion” - Carl Sagan*
- ...or climate denial. This is my experience as well

Media's Disservice to the Public. From Physics Today ..."

- *“Research shows that laypeople and the (popular) media tend to view all scientific viewpoints as equally valid and, therefore, give too much credence to the minority claims, even if the actual weight of evidence is heavily against them. As a result, they may frame global warming as scientifically controversial, when it is only politically controversial”.*

Media – *Profit Uber Alles*

- The late Stanford climatologist and IPCC key author Dr. Stephen Schneider pointed out ([32 minutes into this lecture](#)) that he repeatedly told the media that the IPCC's conclusion that global warming was human-caused was not at all based on the "hockey stick", but instead on the many "human fingerprints" (observational patterns in global warming which can only be produced by our man-made greenhouse gases), and not once would the media actually print this fact.
- Most media outlets have converted to publicly traded corporations whose valuation metric on Wall Street requires constantly rising profits. This means expensive investigative journalism is largely no longer done (except by ~~PBS, NPR,~~ other media which are not stock-price driven (no longer true now that the Koch Brothers fund PBS and Rupert Murdoch (Fox News) bought *National Geographic*)), and instead dodgey blogs become the substitute.

K40: Key Points on Climate Denialism

- **Denialism is fueled by... (for more see K40b: Psychopathologies)**
- #1 Reaction to threats to fossil fuel corporate profits (\$500 million spent to slander, lie, buy politicians)
- #2 Political (right wing) & religious ideology

- **Tactics: Main tactics Include –**
- Corporate **media silence** on the real science
- **Massive funding of climate denial private organizations** dedicated to filling the vacuum with junk science, false claims, and intimidation
- **False Balance** – for every genuine scientific publication, find a denier to take the other side and claim there is a “controversy”
- **Threats, intimidation** of scientists, especially Michael Mann (“hockey stick” graph), anyone associated with Al Gore.
- Steal emails, manufacture false claims by cherry-picking out of context wordings to convey a false conclusion
- Never ever admit when you’ve been shown wrong. Instead merely go silent until you find the next opportunity to launch a publicity-plausible attack against climate scientists