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June 24, 2015

Robert Kenner  
Robert Kenner Films  
134 South Norton Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90004  
[robbythek@me.com](mailto:robbythek@me.com)  
[info@robertkennerfilms.com](mailto:info@robertkennerfilms.com)

Dear Mr. Kenner,

As a follow-up to my attached March 9, 2015 letter and supporting documents, all of which you should read, I am writing regarding the forthcoming DVD release of your March 6, 2015 movie “Merchants of Doubt” (<http://www.dvdreleases.org/documentary/merchants-of-doubt/>). I propose that you modify the Synopsis of your movie and include the modified Synopsis as a clear disclaimer at the beginning of the DVD. I propose this wording for your Synopsis: “Inspired by the book by Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway, Merchants of Doubt takes audiences on a satirically comedic ride into the heart of American scientific controversy. Filmmaker Robert Kenner gives his criticism and perspective regarding a group of highly accomplished physicists who have expressed their own independent scientific opinions about well-studied, but controversial, public threats ranging from toxic chemicals to pharmaceuticals to climate change.”

From my perspective, you defame Dr. S. Frederick Singer by characterizing him as a member of “a secretive group of highly charismatic, silver-tongued pundits-for-hire who present themselves in the media as scientific authorities.” You would benefit greatly by learning more about Dr. Singer and his authoritative scientific credentials. On June 11, 2015, Dr. Singer presented the Frederick Seitz Memorial Award to Princeton University Professor of Physics William Happer (<http://climateconference.heartland.org/>). You should watch the webcast of this presentation, particularly minutes 2 to 12, when Dr. Singer described his connections to both Dr. Seitz and Dr. Happer (<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/63554957>).

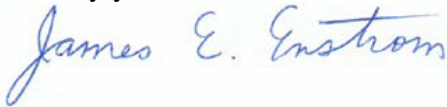
In particular, Dr. Singer described how he escaped from Austria in the 1930s and eventually got to America, much like the Von Trapp Family Singers (no pun intended). During the 1940s Dr. Singer was trained at Princeton University by three renowned physicists, including Nobel Laureate Niels Bohr. Since then Dr. Singer has had a long and distinguished scientific career. Indeed, Dr. Singer, as well as Drs. Frederick Seitz, William Nierenberg, and Robert Jastrow, are highly accomplished physicists with authoritative scientific credentials and you should not characterize them as “merchants of doubt” or “silver-tongued pundits-for-hire.”

If you include an appropriate disclaimer on the “Merchants of Doubt” DVD you will avoid a charge of defamation and you will obey the Ninth Commandment given to Moses: “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.” If you do not include an appropriate disclaimer, I will assume that you and “Merchants of Doubt” authors Dr. Naomi Oreskes and Dr. Erik M. Conway want the DVD to convey the same defamatory comments about Dr. Singer that are conveyed in the movie.

If you need further details regarding any aspect of this letter, I would be pleased to speak or meet with you personally.

Thank you very much for your consideration of my serious request.

Sincerely yours,



James E. Enstrom, Ph.D., M.P.H.

cc: S. Fred Singer, Ph.D. [singer@sepp.org](mailto:singer@sepp.org)  
Erik M. Conway, Ph.D. [Erik.M.Conway@jpl.nasa.gov](mailto:Erik.M.Conway@jpl.nasa.gov)

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March 9, 2015

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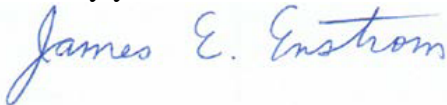
Dear Mr. Kenner,

Last weekend I learned from S. Fred Singer, Ph.D., about your new documentary “Merchants of Doubt” ([http://robertkennerfilms.com/merchants\\_of\\_doubt.php](http://robertkennerfilms.com/merchants_of_doubt.php)). I am concerned that your film does not accurately portray Dr. Singer, a world renowned scientist, and other scientists who have expressed doubt about man-made global warming. In particular, I am concerned that your film makes statements about Dr. Singer that could be considered defamatory, as suggested in Dr. Singer’s enclosed March 6, 2015 letter to you. Because your film is based on the book “Merchants of Doubt” by Naomi Oreskes, Ph.D., you need to know about her contentious and controversial background, as described in the three enclosed articles.

In a good faith effort to assure that some of those who see your film get divergent perspectives on its contents, I request that you invite Wei-Hock ‘Willie’ Soon, Ph.D., of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics to debate Dr. Oreskes following the March 20-21, 2015 screenings in Boston. These debates should increase interest in and attendance for the film.

Thank you very much for your prompt consideration and response regarding my request.

Sincerely yours,



James E. Enstrom, Ph.D., M.P.H.

cc: S. Fred Singer, Ph.D. [singer@sepp.org](mailto:singer@sepp.org)  
Wei-Hock ‘Willie’ Soon, Ph.D. [romeosoon@gmail.com](mailto:romeosoon@gmail.com)

**Also Sent by Registered Mail to Robert Kenner** Films, 134 So. Norton St, Suite A, Los Angeles, CA 90004

Dear Mr. Kenner,

March 6, 2015

I am writing this letter on the advice of my attorneys, who suggested that a friendly letter from me to you might avoid having to take legal action.

I've been informed that your new documentary "Merchants of Doubt" refers to me as "Liar for Hire". If correct, that is a very serious accusation which of course cannot be backed up in any way.

The word "*Liar*" implies not only telling something that is not true, but telling an untruth knowingly. So even people who disagree with me on climate-change science (and such people do exist) would have to prove that I don't really believe what I say – that I am saying it in order to mislead.

The word "*hire*" implies that I am being paid directly, i.e., that I am on salary by some entity such as an oil company -- or that I am taking money from a source that is supported predominately by such money and that I am aware of it. We would judge that *hire* is also very difficult to demonstrate.

I have some experience with libel suits; thanks to Kirkland & Ellis, we prevailed against an environmental lawyer, a groupie of then-Senator Al Gore. It took a lot of my time and was costly. I would prefer to avoid having to go to court; but if we do, we are confident that we will prevail.

My good friend, the late J. Gordon Edwards, professor of entomology at San Jose State University, sued the New York Times for libel and prevailed in a jury trial. The NYT had referred to him as someone who is being paid to lie. We think there will be no problem to demonstrate "malice." (That is, "knowledge that [the libelous statement] was false or [made] with reckless disregard of whether it was false or not.")

Mind you, I am not now accusing you personally of malice, but it is rather too bad that you got mixed up with Naomi Oreskes. She claims to be a historian of science; unfortunately, she has only demonstrated that she's a great polemicist with a rather well-defined bias. Her book "Merchants of Doubt" contains a number of serious scientific errors; also, it is not in accordance with the kind of scholarship expected from an academic historian. Instead of primary sources, she relies on secondary and even tertiary sources who have obvious, demonstrated agenda.

In her book, she attacks four physicists, three of whom were quite distinguished and are now deceased. I have felt it my obligation to defend their reputations posthumously.

I hope that you will respond positively to this letter and suggest ways in which the situation raised by your documentary can be rectified. Your reputation based on your past work is excellent and we should do everything possible to maintain it that way.

Sincerely yours,

S. Fred Singer

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<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/merchants-of-doubt-about-global-warming-hope-to-strike-back/>

# SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN™

## Merchants of Doubt about Global Warming Hope to Strike Back

Climate change deniers look to file lawsuits against those exposing their actions

ClimateWire

March 9, 2015 | By [Evan Lehmann](#) and [ClimateWire](#)



The tactics discussed - like lawsuits and grievances - reflect previous efforts to constrain critics of Singer and others through legal attacks, or the threat of them, several people involved with the movie say.

*Credit: [Film Festivals and Indie Films via Youtube](#)*

Before the release this Friday of the documentary "Merchants of Doubt," S. Fred Singer sought the advice of nearly 30 climate skeptics about their chances of halting the movie and whether he should sue Naomi Oreskes, who co-authored the book on which it's based.

"Has she finally gone too far?" asked Singer.

The discussion is outlined in a chain of emails initiated last fall by the 90-year-old physicist, who is featured in the film for his work questioning the amount of influence people have on rising temperatures. His request reached a mix of academics and others who have been mostly antagonistic toward mainstream climate findings. *ClimateWire* obtained the emails from a source who received them as a forwarded message.

Perhaps the strongest response came from James Enstrom, an epidemiologist who has challenged the science around the health risks of secondhand smoke and particulate air pollution. Enstrom told Singer that he could make "a very strong case" against Oreskes if Singer filed complaints with the universities she's affiliated with.

"I suggest you Attack Oreskes by Filing short Grievances with Harvard and Stanford," Enstrom wrote to Singer on Oct. 21. Oreskes is a professor of scientific history at Harvard University with a doctorate from Stanford University.

"Good thought," Singer responded.

The wider discussion is viewed by some as a window into the network of skeptical scientists, bloggers and conservative think tank scholars who often raise objections to mainstream climate science. The tactics discussed -- like lawsuits and grievances -- reflect previous efforts to constrain critics of Singer and others through legal attacks, or the threat of them, several people involved with the movie say.

"This is part of their intimidation," Oreskes said in an interview. "It's a part about trying to make people frightened that if they do speak up and they do expose what's going on, they'll get attacked. And they will get attacked. I've been attacked."

The documentary is based on her book, "Merchants of Doubt," published in 2010. In it, she outlined the similarities between the political fight around climate change and the earlier debates about whether smoking was dangerous. The effort to fight health problems from smoking was stalled for years. She suggested that a small group of scientists cooperating with think tanks and businesses managed to obscure basic truths about the harms of both. The movie will be released nationally Friday. It's directed by Robert "Robby" Kenner, the creator of the 2008 documentary "Food Inc."

Singer, who cooperated with Kenner to film a scene for the movie, said in an interview with *ClimateWire* that he has decided not to take legal action against Oreskes or Kenner. It would be too expensive and would require too much of his time, he said. He also ruled out filing grievances against Oreskes with university administrators because "they're just as bad as she is."

Still, Singer has sent mixed signals about his intentions. Last week, he sent a letter to Kenner to raise the possibility of legal action.

"I would prefer to avoid having to go to court; but if we do, we are confident that we will prevail," Singer said in the letter, which suggests that the film treats him maliciously and adds, "it is rather too bad that you got mixed up with Naomi Oreskes."

### **A 'liar for hire' or an honest skeptic?**

The letter was posted on Climate Depot, a website critical of climate science run by Marc Morano, who is featured in the film and was a recipient of Singer's emails last fall.

"I think there's a pattern," Kenner said of Singer's letter in an interview. "It's to come after and try to silence critics and to intimidate. And when [Singer] implies litigation is very expensive, I think it's an attempt to be intimidating."

On the other hand, it might be going too far to suggest that Singer's goal is to stifle his critics if he feels he's been slandered, said Andrew Hoffman, a professor at the University of Michigan who studies the behavior of climate skeptics.

Singer says he believes the movie refers to him as a "liar for hire," though he hasn't seen it. That's false, he said, noting that he believes genuinely that humans have little effect on climate change. He also rejects the idea that he's being paid by fossil fuel companies, apart from an unsolicited \$10,000 donation from an Exxon foundation 12 years ago to the Science & Environmental Policy Project, which he founded.

Singer acknowledged that he has "made a lot of money on oil," but it was decades ago, from fees he charged to financial institutions, major corporations like IBM and some oil companies to predict the price of crude using a computer model he created, Singer said. The money wasn't related to research around climate change, he said.

"I'm real sad about this attack, but it's not unexpected," Singer said of the "liar for hire" phrase.

But does the movie say that?

No, said Kenner, who provided a transcript of the scene with Singer to *ClimateWire*. He and others say it appears to be a phrase created by a media outlet that reviewed the film.

Besides, lying isn't a common tool of skeptical scientists, Oreskes said. These contrarians are generally successful, and trusted by some, in one field or another.

"This isn't about lying," Oreskes said. "This is something much more terrible, in a way. Much more devious. A kind of what we call doubtmongering."

"I never said that anyone was lying, and I never would say that," she added. "But this is part of the strategy, too. These people put words in other people's mouths, and then they act all outraged about it, and they spread the claim that you said something that you never said. And then they threaten to sue you for it."

### **Singer supporters slam 'Merchants of Smear'**

Oreskes has an example in mind.

Singer filed a libel suit in the early 1990s against Justin Lancaster, a climate researcher at the University of California, San Diego, who claimed that Singer had taken advantage of his mentor and colleague, Roger Revelle, a noted climate scientist, in the months before Revelle's death.

Singer approached Revelle a month before his triple bypass heart surgery to cooperate on a journal article that downplayed the urgency of addressing climate change. It marked a reversal for Revelle, who supported policies to reduce greenhouse gases and was a mentor to former Vice President Al Gore. The paper roiled the climate debate as Gore's opponents highlighted it to raise questions about the certainty of warming.

But Revelle missed the debate. He died in July 1991 and was unable to shed light on Lancaster's assertions that Singer had pressured Revelle into co-authoring the paper in his weakened state after surgery. So Lancaster accused Singer of acting unethically, and Singer sued. Lancaster eventually settled the suit and entered a yearslong gag period.

He would later say the settlement was one of his biggest regrets. And he accused Singer, in even stronger terms, of pressuring Revelle to cooperate.

"It was one of the worst things I ever did, was to give him a retraction," Lancaster said in an interview. "I did it to try to save my marriage."

Singer frequently points to his success with that case. He raised it in his letter to Kenner and in his emails last fall.

"The lawsuit was not filed to intimidate," Singer said in the interview. "It was filed because what Lancaster suggested was that I faked the participation of Roger Revelle as a co-author. That's completely untrue. We have a complete retraction and an apology."

In his October emails, Singer reaches out to some of the most recognizable opponents of mainstream climate science and policies, including Willie Soon, Patrick Michaels, Anthony Watts, Steven Milloy, Joe Bastardi and Joe Bast.

An English climate change denier, Christopher Monckton, viscount of Brenchley, responded to Singer's request for advice by saying he would "draft the complaint" for a lawsuit, but Singer never followed up.

"In every way, they have bent the science," Monckton said of mainstream scientists and the filmmakers. "And having bent the science and not convinced anybody, not even themselves really, they're not simply resorting to the fallback position which Hitler and Goebbels on the left did, which Mao Tse-tung and Pol Pot did, and of course ... Stalin and Lenin did, and that is smear."

"So this film should really be called 'Merchants of Smear,'" he added.

The pre-release controversy around the movie provides more than just a glimpse into the stormy messaging strategies on climate change. It also promotes the film. But does it help convey the facts?

Hoffman, of the University of Michigan, says tit-for-tats between mainstream and contrarian researchers tend to raise the profile of skeptical scientists, despite their relatively small number. He pointed to the recent inquiries undertaken by Democratic members of Congress, who want the identity of donors who help fund skeptical academics, as an advantage for those who challenge climate science.

"Frankly, this degradation benefits the skeptics," Hoffman said.

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[www.eenews.net](http://www.eenews.net), 202-628-6500*



December 1, 2010

## **Second Hand Smoke [SHS], Lung Cancer, and the Global Warming Debate**

By **S. Fred Singer**

In 1993, the EPA published a report claiming that Second-Hand Smoke (SHS, sometimes known as Environmental Tobacco Smoke – ETS) causes 3000 deaths from lung cancer every year.

Anyone doubting this result has been subject to attack and depicted as a toady of the tobacco lobby. The attacks have been led by a smear blog called ‘DeSmogBlog,’ financed by the Canadian PR firm of James Hoggan, and have been taken up with great enthusiasm by self-styled ‘science historian’ Professor Naomi Oreskes.

The tobacco-smoking issue has also become a favorite tool for discrediting climate skeptics. A prime example is the book, “*Merchants of Doubt*” by Oreskes and Eric Conway, which attacks several well-known senior physicists, including the late Dr. Fred Seitz, a former president of the US National Academy of Sciences, the American Physical Society, and (most recently) Rockefeller University.

No matter what the environmental issue, whether ozone depletion, acid rain, pesticides, etc., any and all scientific opposition based on objective facts is blamed on an imagined involvement with tobacco companies. None of this is true, of course. Oreskes/Conway claim to be academic historians; yet they have consistently ignored factual information, have not bothered to consult primary sources, have never interviewed any of the scientists they try to smear, and generally have operated in a completely unprofessional way.

Their science is as poor as their historical expertise. To cite just one example, their book blames lung cancer from cigarette smoking on the radioactive oxygen-15 isotope. They cannot explain, of course, how O-15 gets into cigarettes, or how it is created. They seem to be unaware that its half life is only 122 seconds. In other words, they have no clue about the science, and apparently assume that the burning of tobacco creates isotopes – a remarkable discovery, worthy of alchemists. As an aside, when not engaged in smearing scientists by linking them to the tobacco

lobby, Oreskes and Conway's book claims that opposition to environmental regulation of greenhouse gases and other 'pollutants' is based on anti-communism!

The ultimate aim of these attacks, at least in my case, has been to discredit my work and publications on global warming. I am a nonsmoker, find SHS to be an irritant and unpleasant, have certainly not been paid by Philip Morris and the tobacco lobby, and have never joined any of their front organizations. And I serve on the Advisory Board of an anti-smoking organization. My father, who was a heavy smoker, died of emphysema while relatively young. I personally believe that SHS, in addition to being objectionable, cannot possibly be healthy.

So what is the truth about SHS and lung cancer? I am neither an oncologist nor a chemical toxicologist, but I do know some statistics, which allows me to examine the EPA study without bias. I can demonstrate that the EPA fudged their analysis to reach a predetermined conclusion – using thoroughly dishonest procedures. EPA 'scientists' made three major errors: 1) They ignored 'publication bias.' 2) They arbitrarily shifted the statistical 'confidence intervals.' 3) They drew unjustified conclusions from a risk ratio that was barely greater than 1.0.

- Since none of the epidemiological studies provided the clear answer they wanted, EPA carried out a 'meta-analysis,' lumping together a selected group of studies. Unfortunately, this approach ignores publication bias, i.e., the tendency for investigators not to publish their studies if they do not find a positive result.
- The EPA, in order to calculate a positive risk ratio, relaxed the confidence intervals from the generally accepted 95% standard to 90% -- and admitted this openly.
- Even so, their 'Risk Ratio' was just a little above 1.0 – whereas careful epidemiologists, because of the presence of confounding factors, generally ignore any result unless the RR exceeds 2.0.

To sum up this somewhat technical discussion, while I cannot give specific answers about lung cancer or other medical issues connected with SHS, I can state with some assurance that the EPA analysis – to paraphrase my former teacher, Nobel physicist Wolfgang Pauli -- is "not only wrong but worthless."

My assessments are independently confirmed by the Congressional Research Service [in report CRS-95-1115], and by a lengthy judicial analysis in 1998 by Judge William Osteen -- all available on the Internet. Science journalist Michael Fumento presented, in 1993, a well-researched and eminently readable account in *Investors Business Daily*.

In the largest (in terms of statistical power), most detailed (in terms of results presented), and most transparent (in terms of information about its conduct) epidemiologic paper on SHS and mortality ever published in a major medical journal (in the May 17, 2003 issue of the *British Medical Journal*) UCLA Prof. James Enstrom found no significant relationship. It is worth noting also that the World Health Organization, in a just-completed study reported in the British medical journal *Lancet*, gives a lung-cancer death rate (for US, Canada, and Cuba) of barely 600 per year, only a fraction of the EPA number of US deaths. An independent study, published in

BioMed Central [2010] and supported by the Canadian National Cancer Institute and Canada's Cancer Society found no noticeable lung-cancer effect from SHS in non-smokers; however, there was a significant effect from welding, use of paint thinners and solvents, and exposure to diesel exhaust, soot, and smoke from sources other than tobacco.

But just when we thought that nothing could top the EPA claims, along comes this bombshell from Obama's Surgeon General Regina Benjamin: "Even brief exposure to secondhand smoke can cause cardiovascular disease and could trigger acute cardiac events like heart attack." Not just long-term exposure to SHS, just a whiff can kill you, asserts the Surgeon General's media release of Dec 9, 2010. Of course, there is no evidence cited to back up this wild claim – just the usual and undisputed evidence about the health consequences to actual (primary) smokers.

So what does it all mean? The issue is not whether SHS is healthy; it obviously is not. One issue is the use of the 'tobacco weapon' to attack the credibility of climate scientists – in place of using scientific arguments. It bespeaks of the desperation of those who don't have any valid scientific arguments and wish to avoid public debate. (Imagine, if you will, Oreskes attacking the validity of the notorious 'hockeystick' temperature curve by linking its author, Michael Mann, to tobacco company Philip Morris, instead of describing his faulty use of statistics.)

The other issue is the conduct of science and the integrity of the science process: the intrusion of government political agenda – worthy or not – on the way science is done and reported to the public. The corruption of science in a *worthy* cause is still corruption, and it has led to its further corruption in an *unworthy* cause – the ideologically-driven claim of anthropogenic global warming.

***Atmospheric physicist S. Fred Singer is Professor Emeritus of Environmental Sciences at the University of Virginia and founding director of the US Weather Satellite Service. His book "Unstoppable Global Warming – Every 1500 Years" (Rowman & Littlefield, 2007) presents the evidence for natural climate cycles of warming and cooling and became a New York Times best-seller. He is the organizer and chairman of NIPCC (Non-governmental International Panel on Climate Change), whose reports reach conclusions that contradict those of the UN-supported IPCC.***

CRS report: [http://www.law.umaryland.edu/marshall/crsreports/crsdocuments/95-1115\\_SPR.pdf](http://www.law.umaryland.edu/marshall/crsreports/crsdocuments/95-1115_SPR.pdf)  
WmOsteen <http://legacy.library.ucsf.edu/tid/pmz82c00/pdf;jsessionid=63919EC582AA0699B9FC0FE80835465E.tobacco03>.  
<http://acsh.org/2013/12/two-stories-one-link-found-secondhand-smoke-lung-cancer-one-seems-care/>

# American Thinker

June 21, 2011

## Science and Smear Merchants

By S. Fred Singer

Professor [Naomi Oreskes](#), of the University of California in San Diego, claims to be a science historian. One can readily demonstrate that she is neither a credible scientist nor a credible historian; the best evidence is right there in her recent book, "*Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming*," coauthored with Eric Conway. Her science is faulty; her historical procedures are thoroughly unprofessional. She is, however, an accomplished polemicist, who has found time for world lecture tours, promoting her book and her ideological views, while being paid by the citizens of California. Her book tries to smear four senior physicists -- of whom I am the only surviving one. I view it as my obligation to defend the reputations of my late colleagues and good friends against her libelous charges.

Oreskes is well-known from her 2004 article in *Science* that claimed a complete scientific consensus about manmade global warming; it launched her career as a polemicist. Her claim was based on examining the abstracts of some 900 published papers. Unfortunately, she missed more than 11,000 papers through an incorrect Internet search. She published a discreet "Correction"; yet she has never retracted her ideologically based claim about consensus. Al Gore still quotes her result, which has been contradicted by several, more competent studies (by Peiser, Schulte, Bray and von Storch; Lemonick in *SciAm*, etc).

Turning first to the her science, her book discusses acidification, as measured by the pH coefficient. She states that a pH of 6.0 denotes neutrality (page 67, MoD). Let's be charitable and chalk this off to sloppy proofreading.

Elsewhere in the book (page 29), she claims that beryllium is a "heavy metal" and tries to back this up with references. I wonder if she knows that the atomic weight of

beryllium is only 9, compared to, say, uranium, which is mostly 238. A comparison of these two numbers should tell anyone which one is the heavy metal.

Her understanding of the Greenhouse Effect is plain comical; she posits that CO<sub>2</sub> is "trapped" in the troposphere -- and that's why the stratosphere is cooling. Equally wrong is her understanding of what climate models are capable of; she actually believes that they can predict forest fires in Russia, floods in Pakistan and China -- nothing but calamities everywhere -- and tells climate scientists in a recent lecture: *If the predictions of climate models have come true, then why don't people believe them* [see [this](#)]? Perhaps because people are not gullible.

But the most amazing science blunder in her book is her hypothesis about how cigarette-smoking causes cancer (page 28). She blames it on oxygen-15, a radioactive isotope of the common oxygen-16. I wonder if she knows that the half-life of O-15 is only 122 seconds. Of course, she does not spell out how O-15 gets into cigarette smoke, whether it is in the paper or in the tobacco itself. If the latter, does she believe that the O-15 is created by the burning of tobacco? If so, this would be a fantastic discovery, worthy of an alchemist. Perhaps someone should make her aware of the difference between radioactive and "reactive" oxygen; the two words do sound similar.

I am sure one would find more examples of scientific ignorance in a careful reading of the rest of the book. But why bother?

Having demonstrated her scientific "expertise," let's turn to her historical expertise. Any careful historian would use primary sources and would at least try to interview the scientists she proceeds to smear. There is no trace of that in Oreskes' book. She has never taken the trouble to interview Dr. Robert Jastrow, founder of the NASA-Goddard Institute for Space Studies, and later Director of the Mt. Wilson Astronomical Observatory and founding president of the renowned George C Marshall Institute in Washington, DC. I can find no evidence that she ever interviewed Dr. William Nierenberg, director of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, who actually lived in San Diego and was readily accessible. And I doubt if she ever even met Dr. Frederick Seitz, the main target of her venom.

Seitz was the most distinguished of the group of physicists that are attacked in the book. He had served as President of the US National Academy of Sciences and of the American Physical Society, and later as President of Rockefeller University. He had been awarded numerous honorary degrees from universities here and abroad, as well as the prestigious National Medal of Science from the White House.

Instead of seeking firsthand information in the tradition of historical research, Oreskes relies on secondary or tertiary sources, quoting people who agree with her ideology. A good example of this is her discussion of acid rain and of the White House panel (under Reagan, in 1982) chaired by Bill Nierenberg, on which I also served. Here she relies on what she was told by Dr. Gene Likens, whose research funding depends on portraying acid rain as a very serious environmental problem. It most definitely is not -- and indeed disappeared from view as soon as Congress passed legislation designed to reduce the effect.

An amazing discovery: I found that Oreskes gives me credit (or blames me) for inventing "cap-and-trade," the trading of emission rights under a fixed cap of total emissions (see pp. 91-93). I had never claimed such a priority because I honestly don't know if this idea had been published anywhere. It seemed like the natural thing to suggest in order to reduce total cost -- once an emission cap had been set. My example involved smelters that emit SO<sub>2</sub> copiously *versus* electric utilities that burn coal containing some sulfur. I even constructed what amounts to a "supply curve" in which the bulk of the emission control is borne initially by the lowest-cost units. Of course, Likens and some others on the panel, antagonistic to coal-burning electric utilities, objected to having my discussion included in the panel report. Nierenberg solved the problem neatly by putting my contribution into a signed Appendix, thereby satisfying some panel members who did not want to be responsible for a proposal that might let some electric utilities off the hook.

We have established so far that Oreskes is neither a scientist of any sort nor a careful professional historian. She is, however, a "pop-psychologist." It seems she has figured out what motivates the four senior physicists she libels in her book; it is "anti-communism." Really! This is not only stated explicitly but she also identifies them throughout as "Cold Warriors."

Well, now we know at least where Oreskes stands in the political spectrum.

***Atmospheric physicist S. Fred Singer pioneered upper-atmosphere ozone measurements with rockets and later devised the satellite instrument used to monitor ozone. He is Professor Emeritus of Environmental Sciences at the University of Virginia and founding director of the US Weather Satellite Service (now NESDIS-NOAA). He is a Fellow of the Heartland Institute and the Independent Institute. His book Unstoppable Global Warming - Every 1500 Years (Rowman & Littlefield, 2007) presents the evidence for natural climate cycles of warming and cooling and became a NY Times best-seller. He is the organizer of NIPCC (Non-governmental International Panel on Climate Change), editor of its 2008 report "Nature - Not Human Activity - Rules the Climate" <[http://www.sepp.org/publications/NIPCC\\_final.pdf](http://www.sepp.org/publications/NIPCC_final.pdf)>, and coauthor of "Climate Change Reconsidered," published in 2009, with conclusions contrary to those of the IPCC <<http://www.nipccreport.org/>>. As a reviewer of IPCC reports, he presumably shares the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize with Al Gore and 2,000 others.***

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## Naomi Oreskes, Conspiracy Queen

By [Norman Rogers](#)

Naomi Oreskes is the environmentalist Noam Chomsky. She thinks that anyone who questions environmentalist doctrine is evil. Her crusade is to expose the presumed ulterior motives of the critics. According to Oreskes, if you question the dubious studies concerning secondhand tobacco smoke, you must be in the pay of tobacco companies. If you question global warming, you must be working for a fossil fuel company. If you question the DDT ban, you must part of a right wing conspiracy to weaken faith in government regulators.

Oreskes is the author of one of the silliest [articles](#) ever to appear in the journal *Science*. She claimed that she analyzed 928 peer-reviewed papers on global warming and 100% agreed with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concerning global warming. If you go to the website of the Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change ([NIPCC](#)) you can find hundreds of peer reviewed papers that disagree with the IPCC in one way or another.

Her latest book, with co-author Erik Conway, is *Merchants of Doubt*. In this tedious book she treats us to the details of numerous disputes between those who subscribe to normative environmental theology and those who don't. Normative environmental theology is the sort of theology that is preached by the [Sierra Club](#) or the [Union of Concerned Scientists](#). Oreskes is a professor and an important [administrator](#) at the University of California. Like Chomsky, she cloaks her endless conspiracy theories in the machinery of scholarship. Her 343 page book has 64 pages of notes. A pig with lipstick is still a pig.

Neither Oreskes nor her co-author have strong scientific educations and it shows. From her book it is obvious that she enjoyed access to many scientists, but somehow none of her scientist friends found the time to proof read *Merchants of Doubt*. This is not hard to understand. *Merchants of Doubt* is a book of unsurpassed monotony. Conspiracy theories get boring very quickly, especially when the conspiracies are all

variations of a few crude plots. A number of informed critiques of *Merchants of Doubt* can be seen in the [1-star Amazon reviews](#).

In the introduction to *Merchants of Doubt* the fact that adding CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere causes the stratosphere to cool and the troposphere to warm is explained as follows:

But if the warming is caused by greenhouse gases emitted at the surface and largely trapped in the lower atmosphere, then we expect the troposphere to warm, but the stratosphere to cool.

It is a bit difficult to know what this sentence means but it is clear that Oreskes hasn't the faintest idea concerning radiation and the role of greenhouse gases. Greenhouse gases (mostly CO<sub>2</sub>) are not trapped in the lower atmosphere but are well mixed up to and including the stratosphere. CO<sub>2</sub> causes the stratosphere to cool because CO<sub>2</sub> is a good radiator of infrared radiation and thus improves the capability to exhaust stratospheric heat to space as radiation. Cooling of the stratosphere is not evidence of global warming. It is evidence of increased CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere. The distinction is important.

The [climategate](#) emails are hundreds of emails among important scientists that show them to be perverting scientific protocols and practicing propaganda to promote global warming alarmism. [Ben Santer](#) is a prominent player in the climategate emails. He is most famous for saying this about the global warming skeptic scientist [Patrick Michaels](#):

Next time I see Pat Michaels at a scientific meeting, I'll be tempted to beat the crap out of him. Very tempted.

Oreskes, apparently before the release of the climategate emails, said this about Ben Santer:

He's thoroughly moderate... soft-spoken, almost self-effacing ... you might think he was an accountant...<sup>[1]</sup>

Ben Santer, who may be Oreskes' favorite scientist, has been struggling for years with the skeptics concerning the relative heating of the upper troposphere. He has resorted to publishing papers with as many of [24 co-authors](#), apparently in an attempt to make his arguments more credible by collecting a lot of scientists willing to support him.

In Oreskes' milieu, it is apparently a bad thing to be anti-communist. She attacks and psychoanalyzes the physicist Frederick Seitz for his "strident" and "unalloyed" anti-communism. She puts thoughts in Seitz's head. He thinks his colleagues are



"ingrates" and he "has an uneasy time with the masses." He was "hawkish" and "superior." Another physicist, William Nierenberg, is also psychoanalyzed by Oreskes. According to her Nierenberg "hated environmentalists" and was "overconfident." Nierenberg's son Nicholas Nierenberg has been so upset by Oreskes' distortions of his father's work that he started a [website](#) to refute Oreskes. The sin of these eminent physicists for Oreskes is that they were critics of environmental extremism and strong supporters of the United States in the Cold War. Seitz and Nierenberg are both dead and thus cannot defend themselves.

Fred Singer is a scientist who has been in the forefront of defending science against [junk science](#). This is not an easy road to take. Junk science is a basic tool for groups that are pushing ideological positions. Subtle distinctions are not welcomed by the ideological groups. If you acknowledge that smoking cigarettes causes cancer, but then you dare to say that the hazard presented by secondhand smoke is exaggerated, you are tagged as a supporter of cancer. If you say that the case for man-caused global warming is full of holes you are tagged as an agent of fossil fuel companies. Very few scientists are brave enough to take the heat and personal attacks that come from standing up to junk science. Fred Singer has been doing it for a long time. In his late 80's, he is still writing scientific papers and traveling the world giving lectures. Oreskes is a promoter of junk science and for that reason cannot abide Fred Singer. Singer is her favorite punching bag. His name appears dozens of times in *Merchants of Doubt*.

Should we be surprised that Naomi Oreskes is a professor at the University of California and has been promoted to an administrative position? After all Noam Chomsky was a professor at MIT. But Chomsky was a professor because of his work in linguistics, not because he believes in crazy conspiracies. It seems that Naomi Oreskes is successful not in spite of her love of conspiracy, but exactly because she promotes conspiracies. This makes one wonder what has happened to the intellectual climate at the University of California.

The science establishment has fallen so low that it thinks it is a useful tactic to deal with its critics by accusing them of conspiracies financed by tobacco companies and oil companies. For the last 50 years, starting with DDT, we have been subjected to junk science scares. The scares were invariably false or exaggerated. Most of these scares were not more than brief media sensations, but some scares have been disruptive, diverting attention from real problems. The king of all scares is global warming. Taken seriously, it requires revamping the entire world economy and making us all poorer. The predictions of global warming disaster are deeply flawed junk science dressed up with an impressive "scientific" structure of panels, committees and organizations. The global warming scare is rapidly collapsing. Scientists outside of the global warming bubble are pointing out the flaws in the

science and a coterie of well-informed [bloggers](#) is getting out the message by bypassing the establishment media where critics' voices are generally blocked. Nature is helping because the earth and the oceans are [failing to warm](#) according to script.

That a conspiracist like Naomi Oreskes would be welcomed by the global warming scientific establishment and [invited](#) to speak at the December 2010 American Geophysical Union meeting is a symptom of increasing desperation. The global warming advocates have dug themselves into a deep hole and they can't seem to stop digging. Ironically Oreskes spoke at a meeting where Exxon Mobil was the biggest financial contributor<sup>[iii](#)</sup>. Apparently it's not a conspiracy if Exxon Mobil gives its money to the right people.



**Naomi Oreskes at AGU Meeting**

*Norman Rogers is a Senior Policy Advisor at the [Heartland Institute](#) and maintains a personal [website](#).*

<sup>[ii](#)</sup> Merchants of Doubt page 1

<sup>[iii](#)</sup> Exxon Mobil was a titanium sponsor, the highest category.