

# PR WATCH

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## IT WAS A VERY FALSE YEAR: THE 2005 FALSIES AWARDS

by Diane Farsetta

As Father Time faded into history with the end of 2005, he was spinning out of control.

Over the past twelve months, the ideal of accurate, accountable, civic-minded news media faced nearly constant attack. Fake news abounded, from Pentagon-planted stories in Iraqi newspapers to corporate- and government-funded video news releases aired by U.S. newsrooms. Enough payola pundits surfaced to constitute their own basketball team—Doug Bandow, Peter Ferrara, Maggie Gallagher, Michael McManus and Armstrong Williams. (They could call themselves the “Syndicated Shills.”)

Then there were the public relations campaigns that sought to redefine reality itself. The oil and nuclear industries could be greenwashed! Rights-abusing governments and labor-abusing companies could be white-washed! Junk food companies could be nutriwashed and genetically-modified foods poorwashed! The only limitations were PR flacks’ imaginations—and their expense accounts.

Viewed in sum, the extensive pollution of last year’s information environment could either make you cynical or have you convinced that two plus two really does equal five.

Here at the Center for Media and Democracy, we realized that sorting through a year’s worth of outrageous spin to bestow this year’s Falsies

## FLACK ATTACK

As the Center for Media and Democracy’s Diane Farsetta writes, 2005 was indeed a very false year. In this issue of *PR Watch*, we’ve included our annual Falsies Awards. As we enter into another year of dazzling spin, we can see how far we have or haven’t come.

We also take a look at how progressives are handling the issue of public relations and message development. Farsetta was invited to participate in the True Spin Conference in early February, which brought lefty activists together to discuss media strategies in Denver, Colorado. She reports back on what she said and heard.

CMD’s research director Sheldon Rampton takes a look at the work of George Lakoff, a cognitive linguist at the University of California–Berkeley, who has

popularized theories about the role of framing in the public debate. Progressives and Democrats have referred to Lakoff’s work as they try to configure winning media strategies. Rampton explores Lakoff’s ideas concerning metaphors, but stresses that there’s more than metaphors shaping our political perceptions.

SourceWatch editor Bob Burton jumps metaphorically into the ring with PR professional Alan Caruba, who heads the National Anxiety Center. Caruba’s anxieties include the environment, immigration and the United Nations. In a recent article defending his friend Michael Fumento (who wrote nice things about Monsanto after receiving money from the biotech giant), Caruba took a swipe at CMD’s website SourceWatch. Burton defends SourceWatch’s honor in his article, “Anxious Al Caruba.”

Awards would be no small task. We asked our readers for help, and 846 people answered the call by filling out our Falsies Awards Survey.

Here, then, are the winners of the second annual Center for Media and Democracy Falsies Awards, followed by our Readers' Choice Falsies. Lastly, we recognize groups and individuals who used information, reason, independent media and community organizing to counter 2005's flack attacks with the Center's first ever Win Against Spin Awards.



## AND THE FALSIES AWARDS WINNERS ARE . . .

**The coveted Gold Falsies Award of 2005 goes to the video news release industry (with a nod to their accomplices in television newsrooms).**

In March 2005, the *New York Times* reported, "At least 20 federal agencies, including the Defense Department and the Census Bureau, have made and distributed hundreds of television news segments in the past four years. . . . Many were subsequently broadcast on local stations across the country without any acknowledgment of the government's role." Video and radio segments from the U.S. Agriculture Department's Broadcast Media & Technology Center, which the *Times* called "one of the most effective public relations operations inside the federal government," are very one-sided. A Center for Media and Democracy review found pieces deriding public safety concerns about mad cow disease as "nothing but media hype" and promoting the

Central American Free Trade Agreement as "very good for agriculture."

It does make a twisted sort of sense, though. These video news releases (VNRs) and audio news releases (ANRs) are produced by public relations firms (or PR staff within companies or government agencies) to advance a client's agenda. They're promotional like advertisements—except that listeners or viewers think they're independently-reported news segments. Too bad for the media consuming public, but it's great propaganda for the corporate and government entities behind the fake news. Everyone knows that ads lie, but who would guess that a "news" report *on* a company was actually produced *by* that company?

Contrary to popular belief, the vast majority of fake news comes from companies, not governments. During a March teleconference of public relations executives, the CEO of Medialink, one of the largest VNR companies, cautioned his peers, "Let's remember this debate, from everything I've seen, read, heard, and talked to, is purely [focused on] the government. . . . I don't hear anybody issuing a healing cry [sic] over the stuff that we do day-in and day-out; it's really government. And I'm glad the story is kind of focused there, because I would hate to see it broaden." Sure thing, Larry—we won't tell a soul!

**The Silver Falsies Award goes to the mainstream media and the Bush administration, for "Not Counting the Dead."**

In March, a survey of more than 200 U.S. media personnel by American University's School of Communications found that "many media outlets self-censored their reporting on Iraq," often out of fear of offending their audience. One participant in the survey wrote, "The real damage of war on the civilian population was uniformly omitted." Indeed, U.S. media ignored or downplayed an October 2004 medical study that estimated nearly 100,000 Iraqi civilians had died since the U.S. invasion. The study, which erred on the side of caution by leaving Fallujah's high mortality rates out of its final projections, was widely praised by public health professionals.

In October, the Pentagon began periodically releasing "enemy body counts . . . to show the impact of some counterinsurgency operations" in Iraq, reported the *Washington Post*. In response to a question at a December talk, President Bush broke his silence on civilian

casualties to say that “30,000 Iraqis, more or less, have died as a result of the initial incursion and the ongoing violence.” This newfound candor came as Bush’s approval ratings for “handling his job, Iraq, terrorism and the economy” were “all at career-lows,” according to ABC News polls. Bush’s lowball estimation of civilian deaths was welcomed as “a more realistic tone” by international media and was quickly overshadowed by Iraq’s parliamentary elections, held just days later.

The debate about Iraqi civilian casualties mirrors earlier, and similarly marginalized, questions about civilian deaths following the 2001 U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. In July 2002, U.S. academic Mark Herold arrived at a conservative estimate of 3000-3400 Afghan civilians killed. He based his estimate on specific reports of deaths by news agencies. Yet U.S. military operations there continued through 2005. Human Rights Watch also claims that U.S. arrest and detention practices are “endangering the lives of Afghan civilians” and “undermining efforts to restore the rule of law in Afghanistan.”

### **The Bronze Falsies Award goes to the U.S. military and their public relations contractors, for “Spinning Wars and Psyops.”**

In January 2005, the Pentagon increased media training for forces going to Iraq, making “one or two hours of briefings by public-affairs specialists” mandatory for Army troops, and distributing wallet-sized “talking point” cards to soldiers. One talking point was, “We are

not an occupying force,” reported the *North Carolina News & Observer*.

Apparently, U.S. officials spent much of 2005 in linguistic debates. Initially, opponents in Iraq were called “dead-enders” or “Baathist holdouts.” When the dead end started looking more like a long slog, they became “former regime loyalists.” That changed to “former regime elements,” to avoid the positive connotations of the word “loyalty.” In November, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld had “an epiphany.” “This is a group of people who don’t merit the word ‘insurgency,’” he said, since that implies that they have “a legitimate gripe.” (Remember, there are no occupying forces in Iraq.) Rumsfeld’s half-joking re-re-re-naming suggestion was “enemies of the legitimate Iraqi government.”

In June, the Pentagon awarded up to \$300 million over five years to SYColeman, Inc., Lincoln Group and Science Applications International Corporation, to “inject more creativity into . . . psychological operations (psyops) efforts to improve foreign public opinion about the United States, particularly the military,” reported the *Washington Post*. At the time, the military contractors’ work was described as developing “radio and television spots, documentaries, or even text messages, pop-up ads on the Internet, podcasting, billboards or novelty items.”

What is missing from early reports on the psyops contracts is information on plans to buy out Iraqi news media. In November, the *Los Angeles Times* outed the Lincoln Group for covertly paying Iraqi newspapers to print stories written by U.S. information operations

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forces. The planted stories were described as “basically factual,” although—like their VNR and ANR cousins—they presented “only one side of events.” But in December, strategy documents obtained by ABC News

apparently, he felt great. In his mug shot, DeLay grinned widely, wearing a dapper suit with his House pin on the lapel. Also unlike your typical mug shot, the picture did not include booking information. Reporters conjectured that DeLay’s advisors “urged him to grin so that Democrats won’t be able to use a dour mug shot in future ad campaigns,” according to *Slate*. But maybe DeLay follows the advice of Billy Crystal’s Saturday Night Live character, Fernando: “It’s not how you feel; it’s how you look. And you look marvelous!”



*The Pentagon, headquarters of the Department of Defense. (DoD photo by Master Sgt. Ken Hammond, U.S. Air Force.)*

suggested that the Lincoln Group’s description of the November 2004 assault on Fallujah as a joint Iraqi and U.S. military operation was inaccurate. “Marines and reporters said the Iraqis were only minimally involved,” reported ABC.

### **Falsies Awards Dishonorable Mentions go to President Bush, for “Support Our Props,” and U.S. Representative Tom DeLay, for “The Mug Shot Mug.”**

In October, President Bush held a videoconference with U.S. soldiers stationed in Iraq that was billed as a “back-and-forth with the troops.” However, a premature satellite feed showed Allison Barber, a senior Pentagon official and former president of the PR firm Sodenta, rehearsing the “spontaneous” conversation with the soldiers. Oops! One of the Iraq troops presented as someone with on-the-ground knowledge, Master Sgt. Corine Lombardo, was also a flack. According to David Axe, who reported from Iraq for the *Village Voice*, Lombardo’s “job when I was with the 42nd Infantry Division included taking reporters to lunch. She lives in a fortified compound in Tikrit and rarely leaves.”

The same month, U.S. Representative and former House Majority Leader Tom DeLay reported to the Harris County, Texas sheriff’s office after being indicted for campaign finance conspiracy and money laundering. He was fingerprinted and posted a \$10,000 bond, but,

### **And the Readers’ Choice Falsies Winners Are...**

Many of our readers sent in their own Falsies Awards nominations. Some were for groups, people or trends whose spinning ways the Center for Media and Democracy has been tracking for

some time. For instance:

- The American Chemistry Council, which, as one Falsies Awards Survey respondent noted, “recently launched a major PR campaign . . . that promotes the economic contributions of toxics producers who are lobbying to weaken the right-to-know annual Toxics Release Inventory report.”
- The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, a “trade/lobbying group” that “continues to insist that reimportation of their drugs from third countries such as Canada is dangerous,” another respondent wrote. “Meanwhile, they’re offshoring jobs.”
- The American Beverage Association, for “announcing a bogus voluntary policy for soda in schools at the National Conference of State Legislatures when [member companies] Coke and Pepsi lobby against state bills.”
- Former *New York Times* reporter Judith Miller, for, as one respondent put it, promoting “her refusal to testify before the grand jury investigating the outing of a CIA operative as a principled First Amendment cause, but, in reality, she played a lead role in the disinformation campaign to prime public support for a war of aggression.”

- “Cause marketing,” such as the widespread pink ribbon ad campaigns playing on the serious health threat of breast cancer. “I am a survivor and I feel Falsies sums it up,” one respondent told us. “We wouldn’t really need them if we had a cure.”

Other readers urged the Center for Media and Democracy to adopt a more global approach to the Falsies Awards. International nominees of note include:

- British Prime Minister Tony Blair received several write-ins, for the “oh-so-dodgy dossier,” his “persuasive” oratories about Iraq’s supposed weapons of mass destruction, and for “lying to the people and the Parliament of the UK” about the Iraq war.
- The Downing Street Memos (and scant media coverage of them), as “a double-edged sword” that sliced through both “the false Iraq war claims” and the “last shred of credibility” of the mainstream media.
- Ahmed Chalabi, who one respondent called “a one-man PR machine,” for having “lied to the Iraqis, lied to the Jordanians, and last but not least lied to the Americans.” Perhaps his poor showing in December’s elections in Iraq is not-so-instant karma?
- The CanWest Global Communications Corporation, “Canada’s leading international media company,” for owning a broadcasting network that “reaches more than 94 percent of English-speaking Canada,” as well as “10 major metro dailies and 23 smaller daily, weekly, and community papers,” among the many other holdings listed on their website. One respondent wrote, “We no longer have anything close to a free press in Canada except for small alternative publications which have trouble surviving.”
- The National Coalition for Haitian Rights–Haiti, for engaging in what one respondent called a “partisan campaign to discredit the ousted Aristide government,” adding, “Prior to the coup, NCHR . . . directly link[ed] police abuses to the government. . . . Post-coup, NCHR now refers to killings of civilians by Haitian police as ‘collateral damage.’”

### And the Win Against Spin Awards Winners Are . . .

The public relations industry is pervasive, well-funded and highly skilled—but not insurmountable. Indeed, the Center for Media and Democracy was founded because deceptive PR only works when it remains unchallenged. Once exposed to public scrutiny, front groups, hollow claims and other media perversions

lose their power. Then, debates on important issues can take place on a more level playing ground.

For their work to overcome misleading spin and reclaim the media, the following groups and people earned the Center’s 2005 Win Against Spin Awards:

- The California Labor Federation, California Nurses Association and Service Employees International Union, for winning their lawsuit against the use of video news releases by Governor Schwarzenegger’s administration to promote workplace rule changes. A Sacramento Superior Court judge ruled that the VNRs gave “the misleading impression that the regulations are unopposed by any segments of the public and are not subject to criticism, thereby discouraging any further questioning or investigation of the matter by the public.”
- Marla Ruzicka, who founded the group CIVIC (the Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict) to document civilian deaths in Afghanistan and Iraq as a result of U.S.-led wars and lobbied Congress to provide assistance to families harmed during military operations. Tragically, this is a posthumous award, as Ruzicka was killed by a car bomb in Baghdad in April.
- U.S. Representative Frank Wolf, for questioning the propriety of lobbying contracts between U.S. firms and the foreign governments of China, Saudi Arabia and Sudan. Wolf also upbraided the U.S. State Department for granting the lobbying firm C/R International an exemption to the ban on U.S. companies doing business with Sudan.
- Voters in Switzerland, three California counties and nearly 100 New England towns who passed resolutions opposing the unregulated use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) or placing a moratorium on the commercial release or cultivation of GMOs. These victories for local food sovereignty and the precautionary approach were won despite massive lobbying and PR campaigns from biotech companies and major farm groups, and attempts to deny communities the right to vote on such matters.
- Citizen journalists—especially those who risk harassment, imprisonment or worse for using the Internet “to expose violations by their governments and provide the outside world with information,” as Amnesty International noted in its tribute to blogs on World Press Freedom Day. In the United States, local news websites and distributed journalism projects (like our own SourceWatch) made significant contributions. ■

# TRUE SPIN': AN OXYMORON OR A LOFTY GOAL?

by Diane Farsetta



“Officials from giant corporations meet all the time to share their latest and greatest PR strategies,” read the conference website. “Now it’s our turn.”

On February 2 and 3, some 180 people attended the True Spin Conference in Denver, Colorado, which was billed as “a PR conference for progressives.” The event was organized by CauseCommunications, a small Denver PR firm whose clients have included Ben Cohen’s Business Leaders for Sensible Priorities, Winona LaDuke’s Honor the Earth, and *The Progressive* magazine.

As a representative of the Center for Media and Democracy (CMD), I found myself generally agreeing on the ends, but sometimes disagreeing on the means, of conference attendees’ media work.

## SOME WORDS OF WISDOM

Much of the True Spin Conference was devoted to honing media skills. Often-repeated advice included:

- Build personal relationships with reporters.
- Be succinct in making your main points, but have supporting information at hand.
- Engage your audience with personal stories. Don’t repeat your opponents’ arguments.
- Practice giving interviews to improve your presentation.

One of my favorite conference moments came early the first day, when *Alternative Radio*’s David Barsamian expressed concern at the ever-increasing consolidation of media ownership, which, he warned, has “very deleterious effects on the workings and the spirit of our democracy.” He added, “No matter how well meaning they might be,” the handful of corporations that own most mainstream U.S. media outlets “simply do not” cover controversial topics or include “a range of opinions.”

The next speaker on the panel, from the local Clear Channel radio station, started off by saying, “I’m going to take a little bit different tack.” He continued, “Part of our business is to create audience, to be able to have enough audience to be able to sell ads to support what we do.” (Clear Channel owns over 1200 radio stations.)

The third panel speaker, from the local ABC TV affiliate, complained, “I hate when people say television dumbs down the news. . . . Why is keeping something simple assumed to be dumbing it down?” But later, he admitted that television “can’t handle multi-dimensional issues.”

At several times during the conference, presenters told horror stories about how overworked reporters are and how downsized U.S. newsrooms have become. These points were made to impress upon the audience the need to be succinct, timely, accurate and polite in their communications with reporters. And it’s exactly this situation that PR firms and their clients exploit to place fake news on television and radio and in newspapers and magazines.

The Denver ABC reporter said, “I’m one of five reporters today, which we can talk about whether that’s good or not. I’m one of five general assignment reporters on staff today, and I have a slot I have to fill, in at least one newscast.” A former television reporter stressed, “I don’t like the term spoon fed, but journalists are busy people. They don’t have a lot of time—especially in today’s world, especially in television. You will find people who are not writing a big story a week; they are writing two or three stories a day.” A former print reporter described his experience writing a press release for a nonprofit organization and seeing it picked up verbatim by a leading news organization: “I never expected that my first piece in the *Washington Post* would have all of my quotes and all of my arguments, but not my byline.”

## IS THERE “GOOD” FAKE NEWS?

In my presentation, I cautioned against progressive groups trying to replicate the U.S. political right’s approach to communications (which David Brock detailed in *The Republican Noise Machine* and CMD’s John Stauber and Sheldon Rampton addressed in *Banana Republicans*). While effective in the short term, many of these tactics undermine the integrity of news media and the quality of public debates—both of which are integral to achieving progressive social change.

After describing recent examples of obviously deceptive tactics—PR firms engaging in pay for play, creating “astroturf” groups, and otherwise giving misleading impressions of their (usually corporate) clients—I turned to fake news. Unfortunately, more progressive groups seem to be using audio news releases (ANRs) and video news releases (VNRs). For example, the U.S. Green Party issued several VNRs in response to Bush’s State of the Union address this year.

According to academic studies, industry monitoring, and anecdotes from media personnel—in fact, according to all accounts, with the exception of PR executives’ Senate testimony—television newsrooms airing VNRs rarely disclose their source to news audiences. I explained that CMD believes the public has a right to know where

its “news” really comes from and calls for mandated disclosure of all broadcast material provided by third parties.

I urged progressive groups putting out ANRs or VNRs to ensure transparency by including disclosures of sponsorship within the broadcast material itself. In the case of VNRs, this could be done by displaying the organization’s logo and/or the words “footage provided by X” throughout the video. Their groups’ goals are lofty and important, I told the audience, but the PR tactics used to further those goals must also be principled.

The audience’s response was polite but unenthusiastic—perhaps because they weren’t expecting media ethics to be addressed in a workshop titled “Do Progressives Suck at PR?” The other panelists, two media critics writing for print outlets and the director of a public interest media center, mostly focused on the dos and don’ts of contacting reporters. As the first panel speaker, though, I was able to nudge the discussion slightly towards potential clashes between progressive values and PR tactics.

In one-on-one conversations, a few conference attendees said that their groups use VNRs. “But we put out the good VNRs,” one videographer told me. When I responded, “The only good VNR is a labeled one,” he countered, “But the TV stations like to pretend it’s their own reporting.” He’s right—but so is CMD.

Progressive groups desperately trying to publicize important information, analyses and policy proposals through compromised news media do have to make tough choices. But there are options—including working with independent, alternative media—that received little attention at the conference. (To be fair, culture jamming and street theater to creatively capture media attention and reframe issues were discussed and demonstrated by the talented Denver chapters of Billionaires for Bush and the Raging Grannies.)

## CHALLENGES AHEAD

During the conference’s last keynote presentation, an African-American man challenged the organizers and other attendees to ensure that future meetings would draw a more diverse crowd. “I won a bet with my wife,”



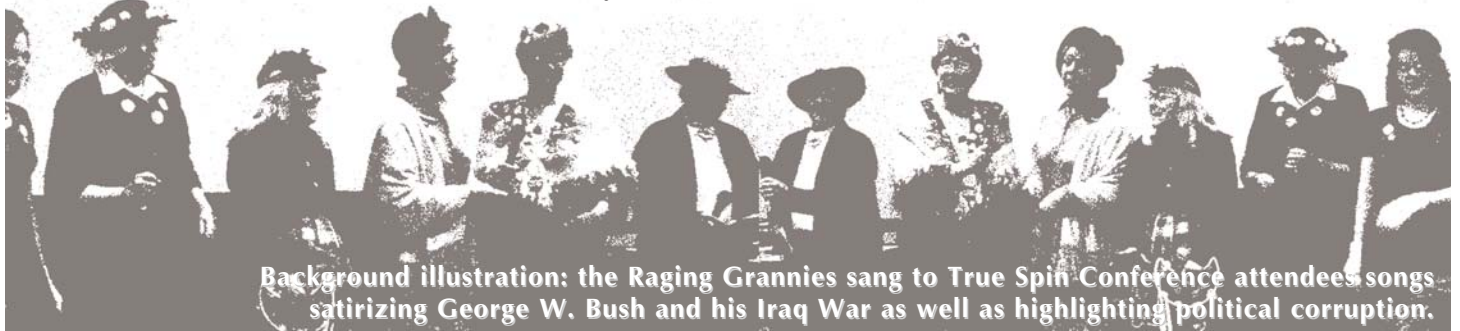
*CMD senior researcher Diane Farsetta at the True Spin Conference.*

he said, “that I would be the only brother here.” (There were a few African-American women and other people of color present, but the event was overwhelmingly white.)

Racial diversity is not just the nice or morally right thing to do, he said. “We’re not going to win” until progressive groups representing a wide range of communities and experiences are all meeting together.

In addition to seriously considering the forces that alienate and disempower people based on their race and/or economic class, progressive groups need to consider the forces that pollute the information environment. Does the short-term gain from using unlabeled VNRs or ANRs outweigh the damage done to the credibility of news outlets? Does the buzz from running provocative ads in the prestige press justify funneling considerable resources—which could be used to strengthen alternative media—to media conglomerates that are often part of the problem?

Much like life, media ethics are complex. These questions can’t be answered with a black-or-white, or one-size-fits-all, approach. The fact that the True Spin Conference organizers asked CMD to present suggests these issues are on their radar screen. Hopefully, future events and other forums will explore these questions in more depth. ■



*Background illustration: the Raging Grannies sang to True Spin Conference attendees songs satirizing George W. Bush and his Iraq War as well as highlighting political corruption.*

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# GEORGE LAKOFF AND THE MOTIVE FOR METAPHOR

by Sheldon Rampton

The U.S. Democratic Party has not exactly thrived in recent years, as John Stauber and I observed in our most recent book, *Banana Republicans: How the Right Wing is Turning America Into a One-Party State*. Republicans now control every branch of the federal government and a majority of state governments as well. Opinion polls show strong public dissatisfaction with both the Bush administration and Congress, but conservatives retain firm control of all of the levers of power. Currently in the U.S. House of Representatives there are 232 Republicans, 202 Democrats and 1 Independent, and in the Senate, Republicans hold 55 out of 100 seats. Democrats will face an uphill struggle if they hope to win back a majority in even one of those houses in 2006.

It's quite a comedown for a party that enjoyed comfortable majorities through most of the latter half of the twentieth century. Adversity, however, sometimes breeds new thinking, and George Lakoff, an affable professor of cognitive linguistics at the University of California–Berkeley, has emerged as an influential advisor to Democrats looking for ways to reinvent themselves. He heads a think tank, the Rockridge Institute, which works to “reframe public debate . . . by applying the discipline of cognitive linguistics to reveal the underlying frames and assumptions that structure American political discourse.” Former Democratic presidential candidate and current party chairman Howard Dean called Lakoff “one of the most influential thinkers of the progressive movement” and was so impressed with Lakoff that he ordered members of his staff to read his 1996 book, *Moral Politics*. Dean also wrote the introduction to Lakoff's more recent book, *Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate* (2004).

The big revelation from Lakoff for many Democrats seems to be his insistence that they need to get serious about the language choices they make when talking about issues. For me, that's not much of a revelation. What I find most interesting about Lakoff isn't the fact that he's interested in framing, but the way he thinks about framing.

Lakoff's scholarly career began under the mentorship of MIT linguistics professor (and leftist activist) Noam Chomsky. In the late 1960s, however, he broke away from Chomsky. Their differences became so sharp within the linguistic community that they are sometimes described as the “linguistics wars.”

“I had helped work out a lot of the early details of Chomsky's theory of grammar,” Lakoff said in a recent interview. “Noam claimed then—and still does, so far as I can tell—that syntax is independent of meaning, context, background knowledge, memory, cognitive pro-

cessing, communicative intent, and every aspect of the body.” Language and thought, in other words, were considered an abstract process that just happened to be occurring in human beings with physical bodies; the same rational processes could be expected to occur even if we were disembodied rational beings, like computers. The mind's cognitive functions could therefore be studied independently of the brain and body that happened to house it.

Lakoff, however, became convinced that human language and thought are inseparable from our bodies. The mind, he says, “is embodied, not in the trivial sense of being implementable in a brain, but in the crucial sense that conceptual structure and the mechanisms of reason arise ultimately and are shaped by from the sensory-motor system of the brain and body.” In order to make sense of the world, we rely constantly on metaphors derived from that sensory-motor system. Even highly abstract systems of thought, such as philosophy and mathematics, rely on body-based metaphors. These ideas became the basis for Lakoff's books including *Metaphors We Live By* (1980); *Philosophy In The Flesh: the Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (1999); and *Where Mathematics Comes From: How the Embodied Mind Brings Mathematics into Being* (2000).

How do metaphors figure in all of this? Here are some metaphors that Lakoff discusses in *Metaphors We Live By*:

- “Time is money.” This metaphor is reflected not just in the phrase itself but in the language we use to talk about time: we “waste” time, “spend” time, live on “borrowed” time, “save,” “budget,” “share” or “invest” it. The metaphor of time as money gives us a way of thinking about time that highlights certain things it has in common with money, such as the fact that it is a valuable, limited resource.
- “Happy is up.” This metaphor is never stated in exactly those words, but we can see it at work in the language we use to talk about our moods: “He lifted my spirits,” “I'm feeling low,” etc. Lakoff points to “happy is up” as an example of an “orientational” metaphor whose meaning is derived from the “sensory-motor system of the brain and body.” Happiness corresponds to the physical experience of standing or walking upright, while depression corresponds to the physical experience of lying down when we are tired or depressed.
- “Argument is war.” This metaphor finds expression in phrases such as “defended a position” or “winning the argument” and in the way we say that arguments can



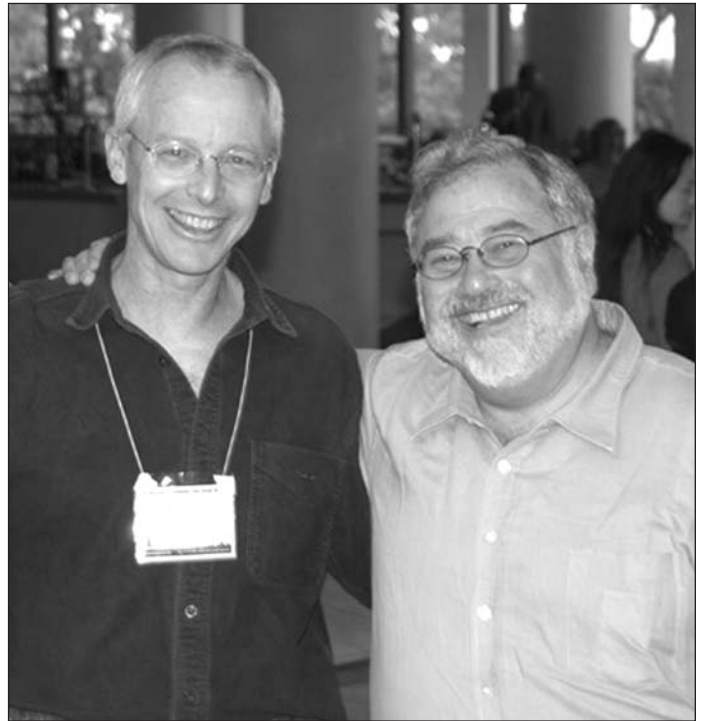
be “reinforced,” “attacked,” “shot down,” “on target,” or even that someone can “occupy the high ground” in a debate. Of course, arguments are not really wars, just as time is not really money, but the metaphor helps us think coherently about arguments based on some of the things that they have in common with war: conflict, disagreement, hostility, strategies for winning, and so forth.

Metaphors, in other words, aren’t just clever word games that poets use when they want to compare their lovers to flowers or summer days. According to Lakoff, “Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature.” Metaphorical thinking occurs whenever we use some formula of “A is B” to understand “A.” Often our use of metaphors is so ingrained that we don’t even notice we are using them. For example, we might say that someone is “crazy about his girlfriend” or “nuts about her” without noticing that they are using the metaphor “love is madness.” If someone “devours” a book, has “half-baked ideas” or makes “warmed-over arguments,” we probably don’t notice that we’re using the metaphor “ideas are food.”

And metaphors are used for political gain. During the first war in the Persian Gulf, Lakoff wrote an essay titled “Metaphor and War” in which he stated:

Metaphors can kill. The discourse over whether to go to war in the gulf was a panorama of metaphor. Secretary of State Baker saw Saddam Hussein as “sitting on our economic lifeline.” President Bush portrayed him as having a “stranglehold” on our economy. General Schwarzkopf characterized the occupation of Kuwait as a “rape” that was ongoing. The President said that the US was in the gulf to “protect freedom, protect our future, and protect the innocent,” and that we had to “push Saddam Hussein back.” Saddam Hussein was painted as a Hitler. It is vital, literally vital, to understand just what role metaphorical thought played in bringing us in this war.

One of the most influential metaphors about war, as Lakoff pointed out, is the statement by German military theorist Karl Von Clausewitz that “war is the continuation of politics by other means.” But other metaphors are at work as well, such as “war is a violent crime”; “war is a competitive game”; and “war is medicine” (which therefore uses “surgical strikes” to “clean out” enemy positions).



***CMD executive director John Stauber (left) and George Lakoff. (Photo by Randall Wallace)***

## **A FAMILY AFFAIR**

In *Moral Politics*, Lakoff attempts to explain why liberals and conservatives in the United States think differently about issues ranging from military spending to abortion to government welfare programs. (Many of the themes from *Moral Politics* are repeated in *Don't Think of an Elephant*, which was written as a practical guidebook for progressives.) The differences in thinking, he concludes, are based on different metaphors about the family that govern liberal and conservative thinking. Both liberals and conservatives use the “family” as a metaphor when thinking about the government, in the following ways:

- The nation is a family.
- The government is a parent.
- The citizens are the children.

According to Lakoff, “we all have a metaphor for the nation as a family. We have Founding Fathers. The Daughters of the American Revolution. We ‘send our sons’ to war. This is a natural metaphor because we usually understand large social groups, like nations, in terms of small ones, like families or communities.”

There is a difference, however, between conservative and liberal family values. Conservatives think in terms of a “strict father” morality, whereas liberals use a “nur-

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turant parent” morality. Here’s how Lakoff describes strict father morality:

It is assumed that the world is, and always will be, a dangerous and difficult place. It is a competitive world and there will always be winners and losers. Children are naturally bad since they want to do what feels good, not what is moral, so they have to be made good by being taught discipline. There is tangible evil in the world and to stand up to evil, one must be morally strong, or “disciplined.”

The father’s job is to protect and support the family. Children are to respect and obey him. The father’s moral duty is to teach his children right from wrong, with punishment that is typically physical and can be painful when they do wrong. It is assumed that parental discipline in childhood is required to develop the internal discipline that adults will need in order to be moral and to succeed. Morality and success are linked through discipline. This focus on discipline is seen as a form of love—“tough love.” . . .

Strict Father Morality demonstrates a natural Moral Order: Those who are moral should be in power. The Moral Order legitimizes traditional power relations as being natural, determining a hierarchy of Moral Authority: God above Man; Man above Nature; Adults above Children; Western Culture above Non-western Culture; America above other nations. . . .

When translated into politics, the government metaphorically becomes the Strict Father. The citizens are children of two kinds: the mature, successfully disciplined, and self-reliant ones (read: wealthy businesses and individuals), whom the government should not meddle with; and the whining, undisciplined, dependent ones who must never be coddled. Just as in the family, the government must be an instrument of Moral Authority, upholding and extending policies that express Moral Strength.

By contrast, progressives see the world through the frame of nurturant parent morality:

It is assumed that the world is basically good. And, however dangerous and difficult the world may be at present, it can be made better, and it is your responsibility to help make it better. Correspondingly, children are born good, and parents can

make them better, and it is their responsibility to do so. . . .

In the Nurturant Parent family, the highest moral values are Empathy and Responsibility. Effective nurturing requires empathy, which is feeling what someone else feels—parents have to figure out what all their baby’s cries mean in order to take care of him or her. . . . Being responsible to others and oneself requires cooperation. In society, nurturant morality is expressed as social responsibility. This requires cooperation rather than competition, and a recognition of interdependence. . . .

The role of the nation should be to promote cooperation and extend these values to the world. This comes from caring about the well-being of people in our own and in other countries, recognizing that all nations exist interdependently in one global “society,” and, therefore, wanting to cooperate with other nations to solve problems like hunger, disease, oppression of women and exploitation of children, and political strife.

Ultimately, the job of a progressive government is to care for and protect the population, especially those who are helpless; to guarantee democracy (the equal sharing of political power); to promote the well-being of all through cooperation; and to ensure fairness for everyone.

These different models of family morality, Lakoff says, explain why certain ideas cluster together as “conservative” while others cluster together as “progressive.” He explores how these models explain why conservatives typically oppose legalized abortion but support the war in Iraq, while progressives support legalized abortion but oppose the war.

From a progressive point of view, the views of conservatives on these two issues are contradictory. How can someone claim to be “pro-life” yet support war? And as Lakoff notes, conservatives also hold other beliefs that seem contrary to a pro-life attitude: “The United States has an extremely high infant-mortality rate, largely due to the lack of adequate prenatal care for low-income mothers,” he writes. “Yet conservatives are not in favor of government programs providing such prenatal care. . . . Liberals also find it illogical that right-to-life advocates are mostly in favor of capital punishment.” But these views hold together, he says, because they are consistent with other aspects of strict father morality. Conservatives support capital punishment because of their

belief in the importance of punishment; they oppose prenatal care because they see health care as a matter of personal responsibility in which the government should not interfere; and they support the war because of their belief in a moral order that places America above other nations and because “the military itself is structured by Strict Father morality. It has a hierarchical authority structure, which is mostly male and sets strict moral bounds.”

Using Lakoff’s analysis, political consultant Tom Ball has advised Democrats to “use words that exude weakness” to describe their Republican opponents. “Do not use words that could be construed in the ‘Strict Father’ model of morality as strong,” he writes. “This refers specifically to many of the words that progressives use liberally in describing the opposition: Mean, heartless, insensitive, dictatorial, hateful, angry, evil, stubborn, harsh. . . . If you truly wish to attack conservatives at their deepest level of meaning, then forget the sissy taunts of, ‘Oh, you’re so mean,’ or ‘. . . so stubborn,’ or ‘. . . so evil!’ Instead, label them WEAK.” Ball has even developed a helpful list of 175 words appropriate to that purpose: coward, confused, unprincipled, failure, nervous, pathetic, helpless, hopeless scared, paranoid, twit, ineffective, incompetent, awkward, inept, etc.

### “PARENT” OR “MOTHER”?

I think some of Lakoff’s analysis is interesting, but I also see some problems with it. In general, I think he does a better job of describing the underpinnings of conservative thought than he does of describing the underpinnings of liberal thought. The concept of a “strict father” is clear and specific, whereas there is something a bit vague about “nurturant parent.” It might be more accurate to say that liberal values are based on a “nurturant mother” rather than parent. Liberalism of course espouses equality between the sexes, but the idea of a nurturant “parent” really draws from the way people think specifically about mothers more than it does from the way people think of parents in general. (In fact, the term “nurture” is based on the same Latin root as the word for “nurse” or “suckle,” suggesting activity that is not only socially but biologically specific to women.)

This gender distinction is sometimes expressed in the not-so-coded language that conservatives and liberals alike use when talking about their differences. According to conservatives, liberals aren’t “nurturant parents,” they are “girly-men,” “wimps,” “pussies.” For their part, liberals characterize conservatives as “cowboys” suffering from “too much testosterone.” I’m not sure what (if any) practical implications flow from choosing the term “nurturant mother” rather than “nurturant parent,” but

Lakoff’s theory should recognize more clearly that gender shapes both conservative and liberal thought.

### THE REST OF THE WORLD

*Moral Politics* is also curiously narrow in its focus. The only political ideologies it seriously considers are liberalism and conservatism as those terms are currently understood in the United States. Other countries and other ideologies are virtually ignored, and the history of how political thinking has changed over time is not even considered, even in the United States. This leads to any number of unanswered questions that I’d like to have seen Lakoff consider:

- *Is “Strict Father” morality really limited to conservatism?* Recently, for example, North Korea held a film festival that featured propaganda films extolling the virtues of its communist leader, Kim Jong Il. The documentaries had titles such as “The Leader Is the Great Father of Our People,” “The Fatherly Leader among Anti-Japanese Revolutionary Fighters,” “The Fatherly Leader among Officials,” and “To Hold the Fatherly Leader in Higher Esteem.” This rhetoric isn’t particularly unique to Korea. Joseph Stalin and Mao Tse-Tung were each portrayed in their day as a “great father of the people,” as were dictators on the right such as Adolf Hitler. But in the communist examples, strict father morality went hand-in-hand with cooperative values and support for a welfare state.
- *What about ideologies other than liberalism and conservatism?* I’ve mentioned communism and fascism, both of which played a major role in world geopolitics during the twentieth century and still have followers today. Even in the United States, communist and socialist ideas have influenced public policy and have attracted a significant number of followers. In *Moral Politics*, however, Lakoff’s only mention of socialism or communism is in a brief passage where he quotes conservative activist James Dobson, who treats socialism, communism and liberalism as equivalent systems that he equates with permissive parenting.
- *What about other uses of the family metaphor?* What the Strict Father and Nurturant Parent models have in common is that they both begin from the paternalistic assumption that parents are in charge of the political “family.” However, there have been important political movements that reject this assumption and actually favor rebellion against parental authority. During the 1960s, for example, the peace movement was dominated by a youth culture whose slogans included, “Don’t trust anyone over thirty.”

- *For that matter, what about George Orwell?* It was Orwell, a socialist, who coined the term “Big Brother” in his novel, *1984*. Orwell used the term to describe the false paternalism of totalitarianism. “Big Brother” is arguably a symbolic father figure, but if we try to explain him using Lakoff’s terminology, he would be a strict father “posing” as a nurturant parent. And although Orwell wrote his novel as a critique of totalitarianism by both leftist and rightist governments, in modern times Big Brother has been used primarily as a rhetorical figure by the right to criticize government programs in general. It’s hard, therefore, to imagine where he would fit either on the axis of liberal/conservative or of strict/nurturant.

What this all suggests is that the clusters of attitudes that Lakoff attributes to the categories of “conservative” and “liberal” do not flow directly and naturally from the idea of a “strict father” or “nurturant parent” alone. Rather, those ideas have come together as a result of America’s specific history and culture, and they find expression in ways that are often arbitrary and paradoxical. Lakoff notes, for example, that there is a paradox in conservative anti-government rhetoric:

American conservatism has a feature that seems peculiarly American and that often puzzles observers of American politics from other countries. It is the resentment toward government that often borders on, or extends to, hatred. . . .

How can conservatives love their country, love their system of government, love the founders of their government, but resent and often hate the government itself? This does not happen in most other countries with versions of conservative politics. You won’t find it in France or Italy or Spain or Israel or Japan. Why?

Lakoff finds the answer in “a peculiar feature of the American Strict Father model” which holds that “good parents do not meddle or interfere” in the lives of their mature children. “Any parental meddling or interference is strongly resented. . . . Here we have a remarkable form of explanation. A characteristically American part of the Strict Father family model corresponds exactly to a characteristically American aspect of conservative politics.” Unfortunately, he offers no citations or other evidence to support his claim that these aspects of the Strict Father model are unique to the United States.

Lakoff adds, “It is not uncommon in this country for strict fathers (or mothers) to go too far and become abusive.” The Nation as Family metaphor may therefore pro-

ject “an abusive Strict Father model” onto conservative political views, in which case “the government, like an abusive father, may be seen as inherently abusive, neglectful, ignorant, dangerous, and potentially out of control.” But these attitudes sound to me like the feelings that a lot of liberals these days hold for the current government. So is this resentment part of Strict Father thinking, or part of the Nurturant Parent model?

## CONSPIRACY THEORIES

I also have a bone to pick with Lakoff’s characterization of what he calls the “cynical liberal response” to conservatism, which he goes so far as to call a “conspiracy theory”:

The cynical liberal response is that the ultrarich are attempting to take over the intellectual life of the country to ensure their domination. One step has been to finance a network of right-wing think tanks. Eliminating the National Endowment for the Humanities would eliminate a major source of funding for non-right-wing research. Eliminating the Corporation for Public Broadcasting would curtail public discourse in a way that would serve thought control. Controlling the purse strings of public universities would be another step in thought control. . . .

There is much to be said for the cynical liberal response. Much of it is true. Yet it has major flaws and is far from the whole story. First, it is a demonization of conservatives. . . . Second, the conspiracy theory attributes too much to competence and to centralized control. . . . Third, the conspiracy theory does not explain why conservative rhetoric can make sense to so many people who did not previously vote conservative. . . . Fourth, the conspiracy theory does not explain the details of conservative political positions. Why should the death penalty be in the interest of the ultrarich? How can the rich get richer on the Three Strikes and You’re Out law, which requires heavy government spending on prisons? . . . The conspiracy theory doesn’t explain many important conservative policies.

At the end of *Moral Politics*, however, Lakoff says that progressives are facing a “think tank gap,” because conservatives have “spend a huge amount of money—well over a billion dollars in the 1990s alone—to support their intellectuals in such think tanks.” So is this “a vast, conspiracy theory,” as Hillary Clinton once suggested? No, it’s not. It is simply the result of disciplined, com-

mitted political organizing by the conservative movement, as John Stauber and I wrote in *Banana Republicans*. For more than four decades, conservatives have worked to build a network of grassroots organizations and think tanks that formulate and promote conservative ideas, and they are now reaping the fruits of that investment.

Moreover, conservative ideas do largely serve the interests of the wealthy, which is in turn tied to the conservative movement's success in raising the money needed to fund its ideological apparatus. When conservative ideas have clashed with the interests of their funders, in fact, the ideas have often changed to accommodate their funders. In *Banana Republicans*, we describe how this process affected libertarianism, a political ideology that was often associated with marijuana-smoking hippies in the 1960s but nowadays focuses mostly on corporate-friendly economic issues such as opposing minimum wage laws or environmental regulations. Why the change? Much of it can be explained as a result of the funding that began pouring into libertarian organizations, beginning in the 1970s, from wealthy corporate backers (and major polluters) such as Charles and David Koch of Koch Industries.

For a more recent example, consider the Jack Abramoff scandal involving prominent conservative activists and Native American casinos. The newfound power of the "gaming industry," as it likes to call itself, has been reflected in the changing attitudes toward gambling of conservative politicians, including President

Bush. Opposition to gambling has been a longstanding tenet of conservative politics and is certainly the attitude that you would expect from Strict Father moralists. Bush expressed this viewpoint himself when he was governor of Texas and wooed religious conservatives by boasting of his "strong antigambling record" and moving to shut down an Indian-run casino. "Casino gambling is not OK," he declared. "It has ruined the lives of too many adults, and it can do the same thing to our children." As a presidential candidate, by contrast, he has accepted large campaign contributions from casinos and even appeared personally at a Las Vegas casino for a fundraiser for his reelection campaign.

"Bush's retreat from his antigambling rhetoric came as Republican lobbyists and activist groups collected tens of millions of dollars from Indian tribes seeking to preserve their casinos," reported the *Boston Globe*. "When Bush was a firm opponent of gambling, his position opened the door for GOP lobbyists to court gaming tribes worried about a tough administration policy. After Bush dropped his antigambling rhetoric, lobbyists touted their access, and fund-raising from Indian tribes grew exponentially."

Lakoff is undoubtedly correct that moral metaphors shape our political perceptions, but as the above examples illustrate, it's not a one-way street. Politics and money also play a role in shaping our moral metaphors—a lesson that public relations specialists and other professional "perception managers" understand only too well. ■

## CMD IN THE NEWS

The Center for Media and Democracy is at the forefront of identifying manipulative PR and propaganda. Here are just a few examples of recent media appearances of the Center and its staff:

- CMD senior researcher Diane Farsetta appeared on Air America Radio's "The Al Franken Show." In the January 24, 2006 interview with Franken, Farsetta discussed the Falsies Awards and the U.S. government's spinning of the Iraq war.
- Andrew McIntosh reported on a new front group in his January 31, 2006 article "Botox maker's lobbying assailed: 'Grass-roots' group fighting planned tax is company-created" for the *Sacramento Bee*. *PR Watch* editor Laura Miller said of Botox's campaign, "They call it grass-roots. We call it Astro-turf. . . . It distorts public debate and . . . the democratic process."

- Doug Ireland writes in his February 13, 2006 article "GAO report: Bush Spends Billions on domestic propaganda" for his blog *Direland*, "If you haven't seen today's *New York Times*, there's a screaming full-page anti-union ad, that ballyhoos a new anti-labor propaganda group called 'Center for Union Facts.' But the ad doesn't say who's really behind it. Well, our good friends at *PR Watch*, as usual, have the goods on this pro-business, union-busting scam. 'Nothing in the advertisement or the webpage mentions Rick Berman, but—Bingo!—that's who owns the website domain name,' *PR Watch* reports." Berman is behind several corporate-funded front groups and websites that take aim at environmental, public health and union activists, including Center for Consumer Freedom and ActivistCash.com.

# ANXIOUS AL CARUBA

by Bob Burton

Alan Caruba is a public relations professional who is so anxious about issues like environmentalism, immigration and the United Nations that he runs the National Anxiety Center. Caruba, who states on his website that his clients include or have included “chemical and pharmaceutical companies, think tanks [and] trade associations,” writes a weekly column, called “Warning Signs,” which is run by conservative websites.

In a late January column, Caruba, an “adjunct fellow” at the anti-environmentalist Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise (CDFE), expressed anxiety over our SourceWatch article on his friend Michael Fumento. The title of his column was “Smearing Conservative Writers.”

SourceWatch references recent revelations by *BusinessWeek* that Monsanto funded Fumento’s 1999 book *BioEvolution*, a fact not disclosed to readers of the book or of his later columns, some of which praised the biotech Goliath. The *BusinessWeek* article, Caruba speculated, had “nothing to do with [Fumento’s] ethics and everything to do with a leftist attack intended to smear his reputation and hopefully remove a leading critic of environmentalism and other manifestations of dubious science intended to frighten people.”

But Caruba’s Center for Media and Democracy-induced anxiety didn’t stop there. He went on to imply that the book *Mad Cow USA*, co-authored by CMD’s John Stauber and Sheldon Rampton, is irrational and extremist since, according to Caruba, “there has never been a case of this [mad cow] disease in the U.S.A.”

Caruba then claimed that “folks like those at SourceWatch” can easily be dismissed, since they receive funding from “left-wing foundations like Ford, Rockefeller, and MacArthur, as well as unions, trade associations, companies, and activist organizations that seek a competitive edge or want to influence public policy.” Members of the public who support organizations like CMD, he wrote, have been so “intensely propagandized” that they “believe that global warming is something other than a normal climate cycle.”

Caruba’s column also extolled the virtues of fact checking, a practice he claimed to have mastered as the editor of a small weekly newspaper. But how well did Anxious Al check his facts?

## SOME WARNINGS ON ‘WARNING SIGNS’

**Caruba wrote, “There has never been a case of this [mad cow] disease in the U.S.A.”**

Where has Caruba been the past two years?

On December 23, 2003, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the first confirmed domestic case of mad cow disease, on a Washington state farm. In June 2005, the agency confirmed a second case of mad cow disease, in a Texas animal.

Did Rip van Caruba sleep through these major news items on the international spread of an always-fatal dementia-causing disease? Apparently not, as his June 24, 2005 column declared “Mad Cows Don’t Scare Me!” In it, Caruba noted but downplayed the significance of the USDA announcements. The column also failed to acknowledge Stauber and Rampton’s prescient reporting (*Mad Cow USA* was first published in 1997), but we’re sure Caruba meant to mention our work.



*Alan Caruba, from the CDFE website*

**SourceWatch, Caruba complained, “lists Boringinstitute.com, the site for a media spoof I created in 1984 that hasn’t been on the Internet since 2004” as one of his current sites.**

Fair point. The SourceWatch article on Alan Caruba, which was created in 2003, hadn’t clarified that Caruba had since abandoned the Boringinstitute.com site. (It does now.)

But neither does the Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise’s website, where Caruba is listed as an adjunct fellow. His CDFE profile currently states, “Mr. Caruba maintains [www.boringinstitute.com](http://www.boringinstitute.com) as the site of his famed media spoof and clearinghouse for information about boredom.” Anxious Al should call CDFE to get that updated!

Caruba also complained that the SourceWatch article on him listed together websites which he owns and/or maintains, and websites which name him as a contact for journalists. The article now distinguishes between the two, and we appreciate him clarifying his online activities to us. (We clearly state that SourceWatch articles, as collaborative efforts, are works in progress.)

**Caruba wrote that “folks like those at SourceWatch” are funded by “left-wing**

*continued on page 16*

# SUPPORT THE CENTER FOR MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY

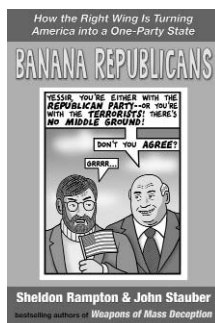
The Center is a non-profit, public interest organization that strengthens participatory democracy by investigating and exposing spin and propaganda, and by promoting media literacy and citizen journalism.

The Center for Media and Democracy serves social change activists, journalists, researchers, policymakers and the public at large in the following ways:

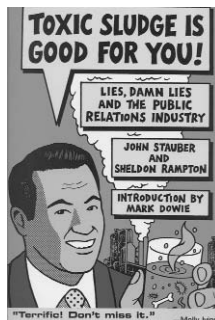
- Countering propaganda by investigating and reporting on behind-the-scenes public relations campaigns by corporations, industries, governments and other powerful institutions.
- Informing and assisting grassroots citizen activism that promotes public health, economic justice, ecological sustainability and human rights.
- Promoting media literacy to help the public recognize the forces shaping the information they receive about issues that affect their lives.
- Sponsoring "open content" media that enable citizens from all walks of life to "be the media" and to participate in creating media content.

The Center for Media and Democracy is a 501(c)3 non-profit. Donations are tax-deductable as allowed by law.

*Banana Republicans: How the Right Wing Is Turning America Into a One-Party State*  
Tarcher/Penguin  
2004

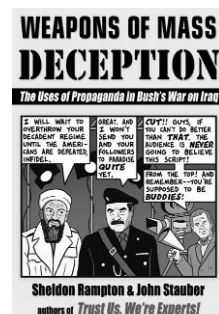
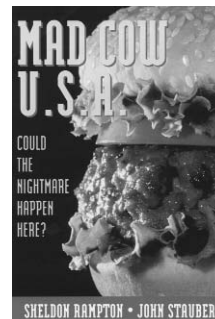


*Toxic Sludge Is Good For You: Lies, Damn Lies and the Public Relations Industry*  
Common  
Courage  
Press 1995



*Trust Us, We're Experts: How Industry Manipulates Science and Gambles With Your Future*  
Tarcher/  
Putnam 2001

*Weapons of Mass Deception: The Uses of Propaganda in Bush's War on Iraq*  
Tarcher/Penguin  
2003



*Mad Cow USA*  
Common  
Courage Press  
1997, 2004

Books can be ordered from the Center on the form below.

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(Contributions of \$35 or more include a one-year subscription to PR Watch.)

I would like to become a Sustaining Member, donating \$\_\_\_\_\_ each month.

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## A CMD riddle:

We have 18, we'd like to have 36. They give, but they also receive. It's only a little, but it's really a lot.

What is it? It's our monthly sustainers program!

We have 18 great fans that currently donate to us monthly by credit card through [groundspring.org](http://groundspring.org). And you can help us to double that by signing up as a sustainer today.

Our sustainers are happy to support CMD's propaganda busting, but we like to show our appreciation too. If you sign up at the \$20 per month level, we will send you the handiest gadget ever—a VNR-Be-Gone! You can zap TVs off wherever you go, whenever you think you are being served up some fake news.

And finally, a monthly gift at any level helps us, and spreading your giving out over the year can help you too—many monthly donors feel like they can give more a little at a time than writing a check once a year.

Go to <https://secure.groundspring.org/dn/index.php?id=1118> to sign up today! If you have any questions, please contact Associate Director Judith Siers-Poisson at [judith@prwatch.org](mailto:judith@prwatch.org).



## ANXIOUS ALCARUBA *continued from page 14*

**foundations like Ford, Rockefeller, and MacArthur, as well as unions, trade associations, companies, and activist organizations that seek a competitive edge or want to influence public policy.”**

This sleight of hand is intended to give the impression that Caruba is listing actual CMD funders, but none of those named are, or have been, donors to CMD. This fact is easily checked, since (unlike Michael Fumento) CMD lists its foundation funders—going back to 1993!—on its website.

To maintain journalistic independence, CMD “does not accept corporate or government grants.” We do accept “contributions from individuals and non-profit organizations,” but to date these supporters have not included unions or trade associations. Maybe this clarification will help Al feel less anxious.

**Caruba claimed that global warming is just a “normal climate cycle.”**

We're sure that Exxon Mobil, which contributed \$130,000 to CDFE in 2004 for “global climate change

issues,” appreciates this sentiment. But Caruba must be getting very lonely with his climate change skepticism.

The Pentagon and the nuclear industry both acknowledge that human-induced greenhouse emissions are contributing to climate change. Even George W. Bush stated in June 2005, “We know that the surface of the Earth is warmer, and that an increase in greenhouse gases caused by humans is contributing to the problem.” But perhaps Caruba thinks that the U.S. president has embraced “dubious science intended to frighten people.”

As independent researchers, we couldn't agree more with Caruba about the importance of checking facts before publication. However, we are starting to doubt that Caruba will correct his errors. After informing him of original blog post he responded in an email appreciative that I had linked to the biographical note on his site. “Who knows, I may get some new business,” he wrote. It seems that Caruba expects basic standards of accuracy and corrections apply only to others. ■