

## **CBC's continuing denial of the climate science debate**

*Like the network itself, The Fifth Estate has violated its own mandate with 'The Denial Machine'*

One Time Publication Rights  
1587 words; not including notes after piece  
November 10, 2007

*By: Dr. Tim Ball and Tom Harris*

The CBC television programme, "The Fifth Estate", [describes](#) its raison d' être as follows:

*"to challenge assumptions and question conventional wisdom, and most importantly to give voice to victims of injustice who deserve to be heard but have been silenced."*

But what if The Fifth Estate itself is the perpetrator of the injustice? What if it is their own network that has ignored and mistreated those who disagree with "conventional wisdom" on an issue of national importance? Will the programme then "challenge assumptions" on which fashionable views are based? Or will they simply parrot political correctness, carefully ignoring, or denigrating the opinions of those who spend their lives studying the field?

If the past year's repeated broadcasts of [The Denial Machine](#)' (aired for at least the 15th time on October 28<sup>th</sup> on CBC TV) is any indication, then the answer to these questions are obvious – when it comes to climate change, the Fifth Estate is not even remotely interested in questioning conventional wisdom or even following basic journalistic ethics. They are climate campaigners – state-funded propagandists, pure and simple. And, as is usually the case with partisan activists, the ends apparently justifies the means in their eyes, no matter how disreputable.

My (Tim Ball's) own experience with Fifth Estate staff is a case in point.

We at NRSP had heard from our American friends who had already been interviewed for The Fifth Estate programme in mid-2006 that it was clearly being designed to malign scientists who dared speak out against the politically correct, but scientifically-flawed hypothesis that human emissions of carbon dioxide were causing a 'climate crisis'. U.S. scientists complained to us that Fifth Estate staff were more interested in creating controversy about alleged funding sources of their work than in listening to anything they had to say about scientific research. Recognizing the CBC show as a 'hatchet job' in the making, we refused the Fifth Estate's dogged requests for interviews, e-mailing them (Tom Harris) "based on your past coverage of the issue and our feedback from people you have already interviewed, or tried to interview, we did not believe the upcoming show would cover the issue in a fair and balanced fashion." We (Tim Ball) even told the CBC via e-mail, "I have now decided not to participate in your program and ask that you not use this or any previous communications in the programme." We also relayed the comments of our US friends to our scientist contacts in Canada and other countries who likewise refused to be interviewed by the Fifth Estate for the show. This is why none of the many Canadian and other non-American climate scientists who question the nonsensical assertions of Al Gore and David Suzuki appear in *The Denial Machine* - except me (Tim Ball), that is.

So, how did I (Tim Ball) end up 'starring' in the Fifth Estate's slick 'docu-ganda' despite having totally refused to participate?

On the morning of October 5, 2006 I was setting up my Power Point slides for a breakfast presentation I was giving at a conference in Dawson Creek, B.C. when a reporter with a camera and sound man approached me. He asked if he could interview me. I asked who he represented. He replied "CBC News". I said, "you are not the Fifth Estate are you because I have declined to be interviewed by them." He said no, he was CBC News. I replied that I didn't have time for an interview as I had a seven hour drive ahead of me right after the talk as I was to present again that evening in La Crete. The reporter said he wanted to talk about funding and I asked why funding from one source was considered acceptable and agenda-less while funding from those on the other side was considered suspect (with only a few brave exceptions, few dare question, for example, the David Suzuki Foundation (DSF), about their funding sources even though they [list](#) oil and gas companies and foreign foundations among their donors. John Oakley on AM640 radio is one of the exceptions – listen [here](#); David Suzuki's errors are outlined [here](#)).

While I spoke with the 'CBC News' reporter, I noticed the cameraman busy doing something with his equipment but since I had said no to an interview, I assumed his camera was off. The reporter then asked if they could follow me to La Crete. I said he could do what he wanted. He left the stage only to come back a few minutes later saying the crew thought it a waste to travel seven hours for a ten minute interview and could I agree to a brief interview after my talk? I consented.

After my presentation, I went to the back of the hall where the CBC team had two opposing chairs, the cameraman, lights and sound man set up. I sat down and they put the microphone on me, then the interviewer said, I think I should tell you that this is for The Fifth Estate, what do you want to do? I stood up, took the microphone off and said, "I'm out of here." He asked if we could discuss it and admitted that his confession as to representing the programme was done at the urging of his technicians. I replied to the reporter, "I don't talk to liars", and left. I would swear I saw a distinct 'good for you' look on the camera and sound men's faces.

That, so I thought, was that. Little did I know however, that without my knowledge or consent, the Fifth Estate cameraman had in fact secretly filmed my conversation with the reporter before the talk. A good portion of that discussion appears starting at about the ½ hour mark in the many airings of *The Denial Machine*. My specific request that they not use "any previous communications in the programme" had fallen on deaf ears. While this sort of thing goes on among some of the less scrupulous media every day, it is a disgrace that our national broadcaster stoops so low. I am planning on registering a formal complaint with the network's Ombudsman.

### ***Programme's mistakes left in even after warnings***

Since the CBC first broadcast [The Denial Machine](#) in November 2006, both the show's producers and the network's Ombudsman have been informed about numerous scientific and other errors in the programme. There are too many to list them all here but some samples that were left in the programme, even after its most recent edit, are as follows:

1. The Fifth Estate commentator asserts, "The Denial Machine investigates the roots of the campaign to negate the science and the threat of global warming." The programme does not address the roots of the issue at all. Had they done so, they would have discovered that many of the scientists who disagree with climate alarmism have been working in this field for decades and their published papers contesting the politically correct view date from the early 80's. If some American climate experts who refute the human-caused climate change hypothesis now receive support from fossil fuel companies, then it is clearly as a result of the scientists' already well-established record of outstanding research in the field. In other words, the Fifth Estate have cause and effect backwards – support from industry would obviously be a result of, not a cause of, the work of skeptical scientists.

The issue of possible industry funding is mostly moot anyways since very little (completely none in Canada) of the funding for research into the causes of global climate change comes from industry of any kind – it is essentially all tax-payer funded. Should the results of tax-payer funded research be hidden from the tax-payer? Like many in the CBC, The Fifth Estate and the network's Ombudsman apparently think so.

The Fifth Estate's use of the phrase "negates the science" is obviously misleading editorializing since scientists who oppose the views of Suzuki, Gore et al are in fact doing what scientists are always supposed to do – probe, enquire, test, and, in this case, advancing a viewpoint of the science independent of political or corporate expedience. This promotes real science and the scientific method, and in no way 'negates' it.

2. Next the Fifth Estate tell us, "Tonight, we'll show you how a relatively small group of scientists and corporations has managed to create a stand-off that could undermine the international cooperation many believe is our climate's best hope."

Both the network and the programme have been shown repeatedly that there is a very large group of climate scientists who have long opposed 'environmental correctness' on this issue. Whether it was the 8,000 scientists who work in areas related to climate change who signed the [Oregon Petition](#) opposing climate hysteria, or other open letters ([sample](#)) and statements from climate experts, the network must understand by now that there is anything but a consensus in the field. In reality, debate rages behind the scenes in the climate science community, as evidenced by the thousands of scientific papers published in the field every year. Were the science 'settled' as the programme implies, then the situation would be more akin to that in the field of plate tectonics where the science is rarely a topic of peer-reviewed scientific papers since the science *is* settled.

The lack of any clear scientific consensus in the field is an important issue and the CBC's response to a challenge to show why they believe such a consensus exists is illuminating – see [Note 1](#) after this article.

3. Immediately after the first broadcast of *The Denial Machine* in November 2006, Terrance Corcoran of the National Post [wrote](#) about how the Fifth Estate had failed to inform viewers about the affiliations of one of their prime witnesses against scientists on our side of the debate, James Hoggan, President of [James Hoggan and Associates](#), a leading Vancouver-based PR firm. Corcoran pointed out the strong connections between Hoggan and the David Suzuki Foundation (namely, sitting on its board. He is also a donor) and alternative energy companies, clients who would benefit from climate alarmism. Since then, Hoggan has taken the reins from David Suzuki and now [sits](#) as the Chair of the David Suzuki Foundation.

Yet, instead of identifying the deepening connection between Hoggan and climate activists, not to mention alternative energy interests (far closer than any 'skeptical' scientist has with fossil fuel interests), the Fifth Estate still identified Hoggan only as "Vancouver PR man". This clearly violates the CBC's "Journalistic Standards and Practices" which [states](#) (Production Standards, section B: 1.3):

*"Any relevant aspects of a commentator's credentials must be clearly summarized so that the audience may have a perspective from which to appraise the speaker's view. For example, the position and affiliation of a journalist or the particular qualifications of an academic or any other type of speaker should be stated."*

Given this obvious breach of the network's own policies, will the CBC Ombudsman rule against the show's producers? Based on the response from the Ombudsman's office concerning past complaints about the CBC's biased coverage of climate change (see [Note 1](#) below), don't count on it.

### ***Samples of the other oversights and errors on the part of Fifth Estate Programme***

Although it is not yet possible to review all the complaints registered by Canadians about *The Denial Machine* over the past year (see [Note 2](#)), many of the programme's errors and oversights are obvious.

1. The Fifth Estate identifies the Web site James Hoggan and Associates is contracted to operate to oppose scientists who disagree with David Suzuki, Al Gore, the IPCC, etc. on climate change, as merely being funded by a "grant from someone in the environmental movement". If this is all they were able to uncover in their research, then one truly wonders about the Fifth Estate's 'investigative reporting' capabilities. Hoggan's staff clearly [identify](#) John Lefebvre (who is also a major David Suzuki Foundation [donor](#)) as their funder, writing on their Web site, "The DeSmogBlog team is especially grateful to our benefactor John Lefebvre, a lawyer, internet entrepreneur and past-president of NETeller ...". A quick media search reveals that Lefebvre has been having legal difficulties of late and now faces the possibility of up to five years in prison and millions of dollars in fines in conjunction with his arrested in Malibu, California by the FBI in January. According to USA Today (August 15, 2007), John Lefebvre "... pleaded guilty to a charge of conspiracy to transfer funds with the intent to promote illegal gambling."

We do not pretend to know more about this case than what is being written in main stream media, but provide [Note 3](#) below to illustrate the sort of coverage that other media have given this situation, information easily available to Fifth Estate producers about the funder of Hoggan's climate change Web site.

[Some media](#) have referred to the American Internet gambling law as "hypocritical" on the part of the U.S government. However, as described in [Note 4](#) below, it is apparent many Americans do not feel this way and have treated the issue very seriously over the past ten years.

2. The Fifth Estate completely misrepresents the way in which the Friends of Science Society (FoS) was initiated. I (Dr. Ball) had been interacting with geo-scientist Albert Jacobs, now a past director of FoS, since the late 1990's when Mr. Jacobs was making regular public presentations on climate science. In subsequent years Mr. Jacobs and some of his earth science colleagues discussed the formation of a group like FoS and the Society was finally launched in early 2002. I (Dr Ball) became an advisor to FoS later that year. Until October 2006, when I withdrew from FoS to dedicate myself to the group I now chair, the Natural Resources Stewardship Project (NRSP.com), I acted as a primary science advisor to FoS and was very pleased to be associated with this outstanding group of individuals. Contrary to the claims of the Fifth Estate, FoS was in no way involved in

the press conference I took part in in Ottawa in 2002. Fifth Estate reporters could have discovered this easily with a brief phone call to any of the current directors of FoS.

3. The Fifth Estate tell its audience that President Bush pulled “the U.S. out of the Kyoto agreement designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.” What they neglect to mention is the U.S. was never really ‘in’ Kyoto because they never ratified it. This had nothing to do with Bush. On July 25, 1997, the U.S. Senate passed [Resolution 98](#), also known as the “Byrd-Hagel Resolution,” which advised President Clinton not to sign the Protocol. The Senate vote was 95 – 0 and the resolution’s passage occurred almost five months before Kyoto was created. The resolution stated clearly that the US should not sign on to any international greenhouse gas control treaty that does not include meaningful targets for developing nations (which they expected would have greater greenhouse gas emissions than developed nations by 2015 – in fact 2004 marked the first time in history that carbon dioxide emissions from the non-OECD exceeded those from the OECD countries – [ref.](#)). Also, the Senate “strongly” believed that “serious harm to the United States economy...” could result if the U.S. did join.

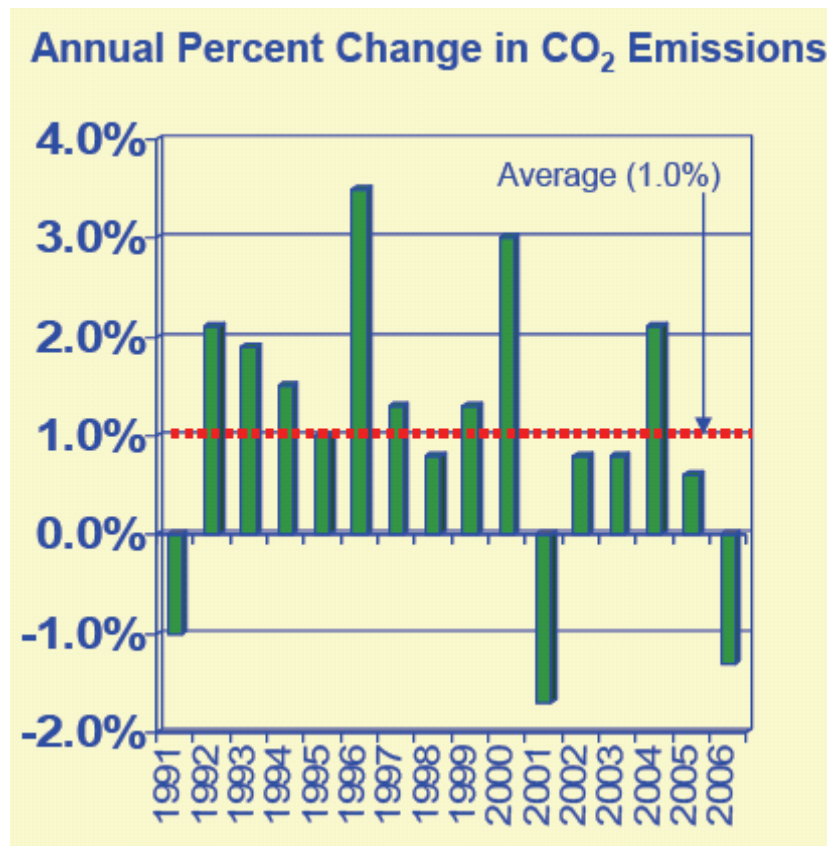
In a presentation to the National Geographic Society on October 22, 1997, President Clinton [asserted](#) “both industrialized and developing countries must participate in meeting the challenge of climate change. The industrialized world must lead, but developing countries also must be engaged. The United States will not assume binding obligations unless key developing nations meaningfully participate in this effort. ... If the entire industrialized world reduces emissions over the next several decades, but emissions from the developing world continue to grow at their current pace, concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere will continue to climb.”

Despite these warning from the United States, the UN proceeded to finalize the Kyoto Protocol in December 1997, in which they assigned no greenhouse gas emission reduction targets to developing nations. Not surprisingly, in February, 1998, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in their hearing *Implications of the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change* included testimony that the Protocol as adopted the previous December “fails—to meet either of the requirements of Senate Resolution 98.” It is therefore also not surprising that neither the Clinton nor the Bush Administration sent the Protocol to the Senate for ratification. Blaming the Bush administration for the lack of American participation in Kyoto may be fashionable these days in much of the media, but the facts tell a different story. How did the Fifth Estate miss this in their months of research for the programme?

### **From basic statistics mistakes to subliminal language tricks, *The Denial Machine* disgraces the CBC**

Fifth Estate errors even extend to simple statistical mistakes. They say, “But don’t bother doing the math. All you really need to know is that, even if the US did cut greenhouse gas intensity by 18%, the absolute amount of carbon dioxide being pumped into the atmosphere could go still up and up, which is precisely what’s happening.” They reinforced this assertion by uncritically including the comment of Philip Clapp of the National Environmental Trust that, “US emissions have done nothing but go straight up.”

This is quite wrong. As can be seen in the following graph from the U.S. [Energy Information Administration](#), absolute emissions dropped 1.3% in 2006, 1.7% in 2001 and 1% in 1991. Even the Washington Post got that one right when they [wrote](#): “U.S. carbon dioxide emissions dropped slightly last year even as the economy grew.”



In 2006, “energy intensity (energy consumed per \$ real GDP) fell by over 4%, as total energy demand declined 0.9% while the economy grew by 3.3%. The 2006 decline in carbon intensity is the largest since 1990 and the 4<sup>th</sup> largest since 1949” (ref.), hardly a catastrophe in the making as the Fifth Estate would have us believe.

Perhaps the most egregious misrepresentation of *The Denial Machine* is the general connection they attempt to establish between scientists who contested the relationship between cigarette smoking and cancer and those who now contest global warming alarmism. After identifying a grand total of one climate scientist (three individuals in all) who the Fifth Estate implies were “veterans of the tobacco wars”, now engaged “on the front lines of the global warming battle”, they uncritically accepted the assertion from a Greenpeace representative that “there are a lot of characters who were in that debate as well who shifted from being tobacco denialists to being climate denialists.” Did the CBC interviewer ask who this “lot of characters” included? Not a chance. After all, this was a connection the Fifth Estate were doing their best to establish as well. Unless, programme producers can present a significant list of such “characters”, climate scientists specifically, then the charge is clearly spurious and should be immediately withdrawn from future airings or other distributions of the programme.

#### **Language and other subliminal tricks employed by the Fifth Estate**

The Denial Machine frequently uses language and other tricks to sway viewers against scientists who contest climate alarmism, for example making statements that appear at first glance to be significant, but are actually meaningless. Some samples from the programme:

- “Global warming is real and we must do something about it.”
- “most scientists believed that global warming was real and had potentially catastrophic consequences.”
- “After all, global warming is widely accepted around the world as scientific fact. “

Yes, global warming is “real” in some time periods in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and in fact throughout the long history of our planet – no one doubts that; so was global cooling “real” in other time frames, such as after World War II when carbon dioxide levels were rising at a faster rate than at any time in human history. Gravity, sunrise and super novas in distant galaxies are also all “real”. That doesn’t mean we are causing these phenomena. After

all, warming is apparently now [happening](#) on Mars, Jupiter, Pluto and other bodies in the Solar System – are human greenhouse gas emissions causing those temperature changes as well? Or is there a common denominator to these occurrences, such as a brighter Sun than at any time in the past 8,000 years ([ref.](#) - describes new findings about the Sun's influence), a far more meaningful correlation the Fifth Estate appears uninterested in investigating. Of course we “must do something about” climate change – learn to adapt to it, as humans always have in the face of environmental change. But trying to ‘stop climate change’ makes about as much sense as engaging in rain dances or burning witches to bring back good weather.

Other ludicrous and misleading statements abound in *The Denial Machine* – here is just one more from the [programme's Web Page](#): “some scientists still insist that climate change, if it is happening at all, could be a good thing.” There are no reputable scientists who contest whether climate change “is happening at all”. As Carleton University paleo-climatologist [told](#) a commons committee in 2005, “The only constant about climate is change; it changes continually.” And it is certainly a good thing that climate changed 10,000 years ago or Canada would still be covered in glaciers. It is certainly a good thing that, starting at the end of the 1800's, climate changed and we began to come out of Little Ice Age, a period that caused untold suffering and hardship for hundreds of millions. Regardless, why does the Fifth Estate apparently believe today's climate is optimal?

### **Subliminal tricks used to discredit skeptical scientists**

The most obvious subliminal trick used by *The Denial Machine* is the disparaging reference to scientists who question current climate concerns as being climate change “deniers”. This is both ridiculous and offensive - ridiculous, for reasons just mentioned; offensive, since the label is intended to equate disagreement with future forecasts of primitive computer climate models with Holocaust denial. Many of those alive today who personally experienced the Holocaust, one of the most evil episodes in human history, are scandalized that this horrific tragedy is being compared to a hypothetical forecast of events that may or may not happen.

Another less severe, though still significant subliminal trick used by the Fifth Estate is the way they identify scientists on each side of the debate:

Climate alarmist Dr. Andrew Weaver is identified as a “climatologist” at the University of Victoria and “one of the authors of that definitive international report.”

‘Climate skeptics’ are ascribed lesser credentials. I (Tim Ball) am just “a retired University of Winnipeg Professor”, a “so-called expert” “who hasn't published original research in years”. In fact, my most recent paper was published earlier in 2007 in the scientific journal, *Ecological Complexity*. It is entitled *Polar bears of western Hudson Bay and climate change: Are warming spring air temperatures the “ultimate” survival control factor?* and was co-authored with Baliunas, Dyck, Soon, Baydack, Legates, and Hancock. I was also the co-author of the book *Eighteenth Century Naturalists of Hudson Bay* (2004 - McGill/Queens University Press) with Dr. Stuart Houston, one of the World's leading authorities on arctic birds.

Dr. Willie Soon, a Harvard University researcher who is a leader in the study of the Sun's influence on climate is not identified at all when he speaks in *The Denial Machine*. Instead, just as Dr. Soon comes on, the Fifth Estate commentator sarcastically remarks, “Call them deniers, debunkers, or skeptics, they style themselves as ‘keepers of the truth’ about global warming, disputing the consensus that climate change is caused by humans.”

Dr. Patrick Michaels is also left unidentified when he first speaks and it is only later in the programme when some of his credentials are listed by conservative talk show host Shawn Hannity but with no reference to his climatology background (Michaels is a past president of the American Association of State Climatologists, was program chair for the Committee on Applied Climatology of the American Meteorological Society and is a contributing author and reviewer of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change).

The Fifth Estate's main target, Dr. Fred Singer, is merely identified as being “of George Mason University in Virginia”. In fact Singer is an atmospheric physicist, Distinguished Research Professor at George Mason University and Professor Emeritus of environmental science at University of Virginia. He was the first director of the U.S. National Weather Satellite Service and served five years as vice chairman of the U.S. National Advisory Committee on Oceans and Atmospheres. But to the Fifth Estate, he is just another ‘denier’ to be discredited, a group that according to the CBC “represent only a fraction of academic thought on the subject”.

This misrepresentation of scientists who oppose the point of view the Fifth Estate is trying to promote is another clear violation of the CBC's "Journalistic Standards and Practices, Production Standards, section B: 1.3" detailed previously. The Singer interview also obviously breaks another CBC rule, found in their Production Standards section B: 1.1 in which it [states](#): "Hosts and interviewers must treat their guests fairly. They should not be critical or demanding of some, while conciliatory and sympathetic to others." Had the Fifth Estate followed this policy, they would have asked Greenpeace, Hoggan and others who support climate change alarmism tough questions such as the identities of their funders.

And so it continues, mistake after mistake, misrepresentation after misrepresentation – not only did the Fifth Estate misrepresent the conclusions of IPCC scientists but they even mis-reported the climate section of the recent throne speech in which the government [said](#), "Canada's emissions cannot be brought to the level required under the Kyoto Protocol within the compliance period," The throne speech did not "promise is to abandon Canada's commitment to reduce greenhouse gases under the Kyoto agreement." as the Fifth Estate asserted. In fact, the federal government has stated clearly that Canada will not be quitting Kyoto (as we legally can, and should, in February 2008) and will continue to work within its framework. How Canada can do that while not meeting its most important components is another question but the Fifth Estate's fabrication of throne speech contents is just more of the sort of thing we have been detailing in this article.

### **Viewer's guide to rooting out propaganda in future CBC climate coverage**

In the CBC's [handbook of Journalistic Standards and Practices](#), outgoing network President and CEO, Robert Rabinovitch asserts, "The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation occupies a unique position of trust. ... it is funded, through Parliament, by the people of Canada. CBC therefore considers it a duty to provide consistent, high-quality information upon which all citizens may rely. ... CBC is and must remain properly accountable to the public it serves. The Corporation is proud to declare its journalistic values for all to see and understand."

We have explained how the Fifth Estate programme, *The Denial Machine*, grossly betrays the fundamentals of honest and professional journalism that the CBC tells Canadians they follow. Will the network, of its own accord, now launch a formal review of a programme that clearly violates its own stated "journalistic values?" Or will the incoming president, Montreal lawyer Hubert Lacroix, simply sweep the issue under the rug as did Rabinovitch when this sort of problem was brought to his attention in 2002? Only time will tell.

In the meantime, CBC viewers need self-defense strategies to protect themselves from the sort of propaganda we witnessed in *The Denial Machine* and other CBC News programmes that deal with the immensely complex and controversial field of climate change science.

The most reliable tool is simple skepticism, standard operating procedure in science untainted by politics. 'I don't believe you; prove it!' is an appropriate response to the assertions of David Suzuki and the newly minted [Al Gore-trained climate campaigners](#) now criss-crossing North America. But such a charge, while normal among real scientists, is politically incorrect when applied to climate change so most people need something more passive, a climate change propaganda detector.

Here are eight basic journalistic blunders that will cause alarm bells to ring on a properly tuned detector:

1. Reporters stating, or implying, that natural events are unnatural, or normal events abnormal. This guarantees that assertions that we are seeing more extreme events are always right. The "warmest/wettest/driest/snowiest/windiest" actually means the most extreme in the official record which for most of the world is less than 50 years. Such a short time interval guarantees records will be set all the time.
2. Speculation and exaggeration presented by journalists and guests as unbiased fact. The Fifth Estates uncritical inclusion of the comments of Dr. Andrew Weaver that, "We have warming. It's because of humans and the cause is fossil fuel combustion." is a good example. Weaver's remarks are the sort of wild leap in faith that has become all too common in the computer climate modeling community (see [Note 5](#) below for more on the problem with models). The public must take such overconfident proclamations with a very large grain of salt.

It is revealing to compare UN and other political pronouncements about climate with the original scientific research that supposedly backs them. Conditional words - "could", "may", "possibly" or "it

appears” – that appear in the science papers vanish when the issues become political and make their way into the press. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon’s assertions before the 15th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in May is classic, *“The recent report of the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) emphasizes that the science on climate change is very clear, that the warming of the climate system is unequivocal, and that this is happening because of human activities.”* Of course IPCC scientists concluded no such thing but the Secretary General’s exaggerations generate exciting headlines and draw more attention to his cause.

3. Reporters making assertions about their being a consensus in the scientific community about the causes of climate change while not citing any polls that show such a consensus exists. Or saying "Scientists believe ..." when in fact it should be "Some scientists believe...". One of the most common misrepresentations by CBC reporters is that "2,500 scientists of the UN IPCC agree \_\_\_\_\_ ", with the commentator filling in the blank with some sort of apocalyptic proclamation – more on this is discussed at the end of [Note 1](#) below.
4. Not balancing the time given alarmists and skeptics. If someone from the David Suzuki Foundation is given ten seconds to expound their views, viewers should complain if someone from the skeptics' side is not given an equal amount of time in that broadcast, or at least another broadcast of equal importance on a nearby day. Viewers should also be alert to determine if programmes are dedicated to exploring alternative viewpoints in a balanced fashion. If The Nature of Things highlights the alarmist side of the climate change debate (as it always does), is an equally well known show such as W5 devoted to an uncritical exposé of the skeptics' view?
5. Exploitation of basic fears; Michael Crichton wrote effectively on the use of fear by environmental groups and the media, a common practice also well documented by Greenpeace co-founder Patrick Moore. Humans are naturally fearful of the environment because they know it can kill them. Animism, the earliest form of religion, revolved around worshipping and placating nature, even at the expense of human well-being. Much of today’s environmentalism takes exactly the same tack.
6. Taking advantage of public ignorance about science. Mislabeling carbon dioxide as pollution is standard practice for many campaigners and politicians – Senator Barbara Boxer’s (D-California) “Global Warming Pollution Reduction Act” is riddled with this fundamental deception and Gore often refers to CO2 as pollution. “Climate change is real!”, “The science is settled” and other meaningless but loaded assertions are frequently used to manipulate public opinion by communications consultants, many media and political operatives unconcerned with reality (climate has, and always will change and the science is never settled).
7. Continuously shifting goalposts. Initially, global warming fears dominated public consciousness. Then, starting in 1998, temperatures dropped and then stabilized while atmospheric CO2 continued to rise in complete contradiction to the theory. So the mantra became ‘climate change’ and any and all variations could then be attributed to human activities. To avoid addressing the fact that climate change is a natural occurrence on all planets (a number of which are now warming, undoubtedly due to increases in solar energy) a new goal post shift is occurring; now the phraseology is the ‘climate crisis’, or even ‘dealing with climate chaos’.
8. Reacting to growing pressure to defend the indefensible by simply ‘upping the ante’, making statements that everyone, regardless of fear or lack of knowledge, eventually understands to be ridiculous. John Ritch, Director General of the London-based World Nuclear Association provided a perfect example in his June speech to the American Nuclear Society in Boston, *“...greenhouse gas emissions, if continued at the present massive scale, will yield consequences that are - quite literally – apocalyptic ... If these predictions hold true, the combined effect would be the death of not just millions but of billions of people - and the destruction of much of civilization on all continents.”*

Countering today’s hysteria is a huge well of common sense in people. This was apparent even in the Fifth Estate’s own [discussion group](#). While seven of the first ten comments from the public supported The Denial Machine, support dropped quickly among the 40 comments that came in until only two of the last ten comments supported the programme. Perhaps not surprisingly, the CBC then quickly closed the discussion group, blocking any further contributions from the public even though the show had last been broadcast the night before and the discussion board had been open only eight days (other programme discussions have been left open for

months on Fifth Estate Web pages). Even the postings that were allowed by the network clearly demonstrated a growing trend in Canada – the public are becoming suspicious that they are being duped as science increasingly demonstrates that the thesis of human-caused climate catastrophe is simply wrong. A 2006 Ipsos-Reid poll supported this when it [revealed](#) that fully 39% of Canadians believe recent climate change is natural.

The Denial Machine does fulfill one useful purpose, however - it can be used as a bad example. Since its biases are so easily rooted out, it is an exceptionally useful educational tool for universities, colleges and senior high schools as a demonstration of 'yellow journalism'. Wikipedia includes the following definition of this despicable practice, "Yellow journalism is a pejorative reference to journalism that features scandal-mongering, sensationalism, jingoism or other unethical or unprofessional practices by news media organizations or journalists." The Denial Machine is a perfect fit.

---

Dr. Timothy Ball, Chairman of the Natural Resources Stewardship Project (NRSP.com), is a Victoria, British Columbia-based environmental consultant and former climatology professor at the University of Winnipeg. Tom Harris is an Ottawa-based mechanical engineer and NRSP Executive Director.

---

**Note 1: Concerning the CBC's assertion that a 'consensus' exists among climate scientists about the causes of climate change**

For a number of years, the CBC has maintained that there is a consensus in the climate science community about the causes of climate change. Indeed, they have repeatedly used the supposed existence of such a consensus as their rationale for rarely covering the alternative point of view on the science. In 2000, I (Tom Harris) challenged the network to show that such a consensus exists. Finally, on January 8, 2002, I e-mailed the Ombudsman:

*"Today, 49 weeks after you explained that programmers were to respond within four weeks and 62 weeks after you said that you wanted to wait for a management review, the best you can say is "Your complaint is among those currently under review." ... The National is clearly violating your own CBC policies which require you to give fair and balanced coverage on controversial issues such as this one, yet no one at the CBC is prepared to even address the issue seriously."*

By this time, I was openly Cc'ing many interested parties on my communications with the network and, perhaps for that reason, the Ombudsman responded in detail ten days later. His 10-page response contains text that is worth including here since many of the same points are being made today when corresponding with the CBC on this issue – here are some excerpts from the Ombudsman's January 18, 2002 e-mail response to my complaint initially registered in 2000:

*"While CBC's Journalistic Standards and Practices instructs public broadcasters to give voice to the widest possible range of views, the journalism policy also imposes upon CBC's journalists another editorial responsibility, notably the requirement to take proper account of the weight of opinion behind a point of view. So, to achieve balance and fairness, it's not simply a matter of stating 'some say this and others say that; there's also a responsibility hereabouts to determine what opinions are relevant, to identify and to reflect what forces are driving any given development. In other words, CBC's journalists have a responsibility to exercise their editorial judgment. As the policy book says, the CBC*

*"must supplement the exposition of one point of view with an equitable treatment of other relevant points of view. Equitable in this context means fair and reasonable, taking into consideration the weight of opinion behind a point of view, as well as its significance or potential significance."*

And then later in the Ombudsman's 2002 letter:

*"... it seems to me, you are overstating both the nature and the extent of the controversy in the science that's been driving the international movement to curtail the emission of greenhouse gases. You portray*

*the state of climate science as a sort of evenly balanced dispute between some scientists who say we are causing climate change and some others who say we are not."*

The Ombudsman then proceeded to describe in detail how climate change science was being covered in other media - in particular, The Toronto Star, The Globe and Mail and The New York Times – as well by politicians, specifically Presidents Clinton and Bush. Besides highlighting the [very rare] coverage the network had given to our side of the science, the Ombudsman concluded this section of his review by stating:

*"In a sense you are not on the same page as the mainstream news Media... the CBC, in its decision making process, is entitled to make its own editorial determination about what opinions are in the mainstream, and need to be reflected, and what opinions are on the margins, and can be given the editorial hook they so often deserve... Generally your other remarks ignore the strong consensus in the scientific community that the greenhouse effect is real, and that we humans are contributing to the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere."*

I responded immediately to the Ombudsman:

*"the fact that most of the world's media and political leaders are convinced of the issue is not the point here. The CBC must be held to a higher standard than other media or politicians due to the network's status as a taxpayer funded institution. I believe that The National should be required to do sufficient research so that they are able to disseminate information based on what scientists currently active in the field are actually saying ..."*

I concluded:

*"you say, "... the CBC, in its decision making process, is entitled to make its own editorial determination about what opinions are in the mainstream, and need to be reflected, and what opinions are on the margins, and can be given the editorial hook they so often deserve." As Cynthia Kinch [Executive Producer of The National] implied, the fact that an idea is "in the mainstream" and is therefore considered politically correct and so "safe" in no way indicates that it is correct. I side with Ms. Kinch on this one (even though I don't believe she is actually directing The National to employ this philosophy when reporting on the climate change issue) when she says, "Skepticism and challenges to accepted beliefs are an inherent part of journalism". If the CBC is merely going to determine "what opinions are in the mainstream, and need to be reflected", then what are Canadians paying \$750 million a year for? We can get the news from the mainstream for free."*

The issue was eventually referred to the CBC President who said he was satisfied with the Ombudsman's response. The President completely ignored my contention that the network had failed to demonstrate a scientific consensus and instead had only shown evidence that a consensus existed in the media and among politicians.

Today, the same unsubstantiated claim of 'consensus in the scientific community' is repeatedly used as a reason for the CBC's dogged refusal to cover both sides of the issue (with the noted exception of Rex Murphy and, at times, CBC TV Ottawa). In response to the same sort of complaints concerning bias in The Denial Machine, David Studer, Executive Producer of The Fifth Estate wrote:

*"... our program was fair and balanced. ... We're not obliged, by policy or normal journalistic practice or indeed by logic, to equate a preponderant and accepted view with minority arguments that are at odds with the facts as we have found them."*

Of course NRSP could challenge Studer to demonstrate that a "preponderant and accepted view" within the scientific community exists and the only a "minority" of scientists "are at odds with the facts as [they] have found them." But the outcome of the same challenge to the network between 2000-2002 suggests that, in the final analysis, the network is not concerned with what is real in this issue, only what is widely thought to be real in the media. In that way, the Fifth Estate is no different to many of the politicians they so harshly criticize.

To learn more about the lack of any known consensus in the scientific community about the causes of the past centuries modest warming and forecasts for the future, readers may [read a paper](#) prepared by the authors as well as the [PowerPoint slides](#) that accompanied the presentation of this paper.

## **Note 2: Complaints from Canadians not yet visible on CBC Web site even after a year of broadcasting The Denial Machine**

When asked how one could view complaints from the public, the Ombudsman responded (e-mail, 25/10/07) that the network "had to overcome some internal "challenges" to our ability to get material up on the website in a timely manner". He also indicated that the reviews of viewers comments "will be posted on our website in the coming days" – nothing is there as of this writing.

## **Note 3: Media reports on recent legal difficulties of DeSmogBlog funder, John Lefebvre:**

1 - According to by Michael Garcia, U.S. Attorney for the southern district of New York, as quoted in a press release issued on January 16, 2007, Lefebvre's arrest was "in connection with the creation of an Internet payment services company that facilitated the transfer of billions of dollars of illegal gambling proceeds from United States citizens to the owners of various Internet gambling companies located overseas".

2 - [Calgary Herald \(October 26, 2007\)](#): "Manhattan-based U.S. Magistrate Judge Gabriel Gorenstein confirmed the original [Lefebvre] bail decision--\$5 million in cash; passport confiscated; confined to the central district of California, except to fly to New York for interviews with U.S. attorneys and FBI agents." The Herald also reports that Garcia said, "At the time that the defendants took Neteller public, ... the company's directors ... conceded that they were risking prosecution by the government of the United States under existing or future federal laws."

3 - Mail on Sunday (London), August 12, 2007: "... John Lefebvre, were arrested and the company's office in Calgary, Canada, was raided by a team of forensic accountants. Neteller paid \$136 million to the US government and returned \$94 million to American customers, while both men [Lefebvre and his original Neteller partner] pleaded guilty to criminal conspiracy."

4 - [Calgary Herald \(October 26, 2007\)](#): "On July 10, Judge Kevin Castel in New York accepted Lefebvre's guilty plea. The DoJ press release said, in part, "During the course of the plea allocution, Lefebvre admitted that, during the time he operated the Neteller Group, he learned that laws in the United States prohibited certain funds transfers for the purpose of promoting gambling, and as a result, he knew his conduct was wrong. ... The DoJ [Department of Justice] has demanded that he be partially responsible for paying \$100 million US in restitution. It has also recommended a jail sentence of up to five years, which is the maximum term specified in the law."

## **Note 4: American concerns about Internet gambling**

In 1996, President Clinton authorized the creation of the [National Gambling Impact Study Commission](#). Their report was [issued](#) in 1999 and in it they paid special attention to the impact of Internet gambling ("Internet betting, a \$4 billion industry that is illegal in the United States" – [reference](#)). Although they focused on a number of problems with Internet gambling – 24 hour access for pathological gamblers ["The director of the Harvard Medical School's Division on Addiction Studies, Dr. Howard J. Shaffer, likened the Internet to new delivery forms for addictive narcotics."], the potential for criminal activities as a result of gambling operations being physically located offshore, etc. – the most worrisome concerns centre around the involvement of minors. The commission concluded, "Because the Internet can be used anonymously, the danger exists that access to Internet gambling will be abused by underage gamblers. In most instances, a would-be gambler merely has to fill out a registration form in order to play. Most sites rely on the registrant to disclose his or her correct age and make little or no attempt to verify the accuracy of the information. Underage gamblers can use their parents' credit cards or even their own credit and debit cards to register and set up accounts for use at Internet gambling sites."

As a result of this study several laws were proposed to restrict Internet gambling and, eventually, on October 13, 2006, President Bush signed the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act of 2006 into law, as part of a larger bill that focused on port security measures. As described [here](#), "Though the final legislation was tacked on to an unrelated bill, the text of the bill represents the culmination of ten years of Federal Congressional efforts, five bills that passed either the House of Representatives or Senate, and countless committee hearings and markups. The new law has had an immediate impact on the online gambling industry, causing their stocks to lose 50% of their value in a single day, and many operators have already withdrawn from the U.S. market [see [here](#) for the beginnings of this in 2003]. This Federal law struck a blow against illegal online gambling by cutting off its payment mechanisms ... The original impetus for this bill was a request from State Attorneys General,

who wanted Federal assistance for enforcing State laws against online gambling.” A graphic display of those supporting the bill may be seen [here](#).

**Note 5:** It is crucially important for viewers to try to discern if the information being presented is the output from a computer climate model. If it is, ignore it. All 'predictions' and rates of temperature and climate change are the products of computer models and they produce essentially meaningless results. As Professor David Deming [wrote](#) when discussing sea level changes, *"Projections of sea-level rise are based on projections of future warming, fifty or a hundred years hence. And these projections are based on speculative computer models that have numerous uncertainties ... These models cannot even be tested; their validity is completely unknown. In short, predictions of future sea-level rise are nothing but sheer speculation."*

NRSP science advisor and official IPCC Reviewer Dr. Vincent Gray of New Zealand summarizes the models used by the UN, *"All [the UN IPCC does] is make 'projections' and 'estimates'. No climate model has ever been properly tested, ... and their 'projections' are nothing more than the opinions of 'experts' with a conflict of interest, because they are paid to produce the models. ... There is no actual scientific evidence for all these 'projections' and 'estimates'."*

Boston-based NRSP science advisor Dr Sallie Baliunas, an expert at understanding the Sun's impact on climate, summed up the situation well when she [said](#) that models are, *"not reliable as tools for explaining past climate or making projections for future trends"*. Click [here](#) for more on models.