

Artificial People: End Corporate Personhood. “Corporations are not People”

By [Rand Clifford](#)

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Ray Davies, front man for the British rock band The Kinks, sang in 1974: *“I can visualize the day when the world will be controlled by artificial people, but I don’t want to live a lie in an artificial world.”*

The song is titled, *Artificial Man*, from the album, *Preservation Act II*. Ray Davies’ words were very apropos in 1974, even more so in 2010—especially with the fresh Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) ruling that dissolves any restrictions on the amount of money corporations may spend to influence elections. By overruling two important precedents regarding the 1st amendment. 1 rights of corporations, the SCOTUS opened the floodgates, allowing unlimited corporate cash to inundate elections, thereby further depleting the already meager power of actual American people to choose our elected officials and influence America’s future course.

Yes, the first elections to be flooded with unlimited corporate cash will be this November, and polls are clearly showing a profound influence. The “grand old party” that usurped the wheel of power in 2000 inherited a balanced budget, then drove the nation off the road, into a very deep ditch of debt and slime. They oversaw unprecedented upward transfer of wealth, lied us into unwinnable wars for oil, pipeline routes, and heroin, leaving over a million dead and millions more homeless.² They poured gasoline on the flames of global hatred toward America, ravaged our middle class and labor unions while stripping rights out of our Constitution in the name of “homeland security”. They grinned at corporate bottom lines as millions of American jobs were “off-shored” to capitalize on foreign slave labor. And don’t forget 9/11—not the official whitewash fantasies, but what actually happened...what virtually all of the evidence says, evidence which was not destroyed as quickly as possible. The overtly illegitimate and criminal Bush II administration and their neocons were not simply “...asleep at the wheel” on 9/11, they pulled off stellar false flag terror, considering all of the damage wrought, including the farcical war on terror, another mechanism of pushing more wealth up to the wealthy.

In the most important ways for the common good, it was the darkest eight years in American “history”. And now, Social Security is already being called an “entitlement”, as though recipients haven’t paid into it all their working lives. If you want to see total chaos, wait until the GOP kills Social Security....

After miring us so deeply in the ditch, then spending two years licking their wounds and obstructing almost any attempts to get us back on the road, Republicans are having mass Pavlovian responses regarding their prospects in November—thanks to corporations flooding

them with election cash same as BPs Macondo well flooded the Gulf of Mexico with oil. And remember, the Macondo well is not yet safely sealed...may never be safely sealed. Seen any CorpoMedia news about what is going on under the Macondo wellhead lately? Damage down below is apparently so extensive that BP is afraid to do anything about a permanent seal, while the government...well, in certain financial ways, BP is the government. Corexit, anyone?

Our dilemma is simple. Candidates with the most campaign cash usually win, especially those with gobs of cash. Under the new rules, corporations can control elections to such a degree as to make them a bad joke. So, our electorate becomes corporate stooges top to bottom, and corporate cash is magnetized to flow to the right. Hard right.

Our solution is also simple, yet daunting. End corporate personhood. Somehow get the SCOTUS to rule that corporations are not people, and should not enjoy the same rights as “All persons born or naturalized in the United States and of the State wherein they reside” (from the 14th amendment). So how did corporations become people? Illegally...not to mention nonsensically.

The core problem stems from an 1886 SCOTUS ruling that was not actually a ruling—but that hasn’t stopped it from being perhaps the most malign thing the SCOTUS has ever done regarding the common good of America...perhaps the most damaging precedent the common good has ever paid for.

We might consider May 26, 1886, to be the *birthday* of official American corporate personhood. Court reporter J.C. Bancroft Davis wrote a letter to Chief Justice Morrison R. Waite, in essence asking to include in the headnotes informal conversation implying that all justices agreed, in the Santa Clara County versus Southern Pacific Railroad case, that the 14th amendment to the Constitution applies to corporations.^{3,4} Waite answered somewhat cryptically that Davis should make the decision as to headnotes of the case.

The 14th amendment was originally established to protect and preserve the lives, property and freedoms of Americans from repressive government. Suddenly, corporations were people, gaining the legal status of citizens—again, not by a new Supreme Court interpretation of the fourteenth amendment, as commonly thought, but by a former railroad company president acting as court reporter maneuvering the “ruling” into the books. Instant landmark *ruling*! Corporations became “artificial persons” with rights of a citizen, plus many advantages such as immortality, mega cash flow, the ability to be many places at once, etc.. Soon after, John D. Rockefeller, father of the modern corporation, created the Standard Oil Corporation. And by the late 1880s, over 90% of American oil refineries were controlled by Standard Oil.

Do you know any person who does not breathe, eat, drink, sleep, bleed when you prick them, or was not born either male or female? Yes, you do, they are called corporations, and we are racing toward a world controlled by corporations. Most people believe, at least those not masters of most of America’s wealth, that the nation is careening drastically off course. Heaping more power onto the most corporate of our two leading political parties, the one that mired us so deeply in the ditch last time they were in power, seems a tidy fit with the definition of insanity. Things are so bad there are even growing cries for revolution, and secession—even a burgeoning new party secretly financed by corporations *themselves*.

Perhaps one of the most beneficial changes for the common good, one that may even inject the withered notion of “common good” itself into our corporate-dominated political landscape, would be for enough actual people to come to their senses to empower a real grassroots movement focused on reversing the legal status of corporations as people, which they are so obviously not. As stacked against real people (to a thoughtful person, is there really any other kind?) as the odds are, there still might be some chance. What chance will there be when over 90% of America will be “...controlled by artificial people,” and the GOP is restored to full power?

The last line of Ray Davies’ song, *Artificial Man*:

“We went and built a master race, to live within our artificial world.”

Notes

- (1) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_amendments_to_the_United_States_Constitution
- (2) <http://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/afghan-heroin-the-cia>
- (3) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Clara_County_v._Southern_Pacific_Railroad
- (4) <http://www.iiipublishing.com/afd/santaclara.html>

Rand Clifford’s novels *CASTLING*, a “Story of the Power of Hemp”...and, *TIMING*, a story of “Time”...are published by StarChief Press.

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