

Who is the Biggest Climate Change Villain?

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Here is an exclusive the Guardian has held back from its readers for 26 years. It is finally [published](#) on its pages today.

*In 1991 the Shell oil company produced a half-hour film, *Climate of Concern*, for showing in schools and universities, that set out the dangers of climate change, apparently with unnerving accuracy. The Guardian calls the film “prescient”.*

The paper makes the point that Shell knew from scientists precisely what havoc our addiction to oil would wreak on the planet. Despite its own warnings, Shell carried on extracting oil regardless.

But the Guardian misses the real story, probably because the villain of the piece is less Shell and the major oil companies than it is the Guardian and other liberal media.

The giveaway is provided in this line in the article:

The serious warning was “endorsed by a uniquely broad consensus of scientists in their report to the United Nations at the end of 1990”, the film noted.

Shell did not rely on its own private team of climate scientists hidden away in an underground bunker that it alone could tap for information. Planet-destroying climate change was public knowledge at the time the film was made, which was presumably why Shell made the film publicly available.

A “broad consensus of scientists” were warning us of the dangers. So why were most of us so misinformed, so unconcerned about the precipice we were hurtling towards? Who was failing to amplify the fears of scientists – and, for that matter, continues to fail to warn of the true gravity of the problem?

After all, there is nothing surprising in the fact that Shell, an oil corporation, makes profits from oil. Nor from the fact that it continued to do so even after it knew oil consumption would burn up the planet. Corporations are required to make profits for their shareholders. Corporate “ethics” are, and have always been, window-dressing to allay the consciences of liberal audiences.

The real issue is why the warnings scientists were making more than a quarter of a century ago were not being echoed by the supposed watchdogs of power: liberal media like the Guardian.

The paper should have run this story back in 1991. It should not have been left to Shell to warn of the dangers of climate change. The Guardian and the liberal media should have been doing so. The data that was published by the UN at that time was just as available to the newspaper as it was Shell. The Guardian should have been shouting this from the rooftops.

And here we get to the crunch. The Guardian ignored climate change because it too is a corporation. It needs advertising to prosper, just like Shells needs cars and planes. And the corporations that make cars and that fly planes are big advertisers in papers like the Guardian.

Serious and sustained warnings about climate change back in the early 1990s might have given us time to make the dramatic changes to our economies needed to wean us off our oil addiction. It might have put pressure on companies like Shell to reform their ways, to invest in other, safer technologies.

But the Guardian was nowhere to be seen. It carried on taking money from the car manufacturers and the airline industries, restricting its environmental coverage to plead with readers to use more efficient lightbulbs.

If you think the Guardian failed us then, but is now taking its environmental responsibilities more seriously, you have missed the point of this post. Nothing has changed.

Back in the early 1990s , the Guardian chose to overlook the climate change story. Today, when the evidence cannot be ignored, it and all the other liberal media underplay the story. Survey after survey shows record-breaking temperature shifts, at an accelerating rate that even most scientists failed to predict.

There is a lesson here. The radical climate scientists, the ones whose forecasts have been most accurate and have risked professional marginalisation and possible career damage to explain what is really going on, should be the ones who are now championed by liberal media like the Guardian. But they continue to languish largely unheard because their message grates with advertisers and would damage corporate profits.

As long as we rely on corporate media like the Guardian for our information about the world, our world doesn't stand a chance.

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