

Global warming charlatan

Sunday, 18 February 2007

Witnesses in a legal trial are sometimes compelled to answer questions that have little or nothing to do with the subject they are testifying on in order to determine whether or not their word can be trusted in the absence of incontrovertible, corroborating evidence. If it can be shown that the witness is a liar, then the veracity of their testimony can, and should, be called into question.

Which brings me to the subject of David Suzuki.

It's hard to imagine any Canadian being unfamiliar with David Suzuki and his long career as an environmental activist. Indeed, Suzuki has, over the years, managed to parley worry about the environment into a multi-million dollar business, making him one of Canada's great contemporary capitalists.

On Thursday (February 15), Suzuki was a guest on the John Oakley show on AM 640 in Toronto as part of his cross-Canada tour drumming up support for the Kyoto Protocol, (or more accurately, stirring up opposition to the federal Conservative Government for its environmental transgressions, real and imagined, specifically its apparent reticence in implementing the provisions of the treaty).

During the course of that interview, Suzuki makes a number of claims that are, shall we say, dubious.

To begin with, he suggests that if Canada fails to meet its Kyoto targets, we will become "international outlaws". (To hear the audio clip [click here](#).) This assertion is stunningly ignorant. The Kyoto Protocol is not criminal law by any standard. It is an agreement – in other words, a contract, not unlike those that people enter into all the time. Parties to contracts sometimes find, for any number of reasons, that they are unable to meet their obligations, forcing them to re-negotiate the terms of the contract, abrogate the contract, or simply repudiate it. Sometimes the act of breaking a contract is accompanied by penalties as stipulated in the agreement, and sometimes penalties are imposed by courts – but when they are, it is always civil courts that impose penalties, never criminal courts. It seems that in David Suzuki's world, you would be branded an 'outlaw' if you lost your job and could no longer afford the mortgage payments you believed you could.

It gets worse.

Having demonstrated how little he knows about the workings of international treaties, Suzuki dismisses questions about the scientific integrity of Kyoto, characterizing as "a lot of baloney" Oakley's observation that "a lot of scientists feel they're intimidated from speaking out..."

"2,500 scientists signed the IPCC (Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change) Report on February 2!" Suzuki exclaims. (To hear the audio clip [click here](#).)

My suspicion already aroused by his false allegation of 'outlaw' behaviour, I decided to check this out for myself – and discovered that, in fact, *only 51 individuals* signed the IPCC Report released on February 2.

It seems that the Great Suzuki got that one wrong too. *Quelle surprise!*

There's more.

After Suzuki insinuates that scientists who disagree with him are "shilling" for big corporations, Oakley asks him where he gets *his* funding. Suzuki replies that his foundation takes no money from governments and complains that "corporations have not been interested in funding us." (To hear the audio clip [click here](#).)

Corporations uninterested? Is it possible that the Great Suzuki has failed to attract a single corporate donation to his feel-good campaign to save the earth? Not one?

Actually, the David Suzuki Foundation's annual report for 2005/2006 lists at least 52 corporate donors including: Bell Canada, Toyota, IBM, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, Microsoft, Scotia Capital, Warner Brothers, RBC, Canon and Bank of Montreal.

The David Suzuki Foundation also received donations from EnCana Corporation, a world leader in natural gas production and oil sands development, ATCO Gas, Alberta's principle distributor of natural gas, and a number of pension funds including the OPG (Ontario Power Generation) Employees' and Pensioners' Charity Trust. OPG is one of the largest suppliers of electricity in the world operating 5 fossil fuel-burning generation plants and 3 nuclear plants... which begs the question – is Suzuki now pro-nuclear power?

If I were less generous I might be tempted to accuse Suzuki of hypocrisy for accepting donations from corporations that he must believe contribute significantly to the production of greenhouse gases, but that would miss the point entirely. The real issue is that, contrary to his clear assertion, the David Suzuki Foundation *does* receive funding from corporations.

The jury may still be out when it comes to assessing climate change and global warming; it's not out when it comes to assessing David Suzuki and the reliability of his testimony though. Suzuki is a charlatan, a shameless self-promoter who foments fear in his audience before promising them salvation – but only if they buy his miracle cure. The only difference is that in his case, Suzuki's miracle cure is deadly to those who take it.

If you'd like to listen to the entire 7min. 26 sec. conversation between David Suzuki and John Oakley, [click here](#).