

## Temper, temper

**18** Post by Mike Klassen in [CityCaucus Feature](#)  
26 comments

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2010

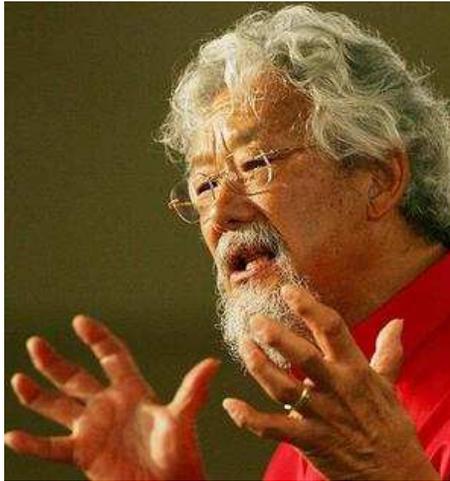
There are few Canadians who have been sainted more than environmental activist David Suzuki. Suzuki's charitable foundation does considerable work advocating for all sorts of environmental causes. His CBC program *The Nature of Things* has inspired thinking in this country about the importance of sustainability. Make no mistake, the David Suzuki brand is big business in Canada and around the globe.

In my quest to understand the way money moves in, out and around BC for political & eco-activist causes, I've come across a complex web of players, charitable foundations and millions changing hands in support of a multitude of causes. It all astounds even a semi-jaded political veteran like myself. Someone who came on my radar as a result of this research was a woman by the name of Vivian Krause.

Krause comes from an interesting background. She's a mom who has seen too much poverty around the world and here at home in British Columbia. Coastal aboriginal communities were particularly hard hit by the inability to generate a local economy. She was told by Chiefs that their quest was at least one job per household, and "a reason to get out of bed in the morning".

One way these communities could get ahead according to her was through aquaculture, and by farming salmon on BC's coast. But there were a few hurdles to this, she says, including an astonishingly well-funded and well-organized smear and fear campaign around farmed salmon. Krause, at apparently great personal sacrifice to herself, sought out to understand who and what was behind the campaign to destroy coastal salmon farming businesses.

Which brings us back to David Suzuki. Last night Krause attended a grad ceremony in downtown Vancouver for her daughter. For years she had been writing Suzuki, presenting her research and looking for some kind of response from Canada's masterful environmentalist. She knows a lot about Suzuki's work, having uncovered [over \\$10 million worth of donations from US-based foundations](#) that have flowed into his organization. In a



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strange twist, it turns out that Krause's daughter was a friend of Suzuki's granddaughter. As fate would have it, the two would finally meet at this formal dress occasion.

On her blog [Krause describes the scenario](#):

As we walked in to Cafe Crepe, I happened to notice Dr. David Suzuki sitting alone, having a bite to eat. For three years, I have been writing letters (see below) and trying unsuccessfully to communicate with Dr. Suzuki so I thought that perhaps I could just briefly introduce myself and give him a friendly handshake to go along with my name. As politely and as respectfully as I know how, I approached Dr. Suzuki to take the liberty of introducing myself...

"Dr. Suzuki, I wonder if I might introduce myself," I said, or something like that. "I'm Vivian, Vivian Krause," I said. He kindly stood up to shake my hand, I believe, but my name didn't seem to ring a bell so I added, "I've been trying to write you letters." Still, he didn't seem to place my name so I added, "I have a web-site, 'Fair Questions,'" I mentioned, adding that I would really appreciate it if I could speak with him or meet with him.

Then, he placed me, or so it seemed. "You're the fish farmer," he said. I had barely begun to explain that yes, I used to work in fish farming - seven years ago - but before I could say much Dr. Suzuki looked me straight in the eye and started telling me to f\*\*k off. Not just once. Then, suddenly, he seemed to catch himself, and quickly sat down.

I was so stunned, I was speechless (which doesn't happen very often).

This "stunned" reaction recalls the experience of my fellow *24 Hours* columnist Bill Tieleman around the time of last year's Provincial election campaign. Tieleman felt Suzuki and Tzeporah Berman had betrayed the NDP during the campaign with an ambush of support for the BC Liberals' carbon tax and wrote about it in his column. When Bill ran into Suzuki just a short time after, [he was also accosted by the environmentalist](#) which he described as follows:

After more of Suzuki yelling and me responding calmly but pointedly, he tried to put me in my place.

"I don't give a sh\*t about you...." Suzuki almost screamed.

"Then that's completely mutual," I interrupted before the great man could say more.

Suzuki spluttered, threw up his hands and rushed away, leaving the event immediately.

It's amazing to me that when you begin to apply a little scrutiny to the subject of charitable foundations, or if you contradict those who feel that they are above reproach, that a backlash follows. These groups should be no different that public officials when it comes to accountability.

While I admire Suzuki for some of his accomplishments, I'm also deeply suspicious any person or group who feels that they know what's best for us all. Untold millions have been shoveled into a powerful network of activists who not only shape the message locally but around the world, making it difficult to know the truth. And the links that exist between

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these groups and the folks running Vancouver City Hall today will also inspire more questions. More on that to follow.

As for Krause, who has evidently spent countless hours trying to bring transparency to the murky world of eco-activist charitable foundations, there's a tinge of sadness to the way she describes her motivation:

The reason that I care so much about jobs is because not all of us have a house on the water in Point Grey, another property in Toronto, another one in Australia, and another one on Quadra Island, like David Suzuki. Some of us have to struggle just to pay for one home that we don't even own - let alone a university education for our kids. When I worked in salmon farming in 2002 and 2003, a woman at the Englewood fish processing plant in Beaver Cove told me, "If I don't earn it, my son doesn't play hockey." That plant has since been closed. I just can't forget about her and her son.

The good news for Vivian is word about her work – most of which is documented at [www.fair-questions.com](http://www.fair-questions.com) – is finally starting to hit mainstream consciousness. Read the following two fine stories in today's *Financial Post*:

- [Salmon farm battle about 'competition'](#)
- [This science is fishy \(op-ed by Terence Corcoran\)](#)

No wonder David Suzuki was a little crabby last night.

- post by Mike



Tagged: [aquaculture](#), [bill tieleman](#), [carbon tax](#), [charities](#), [david suzuki](#), [environment sustainability](#), [vivian krause](#)

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## 26 Comments

Charles, I did work in salmon farming - seven years ago- but I'm by no means a PR troll. Only someone who is familiar with the ENGO campaigns against salmon farming would have been able to connect the dots.

I have not worked in salmon farming since July of 2007. For full disclosure, see: <http://fairquestions.typepad.com/fishfarmfuss/2009/12/disclosure.html>

To me, the issue here isn't salmon farming. The real issues here are transparency, fairness, accountability and the incursion of huge amounts of foreign funding and influence into decisions about how our natural resources are used and managed. See: [www.fair-questions.com](http://www.fair-questions.com)

Vivian Krause replied to [comment from Charles](#) | June 24, 2010 10:30 AM

Let's be clear - Moving to "closed containment" has a huge environmental footprint (on-land sites, concrete, power, roads, etc) and once a proven technology has be devised (all attempts

have failed so far, with large losses of both fish and cash) it will happen outside of the large distribution sites for farmed fish (Seattle and LA). Goodbye to northern Vancouver Island jobs, to the improved employment in First Nations and to BC's largest agricultural export. Until then the American funded campaigns against our cultured fresh (never frozen) fish will continue. "Wild" salmon on the menu means "dry, frozen for months"

Joy replied to [comment from Taylor](#) | June 21, 2010 4:56 PM

I read recently that Beethoven was rude and demanding and that Robertson Davies had a big ego. Should that knowledge have any bearing on my enjoyment of the 9th Symphony or my appreciation of the Deptford Trilogy?

Of course not. But I can see how this sort of journalistic expose would reinforce the opinions of those who hate the music of Beethoven and the novels of Robertson Davies.

Colonel\_Blimp | June 21, 2010 4:28 PM

Charles, sorry to disappoint you. Frankly, I could care less if Suzuki has the occasional public hissy fit. We all have bad days, so we shouldn't expect "celebrities" to have the any less. It is ironic that it contradicts Suzuki's well-crafted public image.

To me the question is how much influence has been bought by millions being poured into local organizations? Suzuki might be unassailable, or his arguments might be full of holes - I don't know. But when you have a lot of resources to defend your point of view, the playing field is no longer even.

I don't know Ms. Krause other than from her work online, and I can assure you the byline is mine. However, her work is the first clear evidence to me of the widespread use of charitable US-based foundation funds to promote a point of view in BC. My natural instinct is to question what kind of impact all that cash is having. The fact Dr. Suzuki has refused to respond to any inquiries about this money makes me want to know why.

Mike Klassen replied to [comment from Charles](#) | June 21, 2010 12:51 PM

This barely passes as an article. In fact it's closer to defamation of character than journalism. Much like the other readers I'm perplexed as to why I read it other than the fact that I care about aquaculture and consider David Suzuki an iconic environmental leader. If you spent your whole life researching how ecosystems were being destroyed by irresponsible industries with their lobbies maybe you'd be annoyed when a PR troll like Krause approached you while trying to enjoy your meal. Nice work framing her as a savior to aboriginal communities and not the public relations attack dog for an foreign owned industry. Just last month the several coastal nations showed up en mass before the steps of the provincial parliament building to protest these open net cage farms that Vivian cares so deeply about. The money that trickles in for non-profits pales in comparison to the astounding profits that these transnational corporations make off our natural resources. Quality journalism Mike. How much of this was written by Krause I wonder?

Charles | June 21, 2010 11:53 AM

This is a great article. Regardless of the issues inherent in the conversation, you can really tell tonas about a person by examining little scenarios such as this. Even if someone bothered me while I was eating, I would be obliged to talk with them, independent of my feeling for them.

His out-of-line attack most likely exemplifies his work strategy as well: Egotistical and narrow-minded

andrew | [June 21, 2010 11:41 AM](#)

This article and comments are so unbelievably mis-informed. Conservation organizations don't want to "decimate" the BC salmon farming industry. They want environmentally destructive open-net cages out of the water and onto land into closed containment. This means, the salmon farming industry stays in BC, can even GROW and create more jobs, and we eliminate one of the factors in the decline of wild salmon while getting the farm waste/pollution out of the water.

Put simply, Vivian Krause's entire argument is some kind of net-cage industry distraction tactic that does not reflect the actual reality of the situation in BC. Smart people who have read the scientific reports, work with government and talk with industry are working hard to create solutions.

Taylor | [June 21, 2010 11:00 AM](#)

@ Confused: "I'm not entirely sure what the point of this article is."

It's obvious. The point of the article is to make people aware of the millions of US dollars being funneled into supposed eco-based foundations, with the goal of damaging Canadian business and jobs for the betterment of our American counterparts.

I wonder if David Suzuki rides his bike from his home in Point Grey to his 'other homes' in Toronto, Australia and Quadra Island? Hypocrisy at work...

Joan replied to [comment from Confused](#) | [June 21, 2010 9:58 AM](#)

I'm not entirely sure what the point of this article is. To show that David Suzuki has a temper? Who doesn't? What's more why shouldn't be allowed to get mad?

Is this article about fish farms? Or is it an article about people's stances and views on an issue? I skimmed the linked articles but I can't help but think that it's all a one sided statement of "Fish farms are necessary, and environmentalists are nut cases."

With that in mind then I guess this article simply exists to support that tow-line.

Confused | [June 20, 2010 11:25 PM](#)

Suzuki needs money for his foundation. The money being attracted to his foundation is targeted to specific causes. Much of the money on the fish farm file is supplied to the foundation to advance the cause of being critical of fish farming. Some of the agencies funding Suzuki are specifically trying to influence public policy against aquaculture specifically in BC. At the very least Suzuki should have a disclaimer on his web site and at the beginning of his TV shows that he is receiving funds which place him in a conflict of interest.

Is it possible that many of the alleged problems with fish farming have been trumpeted up for the sole purpose of attracting funding.

bradford | [June 20, 2010 7:32 PM](#)

i am endlessly amused by people on this thread that think the self appointed Saint Suzuki is anything like his image.

The salmon farming versus wild salmon story is a canard. The Alaskan fishing industry wishes to decimate the BC industry--this story isn't about environmentalism--it's about good ol' Yankee marketing heft. The fish farming industry here has made largely unacknowledged improvements by leaps and bounds, but American contributors like the Pew oundation have been funding our enviro groups so that THEY CAN PUT CANADIANS OUT OF WORK. I believe the amount contributed thu far is around \$180 million dollars.

It is apparent that well-oiled enviro machines don't survive on volunteers and local, small donations alone. Someone might want to do an accounting of which of our so-called home grown environmental groups is receiving American funds to promote the destruction of a BC industry.

Stop the Insanity! replied to [comment from advocate](#) | June 19, 2010 10:57 PM

#### The Thought of The Day

" Environmentalism. Translation:The New Millennium's Socialism with a Capitalist Twist."

As we know by now, Socialism is a License to Steal. Capitalism on the other hand is Capitalist's License to Steal. Environmentalism is the New clever way to Steal...in Capitalist fashion but with a Socialist style execution.

Look at the names and affiliations these people have with each other and you may be able to find the Denominator.

If you don't get it you are naive. If you don't see it, you are blind. If you don't hear it, you are deaf. But if you are none of the above and you still don't acknowledge it, you my friend, are stupid!

Suzuki is to the MSM and other close to his heart interest groups what a Gigolo is to a South Florida middle aged, bored, house wife. But in his case, he is a Biggolo. Translation: Gigolo. Only Bozo. And bad tempered on top of that.

We live in Vancouver and this keeps us busy.

Glissando Remmy | June 19, 2010 3:49 PM

A malthusian satanic cult? That sounds awesome, I want in.

Alex | June 19, 2010 12:25 PM

Suzuki is a fraud, as is his mathlusian cult of satanic carbon dioxide haters.

They belong in prison for crimes against humanity.

Posters like Pat and boohoo need to go get deprogrammed and stop worshipping this snake-oil salesman

PHYSICS MSC | June 19, 2010 11:43 AM

Lot's of celebrities would have reacted the same way when distracted while eating by someone they don't want to talk to. Now where's that strawberry syrup...?

Gerry McGuire | June 18, 2010 6:54 PM

David Suzuki's altercations with Bill Tieleman and Vivian Krause are not isolated incidents. Suzuki is developing a reputation as a foul-mouthed egomaniac who is personally profiting from environmental causes. His financial interest in some of them has tainted his judgement and behaviour.

advocate | June 18, 2010 6:23 PM

Pat, the point is that when science becomes advocacy, then it is legitimate to question the motivation of the advocates. You can never go wrong by following the money.

Bill replied to [comment from Pat Johnstone](#) | June 18, 2010 5:21 PM

Thank you bill. I'm honoured that what started as an ad hominem attack on David Suzuki migrated towards an ad hominem attack on me.

...but what was your point again?

Pat Johnstone replied to [comment from bohoo](#) | June 18, 2010 4:57 PM

Again, it's been asked before, but what's the point of this article other than to make David Suzuki look bad? Are you hoping his causes will take a hit simply because he swore at some people?

Why not discuss the issues around fish farming? There's plenty of environmental issues and science out there to discuss. Wouldn't that be more productive than discussing Suzuki's character?

Suzuki could drive drunk into an elementary school, but it wouldn't change my opinion of fish farming or environmental issues. I don't base my opinions on the world on whether or not someone who shares my world view is a nice guy or not, nor do I automatically change my mind just because I have respect for people who disagree with me.

Tessa | June 18, 2010 4:50 PM

Bill,

You know what they say about assumption....

Can you make your point without cheap shots? ;)

bohoo replied to [comment from Bill](#) | June 18, 2010 4:01 PM

bohoo and Pat are the type that label climate skeptics "deniers" or in the pay of big oil but when the Birkenstock is on the other foot they cry foul. Face it, the environment industry is big business and no different from any other business when it comes to protecting their turf.

Bill | June 18, 2010 3:13 PM

@ Pat

Suzuki is a great marketer. 'Nuff said

As a former student of his and as a teacher ... not so much....  
as a person who practices what he preaches.. not so much.

As the front man for an organization that really has much in the way of credibility.... even more not so much.

Lets just say that what is on TV and reality are 2 very different things with regards to this gentleman and his organization.

The olympic rating sealed the deal with what shreds of credibility he had left.

Been there Done that | June 18, 2010 2:57 PM

I wanted to stop reading at 'eco-activists' but I stomached through the rest.

Poor baby got offended by Suzuki? Too bad. He's human.

You're very good at attacking the messenger and not the message, I wonder what the point is though?

boohoo | June 18, 2010 2:40 PM

I recall the Tielman story, I'm not surprised Vivian has had the same experience.

I don't support fish farms, certainly not in oceans. But between the story of the Tielman encounter and Suzuki giving VANOC a 'bronze' medal (or whatever it was) for a good environmental effort i lost all respect for him.

If Suzuki doesn't want to be bugged, there are lots of places in Vancouver where he could eat lunch without being accosted by us mere mortals.

Wayne | June 18, 2010 2:09 PM

You know how to measure the success of someone like Suzuki? By watching how his critics attack him without addressing his message.

This entire article is an extended ad hominem attack: he is temperate when accosted while enjoying a quiet lunch, he doesn't return e-mails promptly, his funding is â€œmurkyâ€œ, he may use dirty words.

Iâ€™m just not sure what the point is. Because he advocates for responsible environmental management, he has to be sweet like Santa Claus?

Pat Johnstone | June 18, 2010 1:53 PM

Hmnn. So if I read this right, Suzuki doesn't (to quote him from his previous encounter), "give a shit" about Vivian - indeed he may even strongly dislike people like her - so he shuts her out and cuts her off. Interesting effort at dialogue, if this is indeed how the encounter went down. I can just imagine people like Suzuki showing up at the Centre for Dialogue, taking part in workshops to show everyone else how dialogue should take place!

Pamela | June 18, 2010 11:53 AM

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