



David Akin's On the Hill

Working notes, observations, links and other errata from a parliamentary bureau reporter in Ottawa, Canada.

No freedom of the press in David Suzuki's world



[David Akin](#) - February 27th, 2013

The Green Party issued a media advisory yesterday, inviting reporters to attend a discussion at an Ottawa church organized and hosted by an Ottawa bookstore between environmental activist David Suzuki and former Bay Street economist Jeff Rubin, moderated by Green Party MP Elizabeth May. We took the party up on their invite and dispatched reporter Jessica Hume and cameraman, Andrei Filippov. We wanted to hear — and report on — what both Suzuki and Rubin had to say. (Rubin is the sometimes controversial economist who once said we're headed for \$200-a-barrel oil).

We also wanted to ask Suzuki some questions about his endorsement of Joyce Murray in the federal Liberal leadership race. Why did he not endorse anyone in the recent Victoria BC by-election (the Greens thought he had). Is Suzuki a Liberal? What about the B.C. provincial election? Could Nobel Peace Prize-winning climate change scientist and Green Party candidate in Oak Bay Andrew Weaver look forward to Suzuki's endorsement? And what about those CBC policies prohibiting employees, freelancers, and on-air types from getting involved in politics? Not for him, I suppose? Well, read on about our attempts to report on Suzuki's visit to Ottawa:

...when David Suzuki – environmental guru, benevolent dictator and all-around perfect human – arrived in Ottawa Tuesday evening to tell a church filled with a paying audience what a sustainable future looks like, he shocked his own loyal supporters by aggressively refusing to speak with this reporter and a cameraman (who'd only arrived after a media release about the event from the Green Party was sent to the national press corps).

via [THE GOOD DOCTOR WILL NOT SEE YOU NOW « Eye on the Hill](#).


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10 comments

1.  [E. Murdock](#) says:
[February 27, 2013 at 12:08 pm](#)

Why not identify the church and pastor where suzuki was to speak, so that people could then accept attendance at his church without this so called ticket. Does this pastor hand out tickets to a select few, or is everyone welcome?

E. Murdock
Prescott

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2.  *Gabby in QC* says:
[February 27, 2013 at 12:11 pm](#)

OK, maybe this is a little better phrased ...

Anyone who doesn't share environmentalists' world view is not worthy of being on this planet, let alone having their questions answered. Al Gore, David Suzuki, same kind of reaction to anyone asking pointed questions.


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3.  *pegger* says:
[February 27, 2013 at 4:16 pm](#)

Small wonder he didn't want to talk to anyone from the faux news north network. Read your own article – “benevolent dictator”? Where do you come up with this garbage? Dictator of what? If he even spoke to you, you'd actually have something to write. By not speaking to you, you are left with nothing but your usual vitriolic drivel to write, and they've already heard that a thousand times.


Dr. David wins again!

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4.  *John* says:
[February 27, 2013 at 6:00 pm](#)

OK, so I admit I have just had a glass of wine. BUT what is the point of this story? Why the aggressive, emotive title (“No freedom of press in David Suzuki's world”)? Just where in the story is there any evidence that Suzuki wants to deprive other people of freedom of speech? He endorsed someone the journalist did not endorse, and he declined to answer the journalist. How does that violate free speech? If speech is free, so is silence, and Suzuki exercised his right not to speak. There is nothing sinister here, no threat to freedom. The only threat I can see is that journalists expect citizens to open their hearts to them at the drop of a hat. So do telemarketers. I may be damning myself in the eyes of journalists, but give me Suzuki before journalists or telemarketers.

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5.  *Tommi* says:
[February 27, 2013 at 7:13 pm](#)

I never did like him from day one.

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6.  *Gabby in QC* says:
[February 27, 2013 at 7:45 pm](#)


“Just where in the story is there any evidence that Suzuki wants to deprive other people of freedom of speech?”

The questions the Sun journalist wanted to ask were not the usual “gotcha” type some journalists thrive on. The only question that could be interpreted as remotely personal was the one about CBC policy re: its staff & contributors getting involved in politics.

David Suzuki has demonstrated an imperious side of his *persona* before. Not only does he want people to adopt his POV without question, he apparently wanted his opponents to be deprived of their physical freedom, on a couple of occasions calling for political leaders to be thrown in jail for supposedly ignoring the science behind climate change.

As the reporter in question on this occasion aptly put it: "... he'd rather preach to the converted." And if they don't convert, it's "off with their heads" — figuratively speaking, of course.

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7.  *Andrew Watts* says:

[February 27, 2013 at 8:12 pm](#)

I understand from actually reading the story that Suzuki refused to take part in the meeting at all if the journalist was permitted to stay and, 'Heaven Forbid'! actually ask him a question afterwards? If Suzuki wishes to remain a billionaire on tax payers money and pontificate in public he really does not have a right to silence and refuse to answer questions, the same as all politicians and political agitators should expect to do. If you really believe that somehow Suzuki is above such things and should be insulated and protected from the results of his often flawed environmental activism then you should not expect or demand that anyone whose views you oppose should be treated differently.

Suzuki's little boy temper is well known. He's good at stamping his feet and little else!

Andrew Watts

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8.  *KnitNoodles* says:

[February 27, 2013 at 10:26 pm](#)

This event was a book launch, part of a cross-Canada book tour that kicked off on September 23rd, 2012. It was organized by an independent bookstore in Ottawa. They looked around to find a venue large enough to hold the size of audience they expected would attend, realizing that this would be larger than that required by their usual book launch events. They happened to settle on a church building. Tickets to the event were available for purchase from the bookstore in question, not from the church facility which was chosen as their venue.


The day before the event, the moderator who had been lined up by the bookstore, a CBC personality, indicated that illness would prevent the fulfillment of this role. The bookstore then found a replacement in Elizabeth May.

The Green Party chose to issue a media release. Neither the bookstore nor the church issued a media release. Considering whom it was who actually organized the event, it was at the very least in poor taste for the Green Party to assume that the media should be invited. The bookstore had not issued a media release despite their having initially lined up a member of the media as moderator. The event was a book launch. Media are not known for their active desire to cover book launches. Did CBC show up? CTV? The Ottawa Citizen? No, the only media who decided to cover a book launch was Sun News.

It seems that Sun News is desperate for a story.

The only story here is that Sun News saw yet another opportunity to skewer one of their favorite targets, and chose to do so at a book launch.

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9.  *Gabby in QC* says:

[February 27, 2013 at 11:58 pm](#)

"Did CBC show up? CTV? The Ottawa Citizen? No, the only media who decided to cover a book launch was Sun News."

One would think you'd be glad any media showed up at all, showing some interest. Instead, you seem to be complaining about the media's indifference to the book launch ... yet also complaining about the Sun showing up to cover the event. Contradictory, *n'est-ce pas?*

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10.  *Matthew T Volk* says:
[February 28, 2013 at 11:50 am](#)

What: Eco-tour with David Suzuki and Jeff Rubin
When: Feb 26, 7PM
Where: Centretown United Church, 507 Bank Street

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David Akin is Sun Media's national bureau chief and is based in Sun Media's Parliamentary Bureau in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

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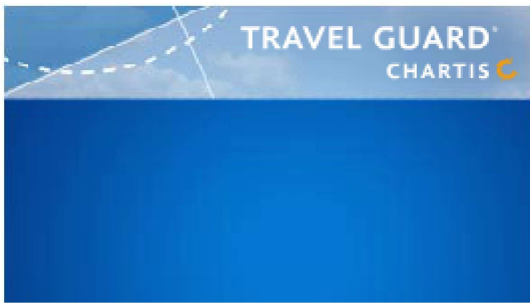
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