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## Greenpeace Is More Dishonest And Dangerous Than The Mafia



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*I debunk junk science and flawed public policy..*

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I grew up in a Philadelphia neighborhood heavily influenced by the Mafia. My best friend sold football pools for the mob family of "The Gentle Don," Angelo Bruno, and my walk to high school took me past his [house](#), where there were often federal agents parked outside, noting who came and went. (The Don went to his final reward not so gently, after a [shotgun blast](#) to the head outside that house in 1980.)

The humanizing effects of “The Godfather” and “The Sopranos” sagas notwithstanding, I have no illusions about the mob. They were cruel, perverted and anti-social. As an adult, I have encountered an organization that is even more misanthropic: Greenpeace. Finally, it’s being [called out in the courts](#)—appropriately, under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) law.

Greenpeace is the defendant in a RICO civil case brought by a Canadian lumber company, Resolute Forest Products. In its filing, Resolute documents that Greenpeace “has published staged photos and video falsely purporting to show Resolute logging in prohibited areas and others purporting to show forest areas impacted by Resolute harvesting when the areas depicted were actually impacted by fire or other natural causes.”



*(FRED TANNEAU/AFP/Getty Images)*

That’s par for the course for Greenpeace, which Hank Campbell of the American Council on Science and Health [described](#) as being “[made up of Internet hackers](#) and [eco-terrorists using fear-mongering](#) to get uneducated people to do their dirty work for them.”

From its early days of dodging harpoons and Japanese whalers in outboard motor boats, Greenpeace has parlayed media savvy, flagrant

dishonesty and an aptitude for political theater into a \$360 million-plus per year empire with offices in more than 40 countries.

But what few members of the public know is that Greenpeace isn't just about saving whales and opposing logging and oil and gas exploration. For more than a decade, its PR machine has spearheaded an effort to deny millions of children in the poorest nations the essential nutrients they need to stave off blindness and death.

Greenpeace's targets are new plant varieties collectively called Golden Rice. Rice is a food staple for hundreds of millions, especially in Asia. Although it is an excellent source of calories, it lacks certain micronutrients necessary for a complete diet. In the 1980s and 1990s, German scientists Ingo Potrykus and Peter Beyer developed the "Golden Rice" varieties that are biofortified, or enriched, by genes that produce beta-carotene, the precursor of vitamin A.

Vitamin A deficiency is epidemic among poor people whose diet is composed largely of rice, a carbohydrate-rich but vitamin-poor source of calories which contains no beta-carotene or vitamin A. In developing countries, 200 million-300 million children of preschool age are at risk of vitamin A deficiency, which increases their susceptibility to illnesses including measles and diarrheal diseases. Every year, about half a million children become blind as a result of vitamin A deficiency and 70% of those die within a year.

Golden Rice could thus make contributions to human health on a par with Jonas Salk's polio vaccine. Instead, anti-technology groups such as Greenpeace have given already risk-averse regulators the political cover to delay approvals.

In a letter unveiled at a press conference on June 30, more than 100 Nobel Laureates from diverse disciplines voiced their support for genetic engineering in agriculture and called on NGOs, the United Nations and governments around the world to join them. The Laureates—in fields including Medicine, Economics, Physics, Chemistry, Literature and Peace—all signed an open letter asking Greenpeace and others who have been blocking progress and access to

beneficial plant biotechnology products, like Golden Rice, to abandon their campaigns against genetic engineering in agriculture.

Genetically modified food has been a *bête noire* of left-wing, anti-technology activists for years, perhaps because it combines the “evils” of being somehow “unnatural” and often coming from corporate research labs. Greenpeace hasn’t been swayed by the scientific consensus about the safety of genetically engineered crops—a consensus that is the result of hundreds of risk-assessment experiments and vast real-world experience. In the United States alone, more than 90% of all corn, soybeans and sugar beets grown is genetically engineered, and in 20 years of consumption around the world not a single health or environmental problem has been documented.

Greenpeace has variously alleged that the levels of beta-carotene in Golden Rice are too low to be effective or so high that they would be toxic. But feeding trials have shown the rice to be highly effective in preventing vitamin A deficiency, and toxicity is virtually impossible. (There’s an internal feedback loop in humans that stops beta-carotene from being converted to vitamin A if levels become too high.)

So with no science to support its antagonism, the organization has been forced to adopt a new strategy: try to scare off the developing nations that are considering adoption of the lifesaving products. Greenpeace has gone so far as to concoct tales of genetically-engineered crops causing homosexuality, impotence and baldness, and of increasing the spread of HIV/AIDS.

In 2012, Greenpeace issued a press release stating that 24 Chinese children had been “used as guinea pigs in [a] genetically engineered ‘Golden Rice’ trial.” The reference was to the results of a 2008 study conducted by researchers at Tufts University and in China and funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the National Institutes of Health.

The safety of Golden Rice was never in question. That had previously been established. The 2008 study demonstrated that the new varieties of Golden Rice did indeed deliver sufficient vitamin A and were superior to spinach for that purpose. As to the ethics of the study, the journal article states clearly: "Both parents and pupils [subjects] consented to participate in the study."

The Greenpeace press release nonetheless produced a furor in China. Chinese news agencies inaccurately reported that the researchers had conducted dangerous, unauthorized experiments on poor children, and within days Chinese police had interrogated the researchers and coerced statements disavowing the research.

The manufactured "scandal" turned into a debacle. The journal that had published the article retracted it—on "ethical," not scientific grounds—and the principal investigator, a professor at Tufts University, was sanctioned. In the end, Greenpeace succeeded in significantly delaying, if not actually eliminating, further development of Golden Rice in China.

Greenpeace has since taken its scare-mongering about Golden Rice on the road to other nations, especially the [Philippines](#).

It is unclear why Greenpeace—which has also raised money and its profile by bragging about sabotaging efforts to test insect-resistant crops that need less chemical pesticide—persists in some of its mendacious, anti-social campaigns. What is clear is that none is likely to be more harmful to the world's children than its assault on Golden Rice.

The real threat to life and limb is not genetic engineering. It's the organized-crime organization called Greenpeace.