

## **IARC: Chris Portier Denies Being Paid By EDF Is A Conflict Of Interest For IARC Members**

Chris Portier, Ph.D., an activist statistician who pushed to get the common herbicide ingredient glyphosate listed as a "hazard" for carcinogen labeling purposes while with the International Agency for Research on Cancer, only later revealed he was on the payroll of an anti-science litigation group that was targeting glyphosate at the time - Environmental Defense Fund.

A court deposition and the implicit threat of perjury should he lie [forced Portier to disclose he was also being paid by a lawyer who wanted to sue over glyphosate](#) once he helped get it declared a "probable" carcinogen. That left glaring questions: How did the law firm learn of the IARC decision weeks before the paper was released? Was it just coincidence they hired Portier to help them as an expert because he was at IARC when the decision came out?

It certainly looked suspicious. So suspicious that if anyone in the pro-agriculture arena did it, organic industry ally Eric Lipton, who practically prints press releases written by Organic Consumers Association industry front group US Right To Know in his columns, would be writing a whole series at the *New York Times* about how evil scientists and corporations are. But about Portier...nothing.

1 Q. In your poster presentation at  
2 Ramazzini Days, in the conclusion, you  
3 state that -- you talk about economically  
4 motivated activities having influenced the  
5 glyphosate science, correct?

6 MS. GREENWALD: Objection, form.

7 A. I should pay more attention to  
8 what my coauthors write sometimes.

9 That is what it says.

10 Q. You do not disclose anywhere in  
11 this poster presentation your role as a  
12 paid expert for plaintiffs' counsel in  
13 private litigation against Monsanto, do  
14 you?

15 MS. GREENWALD: Objection, form.

16 A. Not specific. I list myself as  
17 an environmental health consultant.

18 Q. Again, just so the record is  
19 clear, you do not disclose the fact that  
20 you were a paid consultant for plaintiffs'  
21 counsel in private litigation against  
22 Monsanto?

23 A. That is correct.

24 Q. Now, you're -- the point you're  
25 making in this poster presentation instead

Why didn't they come up with any "secret" documents showing this? The answer is well known by now. Secret documents were being leaked by the trial lawyers to organic industry groups who are paid to promote competitors to farmers who use glyphosate.

If "journalists" had been journalists they'd have read his deposition and driven a stake into the evil heart of such hypocrisy. Instead they did nothing when Portier stated, "at the time of the IARC I had no conflict of interest in my opinion. My only source of income was my retirement and the work I was doing one day a week for the Environmental Defense Fund on air pollution and climate change."

This is a rather precise, and therefore interesting, parsing of terms. *In his opinion?* Deniers for hire like [Mike Balter](#) and [Paul Thacker](#), along with activist journalists (see a whole list [here](#)) insist any non-profit who has ever gotten a donation from a company in their entire history remains conflicted...for all eternity. Yet I have been unable to find a single criticism of Portier by any of those paid flacks and journalists. They are not skeptical when someone helping them in their culture war claims he was only paid by EDF to promote climate change. They pretend to believe that EDF hired a biostatistician with no expertise in climate issues to work on climate change rather than work on the chemicals he scaremongers.

Instead he was let off by sympathetic journalists even though they know he was working for attorneys suing over glyphosate - while telling European and American regulators they should ban the product because his work at IARC declared something no other scientific body had.

24  
25

Q. You agreed on March 29, 2015,  
that you would not disclose your work for

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Page 82

1 plaintiffs' counsel to media organizations,  
2 trade journals, professional publications,  
3 members of the public or other purported  
4 experts, correct?

5 A. Correct.

6 Q. You agreed to retain the  
7 plaintiffs' lawyers to represent you if  
8 anyone sought to compel you to disclose  
9 this information, correct?

10 A. I believe that's what part C  
11 says.

12 Q. And you began billing plaintiffs'  
13 counsel for your time as of -- and this is  
14 the first invoice attached -- June 17,  
15 2015, correct?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. You had a meeting on June 17,  
18 2015 with Mr. Lundy, and then a second  
19 meeting with Mr. Lundy and Ms. Greenwald on  
20 June 19, 2015, correct?

21 A. That is correct.

22 Q. On October 19, 2015, you sent  
23 plaintiffs' counsel an invoice for your  
24 work on their behalf from June of 2015 to  
25 October of 2015, correct?

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Page 83

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. And you have been working as a  
3 paid consultant for plaintiffs' counsel  
4 throughout the entire time that you have  
5 had discussions with regulators in the  
6 United States and in Europe about  
7 glyphosate, correct?

Since EDF wants to help epidemiologists helping advance their lawsuits, they won't dispute his "in my opinion" claims the way they would if a pro-science person said it. And less-than-credible journalists will willingly put on blinders and pretend it did not create a conflict of interest to get glyphosate labeled a carcinogen when he was reliant on income from them *and he knows they lobby against glyphosate.*

Why did IARC create policy that no one who had ever gotten a grant from a corporation, or been an employee of a corporation, could be on their working group. but exempt working for EDF or other anti-science NGOs? They didn't need any policy if they will just accept "in my opinion" by a participant that they are not conflicted.

It's all a little too convenient. But when it comes to lawyers and activists out to undermine public confidence in science, it's all too common.

-  [PDF version](#)



By [Hank Campbell](#)

Hank Campbell is an award-winning science writer and bestselling author. He became the second President of the American Council on Science and Health in June of 2015 and prior to that began the 2006 [Science 2.0](#) movement. He has written for *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Wired*, and in many more places. He is on the Board of Trustees at Science 2.0 and serves on the Advisory Council of [Atlantic Legal Foundation](#).

[Hank's Amazon Author page](#)

[Hank's IMDb page](#)

[Hank on Facebook](#)

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[Hank on LinkedIn](#)

[Hank's listing in Wikipedia](#) (BONUS: Deleted by [an activist](#) politically partisan [attorney](#) who works with the science denial front group known as [Sourcewatch](#)! So this is an archive. He also trashed the ACSH entry.)

A few reviews of *Science Left Behind*:

**Wall Street Journal** - “usefully revealing how pervasive scientific misinformation is in progressive arguments on organic and genetically modified foods, clean energy, nuclear waste and other matters.”

**Scientific American** - “...the left's sacred values seem fixated on the environment, leading to an almost religious fervor over the purity and sanctity of air, water and especially food. Try having a conversation with a liberal progressive about GMOs — genetically modified organisms — in which the words “Monsanto” and “profit” are not dropped like syllogistic bombs.”

**Forbes** - “on many of the most critical issues of our time, the “progressive” perspective is often rooted in out-dated, anti-empirical, junk science paradigms that threaten innovation—and are beginning to unnerve the most scientifically minded thinkers on the left.”

**Huntington News** - "Groundbreaking...If I were teaching journalism, this is a book that I would require my students to read and absorb -- and keep for reference.”

**Science Based Medicine** - "pure music to the ears of science-based medicine. They agree that the anti-vaccine movement is based on outright lies, they call the Huffington Post a

laughingstock of the scientific community for its endorsement of CAM, they call for the NCCAM to be abolished, [and] they explain why presenting data about relative risks rather than absolute risks is misleading."

You can buy his work on Amazon here:

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