0:05
>> For more than 150 years, oil and gas has played a critical role in our society, improving
0:10
human lives, raising standards of living and enabling unprecedent economic growth.
0:15
>> What do you do when your industry can no longer exist without creating catastrophes
0:22
worldwide? >> The impacts of climate change are intensifying... >> It's important to understand the past.
0:27
You can't understand where you are, if you don't know how you got there. >> NARRATOR: In a special three-part series, the epic
0:34
story of our failure to tackle climate change. >> The whole world is heating up... >> NARRATOR: And the role of the
0:40
fossil fuel industry... >> Did big oil knowingly spread disinformation? >> NARRATOR: Now, in part one -
0:46
what big oil knew about climate change more than forty years ago...
0:51
>> The fact, that Exxon had been doing rigorous peer reviewed research in the 80s was staggering to me.
0:57
>> There were uncertainties, but the uncertainty was: when, how fast? >> NARRATOR: And what happened as the science became more
1:04
certain? >> Scientific evidence remains inconclusive as to whether human activities affect
1:10
the global climate. So, there's simply no reason to take drastic action now.
1:17
>> They realized that it was going to be an existential threat to their business, but
1:24
they made a deeply unethical decision to try to obfuscate the reality.
1:29
>> We have continued to maintain a position that has evolved with science and is today consistent
1:35
with the science. >> We won't solve the climate crisis unless we solve the
1:40
misinformation crisis.

Exxon's Early Research

1:51
(projector starting, film strip whirring) ♪ ♪
1:58
>> In 1978, my wife and I was just engaged six months prior. So we were gonna get married a
2:04
year after I graduated from college. I was kind of awkward, a little bit reserved.
2:10
I was definitely a nerd. I mean, I grew up in a blue collar area in Queens. I went to Cooper Union.
2:16
And Cooper Union was very well known. Not to toot my own horn, but you had to be pretty good to get in,
2:21
so we were a draw for Exxon. Exxon had a recruiting program.
2:27
They would go to colleges all around the country and every year they would take the best graduates from my school.
2:32
And so when Exxon offered me a position in their research division, and doing environmental monitoring, for me
2:38
it was a really good fit. And the salary I got offered was about $18,600, which in those
2:43
days was a lot of money for somebody fresh out of school. ♪ ♪
2:53
>> Exxon was not just the largest oil and gas company in existence, it was the largest company period in existence.
3:01
It did business all over the world. It was enormous. And the resources were gigantic.
3:09
And it had a very good reputation. At the time I joined it, they had a company making word
3:16

processors, fax machines. There was a new division of the company, Exxon Nuclear.
3:22
And they had Exxon Solar. >> Exxon wanted to become an
3:28
energy company. They were flush with funds, the oil business was doing really well in the '70s, and so they
3:34
wanted to move into other fields related to energy. The energy projects that they were doing were very well
3:40
funded. Each one of them would have teams of five to ten scientists and then technicians supporting
3:45
them. So the project that I ultimately ended up working for them on was really blue sky. They weren't gonna make any
3:51
money on it. It was just research for the sake of doing research. For somebody who was 22 or 23 years old, it was like, "Wow,
3:57
am I... I'm really happy here, you know, it's a really great place to be working." I was really happy to be working
4:03
for Exxon. >> ...two, one. (beeping)
4:10
(engines roar) >> Back in the mid-'70s, I was
4:17
working for NASA. It was a very exciting time
4:23
because NASA was sending probes all over the solar system.
4:28
And the information that was coming back was very interesting-- things that we never knew.
4:33
For example, we found out that Venus was very hot. It's at least 700 degrees there.
4:39
And the most plausible explanation came from the composition of Venus'
4:44
atmosphere. Venus is almost 100% carbon dioxide.
4:50
It was a kind of unified idea in the terrestrial planets of our solar system that greenhouse
4:56
gas warming was caused by high concentrations of carbon
5:02
dioxide. At the same time, some research scientists were making
5:07
observations of carbon dioxide in our own atmosphere. And we have seen this curve of
5:13
increasing carbon dioxide, it's become a classic icon of the carbon dioxide problem, where
5:20
CO_2 keeps going up and up a few parts per million every year. And we can attribute that to
5:26
greenhouse gases, primarily fossil fuel burning. It was a small group, maybe 20
5:33
or 30, who were developing models independently and checking each other.
5:40
All of the models showed that the average temperature of the earth was going to warm. The things that we didn't know
5:46
were details. We didn't know exactly where that was going to happen and how it was going to happen.
5:53
The question came up: what are we going to do? Over 85% of our energy was
5:58
generated by fossil fuels. And about that time is when I
6:05
had the opportunity to work as a consultant with the biggest company in the world at the
6:13
time: Exxon.
6:20
♪♪
6:37

>> NARRATOR: Today, the evidence of climate change is everywhere.
6:46
"Frontline" has been investigating the role of the fossil fuel industry, and one of its biggest players-- Exxon-- in
6:52
delaying and preventing action on climate change over the past four decades.
6:58
This film is based on over 100 interviews and thousands of documents-- many of them newly
7:04
uncovered. It's a story that begins with a small team of scientists inside
7:11
Exxon.
7:16
>> So this is a presentation entitled "The Proposed Exxon Research Program to Help Assess
7:22
the Greenhouse Effect." It's presented by Edward A. Garvey, myself, Henry Shaw, Wally Broecker and Taro
7:28
Takahashi at Columbia University. ♪ ♪
7:34
Exxon wanted to do research related to climate change. But they wanted it to be recognized that something that
7:40
Exxon can contribute that unlikely anybody else could do. The role of the ocean in the
7:45
global balance of carbon dioxide was not well understood. And so Exxon saw an opportunity,
7:52
using an oil tanker, to involve itself in that line of research and make a really significant contribution to the
7:57
understanding of the global cycle of carbon dioxide. "Program goal: use Exxon
8:03
expertise and facilities to help "determine the likelihood of a global greenhouse effect.
8:10
March 26, 1979." ♪ ♪
8:16
I wasn't dying to go to sea. I was a city kid, I wasn't a sailor. But I think I understood from
8:21
the very beginning that the oil tanker was gonna be my baby, so to speak, I was gonna make it work.
8:28
"Rationale for Exxon involvement: develop expertise to assess the possible impact
8:34
of the greenhouse effect on Exxon business. Form responsible team that can credibly carry bad news, if
8:39
any, to the corporation." The work that we were doing, the company was interested in at
8:45
the highest levels. They wanted the knowledge. ♪ ♪
8:51
>> We wrote computer programs. We plotted graphs, we analyzed the results.
8:56
We compared it with data, with what nature was doing. And we would compare our results
9:02
with others' results, we would see if there's a consensus. Those papers would then get
9:08
presented at meetings with the government, people from industry, people from the university.
9:14
And there would sort of be this sort of brick by brick advance in our understanding of how the system worked.
9:23
Everything that we studied was basically consistent with the finding that the earth was going
9:29
to warm significantly. And we just were trying to say how it would warm.
9:34
I can only speak about the research group and Exxon Research and Engineering. Everybody there accepted it.
9:41
Roger Cohen completely accepted it. Roger Cohen, who was the manager of the group that I was
9:47

consulting for, passed a lot of our results on to higher levels of management.
9:53
Because that's what this is, he's writing to his boss about what the guys working for him are doing.
9:59
"There's unanimous agreement in the scientific community that temperature increase of this magnitude would bring about
10:05
significant changes in the earth's climate, including rainfall distribution and alterations in the biosphere.
10:12
Our results are in accord with those of most researchers in the field and are subject to the same uncertainties."
10:18
>> There was no separation between Exxon's understanding and that of academia. None. Yeah, there were uncertainties.
10:24
But the uncertainty was, when, how fast? That's what we were looking at. If we didn't reduce fossil fuel
10:30
consumption in a significant fashion, we were going to be facing significant climate change in the future. >> And here he's saying that we
10:37
should keep doing the research, because it can inform our decisions.
10:42
"Our ethical responsibility is to permit the publication of our research in the scientific
10:48
literature; indeed to do otherwise would be a breach of Exxon's public position, and
10:54
ethical credo, honesty, and integrity." >> Within the Exxon Research and
10:59
Engineering Company, at least, we knew that changes were going to be necessary. But I think Exxon was afraid we
11:04
would change too fast. You just can't shut off the fossil fuels. Because all of society depends
11:10
on it. I was convinced that Exxon was doing this research to understand it, to get a place at
11:15
the table, to be part of the solution, not so that we can deny the problem.
11:21
♪♪ (indistinct radio chatter)
11:29
(wind whipping)
11:35
(indistinct radio chatter)
What the Fossil Fuel Industry Knew
11:50
♪♪
11:55
>> Some time in the 2000s, Exxon give their archives to the library at the University of
12:00
Texas. Many truckloads of documents. Perhaps it was a PR effort to
12:06
show that this company has a proud history and it's all transparent, it's all in the library.
12:13
And so it was a revelation when journalists uncovered documents
12:18
showing how deep the conversation was about climate change within Exxon.
12:25
>> We came across letter after letter after letter to the leaders of the company about
12:30
carbon dioxide. And not only letters, but we came across a memo that said
12:36
that if carbon dioxide concentrations continue to grow at this rate, this could be catastrophic.
12:41
That was the word used. Anybody who covered climate knew that Exxon had played a critical role in developing and funding a
12:50
narrative of climate denial that began in the 1990s. So the fact that Exxon had been
12:55
doing rigorous peer reviewed research in the '80s was staggering to me.

13:01
>> I've become a curator of documents. And the evidence from the Exxon documents is that there was a
13:06
cadre of really smart scientists putting Exxon in a position of authority on the science of
13:11
climate change. ♪ ♪
13:18
>> Gasoline and fuel oil prices fell 2% last month, the third consecutive monthly decline in the price of gasoline.
13:25
>> That set the stock market skidding into its worse loss in three months, and the fallout continued as the week
13:31
progressed. >> Now we're in 1982. And in 1982 oil prices dropped.
13:39
>> The bottom fell out of the oil market, and so Exxon was having a hard time staying profitable, and it began
13:44
layoffs. >> One of the things that was dropped overboard was the tanker
13:50
project. >> Basically just said, the market's too poor, we no longer can afford this level of research.
13:57
We're going to keep the modeling team together and shut down the tanker project. >> And by 1984, Lee Raymond was
14:04
senior vice president with broad oversight for Exxon Research and Engineering.
14:09
Raymond believed Exxon would always be an oil and gas company. It would never be anything else.
14:16
>> When Exxon retrenched, and sold off its research in lithium batteries, sold off its solar energy, it's like, you're
14:22
throwing out the baby with the bathwater. These are all important lines of research for the potential for the company, and you're just getting rid of them.
14:28
You're not trying to shrink them down saying, "Okay, we have to make do with a smaller budget." No, this is gone. We're done with this, we're done
14:33
with this, we're done with that. >> Alternative fuels. There was a time in the late '70s at your company...
14:39
You spent a lot of money at that time to say... >> Yes, we did. >> ...is there an alternative fuel that will work so that we
14:44
don't have to burn fossil fuels and put all that CO2 in the oxygen in the air? >> Right. We were the first-- we were the
14:50
first oil company that really spent a lot of money looking at all that. >> And the results were what?
14:55
>> None of these technologies-- and we looked at everything, I mean, we looked from soup to nuts-- that none of these
15:02
technologies were going to be competitive against oil. The conclusion we came to,
15:07
Charlie, was that fossil fuels had such an economic-- first of all, such an economic advantage,
15:14
and secondly, such a relatively ease of use that it was going to be very difficult to displace them.
15:20
♪ ♪ >> I didn't stay there that much longer after they shut down the
15:26
tanker project. I know that Exxon did some really good climate-related modeling work and was still
15:32
funding research at Columbia University. But effectively they turned the corner and, well, I just... I
15:37
knew that the place that I worked in was gone. I was heartbroken. ♪ ♪
15:46
>> NARRATOR: Exxon Mobil declined to give us any interviews. In a written response to questions, the company said:
15:51
"For more than 40 years, we have supported development of climate science in partnership with
15:57
governments and academic institutions." And "ExxonMobil has never had

16:02
any unique or superior knowledge about climate science, let alone any that was unavailable to
16:08
policy makers or the public."
16:17
♪♪
16:26
>> I didn't learn about climate change until I was in graduate school.
16:33
These are documents from the '80s, the '70s, talking about climate change and to only learn
16:40
about it in 2010 shows that knowledge doesn't necessarily go
16:45
in a way uni-directional fashion. That we lose knowledge, we forget things all the time, both
16:51
as individuals and as a society. There are many people working on
16:57
this now and we're getting a better and better understanding all the time.
17:02
We now know that Shell, for example, had a sophisticated understanding of the climate
17:08
issue also by the end of the 1980s. The coal industry, too.
17:14
So there is a level of foreknowledge by the fossil fuel
17:19
industry that business as usual would lead to disaster around the world.
17:26
>> My fellow Americans, with summer coming, a lot of Americans will be driving more than ever in everything from
17:31
vans to buses to motorbikes. This is a good time for it because gas prices continue to fall.
17:37
>> Corporate profits surged in the first quarter. Individual winners were Ford, Exxon, General Motors, IBM...
17:42
>> Retail sales jumped, reflecting a surge in demand. >> ...have to sell thousands
17:47
more with Sell-a-thon 3! Starlets, Corollas... >> Boeing aircraft company unveiled their new 67 jetliner.
17:53
>> Sharp fare reductions by American Airlines... >> May turn out to be a major turning point in the history of
17:59
airline pricing. >> Who is making the excess buck here? >> Primarily, U.S. refiners of
18:04
petroleum products. Most of these companies have announced huge increases in their refinery profits over the
18:11
last nine months. ♪♪
18:16
>> Exxon had an idea of how soon governments would start to act about global warming.
18:22
The company predicted that policy action would occur around the late 1980s, which it did.
18:29
So this is really when a huge battle began. ♪♪
The Politics of Climate Change
18:43
>> 1988 was the year that the issue of climate change moved
18:48
from scientific journals into the realm of public policy. I was a 26-year-old on the lower
18:56
end of the totem pole in a Senate office. Senator Wirth said, "You want to
19:02
work on the environment because that's where all the action's gonna be." >> Our climate is changing very dramatically and it's time for
19:08
us to start acting on it. >> You know, we identified early on how important this was and,
19:15

uh, you know, we're probably one of the first to bang away at it. >> Senator Wirth said, "I want
19:21
to write a piece of legislation that addresses global warming."
19:28
The first person I reached out to was Dr. Hansen, a distinguished senior scientist at NASA.
19:35
>> A lot had changed between the middle of the 1970s when we first got interested in the
19:40
problem, and the 1980s-- the late 1980s. Because the real world was
19:48
beginning to show signs that humans were affecting climate. That implies that we're really
19:55
going to get a significant change a few decades downstream. >> My response was pretty
20:01
immediate. This is a big deal. You know, we need to get working on a hearing.
20:07
>> Seattle and other parts of the northwest had their driest February in history. Irrigation reservoirs are 40 to
20:14
85 percent below normal levels. >> By the spring of 1988, there
20:19
was a full-scale drought. >> The earliest fire season in memory has been declared.
20:26
>> They're drenching around the clock on the once mighty now shrunken Mississippi...
20:31
>> It was my perception that the media wanted to explain this drought. And seemed to be at a tipping
20:38
point on the issue of climate change.
20:44
>> The evening before I was lying on my bed in the hotel in Washington writing my testimony
20:50
and listening to the Yankees baseball game. And I wrote my testimony out by
20:55
hand. I do think that scientists have
21:01
a moral obligation to point out the implications of their findings and try to do it as
21:07
clearly as possible. >> I had a sense that it was
21:13
going to be a good hearing. And that his statement would be important.
21:19
You could feel it in the room that this was a significant moment.
21:25
>> Thank you for the opportunity to present the results of my research on the greenhouse effect, which has been carried
21:31
out with my colleagues at the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies. I would like to draw three main
21:38
conclusions. Number one: the earth is warmer in 1988 than at any time in the
21:44
history of instrumental measurements. Number two: the global warming
21:50
is now large enough that we can ascribe, with a high degree of confidence, a cause and effect
21:55
relationship to the greenhouse effect. And number three: our computer
22:01
climate simulations indicate that the greenhouse effect is already large enough to begin to
22:06
affect the probability of extreme events such as summer heat waves.
22:12
Altogether, this evidence represents a very strong case, in my opinion, that the
22:17
greenhouse effect has been detected, and it is changing our climate now.
22:24

>> That was a kind of a magic sentence. This was not environmental groups. This was not some green cabal.
22:29
This was a probably the lead climate scientist in the federal government making this statement.
22:35
>> I realized I was going out on a limb. Not all scientists agreed with
22:41
me that we were ready to say those things. But they were based on sound
22:48
physics, and observations, and models.
22:54
>> It was as if the rocket had lifted off. I wrote on the hearing transcript, "historic."
23:00
♪♪ >> Some experts are saying now that the whole world is heating
23:05
up because of a global greenhouse effect. >> And in the long run that could mean devastating changes
23:11
to all life on earth. >> The next morning, the story was on the front page of "The New York Times."
23:16
>> There are no easy solutions. We're talking here about the use of gas, and coal, and oil.
23:22
>> Scientists urge heavy conservation, a switch to solar energy, and a search for new power sources.
23:28
Pragmatists would argue that we cannot change our energy habits overnight. Scientists say we had better get
23:33
going. >> In those years, there was still a spirit of
23:38
bipartisanship, when really important challenges to the public interest appeared, you
23:46
could work across the political aisle. (crowd cheering) >> I felt like tremendous
23:52
progress was being made. There was greater awareness. There was public policy
23:57
emerging. There was international negotiations developing. >> Momentum was on our side.
24:04
And it kind of opened up the world and you had the feeling of "Wow," you know, "this is really going to change."
24:11
But the minute targets and timetables began to appear, you know, those were magic signals to the industry.
24:18
"Uh oh, this is serious." Little did we know how devastating the counterattack
24:24
was going to be. ♪♪
24:33
>> I've collected documents from every place where I've worked. My basement looks like a trash bin and a fire hazard, but
24:40
nevertheless! I knew that having access to original documents that were,
24:45
in my view, critical to certain decisions being made, would be enormously valuable.
24:51
I'm Terry Yosie, I'm vice president for Health and Environment at American Petroleum Institute. A.P.I. at that time was
24:57
tremendously influential. It was the chief lobbying organization for the petroleum industry, and had representation
25:05
from some of the major oil companies-- Exxon, Mobil, Chevron, Shell, BP-- companies
25:11
like that. By early 1989, the newspapers,
25:17
the television networks were bombarding A.P.I. with questions such as, "Well, what do you
25:22
think of Hansen's testimony?" "What is your view of climate change in general?" "What do you think needs to be
25:28
done about climate change?" "Terry, what do you make of all of this?" ♪♪
25:37

The decision was made that a briefing needed to be prepared for industry C.E.O.s
25:43
"Global Warming The Knowns and Unknowns. By Terry F. Yosie.
25:48
American Petroleum Institute. There is scientific consensus that the atmosphere is changing
25:54
due to human activities. There are three schools of thought that characterize the scientific and public debate
26:00
over global warming. The first is that a crisis exists, and that immediate measures are needed to
26:06
ameliorate it through strong government actions. The second school of thought is that the problem will go away by
26:12
itself. The third school of thought, and one that reflects A.P.I.'s present thinking, was expressed
26:18
by a scientist named Patrick Michaels in a recent article in 'the Washington Post.' 'Our policies,' noted Michaels,
26:25
'should be no more drastic than the scientific conclusions they are based upon.'"
26:31
>> I'm not-- I hate this word. I'm not a denier. I'm a lukewarmer.
26:37
Totally different. And people get that wrong. It's the lukewarm view on climate change, which means
26:43
climate change is real, people have something to do with it. But it's probably not the end of
26:48
the world. I'm probably a lukewarm libertarian too. There is a real problem with this so-called global warming
26:54
apocalypse projection. The earth may in fact be going in the other direction.
27:00
And until we solve that it seems to me that we ought not take any very expensive remuneration. >> Pat Michaels was not a major
27:06
voice in the scientific community on climate change. But I think he was primarily
27:11
useful to the industry as an external voice of doubt creating more skepticism about
27:17
policymakers taking action. "In that vein, A.P.I. must
27:23
become an active participant in the scientific and policy debate. We are well on our way to doing
27:28
that. We must make policymakers fully aware of the uncertainty surrounding the global warming
27:34
issue." >> It's amazing. I mean, it's... it is, um...
27:39
it's al... it's a call to action. They're realizing it's going down, we need to be in the room
27:44
talking about uncertainty, and downplaying the urgency,
27:50
effectively, that that is the call. >> Can I ask you to take a look
27:56
at the document in front of you? >> This thing? >> Yeah, which we found in the Exxon archives.
28:01
>> This says it all right here. This paragraph starts, "Exxon's
28:06
long term public presence and contributions to the scientific field give us unique credibility within the petroleum industry.
28:13
We served on a task force of the American Petroleum Institute and contributed significantly to the development of the A.P.I.
28:19
position on climate change." So essentially what we see as the A.P.I. position is the
28:25
Exxon position on climate change. "Our advice and input influenced the positions of NAM, the
28:31
National Association of Manufacturers, CMA, the Chemical Manufacturers Association, and the Global Change Coalition,"
28:38

which is probably the Global Climate Coalition. These trade associations are key. They are working with other
28:44
shields and other umbrellas. Their focus is trying to emphasize uncertainty.
28:49
♪♪ And we can show that they pretty much did that in following years.
28:57
>> NARRATOR: In response to questions A.P.I said critics were cherry picking information from decades ago, to support a
29:03
misleading pre-determined narrative. And that as climate science
29:08
has evolved so has the industry. Exxon Mobil has denied that
29:15
it's policy at that time was to emphasize uncertainty.
29:25
(crowd applause) ♪♪
Koch & the Lobbyists
29:30
>> The man standing beside me today has what it takes to lead this nation from the day we take
29:36
office. Senator Al Gore of Tennessee. >> When Bill Clinton announced
29:41
that his running mate was going to be Al Gore, that was very exciting. There was an anticipation of a
29:46
much greater effort to tackle climate change. >> We will finally give the
29:52
United States a real environmental presidency. (cheers and applause)
29:57
>> Then President-elect Clinton understood clearly that that's why I was on the ticket.
30:02
That's why I agreed to run as vice president. >> He has won this presidential race, along with Senator Al
30:09
Gore, now the vice president elect. >> Now you're in the White House. >> Yeah.
30:15
>> To tackle it, did you feel a sense of responsibility? >> Oh, absolutely. That was the principal task that
30:20
I set for myself entering the White House. And I went to work right away to try to get a carbon tax in
30:26
our first budget plan. >> Senator Gore asked me to produce some quantitative
30:33
results of how much various energy taxes would reduce emissions.
30:38
>> Our plan does include a broad-based tax on energy. It is environmentally
30:44
responsible. It will help us in the future as well as in the present with the deficit.
30:51
>> I was excited that a fairly bold step had been proposed. >> It's called a "BTU tax."
30:58
>> The tax is likely to be levied at the producer or distributor level, though consumers would feel it as
31:04
energy companies passed it along in their prices. >> It's a tax policy, you don't
31:10
expect everyone to love it. But the opposition to this particular proposal was very
31:16
strong, very strident, very aggressive.
31:22
>> Koch Industries has been called the biggest company you never heard of. The sprawling giant includes
31:27
pipelines, petrochemicals, asphalt plants, trading floors. Based in Wichita, Kansas, it
31:34
sells everything from gasoline to beef. >> I would say that virtually no
31:40
one in the early 1990s had ever heard of Koch Industries. >> Koch's core business is

31:45
distribution. It owns 37,000 miles of international pipeline.
31:50
>> They can take the heaviest oil, the dirtiest oil, the hardest to turn into a useful product and refine it.
31:57
And they became the best in the world at doing that. I think it's still probably the second largest privately held
32:03
company in the world. The two brothers who ran Koch Industries were Charles and David Koch.
32:08
They had their sights set on how their they were going to deal with issues that were existential to their industry.
32:14
It's the heart of what they do, so they're going to... they're going to fight and hang on to that till the bitter end.
32:21
>> The Cato Institute was a public policy think tank. It was founded by Charles Koch.
32:26
And Charles was heavily invested, you know, in energy policy discussions back in that time.
32:32
Particularly with the emergence of climate change. The Cato Institute position was that climate change is real
32:39
but the climate change that we're seeing today is far, far more modest than what the
32:45
computer models say we should have seen by now. We need to know a lot more before we should be spending
32:51
trillions of dollars to address them. >> So the Kochs had funding directed at the Cato Institute as a libertarian think tank.
32:58
They also had funding that went to Citizens for a Sound Economy, which was built for a slightly different purpose, which was to
33:03
be a "grassroots mobilizer." >> Coming out of the gate, we
33:09
then get served up with a proposed BTU tax. It was obvious to us at the Cato
33:14
Institute that once that tax is in place, it's going to be very hard to get rid of.
33:19
>> We walked over from Citizens for a Sound Economy over to the American Petroleum Institute.
33:26
And then we met with the entire leadership of A.P.I. And the meeting was all about, let's just knock out the BTU tax
33:32
in its infancy. >> We would be meeting in various locales in Washington
33:38
with over 100 people in the room. It was a real war room situation.
33:43
>> This coalition is one of the fastest-growing and strongest that I've seen.
33:48
We will stop the BTU tax, and I believe substitute spending cuts in its place.
33:55
Thank you very much for coming. ♪ ♪
34:00
>> We were known, and I think we made ourselves known that way, as the oil capital of the world.
34:06
Almost everywhere you'd look had behind it oil industry dollars.
34:12
I thought that the tax was a bad idea for America, but predominantly a bad idea for
34:18
Oklahoma. Oklahoma was not in a good spot at that time at all.
34:23
Oil wells were being shut. That meant a lot of lost jobs, a lot of lost companies. And that this was putting the
34:30
heel of the boot down hard. I got a call from Koch Industries, telling me the
34:36
industry is very concerned about this, but we're worried that this word isn't getting out.
34:42
Our particular goal was to focus on Senator Boren. >> David Boren was a moderate

34:49
Democrat who chaired the relevant committee that would deal with the Clinton budget. >> We were hearing that he
34:56
wanted to be left to do his own revising of it behind closed doors.
35:02
>> They basically said if we can get David Boren to flip, we win. So they said, what... we're
35:07
gonna do whatever it takes. >> We set about what I would call a grasstops and a
35:12
grassroots campaign. The grassroots were encouraged to call Senator Boren and let
35:18
him know that you do not want a tax, after seeing an ad that showed "take shower pay a tax," "start your car pay a tax."
35:25
>> And everybody was given their marching orders out of this playbook. People would stand up behind politicians with signs about no
35:31
BTU tax. There were rallies. >> To the average household in Oklahoma, it's going to be
35:36
roughly about $500 a year. >> My main role was what I would call the grasstops.
35:42
You may be a civic leader, you may be a C.E.O. Often it would be Mr. Koch would
35:47
call them, or myself, and talk them through, "Did you know it does this, this, this and this?"
35:53
Encourage strongly Senator Boren "kill it." >> What they told the public and
35:59
what the policymakers were led to believe was that there was an army of folks who are ready to
36:05
march in the streets. Maybe there were a handful of folks who thought, "Oh, gosh, I should call my senator and
36:10
register my complaint." But they had no such grassroots army. It was funded and fueled
36:16
by the corporate interests. >> CSE says its work isn't done
36:21
yet. It's joined forces with other lobbying groups, stoking the flames of the prairie fire,
36:27
hoping they'll spread and burn the BTU tax for good.
36:32
>> I remember a very late night or early morning phone call. And it was actually Senator
36:38
Boren's communications guy. "We want those ads to stop. And we want the C.E.O.s to quit
36:44
calling us, and in return, Senator Boren's gonna announce his intentions to vote against it."
36:50
>> Our proposal is fairer than that put forward by the administration. That is the BTU tax, which is
36:56
the tax, which is a part of the administration's plan that does hit lower and middle income Americans.
37:02
>> He folded right away. It's like, wow, this can really
37:08
work. We can pick our targets strategically and win, even when
37:13
we're not in political power. >> NARRATOR: At the time, David Boren disputed he
37:19
was influenced by the oil industry, he said, "He was responding to concerns from the American public," and
37:26
"He opposed the tax because it would hurt consumers and busines people."
37:32
>> President Clinton has pulled the plug on his proposed BTU energy tax.
37:38
>> Critics said it would cost jobs and devastate the economy, and there weren't enough votes in the Senate to pass it.
37:43
Besides, who the heck knew what it was? >> This is, after all, a nation addicted to its cars and to the

37:49
idea of driving down the open road. ♪ ♪
37:54
>> It was extremely disappointing to not get the votes. It was just the raw power of
38:01
all the money that they threw into this. But we just decided to regroup
38:06
and try to skin the cat a different way. >> They never proposed another
38:12
energy tax. It was just considered radioactive. >> I think some of the
38:18
leadership of the Koch network were really quite excited that it worked so well. So that's how that playbook
38:24
first began. It was developed right then. What I didn't know at the time was that it would become the
38:29
beginning of something much bigger. And that playbook is still in use today.
38:36
I don't feel embarrassed or regretful. In hindsight, I shouldn't have
38:42
done that. There's no question I shouldn't have done that. But they were my client. I was a contractor.
38:47
I was paid, I'm gonna do my job. And my job was to... was, was to do that. ♪ ♪
38:56
>> NARRATOR: Charles Koch did not respond to questions about the campaign against the BTU tax.
39:01
In 1994, a top Koch executive said, "Our belief is that the
39:07
tax, over time, may have destroyed our business." ♪ ♪
Spreading Climate Change Uncertainty
39:17
(indistinct chatter)
39:25
♪ ♪
39:38
♪ ♪
39:46
>> As more and more scientists are confirming, our world is deficient in carbon dioxide and a doubling of
39:52
atmospheric CO2 is very beneficial. ♪ ♪
39:58
>> I was aware that this emerging industry of naysayers was growing. This effort to cast doubt...
40:09
You had reams of material coming out of the government. They were at NOAA, at NASA, this
40:17
expanding network of people working on this day in and day out saying that this was a
40:23
legitimate issue and that we needed to do something about it. And, on the other hand, you had
40:31
two or three guys who went around to conferences and said, "I'm not sure. Oh, maybe there's clouds?"
40:37
>> I would like to show you the warming that the satellite sensed over the same region from 1979 to now, which is the next
40:44
slide if you could. Thanks. Nothing. >> It quickly became apparent
40:50
that these were private interests, who had a stake in
40:55
the status quo. >> A respectable body of opinion in the international scientific
41:01
community believes that any climate warming is as likely to be beneficial as harmful.
41:08
>> I remember seeing in the press, this skeptic Fred Singer,
41:13

saying that global warming was not a problem for the planet.
41:19
You saw that he had worked on tobacco and a number of other issues. He was sort of a specialist in
41:25
denial. I thought, that's odd. When I brought that up to some my peers in the environmental
41:31
movement, they really didn't think it was that important. But then every time a new piece
41:36
of science comes out, the same story will have somebody you'd never heard of saying, "No,
41:41
that's completely wrong." So you start to think, well, who are these people, and where are they coming from?
41:49
Oh, interesting. They're funded by Exxon's foundation. And then you see this pattern
41:54
repeated over and over and over. It was coming from the coal-fired power utilities,
42:01
Western Fuels Association, the Koch brothers, Global Climate Coalition.
42:06
And they're funding climate deniers. ♪♪
42:13
>> We are not an ad hoc group anymore, but as a matter of fact, the Global Climate Coalition formalized not too
42:20
long ago. >> The Global Climate Coalition consisted of every major
42:26
manufacturing trade association that produced or consumed fossil fuels, and every major
42:32
company that was in the fossil fuels industry. And so it's a considerable
42:37
coalition of business interests. The Global Climate Coalition put out a bid for a contractor
42:45
to provide communication services. I'd left API in the late spring,
42:51
and I had come over to the Harrison firm-- a public relations firm devoted exclusively to environmental
42:57
issues. "Communication Proposal Prepared for the Global Climate Coalition for the E. Bruce
43:03
Harrison Company." I was asked to be a part of the pitch team, because I was well
43:09
known in the petroleum industry. >> Everybody wanted to get the Global Climate Coalition
43:14
account, because it was a coalition of the biggest industries in America.
43:19
I was brought in to handle press relations for the Global Climate Coalition. A lot of reporters were assigned
43:25
to write stories, and they were struggling with the complexity of the issue. So I would write backgrounders,
43:31
so that reporters could read them and get up to speed.
43:36
>> "It is important for GCC to continue to emphasize the scientific uncertainty
43:41
surrounding climate change. Scientists, economists, academics, and other noted
43:47
experts carry greater credibility with the media and general public than industry representatives.
43:53
Communication efforts should be directed toward expanding the platform for third-party spokespersons."
44:00
The idea behind a third party is that you form a relationship with somebody who already has some stature or standing around
44:08
a particular topic, in this case climate change, and you recruit that person, you pay that
44:13
person, to give a speech, or write an op-ed. The Global Climate Coalition would do the background work of
44:20

placing that op-ed or maybe editing it. >> I met some really brilliant
44:25
climatologists and meteorologists. Met Pat Michaels.
44:31
He struck me as someone who was very smart. He loved talking about this issue.
44:38
>> What was your relationship with the GCC, the Global Climate Coalition? >> Oh, God.
44:46
Not much. >> You were on their scientific advisory board?
44:51
>> Yeah. What does that mean? I don't think we ever had a meeting. >> I, I understand you did.
44:57
>> We did? It wasn't much of a relationship at all. I mean, when you, when you bring
45:04
up GCC, it's like, oh wait a minute, who were those guys? >> How does the funding that you
45:11
received from the fossil fuel industry impact what you were able to do workwise and impact
45:17
the views that you took? >> Didn't change what I do, didn't change the way I think. >> How much do you think you did receive from industry?
45:23
>> I don't know. >> Do you feel like in a way you were sort of used by them, um,
45:28
that you were... >> No, I was using them. You got, you got that wrong. What... I mean...
45:36
I'm somewhat verbal, and I like to write, and I have an
45:41
overestimation of my ability, my sense of humor. But can you imagine somebody
45:46
giving you a little bit of money to say, "Write whatever you want every two weeks"?
45:51
We had a blast doing that. ♪ ♪
46:00
We weren't doing what we were told, we were doing what we wanted. ♪ ♪
46:08
>> The Global Climate Coalition is seeding doubt everywhere. Sort of fogging the air with
46:16
these counter arguments that are contradictory, and nonsensical,
46:21
running this propaganda across the country, putting millions of dollars into this media effort.
46:27
And environmentalists really don't know what's hitting them. >> Did it cross your mind or
46:33
give you any kind of late night worries that you were being paid by a group that had a vested
46:40
interest in delaying action, blocking action, creating doubt
46:46
in the minds of the public and policymakers? >> The backgrounders I was writing, the narrative that I
46:53
represented, as the communications lead for the Global Climate Coalition, was not a popular narrative.
46:59
There's no question about that. Was there truth in all the materials?
47:04
Yes, there was. There was a lot we didn't know at the time. And part of my role was to
47:10
highlight what we didn't know. It wasn't just that we, that is the Global Climate Coalition,
47:16
needed to come up with contrarian voices, the media needed them to have balance. >> You want to make an
47:22
assumption that it's a meritocracy. A good argument will prevail, and it will, it will displace a
47:28
bad argument. But what the geniuses of the PR firms who work for these big
47:34

fossil fuel companies know, is that truth has nothing to do with who wins the argument.
47:40
If you say something enough times, people will begin to
47:45
believe it. >> Finally tonight, some new word on the temperature of the
The 1996 IPCC Report & Pushback
47:51
world. Charlayne Hunter-Gault has that story. >> It's warmer than ever, and
47:56
last year set a record. That's what British meteorologists report... >> Saying that 1995 was the
48:02
warmest year since records first were kept in 1856. >> You have ice slowly melting,
48:08
you have sea levels rising, you have places like the Maldives Islands that's only a meter above sea level, that could be
48:14
completely underwater... ♪♪ >> We knew. We knew in '95 that humans were
48:22
affecting the global climate. Back in 1990, the first report
48:27
of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the IPCC, concludes that it's too soon to
48:33
tell definitively whether there is or is not a human-caused global warming signal.
48:39
Five years later, a very, very different finding. People at different institutes,
48:45
using different statistical methods, different models, formally identified a
48:50
human-caused global warming signal. This was a paradigm shift in
48:56
scientific understanding of the reality of human effects on climate.
49:02
I was 40 years old. I had spent one-and-a-half years working as convening lead
49:09
author for chapter eight of the IPCC's second assessment report, "Detection of Climate Change and
49:16
Attribution of Causes." We were in plenary in the
49:23
beautiful Palacio de Congresos de Madrid. Delegates from nearly 100
49:28
countries were all there to discuss the language that was relevant to chapter eight.
49:35
Some of the industry scientists were involved in the process. Haroon Kheshgi from Exxon was
49:41
there from the beginning of our work on chapter eight right through to the end.
49:46
The Global Climate Coalition and the Saudis and Kuwaitis dominated the plenary sessions,
49:52
saying, "If you say something's uncertain, then it can be overturned."
49:57
Which led to all these sometimes heated exchanges.
50:02
Because uncertainty is an irreducible part of climate science.
50:09
The notion that uncertainties mean you can't say anything useful about anything is
50:14
preposterous. There were these extraordinary back and forth discussions, and my job was to implement those
50:21
changes that we had discussed and agreed upon. I think the most critical part
50:28
of the changes after Madrid was the deletion of the concluding summary.
50:34
Chapter eight had a summary up front and a summary at the end. No other chapter had a summary

50:40
at the end. Now the second summary discussed many of the uncertainties, essentially repeating much of the upfront
50:47
summary. Some of the government comments that we received said, "You
50:53
need to delete the second summary," which we did.
50:58
The bottom line finding agreed upon by all countries present in Madrid was 12 words: "The
51:06
balance of evidence suggests a discernible human influence on global climate."
51:14
Madrid was a triumph of the science, the science won. It was a big deal.
51:20
♪♪ >> Hi, I'm Joey Chen. An international panel of scientists agrees we can blame
51:27
ourselves for global warming. >> Madrid, where 2,500 scientists from around the world have finally agreed with one
51:32
another and are convinced that burning oil and coal is causing
51:37
the world's temperature to rise, which may bring with it environmental disaster. >> How do you think this is
51:43
going to affect policy action on this? >> Certainly ammunition for those that would like more government regulation of
51:49
industry. The move away from fossil fuels to other forms of energy. >> In retrospect, those 12 words
51:54
were the handwriting on the wall. ♪ ♪
52:02
What happened next was that the Global Climate Coalition really came onto my radar screen.
52:09
In the spring of 1996, they published this, um...
52:15
(clears throat) report, "The IPCC: Institutionalized
52:21
Scientific Cleansing." They were arguing that I had purged all discussion of
52:27
uncertainty from the document, which was patently untrue. 20% of Chapter 8 was
52:33
specifically devoted to the discussion of uncertainties. "The changes quite clearly have
52:41
the obvious political purpose of cleansing the underlying scientific report of important
52:47
information and scientific analysis that would lead policymakers and the public to
52:53
be very cautious if not skeptical about blaming human activities for climate change
52:59
over the past century." I had grandparents who were
53:07
cleansed because of their religion in the Second World War. People were being cleansed
53:14
because of their religion in Bosnia. And the Global Climate Coalition, through this odious
53:20
"scientific cleansing" was arguing that I was guilty of a crime.
53:25
"These revisions raised very serious questions about whether the IPCC has compromised or even
53:33
lost its scientific integrity."
53:39
>> Um... I certainly had probably a role in the creation
53:44
of this-- there's a, there's a level of detail here, I just, I don't remember. But what I do, I do remember the
53:49
gist of this. Um, where things were said at one part in the process, and

53:55
then they disappeared at the next, and that struck me as troubling.
54:01
And so I noted that to the folks in the Coalition. >> This stuff caught on like
54:07
wildfire. Patrick Michaels devoted substantial time to amplifying
54:14
the Global Climate Coalition's allegations. Others picked up that report,
54:19
and repeated bits of it verbatim. Things became worse when
54:25
Professor Frederick Seitz wrote an op-ed in the "Wall Street Journal." I was accused of the worst
54:32
abuse of the peer reviewed system that Professor Seitz had seen in his 60 years as a
54:37
scientist. Folks were calling for my dismissal with dishonor from my position.
54:43
A gentleman intimated that I was about to be indicted by the Hague International Court of Justice for "falsification of
54:49
international scientific documents."
54:56
>> That document set in motion a number of public attacks on the
55:04
lead scientist, the lead author of that chapter. >> Oh. >> He was particularly shaken
55:09
by the accusation that he was guilty of scientific cleansing, he found, why... >> Yeah, that, that wouldn't
55:14
have been terminology, by the way, that I would have used. How this was used, and what
55:19
others did with it was outside of my control and purview. And it troubles me to hear that
55:26
this had such an impact on an individual. That's not something I would want to do to anybody.
55:35
>> This attack on individuals, on their integrity, decency, honesty, involved high personal
55:42
cost. And the Global Climate Coalition knew what they were doing.
55:47
Sow those seeds of doubt, and watch them grow and mature. And they did.
55:57
>> Clearly, one of the GCC's main missions was to blunt the scientific urgency driven by
56:03
scientific reports. Simultaneously, there's an assessment done written by a
56:11
Mobil scientist within the GCC. So it says, you know, "Can human
56:16
activities affect the climate?" And the answer is "The scientific basis for the greenhouse effect and the
56:22
potential impact of human emissions of greenhouse gases such as CO2 on the climate is well-established and cannot be
56:28
denied." What's really interesting about this document is the back
56:33
six pages, and this is just a draft, this was never published as far as we know.
56:39
"Several arguments have been put forward attempting to challenge the conventional view of greenhouse gas-induced climate
56:44
change." Patrick Michaels, named as one of the people putting forward
56:50
these arguments, and concludes, "They do not offer convincing arguments against the
56:55
conventional model of greenhouse gas emission-induced climate change." So don't use their, don't use
57:01
their voice! >> The science was growing more certain, and Exxon's own

57:07
scientists were working with scientists in academia to discern the, the human
57:13
fingerprint on a changing climate. I am looking at an article
57:18
written by Lee Raymond, who was chairman of Exxon Corporation, and it looks like this is from
57:24
the mid 1990s. "Global Warming: Who's Right? Facts About a Debate That's Turned Up More Questions Than
57:30
Answers." Lee Raymond was certainly the person with the greatest stature in the oil industry to push for
57:37
this narrative, that the science around climate change was uncertain, and therefore we shouldn't act precipitously to
57:44
address it. >> What's the date of this, my
57:49
God, is this '82? No, this says 1996!
57:56
(stammering) (chuckling) I am just
58:01
flabbergasted by this. "The unproven theory...
58:09
(laughs) This policy, if implemented, has ominous economic implications,
58:14
yet scientific evidence remains inconclusive as to whether human activities affect global
58:20
climate." It's just total baloney. This person should never be the
58:26
CEO of an energy company. I think it's outrageous that he
58:34
would say such a thing because he has a world-class climate and
58:40
carbon cycle research group in his own laboratory, in Exxon Research and Engineering.
58:46
He could pick up the phone and ask one of the people in that group if that statement is true,
58:52
and they would tell him that it isn't. He's using something which is a lie to justify a policy which
59:01
is bad for the world. And I would have to say that on an ethical basis, it's, it's
59:08
actually evil. I think he should be ashamed of himself.
59:13
And I think he should apologize to the world for saying that.
59:19
>> NARRATOR: Lee Raymond did not respond to interview requests. In its statement to us,
59:25
ExxonMobil insisted that its "public statements about climate change are, and have always
59:31
been, truthful, fact-based, transparent, and consistent with the contemporary understanding
59:37
of mainstream climate science." Until his retirement in 2005,
59:44
Lee Raymond continued to publicly question the science of climate change.
59:49
>> There is a natural variability that has nothing to do with man. >> What would that be?
59:55
>> The climate has changed every year for millions of years.
1:00:00
Now, the question is, is part of what's happening related to something other than natural
1:00:06
variability? And if so, how do you determine what that is?
1:00:14
And the reality is, the science isn't there to make that determination.

The Kyoto Protocol in the U.S.
1:00:20
♪ ♪
1:00:32
>> Two weeks from now, this issue of global climate change
1:00:37
will be discussed by more than 120 different countries in
1:00:43
Berlin. This administration will be at the forefront of this global
1:00:49
effort. (applause) I wanted the United States of America...
1:00:55
to lead the world community, to agree on a set of global
1:01:01
initiatives and policies. The United States is committed to reaching 1990 levels of
1:01:06
greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2000. Let us make sure that our next
1:01:12
steps are the right ones. Thank you very much. (cheers and applause) Thank you.
1:01:19
>> We said that the United States was prepared to engage in targets and timetables.
1:01:25
I mean that was obviously a massive threshold for us to cross.
1:01:31
>> I declare open the first session of the Conference of
1:01:37
the Parties. The Convention is coming of age. >> The question was, who goes
1:01:44
first? >> It was in no way possible to get a global treaty with a
1:01:50
proposal that the poorest countries in the world would have to take the same obligations that the wealthy
1:01:56
countries were undertaking. >> And the idea was, those who developed the most, and had
1:02:03
contributed historically the most to the problem, should step up to the plate first in
1:02:08
the effort to reduce emissions. >> I should bang the hammer now. (bangs gavel) >> That was the formula that the
1:02:15
world agreed was the only way to make progress toward a truly global agreement.
1:02:20
>> At a follow-up in Kyoto, Japan, in December, negotiators hope to agree on binding limits.
1:02:26
>> The negotiators did agree they would exempt developing countries from the caps negotiated in Kyoto.
1:02:33
>> But the fossil fuel companies took that feature of the agreement and made that a bete
1:02:39
noire, they made that a politically salient issue, that they used to great effect.
1:02:47
♪ ♪ >> This is a plan from the PR firm E. Bruce Harrison after
1:02:54
Berlin prepared for the GCC board. This is the strategy of the
1:03:01
grand fog. "Third party recruitment and op-ed placement efforts will continue, although with a new
1:03:07
emphasis on economists." So the strategy is evolving.
1:03:13
(loud click echoing) ♪ ♪
1:03:19
>> In 1996, I finished up grad school and accepted a job at
1:03:26
Charles River Associates. We were doing work for the American Petroleum Institute.
1:03:31

So they had a particular point of view. If the U.S. goes ahead and
1:03:36
reduces its emissions, and countries like China and India don't do anything, the U.S. puts
1:03:42
itself at a competitive disadvantage. To try and put numbers on what
1:03:48
those damages would do, how much they were hurt, I think is important, right? We wrote a couple of papers
1:03:54
on our findings. I had general surprise of how much attention it got.
1:04:00
It was finding its way into the air waves. >> Our president must decide if
1:04:05
he'll sign a U.N. climate treaty that could increase the cost of gasoline by 50 cents a gallon
1:04:10
and raise electricity and natural gas prices by 25 to 50 percent.
1:04:16
Meanwhile, countries like China, India, and Mexico, are exempt. >> We pay the price and they're
1:04:21
exempt? >> It's not global and it won't work. >> There's a great pressure that
1:04:28
came from the clients to talk about jobs. We tried to tell clients, we
1:04:33
really can't measure jobs accurately. But, you know, you have to get
1:04:38
paid at the, at the end of the day so, you know, we ended up doing the best we could talking
1:04:45
about jobs. But you don't really, you don't really know.
1:04:50
>> The first people that will lose their jobs are the American coal miner. >> It would cost probably five,
1:04:57
six, 700,000 jobs a year. >> That would hurt the U.S. automobile industry and would hurt the U.S. economy.
1:05:02
>> Every independent, and I say every independent economic study, has come to the same
1:05:08
conclusion that the impact is negative, and it's going to cost jobs.
1:05:13
♪♪ >> Although the studies themselves acknowledge their funding from the industry, that
1:05:20
funding is often not acknowledged when the results are presented to the public
1:05:26
through advertorials that oil companies would take out in big venues like the "New York
1:05:32
Times," without saying that the industry had paid for the study, or what the limitations of the
1:05:38
studies were. So it gave an impression that there were independent
1:05:45
economists coming to this conclusion, when in reality they were hired by the fossil
1:05:50
fuel industry. The analysis completely ignored the benefits of taking action
1:05:55
about climate change. >> NARRATOR: Neither the A.P.I.
1:06:01
nor Charles River Associates responded to requests about their work together.
1:06:08
>> I had misgivings about just telling half the story, right? You know, what do we get if we
1:06:14
reduce emissions? We get less damage from climate change, right? And we're not putting that in
1:06:21
there. Yeah, I wish I weren't a part of that, looking back, I wish I
1:06:27
weren't a part of delaying action. You know, clearly on the wrong side of, of history.
1:06:37

(objects clattering) (wind whipping)
1:06:45
>> 18 weather and climate-related disasters, with a damage total of more than $1
1:06:51
billion each. >> Global damages estimated at around $280 billion.
1:06:58
>> These natural disasters could push the nation's infrastructure to the brink.
1:07:09
♪♪
1:07:14
>> Please welcome our chairman, Lee Raymond. Lee? (applause)
1:07:22
>> Right now, a United Nations effort is moving toward a decision in 1997 to cut the use
1:07:31
of fossil fuels, based on the unproved theory that they affect the Earth's climate.
1:07:37
If implemented, such a policy could inflict severe economic damage, so it's critical that
1:07:44
we in the industry provide a voice of common sense on this important issue.
1:07:51
It means cooperating more closely with other associations within our industry.
1:07:56
And it extends to the circle of logical allies outside our industry that stand with us on
1:08:02
any given issue. One example is our close cooperation with the automobile
1:08:08
industry. Recently, they have become engaged in the global climate issue and are active, aggressive
1:08:15
allies. If we all work toward the same goal, I believe we can change
1:08:21
the perceptions of the American people about energy.
1:08:28
>> It's a call to arms. He's trying to rally the oil industry to speak as one to
1:08:35
oppose climate change action, to fight, basically, the run up to the Kyoto Protocol.
1:08:40
♪♪ This is when it really ramps up. We know Exxon has been funding a
1:08:46
bunch of right-wing and libertarian conservative think tanks. Suddenly, in '97, the sums in
1:08:51
those grants goes way up. They know this is the big fight. >> In the run up to Kyoto,
1:08:58
you're seeing these ad campaigns, the denial ad campaigns, you're seeing TV ads, you seeing print ads, there's
1:09:04
op-eds. >> Millions and millions of dollars worth of advertising. "Why is the U.S. being obliged
1:09:10
to do more than everyone else?" >> "It's not global, and it won't work." And everybody sung from the same
1:09:16
song sheet. >> The administration had just completely misread the political situation.
1:09:22
There was no way in heck that the American public was going to
1:09:27
accept regulating greenhouse gases in a fashion which would disadvantage American industry.
1:09:34
That's an easy argument to make politically, you can make that in your sleep.
1:09:39
>> The biggest loser in all of this will be science.
1:09:44
And I'm here to defend science. >> And then, the Senate issues
1:09:51
this Byrd Hagel Resolution, which passes 95 to zero.
1:09:57

>> S. Res 98 puts the administration on notice that an overwhelming and bipartisan
1:10:03
majority of the United States Senate rejects its current negotiating position on a
1:10:08
proposed new global climate treaty. >> For me, it was, it was
1:10:13
a big deal. As a freshman senator it was my first year in the Senate, with
1:10:18
Bob Byrd. >> Any effort to avoid the effects of global climate change
1:10:24
will be doomed to failure from the start, without the participation of the developing
1:10:30
world. >> This treaty would be a lead weight on our nation's future economic growth, killing jobs
1:10:36
and opportunities for generations of Americans to come. Byrd-Hagel got 95 votes.
1:10:42
95 senators. Nobody voted against it. >> Even using conservative assumptions, Charles River
1:10:49
Associates, a leading economic modeling firm, for example, has estimated that holding emissions
1:10:54
at 1990 levels would reduce economic growth by 1% a year, rising to 3%... (interview): I was not going to
1:11:00
support a treaty that would affect our economy, everything else, when we didn't have the
1:11:06
absolute scientific evidence, first of all, to prove it, and
1:11:11
second, and maybe even more important, let all these other countries off.
1:11:16
If anything has become clear during congressional hearings on this issue, it is that the science is unclear.
1:11:24
It's that the scientific community has not even come close to definitively
1:11:29
concluding that we have a problem. I'm not a scientist. I'm not a climatologist.
1:11:35
I listened to a lot of people. I asked for a lot of opinions.
1:11:40
I had scientists coming in, I had other people come in.
1:11:46
>> We unearthed documents that show a series of meetings and briefings...
1:11:56
>> Oh, wow. It's quite amazing, here's a memo from the American Petroleum Institute.
1:12:02
They're putting on a luncheon. They're hosting Senator Hagel, and they're going to brief him. "Scientists do not have a
1:12:08
precise understanding of this issue." Doubt, doubt. Meeting with Senator Hagel and the Ford Motor Company.
1:12:14
This is the American Automobile Manufacturers Association. The Aluminum Association, Chemical Manufacturers
1:12:20
Association. You know, I'm emphasizing Senator Hagel. But this is happening all
1:12:25
throughout the Senate. 95 senators voted this certain way.
1:12:32
But if you pull that lens back, you're gonna see they're working politicians with the most
1:12:37
sophisticated legislative campaigns. >> What were they saying to you in those meetings?
1:12:43
And did you learn anything that did help to shape your views? >> Well, they made their case,
1:12:48
they made their point. So you listen to them like you would anybody. I wasn't surprised by anything I
1:12:53
heard. ♪♪ >> You met Lee Raymond, the chairman and CEO of Exxon.
1:13:00

What kind of relationship did you have with him? >> Well, Lee Raymond was a South Dakota boy, I remember that.
1:13:07
Um, I didn't have a close relationship with him. I, um, but I listened to him.
1:13:12
He's head of the largest oil company in the country. I listened to everybody's
1:13:17
opinions. >> So this is a page from a briefing document.
1:13:24
And it's, the title is, "The Dilemma for Congress." "Draft resolution is attached
1:13:30
for your consideration." >> So the American Automobile Manufacturers Association is
1:13:37
putting forth, on behalf, I think, of the Global Climate Coalition, the draft resolution
1:13:42
for the Senate to pre-emptively kill the Kyoto Protocol.
1:13:48
>> You mean the Byrd-Hagel Resolution? They didn't draft that.
1:13:54
We had many people coming forward with written examples,
1:14:00
"Why don't you do this?" That's not unusual at all, because our staffs work with
1:14:06
them and so on. But that, that resolution wasn't an A.M.A. resolution, that resolution was decided by us,
1:14:14
by the senators. >> Vice President Al Gore is on his way to Kyoto, Japan, to
1:14:21
attend the global warming summit. Now the goal of the conference is an international treaty to protect the environment, but so
1:14:27
far, it's been hard to find anything the diplomats can agree on. >> I think Byrd-Hagel really
1:14:32
destroyed any hope of getting something done in Kyoto. There was no argument by the
1:14:38
administration against the Byrd-Hagel Resolution. The Clinton administration certainly didn't want to go
1:14:45
into open war. >> To those who seek to obfuscate and obstruct, we say
1:14:52
we will not allow you to put narrow special interests above
1:14:57
the interests of all humankind. ...of both substance and of spirit. (man shouting indistinctly)
1:15:03
>> ...democracy on earth! Corporate American leadership will not save the world!
1:15:11
>> It was just an unbelievable mess.
1:15:16
He did broker a deal, and got as much out of Kyoto as he could have, but we were not gonna get
1:15:21
steep cuts in CO2 emissions out of a global agreement with all the industry fighting against
1:15:26
them. >> Delegates from the U.S. and 149 other countries have
1:15:32
approved the treaty known as the Kyoto Protocol. President Clinton is praising the agreement, but he may have
1:15:38
trouble getting it ratified. >> The Clinton administration never even put the Kyoto Protocol up for a vote in the Senate.
1:15:44
It was D.O.A., and I think they understood that within a week of return from Kyoto.
1:15:50
>> I feel that at the end of the day, the Clinton-Gore administration was not able to
1:15:55
deliver on the lofty promise of American leadership. The door closed for the next ten
1:16:03
years. So it was a significant missed opportunity.
1:16:11

>> When I became part of that world we thought the
1:16:16
odds were pretty long against us, we did not expect to prevail in the climate debate.
1:16:22
...against a problem that most scientists don't say exists. By the end of the decade, however, the climate skeptics and denialists were in a
1:16:28
position of strength. Now, they had pretty much run the table. In every decisive fight, we had
1:16:35
won. >> They won the battle, I was intent that they would not win
1:16:41
the war. It became clear to me at that point that it was going to be a
1:16:46
longer war. >> NARRATOR: We approached multiple members of the industry
1:16:52
coalition that campaigned against Kyoto. None would sit for an interview. For its part, ExxonMobil has
1:16:59
stated publicly that, "We recognize that our past participation in industry
1:17:04
coalitions to oppose ineffective climate policies subjects us to criticism by climate activist
1:17:11
groups." And that "the Kyoto Protocol was unrealistic and economically
1:17:17
damaging."
“Code Red for Humanity”
1:17:23
(water rushing, man shouting)
1:17:34
♪♪
1:17:44
♪♪ >> It is unequivocal that human activities are responsible for
1:17:49
climate change, that's the finding of a new study by the U.N.'s intergovernmental panel
1:17:55
on climate change. >> A dire warning and a stark reality.
1:18:00
The head of the U.N. referred to this as code red for humanity. >> Global temperatures are the
1:18:06
hottest in 100,000 years, and many effects of climate change are already irreversible.
1:18:12
>> If we want to avoid catastrophe, we have to drastically cut emissions-- now.
1:18:20
>> We now know that Exxon was making a concerted effort through the 1990s to cast doubt
1:18:26
on the science. Do you feel that you were misled?
1:18:31
>> Well, what we now know about some of these large oil companies' positions...
1:18:38
they lied. And yes, I was misled. Others were misled.
1:18:44
When they had evidence in their own institutions that countered
1:18:50
what they were saying publicly, I mean, they lied. >> If they had said that, if
1:18:56
they held their hands up there and said, "Yes, this is real," could it have been different?
1:19:02
>> Oh, absolutely. It would have changed everything, I would have... I think it would have changed the average citizen's appreciation
1:19:07
of climate change. And, and mine, of course.
1:19:14
It would have put the United States and the world on a whole different track.
1:19:19
And today we would have been so much further ahead than we are.

1:19:25
It cost this country, and it cost the world.
1:19:31
>> NARRATOR: ExxonMobil continues to defend its record on climate change.
1:19:37
>> My name is Darren Woods. I'm the chairman and chief executive officer of ExxonMobil Corporation.
1:19:43
ExxonMobil has long recognized that climate change is real and poses serious risks.
1:19:50
But there are no easy answers. Our position in this space has been consistent with the general
1:19:56
consensus in the scientific community. ♪ ♪
1:20:08
(turn signal clicking)
1:20:16
>> I am 83 years old. Three or four decades ago, we predicted it.
1:20:24
As a scientist, to have those predictions come true, that's sort of the golden icon that
1:20:29
you look for. However, as a human being, and
1:20:35
as an inhabitant of planet Earth, I'm horrified to watch
1:20:43
the lack of response to this.
1:20:49
I am trying as much as possible to distance myself emotionally.
1:20:58
>> So you're angry. >> (chuckles) Yes, I'm furious.
1:21:04
♪ ♪ >> It's heartbreaking to me. I saw all of that potential
1:21:11
there, at least at that point in time, to really solve the problem in many different ways.
1:21:18
Had Exxon chosen to pick up the ball then and begin to lead, the discussions would have been
1:21:23
about how to do it. We had solar scientists doing
1:21:28
research. We had lithium battery chemists doing research. Think of how important these sciences are to the world
1:21:33
currently. Parts of the world are going to suffer enormously, unnecessarily so.
1:21:40
And for something that we could have done something about.
1:21:48
Not doing anything for decades, that, that's just... it's just
1:21:53
squandered time, and we're going to pay for it.
1:22:02
>> NARRATOR: Next time... >> The plan says, “Victory will be achieved when recognition of uncertainties becomes part of the conventional
1:22:08
wisdom.” >> NARRATOR: The fossil fuel industry continues its fight... >> Emphasizing doubt is a
1:22:14
critically important speed bump to ambitious policy. >> I don't think this is
1:22:19
happening. >> Lee Raymond is salient because he's hammering away the idea of scientific uncertainty
1:22:25
even as the science grew more certain. >> NARRATOR: And the political struggles for the future of the
1:22:30
planet... >> We do not know how fast change will occur... >> There just was no appetite, economically, politically to go
1:22:36
forward with a cap on carbon. >> My brother Charles and I provided the funds to start the Americans for Prosperity.
1:22:42
>> Our job was to fight back against the progressive agenda. >> This was the end of climate

1:22:48
legislation in the US Congress for a long time. We had a shot at it. And we got beat.
Credits
1:23:19
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