



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on February 2, 2026

America's Vaunted "Experts": Often Wrong but Never in Doubt?

In our time we've traded wise men for experts — Confucius for the credentialed, Aquinas for academicians, Democritus for the degreed. Consequently, we don't make our ancestors' bush-league mistakes, such as the Romans using lead pipes, drilling holes in people's heads to treat mental derangement, or selling radium-laced candy and water.

We make different bush-league mistakes. In fact, says Rob Long, pondering all the recent decades' blunders, "you might start to wonder if anyone knows anything."



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"Here's what I mean," [explains](#) Long, a television writer and producer opining at the *Washington Examiner*:

COVID masks, mortgage-backed securities, weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, carbs, red wine, voter turnout, lard, phonics, and Pluto. (Among others.) Smart people — and I knew some of the folks who were involved in the home finance catastrophe of 2007, and let me assure you that they were smart — seem to be making a lot of costly and dangerous mistakes. It often seems like we're living through an Age of Blunder.

Here's a noncontroversial example from history: say what you like about the brutal Stalinist regime of the (thankfully late) German Democratic Republic, but they were pretty good about spying on their own citizens. ... They knew everything there was to know about the German Democratic Republic except that it was about to collapse. Which was the one thing they really needed to know. Talk about the Age of Blunder!

How Expert Are They?

After providing a few more examples, Long discussed the recent blizzard that struck New York and elsewhere. He said that he and some friends were discussing beforehand whether it would materialize. "Experts," ya know? But they were right on this occasion, he stated.

Short-term weather, however, can be predicted with decent accuracy. But on a related note, there's the following.

A generation ago, in 2000, climate scientist Dr. David Viner [stated](#) that within just a handful of years, snowfall will be "a very rare and exciting event. Children just aren't going to know what snow is."

Now, Viner was talking about Great Britain — which was hit by a ["devastating snowstorm"](#) just last year. But then there's the reality here in the Colonies. Only a week ago, parts of my southern N.Y. county got buried under 17 inches of global warming.



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Oh, and if you think nothing could be finer than poking fun at Viner, know that he's hardly alone. The late Professor Walter E. Williams illustrated this beautifully in his 2017 [piece](#) "Environmentalists' Wild Predictions."

Wild Determinations

Some recent stories illustrate expert folly, too. A sampling:

- Virtually all of us have mentioned the world's population with authority at some point. It's 8.3 billion, right? Not so fast. A [recent study](#) found that we may have *billions* more people than previously thought. Billions — with a "b." Or, so some experts say.
- In a shocking story out of Canada, a woman in her 80s was [euthanized against her will](#). A couple of experts ("assessors") denied the euthanization request, as the woman had changed her mind. But a third expert rubber stamped it. Now that she has been killed, other experts are evaluating the decision.
- Experts at the U.K.'s Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs [have drawn up](#) a plan to make the British countryside "less white." The experts claim that without diversity, "the countryside would become 'irrelevant' in a multicultural society." Unasked: Who ever said it wanted to be?

Now, some may wonder if we're going down the Khmer Rouge road here, where you kill (metaphorically) the intellectual class. None of this, however, is to say that experts are bad in principle. But deferring to them unthinkingly surely is.

Some Experts Are More Equal Than Others

Let's gain some perspective. When hearing "Follow the experts," the response should be, "Which experts?" (or, if "Follow the science," "Which scientists?") For example, all the Supreme Court justices are considered judicial experts. Yet on a good number of cases, they're divided as close to 50-50 as possible (i.e., 5-4).

Will the real experts please stand up?

This is the reality, too, with every or virtually every controversial issue (hence the controversy). There will be experts on either side — and that's assuming there are just two sides. So what's the answer? Rely on consensus?

This *may* at times be one's only recourse, but it's no guarantor of inerrancy. Just consider Ignaz Semmelweis and puerperal fever, Dr. Joseph Goldberger and pellagra, Alfred Wegener and continental-drift theory, and Louis Pasteur and germ theory. In all these cases and others, the consensus was all wrong. It also often persecuted those who had the good fortune (and misfortune) of being right 50 years too soon.

So not all experts are very expert. Yet even the great ones can err. Just consider Lord William Thomson Kelvin, who determined absolute zero's correct value. Absolute temperatures are thus expressed in "Kelvin" units, which makes his place in history secure. Yet he also at one time stated, "X-rays will prove to be a hoax," [wrote](#) the aforementioned Walter Williams. Kelvin further predicted, "I can state flatly that heavier-than-air flying machines are impossible."

Then there's Sir Isaac Newton, one of history's most famed and influential scientists. Little known "is that Newton spent most of his waking hours on alchemy," Williams additionally informs. Those



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“experiments included trying to turn lead into gold” and are “not fit to be printed.”

Separating Fact From Fiction

So how can we possibly know what expert advice is valid? Well, when assessing information, consider some factors:

- Politicization — when experts [work for government or rely on its grants](#), they’ll often generate politically desired results to keep their state patrons happy. Dishonesty, [such as Dr. Anthony Fauci](#) “moving the goalposts” on Covid (which he admitted to), can be the result.
- Related to this, realize that [a good percentage of experts’ research is actually fraudulent](#); be on guard for it. Know, too, that media are more likely to report fringe than valid science. It’s the “man bites dog” story.
- Follow the money — novelist Upton Sinclair once observed, “It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his not understanding it.” “Experts” are no exception. Just consider the “transgenderism” specialists who’d give youths sexual-distortion treatments. You’re much less likely to acknowledge the sexual binary’s existence when embracing a “gender spectrum” makes you millions.
- Ideological bias — experts can have political passions just like anyone else. So if, for example, a researcher is an ardent feminist, it’s probable that this will color her “findings.”
- Spirit of the age — if expert claims align too conveniently with political/cultural fashions (e.g., wokeness today), be suspicious. They may amount to pandering, not perspicacity.
- Confirmation bias — be aware that, being human, you’ll likely want to seek out information that confirms your existing beliefs. Seek Truth, even when it hurts, not affirmation.

And a closing thought on experts: While learning is important, it’s no substitute for wisdom. Take an unwise person, give him much schooling and numerous letters after his name, and what have you got?

An over-educated unwise person — with enough credentials to lead lemmings off a cliff.



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