



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on March 6, 2012

Ethical Meltdown: Global Warming Alarmists Defend Peter Gleick's Theft, Fraud

The scandal known as "Fakegate," perpetrated by prominent global warming activist/scientist Peter Gleick (left), continues to reverberate. Gleick has taken a leave of absence from his position as president of the Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment, and Security, and the Institute's board has announced that it is conducting an investigation of the Fakegate affair. While some of Gleick's climate activist confreres have decried his unethical actions and have bemoaned the fact that it is already further undermining public confidence in the claims of global warming alarmists, others are cheering and applauding Gleick's actions as justified and heroic.



Dr. Gleick has admitted that he impersonated a board member of the Heartland Institute in a series of emails to obtain confidential documents, a criminal practice known as "phishing." Gleick, apparently, had hoped to obtain funding documents that he could use to discredit Heartland and scare off its donors by showing that it was simply shilling for Big Oil and Big Coal and other "dirty" corporate interests. Heartland, a free-market think tank, has been a major headache for the climate alarmists because it has published authoritative rebuttals by prominent scientists to the UN's IPCC reports and has sponsored international conferences of scientists that demolished the IPCC/Al Gore claim that the scientific world had reached a "consensus" on anthropogenic (human-caused) global warming (AGW). Heartland writers and affiliated scientists have also effectively exploited the 2009 email scandal known as [Climategate](#) and the 2011 email scandal known as [Climategate 2.0](#) which have exposed many of the leading lights of global warming "science" for being engaged in devious, dishonorable, and even criminal activities.

Gleick and the multi-billion-dollar AGW alarmist industrial complex desperately needed a scandal to pin on climate skeptics, and especially Heartland, to draw attention away from their own series of scandals that have been dramatically undermining public support for the alarmists' proposals for radical restructuring of global society. However, the documents Gleick obtained from Heartland contained no smoking gun, so Gleick, or one of his over-zealous AGW alarmist confederates, had to spice things up by concocting a fake document entitled, "Confidential Memo: 2012 Heartland Climate Strategy," which Gleick then mixed in with the purloined Heartland documents and sent off to blog sites of fellow activists.

On March 2, David Ross [posted](#) an article on Anthony Watts' science blog site, Watts Up With That (WUWT), which methodically goes through the timeline and the digital forensics to argue persuasively that Peter Gleick is the most likely suspect as the fabricator of the fake document.

For now, Gleick is not admitting to having created the fake, admitting only to the illegal phishing



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expedition; he is claiming that he received the forged document from an anonymous source.

However, even if Gleick is shown conclusively to have been the forger, or if he publicly admits to it, there are certain to be many of his fellow activists who will continue to defend, cheer, and applaud him. The fallout thus far over Fakegate has already produced an amazing display of ethical contortionism by many leading AGW alarmists. As we reported last week ([“Peter Gleick Lied, But ...” — Global-warming Alarmists Justify His Crime, Deception](#)), James Garvey of the British *Guardian* newspaper suggested Gleick’s lying and cheating was “justified by the wider good.” In fact, said Garvey, “perhaps more climate scientists should play dirty.” Since Gleick and Garvey are motivated by a noble end — supposedly to save the planet — then any means are justified, he seems to say.

Mr. Garvey is not just your run-of-the-mill activist; besides writing for the very influential *Guardian*, he also is secretary of Britain’s Royal Institute of Philosophy and the author of a book entitled, *The Ethics of Climate Change*. Yes, Mr. Garvey is some sort of “ethicist.” But, then, so is Peter Gleick. Yes, Dr. Gleick also purports to be an ethicist. He strikes a high moral pose in his January 19, 2011 Huffington Post sermon, [“A Brief Lesson in the Integrity of Science: Climate Scientists Challenge Bad Science, No Matter the Source.”](#)

Gleick similarly seizes the moral high ground in his 2007 testimony before a U.S. Senate Committee on “Climate Change Research and Scientific Integrity: Threats to the Integrity of Science.”

Climatologist Judith Curry, Professor and Chair of the School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at the Georgia Institute of Technology and President (co-owner) of Climate Forecast Applications Network (CFAN), has provided links [here](#) at her climate blog site to other essays on integrity and ethics by Dr. Gleick.

Dr. Curry has established a reputation as a genuine scientist who puts truth ahead of ideology. Although a moderate AGW believer herself, she has departed from the path of many of her colleagues who vilify as “deniers” all who question the IPCC “consensus.” She has also been publicly critical of the vehement rhetoric and unethical tactics of her AGW alarmist colleagues. This has earned her a few heretical brickbats herself from the most virulent AGW true believers. Curry writes: “Gleick’s ‘integrity’ seems to have nothing to do with scientific integrity, but rather loyalty to and consistency with what I have called the UNFCCC/IPCC ideology.”

But Gleick’s ideology, apparently, qualified for the type of ‘integrity’ sought by some very influential folks. He was, for example, recipient of the prestigious MacArthur Foundation “Genius” fellowship. He was elected to the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), which has become one of the captive institutions of the AGW ideologists. He was also made the launch Chairman of the new Task Force on Scientific Ethics and Integrity of the American Geophysical Union (AGU), another scientific institution that has become so corrupted by rigid AGW ideology that some very prominent scientists have [resigned](#) in protest. Gleick was also set to become a board member of the National Center for Science Education, which has been scotched by Fakegate.

But to AGW “true believers” Gleick is a martyr to a higher cause. Here are some of Gleick’s defenders:

R.P. Siegel, President of Rain Mountain LLC:

Sure Gleick may have lied to Heartland, but unlike them, he did not lie to the public about the most serious crisis to ever confront mankind. Yes, Gleick lost his patience when confronted with the enormity of the opposition that the scientific community now faces in its efforts to reach the scientifically unsophisticated American public with what is admittedly a complex and somewhat



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abstract message. The revelation that Heartland would now be using their millions in fossil fuel donations to target schoolchildren with their latest misinformation campaign was likely what pushed him over the edge.

[J. Henry Fair](#) at the Huffington Post:

Peter Gleick is a hero, and a man of gumption. It's amusingly ironic that he is being lambasted for using a slight deception to obtain documents from one of the foisters of the grand deception of our day — the denial of climate change.... Gleick is a hero, and has no need to apologize. We as a society need to wake up and do something about this while there is still time.

[Tyler Hamilton](#), The Energy Collective:

I'm sympathetic to climate scientists who have been the subject of well-organized, targeted smear campaigns, and I understand why one would resort — out of frustration and desperation — to some of the same dirty tactics in an effort, however misguided it may have been, to get the truth out to the public. A lie to one is worth it if it brings truth to all.

[Susan Strong](#), founder and executive director of the Metaphor Project:

The first, of course, is Peter Gleick's great personal sacrifice — his desperate gamble taken to expose the Heartland Institute's planned assault on climate science in our schools, funded by the Kochs and other fossil fuel interests.

Michael Hiltzik, *Los Angeles Times* columnist:

Gleick has thrown himself at the mercy of the court of public opinion — he explained his action partially by his frustration with "often anonymous, well-funded, and coordinated" attacks on climate science and scientists and has stepped down, at least temporarily, from the Pacific Institute. But it's Heartland, which has tagged Gleick with the epithets above, that should be answering for its nearly three-decade history of corporate shilldom.

[Scott Mandia](#), a scientist and co-founder of the Climate Science Rapid Response Team:

Gleick merely "used the same tricks that any investigative reporter uses to uncover the truth."

[The Columbia Journalism Review](#), in a piece entitled "Heartland, Gleick and Media Law," attempted to provide an indictment of Heartland disguised as a balanced debate over the question "When, if ever, are deceptive tactics legally or ethically permissible in journalism?"

Canadian author/photographer/climateblogger Donna Laframboise offers more examples of apologetics for Gleick in her post, ["Where Do Gleick's Apologists Draw the Line?"](#)

If Peter Gleick's actions have damaged the credibility of the AGW establishment — and they have — Gleick's defenders and apologists are doing even more harm by justifying the depths to which many of the climate change activists will sink to press their agenda.



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