

RALPH NADER RADIO HOUR EP 399 TRANSCRIPT

Steve Skrovan: Welcome to the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*. My name is Steve Skrovan along with my co-host, David Feldman. Hello, David.

David Feldman: Hello, Steve.

Steve Skrovan: Good to have you here. And it's also good to have the man of the hour, Ralph Nader. And Ralph, you wanted to open the show by making a couple of statements, observations. What do you got for us?

Ralph Nader: Yes, indeed. Yes, indeed. And we're gonna have a great show with the Climate Museum and its founder, Miranda Massie, and maybe develop a joint project with the Tort Museum [American Museum of Tort Law]. Both of them were founded in the same year, 2015. But first of all, I just wanna say that I just got the first copy off the press of the book by Christopher Shaw on our US Postal Service. It's called *First Class: The U.S. Postal Service, Democracy, and the Corporate Threat*. I wrote the foreword to it. And if you want to get an early copy, listeners, and do your bit to turn the postal service around and get it out of the clutches of the Postmaster General, [Donald] Trump's appointee, Mr. [Louis] DeJoy, you can do that by going to City Lights Books. That's a great independent bookstore in San Francisco; it's almost legendary. And you can go to citylights.com and get this book right away called *First Class: The U.S. Postal Service, Democracy, and the Corporate Threat*. [You] might get a copy and give it to your local postmaster too.

And the second observation I wanna make is one of our listeners, Mark Taylor, from Wisconsin sent me a long email and he had helped Public Citizen in the past, many years ago. And he's a cartoonist and he has agreed to do pro bono cartooning for the Congress Club project. And Mark, if you're still listening, one thing I'd like you to do is do a symbol or an insignia for the Congress Club so we can put it on our forthcoming letterhead. Thank you very much, Mark, for staying in touch.

Steve Skrovan: Well, that's great news. We're actually gonna have – as far as your first point, we're gonna have Christopher Shaw on the show next week. So look forward to that. And the Congress Club, this is first I'm hearing it, so that's very exciting. And Ralph, you don't know, we were discussing just before you came on about the Congress Club and Joe Manchin and how people had to kayak out to his yacht on the Potomac [River]. So we were discussing whether the Congress Club maybe should have a Navy--so just a whole fleet of kayaks to get to the people of Congress. That seems to be where they hide out.

Anyway, let's get to the main part of our show today and Ralph mentioned it earlier, and I just wanted to open, set it up by saying while politicians drag their feet on climate action, the crisis is already upon us and wreaking havoc. So every year we see more deadly West Coast wildfires, more deadly East Coast hurricanes. Climate disruption is a complex problem that we need to confront from many different angles. Our guest today, Miranda Massie, concurs. She calls it an all-hands-on-deck situation. And as her contribution to the fight, Ms. Massie founded the

Climate Museum with the goal of uniting artists, educators, scientists, and activists to facilitate civic engagement and inspire action on climate policy. So as a rule, museums are widely trusted and attendance is consistently high and diverse across age, race and class. Americans have been fed decades of petro-propaganda. Why not meet them in a trusted space, dedicated to meaningful dialogue about what's happening to our planet and what needs to be done about it. So we look forward to talking to Ms. Massie all about that.

Then we are long overdue to dig into the mailbag. Ralph will answer some more of your listener questions. And as always, we'll check in with our take-no-prisoners corporate crime reporter, Russell Mokhiber. But first, let's hear from Miranda Massie about how a museum can play an important role in combating a climate in crisis, David?

David Feldman: Miranda Massie, a former civil rights attorney, is the founder and director of the Climate Museum. Welcome to the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*, Miranda Massie.

Miranda Massie: Delighted to be here. Thank you all so much.

Ralph Nader: Well, let's dig into this and what you're doing, what we can do together between the American Museum of Tort Law and the Climate Museum. First, as a public interest lawyer, you know better than anyone that climate disruption, climate violence, climate crisis is a mass tort against the people and the natural world of the planet. It's a mass tort as well as a mass crime against humanity and the natural world. So I hope that you're joining the effort to abolish the phrase 'climate change', which was created by the corporatist, Frank Luntz, the Republican wordsmith, in 2002. We had him on the program actually a few months ago, and he was huddling with some corporate propagandists. And they were worried about the phrase 'global warming' alarming the public unduly. And he said, "Call climate change. I grew up in New England. Climate change is summer, fall, winter, spring." And the Democrats just lapped it up like a cat lapping up milk. And it's almost impossible to shake the Washington establishment that is against climate disruption and wants to do something about it to get rid of that phrase. It's not a phrase that has enough legitimate alarm to it and it's not descriptive. It's inaccurate. What do you think?

Miranda Massie: Total agreement. They've actually done a neurolinguistic study on this, Ralph. And when the human brain processes the phrase 'climate change', there's not enough emotional activity expressed in the neural response. Terms like 'climate disruption', 'climate chaos', the 'climate crisis', the 'climate emergency' are closer to accurate. It's hard to think of a word in English that captures the immense scale and urgency of this situation, but those words certainly come closer than just change.

I will say though, there's an asterisk for us, which is that sometimes either because of the way it's positioned in a sentence so that we're talking about a scientific phenomenon, because scientists do generally prefer the term 'climate change' to global warming since what's happening is not simply warming. It's a bunch of other things as well. There specific occasions when we'll use the term 'climate change', but in overall terms and for everyday purposes, it should absolutely be disruption, chaos, emergency, crisis. That's what we're facing and that's what we should speak the truth about.

Ralph Nader: Next time you're on NPR [National Public Radio] and I hope there is another interview of you. Have you been interviewed yet, by the way, by NPR?

Miranda Massie: Yes. We were on the New York City or we were on the New York City station a couple of years ago.

Ralph Nader: Right. Well, they used the word 'climate change' constantly when they talk about massive wildfires, droughts, floods, rising sea level. So as Confucius said hundreds of years ago, you have to start with the right words to describe the phenomena you're talking about. Anyway, enough of that. One thing I wanted to ask you is can you give our listeners right away your website? Rather than giving at the end, give it at the beginning. And maybe some of them will follow some of the things on your website as they're listening to this program.

Miranda Massie: That's so helpful, Ralph, thank you. It's really simple. And across social media we're Climate Museum. So the website is climatemuseum.org, and that's our handle on Twitter, on Facebook, on Instagram, on TikTok. We have a newly established small presence on TikTok. And if I can be permitted a brief comment on that, when we discovered that that handle was available across all the platforms, of course it's super convenient. But the reality is we should have to be Climate Museum, New York City, 12, or something like that. There should be a Climate Museum in every city in America to help us come to grips with what we're facing as a species and what we need to do to move forward together as a national community. So while it's convenient that we're simply Climate Museum everywhere, it's not a good sign about where things are at and it's an invitation for the cultural sector to step up further.

Ralph Nader: Well, have you been in touch with Al Gore? Because in the article on you by the *Washington Post*, they said when Al Gore's famous documentary came out for which he got the Nobel [Peace] Prize, *An Inconvenient Truth*, in 2006, you dreaded looking at it because you thought it would shake you up so much. And you were in the process of going after the New York City public schools for not moving fast enough on PCB [polychlorinated biphenyl] leakage from lighting fixtures in the classrooms with the children. Have you been in touch with Al Gore? He has a lot of money. He got into Google free. He's a billionaire at least.

Miranda Massie: He's one of a number of people that we're actually looking to reach out to now, because this is a real moment of inflection for us. We've done extensive proof of concept over the last three and a half years in terms of presenting public programs in public spaces in New York City and a seasonal space on Governor's Island and in loan spaces. And it's time for the Climate Museum to have its own dedicated year round space. This is the moment where we're ready for that level of funding and we're well-situated to make that pitch. And it's a moment where both the public and funding constituencies are recognizing that cultural work on the climate crisis is essential for us to move forward.

So, Steve, you mentioned artists bringing artists, educators, scientists, and activists together, and I heartedly agree, and to that I would add, the general public. We need a general cultural shift on this question, a general increase in degrees of engagement to provide both the pressure and the support that elected officials require to take the action that'll be necessary to do what we need.

Ralph Nader: The reason why I mentioned the documentary, *Miranda*, is that the Glasgow [COP 26 UN Climate Change] Conference is coming up very quickly in Scotland. All the representatives from over 180 countries, including Joe Biden, are gonna be there. And I'm just wondering whether there is a powerful video of actual destruction all over the world from floods, wildfires, droughts, wind blasts, et cetera, to introduce the delegates there to the realities in a very powerful way. In other words, you would open up the conference [i.e.,] "Okay, we're gonna get down in some details. They're gonna get very tedious, very legal, very political. Let's see what it's all about from Bangladesh to California, from Australia to England." Has anybody done that?

Miranda Massie: There's a lot of that media out there, Ralph.

Ralph Nader: At the Glasgow Conference.

Miranda Massie: Oh, not that I'm aware of. And I 100% agree that conference needs to see the concrete stories of human beings who are already being affected by climate change, some of them killed by climate change, need to be front and center at the conference of the parties at the COP [Conference of the Parties], at the Glasgow meeting, in a way that is unlikely to happen on its own, let's just say.

Ralph Nader: Yeah. Well again, it's all about focus. As you know, I mean, you're a tough public interest lawyer. You know what power is all about. You've done litigation. I've always been concerned with people who march and demonstrate and write and do artistry all over the country on an issue, but they fail to direct the civic energy to the decision-making arena--Congress, for example, or the Glasgow Conference. And that's what I want to ask you about because we've gone through a lot of issues where people have become aware--like minimum wage, like clean drinking water. I mean, who opposes that? It comes in 80/90%. But it doesn't focus the energy on the power that's concentrated in our dear republic, which is the US Congress, 535 members. And if they turn around, the whole country turns around, and the world starts turning around faster.

Here's the problem. Joe Biden had \$150 billion over 10 years program to subsidize electric utilities and to do the things that are necessary to reduce greenhouse gases, you know, reduce coal, more renewable energy, more conservation, fixing up buildings, et cetera. And Joe Manchin Manchinized the Biden administration and the Congress. He's from coal country, a dying industry in West Virginia, which has far fewer jobs in solar energy employment in West Virginia. But he's stubborn and he's got hundreds of thousands of his dollars invested in the coal industry. So as a result, the Congress has dropped it for some later date. It's been severed from the Biden proposal. Now all the things you're doing and other people are doing will tend to go through people's minds, enlighten them and then the civic energy dissipates in the ether. What are you doing to focus everything that you are all about on what you know has to be done, which is to turn the powerful Congress and the state legislatures around?

Miranda Massie: We are so on the same page and we've arrived at precisely the same conclusion. It's not enough to create a space where people can feel engaged and connected with each other and empowered to take meaningful action. Those are necessary, but they're not sufficient. You have to actually give people concrete mechanisms for raising their voices. So we

have guides to calling your legislator. We have programs that help K-12 students learn about the climate crisis and then write illustrated notes to Congress. And in the last several weeks alone, through several art projects, we've had our visitors send hundreds of postcards to Senate Majority Leader [Chuck] Schumer] and to President Biden saying, "This has to be fully funded. The infrastructure bill and the reconciliation package have to be passed and fully funded. And you need to use your power to protect humanity." Because what we're seeing now would be very difficult to explain to a well-intentioned Martian sociologist, right? You have the fossil fuel industry in the form of Joe Manchin derailing aggressive climate action, certainly threatening to derail it at the very least. He himself is part of the fossil fuel industry in his investments. And he furthermore has received more fossil fuel industry campaign donations in this cycle than anyone else, Ralph, even though he's not up for reelection until 2024. It is obscene that we are continuing to allow the fossil fuel industry to hold such sway over our national politics and that has to end. Their social license to operate must be revoked. And until we achieve that, we will not get the policy that we need. And as you know, time is running out.

Ralph Nader: Well, the other thing of course is the Democrats could have easily won at least seven Senate seats since 2016 against the Republicans, but they wouldn't take the strong stands for public works, jobs, for minimum wage, for universal health insurance. They have great popular support. They just wouldn't do it. So they lost races all over the place--in North Dakota; they lost races in Pennsylvania; they lost a race they should have won in Florida. So they brought it on to themselves. And of course, they brought it on to the country that pays the price.

We have the Congress Club where there are very specific letters that are sent to senators and representatives demanding non-robotized responses and positions [like] "Yes/no--are you in favor of this?" So, would you be willing to draft a letter on climate disruption in terms of exactly what you'd like the senators and representatives to do? We can put that up on our website for the Congress Club. And David, you know, you live in New York and your museum is floating around New York. It doesn't have headquarters yet. It's very flexible. David, could you be the liaison with Miranda on this little project?

David Feldman: Yes.

Miranda Massie: I'd love to talk about that more.

Ralph Nader: Okay, yeah. That would be very good because laser beams are the only thing that get members of Congress's attention from back home. And there are all kinds of ways to write these letters and to diffuse them throughout the district and the state so they know you're not gonna go away, they can't bluff you, they can't send you a robot letter. And that's what we're working to refine. Members of Congress are experts at gaming floods of emails and other such communications. And they know that often they're just mass produced and they disregard them.

But these letters come with consequences and they come with determination and repetition to get these people on board. They come with summoning the members to their town meetings that are created by the citizenry--virtual now; they have no excuse. There's no logistical problem for the senators and representatives to say no. So it ends up with the citizenry summoning the members of Congress after telling them what the subject is, so they can educate themselves to these virtual

town meetings. That way you get rid of the flax, the intermediaries, the diversionary staff, the endless delay graced by incredible arrogance that now is building up on Capitol Hill against responding to people. It's almost impossible to even get through [to] some of these offices; they're all on voicemail now. So it all ends with the summons. And that was written up in my little paperback called *Breaking Through Power: It's Easier Than We Think* and it has the summons--actually, you'll like this--it's in legal language. Whereas the Congress, whereas the Congress, now, therefore we summon you to **our** town meeting on **our** agenda. And that book was also published by City Lights Press in San Francisco.

Before we talk about the climate museum, in some detail, Miranda, I'm trying to get this to a higher level because you've been around a number of years; I've been around a number of years. And we know the difference between exhortation and impactful action.

Miranda Massie: Absolutely. I think figuring out what groundwork we need to lay in order to get people to the right place to exert that kind of pressure and to provide that kind of support as well, Ralph, for climate forward legislators is the key question in my mind. And having an explicit set of programs that essentially scaffold actions that people can take that are directly involved in advocacy is an absolutely critical part of the work that we do.

Ralph Nader: Well, you know, you got into this Climate Museum sort of a mid-career change. In fact, people have praised you because very few people make that kind of change. In the *Washington Post* article, Peter Knight, an early advisor to the Climate Museum and chair of the board said of you, Miranda Massie, "Many of us in public service are trying to figure out our highest and best use." The fact that she could pivot at that point in her life to say, "I was doing some important things, but my highest, best use could and should be to solve this problem." He sort of quotes your words. And then he said, "Well, it's hard to put into words, but that takes a great deal of courage to do", from Peter Knight in the *Washington Post* article of September 10th, 2021 by Tatiana Schlossberg if anybody wants to pull it down. So tell us how how'd you come about doing this and describe the museum. It's sort of a floating museum right now. You don't have a single headquarters.

Miranda Massie: We don't yet. As I mentioned, we're very eager to scale out into having a year round established location because a physical location is part of the suite of super powers that museums hold, which include trust and popularity and voluntary learning in addition to a host of other factors. So having a space where people can convene is incredibly important. What we've done in the meantime is create temporary spaces. We have an exhibition house that is given to us on loan by the Trust for Governor's Island, for example, that operates on a seasonal basis. And having that function as a hub for exhibitions has been incredibly important to our work, which essentially uses a kind of cultural activism to give people the sense that they can take meaningful action on the climate emergency. Because we know from polling, Ralph, that the majority of American adults are freaked out but feel shut down and out scaled by the problem. And one of the precursors to the political action that you've been discussing is a sense that what you do can matter in the overall scheme of things. Vanguard activists have that. And Vanguard activists are an essential, perhaps the essential ingredient in our prospects for a safer future. But because of the scale and variety of impacts of the climate crisis, we need a broader swath of the population getting active and getting engaged at their own level. And that is at the core of the work we do –

giving people a sense of emotional connection to each other and emotional connection to the political priority of climate progress.

Ralph Nader: Well, 'vanguard activist' is a nice phrase. Steve and David, we're gonna have to use "vanguard activist" more often. In your practice, before you started the Climate Museum, you were a civil rights attorney, public interest lawyer fighting for civil rights, affirmative action, environmental justice, immigrant justice, and disability rights in Detroit and New York. I want to single out environmental justice because that's where the worst toxic pollution is often located where poor people live, and they have to breathe worse air/dirtier water. And when this movement started about 20/25 years ago, it was designed to bring in minority people in the environmental movement, which was viewed as sort of a white elite movement funded by elite groups when it was basically a movement against silent violence that attacks everybody indiscriminately, but poorer people more discriminately because of where these corporations put their power plants and put their toxic waste dumps. And the whole area of Detroit is an example of that where you work. How are you connecting your Climate Museum with minority organizations who have a lot of other things on their mind, but as you say, if they don't have this on their mind, they're not gonna get very far on the other things.

Miranda Massie: What drew me personally into working on the climate crisis was the recognition, which as you noted earlier, I pushed off for many years and avoided having for many years--that the climate crisis is the greatest inequality crisis we've ever faced, that it supersedes all the other inequality crises that I had been working on to that point, and that we can't achieve progress in a fundamental and lasting way on social inequalities of different kinds. I was working in particular on racial justice without making progress on the climate emergency. And we do work with frontline and environmental and climate justice organizations across New York City. There's a very strong sector here in New York City.

One thing I would note that listeners might be surprised to learn is that as of right now, as of today, race is a better predictor of the air quality where you live than class is in the United States. Obviously systemic racism means that social class, socioeconomic status and race are correlated and interact. But as of right now, it's race that dictates air quality, the location of toxic facilities, and all of the other forms of environmental violence that you mentioned, Ralph. So the fight against racism, the fight too, for social equality in class terms, but the fight against racism in a very specific way is linked to the fight for climate progress at its core.

Ralph Nader: And I would suggest that you connect corporatism with racism because the corporations decide where to put these garbage dumps, these toxic cancer-causing, lung disease-producing chemical plants and other installations. So we had a program some weeks ago where we talked about corporatism feeding racism because they can get away with it easier. I mean, imagine putting a power plant in Scarsdale, New York or Belmont, Massachusetts--no way! They put it where people are poor, powerless, weak, and don't have a voice. So I would always connect it to the perpetrators.

Miranda Massie: Agree 100%.

Ralph Nader: Yeah. It's very important. Now the reason why mass tort is so important is because if we get that across, that means it's actionable. People can file lawsuits for wrongful injury and it doesn't have to be trauma. It can be cancer, respiratory illness--the silent violence of these polluters. And also a lot of property damage, huge property [damage]--homes being burned in California in the thousands, a whole town of Paradise almost burned up a couple years ago. There's property damage; that's a tort. Wrongful property damage, wrongful damage to health and safety; that's a tort. We need to stop underutilizing the tort law system and start giving this great tool, which produces a lot of disclosure, a lot of deterrence, a lot of press to more and more people who aren't aware of it. And in our Tort Museum, we have a high school curriculum, and we would like to have, some time before the end of the year, a joint virtual event with the Climate Museum. Are you with that?

Miranda Massie: Fantastic. Absolutely. And there's been -- we did a program, a panel, Ralph on...we have a monthly panel series this year on climate and inequality. And then it delves each month into specific topics at that intersection. In one month, it was law. So it was called *Talking Climate: Law*. And we went into a bunch of different areas where the legal system is fitfully moving toward recognition of climate torts and wrongs. As you observed at the top of the show, there should also be space to think about criminal liability for a lot of what's happened. But in the meantime, the economic value of the losses that are generally treated as what economists call 'externalities'; they're essentially not counted in the balance sheet of what climate action would cost. People talking about how expensive it is to take proper action on climate to reduce greenhouse gas pollution and to make ourselves more robust and resilient to stand up to what's coming. And what's lost in all of that is how much it's costing us right now, as you point out, and how much it will cost us in the future not to make those critical changes. So it's lost homes, but it's also lost property values. It's the inability to ensure houses that were safe, seen as safe and insurable 15 or 20 years ago. The amount of economic loss is staggering. And the loss of human life and health, there's simply not a word for it.

One tiny part of it, and this is only a small part of it, is that more than 8 million people per year die of particulate matter, of inhaling particulate matter from the combustion of fossil fuels. Ralph, that is the fifth largest cause of death annually on a global basis, including old age. It's the fifth largest cause of death! And that's not climate crisis deaths. That's simply particulate matter inhalation deaths. That's a tiny little corner of the health impacts that we're seeing from the fossil fuel industry and from the climate crisis. It is something that we have never faced before in terms of its sheer size. And we need to start recognizing that and stepping up to it, including through the legal system.

Ralph Nader: Well, you know, the cost of not moving globally, locally, nationally toward renewable energy, cutting greenhouse gases, converting our economies in other ways towers over the cost that Congress is considering now and dropping in terms of a proposal.

Miranda Massie: Yes.

Ralph Nader: Now this reflects the enormous stranglehold that ExxonMobil and Peabody coal [Peabody Energy] and others have on the world and the country.

Miranda Massie: Yes, it does.

Ralph Nader: And the only institution that can change this big time – 535 members of Congress. They have the awesome power under the Constitution to declare emergencies, to redirect public budgets from the budget of empire, \$750 billion a year, to public works, to create jobs in the communities, retrofitting homes and buildings. I mean, it's so overwhelming the case. But the other side of that it shows you the enormous cruelty, self-centeredness, greed, and power of a handful of these giant corporations. So my question to you is develop some sort of joint program, if you can, and we'll be in touch with you with the Tort Museum. You can take a virtual tour now if you go to tortmuseum.org. It's in Winstead, Connecticut. So it's not far, but it doesn't have to be in a pandemic era, an actual event. It can be a virtual event. And then set the stage for a lot of similar virtual events. Because I think, first of all, the trial lawyers should wake up more and take more venturesome mass tort cases. Some of them are in the Vanguard here. And the insurance industry, which is what I wanted to ask you about. They should have a huge ongoing, immediate interest in loss prevention, because although they're pretty stingy in paying out claims for the fires in California and the huge floods elsewhere, don't they have a vested interest and have they been supportive of you?

Miranda Massie: The insurance industry is a little bit like the military. The climate crisis has created some frontrunners you wouldn't expect necessarily as a progressive. So these are very pragmatic sectors that are laser focused on risk assessment and responding adequately to risk. And so the insurance industry has been ahead of a lot of other industries in recognizing the risk of the climate catastrophe that we're seeing in evidence in an increasing way every year, an accelerating way every year; and in starting to respond to that through pricing and also through some philanthropic support of climate initiatives. And that's definitely an avenue for us to explore. Because you're right, their business is centered on risk assessment and any rational assessment of risk would put climate at the top of your list. And the military says the same thing. And it's not often [chuckle] that I find myself in agreement with priorities articulated by the United States Military as a matter of my own personal views. But the entities that have to think about and manage risk as part of their core operations are recognizing this and the magnitude of this ahead of some other actors in the society. And there are some circumstances in which that can be mobilized to our collective advantage. And the main problem we face, Ralph, is we have to do so much with so much determination and at such a large scale that it's almost inconceivable that we're facing the situation we now see in Washington, D.C., where bickering over, in relative terms small amounts of money, is threatening to derail the significant, if not adequate significant steps that we were hoping to be able to make in this legislative session.

Ralph Nader: Yes, indeed. \$150 billion over 10 years is \$15 billion a year. Apple [Inc] just announced a few months ago, the Apple corporation, that they were gonna spend \$90 billion just to buy back their stock in one year--just by comparison. Well, the insurance lobby, it can be very helpful if it steps up its commitment to loss prevention. The Department of Defense, whether it likes it or not, is gonna be drawn into this because you're gonna have huge hurricanes and floods and the [Army] National Guard is not gonna be enough. And they know that. They're preparing actually to deal with emergencies at bases around the world. The best way to do it is to close down the bases, and in this country. And a report just came out a few days ago, which I'm sure you know about. It declared that climate disruption was a top national security priority. I mean,

these are powerful forces, but Congress seems not to be getting the message. Because you've got in the corridors of Congress well known to them, ExxonMobil lobbyists and all the climate disruption feeder companies swarming all over Capitol Hill, giving money in PACs [political action committees], connections back home, wining, dining, belonging to the same clubs, making sure they're not challenged in the primary. That's the entrenched system that has to be taken apart by organized people back home. It doesn't take that many. If you had 1% of the people behind what you're trying to do, say two and a half million people, 1% in congressional districts, organized, as I've said repeatedly, ExxonMobil and the fossil industry wouldn't have a chance. Because increasingly the polls are going up among conservatives as well as liberal voters that we've got to do something about the climate destruction of our country and world fed by relentless and foreseeable greenhouse gases. Your response?

Miranda Massie: Complete agreement. Whatever their politics, people shouldn't vote for any member of Congress who accepts fossil fuel campaign donations and won't sign the no fossil fuel money campaign pledge or who supports fossil fuel subsidies. We've gotta cut that revolving door of money off. Look, the fossil fuel lobby as of a couple of years ago was spending more than ten times annually what the entire gun lobby spends. That includes but is not limited by any stretch of the imagination as you know well, Ralph, to the NRA [National Rifle Association]. Everybody understands that the gun lobby until very recently and still to a very large extent has a death grip on our national politics. Multiply that by more than ten and you start to get close to where the fossil fuel lobby is. This shouldn't be permitted. It's a question of the survival of, at a minimum our civilization, and potentially, our species! Not to mention all the other forms of life out there on this one and only planet that we can inhabit. It is of the utmost importance that the stranglehold that the fossil fuel lobby has on Washington, D.C. be ended. And the Climate Museum looks to contribute to efforts to do that with these calls to civic action that we make. And we do have to focus on our tax exempt status, which allows us to make some kinds of statements and not make other kinds of statements as you know, Ralph, and as some listeners will know. But on the question of fossil fuel campaign donations, nobody should be allowed to take them. They should be isolated and voted out of office if they do accept them. At this moment in the history of our climate and our human society, it should not be permitted to accept the support of the destroyers – period.

Ralph Nader: And I might add, since the US Government is the biggest consumer in the country of these procurement contracts, they can do much more to condition all contracts with companies having to meet certain standards of renewable energy, energy efficiency, scheduled, paced, and so forth as part of the contract. The customer is always right. But I have an artistic suggestion. I'm not known from my artistic suggestion, but I see that you have a program called – a poster campaign, Beyond Lies. And it's a collaboration between the Climate Museum. We're talking with Miranda Massie, the founder of the Climate Museum, and Mona Chalabi, data editor at the *Guardian US*, who's a journalist and an illustrator.

Now here's a suggestion. We did a poster of former Speaker John Boehner when he was a Speaker of the House, Republican. And he was well known to be tied up with the student loan lobby and other corporations. So we developed the logos of these companies and put it on John Boehner's suit. So it was a poster of John Boehner and the size of the logo reflected the amount of the campaign contribution, so that some companies had a big logo near his lapel and others

had a smaller logo by his cuff. And we sent it around to Capitol Hill. Needless to say, they were not amused, Miranda, but I want to send one to you, because if you develop this kind of art and make personal lobbying, which is why the NRA is so powerful; they lobby personally. You don't see them engaged in many demonstrations and marches. That will really get their attention and you can put it up on the internet and they will be known as an advertising place for these corporations in the most personal way, right on their wardrobe.

Miranda Massie: I love that. And I love that you referenced the Beyond Lies campaign for everybody listening; it's beyondlies.org, and Mona did three fantastic, fantastic posters. One [is] about Exxon's empty promises about working for a safer climate future, when in fact essentially all, 99.8% or 99.9% of their capital investments go into fossil fuels. There's also one about individual blame. People may not be aware of this, but it was the fossil fuel company, BP, Plc [Plc, is the British name for Inc], that invented the concept of the carbon footprint in 2004 to make us focus anxiously and guiltily on our own consumption rather than focusing on their business model and their determination to burn all of the fossil fuels in the ground no matter what the consequences. And then there's a third poster that's focused on going beyond business as usual, which has an image of activists dragging the representative of fossil fuel interest away from the table of power, where policy is made. They should not be allowed in the room. They should not be able to get a meeting on Capitol Hill or in any other place where climate policy is made. It's outrageous that they have a voice given their conduct. They're lying to the American public and to the world about their physically destructive conduct over the last five decades.

Ralph Nader: And we now know that their own scientists at ExxonMobil and others knew this was coming as early as the 1950s and 1960s, but the company suppressed their findings and their projections. Steve and David, while we have a few minutes left, would you like to pitch in here?

David Feldman: Yeah, this is great. And I look forward to meeting you. I want to ask you about what you're up against in terms of neurolinguistic studies. You mentioned it earlier. Where does rage and demonization play into all this? Because our side is always rational and scientific. Today in Reuters, they did an interview with hedge fund managers and investors, Shawn Reynolds from VanEck Funds, Mark Stoeckle from Adams Funds, Michael List, the manager of the American Century Value Fund. All went on record saying they're gonna continue to invest in fossil fuels. What about demonizing these people like, you know, with posters? We know Exxon is bad, but these are the men who enable all this. What about getting people just in a rage and angry? It's really easy to get the American people to go to war. Shouldn't there be a part of the environmental movement that just demonizes these people with ad hominem attacks? Not the entire movement, but isn't there some room for demonization of individuals, so it's not an abstraction?

Miranda Massie: Yeah. Instead of saying demonization, I would say just criticism, right? I mean, these are just criticisms. I haven't seen that article yet, but there have been protests at least in New York City, [and] I think other places too, against big investors in fossil fuel infrastructure. Chase Bank is a huge investor, for example, and Blackstone [Inc.], if I have the name right, is another fund that invests hugely. But going after specific hedge funds that are continuing to finance.

David Feldman: People.

Miranda Massie: And individual people.

David Feldman: Stephen Schwarzman.

Miranda Massie: I agree.

David Feldman: Go to 666 Park Avenue where he appropriately lives and people should be shaming him in front of 666 Park Avenue. I don't understand why we don't do that.

Miranda Massie: I think that has been happening some, and I agree with you that there must be room for that in the climate and environmental movements. It's one of many tactics that we need to mobilize. There's no reason to rule it out. It's not a big happy family. And there are some people it doesn't make sense to try to have a dialogue with – period. We just need to disincentivize their bad behavior and make it as painful for them to engage in it as we're capable of making it. I completely agree.

David Feldman: Yeah. The problem is they're also greenwashing as you talked earlier. They're the big philanthropists in Manhattan.

Miranda Massie: Yes.

David Feldman: And they're all about planting trees and parks. Their money is bad. Isn't it?

Miranda Massie: A 100%. And we have a funding policy that disallows us from accepting any funding or any sponsorships, any partnerships that are inconsistent with our mission. And we urge the cultural sector to reject direct fossil fuel funds and also fossil fuel enabling funds. The problem that you quickly run up against is that we inhabit a fossil fuel economy. The reality is that every dollar in this economy has a relationship to fossil fuels. Even if you're off the grid and using exchange tokens while growing organic flowers in Vermont, you're still part of the fossil fuel economy and that's what we need to end. And so there's no money in the system that's pure, but that doesn't mean we don't need to put a face on the bad actors who are enabling what the fossil fuel industry is doing. It's incredibly important for people to be aware of how vile and longstanding and shameless the fossil fuel industry's disinformation campaign has been. And I strongly recommend that everybody who is a podcast listener check out the podcast *Drilled*, which is run by Amy Westervelt, to learn about the history of disinformation, which is a huge part of why we're in the crisis that we're in today with the West on fire and the East underwater; not to mention what's happening elsewhere in the world. And there are activist movements developing around the finance streams that fund fossil fuel disinformation and fossil fuel infrastructure. And even the PR [public relations] services and the legal services that are also--I don't know what the ungended term for hand maidens is--but the enablers of fossil fuel destruction. The secondary industries are coming under activist scrutiny and attack. That is super positive; it can't happen fast enough. I really encourage people to check all those movements out.

Ralph Nader: Well, clearly the fossil fuel industry is losing support. They're losing support in the polls. More and more endowments of universities are shedding investments in fossil fuel. Harvard [University] is one of the more recent ones. Government contracts are becoming more sensitive to veering away from them in terms of the conditions of the contracts. The Department of Defense now really believes it's a national security issue. More and more people in small business would like to develop renewables in their community and not be reliant on centralized fossil fuel supremacists. But you know where they haven't lost ground and that's where their back comes from? It's these right-wing politicians. It's Governor [Greg] Abbott of Texas, Governor [Ron] DeSantis of Florida, Donald Trump sulking and getting ready for another run in Florida and all the right-wingers in Congress. Once they lose that base, then you'll see acceleration to transform the energy and chemical parts of our society toward renewability speed up enormously.

We've been talking with Miranda Massie, the founder and activist behind the Climate Museum. [She is] by no means the only one. She brings in a lot of people in the world of art and music and above all, as she said, science, without which nothing can go forward. Thank you very much, Miranda. And give us your website once more, including the one for your project Beyond Lies.

Miranda Massie: Thanks all of you. This has been such a pleasure, Ralph, and so instructive. I really appreciate it. Our Climate Museum's website is climatemuseum.org. And Beyond Lies, which is a project on fossil fuel disinformation with the artist and data journalist, Mona Chalabi, is beyondlies.org. I urge everybody to check those out and please let us know what you think.

Ralph Nader: Very good. And we'll keep our listeners informed about the Climate Museum's work with the Congress Club and also the virtual event that I hope will come off in a few weeks between your Climate Museum and our American Museum of Tort Law. Thank you again, Miranda.

Miranda Massie: Thank you. Fantastic.

Steve Skrovan: We've been speaking with Miranda Massie. We will link to the Climate Museum at ralphnaderradiohour.com. Up next, Ralph is gonna answer some of your listener questions. But first, let's check in with our Corporate Crime Reporter, Russell Mokhiber.

Russell Mokhiber: From the National Press Building in Washington, D.C., this is your *Corporate Crime Reporter* "Morning Minute" for Thursday, October 21st, 2021; I'm Russell Mokhiber. Massachusetts' Supreme Court on Wednesday ruled that the 1990s settlement between states and major tobacco companies did not bar the wife of a deceased smoker from recovering \$10 million in punitive damages from Philip Morris USA. That's according to a report from Reuters. The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court reached that conclusion as it upheld a jury's 2019 verdict awarding \$21 million to the wife of a man who died of lung cancer after smoking the company's cigarettes much of his life. The ruling deepened a divide in state appellate courts on the settlement's impact on residents' ability to seek punitive damages. Courts in at least two other states, New York and Georgia, have concluded the deal does bar punitive damages claims. For the *Corporate Crime Reporter*, I'm Russell Mokhiber.

Steve Skrovan: Thank you, Russel. Welcome back to the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*. I'm Steve Skrovan along with David Feldman and Ralph. And Ralph, the mailbag has been filling up. You want to see if we can work our way through that?

Ralph Nader: Yeah, let me try. Walt Booth is thinking of going to law school next year and he wants to know if I have any advice. Yeah. Go to the bookstore at the Tort Museum, tortmuseum.org, and you can order a paperback called *What Harvard Law School Students Need to Know* [What Every Harvard Law Student Should Know]. Otherwise they're not being taught at law schools. And that's true for all law students who are into a curriculum that's full of myths about the way the law should be--rule of law, due process--and they are not taught enough about the reality on the ground, which is lawlessness by the rich and powerful.

Rebecca Troyer wants to know if the vaccine makers, including Pfizer [Inc.] and Johnson & Johnson, who have immunity from lawsuits for at least two years will have that immunity extended. Probably. The fund that's established for people who have been harmed by these vaccines is based on a few cents per vaccine inoculation that's transferred to this fund and that of course persuades Congress not to end the immunity. So well, there's a fixed fund, which of course never is adequate compensation. It's like a worker's compensation fund.

And Johnny Pavacic wants advice on how to help push for a political revolution. He's 25 years old, a meteorologist working on Staten Island with dreams of holding public office and helping the working class reclaim the power stolen from them by corporate greed. I'm using his words. He said he's currently working at the Fresh Kills Landfill, where he does a lot of environmental consulting on how to properly dispose of methane gas produced at the landfill. And he wants to start volunteering for People's Party, the Green Party, and he wants any advice.

Well, my advice first of all, is connect with Howie Hawkins, who was the presidential candidate with a working class background for the Green Party in 2020. He has read a lot and he can give you some good advice and he's up in Syracuse, New York. And second, get my little paper back, as I often say, *Breaking Through Power: It's Easier Than We Think*, City Lights Press. You can go direct and get it and help out a nice independent bookstore that's been going through hard times during the pandemic.

Steve Skrovan: Ralph, this question, didn't get a chance to be answered at our Congress Club Town Hall on the 17th of October. It's from Michelle Loucas who says, "Do you think this is a strategically smart time to push for ranked-choice voting? Since many conservatives are eager to distance themselves from the Trump end of their party, making Ralph's left-right coalition more possible. If so, what groups can we join to help?"

Ralph Nader: It's always a good chance to argue for Ranked-Choice Voting if only to avoid the scapegoating of third parties by the two major parties. But it's always a good time to move for universal voting the way they have in Australia. We've had programs on this and the Brookings Institution, of all places, is coming out with a book in February advocating what they call universal voting as a civic duty.

Steve Skrovan: Thank you for that, Michelle. Ralph, this is another question that didn't get a chance to be answered at the Congress Club Town Hall. This is from Todd Laveen and he says, "Is there somewhere you can find where senators and representatives disclosure their stocks transactions?" -- Open Secrets?

Ralph Nader: Yes, that's one place. And also they're supposed to file their investments with the Congressional Ethics Committees in [both] the House and Senate.

Steve Skrovan: Thank you for your questions. I want to thank our guest again, Miranda Massie. For those of you listening on the radio, that's our show. For you, podcasts listeners, stay tuned for some bonus material we call "The Wrap Up". A transcript of this show will appear on the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* website soon after the episode is posted.

David Feldman: Please subscribe to us on our *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* YouTube channel. And for Ralph's weekly column, you can get it for free by going to nader.org. For more from Russell Mokhiber, go to corporatecrimereporter.com.

Steve Skrovan: For a copy of *The Day the Rats Vetoed Congress*, go to ratsreformcongress.org. And also check out *The Ralph Nader and Family Cookbook: Classic Recipes from Lebanon and Beyond*. We will link to both of those at ralphnaderradiohour.com.

David Feldman: The producers of the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* are Jimmy Lee Wirt and Matthew Marran. Our executive producer is Alan Minsky.

Steve Skrovan: Our theme music *Stand Up, Rise Up* was written and performed by Kemp Harris. Our proofreader is Elisabeth Solomon. Our associate producer is Hannah Feldman. Our social media manager is Steven Wendt.

David Feldman: Join us next week on the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*. Thank you, Ralph.

Ralph Nader: Thank you, everybody. And *The Rat* book has been issued by Fantagraphics with great artwork and it's a great motivator for you to organize back home to take Congress back from the corporations.

[57:52]

[Audio Ends]