

## Fahrenheit 9/11 and Truth in Advertising

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Thank you very much, Don, it's great to be here. We're going to talk about the Michael Moore film *Fahrenheit 9/11*, but as way of introduction I'm going to talk a little bit about my own background, how I came into this line of work. Perhaps there are some lessons here for you.

I was initially a philosophy major in college. I wanted to find out the meaning of life, why there was suffering in the world, why there was evil, was there a God. And after getting the answers to all those questions I went to the chairman of the department in philosophy and said, you know, this is just great, I enjoyed this, I like to think, it's been really exciting - but what do I do with this? What do I do with a degree in philosophy? And he said, well, you can always go on and get a Ph.D. He said, I've got some friends with Ph.Ds in philosophy and they're now driving taxi cabs.

So I thought, well, you know, it's fine to think, but as my dad always taught me, you need a marketable skill. You need a marketable skill, and so halfway through my college training I took a year and a half off and started pumping fuel at a truck stop and did some more thinking, and then went back to college and got a degree in communications and journalism in order to get that marketable skill, because unless you know how to put things down on paper, it's fine to think about them, but you need to be able to communicate both verbally and in writing. And that's worked out well for me; I've been in Washington D.C. for 25 years, as Don indicated, a lot of that time working in some capacity with Accuracy in Media, working closely with Reed Irvine, who I consider really one of my mentors.

I originally came up in the summer of 1978 through Stan Evans' National Journalism Center program and since have gone on to other pursuits as well, being a husband and father of three and I spend a lot of my time trying to raise three boys. That's a challenge, you can't learn how to cope with that in college, really. That's on the job training.

But let me tell you when I communicated with audiences, I just want to leave you with one thing, because later you may scratch your head and say, what did he say, anyway? And that is, pursue the truth, pursue the truth, that is the one consuming thing in life. Because you have to pursue the truth and you have to recognize it when you see it. And by way of explanation, and eventually we'll get to the Michael Moore film, one thing I've learned in Washington D.C. is that the truth is almost not very often readily apparent. And many people don't like to face up to the truth. And it's not just in D.C. of course, it's across the United States.

You know that old Tom Cruise marine movie, "Can you handle the truth?" Well, here's a story for you that illustrates that point: A husband and wife are getting ready for bed. The wife is standing in front of a full length mirror taking a hard look at herself. "You know, dear," she says, "I look in the mirror and I see an old woman. My face is all wrinkled, I've got fat legs, my arms are all flabby." She turns to her husband and says, "Tell me something positive to make me feel better about myself." The husband studies hard for a moment, thinking about it, and then he says in a soft thoughtful voice, "Well, there's nothing wrong with your eyesight." Services for the husband were held Saturday morning at 10:30 a.m.

So, yeah, sometimes we don't want to hear the truth, do we? And one of the most amazing things I've discovered in Washington, especially through my association with Accuracy in Media, is that journalists themselves, who are supposed to be truth tellers, who are supposed to gather information, don't like the truth either. But as any of you know who are taking journalism today, they don't teach journalists today how to report the facts, the objective truths. In fact, I don't consider myself that old, but when I was taking journalism in college my college textbook was called *Interpretive Reporting*. It's the Curtis-McDougall textbook, I wonder if any of you have come across that, I understand it's still widely used.

It's not objective reporting anymore that's being taught, it's interpretive reporting. That means previously it was 'who, what, where, when, why and how'. Now it's 'who, what, where, when, why, how, and *so what*'. Which means that journalists interpret the news for you. They decide what is relevant, whether you are entitled to this information, whether they think you ought to know. 'Who, what, where, when, why, and so what'. So consequently, it's amazing to me after 25 years in Washington, that we still come across journalists at the big media who continue to pretend that somehow they are objective journalists, that they have no biases or else they screen their biases and prejudices out. Remember Walter Cronkite, "and that's the way it is"? Well it hasn't been 'that's the way it is,' it's not the way it was, it's not the way it's going to be.

The good news is people are wising up to that, as demonstrated by the growth of alternative media, new media, conservative talk radio, cable news, especially Fox News. People are looking for alternative, different sources of information. And I'll give you just a couple examples of issues we're working on at Accuracy in Media that show how difficult it has been to get out the truth.

There's a book, in fact I brought it up, it's been out by a couple of months, by ambassador Joseph Wilson called *The Politics of Truth*. Well, that's a pretty straightforward title. And he has a website paid for by 'John Kerry for President' (because Ambassador Wilson is an advisor to the Kerry campaign) called RestoreHonesty.com. Now that's pretty direct, straightforward, and impressive - truth, honesty.

Well just over the last few days here in Washington D.C. because of the release of a special Senate Intelligence Committee report on the CIA's intelligence before the Iraq War, we now know that Ambassador Joseph Wilson, and I should be careful, but that Ambassador Joseph Wilson for about the last year has been, according to his critics, lying about what he discovered on a trip to Niger in Africa about Iraq's interest in uranium. And just to give you some background about this, Joseph Wilson, of course, is the former ambassador who went public doubting and refuting President Bush's claim in the State of the Union address that Iraq had sought uranium from Africa. Joe Wilson was the fellow who said, 'no it's not true, the President has been misleading the American people,' then when information was provided to columnist Robert Novak about the fact that Wilson's wife, who worked at the CIA, had actually recommended Wilson for this mission to investigate the Iraq-uranium connection, Wilson said that wasn't true either. His wife never recommended him for this job, she had nothing to do with it. Then the name of his wife, Valerie Paine, was published by Novak. Wilson went ballistic, saying that Novak and the officials in the Bush administration who had provided her name had blown her cover as an undercover operative at the CIA, that perhaps had even put her life in danger, and had violated a law known as the Intelligence Identities Protection Act. We now have

a full blown federal investigation under way into who in the Bush administration leaked this information to Robert Novak.

It's been going on for several months as well, yet now we find out from the Senate Intelligence Committee report based on interviews and other evidence that President Bush was right after all, that in fact the evidence Wilson himself brought back from Africa bolstered the President's case. And what's more, that his wife did recommend him for this job and the significance of that is it constitutes a violation of federal nepotism laws that prevents family members from recommending one another for federal jobs. So the investigation, in other words, shouldn't be on who in the administration provided this information to Robert Novak about Wilson and his wife, but whether Wilson and his wife had themselves violated federal law in arranging this trip and concocting a phony scandal to damage President Bush.

But it's taken literally a year to get to the bottom of this and now Mr. Wilson with his book *The Politics of Truth* and his website, paid for by the Kerry campaign, RestoreHonesty.com, is trying to fend off allegations and charges not only by the senators but by others that he's been lying all along.

Welcome to Washington D.C. This is what can happen in the nation's capital. Everything gets turned on its head. And I want to give you one more quick example before we go to Michael Moore's so called documentary.

This is another issue we've been working on at Accuracy in Media. And this involves something that goes back not a year but fifty years. And we're still struggling to get out the facts and the truth. And that is that on June 24 the Senate of the United States passed a resolution honoring the loyal service of J. Robert Oppenheimer who was director of the Los Alamos project that developed the atomic bomb for the United States. Now you'd say, well that's perfectly acceptable, perfectly appropriate to honor him, Oppenheimer; he's been called "the father of the atomic bomb" for his loyal service to the United States.

Except for the fact that it has come out over the last ten years mostly, that at the same time when Oppenheimer was helping the United States build the atomic bomb that ended World War II, he was not only a member of the Communist Party U.S.A., he was a Soviet spy engaging in espionage facilitating the betrayal of our atomic secrets to the old Soviet Union, enabling the Soviets to develop their atomic bomb. So he was a traitor, he was a traitor. And yet the Senate of the United States passes a resolution honoring his loyal service and directing the energy department to spend taxpayer dollars on a special event in his honor. Isn't it amazing how fifty years later after this had occurred and after revelations upon revelations, especially over the last ten years, that even the Senate of the United States, especially under the prodding of Senator Jeff Bingham of New Mexico, did not want to face up to the truth about Oppenheimer being a communist and a Soviet spy.

Now I brought this information to the attention of some congressional staff members, especially those in the Senate of the United States, just yesterday in Washington D.C. and they all looked up, rolled their eyes, and said, and I'll give you some quotes, "This is how the Senate does business; it's not pretty", "a waste of tax payer dollars" - on and on. But it happens because people do not want to face up to the facts, do not want to face up to the truth. It's a version, yes, of the cultural Marxism we know as political correctness. That's how difficult it can be to get out the truth, even when it comes to the Senate of the United States. I don't know what we're going to do at this point about that Senate resolution, so stay tuned. Keep going to the AIM website,

AIM.org for updates on this one, we have a forthcoming AIM report that deals in part with this.

Which brings us to the Michael Moore film which has been labeled by the media as a so-called 'documentary', which is itself a falsehood. This film does not even pretend to be a documentary. It certainly has a point of view, but a documentary is supposed to have at least some connection to actual facts and truth. And yet not only does it have a point of view, but it attempts to get across a point of view in a dishonest manner. And I'll give you just one example that we've documented in our AIM Report, and even, to their credit, reporters for the major media have pointed this out - Lisa Meyers of NBC News, Dan Harris of ABC News - that Michael Moore in his film goes out of his way to try to imply that Bush family connections to the Bin Ladin family of Saudi Arabia had something to do with the Saudis in the United States after 9/11 being whisked out of the country without adequate FBI screening. That's one of the main charges in the film.

Ironically one of the heroes in his film, one of the whistleblowers in the film, so called, is Richard Clarke, formerly counterterrorism chief in the Bush and Clinton administrations, who has publicly said that Bush had nothing to do with this decision to get the Saudis out, that it was he, Richard Clarke who made that decision on his own. And he defends it. This is the Richard Clarke who was in the film, Michael Moore's film, as a hero, because generally speaking he's been critical of the Bush administration, except on this issue he gets the Bush administration off the hook and there's nothing about it in the film. Now what does that say to you? How honest and truthful is Michael Moore?

I went and saw this film. How many here have seen it? Shame on you, no - (*laughing*) - guys, I saw it too. And I was amazed. I went and saw it on a Sunday morning at about 11:20 in the morning, an early matinee, and at that point, this was about three weeks ago, it was more than half full. And most of the people just laughed it up, and I grant, there are some funny moments, there are some funny moments, some of the outtakes about some of these U.S. officials getting prepared for TV interviews, some of the statements that President Bush has made, that he's mangled, but who doesn't do that? Well it's funny on camera.

But what really got me was, I enjoy a good laugh, but this was more than a comedy. This film was designed really not only to discredit the Bush administration and Bush, and Moore openly acknowledges that's one intent, that he wants to defeat Bush this November, but it completely obliterates any rational understanding of the enemy we face or a kind of society and form of government we want to preserve here. For Michael Moore, if you've seen the film you know that he even attacks the invasion of Afghanistan, not to mention the invasion of Iraq. He seems to imply that Saudi Arabia is more of a threat to the United States than Osama bin Ladin and the Taliban ever were. And not only that but some of the film footage in there of our own troops, admittedly hyped up as they go into battle, listening to some heavy metal music, makes them out to be bloodthirsty killers.

But not only that, and I haven't seen anywhere where Michael Moore tries to defend this, do you remember how his film depicts life in Iraq under Saddam Hussein? Kids in an amusement park, Iraqi kids flying kites in the arms of their mothers and fathers. Peaceful. Nice. No torture chambers, no mass graves, no wars against their neighbors, no use of chemical or biological weapons against their neighbors. Iraq was a, we're told, peaceful place. Until the United States invaded. I mean this is the kind of propaganda that they call a documentary. It's not about candor, that's being charitable.

It's a lie, it's a lie. The people, at least in the movie theater where I was who watched it, many of them applauding, cheering, now how is it that we've come to the point in this country where we have people that are so misled about the nature of truth and reality that they could applaud and cheer such a blatantly dishonest film?

What Michael Moore does in the film, but which he's talked about openly on his own website, is that he really doesn't think the terrorists in Iraq are the bad guys, he doesn't even think they're terrorists. He said on his own website that these terrorists are not the enemy and he has compared them to the Minute Men, the revolutionary war forces that brought into being the United States of America, implying that these terrorists killing Americans in Iraq are patriots. He has said that openly on his own website. He's not that honest in his own film, but that's the import, that's what it's designed to do, to get us to think badly of our own forces in Iraq, to think that Iraq was peaceful until we invaded, and that the enemy is really a group of patriots just fighting for their homeland. How dishonest. How untruthful. How disgraceful to do that during a time of war when our troops are fighting and dying on the battlefield, a time of war.

And yet, I don't have to tell you about all the favorable publicity he's received by the same media that have called this a quote, 'documentary'. Editor & Publisher has done a survey of the newspapers out there finding that a strong majority of the papers that reviewed his film reviewed it favorably. This is one more example in the examples I've cited here, going back to the Senate honoring Oppenheimer despite the facts, to Joe Wilson claiming to be for honesty and truth despite the facts, that it's very difficult in this town and it's going to be difficult in your lives to keep your head on straight and realize that people are coming at you constantly with falsehoods and deceptions. It really takes an effort to get the truth, to be absolutely sure, to be absolutely accurate. And that's our obligation. But you have to realize that what you're getting from Michael Moore or from a book like this from Wilson, or in the major media - so much of which you're exposed to on a daily basis is not necessarily true. You have to develop a healthy skepticism about everything you see, read, and hear. Except when I'm speaking.

Seriously though, if there's anything I can leave you with, it's to be skeptical of the Michael Moore's of the world, of the Washington Post, the CBS's, even our elected legislators - yes, especially them, and including the Senate of the United States. And yes, subject my comments to scrutiny if you hear something that you object to or you find some question about, feel free to challenge it, that's the American way, it should be the American way. The only thing I want to leave you with is some advice that my dad gave me besides the great advice when I realized I couldn't get anywhere with a philosophy degree and he said develop a marketable skill. He said, "Son, if you don't know where you're going it doesn't matter which road you take."

Questions and Answers:

Q: This next film coming up, *Michael Moore Hates America*, I'm assuming you've heard about it- what is your take on what's going to be presented in that film. Do you think it'll in any way counteract what's going on?

CK: That's interesting. There have been reports of various films that are coming out to rebut or counter what Michael Moore has done, one is tentatively titled *Michael Moore Hates America*. I should get in a plug for Accuracy in Media and the fact that Roger Aronoff, one of our top people, is working on a true documentary to tell the truth on the

coverage of the War in Iraq. That should be coming out not too long from now as well. Again, keep posted at the AIM website [www.AIM.org](http://www.AIM.org) for updates about this and other films. Of course you can sign up at our site for daily e-mail updates including our media monitors and AIM report and columns. You didn't want to hear an advertisement but I thought I'd take that opportunity.

So things are happening, people are concerned, and that's an effective way to go: counter what Michael Moore is doing with the truth.

Q: I think Michael Moore would've been more appropriate if he had been in *Super Size Me*, a documentary about a man that gained a lot of weight. It's so easy to make fun of him, you know, 'he's got weapons of mass destruction' and things like that, but I've noticed when you try to protest a movie like this or something, the companies themselves, the reason why they did it was because they had so many phone calls was really organized in putting this in all the theaters. The movie *America's Heart and Soul*, which is a great movie that talks about the goodness of America, it's only showing in about 90 theaters. The same thing happened to *Michael Moore Hates America*. Is there any one organization or group that we can rally around and get them to put those films in the theaters?

CK: The AIM film and perhaps the *Michael Moore Hates America* film I understand are going to be debuted at a film festival I think in August perhaps in Los Angeles, the Liberty Film Festival I think it's called, and so we will be putting updates up on the AIM website for people who know more about that. Of course, not everybody's going to go to the screen in Los Angeles but I'm sure copies will be available because time is running out. This Michael Moore film could be misleading literally tens of millions of people about the nature of the enemy we face, about the nature of the threat in this critical election year. And so these quote anti-Moore films are coming out over the next few weeks and months and people have to keep up to date on them. Not to go down to that level, but on the AIM report we did on a Michael Moore film I mentioned how he appears in his own films, and he's not a very attractive character, to put it mildly, but my conclusion was, I don't want to go out of my way to make fun of him personally, but it appears that he has as much respect or concern for the truth as he has for his own appearance.

Q: In World War II and World War I, things like Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11* would be considered high propaganda and treason towards America. Why do you think now that in a time of critical need - we need support, we need to rally around our troops, we need to rally around our leadership - why do you think that we're lacking that now in that nothing's being done about this type of propaganda? Because that's what it is.

CK: People don't like to accuse other Americans of being unpatriotic or treasonous. As I pointed out with the Senate vote in honor of this resolution honoring the communist Soviet spy Oppenheimer, they're refusing to recognize that, despite what the facts show. But there is one individual, he has written for our AIM report on one occasion, he has his own group - Jon Alvarez - his group is PABAHH, I think its Patriotic Americans Boycotting Hollywood, something like that. He has gone so far as to say that he believes this Michael Moore film does constitute treason during a time of war, and he has called

on Attorney General Ashcroft to prosecute Moore. So some people are speaking out in that regard.

Q: What do you think of the new book *Michael Moore is a Big Fat Stupid White Man*?

A: I haven't seen that book but I know that has come out. Again, people are reacting to Michael Moore, his quote 'popularity' and the adoration that he receives from the major media realizing with few exceptions, and I cited a couple, the major media would rather just publicize him and make money for him, even though clearly he is exploiting the suffering of this war for profit. He's a multimillionaire who is exploiting the suffering of this war, the suffering of the Iraqi people and the Americans there. For Americans especially, this "evil" Halliburton company that he attacks incessantly in his film, this is a company that has lost over forty employees because of the war. Americans have died and Michael Moore continues and his allies continue to attack this company even though this company is absolutely essential and vital. What he never tells you in his film is that the main global competitor to Halliburton is Schlumberger, a French firm. Does he want the French to be able to make that kind of money or to go into Iraq? Is that really the purpose, the intent behind the attacks on Halliburton? And the fact that Schlumberger has on its board two leading Clinton Administration officials. Why aren't we ever told about that in all that we hear about how bad Halliburton is?

Q: I'm sure there is an official definition for what is a documentary, and I wonder if it would be worth fighting for re-labeling the cover?

CK: Well there should be, "This can be hazardous to your health!" We've tried to re-label it, we've criticized the media for calling it a documentary but I guess he can call it what he wants. And I cited one concrete example of how he completely misleads his audience about the Saudis who left the United States after 9/11, ignoring the testimony, the revelations of somebody who's in his film! That's just plain dishonest, and that shows that it's not a documentary. Legally, how do you fight for that, how do you get that changed? I wish I had an answer, I don't know how. We should challenge the media, the reporters. Don't call that thing a documentary, for crying out loud! If words have any meaning at all!