

CrossFit: Uncle Rhabdo Goes To Washington



By Hank Campbell — September 21, 2016



CrossFit Inc.'s CEO Greg Glassman was once in a war on Coca-Cola - at least until it was revealed he was only in a war on Coca-Cola because Coke gave money to his competitors. Then he changed gears and claimed to be in a war against soda. But then it was revealed that he drinks a lot of soda - and a lot of margaritas - and switched gears to claiming he is not in a war on soda, he is in a war for public health, and simply believes that if a researcher has ever taken money from a company, they are unethical.

In the science community, when dealing with people who are either evangelists in a war they know little about or are simply anti-science, this is known as "moving the goalposts." Basically, you just keep changing your argument every time the old one is shown to be invalid. That is what Glassman is doing.

Do you think Coke causes diabetes? If so, you are the perfect customer for his overpriced videos - the exercise equivalent of only buying books you saw on the Oprah show. [Type I diabetics turned out in droves to criticize him when he first overturned all of medical knowledge and claimed soda was to blame for their disease](#) [1]. **(1)**



Then he went a step further, looked at everyone Coke ever gave grants to over the last 38 years, and wrote a bunch of us letters demanding we stop taking money from Coke.

I wrote about his weird PR stunt last year ^[2] after I got my letter - wondering why a guy who has never donated to science and health consumer advocacy like ours is demanding I stop taking money from a company that doesn't give us any money. I even offered a health challenge to Mr. Glassman - if he would send us a donation, I would vow *never to take money from Coca-Cola*. He ignored it, and instead sent his well-known marketing thugs to claim on social media that I was promoting cancer and to threaten me. No, really. That is their corporate culture.**(2)**

Now he is back at it, [this time paying for an appearance on Capitol Hill](#) ^[3] to demand that the government try to forbid companies from giving grants to anyone in health research. The timing is good; just last week the *New York Times* ran an article about an analysis of sugar health information from Professor Stan Glantz ^[4], the long-time anti-smoking activist (rightfully so) who then did a Greenpeace after cigarettes plummeted and latched onto a new cause (vaping, which has no smoke and is used for quitting cigarettes) and now that those have been hindered by FDA has segued into sugar. His common claim; anyone who has taken a donation is corrupt and there is a big corporate conspiracy to manipulate science.

Unless the donor recipient is Stan Glantz, who splits hairs and claims he has never *directly* taken money from corporations, leaving out that the corporate donations he has gotten just happened to go to his school. Thanks, NicoDerm® (Johnson & Johnson)!

But Glassman doesn't know all that - his "follow the money" conspiracy tale only applies to causes that will make him richer, in this case attempting to use legislative fiat to penalize his competitors because he can't beat them in the free market. Oddly, he has gotten CATO Institute, the respected

libertarian think tank, to provide an outlet for him to claim this Vast Corporate Conspiracy. It is strange to have them lending their credibility to a guy who wanted government to ban one brand of soda but has now changed his argument to banning corporations from funding science.

Glassman is in a War on Fun, no different than the war on marijuana has been. Do libertarian groups also think that "war" has been a good idea and proper use of government resources?

I don't drink much soda, though I think I had one last week, and have never smoked marijuana, but I recognize that some people are going to do too much of those. The solution to issues like obesity or drug addiction is not to ban research or soda or marijuana, and it is certainly not to make the perfect the enemy of the good by castigating the people we claim to care about. Some people will go skydiving, that has risks and no benefit, some will smoke, some will drink Red Bull. I don't think any of those are good ideas, but we shouldn't ban them across the board. In order to rationalize more social engineering and solve problems we don't have, I don't think [our government should embrace fake metrics](#) ^[5] that [no one else in the world recognizes as clinically relevant](#) ^[6], (a statistically insignificant noise level [5 percent](#) ^[7]) like [an arbitrary "prediabetes" designation](#) ^[8] which will cause people to panic, and which Glassman only uses because it matches his pre-existing beliefs. This is a guy who *makes fun* of diabetics and dialysis patients he has created. He is hardly a defender of public health.

Penalizing scientists and doctors by telling companies they shouldn't fund research is helping no one and not solving the obesity problem. If Skittles ever wants to send us a check, it will make zero difference in what we study ("[unconsciously](#)" or [otherwise](#) ^[9]) because scientists and doctors here do not know who our funders are. And It would be weird if I suddenly said in a meeting, "Skittles are great, I think we should do an article defending them" - so weird even String Theory believers haven't invented the alternative universe where that could happen. Of course companies should fund our research instead of dumping more money into marketing - they absolutely should do something useful with their cash and we are in a war with anti-science groups that have a \$1,000 to 1 advantage.

A truly skeptical thinker will note that Glassman doesn't criticize Pepsi much. I wonder why?



NOTE:

(1)

Diabetics were not amused.

Hey @CrossFit^[10] and @CrossFitCEO^[11] - not sure @CocaCola^[12] appreciates your trademark infringement that insults 29 million U.S. families.

— The Perfect Diabetic (@ThePerfectDBlog) June 30, 2015^[13]

@CrossFit^[10] @CrossFitCEO^[11] Great job spreading ignorance you schmuck. Someone SLOWLY explain to this guy that sugar does not cause diabetes

— A Diabetic Comic (@ChelcieRice) June 30, 2015^[14]

My blog post is in reply to @CrossFit^[10] @CrossFitCEO^[11] 's ridiculousness! Check it out! <http://t.co/QNH0oQyuXm>^[15] #crossfit^[16] pic.twitter.com/jD9UtS2krG^[17]

— Samantha Redden (@MrsFoss1987) July 14, 2015^[18]

actually, @CrossFitCEO^[11], as a T1 since I was a skinny little kid, it's @CocaCola

^[12]

that can save my life during an insulin shock, not [@CrossFit](#) [10]

— Jesse Bering ([@JesseBering](#)) [July 13, 2015](#) [19]

[@CrossFit](#) [10] [@CrossFitCEO](#) [11] Sugar does not cause diabetes. You insult millions of people with your tweet. pic.twitter.com/7hv3Z7vWY6 [20]

— DiabetesHeroSquad ([@DiabetesHeroes](#)) [June 29, 2015](#) [21]

[@CrossFit](#) [10] [@CrossFitCEO](#) [11] this post sadly perpetuates the stereotype that jocks are morons.

— Didier Moutia ([@DidierLM](#)) [July 14, 2015](#) [22]

[@CrossFit](#) [10] [@CrossFitCEO](#) [11] Can u guess who has diabetes in the pic? pic.twitter.com/OcjX64uNbK [23]

— Rebecca Shelley ([@rebecca_shelley](#)) [June 30, 2015](#) [24]

It's upsetting that [@CrossFit](#) [10] wants me to give my diabetic son sugar AFTER he's dead. What awful people.

— David @ scificommons ([@ScifiCommons](#)) [June 30, 2015](#) [25]

[@CrossFit](#) [10] [@CrossFitCEO](#) [11] Was Gassman yelling at PWDs? Slamming sugary drink makers? Racial slur? This comes to mind pic.twitter.com/ck4iyb3pzi [26]

— Riva Greenberg ([@diabetesmyths](#)) [July 2, 2015](#) [27]

[@CrossFit](#) [10] [@CrossFitCEO](#) [11] Wow, stunned at the crassness of this tweet. Why not apologize + be valid advocates for good [#nutrition](#) [28] and [#health](#) [29]?

— Elizabeth I Ransom ([@EIRansom](#)) [July 1, 2015](#) [30]

This Henry is only 7 years old and he knows more about diabetes than Greg Glassman does. <https://www.instagram.com/p/4ko8gkqXyz/> [31]

@CrossFit^[10] @CrossFitCEO^[11] you need to educate yourself and quick, I am ashamed to call myself a Crossfitter tonight

— Jane (Northernmum) (@janeblackmore) June 30, 2015^[32]

And of course one famous diabetic didn't take kindly to this:

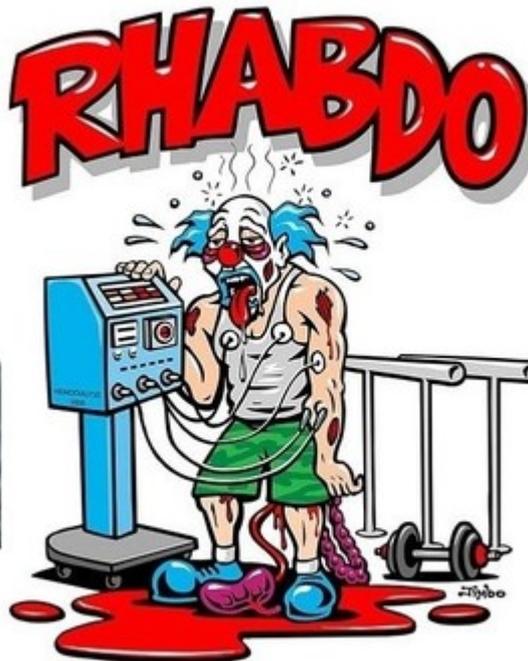
This is not cool. Please know and understand the difference between type one and type diabetes before making <https://t.co/HtptOe8KMa>^[33]

— Nick Jonas (@nickjonas) June 30, 2015^[34]

(2) In case you are wondering about the "Uncle Rhabdo" in the title, Glassman is so unconcerned about actual public health that [when it was revealed his extreme exercise beliefs](#)^[35] (he obviously doesn't do it himself, he just sells it) were leading to rhabdomyolysis, a cellular muscle breakdown which can lead to total kidney failure and dialysis, he put out this cartoon, creating the Uncle Rhabdo character, ridiculing the people the people whose lives he had ruined.



Greg Glassman
Founder - CrossFit



Credit: [Examiner](#)^[36]

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Source URL: <https://www.acsh.org/news/2016/09/21/crossfit-uncle-rhabdo-goes-washington-10194>

Links

[1] <https://twitter.com/CrossFit/status/615539464232902656/photo/1>

- [2] <http://acsh.org/news/2016/03/01/an-open-letter-to-crossfit-ceo-greg-glassman-2>
- [3] <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2016-09-21/crossfit-brings-soda-battle-to-capitol-hill?source=acsh.org>
- [4] <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/13/well/eat/how-the-sugar-industry-shifted-blame-to-fat.html?source=acsh.org>
- [5] http://www.science20.com/news_articles/its_time_to_jettison_the_prediabetes_label-140549
- [6] http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2016/03/the_cdc_is_trying_to_make_86_million_americans_sick_.html?source=a
- [7] <http://acsh.org/news/2016/02/03/mary-prediabetes-draft>
- [8] <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/commentary/ct-prediabetes-diabetes-pharma-epidemic-perspec-0801-jm-20160729-story.html?source=acsh.org>
- [9] <http://acsh.org/news/2015/09/28/coca-cola-transparency-and-science-outreach>
- [10] https://twitter.com/CrossFit?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw
- [11] https://twitter.com/CrossFitCEO?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw
- [12] https://twitter.com/CocaCola?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw
- [13] https://twitter.com/ThePerfectDBlog/status/615865943189811200?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw
- [14] https://twitter.com/ChelcieRice/status/615689582668029952?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw
- [15] <http://t.co/QNHOOQyuXm>
- [16] https://twitter.com/hashtag/crossfit?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw
- [17] <http://t.co/jD9UtS2krG>
- [18] https://twitter.com/MrsFoss1987/status/620979018305773569?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw
- [19] https://twitter.com/JesseBering/status/620407354589196288?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw
- [20] <http://t.co/7hv3Z7vWY6>
- [21] https://twitter.com/DiabetesHeroes/status/615575659901947904?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw
- [22] https://twitter.com/DidierLM/status/620871998755831808?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw
- [23] <http://t.co/OcjX64uNbK>
- [24] https://twitter.com/rebecca_shelley/status/615880332923895809?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw
- [25] https://twitter.com/ScifiCommons/status/615927369216319488?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw
- [26] <http://t.co/ck4iyb3pzi>
- [27] https://twitter.com/diabetesmyths/status/616708206950092801?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw
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- [31] <https://www.instagram.com/p/4ko8gkqXyz/>
- [32] https://twitter.com/janeblackmore/status/615998507711889408?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw
- [33] <https://t.co/HtptOe8KMa>
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- [35] <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/22/fashion/thursdaystyles/getting-fit-even-if-it-kills-you.html?source=acsh.org>
- [36] <http://www.examiner.com/article/physical-therapy-professor-reveals-dark-side-of-crossfit-uncle-rhabdo>