

# We Were in Smithsonian Magazine, Washington Post, On The Radio, And More Last Week



By Hank Campbell — October 3, 2018



**1. In his regular bi-weekly radio spot**, Dr. Alex Berezow talked about a study showing that conventional farms are better than the organic kind - by far, how scientists in Europe would like to fight back against the political war on biotechnology, which threatens to leave them behind for a generation, torn ACLs in athletes, and much more.

<http://kvi.com/podcast/kirbycast-september-25th-3pm-hour> <sup>[1]</sup>

<http://kvi.com/podcast/kirbycast-september-20th-3pm-hour> <sup>[2]</sup>

**2. In *Smithsonian***, they covered our work on [how the artist Caravaggio may have died of sepsis](#) <sup>[3]</sup> - blood infection triggered by golden staph - due to a sword wound rather than syphilis (at least a good story for an artist) or malaria (not a good story, since you don't do anything to get it except live in a country where environmentalists block science).

**3. In *Detroit News***, I talked about [the efforts of organic corporations and their trade groups to promote their goods at the expense of pro-science agriculture](#) <sup>[4]</sup>. Look, I am all about free markets and organic food is a great free market story. They convinced customers their product was more nutritious and more ethical when even the USDA person who signed off on it said it was nothing of the kind. They went from being a fringe movement to a \$35 billion Big Food industry.

All fine, but you can't lie. FDA would crack down on them if they tried to claim organic food cures cancer on a label, but Whole Foods has blatant falsehoods right on its website and FDA does nothing. They are too busy trying to manufacture a war against e-cigarettes by claiming that 2.5% of teens, most of them former or current smokers, using vaping devices are an "epidemic."

Fear sells. In organic food, customers are paying the price of fear and smokers will pay if FDA

uses a Scud missile to target smoking cessation and harm reduction while claiming that they are worried about a few bad actors selling products to children.

**4. In *Washington Post***, they ran a conspiracy op-ed by discredited former journalist Paul Thacker, who now works as a paid scribe for activist groups (hey, someone has to pay for him to go on those long vacations in Spain), and given the political mandate from their new owner, they had no interest in a rebuttal to his allegation that the EPA knows plastic was killing us but does nothing. Still, they suggested I make it a Letter to the Editor, [which they did publish](#) [5].

So how is Big Plastic blocking a ban on their carcinogens out? He can't say, and systemic conspiracy theories don't need to make sense. He is doing work for hire, and Washington Post is going to be sympathetic to the environmental NGOs that pay him.

**5. Politically fringe sociologist Michael Halpern**, of the ironically named Union of Concerned Scientists, [also claims science is a Vast Corporate Conspiracy](#) [6]. And only donations to his activist group will stave off our doom. This is puzzling logic. He and his fellow travelers are literally 1,000X the funding of the pro-science community, as again any look at form 990s of the pro-science side would show, if he chose to do any journalism.

You might think we'd get tired of being attacked by everyone from Greenpeace and NRDC to lawyers at Center for Science in the Public Interest or Union of Concerned Scientists. No, it shows we are in exactly the right place. It's if they stop attacking that I'd be worried.

Imagine if their funding advantage was only 500 to 1. You can help in that by making a donation [here](#) [7].



**6. Not to be outdone, something called Daily Coffee News**, which is located in that bastion of science known as Portlandia, [seems to be angry because climate change has not ruined coffee](#) [8], which former Vice-President Al Gore said in 2006 would happen by 2016 unless we bought carbon credits from his company.

That doesn't deter blogger Howard Bryman from going on a rant about Dr. Alex Berezow. In cancer claims, the four word question that stumps activists is, *where are the bodies?* In conspiracy claims about corporate funding, the question is *where is the money?*

A look at our form 990, the very first tab on this website, shows it isn't there. Yet the conspiracy theorists just move the goalposts. They will claim we are either willing to risk jail by hiding some secret pile of gold in the basement or we are auditioning for money because corporations. Don't try to figure that logic out, you'll get a headache.

**7. Finally, Dr. Jamie Wells attended events** at the Wistar Institute and and at the Susan G. Komen Foundation. We'll go anywhere to talk about science. If you are having an event and want one of us to speak, please let me know by writing [hcampbell@acsh.org](mailto:hcampbell@acsh.org) [9]

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**Links**

[1] <http://kvi.com/podcast/kirbycast-september-25th-3pm-hour>

[2] <http://kvi.com/podcast/kirbycast-september-20th-3pm-hour>

[3] <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/caravaggio-may-have-died-infected-sword-wound-not-syphilis-180970374/?source=acsh.org>

[4] <https://www.detroitnews.com/story/opinion/2018/09/20/organic-label-misleads-consumers/1347314002/?source=acsh.org>

[5] [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/readers-critique-the-post-an-uplifting-letter-is-finally-unearthed-but-history-is-overlooked-in-north-carolina/2018/09/28/c190e7a8-c356-11e8-97a5-ab1e46bb3bc7\\_story.html?source=acsh.org](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/readers-critique-the-post-an-uplifting-letter-is-finally-unearthed-but-history-is-overlooked-in-north-carolina/2018/09/28/c190e7a8-c356-11e8-97a5-ab1e46bb3bc7_story.html?source=acsh.org)

[6] <https://blog.ucsusa.org/michael-halpern/what-is-the-responsible-science-policy-coalition-here-are-some-clues?source=acsh.org>

[7] <https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/weblink.aspx?name=acsh&id=1>

[8] <https://dailycoffeenews.com/2018/09/28/the-extraction-gets-frothy-over-climate-change-denial/?source=acsh.org>

[9] <mailto:hcampbell@acsh.org>