

DeSmogBlog: Climate Website Is Headed by Anti-Vaxxer Brendan DeMelle



By Alex Berezow, PhD — March 23, 2020

DeSmogBlog, a climate activist website that ruthlessly smears scientists, is headed by Brendan DeMelle, an anti-vaxxer who helped RFK, Jr. write an infamous and since-retracted article linking vaccines to autism.

Meet the climate website
led by an anti-vaxxer



DESMOG

DeSmogBlog is led by an anti-vaxxer

We have had a recent and unfortunate encounter with a website called DeSmogBlog, whose stated aim is "clearing the PR pollution that clouds climate science." In reality, it's an ideologically driven, propaganda website that spreads malicious disinformation and [smears scientists like the late Dr. Freeman Dyson](#) [1].

And irony of ironies! While claiming to be on the side of science, ***DeSmogBlog Executive Director Brendan DeMelle is an anti-vaxxer.***

His bio page proudly notes that he "served as research associate for Robert F. Kennedy, Jr." As we have written before, [RFK, Jr. is a scourge on public health](#) [2]. His own family [agrees](#) [3]. RFK, Jr.'s unhinged, anti-vaccine articles and rants discourage people from getting vaccinated for measles, influenza, and HPV. His legacy will be one of disseminating lethally dangerous junk science and facilitating the spread of preventable infectious disease and cervical cancer.

What on earth was Brendan DeMelle doing with the utterly reprehensible RFK, Jr? Well, he was

helping him write those anti-vaccine articles and rants. Specifically, DeMelle helped RFK, Jr write the now-infamous article for *Rolling Stone* and *Salon* claiming that vaccines cause autism. *Salon* later [retracted the piece](#) [4], and *Rolling Stone* [hid it behind a paywall](#) [5].

Did RFK, Jr and Brendan DeMelle learn something about science from this? Oh, no. They doubled down. Here's an [excerpt](#) [6] from RFK, Jr's book *Thimerosal*, which falsely declares the preservative a neurotoxin:

day... It is important to note, however, that none of the mistakes weaken the primary point of the story." In fact, as email record exchanges from the time show, most of the errors were made by *Rolling Stone's* and *Salon's* editors as they cut my 16,000-word submission to 4,700 words. The editors apologized to me and my research assistant, [Brendan DeMelle](#), for the errors they had introduced into the copy.¹⁴⁵⁸

"None of the mistakes weaken the primary point of the story." Wow. After all these years, RFK, Jr and his sidekick Brendan DeMelle are unrepentant anti-vaxxers, still happy to spew disinformation that harms public health. In 2018, [more than 140,000 people died of measles](#) [7]. We can thank the tireless efforts of RFK, Jr and DeSmogBlog's Brendan DeMelle for contributing to that outcome.

Brendan DeMelle: A Long History as an Anti-Vaccine, Anti-Biotech Activist

It wasn't just in 2005 that DeMelle was spreading lies about vaccines with RFK, Jr. He's been helping him do that for many years. In 2008, they co-authored a [series of articles for the Huffington Post](#) [8], one of the biggest, guiltiest offenders of propagating pseudoscience. Despite already having been thoroughly debunked by the scientific community, RFK, Jr and DeMelle kept right on [claiming that thimerosal caused autism](#) [9]. They were also busy spreading [misinformation about GMOs](#) [10].

The icing on the cake is that DeMelle and DeSmogBlog have a [longstanding collaboration with Lisa Graves](#) [11], a lawyer who runs the thoroughly discredited conspiracy theory website [SourceWatch](#) [12]. Funny how when you find one conspiracy theorist, you always find several more. It's a conspiracy of conspiracy theorists.

DeSmogBlog Lies About ACSH and COVID-19

It's this motley crew that, just the other day, [completely lied about ACSH](#) [13], claiming that we "downplayed" the threat posed by COVID-19. In reality, we declared COVID-19 a global health crisis a [week before the World Health Organization](#) [14].

Fish gotta swim, birds gotta eat... and anti-vaxxers gotta lie. Some of them even get paid to do it.

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Links

[1] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2020/03/23/desmogblog-climate-activist-site-smears-freeman-dyson-and-other-scientists-14651>

- [2] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2019/09/04/if-rfk-jr-likes-your-article-it-might-get-retracted-14271>
- [3] <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2019/05/08/robert-kennedy-jr-measles-vaccines-226798>
- [4] <https://retractionwatch.com/2011/01/16/salon-retracts-2005-robert-f-kennedy-jr-piece-on-alleged-autism-vaccine-link/>
- [5] <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/deadly-immunity-180037/>
- [6] <https://books.google.pl/books?id=Wy-CDwAAQBAJ&pg=PT365&lpg=PT365&dq=brendan+demelle+vaccine&source=bl&ots=EBkV>
- [7] <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/05-12-2019-more-than-140-000-die-from-measles-as-cases-surge-worldwide>
- [8] <https://www.huffpost.com/author/robert-f-kennedy-jr-and-brendan-demelle>
- [9] https://www.huffpost.com/entry/unearthed-news-of-the-wee_b_102043
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- [13] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2020/03/17/desmogblog-intercept-spread-lies-about-acsh-covid-19-14641>
- [14] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2020/01/24/who-damages-its-reputation-vaping-coronavirus-14528>