Journalists Regurgitate 'The Monsanto Papers'

By Alex Berezow, PhD — March 2, 2021

The mainstream media is repeating the unscientific claims of a dishonest book. A deeper dive into the author of the book would have revealed duplicity and enormous conflicts of interest.

An unfortunate article in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reviewed a book (ominously titled The Monsanto Papers) written by Carey Gillam. The book is a conspiratorial screed alleging that Monsanto and the EPA were involved in a massive X-Files-like cover-up involving glyphosate (an herbicide). Gillam believes glyphosate causes cancer. (It doesn't.)

Carey Gillam is an anti-GMO activist who works for U.S. Right to Know (USRTK), an organization that ostensibly promotes corporate transparency* but whose real purpose is to undermine the agricultural and biotech industries. Because USRTK receives money from the overpriced organic food industry, that is highly relevant information.

Did the book review mention that? No. Gillam instead was referred to as a "[v]eteran investigative journalist."

Unfortunately, the review takes a completely uncritical look at her book and simply regurgitates as gospel truth whatever she wrote down. For instance, the article just assumes that glyphosate causes cancer, despite the fact that just about every major regulatory body on the planet has concluded that glyphosate is safe.
Is that mentioned anywhere in the article? No.

One of Gillam's collaborators [5], a trial lawyer named Timothy Litzenburg who made bundles of cash by accusing companies of causing cancer, was found guilty of extortion and sentenced to two years in prison [6].

Did the article mention that? No.

Recently, Gillam's employer (USRTK [7]) began spreading conspiracy theories about the coronavirus, namely that it was genetically modified in a Chinese lab. Additionally, USRTK's primary funder is the Organic Consumers Association, a group that promotes 9/11 trutherism [8], chemtrails [9], FEMA's secret plan to implement martial law [10], pesticides causing school shootings [11], and anti-vaccine propaganda [12].

Did the article mention that? No.

In 2017, David Zaruk [13] and the Times of London [14] discovered that an advisor to IARC (the group within the WHO that is responsible for classifying carcinogens) named Christopher Portier was paid £120,000 from trial lawyers who stood to profit from glyphosate being labeled a carcinogen.

Surely, the article reported that, right? You know the answer.

Instead, it attacked our organization by calling us a corporate front group, despite the fact that less than 5% of our funding comes from corporations or trade groups. C'est la vie.

*Note: As you might suspect, USRTK's insistence on transparency doesn't include themselves. One time, USRTK wrote a letter [15] to USA Today, demanding that they stop publishing my columns. Why? Because I'm a corporate shill, of course. (Much to USA Today's credit, the letter was ignored.)

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