

TRUTH OR DECEPTION

A pamphlet written in the tradition of Thomas Paine's
Common Sense, for a purpose every bit as vital

on the following interesting

S U B J E C T:

TRUTH LITERACY is the ability to tell truth from deception. Universal truth literacy is just as important to the health of democracy as reading literacy, because if people cannot "read" the truth they are blind to what the truth really is. They are easily controlled by any politician who uses deception to hoodwink the masses into supporting him and his positions.

It follows that TRUTH ILLITERACY is the proximate cause of the disastrous path our country has taken recently.

From this it follows that the TRUTH TEST is part of the cure.

THIS PAMPHLET provides a complete introduction to the Truth Test, which is a simple four question test designed to tell whether a political statement is truth or deception. But for the cure to work, after reading this pamphlet, IT MUST BE PASSED ON to the next reader.



How strangely will the Tools of a Tyrant pervert the plain Meaning of Words!

Samuel Adams, in a letter to John Pitts, January 21, 1776



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On truth literacy and the survival of a nation

Anation cannot long endure if oppressed, whether by a mother country, a tyrant, a class, or any other group who puts their own interests first. **Oppression** is the act of using power to benefit one group at the expense of another. *Since no sane person wants to be oppressed, in a democracy mass oppression requires mass deception.*

Truth literacy is the ability to tell truth from deception. Universal truth literacy is just as important to the health of democracy as reading literacy, because if people cannot “read” the truth they are blind to what the truth really is. They are easily controlled by any politician who uses deception to hoodwink the masses into supporting him and his positions.

Political deception is an age old, worldwide problem. Its success has led to more corruption, war, economic catastrophe and *oppression* than any other single cause. For example, how did Vladimir Lenin rise to power and consolidate his and the communist party’s iron grip after the Bolshevik Revolution? Some by force, but mostly by the fog of deception. It was Lenin who gave the world this chilling quote:

A lie repeated often enough becomes the truth. ¹

But if citizens can tell that lies are not the truth then the lies will not work, no matter how many times they may be repeated. In fact, once a person has been fully inoculated against deception, each further repetition of a bold lie only serves to drive them further away from the deceiving politician.

While political deception is a worldwide problem, this pamphlet is written for those living in a country where the problem has spun out of control. If Thomas Paine were alive and writing today, he might repeat his cry that “These are times that try men’s souls,” because in that country a new brand of politics has replaced reason and the common good with something else.

That nation was formerly the most prosperous and esteemed on the planet. But since the ascendancy of a party and an ideology that bases its power on the two most powerful special interest groups on the planet, large for-profit corporations and the rich, that nation has stumbled badly.

While those special interests have profited immensely, on the average everyone else has suffered. Most people see their real incomes shrinking. They see their constitutional rights being taken away, drip by steady drip. They see minor issues like abortion, immigration, guns and gays rising to a fever pitch of prominence, while the issues that really matter go unattended. They see their country turning away from the constructive forces of cooperation to the destructive forces of unilateralism. From 2000 to 2008 they watched a record surplus turn into a record deficit and saw their President fabricate a war that has killed approximately 300,000 people.² Oppression stalks the nation, draining away its life one more drop at a time.

And it's all happening in the United States of America, the country that invented modern democracy, where such things should not be possible.

Piled on top of that enigma sits another. When the Great Recession of 2008 hit, the people threw off the oppressing party and voted in one that worked for The People. But now only a few years later, public opinion is turning against the party and administration that's working for the common good, despite the fact this is totally unjustified. The Obama administration and the Democrats didn't cause the recession, or the high expense of two wars, or the deficit. But they are being successfully blamed for a bad economy and mounting deficits. WHY IS THIS?

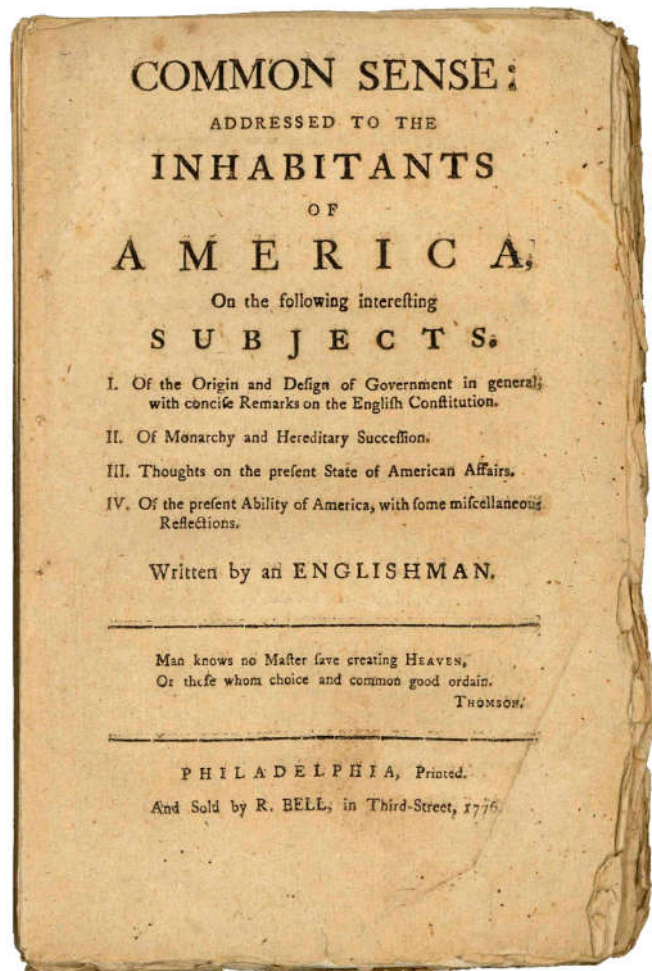
Because while you can't fool all of the people all of the time, *you can fool most of the people most of the time with the right political deception.*

But what if those people could no longer be fooled? If the majority of the people could see the truth they would rise up on Election Day, peacefully throw their oppressors out, and return their nation to normality.

This has been done before and we can do it again.

On January 10, 1776, Thomas Paine published the first edition of his 46 page pamphlet, *Common Sense*. (In honor of Paine's work this pamphlet is the exact same length.) Starting on that day, America's men and women begin to see the truth. The first printing of 1,000 copies sold out in days. More printings followed.³ In a matter of weeks The People begin to arise from foggy slumber and ponder what to do. Later that year they took the strongest action possible to throw their oppressors out, when on July 4, 1776 their representatives signed the United States Declaration of Independence.

Common Sense did what this pamphlet attempts to do. It allowed an intelligent population to break free from the bonds of deception, by replacing illusion with reality and offering a clear vision of an alternative that can work. *Common Sense*



explained, in simple terms everyone could follow, why the colonies had to wake up and break free from their mother country. Edmund Randolph, who later became Virginia's seventh governor, wrote that "the public sentiment which *a few weeks before* shuddered at the tremendous obstacles, with which independence was envisioned, overleaped every barrier." A reviewer in Connecticut noted "We were blind, but on reading these enlightening words *the scales have fallen from our eyes.*" Writing in a letter to a friend, a Bostonian said "Independence a year ago could not have been publickly [sic] mentioned with impunity ... *Nothing else is now talked of,* and I know not what can be done by Great Britain to prevent it." ⁴

We can again break free from the bonds of deception because the same preconditions exist. Today, as then, the majority of the population senses something is intolerably wrong but cannot unify behind a single course of action. Powerful special interests (royalty and the aristocracy then, large for-profit corporations and the rich now) are exploiting and oppressing the population, but too many people are unable to see the situation for what it is and break free. The nation has followed a course of action for so long that most of its citizens are fervently attached to their current world view and ideology, and are resistant to change. A galaxy of confusing, conflicting, and often unfounded opinions exists, causing the people to be unable to determine what to do.

What would happen if we could cut through that fog of confusion and inability to change as swiftly as *Common Sense* did over 200 years ago? That can be done with this pamphlet by learning:

The Truth Test: a way to tell truth from deception

The **Truth Test** is a simple test designed to tell whether a political statement is true, false, or just plain nonsense. This allows voters to discriminate between reality and illusion, as well as political benevolence and oppression. They can then correctly answer the question every democracy depends on: *Is this truth or deception?*

The Truth Test works for people who have an open mind and are earnestly seeking to make decisions based on a reasonable approximation of the truth. It tends to not work for those highly committed to a particular ideology or candidate, because they usually rationalize away input that conflicts with their viewpoint and accept the rest. Fortunately this leaves swing voters and those who are not highly committed. The Truth Test can work for them.

The Truth Test is not perfect. As an element of critical thinking ⁵ it takes effort to apply and requires judgment calls. But once practiced for awhile, it should allow you to sail through most attempts to influence your vote in little longer than the time it takes to watch or read them.

The test consists of these four sequential questions:

- 1. What is the argument?**
- 2. Are any common patterns of deception present?**
- 3. Are the premises true, complete, and relevant?**
- 4. Does each conclusion follow logically and strongly from its premises?**

In politics about 80% of false arguments are based on well known, easily spotted patterns of deception, like creating a false enemy, pushing the fear hot button, the false dilemma fallacy, and the ever-popular *ad hominem* attack. Thus, only the first two questions are needed in most cases. This makes the test fast and easy to apply.

The average person is never taught anything like the Truth Test in school or the workplace. *Thus their immunity to deception is largely a matter of cultural chance.* For truth literacy to become a cultural norm and achieve its full success, it must become as essential to a person's education as reading and writing.

Let's take a look at the Truth Test one question at a time.

Step 1. What is the argument?

The purpose of an argument is to establish or strengthen belief. An **argument** consists of one or more premises (also known as reasons) leading to a conclusion. The premises and conclusion can be stated or, if obvious or well known, implied. If an argument contains no premises leading to a conclusion it's not an argument. It's nonsense.

But it may be such clever, appealing nonsense that it works, as in these two isolated incomplete arguments:

1. Support our troops.

2. Vote for me in November.

Neither argument contains a premise and a conclusion. Both consist only of unsupported conclusions, because no reason is given as to why you should support the troops or why you should vote for me. Because they are not an argument but attempt to sway your belief, they are nonsense. Such candidates are trying to manipulate you with empty slogans and sheer hogwash. Their crude arguments demonstrate that their real intention is to do whatever they want—after they have tricked you into supporting them.

Do more statements make an argument better? Not if it's still nonsense, as in:

Our country is a great place. It takes courage to win a war. I was a war hero. Vote for me in November.

There's no clear reasoning relating the three premises to the conclusion. There are too many ways to interpret the statement. It's not a clear argument but a soggy hodgepodge of related snippets, designed to worm their way into your brain and entice you into voting for the candidate in November. Even though it's not an argu-

ment, if it's repeated often enough it works. Imagine the above snippets sprinkled in a dozen speeches, fifty ads, and a hundred lame talk show appearances by those supporting a candidate. If the other side doesn't do something more effective, that candidate will win. The human mind cannot resist such continual onslaughts of infective deception, unless it has been properly inoculated.

Notice what's happening here. For the Truth Test to work you have to put up your guard and not accept arguments without consciously evaluating them. This is more than skepticism or critical thinking. It's like taking **The Smart Voter Pledge**: "I will no longer be a pawn of political manipulation. From this day forward I can't be fooled, because from now on I'm going to apply the Truth Test to every attempt to persuade me to support a politician or position. If I don't have the time to apply it then I'm going to ignore the appeal." At first this will be difficult or slow. But with practice it will become a swift reliable habit.

It's impossible to evaluate an argument until you know what the argument is. Consider this popular appeal:

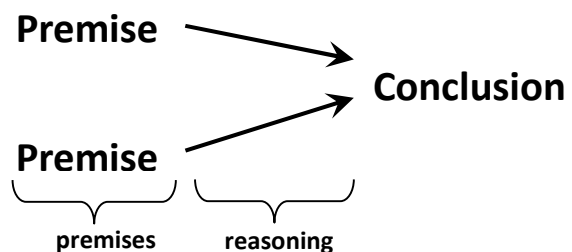
A vote for me is a vote for a better country.

This could be restated as "If you vote for me then that will make this a better country." Now that we know what the argument is, we can see that "If you vote for me" is the premise and "that will make this a better country" is the conclusion.

Why is this true? That's not stated. There's no valid reason why "a vote for me" will make this a better country. Thus this argument and all those like it are false. But it contains great emotional appeal, because we would all like a better country. That's why we see arguments like this over and over. They work. But they won't work anymore if voters can see them for what they are and ignore them, or better yet, come to an even more productive conclusion: that politicians who rely on emotional appeal are not to be trusted.

An argument has three parts: one or more *premises*, the *reasoning* that allows the conclusion to logically follow from the premises, and the *conclusion*. Complex arguments can be so long they require intermediate conclusions, which become premises for further conclusions. The diagram illustrates the three parts all sound arguments must have.

The Three Parts of an Argument



Homo sapiens means “knowing human” because our greatest tool is reason. Without it we would be little different from the other primates and civilization would not exist.

Lately that difference is in jeopardy, because in the nation in trouble the average voter is no longer able to use mankind’s greatest tool to pick the best candidate. Instead, citizens base their choices mostly on emotion and the insidious effect of deliberate lies. *If this trend and its consequences continue then all is lost*, eventually including civilization itself, due to the unavoidable side effects of environmental, economic, and social unsustainability. But if we can turn this trend around we could start electing leaders who would see these problems as their highest priority and solve them in the interest of the common good, instead of continuing to elect leaders bent on satisfying the goals of their special interests.

Since this is somewhat important, let’s turn our attention to the reasoning part of arguments, and see if perhaps we can improve things a little.

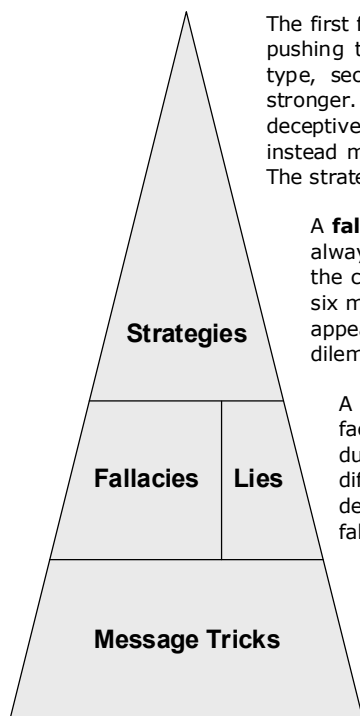
*The wise are instructed by reason; ordinary minds by
experience; the stupid, by necessity;
and brutes by instinct.*

Marcus Cicero, orator and statesman of ancient Rome,
106BC to 43BC. ⁶

Step 2. Are any common patterns of deception present?

Deception makes falsehoods appear true by misleading the normal processes of reason. The science of political deception is so complex that to make sense of it we have classified the common patterns of political deception into four categories and organized them into a tool for thinking at a higher level. This gives us a hierarchy of deception techniques, which we call:

The Pyramid of Political Deception



The first four **strategies** are false promises, false enemies, pushing the fear hot button, and wrong priorities. A fifth type, secrecy, is used to make the others possible and stronger. From the viewpoint of a healthy democracy all are deceptive because none optimize the common good. They instead maximize the uncommon good of special interests. The strategies are implemented with fallacies and lies.

A **fallacy** depends on unsound reasoning. Fallacies are always false because using the reasoning of the fallacy, the conclusion does not follow from the premises. The six most common fallacies are the ad hominem attack, appeal to emotion, biased sample, false analogy, false dilemma, and straw man.

A **lie** depends on false facts. Lies are either false facts or false arguments whose logic is sound but due to false premises the conclusion is false. The difference between fallacies and lies is that fallacies depend on false *reasoning*, while lies depend on false *facts*. The two are very different.

There are thousands of **message tricks** used to maximize the success of implementing the upper layers, like ambiguous wording, emotional trigger words, biased framing, eye candy (powerful visuals), subliminal mood music, and repetition.

At the bottom layer of the pyramid sit the thousands of message tricks that tricksters use to put the final wrapping on their glittering packages of deception. There are so many one quickly gets lost in trying to understand even the most common. But if we can spot deception by working at the higher layers then there is little need to work at the bottom layer. Learning a handful of the most common tricks can, however, make it easier to sniff out false appeals. ⁷

The middle layer contains the fallacies and lies used to implement deception strategies. **Fallacies** are false due to the unsound reasoning used. There are hundreds of types of fallacies but less than a dozen common ones. This makes it possible for you to be able to instantly spot most fallacies.

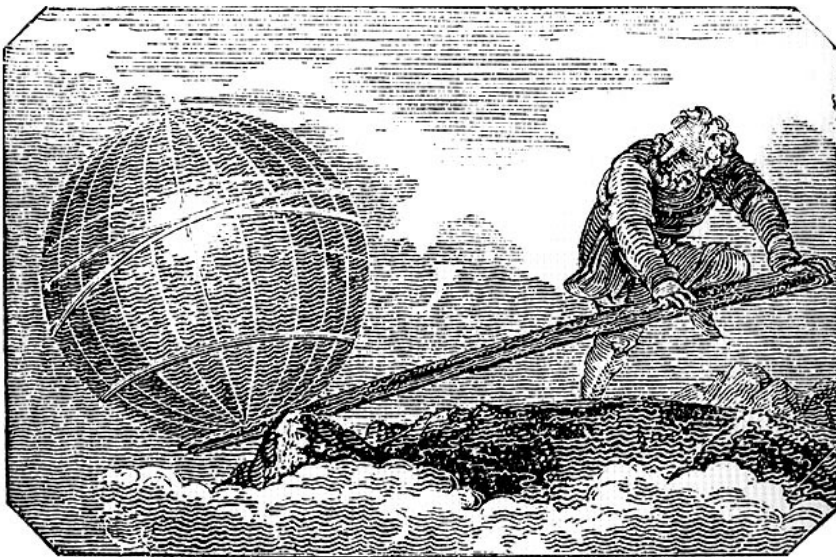
Lies depend on false facts. There are two types of lies: false facts and false arguments whose logic is sound but due to false premises the conclusion is false. Root premises are themselves facts, so all lies are based on false facts.

Lies are not nearly as easy to spot as fallacies because they often require expert knowledge or access to data to prove or disprove the facts. The average person does not have this knowledge or data. We are thus dependent on politicians to tell us the truth.

But too many don't, so we're stuck. Unless we can develop a surefire way to spot lies and fallacies we will forever be at the mercy of unscrupulous politicians. We will forever be expendable pawns in their ruthless the-end-justifies-the-means struggle for power and more power, and their game of more and more rewards for their special interests, at our expense. So what can we do?

The answer lies at the top of the pyramid. *If we can spot deception strategies in play, then we can assume that the rest of the pyramid is being used to carry them out.* So we don't have to work much at the bottom or the middle layers. We can work mostly at the top, where our efforts will have the greatest *leverage* because we will be working at the strategic instead of the tactical level. ⁸ If we can't apply enough leverage we will be unable to change the world.

Let's walk through each of the four sections of the pyramid, starting at the top.



Give me a lever long enough, and a place to stand, and I can move the earth. ~ Archimedes, 287 to 212 BC, was a Greek mathematician, physicist, engineer, and astronomer. Archimedes invented the Law of Levers.

The five main deception strategies

The principle we are following is that if we can spot one of the five main types of political deception, then we can be sure we are being deceived. We don't have to go any further. We can stop right there and not support that politician, that party, or the policy they are promoting. In one blow we have thwarted their strategy. The principle can be stated as:

The Deceptive Politician Rejection Rule

If a politician employs one of the main deception strategies then reject that politician.

Sometimes a politician feels forced to use deception because it works so well. Because they're forced to deceive against their will, they tend to use a lot less than those relying on deception as their central voting winning strategy. Why do some politicians do that? To hide the fact they are working mainly for special interests. Thus if your choice is two politicians who both use deception, one is likely to use far more than the other. Reject the one who uses the most deception.

The rule only works if you can reliably detect use of the five strategies. To make this as easy as possible we have carefully given each of them a memorable, self-explanatory name. The first four types are *false promise*, *false enemy*, *pushing the fear hot button*, and *wrong priority*. A fifth type, *secrecy*, is used to make the other types more possible and stronger.

If you can spot the five types as easy as a leaky faucet then We the People can at last achieve the democratic vision: a nation where life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are the norm, rather than the growing exception.

"We the people" are the non-rich, who make up about 95% of the population.⁹ What they would like is a world free from problems like: (1) Unjustified wars, which benefit the military/industrial complex, (2) Institutionalized poverty, which benefits employers and the rich, (3) Rising income inequality, which benefits the rich, and (4) Environmental unsustainability, which benefits the short term profits of corporations. These problems and more benefit the two most powerful special interests in the industrialized world: large for-profit corporations and the rich.

Greed and self-interest are powerful motivators. Thus it should be no surprise that when the trail of influence is examined it shows these problems are caused by the top two special interests. They are the real oppressors, not the lobbyists that represent them or the politicians who become beholden to them.

As impossible as solving the problem of oppression by special interests may seem, it can be done. *We need to be able to spot the five main types of political deception whenever they appear and then act decisively.* Here they are:

1st type of deception: False promise – A false promise is a promise that is made but never delivered or never delivered fully. False promises are widely used to win and keep the support of various segments of the population, like organized special interest groups, religions, industries, and demographic groups like seniors or immigrants. False promises flow like wine during election season.

As soon as a politician echoes anything like Herbert Hoover's "A chicken in every pot and a car in every garage," that's a false promise. So is "I will make this country a better place for you and your children," in its million and one forms, because technically all they have to do is increase average income by one cent and the promise is fulfilled. So is "It's time to stand up to the special interests," because all a politician has to do to fulfill that false promise is to shake their finger at a few lobbyists and say "No, no, no" and they have "stood up" to them. Or they may be more specific and promise to set "mandatory reduction targets" for carbon dioxide emissions from power plants, as George W. Bush did on September 29, 1999. The promise was broken six months later, when the Bush administration announced it would not seek to regulate those emissions. The immediate reason? "Strong pressure from conservative Republicans and industry groups." ¹⁰ The real reason? It was a false promise all along, designed to sway more voters to vote for Bush, whose party has traditionally been anti-environmental.

Politicians routinely promise the moon but deliver cupcakes because after an election it largely doesn't matter. Voters have mostly forgotten the false promises and can do little about them.

2nd type of deception: False enemy – Creating a false enemy works because it evokes the instinctual fight or flight syndrome. The brain simply cannot resist becoming aroused when confronted with a possible enemy.

The two main types of false enemies are: (1) *False internal opponents*, such as those created by negative campaigning, "big" government, gays, the Salem witch trials, and McCarthyism, and (2) *False external opponents*, such as communism and the second Iraq "war." While communism was a true problem, it was trumped up enormously to serve the role of a false enemy. False enemies are often scapegoats. A **scapegoat** is someone who is blamed for misfortune, usually as a way of distracting attention from the real causes or more important issues. Name-calling (such as tree huggers, tax-and-spend liberals, and ultra-right fanatics) and *ad hominem* attacks are popular ways to create false enemies.

When it comes to creating false internal enemies, the winning strategy is to *attack early and attack often*. This becomes doubly successful when those attacked are politicians in the opposing party: (1) The fight or flight instinct is evoked, which clouds the judgment and causes people to want a strong militaristic leader to lead them out of harms way. The attacker proves his militaristic capability by the viciousness of his attack, causing those witnessing the attack to frequently

swing their support to him. (2) Attacks cause the attacker's own supporters to fervently support him even more, because he has just pointed out why the opposition is so bad.

Creating false enemies works so well that attack politics has become *the* central strategy for some parties. Look around. Are there any political parties whose most outstanding trait is they are essentially one ruthless, insidiously effective attack machine?

3rd type of deception: Pushing the fear hot button – When a politician talks about almost everything in terms of terrorism, communism, crime, threats to “national security” or “our way of life,” and so on, that politician is pushing the fear hot button. It's very easy to push. Just use a few of the right trigger words, throw in a dash of plausibility, and the subconsciousness is instinctively hoodwinked into a state of fear. Whether or not an enemy actually *is* out there doesn't matter—what matters is that we think there *might* be one.

No passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear. ~ Edmund Burke, 1729 to 1797. ¹¹

Fear clouds the judgment, making it all the harder to discern whether the enemy really exists. Because we cannot be sure, we play it safe and assume there is at least some risk. Since people are risk averse the ploy works and we become believers. We have been influenced by statements of what *might* be lurking out there. Our fear hot button has been pushed and it worked. Here's an example of how easy this is to do. (This pamphlet will use examples from both parties, as well as historic examples, to demonstrate that political deception is universal and knows no party lines.)

“The most famous political ad in American history” ¹² ran only once, on September 7, 1964. Created by the democratic team supporting President Lyndon B. Johnson's run for reelection, the 60 second “Daisy ad” began with:

...a little girl standing in a meadow with chirping birds, picking the petals of what appears to be a daisy while counting each petal slowly. (Because she does not know her numbers perfectly, she repeats some and says others in the wrong order, all of which adds to her childlike appeal.) When she reaches “nine,” an ominous-sounding male voice is then heard counting down a missile launch, and as the girl's eyes turn toward something she sees in the sky, the camera zooms in until her pupil fills the screen, blacking it out. When the countdown reaches zero, the blackness is replaced by the flash and mushroom cloud from a nuclear explosion.

As the firestorm rages, a voiceover from Johnson states, “These are the stakes! To make a world in which all of God's children can live, or to go into the dark. We must either love each other, or we must die.” Another voiceo-

ver then says, “Vote for President Johnson on November 3. The stakes are too high for you to stay home.” ¹³

The ad worked by pushing the fear hot button. On May 24, 1964 Goldwater had stated in a television interview that one strategy for winning in Vietnam might involve “defoliation of the forests by low-yield atomic weapons.” The Daisy ad exploited that careless remark. Although his name was never mentioned, the implicit message was that Goldwater was some nut who might use nuclear weapons. Johnson won the election by a landslide, more out of fear of Goldwater than support for Johnson, according to post-election polls.

4th type of deception: Wrong priority – Wrong priorities stem from hidden agendas. A **hidden agenda** is a plan or goal a politician must conceal from the public, due to an ulterior motive.

There are many ways a hidden agenda can come about. A politician may support a certain ideology, and so bends everything to support the goals of that ideology. He may have accepted donations and/or voter support from special interests, such as corporations, and therefore must promote their agenda. Perhaps he had to cut a deal.

A politician with a hidden agenda must make the wrong priorities seem like the right ones in order to achieve what’s on the hidden agenda. How can he do this? For a corrupt politician such matters are child’s play: manipulate the public through false promises, create a false enemy, push the fear hot button hard and often, repeat the same lie over and over until it becomes “the truth,” and so forth.

5th type of deception: Secrecy – The fifth main type of deception makes the other four types much easier to achieve. Secrecy is hiding or withholding the truth. It’s a powerful form of deception because it creates a false impression without actually having to openly lie. Secrecy makes it impossible to tell if a politician is lying because key premises cannot be tested.

Secrecy is the beginning of tyranny. ~ Robert Heinlein ¹⁴

Secrecy is so important to the success of the other four types of deception that without it they would crumble into ineffective mumblings. But with secrecy they work most of the time, because there is no way for the population to tell if a politician is telling the truth or not. When you see a politician or administration using much more secrecy than normal and there is no reasonable justification, you can be certain its purpose is deception.

A classic example of all five deception strategies is the way the George W. Bush administration used them in the Iraq war. They (1) *falsely promised* it would cost little and we would be welcomed as liberators. The (2) *false enemy* was Saddam Hussein, who had not done the US any harm, had not backed Al-Qaida, and had no weapons of mass destruction. The unjustified Iraq war (and the oft repeated chilling phrase, the “war on terror”) was used to (3) *push the fear hot button* of the public frequently. This was necessary, as the previous mechanism of orange and yellow threat levels of the homeland security system was beginning to lose its effect. The Iraq war masked the fact there are other issues of higher priority, such as reducing budget deficits, environmental sustainability, nuclear proliferation, and finishing the war in Afghanistan. Thus the Iraq war was a (4) *wrong priority*. Finally, an unusual level of (5) *secrecy* descended on everything the Bush administration did. This made it difficult and frequently impossible for the public, investigative reporters, or even Congress to determine the truth.

The Deceptive Politician Rejection Rule (page 9) states we must act decisively whenever we spot one or more of the five main strategies of political deception and reject that politician. In the above example hindsight has made deception easy to spot. But could we have detected deception at the time it occurred?

Yes. The Iraq war began on March 20, 2003. A few months earlier my wife and I participated in a small march in Atlanta against the invasion. Our sign, which we still have, reads “This is not war. This is vigilantism.”

It was not that we were pacifists. Along with many others, we could see through the smokescreen of deception, propaganda and hysteria that had taken over the media at the time. Nearly all sources were pro war. Fear was in the air. However, if you followed the on-site inspections for WMDs by Hans Blix and his team, you could see there was no proof Iraq had WMDs. ¹⁵ The “cat and mouse” games he chastised Saddam for conducting were exactly that: games designed to create a false enemy against which Saddam could rally his people. The proof of WMDs presented by Colin Powell at the UN was so tenuous that the UN would not agree to back an invasion. So the country attacked on 9/11 went after Saddam alone, with enough token forces from other countries (mostly due to bribes and strong arming) to call it a “multilateral” force, which was even more deception.

To us it was clear that not only was Saddam deliberately creating a *false enemy*, but so was Bush. Not only that, but Bush was *pushing the fear hot button* every chance he had. That became obvious when my brother reported that his son’s high school trip to New Orleans had been cancelled, out of fear that terrorists would somehow strike their school bus or New Orleans while they were there. All those homeland security system alerts and use of ominous, mind numbing phrases like “war on terror” and “axis of evil” had achieved their intended effect. But since Martha and I were aware of the ruse it didn’t work on us. And since we knew what a false common enemy was that didn’t work either. So we marched.

Let's not fall into the trap of dwelling on the faults of those we disagree with, while rationalizing away the same faults of those who think like us to avoid cognitive dissonance. Both US parties have used the five deception strategies. It's almost impossible to resist their magical allure because they work so well.

The difference is one party uses deception much more than the other. Why? *Because if they told the truth they would not be able to justify special treatment for special interests, which is the main goal of that party.* That well hidden goal drives everything they say and do.

The common fallacies

The five types of deception allow you to easily spot high level patterns of deception. But they do not allow you to tell if a particular argument is sound or unsound. For that we need to move from the top of the pyramid to the second layer.

The Three Parts of an Argument diagram on page 5 shows how reasoning allows us to use premises to reach a conclusion. A **fallacy** is an erroneous pattern of reasoning that makes a false argument look true. Fallacies work extremely well in political appeals because most people have never been trained on how to spot them.

Most political arguments are short and simple. If they weren't they couldn't be understood by the average audience and easily inserted into ads, sound bites, and speech lines. This simplicity makes it relatively easy to spot the more common fallacies. Let's look at an example of how this can be done.

This is a great country, but I think it could be a greater country; and this is a powerful country, but I think it could be a more powerful country. I'm not satisfied when the United States last year had the lowest rate of economic growth of any major industrialized society in the world.

This is from Senator John Fitzgerald Kennedy's opening statement in the first Kennedy-Nixon presidential debate on September 26, 1960. The premise that "the United States last year had the lowest rate of economic growth of any major industrialized society" is true. But the implied conclusion that the United States is falling behind economically is not, as Nixon pointed out in his rebuttal by saying, "Now last year, of course, was 1958. That happened to be a recession year. But when we look at the growth of G.N.P. this year, a year of recovery, we find that it's six and nine-tenths per cent and one of the highest in the world today."

Thus it was not true that the United States was falling behind economically. By selectively choosing a piece of data supporting his position, Kennedy used the *biased sample fallacy*, also known as cherry picking. Nixon saw through the fallacy immediately.

If a common fallacy is present in a political argument the reasoning in the argument is seriously deficient. The argument should not be trusted. This is psychologically difficult to do, however, because of the powerful persuasive nature of fallacious appeals like the Swift Boat ad campaign (an *ad hominem* fallacy) that

destroyed John Kerry's run for the presidency in late 2003. Political fallacies steam-roller over the mind relentlessly, converting even thoughtful voters into emotional wrecks who turn away from perfectly good candidates. So what can you do?

You can adopt this rule:

The Fallacy Rejection Rule

**If an argument depends on a fallacy
then reject the argument.**

If a political argument depends on a fallacy for the appearance of truth then you don't have to examine the argument any further. There is no need to waste time agonizing over whether the premises are true or false. Arguments based on fallacies are always false. Spot the fallacy and reject the argument.

The undetected fallacy works even better than the truth, because a politician can make himself look better and his opponent look worse than he could possibly do if he relied only on the truth.

The Fallacy Rejection Rule and basic familiarity with common fallacies will give you most of what you need to become fool proof, since most false political arguments are based on well known fallacies. I would estimate that over 80% of false political ads, sound bites and short statements are false because of a common fallacy. The rest are false because of uncommon fallacies or just plain lies.

Here is a list of some of the most common political fallacies:

- 1. Ad hominem** – An attack on a person's character rather than the positions he or she supports. The attacker attempts to change the subject from what really matters to what matters far less or not at all.
- 2. Appeal to emotion** – The use of strongly emotional premises, wording and/or imagery to prove a point. The emotion hides the fact the premises do not lead to the conclusion.
- 3. Biased sample** – The use of selective evidence to prove a conclusion, which does not follow because the evidence is biased and not representative of the whole. Also known as cherry picking.
- 4. False analogy** – The claim that because two things are similar in one quality, then they must also be similar in a second quality. The analogy is false if the two things are not of the same class for both qualities.
- 5. False dilemma** – Presenting fewer options than those that actually exist, such as "America, love it or leave it." The option you could also work to improve an America that you don't yet love is omitted. You could also stay but not love it, or leave it and still love it.

6. Straw man – This occurs when an opponent's argument is reinterpreted as a different argument, one so weak it's as easy to knock down as a straw man. The weakness is then magnified and used to imply the original argument is false, which does not follow.

We haven't performed an exhaustive analysis so we can't say for certain these are the most common fallacies. But based on casual review of thousands of sound bites, ads, speeches, and media appearances, it appears these six fallacies account for over half of all *successful* fallacious political appeals, especially the ones that have been the most devastating.

That it takes only six fallacies and five types of deception to fool most of the people most of the time makes it possible for you to vaccinate yourself against the scourge of political deception.

Below are examples of how these fallacies have been used. *The goal is to give you a sixth sense of when a fallacy is being used to plant a false conclusion deep inside your brain.* If enough readers can develop this sixth sense, then the truth will be revealed and oppression in the birthplace of modern democracy will no longer be possible. What will people see? Many things, including perhaps something one of our leaders saw long ago:

Political parties exist to secure responsible government and to execute the will of the people. From these great tasks both of the old parties have turned aside. Instead of instruments to promote the general welfare they have become the tools of corrupt interests, which use them impartially to serve their selfish purposes. Behind the ostensible government sits enthroned an invisible government owing no allegiance and acknowledging no responsibility to the people. To destroy this invisible government, to dissolve the unholy alliance between corrupt business and corrupt politics, is the first task of the statesmanship of the day. ~ Teddy Roosevelt, *The Progressive Covenant with the People*, speech, 1912

Here are the most common fallacies:

1. The ad hominem fallacy – As an election draws near the most popular fallacy of them all is the *ad hominem* attack. An **ad hominem** (argument against the man) fallacy is an attack on a person's character rather than the positions he or she supports. The attacker attempts to change the subject from what really matters to what matters far less. *Ad hominem* attackers try to find some flaw in a person's traits or strengths and then huff and puff on it until its perceived importance is so high the person is discredited. Since the average voter deals much more with character traits and strengths than policy issues or a candidate's voting record, *ad hominem* attacks appeal to highly relevant voter needs: Who is this guy? Can I trust him? Furthermore, people are more risk adverse than opportunity prone. *Ad hominem* attacks reveal possible risks, which can be used to check off a candidate as too risky to take a chance on.

What's the easiest way to make your opponent look bad? Attack his character. The Daisy ad was a type of *ad hominem* attack, since its purpose was to destroy Goldwater's reputation. Other popular terms for the *ad hominem* fallacy are demagoguery, shooting the messenger, negative campaigning, smear tactics, and sliming your opponent. However these terms are broader, as they include not only attacks on a person's character but also on his position or record.

Sometimes the public needs to be made aware of a character flaw that's true and would disqualify a candidate. This is what objective reporting does. But *ad hominem* attacks are not objective. They deliberately distort the facts and introduce outright lies to pump up the force of the attack, as was done in the Swift Boat attack campaign against John Kerry in the 2004 presidential election:

The ads were extremely well produced. The first, which appeared on August 4 [the week after the Democrat convention], was by far the most persuasive. It featured one veteran after another—all claiming to have been on the boat with John Kerry, to have served under him, to have been his commanding officer, or otherwise to have had direct knowledge of his service in Vietnam—who offered some variant of the following: “John Kerry has not been honest about what happened in Vietnam,” “He is lying about his record,” or “He betrayed us.” Particularly damning was the “testimony” of a man identified on the screen as “Louis Letson, Medical Officer, Lieutenant Commander,” who stated boldly, “I know John Kerry is lying about his first Purple Heart because I treated him for that injury.” The timing was not coincidental: the theme of the Democratic Convention was that Kerry was a war hero who could lead the nation in a time of war.

The Swift Boat ads, like the [Max] Cleland ads, had all the earmarks of a classic Carl Rove smear: always just one step removed from Rove (funded and produced by his colleagues, protégés, and major campaign contributors), always devastating in their impact (particularly in their immediate impact, which either disrupts momentum of the opposition or leaves lingering questions in the minds of voters), and always difficult enough to sort out at first blush that their truth or falsehood would be adjudicated, if at all, long after their damage was done. ¹⁶

The public was so shocked and taken in by the ads that Kerry's popularity plummeted immediately. He never recovered and lost the election.

How can you avoid being taken in by masterpieces of deception like this one? That's surprisingly simple. Every time you see a new appeal to you as a voter, apply the Truth Test.

First, what is the argument? The premise in the Swift Boat ads was that John Kerry's war record was falsified. The implied conclusion is you should not vote for him because he lied and cannot be trusted.

Second, are any common fallacies present? Yes. This is clearly an *ad hominem* attack. The main reason it's a fallacy is character doesn't matter much unless there are unusual problems like a criminal record. What does matter are the hard facts of intelligence, skills, bona fide experience in similar jobs, and most of all, how well you did in those jobs. This is what the corporate world examines most when hiring. The political world should do the same.

Third, many of the argument's premises were false. The ad was full of lies presented so cleverly they sounded true.

The second reason *ad hominem* attacks on politicians are usually false is because if they were true the thousands of reporters swarming over the candidate's backgrounds would have picked up the story long ago. The fact they did not is strong evidence this attack is fabricated. Further evidence is the source. The Orwellian named *Swift Boat Veterans for Truth* group was "funded by the biggest Republican campaign donor in Texas".¹⁷ Such a source guarantees bias.

The third reason *ad hominem* attacks are usually false is they work even if they are false, so they are widely used. Character attacks strike fear into the hearts of voters, who now wonder if the attacked candidate really is flawed. As the ads are repeated to fan the flames of that fear, people tend to forget the biased source and remember only the message. The fear deepens and the ploy works.

Why do we see so many *ad hominem* attacks? Cicero explained why two thousand years ago: "*When you have no basis for argument, abuse the plaintiff.*"¹⁸

Attacks on a person's character are a type of negative campaigning. Kathleen Hall Jamieson, a political advertising and campaigning expert, argues there are several reasons we see so much negative instead of positive campaigning: (1) Negative information carries more weight in evaluative thinking than positive information, (2) Negative information is better able to alter existing impressions than positive information, (3) Negative information is easier to recall, and (4) Fear can short-circuit cognitive processing.¹⁹ This is why we must put up our guard and instantly reject politicians who resort to *ad hominem* attacks, because if we don't we are putty in their hands.

2. The appeal to emotion fallacy – The Daisy ad was the strongest possible appeal to emotion, so strong, in fact, that there were immediate objections from *both* parties and the ad was pulled immediately. It ran only once, plus two free air-

ings on the other two networks and hundreds of descriptions in the newspaper and magazine articles that followed. But the damage had been done. Like John Kerry after he had been Swift Boated, Goldwater never recovered. The ad worked beyond its creator's wildest dreams. Why? ²⁰

Drew Weston, writing in *The Political Brain: the Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation*, sums it up: "In politics, when reason and emotion collide, emotion invariably wins." Comparing the two parties on their use of emotion in campaigning, Weston wrote in 2007 that:

Republican strategists have recognized since the days of Richard Nixon that *the road to victory is paved with emotional intentions*. Richard Wirthlin, an economics professor who engineered Ronald Reagan's successful campaigns of 1980 and 1984, realized that all the dispassionate economic assumptions he'd always believed about how people make decisions didn't apply when people cast their ballots for Reagan. As he discovered, people were drawn to Reagan because they *identified* with him, liked his emphasis on values over policy, trusted him, and found him authentic in his beliefs. Since Lyndon Johnson's victory in 1964... only two Democrats [have been] elected to the White House, and both of those Democrats offered *compelling emotional messages*: Jimmy Carter promised to restore faith in government after Watergate, and Bill Clinton promised to restore hope to the American dream.

Republicans understand what the philosopher David Hume recognized three centuries ago: that *reason is a slave to emotion*, not the other way around. With the exception of the Clinton era, Democratic strategists for the last three decades have instead clung tenaciously to the dispassionate view of the mind and to the campaign strategy that logically follows from it, namely one that focuses on facts, figures, policy statements, costs and benefits, and appeals to intellect and expertise. ²¹

The **appeal to emotion** fallacy occurs when emotion is used to prove a conclusion instead of reason. The emotion overpowers the mind, hiding the fact that the premises offered do not logically lead to the conclusion.

Political emotional appeals use strong emotional wording, ideas, sound, and imagery to bypass a person's rational thinking and go straight to the hard wired part of the brain that decides on emotion. While emotional hard wiring has long provided an advantage when living in the jungle and fending off occasional predators or human adversaries, that hard wiring becomes a liability when living in the concrete jungle of modern political systems, because it is too easily exploited.

That exploitation jumped from first to third gear on September 23, 1952 when Richard Nixon's delivered his legendary "Checkers speech." The speech saved his career.

As Eisenhower's vice presidential nominee, Nixon was under attack for maintaining a "secret fund" of \$18,000. The money was from influential backers, with

the implication that he received the money in return for political favors. There was no evidence of this, but there was also no explanation from Nixon. Since one of Ike's key campaign themes was charging the Truman administration with corruption, "Nixon has got to be as clean as a hound's tooth," said Ike to reporters.²² The scandal grew. When the most influential Republican newspapers in the country started calling for Nixon to leave the ticket, Nixon was forced to act.

In one of the first cases of a politician appealing directly to the public via television, Nixon gave a live speech in which:

He discussed his personal finances in excruciating detail, offering specifics about the cost of his home, his insurance policies, his salary, and so on.

At the outset, Nixon pledged to lay out the facts and answer the question of whether it was "morally" appropriate to maintain such a fund—yet he pretty much did neither. ...by laying out his personal finances, he presented himself as a man of humble origins, once again changing the subject away from the issue of whether the fund he maintained with the assistance of private and anonymous donors was morally improper.

But of course the facts of the case were secondary to the image that Nixon was trying to project. Nixon presented himself as a child of "modest circumstances." ... Nixon even cited Abraham Lincoln and his paean to ordinary Americans: "God must have loved the common people—he made so many of them."

Then, in the speech's most maudlin and notorious moment, he told the audience of a gift he had received from one supporter in Texas—"a little cocker spaniel dog" that Nixon's daughter Tricia named Checkers. "And you know, the kids love the dog and I just want to say this right now, that regardless of what they say about it, we're going to keep it."²³

The speech worked and Nixon stayed on the ticket. It worked because of brilliant use of the appeal to emotion fallacy. Despite presenting a we-find-no-illegality-here audit of the fund during the speech, Nixon never did itemize who gave the money, where it went, and what favors he might have done. This is what the press had been demanding. Instead he shifted the public's thinking to the *emotional* part of their brains and won his case there. He did this so well that:

The Checkers speech is often cited as a seminal moment in American history, and it's not an undeserved recognition—but it was not because of the power of Nixon's metaphors, the insight of his political analysis, or the stirring nature of his rhetoric. Instead, the speech changed the way we think about our elected leaders. *It demonstrated the ability of television to not only humanize candidates but also transform their interaction with voters.* It was one of the first uses of television in a presidential campaign, and certainly among the most effective. But above all, it brought into clear relief the role of *image*

making in American politics and *heralded the slow transformation of speechwriting from oratory to image creation and maintenance.* ²⁴

This explains why modern politicking is all about image rather than the issues. It *should* be the issues.

An appeal to emotion with the gravest of consequences occurred on October 7, 2002 when President George W. Bush invoked the fallacy in a speech in Cincinnati, Ohio:

Knowing these realities, America must not ignore the threat gathering against us. Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof—the smoking gun—that could come *in the form of a mushroom cloud.* ²⁵

As soon as people heard “in the form of a mushroom cloud,” emotion displaced any logic that might have been trying to decide whether the threat was real enough to justify war. This was a way to push the fear hot button. Very few people want to wait for a mushroom cloud to appear.

Another case of the appeal to emotion fallacy was the infamous “Wolves ad” of the Bush versus Kerry campaign of 2004. Fred Kaplan of Slate tells the story:

Have you seen George W. Bush's latest campaign ad—the one with the wolves? A shaky hand-held camera moves through a forest at twilight. Suddenly a wolf darts across the screen, then another, until finally we see a whole pack of wolves, rising from their slumber to come get us. Over a soundtrack of rustling leaves and spooky music, the narrator—a breathy woman—says:

“In an increasingly dangerous world, even after the first terrorist attack on America, John Kerry and the liberals in Congress voted to slash America's intelligence operations. By \$6 billion. Cuts so deep, they would have weakened America's defenses. And weakness attracts those who are waiting to do America harm.”

The key phrase here is “after the first terrorist attack on America.” At first viewing, I took this as a reference to the aftermath of 9/11. (Millions of other viewers probably did, too; no doubt the scriptwriters meant us to make the connection.) This puzzled me, because nobody proposed cutting intelligence after 9/11. On second viewing, though, I realized that the phrase was a veiled reference to the first bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993.

In 1995, several legislators, among them Sen. Kerry, did introduce amendments to cut the intelligence budget by \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion, which, spread out over several years, could have added up to \$6 billion. ²⁶

The “Wolves ad” wrapped a lie in an appeal to emotion so strong it made the lie appear true. Kerry never recovered and lost the election. But suppose voters had been inoculated against the lie *before* they saw the ad: ²⁷ (Italics added)

...inoculation ...is regarded as one of the most effective ways to counter negative advertising appeals. Inoculation works in the following way: Anticipating an attack by the opponent, the candidate acknowledges the problem, even going so far as to describe the nature of the charge leveled against his or her campaign. The candidate then refutes the charge, explaining why it is hogwash. ...*There is considerable evidence that inoculation can neutralize an opponent's negative commercials.*

This type of inoculation is extremely expensive and limited, however, since you have to anticipate every act of deception and run an ad campaign for it. It's thus not workable. But what about mass inoculation via truth literacy education? That would economically inoculate voters against most deception.

3. The biased sample fallacy – Also called cherry picking, a **biased sample** occurs when the evidence presented to support a conclusion is not representative of all the evidence as a whole. Instead it is biased toward the position favored by the argument peddler.

Here's an example from President William McKinley's "Last Speech" on September 5, 1901: (Italics added)

Trade statistics indicate that this country is in a state of *unexampled prosperity*. The figures ...show that we are utilizing our fields and forests and mines and that we are *furnishing profitable employment* to the millions of workmen throughout the United States, bringing comfort and happiness to their homes and making it possible to lay by savings for old age and disability. That *all the people* are participating in this great prosperity is seen in every American community and shown by the *enormous and unprecedented deposits* in our savings banks.²⁸

McKinley created the illusion of "unexampled prosperity" by choosing data that supported the illusion. Trade statistics alone cannot indicate a country is doing well. Nor can "furnishing profitable employment" to millions show that, because there could be other millions who are not employed. But the most glaring biased sample occurs in the last sentence. "Enormous and unprecedented deposits" do not automatically translate into prosperity for "all the people." It merely implies prosperity for some, which it turns out is once again mostly the rich.

4. The false analogy fallacy – The argument in the Daisy ad (page 11) was that because Goldwater had said winning in Vietnam might involve "defoliation of the forests by low-yield atomic weapons" there was a significant chance he would use full scale nuclear weapons in other cases. That conclusion does not follow from the premise. But the ad makes it *appear* to follow by use of the false analogy fallacy.

A **false analogy** claims that since two things are similar in one quality then they must also be similar in a second quality. For example, politician A is from Kansas and is corrupt. Politician B is also from Kansas. Therefore he's also corrupt.

In the Daisy ad the two things being compared are the situation in which a President would use nuclear weapons. The first case is defoliation of forests using small bombs. The second is a preemptive or reactive strike against a military enemy using much larger bombs. The ad argues that since Goldwater considers the first okay then he considers the second okay too. *But that does not follow because the two cases are so different they are not of the same class and hence not analogous.* There are large, well known reasons not to use nuclear weapons in the second case, because they could too easily start a tit-for-tat nuclear exchange. But that would be unlikely to occur in the first case.

The reason the false analogy was *not* obvious to the average voter is it was so indirect and so overshadowed by the message trick of powerful manipulative imagery. But it *was* obvious to the leaders of the Republican and Democratic parties, because they dealt with deception all the time.

5. The false dilemma fallacy – When the stakes are high and a politician wants to trick you into choosing his favored position instead of another, his best bet is to create a false dilemma. A **false dilemma** occurs when a small number of choices are presented when in fact there are more.

Usually only two choices are presented, since the simpler an argument is the more easily it slips into the mind. One choice is designed to be so much more appealing than the other that people instinctively choose it, instead of pausing to realize that such blatant oversimplification is probably fallacious. In politics most problems are so complex that realistic solutions cover a broad range of possibilities.

President Johnson used a false dilemma in the Daisy ad when he said “These are the stakes! To make a world in which all of God's children can live, or to go into the dark. We must either love each other, or we must die.” There is such a strong *appeal to emotion* fallacy here, both in the wording and the visual imagery, that it's hard to see exactly what the false dilemma is. We *do* need to love each other. If Goldwater drops the bomb that it's conceivable we *could* all die. But in between these two extremes of black-and-white thinking lie a multitude of other options. We can try to love each other via international cooperation, and fail sometimes, and we will not all die. Or we can gradually improve the United Nations until war is a relic of the past. Or we can not love each other and still decide not to use the bomb, so we will not all die. And so on. Once you pause to examine the false dilemma presented in the ad, its absurdity is as striking as its imagery.

Five days after 9/11 President George W. Bush, in a joint news conference with French President Jacques Chirac, said:

...all nations, if they want to fight terror, must do something. Over time it's going to be important for nations to know they will be held accountable for inactivity. *You're either with us or against us* in the fight against terror. ²⁹

Despite obvious use of the false dilemma fallacy, “you’re either with us or against us” became the rallying cry of the Bush administration in its “war on terror.” The phrase “is commonly used to polarize situations and force an audience to either become allies or to accept the consequences as being deemed an enemy.” ³⁰ The phrase was employed in dozens of official statements and repeated in thousands of articles and news casts. Before long, since either you were with us or against us, then either you were patriotic or you were a traitor.

The overwhelming success of that one false dilemma turned dissent into disloyalty, caution into cowardliness, and not wearing a flag pin into being branded as a coward or someone who’s against us. The insane but accepted logic of the fallacy justified attacks on anyone who disagreed with “us.” No one could say no to anything the Bush regime proposed.

But suppose a few defiant politicians or journalists had pulled out a copy of this pamphlet and applied the Truth Test. They would have instantly spotted the fallacy. They would have seen that you can also be undecided or neutral. They would have seen you can be both for and against, as were many of the countries that supported some of Bush’s policies and rejected others. They might have even discovered that *Benito Mussolini had used the identical phrase in speeches across fascist Italy: “O con noi o contro di noi”—You’re either with us or against us.* ³¹ Once they found that, they might have begun drawing parallels between how Mussolini and Bush were both using the same fallacy for the same reason: to fool The People into supporting a totally unjustified war against a false enemy.

But they could not see the truth and they could not say it, because their minds and lips were sealed by the Suffocating Straightjacket of Deception.

6. The straw man fallacy – Suppose a politician said “It’s no use building a fence on the border, since people could tunnel under it, go around it, or fly over it.” The conclusion that the fence should not be built does not follow from these reasons, because the fence would still stop the most common form of illegal immigration: walking across the border. This is all it’s designed to do. Saying it won’t work because of other reasons attempts to redefine the fence as something that should stop 100% of all forms of illegal immigration. That is a much easier argument to prove false. But proving it false does not prove the original argument false.

The **straw man** fallacy occurs when an opponent’s argument is reinterpreted as a different argument, one so weak it’s as easy to knock down as a straw man. This is then used to imply the original argument is false, which does not follow.

Straw man fallacies are often difficult to spot because their logic is so convoluted and indirectly implied. For example, consider the argument that “We should let Iran develop nukes because other countries have them.” The original argument be-

hind reducing nuclear proliferation is that the more countries who have the ability to produce nuclear fuels themselves, the more likely they are to decide to produce nuclear bombs. Saying “We should let Iran develop nukes because other countries have them” is a completely different argument. It says that since countries A, B and C do something, then it’s okay for country D to do it too. That argument has great appeal, so it’s easy to use it to knock down the original argument.

As another example, the straw man of “big government” hides the fact the real issue is not government size. It’s how smart government is and what centralized services are essential to a country’s well being.

Lies, little lies, and big lies

Deception strategies and common fallacies are great ways to fool the public. But sometimes they are not enough. The truth is just too obvious and can’t be wrapped in a fallacy. When faced with that situation, politicians turn to the biggest trick they have left: lies.

For our purposes a **lie** is any statement that depends on false facts to appear true. Facts are the premises used to build an argument. If a premise is a lie then the argument is always false.

Politicians, like fishermen, tell more whoppers than little lies because the bigger the lie, the more you accomplish with the same amount of effort and paradoxically, the more likely people are to believe it. This is common knowledge, as President Franklin D. Roosevelt related in a speech in 1944:

The opposition in this year has already imported into this campaign a very interesting thing, because it is foreign. They have imported the propaganda technique invented by the dictators abroad. Remember, a number of years ago, there was a book, *Mein Kampf*, written by Hitler himself. The technique was all set out in Hitler’s book—and it was copied by the aggressors of Italy and Japan. According to that technique, *you should never use a small falsehood; always a big one*, for its very fantastic nature would make it more credible—if only you keep *repeating it over and over and over again*.³²

Roosevelt was referring to this passage in Hitler’s 1925 autobiography *Mein Kampf*, volume 1, chapter 10:

All this was inspired by the principle—which is quite true in itself—that in the big lie there is always a certain force of credibility; because the broad masses of a nation are always more easily corrupted in the deeper strata of their emotional nature than consciously or voluntarily; and thus in the primitive simplicity of their minds they *more readily fall victims to the big lie than the small lie*, since they themselves often tell small lies in little matters but would be ashamed to resort to large-scale falsehoods. It would never come into their heads *to fabricate colossal untruths*, and they would not believe that others could have *the impudence to distort the truth so infamously*. Even

though the facts which prove this to be so may be brought clearly to their minds, *they will still doubt and waver* and will continue to think that there may be some other explanation. For the grossly impudent lie *always leaves traces behind it*, even after it has been nailed down, a fact which is known to all expert liars in this world and to all who conspire together in the art of lying.³³

Examples of big lies are:

1. The “trickle-down economics” of Reaganomics. It was a disaster for everyone in the US except the rich, so bad it came to be called “voodoo economics.”

2. The deficit in the US must be solved NOW. It should be solved later, after stimulus is used to accelerate moving out of the Great Recession of 2008. Attempting to balance the budget now will only prolong the recession or make it worse.

3. The labeling of the Obama administration’s health care reform proposal as a “government takeover of health care.” It was not.³⁴ It relied on private insurance. This big lie was manufactured by “GOP wordsmith Frank Luntz” using “polling results and Instant Response dial sessions. ...rather than challenging the tenets of American reform proposals, Luntz establishes a **straw man argument** against a non-existent health plan. Buried amongst the usual rhetoric about government-run health care is Luntz’s predictable contradiction: he instructs Republicans to ‘be vocally and passionately on the side of REFORM’ but then urges GOP lawmakers to misrepresent and obstruct any real chance of passing comprehensive legislation.”³⁵ The Luntz lie worked so well the final legislation was greatly compromised and barely passed. A poll found that “53 percent [of Americans] say the plan amounts to a government-run system.”³⁶

Message tricks

Once a message peddler has his deception strategies, fallacies, and lies, the final step is to apply the message tricks needed for that final touch, so that it’s impossible for victims to tell truth from fiction. Most of these tricks are thousands of years old.

A trick a day keeps the truth away. Here’s a list of just a few of the tricks: ambiguous wording, biased expert, biased framing, biased study, emotional trigger words, eye candy (powerful visuals), FUD (fear, uncertainty and doubt), glittering generalities, misleading wording, mood music and other sounds, newspeak, quoting out of context, repetition, stereotyping, small kernel of truth, weasel words (like may or might or some), and word redefinition.³⁷ All of these are heavily used by the advertising industry, which is where they were perfected in the first place.

This completes the four sections of the Pyramid of Political Deception.

Step 3. Are the premises true, complete, and relevant?

This is the third question in the Truth Test. If an argument passes the first two questions then it stands a good chance of being true. This question lets you go deep, to the foundation of all arguments: premises.

A **premise** is a statement of fact or a conclusion from another argument. Most political arguments are simple, so most of their premises are facts. The premises are stated or implied. *For an argument to be sound, its premises must be true, complete, and relevant.*

It's difficult to instantly tell the truth of some premises. That's why we have weeded out 80% of all false arguments before you get to this step. If you do have to go as far as step three, it's well worth not making a snap judgment on whether a premise is true. Instead, *be skeptical* and don't be taken in until you have verified its truth. This can usually be done by a little reading of high quality sources or browsing the work of independent "truth rating" organizations like FactCheck.org and PoliticFact.org.

Suppose the premises are all true. Next, are they complete?

Consider this argument: "If we legalize recreational drugs that would send the signal that society says drugs are okay. But they're not. So we should not legalize drugs."

There are no common fallacies here. The implied premise is that drugs are bad for people's health. That in general is true. But are the premises complete? No. Illegal drugs are not just bad for individuals. They are also bad for society, due to the high amounts of crime they cause. Another missing premise is that a legalized drug program could require addicts to become licensed to purchase legalized drugs. This would allow counseling as part of the program and would send a signal that drugs are bad. An important missing premise is that if the price of drugs goes down, then use and addiction rates may go up. This last premise points to *not* legalizing drugs. These premises and many more, including experimental results and the experience of other countries, need to be carefully weighed before reaching a conclusion. Therefore the argument is unsound, because its premises are grossly incomplete.

Suppose the premises are true and complete. Are they relevant?

A common ploy is the irrelevant premise. For example, US Senator Joseph McCarthy began his infamous witch hunt in 1950 with these words: "Today we are engaged in a final, all-out battle between communistic atheism and Christianity."³⁸ But in the US there is strong separation of church and state. Painting the problem as a religious battle is thus irrelevant. It would only be relevant if the US was a Christian state. It was an insidiously clever irrelevant premise, combined with an appeal to emotion and the creation of the many false enemies McCarthy singled out and destroyed. The McCarthy trials were one of the darkest periods of American history, resulting in a new word: "**McCarthyism** is the practice of making accusations of disloyalty, subversion, or treason without regard for evidence."³⁹

Step 4. Does each conclusion follow logically and strongly from its premises?

Rarely will you get this far when examining a political statement, because nearly all will have been eliminated by the first three questions.

This step would be difficult if you had to study and master the rules of logic to determine if each conclusion in the argument followed from its premises. But you don't. All of us have mastered most of these already. But we have not given them names because we employ them subconsciously in seconds. By the time we become adults we have done this millions of times. This is the intuitive but fairly reliable part of argument analysis. Usually if you have taken the time to perform the first three steps, then you can intuitively perform the fourth step correctly—if you don't rush it.

The way to avoid rushing the fourth step is to go back and review the first three steps: (1) What is the argument? (2) Are any common patterns of deception present? (3) Are the premises true, complete, and relevant? This review will clarify your analysis, allowing you to perform the fourth step reliably most of the time. In step 4 you simply ask: *Does each conclusion follow logically and strongly from its premises?* If there's any doubt or it follows weakly then you must classify it as an unsound argument.

There will be a small percentage of arguments your inner voice says cannot be settled. You have two options: You can go see an expert and get them to examine the argument. Or you can simply say "I can't decide" and leave it at that. If you do, don't let the argument nag away at you, as you come back to it again and again, wondering if it is true, false, or nonsense. If you do that then the argument wins and you lose. The classic deception strategy of fear, uncertainty, and doubt (FUD) has worked again.

This completes presentation of the Truth Test. You're probably already doing most of it naturally. But now that you consciously know all the steps and the Pyramid of Political Deception, you are a trained political deception sleuth. You have been immunized against the disease of deception. If this happens to enough people, what might their nation suddenly see?

The truth revealed: The assault on all but the rich

Based on our newfound ability to see the truth, we are about to present several startling conclusions. Some of these run so strongly against conventional wisdom they may seem absurd, despite solid supportive evidence. This has happened before, which is why Thomas Paine began *Common Sense* with this oft quoted paragraph: (Uppercase and italics are in the original.)

PERHAPS the Sentiments contained in the following Pages are not *yet* sufficiently fashionable to procure them general Favor; a long Habit of thinking

a Thing *wrong*, gives it a superficial appearance of being *right*, and raises at first a formidable Outcry in defense of Custom. But the tumult soon subsides. Time makes more Converts than Reason.

Two hundred and thirty five years ago the truth was revealed when American colonists read *Common Sense*. In a matter of weeks they awoke to a new reality—that they were being oppressed and there was something they could do about it.

What might happen today if the American people could see their own new reality? What would they see? And what would they do?

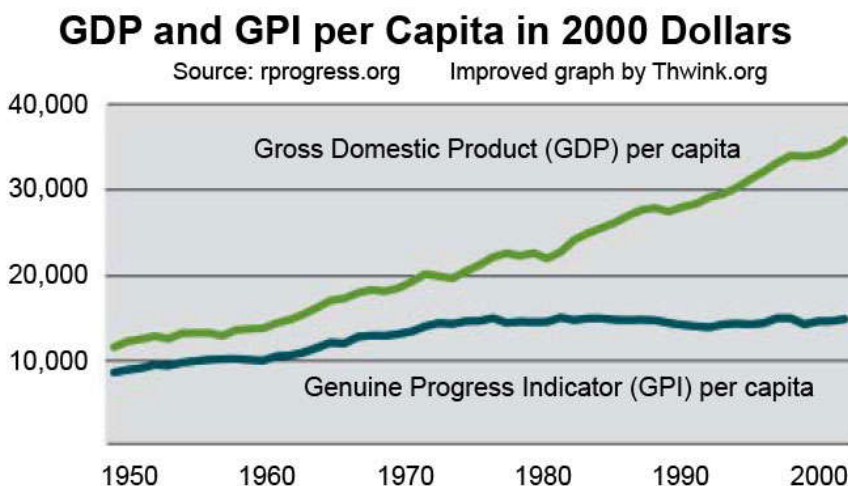
They would see that the rich are winning and everyone else is losing.

This is not a statement to be made lightly. Here's the proof:

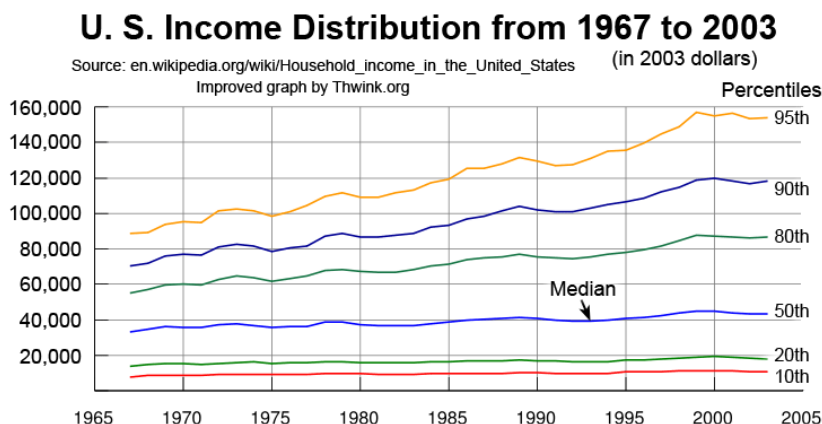
Redefining Progress is a think tank dedicated to ensuring “a sustainable and equitable world for future generations.” In 1995 they created the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) as an alternative to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the universal measure of the health of nations. However, GDP measures only total production. It does not differentiate between good (such as food) and bad (such as war) production. Nor does it include unpaid production like housewives and volunteers. Thus GDP is only a rough measure of how well a nation is doing for its people.

This is what GPI corrects. Starting with GDP, GPI removes negative expenditures, such as cleaning up pollution and the military. These could be reduced or eliminated with good management and do not benefit the people. The GPI adds positive expenditures, such as the production of unpaid labor. The result is a much closer approximation of quality of life than GDP.

GDP and GPI per capita in the United States are graphed below.⁴⁰ The result proves conclusively that quality of life has stagnated since about 1980. This tells a different story from the more optimistic one told by the steady rise of GDP. From 1950 to 2000, GDP tripled. But quality of life only went up about 50%.



Let's dig deeper. The graph below plots household income growth for six segments of society using **percentiles**. At the 10th percentile, 10% of all families have less income and 90% have more.



The 50th percentile represents the **median** family. At that income level 50% of families are poorer and 50% are richer. This is the middle of the middle class. The median better reflects the “average” family than the numerical average, because the numerical average is too easily distorted by the way the rich earn so much more than the average person. If Bill Gates walked into a room with 99 people earning \$50,000 a year, the numerical average person in the room would be a millionaire. But that’s a fallacious picture. The other 99 people didn’t get richer at all. This is why we use the median when talking about the “average” family.

The graph shows three important trends: (1) For the very poor, the 10th percentile, income growth was flat. (2) Median income barely grew during the period. (3) The richer you are, the greater the growth. In fact, if the graph contained the 99th percentile, it would run off the chart.

Consider the nearly flat median curve. If we recalculated it using quality of life data instead of GDP data, the curve would fall downward about 50%.⁴¹ In other words, *we have a falling median GPI*. This is easily seen by the fact that in the GDP and GPI graph, in the beginning GPI was about 80% of GDP, but at the end it had fallen to 40% of GDP.

All six income distribution curves could be adjusted for quality of life. They would all be falling, except somewhere around the 95th percentile, where households earn \$150,000 a year.

Thus the evidence shows that for all but the rich, quality of life is falling. We are seeing our quality of life ebbing downward. This is why we can say “the rich are winning and everyone else is losing.”

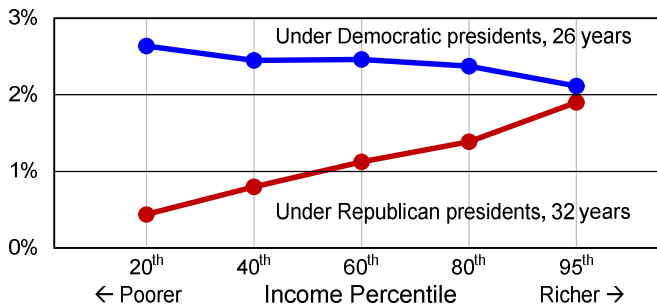
Issues like this are the real problems (the right priorities) our leaders and the news should be talking about. But they are not, due the extraordinary success of the wrong priority deception strategy.

The income distribution graph shows a disturbing trend. The rich get richer while the rest stay about the same or see only modest improvement. Is this rise in income inequality related to which party is in power?

Yes. *Unequal Democracy*, a 2008 book by Larry Bartels, a professor of political science at Princeton, sifts the data and finds the smoking gun. The key conclusion from the book is shown below. “The starkly different patterns of income growth under Democratic and Republican administrations are very clear in the figure.”

U. S. Family Income Growth from 1948 to 2005

Annual average adjusted for inflation. Data source: *Unequal Democracy*, by Larry Bartels, 2008, p33. Regraphed by Thwink.org.



Most graphs track time on the horizontal axis. This one is different. It tracks income change for five different percentiles, not time. Thus the lower graphed line doesn't show an income rise over time. *It shows a rise in income the richer you are.* On the lower line, those in the 95th percentile (the rich) saw four times the income growth of those in the 20th percentile (the poor), twice the income growth of those in the 40th percentile, etc. On the upper line, those in the 95th percentile saw slightly less income growth than those in the other four percentiles.

Several conclusions are unmistakable. The first is that one party delivered fairly even income growth in all five percentiles that slightly favored *income equality*, while the other party delivered uneven income growth and strongly rising *income inequality*. The second conclusion is that one party delivered a much higher average rate of growth than the other. It appears this is due to the system not being as efficient as it could be when one group (the rich) is heavily favored over the others. Cooperation is more efficient than non-cooperation. The third conclusion is that one party is working for *all* the people, while the other party is apparently working for the rich.⁴²

In chapter 2, *The Partisan Political Economy*, Bartels explains why the two lines on the graph are so different: (p30, italics added)

In addition to documenting these substantial partisan disparities in income growth [as graphed], the analyses presented in this chapter address a variety of potential explanations for them. I show that the dramatic differences in patterns of income growth under Democratic and Republican presidents are quite unlikely to have occurred by chance; nor can they be attributed to oil

price shocks or changes in the structure of the labor force or other purely economic factors, or to cyclical corrections by each party of the other party's policy excesses. Rather, they reflect *consistent differences in policies and priorities* between Democratic and Republican administrations. In the first half of the post-war era, these differences were expressed primarily in macroeconomic policies and performance, with Democrats presiding over significantly less unemployment and significantly more overall economic growth than Republicans. Since the 1970s some of these macroeconomic differences have been muted, *but significant partisan differences in tax and transfer policies have continued....* The cumulative effect of these partisan differences has been enormous.

The big lie revealed: The four deficits

Thus far these pages have explored merely the little deceits. The really big ones are so enormous they are taboo to discuss at any length in the press, let alone the campaign trail or in office. As Hitler wrote, it is the big lies, the “colossal untruths” that work the best.

The biggest lie of them all is that everything is basically fine. Progress will continue. Sure, we have a few wars. Yes, we do stumble now and then when a recession or a Katrina hits. Business cycles happen. Everyone makes a few mistakes.

But beneath that big lie hides the truth.

(Note: This section was written in October 2008, just as the recession was starting. Its message still holds today. The public is starting to wake up and acknowledge these truths. But as memory of the recession fades the public will forget and ignore these important truths if it does not become truth literate.)

America sits on the powder keg of *four monumental unsustainable deficits*. Each has been going on for so long that any one could cause disaster. Taken together, they threaten eventual and complete collapse—unless they are solved proactively, well ahead of time. This is not happening.

The four deficits are the trade deficit, the fiscal deficit, the private debt deficit, and the environmental deficit.⁴³ Let's briefly look at each:

1. Trade deficit – Here's what Frank Shostak, chief economist of MF Global, has to say in a piece titled “*Does the widening US trade deficit pose a threat to the economy?*”

Most economists are extremely alarmed about the effect of the expanding deficit on the current account. In 2004 the deficit stood at \$668 billion, or 5.7% of the gross domestic product (GDP). For 2005 we have estimated that the deficit was around \$788 billion, or 6.3% of GDP.

It is held that this increase in foreign debt cannot go on forever. If the Americans do not begin reducing their trade deficit, there will come a time when foreigners will become less willing to hold dollar denominated assets.

This in turn will weaken the US dollar. Consequently, once this happens the United States will be forced to increase interest rates (*maybe sharply*) to continue to attract foreign investments. Higher interest rates in turn *will plunge the economy into recession*. In short, given the size of the current account deficit it is held that the US dollar has to plunge in a big way against most currencies, and it is not possible to avoid *a painful adjustment* as a result of this. It would appear that the trade deficit is a major economic problem that must be urgently addressed in order to avoid *serious economic disaster*.⁴⁴

2. Fiscal deficit – Grim words. But the accumulated fiscal deficit (government debt) is just as bad, as Facing Up, “a nonpartisan project on the long-term challenges of the federal budget” summarizes:

The nation's long-term obligations are staggering. With a national debt of \$9 trillion (and rising) and 78 million baby boomers about to retire, straining our Social Security and Medicare systems, our country is on *the brink of a fiscal crisis*, in the form of steep tax hikes, major cutbacks in federal spending, higher interest rates, inflation and an overall declining economy—not to mention an *unsustainable* path for our children and grandchildren.⁴⁵

Our public debt of \$9 trillion is 66% of 2007 GDP. This is may not sound like much until you consider that interest on it runs \$240 billion dollars a year.⁴⁶ By comparison, the Iraq war averaged \$100 billion per year for the first five years.⁴⁷

3. Private debt deficit – For corporations private debt is loans. For households it is short term debt like credit cards and long term debt like car, college, and mortgage loans.

No one can borrow more and more forever. Overshoot causes bubbles, and bubbles based on debt fueled spending will always burst. Excessive private debt combined with weak government regulation is the gremlin behind the subprime mortgage crisis, which (as of September 17, 2008) has triggered a large Wall Street meltdown.⁴⁸

A persistent lie is that to solve the current problem, all the government has to do is follow standard procedure: get the Federal Reserve to take the right steps, bail out ailing institutions as necessary, creative crisis management, etc. But this only treats the symptoms. Until the underlying cause is resolved the problem will return, in a bigger and bigger form, until finally no quick response treatment works. We may be witnessing this now.

This persistent lie hides the fact that the cause is insufficient regulatory oversight. People have been allowed to shoulder more debt than is prudent. Investment banks, corporations, and traders have been allowed to too highly leverage their assets. Overly optimistic debt ratings have compounded the problem. So have deceptively complex new financial instruments. All this increases profits. But it also

increases instability through unsustainable economic growth. The result is that once sustainable limits are exceeded, something breaks and the system collapses.

4. Environmental deficit – This is the biggest of them all in terms of potential detrimental impact. The environmental deficit is cumulative overshoot of environmental limits. For example, there is a limit to the amount of greenhouse gas emissions the biosphere can effectively absorb and recycle. Above that limit ecological damage occurs. Due to the delays involved, actual impact on the human system has been postponed. This is exactly like the way repayment of loans is postponed. But eventually all borrowing, whether it be financial or ecological, falls due.

These four deficits have silently been building up. All are unsustainable. All are a symptom of a deeper cause.

The hardest part of the lie to see is that all four deficits are being piled up well beyond their sustainable limits, due to prolonged hyper optimization of the economic system. The system is being wound up with four giant rubber bands. These are so intertwined that when one finally snaps the effect is amplified. The further the deficits go past their limits, the more likely it is that triggering one deficit reaction will trigger another, and so on, until all four are pushing the human system toward swift, painful collapse.

If a system is stretched to its limits in one deficit, then it's less able to cope when another deficit overshoots its limit and the system snaps. For example, if the U. S. government did not have the huge *public debt* of \$9 trillion, it would be able to commit trillions instead of billions to propping up the economy while markets adjust to the bursting of the latest *private debt* bubble: the subprime mortgage crisis. Furthermore, if the U. S. did not have such a large cumulative *trade deficit*, the dollar would be much stronger and we would be more able to borrow from other governments to help ourselves through this crisis. Finally, one effect of this crisis will be to further postpone taking serious action on the *environmental deficit*.

The current financial crisis will probably be patched up. But until the root causes of the four deficits are resolved, such fixes are temporary band aids. *Insisting that such fixes are adequate prolongs the biggest lie of our time: that everything is basically fine.*

It's easy to conclude that once people see the four deficits and their consequences they will want to take action. But this is a difficult complex system problem. Such problems cannot be solved by treating the symptoms, as by teaching the public truth literacy right now. It's too late for that to work, because a majority of the people have become so controlled by ideologies, falsehoods of the day, and wedge issues (all beneficial to special interests) that they have become incognizant zombies. They cannot be awakened.

Or maybe they can, if it's not too late.

Meanwhile, those of us who are awake must go deep, all the way to:

The Root Cause: Mutually Exclusive Goals

The top problems facing our country are a falling median Genuine Progress Indicator and lack of attention to the four deficits. The immediate cause is existing law and lack of its enforcement.

Most Americans would *not* have consciously permitted these ills to befall them. Thus our government would only have passed these laws if they were deceived or were complicit in deception. What might have been the motivation behind this deception? What is the root cause?

Follow the money. Over the last few decades, the vast majority of political contributions and investments in lobbying have come from one source: large for-profit corporations and their owners (the rich). The end result is laws that explicitly or subtly favor corporations. Some politicians voted for such laws under the impression they would benefit the common good. But in most cases the votes were exchanged for political or personal advantage.

Now for the heart of the matter: *The principle root cause of the assault on all but the rich and the four deficits is the mutually exclusive goals of the corporate and human life forms.* The goal of for-profit corporations is to maximize the short term value of profits. The goal of people is to maximize quality of life, for themselves and their descendents. These two goals are so mutually exclusive the system cannot be designed to achieve both. Instead, the system now favors the corporate life form at the expense of people. The human system is working as hard as it can to maximize the short term value of profits, at the expense of quality of life. *That is a surefire recipe for global disaster on an unimaginable scale.* It's the Plain Truth. Anyone with Common Sense can see it. The Great Recession of 2008 will be seen as a minor bump compared to the one coming, if the four deficits are not solved.

Let's define a **life form** as any independent agent that follows the three fundamental requirements of evolution. These requirements are replication, mutation, and survival of the fittest.

Here's a question: What life form has the ability to replicate instantly with almost no expenditure of energy, can mutate during replication or at any time thereafter, and, when it has failed in the battle of survival of the fittest, sells little pieces of itself to its competitors in order to minimize its own pain of death? These are fantastic powers no human could hope to have. But what if we go further, and ask what life form has the miraculous power of being in many places at the same time, has an infinite life span, and can cleave off chunks of itself and have them instantly come alive? That would make it a formidable competitor indeed, one that could run rings around any other plant or animal. Darwin would be astounded.

But there's more. What life form totally dominates mankind, by controlling most jobs in developed countries, by determining the path of nearly all of new technology, products, and services, by controlling elections and political decisions more than any other life form, and by defining the very evolution of culture to its advantage through demand advertising, ownership of the media, and new product de-

sign? If that is not enough, what life form controls the billions of boxes in our homes that provide us with most of our “news,” and most of our new knowledge once we have finished school, while at the same time subconsciously indoctrinating us to be high volume, complacent consumers? To top it off, what life form is spreading exponentially from industrialized countries to the rest of the world, and will soon dominate them all? The answer is obvious: It is the modern corporation, which is the **New Dominant Life Form**.

Thus the dominant life form on Earth is no longer Homo sapiens. Instead, it is the modern corporation and its allies. ⁴⁹ Its allies include most of the rich, the military, politicians, and various special interest groups as needed to elect preferred politicians.

Please note this is not an indictment of all corporations and their managers. Most are doing the best they can, and are basically good. Each agent, from its own perspective, is behaving rationally. It is the life form as a whole that has the emergent property of behaving destructively in too many cases.

It follows that if we want the New Dominant Life Form to radically change its behavior then major surgery is required at the fundamental level. When mechanical engineers discover a bridge design is faulty and collapsing too often, they reengineer the basic design so the next bridges built do not collapse. When social engineers discover a portion of a social system is faulty due to repeated catastrophe, they reengineer the basic design of that portion of the system so that the next time it’s used, it works.

Therefore society must commit itself to redesigning the modern corporation so that we can begin:

Resolving the Root Cause of Mutually Exclusive Goals

The table on the next page compares the competitive advantage of corporations versus people. These two life forms are locked in a battle for control of the biggest ecological niche on the planet: the biosphere. Judging by who controls jobs, food systems, technology, energy, culture, and most of politics in industrialized countries, there is little doubt the New Dominant Life Form has won the battle.

The corporate life form won by relentlessly changing the system to favor themselves over people. This has been done so cleverly and in such small, imperceptible increments over the last few centuries that few citizens have noticed. But when you pause to examine the outcome the findings are shocking, as the table shows.

The Competitive Advantage of Two Life Forms		
Attribute	The Modern Corporation	<i>Homo sapiens</i>
1. Can physically manipulate its surroundings	No	Yes
2. Is legally considered a person	Yes	Yes
3. Maximum life span	Infinite	About 120 years
4. Can be in many places at the same time	Yes	No
5. Can own slaves like itself	Yes	No
6. Speed of procreation	Hours	Nine months
7. Can cut itself up into little pieces, each of which can become a new life form	Yes	No
8. Can hibernate indefinitely in hard times	Yes	No
9. Body size limit	Unlimited	About 8 feet high
10. Brain size limit	Unlimited	About 1,500 grams
11. Owners have limited liability	Yes	No, since no owners
12. Has international organization with high efficiency of decision making and full power of enforcement of decisions for its life form type	Yes, the World Trade Organization	No, the United Nations
Primary energy input	Money via sales	Food
13. Requires a physical form for its primary energy	No	Yes
14. Can transmit its primary energy instantaneously over great distances	Yes	No
15. Can store its primary energy indefinitely	Yes	No
16. Can store infinite amounts of its primary energy at no cost	Yes	No
17. Financial impact of storing its primary energy	Makes a profit by charging interest	Must pay storage costs

Only in the first attribute does *Homo sapiens* have the advantage. In the second attribute they are equal. In all the rest the modern corporation has the overwhelming advantage.

For-profit corporations will continue to have that advantage until the root cause of their dominance is changed. As we argued before:

The goal of for-profit corporations is to maximize the short term value of profits. The goal of people is to maximize quality of life, for themselves and their descendents. These two goals are so mutually exclusive the system cannot be designed to achieve both. Instead, the system now favors the corporate life form at the expense of people.

Which goal should we change? We probably don't want to change the goal of people. That goal has worked fine for about 200,000 years. *Therefore the strategic solution is to change the system by redesigning the modern corporation.* There appears to be no alternative.

This pamphlet is not the place for a thorough discussion on how to do this. But we can say that elements like these should be considered. The first is required:

- 1. Compatible Goals** – A **servant** is an artificial entity created by humans to serve the interests of humanity in some manner. By designing the first iteration of an alternative to the traditional for-profit corporation, we create a new, much more trustworthy servant type. Call it **Corporation 2.0**. Its goal would be to optimize some aspect of quality of life, as stated in its charter. It would be a non-profit so profitability would be a lower priority secondary goal. The goals of the two top life forms are now compatible. The system can now achieve both goals.
- 2. No Servant Secrets** – Because we want cooperative servants, 2.0 corporations would have no competitive secrets. After all, if a servant is an entity created and employed by humans to provide goods and services, why should a servant need to keep any form of competitive advantage secret, except to gain advantage over its master or other servants? Note this does not include non-competitive secrets, like passwords, personal information, and jury deliberations.
- 3. Unlimited Liability** – Because we want a servant that takes as little risk toward hurting humanity as possible, it would have *unlimited liability*. 2.0 corporations would be fully liable for all types of liabilities. This could be accommodated by insurance as needed, which would create a feedback loop driving servant behavior toward that which is best for their masters.
- 4. Limited Lifespan** – Because we do not want hordes of incompetent, marginal 2.0 corporations running our system, their charters would last for only seven or so years. At the end of that period they would apply for renewal and must present outstanding proof they have done an excellent job of achieving their chartered goals. If they have then they live. Otherwise they die an immediate Darwinian death and their assets are sold off to more benevolent servants.
- 5. Continuous Improvement** – In every charter is the obligation to continuously improve the design of corporation 2.0. Suggestions for improvement can be submitted to the governing body of artificially created life forms and if accepted would be propagated to all 2.0 corporations. In this manner the new life form is self-evolving in a beneficial way. In a few iterations it will no doubt evolve into a much more efficient and effective entity than what we've sketched here.

Suggestions like these will be controversial and resisted. Corporate proxies will argue that without their present powers, corporations could not deliver the cornucopia of benefits needed by consumers to survive.

But consider how humanity fared before corporations were created. We did just fine, though so-called progress was slower. Looking over the last 500 years, all corporations have done is accelerate progress. But this has been a Faustian bargain from the start. As President Hayes complained after his election in 1876, “This is a government of the people no longer. It is a government of corporations, by corporations, and for corporations.” By 1992 the problem had grown so bad that William Greider, in *Who Will Tell the People? The Betrayal of American Democracy*, pointed out that:

[The corporate life form’s] tremendous financial resources, the diversity of their interests, the squads of talented professionals—all these assets and some others are now relentlessly focused on *the politics of governing*. This new institutional reality is the centerpiece in *the breakdown of contemporary democracy*. Corporations exist to pursue their own *profit maximization*, not the collective aspirations of society.⁵⁰

1.0 corporations are what we have today. Once people realize they are causing “the breakdown of contemporary democracy,” by interfering in “the politics of governing,” *2.0 corporations will be seen as preferred investments by those who want to put their money into something that makes this a better world first and is profitable second*. As the truth of the consequences of corporate dominance starts to spread, there will be a flood of money moving to 2.0 corporate loans and consumer purchases, because We the People want the same independence from oppression that our founders wanted in 1776.

2.0 corporations can be created under existing law. At a minimum all that’s required is that the charter specify a non-profit corporation, state there is no limited liability of any kind, state that the corporation is not to be considered a person and thus has no rights of a person such as free speech, and state that the corporation is a servant of The People and lives at their pleasure. Its charter comes up for periodic renewal. If the corporation has not performed well its charter is not renewed. To identify a 2.0 corporation a standard corporate name suffix of “C2” is suggested.⁵¹

Vanquishing the political deception machine

How did the New Dominant Life Form achieve such a lopsided competitive advantage? *By a single central strategy: a gigantic political deception machine*. First corporations aligned themselves with a party/ideology and infected it with values and goals that appeared beneficial to people but were in fact more beneficial to corporations and their shareholders. This worked so well that in 1925 President Calvin Coolidge pronounced that, “The chief business of the American people is business.”⁵² Next, using the master plan outlined in the Powell Memo of 1971, written by soon-to-be Supreme Court justice Lewis Powell at the request of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, corporations begin founding pseudo think tanks and other organizations, like the Heritage Foundation, to manufacture the subtle lies and rationaliza-

tions that aligned politicians would need to achieve the corporate agenda. For example, “In 1978 the Institute for Educational Affairs was formed to match corporate funders with sympathetic scholars producing research studies supporting corporate views on economic freedom.”⁵³ Campaign strategists switched from talking about the issues to creating and maintaining a politician’s image in order to maximize the success of The Pyramid of Political Deception.

It worked. Too well.

The message in Thomas Frank’s 2004 classic, *What’s the Matter with Kansas?*, was that conservatives are winning by conning Americans into voting against their own interests. The conservative deception machine employs the **backlash** technique. As Frank explains, backlash:

...mobilizes voters with explosive social issues—summoning public outrage over everything from busing to un-Christian art—which it then marries to pro-business economic policies. *Cultural anger is marshaled to achieve economic ends.*

The backlash is what has made possible the international free market consensus over recent years, with all the privatization, deregulation, and deunionization that are its components. Backlash ensures that Republicans will continue to be returned to office even when their free market miracles fail and their libertarian schemes don’t deliver and the “New Economy” collapses.

The leaders of the backlash may talk Christ, but they walk corporate. Values may “matter most” to voters, but they always take a backseat to the needs of money once the elections are won. This is a basic earmark of the phenomenon, absolutely consistent across its decades-long history. Abortion is never halted. Affirmative action is never abolished.

Backlash anger (also known as wedge issues) works by (1) *pushing the fear hot button*. It creates the highly charged myth that unless a trumped up issue is resolved in your group’s favor, you lose. There is a steady supply of ready issues, because so many little things are important to people. These issues become the (2) *wrong priorities* that voters are most concerned about, while in reality other issues are far more important. Liberals, gays, immigrants, big government, and so on are painted as the (3) *false enemy* you should be angry against. Later after the conservatives win they fail to deliver on their (4) *false promises*, and use (5) *secrecy* to hide the corruption necessary to channel as much favoritism as possible to the special interests who really matter: corporations and the rich.

By using all five deception strategies The Great Mass Deception Machine prevails in one election after another. The machine slows down only when a calamitous failing of its policies occurs, such as the disastrous Iraq war and the financial meltdown of 2008. But these are quickly forgotten as new backlash issues are fomented to shift attention from these failings and stoke up the old anger all over again, and

further deceptions are used to make it look as if irresponsible liberals (or other scapegoats) were the real cause of the failings.

If you practice the Truth Test none of this will work on you. You will see that today not only are the lower and middle classes losing ground, but if the problem of corporate oppression remains unsolved, *democracy itself is in danger*. How many other countries are likewise oppressed? *If we save ourselves we save all*. If we, once the beacon of the free world, cannot save ourselves, the apogee of civilization lies behind and darkness ahead. If corporate oppression continues and the laws of the land continue to favor corporatism, who will decide the ultimate issue of the 21st century: corporate profits versus environmental sustainability?

But as this pamphlet has argued all along, there is a way out. *All we have to do is eliminate the ability of mass political deception to work*. Once that happens, the George's and Wilma's and Martha's of America will see the truth. Once "*the scales have fallen from our eyes*" then We the People will see what has happened. The majority of Americans will be so horrified they will immediately begin to elect virtuous politicians, ones who will work for the common good of all, instead of the uncommon good of special interests.

It can be done. In fact:

We did it before and we can do it again

Over 200 years ago, *Common Sense* performed a near miracle. In a matter of weeks it galvanized an emerging nation to throw off the bonds of oppression by striking out in a new direction under a new vision, one so ambitious and innovative it led to the invention of modern democracy.

That pamphlet worked by painting a new reality. This one works by self-education, so that you can create your own new reality. Illusion can be replaced with the truth about what you can see for yourself. Such empowerment can work wonders.

If something like the Truth Test had been instilled into the culture of humanity since the Age of Enlightenment, history would have turned out quite differently. For example, what would have happened if citizens had been immune to the torrent of lies that Hitler and the Nazi Party used to rise to power? The Third Reich would have never happened and Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda from 1933 to 1945, would have never been able to proclaim:

No one can say that your *propaganda* is too crude or low or brutal, or that it is not decent enough, for those are not the relevant criteria. Its purpose is not to be decent, or gentle, or weak, or modest; it is to be successful. ⁵⁴

It does not matter how many *lies* we tell, because once we have won, no one will be able to do anything about it. ⁵⁵

This has happened too many times. Never again should we allow tyranny to come to power through political deception. And it won't—if we can give the average person the ability to spot the truth, no matter how cleverly it may be disguised.

Throughout history, people living in groups for a long time have sought one end more than any other: *Freedom from Oppression*. This has required a long succession of smaller freedoms to attain.

In England, the King's subjects gave themselves the *Great Charter of Freedoms*, also known as the Magna Carta, in 1215. In the United States, the colonies realized *Freedom from the Mother Country* in 1776 with the Declaration of Independence, followed by *Freedom of Universal Rights* in 1791 with the Bill of Rights. Slaves attained *Freedom from Slavery* in 1865 with the Emancipation Proclamation. Women attained the *Freedom to Vote* in 1920 with the Nineteenth Amendment. In 1941 President Franklin D. Roosevelt proposed “the four freedoms” that people “everywhere in the world” ought to enjoy: *Freedom of Speech and Expression*, *Freedom of Religion*, *Freedom from Want*, and *Freedom from Fear*. Finally, minorities saw *Freedom from Discrimination* with the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

But there is one last freedom left to achieve. It is the one that will make the greatest difference, because without it all the others are at risk, as we have seen so starkly in the disastrous path our country has taken recently. Like Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, this pamphlet:

“...[shares] a commitment to Enlightenment ideals and a belief that humanity and society [can] be improved through the application of REASON and the extension of FREEDOM.”⁵⁶

Therefore the final freedom left to achieve is *Freedom from Falsehood*. This gives people the right to freedom from falsehood from sources they must be able to trust. This includes all “servants” of The People, including politicians, public employees, and most importantly, corporations. A **servant** is an agent created or employed by *Homo sapiens* to do something useful for humanity. All servants must remain subservient to *Homo sapiens* and keep the interests of humans above their own.⁵⁷

The final freedom of *Freedom from Falsehood* will come only to those who do the same as those who came before us in 1776. They took resolute action. If they had not, their inaction would have continued the consent of the oppressed.

FINIS

Improvements to the September 20, 2008 1st edition

It must be remembered that the original pamphlet was written during a time of crisis, when a pivotal presidential election two months later held the fate of a nation in its hands.

On page 1, the sentence “*Since no sane person wants to be oppressed, in a democracy mass oppression requires mass deception.*” replaced two other sentences. On p4, “logically and strongly” was added. On p22 some text was replaced with the material about inoculation. On p31, Larry Bartels’ data on Family Income Growth was converted from a table to a graph. Related descriptive text was changed or added to better describe the graph. On pp31-32 the causes behind the income growth graph have been explained differently by use of a quote from Bartels. Numerous small changes were made to update the content to 2011 and improve readability and strength of argument. Otherwise the full vibrancy and fire of the original pamphlet has been retained.

Reading it again today, I can remember those turbulent days when the biggest economic collapse since the Great Depression was underway and the future looked grim. The *global* economy was crashing like it had never crashed before. The world was holding its breath because no one knew how it might turn out.

In the US The People spoke and a new president, one clearly working for the common good, gave us hope. History has begun to repeat itself once again, however. The Great Mass Deception Machine has come roaring back to life. Its geyser of misinformation is so pervasive and so cleverly done that The People have forgotten who caused the Great Recession of 2008, and voted them right back in during the 2010 election. This piles one more stone on the mountain of evidence showing that, until truth literacy comes to the majority of the public, they will forever be at the mercy of the world’s merciless exploiters.

It will take more than the Truth Test

This pamphlet, like so much other introductory material, over simplifies. Actually it will take more than the Truth Test to solve the political system exploitation problem, also called *the broken political system problem*. Modern marketing methods, initially used for government propaganda and later perfected by the advertising/marketing industry, have grown to be so productive that it requires near super-human truth literacy to ward off the intoxicating effects of false advertising. Politics has adopted these methods and has achieved the same ultra high productivity. Voters can now be manipulated as easily as consumers. All that’s needed is plenty of money. Thus the Truth Test would probably not inoculate 100% of the population against political deception. It would be more like 10% to 40%, because of the high degree of education and diligence required to learn the Truth Test and to perform it successfully in all situations.

Additional solution elements have been developed as a result of analysis of the structure of the political powerplace that characterizes all societies. These and the

analysis behind them have been written up in a book at Thwink.org. *Common Property Rights: A Process Driven Approach to Solving the Complete Sustainability Problem* is named after the flagship solution element of Common Property Rights. The analysis and book were completed in 2011.

As the last chapter in the book explains, however, the book is about much more than the sustainability problem. It's about the broken political system problem, which is the same problem this pamphlet addresses. The book presents twelve solution elements. Three are (1) the Truth Test, (2) Politician Truth Ratings, and (3) Politician Corruption Ratings solution elements. As we have explained, the first solution element is not enough to solve the Truth or Deception problem. The three elements combined can. The 2nd and 3rd elements are forms of Politician Ratings.

Politician Ratings would be created and published by independent trustworthy non-profit organizations, like Consumer Reports, FactCheck.org, or PolitiFact.org. Politician ratings will someday become as ubiquitous as credit ratings. This is an inevitable result of the evolution of democracy because without politician ratings The People have no reliable guide to who to vote for. They must instead trust what politicians and the media tell them. Since this information is presently unreliable, the voter feedback loop is too weak to steer democratic systems toward the common good of all. *A weak easily exploited voter feedback loop is the structural cause of the broken political system problem.*

The Truth Test and Politician Ratings solve that problem. Together they can strengthen the voter feedback loop to where it routinely elects the best political system managers. The Truth Test works on that portion of the population that's truth literate. They can rate politicians themselves because they can "read" the truth directly. Politician Ratings works on the rest of the population because all it depends on is voters using politician ratings in their decisions. If one politician scores an 85 and another a 91 out of 100, then guess which politician will, on the average, win? Once a population becomes accustomed to using Politician Ratings, "reading" how truthful and helpful a politician is to a nation's well being will be as easy as reading a thermometer.

The Truth Test and Politician Ratings are designed to establish a race to the top among politicians, as described in *Common Property Rights*. Once this happens politicians will no longer be competing to see who can please special interests the most. They will instead compete to see who can "promote the general welfare and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity." ⁵⁸

If so, then we have at last solved the problem that Thomas Paine and the inventors of modern democracy set out to solve so long ago. Soon these will no longer be "times that try men's souls."

End Notes

¹ “A lie repeated often enough becomes the truth” – Authorities differ on the source of this quote. Some say Vladimir Lenin and other say Joseph Goebbels. Since both sources exploited the principle embodied in the quote for monstrous destruction, either source will do.

² The average of Iraq war deaths (on June 19, 2011) from six sources is 331,353, as listed on en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualties_of_the_conflict_in_Iraq_since_2003.

³ If the number of copies of *Common Sense* printed was adjusted for today’s population, it would be the equivalent of 30 million copies sold in two months, making it the fastest selling book of all time.

⁴ The quotes about *Common Sense* are from craignelson.us/tompaine.html. The image of the title page of *Common Sense* is from www.history.org/history/teaching/enewsletter/volume6/dec07/primsources.cfm.

⁵ For a long overview of critical thinking see en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critical_thinking. To summarize, **critical thinking** consists of two main aspects: (1) A set of cognitive skills, intellectual standards, and traits of mind, and (2) The disposition or intellectual commitment to use those structures to improve thinking and guide behavior.

⁶ Cicero quote from en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Cicero.

⁷ For a great book on message tricks and more see *unSpun: Finding facts in a world of disinformation*, by Brooks Jackson and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, 2007. They should know, because they are the founders of FactCheck.org. In the book “spin” is another word for deception.

⁸ Image from www.cs.drexel.edu/~crrorres/Archimedes/Lever/Lever.jpg.

⁹ Who the non-rich are depends on how “rich” is defined. According to US Census Bureau income statistics for 2005, the top 20% of households earned \$92,000 or more. The top 5% earned \$167,000 or more. “Rich” can be defined as that level of income at which one has no realistic survival or security worries at all unless one spends extravagantly. That level appears to be reached at somewhere between \$92,000 and \$167,000 per year. Source of data: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_class_in_the_United_States on September 2, 2008.

¹⁰ The reversal quote is from *Bush, in Reversal, Won’t Seek Cut in Emissions of Carbons Dioxide*, by Douglas Jehl with Andrew Revkin, March 14, 2001, the New York Times. See www.nytimes.com/2001/03/14/politics/14EMIT.html.

¹¹ “No passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear.” – From http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Edmund_Burke. According to en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmund_Burke “He is often regarded by conservatives as the philosophical founder of Anglo-American conservatism.”

¹² Source: www.cnn.com/2006/POLITICS/10/20/gop.ad/index.html. “CNN senior political analyst Bill Schneider called [the ad] ‘the most famous political ad in American history.’”

¹³ The Daisy ad description is from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daisy_ad.

¹⁴ “Secrecy is the beginning of Tyranny” – By Robert A Heinlein in *Time Enough for Love*, Second Intermission: More from the Notebooks of Lazarus Long.

¹⁵ Ironically, the U. S. was manufacturing its own WMDs. Warren Buffett warned in 2003 that derivatives were “financial weapons of mass destruction.” Five years later, they blew up.

¹⁶ The passage about the Swift Boat ads is from *The Political Brain: The Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation*, by Drew Weston, 2007, page 342.

¹⁷ The Swift Boat funding quote is from a FactCheck.org article at www.factcheck.org/republican-funded_group_attacks_kerrys_war_record.html.

¹⁸ “When you have no basis for an argument, abuse the plaintiff.” Cicero. From the *Encarta Book of Quotations*, by Swainson and Soukhanov, 2000, page 212.

¹⁹ From *Pulp Politics: Popular Culture and Political Advertising*, by Glenn Richardson, in *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 3.4 (2000) 603-626, online at muse.jhu.edu/journals/rhetoric_and_public_affairs/v0003/3.4richardson.html.

²⁰ For further reading on the Daisy ad see www.conelrad.com/daisy/daisy3.php.

²¹ Quotes from *The Political Brain: the Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation*, by Drew Weston, 2007, pages 35, 13, 14 and 15. For a possible explanation of why Democrats prefer appealing to the intellect with the truth and Republicans prefer the use of emotion, which is a form of deception, see *The Dueling Loops of the Political Powerplace* paper at Thwink.org.

²² From *Live on the Campaign Trail*, by Michael Cohen, 2008, page 209.

²³ Ibid page 211 and 212.

²⁴ Ibid page 208.

²⁵ Source of “mushroom cloud” quote: www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/10/20021007-8.html.

²⁶ Source of wolves ad text: www.slate.com/id/2108598.

- ²⁷ Inoculation source: *Political Communication*, by Richard Perloff, 1998, p368-369.
- ²⁸ Source: www.buffalonian.com/hnews/1901LastSpeechMcKinley.html.
- ²⁹ Source: archives.cnn.com/2001/US/11/06/ret.bush.coalition/index.html.
- ³⁰ Source: Schiappa, Edward (1995). *Warranting Assent: Case Studies in Argument Evaluation*. State University of New York, page 25, as noted in en.wikipedia.org/wiki/You're_either_with_us_or_against_us.
- ³¹ Source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/You're_either_with_us_or_against_us.
- ³² From *Live on the Campaign Trail*, by Michael Cohen, 2008, page 167.
- ³³ The Hitler passage is from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_Lie.
- ³⁴ The phrase “government takeover of health care” was a carefully manufactured false meme created by Frank Luntz. See www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/article/2010/dec/16/lie-year-government-takeover-health-care where “PolitiFact editors and reporters have chosen ‘government takeover of health care’ as the 2010 Lie of the Year.”
- ³⁵ Material on Luntz lie from thinkprogress.org/health/2009/05/06/170766/luntz-memo.
- ³⁶ Poll quote from www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?sid=a2R1ChNYjoag&pid=newsarchive.
- ³⁷ Several of the message tricks are from *unSpun: Finding facts in a world of disinformation*, by Brooks Jackson and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, 2007.
- ³⁸ Quote from *The Penguin Book of Twentieth Century Speeches*, by MacArthur, 1999, p243.
- ³⁹ Definition of McCarthyism from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McCarthyism.
- ⁴⁰ Graph from www.rprogress.org/publications/2007/GPI%202006.pdf.
- ⁴¹ Actually it would fall by more than 50% because the median is lower than the numerical average, which is what is used in the GDP and GPI graph.
- ⁴² For further discussion see: www.nytimes.com/2008/08/31/business/31view.html.
- ⁴³ There are at least two more deficits: physical infrastructure like bridges and social infrastructure like the quality of educational system. But we have kept the concept of the four deficits simple, by limiting it to four.
- ⁴⁴ Source of trade deficit quote: mises.org/story/2029.
- ⁴⁵ Source of fiscal deficit quote: www.facingup.org/why.
- ⁴⁶ Source of fiscal deficit interest: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_public_debt
- ⁴⁷ Source of Iraq war cost: money.cnn.com/2008/01/10/news/economy/costofwar.fortune/index.htm.
- ⁴⁸ See www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/02/13/AR2008021302783_pf.html for how the Bush administration apparently collaborated with business, against the wishes of all fifty states, to cause the subprime mortgage crisis. The article is *Predatory Lenders' Partner in Crime: How the Bush Administration Stopped the States From Stepping In to Help Consumers*.
- ⁴⁹ The phrase New Dominant Life Form is designed to emphasize the way the modern corporation and its allies are a true life form and are currently the dominant one on the planet. For further elaboration and support of this conclusion see: *Gangs of America: The Rise of Corporate Power and the Disabling of Democracy*, by Ted Nace, 2003; *When Corporations Rule the World*, by David Korten, 2001; and two by Sharon Beder: *Global Spin: The Corporate Assault on Environmentalism*, 2002, and *Suited Themselves: How Corporations Drive the Global Agenda*, 2006.
- ⁵⁰ From *Who Will Tell the People? The Betrayal of American Democracy*, by William Greider, 1992, page 331. Quoted by Korten (see below) on page 74.
- ⁵¹ For much more detail on the Corporation 2.0 solution element see the *Common Property Rights* book. The sketch given here is limited and approximate. New laws will probably be needed to optimize and standardize 2.0 corporations, but that's no reason to not begin now with the first round of 2.0 corporations by way of custom charters.
- ⁵² Quote from: en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Calvin_Coolidge.
- ⁵³ From *When Corporations Rule the World*, by David Korten, 2001, page 144.
- ⁵⁴ Source: www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/goeb54.htm.
- ⁵⁵ Statement by Dr. Joseph Goebbels to Adolf Hitler, early 1930s, from *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, by William L Shirer.
- ⁵⁶ Quoted from *Thomas Paine and the Promise of America*, by Harvey Kaye, 2005, p70.
- ⁵⁷ For much more on Freedom from Falsehood, servants, and the necessary servant role of the modern corporation see *Common Property Rights*, a book available at Thwink.org.
- ⁵⁸ From the preamble of the U. S. Constitution, as adopted on September 17, 1787 by the Constitutional Convention and ratified by each U.S. state in the name of "The People."

NOT A CALL TO ARMS, BUT A CALL TO REASON

IN THE EIGHT YEARS from 2001 to 2008:

WHY did a record surplus turn into a record deficit?

WHY did real income rise only for the upper 50% of Americans?

WHY did we start a war that should have never happened?

WHY did the Great Recession of 2008 come about?

BECAUSE TOO MANY of the American people were unable to tell political deception from the truth, so they supported the wrong politicians and the wrong polices.

THEY COULD NOT SEE there was no need to cut taxes (mostly for the rich) so much that a large deficit was the inevitable result.

THEY COULD NOT SEE that political decisions were biased toward the rich, at the expense of the middle and lower classes. (See pages 30 and 31 for graphs showing an astonishing phenomenon.)

THEY COULD NOT SEE the evidence against Iraq was so thin the United Nations refused to back a U. S. invasion, and that our leaders were exploiting the trauma of 9/11 to justify a totally unnecessary war. (See page 13 for that classic example of deception.)

THEY COULD NOT SEE that large for-profit corporations need firm and sustained regulatory oversight, if we are to avoid the nasty side effects of maximization of short term profit at the long term expense of the common good of The People. (See page 32 for the big lie of the four deficits.)

BUT THEY WILL BE ABLE to see these things, if We The People can develop the ability to tell truth from deception.



See TruthTest.org for the video related to this pamphlet.