

The US Corporation as Psychopath

One Good Reason to Overturn the 2010 Citizens United Ruling

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"Slavery is the legal fiction that a person is property. Corporate personhood is the legal fiction that property is a person." — Anonymous

The infamous NeoConservative, anti-democratic Roberts' Supreme Court 5/4 decision in the 2010 Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission ruling (granting personhood to corporations) has emboldened the already powerful and very corruptible multinational corporations (that have already achieved dominion over politics and the economy in the United States) to "buy" any number of politicians and brain-wash many voters in many state and national elections.. The US Supreme Court has made legal the absurd notion that inanimate corporations deserve the same rights (but not the same responsibilities) as living humans.

Soberingly, after the ruling came down, there was only a brief bit of anger and outrage from our national leadership over this democracy-threatening decision, and the outrage was quickly drowned out of the public consciousness by a well-timed, mainstream media-orchestrated "tempest in a teapot" – Toyota's recall of tens of thousands of accelerator pedals (that apparently had only infrequently been the cause of significant accidents).

The following question must be asked:

If corporations have the privileges of personhood shouldn't they also bear the same responsibilities and incur the same punishments as individuals do when they commit crimes?

Peace and justice activists briefly applauded when the citizens of Shapleigh, Maine protected their water rights last March from the insatiable water-extracting corporate giant Nestle. (See [video and more information on this episode](#))

Nestle, one of the most infamous of the countless multinational corporate exploiters, has no allegiance to Maine or Wisconsin or any other locality where they try to extract relatively non-polluted water; but when the water is gone, so will be Nestle, and so will be Coca-Cola and Perrier or whatever other corporate intruder that extracts the people's resources for the benefit of their shareholders and their predatory corporate executives. The good citizens of Maine recognized the foxes that tried to get inside their henhouse, and they did the right thing by resisting, and little David and his slingshot won another rare victory against the evil giant Goliath.

This small victory for justice should illustrate what must be done if the disastrous Citizens United decision is allowed to stand. The future of the nation, the future of the children and the future of the planet is at stake. And corporations don't seem to care.

It is important to understand that the allegiance of corporations is to its shareholders, executives and management teams, and not to the people whose lives and health depend on the sustainability of the land, water, air and food supplies. Most corporate shareholders and executives are motivated by profits/greed and are not affected when local resources are used up and the struggling local communities (that placed their trust in untrustworthy corporations) are degraded.

The hollow "promises" of conscienceless megacorporations to "trust us" to un-poison the poisoned environment aren't revealed as the cunning disinformation it is until it is too late and the mess that is left behind is no longer the sneaky corporation's problem. What was promised prior to the pull-out or the bankruptcy or the merger was designed by clever corporate lawyers to legally go back on the promises that had been made during the conniving "courtship" phase of the deal.

One of the many tax avoiding American megacorporations is Wal-Mart. Most of its profits go to a handful of Walton family billionaires in Arkansas. WaMart tries hard not to pay for healthcare insurance and other benefits for their exploited and underpaid employees, who are victims of WalMart's union-busting policies.

US taxpayers are left holding the bag while Wal-Mart legally avoids what should ethically be their corporate responsibility to support their workers. Wal-Mart is notorious for not hiring workers for full-time work and then paying the part-timers below-subsistence level wages that force many of them to apply for welfare benefits – a cunning cost-shifting tactic that places economic burdens on the tax-paying public.

Another example is Coca-Cola. Coke depends on water that it extracts from anywhere the corporation can suck it out, including, as a particularly egregious example, from the aquifers that are situated beneath struggling, starving (and then suicidal) farmers who are losing their farms in drought-stricken India. Millions of gallons of water, that has traditionally been used for farmland irrigation systems, are being ruthlessly used up by Coca-Cola in order to meet the artificial demand that has been created for the sweet, addictive, nutritionally useless, sickness-inducing and obesity-producing soft drink that contains two cents worth of ingredients but is being sold to poor people everywhere for as much as the market will bear.

Coke's predation of poor people in India and elsewhere brings to mind another corporate crime that has never been brought to justice. The infamous 1984 Union Carbide/Bhopal cyanide catastrophe that killed 25,000 slum-dwellers, left 100,000 permanently poisoned, and has left uncounted numbers of people living on poisoned soil, drinking contaminated

water and breathing poisoned air.

Every person that has been exposed to the Bhopal plant environs since 1984 is chronically ill; and Indian mothers are still delivering malformed babies and dead fetuses because of the pesticide residues that cannot be detoxified. Union Carbide, the American corporation responsible for the disaster, has consistently shirked its moral responsibilities to the suffering victims. Carbide eventually sold itself to the equally infamous Dow Chemical, the company that brought us Agent Orange, immune-destroying silicone breast implants and a multitude of other highly profitable and very poisonous products.

Union Carbide's corporate executives have been subpoenaed to appear in Indian courts for their crimes. But the US has not honored the extradition treaties it has with India. These executives have repeatedly refused to appear and are therefore in contempt of court. There are warrants out for their arrests in India, just as there are warrants out for the arrest of citizen Henry Kissinger for his part in international war crimes in Chile, East Timor, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, etc. All remain at large, harbored by America's big Business-friendly, corporate-controlled nation.

There are a number of common denominators that link human criminals and corporate criminals that populate the Fortune 500 list (like Union Carbide, WalMart, Dow, Monsanto, Merck, Nestle, Enron, British Petroleum, Halliburton, etc, etc). For one, the corporations, being just as afraid of facing the music as were Henry Kissinger, Bernie Madoff, Ken Lay and the multitude of others of their ilk, will use any means necessary to evade or delay justice. Similarly, none of them will admit their guilt and none of them can be expected to show any genuine remorse for the massive human suffering their actions have caused.

There are checklist diagnoses for various personality disorders in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM), the recipe book and billing manual for psychiatrists. One of these disorders, antisocial personality disorder (301.7), describes pathological cheaters, liars and abusers whose lack of morals, ethics and consciences often enables them to avoid being caught or punished for their crimes and misdeeds. These sociopaths (aka psychopaths) refuse to take the blame or accept responsibility for their actions.

The quasi-humans who meet the full criteria for this diagnosis are incapable of showing genuine remorse if or when they are caught, convicted or punished for their crimes. Below are seven diagnostic criteria that are used to diagnose antisocial (aka, sociopathic or psychopathic) personality disorder (be mindful that only three of the seven are needed for a positive diagnosis):

1. callous disregard for the feelings of other people,
2. the incapacity to maintain human relationships,
3. reckless disregard for the safety of others,
4. aggressiveness,
5. deceitfulness (repeated lying and conning others for profit)
6. incapacity to experience [guilt](#), and
7. the failure to conform to [social norms](#) and respect for the [law](#).

Other common traits include these:

- No conscience
- Lack of remorse for evils done to others

- Indifferent to the suffering of its victims
- Rationalizes (makes excuses for) having hurt, mistreated or stolen from others
- Willingness to exploit, seduce or manipulate others
- No sign of delusional or irrational thinking.
- Cunning, clever
- Commonly above average intelligence
- Always looking for ways to make money or achieve fame or notoriety
- Willing to cause or contribute to the financial ruin of others
- Untrustworthy
- Cannot be trusted to adhere to conventional standards of morality.

We are talking about criminality in otherwise sane individuals. Sadly, psychopaths are, for all intents and purposes, incurable. These disordered individuals (as are their sociopathic corporate counterparts) never truly feel guilty about their misdeeds, and therefore they never truly try to change; nor do they even ask for help.

When court-ordered to submit to “treatment”, they usually only pretend to change until the pressure is off and criminal activities look doable again. History tells us that rehabilitation for full-fledged sociopaths is useless, although the often charming, charismatic sociopath will commonly fool the treatment team into thinking progress is being made.

By and large, most criminally-minded sociopaths have to be locked away to protect society from them. So another set of questions needs to be asked: “what needs to be done with sociopathic corporations when they lie, cheat, commit crimes or otherwise act unethically?”

Given the Supreme Court ruling granting personhood to corporations, shouldn’t they be treated like their human sociopathic counterparts, perhaps with long prison sentences, confiscation of property or even capital punishment? (I hasten to add that I am against capital punishment for humans, but corporations are not human (despite the Citizens United ruling), don’t bleed and don’t cry out in pain during the execution process, although they may plead for mercy.) Capital punishment for corporations, contrary to the data on capital punishment for humans, would prevent a lot of sociopathic behaviors from multinational corporations.

What about the crime of rape as applied to corporations? Rape has several definitions, including the following ones that are in my dictionary: 1) Any violent seizure or hostile action against a weaker opponent; 2) to rob or plunder; 3) the act of seizing and carrying off by force; and the common one most people think of, 4) the crime of having forcible sexual intercourse without consent.

Corporations who plunder Mother Earth meet most of the definitions of rape. Should our society punish corporate rapists as severely as we punish human rapists? And what about the serial corporate killers of the creation and the creatures that have every right to co-exist on our increasingly poisoned planet?

What about the known lethal poisons that thousands of unregulated chemical companies knowingly discharge into the water, air, soil? Should their acts of desecration be regarded as premeditated murder? Their murderous actions have already caused a multitude of dead zones in our aquifers, oceans, lakes and rivers.

What about the extractive mineral companies that blow the tops off mountains in Appalachia or the Philippines (or in the Penokee Mountain range of northern Wisconsin) to extract the resources beneath and then claim innocence when living things downstream die off from the poisoned water and toxic sludge that contaminates previously pristine streams that previously provided safe drinking water, irrigation water for farming and a healthy natural environment for fish and wildlife?

How many strikes should any corporate predator be allowed before they are called out and thrown off the land and out of the game? Shouldn't exploitive intruders be stopped before they despoil even one more aquifer, one more lake, one more mountain or just one planet? Shouldn't cunning, politically-connected corporate exploiters be banned, arrested, tried and punished just like the human predators that civilized people despise? And shouldn't there be generous monetary restitution to the victims of their crimes?

Shouldn't corporate thieves and liars and rapists and killers be treated the same as human thieves and liars and rapists and killers? Shouldn't we refuse to trust untrustworthy corporations that are lying to us or poisoning us?

And shouldn't some of the most dangerous – albeit legal – of the thousands of toxic synthetic chemicals so cavalierly marketed by BigPharma, be recalled just like Toyota's occasionally dangerous accelerator pedals? BigPharma's drugs cause many more deaths than do design problems of automobiles. Shouldn't the pharmaceutical manufacturers, marketers, suppliers and sellers of such potentially lethal substances be stopped just like the street corner pushers of illicit drugs? What about the corporate pushers of the cocaine-like drug Ritalin and the amphetamine Adderall that are being dispensed so cavalierly to inattentive or active little children whose brains haven't been hard-wired yet?

What about corporate junkies, those companies and executives that are addicted to their profits, their prestige, their corporate jets, their vacation homes and their quarterly bonuses? We regularly intervene for some of society's human addicts, who are on the road to ruin and damnation and a danger to themselves and others. Shouldn't there be interventions planned for these wealth, power and greed addicts before they kill again?

The answer, in a fair society, should be yes to all these questions, no matter how often the smiley-faced, well-dressed corporate CEOs or their well-paid spokespersons, in their most cunning damage-control mode, try to convince us that their companies are "responsible citizens". We star-struck celebrity-worshippers of Fortune 500 companies seem to sucker for that line again and again – but the stakes are higher this time.

Deep down, all fair-minded Americans know that corporations are NOT people, despite what the corrupted and co-opted Roberts' Supreme Court so shamefully ruled back in 2010. I wonder if the best approach for society in dealing with those shady inanimate corporate entities, is to, rather than applying the standard constitutional guarantee of being innocent until proven guilty, we should judge these often ruthless corporations as being guilty until they are proven innocent.

I like that notion. I have often advised my psychologically traumatized patients who were physically, sexually or emotionally abused in childhood by parent figures to only give respect and forgiveness to them when they have truly earned it and therefore deserve the respect and forgiveness. Psychologically speaking, not obeying – and also not respecting one's victimizers should be the norm in interpersonal relationships. Psychologically

speaking, and in my considered opinion, parental neglect or abuse negates the 4th commandment that commands children to honor their father and mother. Likewise, we should only do business with companies that have earned and therefore truly deserve our respect.

Being suspicious of psychopathic entities is an important strategy to follow if one is to protect oneself from getting cheated or otherwise victimized. Staying out of a sociopath's grasp is the proper thing to do, even if the person or corporation seems to be charming. Staying clear of anybody or anything that you suspect has no conscience makes tremendous sense, since conscienceless entities are also likely to be liars and thieves and are fully capable of rape, pillage and murder if they feel that there is a chance of getting away with the crime.

Staying away from (boycotting) corporations that have behaved unethically is the best strategy to combat corporate criminality. Corporations hate it when the nonviolent tactic of boycott is used, but in our largely brainwashed, advertised-into-submission citizens, only small minorities of people recognize that they are being victimized by psychopaths. Many victims of corporate crimes seem to be unaware of their victimhood, probably too distracted to understand that they are being cleverly conned.

The concept of corporate power and privilege – to the point of being above the law – has massively benefited Big Businesses at the expense of the “consuming” public, but the reality is that it has been going on for generations. Multinational corporations are increasingly in control of the White House, the US Congress and the federal courts. Both political parties are guilty of being seduced by corporate campaign money/bribes, although it appears that, whereas the Republicans have been 100 % guilty of facilitating attempted corporate takeovers of the US government for a long time, the Democrats still have had a courageous, though very small minority that are resistant to being seduced by obscenely wealthy corporations and assorted greedy billionaires. And now, sadly, it appears that all three branches of the federal government have been totally bought by big money – and it appears that they are staying bought. It is not just politicians that are controlled by corporations anymore.

The mythical “unbiased” US Supreme Court has, in reality, always been heavily influenced by corporate power. After all, throughout US history, it has been wealthy businessmen, wealthy politicians, wealthy judges and wealthy attorneys that have been the ones to be nominated by wealthy presidents that are all members of the same bipartisan “old boy's club”. So the court has always had sizable numbers of crony capitalists, racist, anti-union justices, depending on which political party was in control of the White House when an old Supreme Court justice retired or died and a new replacement was to be added.

Mussolini wrote that “fascism should rightly be called corporatism as it is a merger of state and corporate power.” He should know, he invented it.

Fascism is a far right-wing nationalistic political ideology that controls its population by a controlled and censored media, powerful military and police systems that are backed up by a secretive national security state. Fascist nations commonly violate the human rights of its citizens and try to unify the population by creating enemies and scapegoating them. Oftentimes there is a quasi-merger of church and state, anti-intellectual attitudes and corrupt crony capitalism. Always there is an obsession with law and order (with police state

tactics), fraudulent elections and a suppression of trade unions.

The pro-Big Business billionaire's club called the GOP has succeeded in installing all the right-wing, anti-democracy, anti-worker's rights justices while the decidedly more pro-democracy, pro-small business and pro-labor (but corruptible and bribable) Democratic Party has accounted for the rest; but the current right-wing court has a solid 5-4 majority now.

But it appears that there has been a slow bloodless corporate coup d'état that has finally overthrown our one person/one vote democracy in America. We are now a plutocracy (rule by the wealthy class). The coup was accomplished gradually – death by a thousand cuts – and it appears now to be in place, never to be declared officially. Wealthy corporations and their billionaires are in charge of everything now, and they have their privatizing eyes on our drinkable water, our breathable air, our arable land and our nourishing food (as Bob Dylan sang in Union Sundown, “I can see the day coming when even your home garden is gonna be against the law”).

Elections, fooling us to believe that we still live in a democracy, will continue, although the “debates” and speechifying and small monetary donations will be increasingly meaningless. There will be no viable, courageously anti-establishment candidates like Paul Wellstone (or a Green Party or a Democratic Socialist Party) for whom to cast votes. The American dream (that you have to be asleep to believe in, as George Carlin often told us) is gone, and we sheeple were predictably and apathetically snoozing when it disappeared.

By exercising the privileges of corporate personhood while simultaneously refusing to accept the responsibilities of personhood, corporate greed will accelerate the loss of non-renewable resources that will worsen the disappearances of arable land, drinkable water, breathable air and non-renewable energy sources.

It is the greedy, non-human, conscienceless corporations (and NOT “man”) that have positioned the planet to the verge of extinction. The guilty unregulated multinationals are the ones that cause economic crises, and, because there are no consequences for their misdeeds, they are getting away with murder and don't seem to care. Their motto seems to be: “grab everything you can steal; pay your spokespersons, lawyers and lobbyists well; cleverly bribe your legislators; wine and dine your judges and media collaborators don't get caught; and let the devil take the hindmost.”

We all know that most of the acts of out-and-out criminality of powerful corporations are rarely punished commensurate with the crime. Wrist slaps are the norm for corporations and the superrich when they are “brought to justice” in front of conservative judges. If there are any consequences for reckless or destructive business practices at all, the company will usually just pay a relatively small, very affordable fine. At worst, it will threaten to move its corporate headquarters and its manufacturing facilities off shore, leaving their smelly messes to be cleaned up by somebody else, just as one would expect of a conscienceless psychopath.

The brazen action of the Roberts' court in Citizens United might be one of the final nails in the coffin of America's mortally wounded democracy. Given the fact that the myth of corporate personhood is now legal, it is past time that we of the 99% majority insist that the transnational corporate 1% minority be treated as severely as human criminals are treated.

The 99% needs to exercise its duty to preserve and defend the planet from all enemies, foreign or domestic, human or corporate.

And we can't fail to identify the many domestic enemies that are members of the executive, judicial or legislative branches of our federal and state governments. We need to name the evil and the evil-doers in order to effectively confront them, and, simultaneously, we need to demand that our human rights to healthy water, soil, air, food supplies and affordable health care be safe-guarded from the exploiters in the ruling classes. The future of our children, grandchildren and planet Earth depends on it.

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Please join the effort to urge Congress to pass legislation to reverse the Citizens United ruling and correct the damage done. (See www.movetoamend.org for more)

Dr. Kohls is involved in peace, nonviolence and justice issues and therefore resists fascism, corporatism, militarism, racism and other movements that are anti-democratic.

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