



Campaign 2000

Media Reality ✓ Check

Expert Documentation of the Latest Liberal Media Bias ☆ Friday, September 22, 2000

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Protesters of Gore's Family Ties to Occidental Petroleum Spiked While Al Bashes GOP "Big Oil Ticket"

Why No Talk of Gore's Big Oil Connection?

Oil became the big story yesterday on the campaign trail, but reporters continued to ignore any anti-Gore background music. Last night, ABC's *World News Tonight* led with reporter Terry Moran on how Gore "was casting himself as the champion of beleaguered consumers and Governor Bush as a pawn of the oil industry." Gore declared: "I will not go along with an agenda that is of Big Oil, by Big Oil, and for Big Oil." Moran concluded that the Gore campaign welcomes the issue "if only to point out to voters that both Governor Bush and Dick Cheney hail from the oil industry."

Utterly missing from Moran's report and almost all of the last eight years of Al Gore media coverage was any scrutiny or criticism of Gore's own ties to Big Oil: his father's long-time relationship with Occidental Petroleum, and its owner, Soviet agent Armand Hammer. But Moran has covered this story before. Back on March 6, Moran covered left-wing protests of Gore for ignoring Occidental's drilling in Colombia, which they say threaten the U'wa Indian tribe.

Moran reported: "After Gore's late father left the U.S. Senate, he was named to the board of Occidental. Financial records show the Vice President is the executor of his father's estate, which holds as much as \$500,000 worth of Occidental stock. That means Gore could ultimately benefit from the company's operations in Colombia. Plus, Occidental is a major Democratic Party donor, giving nearly \$500,000 in soft money since 1992."

Moran concluded: "Gore refused several requests to speak with ABC News about the U'wa, and his family's holdings in Occidental.... But as the demonstrators dog him and Occidental begins drilling in Colombia, Gore's public silence on the issue leaves him open to the charge that for all his speech-making on the environment, he won't put his money where his mouth is." Why would ABC find this story worth airing in March, but not worth noting now?

Gore's interest in Occidental has had real policy implications. The liberal Center for Public Integrity complained in its book *The Making of the President 2000* that in 1997, thanks to pressure from Gore, the Energy Department sold its interest in the Elk Hills oil field in Bakersfield, California. Ironically, they noted Elk Hills was one of the oil fields involved in the 1920s Teapot Dome scandal, which led to the resignation of Interior Secretary Albert Fall. In 1973, Richard Nixon tried to lease Elk Hills to boost domestic oil production. The Reagan administration repeatedly proposed selling it. "But where Fall, Nixon, and Reagan had failed, Gore succeeded," the book noted. "It was the largest privatization of federal property in U.S. history, one that tripled Occidental's U.S. reserves overnight." (pages 142-144 and 149-152).

The left-wing anti-Occidental protesters, led by Amazon Watch and the Rainforest Action Network, have dogged Gore's campaign trail, including just this week. *The Washington Times* reported hundreds of protesters shut down his campaign office in Olympia, Washington on Tuesday, and ten people were arrested during the seven-and-a-half hour protest. *The Drudge Report* linked today to news that Karenna Gore was heckled at the University of Missouri on Wednesday.

Why did ABC ignore the CPI slant now? After all, their book comes with a blurb from Diane Sawyer: "The Center for Public Integrity is the real thing. Groups of dedicated people who remember that journalism is about grit and guts and stamina and razor-sharp instincts. They are, thank heaven, here to stay." But ABC's razor went dull on Gore, the Oxy Proxy. — Tim Graham

If the media were a nonpartisan band of truth-detectors, would they let Al Gore tar others for their Big Oil connections without at least noting his?

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