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Al Gore's Hypocrisy Astounding

By Jay Ambrose

Here's the first thing you shouldn't do in front of Al Gore: Be skeptical about catastrophic, human-caused global warming. He will rip your reputation apart, just as he once did to reputable, honorable scientists in congressional hearings.

Here's the second thing you shouldn't do in front of Al Gore: Ask him whether he himself might have the kind of conflict of interest that he takes for granted in others. For heaven's sake, do not get into the question of whether he might make a lot of money with the passage of a global warming cap-and-trade tax that he has been fighting for.

Republican Rep. Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee thought it might be interesting to find out. After all, Gore is associated with a venture capital company that has invested about \$1 billion in companies that just might make a bundle should cap-and-trade become law. So she asked if he would benefit.

Emitting a sigh made infamous in a debate way back when, Gore first replied that "a green economy . . . is good for all of us." He then said yes, he was a partner in the venture capital company, adding quickly and emphatically that "every penny" he made from environmental investments went to the non-profit Alliance for Climate Protection.

With a smirk on his face, he huffed that no one who knew him would ever think he had been working on the global warming issue for 30 years for "greed." When Blackburn said she wasn't making accusations, he said, "I understand exactly what you're doing, Congresswoman. Everybody here does."

Blackburn called it quits at about that point, although she could have noted that Gore was founder and chairman of the non-profit group he mentioned. She could have explored whether some of the money he gives to the group redounds to him in other ways, such as expense-paid trips. She could also have gotten into reports that his net worth is now \$100 million, when it was put at \$2 million when he left politics. She could have pursued the tax advantages of his charitable donations.

But she didn't, and I think it is just as well she didn't. The money Gore's made since he was vice president seems to come mostly from Internet ventures and speeches given at \$175,000 a whack, and I doubt seriously that his campaign on global warming has anything much to do with money. The man is a true believer, or so I believe.

And yet, his hypocrisy is astounding. While he cannot believe anyone could ever conceivably have reason to question his motives, he has never hesitated to question the motives of those who differed with him. In that case, you were bought out by ExxonMobil or are an equivalent of Bernie Madoff, the Ponzi-scheme swindler.

Congressional hearings he conducted in 1992 have been described as inquisitorial show trials. One victim, Professor Richard Lindzen of MIT, has written about scientists being "in the crosshairs" of Gore, who "tried to bully" them into changing "their views and supporting his climate alarmism." Lindzen also refers to a failed Gore effort to "enlist Ted Koppel (then a TV host) in a witch hunt to discredit anti-alarmist scientists."

Lindzen is viewed by some as one of the nation's foremost climatologist. Unlike Gore - whose movie and slide show have been rife with error - he knows what he is talking about, probably a major reason Gore won't debate him. Lindzen years ago did about \$10,000 worth of work as a witness for fossil-fuel companies. There was nothing wrong with that, and he clearly was not corrupted by it.

Whatever Gore believes, the global warming debate is not over, but what should be over is waging it as an ad hominem contest in which science itself is hurt along with scientists whose arguments should be weighed on their merits.