

Psychopaths Holding America Hostage

by Dr Brian Moench via sarah - TruthOut *Wednesday, Dec 5 2012, 10:56pm*

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The American Plague Revealed

"The greatest threat to the United States will never be al-Qaeda, Russia, China or Iran. It will be our failure to wrest control of public policy from the inmates of our own insane asylum," says Dr. Brian Moench.

My father, a psychiatrist whose practice focused on the severely mentally ill, used to say, "Well, schizophrenia is better than no phrenia," and, "In poker, a paranoid always beats one of a noid." He also pioneered the subspecialty of forensic psychiatry, before it had a name, in that he was often asked as an expert witness to evaluate psychopaths and the competency of criminals to stand trial. Not all criminals are psychopaths, and certainly not all psychopaths have violated the law. Serious mental illnesses are family tragedies not to be trivialized. But in ruminating about a post-election America, I've been struck by how large portions of the country are mired in schizophrenic distortions of reality and how prominent business leaders and politicians overtly display personality traits common to psychopaths. Vestiges of widespread mental illness abound.

Although hurricane Sandy has likely been the trigger for a sharp rise in the percentage of the population who believes the climate crisis is serious and must be addressed in public policy, still, about 30 percent of American adults don't believe it, and there is no indication that the leaders of the Republican Party have joined the "Reality" Party. Let's briefly outline how disconnected this position is.

Eighty international scientific societies have endorsed the concept of a primarily human-caused climate crisis that is already starting to threaten the health and well-being of millions, and soon to be billions, of people in the next few decades. The total number of scientific organizations that dispute this is zero. If you were watching a basketball game where the score was 80 to 0, with one minute left in the fourth quarter, and you decided to bet your entire nest egg on that losing team, no one would argue that you were not severely delusional.

Almost weekly, more studies are published strongly suggesting that the chaos and destruction built into the greenhouse gas phenomenon has been underestimated and that climate-related extreme outcomes are happening even faster than worse case predictions of even a few years ago. Our own Pentagon, the insurance industry, the World Bank, the United Nations, the American Meteorological Society and virtually every other country in the world accepts the science. The American Republican Party and the Fox News/right wing entertainment complex are the only organizations in the world that deny the validity and reality of the science. And because the Republicans control the US House of Representatives, there is no hope any legislation will be passed to address the climate crisis. Inability to discern reality is the hallmark of schizophrenia.

One of my professional friends - smart, well-educated, and seemingly otherwise sane - has been relentlessly trying to sell everyone I work with on the conspiracy theory that Barack Obama's real father was an African-American communist activist, Frank Marshall Davis, and that Obama's secret agenda is mind control and the collapse of the American way of life through diabolical UN-mandated sustainable land use planning - a pillar of Glenn Beck's circus tent of amazing conspiracy theories.

People who believe others are reading their minds, controlling their thoughts, or plotting to harm them are usually medicated to make them safe to live among us. But institutions that promote the same paranoid delusions are rewarded with handsome profitability.

For the first time since the Civil War, hundreds of thousands of American citizens have petitioned the federal government to allow their states to secede from the union. This is more than just a new expression of undying racism. It is also a sharp detachment from reality. The efficacy of tax cuts for the rich as an economic stimulus, has no empirical substantiation - in other words no basis in reality, just like global warming denial.

Much has been written about the Karl Rove/Republican/right wing/Fox News bubble and their group delusion in truly believing that their polling heralding a Romney victory was superior to everyone else's reality. Rove is also widely thought to be the source of the famous quote from a George W. Bush insider, offered to Ron Suskind for an article in the New York Times Magazine in 2004, "We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality." That's how schizophrenics talk and think.

Psychopaths often appear normal, even charming. Underneath, they lack conscience and empathy, making them manipulative, volatile and often (but by no means always) criminal. The psychologist Kevin Dutton in his book, *The Wisdom of Psychopaths*, notes society, and especially Wall Street, admires and rewards many of the qualities of psychopaths - fearlessness, emotional sterility, supreme confidence, ruthlessness, lack of remorse, refusal to take responsibility, narcissism and delusions of grandeur. Who could argue that those characteristics virtually defined the Wall Street crowd responsible for blowing up the world's economy in 2008? In fact, a recent study showed psychopaths were four times more common among business leaders than among the general population. [1]

A 2005 British study compared the psychological profiles of 39 senior business executives at leading British companies with those of mental patients in the UK's Broadmoor Special Hospital. The business leaders scored a clear "victory" in the three traits normally used to identify the emotional dysfunction of psychopaths: histrionic personality disorder, narcissistic personality disorder, and compulsive personality disorder.

Other studies suggest that financial elites, like psychopaths, are more likely to feel like rules and societal constraints don't apply to them. Mitt Romney's entire business and political career, especially his approach to paying taxes, is the freshest, most conspicuous example of this personality trait.

Dr. Dale Archer, a psychiatrist and frequent guest on "FoxNews.com Live" of all places writes, "Physically, studies have shown that the brain chemistry is different in powerful politicians, leading to sensation seeking and risky behavior. They have lower levels of the brain chemical monoamine oxidase-A, which means they have higher highs when they engage in risky behavior and that they get bored much more easily than the norm."

Enter the 71 corporate CEOs behind the current Campaign To Fix The Debt. These are CEOs making the media rounds and spending \$30 million dollars pounding the table on achieving federal deficit reduction exclusively by dismantling the social safety nets - Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security - while they sit on their own massive retirement funds averaging \$9.1 million. These are the same CEOs who have contributed mightily to and benefited personally from the deficit they now want closed. Their companies have received trillions in federal war contracts, subsidies and bailouts, as well as specialized tax breaks and loopholes that virtually eliminate the companies' tax bills -

companies like Goldman Sachs, Honeywell, AT &T and Boeing. And no, they are not offering to reduce their feeding at the public trough, instead they want us to turn away the poor, disabled and the vulnerable, calling government support for them "low priority spending." Meanwhile, CEOs of the major fossil fuel companies have enough scientific expertise to know that their business model of extracting all the carbon they can get their hands on threatens the very survival of all of mankind, yet they are undaunted in doing exactly that. Who cares about the collapse of civilization when there are quarterly profits to be made? How are these captains of the fossil fuel industry not psychopaths?

Psychopaths are notoriously refractory to treatment or behavioral modification, another trait they share with business and political elites. As F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote in *The Great Gatsby*, "Let me tell you about the very rich. They are different from you and me...They think, deep down, that they are better than we are." Our nation's responses to the climate crisis, the federal deficit, our economic stagnation and many of our other serious challenges are still being held hostage by people who manifest a detachment from reality as profound as that of schizophrenics. We are still allowing a powerful elite, who behave like psychopaths, to steer our government towards protecting their interests at the expense of everyone else. The greatest threat to the United States will never be Al Qaeda, Russia, China or Iran. It will be our failure to wrest control of public policy from the inmates of our own insane asylum.

Footnote:

1. Babiak P, Neumann CS, Hare RD. Corporate psychopathy: Talking the walk. *Behav Sci Law*. 2010 Mar-Apr;28(2):174-93.

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<http://tinyurl.com/b7uyuew>

Jungle Drum Prose/Poetry. <http://jungledrum.lingama.net/news/story-279.html>