

Big Oil's lies about climate change—a climate scientist's take | Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists

By Adam Sobel

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The Guardian's new series of articles on fossil fuel companies' culpability for the climate crisis is entitled "Climate Crimes." Is this too extreme a title?

After all, Exxon and the others were just working within our legal, economic, and political systems to provide a commodity we all use every day. They may have known that global warming posed a risk, but people accept all kinds of risks in exchange for the many benefits of living a relatively affluent life in a modern, industrialized economy. Is it really appropriate to call them criminals—and accordingly, to take them to court all over the world?

I think the answer is yes. It comes down to the scale of the harm; the willful, systematic, and sustained nature of the lying; and the leading role the climate denial movement has played in the sustained assault on democracy that we see today.

[...]

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