

These fake personas use fake social media and message board accounts to interfere in internet debate—say by harassing local citizens who are concerned about pollution and who may be criticizing FTT's clients, so they will bomb into the internet debate around that, offering fake personas as the phony voice to disrupt that debate.

This is actually their menu. You have what they call "the Deraileur." "The Deraileur seizes on a seemingly innocuous section of the otherwise negative narrative and attempts to pull the comment thread into a discursive discussion around that detailed non-issue."

They offer next the "Drunken Conspiracy Theorist Uncle." "The Drunken Conspiracy Theorist Uncle agrees with the negative commenter but conflates other unrelated and offensive issues into it, lumping it all together into an unpalatable whole."

They also offer the "Semantic Nitpicker," who "asks an endless series of questions seeking clarification or pointing out minor flaws in the way the argument is constructed. This can be played both friendly and oppositionally, but by different stacks of kids."

On it goes through the "Skeptical Capitalist," the "Patronizing Voice of Reason," the "Confused Time Traveler," the "Concerned Hipster," and believe it or not, here is a real beauty—the "Dog Typing on a Keyboard." You can pay FTT to send somebody real behind a fake persona to go interfere anonymously in somebody else's conversation—in this case, claiming a dog typing on a keyboard. "The dog typing on a keyboard chimes in with very poor grammar, spelling, and punctuation, and posts frequently to clutter up the thread and make it very hard to read"—basically packing the debate with so much nonsense that everybody has to tune out.

These are actually services offered to the fossil fuel industry clients that they pay for. They pay to disrupt legitimate internet debate using phony, paid-for personas that come in occupying these characteristics, I guess you would call them. It is unbelievably disgusting behavior for any corporation to engage in, which is probably why they hide the money.

You may ask, why? Why on Earth would fossil fuel companies spend big money on all this fancy, fake activity—from phony Astroturf groups to fake attack campaigns, to the dog typing on the keyboard? Why would the fossil fuel industry go through all these complex, phony schemes? Won't they ultimately get caught?

Well, the answer is simple, and it is a number—\$650 billion. Six hundred and fifty billion dollars is the subsidy for fossil fuel in the United States of America every year. Every year, \$650 billion. Another year, another \$650 billion, according to the International Monetary Fund, which is kind of a technical bean counter organization

that is not an environmental group by any stretch.

So let's say you are getting that \$650 billion subsidy every year. Even if all this fakery ends up exposed, if in the meantime you have disrupted the opposition and kept your business scheme going, you have reaped another year of multi-hundred-billion-dollar subsidies.

I mention in this web of denial the identity-laundering group called Donors Trust, and I will come back to them right now because I have called them out over and over.

Donors Trust just put a letter to the editor into my home State newspaper to assure its readers that Donors Trust is just as pure as the driven snow. Of all the newspapers in the world, Donors Trust just happened to pick mine. I appreciate the attention. But let's get the facts straight because here is Donors Trust, right in the middle of the web of denial. It has been called "the dark-money ATM of the right," behind "the right's assault on labor unions, climate scientists, public schools, [and] economic regulations." It has been called "the Right's favorite dark-money conduit, [which] allows the identities of wealthy conservative donors to stay hidden." It has been called "Donors Trust, the Right-Wing Secret Money Machine." And it is smack in the middle of this dirty, dark fossil fuel web that has propagated and funded the lie—the lie of climate denial.

From FTT and all of its schemes and its typing dogs to Donors Trust, the sleaze and the scale of the fossil fuel scheming is itself a signal of the mischief afoot. You don't put up a phony-balance operation of this magnitude unless you have some real nasty stuff that you are trying to defend and mislead people about. Well, for \$650 billion a year, you can crank up a lot of sleazy mischief.

Here in Congress, we can't keep dancing to the tune of this crowd. We still don't know which party will control this Chamber next year, but we do know that the Senate is out of excuses on climate change. It is time for a strong climate bill that can be signed into law by a new President, swept into office with the most votes in history on a strong commitment to climate action.

It is on us. It is on us whether this web of denial will hold us back or whether we will break free at last of its corrupting influence and do, for once—for once—our duty instead of its bidding.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

MR. BROWN. Mr. President, I always appreciate the persistence and integrity and intellectual vigor of Senator WHITEHOUSE's comments on the floor talking about climate and talking about the corruption of big money and climate politics and climate decision making.

So to Senator WHITEHOUSE, thank you.

#### REMEMBERING LARRY WILLIS

Mr. President, this weekend we lost a great champion for American workers—Larry Willis, president of the Transportation Trades Department at the AFL-CIO.

Larry dedicated his life to the labor movement, fighting for workers on the frontlines of our transportation system. He worked to empower busdrivers and ramp workers, flight attendants and train operators around the country so they could fight for better wages and protections on the job and they could build a middle-class life for their families.

We know the labor movement is the single biggest reason that we have a middle class in this country. We know that the decline of the labor union movement is the reason that the middle class is shrinking in this country.

All of what Larry did said a lot about his character—that he took on that job and spent his whole career fighting to give power to the workers who have so often been denied a voice in this country.

Everyone who worked with him attests to his skill, his compassion, his commitment to justice, and his love of life. One of his greatest strengths was his ability to find compromise in even the most difficult, thorniest issues in front of us.

Make no mistake, Larry was always a fierce fighter for transportation workers. He never compromised when defending worker safety. He always challenged us to make legislation better, but he also understood that meaningful change sometimes comes in smaller steps, not in great bounds. He was willing to work for months, even years, behind the scenes to make real progress for transportation workers. Washington needs more advocates like Larry—someone who believes deeply in the cause and backs it up with relentless work to find a solution.

I want to talk about his grace. He was very direct. He didn't hold back when Congress did something that was not in the best interests of workers, but he never closed the door on anyone, even his adversaries. Larry was always willing to pick back up a conversation to find a path forward. He did not let egos get in the way of progress—something that happens far too often in this town. He never let disputes make him jaded. He always kept his head up and his door open.

My staff and I relied on Larry's guidance and wisdom for many years. He knew every angle of our Nation's transportation system. He used that knowledge to help millions of transportation workers. He was a wonderful person. We loved working with him.

We are deeply saddened by his passing. We are keeping his wife Amy and daughter Samantha—oh, how he loved both of them and lit up when talking about them—we are keeping them in our thoughts and prayers as they cope with this sudden, heartbreaking loss.

We will honor Larry Willis the best way we can—by continuing to fight to

empower transportation workers around the country and fight with a doggedness that would make him proud.

#### WORKER SAFETY

Mr. President, this spring I was talking with a grocery store worker in Southwest Ohio, who told me: You know, they call me essential, but really I feel expendable.

That grocery store worker and thousands of others are on the frontlines of this pandemic. They risk their lives so that Americans can keep food on their tables and get their packages delivered. They are changing linens in hospitals. They drive buses. They stock shelves in supermarkets and drugstores. Then workers go home at night. They worry they are going to bring to their home the virus and infect their family—always the anxiety they live with.

We know that hundreds of thousands of workers have been exposed to the virus on the job. Thousands have died. We don't know exactly how many because the President hasn't directed his government to make it a priority to keep track of these numbers. Think of that.

We know UFCW—United Food Commercial Workers—reports that more than 16,000 grocery store workers have been exposed at work. More than 100 have died. Sixteen-thousand exposed at work. More than 100 have died.

National Nurses United has recorded at least 1,700 deaths, and 58 percent of those healthcare workers who died were people of color. Seventeen hundred have died; 58 percent, people of color.

In meatpacking plants, we know the toll has been horrific. As of this summer, 16,000 workers in meatpacking plants, including in the Dakotas, the vast majority of them Black and Brown workers, and more than 230 have died. We can only expect those numbers to be higher.

What is the President's response? In the White House, they are putting up holiday displays with a lit-up ceramic post office and ornaments in the shape of garbage trucks and nurses' hats. That is right. Workers are dying around the country, and instead of doing anything at all to protect them, the President of the United States is decking the halls with ornaments. Workers don't need Christmas ornaments; they need fair pay, and they need protections on the job.

President Trump hasn't lifted a finger to protect frontline workers. Let me explain. I make a charge like that, I back it up. He spent 4 years in office putting corporate lawyers in charge of the Department of Labor. The Secretary of Labor made millions of dollars practicing law by representing corporations against workers—sometimes union workers, sometimes unorganized workers.

The Department of Labor makes it easier for corporations to skirt safety rules. The point of the Department of

Labor, the point of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, is to protect workers. Yet this Secretary of Labor, this Department of Labor—including from IBEW workers to steelworkers, to meatpacking workers—he refused to issue workplace safety requirements throughout the pandemic. He failed to get workers the protective equipment and medical supplies they need to protect themselves. He forced people back to work in meatpacking plants around the country.

In South Dakota, we know, in a meatpacking plant owned by the Chinese Communist Party, 1,300 workers got sick in one plant, and 4 of them have died that we know of.

The Trump administration fined this multibillion-dollar meatpacking—Chinese Communist Party-owned meatpacking plant—fined them \$10 a worker. Thirteen hundred workers got sick and OSHA, the government, the President, fined them \$10 a worker. But don't worry, he and his wealthy contributors who come for White House tours without masks or social distancing will get to look at some sparkly ornaments.

President Trump could crack down on corporations like Smithfield. He could mobilize American manufacturers to get every American worker the masks and the protective equipment they need. He could issue an OSHA temporary standard, as we have asked him repeatedly, that would provide clear enforceable requirements for keeping workers safe. He could stand up for workers, but he won't.

That is fundamentally why he lost. Eighty million Americans decisively rejected this President and his total lack of empathy, his complete failure to understand the dignity of work.

There are a lot of Senators in this body—not a lot. There are some Senators in this body whose mothers or fathers carried union cards and knew that was their ticket to the middle class and understood that their mothers and fathers were protected by OSHA, protected by the Department of Labor that cared about the safety of those workers in the workplace.

But all that the President did do to ignore workers and didn't do to protect workers, none of that is stopping him from trying to do more damage on his way out the door. The Trump USDA, the Department of Agriculture, is trying to race through a new rule—trying to push through, in the last weeks, a new rule that actually speeds up chicken factory processing lines; that is right, not slow them down in the face of record infections at these plants but speed up the line.

We know it is a trick. It is the oldest trick in the book. You make more money if you speed up the line. You speed up the line, and workers are more likely to get hurt. When you speed up the line during a pandemic, more workers are likely to get sick.

They tried to pass the rule earlier. It was held up over concerns workers

would get hurt and salmonella would spread. That is not even counting COVID. But to President Trump and his allies, more workplace injuries and more grandparents hospitalized by salmonella are a small price to pay if it means more profits for meatpacking companies.

Trump and his corporate lawyer Secretary of Labor are pushing through a new policy to ensure that companies can continue to exploit workers by classifying them as independent contractors. Go back to the childhood of a number of Members of the Senate who had parents who worked in factories and parents who worked in construction jobs, parents who carried a union card. You know what that would mean to those workers and the threat that they could get sick.

Think about it now. Corporations love this new business model. It is a way to classify people as independent workers. It is a way to pay people less for the same work, skirt labor laws, wash their hands of responsibility for the workers who make their businesses successful.

These workers aren't working for a big insurance company that really does have a public image they are trying to protect. These workers aren't working for a hospital or a big bank that cares about its public image. These workers are working for an entity hired by these big banks or by these insurance companies to prepare the food or to provide the security or to do the custodial work—a company you have never heard of that has no public image because this company is all about being hired by large corporations. They then can pay them lower wages. They can then protect them less on the job, and they can then not provide benefits. That is what happens with contract workers—those independent contractors. We know they love this business model. They can pay workers less. They can skirt labor laws.

President Trump wants to make that easier, partly, because he probably does that in his business, and he has a whole lot of corporate friends—big contributors to the Trump campaign who make more money by doing that.

Fundamentally, President Trump, Senator McConnell, and their corporate allies just don't understand the dignity of work. They think workers are always a cost to be minimized instead of the engine behind our country's success.

Think back again to those Members of the Senate whose parents carried union cards who cared about all this, who had a chance—in a job like this, who had a chance for opportunity because those workers carried a union card and were treated decently on the job. Because those workers carried a union card, their bosses couldn't think of them only as a cost to be minimized. They did think of them as the engine behind their country's success.

The American people rejected that—the 80-plus million people who voted