

**“A Disgrace to the Profession”:
The World’s Scientists, in Their
Own Words, on Michael E.
Mann, His Hockey Stick, and
Their Damage to Science,
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Scientists Speak

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In 1995, I had a short paper published in the prestigious journal *Science*....[W]ith the publication of the article...I gained significant credibility in the community of scientists working on climate change. They thought I was one of them, someone who would pervert science in the service of social and political causes. So one of them let his guard down. A major person working in the area of climate change and global warming sent me an astonishing

email that said “We have to get rid of the Medieval Warm Period.”

—David Deming¹

And so it began. A young scientist from Yale University, Dr. Michael E. Mann, took up the charge and subsequently produced his now-infamous “Hockey Stick”—a graph that shows air temperatures for the Northern Hemisphere exhibited a slight but definite decline from 1000 AD to about 1900 AD, followed by a dramatic increase over the last century. From this graph, climate change over the last millennium appears solely attributable to anthropogenic increases in carbon dioxide concentrations. Mann’s work became the centerpiece of the *Third Assessment Report* of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), largely as a result of Mann’s authorship of the critical chapter that self-touted his Hockey Stick.² To the delight of those who deny the impact of natural climate change over the past millennium (the *true*

¹David Deming, “Global Warming, the Politicization of Science, and Michael Crichton’s *State of Fear*,” *Journal of Scientific Exploration* 19, no. 2 (2005): 248–49, <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download;jsessionid=87A20979B36B5B28DAAD68BF61CB88FB?doi=10.1.1.306.4185&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

²Mann was appointed lead author of the section that touted the Hockey Stick only a few months after his Ph.D. was awarded—both a conflict of interest and at variance with the IPCC requirement that the lead author must have the highest level of expertise in the particular field.

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climate deniers), Mann's Hockey Stick removed the substantial observations that a Medieval Warm Period existed (and concomitantly, the Little Ice Age as well), thereby avoiding the embarrassing question as to why air temperatures rose between about 950 AD to 1250 AD without carbon dioxide forcing.

But "*A Disgrace to the Profession*": *The World's Scientists, in Their Own Words, on Michael E. Mann, His Hockey Stick, and Their Damage to Science, Volume I*, edited by Mark Steyn, is not about the science behind the hockey stick shape of Mann's graph; it is about the discussion of the Hockey Stick that arose among scientists who study various aspects of climate change and the politics surrounding it. Granted, science is not driven by consensus (it is about withstanding the trial-by-fire of scientific inquiry and analysis) and many papers have been written that both attack and defend the Hockey Stick. But the book serves to show what scientists have said about Mann and his research—publicly, but not when it mattered.

Steyn, a Canadian writer, journalist, and political commentator, does not rehash the technical treatise that has played out on the pages of several professional journals, led to an attack to destroy the journal *Climate Research*, and even spilled over to a Senate committee hearing

pitting Mann against two of his critics. Indeed, many who have dared to criticize the Hockey Stick have paid a professional price for their efforts. From personal experience, I know this all too well. In the fairness of full disclosure, I have interacted with Mann on two occasions—one friendly and one quite adversarial—and suffice it to say that I am not a fan of the Hockey Stick. Indeed, Steyn himself is embroiled in a lawsuit brought by Mann in the District of Columbia Superior Court alleging that Steyn defamed "a Nobel Prize recipient" (which Mann is not) by claiming that Mann's Hockey Stick was "fraudulent." Steyn definitely has an axe to grind with this book.

However, "*A Disgrace to the Profession*" is not about Steyn's criticism of Mann's research. Steyn only provides a short, nonscientific introduction to the Hockey Stick, explains why it was so important to furthering the anthropogenic climate change argument in the mid-2000s, and covers the history of his criticism of Mann's research and Mann's litigious response. The majority of the book focuses on what has been written regarding the Hockey Stick and Mann's research methods—not by militant bloggers, not by biased journalists, not by man-on-the-street polls, but by more than 120 other *scientists*, including those on *all* sides of the

anthropogenic climate change discussion.

These scientists are well-versed in the science of climate change and are identified by name and credentials, or in two cases, as anonymous reviewers for two major journals (whom the editors felt were competent enough to provide a scientific review).³ Nearly all quotes are from doctoral degree recipients (Ph.D., D.Phil., or Sc.D.) or those who hold positions of authority in fields related to climatology. As expected, some of these scientists are Mann's antagonists, but many others agree with the anthropogenic climate change disaster scenarios and some have even jointly published research articles with Mann. Nevertheless, *all* of these scientists provide condemnation of the Hockey Stick and the scientific and/or political methods used to develop and promote it. The book's title, with a tinge of wry humor, suggests it is only the first volume.

So where did Steyn obtain these quotes? Searching numerous outlets, including journal articles, newspaper interviews, congressional and legal testimony, speeches, public lecture notes, freedom of information

requests, and the Climategate e-mails,⁴ Steyn has left no area unexplored to find frank and often unsolicited assessments of Mann's research methods in general and the Hockey Stick in particular. All quotes are extensively referenced for anyone wishing to investigate further. I cross-checked several sections, including my own, and found the references to be accurate. To keep the book to a manageable size, comments from each scientist are restricted to two pages in the book.⁵ These quotes are frank and sometimes use coarse language, but all are correctly attributed and transcribed.

Lest this suggests that the book is simply a collection of quotations by various scientists, it is anything but Steyn's characteristic and unequalled wit and sarcasm are on full display. He weaves these quotes into a narrative that yields precisely what other scientists think of Mann's Hockey Stick and his research and provides the reader with the proper context.

The book is divided into twelve chapters, each with ten subchapters focusing on one scientist (or in

³Everyone cited in Steyn's book is a scientist except for number 19, the young son of Tom Wigley (a climate scientist who'd served as the University of East Anglia Climatic Research Unit director from 1978 to 1993), who conducted a simple study that was relayed to Mann by Wigley in an e-mail.

⁴In November 2009, approximately 61 MB of computer files were uploaded to the Internet from the servers at the Climatic Research Unit at the University of East Anglia (UEA) in Norwich, UK. This provided 1,079 emails between climate scientists at UEA and other scientists worldwide.

⁵Full disclosure: I knew nothing about the book until I received the published copy and I have never met or spoken with Mr. Steyn.

several cases, a group of scientists).⁶ Each chapter emphasizes a central theme around which the quotes from reputable scientists are used to discredit the Hockey Stick, its science, and even Mann himself. These themes cover

- (1) what science should be about and how the Hockey Stick violates those principles
- (2) flaws in the proxies and the reconstructed temperature record
- (3) the attachment of the observational record to the reconstruction
- (4) the inherent need for the Hockey Stick to further the IPCC's goals
- (5) the lack of any discussion of error bars or uncertainty
- (6) the collusion among scientists to protect Mann and his Hockey Stick
- (7) investigations and claims of exoneration
- (8) comparisons with other reconstructions that exist
- (9) how Mann's expertise has spread well beyond paleoclimate reconstructions
- (10) Mann's attacks on his detractors
- (11) how Mann's career has been furthered by the Hockey Stick,

and his subsequent behavior regarding it

- (12) the legacy of the Hockey Stick on the climate change debate

Steyn's decision to focus on ten scientists to make his case for each of these twelve themes was an excellent choice. Had Steyn quoted from many different scientists to make each of his points, the reader would likely have become lost in the piecemeal parade of quotations without a context for who said what. In each subsection within each main theme, the reader is given the featured scientist's credentials, background as to whether he may be friend or foe (with respect to the anthropogenic climate change debate), and damning evidence on Mann or on the Hockey Stick that the scientist has written. At times, potentially important quotes may be missed, but this is not critical—which is the point: Steyn has so many scientists and quotes from which to choose that he is able to present a strong case within an easy-to-follow framework.

So why is "*A Disgrace to the Profession*" an important read? Steyn makes a statement regarding Mann's lawsuit against him by demonstrating that numerous scientists have made disparaging claims about Mann's research and attitudes toward science. If Steyn is to be sued for defamation, then he

⁶Full disclosure: I am scientist number 3, referenced in chapter 1 of Steyn's book.

should have 120-plus codefendants. But this is *not* the takeaway the book really conveys.

“*A Disgrace to the Profession*” uses this specific example to condemn the hypocrisy that pervades the anthropogenic climate change disaster movement. While scientists have openly criticized Mann and his scientific methods, the flawed Hockey Stick and its message live on. Little scientific outcry has been raised to dispel its myth that climate change over the last millennium is almost exclusively human-induced. Indeed, those who “deny the Stick” are often labeled as heretics and the anthropogenic climate change “true believers” continue to cite the Hockey Stick as gospel.

As Steyn demonstrates, the lasting and profound effect of the Hockey Stick on the perception of anthropogenic climate change seemingly justifies its flawed science. Steyn’s book, therefore, illustrates what no scientific treatise criticizing the Hockey Stick could that climate science has abandoned its scientific principles. Despite their words, scientists chose to ignore egregious violations of the scientific method and its ethics to further a cause that pays them, with both fame and fortune, to shred the fabric of the science they have sworn to uphold. “*A Disgrace to the Profession*, therefore, is a must-read for anyone concerned about the veracity of science and how the climate change movement has corrupted it to serve its own interests.