

Open-Borders ‘Journalist’ Attacks Warren Buffett

Reporter with criminal record alleges billionaire supports Trump’s wall

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Left-wing intimidation and guilt-by-association tactics are now being used against America’s most loved investor.

The recent series of smear attacks against Berkshire Hathaway billionaire Warren Buffett, along with his son Howard, over the loose connections each has to groups supporting the President’s border wall shows all too well today’s increasingly toxic mediasphere when it comes to the topic of immigration policy.

Beau Hodai’s ongoing smear-series against the Buffetts appears in the *Phoenix New Times*. The first article, which went viral, assails Buffett for having been an early funder of the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), a decades-old advocate of America-First immigration policies, including President Trump’s plan to expand the border wall.

The report further attacks Buffett’s long-time partner at Berkshire Hathaway, Charlie Munger. Munger was also an erstwhile supporter of FAIR and even penned the foreword to a book written by founding-FAIR member and “Tragedy of the Commons” author, Garrett Hardin.

As for the billionaire’s son, Howard, he’s assailed for, in part, his connections with two environmental groups FAIR represented in a complaint against the federal government over its refusal to fulfill its statutory obligations to analyze the environmental effects of immigration-induced population growth. The lawsuit was brought on behalf of a host of honest and high-achieving individuals concerned about big issues like urban sprawl and depleted aquifers, including environmentalists like former Colorado governor Richard Lamm.

The *Times* series on the Buffetts’ tangential associations with FAIR and others is interesting for sev-

eral reasons. First, it shows the willingness of left-wing media outlets to publish articles hyper-scrutinizing an individual’s personal life, rather than the merits of their policy position that led to the attack in the first place. It also shows that any individual, including someone like Buffett, who helped raise money for Barack Obama and supported Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign, is not exempt from smearmongering trolls. Moreover, Hodai’s report was funded by groups tied to George Soros’s Open Society Institute and the Ford Foundation. Despite its questionable worth, this sort of “news” is becoming exceedingly common, especially when, as in the immediate case, it’s executed by way of guilt-by-association tactics and aspersions of the flimsiest sort.

Granted, this sort of thing is easy to do (perhaps more so than covering actual news). Even the hit-piece author himself has been the subject of similar attacks. Before he started going by the name Beau “Mohamad” Hodai, he wrote attack pieces on political nonprofits he disagreed with for the far-left publication *In These Times* and other similar outlets. This provoked a conservative outlet, the *Washington Free Beacon*, to dig into Hodai’s background, where they unearthed a long history of violent offenses, criminal charges, and a particularly brazen example of a journalistic ethics violation—quite bizarrely, when Hodai’s 2011 charge for assault with a deadly weapon was reported on by his employer, the *Carbon County News*, it was Hodai *himself* who covered the story under a different name.

At its core, the *Beacon* piece is similar to Hodai’s in that it’s designed not to inform, but to embarrass and intimidate. This works especially well for individuals with sensitive public images who risk being pushed out of polite society, like the Buffetts. In Howard’s case, he, like his father, maintains a relationship with Bill Gates. He also once received an award from Hillary Clinton for philanthropy in Africa. Members of elite networks like these are indeed as sensitive to negative press as they are lofty, and although there’s been no indication yet of the

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Buffetts disavowing border security or the President's border plans (no doubt the goal of Hodai's piece), given the pressure created by today's viral media assaults, such an outcome would not be a surprise.



Beau "Mohamad" Hodai

Second, the report shows well the power of the Internet as a tool for surveillance and intimidation, especially as used by open-borders, post-national activists. Hodai has attacked FAIR before, and his report was funded by non-profits tied to the biggest open-borders funders in the country: George Soros and the Ford Foundation. Building on philosopher Michel Foucault's concept of "panopticism," which he used to describe technologies designed to allow one or a few persons (like prison offi-

cials) to monitor and indirectly control large groups, sociologist Thomas Mathiesen created the concept of "synopticism" to describe the reverse: when technology enables the many to monitor the few.

Today, through websites and social media, members of the mass public can instantaneously view and surveil the activity of the powerful, including movie stars, political leaders, and those with social and financial influence, like the Buffetts. As the brothers Joel and Ian Gold observe in their book about the psychological effects of surveillance, "[i]n the age of Twitter and Facebook, you need not be particularly powerful to control others by viewing them; you just have to be part of the crowd providing its opinion."

For the powerful few, to be monitored and researched online by a mass of unknown observers and then attacked with potentially viral (yet specious) news coverage acts as an indirect, albeit potent, form of behavioral control. And, of course, the utilization of "synoptic" tools like social media is especially intense among those who have the time, resources, and enough ideological commitment to intimidate those they disagree with: people like Hodai, and groups like the Southern Poverty Law Center (who he's worked with in the past). Ironically, these are the types who are most critical of surveillance laws like the PATRIOT Act, widespread use of CCTV cameras, or of Facebook information to better target political advertising. To those who are influential, but ideologically non-conformist (like the Buffetts, apparently), the message from these groups is simple and clear: stay passive in politics and go unmolested.

Those most at risk in such a porous and politically toxic society are those who value their privacy but happen to have views that diverge from the media elite. Without ever giving their consent, and without hurting anyone or committing a chargeable offense, they can be pushed out into the mediasphere and tarred by paper-thin accusations and guilt-by-association attacks. All the while, such reportage gives the public zero illumination about the actual policy differences that incited the attack in the first place. If spurious assaults against advocates for border security are left unchallenged, where does the fate of debate in this country lie? Where does the fate of the country lie? ■