



**COMMENTARY ON
BOOK REVIEW**

Counterpoint to Walach's Review of *The Real Anthony Fauci, Bill Gates, Big Pharma, and the Global War on Democracy and Public Health* by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

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<https://doi.org/10.31275/20222471>

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At age 77, I can remember polio. I was terrified of it. Everybody was. A child in perfectly good health suddenly got a fever and the next morning was paralyzed for life. Everyone knew someone who had it. Then a vaccine came out, and this was a Wonderful Thing. Parents eagerly lined up their children to receive it (or a placebo in the earliest phases of its development), and nobody questioned this, as polio was obviously worse than the vaccine could ever be. Republican or Democrat, you did not want to get polio: There were no politics involved. There was also no Facebook.

Enter COVID. Suddenly 450 beds of my 650-bed hospital contained COVID patients, all of them good and sick. Corpses accumulated faster than they could be disposed of. Local nursing homes saw a majority of their residents die. People were terrified. The country shut down. When a vaccine finally arrived, you would think everyone would rush to get it, and many did. But then a strange and probably unprecedented thing happened: Politics supervened. Why not wanting to die should be informed by your political affiliation is still beyond me. By September 2021, 56% of Republicans were fully or partially vaccinated, as opposed to 92% of Democrats (Saad, 2021). During October/November 2021, an unvaccinated person was 78 times more likely to die of COVID than a fully vaccinated one (CDC, 2022a).

There have been nine deaths attributable to COVID vaccine (CDC, 2022b)—all from the Johnson & Johnson product, and at the time of this writing, 900,000 deaths from COVID in the United States. Polio vaccine, when the live virus, oral product (Sabin vaccine) was used for the convenience of not having to give a shot, caused five to ten cases of polio/year. For many years this was considered acceptable, compared to the millions of disease cases prevented. But as American society became more risk-averse, the original Salk vaccine, which did not use live virus but had to be injected, was brought back. Politics, by the way, was not involved in this change. The point is, sometimes vaccines have adverse effects, but are worth it. A child paralyzed by polio, a grandparent dying of COVID—who would not avoid this if they could?

Against this backdrop, this Journal's Editor-in-Chief asked me to examine the review by Harald Walach of the book *The Real Anthony Fauci, Bill Gates, Big Pharma, and the Global War on Democracy and Public Health* by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. I am a conventionally practicing, university-based family physician. I've dabbled in alternative medicine but generally haven't found it effective. I've a side interest in paranormal phenomena as described in medicine and wrote a book about it (Bobrow, 2006), which is how I came to the Society for Scientific Exploration. I think mask mandates have been overdone—particularly outdoors where packed Black Lives Matter protests did not result in more COVID cases, and I am aware that some states that remained "open" (e.g., Florida) often didn't fare worse than those that closed (KFF, 2022). But in a risk-averse society you can expect some degree of overprotection. Disclosure-wise, I tilt Democratic but hold a number of conservative beliefs, and I got myself vaccinated against COVID as soon as I bloody well could. I say



this because Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., is a staunch and vocal ‘anti-vaxxer’ and his book, which I admittedly have only skimmed, appears to be his Manifesto.

Dr. Walach’s review is well-written and includes a short summary and a good sense of what the book is about. Some weaknesses also are addressed. As such, it is a good book review and Walach, to his credit, makes it clear that he’s “certainly not an anti-vaxxer.” However, he seems willing to take Kennedy seriously on most other key issues dealt with in the book, to wit:

Anthony Fauci is Evil
Bill Gates is Evil
Big Pharma is Evil
The CIA is Evil

(And they’re all in cahoots.)

Let’s take these assertions one by one.

Anthony Fauci’s job is as difficult as it is thankless. He has to tell people what they don’t want to hear, issue dire warnings against threats that will never come, and change his positions frequently, as new data arrives. Within the medical profession he is held in the highest esteem, and I’ve not seen an unkind word about him in any major medical journals. Unfortunately, his recent “I Am Science” stance has put people off unnecessarily. But someone has to do what he does: Be our country’s first defense against plagues. He may not be perfect, but it’s hard to imagine anyone else doing it better. Kennedy’s book, as interpreted by Walach, charges Fauci with “having instigated, funded and overseen the research in the virology lab in Wuhan which was the trigger for the pandemic”¹ (and accuses Fauci of “owning wagonloads of patents and shares in pharmaceutical companies, such as Gilead pharmaceutical or Moderna, that produce the very products Fauci or his cronies invent and patent.” This is patently absurd, and I would put it on the same level as Hillary Clinton abusing children in the basement of a Washington, D.C., pizzeria (“Pizzagate”) (Robb, 2017). A number of fact-checking sites have examined, and debunked, these allegations against Fauci (Schaedel, 2020; Reuters, 2021; Dent, 2020; Brown, 2020; Fauzia, 2020).

Bill Gates. I have no particular qualifications to weigh in on this, but I’ve had no reason to think he’s gone over to the dark side.

Big Pharma. Well, there is something here, at the very least some abuses of capitalism. Charging what the traffic will bear. Rebranding and repurposing drugs when their patents expire to sell them more expensively. Colluding to keep prices at a certain level, even generics (e.g., of ten different steroid inhalers for asthma, including generics, none is cheaper than \$179 wholesale) (Drugs for asthma,

2020). Worse, medical practice guidelines are drawn up by physician groups whose majority memberships receive significant sums of money from the drug companies and advise accordingly (Choudry et al., 2020). On the other hand, it must be noted that Big Pharma developed HIV drugs which, albeit quite expensive, transformed AIDS from a death sentence into an inconvenience, and they developed vaccines for COVID that saved many lives (see Note 2). Capitalism works both ways.

While we’re on the subject of pharmaceuticals, Dr. Walach makes mention of Kennedy’s example: “Medical doctors in the US and elsewhere had alerted the public to the benefit of early treatment of COVID-19 with antivirals, mainly cheap generic ones like hydroxychloroquine or ivermectin, together with anti-inflammatories, zinc, and later on aspirin” and continues: “These cheap regimens were aborted, mainly by Fauci . . .”. We used hydroxychloroquine and zinc in our hospital at the start of the pandemic in 2020, mainly in desperation as people were dying in bunches and we had nothing else. A single, small, French study had tabbed hydroxychloroquine as possibly useful. We stopped using it when it clearly didn’t work. I don’t know where ivermectin came from but by then we had better agents (Remdesivir [Gottlieb et al., 2022; Beigel et al, 2020] and monoclonal antibody therapy) and didn’t need to “try anything.” And ivermectin had mixed reviews in the medical literature (Bryant et al., 2021; Lawrence et al., 2021).

Here’s what fascinates me: There is a cheap, safe antidepressant known as fluvoxamine (brand name Luvox) which actually has been shown, in real studies, to be useful in COVID (Reis et al, 2021; Finley, 2021; Lenze et al., 2020). How did the information pipeline that brought us hydroxychloroquine and ivermectin miss this one? Perhaps this is what happens when you get your medical advice from social media. We didn’t use fluvoxamine as by then, as noted above, we had better drugs. Another study had shown that the measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine (the one Kennedy claims causes autism) conferred “strong protection from COVID-19” (Wesson Ashford et al., 2021) Where was social media on this one? Again, if you don’t want to get COVID, get vaccinated. If you do have the misfortune to be hospitalized, remdesivir and monoclonals are your best bets, even if Big Pharma profits.

The CIA. Well, here I must admit . . .

And they’re all in cahoots. This is too preposterous even for me, and I believe in the paranormal.

Dr. Walach, a European national, writes “Fauci was new to me. I knew of him, of course.” As an American practicing physician, I had been familiar with Fauci for decades and didn’t have to learn about him from Kennedy. Dr. Walach has a great respect for Kennedy (“a man of Kennedy’s

stature”) and takes him more seriously than do members of his own family (Kennedy Townsend et al., 2019). Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., has distinguished himself over the years as an environmental lawyer who has won some significant cases against polluters and is well-respected for these efforts. How he drifted over into grand conspiracy theories and the demonization of vaccines, Anthony Fauci, and Bill Gates I can’t say, but I hope our SSE membership can distinguish between the merely paranormal and that which is paranoid, delusional, and self-destructive. I do not disagree with Walach’s final point in his analysis of the book: “Those who have the money and the power, do not always have the knowledge and the wisdom needed to guide the world to a place of greater freedom and comfort.”

Kennedy’s book currently sits third on *The New York Times* nonfiction bestseller list. It is heavily referenced and as such, convincing. But the evildoers’ “Coup d’Etat” that he claims is occurring isn’t obvious to me. What I do see is no more patients younger than I am dying miserably of AIDS, and COVID under control except for the misled, misinformed unvaccinated, who make up almost all the current mortality from the disease. And no polio.

NOTE

¹ Our government did fund some research in the Wuhan virology lab but the implications in the statement are incorrect. <https://reporter.nih.gov/search/bvPCvB7zkyvb1AjAgW5Yg/project-details/8674931>

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