

# Story Wars

<https://www.climateone.org/audio/story-wars>

Recorded on July 10, 2012

**Greg Dalton:** Welcome to Climate One at the Commonwealth Club, I'm Greg Dalton. Today, we're discussing storytelling in the age of climate disruption. Most people have heard how the burning of fossil fuels is increasing the Earth's temperature. Scientists and environmentalists spew facts and figures about atmospheric carbon concentrations and the high risks of low-probability events like fires, extreme storms, et cetera. We've had a lot of those conversations right here at Climate One.

But are those statistics and insights having an impact on public opinion? Are facts or stories more powerful in shaping our perceptions and behavior? In the next hour, we'll talk about energy and environmental narratives, conflicts between heroes and villains, and the influence of archetypes and a lot more.

Joining our live audience at the Commonwealth Club, we're pleased to welcome three guests with diverse perspectives on the power of storytelling and media communications. Carrie Armel is director of the Sensor and Behavior Initiative at Stanford, a cross-disciplinary project funded by the federal government, looking at how information and technology can influence people's behavior around energy. She has Ph.D. in Psychology and Cognitive Science. Jon Else is director of the Documentary Program at UC Berkeley School of Journalism, and was series producer for the PBS documentary *The Eyes on the Prize*, and most recently was executive producer of *The Island President*, a film about the Maldives and sea level rise. His journalism laurels include several National Emmys, Peabodies, and Alfred DuPont awards. Jonah Sachs is cofounder of Free Range Studios, an ad agency here on the Bay Area.

He's also author of the new book published today, *Winning the Story Wars: Why Those Who Tell and Live the Best Stories Will Win the Future*. He helped create the Story of Stuff, a video that went viral on the internet, and is now used widely in schools around the country, teaching about consumption and sustainability. Please welcome them to Climate One.

Jonah Sachs, let's begin with you. In the late 1980s, the climate scientist James Hansen testified before Congress for the first time, laid out the evidence that humans were affecting the Earth's climate. He revealed the truth, and felt that would lead to action. You brought that about that in your book, so tell us that story about James Hansen, and what that means about the importance of relying on experts and the facts versus stories.

**Jonah Sachs:** Sure, well James Hansen had been kind of uncovering this frightening set of facts since about the late 60's. He was kind of one of the first to start looking at this, and like a good scientist should, he felt that his job was simply to reveal what was going on. And he felt that if he could let people know in ways that were becoming more and more irrefutable in his mind and through his research what was going on, that he could simply turn the information over and everyone would act, things would just kind of fall into place. And it would be kind of unseemly for a scientist to do anything else. So, when he came out to testify for the first time, he figured he was kind at the end of the road here. He'd put the facts out, and the response was uncertainty, a little bit of fear, but also a sort of mass denial, because it was so difficult to do something about it, and then great stories from the opposition, who -- people who didn't want to change in fossil fuel industry primarily, to make us question whether these facts actually meant something. And he toiled for about the next 20 years trying to just scream the facts, and he was so trained, deeply trained to believe, if we put the fate of these facts out there people will change.

And it wasn't until the beginning of this century, that he finally started chaining himself to coal plants and starting to tell stories about a 70-year-old man who had been pushed to the brink, and now was willing to actually take direct action and to try to find a new story. And he basically came out, not long ago and said that the facts cannot rule the day, and that it's really about -- we have to tell our stories about what these means for our society and what we can do about it. And that -- that's how society has always work. We're driven by facts and -- we're driven by myths that are based -- that explain the world, not simply strings of facts that tell us what we should do and how we should respond to the world around us.

**Greg Dalton:** And we'll get into some of that word. Jon Else, I mean, how do you see the narrative in the last couple of decades? You're a storyteller. You see, you know, some of the failure of that message of, you know, dispensing the facts.

**Jon Else:** Well, I think Jonah's right. The facts alone cannot win the day in a democracy. And in a functioning democracy, I think facts and narrative of some sort are an unbeatable combination. Well, it's frequent they get beaten, but very often they work. And we -- they can backfire. That is narratives can be counterfactual also, and we've seen a lot of that between political campaigns. But if we're talking about big movements like the environmental movement, like the Civil Rights movement, like Appalachian in the 19th century. I mean you could, in a way, say that the facts about slavery were known for a long time. And it took things like "Uncle Tom's Cabin," you know, it took the slow building of a movement around narratives and around images, frankly. When we talk about narratives -- storytelling, the story of Rosa Parks for instance, the story of David Brower stopping Marble Canyon Dam. We also have to acknowledge the power of single images.

And I think one of the problems with climate change, and especially with Hansen's early work was it would -- no ever succeeded in tying that to a dog going after a demonstrator and fire hoses in Birmingham, Alabama. We have yet -- there's few images in *An Inconvenient Truth*, in the Al Gore film, the glaciers are very powerful. But there's nothing that's quite as hot imagistically as what we've seen in previous movements, the anti-apartheid movement. So that is -- that's a part of what we're cooking up here.

**Greg Dalton:** If there's one image of people think of climate change, it's probably a polar bear?

**Jon Else:** Yeah.

**Greg Dalton:** Maybe a melting iceberg. And both are things that most Americans never see firsthand, and they're far away and it's hard to see how that relates to their lives. I want to carry in a minute but yeah, that image, you know, is that -- is it possible to rebrand that image on the and make the polar bear not the icon for climate change and make it, I don't know, something more close to home.

**Jonah Sachs:** Yeah. I mean, the thing about images is they bring down the set of invisible facts to the human scale. So we were programmed to be afraid of tigers, not parts per million of, she say saber-tooth lion -- saber-tooth tigers on the savannah. So we don't understand how these invisible gases can really get to us, and those images don't bring things down to the human scale, because we don't have that human experience of the Arctic or of polar bears. We're just -- it does not -- it's not close to us. And until can we start seeing what it really feels like and looks like to live in this future that we're heading towards, it's going to be very hard for us to react. But we can do that.

**Greg Dalton:** Carrie Armel, are our brains wired -- can we process this? Can we, something that's so abstract and what, in time and space -- can our brains process such a threat?

**Carrie Armel:** Well, they're exactly right with my experience.

That people really can't visualize what's going to happen well into the future. They're much more affected by the immediate experiences and the visualizations, that immediate visualizations. So, there's that are hardwired, there's things that are learned through association, there's things that are learned through multiple levels of associations, and then there are sort of the facts that are beyond that. And so the more degrees of separation, the less this rule in tapping into the emotional and motivational systems that there are, yeah.

Which reminds me a little bit of a time with the point that you made about the scientists, and then presenting the facts and it's a little bit off on a different topic, but it ties into these two systems of the emotional and the visceral reaction, and then the second systems that's more factually-based, whereas if scientists are presenting the facts and yet the facts have such dire consequences and they're conveying these facts to the general public. As facts, the general public may not understand the facts entirely, but they see the emotional -- the emotion that the scientist conveys and the narrative that the scientist gives them. If they don't see much emotion or much narrative associated with the scientist, then their interpretation maybe well, it doesn't have such severe consequences. And so, maybe there almost is a role for the scientist to play in in stepping over that boundary to better convey to the public the severity that they feel is occurring.

**Jon Else:** It is a huge mismatch because facts, by their nature, are supposed to be "valueless". They're not values-based. The values-based fact is not a fact, right? So we put out information that's not values-based. We're missing a chance to get people to act, because all of our actions we see through research is based on values and not our rational sort of measuring of what's right and wrong but truly, does this connect with my values [0:10:00] and I will act upon it regardless what the fact say, and yet we always present facts as the very opposite of that. And so -- and stories are what are actually containers for values. There always have been ways of transmitting values, that's what they are, that's why children sit on their parents' knees and ask for stories. They want to know what we value. What do my parents value? What does the society values? And if we're not talking about values, what -- we are missing the game, and anyone who observes politics lately knows that values rule the day. And in a very complex world, values voters are basically, have been ruling our democracy for quite a long time.

**Greg Dalton:** So what are the narrative -- competing narratives right now on climate change? We hear some people say it's not happening. That people didn't start causing it. Other people say, "Yes. It's definitely happening. Definitely human cause," and there seems to be a battle. Who's winning on that?

**Jonah Sachs:** Well, I think the battle in many ways is over for whether or not it's really happening. In my mind, if you look at opinion posts, people generally have come to understand to believe, enough to make it -- to make the change that we need to make. There's still that sort of seeds of doubt that help feed into the denial story that we all kind of hope it's not true. We all would like to believe it's not true. So the seeds of doubt are important.

One of the kind of very interesting stories that I see bubbling up right now is the story about whether this is our fault as individuals for making bad choices, or is it the fault of the market that we're being given. And we're working on a new Story of Stuff called "The Story of Change," which is really about the fact that if we're not giving good choices in the marketplace but constantly feel like we're making the better -- everytime we get in a plane, everytime we get in our car, we're causing climate change and we're planet wreckers. Then that story becomes we're our own enemy, and we don't know what to do with that story. But the reality that's coming out now is that there are some enemies out there that are not necessarily us. We don't have choices about how to live our

lives in a way that can stop the climate change problem. But we can reorient the marketplace to help us do that. We can fight against some of these oil companies who already have enough oil on their -- carbon on their books that they're planning to burn, that's going to take us to 10° Celsius in the future.

Those business models are the enemy. If every time we get in the car or go see our grandma, we feel like we are the problem. There's almost nothing to do. But if we can start looking at the factors that are causing climate change and start really using the global marketplace to price carbon or whatever we need to do to attack the problem and encourage solutions, I think we can kind of start building a global movement. We need a new story with new villains that are not ourselves, because it's not working.

**Greg Dalton:** Jon Else, who are the villains in the carbon filling?

**Jon Else:** Well, we can go way back to begin to identify that. No. There was a famous commercial in about 1970, the crying Indian commercial. It was a famous 30-second spot. People of a certain age are all nodding, I see. And it showed a Native American in his canoe paddling along and pulling the canoe up on the shore that was littered with junk, with smokestacks in the background, and getting out of his canoe, a car drives by and throws a bunch of fast-food wrappers and junk at his feet. And the announcer says, "People make pollution. People can stop pollution." And what that did and what I think it ties into what you're saying, that shift of the blame to all of us is throw litter out of our cars and it ignored this enormous production of carbon, this tremendous consumption of fossil fuel that was happening just off camera that we had just seen.

And so, I mean the individual responsibility is a two-way street. It's a cover -- I mean, who is the enemy? I think, you know it's national and international policymakers. It's national and international legislative bodies. It is certainly large players in the markets, particularly in the fossil fuel markets. I mean, you know, in other movements, if we think of this as a movement, it was easier to identify villains whom you could steer, you could direct.

Because the atmosphere does not know national boundaries, because the air I polluted driving here today is going to end up in China. I mean, forget the fact that climate legislation is stalled in the United States legislative system. I mean, Carrie could speak more to this than I can, it seems to me we have this global problem where the enemies are all over the place and not really under the -- under the control of any policy body or any regulatory body.

**Greg Dalton:** So does that mean individuals are off the hook? I mean we have some responsibility in this but ...

**Jon Else:** Yeah. Of course we do. But if we were all -- if none of us have driven here today

**Jonah Sachs:** I mean, and it always starts with "Well, if I can do it, and if we all do it." The truth is we won't all do it and make those choices. That's not how our economy and our markets are set up. It doesn't -- that's a big gap that we just jump over and does shift the blame. And the really interesting about that story, which I read about in the book, is first of all, that was a campaign designed by beverage and container-makers who didn't want to see deposit laws on bottles. So they said, "Hey, here's a new idea, people start pollution. They should stop it. It's not our problem."

So that's the most iconic environmental campaign of all time, incredibly effective because it was an amazing story. And it actually does what I call kind of "filling a myth" gap." It came out of a time of Vietnam and environmental movement realizing basically that we were -- we were very out of touch with American imperialism at the time. We were really questioning how we had treated Native

Americans. All the Western movies at the time were all about the Native Americans as the good guys and the cowboys as the bad guys. We were questioning like our national history based on both conquering the Frontier and what we're doing in Vietnam. And this ad came along that made us feel really good. We're on the side of the Native Americans. We feel good about ourselves. We're cleaning up our rivers. We're cleaning up the world. We're getting out of Vietnam. It was all conflated together with this new myth and story, that if I put this in this trash can, I'm reconciling myself to my sense of identity, and it worked great.

We can do those kinds of myths too, but we should not be doing them to stop bottle deposit laws. We should be doing them to try to actually save the world.

**Greg Dalton:** Is buying a Prius such a myth? Thank you then. While I'm doing good of addressing my conscience, but it's not -- this is a value statement --

**Jonah Sachs:** I drive a Prius, and I feel that every action that you -- I feel that every action that you take and every time you declare that you're on the side of saving the planet in anyway is a great thing to do. And it's a terrible place to stop doing anything after that. So, it's wonderful to declare your intention. And if you -- if you wear something, if you drive something, if you do something that may seem though that every -- you're in the side of fighting this problem, then that's great. But if you think that's all you need to do, you know, it's not very helpful for future generations.

**Greg Dalton:** Let's talk about Heroes. "The Hero's Journey," you wrote about the heroes of journey, you know, hero to be -- enters the world out of balance, and one person that you wrote about, John Brown, former CEO of British Petroleum, really was living a lie and that was a company that lot of people rallied behind, and we all know what happens, BP, with the oil spills, et cetera. So how does leave John Brown and BP into this? Jonah?

**Jonah Sachs:** I was really fascinated with BP when I was writing the book, because I was thinking about how we don't just need to tell better stories, but we actually need to live those stories, but why. And BP seemed like way too easy a target, because they're like, well of course, BP destroyed their brand when they destroyed the Gulf, and they -- but they destroyed so much more than just their green brand.

But as I look more deeply into it, I actually came to the conclusion that their deceptive green branding of BP, the "Beyond Petroleum" thing, actually caused in many ways the deep water horizon spill and destroyed of billions of dollars of equity, not just in the brand, but actually in the company. And here's why. BP at the time had huge safety problems. They had about 715 violations to Exxon Mobil's 1 over ten years. But the public hated Exxon Mobil because of the Valdez Spill. Here's BP -- "we're beyond petroleum."

They're actually the most aggressive fossil fuel explorers with the worst safety record. But when the crisis -- when the spill happened, Tony Hayward walked into his office, in the privacy of his own office and he said, "What the hell did we do to deserve this?" He could not believe that this would happen to them, because the world was telling them, you're the good guys. Queen Elizabeth knighted John Brown, made him Lord Baron something of -- I forget his name. But she gave him some really good title. And he became the sun king, and BP became this wonderful brand, and they believed they were the good guys. And there was a phenomenon called "Group Think", where when you have a cohesive group of people who believe they're right, they ignore all the facts outside them that are telling them you're on the wrong path. And BP was so obviously on the wrong path. They got report after report from outside consultants that they ignored at their own peril. And they wouldn't have done it -- I don't believe if they had the negative reputation that Exxon Mobil had, who was actually much more safe. So, I think brands that go out there and try to -- cast themselves as

green, they're not just pulling the wool over our eyes with those stories but they're actually -- it's a huge liability for themselves.

**Greg Dalton:** Jon Else is a very different character. You spent a lot of time working on a documentary of President Nasheed of the Maldives. He -- some people look to him as certainly a voice of moral clarity, if not a hero these days. Tell us about what he's doing, former president of Maldives, President Nasheed.

**Jon Else:** Well, yeah, I mean he's -- you know, I think that, Richard Berge, and John Shenk and Bonni Cohen who conceived that film, were very, very, very smart to find this guy. I mean if there was ever a fascinating individual, a charismatic, complex, complicated individual who was in the trenches, perhaps unwillingly at first in the climate battles, it's President Nasheed. And for those of you who don't know, there are really two parts to the story of "The Island President", one is Nasheed's battle to bring democracy to the Maldives after 30 years of a dictatorship.

And this slow, dogged work to become the first democratically-elected president of this island nation after he'd been imprisoned many, many times, tortured. And then the day he went into office, there was some bad news. And the bad news was that the seas are rising and the highest point of the Maldives is about 6 feet above sea level. So the film traces a year in his life. And if anyone -- any head of state on the planet has a state in reversing, or at least stopping climate change, it is Mohamed Nasheed. So the year that the crew followed him really is a year in which he goes around the world trying to shake the world via the lapels to say, "Look, you know, you have to limit carbon emissions, we've got to cap this thing at 300 parts per million or 350."

And where the hero's journey becomes complicated, as it has become complicated with many other historical figures in every movement, is that Nasheed then went to the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, and that's where things got incredibly complicated, incredibly nasty, incredibly -- the passion to do exactly the right thing ran up against the realities of trying to get a couple of hundred nations in a room to agree on something. And like so many visionary leaders, Nasheed was faced with coming away with a compromised agreement from Copenhagen or no agreement at all. And I'm not giving anything away to say that, you know, over the objections of many of his own cabinet, many of his own advisers, he fought for a compromised agreement in Copenhagen as a start.

**Greg Dalton:** Something's better than nothing.

**Jon Else:** Yeah, and something better than nothing, yeah. And that -- you see that again and again in social movements.

People who, you know, you know, winning the revolution is one thing, and then actually governing the country is often much, much harder than winning the revolution.

**Greg Dalton:** Carrie Armel, can regular people be heroes?

**Carrie Armel:** It's a good question. So, there's a -- some interesting work by Phil Zimbardo, where he spent a lifetime studying what makes people evil, and I believe towards the end of his career, he studied what makes people become heroic and how can ordinary people become extraordinary people. And so, he's delved into some of those principles and has a program where -- in different domains, like health domain, environmental domain, et cetera, he tries finding people who have -- ordinary people who have become heroes to identify them and tell their narratives and share them with other people and then develop programs to help other people become heroes as well.

We are doing a bit of a spinoff project kind of related to that, not specifically with Phil, but as part of our ARPA-E grant. We have kind of backed in this -- to this narrative space starting with how can help people identify which actions they can take to reduce their energy use, how to overcome barriers so they can execute on those actions, reduce their energy use, make everything super easy, et cetera, et cetera, many different behavioral techniques, some technology thrown in there. But, to tie that altogether and make it visceral and appealing to people, we started layering on metaphors and narratives, and one that we have kind of stumbled into after a lot of exploratory work relates to empowering people through this metaphor of heroes.

So we actually, along with DraftFCB, a marketing company, they held a competition with offices of theirs all over the world to come up with stories or visualizations or metaphors that would resonate with people so that they could see their energy use, and we got about a hundred submissions. And we realized going through them that probably that 98 percent of the hundred were negative and that they had to do with sort of what we were talking about a little bit earlier, with guilt and fear and things along those lines. And that moment, we sort of realized that this whole movement is very un-empowering for people. And there's -- when people are unempowered and feel like they can't take action, they develop a certain amount of cognitive dissidence so that they diminish the importance of that thing or there's -- denial is a common reaction to it, et cetera. And instead of doing that, if you want people to take action, you actually want to empower them. And so, we started to think about what metaphor could we use that would empower people. And so we've been playing around with the idea that a hero metaphor where people, when they say power, they assimilate that power and they become more powerful. So, anyhow, there's kind of a little narrative --

**Greg Dalton:** So when my kids turn off the lights, they're going to be heroes, and they're going to get more powerful?

**Carrie Armel:** Right. Yeah.

**Greg Dalton:** Now I think I like that. Okay.

**Carrie Armel:** Well, it's -- yeah. We have a little -- yeah.

**Greg Dalton:** Jon Else?

**Jon Else:** Only a follow-up. And you've asked about The Hero's Journey, and there are a couple of -- two different kinds of heroes. There are individual heroes who make a difference in their -- in their own lives and in the circle -- a small difference in the circle around them. In that sort of Joseph Campbell sense, there is the hero's journey where we have this myth of the individual who was called upon to go out and save the kingdom and goes out and slays the dragon, and pretty much single-handedly comes back and saves the kingdom. That works very often in literature than it works in narratives.

When you begin applying to large social movements and to the kind of storytelling that I get involved in where we're looking at big social movements, the anti-apartheid movement, the environmental movement, Civil Rights movement, it becomes much more complicated because -- I mean, Rosa Parks is a very interesting case, that she is called up as very often as the icon, sort of the mythic hero of the Civil Rights movement, as a woman -- a simple seamstress who sat down on the bus because she was tired. The fact is that Rosa Parks had been active and training for decades before that happened, had been thrown off that same bus many times before, was the state chairman of the NAACP Youth Committee, and it was a huge organization in Montgomery, Alabama. The Woman's Political Action Committee was this whole structure of foot soldiers and officers if you will, that were ready to spring into action. And then after she sat on the bus, contrary to what I think an awful lot

of folks think. It took a year of people walking to work in Montgomery, Alabama, and it took finally the United States Supreme Court to get -- they said, "Get the buses desegregated in Montgomery."

**Jonah Sachs:** I think what you're saying now is that The Hero's Journey story is what has held and resonated --

**Jon Else:** Yes.

**Jonah Sachs:** -- with the most of us. And then the facts --

**Jon Else:** The fact is --

**Jonah Sachs:** -- are behind it. And then so it's relevant, but really, if we have to elevate some of those hero's journey stories, because hers -- because she's a member.

**Jon Else:** Yeah. The problem is that it -- it -- it may make us think that one person can just go out and do it. When in fact -- well I mean it's a whole new world now with the internet.

**Greg Dalton:** Sounds like 2008 election. Yeah.

**Jon Else:** Yeah. I mean the fact is that one person can light the spark, can get things going, but it takes these tremendously complicated dogged things that finally lead to a policy change.

**Jonah Sachs:** I mean, it may not -- it may not be a great organizing strategy, though I tell people that we need individual heroes all over the place. But The Hero's Journey story really existed to talk about metaphorically what an -- it's always an unlikely person, you said, can a regular person be heroes? Yes, as you know, it -- you can't always say -- the only people who could be heroes, the regular people who don't believe they have any potential to be hero. Moses was 80 years old. Dorothy is a little girl. Luke Skywalker is a lame teenager, so they have no chance, right?

And then they get called upon by this mentor character to do something crazy and dangerous, and the first thing they say is, "No, I'm not a hero". So you can't just tell people you're a hero. That no, I'm not the hero. But what they learned to do is they go and they slay that dragon, but what that really means is confronting their own fears. And when they don't slay the dragon and get a lot of treasure. In fact when they get the treasure, they usually bring the treasure back and it turns to dirt when they come back to the real world. But what they really come back was a chance to heal a broken society. That's what Campbell said these stories are all about.

And so, when we -- we -- we thrill to these hero journey stories because really, they're metaphors for how we become heroes in a small way in our own lives. How do we mature and start being engaged with larger things? How do we overcome our own fears? We don't necessarily want to be Luke Skywalker and blow up the Death Star, but we want to sort of learn that we can overcome some of our own limitations and do something. And you know, Campbell would tell us that a hero is someone who sacrifices in some way their own position, comfort, for the greater good. And I think that these bigger narratives, these heroic narratives don't make us think that one person could stop the climate crisis perhaps, but do make us think, "You know what, I can be part of something more," and all of our marketing for the last 50 years are specifically designed to make us think that we are simply consumers and we need to be -- you we're talking a little bit about, you keep speaking to people's sort of fears and hitting them at that level, which the environmental movement has done. Fear-grade status, you're going to get some sort of consumer activists who really don't know what to do. So it's really -- I talk about empowerment marketing much the same what you do, what you're talking about as the only way to kind of bring people into really changing the world.

**Greg Dalton:** So who are some climate heroes out there right now? They -- agreed that they may not solve everything for us, but who are some of the inspiring leaders out there that are taking action on these sustainable issues?

**Jon Else:** Mohamed Nasheed.

**Greg Dalton:** Mohamed Nasheed?

**Jon Else:** But Mohamed Nasheed was deposed. Mohamed Nasheed is no longer a head of state.

**Greg Dalton:** But he still has a great story -- his story is unfolding.

He's now the ousted -- He's the ousted president trying to get back into power...

**Jon Else:** That's right. I mean there was a piece about him in -- just a couple of days ago in the New York Times. Not about the guy who's now President of the Maldives. He has -- he has sort of the moral inspirational force that a guy like King or Mandela -- yes, I don't, quite at that level.

**Greg Dalton:** And that resonates. He came to the United States around the time of his film which didn't do so well at the box office but he got on David Letterman and a whole lot of people saw him on David Letterman, so something resonated at least there to get him some -- an audience and -- and, you know, there's -- there's something that's part of his story is unfolding, who are some other heroes. Carrie Armel?

**Carrie Armel:** So, two scientists at Stanford, Steve Schneider and also Lee Schipper. Steve Schneider, famous climate scientist, very vocal in the media, and Lee Schipper, who studied transportation all over the world helped institute more sustainable transportation. Unfortunately both of them passed away in the last couple of years. Both of them were tireless, tireless voices that just killed themselves to—

**Greg Dalton:** Sacrificed to the cause.

**Carrie Armel:** Yes.

**Greg Dalton:** Is Al Gore a hero in this respect?

**Jonah Sachs:** I just like to add, before answering, to highlight, the kind of small handful, like you know, 5,000 people who got arrested, went to the White House and stopped the Keystone Pipeline, as a real direct action. For something that really -- seem to me at least to be an inked deal, and then through some organizing and some direct action, in a time when we feel like this government won't listen to us, kind of made a huge -- a huge, at least symbolic and hopefully tangible win.

And I think, you know, in my mind, Al Gore has been a huge part of exposing the reality of what's going on, and "Inconvenient Truth" did that. Like many people say, it was shocking to get to the end of *Inconvenient Truth* and see these 10 simple things that you can now do that didn't in any way match the scale of the problem. That was forgivable, I think at a little more naïve time. I haven't seen from him a new story emerging about what we can really do that cause us to that higher empowerment level.

**Jon Else:** So I don't think we know yet. I think there's someone out there, there are probably dozens of people out there who are working in places that we don't even think of, they're working inside corporations that are working -- working inside energy companies that are working, some obscure staff member on some Congressional Committee. There are people who are actually taking

professional risks by doing what they know is right and we're not going to, you know, someone's going to -- we're going to learn about them 10 or 20 or 30 or 100 years from now.

**Greg Dalton:** So Jon Else, when you did the documentary, *Eyes on the Prize*, on Civil Rights for Youth movement, you had the benefit of scholarship and the benefit of history to look back and of course, Rosa Parks then looked like, of course, that now there's Rosa Parks out there doing things on climate, but we don't see their impact of their action yet.

**Jon Else:** Yes, yes. I mean, I have the luxury of, you know, letting the scholars work for 20 years and then we just say, "Hello, Mr. Scholar," you know, "Mrs. Scholar, you know, tell us what happened and we'll make a movie about it." It's very, I mean, there is a problem, I mean that's one of the things that was so attractive about Nasheed was that it's very hard to find people who actually are making a difference in the present as the events are unfolding. It's harder yet to actually get access to the process, to be backstage if you will, at the meeting -- at these international meetings, at policy meetings. It's a lot easier looking back and getting old news reel film of Dr. King for instance.

**Greg Dalton:** Jon Else is the director of Documentary Program at the UC School of Journalism.

Other guests today at Climate One are Carrie Armel, director of a research project at Stanford, and Jonah Sachs, author of the new book, *Winning the Story Wars*. Carrie Armel?

**Carrie Armel:** I was going to say besides the problem, we're supposed to make 60% to 80% energy reductions to address this problem and this is at a time when energy productions are expected to double, energy consumption is predicted to double over the next few decades. So we have to -- I mean, dramatic, dramatic life changes. So just to your last point Jon, I think not only are we going to see spottings or heroes in all these various places, but both.

As a society, we're going to have to have heroes, and it's not just heroes like I was saying at the individual, you know, household level, change our actions, I mean, heroes across the board and every sector of society and my personal experience with people in government at DOE, venture capitalists, people at startup companies and academia, everyone working on this energy space, you know, folks on the stage, everybody work in the space is killing themselves to do the most innovative things to really make a dent. So I think there's a lot of heroes out there.

**Jonah Sachs:** Yes. I think there are some potential heroes out there because you have people like the Koch Brothers who were so old paradigm and so stuck in this way of thinking in these where traditionally those industrialists -- those industrialists became the billionaires, and we know what people like that can actually do to the debate. And now we do have this new generation of billionaires who kind of rose about this millennial. It's a small group of potential heroes. But I'm waiting for and really hoping that some of the people in this area actually who have it -- that kind of power to fight back on that level and, you know, use the -- use the Citizens United Fiasco to actually put a lot of money into the other side of things. And we might see some of those people emerging because they're coming with a very different mindset. Their wealth is not based on business as usual, and they might be able to help resist.

**Greg Dalton:** I'd like to read a quote from Jonah's book to get some of the policy and political dimensions of this. This is James Carville, the Democratic strategist who said, "Republicans quote say 'I'm going to protect you from the terrorist in Tehran and the homos in Hollywood.' Democrats say, 'We are for clean air, better schools, more health care'". There's a Republican narrative, there's a Democratic litany -- which is more effective? I think we know which is more effective, which is -- so is that true? That Democrats list issue, cite facts and Republicans have a better story values-based story that they tell?

**Jonah Sachs:** I mean, I've put that in the book for that reason, I believe so I think that [Laughter]

Any Republican's strategy starts at the level of values and I think that Democratic strategy often starts at a kind of motley collection of facts. In about 2004 before the election, I sat through this really interesting presentation of again, a group of Democratic organization -- organizations that wanted to support Kerry, an ad firm who kind of came out with a, "I'm a Democrat" kind of ad campaign. And they showed -- I think, you know, it's a reasonably compelling to treasure all these heroes who have been Democrats across time and everyone is looking at this, you know, first of all, they've kind of gave themselves away when they said, you know, our primary clients are Coca-Cola and then the room kind of chilled and you have all these progressive activists out there, they showed this kind of campaign that was actually emotionally moving, showing these faces like showing Dr. King and showing kind of a FDR and all these Democrats to be proud of.

And then immediately, everyone started throwing out all these facts. Why don't I see this represented there? I don't see this -- what about the fact of this and what about the fact of this, and no one was talking about how it made them feel. And by the time that these people slunk off the stage with a mountain of facts being thrown at them and no one said, "Well, this made me feel proud to be a Democrat." And I think that the Republicans always sort of start or how can we connect with the core values of the people out there? How can we get our policy in line with those values and keep hitting the same values again and again? I think that, you know, the -- the -- the use of villains, the use of heroes, all that stuff is, you know, where Carville is talking about, the Republicans do so well. And to understand the structure of story is really, there's these heroes and the villains in the surface and just below that is a moral of the story, key truth about how the world works and should be ordered and does work. And that's how stories get created at the -- we need to not have a motley collection of facts, but kind of core truths about how the worlds can work.

**Greg Dalton:** So Jon Else here, at Storyteller, can you help Democrats who are so lousy at this?

**Jon Else:** [Laughter] Well, I mean, I teach in school of journalism, so I'm not supposed to help anyone. I'm supposed to teach --

**Greg Dalton:** You teach at Berkeley? Yeah, okay.

**Jon Else:** -- get facts. Well, I mean, it is you mentioned Kerry and it is interesting that to compare how John Kerry's campaign handled his narrative, that it's his life history.

With how Barack Obama has handled his life history, and I would submit that Barack Obama has been very, very forthright about, as far as I know, about his entire life story. I mean, you know, he was running for president and he -- I don't know if I can say this on the radio. In the first page of his autobiography, in the first couple of sentences he said the word shit a couple of times, right, as he was laying out a story. Kerry completely erased his opposition to the war in Vietnam from his own narrative and --

**Greg Dalton:** He airbrushed his own story?

**Jon Else:** Yes, he airbrushed his own story, and we'll never know whether that was a problem or not.

**Jonah Sachs:** It was a problem when he sit up there and said John Kerry reporting for duty in the --

**Jon Else:** Yes.

**Jonah Sachs:** -- the Democratic National Convention.

**Jon Else:** Yeah.

**Jonah Sachs:** To see the destruction of --

**Jon Else:** That's right.

**Jonah Sachs:** -- that's better for treating all --

**Jon Else:** Yes, yes. There was a disconnect. Could I help? Let me phrase it differently. Could I help any responsible leader whom I'd like to see serving? Yes, I think I could by being forthright about their narrative, by being forthright and complete about what is -- what is the real story here.

**Greg Dalton:** So what is the real climate story that should be told right now about what we're doing to the Earth's atmosphere?

**Jon Else:** Well, you know, I would not begin -- I mean, Al Gore has done it one way with "An Inconvenient Truth", what I actually thought was a tremendously powerful film. I mean, I -- it really opened my eyes. I felt that intellectually and visually, it was an astonishing achievement. Whether it did much good remains to be seen. Al Gore did it one way, there was a -- it's an essay film, it's a non-fiction essay. Jon Shenk and Richard Berge and the folks who did Island President did it in a different way. They -- it needed two classic models for us. They found a singular person who was charismatic and smart and had some power, and followed him through a 90-minute story covering a year in the life of a climate warrior.

**Greg Dalton:** And he was the underdog, too. He's a little -- president of a little country up against -

**Jon Else:** Yeah.

**Greg Dalton:** You had China and US.

**Jon Else:** And he fits into an awful lot of algorithms in our cultural DNA, we want to use David against the Goliath. You know, we look for that. As a documentary-maker who works mainly in this tremendously bullying visual medium of television, I would also look for images. I mean, you know, I think you could argue that much of the effective advertising in the last -- political advertising has not been with heroes, but it's been with villains, it's been with anti-heroes. It has been -- Michael Dukakis in the tank, it has been Willie Horton. I mean, if we want to really talk about individual people who really change the society, we can go back to the 60s and start talking about assassins. But the power of single images for good or for ill in the nonfiction world is I think, it's underestimated.

**Greg Dalton:** Jonah Sachs, you're write that John Kerry had a -- was a better candidate, but George Bush had a better story. And that John Kerry was basically, say narcissistic, too much of John Kerry in it. Some people would say there's too much of Al Gore in *An Inconvenient Truth*.

**Jonah Sachs:** Yes.

**Greg Dalton:** The story wasn't about him.

**Jonah Sachs:** I would agree.

**Greg Dalton:** You would agree with that? So people -- the person with the better story wins.

**Jonah Sachs:** Yes. And I also use the John Kerry example to say that one of our classic errors is when we try to communicate as marketer for any kind of cause or any kind of brand. We talk about -- we just keep talking about ourselves and, you know, it's about us and John Kerry kind of analyzed -- John Kerry's speech is -- it feels like it's ancient history now, but his kind of acceptance speech at DNC and every -- for the first two minutes, all he makes are me-focused statements. I would -- "I -- my mom did this, I did this, I am doing that." And Bush didn't do that once. He said only "we" or "you" the whole time. And it wasn't an editorial comment that Kerry is a better candidate specifically, but Bush was behind in all the issues, and he just included everyone and he made it their story.

And I think that story you're asking about if I had a new story for climate change, I'd not -- wouldn't be here right now, be making it of course, but like the key I think is to recognize that people who are engaged in doing something that matters across the board tend to be happier, tend to be more joy-filled and more satisfied with their lives. And I think the story that needs to come forth is one of credible and joyful rebellion against this problem. We've gotten the ideas out there, we've gotten the facts out there, how can we make it irresistibly fun and meaningful to do something about it and offer pathways that are truly, that's what empowerment is all about. So...

**Jon Else:** You know, environmentalists don't have any good songs, you know, just think of the anti-apartheid movement and the Civil Rights movement and the Spanish Civil War. I mean, you know.

**Greg Dalton:** In civil rights, Crosby, Stills and Nash, these early environmentalists, there's no climate song --

**Jonah Sachs:** There's no climate song.

**Greg Dalton:** Maybe Melissa Etheridge from *Inconvenient Truth*, but yes, there's no real climate song. We're talking about communication and climate change at Climate One. Our guests today are Jon Else, director of Documentary Program at UC Berkeley School of Journalism, Jonah Sachs, author of *Winning the Story Wars*, and Carrie Armel, researcher at Stanford University. I'm Greg Dalton.

We're going to take a production break right now and bring the audience microphone out here and invite your participation. Again, a reminder if you're on this side of the house, please go over to our producer, Jane Ann, where the line will start, and we invite you to a one part question or comment -- and hopefully we have a lot of them. This is often where the best parts of the interaction and if you need some help keeping it one part or short, I'm happy to help you and let's go to the audience participation program. Yes, sir. Welcome to Climate One.

**Male Participant 1:** Hi. Hello. Thank you for coming. I always want to ask, can't we develop a narrative that moves beyond this blame thing?

The question of whose fault it is and who is the enemy and just say something like, well, we -- for decades we did what we thought was right, but we've learned some new things since then and now we've got a problem and like you just said, together we can solve it. Something along those lines would -- what -- do you think that the blame thing is effective or it -- should we move away from it?

**Greg Dalton:** Jonah Sachs?

**Jonah Sachs:** Yes, I think it's -- it's a very -- it's a very difficult question on this topic because I think that, again, you know, take the Darth Vader character in Star Wars. He is both -- the guy that we blame, the ultimate villain, but also kind of a reflection. He's our -- he's the hero's father and

who the hero would become if they give in to that anger. So having an empathetic kind of reaction to those who stand in our way is actually very important. In a lot of movements, non-violent movements have done that really well and seeing the other side as human beings. I don't think we necessarily need to demonize any other person, but I think that there are structures, corporate structures and systems that are in our way that don't have -- that every person can be redeemable in this movement, but I do think that if we say that there are nothing that we're against at all within it, we need to first declare what we're for. We say that we're not against anything, we can't identify what the problem is except for ourselves, I think we're going to stay in this kind of -- in this kind of cycle of denial.

We need to -- we need to be better, we need to be better and we're just not getting there. We've tried it for 30 years and we're not getting better. So I think it's about not demonizing, not stereotyping. I use the idea of wars in the -- in the -- for the title of the book, not to call for more violence and war in the world, but because that conflict is the key -- is the key of any story. Every story is about character, conflict and plot. So we need to know what we're against. We don't need to focus on it, we can focus on the positive future. But if we don't what we're against, there's not really a story there.

**Jon Else:** We have to take --

**Greg Dalton:** Jon.

**Jon Else:** -- responsibility for separating out backward-looking blame with forward-looking responsibility.

I think -- and I think there's no question that whatever the ill is, there are forces and people who are responsible for perpetuating it, and we can move on to dealing with that in good ways.

**Greg Dalton:** Thank you.

**Carrie Armel:** I was just going to add. I think it may be useful to understand what the actions are so there's -- sort of the cause of the problem. But then what are the actions that are going to allow us to address the problem. And once we understand what actions need to be taken, they may suggest different storylines, potentially different narratives that may be an end to be is bad, but maybe it would shed a slightly different story on as well. So...

**Greg Dalton:** Yes, hi. Welcome.

**Female Participant 1:** Hi. I was fairly encouraged by the environmental movement right up until the Soviet Union fell in the Iron Curtain went down and we got a peek behind, and we saw the black towns and there was Chernobyl and so forth. How can we get the world to realize that it affects all of us and we're going to have to work, make it a real "we," that it's the planet that's endangered right here?

**Greg Dalton:** Jon Else, this is more of a global problem than Jim Crow and the American South or some things you've --

**Jon Else:** Yes. I mean, if it could find you, we'd know, we'd all be very, very -- very, very happy. You know, I think that, you know, we are in the new world now in the last 10 years with -- the world is all laced together, the Internet, I mean, you know, you know, you can -- you know, YouTube videos from Syria. Somebody have -- probably has some on their iPhone as I'm speaking right now. That gives me some hope that this borderless -- well, generally borderless with some glaring receptions, borderless system, with people talking to one another, maybe our salvation in that sense.

**Carrie Armel:** There's -- we're also in our way, we have some interesting technology.

I'm definitely not saying this is -- this is the only way to address it but it provides an interesting opportunity where we can do simulations and virtual reality and things along those lines, and so there's Professor Jeremy Bailenson, who's part of our grant, who does virtual reality and he'll do simulations of -- he's proposed doing some related to simulations where you can visualize the carbon molecules building up due to your actions and you can see them accumulate, the negative repercussions, and you can speed up time, et cetera. So you can -- you can change the scale and the time and you can visualize things that you couldn't necessarily before. So there may be a dimension there that brings that closer and allows you to see the global repercussions.

**Greg Dalton:** Let's have our next line in question. Welcome.

**Male Participant 2:** Great. Thanks very much, thanks for joining us, this is great. It strikes me that there's a lot of stories out there that are convincing a lot of people to do a lot of things, just not always the things we want them to do to get to a little carbon economy. So I'm curious from each of your perspectives, what stories out there are really effective? Right now, regardless of the source or the industry or the field and what can we learn from them?

**Jonah Sachs:** Well, this idea of giving people things that actually -- not just kind of defusing, telling a story and then giving that is yet another thing to do, but giving them credible theory of change is credibly important. Kony 2012, the most viral video of all time, 20-something minutes long, social change video, did a lot of things really well, and one of the things that it did really well was laid out a sort of very clear -- credible to its audiences theory of change, and most people think all that -- you can't take any time with our theory of change in our story or video, but it said, you know, it made it an epic tale.

We are a generation that can change the world and we can't do that today, but what we can do is prove that we're that generation. And to do that, we need to catch this guy you've never heard of. And to do that we need to convince Congress to have military intervention, and like if you really look at it like, whoa, this is a lot of strange steps but you know, 85 million people in a few days signed on.

Now, ultimately, it didn't achieve all of its ends, but that's the kind of story when you include people in a sort of a theory of change that makes sense to them and shows them how they can get to epic wins and not just, "okay, you've watched this epic video, now click here to sign a petition." I think you can start telling stories that give -- that actually create action. And that video, it did create a lot of action, a lot of weird stuff happened around it of course, it didn't go where it wanted to go in the end, but I think we can learn a lot from what it told us.

**Greg Dalton:** And Story of Stuff, have I mentioned briefly Story of Stuff, the impact that had?

**Jonah Sachs:** Yes, I mean the Story of Stuff was a paradigm shift in how you see the world. There wasn't a simple action at the end to say, okay, now you've seen how the world really and there's something that you can do about it right now. It treated audiences actually as grown-ups and said there is no simple thing now to take down this system, but just, we want you to under -- we believe that you can understand it and find your own entry points for what to do and give people many, many ways to see. Oh, yes, the stuff that I have has a huge story out there and a huge impact on the world and now everything I see, every material object I buy and see is -- is -- is impacting, and I want to find my entry points-- and it gives you lots of different groups to join or things to do and ways to be a citizen. And interestingly, a lot of people took that video to me and why I should just -- I should just be a better shopper, I should buy better stuff. And, you know, over time, and it's kind of revealed

to them -- well actually, it's not just --

**Greg Dalton:** Annie Leonard, who's the person behind the video, should say also that -- talking about common heroes. She was a single mom who kind of, that'll I say, fell into this, but this is really --

**Jonah Sachs:** Well, she's someone who knew a lot about the facts and try to get them out there and no one listened, and then she learned to tell a story, and suddenly became an internet celebrity who changed the way millions of people see the economy, so.

**Greg Dalton:** Let's have our audience question. Hi. Welcome.

**Female Participant 2:** Hello. I would like to suggest for your consideration a symbol, a few heroes and a good villain. You were talking about the polar bear. I would like you to consider as your symbol fire. We've just been through a ton of fire, we're going to be going through more fire.

As far as your heroes go, look at the firefighters. They come from all classes, all races, all religions, both genders, from the captain down to the grunt, you've got some wonderful heroic stories there and fire has a definite connection with carbon. And as for your villains, look no farther than corporate coal. [Laughter]

**Jonah Sachs:** Thank you. And one thing I love about that is firefighters are amazing heroes. You know, Jung talked about this idea of archetypes, these are primordial images of certain kinds of characters. Every human being he felt was born, the idea of a hero, but then in your own cultural context, you have to apply what does a hero look like, what does a villain look like, what does a mentor look like. And in our cultural context, firefighters are sort of that perfect, they're wearing the clothes of the hero all the time and any -- yes, they're an easy win, politicians know that and they might be a great symbol for this.

**Greg Dalton:** There it is. Let's have our next question. Hi. Welcome.

**Female Participant 3:** Hi. Thank you so much for being here, having this conversation. And there's a story block I think that we're experiencing in this country, and we have -- kind of have a two-tribe scenario going on and I'm guessing that you've been thinking about this is a great deal because it's one of the primary challenges for this country is to create a connection between those tribes again so we can have a reasonable storytelling experience together. Have you come up with the answer please? [Laughter] The answer please.

**Jonah Sachs:** Well, you know the -- all societies that we've ever seen throughout history are founded on kind of core myths. So they're built on core myths and these -- these myths provide universal explanation, meaning, ritual, and they're shared kind of by everybody. And our changing times have like really broken those myths up so we don't really share many myths at all anymore through religion and science. They're not giving us those myths that give us all these things together, and marketers have really cracked their way to sort of use products and marketing campaigns to kind of give us these only shared myths, we all share understandings of how to behave and build identities over what marketers have done.

We do need some kind of new universe -- more shared and universal myths, and I think that as we step out of the old ways of telling stories and that are -- that are -- and spouting values but really kind of tell new stories that give -- that anybody can relate to the characters and anybody can relate to the situations and the values are more quietly placed within them, so instead of going right at the issue with everything that we do in our advocacy, tell compelling stories about real people and keep

-- keep the moral of the story a little bit to yourself and let people make their own decisions. Get these different tribes out there, sharing exciting stories and talking about what they think they mean and entering real conversation about, you know, these heroic firefighters, for instance. So what does this really mean? What shall we do to support them? And slowly allow people entry points. Because if you start with the moral of the story or basically do tell fables like "here's what it mean and here's what you should do about it," we can't really cross those tribes. We tell really amazing stories that are emotional, that carry values that we all human -- universal human values, and one of the things that human beings do have a lot of values they share regardless of how they interpret them, we share a lot of values and come across the board, how this people's core universal values and keep the moral of the story a little bit to yourselves so that you bring more communities into conversation.

**Greg Dalton:** Jon Else.

**Jon Else:** You know, one thing we do as historical documentary-makers is to look back 10 years or 20 years at what appear to be black and white tribal conflicts, and if you look carefully and if you give the scholars a little bit of time to work, you discover that whatever the conflict, whatever the social movement, whatever these great collisions of forces, that within the tribes, they're very often, they're tremendously fractured in this tremendous internal debate going on within the Civil Rights movement, within white resistance to the Civil Rights movement, within -- in South Africa, within the environment, but within the firefighting community. And tribes are not, I think it's instructive for us to know the tribes traditionally have not been as monolithic and as ossified as we tend to think.

**Greg Dalton:** And one thing, Jonah talked about common values, food is something that certainly cuts across political boundaries. We've seen that with the Slow Food, Food Movement, organic food, that certainly reaches across some boundaries in a way that can be very powerful. Let's have our next audience question. Hi. Welcome.

**Female Participant 4:** Hi. I apologize that this is a poorly articulated one, but there's a lot to talk about heroes, individuals, right, and also actions are seem -- we seem to be talking about consumer actions, but in epic stories, but when you get to the -- click on the petition that's boring and not effective and whatever, but -- however, I would say that what we -- a big part of what we need is political action and it's group action whether or not it's politically-oriented. And so how do you reconcile kind of these hero stories doing epic things, with the things that we need which actually our people to sign petitions and to vote and to pay attention to politics?

**Jonah Sachs:** We don't necessarily need people to -- I mean, petitions are a very low bar. We don't necessarily need that, but we -- what Obama's 2008 campaign did so well, I think was got -- people to be in the hero -- to be individual heroes within their social networks, captains if you will of their little world and do enormous self-sacrifice of time and energy and output and putting themselves in the line and maybe keep -- they built social capital within their networks and became heroes so that they could bring that whole social network to this big common, yes, we can. So it's not, yes, you can. It's not, yes, I, Obama can. It's yes, we all can. But there was lots of room to make that -- to make become a hero in your community as a way of joining that movement. It's a, you know, it's a -- it's gotta be a template for all of us even though I think it hasn't delivered completely on and we hoped it would be for every -- in all those ways of participation. It showed that people are ready to be both heroic and collectively active.

**Greg Dalton:** Carrie Armel?

**Carrie Armel:** Yes, there's something I might add which is, so right now, we live in an age where there is about 400 million people worldwide operate avatars and virtual environments.

And there's sensors all over the world now -- smart meters, transportation sensors, sensors in your shoes that track your steps, all sorts of stuff, and that sensor data actually could fairly, easily be pulled into these online games to give people points or rewards or tie in to this virtual space to build up a more fantastical or, you know, motivating narrative around them. So again, I'm not suggesting this is the main thing we should be doing, but it's kind of an interesting angle on what we could potentially do to make these sort of potentially not very interesting actions more motivating or exciting for people.

**Greg Dalton:** Let's have our next audience question. Welcome.

**Male Participant 3:** Hi. Thank you. It seem like in the last round where we almost got cap and trade in 2009 or so and leading up to that, it seem like the real barrier to that was economic insecurity and the recession that happened in -- was it in 2006, 2007, people were handicapping if we were going to get some type of cap and trade legislation. So it really seemed like the real issue is economic insecurity and I was wondering if you would have done the storytelling differently around that time or -- and it looks like we're going to have more economic insecurity for the next few years, so how -- how -- how do you deal with this from the story-telling perspective?

**Jonah Sachs:** Insecurity is the most powerful tool in the maintenance of business as usual or the furtherance of business as usual. Like the more insecure we feel about national security after 9/11, the more we can kind of push this direction. The more economic insecurity, the more we can push this direction. Of course, the more we push it in this direction, the more economic insecurity we're creating out into the future. But the problem with insecurity is it forces -- ,psychologically it gets us to think short term. And the problem -- the problem is we need to be thinking somewhat long-term.

So how we might tell that story differently, it's really a matter of questioning, you know -- might as well sort of say that we will -- if you keep stimulating people's insecurity values, it'll be harder for them to leverage up and think about their higher level values. But that means we could -- we -- we -- we know that people still seek higher level values no matter how insecure their life has become.

And so, I think we need to keep getting out there and keep appealing to people's higher sense of purpose in the -- and resist the narratives that basically say, you know, the end is coming -- for some reason, we can't deal with the future right now, but we're up against a powerful weapon on the other side. We just have to keep empowering, keep empowering and not using their tools to keep saying, "Well actually, here's a better way to take care of today right now," like recognize that we're -- it's an uphill battle but it's -- we're fighting the right one by empowering them.

**Greg Dalton:** I'll just add that we've had an author here, Chris Martenson, who's a futurist and author who said that the narrative is broken in America right now for young people. It used to be study, work hard, go to college, get a degree, come out with maybe manageable amount of debt, you have some upward mobility and some autonomy and right now, there's a generation that's looking at, coming out with a lot of debt, not much opportunity, flattening life expectancy, health issues, et cetera. That story is broken and I'm not sure there's a story to replace it for young people these days. Jon, anything to add?

**Jon Else:** I just wanted to add briefly that cap and trade is one of those issues that just defies storytelling. There were [crosstalk] there were number of documentaries done around that time about cap and trade and nobody watched them, nobody could understand them. So there are some issues that we have yet to crack the code.

**Greg Dalton:** The best one was Jon Stewart who had Cap and Trade by Captain [Laughter] it was hilarious because he just -- he skewered it. Let's have our next audience question.

**Female Speaker 5:** Yes, hi. Thanks for starting this dialog or continuing it.

I'd like to say a story that helps people connect the dots, especially students and young people -- connects the dots about fossil fuels and the problems with burning things to produce energy. We have problems with the mining, problems with fracking, problems with air pollution and human health, problems with transport, problems with carbon buildup, climate change, fires, et cetera. So really the age of burning is coming to a close I feel for the human species, we need to find other ways to get energy and returning to a theme that you brought up a few minutes ago. I also think there's room for some stories about people as heroes who make wise investments in clean energy, like all of the thousands of Californians who have invested in solar panels and maybe went into some debt to do so. Many Americans go into debt without blinking for a \$30,000 SUV, but when it comes to a solar panel installation, they go, "Oh, that's way too expensive."

**Greg Dalton:** And then we even need to get at debt now, because you can get no capital up front solar installation so, are we done with fire or earlier we had a recommendation about fire being the icon. So which way we're going to go on this?

**Jonah Sachs:** Well, it's amazing how they, you know, we know that alternative energy and making markets competitive for alternative energy is gotta be part of the mix for the solution, you know, one of the dancing on the grave of Solyndra has been a big story, right? "Oh, doesn't work. Here, here a few, it doesn't work." Now we can just move on. And I think we need to -- definitely need to tell a story. Well, it better work and we better be putting a lot of resources into and then market forces to push it. It's not the only solution, alternative energy. But yes, we'd better be celebrating the ingenuity and innovation in that -- in that field for sure, and that's a major story of heroes, of people who are working to save the planet in that space.

**Carrie Armel:** There's some evidence that getting people focused on adaptation actually motivates them to take action related to mitigation.

**Greg Dalton:** Explain what you mean by adaptation -- dealing with climate change is going to happen anyway.

**Carrie Armel:** Right, so that's going to happen, what are we going to do about it? Does our town need to put sand piles along the edge because the water is going to rise where, you know, they're going to be more storms and some going to have to have backup supplies, et cetera, would be the adaptation, whereas the mitigation would be to try to prevent it from happening in the first place. And so it's just sort of thinking aloud, but I wonder if there's a narrative that's actually related to the adaptation side of things and once people get more motivated around the -- reacting to what's going to happen, they want to avoid it getting worse, and so they also focus on the mitigation.

**Greg Dalton:** There might be people who deny it's happening, but they want to protect that seafront condo. Yes, sir. Let's have our next audience question, that's one more.

**Male Participant 4:** Yes, sir. My -- my -- my point has been an awful lot of very interesting discussion. You've covered a lot of ground, the whole issue of globalization and dematerialization. We've come a long way in which we had Charles Dickens and we had burning smokestacks in London and people couldn't breathe because of thick black smoke around them. I think probably a little bit maybe -- a little bit more emphasis might be beneficial to be placed on the good things that have come out of things recently. You have, like Carrie spoke about, actually connecting with information with games and things like that. Google, GPS systems, traveling all over the globe, right now when you have stuff piled up in your backyard or your house or whatever, everything was in front of you, so you could actually appreciate things with dematerialization, with the Internet, with

things which are electronic. A lot of the production like in the Story of Stuff happens overseas, it's not on your backyard, it's someone else's problem. It's out of sight, out of mind. Having those metrics, taking that information and actually showing people that that information is really powerful, you can have GPS systems, is it beneficial to travel down to the grocery store to buy something if you're only saving a few cents or pennies, somewhere else.

Maybe it's actually better to spend a bit more. With that information, it really empowers people, people have smart phones. You can actually use technology to your advantage and I think by using that and making sensible choices, you can start connecting the dots, you can start actually quantifying where the use is actually happening. Is it beneficial? Is it a cellphone that's being thrown away in two years or whatever? Can things actually be more beneficially creative? So you actually start creating a circle in which everything, as the last lady was talking about, you connect the dots and people actually see continuity. Right now, the system is broken. Everything is basically fractured, it's basically specialization, everything is done somewhere to the nth degree --

**Greg Dalton:** Thank you.

**Male Speaker 4:** -- but you don't see the connections.

**Greg Dalton:** Hope. We need hope in connecting dots. That's -- we have to wrap it up here. This is -- that was the last one so. Who would like to fill that one?

**Jon Else:** Well, Dickens was a great dot connector.

[Laughter]

**Greg Dalton:** Dickens was a great dot connector. Okay.

**Jonah Sachs:** I'll leave it with that and that's what -- that's what stories are for. Right, the world is just a lot of dots and stories tell us which one to pay attention to how to connect them together and, yes, that -- you have a technology now to do it and we have the narrative patterns to do it, and that's part of our work.

**Greg Dalton:** And the dots -- the circles of the Climate One logo is actually also about connecting dots and convening, et cetera. We have to end it there. Thanks to Carrie Armel, director of Sensor and Behavior Institute Initiative at Stanford, Jon Else, director of the Documentary Program at the UC Berkeley School of Journalism and Jonah Sachs, co-founder of Free Range Studios and author of the new book, *Winning the Story Wars: Why Those Who Tell and Live the Best Stories will Rule the Future*. I'm Greg Dalton. Thanks -- I'd like to thank our guests and audience here at Climate One for coming today. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

[END]