



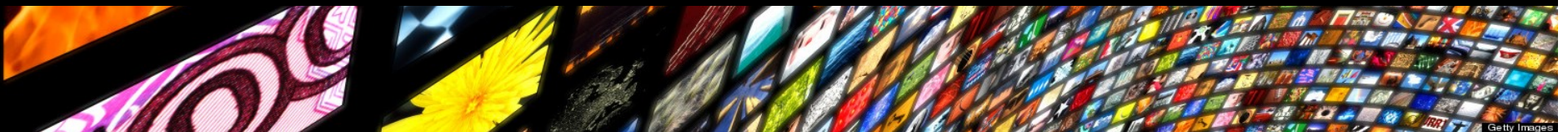
Media Reality: Influence and Responsibility

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Editor-in-Chief, *American Scientist*

 Twitter: @JLVernonPhD







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"I think there needs to be a discussion about when the government should be able to gather information...The sooner we modernize the laws the better."

~Bill Gates, March 8, 2016



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- Agenda setting
- Issue framing

Mass Media and Policymaking

Stuart Soroka (McGill University)

Andrea Lawlor (McGill University)

Stephen Farnsworth (University of Mary Washington)

Lori Young (University of Pennsylvania)

Forthcoming in *Routledge Handbook of the Policy Process*, edited by Wu Xun, M Ramesh, Michael Howlett, Scott Fritzen & Eduardo Araral

Mass media can, and often do, play a critical role in policymaking. The typical view of media is that they matter in the early stages of the policy process — that media can help to set an agenda, which is then adopted and dealt with by politicians, policymakers, and other actors. The impact of media is rarely so constrained, however. Our argument here, in short, is that media matter, not just at the beginning but throughout the policy process.

Many of the standard accounts of policymaking have a much too narrow view of the timing of media effects. That said, the ways in which mass media can matter are relatively well understood. Existing work tells us that media can draw and sustain public attention to particular issues. They can change the discourse around a policy debate by framing or defining an issue using dialogue or rhetoric to persuade or dissuade the public. Media can establish the nature, sources, and consequences of policy issues in ways that fundamentally change not just the attention paid to those issues, but the different types of policy solutions sought. Media can draw attention to the players involved in the policy process and can aid, abet or hinder their cause by highlighting their role in policymaking. Media can also act as a critical conduit between governments and publics, informing publics about government actions and policies, and helping to convey public



Agenda Setting

Consistent and prominent featuring of issues in the news to focus public attention on those issues and effectively “set” the public agenda.



Agenda building

'Reality'

- Politics
- Economics
- Science
- Society

Selection by
Journalists
→
Political PR
Public affairs

'Media Reality'

- Media agenda

Direct impressions,
discussions

Public agenda
setting

'Public Perception Of Reality'

- Public agenda



PROBLEM: Climate Change

Government Officials

Department heads
Assistant secretaries
Program managers
Message traffic

Private Sector

Lobbyists
Executives
Citizen groups
Pollsters
Citizens

Media

CNN/C-SPAN
Wire services
Radio/TV
Pool reporters

Politicians

Executive Leadership
Legislative leadership
Personal & professional staff

Foreign Officials

Diplomats
Counterparts
Correspondence

Non-Governmental

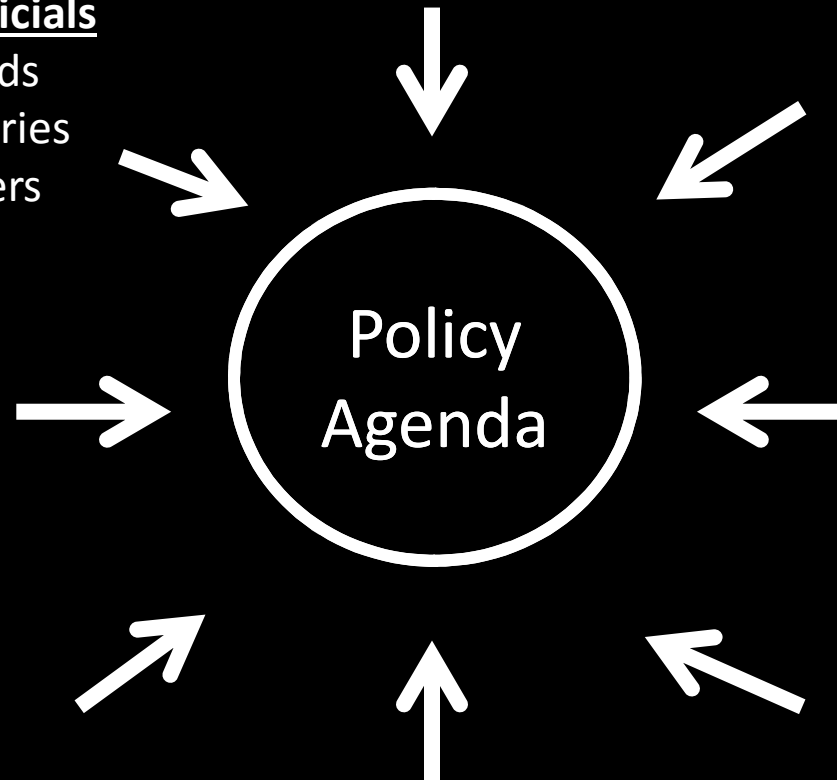
Think tanks
Academics
Authors
Foundations
International

Intelligence

DNI
DCI/CIA
USDI
NSA, NRO, NGA, DIA
Service centers

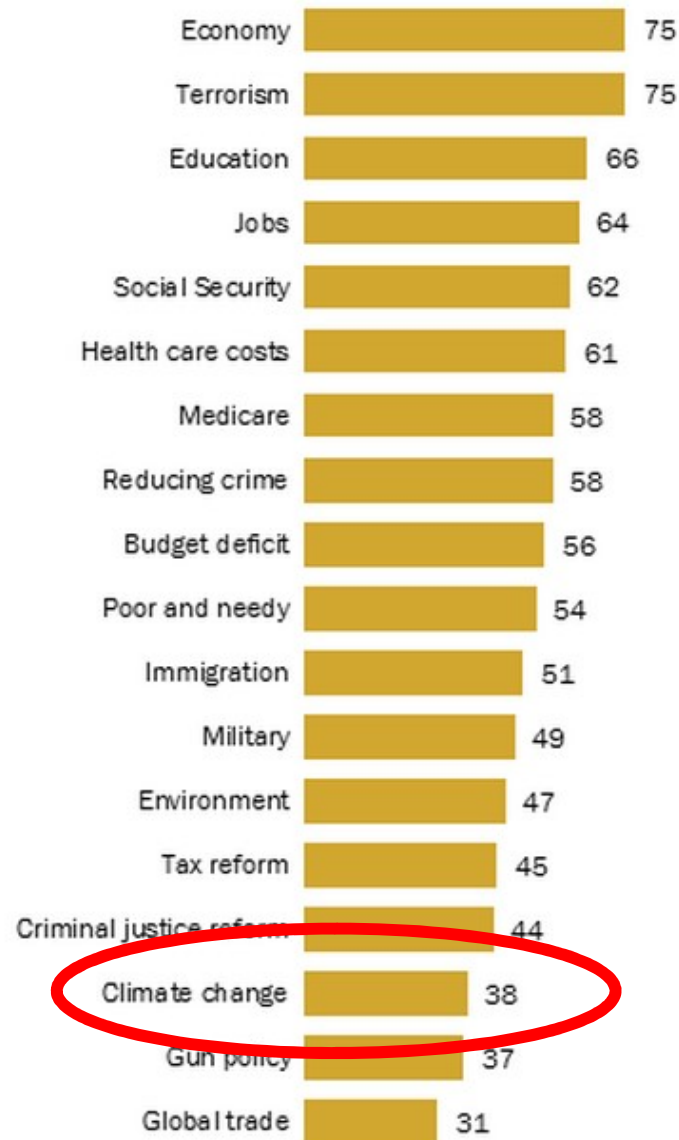
Personal

Family & intimates
Church & clubs
Others



The public's policy priorities for 2016

% rating each a top priority for Obama and Congress



Source: Survey conducted Jan. 7-14, 2016.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

What's driving public opinion on climate change?

- Extreme weather events?
- Public access to scientific information?
- Media coverage?
- Advocacy efforts?
- Influence of political leaders?

Climatic Change
DOI 10.1007/s10584-012-0403-y

Shifting public opinion on climate change: an empirical assessment of factors influencing concern over climate change in the U.S., 2002–2010

Robert J. Brulle • Jason Carmichael • J. Craig Jenkins

Received: 22 September 2011 / Accepted: 13 January 2012
© Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2012

Abstract This paper conducts an empirical analysis of the factors affecting U.S. public concern about the threat of climate change between January 2002 and December 2010. Utilizing Stimson's method of constructing aggregate opinion measures, data from 74 separate surveys over a 9-year period are used to construct quarterly measures of public concern over global climate change. We examine five factors that should account for changes in levels of concern: 1) extreme weather events, 2) public access to accurate scientific information, 3) media coverage, 4) elite cues, and 5) movement/countermovement advocacy. A time-series analysis indicates that elite cues and structural economic factors have the largest effect on the level of public concern about climate change. While media coverage exerts an important influence, this coverage is itself largely a function of elite cues and economic factors. Weather extremes have no effect on aggregate public opinion. Promulgation of scientific information to the public on climate change has a minimal effect. The implication would seem to be that information-based science advocacy has had only a minor effect on public concern, while political mobilization by elites and advocacy groups is critical in influencing climate change concern.

One of the earliest U.S. public opinion polls on global climate change was taken in July 1986, when the Cambridge Reports National Omnibus Survey asked individuals if they

Electronic supplementary material The online version of this article (doi:10.1007/s10584-012-0403-y) contains supplementary material, which is available to authorized users.

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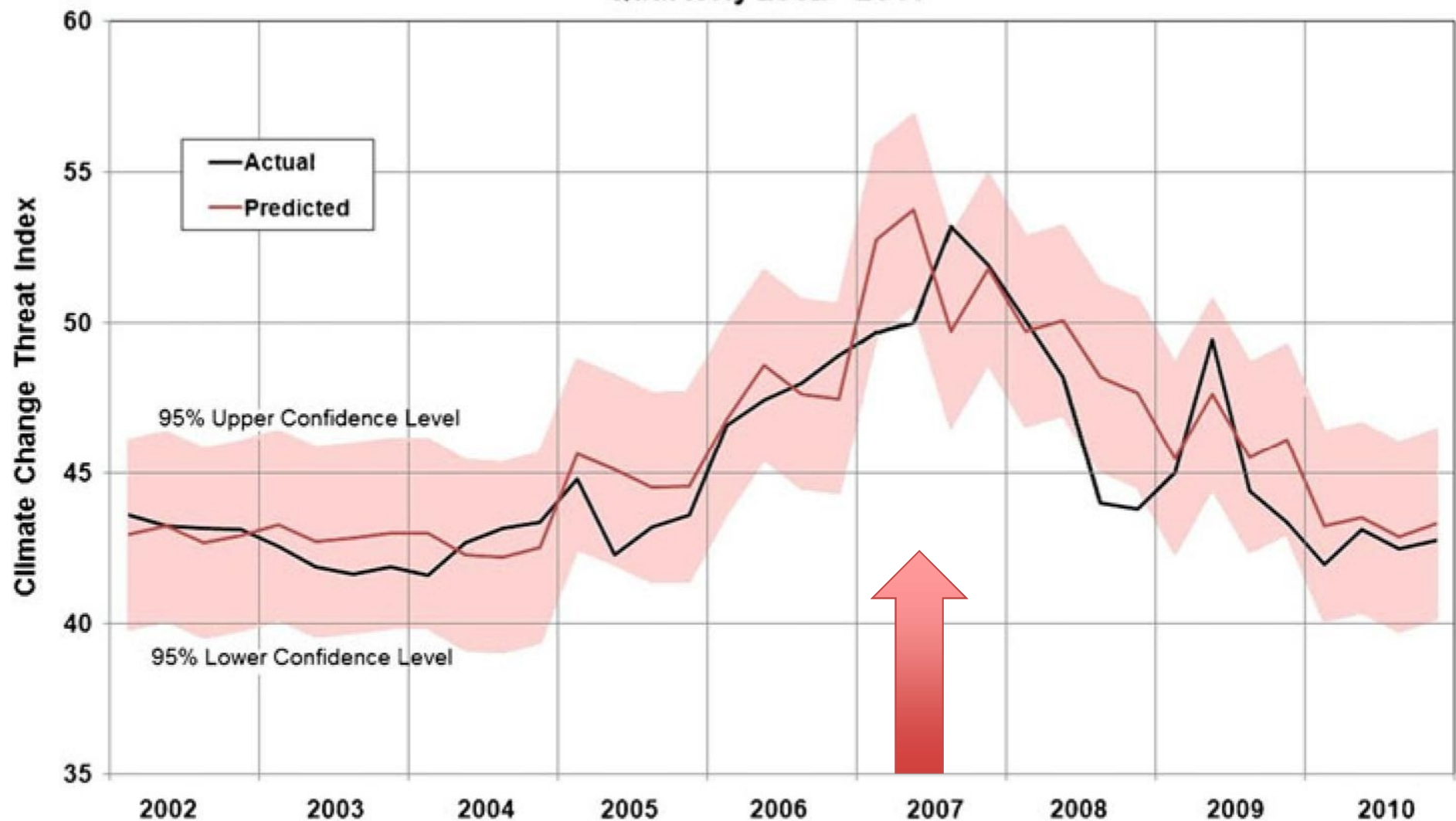
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Climate Change Threat Index (CCTI): A compilation of 74 surveys consisting of 84,000 responses between 2002 and 2010 that asked respondents to rate their concern about climate change

Factors	Measure
Extreme weather events	NOAA's Climate Extremes Index
Public access to scientific information	number of climate change papers published in Science, major climate assessments (2007 IPCC report), and articles in popular science magazines
Media coverage	simple count of stories appearing on broadcast evening news shows and in several leading periodicals
Advocacy efforts	"major environmental" and "conservative magazines"
Influence of political leaders	congressional press releases, hearings, and votes on bills related to climate change also number of times Al Gore's <i>An Inconvenient Truth</i> was mentioned in NYT

U.S. Climate Change Threat Index Quarterly 2002 - 2010



Brulle et al., Shifting public opinion on climate change: an empirical assessment of factors influencing concern over climate change in the US 2002 to 2010, Climatic Change, Feb 2012.pdf



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Adapted for **A NEW GENERATION**
from the *New York Times* Bestseller

an inconvenient truth

the crisis of
global warming

AL GORE



Public takes cues from:
1) Political elites
2) Media advocacy



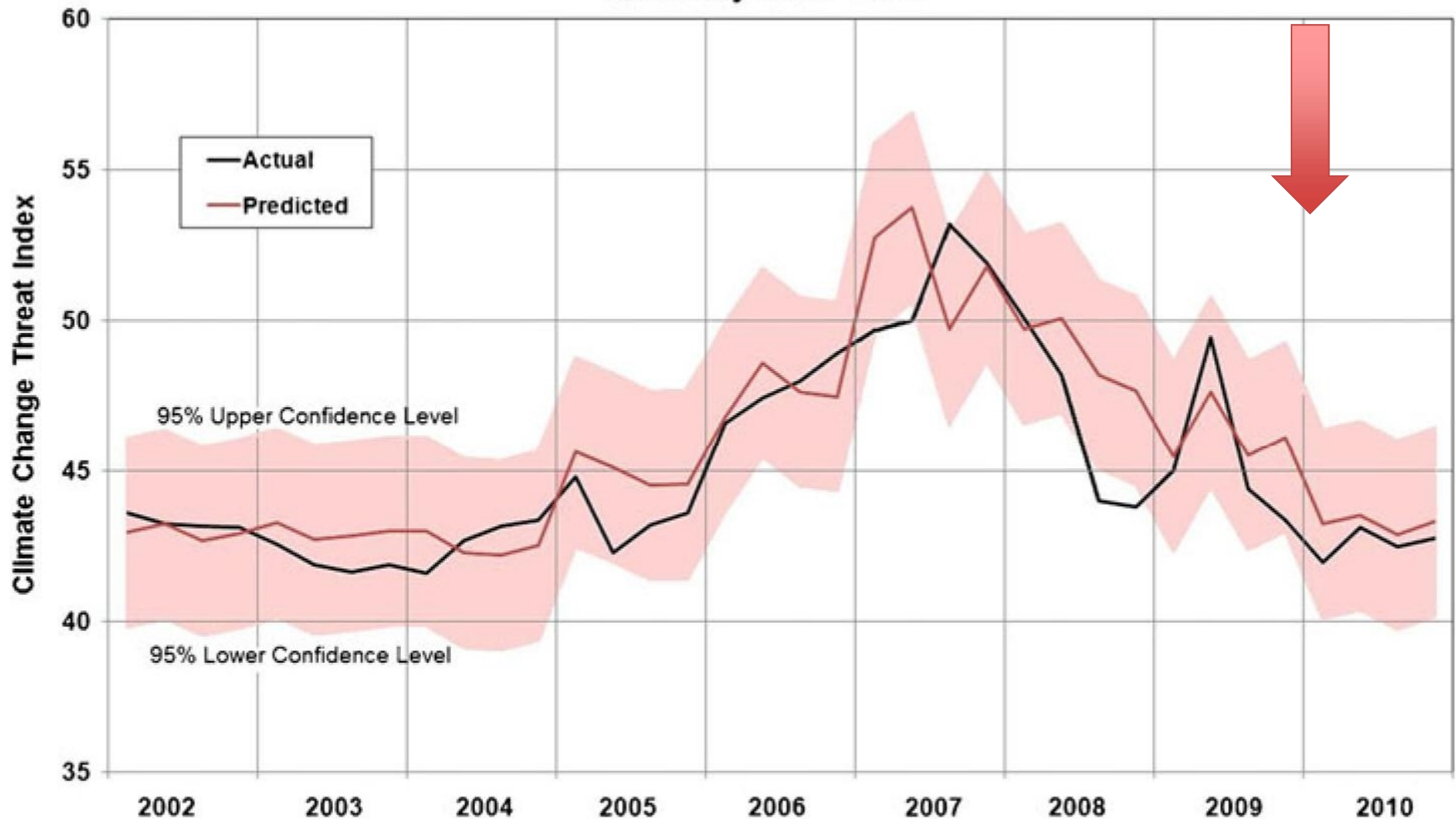
Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D) and Speaker Hastert (R), Washington, DC

It's American to disagree. It's also American to come together in the face of a challenge. And few challenges are as urgent as global climate change. Take one minute to join us at www.solveit.org and add your voice to millions of others. Together we can solve the climate crisis.

Join  today.

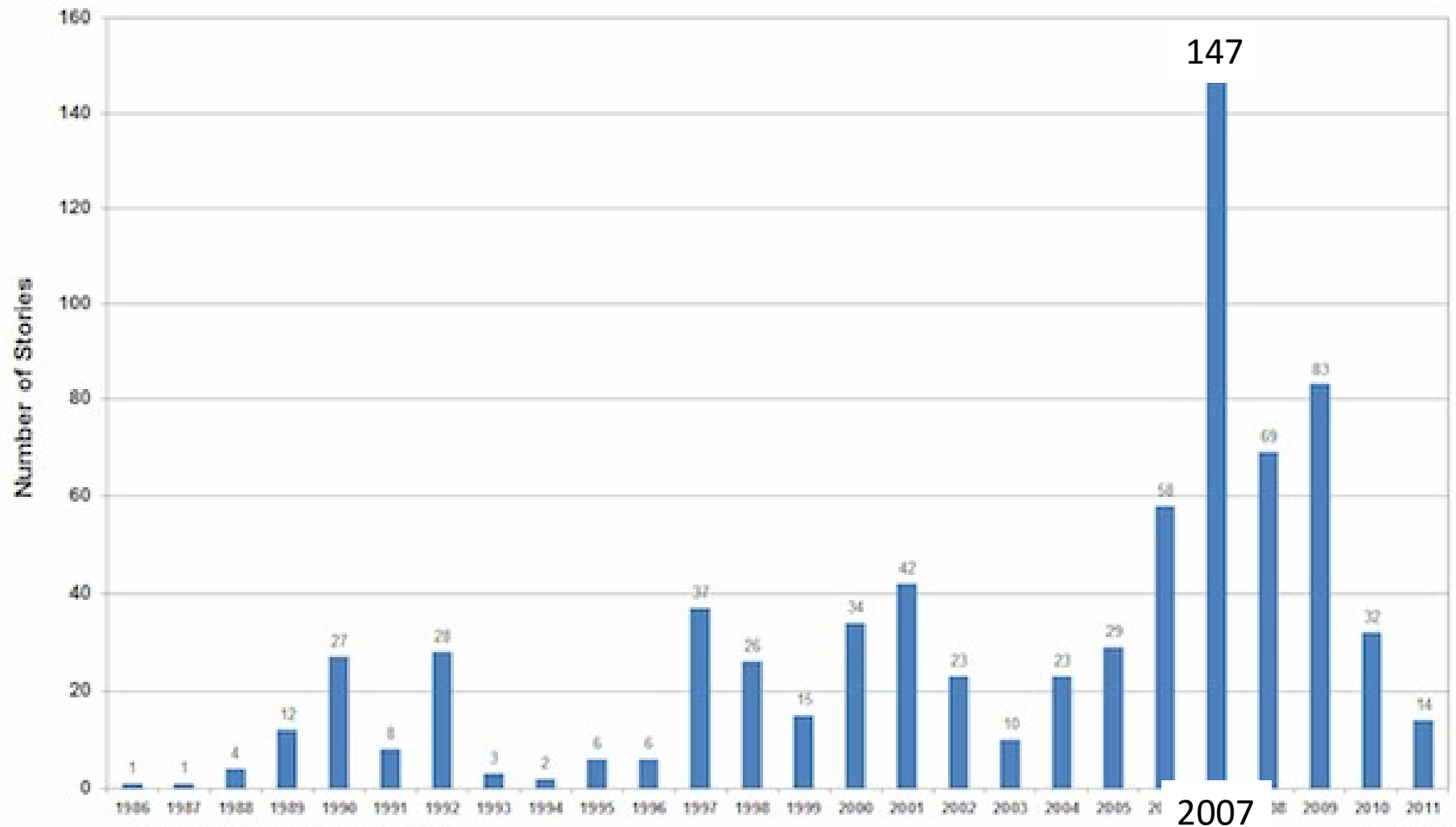
©2009 The Alliance for Climate Protection

U.S. Climate Change Threat Index Quarterly 2002 - 2010



Brulle et al., Shifting public opinion on climate change.an empirical assessment of factors influencing concern over climate change in the US 2002 to 2010, Climatic Change, Feb 2012.pdf

Nightly Broadcast News Coverage of Climate Change (NBC, CBS, and ABC)

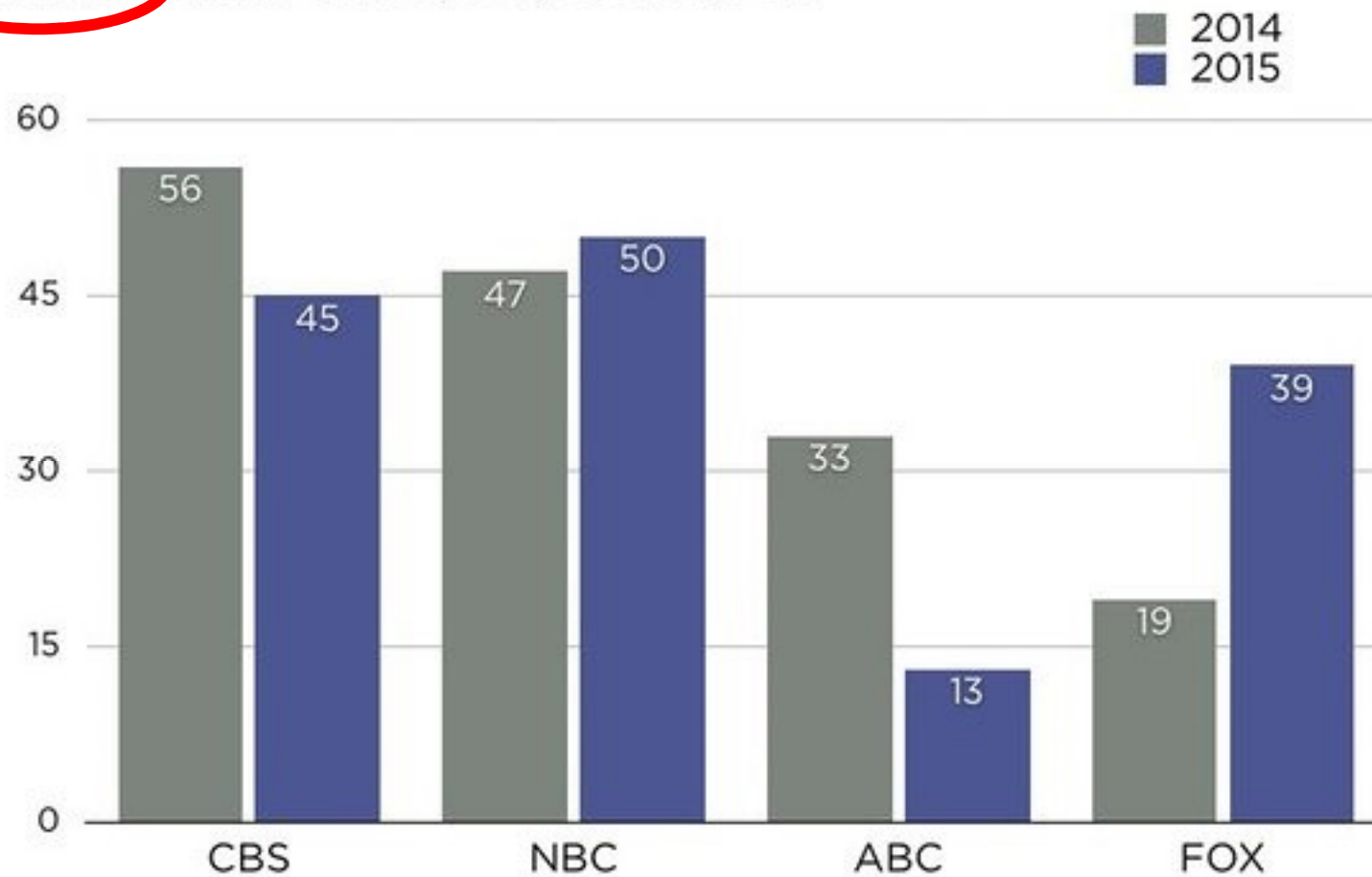


Based on a Vanderbilt Television Archive Search 1/20/12

R. J. Brule 1/20/12

Total Coverage Of Climate Change In 2014 And 2015

Minutes of *airtime on ABC, CBS, NBC, and FOX*



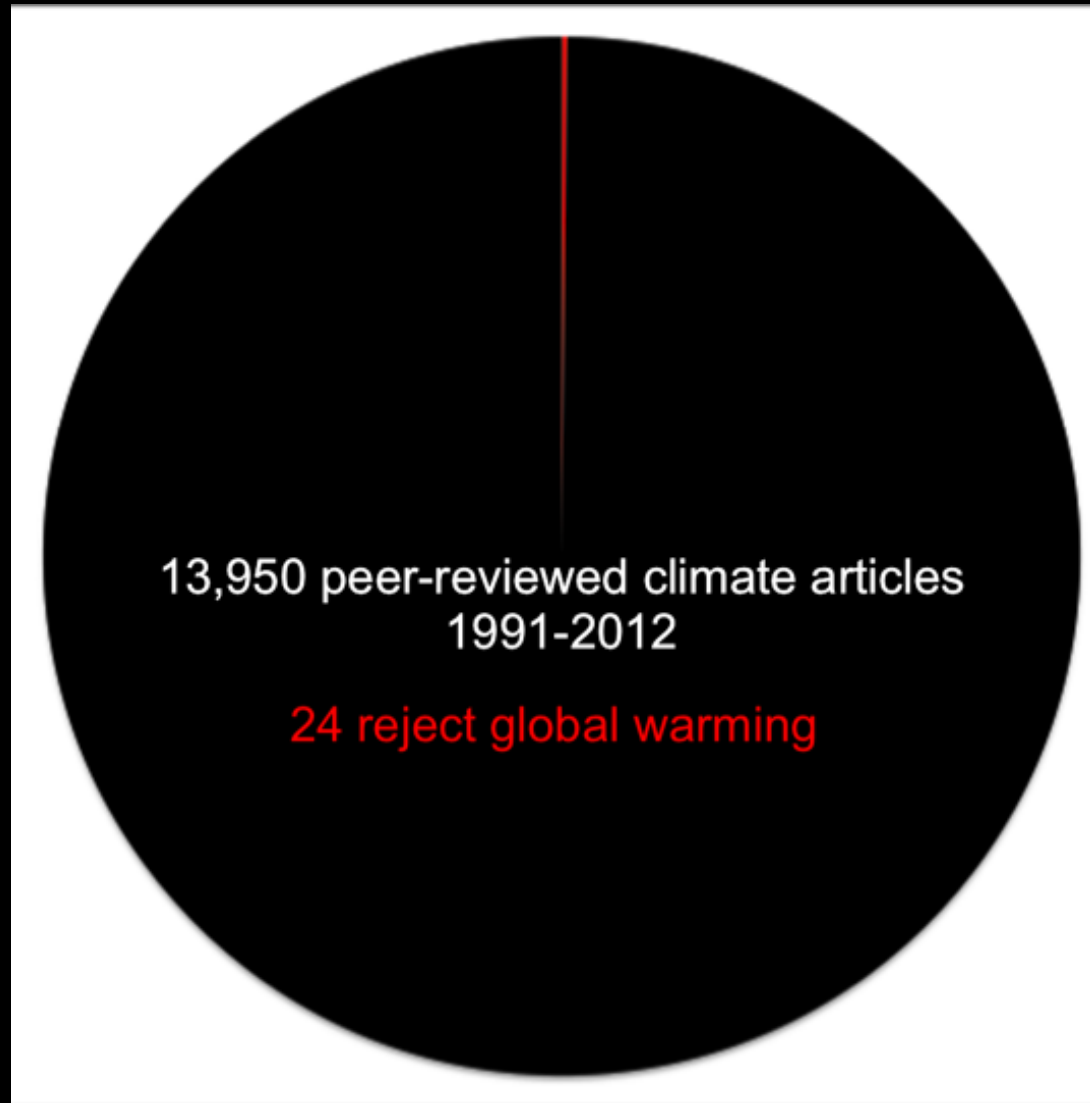
MEDIAMATTERS
FOR AMERICA



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False Balance





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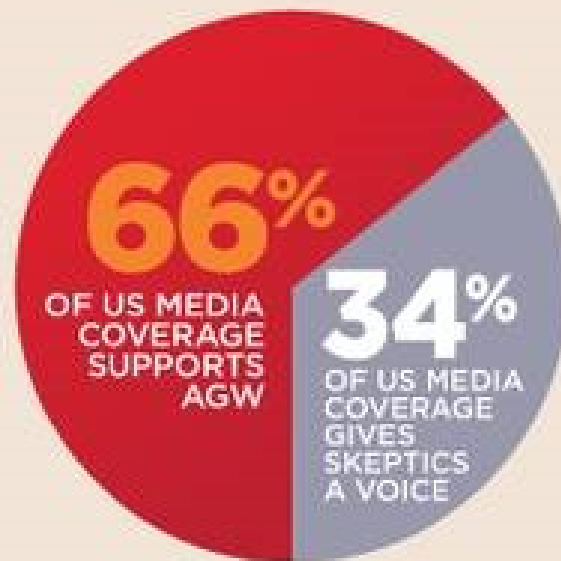
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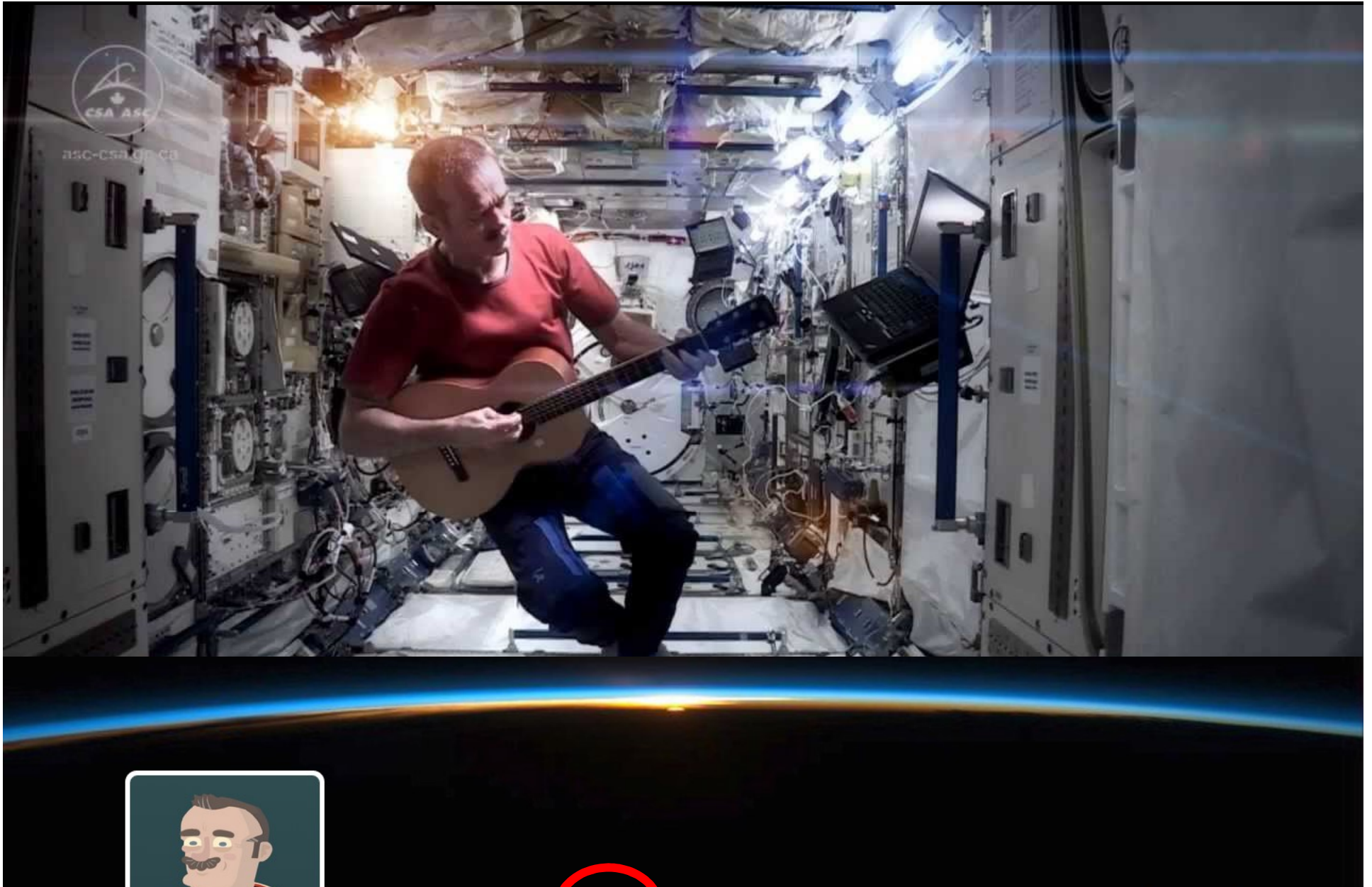
False Balance



THE MEDIA

gives the very small number of skeptics a disproportionate amount of media attention, considering the overwhelming scientific consensus agreeing with AGW.

[source info](#)



Chris Hadfield ✓
@Cmdr_Hadfield

TWEETS
9,002

FOLLOWING
80

FOLLOWERS
1.56M

LIKES
2,901



Following

Tweets

Tweets & replies

Photos & videos

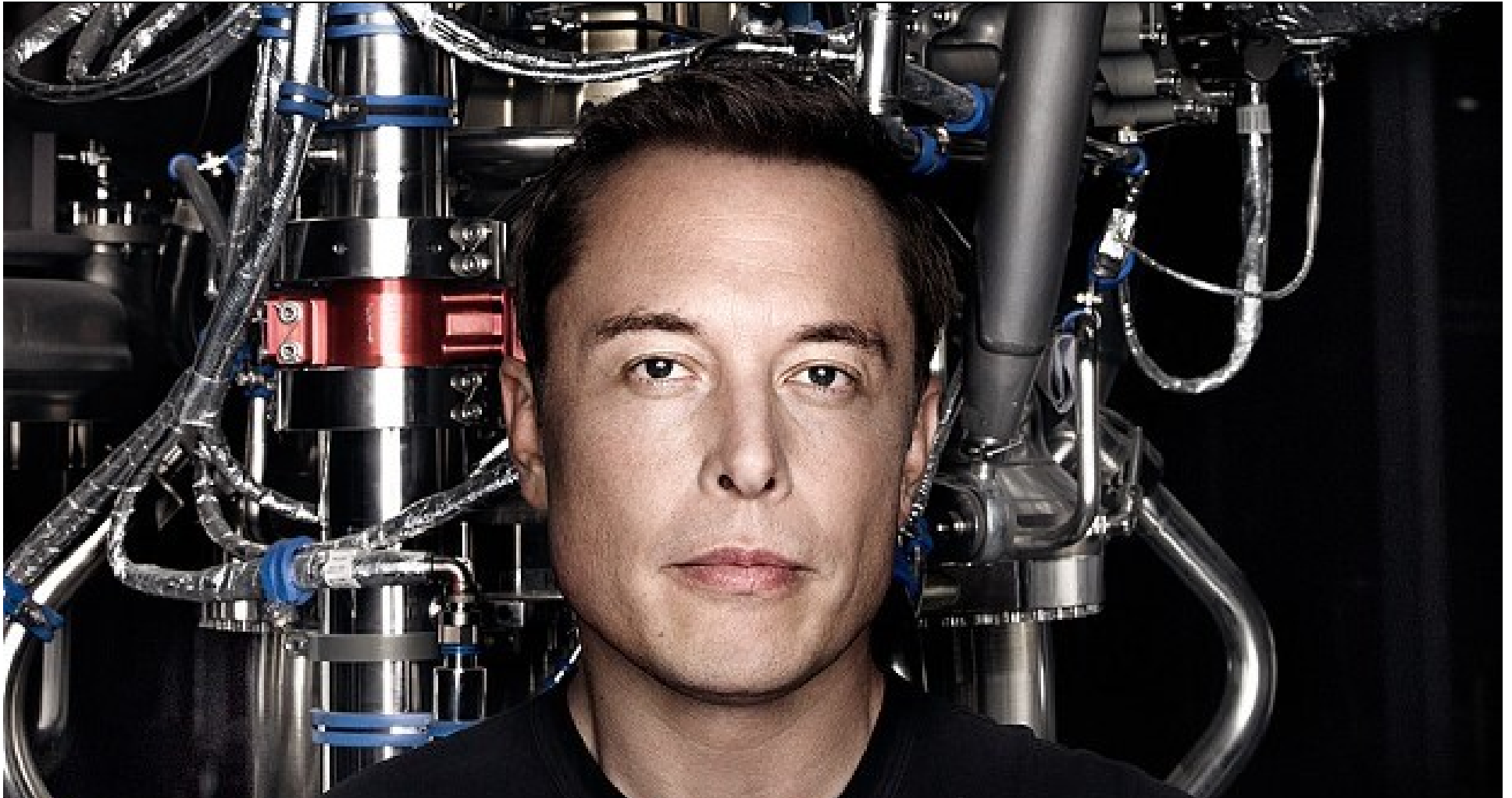


Chris Hadfield @Cmdr_Hadfield · 7h

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Donahue Lab @DonahueLab ×



Elon Musk ✓
@elonmusk

TWEETS
1,607

FOLLOWING
51

FOLLOWERS
3.54M

LIKES
239



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Photos & videos



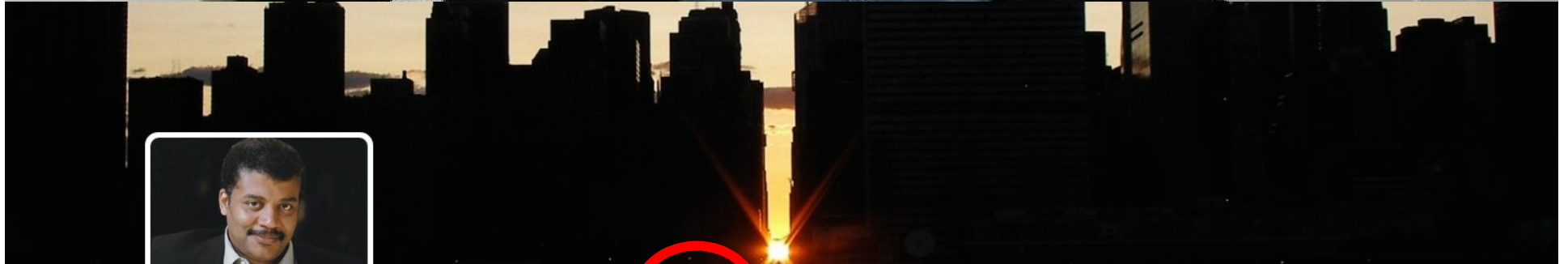
Elon Musk @elonmusk · 4h

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Donahue Lab @DonahueLab





Neil deGrasse Tyson ✓
@neiltyson

TWEETS	FOLLOWING	FOLLOWERS	LIKES	LISTS
4,860	47	5.03M	3	9

⚙️ **Following**

Tweets Tweets & replies Photos & videos

Who to follow · Refresh · View all

 **Neil deGrasse Tyson** @neiltyson · 15h

 **KINSEY SCHOFIELD** ✓ @k... ✕



Media Responsibility

- Put important issues on the agenda
- Invite scientists to speak on issues related to science
- Properly frame the opposing position

Thank you.

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