










The following pages document the discussion that I had on 14-15th of June 2018 with an Alex Berezow from the “American Council of Science and Health” (ACSH). The exchange did not only end up with Berezow contacting various journal editors (he did not reveal which ones), in order to defame me see <http://www.thomasbackhaus.eu/my-rampant-financial-conflicts-of-interest/>





It also sparked a long and broad discussion on twitter with quite a few people involved. I therefore can't really list all tweets that were going back and forth between various participants. It's practically impossible to put them into a chronological order and an appropriate context without generating an unmanageable long document. So here is just the main discussion between Berezow and myself. Of course, all tweets related to the subject are available on twitter itself.





For me, Berezow's strategy is clear. First an attempt to ridicule me by asserting that “I have fun scaring people about glyphosate”, with a cute little video attached to his tweet. As soon as I call him out, he fails to back-up his claim. Berezow then switches immediately to an almost classic intimidation tactic by going after my reputation. By accusing me to be paid off by... Yeah, well... I honestly still don't know by whom.





But, judge for yourself:














 <p>Alex Berezow ✓ @AlexBerezow 1d Replying to @ThoBaSwe @kevinfolta ... Ok, well, it's late here in Poland, too. Anyway, have fun scaring people about glyphosate!</p>  <p>GIF</p> <p>💬 ↺ ❤️ ⋮</p>	
 <p>Thomas Backhaus @ThoBaSwe 1d Replying to @AlexBerezow @kevinfolta... When did I do that? Or is that just a baseless ad hominem attack that you felt compelled to tweet because...?</p> <p>💬 ↺ ❤️ ⋮</p>	<p>I am sooo tired of the old trope that anybody who is not 100% pro-glyphosate is “scaring people”.</p> <p>But, I'm curious. So, I asked...</p>


 <p>Alex Berezow @AlexBerezow 1d Replying to @ThoBaSwe @kevinfolta ... Ummmm.... it's not an ad hominem attack to point out things you've actually done and said. So, let's get started! thomasbackhaus.eu/glyphosate-a-s...</p>	<p>Berezow links to one of my blogposts on glyphosate at http://www.thomasbackhaus.eu/glyphosate-a-stupid-comparison-of-toxicity-data/</p>																																				
 <p>Alex Berezow @AlexBerezow 1d Replying to @AlexBerezow @ThoBaSw... Here's more!</p> <div data-bbox="305 703 792 976"> <p>Backhaus</p> <p>Thomas Backhaus @ThoBaSwe · 25 Oct 2017 Sorry, but that is absolute bull. Check the safety classification of #glyphosate. Looks quite different to table salt, doesn't it?</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Safety Information</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Symbol</td> <td> GHS05, GHS09</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Signal word</td> <td>Danger</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hazard statements</td> <td>H318-H411</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Precautionary statements</td> <td>P273-P280-P305 + P351 + P338</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Personal Protective Equipment</td> <td>dust mask type N95 (US), Eyeshields, Gloves</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RIDADR</td> <td>UN 3077 9 / PGIII</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WGK Germany</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RTECS</td> <td>MC1075000</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Thomas Backhaus @ThoBaSwe German Environmental Minister railroaded by the Minister for Food & Agriculture, in order to switch the German vote on the #glyphosate re-authorization to a "yes"....</p> <p>ACZi6K</p> </div>	Safety Information		Symbol	 GHS05, GHS09	Signal word	Danger	Hazard statements	H318-H411	Precautionary statements	P273-P280-P305 + P351 + P338	Personal Protective Equipment	dust mask type N95 (US), Eyeshields, Gloves	RIDADR	UN 3077 9 / PGIII	WGK Germany	2	RTECS	MC1075000	<p>Berezow tweets the following two screenshots from two of my tweets from 2017:</p> <div data-bbox="831 661 1399 1018"> <p>Thomas Backhaus @ThoBaSwe</p> <p>Here is the #Glyphosate story in English, by @POLITICOEurope politi.co/2ACZi6K</p> <p>Thomas Backhaus @ThoBaSwe German Environmental Minister railroaded by the Minister for Food & Agriculture, in order to switch the German vote on the #glyphosate re-authorization to a "yes"....</p> </div> <p>And:</p> <div data-bbox="831 1081 1399 1501"> <p>Thomas Backhaus @ThoBaSwe · 25 Oct 2017 Sorry, but that is absolute bull. Check the safety classification of #glyphosate. Looks quite different to table salt, doesn't it?</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Safety Information</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Symbol</td> <td> GHS05, GHS09</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Signal word</td> <td>Danger</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hazard statements</td> <td>H318-H411</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Precautionary statements</td> <td>P273-P280-P305 + P351 + P338</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Personal Protective Equipment</td> <td>dust mask type N95 (US), Eyeshields, Gloves</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RIDADR</td> <td>UN 3077 9 / PGIII</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WGK Germany</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RTECS</td> <td>MC1075000</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div>	Safety Information		Symbol	 GHS05, GHS09	Signal word	Danger	Hazard statements	H318-H411	Precautionary statements	P273-P280-P305 + P351 + P338	Personal Protective Equipment	dust mask type N95 (US), Eyeshields, Gloves	RIDADR	UN 3077 9 / PGIII	WGK Germany	2	RTECS	MC1075000
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 <p>Thomas Backhaus @ThoBaSwe 1d Replying to @AlexBerezow @kevinfolta... Mhh... Any of that information factually wrong? I mean, those are official labels, used by the producers themselves. So, where did I try to scare people?</p>	<p>Simple question.</p> <p>But obviously too hard to answer, as can be seen in Berezow's reaction-</p>																																				

 <p>Alex Berezow ✓ @AlexBerezow 1d Replying to @ThoBaSwe @kevinfolta ... Here's a more interesting question: Why do your scientific publications fail to disclose the fact that you're an environmental consultant? fb-envico.com 💬 ↺ ❤️ ⋮</p>	<p>Here it begins. Berezow realizes that he can't support his statement that I'm running around and try to "scare people about glyphosate". Despite him checking my website and even going back more than half a year in my twitter timeline (!).</p> <p>So, in an almost classical move, he's switching to attacking my reputation.</p>
 <p>Thomas Backhaus @ThoBaSwe 1d Replying to @AlexBerezow @kevinfolta... Nice evasion. So, again: where did I try to scare people about #glyphosate? 💬 ↺ ❤️ ⋮</p>	<p>I am trying to call him out and get the discussion back to glyphosate.</p>
 <p>Alex Berezow ✓ @AlexBerezow Replying to @ThoBaSwe @kevinfolta @zaruk It's not an evasion. It's now an interrogation. And I'm going to follow-up with the journals to find out why your very obvious conflict of interest hasn't been disclosed. 12:22am · 14 Jun 2018 · Twitter Web Client</p>	<p>Didn't work. Obviously, Berezow has now appointed himself as my prosecutor.</p>
 <p>Thomas Backhaus @ThoBaSwe 1d Replying to @AlexBerezow @kevinfolta... Knock yourself out. But ok, so you can't back up your accusation that I "scare people about glyphosate". Noted. 💬 ↺ ❤️ ⋮</p>	<p>My conclusion regarding our glyphosate debate.</p>

 <p>Alex Berezow ✓ @AlexBerezow 1d Replying to @ThoBaSwe @kevinfolta ... Here's a more interesting question: Why do your scientific publications fail to disclose the fact that you're an environmental consultant? fb-envico.com</p> <p>💬 ↺ ❤️ ⋮</p>	<p>Berezow keeps on coming. Not about glyphosate, mind you.</p>
 <p>Alex Berezow ✓ @AlexBerezow 1d Replying to @AlexBerezow @ThoBaSw... This is interesting. You're an environmental consultant. But you don't mention this in any of the scientific articles that you write... even one that is explicitly about conflicts of interest. Now, that's interesting. ehp.niehs.nih.gov/EHP644/</p> <div data-bbox="310 974 808 1262"> <p>Welcome!</p> <p>Faust & Backhaus Environmental Consulting in Bremen, Germany, provides expert knowledge in chemical risk assessment. We provide consulting services to national and international authorities, universities, research institutes and private companies.</p> <p>Here you can get an overview of our services. However, we emphasise tailor-made consulting services. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us directly if you would like to get more detailed information about us, our services and how we may be able to assist.</p> <p>Who are we?</p> <div>  <p>Dr. Michael Faust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing partner Certified environmental management advisor (environmental legislation, economics and management) PhD in toxicology (hazard and risk assessment of chemical mixtures) Training as a molecular biologist and ecotoxicologist at Bremen University Author or co-author of more than 50 research publications </div> <p>Customers and Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment DG of the European Commission DG SANCO of the European Commission EU Commission, DG Research (FP7) European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Federal Environmental Agency, Berlin Chemicals Inspectorate, Sundbyberg, Sweden Norwegian Environment Agency, Oslo, Norway Gab Foundation Centre for Environmental Research, Leipzig/Halle, Germany Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, UK Brunel University, UK Wissenschaftszentrum des Deutschen Bundestages </div>	<p>One has to give it to him, he is certainly persistent...</p>
 <p>Thomas Backhaus @ThoBaSwe 1d Replying to @AlexBerezow @kevinfolta... Again, not true. Here's my latest CoI declaration, if you're interested peerj.com/manuscripts/28375/</p> <p>💬 ↺ ❤️ ⋮</p>	<p>I link to a recent letter to an editor, which is currently online as a preprint (https://peerj.com/manuscripts/28375/) And, given that the topic indeed is partly also about undisclosed conflicts of interest, I have of course provided an extensive declaration of interest https://peerj.com/manuscripts/28375/files/537119/download/?rid=55926 . As have all my co-authors.</p>

 <p>Alex Berezow @AlexBerezow 1d Replying to @ThoBaSwe @kevinfolta ... You've been a consultant since at least 2014. Yet, your conflict of interest isn't mentioned here: ehp.niehs.nih.gov/EHP644/</p> <p>Or here: sciencedirect.com/science/articl...</p>	<p>Berezow links to the two following papers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/ehp644/ which is on the risk assessment of food contact materials 2) https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0160412015000288 on planetary boundaries for chemical pollution. <p>Two quick comments: I have never been doing any consultancy work that was related to food contact materials, not even for a governmental authority. And how writing a review on the topic of planetary boundaries should relate to financial conflicts of interest of any sort is completely beyond me.</p>
 <p>Thomas Backhaus @ThoBaSwe 1d Replying to @AlexBerezow @kevinfolta... What kind of conflict of interest am I supposed to have there? Certainly not a financial one... So?</p>	<p>So I thought I'd ask...</p>
 <p>Alex Berezow @AlexBerezow 1d Replying to @ThoBaSwe @kevinfolta ... Oh..... so, you do your environmental consulting for free?</p>	<p>Ok, so Berezow is insisting that it is a financial conflict of interest...</p>
 <p>Thomas Backhaus @ThoBaSwe 1d Replying to @AlexBerezow @kevinfolta... I won't honor that with an answer. But where's the "conflict"?</p>	<p>I still don't get it, so I keep on asking...</p>

 <p>Alex Berezow  @AlexBerezow 21m Replying to @ThoBaSwe @ksenapathy ... You have an undisclosed financial conflict of interest. That's a big problem. And two of the editors I've contacted told me they're investigating the matter. That's not intimidation; that's holding a scientist accountable for conflicts of interest.</p>	<p>But (not surprising anymore), Berezow doesn't actually have an answer for me.</p> <p>Instead he repeats a baseless accusation and tries to hammer it home as a fact. For the audience, I guess.</p>
 <p>Thomas Backhaus @ThoBaS... 17m Replying to @AlexBerezow @ksenapat... No I don't and hence it isn't. You simply try to defame people that you don't agree with.</p> <p>I've already asked you yesterday, and you couldn't even explain what you actually mean. If you'd really be interested in facts, you'd have continued the conversation directly with me.</p> <p>   </p>	
 <p>Alex Berezow  @AlexBerezow 21m Replying to @ThoBaSwe Keep tweeting. I'm screencapping. Two of the editors I spoke with are investigating your financial conflict of interest. This won't help your case.</p> <p>   </p>	<p>Intimidation tactics 1-0-1</p>

 <p>Thomas Backhaus @ThoBaS... 15m Replying to @AlexBerezow Sorry, intimidation tactics won't work. Call me out on facts, and I'm happy to discuss and perhaps revise my standpoint. But bullying...? Not so much.</p> <p>But sure, and editor worth his/her salt will investigate. That's their job.</p>	<p>Typo. Should be "...<i>any</i> editor worth his/her salt".</p>
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