



Introducing the Center for Ineffective Philanthropy

by Phil Anthrop

What is the secret to undermining institutional philanthropy?
Phil Anthrop's SEVEN POINTS to effectively render foundations
ineffective are a tour de force of cunning, collusion, and commitment
to bringing the enemy down by whatever means necessary.

CONFIDENTIAL
TO: George Soros

I'M NOT REALLY SURE WHY I'M WRITING THIS to you, but after all the anguish and pain I've been through I knew I had to tell someone, and as weird as it must seem to you, you may be the only person on earth who would understand this.

So, where this all started: a quite odd interview in New York, which at first seemed absurd on the face of it.

I was discreetly vetted and then invited to an extraordinarily private meeting to create what was made crystal clear to be an absolutely confidential campaign to undermine institutional philanthropy. This was not a hard sell for me, since the cause was compelling and I knew it to be urgent: America's foundations were a clear and present danger to democracy, personal liberty, the sanctity of marriage, and the free market economy. Foundations had to be stopped by whatever means necessary. (I know that probably sounds weird to you since you seem to devote your fortune to just these pursuits, but please read on.) Anyway, the only real question we had was the choice of weapons.

That first intensive meeting of eleven

patriots at the Amelia Island Ritz Carlton was memorable for its laser focus on the foundation crisis and excellent service by the concierge and her staff. (The filet Provençal was sublime, by the way.) We had more ideas than we knew what to do with; that wasn't the problem. The problem was how to take on an enemy—these xxx foundations with \$xx billion in wasted assets—that used every guile

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and artifice to worm its way into the collective consciousness of a sadly dupable American public, even to the very children and grandchildren of The Eleven (we now called ourselves The Eleven). And it was perfectly obvious that, like the jiu-jitsu principle of using force against force, we had to use our enemy's tactics

of stealth and manipulation against them, and that would take money—big money, and lots of it.

We weren't born yesterday. We knew where the money was: Texas billionaire and top GOP moneyman Harold "Swift Boat" Simmons; the billionaire Koch brothers; casino magnate Sheldon Adelson. You know the type. But we knew these weren't mere true believers who would contribute money because they believed in the cause. Hell, anyone can believe in the cause and be perfectly sincere and absolutely ineffective—that was the point. These giants think like generals, not patrons. They are data people at heart, who have to be shown deliverable, quantifiable, tell-me-how-my-money-will-tip-the-balance outcomes.

We needed a plot, not a plan.

I won't go into all the ways we figured out the SEVEN POINTS—what it would take to undermine all the supposed good works by these self-important foundation hacks—but by the time we did, there was not a dry eye among The Eleven. It

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is one thing to identify a problem, and it is quite another to home in on the exact method that will crush, despoil, flat-out ruin your adversaries, their houses, and their issues.

We wrote it down. That part may have taken an hour or so, but that hour could never have happened without the Seattle, Palm Springs, and Stamford huddles. By this time we Eleven had a perfect level of trust and a keen understanding of what we were up against and how to bring it down.

SEVEN POINTS

1. Induce Foundations To Constantly Alter Plans, Objectives, Focus, Methods.
2. Restrict Funding To Small Increments Of Time.
3. Focus Attention On Internal Meetings, Document Preparation, Obsessive Board Meeting Rehearsals, Cautious Public Communications.
4. Create Officious Online Application Processes With Oblique And Nonsensical Criteria; Restrict Public Interactions.
5. Adopt Progressively Narrower Interests.
6. Expend Increasing Resources On Consultants, Executive Compensation, And Self-Promotion.
7. Chase Sunshine, Rainbows, And Lollipops.

A prescription for disaster, we thought. Make every foundation head a Manchurian Candidate, undercutting and demoralizing each potential partner in every interaction, wearing them out and dragging them down so that every foundation initiative actually sets their issue back further than when they started. And at the same time create a self-reinforcing bureaucracy that firmly believes in its

own effectiveness, either closing off meaningful feedback or channeling it in such a way that all of its actions can only be interpreted as raising important issues, showing promising results, and breaking new ground.

This comfortable cloister—which we Eleven jokingly refer to as “The Center for Ineffective Philanthropy”—would be surrounded by awards and recognition, supported by earnest affinities and calls to action, and fed with thank-you letters and requests for advice. With the right level of resources, the SEVEN POINTS would keep these foundations in neutral forever.

It took eight months, but we finally got “Swift Boat” Simmons, the Koch brothers, Sheldon Adelson, and four others into the same suite at the Venetian Resort Hotel Casino to lay out the SEVEN POINTS—and to request 120 Really Big Ones.

You can imagine my shock when Charles G. Koch laughed, and said, “Oh good grief, Phil, we funded that project thirty years ago—works like a charm to this day!”

So now, after all that pointless scheming, I can see how effectively foundations were made ineffective years ago. Except you, George. You really are a contrarian in a field that reprograms contrarians. I guess that’s what I admire about you. That, and your enormous wealth. And, I suppose, your willingness to look at the attached, very different proposal. . . .

*Warm regards,
Phil Anthrop*

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