

INTERVIEW ELLIS MEDAVOY

"We had to discredit Peter Duesberg"

By Jon Rappoport

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In 1987, I became re-acquainted with a man who calls himself Ellis Medavoy. He has since retired from his contract work as a propaganda consultant.

Medavoy supplied me with several contact numbers and a small pile of documents. Using these, I convinced myself that he was entirely legitimate. That he in fact was working on AIDS, and in a very curious way.

His job was to influence the press in the direction of completely accepting mainstream research on the subject of HIV. By 1987, this was not what you would call hard work. But he had been at it since 1982---when all sorts of theories about AIDS abounded in the press and in the specialized medical literature.

Medavoy had been retained by "individuals who were part of the Council on Foreign Relations and the British Roundtable but were not acting as official representatives of those groups."

In 1983, a year before HIV (aka HTLV-III) was announced to the world as the official cause of AIDS, Medavoy knew that Robert Gallo would be the messenger for "some kind of retrovirus that would be said to be the driving force behind a global plague."

Medavoy had several tasks before him. The first one was to soften up reporters so they would be receptive to the idea that a virus was the cause of AIDS. Essentially, Medavoy had access to certain key sources that these reporters often used for medical stories.

His job was to convince these sources that "the inside word was" a retrovirus. A retrovirus was causing AIDS. Then these sources would pass that word along to

reporters.

Medavoy, of course, already knew these reporters' "reliable sources." He had been cultivating them for years, in a variety of contexts. They trusted him.

And why not? He seemed to be right on the money time and time again. What he told these sources would happen did happen. And when the sources passed down Medavoy's advance wisdom to their reporter friends, the reporters were all too happy to get this prized info.

That was how Medavoy worked. He was not alone, of course. There were others like him, and others working on the AIDS issue. Medavoy's bosses considered AIDS a very big deal. It had to be positioned correctly. It had to be thought of in a certain way, so that it could be used as a smokescreen, a lie, to conceal the depopulation agenda that had been underway for a long time in Africa, Latin America, and Asia.

"When I got this assignment," Medavoy told me, "I knew I was in some very important territory. The world was going to be told a lie, and they were supposed to believe that lie. Civilians, doctors, researchers, politicians---they all had to swallow the propaganda."

And what was the central piece of propaganda?

That HIV was the cause of AIDS.

Medavoy continued, "There were things that the public had to be shielded from, too. Under no circumstances could they get the notion that AIDS was really many different conditions. That was a supreme no-no. The medical journals, as well, had to refrain from picking up that tune. AIDS had to be thought of as ONE disease condition---the destruction of the immune system---which was happening solely because a germ, HIV, was attacking cells of the immune system."

Medavoy understood all of this at least a year before Robert Gallo would tell the world on television that HIV (HTLV-III) was the cause of AIDS.

So Medavoy began to plant the seed.

He began to meet with people (some of them doctors and researchers), and he told them that they could count on the fact that a virus would be found, a virus which was causing AIDS. He told them he had the word from deep inside the major research

institutes around the world that were working on the problem. He told them they would be "in no trouble" if they started telling reporters who relied on them that it would be a virus---and a particular kind of virus, a retrovirus.

Medavoy told these people---who were in turn reliable sources for reporters---that Robert Gallo was surely the man who would win the race to find the cause of AIDS. Gallo was the one to keep their eyes on.

Medavoy told me, "Gallo himself was not in on this gigantic hoax. He would steal the germ from Montagnier and call it his own, but that was just theft. Gallo was just a pawn. He was a man who wanted desperately to find a retrovirus as the cause of AIDS, just as he had been a man who desperately wanted to find a retrovirus as the cause of cancer. He had learned this new field of exploration---retroviruses---and it was his only real ticket to fame. He was riding that pony for all it was worth, and the federal money, such as it was in those days, was mainly coming to him and his colleagues at the National Cancer Institute."

Gallo had been selected to be the "HIV messenger" because it was clear he would do whatever it took to finally say, "I found it!" Even if he had not found it. Even if the evidence was missing. (As I've written before---and you should keyword-search my archive for many past articles on AIDS and HIV---at the time, in the spring of 1984, when Gallo told the world he had found the cause of AIDS, he had not published a single paper that even purported to seriously prove that HIV was the cause of AIDS.)

Gallo wouldn't disappoint the planners of this scam. He would deliver the goods. And he did.

And then Medavoy was riding high. All his predictions had come true. What he told these "reliable sources," who in turn passed that information along to reporters, had been exact. AIDS was announced to be a condition caused by a single retrovirus.

Job of lying well done.

Lie accepted.

Universally.

Well, almost.

There were a few disgruntled scientists who fully realized that Gallo had never offered

proof that HIV caused AIDS, but they were keeping their mouths shut. They could see the weather shift overnight in the spring of 1984. There was no more federal money for looking into the cause of AIDS, or for confirming or disproving Gallo. It had evaporated in hours. Suddenly, all federal funds were earmarked for discovering HOW HIV caused AIDS, what it actually did inside the body.

I once asked Medavoy, "Did you yourself know what AIDS really was?"

He laughed. "Of course I did. I had to know. I needed that information so I could develop the necessary propaganda to counter it."

"And what was your understanding of what AIDS is?"

"You should know," he said. "You've been writing about it."

Here is what he meant, and what I confirmed with him point by point: AIDS is a label given to a whole variety of disease conditions THAT ARE CAUSED BY DIFFERENT THINGS. Not HIV. Not HIV in any way, direct or indirect. What is called AIDS is immune suppression. This immune suppression can result from different causes in different groups and, ultimately, in different individuals. Some of the many causes? Contaminated heroin, medical drugs (such as corticosteroids), starvation, contaminated water supplies, toxic pesticides, intestinal parasites grossly overtreated with massive doses of antibiotics, syphilis, massive drug taking, say, in the form of MDA -- combined with months of bathhouse sex with many partners, vaccines given to people whose immune systems are already dangerously compromised. There are other causes.

Medavoy's propaganda work was aimed, in particular, at masking the continuing causes of death on the African continent--starvation, contaminated water supplies, theft of agricultural lands, and so on. Gradually, these obvious factors would be replaced in the public consciousness with a new buzz-term, HIV. As the real causes of death were allowed to flourish, depopulation would begin to overtake the population growth.

Medavoy worked on the entirely bogus green-monkey theory of AIDS.

"The green monkey," Medavoy told me, "was a myth invented to attribute the origin of HIV to Africa. It was understood that if HIV could be said to have come from Africa, then people would believe the outrageous estimates and projections for future AIDS deaths IN Africa. You know, darkest Africa, where strange and bad things lurk. We played that nonsense like a harp. The green monkey never even carried HIV---of

course who cares because HIV causes nothing anyway. But the whole deal about those monkeys was really about lab monkeys in Boston who were found to have a virus 'similar' to HIV---and lab contamination was where that 'similar' virus actually came from. We knew way ahead of time---as we propounded the early green-monkey story---that it was monkeys in labs we were really talking about. We were talking about stupid and careless research in labs, and we were transferring that whole business into a ridiculous myth about Africa. The story was about as real as the moon being made of cheese."

In the spring of 1987, propaganda consultant Ellis Medavoy became aware that his objectives were being threatened by a University of Berkeley virologist named Peter Duesberg.

Duesberg had just published a long paper in the journal Cancer Research. That paper made a case against HIV as the cause of AIDS.

Duesberg was far from being a nobody. He was a star in his field. He had grant monies to do research. He had a lab at Berkeley and graduate students lining up to be part of his team. Duesberg was, in addition, a recognized expert in the emerging field of retroviruses.

He was, in his own way, the equal, in terms of prestige, of Robert Gallo. In fact, Duesberg had worked with Gallo and Montagnier and others in the doomed Viral Cancer Project, an effort to show that cancers were caused by retroviruses.

Duesberg had bailed out of that project. "I could see that we weren't getting anywhere," he told me. "These viruses were interesting, but I discovered that they weren't very important as far as cancer research was concerned. But Gallo and others stayed on. They had their reasons. I was glad to leave. Disappointed, to a degree, but satisfied. I had seen what there was to see."

Medavoy told me, "Duesberg was a wild card. We knew we could come across one, and he was it. He saw through the propaganda we were spreading in the guise of science. He attacked HIV from a researcher's point of view and he said all the right things. That is, he didn't know there was an intense propaganda campaign coordinated at high levels to 'protect' HIV as the cause of AIDS. But he knew the science. He knew the difference between real research and badly done or fake research. And HIV was, make no mistake about it, a fake from day one."

In his Cancer Research paper, Duesberg had said several things. Among the most important was, HIV was, at best, infecting only a tiny percentage of (immune-system)

T-cells. This made no sense. If HIV was killing immune systems, it had to be doing much more than that.

Duesberg also began to comment on the wild contradiction implicit in HIV testing. He noticed that the blood test was looking for antibodies which had formed as part of the body's defense against HIV. The presence of such antibodies was taken as a sign that a person was going to develop full-blown AIDS and die. But, on the other hand, a vaccine against AIDS would produce the exact same antibodies, in which case people would be said to be immune from AIDS.

Medavoy told me, "Duesberg got that one right too. He saw that the HIV test was completely insane. He was telling the research community they had been roped in by a bunch of fakers---and so we had to do some heavy damage control."

Duesberg was not the only problem. At Berkeley, a few other people were waking up. Harry Rubin, one of the grand old men of virology, was willing to go public and say he thought HIV research needed a "second opinion." Richard Strohman, a cell biologist at the school, was also dissatisfied with the glib crowning of Gallo as the discoverer of the cause of AIDS. And then, there was a maverick professor of law at Berkeley, Phillip Johnson, who was more than willing to join in the fray. He not only agreed with Duesberg, he was able to organize the arguments against HIV in a more structured way than Duesberg, in speaking forums, usually bothered to. (Eventually, this burgeoning little group would expand to include more than 300 scientists and journalists who signed on to a short letter asserting that HIV science was deficient and needed a complete review by impartial people. One signer was Kary Mullis, a Nobel laureate who had discovered the PCR test for DNA. Mullis was like the grim reaper when it came to HIV. He was willing to take on anyone anywhere.)

But in 1987, it was mainly Duesberg who was carrying the banner against false science. Duesberg's principal ally at the time was Harvey Bialy, the research editor of Bio/Technology, a sister publication of Nature, the revered medical journal. Bialy was completely disgusted with the rush to judgement that had accompanied Gallo's unsubstantiated claims for HIV as the cause of AIDS.

Bialy was definitely not a man to tangle with in print. He was quite willing to do the one thing most career-minded researchers were loathe to engage in. Bialy would read a key paper on the subject of HIV all the way through and in detail, and then blast the arguments to smithereens. Point by point. Like Duesberg, he read the fine print and the methods sections, and he was brutal in his criticism. Bialy saw that, in a field (virology) that once rippled with extensive debate, AIDS was taking over as mush-science. Press-conference science. Bubble-head science. Science on behalf of gaining

money grants to spout the favored line.

In 1987, Ellis Medavoy, whose job it was to protect HIV against all detractors, told me he was getting fed up with his own profession. He wanted out. He was ready to end his long career as one of the bad guys---mostly because he saw where things were headed--into a vast depopulation effort that would take decades and decades. This was a bit more than he had bargained for. Medavoy was somewhat unstable, you could say. Depending on what day you talked with him, he could be ready to throw in the towel---or he might display a completely arrogant attitude toward the rest of the human race. At any rate, before he did actually drop out and quit, he began to tell me about what he was doing---and in some cases, how he was doing it.

Ellis Medavoy and his colleagues had, besides Peter Duesberg, another problem on their hands. Through the efforts of certain "subversive reporters"---and guess who was in that crowd?---connections were being forged with the alternative health community. Some of these activists had never been much for blaming human disease on germs, and the revelations about fake HIV science were quite exciting to them. Furthermore, there were people who had been diagnosed as HIV positive or "full-blown AIDS" who were surviving quite well because they were taking care of their health. They were rejecting the whole HIV premise and they were exercising and changing their diets and not taking any more drugs and taking nutrients and so on. And staying away from AZT. These people were living testimonials to a sensational kind of healing---and if THAT got out far and wide, the whole sordid game could be blown off its hinges.

Medavoy said, "A lot of what we did at this point was stop things from getting into print. That's often more important than planting lies. As far as Duesberg was concerned, I can tell you there were many newspapers and magazines who were ready to give his views some space. You know, maverick scientist rejects HIV as cause of AIDS. So we began a coordinated effort to keep that from happening. We let the scientists at NIH [National Institutes of Health], who had the most to lose if Duesberg could establish a credible beachhead, handle the PR on rejecting Duesberg's science. They engaged in some character assassination as well, which was fine. We, on the other side, got 'reliable sources' to go to those newspapers and magazines and tell them that to print anything good about Duesberg was DANGEROUS and IRRESPONSIBLE. That was our tack. We had our people say that thousands of people could die if they stopped believing that HIV was the cause of AIDS. Promiscuous sex would become more rampant than ever, people would get infected, get sick, and spread the virus even further. We hammered on all this, and we cowed most of those media outlets. It worked, for the most part.

"As far as the very embarrassing and growing list of AIDS survivors was concerned---

the people who had rejected the idea of HIV and were rebuilding their health successfully without medical drugs---we tried to keep track of pending stories on these people, and we went to those media outlets and told them these people were 'vegetarian kooks' and 'anecdotal examples who had not been studied by real scientists' and 'publicity seekers' and so on. We said some of them had never really been HIV positive to begin with. It was like shooting pigeons. We did pretty well. Some stories did appear on these survivors, but the general tone was, 'so and so is a strange curiosity and scientists are studying why he has managed to live for so long without getting sick, and this may hold promise for future research.' You know, all that crap."

Here is another choice quote from Medavoy on the AIDS scam. He told me this in 1996:

"Some other operatives I was aware of played a role in getting mainstream researchers to lobby for, and win, a new standard for HIV illness, based purely on numbers of T-cells. [Note: this 'innovation' came later, long after 1987.] Tests would determine if a person was 'getting sick,' or if he was 'getting better' after taking his AZT---all measured by how many T-cells [part of the immune system defense] showed up on the tests. These operatives knew, and had been briefed on this, that T-cells could actually vary all over the place, up and down, depending on factors like the time of day a person was given the test. It was another area of shoddy science, and they took advantage of it. I'll give you an example. You've got some guy who has been told he's HIV positive, and so, even though he's not sick at all, he gets tested every few months for numbers of T-cells. Sooner or later, those numbers will go down on a test. If the doctor isn't really attentive, he'll tell the patient he is now officially diagnosed with full-blown AIDS, because those numbers are too low. If the patient hasn't been taking AZT yet, he will go for it now."

By the mid-1990s, Peter Duesberg no longer got grant money from the government. His major lab at Berkeley was gone. Graduate students were told they'd be risking their futures if they associated their names with him.

Years before, Robert Gallo had told me, "The thing about Peter is, he's different. He's very bright, and he goes his own way. Sometimes that way turns out to be unusual, strange. He can be difficult on purpose, you know. As if he's trying to adopt a position that challenges everybody else. He's a different kind of man."

Ironic, coming from the tyrannical and arbitrary Gallo, the man who had laid claim to the virus that doesn't cause anything.

Jon Rappoport has worked as a free-lance investigative reporter for 20 years. He has written articles on politics, health, media, culture and art for LA Weekly, Spin Magazine, Stern, Village Voice, Nexus, CBS Healthwatch, and other newspapers and magazines in the US and Europe. Rappoport is the author of "[AIDS Inc.](#)"

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