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How Fact-Finding Fauci Led To My Cancellation At Forbes

The inside story of how it happened.



Adam Andrzejewski

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Over the past 14 months – since January 2021 – we investigated Dr. Fauci’s financials by filing FOIA requests. When I published our original reporting at Forbes, here is what happened.

The National Institutes of Health, Fauci’s employer, loaded an artillery shell in their big gun and fired it at the C-suite at Forbes. Quickly, Forbes folded and my column was terminated.

Background

At OpenTheBooks.com, we believe transparency revolutionizes U.S. public policy and politics.

As a regular contributor to Forbes since May 2014, I published 206 investigations while writing an estimated quarter million words on the platform. In May 2018, Forbes upgraded my title to senior policy contributor.

Over this nearly eight year period, my articles were a-political and used hard data to fact-check Republicans, Democrats, and unelected bureaucrats. Since 2019, I published 112 articles for 13,031,558 views – an average of 116,353 views per investigation.

Here are three examples of our original reporting:

- The Biden Administration left behind up to 600,000 weapons, 75,000 military vehicles and 16,000 night vision devices in their hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan.
- No, President Donald Trump didn’t drain the swamp – the swamp grew by 50,000 executive agency positions during his four years.
- In 2004, Dr. Fauci received a permanent pay adjustment for his biodefense work. In other words, Fauci was the top-paid federal employee precisely because he was paid to stop a pandemic.

In 2020, I published 36 investigations at Forbes and the editors chose 26 for special showcase on the platform, a designation called “Editors’ Pick.”

The first piece I published in 2021 broke national news that Dr. Fauci was the most highly compensated federal employee and even out-earned the president, four-star generals, and 4.3 million colleagues. That piece alone has 900,000+ views.

However, none of the 56 articles I published during 2021-2022 received an “Editors’ Pick” designation.

Something changed at Forbes after I wrote about Dr. Anthony Fauci.

Peak Moment

The controversy surrounding Dr. Fauci’s finances reached a fever pitch in January of this year, and my column at Forbes was right in the middle of it.

In the Senate hearing on January 11, 2022, U.S. Senator Roger Marshall (R-Kan.), cited my Forbes article in his questioning of Dr. Fauci’s salary and his financial disclosures. First, Fauci claimed his financials were “public knowledge,” then, the hot mic caught the doctor calling the senator a “moron.”

It was Fauci’s code red moment and one of the top national news stories of the day.

As reported by *The Washington Post*, when Fauci went back to NIH, he admitted, “Maybe the senator has a point. Maybe my financial investments, though disclosed and available, should be much easier to see.”

In fact, Fauci’s financials were not available and I had firsthand knowledge.

Immediately, I published the evidence behind the lack of transparency at Forbes on January 12: No Fauci’s Records Aren’t Available. Why Won’t NIH Immediately Release Them?

During an entire year, NIH had refused to produce Fauci’s job contract, job description, non-disclosure agreement, conflict of interest, financial disclosures, ethics agreements, and royalties subject to our OpenTheBooks FOIA request. In October 2021, we sued NIH with Judicial Watch and we still hadn’t received the 1,200 pages promised by the agency.

PolitiFact fact-checked Sen. Marshall and Dr. Fauci on their statements during the hearing, Fauci said all you have to do is ask for his financial disclosure. Yes, but it could take a while. PolitiFact cited my Forbes column as “Primary Source Material” for their Truth-O-Meter analysis.

In one of the top national news stories of the week, the fact checkers used my original reporting to hold *both sides accountable* in the heated U.S. Senate hearing.

Beginning Of The End Of My Column At Forbes

Rather than putting the full weight of Forbes behind obtaining the 1,200 pages of unreleased Fauci financials, Forbes went after my column.

On January 12, Sen. Marshall wrote a demand letter to NIH for Dr. Fauci’s unredacted ethics/financial disclosures. In the letter, Marshall included footnotes that referenced my Fauci-Forbes columns.

On Friday, January 14 at 5:00 pm ET, NIH produced Fauci’s unredacted ethics/financial disclosures from 2019 and 2020 subject to Sen. Marshall’s demand letter. The 2020 disclosures had never been released and only heavily redacted 2019 disclosures were previously released.

Working through the night, I dug through the 178 pages of disclosure and published the breaking investigation at Forbes on Saturday, January 15 at 3:03 pm ET, Disclosures Show Dr. Fauci’s Household Made \$1.7 Million In 2020, Including Income, Royalties, Travel Perks And Investment Gains.

Our findings included:

- **Net worth:** The Fauci household net worth exceeded \$10.4 million.
- **Earnings and gains:** Salaries, benefits, royalties, investment gains in the Fauci household exceeded \$1.7 million in 2020.
- **Fauci’s wife:** Christine Grady, the chief bioethicist at NIH made \$234,284 in 2020.
- **Royalties:** Fauci made between \$100,000 and \$1 million as an editor and board member of McGraw-Hill.

- **Awards:** In 2021, Fauci was awarded a \$1 million prize for “speaking truth to power” from the Dan David Foundation in Israel.

These were newsy findings.

However, Justice Louis Brandeis said it best, “There is no great writing, only great rewriting.” A regular editor at Forbes suggested some language and style edits and identified a typo – a number that was right in the title and wrong in the text. Quickly, the edits were incorporated while the article had less than 350 views.

(Today, the column has 120,000+ views and is the definitive analysis of Fauci’s FY2020 financial disclosures, the latest available.)

Then at 4:22pm ET, I received an email from Caroline Howard, the executive editor at Forbes – a person who I had never spoken to or met during my nearly eight years as a contributor:



From: Howard, Caroline <[redacted]>
Sent: Saturday, January 15, 2022 3:22 PM
To: Adam Andrzejewski <Adam@openthebooks.com>; [redacted]; [redacted]; [redacted]
 <[redacted]>
Subject: RE: Problems with the Fauci post

Hi Adam,
 I see this is your third article on Fauci in 3 weeks. Huh. And I believe [redacted] spoke to you about the tone of your posts straying into advocacy—not to mention the reporting errors pointed out today. We insist on firm standards for our valued contributor network. This site is for fair and authoritative information. Everyone who publishes on the Forbes platform must steer clear of opinion, distortion, speculation, exaggeration, bias, carelessness, half-truths and deceit. I appreciate your quickly reply to [redacted] corrections. But to be clear, anyone who engages in this type of writing is subject to review and swift action, from coaching to reprimand, warning and dismissal. I’m always available to talk during work week.
 Caroline

Caroline Howard
 Executive Editor | Forbes
 @ [redacted]

Note: Emphasis added. Emails and non-executive Forbes employee names are redacted.

Let’s break down the executive editor’s email above.

"I see this is your third article on Fauci in 3 weeks. Huh."

Each article on Fauci from December 28 through January 15 published original journalism and broke national news. Each article added substantial context to the national discussion.

The first article estimated Fauci's \$350,000 golden-parachute retirement pension as the highest in U.S. federal history (December 28, 2021). Articles two and three (January 12 and 15, 2022) resulted from the surprisingly heated Senate hearing on Fauci's finances (discussed above).

Only six of my 56 published pieces at Forbes during 2021-2022 were on Fauci. But, again, each column was original reporting with important national implications.

"...the tone of your posts straying into advocacy"

I am a transparency advocate and it is one reason why Forbes chose me to contribute. Currently, there is a war on transparency at NIH with 633 FOIA requests past due triggering 33 lawsuits from various parties in federal court. Good journalism holds the agency accountable.

In fact, since my appointment in May 2014 at Forbes, I *only* wrote about government transparency and accountability. All 206 investigations followed the money and properly cited the original research of our auditors at OpenTheBooks.com.

"Everyone who publishes on the Forbes platform must steer clear..."

The rest of the emailed insinuations are hyperbole and borne out by the fact that Forbes kept my author archive live even after my column was terminated.

National Institutes Of Health Pressured Forbes

On Sunday, January 16 at 12:43 pm ET, six top communications, government relations, and public affairs officers at NIH wrote a "corrections" email to Randall Lane, the chief content officer and editor of Forbes and me.

As you can see, the email did not contain any substantial corrections.



From: Fine, Amanda (NIH/OD) [E] <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, January 16, 2022 11:43 AM
To: [REDACTED]@forbes.com <[REDACTED]@forbes.com>; Adam Andrzejewski <Adam@openthebooks.com>; [REDACTED] Randall Lane
Cc: Myles, Renate (NIH/OD) [E] <[REDACTED]>; Wojtowicz, Emma (NIH/OD) [E] <[REDACTED]>; Ritter, Emily (NIH/OD) [E] <[REDACTED]>; Billet, Courtney (NIH/NIAID) [E] <[REDACTED]>; Stover, Kathy (NIH/NIAID) [E] <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Report Correction: Dr. Fauci financial disclosures

Greetings-

Your article, [Disclosures Show Dr. Fauci’s Household Made \\$1.7 Million In 2020, Including Income, Royalties, Travel Perks And Investment Gains](#) by Adam Andrzejewski, reports incorrect information. We are requesting that you immediately correct and update it. Please see our statement of correction below. Should you need to attribute it, please do so to NIH generally.

STATEMENT OF CORRECTION

Your article incorrectly states that Dr. Fauci and his wife “collected” \$8,100 to attend three galas. Rather, Dr. Fauci accepted invitations for himself and his wife to attend three virtual events during 2020, one of which – The RFK Ripple of Hope Gala – also honored him as the award recipient. He correctly reported the gifts of free attendance under the Gift section of his disclosure report and noted the market value. Filers are instructed by Government-wide regulations that the “market value” of a ticketed event is the ticket’s face value. He never “collected” any money for these events. In addition, as is also required by Government-wide ethics rules, Dr. Fauci sought and received prior written approval from the NIH to attend the events.

Dr. Fauci’s reports also disclose his approved editorial board position with McGraw-Hill. With regard to the Forbes statement about “travel perks”, the editorial board members meet in person when organized by the publisher and are reimbursed for their travel expenses that board members pay themselves out of pocket. Dr. Fauci, as a board member, receives the same travel reimbursement as the other non-Federal members.

Thanks,
Amanda

Amanda Fine
Chief, News Media Branch
National Institutes of Health

Note: Emphasis added. Email accounts are redacted.

Let’s break down the NIH “corrections” email above.

Fauci disclosed receiving honoraria and gifts valued at \$8,100 on his FY2020 ethics form. Therefore, it is fair to characterize Fauci as “collecting” those gifts. Fauci himself reported those items on his ethics form in the “Gift” section.

The requested edit from NIH was a difference without a distinction. I quickly updated the piece by replacing the word “collecting” with “reported.” NIH also gave further background

into Fauci's board position at McGraw-Hill and travel reimbursements, which was also incorporated. (This was the purpose of my request for comment to NIH – additional context for the reader and fairness to the subject.)

NIH found nothing wrong with the major facts and analysis in my article: the Fauci household's entire cash compensation, benefit, royalty, and investment portfolio.

In other words, all substantive findings remained intact and validated.

Cancellation

Of course, the real purpose of the NIH's email wasn't to correct my work.

Two directors, two bureau chiefs, and two top PR officers didn't send an email to the Forbes' chief on a Sunday morning because they wanted to correct the record about Fauci's travel reimbursements.

They sent that email to subliminally send a message: We don't like Andrzejewski's oversight work, and we want you to do something about it.

Unfortunately, Forbes folded quickly.

Within 24 hours of the NIH email to Randall Lane, my regular Forbes editor called and announced new rules. Forbes barred me from writing about Fauci and mandated pre-approval for all future topics.

Then, Forbes went silent and terminated my column roughly 10 days later on January 28.

On the day Forbes cancelled me, the editors bent the knee. A new piece on Fauci published: ["Fauci's Portrait Will Soon Hang In The Smithsonian."](#)

Of course, the article was designated an Editors' Pick.

Note: Forbes and NIH didn't respond to requests for comment. A Forbes spokesperson [previously told the New York Post](#), "Forbes regularly removes contributors who don't meet

our high editorial standards.”

Additional Reading:



DR. ANTHONY FAUCI INVESTIGATING FAUCI'S FINANCES

OpenTheBooks Oversight Report

[OpenTheBooks Oversight Report: Dr. Anthony Fauci – Investigating Fauci’s Financials, A Compendium Of Our Findings Published: March 2022 | OpenTheBooks.com](#)

[Disclosures Show Dr. Fauci’s Household Made \\$1.7 Million In 2020, Including Income, Royalties, Travel Perks And Investment Gains Published January 15, 2022 | Forbes](#)

[No, Fauci’s Records Aren’t Available. Why Won’t NIH Immediately Release Them? Published January 12, 2022 | Forbes](#)

[Dr. Anthony Fauci’s Golden Parachute Will Exceed \\$350,000 Per Year – The Largest in U.S. Federal Government History Published December 28, 2021 | Forbes](#)

[Dr. Anthony Fauci Received Big Pay Increase To Prevent Pandemics Published October 20, 2021 | Forbes](#) [Dr. Anthony Fauci’s 400+ Media Events Cost Taxpayers During The Pandemic Published June 16, 2021 | Forbes](#)

[Dr. Anthony Fauci: The Highest Paid Employee In The Entire U.S. Federal](#)



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 Reply

 **BetsyR** 4 hr ago
 Forbes....another thing to boycott.
 Reply

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