



THE BRADLEY PRIZES®

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2024 Bradley Prize Winner**

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AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY:

Thank you! I am so grateful to be honored by the Bradley Foundation today. I am especially thankful because, in my view, this award is not just to honor me but to acknowledge so many brilliant scientists, politicians, public servants, teachers, lawyers, firefighters, small business owners, CEOs, and people from every walk of life who risked their jobs, their reputations, or their family bliss to oppose covid tyranny. I dedicate this award to each of them.

It's not hard to see that our pandemic response failed. Official counts attribute more than a million deaths to covid in the United States and almost seven million worldwide. By early 2022, about 95% of Americans had contracted covid despite the harsh countermeasures in most states, including confinement of broad populations, business closures, cessation of religious and other gatherings, school closures, and widespread violation of fundamental civil liberties. Very clearly, these measures failed to protect Americans from covid.

Many powerful scientific bureaucrats justified these policies with the idea that all scientists agreed that the lockdowns would work to suppress or even eliminate the virus. This was known false by Spring 2020. For instance, the Swedish experiment with keeping schools open in Spring 2020 was a tremendous success. Lockdowns are inherently leaky because human societies, human health, and human well-being require physical proximity. It is unhealthy to treat our fellow human beings primarily as biohazards.

Unfortunately, the pandemic response itself has wrought tremendous collateral harm. There is now [broad agreement](#) that the school closures have set kids – especially poor and minority kids – behind in ways that will lead them to worse outcomes as adults, including shorter, poorer lives. I could go on at

length, but suffice it to say that nearly every poor person on the planet was harmed physically and materially by the economic dislocations caused by the lockdowns. I am dedicating all the prize money to the U.K. charity Collateral Global, which is dedicated to documenting the collateral damage from lockdowns and informing government reviews on the topic.

Maybe the most perplexing sin of the public health establishment was that it abandoned an essential commitment to science. The key to understanding this is that during the covid era, governments worldwide – including, I’m sorry to say, in the U.S. – violated the free speech rights of citizens and scientists to create an illusion of consensus in favor of lockdowns.

Science works when scientists can freely discuss ideas and correct each other. This is especially important for science at the frontier of knowledge (like when a new viral disease is floating around). Instead, scientists who harbored dissident thoughts during the covid consensus faced tremendous pressure to stay silent.

In October 2020, Martin Kulldorff invited me and Prof. Sunetra Gupta of Oxford University to a small conference in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. We wrote a short one-page document called the Great Barrington Declaration advocating for focused protection of vulnerable older people from covid, lifting lockdowns, and opening schools to avoid the harms of lockdowns on less vulnerable populations. You know—the old pandemic plan.

We had two aims. One, to shatter the illusion that there was a scientific consensus in favor of lockdowns when we knew for certain that there was not. And two, to start a conversation among public health professionals about how to protect older people from covid better.

The GBD went viral. Tens of thousands of doctors, epidemiologists, and scientists endorsed it and nearly a million people signed it. But only four days after we wrote it, then NIH director Francis Collins wrote an email to Tony Fauci calling me, Martin, and Sunetra - Stanford, Harvard, and Oxford professors -- “fringe epidemiologists” and engaged a media campaign to conduct a “devastating takedown.” Media hit pieces flooded the airwaves alleging that we wanted to let the virus “rip” and kill people for the crime of wanting to protect older people better and open schools.

This was an abuse of power by Collins. As the head of the NIH, his agency controls the funding and professional standing of nearly every biomedical scientist of note in the U.S. and many worldwide. When Collins directed his “devastating takedown” of the GBD, he sent an unmistakable signal to other scientists and epidemiologists – fall in line with his lockdown policy or else face excommunication from the scientific community.

I have since discovered that Collins’ devastating takedown was not an anomaly. Under the banner of combatting “misinformation,” government health agencies used their power to collaborate with social media companies to control the public conversation about covid science and policy.

Public health bureaucrats operated more like dictators than scientists, sealing themselves off from credible outside criticism and smearing scientific dissidents who contradicted public health dogma on

topic after topic, including the origin of the virus, immunity after covid recovery, the harms and inefficacy of lockdowns, and vaccine efficacy against infection & transmission. Even the existence of Sweden was under a cloud of doubt!

The censorship of scientific discussion permitted a policy environment where clear scientific truths were muddled. As a result, ineffective, destructive policies persisted much longer than they would have otherwise.

In 2022, the Missouri and Louisiana AG's offices filed suit against the Biden Administration's censorship industrial complex. Discovery document showed the Biden administration induced social media companies like Facebook to censor content – including true content – that criticized government pronouncements on covid policy, elections, and much else.

So, how do governments accomplish these feats of censorship? It is shockingly direct. Government agencies, including the CDC, the Surgeon General's office, and the White House itself, develop lists of who and what to censor, sometimes laundering the task to third-party NGOs and universities in the guise of funding "research." Lists in hand, government officials [threaten](#) regulatory action to harm social media companies that do not comply.

When Elon Musk bought Twitter in late 2022 and made internal documents available to reporters, I found out that Twitter 1.0 had placed me on a "blacklist" the day I joined Twitter in August 2021 for the crime of posting a link to the GBD. Given the evidentiary record found in Missouri v. Biden, it is nearly certain that the government requested that I be placed on Twitter's blacklist. Federal judges hearing the case likened the Biden censorship regime to an Orwellian Ministry of Truth and issued a preliminary injunction to stop censoring.

As things stand, the situation regarding free speech is dire in the Western world. The Missouri v. Biden case is currently under consideration by the U.S. Supreme Court. It has the promise to limit the government's power to censor, but I do not know how the Supreme Court will rule. In any case, it is not enough. The whole scientific community & the public need to understand the stakes because I do not believe the suppression of scientific ideas and debate will die with the pandemic. Without a concerted political program to restore free speech, the American civic religion of free speech and the very nature of our republic may not survive.