

# Big Oil Satirical Video Series

## Climate Communications Case Story



Accessibility



Cognitive Dissonance



Personalization

### PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

**Project Title:** The Big Oil Alliance

**Location:** Online

**Project Partners:** ARCA Productions – Artists for Real Climate Action

**Date:** Released in April, 2024

**Climate Issue:** Climate change denial

**Action Area:** Climate change awareness and entertainment

**Behavioural Theme(s):** Accessibility, Cognitive Dissonance, Personalization

**Audience:** People across Canada who watch Youtube

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*Yeah, I make a lot of money off of oil and gas. And yes, oil and gas is an existential threat to humanity.*

*– Jim Straight, Fictional Oil Executive<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>2</sup> ARCA Productions – Artists for Real Climate Action. (2024, April 10). *Meet Jim Straight: CEO of Canadian Oil Company Rancor Oil | The Big Oil Alliance* [Video]. YouTube. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCi8MWtI2\\_4&list=PLAWUEoX923p1a64GTdUes3yH95cYWKd&index=8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCi8MWtI2_4&list=PLAWUEoX923p1a64GTdUes3yH95cYWKd&index=8)

## IMPACT STORY

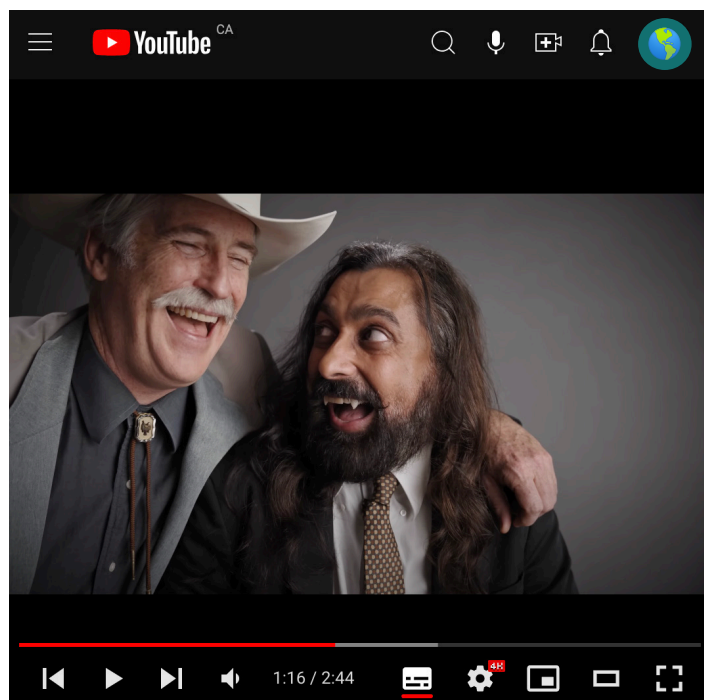
In this comedic twelve-part YouTube series by Artists for Real Climate Action (ARCA), satire and humor are used to highlight the cognitive dissonance often observed among key players and supporters of the oil industry. Absurd statements and highly exaggerated, stereotypical behaviours contribute to recognizable caricatures of Big Oil executives that highlight the contradictions inherent in the promotion of continued oil extraction against the realities of a changing climate.

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES INCLUDE...

- Reaching a broad audience by leveraging comedy;
- Highlighting the contradictions of Big Oil messaging; and
- Creating accessible dialogue around climate change science.

## COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

- **YouTube Video Series:** Short, well produced, and punchy YouTube videos are more likely to be shared and can reach a broad audience.
- **Character Accounts:** Some of the responses in the comment section use punch-lines from the videos and appear to come from the characters of the videos themselves. This is a clever way to respond to climate change deniers while maintaining the satire.



### FULL SERIES: The Big Oil Alliance

Big Oil Alliance - 1/14

↺ ↻

- 1 **Meet The Big Oil Alliance: Four Oil Execs and a Vampire Walk Into a Boardroom** | Big Oil Alliance (2:45)
- 2 **Meet Tank Hightower: CEO of Canadian Oil Company Imperious Oil** | Big Oil Alliance (2:39)
- 3 **Stop The Steal - BIG OIL CALLS OUT BIG WIND** | Big Oil Alliance (0:37)
- 4 **Can Four BILLIONAIRES and a VAMPIRE solve CLIMATE CHANGE?** | Big Oil Alliance (3:09)
- 5 **Meet Marjorie Storm: CEO of Canadian Oil Company Novopus** | Big Oil Alliance (2:08)

### Meet The Big Oil Alliance: Four Oil Execs and a Vampire Walk Into a Boardroom | The Big Oil Alliance



**Big Oil Alliance**  
650 subscribers

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269



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## BEHAVIOURAL STRATEGIES & TAKEAWAYS

- **Accessibility:** YouTube reaches a diverse audience of millions. By posting videos on the publicly accessible streaming platform, barriers to access are removed and videos are available for free viewing. The videos also have the potential to go viral, increasing the chances of exposure.
- **Cognitive Dissonance:** While the scenarios and statements depicted in the videos appear far-fetched, the mental gymnastics on display are exaggerated versions of the kinds of justifications we all make when confronted with indefensible choices we feel we must defend. This tactic illuminates how individuals work to rationalize absurd decisions and actions, allowing viewers to recognize and confront their own cognitive dissonance.
- **Personalization:** Tailoring climate communication based on audience preferences (e.g., humour) can be used to present climate issues in an engaging and non-threatening way, making it easier to confront hard truths. The comment section interactions also generate real-time dialogue and cultivate further conversations when supported by the right personalized responses.

## SOURCE

Artists for Real Climate Action (ARCA Productions). (2024, April). *The Big Oil Alliance* [Video series]. YouTube. [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAWUEoX923pla64GTdUe\\_es3yH95cYWkd](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAWUEoX923pla64GTdUe_es3yH95cYWkd)

## CONCLUSION

Using humor to illustrate the contradictions inherent in contemporary promotion of fossil fuels can attract a wider audience that might not be receptive to a more serious conversation about climate change. Additionally, this satirical approach may hold a mirror to some viewers, revealing how they might be making excuses for continued fossil fuel extraction. Viewers coming to a recognition of their own cognitive dissonance may be productively challenged to change their perspective.

## MORE CASE STORIES AND RESOURCES ONLINE

This case story was developed by ICLEI Canada through the Ontario Resource Centre for Climate Adaptation (ORCCA) as part of a Climate Communications Toolkit. Find more case stories and additional climate communications resources online at [icleicanada.org/project/climate-communications-toolkit](https://icleicanada.org/project/climate-communications-toolkit)

ORCCA is a pilot initiative led by ICLEI Canada and supported by the Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks alongside financial support from the Government of Canada through the federal Department of Environment and Climate Change Canada.

CLIMATE COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

