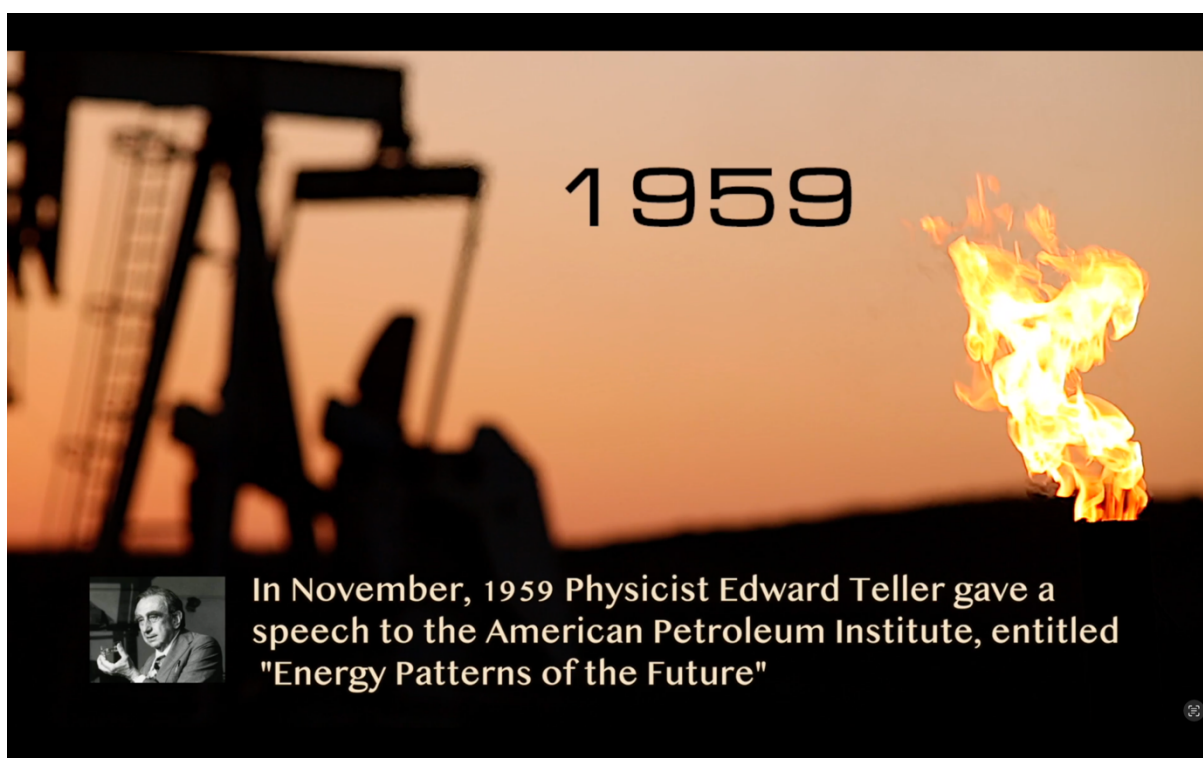


We've Been Bamboozled

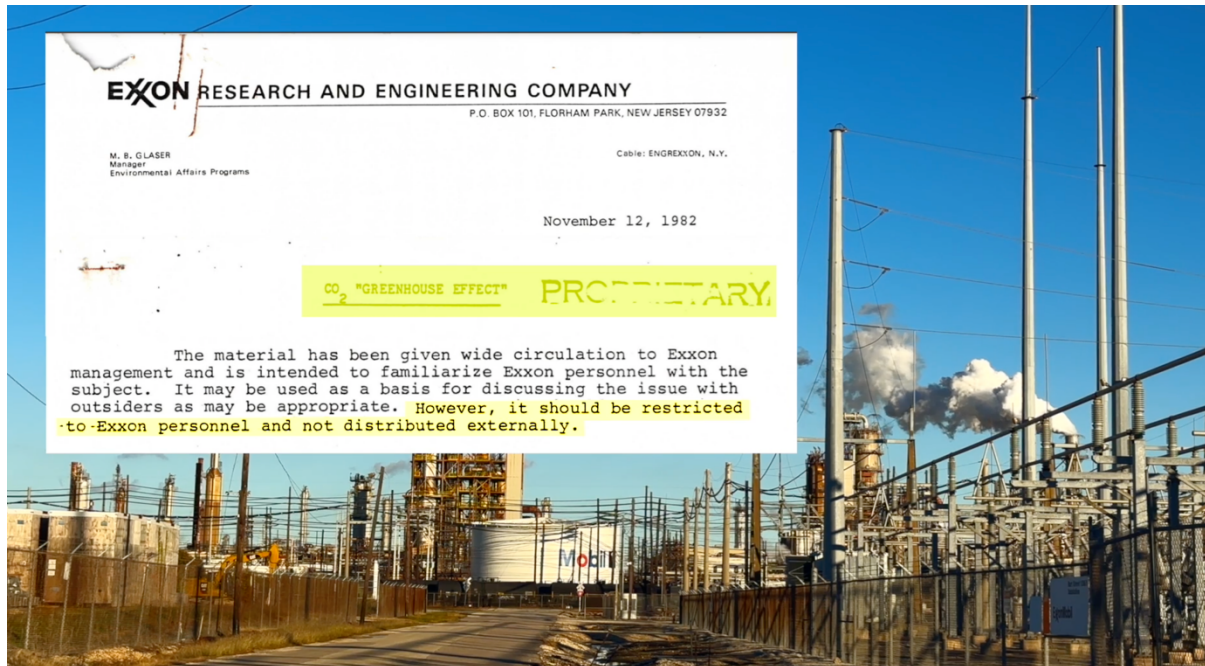
Pamela Falkenberg and Jack Cochran

Jack Cochran and Pamela Falkenberg are valued contributors to Liberated Words, being known for their pioneering poetry film climate activism in relation to exposing American industrial crimes against the planet. For example, *Cancer Alley*, their film with poet Lucy English, about what it is like to live in the small towns near the Mississippi River, between East Baton Rouge and New Orleans, (which are now dominated by more than 200 chemical plants and oil refineries, sometimes literally located in residents' back yards). It was during the making of this film that Jack discovered Geoff Dembicki's incendiary book, *The Petroleum Papers* (Greystone Press, September 2022), whose subtitle is 'inside the far-right conspiracy to cover up climate change'.



Pamela continues: 'Jack read the book, which revealed even more nefarious aspects of the fossil fuel conglomerates than locating refineries and chemical plants in powerless poor communities: multiple oil industry executives had privately commissioned scientific research, going back at least as far as the early 1950s, to determine what the the future consequences of burning fossil fuels on the world's natural environments would be. These reports, even couched in the dry language of memoranda, could not have been more dire, but the information was proprietary, kept private, and the oil industry did ... nothing, except to obfuscate.

Even more discouraging, *The Petroleum Papers*, along with the leaked original research reports (some of which are now archived online), which revealed all this perfidy, only created a relatively small fuss, instead of widespread public outrage. This was despite the fact that the U.S. House of Representatives Oversight Committee on Reform investigated and called in all the oil executives to testify on the record, and published a damning report, which revealed the contents of the previously private research.

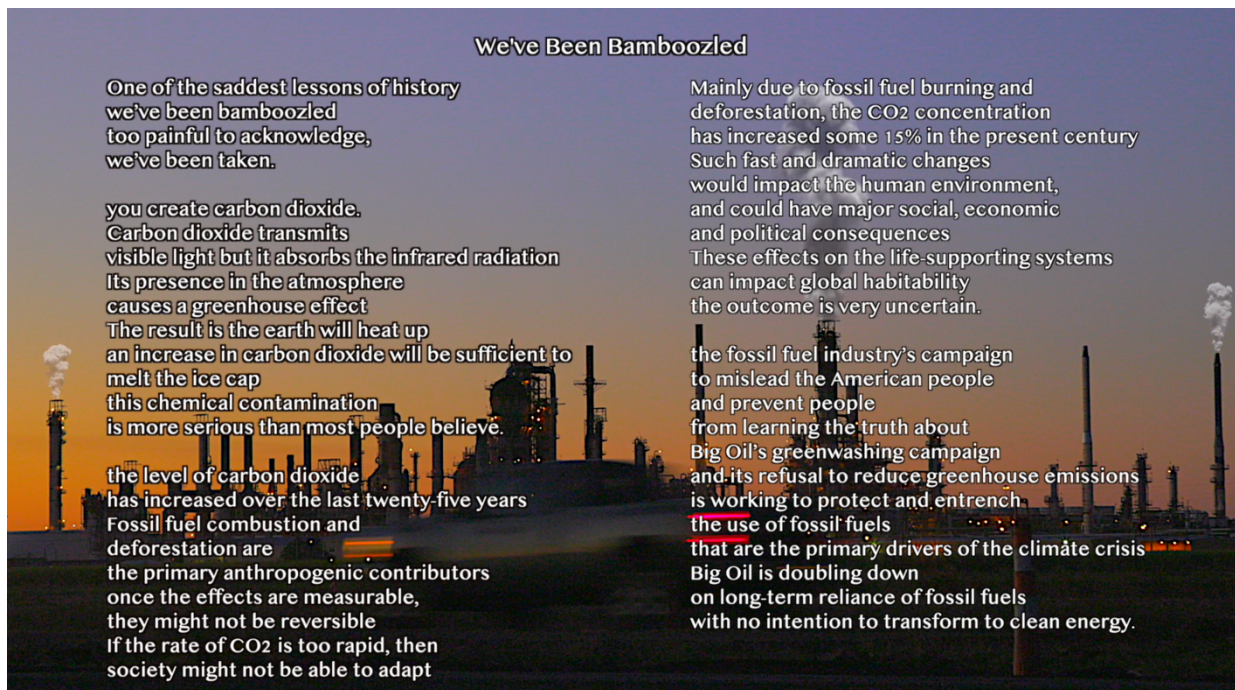


When Jack told me about all this, I said, “We need to make another film!” *We’ve Been Bamboozled!* is the result, and this is how we officially describe it when submitting to film festivals:

Recent revelations show that the fossil fuel industries, over the course of many decades, sponsored scientific research about the potential consequences of burning fossil fuels on the earth’s environment, which concluded that the impact would be “dramatic” and “urgent.” Instead of sharing this information and seeking alternatives, the fossil fuels industries embarked on a longstanding campaign of disinformation and obfuscation that has outdone that of big tobacco (see, for instance, this Guardian article from 2021 — <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jun/30/climate-crimes-oil-and-gas-environment>).

Now that all this has come to light, the result is an unprecedented rash of lawsuits and investigations. These legal proceedings are expected to take years, but right now we need to be informed about what is at stake.

Our short film, *We've Been Bamboozled*, which combines images of a world powered by fossil fuels with a poetic summary, based on text extracted from the oil industry's own reports, is part of that effort. We freely admit that our poem takes liberties with the original texts, ironically paring down their prose using an erasure strategy, to reveal and highlight that the fossil fuel industries knew how much they were contributing to climate change, how dangerous that was, and just how long they chose to keep that information to themselves (since at least 1950's).



Bamboozled, poem, Pamela Falkenberg and Jack Cochran

We encourage our audience to get the full story from our source materials, via this link on our website:

<https://www.outliermovingpictures.com/we-ve-been-bamboozled>

Erasure ≠ cover up

Link to the text of the poem:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1CNhqfivzbGp2lvfkUrLysjkyR9o3T8M6zrE2euqGIBA/edit>

We are not naive enough to believe that our film is some kind of breakthrough moment that will galvanize huge numbers to demand urgent action to avert the worst consequences of climate change, but that doesn't excuse us from doing what we can. We cannot accurately predict exactly who will see our film, or what that experience might inspire. Perhaps some brilliant young person will see it at some point, and become an environmental activist or

scientist, who will accomplish more than we can... We are also reminded of two quotes: one from Thomas Jefferson, “Evil triumphs when good men do nothing,” and another from a young activist we quote in our *Climate Anxiety* film, “At no point does it make more sense to give up than to carry on.”

Sarah Tremlett has already included *We’ve Been Bamboozled* in a group of climate crisis films screened at the British Library, and it has been accepted by two other festivals so far, the Denver Underground Film Festival and Small Ax - Radical Short Film Awards (upcoming), with 14 other submissions undecided and 4 rejections. We are happy that people are seeing our film, and especially happy to have it made available on *Liberated Words*, where it will reach an eclectic and discerning audience.

We know that *We’ve Been Bamboozled!* takes up an important topic, but we have worried about whether our erasure strategy treatment of the memos is effective, and whether the result is really poetic. So we were really honored that Sarah was enthusiastic, telling us in an email that “This film is ... well done in combining the terrible facts with a creative work. If these energy companies don’t change fuels we are doomed.”

Review of *The Petroleum Papers* in the *Vancouver Sun*

<https://vancouversun.com/entertainment/books/linking-the-political-far-right-to-big-oil-climate-change-denial>

Wikipedia overview of *The Petroleum Papers* and its impact

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Petroleum_Papers?wprov=sfti1

<https://www.ciel.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Smoke-Fumes.pdf>