

## How the Mainstream Media Censors the Cow in the Room

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In our system of normalized violence, deceptions are par for the course. But it is hard to fathom the comical extent to which mainstream media editors go to avoid addressing the Cow in the Room. In the documentary, [Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret](#), Kip Andersen remarks about being in “some strange Cowspiracy Twilight Zone where no one could talk about cows.”

I had the same experience last week. Thanks to a nomination by Virginia Bell, I was designated a “Climate Hero” by the Guardian Newspaper in its Down to Earth Newsletter. The editor had this to say about me:

*“The epiphany came while he was sat on the sofa. In 2005, watching TV alongside his wife, Sailesh Rao caught Al Gore addressing climate activists in San Francisco. He found himself “rooted to my seat and filled with horror”.*

*“If half of what he is saying is true,” thought the electrical engineer from Karnataka, India, “I’m wasting my time working on making the internet ten times faster.”*

*Pushed by his wife, Jaine, within months, Rao had researched the impacts of energy consumption on our planet, and found there was precious little activism in this area. He wrote books, produced documentaries, and in 2007 started Climate Healers, a non-profit dedicated to charting a path to a more sustainable economy and way of living through what Rao calls “the greatest transformation in human history”. He is now recognised as a foremost voice on green transition and on the true scale of societal change required to save the planet.*

*His latest book, The Pinky Promise, focuses on fighting for a better world for his granddaughter, Kimaya (both pictured above). Rao stresses the importance of thinking of future generations, and “honouring the millennia of sacrifices that our ancestors endured” to give us what we have today.”*

Notice that the Cow in the Room is completely missing in this passage. In contrast, here is the actual Q&A exchange that I had with the editor and you can see that it had copious references to the Cow in the Room:

**Can you tell us a bit about your background, and your connection to the environment?**

I was born in the Western Ghats forest of South India near the Arabian Sea port city of Mangalore in Karnataka. This forest has now been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site and it is one of eight biodiversity hotspots in the world. Though I was raised in Chennai on the East coast, I usually spent my summer vacations at my grandparents' homes near Mangalore, which was still relatively undeveloped in the sixties and early seventies. Along with my siblings and my cousins, I used to spend a lot of time during my childhood summers playing in the woods around my grandparents' homes and hence my early childhood connection with the environment. However, I studied to become an electrical systems engineer and pursued a career working on digital signal processing solutions for High Definition Television and the Internet.

**What drove your big career switch from tech to climate? Your bio says you became “deeply immersed” in the issue – how come?**

I came home from work one December night in 2005, dog tired, plopped down on the sofa and turned on the TV. There was Vice President Al Gore talking about global warming to some activists in San Francisco. I was rooted to my seat, filled with horror and I told my wife, Jaine, that if half of what he is saying is true, I feel like I'm wasting my time working on making the internet ten times faster. She said that if you think it is that important, why don't you look into it.

That's what I did.

Within 3 months, I realized that it was far worse than what Mr. Gore was saying. He was only considering the impact of our energy demands on the planet, while neglecting the impact of our food and other consumer demands. I spent the next few years trying to convince Mr. Gore to consider all aspects of this multi-pronged problem, but he preferred to focus on just the energy aspect. His stated motivation was to preserve civilization as we know it, which ruled out any actions that might challenge our way of life.

I love challenges and I realized that healing the climate was the biggest systems engineering problem around, dwarfing anything that I had done in the internet arena. I founded the non-profit organization, Climate Healers in 2007 to solve this problem. That's how I became deeply immersed in this issue.

**Can you tell us a bit about your many books and docs: which you're most proud of, what you've taken from doing them...**

The books and documentaries are part of our story telling to facilitate the Greatest Transformation in Human History. It is through common stories and games that we, humans, coordinate our actions among millions and even billions of us. This has turned us into the most powerful species on the planet that can even change the climate of the planet. However, once we acknowledge that we are changing the climate of the planet, we automatically shoulder the responsibility to harmonize the climate on behalf of future generations and all life on earth.

In order to promote our transformation from a Climate HEATing to a Climate Healing species, I wrote my first book, “Carbon Dharma: The Occupation of Butterflies,” in 2011. I came home to the San Francisco Bay Area, inspired after meeting our newly born granddaughter, Kimaya, in Phoenix, Arizona, for the first time. (I'm attaching a PDF of the new book I've written about her, “The Pinky Promise,” for

your reference). Carbon Dharma literally poured out of me as I wanted to put down everything I knew on paper, just in case something happened to incapacitate me. After writing that book, I was disappointed that only a few thousand people bought the book and even fewer people actually read it. That's when I started executive producing documentaries to widen the reach of the Climate Healers messaging, beginning with "[The Human Experiment](#)" in 2013, followed by "[Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret](#)" in 2014, and so on. The books I wrote enabled me to document all the systems research work that I've done cogently, but the documentaries were more effective at simplifying and spreading the message.

Over the past two years, we introduced Vega, [the Cow in the Room](#), as an animated character and as an inflatable likeness, to cut through the clutter at the COP26 UN Climate Change meeting in Glasgow, Scotland, and simplify our message even further. With a short [one-minute animation](#), we were able to convey the gist of the global climate change problem and the core essence of the solution we propose, which the Guardian also reported [at that time](#). At COP26, we also introduced the [Climate Bathtub model](#) for exploring the solution space for climate change, which illustrated why it is urgent for humanity to transform to a plant-based economy as soon as possible, while we must take a more nuanced approach to transition to a clean energy economy.

This year, Vega boycotted the COP27 UN Climate Change meeting in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt to protest its serving meat, dairy, fish and eggs in the cafeterias and instead, put on an apron and transformed from the Cow in the Room to the [Cow in the Kitchen](#) to support the Food Healers initiative. Food Healers call for global community efforts to make healthy, whole-foods, plant-based Universal vegan meals freely available to every human being on the planet, regardless of economic or ethnic background. This is like the oxygen mask rule on Spaceship Earth: we must heal ourselves first before we can heal the climate of the planet. Just as every passenger on an airplane gets a free oxygen mask regardless of their economic or ethnic background, we have a moral imperative to ensure that every human being has access to free, healthy food regardless of their economic or ethnic background. As you can see [here](#), the Mayor of New York City, Eric Adams, will be issuing a proclamation in support of this initiative.

Of all the books I've written, I'm most proud of "[The Pinky Promise](#)" and of all the documentaries I've been associated with, I'm most proud of "[The Land Of Ahimsa](#)". I'm usually most proud of my latest effort as it encompasses all of my life-long learnings to date.

### **Can you tell us a bit about Climate Healers: what it does, what it hopes to do, and why you started it?**

I started the non-profit, Climate Healers, in 2007 to heal the climate as opposed to maintaining it in a high state of disrepair as the mainstream environmental community was framing it. They didn't want to touch the third rail of environmentalism – our culture of consumerism, especially of animal foods, while I wanted to put everything on the table and see what humanity can do to heal the climate.

At Climate Healers, we use established systems engineering principles to tackle the world's environmental problems. We realized that no one is talking about the Cow in the Room, because it requires a systems change. However, transforming to a plant-based economy is a systems change that returns us to our true essence. I've asked numerous audiences whether they would deliberately hurt an innocent animal unnecessarily and no one has said "yes," so far. Therefore, compassion is at the core of all human beings, but we took a 10,000 year detour from our true essence in order to HEAT the climate of the planet.

As with any engineering project, Climate Healing requires creating a systems model for the solution space, determining a near-optimum consensus solution within that space and then iteratively refining the model while we execute on that chosen solution. During the first few years of my systems research work

on the climate, it became clear that our global industrial civilization is configured to be a Climate HEATing civilization. Its foundational axioms and the money game that we play within that civilization all contribute towards HEATing the climate. To heal the climate and harmonize it, we would need to transform the foundational axioms and the money game as well. Please see this spreadsheet I created using the system leverage points of Donella Meadows, contrasting the Climate HEATing civilization with a Climate Healing civilization.

**I love the bit in your bio about your promise to your granddaughter... Why do you feel it's important to try and build a better world for her and her generation?**

In fact, our systems analysis shows that we will likely hit several tipping points in the earth's biogeochemical cycles within the next few years and therefore, it is important to try and build a better world for our own survival, not just for our children's or our grandchildren's generation. It is also important to do this to honor the millennia of sacrifices that our ancestors endured throughout the world in order to give our generation the greatest accumulation of planetary resources in the history of humanity. They have given us all the tools, technologies, resources and knowledge we need to transform our Climate HEATing civilization to a Climate Healing civilization and we are most likely the last generation that can accomplish such a transformation. Therefore, we have an obligation to step up and do the needful.

**Lastly, any interesting projects you'd like to shout out at all?**

I would like to shout out about our [Food Healers](#) project that aims to eradicate global hunger and create a solid foundation of health for the Climate Healing civilization of the future. As the [EAT-Lancet Commission](#) noted, much of the world's population is inadequately nourished. Around 3 billion people don't have regular access to healthy foods, while the other 5 billion people have been deceived into consuming unhealthy foods that make them sick. Governments all over the world are subsidizing these unhealthy foods in order to "grow the economy," which depends upon the ludicrousness of chopping down forests to grow food to feed animals, slaughtering the animals to feed ourselves unhealthy foods so that we can get sick and undergo elaborate medical procedures or pop pills on a daily basis. The system clearly needs to change and the best way to trigger this system change is to make healthy, plant-based foods freely available to every human being on the planet.

There you have it. Who knows? Perhaps after the Guardian wrote about the [Cow in the Room](#) in 2021, the editors got called into the Principal's office at some Meat and Dairy sponsored boarding school and got rapped on the knuckles with a birch cane. We haven't heard a peep about the Cow in the Room from the Guardian ever since.

I wish these mainstream media editors would eat some [CowRage Laddus](#) and grow a pair.

Thank you for your support.

**HELP** us every day to  
**Heal** the planet.  
**Eat** plants.  
**Love** animals.  
**Plant** trees.

It's that simple.

Thanks again for being a superhero and joining our herd. Please forward this post to all your friends and let's grow our MOOOvement together.

With much love,

Sailesh on behalf of Vega, Cow and Climate Healer and the Climate Healers team.