

SPOTTING INADVERTENT PROPAGANDA

EXERCISE #1

Here's the beginning of an article based on a press release from a nonprofit organization in San Francisco:

The New York Times, January 1, 2004

The Very Rich, It Now Appears, Give Their Share And Even More

By DAVID CAY JOHNSTON

The top 400 American earners in 2000 provided nearly 7 percent of all the charitable gifts reported on income tax returns for that year, well in excess of their roughly 1 percent share of overall income, according to data released yesterday by the NewTithing Group, a charity that tracks giving.

The 400 taxpayers with the highest reported incomes in 2000 made an average of \$174 million and gave away, on average, \$25.3 million that year. Their combined giving totaled \$10.1 billion, or 6.9 percent, of the \$146 billion in charitable donations that Americans deducted on their income tax returns in 2000.

Charitable giving by this wafer-thin yet deeply rich slice of Americans, the new Internal Revenue Service data showed, represented an average of more than 14 percent of their incomes, compared with overall charitable tax deductions equal to 2 percent of adjusted gross incomes. Only a fourth of taxpayers file returns that allow them to deduct charitable gifts...

And here is the beginning of the press release upon which the above article was based.

The heading:

**Wealthiest 400 Could Comfortably Afford To Give Billions More
However, Their Annual Gifts Have Comprised As Much as 7% of All Individual Donations**
San Francisco – January 1, 2004

The wealthiest 400 U.S. tax filers could have comfortably donated \$19 billion more than they actually did between 1997 and 2000 without sacrificing lifestyle, according to NewTithing Group, a non-profit donor education & research organization founded by philanthropist and retired money manager Claude Rosenberg. Based on the latest available IRS data, NewTithing Group estimates that the nation's wealthiest 400 tax filers could have comfortably afforded to donate:

- Over three times what they donated in 1997, which would represent in aggregate nearly \$5 billion in additional donations for that year alone. However, in 1997, the Top-400 U.S. tax filers actually donated to charity a combined \$2.4 billion, 2.4% of all individual giving.
- Over twice what they donated in 1998, which would represent in aggregate over \$4 billion in additional donations for that year alone. However, in 1998, the Top-400 U.S. tax filers actually donated to charity a combined \$3.3 billion, 3% of all individual giving.
- Nearly two-and-a-half times what they donated in 1999, which would represent in aggregate over \$6 billion in additional donations for that year alone. However, in 1999, the Top-400 U.S. tax filers actually donated to charity a combined \$4.4 billion, 3.5% of all individual giving.

SPOTTING INADVERTENT PROPAGANDA

EXERCISE #2

Fidel Castro stepped down as Cuba's president in 2008, and his brother Raúl took over the office. Just days later an article appeared in the New York Times, and it began like this:

The New York Times, February 27, 2008

Cubans Wary of Raúl Castro's Hints at Change

By JAMES C. McKINLEY Jr.

HAVANA — In his first state reception as Cuba's president, Raúl Castro met Tuesday not with leftist Latin American leaders like Hugo Chávez and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, nor with Chinese officials, but with the secretary of state of the Vatican, a traditional enemy of Communism and a critic of Cuba's record on human rights.

Mr. Castro's decision to begin his tenure by meeting the Vatican's top diplomat, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, a possible go-between with the United States and Europe, reflects his practical, no-nonsense style as well as his greater willingness to put ideology aside to achieve his goals than his brother often showed.

Mr. Castro, who is 76 years old, is hardly a fresh face to Cubans, having served as the defense minister for the past half century. Many people doubt that he intends to upend his brother's legacy. Yet he does seem inclined to govern more pragmatically than his more doctrinaire and romantic brother, who ran this country for 49 years as if it were his own business, signing off on almost every government decision.

Questions for discussion

1. OVERT PROPAGANDA:
 - a. Do you see any here? Do you see any specific point that the reporter is asking us to take away from the article?
 - b. Remember, Overt Propaganda—or any propaganda—can be either true or false.
 - c. Do you know enough about Cuba, or the Vatican, or Fidel Castro's governing style, to have a basis for believing, or not believing, the statements made here about them?

2. DEEP PROPAGANDA:
 - a. Is there any Deep Propaganda displayed in these first three paragraphs? What is it?
 - b. If you find any Deep Propaganda, does it fit with your own Propaganda ABCs?