Reining in the Bulls with Michael Marx
Interview with Kenny Bruno of the Cloud Mountain Foundation
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Name: Kenny Bruno
Current Title: Senior Advisor
Current Organization: Cloud Mountain Foundation
Title during campaign: US Campaign Coordinator
Organization during campaign: Corporate Ethics International
Name of campaign: Tar Sands Campaign
Date(s) of campaign: 2009-2015
Target companies/corporations: TransCanada

Summary: We aimed to stop the reckless and rapid expansion of the dirtiest project on earth, the tar sands industry in Alberta. One of the main strategies was to delay and prevent permitting of tar sands pipelines like Keystone XL, Northern Gateway, Energy East, Line 3 and Transmountain. We did stop Keystone XL, Northern Gateway and Energy East. Enbridge expansions of Alberta clipper and Line 3 were built. We impacted the tar sands industry in Canada, by constraining takeaway capacity and forcing policy change in Canada. The Keystone XL campaign also ignited a new fighting spirit in the US climate movement and a new focus on fossil fuel infrastructure.

00:02 Michael Marx:
Kenny Bruno, thanks for joining me for this interview.

00:07 Kenny Bruno:
Thank you, Michael.

00:08 MM:
We're going to talk about the tar sands, and I'm particularly interested in the network that was created for it. Who did you work for during the Tar Sands campaign?

00:21 KB:
I worked for Corporate Ethics International, which is a California-based nonprofit.

00:27 MM:
And what was your role with them?

00:30 KB:
I was the US coordinator. We had a bi-national campaign with the US and Canada. Canada had a coordinator and the US had a coordinator, and then we had sort of an overall coordinator who also was the primary contact with the foundations who supported the campaign.

00:50 MM:
Okay, great. What was the issue the campaign was dealing with?

00:56 KB:
The tar sands is this gigantic deposit of hydrocarbons, mostly in Alberta, and almost no one had ever heard of it. In the mid 2000's we were hearing an alarm sounded by the First Nations, the indigenous people in Alberta, that this industry was growing recklessly and rapidly and was destroying their livelihoods and contaminating the Boreal Forest in that area.

01:28 KB:
And as the groups looked more closely at it, we discovered that it was in the words of Environmental Defense Canada: "The most destructive project on Earth." It is a mega project, taking up a vast area that not only was polluting the region and the fisheries and the forests of First Nations territory, but also was a carbon bomb, because this was a very high carbon intensity fuel. And so the task we set ourselves was to stop the reckless and rapid expansion and to limit – we couldn't eliminate tar sands exploitation because it had already begun – but to limit its expansion as much as possible.

02:23 MM:
Good. That was the goal I was going to ask for the campaign, limit as much as possible. How are the organizations recruited in the US and Canada to join the campaign? Or were they?

02:41 KB:
We were fortunate that the campaign started with a certain amount of money that we were able to grant out. So it was a combination of groups that were impacted – in other words that lived in the Athabasca Tar Sands deposits region, and then groups that were expert and motivated and interested. And, let's be honest, being able to give a grant to a nonprofit organization is a very strong recruiting tool. But also it was natural to partner with groups that already worked in the Boreal Forest, already had connections with First Nation leadership, already had expertise, either technical expertise or in some cases, a sort of political expertise and knew how to operate in Ottawa and knew how to influence things. So we kind of ended up with a cadre of organizations that were able to really take a deep look at the problem and strategize together on how we could move toward our goal.

04:05 MM:
It sounds like, at least in Canada, it was almost self-organizing just given the fact that there was a pool of funds, there were grants that were possible, and many of those groups had already been working on related issues in the Boreal Forest. In the United States, which ended up being a big part of the campaign as well, how did those groups come into the campaign?

04:31 KB:
The US angle was interesting. There was some experience amongst a small but very dedicated group of activists in affecting Canadian environmental policy and practices through the US

because the US was the major market for Canadian products. That was true for some of the important forest protection campaigns, where the pressure on the Canadian actors came from the US. That insight was extended to the Tar Sands campaign. We realized, well, we can't really just pressure the Alberta government which hands out these permits, where the deposits are located. We have to do it from outside where the market is. And the US is the biggest market for Tar Sands oil. So we knew we had to do the US but as I said before, nobody had ever actually heard of the tar sands. And when I say nobody, I mean really, almost nobody.

05:47 KB:
There were a few organizations that had this kind of bi-national experience, including Forest Ethics, which was later rebranded as Stand, NRDC which had a Canada project and worked in the Boreal Forest. But we needed more than that in the US. And, I'm jumping ahead a little bit here, but after we decided that one of our tracks, one of our strategies was going to be to try to delay and prevent the construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline, which was one of the major linchpin infrastructure projects for the tar sands, then we went up and down the route in all six states where it would pass through and looked for local allies. And that was also very important. As the campaign gathered momentum, groups came to the campaign without us necessarily recruiting them, they were attracted to it for one reason or another, and joined the campaign of their own volition.

07:10 MM:
It sounds like there were quite a few groups involved. Was there an initial strategy or organizing meeting, where there was an attempt to bring at least a cadre of them together or, a larger number? Was it in just Canada, was it in the United States, or was there a combination that came together?

07:34 KB:
There was one meeting that I remember as really a seminal meeting. It was in Minneapolis, in a non-descript conference room in a Ramada Inn near the Mall of America, which by the way at that time was the largest mall in North America, where we really kind of got together and thrashed out this idea of how are we going to stop the expansion of the tar sands. And I think it was the first time that a bunch of people sat together and racked their brains, looked at it from all the different angles and said, we have to stop this from expanding, and how are we going to do it?

08:15 KB:
That was only one of many, many, many meetings, and at the time, I don't think we understood its significance. But looking back, I think that meeting really got us going. But at the same time, there were meetings even before that just to identify that the tar sands, as I said, being the most destructive project on Earth by some measures, just to identify it as worthy of a large-scale campaign. And then there were so many meetings to really help everyone understand all the facets, the technological facets, the dynamics with the communities, the political dynamics also. So many meetings where people shared their perspectives and where we really racked our brains to figure out how to do this because it was a very challenging campaign.

09:19 MM:
I'm jumping ahead a little bit, but were there annual meetings or, periodic meetings where a cadre of those groups came together as well to just revisit the strategy, update it?

09:35 KB:
There were frequent meetings, far more than annual. And we also broke out into work groups so that there were frequent meetings of work groups. There would be a meeting of almost all the key groups. But then at some point, the campaign grew so large that you really couldn't have a meeting of everyone at once. And a lot of the work got done in work groups in smaller chunks that corresponded to strategic tracks that we had decided were our best hopes.

10:10 MM:
Now, it was a network as opposed to a coalition or an alliance? Am I right about that? Just the way you've described it?

10:22 KB:
I would say it was not a coalition, because the way I think of a coalition is as an entity where everybody has to sign on to everything that the coalition does. And that's very cumbersome and slows you down and also can get kind of annoying. A network would be, in my definition, much looser. I would say we were somewhere in the alliance and network realm because we had this common goal. And the common goal, as I said, was to stop the expansion of the tar sands. So in a network, you could have groups that didn't share that goal. But in our campaign, pretty much everybody signed on to that campaign goal. And within the Tar Sands campaign, we also had other campaigns, for example, the campaign to stop the Keystone XL Pipeline. And that campaign also was more than a network because everybody who worked together shared the goal of stopping the construction of that pipeline. There was nobody we worked closely with who had a goal, for example, of making the pipelines safer. And I really think that if we had even some of our members, some of our allies trying for a safer pipeline or a smaller pipeline, or a different route, I think we would've failed. I think the unity of aiming for no Keystone pipeline at all, and the unity of going for no expansion or minimal amount of expansion is what held us together. So it's a bit more than a network, but a bit less than a coalition, and less rigid than a coalition.

12:18 MM:
I think that's a really important distinction. I get your point – it's a hybrid of a network closer to an alliance when they share the common goal. Whereas oftentimes you'll have a number of groups who have a very general goal like climate or to reduce the supply of oil, and production and keep oil in the ground, but they're all working on different campaigns within the network. So thank you. That's a good distinction to make. How many organizations were in this network? It sounds like it could have been pretty sizable.

13:01 KB:
It depends how you define it. I think in terms of organizations that we provided at least some funding to, at the peak it was probably 40 or 50. But then there would be other groups that

would be in our orbit, but not necessarily funded by the campaign. And some of those became very important. For example, in the US, 350.org came in from its own logic, without really us recruiting them. That was a really important turning point and , after they joined, we were able to coordinate and also help fund them, but largely they were self-funded.

13:59 MM:
I'm wondering how the network was organized or managed. You mentioned that you were the US coordinator, there was a Canadian coordinator, there was an overall director of the campaign, but how did you all manage 40 to 50 groups?

14:21 KB:
Right. Well, let's see. I think speaking for the US, which was my primary involvement, although I did interact with the Canadian campaign quite a bit as well, we had listservs, we had working groups, we had frequent conference calls (there was no zoom in those days), and I had good close one on one relationships with the key people in each organization. And we had probably quarterly in-person meetings with a robust happy hour afterwards that everybody really enjoyed. And I believe that the culture of the campaign was very friendly; we had our fights and we had our tensions, but for the most part, people enjoyed working with each other, and there was a lot of solidarity. I tried to arrange things so that it was pleasant, enjoyable, and not tedious for groups to be part of it.

15:33 KB:
The other thing that is important is we were an underdog campaign. Everyone knew that this had never been done. Something on this scale had not been done. And it gave us a sort of a fighting mentality. And the campaigners were like junkyard dogs. I mean that as a compliment - they would do anything to win this campaign. And because we did actions together, people watched each other work, and they learned to respect each other, and they saw how much they could learn from each other, and they understood that they, their organization, no way could they win this alone. Absolutely impossible. The only chance we had was coming together. So, people had a motivation to win this, and therefore a motivation to work together. And we also went from action to action. It's not just theoretical working groups, it was also, 'okay, the next thing we're going to do is a demonstration at the White House.' 'The next thing we're going to do is turn out people to the State Department hearings.' 'The next thing we're going to do is X and Y.' And we went from tactic to tactic and worked together on the ground, with actions, with actual events. And that's also very important to be doing constant activities and actions, and to watch each other work.

17:16 MM:
I want to underscore that because it sounds like when you brought groups together, there was a real attempt to build the camaraderie and they were wide open and embracing that. That's one piece of it. The other piece is build the team – that they realized that they couldn't win this big game alone, that you all were underdogs. And so they really had to operate as a team. And it sounds like the third thing is action. It doesn't go into a quiet period. The campaign keeps moving, and with the various tactics really maintaining the energy in the campaign, right?

18:03 KB:
Yes. You have to maintain the energy. The campaign has to have a rhythm. Some people are fond of saying you have to have a drumbeat. And I agree with that, but you also need a cymbal crash. You need these bigger moments where you get in the media and, step by step, you lift the campaign up. And the rhythm of the campaign, the spirit of the campaign, the culture of the campaign, those are all important. They may be hard to define, but they're important. They're just as important as the strategy itself.

18:43 MM:
Working groups, you alluded to the fact that, and I'm kind of building off the team point, you alluded to the fact that there were working groups. Do you remember what were some of the different working groups in the campaign?

19:02 KB:
Yes. In a big campaign, you must break it down into digestible tasks. You have to really get the work done in a working group. You can't do it with everyone together. But with the working groups I want to stress that we stayed flexible. At one time the communications group, the refineries group, the pipelines group, and the corporate users group. And then we reshuffled as things evolved; we shut down some working groups and opened up others. There were also ad hoc working groups. In other words, one year we did a big march in Washington. We had a core group that really took the lead in organizing that march, that was its own working group. Everybody participated. And when I say everybody, most groups participated, but there was a core group that was really taking the lead and kind of responsible on the bottom line for doing that.

20:03 KB:
And then later we did a week long encampment on the National Mall in Washington DC. Although it was a big project, it was sort of ad hoc also in the sense that it ended, and then that working group wasn't needed anymore. But of the ongoing working groups, we had a sort of policy and communications, politics – recruiting champions in Congress and pressuring elected officials. And although I don't know that we ever said it this way, we had an insiders working group, people who knew the Obama administration from the inside, former Obama insiders, trying to suss out how they were thinking and what would be the best way to get the right decision, because it was a presidential permit that was the key lever we had to prevent this from happening. And although prior to our campaign, so-called presidential permits were really made pro-forma by an undersecretary of state, we were insisting that the president needed to decide on the presidential permit, which on the surface makes sense. But how, in a such a big country, with so many issues that a president has to decide, how do you raise it up to the level where he pays attention? So we had a sort of an insider's working group. And then as I said, we tried to stay flexible and adjust and use people's strengths, so like the communications or media working group, a lot of people think they're great communicators, but it's really still a specialized thing to get coverage.

22:15 KB:
How do you get coverage? We worked really hard on that. And our first few attempts actually failed. I remind myself, sometimes when you win a campaign, people think everything was perfect, and that's not true at all. We had working groups that didn't work out actually. So we rejiggered it.

23:01 MM:
Which actually leads me into the question now: What were some of the biggest challenges that you faced in the campaign and in managing the network? But I'm thinking more at this point it's maybe moving into the campaign story. What were some of the big challenges?

23:19 KB:
Well, I think the biggest challenge we had is that there was no blueprint for how to get the right decision or decisions that would actually limit the growth of tar sands. And so we chose a number of approaches. We wanted to focus on big users of tar sands fuel, like trucking companies like FedEx and UPS or airlines. That line of campaigning really just never took off. We wanted to look at refineries that we see who are the buyers of the tar sands oil, but there's 150 of them in the US so that's 150 targets and very diffuse. So, that never really took off. Then there were the pipelines of which there were only a few. And early on, trying to stop the pipelines was just one of many strategies.

24:39 KB:
But over time, it emerged as the one that was making the most progress and that surprised a lot of people, including me – we all thought it was really a long shot. Nobody had ever really stopped a major pipeline before. And not only that, but there was some debate as to whether stopping the pipeline would actually affect the growth of the tar sands in Alberta. And it was very hard to convince even our allies that it would. many thoughts hey it's just a pipeline it doesn't impact production upstream. The advantage we had in our campaign was we had really good analysts in Canada, industry analysts who understood the industry, and followed industry publications, who explained to the rest of us how and why this was infrastructure that was crucial for tar sands expansion. And so we knew that if we could stop it, it really would make a difference upstream in Alberta, that was not something that the average person could or would have any idea about.

25:54 KB:
We had that advantage of really knowledgeable industry experts and observers in Canada. But the challenge was how do you choose something that people will get on board with? There's so many ways you could go, there's so many directions you could take, and how do you get everybody putting their shoulder behind the same boulder? We never a hundred percent had to do that because we still had a multifaceted campaign, but we were able ultimately to convince enough groups that we were going to fight the pipelines, and that that was going to be the most efficient strategy. Not easy, not super efficient, but the least difficult strategy. It was hard to get there but eventually energy coalesced around stopping Keystone XL.

26:56 MM:
The other challenge, I'm just thinking of the United States really is kind of addicted to oil. And it would seem to me that if Obama was key here, it's also really trying to change the whole trend by getting a president to actually restrict the supply of oil into the United States. Did that play out at all?

27:24 KB:
A huge challenge was the basic mentality that these pipelines were a done deal. That opposing them was a fringe idea, was such a long shot. I'm absolutely sure that the president had no inkling about Keystone when we started. Some undersecretary was going to sign the permit, and he would never know about it. This was so obscure. Like I said, nobody had heard of Tar Sands, and certainly nobody had heard of Keystone XL. So when we started, I think the biggest challenge for us was that nobody had ever heard of it. One of our great campaigners from NRDC, Liz Barrett Brown, used to wander around the halls of Congress with big pictures of the tar sand, showing how ugly it was, and begging people to listen to her. She called herself the Tar Sands bag lady because she was walking around with these big bags of evidence, but no one knew what the heck she was talking about.

28:33 KB:
There's a million issues that come at these senators and members of Congress every day. And this was way down on the list. Similarly, media never covered it. Ironically, at some point we got over the hump and the media couldn't get enough of it. That was largely because the Republicans decided to make supporting Keystone a central cause for them, and it became a high level political football. But, in the beginning it was a huge challenge to get anybody to care.

29:00 MM:
When you got people to finally care, what would you consider to be some of the biggest kind of tactical highlights of the Tar Sands campaign?

29:13 KB:
Early on, I think the first turning point we had was when Lisa Jackson, the head of the EPA, gave a failing grade to the state department's environmental statement and sent it back. And said, you have to redo this because many agencies get to comment. So that bought us almost a year. And that was due to really good insider work, was due to the fact that Lisa Jackson herself was sympathetic and understanding and cared about climate and due to some really good insider work by big green groups based in Washington. In the meantime, the next big turning point was when Bill McKibben convened a series for almost two weeks of daily sit-ins at the White House, calling on Barack Obama to reject this, and did so with a very friendly but firm tone.

30:31 KB:
In other words, he struck a very good balance saying, we're your supporters, we voted for you, and you said that this was the moment when we would finally start to stem the rising oceans and so on. We're going to hold you to it. The White House sit-ins were in August. And then in November there was an action where we surrounded the entire White House. The energy was

very high. That was another turning point because a few days later the Administration announced a long delay in the permitting of Keystone.

That, in turn, led to the Republicans deciding to make this a huge political issue. The Republicans, thinking it played to their advantage, actually made a front-page political story, month after month. You might call the GOP's counter-campaign a turning point as well.

31:12 MM:
How many people did it take to surround (the White House)?

31:16 KB:
Between 12,000 and 15,000 were there? Most of it was more than one deep, so you wouldn't need quite that many to encircle the White House. But we had 12 to 15,000. It was very inspiring. I walked around the perimeter and there were no gaps. I mean, there were people holding hands, touching around the entire perimeter of the White House. And of course, that's not the house. It's the fence around it. We had a concert, we had speakers, and we had very, very high energy.

31:51 KB:
The other thing that had happened, the other big turning point, was that we supported groups all along the pipeline route: Montana, South Dakota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas. And we tried to encourage and catalyze campaigns in all of those states. We had no idea which, if any of them would work.

32:20 KB:
But we caught fire in Nebraska. And the campaign caught fire amongst both farmers and ranchers, mostly white farmers and ranchers, many of them conservative Republican voters, and also tribal nations in South Dakota and in Nebraska, and some of the associated tribal organizations that weren't actually tribal nation governments. And that brought another dimension to the campaign that was very important because these were people living along the route.

32:58 KB:
These weren't staff for big green groups. They weren't lawyers, they weren't run of the mill activists from Massachusetts or California. They were people on the route that gave a very human face to the campaign. And so, in that fall of 2011, when Barack Obama postponed his decision till after the 2012 election, which was clearly a political move by him, he didn't want to approve it nor did he want to reject it. The reasoning he gave was that the route was not settled in Nebraska, and that was true. And so that was a very sort of soft landing place for him to delay his decision. And so I would say those turning points of galvanizing Nebraska landowners, of getting Bill McKibben and 350.org to adopt this as a major campaign for them, and getting EPA, and of provoking a high-level counter-campaign by the GOP, those were some of the early turning points.

34:18 MM:
So when you look back over the campaign, what are some of the things that you really attributed success to? You've actually alluded to several, but I think it might be worthwhile to just summarize.

34:35 KB:
One of the most important things we did was reaching out to the groups and the individuals in some cases along the route, and finding, in the case of Nebraska, an extremely talented organizer to spearhead the campaign in Nebraska. That was Jane Kleeb, the head of Bold Nebraska, who by the way, was not an environmental campaigner, not a climate person, but just a fantastic organizer with tremendous leadership qualities.

35:07 KB:
And even as a liberal progressive Democrat, was trusted by these conservative farmers and ranchers, and they believed in her, and they followed her. Something I had done years earlier as a toxics campaigner with Greenpeace was organize in the communities where incinerators or landfills or toxic waste sites were. It felt very natural to me. But the climate campaign in the US wasn't doing that sort of thing.

35:42 KB:
The climate campaign operated basically on scientific arguments. It was about emissions. And, the lead spokespeople were scientists and policy experts. In our campaign, they were joined by Joe Rancher in rural Nebraska. That was very effective. The other thing we did was the ambition to make Barack Obama the target.

36:18 KB:
At first we thought maybe Secretary Clinton should be the target, because this is a permitting process that takes place within the State Department. And she was the Secretary of State and also a public figure, obviously. But it turned out that actually Hillary Clinton was harder to influence than the president himself. And also we were looking at it originally from too much of a bureaucracy standpoint. Like, here's the person who's supposed to make the decision. But once we sort of dropped that and had the imagination to say, really, it should be the President, that was an important breakthrough for our campaign.

37:03 KB:
It's not easy to get to the President, but ultimately we did. Another thing that happened, and I can't necessarily explain how or why, but there was a certain magic that happened where once we got to a certain point, people sort of adopted it to the extent that everywhere Obama went, he was met with these ‘No KXL’ signs, even if it was only two people on the route waving the signs at his motorcade on the way to a fundraiser. But it could also be someone in that fundraiser, a wealth donor. It would be somebody who had meetings with his staff in the White House, everywhere he turned people took this cause up. And, ultimately, eventually, he kind of realized we’re not going to let this go. And, as he later put it, we can't be climate leaders and still approve this.

38:17 MM:
I want to pick up on that one because Obama was running for reelection. He was seeing people along the routes when he was going out to campaign. Were you getting reports from donors for example, or from the campaign insiders that donors were actually calling him up and threatening to withhold funding for the campaign? Did it go there?

38:42 KB:
I don't know if donors threatened to withhold funding or not, but he definitely heard from donors face-to-face about this. And, not only that, but we did something, and this wasn't my idea, but I thought it was a really smart thing. We did demonstrations at Obama reelection offices with sort of low level campaign managers.

39:15 KB:
When you do something at a campaign office, wow. People would go and say, “In 2008, I knocked on doors, I made calls, I gave money. I'm not doing that in 2012, unless you reject Keystone.” And let me tell you, the news of that zoomed up the chain to the campaign director in minutes. Whereas as president, it's very hard to get to him. As a presidential candidate, it’s much easier to reach him with the message. So that was a good lesson for me, that when someone's running, they're much more sensitive.

40:04 MM:
I remember historically that before the Tar Sands campaign, there was the big push, and I think funders put a lot of money into this for a tax on carbon, which goes back to your point of, it really was at this higher level kind of intellectual research, large organization level. And then the Tar Sands came along, and it was much more down on the ground. It leads me to ask the question, how did the Tar Sands campaign do you think actually influence the climate strategy going forward?

40:54 KB:
I was saying before that the climate campaign in the US didn't usually go into the communities that were affected by projects. But now that is standard practice. And, I think that the Keystone campaign very much influenced the DAPL campaign, Keystone I was originally opposed by North Dakota tribes, and the Keystone XL campaign was inspired and influenced by Tribal Nations in both Canada and the US, but for DAPL the Standing Rock tribal government leadership was central. And then that influenced the Line 3 campaign, which was also centered in indigenous territories in Minnesota. And I think all the major campaigns like that now have or try to have a strong presence in local communities with the leaders in the neighborhoods, in the actual places that are most affected, which only makes sense. And that's common now. All the campaigns have that. That wasn't happening when we started in 2009, 2010.

42:25 MM:
Kenny, when you look back over the campaign, are there any big lessons learned, beyond the ones you've already shared, any last thoughts as we go forward and for people that are going to

be facing these kind of challenges in the future and maybe trying to manage to pull together a large number of groups?

42:57 KB:
I think it's important to create a culture in the campaign where people are happy doing their work, where they're motivated doing their work, where they see others work, and see how great it is and learn to respect it. And I think it's important to choose your campaign goal extremely carefully. You know, spend some extra time thinking about the goal. And also the goal beyond the goal. And in this case, I have to say that the Keystone XL campaign was successful. We stopped it. Our theory turned out to be true, which is to say that stopping Keystone really did impact the expansion of the Tar Sands in Alberta.

44:04 KB:
Not only did it protect the Ogallala Aquifer and the Sandhills in Nebraska because the pipeline wasn't built, but it had an impact upstream, and it led pretty directly to Alberta's climate plan and a limit in how much they would extract. Where we fell short, and I've thought a lot about why this happened, and I can't fully explain it, but we did not manage to get this kind of climate test that President Obama applied to Keystone applied elsewhere. We have not been able to force President Biden to apply that test similarly, and meanwhile the Republican Party has gone completely the opposite direction in full denialism, and they would never reject a pipeline that the oil industry wanted.

45:06 KB:
The Democrats, of course don't deny climate change, but they're still ambivalent about this kind of infrastructure. And, I can't fully explain but we have not extended the principle of evaluating a pipeline on whether it significantly exacerbates carbon pollution, which was Barack Obama's formulation. We have not gotten the Democrats as a whole to extend that kind of climate test to other infrastructure projects, and we need to get there.

45:41 MM:
I want to underscore that point, because I think a lot of corporate campaigns, often they stop when they get the company to make a commitment to change its practices. They've really evolved now where they get the lead company to make a commitment and then they go to work on the rest of the industry. And where they've really evolved is actually institutionalizing the change, putting it in place so that everybody has to obey. And, the application here from the Tar Sands campaign is that Obama said – and I think it was a result of the Tar Sands campaign that he said, we're going to submit other projects to this climate test, but it's getting that institutionalized.

46:37 KB:
Right. Obama made an important climate speech at Georgetown in 2014, and he said, I will evaluate Keystone XL on the basis of whether it significantly exacerbates carbon pollution. But he never quite said, I'll evaluate all projects on that basis. We tried to force that to happen, and we still haven't gotten there. Now it's important to say that Trump, on the first day of his

presidency, and this gives you an idea of how much of a political football Keystone had become, Trump approved it. But he did it in a very sloppy way. And our great lawyers were able to hold it off for the entire four years of his presidency. And then on day one of Biden's presidency, in fact, within a few hours, he rejected it again. So Keystone itself, we kind of got there politically where President Biden felt compelled to fulfill a promise and reject it right away. But again, we have not really gotten him to apply that same principle and extend that same principle to other infrastructure. The Mountain Valley pipeline got packaged with a must pass legislation by Joe Manchin and President Biden went along with it. And, that's just fully against the principle of how Keystone XL was decided. I don't know if I would call it a regret exactly, but it's a limit to the victory. And again, I think we surpassed our own expectations in how it impacted the Tar Sands in Alberta, which was the original point. But we've fallen short of getting infrastructure evaluated on the basis of its contribution to the climate change.

49:08 MM:
So even though the Tar Sands campaign, clearly in the last 20 years is really one of the seminal environmental campaigns, even at the end of those campaigns, it feels like there's always more to do, more that we could leverage, and that we have to work on to really institutionalize those changes and carry it forward.

49:33 KB:
And I think one thing that I've learned is that a campaign is only one piece of a bigger cause. For example the Montgomery Bus boycott was only one campaign within the Civil Rights movement. They won that campaign and the buses were desegregated, but that did not mean equal rights and freedom for black people in America. Not at all. It was just one thing. Desegregating buses and lunch counters was incredibly hard but it was only the beginning. So too, these corporate and environmental campaigns, win or lose, it’s the bigger cause that gives them meaning. The meaning of the campaign is really found in the movement that it's part of, and the movement is a lifetime's work or multi-generational work, just like racial justice or peace, restoring a safe climate is a multi-generational cause.

50:42 MM:
Kenny, it's been a really great interview. I think that's a really nice place to end is to remember that all these campaigns are feeding into a larger movement. There's that larger kind of progressive movement, but then there's the components of it, and you alluded to them. I really appreciate your time and the opportunity to get a behind the scenes look at what really truly is one of the seminal campaigns in the last 20 years. Thank you.

51:16 KB:
And, of course, I have to say for the record that Michael Marx of Corporate Ethics International was one of the key visionaries and also a pleasure to work with on that campaign.

51:36 MM:
Ah, thanks.

51:37 KB:
Thanks.

51:43 MM:
I really appreciate it. Thank you. I consider working with you and working on that campaign to be really the highlight of my environmental experience. And we got to work on some really great campaigns over the years.

51:57 KB:
I always say it was the campaign of a lifetime.

52:04 MM:
Definitely.