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The Empire Club Presents

## **Ezra Levant: Ethical Oil**

Chairman: Verity Craig, President, The Empire Club of Canada

### **Head Table Guests**

**Tim Reid**, Director of Business Development, ZED Financial Partners, and Past President, The Empire Club of Canada

**Bishop Mark MacDonald**, National Indigenous Anglican Bishop

**Alana Williams**, Student, Rosedale Heights School of the Arts

**Claire Kennedy**, Partner, Bennet Jones LLP

**Doug Pepper**, President and Publisher, McClelland & Stewart

**Dennis Matthews**, Director of Marketing, Sun News

**Andrea Wood**, Chief Legal Officer, WIND Mobile, And Director, The Empire Club of Canada

**Stephen Bowman**, Managing Partner, Toronto, Bennet Jones LLP; and

**Brad Martin**, President and Publisher, Random House.

### **Introduction by Verity Craig**

It is now my absolute pleasure and delight to introduce our keynote speaker for this this afternoon Mr. Ezra Levant. Rare is the opportunity to introduce someone with the complex notoriety of today's speaker. To be completely frank, it's hard not to be intimidated at the task ahead of me. One nil single word or phrase can possibly describe our speaker today. I will offer this I will offer this single sentence Ezra Levant is a lightning rod for opinion, both his and those of others.

Our speaker Ezra is a lawyer, writer, political activist and media personality. He's the founder and former publisher of the Western Standard, hosts "The Source Daily," on Sun News Network, and has written several books on politics. His most recent book is *Ethical Oil, The Case of Canada's Oil Sands*. Born in Calgary, Ezra holds a commerce degree from the University of Calgary and a law degree from the University of Alberta. Over his career, he's taken on the Canada Pension Plan, trade unions, the minimum wage, universal health care and subsidized tuition. If Ezra were a hockey player, you probably described him as leaning right while shooting at the left. He's so dedicated to his free speech, human rights and the cause of conservatism. His commitment and ability to sell a vision made him prime mover in what we've come to know now as Unite the Right movement. He gave up the energy that fostered the merger of the Reform Party, and the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada into the party that now governs our country. The *National Close Post* declared that his book *Shakedown* was the most important public affairs book of the year. His current book, *Ethical Oil*, and his premise that the real test of ethical oil was not in comparing the oil sands to some impossible, ideal standard, but comparing to its real competitors. It has shaken government, public and media opinion not only across North America, but around the world. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming Mr. Ezra Levant.

### **Mr. Ezra Levant**

Thank you very much Verity. When you said, "No one word sums up Ezra Levant," I am very grateful that people didn't shout out your suggestions for what that word might be. It's a pleasure to speak at the Empire Club. I'm a simple boy from the colonies way out west. And in Alberta, where frankly, a chicken

lunch would have been the vegetarian option. So it's nice to be here in the heart of the Empire at the Royal York. I'm sure it's a pleasure to be here. Thanks to Bennett, Jones, so many of you here today. It's because of you that frankly, I'm not in jail right now. So, let's be honest, and will that we'll deal with the parole officers later.

Folks, it's great to be here. I am limited in time because I got to go and take my show at two. So, you were very lucky. This will not be the two hour speech that it normally is.

I want to tell you about *Ethical Oil*. It's a book that I wrote, by accident. I know that sounds funny, how to write a book by accident? Well, it's the truth. A couple of years ago, I had written a book and my friend Jonathan Kaye helped me out called *Shakedown*, and it was about freedom of speech and human rights and that sort of thing.

I was at the Ottawa Writers Festival talking about it. And I was there a little bit early, and they said, "Look, there's some guy downstairs talking about the oil sands, why don't you downstairs and make it a panel discussion?" I said, "I simply can't, I really don't know anything about the oil sands." "You're from Alberta. You're an expert. Go." I didn't want to be rude. I mean, they were very generous to me. So, I went downstairs, there was room not much bigger than this. All the walls were adorned with what I call "oil sands, pornography," these poster size pictures. Here's an example from the Greenpeace website. That's oil sands porn. It's designed to get an emotional reaction and I just made a joke, "Oh, there's my apartment right there." You know, I mean, I tried my best. But basically, let's be honest, I made everyone in that room angrier at the oil sands by the time when they were done.

It's not that the people in that room were malicious or hostile. They weren't professional fundraisers from Greenpeace or anything. In fact, if I really thought to myself, the average person in that room was a do-gooder. They were maybe a little utopian, but they were idealists. I'd say the average person in that room was a 20-something university student from McGill, who had never been further west than Hamilton, maybe taking, vegetarian studies. Oh, you know who I'm talking about? Let's call her. Zoë. There's a picture of me, by the way.

[Picture is shown.]

There's a picture of me -artist's rendition of me being chased out of there. Didn't go very well. But that Zoë, Zoë didn't like what I had to say. And I was wrong. And I think I'm a persuasive fella. But the people in that room, I hated it. And I thought and one of the rare moments of self-reflection in my life, I thought, "What did I do wrong?" And I thought, you know, the problem is, I'm a right-wing guy, and everything I said --I'm a skeptic of the theory of manmade global warming, I like profits, I'm a catholic. Everything I was saying was just needling, needling, needling and making people angrier. And I thought, "Hang on a second, what if I, what if I threw out my vocabulary? My words, and I tried again, what if I am a right-wing guy? What if I tried to write a left-wing book? Can a right-wing guy write a left-wing book?" Well, I don't know every guy in this room spends half our time thinking, "What do women want?" So if a guy can think, "What do women want?" Maybe a right-wing conservative from Alberta can say what does Zoë want? What does Zoë care about?

If you ask her, she'll say, "I care about the environment, I care about David Suzuki." He believes in you know, Zoë would say she believes in clean air, clean water and clean soil. And the last 10 years Zoë has

been taught to be totally terrified of greenhouse gases. I am meeting some greenhouse gases right now: carbon dioxide, there are some people in the room emitting methane, I will not point you out. So, but this is the first thing that Zoë cares about: environmental responsibility. But if you look at the word Greenpeace, the first part is the green; but there's the peace part. Zoë cares about peace, if you ask her. And that's not all Zoë cares about: the plight of the working man. Zoë has only worked in Starbucks as a barista, but she still sympathizes totally with the working man. I'm not making this up. I mean, a large part of the progressive movement in Canada is labor unions - I mean, they certainly helped elect the new premier here -but that is not all what Zoë cares about. I mean, I care about right-wing stuff. But Zoë cares about environmental responsibility, peace, the treatment of workers, and probably the most important thing to Zoë, it's so important, it's so fundamental, she probably doesn't think of it unless she's prompted. It's human rights. We take it for granted. In Canada, we have a woman as a Supreme Court Chief Justice, we've had the last two Governors General in a row were women actually, we do take it for granted that women and men and all races are equal. It's so normal in Canada, we don't think about it. But if you if you were to probe Zoë, she said yes, it's very important to me. So, these four values: environmental responsibility, peace, the treatment of workers and human rights, that is how she talks. These are Zoë's progressive values.

This is not how I talk. I mean, I actually agree with these things, I might put them in a slightly different order, and I would use a different lingo. I wouldn't say treatment of workers, or economic justice, I'd say, you know, freedom of association, the right to unionize, things like that. These are the four values that Zoë has. And the problem in that room that day in Ottawa when I lost the bank, was that so many people in that room who were good faith Liberals who were trying to make the world a better place, were comparing the oil sands against some fantasy fuel of the future that's perfect in every way. It just, it hasn't been invented yet. I mean, Lithium crystals, that's totally awesome, we should totally get off oil and use Lithium crystals. Hey, great idea. Let me know when that happens. You probably won't have to let me know. I think I'll hear about it. Or what was the movie an avatar, they were mining Unobtainium, which is a pretty good name for it because it hasn't been invented yet. If you're going to debate oil sands oil versus the fantasy fuel of the future, I have to tell you right now you are going to lose every time.

But that is not a morally serious discussion. Zoë who really wants to heal the world. The practical application of ethics is dealing with real choices in real life. And the thing is, if you do not fill up your car today with gas from the oil sands, you are going to be filling it up with gas from somewhere else. So, forget about Canada, we're fuelling 300 million Americans down there. And I can tell you right now where they're going to get their oil from if not from the oil sands because I know where they got it from before the oil sands came along.

If we were talking about olive oil, fine. Buy it from whoever you want; Greece, Italy, good folks, knock yourself out. But the thing about the crude variety. I don't know what God was thinking when he was handing the stuff up, but he gave it all to the world's bastards. I mean, look at this list of countries ranked, which is the top 10 list of countries ranked by oil reserves.

*[Picture is shown.]*

The skull and bones is my symbol for OPEC, that's not the real corporate symbol, I should let you know, but I think when the cameras are off, they put on the pirate hats and say 'avast' a lot in Arabic. And anyways, Russia is not a member of OPEC there, they're terrifying enough; they don't have to be they

got Vladimir Putin there. If you will notice, we are the only Western liberal democracy on that list of Top 10 countries ranked by reserves, and reserves are a good measure because that's where oil is coming from 10 years from now, 20 years from now. It's us and a bunch of terrorists and murderers and dictators and bad people, and so I would say to Zoë if she was here now if I could go back in time and try and win that debate, I would say Zoë, fine, you don't like oil sands fine. You care about your four liberal values: environmental responsibility, peace treatment of women and human treatment, workers and human rights. Fine. Tell me where you want your oil from Zoë. Because it's not enough for you to say Lithium crystals.

If Americans don't fill up their cars with oil from us, they're getting it from somewhere else. And by the way, not driving. No one means it in the one of the largest countries and cold countries in the world; but it doesn't even matter, because in the year 2009, we reached a tipping point. That was the first time ever more cars were bought and sold in China than in the United States. And they all want to be two car families; and same with India. And so even if every single Canadian in active moral righteousness said, "We're not gonna drive anymore." Fine. Doesn't make a difference. China will burn all the oil they need. That's why the world's demand is increasing.

These four values, I promise you, if you take these four liberal values, my phrase is this. If Zoë was here today, there may even be a few Zoë's in the crowd, if Zoë was here today, she would say "Yes, yes, that is what I stand for." Fine, Zoë, then go around the world in these top 10 countries, and you tell me, you tell me. We're going to take a tour of the world and we're going to come back to Canada and I put it to you that using your Liberal criteria, not my right-wing, George Bush talk, your left-wing Greenpeace talk, I put it to you that our oil sands oil is the Fairtrade coffee of the world's oil industry. Absolutely. Think globally, act locally. Okay, let's go through these very quickly.

*[Picture is shown.]*

That is a picture of the oil sands, that oil sands porn. It looks like something out of I don't know, the land of Mordor in Lord of the Rings. It looks like a moonscape. It is awfully ugly, and that is actually the chief problem with the oil sands: it is ugly; which is why it's so profitable for Greenpeace to put those in their fundraising letters. But here's a fact: only 2% of the landmass of the oil sands is the oil close enough to the top that you would mine it this way. You don't strip mine something that's a kilometer down. The oil sands are the size of Florida, or the size of the UK. I mean, they're huge. And if you were to believe in the oil sands activists, they would have you think that that whole thing will be dug up. Only 2%. Well, of course, not all at once, over the course of 50 years, the other will be mined this way, this is called in situ, underground, all this area, all this area where the trees are growing, the critters are frolicking and birds chirping is oil sands being produced. This is the footprint here and then the pipe scope underneath it. I'll tell you how it works in a minute. Water use: only 2% of the river flow is a lot. It's all 100 oil sands companies combined. Only 1% of that is used even that is restricted during a period of low flow. Here's what the chart I was going to show you.

*[Picture is shown.]*

This is how underground oil sands works. You have one pipe coming in steaming it up the other pipe pulling it out. The top is not disturbed. There are no tailings ponds, and there's no fresh water use. Why

am I giving you these little factoids? Why am I showing you this? Because I don't think I can actually deprogram an Al Gore robot into all of a sudden, but if I can put a few facts, showing the oil sands are maybe not quite as horrendous as they ought to be on their first criteria. Maybe I can buy enough time to talk about peace, treatment of workers and human rights. Let me show you. By the way, if you care about tailings ponds, the phosphate tailings ponds in Florida are two or three times as big as the oil sands tailings ponds up here, but we won't mention that because we love our American CO2.

When I was a kid, this was so long ago, the first time I ever heard of carbon dioxide was when we were learning about photosynthesis. It was called plant food back then, but now it's called a pollutant. This fella here speaking in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and he condemns the oil patch in America. He doesn't really criticize it in Saudi Arabia. He has convinced us that CO2 is a pollutant, and I'm a skeptic on that. But I don't try and convince Zoë not to believe in her pagan cult that says CO2 is angry and we're inflaming The Goddess Earth. I don't try and deprogram someone because it would be like someone telling me to convert from my religion. It's just not going to work. I will say fine. I accept on your terms, Zoë, that CO2 is a pollutant. Fine. Fine. I accept that. Let me prove to you though, that over the last 20 years according to Environment Canada, the per barrel amount of CO2 has fallen by 29% in the oil sands. To make one barrel of oil in the oil sands today, we use 29% less energy, 29% less emissions than 20 years ago. I can hardly wait to see where we're going to be 5-10 years from now. So, we're getting better all the time.

I can assure you they don't care about these things in OPEC countries. They don't care about people, they're probably not going to care about flora and fauna. All 100 oil sands companies combined in about 45 megatons of CO2 a year mega sounds pretty big, but if you put it into comparison, a single coal fired power plant in Asia, one plant, and it's 42 megatons, and they're building two or three of these, each week in China. Here's a picture of a power plant in northern China.

*[Picture is shown.]*

That black stuff in the air is indeed carbon. It's not CO2, it's particulate pollution. They're building two or three of these a week in China. That's real pollution in the air. According to the World Bank and the IMF, 20 out of the 30 most polluted cities are in China. We could shut down on the oil sands -by the way, the air quality in Fort McMurray is cleaner than in Toronto - we can shut down the oil sands and I can assure you would make not a drop of difference in the world. This is the Tai Chung power plant in Taiwan.

*[Picture is shown.]*

42 megatons of CO2, it's expanding it to 56 megatons. Look at that haze. It's awesome. Of course, underground coal mine fires in China emit 360 megatons of CO2 a year. So that's sort of, "Oops, Boss, I lit the coal mine on fire. That thing's gonna burn for a century." I'm just trying to put things in perspective a bit, perspective. Those red dots are the amount of carbon emitted by US coal fired power plants, that yellow dot in Alberta is all the oil sands combined. If you actually cared about carbon, you would probably focus on other things unless maybe you had a competitive or corporate or trade agenda.

*[Picture is shown.]*

That's your oil sands oil per barrel. That's how much CO2 there is per barrel of oil sands oil. It is true that your Saudi Arabian your Moammar Gadhafi special, has about 6-10% less CO2 per barrel than oil sands, it's true; because they don't have to boil it out of the sand like we do. So, if you don't care about blood in your oil, go ahead, buy your Saudi variety. But if you're buying from Nigeria and Iraq, know that know that their CO2 per barrel is about the same. And this is using the Obama administration's Argon National Labs, because they flare so much of the natural gas that comes up with their oil, they just burn it. I mean, Nigeria burns \$2 billion worth of natural gas a year. They just flare it, we catch it and sell it. Venezuela, very high carbon oil, that's the oil that would be displaced by the pipeline, the Keystone XL pipeline. So we would actually be displacing higher carbon fuel from Venezuela, with our lower carbon fuel from the oil sands.

What's the highest carbon fuel in the world is from California? It's so high carbon is called California Heavy. It's so heavy, it has to be exempted by Nancy Pelosi and Arnold Schwarzenegger and their low carbon fuel standards. So, I guess if I'm arguing with Zoë, I'm gonna say, "Look, we can't get rid of all the oil in the world. So, it's just not realistic. But wouldn't you agree with me that we should take what steps we can? Shouldn't we replace as much California Heavy, and as much Venezuelan oil with oil sands oil knowing that our oil is lower carbon per barrel? If you care, Zoë, you told me you cared. You told me you cared. Zoë take your hands out of your ears and listen to me."

Alright, look, I'm not going to convince anyone who's been an Al Gore bot their whole life to suddenly love the oil sands, but maybe I can fight them to draw there and say, all right, but you care about more than just green; I know that because your organization's called Greenpeace. We Canadians invented peacekeeping. We won a Nobel Prize for it. The Saudis invented 9/11 15 out of the 19 terrorist came from that country. They're still the world's largest financiers of terrorism. Iran is using its oil money to build nuclear weapons and long-range missiles. This is Russia invading Georgia; oil has refreshed their Treasury.

*[Picture is shown.]*

This is Sudan. That's a neighborhood called Darfur. 300,000 people were murdered in Darfur, according to the low estimate by the UN. If you take 300,000 people, multiply it by 185 ounces of blood per human body, divide that into the number of barrels of oil exported by Sudan over the same period of time. It's 6.5 milliliters of blood for every damn barrel exported by Sudan: that's about as much blood as would fit in a lipstick tube. My point is those Sudanese were so stupid. Why didn't they become birds or whales so Greenpeace would give a damn? It is true that 1500 ducks that sat down in a tailings pond in Alberta by accident when the electronic scarecrow wasn't working. It is true man, *mea maxima culpa*. 15 out of 1600 birds were killed.

Now Greenpeace would use the word tragedy. I would not. I would say industrial accident. I would say PR disaster. They were prosecuted in a criminal court. It was it was a showdown. \$3 million fine. I would call it a prosecutorial abuse of power and resources. But I'm not gonna call it a tragedy because I need to keep the word tragedy sharp like a rarely used knife because every once in a while, there actually is a tragedy in the world; and if I call this a tragedy, what word is left when there really is a tragedy? 1600 ducks 300,000 people, which one has the Greenpeace protests? Which one is in the Greenpeace fundraising letters? Stupid Darfurians. Why couldn't they just have dressed up as dolphins or something? Oh, by the way, if you care about birds, per unit of energy windmills kill 445 times more,

but that's only if you care about birds. I care about birds very deeply. I can put away with 50 chicken wings.

Treatment of workers. Hey, anyone here been to Dubai? Anybody here been to Dubai? Dubai is super awesome. That is a picture of the world's largest building called the Burj Khalifa.

*[Picture is shown.]*

It's named after the dictator of Dubai. Of course he's gonna call it after himself. It's sort of phallic issue there but it is a gleaming tower. There is so many gleaming pretty things; very shiny. If you like white alabaster pillars, you'll like Dubai. It's like the US south before the Civil War. Lots of beautiful plantations, white pillars. Just don't look at all the brown people. For every Emirati, there are four foreign indentured workers, always minorities, often from the Philippines, Thailand, Bangladesh, fellow Arab Palestinians, who live in squalor. This is pretty, this is ugly. This is the reality. It's not just men. There are literally millions of indentured women throughout the Gulf, who are, and if you think they're just economically abused, if you don't think they're physically and sexually abused, you are hiding your eyes.

*[Picture is shown.]*

Who's this man sending a batch of the \$5 billion? Why did he do to that? Well, he stole it from Nigeria. If you work out, according to Nigeria, his own commission of corruption This is their confessions. This isn't for an accusation. The Nigerian government itself admits the \$366 billion stolen over the years by their own politicians and bureaucrats; that works out to \$18 a barrel for every barrel ever exported since 1960. Price of oil hasn't even always been 18 bucks. They were stealing 18 bucks a barrel when oil was only costing 14 bucks. That's how they treat workers. How do we treat workers in Fort McMurray? \$150,000 for a welder, the most generous, the richest city in Canada according to the United Way, the most generous city in Canada, also.

Human rights. I've got to speed up because I do want to leave some time for questions. And I gotta go do a TV show. Human Rights.

*[Picture is shown.]*

This is a picture of Melissa Blake. She is the mayor of Fort McMurray; was just reelected last year. Completely unremarkable to have a young woman mayor in Alberta. Alberta was where the famous five were from, with the first female magistrate in the British Empire, Beverly McLaughlin the Chief Justice I mean, it is the most, we're the first Muslim mayor in north in in Canada. I mean, we are a meritocracy. Question: how many young women mayors are there in Saudi Arabia? There are none. It is against law to be a young woman mayor in Saudi Arabia. It's against the law to vote for young woman in Saudi. It's against the law to drive, against the law to go out without your one woman burial shroud on, against the law to feel the sun on your face. In Saudi Arabia, if you're a woman it is against the law to get elective surgery without the permission of your husband slash owner. In Saudi Arabia, it is against the law to be raped. In Saudi Arabia - I did not say to rape, I said to be raped, because to be raped in Saudi Arabia is the crime of adultery. And you will get the lash for your crime of being raped that Saudi Arabia and Iran. This is a picture from Amnesty International, where they actually stone women in the 21st century.

*[Picture is shown.]*

Do you care about gays? Zoë does. Let me tell you that in Iran, according to the US State Department, since the Revolution, 4000-6000 gay men and lesbians have been executed for the crime of being gay. This is an actual photo of two gay men being hanged for just that.

*[Picture is shown.]*

In Dubai, they're much more liberal. They just throw gays in jail and pump them full medicine to de-gay them. Very, very, very liberal of them.

That's an Aboriginal worker in the oil sands.

*[Picture is shown.]*

The oil sands are the largest employer Aboriginal people in Canada. They're not fake work, make work affirmative action jobs; they need the labour. 100,000 \$150,000 a year jobs. And that's just the direct employment. There are Aboriginal bands out there like the Fort Mac band: 0% unemployment. Anyone with the companies come in and beg the kids to finish high school and say, "You finish high school, we'll give you a six figure job." They probably have better high school completion rates in some of those reserves than in some parts of Toronto, I dare say.

Listen, I've told you the case against the oil sands some, but I'm going to take just a couple more minutes. I'm gonna whip through some more slides; I have 104 slides.

*[Picture is shown.]*

This is a pipeline. This is a this is a pipeline that's proposed to go from northern Alberta all the way down to Texas. It's called Keystone. The yellow dotted line is called Keystone XL. Why would you sell oil to Texas? That's like selling ice to Iqaluit. Well, the reason is because that's where all the refineries are. This pipeline would displace Hugo Chavez conflict oil and replace it with ethical oil that also happens to have a lower carbon footprint. It'll pump \$20 billion into the US economy. It will be the largest property taxpayer in many of the counties through which it flows.

Now, this is just us being friendly neighbors say, "Hey, we got an idea. We got an idea." Here's an idea: a bunch of new jobs, bunch of money, but Texas, it's just a suggestion from your friends. Or you can do what you're doing now: spending \$50 billion a year securing the Persian Gulf. You could spend \$50 billion a year being the Brinks Truck to get the Saudi oil, and you divide that into the number of barrels of oil America imports from the Gulf: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, etc. It works out to a \$54 a barrel subsidy. So you can have your American taxpayer and your American servicemen provide blood and treasure to escort your Saudi oil in, and how's that working for you? As Dr. Phil would say. Or here's just an idea, just an idea: why don't you get off the OPEC oil, have a secure supply from your friends to the north who don't hang women and gays? Just an idea. There's another idea: why don't we sell our oil to China? That way we don't have just one customer.

The oil sands activists, besides attacking Austin, say, "We cannot have any tankers; tankers are dangerous." There's tankers going up and down right now bring it all from Alaska. There are tankers

already exporting oil from Vancouver. Eastern Canada imports its oil by tanker. Did you know that 54% of Canadian consumption is actually imported? All that good stuff from the west, we sell it to America. You guys out here are bringing in conflict oil. This is a ship. This is one of Paul Martin's boats, that leak diesel in the St. Lawrence Seaway.

*[Picture is shown.]*

That is an actual cargo ship wedged sideways in the St. Lawrence Seaway. That's another shot of a, "Yeah, boss. You see, I just wasn't looking." And my point is, could you imagine the freak out if these boats were exporting ethical oil, but we have accidents all the time with conflict. So, this is a conflict oil tanker in Labrador or run aground.

*[Picture is shown.]*

Conflict oil tanker run aground in northern passage. I got a picture. There's a whole website dedicated to oil tankers running aground. That's where I got these pictures from. My point is that people who say they're against oil tankers, they're not. They have no problem with us importing conflict oil in strange conditions, treacherous conditions. They only hate ethical oil going out. They're happy with unethical conflict, all Sharia oil, gay bashing oil coming in.

*[Picture is shown.]*

What's this slide? I'm joking about this, but this is the most un-Canadian guy I know. He's not anti-Canadian, just un-Canadian. And by that, I mean, he's got so much chutzpah, I don't think he could survive in this country for more than a few days. And the four values I talked about: environmental responsibility, peace, treatment workers and human rights, those are Canadian values. But unfortunately, there's another aspect of being Canadian, which is modesty, humility, opening the door for the other guy, being quiet, being a little bit demure, deferential, that is great in a person; that is wonderful to have, you know, humility as a personality trait. And one day, I'll know what that feels like. But for a country, for a country to be humble, and un-Donald Trump-like doesn't work when your competitors are the world's butchers. We're the gentlest country in the world. That's why Greenpeace comes here to break into refineries; try breaking into refinery in Saudi Arabia, or Iran, or Venezuela, or Nigeria, or even post 9/11 United States. The reason they come here is precisely because we're so gentle. When they broke out of the Calgary tower, the police held traffic back to protect them. That is not how it works in Saudi Arabia.

I'm going to whip through a few more slides so quickly Verity, you're not gonna believe it. I set up a website called ethical.org. This just perpetuate the idea because I got to go to get a real job now at *The Sun*. Thanks, Sun, by the way for buying lunch, appreciate it. Set up a website blah, blah, blah, put together some comparison ads, and there we go. The Saudis took note of this right away. I did not know that at the time. The Saudis started to visit our website; Dictatorship vs. Democracy, Sudan vs you know, how are gays treated in different countries? Oh, we started getting a little bit of traffic, in that first week we had 41 visits from the kingdom. This week, we were just getting 3000 visits a week. Okay, fine. It's not a big website. It's kind of long in daily blog entries, myths and lies exposed, PayPal, thank you very much. 1000 likes on Facebook. It was coming along, 1200 Twitter followers This is the *Globe and Mail* said they liked the diamond analogy, the conflict-free diamonds. Things are coming along fine. This is a coda to my story, by the way. *Calgary Herald* liked it. They put it on the front page. 208 Media

mentions. Oh great, coming along. National mentioned it; we got 479,000 Google hits. That's pretty cool.

Then we had this TV ad, can you press play on the TV ads just for 30 seconds.

*[Video.] FACT: last year, we bought over 400 million barrels of oil from Saudi Arabia. We bankrolled a state that doesn't allow women to drive, doesn't allow them to leave their homes or work without their male guardian's permission, and a state where a woman's testimony only counts for a half of a man's. Why are we paying their bills and funding their oppression? Today, there's a better way: ethical oil from Canada's oil sands. Ethical oil. A choice we have to make.*

We scraped together \$2,000, that ad cost about 500 bucks, because there's a lot of stock imagery and we paid 100 bucks to do the voice. And we got the Oprah Winfrey Network to run that ad like six times. It was just to say it ran on TV and Oprah Winfrey sort of make the point about women's rights. We put it on YouTube and no big whoop. Okay, fine. It was done, but then we got a call from something called Telecaster. That's the Canadian agency that approves TV ads, and they said, "Ezra, we have received a threatening letter from the Saudis." I said, "No, you haven't. BS." But they said, "Yes, they hired one of the world's largest law firms, Norton Rose; 2600 lawyers, to threaten TV stations and the Telecaster Broadcasting Authority not to run that ad again." Our tiny little website that I thought no one was watching. The Saudis were watching indeed, and they hired the biggest gorilla in the room. We instantly tried to buy ads on every network and CTV said, "Yes." Then they got a letter from Norton Rose and they wrote back and said, "No." We had an instance where Saudi Arabia was bringing him, not a fatwa, I won't call a fatwa, but it was threatening. It brought in a little bit of their intolerance and their censorship from Riyadh to Canada, and shame on CTV for complying. I knew we had struck a chord. They proved my very point about them being intolerant to dissent. We love complainers so much in Canada that we take the country's biggest complainer, we give him a six-figure job, a free house, and we call them the Leader of the Opposition. In Saudi Arabia, they put him in jail or kill him. Oh, boy. 52,000 people went to YouTube to check out the ad the Saudis didn't want them to see. Thank you, King Abdullah, whatever your name is.

A couple of you are sitting at a table sponsored by Americans for OPEC. We have a little group called Americans for OPEC, and they went down to the White House to stop Canada; blame Canada, and sort of point out that if you're not bringing your oil in from Canada, you're getting from somewhere else. Americans for OPEC. Blame Canada. What's my point that I want people to remember that is always a choice, and the choice is not between oil sands oil and Lithium crystals. We had a little counter protest outside Lush, a store that said, "Oh the oil sands. We don't like the oil sands." You don't like oil from the oil sands? Okay, fine. Lush. Here's a couple of performance artists in the Byward Market in Ottawa, handing out pictures about Lush.

*[Picture is shown.]*

Lush attacks Canadian oil sands yet does business in Saudi Arabia. What's a company that believes in women's liberal freedom and empowerment doing business in Saudi Arabia? How dare they take on the oil sands? They did not make this campaign.

The Saudis made the front page the *National Post* and also the *Calgary Herald*. Jason Kenney went on a tear. Even the *Toronto Star* wrote about it. I can't even read that. There was a funny cartoon in the *National Post*. We don't take kindly to foreign governments threatening John Baird, Joe Oliver. Even Paul Dewar, the NDP, doesn't like the oil sands much. I think the Saudis probably should stick to regulating their own affairs. You're Damn straight. Go pound sand. I love saying that. It sounds a little bit racist, but it's not. Go pound sand. Love saying that the Saudis.

I'm gonna close with an idea. It's just an idea. I call it, "certification marks." Every piece of clothing you are wearing has a label, country of origin labeling. Everything in Walmart, everything in Toys R Us. Where's your oil come from? You go to the gas pump. You don't know. You just know octane. I don't even know what that means. How about if we had one pump that said "Made in Canada?? Okay. One pump, "Made in Nigeria." One pump, "Made in Saudi Arabia." By the way, it all costs the same. Which one would you choose? What would happen? I hope the government would bring this in but even if it doesn't, I think we can go ahead with certification marks. Ethical oil. Make a statement. Ethical oil. Fill up with ethical next turn. We serve ethical. What do you think of that idea? What do you think of that? If it was all the same, wouldn't you choose the gas that didn't support the terror, the world invasion of Georgia? Point of sale labeling, even on your receipt. You made the ethical choice.

My next project, my friends, is to try and find an ethical oil company to put this on their gas pump, and to say, "Hey, Canadians, if you don't like the Saudi thugs, why don't you choose the ethical choice?" I'm Ezra Levant. It's called *Ethical Oil*. I'm having fun. Thanks for your time.

### **Verity Craig**

I'll pass it over to Andrea Wood.

### **Andrea Wood**

Now we'll ask a couple of questions of Ezra from the audience. I've received a couple. But if anybody would like to ask some questions, please feel free to put up your hand and, and go ahead.

### **Questions & Answers**

**Q. Ezra, the first question I've been asked is do you think your ethical oil campaign has been effective in encouraging a buy Canada policy?**

**EL:** Not yet, but I do believe it's effective and here's my proof. When the book first came out, David Suzuki felt free to dismiss it with a one-word review to the *Calgary Herald*. "Bullshit." That's what he said. Then he took another crack at it, calling me a, "Big shot loyalist who is unethical," and that's just a personal attack. Just really un-Suzuki-ish it was; he let the mask drop for a minute. That was a few months ago. But just last week, he came out with his third attempt. "Ezra Levant raises some very good points about the ethic mob, blah, blah, blah."

But why would he have to come back and again, and again, because the idea is finding purchase, the Prime Minister himself used the phrase, I think that good faith, thoughtful progressives, are troubled by some of these issues, not saying they're turning into pro-oil sands activists, but all of a sudden, their rage for the oil sands is dampened a little bit. It's tough to, it's tough to rage against the oil sands, because we've got a little problem, when you have massive problems in Saudi Arabia, or Iran. The idea is powerful. It hasn't broken through yet. But I am quite confident that the Keystone XL pipeline will be

approved. And that will bring 700,000 barrels a day to the States. That's a big step to getting the US off OPEC. Wouldn't it be amazing if America didn't buy any oil from the Persian Gulf anymore? Imagine the freedom, the political freedom, that country would have,

**Q. Have you trademarked ethical oil?**

**EL:** You know, I sent a letter to my lawyer just last week about that very subject. I said, "Good Lord, we've built something here." We have with certification marks, which is what I'm talking about more, you have to get someone to use it before you can register it. You can't just register ethical oil as a certification mark til you find a user. So I'm looking for one little gas station somewhere to let me put that little turquoise E on and then I'll register that certification mark. It's like a kosher certification or, or any other private certification. If we can't get country of origin labeling by the government, maybe we can get it just by people adopting it.

**Q. The last question that I'll ask you is how do you address the environmental issues regarding the oil sands development?**

**EL:** I say that they are definitely an issue, and an issue that the Canadian oil industry is more seized with than any other oil industry in the world. And very briefly, I will tell you my concept of an ethical oil spill. What's that? It's the same as an ethical car accident. We don't want car accidents to happen, but occasionally they do. Now you can have an ethical car accident or an unethical car accident. An ethical car accident is less likely to happen in the first place because you got driver training, well-marked roads, your car's maintained. God forbid when it happens. You get speed limits, but when it happens, you stop, your report, you share information, there is charges laid, the ambulance is called. Every step of the way, you're dealing with this terrible problem ethically as opposed to hit and run. No cops, whatever. Can you have an ethical oil spill oil is going to spill I bet you there's some oil spilled on each of your driveways. Now what do we do when oil spills? Well, when one of the largest oil spills happened in the Gulf of Mexico 30 years ago by Petro Mexico called the Stock Refinery Oil Rig for nine months oil leaked out of it, but it was owned by the government of Mexico; so the government of Mexico didn't beat up the government of Mexico to pay the government Mexico from the government. It just there wasn't the accountability you didn't have.

When oil spills in Saudi Arabia, you don't have a free press to jump on it. You don't have an independent judiciary to sue over. Compare that to the BP oil spill; lots of mistakes made. What happened? Immediate transparency, media focus, political punishments, \$20 billion taken into escrow. The focus on remediation, the CEO was sacked, about \$100 billion wiped off of shareholder values, and I don't think BP could survive another such PR disaster. It was a terrible thing that oil spill, but the way it was handled was by the government, by the jurisdiction, by the Courts, by the convention, was ethical. We don't even know about the biggest oil spills in the world because they don't have transparency, let alone accountability. Thanks.

Cheers, everybody.

**Verity Craig**

I would like to call upon Doug Pepper from McClelland and Stewart to give the formal Thank you.

**Note of Appreciation by Mr. Doug Pepper, President and Publisher, McLelland & Stewart**

On behalf of Ezra and the very kind sponsors, and especially the Empire Club, I just want to thank you and everybody, for a very intriguing and entertaining a morning and afternoon. And thank you to Zoë as well, wherever she may be, Ezra. And I hope you got copyright permission to use her image. Anyway, for those of you who don't know, you know, or is your first Empire Club launch or what have you, it's a great institution. And as a book publisher, we have relied on it to get the words out from our authors. And I know I speak for all publishing companies in Canada that do it. So thank you, especially to you. Take care. Thank you.

### **Concluding Remarks by Verity Craig**

Ezra, as a token of our appreciation on behalf of the Empire Club. I would like to present you with a copy of *Who Said That?* it's a selection of quotes and notes from 100 years of Empire Club speeches. Thank you so much.

And finally, each one of you should have a list of upcoming events at your table. And we have an absolutely amazing lineup. October 14, please join us for Rob Ford, Mayor of Toronto. October 26, please join us for Ian Greenberg president Chief Executive Officer of Astral media. And on November 4, please join us for Dr. Barry McClellan, President and Chief Executive Officer of Sunnybrook Health Sciences Center.

I would like to thank Sun News Media for sponsoring our event today. And also like to thank Bennett Jones for sponsoring a VIP reception and med can for sponsoring our student table. I would like to thank the *National Post* as our print media sponsor. We are now on Twitter and Facebook as well as our own web address [www.dot Empire Club.org](http://www.dot Empire Club.org).

Thank you for all of you for coming. This meeting is now adjourned.