

JEAN CARPER

Steve Skrovan: From the KPFK Studios in Southern California, it's the Ralph Nader Radio Hour.

Stand up, stand up, you've been sitting way too long.

[Music]

Steve Skrovan: Welcome to the Ralph Nader Radio hour. My name is Steve Skrovan, with my co-host David Feldman. Hello David.

David Feldman: Hello Sir.

Steve Skrovan: And the man of the hour, Ralph Nader. Hello, Ralph.

Ralph Nader: Hello, another invigorating show.

Steve Skrovan: You are so right, Ralph. On the show today, we will be welcoming Jean Carper, an award-winning columnist, author and CNN contributor, who found out that she was at a high risk for Alzheimer's disease. This set her on a journey to confront her fears about that which she has chronicled in a documentary film entitled, *Monster in the Mind* which sounds pretty scary, but she manages to deal with it with humor. And then Ralph is going to do an extended deconstruction of the news of Apple's one trillion dollar valuation. But first, our genes, our destiny, I think you'd be surprised by the answer. David?

David Feldman: Jean Carper is a best-selling author, columnist, radio talk show host and leading authority on health and nutrition. She is the author of 24 books including the award-winning, *Stop Aging Now*. Her latest book is *100 Simple Things You Can Do To Prevent Alzheimer's and Age-Related Memory Loss*. And on that same thing, she has directed a documentary entitled *Monster in the Mind* which Ralph Nader called a brilliant deconstruction of the Alzheimer's myth. Welcome to the Ralph Nader Radio Hour, Jean Carper.

Jean Carper: Hello, great to be here.

Ralph Nader: Yes, welcome Jean. You've reached tens of millions of Americans more times than your writings in on national television shows including the Donahue Show, on many consumer protection health and safety issues. And now you're focusing on the Alzheimer's topic and let's start just this way, before I ask you how you got involved in this subject, what's the difference between Alzheimer's disease and dementia?

Jean Carper: That is a major issue. The fact is that the word dementia is the big picture of all kinds of dementias that you may have. And Alzheimer's is but one part of dementia. In fact the truth is that Alzheimer's probably represents about 40% of the dementia, or people with dementia over age 60.

Ralph Nader: And actually have documented that the rate of dementia and Alzheimer's in recent years has been declining, when all we hear, so all that we hear about is how it's going to take over the elderly population over the next 50 years.

Jean Carper: Oh, absolutely, and that is one of the biggest myths of Alzheimer's and dementia. The surprising fact that has only come out in the last few years is that dementia among elderly people in affluent countries around the world has been dropping precipitously. There is a recent analysis by the Framingham Heart Study that found that the rate, incidents of dementia is going down at 20% per decade. It is an amazing fact whereas for most people are panicked that their risk is going up and it looks that way. It's mostly propaganda in order to its support certain organizations that are looking for lots of money to study Alzheimer's. The truth of the matter is that we have younger brains, healthier brains now than at any time in history. For example, my grandmother, great grandmother had a brain -- mine looks maybe 10 years younger than theirs does, if you have PET scan which I have had. It's an amazing thing. And it means that we are doing something right in our lifestyle.

Ralph Nader: Yeah, what is the lifestyle change?

Jean Carper: Well, for one thing, people stopped smoking or certainly cut back. There's a lot more emphasis now on physical activity, mental activity, social activity. We have mostly -- most people have been paying attention to their diet. There are all kinds of things that we're looking at. And we're taking better care of our heart. And there is a huge connection between your cardiovascular health and whether or not you're going to ever have dementia and memory loss in old age. So things are generally getting better. It's quite amazing.

Ralph Nader: You've written a book on diet for people who have dementia, didn't you?

Jean Carper: Well, I have mentioned it in several of my books, yes. And I follow it myself. You haven't asked me but the reason I got interested in this is that I, myself have the major gene for old age, after age 60, dementia and Alzheimer's. And so I have written a lot about this and I follow a certain diet. I think the number one thing though, Ralph, that can help delay or prevent Alzheimer's and dementia in general is exercise. Almost everyone agrees that people who exercise, as best they can, whether it's aerobic and whether they're out playing tennis, like I was this morning; that kind of exercise seems to really protect the brain.

Ralph Nader: How did the fact that you have this so called Alzheimer's gene, affect the way you went about this? Did you want to disprove anything? Did you just want to search for the facts? You came up against the blizzard of articles and TV segments about Alzheimer's spreading, about the only way to really deal with it is to discover a drug or pharmaceuticals. Some people have called this the Alzheimer's industry. How did this predispose you in your thorough inquiry over the years?

Jean Carper: Well, it was amazing because I, myself was a medical correspondent at CNN. I did a documentary there in 1981. And I went from there and I said, let's look at what happened since then. And when I went in to making this documentary, I too believed most of these things that turned out to be myths when I delve into it. So I was totally surprised and shocked to find out that most of everything that I had thought I knew about Alzheimer's and dementia turned out to be wrong. And the more scientists I interviewed the more that became clear. And it was shocking to me to realize that people are still pursuing those myths that they're scared to death of Alzheimer's and dementia, when the fact is that is the first good news that we have had about dementia declining and we know essentially what people can do to delay or avoid dementia.

Now, does it always work in everyone? No, there are a small percentage of the people it may not work in. But the fact is that we are responsible like we're responsible for the rest of our health, we are responsible on the state of our brain when we get older. And we can do so much about it and it makes me very sad, Ralph, a lot of the time, when I realize that people are still in the dark about this. The myths are persisting, and people are not realizing what they can do.

Ralph Nader: Well, it's in a way a correlation that you just drew. I mean, if you go to nursery homes and you see people with dementia, you see people who do not exercise, or not afforded the opportunity to exercise before it's too late. You see people who don't have a very good diet. You see people sitting in isolation, lonely, minimal interaction with other human beings other than the staff. So, it just exacerbates itself. We have the National Institutes of Health, they're spending a lot of money on this. Can you describe what they're doing, whether it's the right course?

Jean Carper: Well, there seems to be a lot of confusion for a very long time until the last few years. Everyone is looking for the drug cure. Well, that's not going to happen and it's not going to happen soon.

And somebody did a really, a big study and they found that over the last, since the 1980s when this started, the drug started to come in, the failure rate of drugs that have been tested to treat Alzheimer's is 99.6%, they have all failed. So, to pursue this cure is a waste of money, mostly. We don't even know what the cause of Alzheimer's is and yet we find these drugs coming out and they have never had any success whatsoever. Now, there is a big contingent now within the last two or three years of doctors and experts and scientists who are now saying, well, wait a minute, we're not going to have a drug cure any time soon. That is such a myth.

We need to change our lifestyle, which is the only protection that we have against dementia in old age. And some cases NIH has been catching on to that. But they're not knowing, there's much done as could be. And we're still wasting millions and millions of dollars in pursuit of an Alzheimer's drug. And let's face it, Ralph, okay, if Alzheimer's is responsible for maybe 40% of the dementia cases, if we had a cure for Alzheimer's tomorrow, it would mean that we would still have 60% of our dementia problem in old age. Going about trying to focus on Alzheimer's all the time and a cure is just a really stupid way to try to keep our brains safe.

Ralph Nader: And commerce use to butt-in to this, more money, more drug research, more research for the cure, right?

Jean Carper: Yes.

Ralph Nader: Well, you know, I was just looking at one of your articles on this and I want to quote for our listeners one of your articles and you write, "I begin dashing off emails to the world's most prominent Alzheimer's researchers. To my astonishment, all but one eagerly agreed to talk. The first was Harvard superstar, Reisa Sperling, who responded at 7:00 am one morning within 15 minutes. That led eventually to on-camera conversations with over 60 leading Alzheimer's authorities worldwide. I was dazzled by their intelligence, dedication, courage, openness and good humor and I piled up about 70 hours of footage." This is for your documentary. "Then I stalled." What happened?

Jean Carper: Well, I stalled because I realized that I wasn't getting the total picture of that. I didn't have the right focus on what was happening. And it suddenly occurred to me, I mean there were so many excellent scientists who were saying to me, look, Jean, it's lifestyle, we're not going to have a drug that's going to help this. And there is a huge change in the field actually. And so as soon as I caught on to the fact that Alzheimer's is essentially a ghost story, that is being used to scare us all to death so that we support these myths about Alzheimer's, I got the picture, it became very clear to me that what I needed to do in this documentary was to show people what the best Alzheimer's researchers were saying and that is get on your own case, help take care of your own brain, don't wait around for a fantasy cure for Alzheimer's and dementia.

Dementia comes from so many different influences that was never could possibly have a cure for it. So, I got the idea finally that this is misleading. I think that the most dangerous myth is that we have this dangerous myopia that we have about Alzheimer's. We focus on it that all dementia is Alzheimer's, it's mostly caused by your genes. There is nothing you can do to avoid it. And that once it starts, it progresses, all of this is totally untrue. And as long as people are captured by the awful idea that there is nothing they can do to save themselves from old age dementia, that you can't get very far. And a lot of it is totally propaganda to prop up the search for pharmaceutical drugs.

Ralph Nader: Well, actually, you're living the life that demonstrates your findings and your recommendations. You declared in the film which is called *Monster in the Mind*, it's been called brilliant, exciting, hilarious remedy, you can get on the dreaded Amazon. And actually, you won a prize in Norway on this.

Jean Carper: Yes.

Ralph Nader: But you are a carrier of the APOE for genes that's been identified as a major risk factor for developing Alzheimer's disease. And you go for regular checkups. Can you tell us a little more about this?

Jean Carper: Well, yes. You know, when I first began the documentary that one of my reasons for wanting to do it was that I was panicked that I, myself was getting in to the realm of age where dementia might be a growing risk and more probable. And I was in a panic over this. I was having nightmares about Dr. Alzheimer that he was on his way to come get me. And so, all of that dissipated after I began my search for the real truth about what we can do about Alzheimer's and dementia. And I did have a PET scan. Right now, for the first you can have a PET scan that will show you how much Alzheimer's amyloid plaque you have in your brain. I went, I did that in order to find out.

But mostly, as soon as I realized how much there was that you could do, I intensified my activities in that direction. Now, I have to say that I have been a medical and health writer for 50 or 60 years. So, I was already perhaps living a fairly good lifestyle. But I did do more and I think all of it makes the difference and I did extensive scientific searches to determine every last thing that I could find out about that might influence your risk of dementia in old age. And so, I tried to do all of those things. I mean, there are so many, Ralph, I mean even being anemic, for example, can raise sort of memory problems in old age, depression, stress. And most people have no idea. Another revelation here is that, you can add new brain cells for ages. Until really only a few years ago everyone thought that you only have as many brain cells as you were born with. That was it, they died, you could never get them back.

The fact of the matter is you can, and you can add new brain cells. That's called neurogenesis, to your brain by the things you'll do. A big one, exercise, antioxidants, and avoiding certain things, even heart burn drugs can raise your risk of dementia. I mean, the right diet, red meat is not particularly good for the brain, salmon is a whole lot better, antioxidant vegetables, getting a good sleep. They found that sleep disturbance can lead to memory loss. And you need normal blood sugar. And the main thing is you need to keep active, physically, mentally and socially. And the fact that you mentioned loneliness, there is concrete evidence that being lonely and feeling lonely, whether or not you're in a nursing home or whether you're sitting alone some place in your house in old age, it raises your risk of dementia. We should not let brains deteriorate because of failure to keep up communications with other humans. That's a terrible thing.

Ralph Nader: Many years ago -- we're talking with Jean Carper who has written a book on "Prevent Alzheimer's and Dementia Now, 101 New Ways to Save Your Aging Brain" and the grouping documentary called *Monster in the Mind* which we want to talk about more in a minute or two. But I just want to interject here that in the early 1970s, we had a team of high school graduates from the Miss Porter's School in Connecticut, work on nursing homes. And they did a great job. They went to Washington under the supervision of their teacher. They dug in to all kinds of records, inspection reports, put out a book with test ride for the house and senate, got a lot of media help nursing home reform. But the book when I read the manuscript, I said, this book has to be called the Last Segregation, one million Americans.

And industrial societies unfortunately segregate the elderly. You go to folks' societies around the world which have their problems of course and their part of extended families, children, grandchildren, great grandchildren. They're looked at that for wisdom and they're not looked down that that the minute they forget something, the stigma, it's starting with grandma or grandpa. So, I just want to interject, there is a cultural aspect to this. Is it their gene?

Jean Carper: Oh, my goodness, yes. Yes. Definitely, definitely, and there's a socioeconomic implication here too. I mean, people who are poor have a higher risk of dementia in old age. African-Americans have a higher risk, people with lower salaries have a higher risk, people who are lonely, all of these things, yes, very socioeconomic and the fact of the matter is that we get so much propaganda that it's in your genes. Well, really, it's not in your genes. It's in your head and the way that you live your life. And the sooner we catch on to that and I totally agree with you on the nursing homes, in the process of doing this documentary, I went to the Netherlands where they were doing quite a lot of research and I visited a nursing home there which was nothing like the nursing homes that we have here that are so horrible for older people. It was entirely like a community.

They had structured a whole nursing home like it was a small village. And it was a remarkable thing to see. So, we're very behind on all of that. And that we condemn people to this. Another awful thing is that, one of the big myths is that once, if your memory starts failing, you're just getting a lot or it's going

to progress. It's not. The truth of the matter is that people are often diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment. Then they say, okay, well, that's it, you're on your way, you're going to end up with dementia. The fact of the matter is when you look at the studies, one-third of the people may have gotten -- they got a little worse. One-third of the people stayed the same, they were as they were. And one-third of the people improved, because many of the causes of mild cognitive impairment that gets people in trouble are medical.

I mean, for example, one study showed that most of them have medical problems that could be easily corrected by correcting things like anemia, taking them on certain drugs. I mean, all of this enters in and it's really horrible what we have let happen.

Ralph Nader: So, the side-effects of pharmaceuticals have been studied in many medical journals and that they're mostly destructive. In fact, two years ago the first estimate came out 100,000 deaths a year, it's 2000 a week, just in the side-effects of prescribed medicines over diagnosis, over medication, mixing different pharmaceuticals together have bad effects. But there is such a thing, Jean Carper, as someone who can do everything that you said should be done. This still comes down with Alzheimer's disease.

Jean Carper: That is very, very true. And let's look at a fact there. Most people don't realize that there are two types of Alzheimer's. There is early onset Alzheimer's that strikes before age 60. Then there is old age Alzheimer's and dementia that strikes after age 60. The only one that is genetically controlled is early age onset Alzheimer's. And that is only, two, most people say 2% of the entire number of cases. So, there are people who are going to have dementia. But it isn't always true that it has to progress or that it cannot be reversed in any way because it can often be reversed if you start doing something or if you stop doing something else. There are all these factors that enter in. And that's what we need to know. And the most dangerous myths about Alzheimer's and old age dementia is, that you can't do anything to avoid it, delay it, or stop it. And we now know that there are many, many things you can do. And we should be all doing them.

David Feldman: You've screened your film at Stanford, UCLA Medical Schools, for ...

Jean Carper: I did. You know, Ralph, one of the best positive things for me personally is that my documentary really got a great audience among top researchers and experts in the field. In fact, it was so gratifying to me that it was screened at the Medical School in Stanford which is of course one of the best in the country. It was screened at the Medical School of UCLA. There are many people who are now saying, look -- and there are many professors, there are many great scientists that I interviewed who are saying, let's stop looking at this as a hopeless genetic horrible disease and look at it as something like a chronic disease of aging, like the heart disease and others, because there is a lot we can do to prevent it and there's a lot we can do to treat it.

Ralph Nader: And listeners, you can view a trailer at monsterinthemind.com, just go to monsterinthemind.com to review the trailer. And now I want to indicate what your documentary revealed before we talk about your style in the documentary, to make people want to persist and watch it all. One finding is despite 100 years of unproven theories, the real cause of Alzheimer's is unknown. Number two, it's still misdiagnosed half of the time even in autopsy. Number three, it's far less up to destroy your brain and other old age dementia such as micro-strokes. Number four, after age 60 is not determined by genes. Number five, you can lower your risk of old age dementia by lifestyle choices. Number six, the rates of old age dementia in the US and other affluent countries are falling dramatically, not rising. And finally, losing your mind is not an inevitable consequence of aging. It is preventable.

Now, in this documentary, you're a lifetime fan of documentaries. Your mother played piano to accompany silent movies. And so, you wanted to make this entertaining as well as informative. So, you packaged it in the genre of a science fiction horror film with vintage clips and Frankenstein, neither the Living Dead, Dracula and others. But listeners should realize this did not dilute the accuracy of this film. It just gets you to be more alert when you watch it. Isn't that what your approach is?

Jean Carper: Yes. Yes, it is. I wanted it to be something that people would want to look at it and when some of the researchers, I got feedback, many of them thought that it was right on target. They were very happy with it, the audiences. It was so good for me to go to festivals where the audiences can see their reaction. And they were so relieved at the end when they realized that this was really good news and there were so much they could do. That was such a great feeling for me to see that. One researcher also said, you know Jean, it's really important, I loved your documentary and by the way, it's hilarious.

Ralph Nader: Well, the interesting thing about all this is that you're trying to reach a lot of people and Public Broadcast System, PBS, they often put documentaries on the air. Are they considering putting yours on the air?

Jean Carper: Not so far. I have not heard that they are. It played well at a number of prestigious film festivals. It is now streaming, the documentary is now streaming on Amazon at a cost of, I think, \$4.5. You can go to Amazon and see the documentary. And it is in DVD now. You can also buy that online. And then of course I have done the book extra too. I give people -- tell them all the things I think they might be able to do to avoid getting dementia in old age.

Ralph Nader: And for people who don't want to shop at Amazon, can they get it streamed in any other way?

Jean Carper: Yes. And one really good way to get it streamed is if you are associated with any libraries, public libraries and academic centers, universities, they carry a streaming service called Kanopy, K-A-N-O-P-Y. And it is free. If you have a library card, a public library card, if you are affiliated with any university, you could be a student or a professor or on the faculty, and you can see it through this library system called Kanopy. It is streaming, yes. And it is getting good reception. I just got an email yesterday from Australia saying they had seen it and they wanted to show it more widely. You can get it, yes.

Ralph Nader: And they you are listeners, you see, if you don't ask a question, I don't want to deal with Amazon, how can I get a book or how can I get something streamed video, you don't get the answer Jean just gave you. So always ask, what are the alternatives to using this Goliath that's emptying our main street called Amazon, and give other vendors a chance, whether they're nonprofit or for profit. What do you think our listeners are thinking right now, Jean? From what they've heard, what do you think they're thinking?

Jean Carper: I hope that they are thinking that they have learned things that would make them want to change their mind about their own future with dementia and Alzheimer's. And that we should stop focusing so much on the propaganda around Alzheimer's and just get on with the daily things that we can do in life. To take our own brain healthier and delay any form of memory loss and dementia until very old age or after we're gone. You can delay this for 10, 15 years after which time you may not then really want to worry about it if you're going to. If you're my age, 86 now, and I could delay this for let's say till I'm 100. That's a very good possibility.

Ralph Nader: Most people would sell for that, wouldn't they?

Jean Carper: Yes.

Ralph Nader: By the way, our listeners are well informed about our public airways and we own the public airways and we're the landlords and the radio and TV stations are the tenants. And they don't pay us any rent, compliments of Congress and the Federal Communications Commission. But another thing our listeners can do is call up your TV station and say, what is all this junk you're putting on Saturday afternoon or all this endless comedic program? Why don't you put this Monsters in the Mind documentary that people really want to hear and learn and see what they can do in their extended family. I mean, the amount of dread and anxiety and fear that is generated by this propaganda and this over exaggeration and this sense of futility until some miracle drug is discovered is immense, immense.

Nobody could put a number on it but we all know from our experience with families and extended families and nursing homes, we all know the way our culture treats older people with almost a patronizing attitude that they reserve for six-year-olds, we all know that. And so this is a great service

that you have performed, Jean Carper. And now we're going to get the reaction from David Feldman or Steve Skrovan.

David Feldman: I wanted to ask you about confidence. How much of memory loss as we get older is aggravated by our lack of confidence in our cognitive skills?

Jean Carper: A lack of confidence in your cognitive skills?

David Feldman: Yeah, where there's confirmation bias every time we forget something once we're at a certain age, it confirms our deepest fears as supposed to when we're in our 20s, you don't worry about.

Jean Carper: Yeah, but why are we so worried about it? I think a lot of the reason that people are so frightened of it as I was myself at one time is, there are so much propaganda out there of how one little slip over the memory is going to send you into a long life of dementia. It just doesn't happen that way. So I think if people knew more that there was so much that they could do, that they wouldn't have such a terrible fear on lose confidence in their memory and their brain. As I said, you have a little memory loss that could be due to 100 things. And it doesn't mean that every time you have a slip of the tongue or you can't remember something that you're on your way to dementia. But I think that that is a myth that has been put forth as a way of getting more attention for fundraising for Alzheimer's.

Ralph Nader: I've met plenty of people in their 20s and 30s who are overloaded with their cell phones who have regular memory loss. Well, Steve Skrovan who is the Chief Script Writer for everybody Loves Raymond, what about your reaction, Steve?

Steve Skrovan: I don't know why that intro was necessary, Ralph. But I guess I appreciate that you've dealt with this with some humor which is always a great livening device. So, when people watch this, it's not like taking medicine. What was behind your idea about the good humor behind Monsters in the Mind?

Jean Carper: Well, that's a really interesting question. And I think of my love of movies and that I, myself when I started this, one of the reasons I started this documentary was that I, myself was having dreams about Dr. Alzheimer coming to get me just like I had had dreams at age nine that Frankenstein was coming to get me. And that was a comparison I made in my mind. I said, oh no, Dr. Alzheimer, this ghost is just like the old Frankenstein coming to get me. And that's what sort of got me on. We used like almost 100 old film clips in this documentary to make the points. And that's how I think why it all came in and it began to be -- we could see that there was a connection there. It's like I was scared and panicked of Frankenstein, now I'm scared and panicked of Dr. Alzheimer. Well, same similarity here.

Steve Skrovan: It's always a German coming to get you. It's either Frankenstein or Alzheimer.

Ralph Nader: Yeah, but remember she discovered she had the APOE for Alzheimer's gene. And that's understandable. That could translate into nightmares. And by the way, let any of our listeners think this documentary or her book called Prevent Alzheimer's and Dementia Now, 101 New Ways to Save Your Aging Brain, just a gun hole feel good submission, you will be astonished how scientifically based this is, how many interviews she has with the world's leading researchers on Alzheimer's and dementia and how often she challenged those who have the other side to come forth with their data. So, let's run through very slowly how people can get both, the Monsters in the Mind and the book, Jean Carper.

Jean Carper: Okay. One free way that you can get it, they can stream, or you can get it by Kanopy, K-A-N-O-P-Y, which is practically in institution and the libraries of all medical centers and the academic centers as well as public libraries. That's a good way to get the DVD. You can also now buy it on Amazon and on a special website online, Monster in the Mind. You can get the book right now on Amazon and I'm hoping to get a printed copy of it that I will do myself that we'll not have to go through Amazon, Ralph. But right now, you can see all the things that you need to do and could do to avoid this awful thing of dementia in old age. And I hope that you will really -- people, audiences have felt so much better after getting the real facts instead of having to face the barrage of myths about Alzheimer's and dementia that has really threatened our sanity and made us panic.

Ralph Nader: And to illustrate how our mass media is degraded, some years ago, Jean Carper would have been a slam dunk guest on the Phil Donahue Show for full hour, and on the Oprah Show. Both of them are now gone and their substitutes require impolite language, we don't deal with on this show. So that's why you have to get it streamed Monster in the Mind and/or read the book that Jean has produced called Prevent Alzheimer's and Dementia Now, 101 New Ways to Save Your Aging Brain. Before we conclude, Jean Carper, how do you exercise and how frequently?

Jean Carper: Right before I talked to you, Ralph, I was out playing tennis with a pro. I play tennis four times a week. I love -- I'm one of the few people I know who loves the treadmill. I really enjoy exercise and always have. But people shouldn't have to think that they have to do such extreme things. Aerobic exercise definitely would be probably the best kind of exercise to get but walk, do anything, keep moving physically because physical inactivity is one of the biggest associations with losing your memory and having dementia in old age.

Ralph Nader: Well, thank you very much, Jean Carper. You're going to go down in history for many things, but this one is really I think your greatest triumph because we are experiencing an aging population and more and more people will be over 65, fortunately, as a percent of the overall

population. They have a lot to contribute. They can become civic activists, they're free of the boss at last, they can say what they believe, they can act on what they believe. And do we ever need in every community in our country that kind of activity which comes with wisdom, perspective, great ability to talk to younger people especially children. And to do all that, we have to get rid of our propaganda on our commercial exploitation of the elderly, the demeaning, the decline of life in so many of the nursing homes, not all of them, and start a vibrant new culture for people in the last third of their lives. Thank you very much, Jean Carper.

Jean Carper: Thank you, Ralph Nader.

Steve Skrovan: We've been speaking to journalist, author and now film director, Jean Carper, director of *Monster in the Mind*. We will link to that and more of Miss Carper's work at ralphnaderradiohour.com. Now, Ralph, you want to talk a little bit about the latest news coming out of Apple, one of your favorite corporations?

Ralph Nader: Well, Apple hit one trillion dollars in asset valuation, the first company in the history of the world to have its stock worth one trillion dollars or more. So, it made big news. And the business press went overboard, oh, amazing. What a business model, oh brilliant CEO Tim Cook is? What's next? Is it going to be another record? And so, I took that apart and basically what we have is a business model by Tim Cook, the CEO of Apple, that is fundamentally relying on sweat labor in one factory complex in China, they have 1.3 million workers in sweat like conditions, that's the contractor to Apple that makes the iPhones. And then the other part of the business model is high priced iPhones. I'll get to that in a minute.

And the third leg of this three-legged stool is massive use of profits to buy back Apple stock. Now, if listeners don't think this affects a lot of people in this country, give me a few minutes. Number one, stock buy-backs are not determined by the shareholders. There's no vote, there is no advice. It was determined by Tim Cook and maybe one or two other executives at the top, the hired hands. They have said earlier this year, they're going to buy back \$100 billion that's with the B, of their stock. And the general press says, oh, that's good for shareholders. Guess what, Apple shareholders may have wanted more of that money distributed to them directly in cash dividends instead. That is a sign of mismanagement, that they have nothing else to do with this huge cash of profits from overpriced iPhones.

They don't have anything better to do than to buy back their stock which just incidentally increases the metric value of the executive compensation of Tim Cook and his colleagues at the top with this giant company. It doesn't do much for the stock. It may go up a little bit and may go down. There're far more serious things that are going to affect Apple stock as to whether there is going to be a new Samsung phone, whether tariffs are going to be applied by Trump on Chinese imports which would include the

iPhones. But just look at this figure for a moment, before we talk about its uses, \$100 billion is more than 10 years of the budget of the Environmental Protection Agency, more than 10 years.

The agency in the Federal Government to protect worker health and safety, OSHA, their budget is \$500 million. That's one-half of 1% of the stock buy-back. Just to show you public expenditures on very important matters of health and safety compared to private affluence in waste. Now, what could they have done with this \$100 billion? For 2 billion, a mere 2 billion, they would have doubled the wages of those 1.3 million workers in China. For another 2% of the \$100 billion, they could have vastly improved the recycling and the protection of the environment and the workers who are exposed to used iPhones and used computer dismantling, deadly work, just \$2 billion.

They could have increased their employee salaries. They could have shored up the employee pension fund. They could have engaged in more research and development. They could have found productive investment to employee workers in this country for a change. They could have done any number of things. But instead they bought back their stock which I have called, wasting burning profits. And that is characteristics now of all this big successful companies. In the last 10 years, US corporations have bought back seven trillion dollars, trillion dollars of their stock. So Marx of many, many generations ago could never have predicted that these corporations would make so much profit turned into capital. They didn't know what to do with it other than to buy back the stock.

I've written Tim Cook about this. I bought a few Apple shares, so I wrote him as a shareholder. It doesn't matter. He didn't answer it. In fact, someone ought to do a project where non-shareholders send 10 letters to corporations. And shareholders send the same 10 letters asking for response, asking for a reaction, asking for a disclosure. There is no difference. These barons at the top of these corporations, these private governments don't feel they have any responsibility even to those people who own a part of their company, the shareholders. And that's true for the big shareholders who don't use their muscle like Fidelity, Vanguard, the Teacher Pension Funds. They just buy in, rise with the stock. There's an article recently by a finance professor talking about Apple's financial model.

For example, in order to show out a \$100 billion, they borrowed money. So Apple under Steve Jobs never was in debt for a cent. Now, Apple has a \$130 billion in debt, so it's low interest rates, they took advantage of it, deducted it. But here we go, it increases the stability in an economic downturn of companies that have these kinds of quirky financial models. Another thing Apple could have done because it's in a notorious tax evader, some would call tax avoider, is sent to Ireland and other tax havens that's been enforced against by an awakening European Union, Tim Cook is outraged. But they pay a very little income tax because they gained the jurisdictions, nations and play off the various tax laws in the tax havens against the tax laws in the US or say, China. So one thing they could have done is pay their fair share of taxes.

Now, you look at the business pages and it's all Tim Cook, the great CEO. Tim Cook, the great planner, the strategist, the builder of the biggest company on earth. It's time to dismantle the propaganda and see what actually is happening. And you can start with how much you are paying for that iPhone. If that iPhone produces that level of profit, then Apple doesn't know what to do with it other than buy back their stock in order to increase the metrics for their compensation package. Then maybe you, iPhone owners should say, cut your prices, Apple. We're sick of paying through the nose. There's a great book that shows what happens when executive compensation determines corporate policy all the way down to investment strategist, all the way down to what they're paying employees, what kind of RnD they do, how they pay their taxes, it's called, the CEO Paying Machine by Steve Clifford. The CEO Paying Machine.

We had Steve on our show some months ago. But his message bears repeating because it's not getting out on the cable business shows or in the business news features with a few exceptions. Take Walmart, Walmart has bought back over \$50 billion of their stock and they have a million workers who are making less today than Walmart workers made in 1968, adjusted for inflation. Although Walmart is increasing their minimum wage and it's moving just about close to what workers under Sam Walton made in 1968, adjusted for inflation. So they're burning their profits instead of giving their workers a decent living. And this is crazy, what's going on. And the Securities of Exchange Commission is doing nothing because of the Business Judgment Rule. They say, oh it's the Business Judgment Rule, the shareholders' money can be turned into anything by the bosses at the top and the shareholders don't have to hold on it. They're just the owners after all.

That's why corporate capitalism is destroying capitalism. It's one of the principles of capitalism is if you own part of the company, you have some say in how it's run. You don't just get the message from your hired hands at the top in their executive suites. The message just says, you don't like what we're doing? You can sell your stock. No. Shareholders should say, we don't like what you're doing and we're going to change what you're doing. You're not going to just say, you don't like what we're doing, quit. That's a prescription to letting the rascals stay in place and further depreciate and degrade the wealth in this country and who actually has earned so much of it, the workers, and not getting it. Did you know all this, Steve, David?

Steve Skrovan: It seems to me that should be the sharp point of the message for political candidates that if you like capitalism, it's actually being destroyed by the "capitalist." And you can demonize socialism all you want but the biggest socialist are these chronic capitalists.

Ralph Nader: Yeah, and we call it corporate socialism. And you just touched on something very interesting, Steve, which is, this is the message the democrat should take up against the Trumpsters in the November election, because it affects everything; pensions, it affects employee wages, it affects constructive investment, actually US companies, because they pay their bosses and manipulate it much more than foreign companies are able to do for their bosses. They actually have a lower rate of investment. It's been declining because they have all these little things they play around with like stock

buy-backs. And so this really affects everyone and it affects companies who say, oh, we have to pay less taxes, congress, we want a tax-cut from congress and Whitehouse because we need capital for productive investment. And the democrats never say, really? How come you burned seven trillion dollars in stock buy-backs over the last 10 years?

Why didn't you use that for productive investment and pay your fair share of taxes and not get a tax-cut, that Trump and the republican congress produced last year. So these are great arguments and I don't know a single democratic senator or any candidate running for office with the possible exception of Congressman Tim Ryan, from Youngstown, who is making these arguments. I don't even see Bernie Sanders making the stock buy-back argument. And the other thing is this, if these corporations have money to burn, then they should be required to pay sales taxes. Now, you and I, others go into a store, listeners, and you'll pay 6%, 7%, 8% sales tax on some necessities in life, depending on the state you're in. You might pay it local, city tax like in New York and a statewide sales tax. How come today or tomorrow, whenever, someone can buy \$100 million worth of Apple stock or Exxon Mobil stock or Pfizer stock or Bank of America stock, and not pay a dime in sales tax?

That's why Bernie Sanders is recommending along with Senator Elizabeth Warren and the Nurses of America, the Organized California Nurses Association, other nurses' labor unions who picketed on this, they're demanding what's called a transaction tax, a speculation tax on Wall Street transactions, which one, was deemed some of the crazy manipulation and speculation that's been going on and it can lead to another crash like 10 years ago. And second, just think of this, a tiny sales tax, never mind 6%, 7%, a tiny sales tax like one-half of 1%, one-half of 1%, can produce \$300 billion a year that can go to repair our public works and create good jobs here. It can't be exported abroad. It can go to providing healthcare for people who don't have healthcare. It can go to improving our schools.

And the Democratic Party doesn't want any part of it except for the renegades, Senator Warren, Senator Sharrod Brown is in on this. So they're just a handful of senators. So when you meet this candidates running for offices in November, listeners, throw some of these issues at them. Watch their reaction. Are they running for corporate power? Or are they running for citizen power? Question you should ask them and say, who are you representing? Why aren't you shifting more power from the few to the many? I mean, the dialogue is so thin, it's so anemic. And then when the democrats send you fundraising letters, they say, we're for an adequate wage or living wage, but they never specify. I've gotten through example, a letter from Senator Schumer from New York, he is talking about expanding healthcare but he doesn't say a single payer or full Medicare for all.

He talks about improving minimum wage but he doesn't say where it's going to go for \$12 or \$15 an hour. That's why people don't think the democrats are authentic that they don't really mean what they say. And that's why they're losing elections in being landslided by the world's most corrupt, most real migraine, most Wall Street and ventured Republican Party in history. That's why, because people listen to the rhetoric of the democrats and they say, it was pretty good rhetoric but I don't believe you. Your

record hasn't demonstrated it and you're not specific enough for people who work on M Street and Main Street.

Steve Skrovan: And the economic issues are harder to grasp than the social issues, whether it's emigration, gay marriage, abortion, all of those things. And so the democrats feel like they're on safe ground there but on the economic issues, they don't, as you say, seem to have an approach for attacking what's going on now.

Ralph Nader: Even though that's how it is to win on the elections under Franklin Delano Roosevelt, so many of their elections, Harry Truman, with bread and butter issues. Where people live, work, raise their families, they'll respond at the polls but they got to believe these politicians.

Steve Skrovan: They make the conversation about economics as complicated as the financial instruments that crash our economy.

Ralph Nader: Yeah, look at the words they use. Well, we're opposed to austerity. What is austerity? They should say we're opposed to driving down wages in an era of record corporate profits. We're opposed to shortening work weeks where people can only find work at Walmart for 23 hours a week at low wages. We're opposed to try to shrink Social Security or limit Medicare. Never mind using the word austerity. Why don't you just talk plain language? But the democrats talk this because they're too busy dialing for corporate dollars for their campaign. They want it both ways. If they'd stop dialing through these dollars and start dialing for what people need in America, they wouldn't have to raise that kind of money. People would vote for them. They wouldn't have to put all these silly television ads on what they promise to do.

They wouldn't have to just run against Trump. They could run for justice, for fair play, for better life for people, for respect for the children and grandchildren, for clean environment, for wage increase, for getting out of these military quagmires that are only increasing the backfire and the backlash from people whose backyards were into, whose dictators we're supporting. They're compromised because they come in with their meetings, these democrats. Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur told me once, she says, Ralph, you know, we walk into the house democratic caucus meeting and the talk is about money. We sit down at the meeting and the talk is about money. We leave the meeting with our quota for raising more campaign money. And I said to her, and that's why the democrats are losing.

Steve Skrovan: Well, on that important note, that's our show. I want to thank our guest again today, Jean Carper, Director or Monster in the Mind. For those of you listening on the radio, we're going to cut out right now. But for you podcast listeners, stay tuned for some bonus material, we call the wrap up.

David Feldman: Join us next week on the Ralph Nader Radio Hour, when our guest is Chris Hedges.
Thank you, Ralph.

Ralph Nader: Thank you, and listeners, do watch *Monsters in the Mind* by Jean Carper. It exemplifies the wisdom that the truth shall make you freer.

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