

“Let me ask you this. What was the moment we can point to that nuclear technology was invented? I’ve never met a person who can isolate the moment where nuclear technology became known to man. German scientists in the 1930s? Really? Name the date? It’s very clear to me that these [nuclear weapons] are demonic.”

The speaker, in case you’re wondering, [was](#) Tucker Carlson, who has also claimed that he was mauled by demons in his sleep. He also has a theory about extreme weather events. According to [Carlson](#), recent hurricanes are a consequence of – wait for it – abortion, which he calls a form of human sacrifice. “I’m sure I’ll be attacked for saying this, but I really believe it. You can’t participate in human sacrifice without consequences.”

Unlike many people, Tucker Carlson doesn’t just have personal demons; he apparently thinks they hang out in his bedroom and in physics labs. Yet Carlson can’t be dismissed as an isolated crank. He spoke at the Republican National Convention and appeared at Trump’s big rally in Madison Square Garden. Until recently, he was the star of the most popular show on cable news. He now does a digital show. A lot of people still pay attention to him. According to [XData](#), posting on February 14, 2024, “today on X, there have been over 1 million posts about Tucker Carlson. His latest interview has garnered over 26 million (and counting) views, 427k favorites, and 101k reposts in the last two hours.”

Tucker Carlson isn’t on his own. During the campaign, our once and future president Donald Trump [chimed in](#) that Democrats are a “demonic party.” And bizarre conspiracy theories are rife these days. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene has blamed the Maui fire on a laser that she connected with the Rothschilds and claimed that Hurricane Helene was created by the government.

RFK, Jr., Trump’s nominee to head all the government’s healthcare programs, has said: “FDA’s war on public health is about to end,” including its “aggressive suppression of ... anything else that advances human health and can’t be patented by Pharma.” Kennedy is of course an anti-vaxxer, who can claim [partial credit](#) for a measles epidemic that in Samoa that killed two dozen small children.

In this atmosphere, it will be a serious challenge to keep public policy in touch with reality. That’s putting it mildly. It is all the more important that we protect the role of experts, whether ecologists or economists, as free, independent voice in public policy.

Put on your best anti-gaslighting gear. There will be many voices — some of them in high

office — spouting bizarre distortions of reality.