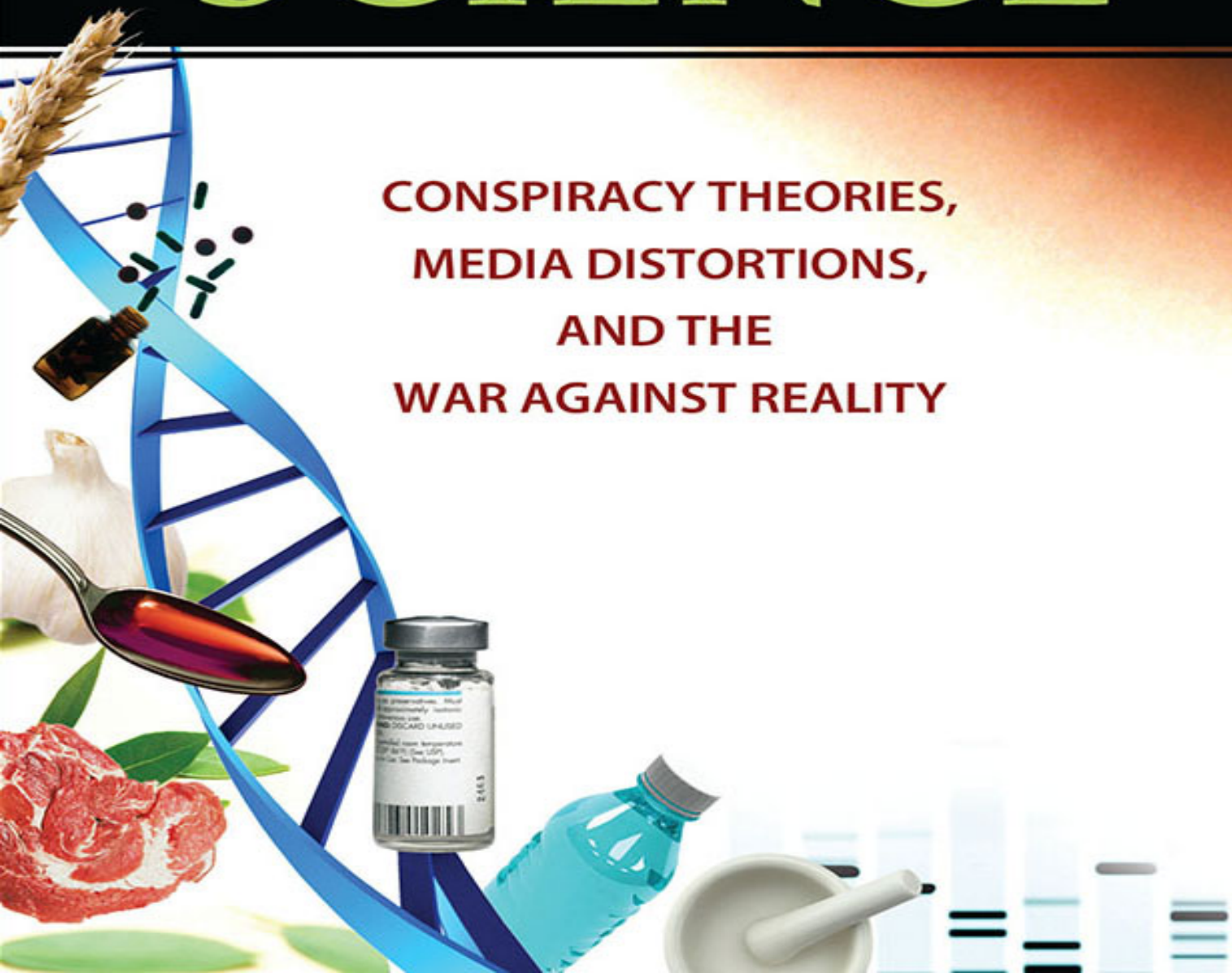


"John Grant is the living heir of Martin Gardner...."
GREGORY FROST, author of *Shadowbridge*

JOHN GRANT

DENYING SCIENCE

**CONSPIRACY THEORIES,
MEDIA DISTORTIONS,
AND THE
WAR AGAINST REALITY**



JOHN GRANT

DENYING
SCIENCE

CONSPIRACY THEORIES,
MEDIA DISTORTIONS,
AND THE
WAR AGAINST REALITY

 **Prometheus Books**
59 John Glenn Drive
Amherst, New York 14228-2119

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments

Introduction: Unless We Think, We Aren't

1. God Told Me to Deny

2. "The Law Is a Ass"

3. Thoroughly Uncomplementary

4. Puffing the Product

5. Paying with Their Lives

6. The Antivaxers

7. The AIDS "Controversy"

8. Selfish Help

9. Dissent about Descent

10. We're (Badly) Designed

11. No Safe Classroom?

12. Evilution

13. Eugenically Speaking

14. Social Darwinism

15. It's the Ecology, Stupid

16. So, What Was the Weather Like in 2010?

17. Global Weirding

18. Marketing Climate Denialism

19. Climate Denialism: Dramatis Personae

Afterword

Notes

Bibliography

Index

THE ANTIVAXERS

We are now an organized and united group, thanks mainly to the power of the Internet. Our message has severely eroded confidence in the cornerstone of health care: THE CHILDHOOD VACCINE PROGRAM.

—Anne Dachel¹

In late 2010 there was an outcry over a cinema “public awareness” advertisement created by the antivax² organization SafeMinds and the website Age of Autism. The ad claimed the Thimerosal in that year’s flu shot was a hazard. In response to representations from the rational community, the AMC cinema chain canceled its plans to screen the item. Aghast, one of the principals of SafeMinds, Kim Stagliano, promised to retaliate by boycotting, with her family, AMC theaters all through the holiday season. Good. The last person you want to sit beside in a crowded movie theater is someone who hasn’t been vaccinated.

Today’s rejection of vaccination is not a new phenomenon. From the outset the practice was denounced by the christian churches, which for centuries had maintained that diseases were caused by demons and/or were expressions of divine displeasure. If a disease had been visited upon us by an angry God, the reasoning went, surely any effort to counter or ameliorate it was an attempt to thwart God’s will, and could have no effect but to make him even crosser. Of course, such theological deduction was faced with the unfortunate evidence that those who were inoculated tended to survive while the devout tended not to; and thus, gradually, vaccination was accepted as suiting God’s purpose after all. Even so, suspicion lingers—and not just among evangelicals or the vaccination/autism crowd. The US comedian and self-proclaimed rationalist Bill Maher has frequently maintained on his TV shows that vaccination must “obviously” be dangerous because you’re introducing a disease into a body that was