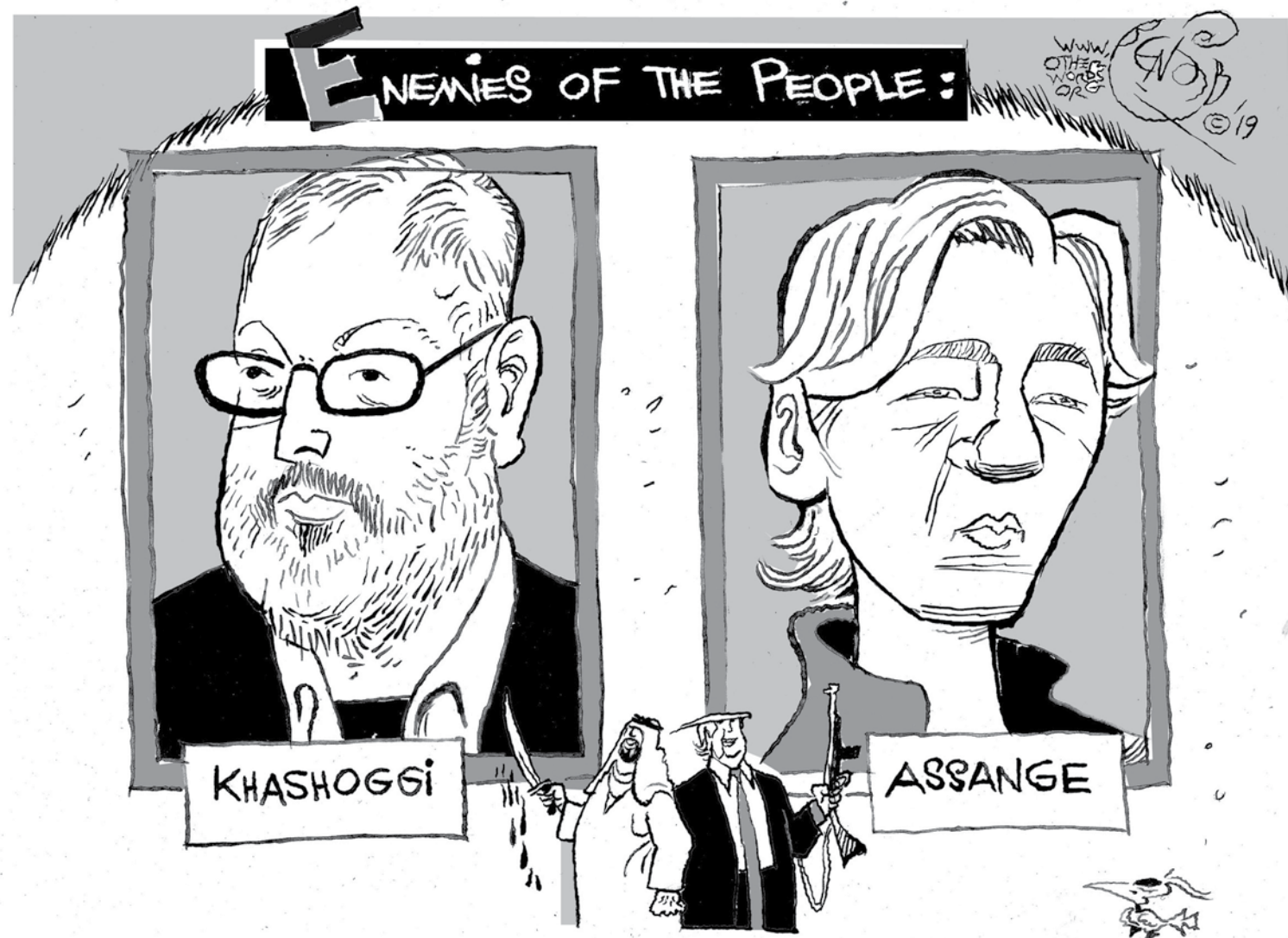


# OPINION



**MCS Still in Business**

## Martin Cleaning Service

**Carpet & Upholstery Cleaning**  
**Residential & Commercial Services**  
**Minimum Service CHG. \$50.00**  
 A small distance/travel charge may be applied

**CARPET CLEANING**  
**2 Cleaning Areas or more \$30.00 each Area**  
**Pre-Spray Traffic Areas (Includes: 1 small Hallway)**  
**1 Cleaning Area (only) \$50.00**  
 Includes Pre-Spray Traffic Area and Hallway

**Stairs (12-16 stairs - With Other Services): \$30.00**  
**Heavily Soiled Area: \$10.00 each area (Requiring Pre-Spray)**

**Area/Oriental Rug Cleaning**  
**Regular Area Rugs \$25.00 Minimum**  
**Wool Oriental Rugs \$40.00 Minimum**

**UPHOLSTERY CLEANING**  
 Sofa: \$70.00  
 Loveseat: \$50.00  
 Sectional: \$110 - \$140  
 Chair or Recliner: \$25.00 - \$50.00  
 Throw Pillows (With Other Services): \$5.00

**ADDITIONAL SERVICES**

- Auto/Boat/RV Cleaning
- Deodorizing & Pet Odor Treatment
- Spot & Stain Removal Service
- Scotchguard Protection
- Minor Water Damage Services

**Call for Appointment (503) 281-3949**

## ‘Eco-friendly’ Products that Actually Pollute

### This Earth Day, beware of greenwashing

BY MALLIKA KHANNA

This Earth Day, I’d like to warn you about “greenwashing.” That’s the practice of corporations branding their products “eco-friendly,” even when they actually pollute, to deceive environmentally concerned customers.



Even if you’ve heard nothing about greenwashing, you’ve probably read about the Volkswagen emissions scandal, “Dieselgate.”

A few years ago, the Environmental Protection Agency found that many Volkswagen cars being sold in America had been outfitted with software that enabled their diesel engines to detect when they were being tested. This allowed the engines to improve emissions performance under controlled laboratory conditions.

But out on the road, the engines were emitting 40 times above the nitrogen oxide pollut-

ant levels allowed in the United States. The software was simply covering that up.

Volkswagen apologized for the scandal and recalled its cars. But for customers who bought from the company thinking they were having a positive impact on the environment, the damage was already done. Volkswagen had successfully duped them — while also doing enormous environmental destruction.

Unfortunately, Volkswagen is nowhere close to alone. Greenwashing has a deep history dating back to the start of the modern environmental movement in the 1960s. Since then, no industry has been immune to greenwashing.

In 2019, you can find this unethical business practice flourishing in the fashion, electronics, fuel, food and agriculture, and plastics industries (among others).

Take hugely popular fashion brand H&M’s Sustainable Fashion line. On the face of it, H&M’s commitment to creating a sustainable fast fashion business model is commendable. The brand has “pledged to become

“100 percent climate positive” by 2040 by using renewable energy and sustainable materials.

The problem is that using this language of environmental concern numbs H&M’s customers to the utter unsustainability of fast fashion as a concept.

For all of H&M’s recycling endeavors, it’s still producing far more clothing than can be used, most of which ends up in landfills after losing its appeal within a season or two. By all metrics, fast fashion is one of the most polluting industries globally.

As a consequence, even if H&M were to fulfill all its promises by 2040, it would still be doing more harm than good by encouraging consumers to buy and discard low quality products seasonally, contributing to a never-ending cycle of waste creation.

On the surface, many brands actually do implement policies that are better for the environment in their attempt to bring in ecologically conscious customers. But doing the bare minimum doesn’t entitle them to take advantage of consumers — or to keep polluting.

So, what can you do? On an individual level, always look past packaging and actually

read labels, since ingredients are far more indicative of a company’s relationship to the environment than their branding. Read up about a brand before buying from it to make sure it doesn’t have any environmental skeletons in its closet.

Whenever possible, try to find local alternatives to products created by multinational corporations, since these tend to be the largest polluters.

And remember, buying better quality, more expensive products once in a while is always better than buying and throwing out low quality products seasonally.

But to truly abolish this harmful practice, we must acknowledge that it’s a structural issue.

While you can help in small ways through individual action, the biggest impact you can have is by supporting policies like the Green New Deal. When our tax dollars support sustainability on a massive scale, we’ll see a much bigger impact than what we can achieve in a store aisle.

Mallika Khanna is a freelance writer based in New Delhi, India who also writes about gender, immigrant experiences, and South Asia. Distributed by otherwords.org.