

THE WAY OF WATER by Caridad Svich
Testimonials about BP Oil Spill Health Problems

“The memory problems, I don't really know when they started. [...] I'll get shaky, sweaty first, I knew it's coming, I start to shake, like I'm shaking now, and then it gets real intense, I've had a few seizures. Right after that, the frontal lobe of my head starts to pound. [...] I'm still having all the same problems—real bad seizures, heart problems, tachycardia, having trouble controlling my blood pressure, [...] Dr. Mike said, 'Man, a lot of our other patients are experiencing this, and it could be some effects from the oil spill, from the Corexit, from some of the hazardous materials in the oil. We proceeded to do a circuit test, and it came back showing me hypoglycemic. We had my blood drawn for VOCs (Violent Organic Compounds), and it showed that I do have that, in fact, in my blood. My exposure down there was only four days, so I thought it should have been minimal, but obviously it's not. We went fishing; they were spraying down there. We were fishing offshore, probably sixty miles offshore, all the way back in the water. We'd crab for several days and nights out there and we got the crabs, ate them, and never thought anything of it because we'd been told by BP that they were safe and fine. [...] Between now and then I've had multiple seizures, been in multiple hospitals [...]. I mentioned to the doctor I'd been exposed to Corexit, to the oil spill, and he immediately decided to say he didn't know anything about that. Within five minutes I had my discharge papers and I was discharged. Obviously, no one wants to help me battle with this, I guess because they're scared of BP or whatever's going on.”

Brandon Casanova, fisherman.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CxefgW2S99w&feature=mfu_in_order&list=UL

“My son and myself both have this [condition] that started with being nausea and throwing up.”

-George Price, boatyard owner in Louisiana; diagnosed with severe anemia in the months after the Spill.

“It's very, very clear when you look at the ingredients both of oil—which is considered itself a hazardous material—coupled with the ingredients in the toxic dispersants. And when you mix those together, it actually creates a substance four times more toxic. And these are exactly the types of chemicals that are turning up literally in people's blood.”

Dahr Jamail, Investigative Journalist

“I cough and spit up blood all the time. I shake and tremble all the time. I can't even open a bottle of water or hold a bottle of water with my hands [...] It seems to get worse and worse everyday.”

-Clayton Matherne, boat engineer in Louisiana

www.bpoil.wordpress.com

On the effects of the oil spill on children:

“I have friends that are sick that have been sick since the spill. I had a two-year-old grandson—he's now three—that has been sick since September after the spill, 2010. His immune system was so low that they couldn't detox him, so they've had to just naturally try to—with eating habits and things like that—to try to get his immune system built back up. [...] Upper respiratory problems, fevers for no reason, things like that. But you can't take him to a doctor because most doctors just want to give him antibiotics, and that's what helped destroy his immune system in the first place.”

Shirley Tillman, Mississippi Coastal Resident, on the effects of her grandson's exposure to oil spill contaminants.

“She'll be two in May. She has acute sinusitis, stomach problems [...] I've had to pick her up multiple

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times from school since the oil spill. I never picked her up before [...] It's because of her stomach. She swears it's killing her. [She's had multiple] viral and bacterial infections at the same time.”

Julie Crepoel (Burras, LA), on her daughter's chronic illnesses after the spill.

“One's two, the other's five. They're my grandchildren, and they've got runny noses all the time and they never used to have that. Breathing problems, continuously. Both of them are diagnosed with bronchitis. The five-year-old, she never had any of these breathing problems before the Spill.”

-Betty Doud

www.bpoil.wordpress.com

Fisherman discussing the effects of their exposure:

“I cough, I'm always coughing. I wake up in the middle of the night coughing.”

-Mike Fraser, captain of relief effort boat

“I've had bronchial pneumonia four times. I ain't never had no kinda problems prior.”

Todd Rook, fisherman.

“I think there's a fairly high likelihood that we'll see some increase in some cancers in some of the populations exposed to the chemicals. [...] This is nothing new. These were well-known health effects and the science is very strong.”

-Dr. Michael Harbut, Louisiana doctor

"For me, it's more like short-term memory loss. You forget what you're doing when you're doing things and going about your daily routine. [...] What I would like the outcome to be is for us to be told the truth. Just tell us what happened to us ... and then we can move on, seek whatever we have to do to try to get better. Move on with our lives." - **Levi Burnett, fisherman**

“I think sometimes he's just blank. I don't know if people understand when I say, 'just blank.' [...] BP says they want to make us whole. They have not made us whole. They have made us worse than we were before. They haven't fixed us physically. I mean, these guys have poor health now. They've haven't fixed our lives back to normal. I mean, it's just...it's a mess.”

-Reba Burnett, on her husband's memory loss.

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/fishermen-sick-gulf-oil-spill-cleanup-abc-news/story?id=13399130>

<http://abcnews.go.com/WNT/video/bp-spill-year-13410256>

“I haven't eaten anything that comes out of the water in the Gulf since May [2010], and I won't. And you know why? Because the fishermen I know, that I work with, are telling me, 'Don't.'”

-Cherri Foytlin, Louisiana Resident

“One person after another I'm having tell me, 'I'm having kidney failure, my pancreas is rotting out, I don't know what's wrong with it, my kidneys won't stop hurting, my liver won't stop hurting.’”

Jennifer, Louisiana Resident, cleanup worker

“I was speaking to my doctor and I said, 'Honestly, could this [work] affect me,' and he said, 'These chemicals could directly affect your fertility.’”

Gavin, Activist

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http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMsHeP4ydDI&feature=player_embedded
(Al Jazeera report)

Damage to fishing economy:

“I made close to forty thousand dollars this last year bedding oysters. [...] Now, I lie in bed three or four hours before I can fall asleep. I wake up at three o'clock in the morning with the same stuff on my mind, tossing and turning. I feel like a fish out of water, just slopping around in my bed at night.”

- Lewis McCannister, Louisiana fisherman, on the psychological consequences of being newly unemployed as a result of the BP spill.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=emaf6w9ZJ5Q>

(Voice of America News)

“My symptoms went from nosebleeds to respiratory problems, ear infections, throat infections. Sometimes my throat would feel like I had swallowed razorblades—it would get so sore [...]. And it went from that to having anxiety, severe chest pains—my heart was beating like a hundred and fifty beats per minute. I was having severe sweating. [...] I started with muscle spasms. I'd get sometimes the cramps in my legs, and I'd get them in my ribs. It would feel like I couldn't breathe. [...] Sometimes I would feel confused, like I could remember what was going on, but it seemed fuzzy. I couldn't stay on top of what I was supposed to be doing everyday. [...] I had conjunctivitis. My eye swelled up; I couldn't see anything out of it. They gave me an eye test; I couldn't even read. [...] Then I started with the vomiting. I would puke until I felt like my guts were going to collapse. [...] I haven't had a menstrual cycle since I came back. When I first got to [the hotel], I had one, and after about two months there, I've never had another one since.”

-Jamie Griffin, washed cleanup workers' clothes for several months on board a 'floating hotel' off shore of the Gulf.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bmZJVQFf80&list=UU_ssES4yL7LH8OmHtOT5Tdg&index=4&feature=plcp

“I have severe pain behind my right eye. My insides shake and tremble. I don't know why things are happening like this. It seems to get worse and worse everyday. I don't know how to explain it, it's just...it's driving me crazy, is what it's doing. I lay in bed last night and prayed that God would just let me die, you know. I'm tired of suffering, you know? I'm tired of watching my family suffer; I'm tired of seeing my family worry about me, you know? I don't know how much longer I can deal with it. I feel like I'm just losing control over everything and can't...It isn't right. My family's lost everything they ever had because of me. I don't know how to gain control back, you know?”

-Clayton Matherne, fisherman

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LN8zdZlz4VQ&list=UU_ssES4yL7LH8OmHtOT5Tdg&index=6&feature=plcp

“I worked at a salon right on the beach. [I stopped working] when I was unable to because of the symptoms of whatever I've got. [My face is swollen] about three times its size, and so is my neck, [...] I was having problems before, but on the 22nd of September I went out to see that full moon come up, the Harvest moon, and that night when I got home, I had a major attack on my throat and my head. It felt like knives were sticking in my throat, and my throat closed up. And ever since then, I've not been able to talk. [...] I've been to the doctor five times. I have been on enough Pregnazone to kill a horse,

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and I have had two shots, and I have been on four different kinds of antibiotics, and nothing is touching this at all. [...] Everybody seems to be blowing me off and sending me to another doctor. [...] I have not been to the emergency room because I know that they'll give me the same steroids, the same antibiotics, or whatever. [...] It ebbs and flows. Sometimes it's really, really, really bad, and I get scared, and I feel like I'm going to have to call somebody to take me to the emergency room. And sometimes it'll go down just a bit, to where I'm not choking. I'm just trying to survive.”

Lisa Nelson, died on 3/6/11

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AIO2TCQtkk0&feature=related>