

Monday, June 14, 2010 Clips from Keith Olbermann Transcript on Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill

(Dead Marine Life on Beaches – Restrictions Placed on Media by BP – Information on Human Health Problems – Lack of Proper Gear and Respirators)

“...OLBERMANN: The Supreme Court ruled that corporations are people. BP is, of course, a convicted criminal now. And although any criminal investigator will tell you the importance of preserving the scene of the crime and any evidence, in this case, the scene of the crime is being managed by the convicted criminal, who just happens to suspect number one this time out as well.

So the shocker in our fourth story, it looks as if someone is destroying evidence at the scene of the crime. Despite BP’s claim of openness, the public beaches are still being run like private ones, virtually every media outlet by now has its own story of access denied. WDSU in New Orleans being told on camera that workers could not speak even after BP executives denied anyone had such order.

KHOU talking it to a BP operator in Houston who calls the spill hotline a diversion to stop callers from through, claiming—though BP denies this—that other operators do nothing with the calls. Quote, “They just type blah, blah, blah. No information. Just blah, blah, blah.”

Almost from the beginning, this news hour has reported on claims that the aerial dispersants might do more for BP’s image that they do for the water. Dispersion of oil is not the equivalent of disappearance of oil. And the deployment of booms in the Gulf also criticized for the improper execution of that deployment, including by some veterans of Exxon Valdez spill.

Veterans who remember full well that Exxon’s then-CEO promised that those communities, too, would be helped. But behind the scenes, he was audiotaped saying he didn’t care whether the booms contained the oil. He just wanted pictures of them in the water.

We’re joined by one of those Valdez veterans, marine biologist, Riki Ott, who at that time worked in commercial fishing in Alaska. She joins us tonight from Pensacola, Florida. Great thanks for your time tonight.

RIKI OTT, RIKIOTT.COM: You’re welcome. Good evening.

OLBERMANN: You have been traveling the coast since this happened. Can you tell us your experiences and what you’re hearing from people there?

OTT: The experiences veer across three different states now, four actually, including Florida. People are getting headaches, sore throats, nausea, dizziness, and stuffy noses. These are people—these are surfers, these are turtle watch volunteers, these are the spill response workers—identical across four states.

And we have BP still maintaining that these people do not need respirators either on their cleanup or in the communities. That's one thing.

Another thing is that the people, especially the turtle watch volunteers who walk the beaches consistently every morning at 6:00 a.m., they're saying the carcasses are disappearing. People who walk the beaches at night, they've seen little baby dolphins wash up dead, flashlights, people descend out of nowhere, carcass gone in 15 minutes. There's reports from offshore of massive kills on the barrier islands from fishermen who have been working on the spill response. And the—BP's response has been to use metal detectors to keep and prevent the people from even taking cell phones out to photograph this.

We have (INAUDIBLE) -- we've flown pilots out, carcasses gone. So—and also now, we have reports of e-mails that anything to do with carcasses, they're disappearing from people's servers. OLBERMANN: None of this is being captured on videotape? In other words, if there's an attempt to suppress this, you're suggesting there's both an attempt to suppress this and also a very effective attempt to suppress this information and these images?

OTT: Absolutely. Images are evidence. Carcasses are evidence. These were under lock and key, Exxon Valdez, NOAA did the collection, a federal agency.

And here, what we see are people—I've been able to get some pictures of BP raking up bird carcasses, separating heads from bodies. Supposedly, NOAA is saying, oh, these carcasses are all going to be autopsied so we can determine cause of death. You're not going to autopsy a carcass where the head is removed from the body.

So, in my opinion, there's a very strong attempt, not only to control and minimize how much oil was spilling, but now, to control the evidence of the damage, the appearance of carcasses. And you have sick wildlife. You have sick workers. It's the oil that's making this problem. We need Obama to stand up and order respirators on all the response workers now to avert a human tragedy.

OLBERMANN: On the premises that all this is being done and you're certain this is—the things that you have seen are being done by BP and not by NOAA at BP's instructions, or local police at BP's instructions, whichever the formula is—what is their—what is the evidence that you can present to support your claim?

OTT: I put several photographs on “Huffington Post” of literally a bird's head and a rake and the head being separated. We are—I can get pictures of the early—of the raked beaches in the morning from the turtle watch volunteers. **I'm also going to ask people to start taking pictures of their skin rashes and blisters. This is coming in from surfers now and from the turtle watch volunteers as well as the workers.**

In response to this, Tulane University is deploying a mobile medical unit to the Venice area, and also, we're working with physicians for social responsibility to come in all five of the Gulf Coast states. And, right now, what they're doing is counseling medical doctors because this is like an ordinary headache or flu.

This is, you know, chemical poisoning very likely.

It's not just tar balls that are washing ashore and moss (ph). It's the invisible oil, the underwater plume that's coming ashore, it's surface oil, and it's also these vapors.

There's five forms of oil that's coming, you know, onto these communities and that the workers are experiencing. So, we've actually got a team of physicians that believe us and they're down here. And Tulane University as well.

OLBERMANN: Riki Ott, marine toxicologist, commercial fisher from the Exxon Valdez times, outlining now, of course, something new and as equally disturbing as anything else we've seen here—the potential of a human health crisis enveloping the entire Gulf.

We'll stay in touch with us if you stay in touch with us. We'd appreciate it. Thanks for your time tonight.

OTT: You're very welcome.