

# BP's Insidious Coverup and Propaganda Campaign: Out of Sight, Out of Mind

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Since BP announced that CEO Tony Hayward would receive a multi-million dollar golden parachute and be replaced by Bob Dudley, we have witnessed an incredibly broad, and powerful, propaganda campaign. A campaign that peaked this week with the US government, clearly acting in BP's best interests, itself announcing, via outlets willing to allow themselves to be used to transfer the propaganda, like the [New York Times](#), this message: "The government is expected to announce on Wednesday that three-quarters of the oil from the Deepwater Horizon leak has already evaporated, dispersed, been captured or otherwise eliminated — and that much of the rest is so diluted that it does not seem to pose much additional risk of harm."

The Times was accommodating enough to lead the story with a nice photo of a fishing boat motoring across clean water with several birds in the foreground.

This message was disseminated far and wide, via other mainstream media outlets like the AP and Reuters, effectively announcing to the masses that despite the Gulf of Mexico suffering the largest marine oil disaster in US history, most of the oil was simply "gone."

Thus, it's only what is on the surface that counts. If you can't see it, there is not a problem.

This kind of government cover-up is nothing new, of course.

"It is well known that after the Chernobyl accident, the Soviet government immediately did everything possible to conceal the fact of the accident and its consequences for the population and the environment: it issued "top secret" instructions to classify all data on the accident, especially as regards the health of the affected population," journalist Alla Yaroshinskaya [has written](#).

In 1990 Yaroshinskaya came across documents about the Chernobyl nuclear catastrophe that revealed a massive state cover-up operation, coupled with a calculated policy of disinformation where the then Soviet Union's state and party leadership knowingly played down the extent of the contamination and offered a sanitized version to the public, both in and out of Russia. To date, studies continue to show ongoing human and environmental damage from that disaster.

When the disaster at Chernobyl occurred, it was only after radiation levels triggered alarms at the Forsmark Nuclear Power Plant in Sweden that the Soviet Union admitted an accident had even occurred. Even then, government authorities immediately began to attempt to conceal the scale of the disaster.

Sound familiar?

In late April, after the Deepwater Horizon rig exploded and sank into the depths and the Macondo well began gushing oil, BP and the complicit Coast Guard announced no oil was being released. The [Gulf Restoration Network](#) flew out to the scene and saw massive amounts of oil and sounded the alarm, which forced BP and the US government to admit there was, indeed, oil. Such has the trend of BP/US Government lying, countered by (sometimes) forced accountability, then to more lying, been set.

These most recent, and most blatant of the BP/US Government propaganda gems are easily undermined by countless facts. Reality and truth always, given time, find a way to surface...just like BP's dispersed oil.

Two captains of so-called "vessels of opportunity" helping with the cleanup recently [told](#) Times-Picayune reporter Bob Marshall that they saw more oil at South Pass on Tuesday than they have during the entire crisis.

"I don't know where everyone else is looking, but if they think there's no more oil out there, they should take a ride with me," charter captain Mike Frenette said.

Another captain, Don Sutton, saw floating tar balls for 15 miles from South Pass to Southwest Pass. "And that wasn't all we saw. There were patches of oil in that chocolate mousse stuff, slicks and patches of grass with oil on them," he said.

Yesterday I spoke with Clint Guidry, a Louisiana fisherman who is on the Board of Directors of the Louisiana Shrimp Association and the Shrimp Harvester Representative on the Louisiana Shrimp Task Force created by Executive Order of Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal.

"Right now, there is more oil in Barataria Bay than there has been since this whole thing started on April 20," Guidry told me.

BP oil is now turning up under the shells of post-larval blue crabs all across the northern Gulf of Mexico. Nearly all the crab larvae collected to date by researchers, from Grand Isle, Louisiana all the way over to Pensacola, Florida, have oil under their shells. Further analysis is showing that the crabs likely also contain BP's Corexit dispersant.

On August 5th it was [reported](#) that a pair of fishermen in Mississippi "made an alarming discovery that has many wondering what's happening below the surface" of the Gulf of Mexico. They found several full-sized crabs filled with oil.

In Hancock County, Mississippi, Brian Adam, the EMA director, reported, "We're still seeing tar balls everyday, and I'm not talking just a few tar balls. We're seeing a good amount everyday on the beaches."

According to Adam, a rock jetty near Waveland became covered in one thousand pounds of tar balls in only three days time. Keith Ladner, owner of Gulf Shores Sea Products and a longtime supplier of seafood, said this of some full-sized crabs he found near the mouth of Bay St. Louis: "You could tell it was real slick and dark in color so I grabbed it, and opened the back of the crab, and you could see in the 'dead man' or the lungs of the crabs...you could see the black."

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) report from Wednesday claims that 33 percent of BP's oil in the Gulf has been either burned, skimmed, dispersed, or directly recovered by cleanup operations. NOAA goes on to claim that another 25 percent has evaporated into the atmosphere or dissolved in the water, and another 16 percent has been naturally dispersed. Of the remaining 26 percent, NOAA claims that amount is either washed ashore, been collected from beaches, is buried along the coasts, or is still on or just below the surface.

University of South Florida chemical oceanographer David Hollander [says](#) these estimates are "ludicrous." Of the NOAA report, Hollander says, "It's almost comical."

Other scientists also [immediately expressed their doubts](#) of the validity of the NOAA report, while [toxicologists](#) expect to be busy tracking the effects of BP's toxic dispersants "for years."

Giant plumes of BP's sub-surface dispersed oil are floating around the Gulf of Mexico, as confirmed recently by researchers from the University of South Florida.

It was also [recently revealed](#) that the worst dead zone in 25 years has been recorded in Gulf of Mexico waters. Of course it's likely a given that this is due to BP's liberal use of dispersants.

"To judge from most media coverage, the beaches are open, the fishing restrictions being lifted and the Gulf resorts open for business in a healthy, safe environment," environmental activist Jerry Cope [wrote recently](#), "We, along with Pierre LeBlanc, spent the last few weeks along the Gulf coast from Louisiana to Florida, and the reality is distinctly different. The coastal communities of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida have been inundated by the oil and toxic dispersant Corexit 9500, and the entire region is contaminated. The once pristine white beaches that have been subject to intense cleaning operations now contain the oil/dispersant contamination to an unknown depth. The economic impacts potentially exceed even the devastation of a major hurricane like Katrina, the adverse impacts on health and welfare of human populations are increasing every minute of every day and the long-term effects are potentially life threatening."

Cope continued:

"In May, Mother Nature Network blogger Karl Burkart received a tip from an anonymous fisherman-turned-BP contractor in the form of a distressed text message, describing a near-apocalyptic sight near the location of the sunken Deepwater Horizon — fish, dolphins, rays, squid, whales, and thousands of birds — "as far as the eye can see," dead and dying. According to his statement, which was later confirmed by another report from an individual working in the Gulf, whale carcasses were being shipped to a highly guarded location where they were processed for disposal."

"Local fisherman in Alabama report sighting tremendous numbers of dolphins, sharks, and fish moving in towards shore as the initial waves of oil and dispersant approached in June. Many third- and fourth-generation fishermen declared emphatically that they had never seen or heard of any similar event in the past. Scores of animals were fleeing the leading edge of toxic dispersant mixed with oil. Those not either caught in the toxic mixture and killed out at sea, or fortunate enough to be out in safe water beyond the Source, died as

the water closed in, and they were left no safe harbor. The numbers of birds, fish, turtles, and mammals killed by the use of Corexit will never be known as the evidence strongly suggests that BP worked with the Coast Guard, the Department of Homeland Security, the FAA, private security contractors, and local law enforcement, all of which cooperated to conceal the operations disposing of the animals from the media and the public.”

Cope added, “The Gulf of Mexico from the Source into the shore is a giant kill zone.”

Earlier this week, marine biologist, toxicologist and Exxon Valdez survivor Dr. Riki Ott took a flight over southern Louisiana. Here’s some of [what she wrote](#) about it:

“Bay Jimmy on the northeast side of Barataria Bay was full of oil. So was Bay Baptiste, Lake Grande Ecaille, and Billet Bay. Sitting next to me was Mike Roberts, a shrimper with Louisiana Bayoukeepers, who has grown up in this area. His voice crackled over the headset as I strained to hold the window. “I’ve fished in all these waters – everywhere you can see. It’s all oiled. This is the worst I’ve seen. This is a heart-break...”

“We followed thick streamers of black oil and ribbons of rainbow sheen from Bay Baptiste and Bay Jimmy south across Barataria Bay through Four Bayou Pass and into the Gulf of Mexico. The ocean’s smooth surface glinted like molten lead in the late afternoon sun. Oil. As far as we could see: Oil.”

“When we landed after our 2-hour flight, our pilot told us that she sometimes has to wipe an oily reddish film off the leading edges of her plane’s wings after flying over the Gulf. Hurricane Creekkeeper John Wathem documented similar oily films on planes he chartered for Gulf over-flights. Bonnie doesn’t wear gloves when she wipes her plane. She showed me her hands — red rash, blisters, and peeling palms.

If peeling palms are an indication of the oil-solvent stew, the reddish film on Bonnie’s plane and others means that the stew is not only in the Gulf, it is in the rain clouds above the Gulf. And in the middle of hurricane season, this means the oil-solvent mix could rain down anywhere across the Gulf.”

Dean Blanchard, one of the most important seafood purchasers in Louisiana, recently attended a Town Hall Meeting with a BP representative in Grand Isle, Louisiana.

[In the meeting](#), Blanchard stands up and addresses the BP representative at length.

“Ya’ll didn’t give me enough money to pay my bills. I can show you. For the electric bill and everything. What I’ve collected from BP, so far since this started, is less than what I paid out in bills. And I’ve cut my things down to rock bottom. But how do you expect a man to live on less than 10 percent of what I was projected to make? I don’t believe there’s anybody in this country who could pay their bills with just 10 percent of their check. We borrowed money preparing for shrimping season and this happened at the worst possible time.”

Blanchard added, “I ain’t got no job, and no money, and Mr. Hayward gets \$18 million and a new job. That’s hard to take. Let me tell you. Very, very hard to take.”

I should point out that from my first days Louisiana, I’ve been hearing from fishermen

working on BP's clean-up operations that BP is using night flights to drop dispersant on oiled bays. I've seen video taken by fishermen of a white-foamy substance in the marsh the morning after these flights took place.

Blanchard went on to say that he felt that BP did not want to clean up the oil, that it was more cost effective for them to leave it in the water than to clean it up, and then mocked the preposterous government claim that most of the oil is gone because you cannot see it from the air.

The BP rep, Jason, clearly nervous, later responds by saying, "We are doing over-flights, our task forces are looking for oil each day. We have a communications room where they are able to call in sightings of oil, from the boats, from the task forces. There is...I understand the anger and I understand the frustration. A couple of things that Dean said I have to take exception to. We do want to clean up this oil. I can understand frustration. I can understand seeing certain people getting certain amounts of money and some of the things that people see. But someone is going to have to explain to me why BP would not want to clean up this oil."

Blanchard had clearly heard enough of BP's propaganda. To the representatives' request to have someone explain to him why BP would not want to clean up the oil, Blanchard angrily obliged:

"Because it's more cost effective for ya'll to come at night and sink the son-of-a-bitch! When the oil's coming around, they call ya'll, they tell ya'll where the oil's at, and the first thing ya'll do is tell them to go the other way, ya'll send the planes, and ya'll fucking sink it! [Spray dispersants from the air] That's what ya'll are doing, come on man!" He sits back down angrily. "Let's quit playing over here and tell the truth. Ya'll are sinking the oil, Jason! You know ya'll are sinking it. You know what ya'll are doing. Ya'll are sending all the boats, you're putting them all in a group at night, we all hear the planes, and the next morning there's nothing but white bubbles! What do you think, we're stupid? We're not stupid! Ya'll are putting the oil on the bottom of my fishing grounds! Ya'll not only messing me up now, ya'll are messing me up for the rest of my life! I ain't gonna live long enough to buy anymore shrimp!"

The lives of Gulf coast fishermen and residents are being destroyed. Scientists, environmentalists, and toxicologists are describing the Gulf of Mexico as a growing dead zone, a kill zone, and an energy sacrifice zone. As you read this, oil is everywhere around southeastern Louisiana, and continually washing ashore in Alabama and Mississippi.

Meanwhile, Doug Suttles, BP's chief operating officer, announced Friday that the company may not give up on its claims on the Macondo well. "There's lots of oil and gas here," he [said](#), "We're going to have to think about what to do with that at some point."

Of this, Louisiana's St. Bernard Parish President Craig Taffaro said it's no secret that BP wants to drill again. In fact, he said, it has been part of his conversations with BP since the oil crisis began.

Let us be clear about who, and what, we are dealing with here.

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