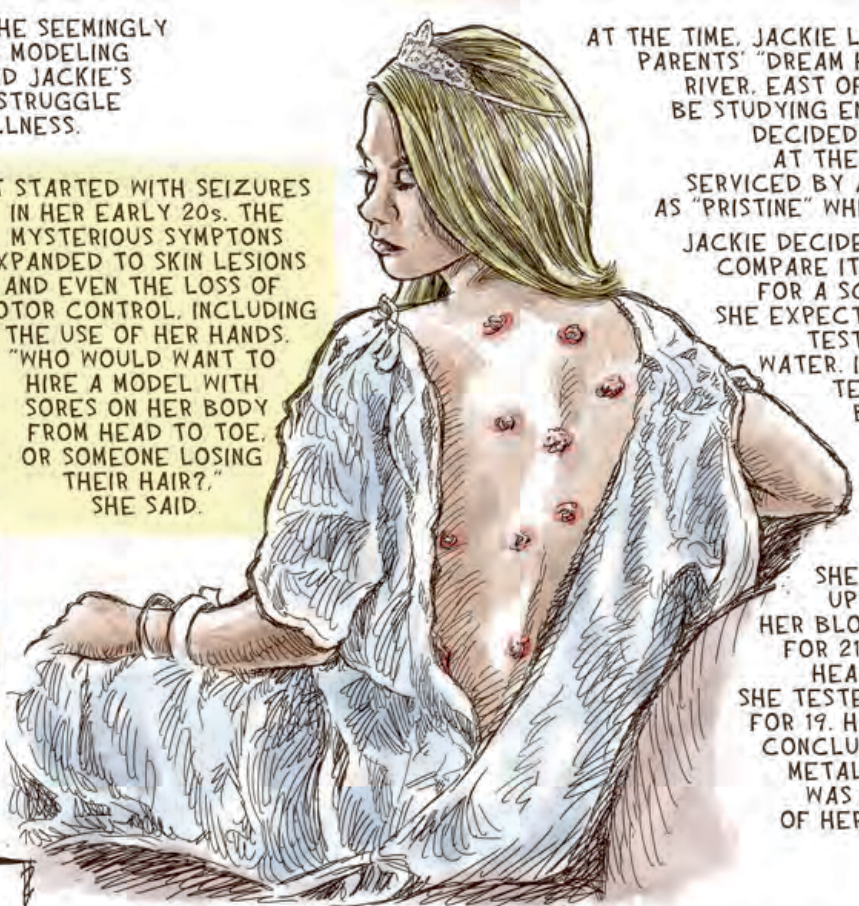


MEET JACKIE YOUNG, MISS HOUSTON RODEO 2013. SHE'S BEEN MODELING SINCE SHE WAS A CHILD, BUT HER CAREER REALLY TOOK OFF WHEN SHE WON MISS DARQUE TAN IN 2009. SHE USED THE FLEXIBILITY AND INCOME AFFORDED BY A MODELING CAREER TO PUT HERSELF THROUGH COLLEGE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE.



BUT BEHIND THE SEEMINGLY GLAMOROUS MODELING LIFE LURKED JACKIE'S PERSONAL STRUGGLE WITH ILLNESS.

IT STARTED WITH SEIZURES IN HER EARLY 20s. THE MYSTERIOUS SYMPTOMS EXPANDED TO SKIN LESIONS AND EVEN THE LOSS OF MOTOR CONTROL, INCLUDING THE USE OF HER HANDS. "WHO WOULD WANT TO HIRE A MODEL WITH SORES ON HER BODY FROM HEAD TO TOE, OR SOMEONE LOSING THEIR HAIR?" SHE SAID.



AT THE TIME, JACKIE LIVED WITH HER FAMILY IN HER PARENTS' "DREAM HOME" NEAR THE SAN JACINTO RIVER, EAST OF HOUSTON. SHE HAPPENED TO BE STUDYING ENVIRONMENTAL GEOLOGY, AND DECIDED TO HAVE HER WATER TESTED AT THE UNIVERSITY. THEIR HOME WAS SERVICED BY A WELL THAT WAS DESCRIBED AS "PRISTINE" WHEN THEY BOUGHT THE HOUSE.

JACKIE DECIDED TO TEST THEIR WATER AND COMPARE IT TO CITY OF HOUSTON WATER FOR A SCHOOL HYDROLOGY PROJECT. SHE EXPECTED HER "PRISTINE" WATER TO TEST FAR SUPERIOR TO MUNICIPAL WATER. INSTEAD, HER FAMILY'S WATER TESTED HIGH IN HEAVY METALS, BACTERIA AND AN UNHEALTHY PH LEVEL. HER PROFESSORS POINTED OUT THAT YOU COULD ACTUALLY SEE THE TINY BITS OF METAL.

SHE FOLLOWED UP BY HAVING HER BLOOD TESTED FOR 21 DIFFERENT HEAVY METALS. SHE TESTED POSITIVE FOR 19. HER DOCTOR CONCLUDED HEAVY METAL EXPOSURE WAS THE CAUSE OF HER SEIZURES.



SUDDENLY, MANY SEEMINGLY DISPARATE FAMILY HEALTH ISSUES NOW APPEARED TO SHARE A COMMON CAUSE. EVEN BEFORE THE SEIZURES, JACKIE AND OTHER MEMBERS OF HER FAMILY SEEMED TO FALL ILL EVERY COUPLE OF MONTHS, WITH SEVERE, FLU-LIKE SYMPTOMS AND RASHES. EVEN THEIR PETS HAD AN INORDINATE NUMBER OF ILLNESSES AND MEDICAL COMPLICATIONS.



CATS DEVELOPED TUMORS.

CHICKENS LOST THEIR FEATHERS AND STOPPED LAYING EGGS.



SIX SQUIRRELS THAT JACKIE'S MOM WAS REHABILITATING FOR TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE SUDDENLY DIED.

OF ALL JACKIE'S FAMILY MEMBERS, HER FATHER SEEMED TO GET SICK MOST OFTEN AND MOST SEVERELY. HE WOULD BECOME BED-RIDDEN WITH SEVERE SYMPTOMS AND RASHES SEVERAL TIMES A YEAR.

IN 2012, HE SNAPPED HIS SPINE WHILE TRYING TO LIFT A HEAVY FENCE THAT HAD FALLEN ON THEIR PROPERTY. MEDICAL TESTS SHOWED THAT HIS BONES HAD BECOME BRITTLE AND WEAK FROM PREVIOUSLY UNDIAGNOSED MULTIPLE MYELOMA, A CANCER THAT STARTS IN BONE MARROW.

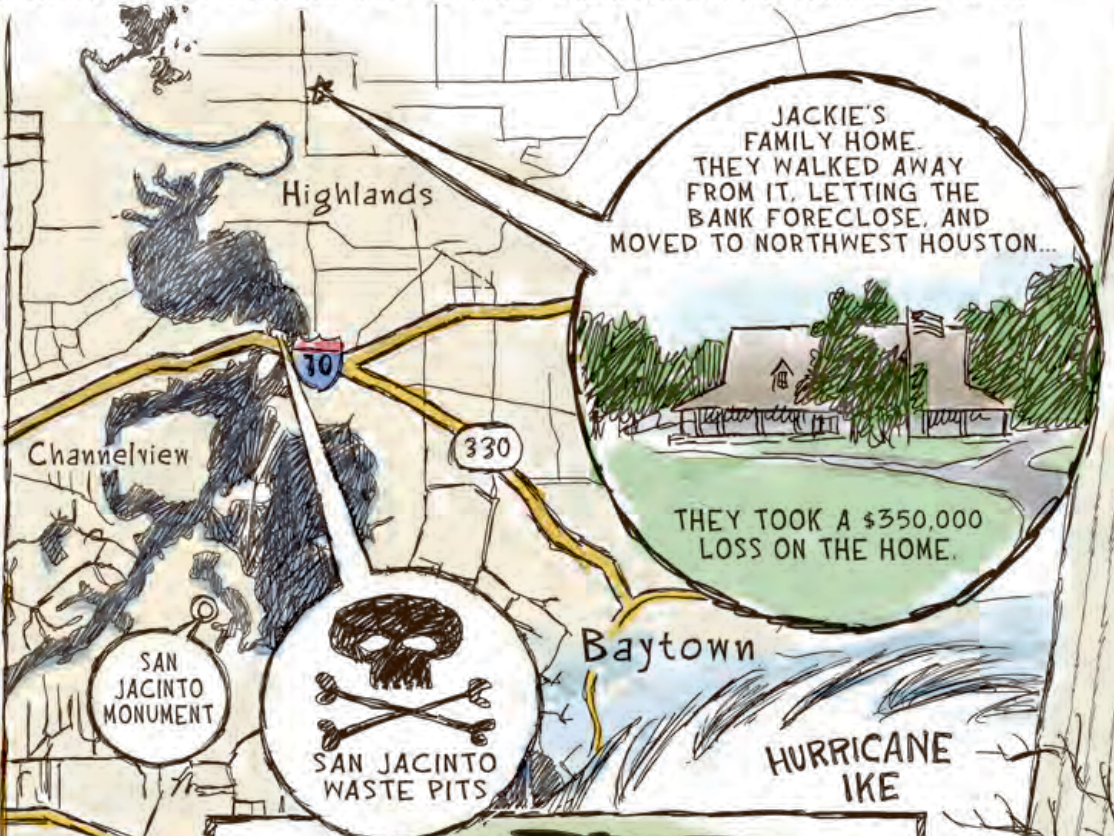


JACKIE'S MOTHER FINALLY DECIDED TO START TRUCKING IN WATER SO THEY COULD AVOID THE WELL WATER. JACKIE'S SYMPTOMS STARTED TO IMPROVE AND THE CHICKENS STARTED LAYING EGGS AGAIN.

IT'S DIFFICULT TO KNOW THE SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION OF THEIR WELL WATER WITH CERTAINTY, BUT JACKIE SUSPECTS THE SAN JACINTO RIVER WASTE PITS AS A PRIMARY SOURCE. THEY WERE BUILT ALONG THE RIVER IN THE 1960s FOR DISPOSAL OF PAPER MILL WASTE. THANKS TO SUBSIDENCE AND WATER FLOW, THE PITS ARE NOW PARTIALLY SUBMERGED IN THE SAN JACINTO RIVER.

FOR OVER 40 YEARS, THE PITS SAT UNCOVERED AND SINKING INTO THE RIVER, GRADUALLY POISONING THE SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT. THE SITE WAS ADDED TO THE EPA'S SUPERFUND LIST IN 2008 AND A TEMPORARY CAP WAS INSTALLED IN 2011. UNFORTUNATELY, THE CAP IS ALREADY SHOWING SIGNS OF FAILURE AFTER A MINOR FLOODING EVENT.

ASIDE FROM HEAVY METALS, THE PITS HAVE EXTREMELY HIGH CONCENTRATIONS OF DIOXIN, WHICH IS ONE OF THE MOST POISONOUS COMPOUNDS EVER CREATED BY MAN.



JACKIE'S FAMILY HOME. THEY WALKED AWAY FROM IT, LETTING THE BANK FORECLOSE, AND MOVED TO NORTHWEST HOUSTON...

THEY TOOK A \$350,000 LOSS ON THE HOME.



WARNING SIGNS ARE POSTED ALL OVER THE AREA ADVISING PEOPLE NOT TO EAT FISH, CLAMS AND OYSTERS CAUGHT IN THE AREA, BUT SOME DO IT ANYWAY, AND THERE'S EVIDENCE FROM LAWSUITS THAT SOME IS SOLD COMMERCIALY.

MANY RESIDENTS IN THE AREA ARE WORRIED ABOUT THE INTEGRITY OF THE TEMPORARY CAP, WHICH IS ESSENTIALLY A TARP WITH ROCKS OVER IT. IF A HURRICANE COMES THROUGH THE AREA, IT COULD DAMAGE THE CAP, AND THE ACCOMPANYING STORM SURGE AND HIGH WINDS COULD SPREAD TOXINS THROUGHOUT THE AREA. JACKIE SAYS THAT MANY OF THE HEALTH ISSUES SHE AND HER FAMILY SUFFERED DRAMATICALLY AS A RESULT OF HURRICANE IKE. "OUR FAMILY WAS NEVER THE SAME AFTER IKE."

LAST YEAR, JACKIE PUT HER GEOLOGY DEGREE AND PERSONAL PASSION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT TO WORK WHEN SHE TOOK A JOB WITH THE ADVOCACY GROUP "TEXANS TOGETHER" AS PROJECT MANAGER FOR THE SAN JACINTO RIVER PROJECT. THE GROUP IS FIGHTING FOR FULL REMEDIATION OF THE WASTE SITE. NEXT WEEK, WE'LL TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THE SITE THAT HOUSTON'S OWN "ERIN BROCKOVICH" IS WORKING TO RESTORE - AN AREA THAT PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE IN TEXAS HISTORY.

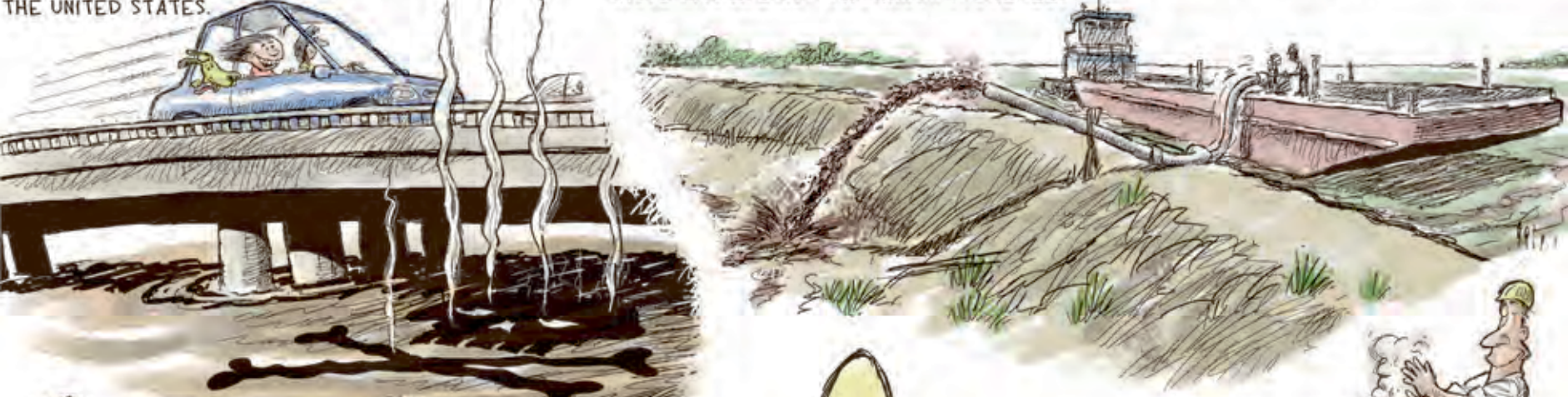
THE SAN JACINTO MONUMENT STANDS A SHORT DISTANCE FROM THE WASTE PITS AND THE POLLUTED WATERS OF THE SAN JACINTO RIVER AND UPPER GALVESTON BAY. TEXAS FOUGHT FOR ITS INDEPENDENCE HERE, BUT HAS SINCE QUIETLY SURRENDERED THESE SACRED ENVIRONS TO THE TOXIC REALITIES OF SWEEPING INDUSTRIALIZATION.



Nick Anderson 2013 Houston Chronicle

MOST HOUSTONIANS ARE PROBABLY UNAWARE THAT WHEN THEY CROSS OVER THE SAN JACINTO RIVER ON I-10, THEY ARE CROSSING ONE OF THE MOST TOXIC SITES IN THE UNITED STATES.

IN THE MID 60s, MCGINNES INDUSTRIAL MAINTENANCE CORP. HAULED SLUDGE FROM CHAMPION PAPER BY BARGE AND DUMPED IT INTO SHALLOW PITS ADJACENT TO THE RIVER. THANKS TO SUBSIDENCE (A SINKING OF THE TERRAIN) AND RIVER CURRENTS, THOSE PITS ARE NOW PARTIALLY SUBMERGED.



THE PITS WERE LARGELY FORGOTTEN FOR DECADES, UNTIL 2005 WHEN OFFICERS FOR TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE SEARCHED FOR THE SOURCE OF DIOXIN IN GALVESTON BAY.

MANY HEALTH PROFESSIONALS CONSIDER DIOXINS TO BE THE MOST TOXIC CHEMICALS EVER CREATED BY MAN. THE DIOXINS WERE A BYPRODUCT OF PULP BLEACHING BY CHAMPION PAPER.

IN MARCH 2007 U.S. REPS. GENE GREEN AND TED POE SUBMITTED A REQUEST TO THE EPA FOR SUPERFUND DESIGNATION OF THE PITS. NOT ONLY WERE THEY ADDED TO THE SUPERFUND LIST...

...THEY WERE ADDED TO THE NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST FOR THE WORST SITES IN THE U.S.

THE RESPONSIBLE COMPANIES, SINCE PURCHASED BY WASTE MANAGEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL PAPER, RESPECTIVELY, WERE PRESSED BY THE EPA INTO INSTALLING A TEMPORARY CAP OVER THE SITE IN 2010, WHICH IS ESSENTIALLY A TARP WITH ROCKS ON TOP OF IT. THE CAP WAS DAMAGED CONSIDERABLY BY A 2012 STORM ACCORDING TO THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS. WASTE MANAGEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL PAPER ARE RESISTING A MORE PERMANENT (AND EXPENSIVE) FIX TO THE PROBLEM.



INTERNATIONAL PAPER



DIOXINS, THE COMPOUNDS PRESENT IN AGENT ORANGE, ARE EXTREMELY TOXIC, EVEN IN SMALL DOSES. WHETHER INGESTED ORALLY, INHALED OR ABSORBED THROUGH THE SKIN, THE SAN JAC'S WATER FLOW SPREADS THE DIOXINS DOWNRIVER AND INTO THE BAY. FLOODS, HIGH WINDS AND STORM SURGES FROM HURRICANES CAN DEPOSIT THE TOXINS FAR UPRIVER AND INTO SURROUNDING LANDS AND WATER TABLES.

A STUDY RELEASED THIS MONTH BY SAM BROYD OF TEXAS A&M GALVESTON SAYS THE LOCATION IS "ESPECIALLY PROBLEMATIC FROM A STORM SURGE STANDPOINT" BECAUSE "THE HIGHEST TIDAL DEPTHS OCCUR AT THE MOUTHS OF MAJOR RIVERS AND FRESHWATER INFLOWS. SURGE MODELS FOR A CATEGORY 3 HURRICANE STRIKING GALVESTON BAY DURING HIGH TIDE SHOW SURGE LEVELS AT THE WASTE PIT SITE REACHING 23 FEET. A CATEGORY 5... UP TO 33 FEET."

THE HARRIS COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE IS SUING WASTE MANAGEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL PAPER SEEKING HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN PENALTIES. SPECIAL ASSISTANT HARRIS COUNTY ATTORNEY TERRY O'ROURKE SAID, "IT'S SIMPLY UNACCEPTABLE TO HAVE RESERVOIRS OF DIOXIN JUST WAITING FOR A HURRICANE. DIOXIN HAS ALREADY SPREAD TO GALVESTON BAY. IT'S PERVERSIVE. IT'S EVERYWHERE."

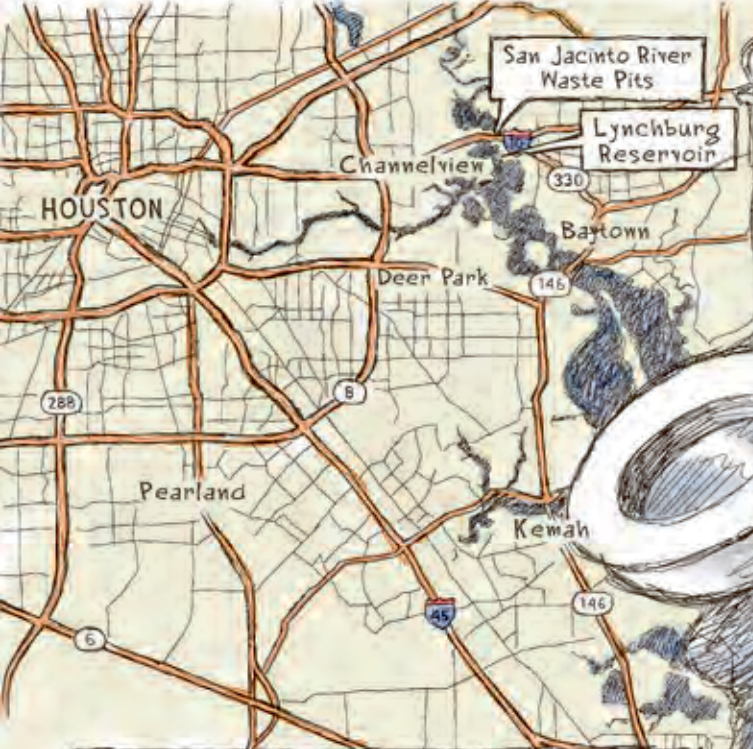
THE STUDY ALSO WARNS: "OF PARTICULAR CONCERN IS THE LYNCHBURG RESERVOIR APPROXIMATELY HALF A MILE FROM THE SUPERFUND SITE...RANGING FROM 4-7 FEET ABOVE SEA LEVEL. THE RESERVOIR IS SUSCEPTIBLE TO SURGE INUNDATION..." THE RESERVOIR SUPPLIES DRINKING WATER TO 600,000 HOUSTON-AREA RESIDENTS.

THERE ARE FISHING ADVISORY SIGNS AROUND THE IMMEDIATE AREA, BUT PEOPLE STILL FISH. TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE RANGER CAPT. FREDERICK RUIZ CAUGHT A FISHERMAN WITH 300 POUNDS OF CLAMS. THE FISHERMAN TOLD THE RANGER THE CLAMS WERE TO FEED HIS FAMILY.

ACCORDING TO HARRIS COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE DOCUMENTS OBTAINED UNDER OPEN RECORDS LAWS, CAPT RUIZ STATES THAT IT'S CLEAR THE SEAFOOD WAS DESTINED FOR COMMERCIAL SALE.

THOSE DOCUMENTS ALSO STATE THAT FISH AND SHELLFISH SAMPLES COLLECTED NEAR THE PITS EXCEEDED THE HEALTH-BASED STANDARD IN "97% OF FISH SAMPLES AND IN 95% OF THE CRAB SAMPLES."

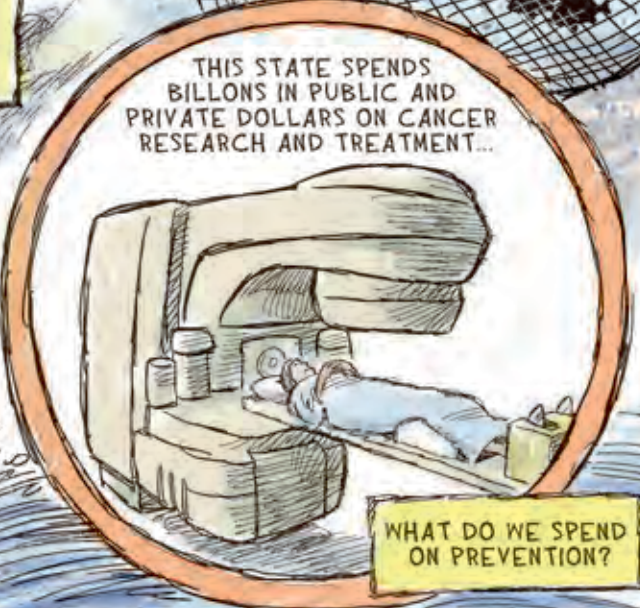
A GROUP OF COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN IS SUING WASTE MANAGEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL PAPER ON THE GROUNDS THAT FISH AND CRAB THEY SOLD TO LOCAL FISH MARKETS WERE CONTAMINATED WITH DIOXIN. THOSE MARKETS SELL TO INDIVIDUALS, LOCAL RESTAURANTS AND ARE DISTRIBUTED NATIONWIDE.



IT ISN'T JUST THE IMMEDIATE AREA THAT POSES A RISK. THE ENTIRE HOUSTON SHIP CHANNEL AND GALVESTON BAY ARE UNDER ADVISORY FOR LIMITING SEAFOOD INTAKE DUE TO DIOXINS, PCBs AND OTHER TOXINS. GALVESTON BAY IS THE SECOND MOST PRODUCTIVE ESTUARY IN THE U.S. FOR SEAFOOD.

FOR TOO MANY YEARS, AMERICAN CITIES HAVE USED THEIR STREAMS AND RIVERS AS INDUSTRIAL COMMODES OF GEOGRAPHICAL CONVENIENCE. STRIDES HAVE BEEN MADE, BUT MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE.

SO KEEP THAT IN MIND NEXT TIME YOU'RE RECREATING IN THE WATERS OF THE SAN JAC OR GALVESTON BAY...



THIS STATE SPENDS BILLIONS IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE DOLLARS ON CANCER RESEARCH AND TREATMENT...

WHAT DO WE SPEND ON PREVENTION?

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WHEN LAST WE MET, WE TOOK A TOXIC TRIP DOWN THE SAN JACINTO RIVER AND EXAMINED A PRIMARY SOURCE OF DIOXIN IN THE RIVER, THE SAN JACINTO WASTE PITS...

HARRIS COUNTY IS SUING WASTE MANAGEMENT, MCGINNES INDUSTRIAL MAINTENANCE CORP AND INTERNATIONAL PAPER - CURRENT OWNERS OF THE COMPANIES THAT RAN THE TOXIC DUMP - FOR DAMAGES OF MORE THAN \$1 BILLION. THE TRIAL IS SET FOR OCT. 6.

THE SUIT METHODICALLY DOCUMENTS THE "CONSCIOUS AND INTENTIONAL ABANDONMENT OF THE WASTE AND POLLUTANTS INTO THE ENVIRONMENT AND FOOD CHAIN" BY THE COMPANIES, FOLLOWED BY DECADES OF NEGLIGENCE, A "CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE," CONTENT TO LET IT BECOME SOMEONE ELSE'S PROBLEM... OUR PROBLEM.

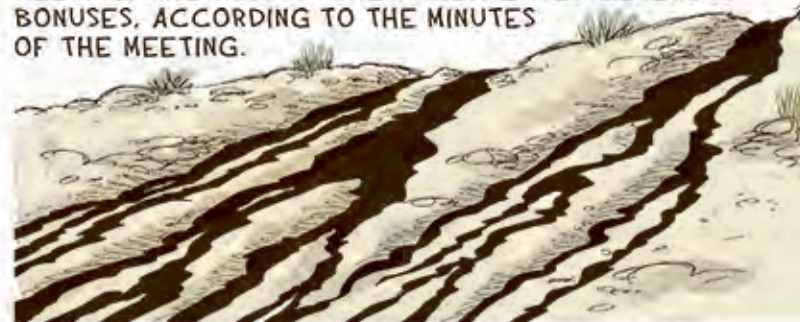
THE COUNTY ADVANCES A DEVASTATING NARRATIVE OF ENVIRONMENTAL NEGLECT AND CASUAL DISREGARD FOR THE HEALTH AND WELFARE OF HARRIS COUNTY RESIDENTS...



FROM 1965 THROUGH 1967, MIMC PUMPED WASTE FROM CHAMPION PAPER (NOW INTERNATIONAL PAPER) INTO THE SITE. IN 1965, THE HARRIS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT CITED MIMC AND CHAMPION FOR INTENTIONALLY PUMPING WASTE FROM THE PITS DIRECTLY INTO THE RIVER AND NOTED THAT THE WASTE WAS "HIGHLY TOXIC TO MARINE LIFE." MIMC AND CHAMPION WERE ALSO ORDERED TO STOP THE DISCHARGES AND REPAIR THE EARTHEN DIKES, WHICH WERE STARTING TO DETERIORATE. THE DELIBERATE DISCHARGES CONTINUED THROUGH EARLY 1968 IN DEFIANCE OF THE ORDER.



IN 1968, THE BOARD OF MIMC - NOW A PART OF WASTE MANAGEMENT THROUGH A SERIES OF MERGERS - VOTED TO "ABANDON" THE POLLUTED WASTE PITS. IN THE SAME MEETING, THE BOARD VOTED THEMSELVES GENEROUS BONUSES, ACCORDING TO THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING.



FOR MORE THAN FOUR DECADES, DIOXIN AND OTHER TOXINS OOZED INTO THE SAN JAC AS THE EARTHEN DIKES SLOWLY CRUMBLLED AND THE WASTE PONDS SANK INTO THE RIVER. ACCORDING TO THE SUIT, THERE IS NO RECORD TO SHOW THAT CHAMPION OR MIMC DID ANYTHING TO STOP THE SEEPAGE OR TO DISCLOSE THE DANGER TO THE PUBLIC.

FAST FORWARD TO 1992... MIMC WAS DECENT ENOUGH TO DISCLOSE THIS TOXIC DEBACLE WHEN IT WAS BEING ACQUIRED BY ANOTHER COMPANY - GC ENVIRONMENTAL (LATER MERGED INTO WASTE MANAGEMENT). MIMC REVEALED TO ITS NEW OWNERS THAT MIMC MAY "AT SOME POINT INCUR LIABILITY UNDER ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS" FOR THE WASTE PITS.



THEY STILL DIDN'T BOTHER TO ALERT THE PUBLIC OR STATE OFFICIALS - WHO HAD DETECTED HIGH DIOXIN LEVELS IN THE SAN JAC. THE STATE SEARCHED IN VAIN FOR THE SOURCE WITHOUT FINDING IT - UNTIL 2005 - WHEN A TIP LED THEM TO THE SITE WHERE THEY MEASURED "ASTRONOMICAL" DIOXIN LEVELS.

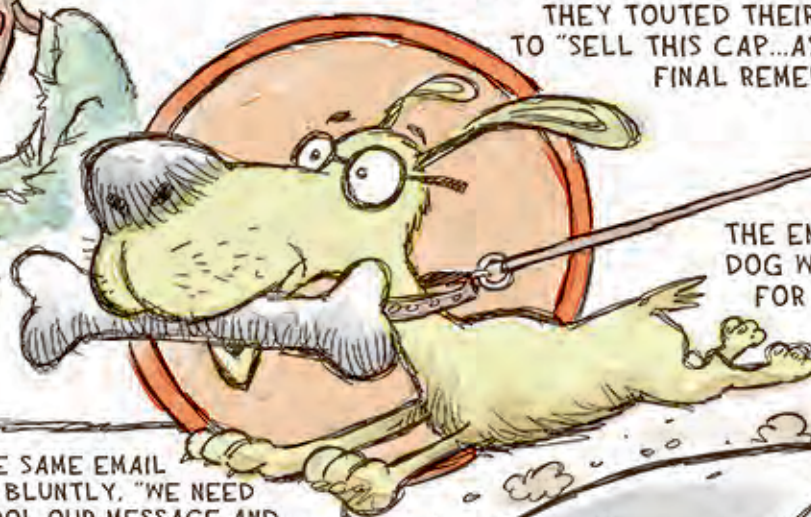


IN NOVEMBER OF 2009, AFTER THE WASTE PITS WERE ADDED TO THE EPA'S SUPERFUND LIST, THE COMPANIES WERE ORDERED TO STUDY THE SITE AND SUBMIT A REPORT. THEY HIRED INDEPENDENT SEDIMENT SCIENTIST DAVID KEITH AS PROJECT COORDINATOR FOR THE STUDIES. RECENTLY, HE PENNED AN OPINION PIECE PUBLISHED IN THE HOUSTON CHRONICLE ARGUING THAT "OBJECTIVE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS OUGHT TO DRIVE ANY DECISION" ABOUT THE WASTE PITS.



BUT INTERNAL EMAILS SUGGEST THE PROCESS HAS BEEN ANYTHING BUT OBJECTIVE. IN MARCH OF 2011, TWO YEARS BEFORE THE "OBJECTIVE" SCIENCE WAS COMPLETED, OFFICIALS FROM WASTE MANAGEMENT DISCUSSED THEIR PLAN TO CONVINCE THE EPA AND THE PUBLIC THAT THE TEMPORARY "ARMORED" CAP THE EPA ORDERED THEM TO INSTALL WAS ADEQUATE AS A PERMANENT SOLUTION.

THEY TOUTED THEIR "BIG PLAN" TO "SELL THIS CAP...AS PART OF THE FINAL REMEDY."

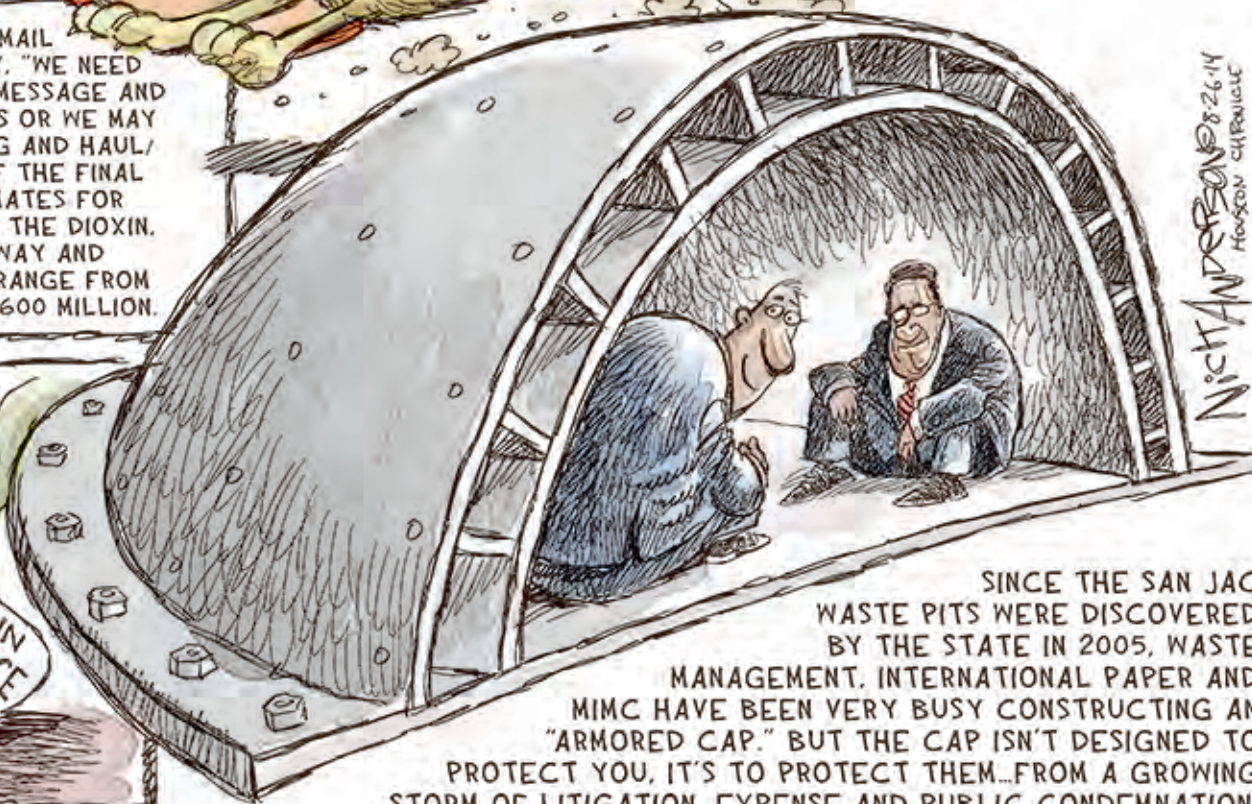


THE EMAILS REFER TO DR. KEITH AS THE "LEAD DOG WHEN IT COMES TO BUILDING CONSENSUS" FOR THE CAP AND ASSERT THAT HE IS THE "BEST SPOKESMAN TO CONTROL OUR MESSAGE."

**OUR AGENDA**  
SCIENCE  
(KEEP IT CHEAP)

THE SAME EMAIL STATES BLUNTLY, "WE NEED TO CONTROL OUR MESSAGE AND BUILD CONSENSUS OR WE MAY BE FACING A DIG AND HAUL/ BURN AS PART OF THE FINAL REMEDY." ESTIMATES FOR DIGGING OUT ALL THE DIOXIN, HAULING IT AWAY AND INCINERATING IT RANGE FROM \$100 MILLION TO \$600 MILLION.

THE EPA DOESN'T SEEM TO BE SATISFIED WITH THE COMPANIES' "OBJECTIVE" SCIENCE. ON JULY 29, THE EPA ANNOUNCED IT WAS TAKING THE UNUSUAL STEP OF SEEKING AN "INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF SITE MODELLING AND POTENTIAL RIVER/ WEATHER CONDITIONS..."



SINCE THE SAN JAC WASTE PITS WERE DISCOVERED BY THE STATE IN 2005, WASTE MANAGEMENT, INTERNATIONAL PAPER AND MIMC HAVE BEEN VERY BUSY CONSTRUCTING AN "ARMORED CAP." BUT THE CAP ISN'T DESIGNED TO PROTECT YOU, IT'S TO PROTECT THEM...FROM A GROWING STORM OF LITIGATION, EXPENSE AND PUBLIC CONDEMNATION

NICK ANDERSON 8/26/14 HOUSTON CHRONICLE