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ALEXANDER COCKBURN AND JEFFREY ST. CLAIR

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## **An ex-Mormon Woman Looks Back at the Church “I’ve Never Met a Mormon Man Who Has Any Real Respect for Women”**

**M**ormons are in the news, because Mitt Romney stands a chance of being the next president and Romney is a practising Mormon. Becky Grant, known to thousands of CounterPunchers as our business manager, was raised a Mormon. Co-editor Alexander Cockburn recently talked to her about the Church.

*What can we expect from a Mormon man in the White House?*

All the Mormon men I know are good at justifying anything with the doctrine of the Church. Take my uncle, former Mormon bishop, a chemist and head of what used to be called Morton Thiokol. He’s a sweet guy, and would call himself a good Mormon. He believes his knowledge of science is a gift from God that he needs to exercise to its fullest. He’s gone on to hold patents for most of the explosives used by the Army. He’s done some good things. He holds the patent for the propellant in the airbag. But he says that his patent for the explosive that’s used for fracking is for the environmental good.

You would assume that a Mormon guy would be honest and trustworthy and forthright, but the Mormon religion is not like branches of Christianity where they’re just basing things on the Bible. Mormons are basing it on doctrine that can be renewed all the time, whatever the current prophet – the president of the Church – says. If the prophet says, Support proposition 8 (the California Marriage Protection Act), for example, then the Church puts money into it. I think their ethics are completely backward.

*What the prophet says goes?*

**MORMONS** CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## **Two Ounces of Kafka An Oily Encounter with Homeland Security** By Pete Knutson

**M**y story begins on November 9, 2011, when, acting on a tip from an unnamed private citizen, a harbor manager for the Port of Seattle reported me as a polluter to the Department of Homeland Security. His report alerted a chain of agencies, including, among others, Customs and the Border Patrol, the Coast Guard, the National Guard, FEMA, NOAA, EPA, the Washington State Department of Ecology, the Port of Seattle, the Oregon Titan Fusion Center, and the Washington State Fusion Center. Fusion centers, created in the aftermath of 9/11 by

Homeland Security and the Department of Justice, are intelligence clearinghouses, which coordinate counterterrorism information primarily among federal agencies – including the FBI, the CIA, and the U.S. military.

So began Homeland Security Incident #995038, in which, the Port alleges, an automatic bilge pump on my 40-foot fishing vessel discharged two ounces of oil into the water at Shilshole Bay Marina.

I’m a fisherman with a family business and a long history of public activ-

**KNUTSON** CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

## **The Port Huron Statement and the Start of the Sixties**

By Alexander Cockburn

**F**ifty years ago, a group of students in the American Midwest issued a document rather portentously titled “The Port Huron Statement.” It was the founding manifesto of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), and became one of the most famous documents of that momentous and creative decade.

Read any history of the upsurges in the United States in the 1960s written over the past three decades and you’ll at once encounter tributes to SDS as being on the cutting edge of radical organizing – in the battles against racial discrimination, particularly in the South; in the protests against the Vietnam War; and, more largely, in the aim of young people in the 1960s to break the shackles of the Cold War consensus that had paralyzed independent thought and spread fear of McCarthyite purges through the whole of what remained of the organized left in America, in the labor movement, the

churches and in the universities.

SDS was founded in 1960 and, in the summer of 1962, held its first convention just outside the Michigan town of Port Huron, on the U.S.-Canadian border an hour’s drive north of Detroit. Presented to this gathering was a manifesto initially drafted by a former student at the University of Michigan Tom Hayden, and revised by committee and finally delivered to the world as the Port Huron Statement.

“We are people of this generation,” it began, “bred in at least modest comfort, housed now in universities, looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit. When we were kids the United States was the wealthiest and strongest country in the world: the only one with the atom bomb, the least scarred by modern war, an initiator of the United Nations that we thought would distribute Western influence throughout the world. ...As we

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grew, however, our comfort was penetrated by events too troubling to dismiss. First, the permeating and victimizing fact of human degradation, symbolized by the Southern struggle against racial bigotry, compelled most of us from silence to activism. Second, the enclosing fact of the Cold War, symbolized by the presence of the Bomb, brought awareness that we ourselves, and our friends, and millions of abstract 'others' we knew more directly because of our common peril, might die at any time. ...

"While these and other problems either directly oppressed us or rankled our consciences and became our own subjective concerns, we began to see complicated and disturbing paradoxes in our surrounding America. ... We began to sense that what we had originally seen as the American Golden Age was actually the decline of an era..."

"Our work is guided by the sense that we may be the last generation in the experiment with living. But we are a minority – the vast majority of our people regard the temporary equilibriums of our society and world as eternally functional parts."

Reading these apocalyptic lines today, a reader is surely struck by the thought

that 1962 was somewhat late in the evolution of the Cold War to make these discomfited observations. It was fourteen years since President Truman had launched the postwar militarization of the U.S. economy. By 1950, U.S. military advisors were in Indochina; by the mid-1950s, America's imperial jackboot had crushed reform in Guatemala and Iran. In 1961, President Eisenhower, a year before the Port Huron statement, bid farewell to his presidency with his famous warning that "we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for

**The cultural task of students was to depict the real despair that supposedly lay beneath the high-paying working-class jobs and the emptiness of tail fins on big cars and fishing boats out front of the holiday tract homes beside the lake.**

the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist ... we must ... be alert to the ... danger that public policy could itself become the captive of a scientific, technological elite."

Ironically, Ralph Williams, a Texan who drafted the speech under Eisenhower's close supervision, included a warning against "the tendency for orderly societies to break down into mob-ridden anarchies, e.g., student riots," but this was cut, leaving as Eisenhower's main rhetorical bequest to John Kennedy, inaugurated three days later, the warning against "the military-industrial complex," which duly mushroomed under JFK as he fulfilled his campaign pledge to abolish the "missile gap" (entirely imaginary) – the Soviets had only four in 1960 – by building 1,000 intercontinental ballistic missiles. An earlier draft also referred to "the military-industrial-congressional complex," but eventually it was decided not to give Congress so stiff a finger.

And, indeed, by the late 1950s, the ice age of the Cold War was, at least on

one campus, beginning to melt. At the University of California at Berkeley, organizing against compulsory military training on campus (ROTC) had begun in 1956 with a hunger strike and, by 1962, ended in total victory with a vote by the university's regents. Joe Paff, studying Political Science at Berkeley, remembers how stultifying Berkeley was when he arrived: "Middle America was resurging with khaki buckle-in-the-back pants and button-down collar and oxford cloth. It was pretty much a uniform. Compulsory ROTC required males to drill in uniform once a week; fraternity boys at the entrance to campus enforced conformity; the student body elections were considered jokes ('if elected, I will launch Sather Gate into space to compete with sputnik'). Faculty who had opposed the loyalty oath had been purged. In this climate of conformism, conservatism and William Whyte's 'Organization Man,' the campus had decided that students should not talk about 'off-campus issues' and should be protected from 'outside agitators.'"

Malcolm X was invited to speak on the Berkeley campus in May of 1961, "but," Paff remembers, "the University high command rejected him, saying he was a minister who might convert people to Islam. We found him a venue at Stiles Hall at the last minute, with no time for publicity and room for only 160. He was electric, the most extraordinary speaker I have ever heard. He changed everyone's life forever. You'd ask him a question, he'd look you in eye and repeat your question, then really go into it. Pretty soon people got scared of asking dumb questions. All blacks sat together and not one of them acknowledged you when they left. Within a month, half the blacks were giving Malcolm's speech."

The 1960s rolled into motion. Students began to head south to work with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), founded in 1960. So, the Port Huron Statement was not generated in a vacuum, nor were all its propositions entirely novel. But no single radical document from that era captures so vividly the angst so many young people felt as they sought to struggle free from the deadly conformism of the 1950s. Professors were terrorized by the fear of being fingered as pinkoes. In Political Science departments, original works by challenging thinkers were sterilized in

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carefully edited anthologies.

The Port Huron Statement reverberates with an underlying anxiety of loneliness and alienation. Beyond liberalism and socialism there was a fundamental issue of self-realization, of fulfilling one's potentiality – a theme that came from Paul Goodman, one of the founders of Gestalt therapy and anarchist author of *Growing Up Absurd*, a hugely popular text among radical youth on both sides of the Atlantic. The section of the Statement titled "The Society Beyond" depicts the newly aware students surrounded by vast doldrums of "apathy," with the entire society depicted as an alienated realm of false consciousness. The cultural task of students was to depict the real despair that supposedly lay beneath the high-paying working-class jobs and the emptiness of tail fins on big cars and fishing boats out front of the holiday tract homes beside the lake. Organized labor is submerged in the vast apathy of the "Society Beyond," and the union leadership hasn't read Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* to articulate the varieties of alienation. (A job the SDS offers to perform.)

A very short chapter of a couple of paragraphs on "the economy" begins "Many of us comfortably expect pensions..." and depicts an America of wealthy citizens who are discomfited by the existence of poor people in their midst. These days it sounds like Utopia, and the essential optimism underlines an important point that the authors of the Statement, despite the initial remarks about the end of the Golden Age of Affluence, actually had little sense of the volatility of capitalism – a flaw in foresight which extended to almost all the major economists of the time. It was only seven years till, in 1969, the American working class – in its upper, mostly white tiers – reached the apex of capitalism's rewards in terms of wages and appurtenances such as large comfortable cars with baroque adornments, a second car for the wife who did not have as yet to go out to work, labor saving devices in the home, pensions, health benefits and, after 1965, Medicare – socialized health insurance for those over 65. From the start of the 1970s onward, it was downhill all the way.

The strongest section in the Statement was on the "military-industrial complex," suggesting that Eisenhower was more re-

liable as a guide than Goodman.

The section "Alternatives to Helplessness" invokes committed students strategically placed throughout the land surrounded by a vast sea of apathy and complacent materialism. How to effect change? "From its schools and colleges across the nation, a militant left might awaken its allies (though the precise nature of the "allies" is left unspecified). ... It [the new left] must give form to the feelings of helplessness and indifference, so that people may see the political, social and economic sources of their private troubles ... The bridge to political power, though, will be built through genuine cooperation locally, nationally, and internationally, between a new left

## **The Port Huron Statement reverberates with an underlying anxiety of loneliness and alienation. Beyond liberalism and socialism there was a fundamental issue of self-realization, of fulfilling one's potentiality.**

of young people, and an awakening community of allies."

Very pervasive in the Statement was the belief that participatory democracy – a notion taken from the radical sociologist C. Wright Mills – was the answer to everything. With the hindsight of fifty years, we can smile at the Statement's optimism about how easily we could "harness the atom" and build thousands of reactors everywhere, defeating militarism and creating cheap and easy power. The Statement is energetic in expressing fear of a united Germany, buttressed by a belief in the permanence of the "The Wall" and the "Cold War." What's termed "The Industrialization of the World" is seen as an issue of "noblesse." America should share its technology with kindness.

Yet, amid such naiveties we must acknowledge the impact the Port Huron's denunciation of the Cold War had on older leftists such as Michael Harrington and Irving Howe – the New York intellectuals, as they were known. They furiously denounced the Statement for in-

fantile underestimation of the aggressive potential of the Soviet Union and broke off organizational ties with SDS. Here was a true dividing line between two eras, one that marked the emergence of a generation that would, by the end of the Sixties, denounce the American Empire as at least equivalent in evil to the Soviet Union.

This is not the place to chart in any detail the subsequent career of SDS through the 1960s before its fracture in 1969 into splinter groups, such as the Weathermen. To its advantage SDS has, across the past decades, largely captured the strategic high ground in terms of historiography, somewhat magnifying its actual achievements as against the histories of SNCC or the Black Panthers, many of whose leaders were unable to write histories from the vantage point of tenured academia since they had been murdered by the police. The arc of the man who first drafted the Statement? By 1964, Tom Hayden was organizing poor communities in Newark, New Jersey, a few years later traveling to Hanoi with his wife, Jane Fonda, later still an elected member of the California state legislature.

Across the past four months, we have witnessed the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement, with its encampments – at least for now dispersed by the police – in cities across country from New York to Oakland. One is struck by the lack of intellectual and organizational continuity. SDS could trace a lineage of ideas back to the early Marx and, as the Sixties progressed, to Frantz Fanon, Paulo Freire, Gunnar Myrdal. But it is hard to descry much continuity between SDS and OWS – perhaps because of the evolution of American capitalism and the decline of the old organized left. The authors of the Port Huron Statement saw themselves as sparks of lonely resistance in the vast dark night of American complacency. The OWSers see themselves as representatives of the 99 per cent against the 1 per cent! CP

This article also appears in the excellent French monthly *Le Monde Diplomatique*, whose director, Serge Halimi, asked co-editor Cockburn to write it.

Alexander wants to tell readers that he's nearly done with his latest collection, *A Colossal Wreck*, which will be published this spring by CounterPunch Books.

**MORMONS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

Yes, he receives prophecies from God, I don't know, maybe on a daily basis. LDS General Conference comes twice a year, and whatever he says is the new doctrine.

I've never met a Mormon man who has any real respect for women. First of all, if you're a Mormon man, then you believe you're going to have multiple wives in the afterlife. So, even though he's not acting on the will of God at this point in time here, on earth, to have many wives, a Mormon will tell you that this will be a commandment again definitely in the afterlife. To Mormons, life on earth is just a twinkling of an instant in the rest of your life. If you're a good Mormon, you can go on to become a god and have your own planet and worshippers. So, there's no basis to really and truly love and respect your wife because there's going to be another, or many more, in the afterlife.

*So, Mitt Romney, clearly a devout Mormon, looks at Mrs. Romney and he's thinking, I love Ann, but ...*

Yes, he might be looking at the Relief Society president of his ward and thinking, Wow, maybe she'll be mine in the afterlife. It just doesn't exactly lead to re-

spect for women to have their husbands thinking like that.

*Because here's this wife you have just for the twinkling of an eye, and then, when you die...*

Well, she'll be your wife still, but maybe your sister-in-law will be your wife too.

*What are women meant to think of this?*

Women aren't privy to all the information in the temple. For example, when you go to the temple – and I haven't been because I was never worthy – the Mormon man in the temple gets a secret name, and his wife has a secret name that he knows and she knows, but she doesn't get to know his secret name.

Women are the descendants of the "evil" Eve. Women aren't allowed to hold the priesthood. For example, in my first marriage three bishops and my father all told me – these are all Mormon men – that my utmost duty as a new wife was to please my husband, make sure dinner was on the table, make sure he was well taken care of, to put on makeup before he came home from work, and to please him in any way. And when I went to a couple of different bishops, because I was sort of tattled on by my ex-husband (he went to the bishop and said I wasn't doing my wifely duties), they told me that I was pushing him into affairs by not fulfilling my duties and that it was my job to please him any way he sought.

It's a bit different these days because women work more outside of the home, but if you're a real good Mormon woman, you stay at home, you don't have a career. If you aim to have one, you can forget about it because right away it's time to start breeding. My husband has cousins, and one of them was once asked, "How many kids are you planning to have?" And he said, "As many as my wife's body can handle." Most of the people I went to school with have four or five kids by the time they were 35.

*I'm always struck by the fact that former Mormon women are quite feisty, get-up-and-go types.*

Well, you might say that of me.

*You mean the regular Mormon woman is a pretty oppressed creature. The husband rules.*

The husband ultimately rules. My mom has been working for my dad her whole life. My grandmother wanted to go out and get a job after the kids left

home, but my grandpa didn't want her to. Most women are in charge of taking care of the home. Some of them are probably fine with that. The man is ultimately head of the house; he's the one who holds the priesthood. So, if you hold the priesthood, when it comes to big decisions, you're the one who has the ultimate say, to say the prayer to ask God to tell you what the answer should be. If you have the priesthood, you also have the power to heal, also the power to receive counseling from the Holy Ghost, more so than the wife would, even though the Holy Ghost is available to anyone who has been baptized. But women will never hold the priesthood – though maybe some day they will. They were never going to let blacks into the Church and ultimately they did.

*What about Mormon men and money?*

Well, if you're making a lot of money, you're blessed; so, the more you make, the more blessed you must be.

*So, if Romney makes \$23 million in 2010, which he did, that's a sign that God is blessing him powerfully?*

Exactly.

*And he'd tithe 10 per cent to the Church?*

Yes, and you're also supposed to be giving to the missionary fund and other funds. There's a whole list of them on the tithing slip. They expect you to give a lot more. At the end of the year you go to tithing settlement, and they call you in, you meet with the bishop – the head of your ward, that is – and he says, did you give 10 per cent? My parents and most of the people in the ward took their check-books in because they wanted to make sure they were going to get all their blessings. Everyone paid more than 10 per cent.

*And if you don't pay your 10 per cent, presumably God isn't too happy.*

Yes, if you're not paying tithing, that's a sin, basically. I wouldn't say it's akin to adultery, but it's really looked down upon if you don't pay tithing.

*Let's say there are three candidates for the White House – a Southern Baptist, a Mormon, and an Episcopalian – would you think we'd be worse off with a Mormon president?*

Yes, I think so, because, on the environmental front especially, he'll have no qualms. If you're a good Mormon, you're going to be a god someday and you're going to have your own planet, so,

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it doesn't matter what happens on this earth.

*Just move on.*

Yes, it doesn't really matter because this is so temporary – earth is practically like a motel on the interstate. So, there are no ethics about what happens to the environment; plus, if you're doing something for science, that's backed by God, so environmental considerations get overruled.

Mormons have no tolerance for abortion or gays. That's a generalization, of course. I do know Mormons who say, We're all God's children, but if you ask most Mormon men about being gay, they see it as a disease gay people want to spread. I heard that my whole childhood. It's a slippery slope, they say. If you support gay marriage, it's just one more step toward a gay guy sleeping with an 8-year-old boy. The slippery slope thing is huge. You start drinking coffee. Pretty soon, you're on to beer and wine ... It's funny, because Mormons take a lot of Prozac, more per capita than in any state in the union.

*Mormons are more depressed?*

Western medicine is a technology that God gave us; so, we might as well use it. All those years of following, of being a lamb, of being told to shove difficult things under the rug – that does something to you. Besides, we're only here temporarily, so why not feel warm and fuzzy. Yes, Mormons are often depressed. When I was growing up, three neighbors committed suicide, men in their 60s. There are lots of Mormon suicides.

*What appeals to converts about Mormonism?*

A lot of it is social. You go to church and church activities; it's happy; you sing songs and you get a burning in the bosom, and it's all good. They say the burning in the bosom is God, but you can also get a burning in the bosom watching *Toy Story 3*.

My mom moved from Chicago and went to Brigham Young University, converted pretty quickly; my dad was born and raised a Mormon. There were only one or two kids in my elementary school who weren't Mormon. They were Catholic. I loved going over to their houses. There was one boy who was a Jehovah's Witness. He had a hard time, especially when he had a broken arm and wasn't wearing a cast, just a dishtowel.

*Did the Church give you some good*

*things?*

Sure, the ability to push through and look on the bright side, plus my mom was really into canning in the 1970s – it's kind of had a resurgence with Martha Stewart. Self-sufficiency and getting stuff done. I think Mormons are pretty driven. Take the Mormon logo – the beehive, called Deseret, which is also the pet name for the state. Being a worker bee ... My favorite hymn is "Put your shoulder to the wheel and push along." I have to give credit to the Mormons for that. They take some things too far – or, my Mom did ... like believing cleanliness is next to Godliness. They're a little over the top on that.

To get statehood, Mormons had to get rid of polygamy, but it's rampant in Utah Valley. It's still around. It hasn't gone away. The way we would know is we'd be

**This is so temporary – earth is practically like a motel on the interstate. So, there are no ethics about what happens to the environment.**

driving along as kids and we'd see a house like a big square apartment building in a field with a bunch of Suburbans parked around the outside. It was in southern Utah more than Utah Valley. Apparently there's a lot more in Las Vegas now.

*What about the White Horse prophecy?*

I only heard the phrase recently – it's something Glenn Beck has talked about – but, as kids, we were told that some day a Mormon would be president and we should go to Church every week and make sure our names were on the rolls for every class we attended, because somehow this would be checked on when the Mormon became president and we would only be protected if we had been going regularly. I always thought it sounded really scary. It could be part of the MBSN – the Mormon BullShit Network – but there was a lot of that kind of thing, stories to scare us into being obedient children.

*Here's an excerpt, adapted for Vanity Fair, from Michael Kranish and Scott Helman's book The Real Romney, which*

*recounts the 1983 pregnancy saga of Peggie Hayes. According to the book, Hayes was a single mother raising a young daughter at the time. Romney was her church leader and helped set up the 23-year-old nurse's aide with what the authors describe as "odd jobs for other church members." Hayes recalled that Romney "was really good to us. He did a lot for us."*

*When Hayes became pregnant that year, Romney sat down with her and "said something about the church's adoption agency." Hayes, who recalled that she "wanted to" have the second child, eventually came to the realization that Romney "was urging her to give up her soon-to-be-born son for adoption, saying that was what the church wanted." More from Vanity Fair:*

Hayes was deeply insulted. She told him she would never surrender her child. Sure, her life wasn't exactly the picture of Rockwellian harmony, but she felt she was on a path to stability. In that moment, she also felt intimidated. Here was Romney, who held great power as her church leader and was the head of a wealthy, prominent Belmont family, sitting in her gritty apartment making grave demands. "And then he says, 'Well, this is what the church wants you to do, and if you don't, then you could be excommunicated for failing to follow the leadership of the church,'" Hayes recalled. It was a serious threat. At that point, Hayes still valued her place within the Mormon Church. "This is not playing around," she said. "This is not like 'You don't get to take Communion.' This is like 'You will not be saved. You will never see the face of God.'" Romney would later deny that he had threatened Hayes with excommunication, but Hayes said his message was crystal clear: "Give up your son or give up your God."

Hayes eventually decided to have the baby, but when she did give birth to her son Dane, he had health problems that required surgery. Looking past their uncomfortable conversation before Dane's birth, she called Romney and asked him to come to the hospital to confer a blessing on her baby. Hayes was expecting him. Instead, two people she didn't know showed up. She was crushed. "I needed him," she said. "It was very significant that he didn't come." Sitting there, in the hospital, Hayes decided she was finished with the Mormon Church.

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ism in support of sustainable fisheries. I've fished for 40 years in Alaska and on Puget Sound; I am committed to protecting the web of marine life in Puget Sound and the North Pacific. I serve on the Puget Sound Salmon Commission, a state commodities commission. I've organized fishermen to testify for environmental responsibility, successfully opposing huge industrial interests. In my other job, at Seattle Central Community College, I teach environmental anthropology. Never before have I been charged with any fisheries or environmental violations.

"Sorry, our hands are tied, Pete," the Port of Seattle's harbor manager told me that morning last year. "If someone reports a spill, we are mandated to call Homeland Security. We have no choice. Fifteen agencies have been notified. You are in the bull's eye."

When I arrive at my boat, the *Njord*, there was little evidence of what would normally be considered an oil spill. The oil-absorbent diapers the Port had placed around my boat were white and appeared unstained. The only evidence of hydrocarbon next to it was light streaks of residual oil, a common sight most days at this marina. Perhaps a hundred feet down the dock from my boat was a patch of light oil. It was just after slack water, and there had been very little tide and no wind that morning; if my vessel's automatic pump had discharged this oil, there would have been signs everywhere around the hull and in the diapers.

As I begin taking cell phone pictures of the clean booming and barely oiled water, a knot of state and federal investigators arrived. A severe-looking woman who turned out to be a Department of Ecology agent glared at me as I snapped photos. Without introduction, she barked at me, "*One drop of oil in Puget Sound is a crime against the state!*"

"Where's the oil spill?" I asked her, palms upturned. She pointed at the water next to my boat and snapped, "Just because it's not *there* doesn't mean" – she pointed at the sheen at the end of the dock – "it's not *there*. You may need to hire a private contractor to do your cleanup," she added. I was tempted to tell her that she was making a mountain out of a molehill, but I remembered my wife's parting advice: "Don't give them attitude."

Mr. Coast Guard now consulted with

Ms. Ecology, referring to me in the third person: "Do you want him, or should we be lead on this?"

The dock grew crowded with personnel from the Coast Guard, the Port of Seattle, and the Department of Ecology. They crawled into my engine room on their hands and knees, alongside the John Deere diesel motor and refrigeration compressor. Admittedly, it wasn't spotless. My crew recently had finished another Alaskan salmon fishing season – three months, 1,500 engine hours, and 3,000 miles. That is a lot of labor, fossil fuel, and maintenance, which ultimately translates to about thirty tons of processed-on-board salmon and halibut for farmers' market customers in Bellevue, the Rainier Valley, Ballard, West Seattle, and Capitol Hill.

## Without introduction, she barked at me, "*One drop of oil in Puget Sound is a crime against the state!*"

The Coast Guard men checked the engine room and pronounced the bilges dry. But the Ecology agent emerged soon afterward, brandishing a sample of clear hydraulic oil apparently taken from my engine room floor. A quarter-inch sensor line with a loose fitting had weeped a small amount of oil, perhaps one or two ounces, on the floor next to the bilge. I had not noticed the loose fitting; now I fixed it with one turn of the wrench.

Back on the dock, I signed Coast Guard papers acknowledging federal jurisdiction in this oil "incident." My automatic bilge pumps were shut off, the hydraulic hose tightened, and the paperwork finished. It was now 11:30 a.m., and I had to drive from Ballard to Capitol Hill to teach my noon Environmental Anthropology class at Seattle Central Community College. (Sometimes I teach during the day and fish at night). I informed the authorities that I would return after class, and expressed my desire to go out that evening for the scheduled fishing opening.

When I returned to my boat that afternoon, the Coast Guard incident manager handed me two written orders from the captain of the Port of Puget Sound, who in this case was also the federal on-scene

coordinator. The upshot was that my vessel was impounded until it underwent an engine room inspection and a Coast Guard fishing vessel safety inspection. According to Order 102-11, a "nonwillful" violation of these orders made me liable for a \$32,500 civil fine. A willful violation is a class D felony, "subject to a criminal penalty of not more than \$50,000 and/or five years imprisonment."

"For a spill of this size we would normally just file a warning," said the incident manager. "Losing a fishing night is already a pretty stiff fine," I replied. This is a financial hit for my family. Washington State gives us only a few fishing nights for the fall season, and a single night can be worth a couple thousand dollars.

The Ecology agent then took over and informed me that if I put any dispersant (i.e., soap) in the water, I would be violating state law and would be prosecuted. She also handed me literature regarding the potential fines to which I might be subject, including a fee for her time. And she left me her card. It read, "Working with you for a better Washington."

Not until five weeks later would I learn, in response to a public disclosure request to the Coast Guard, that in my short absence that afternoon the Ecology agent boarded the *Njord* and searched the engine room. She took bilge samples, according to her log, and also listened in on a cell phone conversation between my son Jonah and myself. She had the right to board under state oil response law, but it's troubling that she would do so rather than wait 30 minutes for my return, without the courtesy of asking permission, and without subsequently informing me.

Her comments get me thinking. In an effort to clean up after the Deepwater Horizon gusher, the Coast Guard let British Petroleum put 1.84 million gallons of dispersants into the Gulf of Mexico. That's equivalent to 235 million ounces of dish soap. Apparently, the no-soap regs apply only to real persons, not to the fictitious ones.

I got a small check from Exxon for damages to my salmon market this year, 22 years after the *Exxon Valdez* hit the rocks. Exxon dumped 700,000 barrels of oil into Prince William Sound. That's five billion ounces. It paid just under \$2 billion in fines, penalties, and interest, which works out to about 40 cents an ounce. So, if I'm guilty of a discharge and get fined at the same rate, I'll owe 80

cents 20 years from now. But I guess BP and Exxon get the volume discount.

Later, as my son Dylan and I made dinner on our impounded boat, the Ecology investigator and her assistant returned, unannounced. Dylan saw them standing silently in the dark, staring at my vessel's stern. I stuck my head out the galley door. "Is there a problem?" I asked. "No," she said, and turned to leave. "Good," I found myself telling her, "I was beginning to get a little paranoid."

The next day, after my vessel passed Coast Guard inspection, the impound order was lifted. I gathered up the Port of Seattle's oil sorbs and stacked them on my deck. They were crisp and clean. I wanted to retain them as evidence for any future proceedings, but the Port manager told me they wanted their diapers back. When I protested, he promised they would bag and tag them for me.

Over the next week, I photographed many small oil sheens at the marina, similar in size and location to the sheen for which I was on the hook. I emailed the Coast Guard incident manager the time-stamped photo files and reported the floating oil to the marina office. I didn't hear back from the marina. The Coast guardsman instructed me to call a 1-800 number. I phoned the incident manager and asked, "Why was the Ecology agent so aggressive?"

"You know, it's like when you get pulled over by a cop," he explained. "It's how you respond. She felt you were being nonchalant about the incident because you left the dock to go teach your class."

"There was nothing else to do at the marina. Students pay tuition, the taxpayers pay salary. Am I supposed to blow them off?"

A couple days later, the incident manager notified me that an oil sample taken from my boat and a sample taken from the water matched. He attached the lab results and the Ecology agent's comments. Those results actually said something very different: that the two samples both contained "lube oil," and that to confirm a match further, more complex tests would need to be run.

This struck me as curious, because the Ecology agent had identified the oil from the sensor line in my engine room as "hydraulic oil," which is a very specific grade of low viscosity oil used to power, not lubricate, machinery. I called the research chemist at Ecology's Manchester

Environmental Laboratory. "What do you mean by 'lube oil'?" I asked him. "Lube oil means anything from heavy motor oil to light automatic transmission fluid. It's a wide range of hydrocarbon. We're going to conduct biomarker analysis to see if we can match the two samples."

The notes that the Ecology agent submitted to the laboratory with the samples indicated that neither sample came from my boat: the two samples were taken nearly three hours after the call to Homeland Security at two locations in the marina, one of which was near my boat.

I asked the chemist, "If two boat owners get their lube oils from the same Mobil or Chevron distributor, would their biomarkers be similar?"

"If the oil came from the same production batch, their biomarkers would be identical," he said.

## The Ecology agent also listened in on a cell phone conversation between my son Jonah and myself.

The Ecology agent characterizes the chemist's results differently in an email to the Coast Guard: "Hydrocarbon identification of oil in both samples matched. The oil is hydraulic oil."

The chemist had never identified hydraulic oil. He had explicitly stated in his lab notes that a match had not been confirmed. Yet, based on her misrepresentation, the Coast Guard had now concluded that I was responsible for this "spill."

The Coast Guard, the Department of Ecology, and the Port of Seattle are now considering their enforcement options. The Ecology agent has informed the incident manager that she is preparing a penalty. Her logs of the incident, which I obtained from the Coast Guard, portray me as a flippant noncooperator. She claims I made a joke that Shilshole Marina looked like "the Bay of Mexico." Her notes omit any evidence of cooperation and state that I did nothing to rectify the situation. She writes that, by locking the door to the *Njord* while teaching at Seattle Central, I cut off her investigative access. She failed to note that she did not request continued access, nor did she appreciate that fact that I have valuable electronics

on board. Moreover, she failed to note that, when I was gone teaching, she ordered my son Jonah to stop cleaning the engine room of the *Njord*, claiming that his attempt to help clean the *Njord's* bilge interfered with her investigation. All of these details are important for the penalty phase of her investigation. The severity of the penalty largely hinges on evidence of cooperation by the "responsible party."

The Ecology agent has posted her professional profile on LinkedIn. Her resume includes lengthy work for various oil and mining multinationals, including BP and Chevron Texaco.

On November 17, I filed a public disclosure request with the Department of Ecology regarding this incident, a request noted by the Ecology agent in her notes. Under Washington State statute RCW 42.56.520, state agencies must initially respond to such a request within five business days. Although Ecology has been aware of my public disclosure request, they never responded. On January 9, my attorneys filed suit against the Department of Ecology in King County Superior Court for violation of state public disclosure statute.

The Coast Guard has now stopped sending me documents and has informed me that my FOIA request has been transferred to D.C. Their email to me reads: "The investigation is still open and in progress. Per Department of Homeland Security policy and under 5 U.S.C. 552(b) (5) we cannot release documents until the case is completely reviewed and closed."

I am alleged to have inadvertently spilled two ounces of oil. How much public money has been wasted in lab fees and agency time to pursue this charge? Strong protections for Puget Sound are needed, but I fail to see the cost-benefit here as our state budget implodes. I would wager that the money spent on this investigation would fund at least two additional classes at my cash-strapped community college.

Beyond the money, the most damaging effect of disproportionate enforcement like this is the way it promotes cynicism and undermines the legitimacy of vital social institutions. I believe government regulations can play a critical role in protecting the environment. But a story like this provides grist for corporations seeking to end all regulations that constrain their profits.

**return service requested**

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On December 1, the Coast Guard called to “deliver enforcement.” I met two young men at Fishermen’s Terminal. They give me the penalty notice and tell me that new lab results conclusively match the bilge sample from the *Njord* to the November 9 oil sheen at Shilshole Marina. They inform me I have 45 days to decide: either pay a \$250 fine or request a hearing before an officer and risk paying up to \$11,000. I tell them I will reserve my options. I point out the oil sheen which surrounds us on the work float, and the incident manager laughs: “Yeah, that looks worse than what you got cited for.” We laugh together.

At the end of 45 days, I declined the penalty and requested a hearing. Meanwhile, in my other life, I teach environmental studies to students who can’t afford to buy books. **CP**

Fishing the North Pacific **Pete Knutson** and his family, as Loki Fish Company, supply farmer’s markets and co-ops in the Pacific Northwest. He organizes in the fishing industry and also teaches environmental anthropology at Seattle Central Community College.

**MORMONS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5**

*Fits with your experience and memories?*

Sounds familiar. Bishops take on all kinds of roles – the Church believes you should always go to your bishop first – about everything. They play family counselor, psychologist, life coach, etc., ... and usually these guys are not qualified to do this. All the suicides in our neighborhood – these were all guys going to the bishop, going to church. The power given to bishops really should be considered unlawful. I know somebody personally who is a sexual offender – a pedophile – and he was counseled by his bishop to ask for forgiveness from God and the parents of the kids he molested, but they didn’t tell him to get help. Now he’s a father and a Boy Scout leader, and I have to wonder if the kids who are around him on regular basis are safe.

I had the option of utilizing the Mormon adoption service and was encouraged to, but not pressured, luckily. There were about five Mormon girls within a block of my house who all got pregnant at the same time - these were 16 and 17-year-old girls – all Mormon.

It demonstrates that something is seriously going wrong when all these girls in a neighborhood are getting pregnant – it wasn’t just “in the water,” liked they joked. One friend of mine used the adoption service, and she’s recently reunited with her daughter, who is my son Nick’s age now. Another neighbor girl was forced to conceal her pregnancy and then give her baby up for adoption – she’s never been the same, and finally she’s left the Church and is living happily with a non-Mormon guy. I think that the three different bishops who blamed me for my ex looking at *Hustler*, cheating on me, etc., ... and for not doing my wifely duties – as a pregnant 17 and 19-year-old – were hugely out of line. My dad was right there on board in their court too – and my uncle gave me similar advice. All these Mormon men were basically telling me that I was the property of my husband and, in the eyes of God, I was sinning by not being submissive to his needs – inviting in the devil. It seems like another lifetime, and retrospectively I just really feel disgusted that a teenage girl could be pressured like that. It’s really sick. **CP**