

Episode 5: Pay to Pollute. “If you don’t have a seat at the table, you’re probably on the menu.”

Between Hudson River Miles 130 and 135 there are two multinational companies issuing pollution. One produces cement, the other is a Saudi chemical manufacturing company (SABIC)(1) owned by Saudi ARAMCO (2). That oil company is controlled by, among others, the Saudi Royal Family (SRF). The SRF is led now by Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman (MBS) implicated in the murder and likely dismemberment of Jamal Khashoggi, a critic of MBS and journalist for the Washington Post. Incredibly, the decades long pollution of the River by SABIC and other industrial giants is still legal! (3) This deal with the devil reaches back to the bad old days of environmental ignorance when industries could throw chemically toxic waste in the River for “nature” to magically treat and dispose of.

If the people who are subject to SABIC’s pollution of the Hudson River (like the seven down-river communities that drink from the River)(4) want an end to legal industrial pollution, as it affects them, what is the likelihood that SABIC, ARAMCO, SRF and MBS would support that environmental clean-up?

Put another way, what is the history and likelihood of any multinational corporation supporting any healthful change if it will immediately affect their profits? History shows that from seat belts to tobacco the industrial giants of Capitalism will fight any change that reduces profits, even if temporarily, and even if the change will eventually be negligible or even benefit their bottom line. It appears greed, shortsightedness and indifference to the general welfare have seats at the table. Nevertheless, The era of legalized industrial pollution of the Hudson River must be brought to an end.

As we watch the knock-on effects of climate change on drought, food shortages, famines, agricultural production and global food resources we should remember that once sturgeon caviar from the Hudson was so plentiful it was served for free in saloons as “Albany beef”. In the world under the oppression of climate change and global warming, current and future generations may desperately need to clean and return damaged waterways like the Hudson River to vital food resources, as once they were. The perils of climate change are real, including food shortages. Unfortunately so are the inertia, lack of vision, indifference and complacency of those at the table who could prepare NOW for what those generations will face.

#### Bibliography:

1,2. Wikipedia

3. State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit NY 000 707

4. Poughkeepsie Journal “Communities that drink from the Hudson River Push for Further Water Protections”. Amy Wu. Feb. 23, 2018.

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