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[Mother Earth](#)

We are a nation of infants. Short on vision, short on delay of gratification, driven by desires which we experience as needs. Luxuries we deem necessities. Power, lucre. We are greedy, glutinous. Witness the steadily increasing width of the ever ravenous man, woman, child on the street. Like the typical two year old, we want what we want, and whatever it may be, we do not want to have to wait for it.

"BP clearly took shortcuts when drilling offshore--thus inviting the blowout on April 20--but it did so in a permissive atmosphere established by the 2001 policy framework," writes Michael T. Klare in the Aug. 2/9 issue of *The Nation*. This policy framework was the National Energy Policy of May 17 of that year, which, Klare writes, was "better known as the Cheney plan." And, he adds, that the spoils were "widely viewed as a payoff to Bush/Cheney supporters in the oil industry."

Our current administration, the one that had when campaigning promised us change, had done nothing to check the permissive atmosphere of the preceding seven years, the atmosphere that permitted action based on hope and fact-poor assumptions rather than on information, scientific inquiry, and preparation for the possible unanticipated event. The one that they all said would not happen but did.

MMS: the let's-get-on-with-it faction vs. the yeah-but-what-if faction, the former being the engineers, the latter the scientists. The *New York Times* published a long piece on Sunday, August 8th, about the functioning of MMS and about Chris Oynes, who held sway in the agency for some 21 years and who, when faced with either ensuring safeguards or proceeding rapidly, tended toward the gung ho approach. "Expedite," he is said to have commanded. Mr. Oynes is a lawyer, by the way, not an engineer. (I found that odd, myself.)

BP won, or so it thought at the time. (As well as all the other oil companies drilling.)
Bush and Cheney won, both pleasing their supporters and lining their pockets.
And the oil industry big shots won.

The Obama administration had yet another mess on its hands, one which it did not create but sadly, did not prevent.

The cost was, is, and will be great. Greater, we fear, than we will expect, for the inevitable spin has already begun. The spin that is all about money. Look, the oil is almost all gone! Look, we tested some sea food, and it was okay; let's go fishing!
The *New York Times*, today, Monday, August 8th, had not one word on its front page about the catastrophic event; the oil stopped gushing; problem solved, case closed. But inside the paper we find an article about the nation's oldest oyster shucking company's having to shut down, because the oysters are a-goner. And it is spawning season now, and every oyster takes from 18 to 24 months to mature, so they're a-goner for the foreseeable future. And the shucker and his 25 employees? They are out of work.

A couple of platform workers expressed some concern about the functioning of the Macondo Well--someone actually spotted a leak in the now notorious blow-out preventer--in March and April, according to Wikipedia, but no one paid attention. If memory serves, Osama Bin Laden himself sent at least one warning to Bush during August, preceding 9/11. No one listened to that either.

In this case, we are the victims of a hydraulic leak in the rig's blow-out preventer and a failed battery. If the situation weren't so horrifying, it would be funny.

The implication here, of course, is that if allowed to misbehave, many will. Not all, but many. Most? When tempted by the outcome's accruing to one's own advantage and simultaneously reassured of the probability of getting away with the bad act, most will do the deed, misbehave. No matter the pain inflicted. We see increasing evidence of an ethical desert around us, and it is everywhere we look. Add to that, denial: this is going to be a big pain in the ass; I don't feel like thinking about it, so I won't, and then, if I don't think about it, it won't happen.

GIC, the Global Interdependence Center is a think tank of sorts composed of members who concern themselves with matters such as this, most which affect all of us, matters such as air and water quality, energy sources, wealth and the lack of it, international relations. It meets often, in various places, all over the world, and boasts a changing cast of characters, most of whom are experts in their fields. Topics range from those that are huge, such as the economic situation of our nation and even the entire planet at this time in history to all manner of problems affecting the local modus vivendi in a relatively small area on one continent in one country and one state. Because of the input by the various smart and knowledgeable people who speak to us, the meetings are both informative and fascinating.

I am one of the privileged few who choose to and am able to be a member of this group; would that we all could be privy to the real dope.

Ignorance may be blissful, especially these days, but with knowledge comes at least the possibility of the birth of an urge to ameliorate situations that cry out to be fixed. Complacency might transmogrify to rage. We humans could use more of that right now. There is precious little fury rumbling around in the general population as we mindlessly aid and abet our own demise, the gradual erosion of our blessed mother earth.

We are off to Baton Rouge on the 11th of August for a real live view of the oil mess on the water, in the wetlands, on the beaches and on the fish and flying creatures, or those creatures that once flew. There is always a difference between the picture one sees on a television screen or the photo in print and the thing itself, in real life, in real time, and I am filled with anticipation and dread all at once.

During this trip, from the 11th to the 13th, and after--look for a series of articles about what we see and what we learn--subjects such as the devastation experienced by the fisherman whose fish are fouled by oil and whose livelihood is therefore a thing of the past, suddenly, one day, without warning. And too, the sea life, the birds, the water, the air, the wetlands, and human illness, depression, anxiety, despair; and always, inevitably, somehow, challenging understanding, courage, pluck, faith, and even optimism.

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