

**June 15, 2010      MSNBC Keith Olbermann Partial Transcript**

### **Gulf Oil Spill Information**

“OLBERMANN:      “...First, in the gulf today, BP suspended the collection of oil for five hours after a lightning strike from a storm caused a fire at the top of the (inaudible) at the Discovery Enterprise. It underscores how collection would be adversely affected should a hurricane hit the gulf.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

REP. ED MARKEY, Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee-(Hearing June 15, 2010): As you can see by looking at the covers of these five plans on the screen and over my head, the pictures are the same for each plan. All that is changed is the color. ExxonMobil's Gulf of Mexico oil spill response plan lists walruses under sensitive biological and human resources. As I'm sure you know, there aren't any walruses in the Gulf of Mexico and there have not been for three million years.  
(END VIDEO CLIP)

OLBERMANN: All the oil company executives agreed that it was inappropriate, even embarrassing to have walruses in their Gulf of Mexico response plans. Chairman Markey repeatedly referenced a BP document that placed the range of the possibilities for an accident at 1,000 to 14,000 barrels/day. Without results, he asked BP America President Lamar McKay why his company low balled the actual spill rate at 1,000 barrels per day. Today's new estimate, 35,000 to 60,000 barrels/day. Chairman Markey also repeatedly asked for a specific apology.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

Lamar McKay, BP America President: Please, one final chance, apologize for getting that number wrong. We are sorry for everything the gulf coast is going through. We are sorry for that and the spill. What I can say is we have provided every bit of data and information we have.  
(END VIDEO CLIP)

OLBERMANN: And during further questioning from the panel, Mr. McKay offered this:

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MCKAY: I understand everyone's frustration with how long this is taking, but the spill response has actually been pretty effective in terms of dealing with it on the water. It's unfortunate we can't get it stopped at the source right now. We're doing everything we can to do that.  
Unidentified man: Congressman Bart Stupak managed to grind out a straight answer from the CEO of ExxonMobil Rex Tillerson when Stupak asked about that company's plans for a worst case scenario.

REX TILLERSON, EXXONMOBIL CEO: We are not well equipped to handle them. There will be impacts, as we are seeing. And we've never represented anything different than that. And that's why the emphasis is always on preventing these things from occurring, because when they happen, we're not very well equipped to deal with them. And that's just a fact of the enormity of what we're dealing

with.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

OLBERMANN: As promised, here is Congressman Ed Markey, the democrat of Massachusetts, Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on the Energy and the Environment. Thanks for your time tonight, sir.

MARKEY: Thank you.

OLBERMANN: I can imagine the choices of a thousand different answers to this, but that was your greatest source of frustration today.

MARKEY: Well, we're looking for a little bit of humility from BP this late into the game as the size of the spill has gone from 1,000 to 5,000 to 10,000 and now, as you were just saying, up to 30,000 to 60,000. But yet there is still this incredible denial in BP, this still inability to understand how much the American people are appalled at their performance. And to be honest with you, it's still, I think, not clear to themselves that they're either lying or they are just grossly incompetent, and they just can't come to grips with it which is why, I think, a couple of the members of our panel today asked for Mr. McKay to resign.

OLBERMANN: Congressman Stupak noted that Exxon's media response plan was five times longer than its plan for protecting wildlife. Did the hearing at least begin to demonstrate how grossly ill prepared all of these oil companies are at this moment in the event of another major spill such as the one we're experiencing right now?

MARKEY: It's pretty clear that the only technology that these companies have invested in for a response to a spill in the Gulf of Mexico is a Xerox machine. They basically Xeroxed, each one of them did, the same plan that had walrus in it, that had the name of a deceased person with their telephone number from 2005.

It is now 2010. And they all had the same plan. So, it's obvious that they all decided that they would promise to the federal government that they could clean up a spill of 250,000 barrels a day, 200,000 barrels per day, but yet in their spill response plan, they had walrus, they had the names and telephone numbers of dead people. They just did not take it seriously. And to be honest with you, MMS turned into a lap dog and not the watchdog, which it should have been.

OLBERMANN: To your mind, congressman, did the president's speech tonight sufficiently separate the government's response from BP's response?

MARKEY: In my opinion, I think that the president said that there will be a plan, that people will be compensated for this harm that the spill will be stopped and will be cleaned up..."

OLBERMANN: I hope you're correct. Congressman Ed Markey, the democrat of Massachusetts, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Energy and the Environment. Again, our great thanks for staying late with us.

MARKEY: Thank you.

**OLBERMANN: And our next phase of the story is becoming very ugly and very rapidly. Reports of four states of clean-up workers already sick, possible chemical poisoning. Threatened perhaps by BP employees as they tried to wear their own protective hazmat suits.**  
Stay with us tonight on COUNTDOWN.

OLBERMANN: The British Petroleum Company has now issued a response to the president's address tonight on the subject of BP's deepwater horizon disaster in the gulf. A spokesperson, no name given said, "We share the president's goal of shutting off the oil as quickly as possible, cleaning up the oil and mitigating the impact on the people and environment of the gulf coast. We look forward to meeting with President Obama tomorrow for a constructive discussion about how best to achieve these mutual goals." It's unsigned, which should tell you everything.

**The responders are now reported to be getting sick and BP is reported to be interfering in the use of hazmat suits and other protective gear. We go live to Baton Rouge next on countdown.**

**OLBERMANN: Even as BP works to destroy or cover up the evidence of dead animals and decimated wet lands in the gulf, it appears it is also working to suppress news of an unfolding human health crisis in the gulf.**

BP blaming the headaches, sore throats, dizziness, nausea of first responders on fatigue, even on food poisoning as we've heard. Even as second in command Doug Suttles admitting the companies clean up technology is not of this century.

Associated press reporting yesterday workers were not give protective gear for the clean up effort. And if they were, it was not the right kind.

Marine Biologist Riki Ott warning on this news hour just last night of quote, "invisible oil." Underwater plumes coming ashore also affecting public health.

Meanwhile, Woai in San Antonio, Texas reporting that doctors have apparently given a name to the emerging illness calling it or **toxicant induced loss of tolerance.**

Those effective find themselves in tolerant to everyday scents, household products, medicines, and even food after exposure to chemicals and toxic fumes. The Louisiana Department of Health reporting over 70 people have gotten sick from the spill, 15 more in Alabama.

And in Baton Rouge, let's go there to the Executive Director of Louisiana Environmental Action Network Marylee Orr. Thanks for some of your time tonight.

**MARYLEE ORR, LA ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION NETWORK EXEC. DIRECTOR: Thank you, Keith. It's an honor to be with you. Thank you so much.**

OLBERMANN: Your groups out there helping the first responders in the gulf, tell us your experience, what you're hearing from these people about their health.

**ORR: Well, what we're hearing is folks are getting very sick, dizzy, vomiting, nausea, headaches, chest pains. And not just from the folks who are in the first responders, but folks who live along the gulf is also having health effects.**

OLBERMANN: Are these—do these symptoms last? I don't want to get to medical? But is this a brief exposure sort of related and underscored thing or does it last?

ORR: Well, our concern is that it will stay with them, for some folks who go out and doing the clean up work. They come back, they feel better and they go back again. Because it's a choice between feeding their family and not having any money to feed their family. And they're willing to sacrifice their health to feed their family. And I think that's tragic.

OLBERMANN: Your groups have been distributing what protective gear you have to these workers. Do you know what BP's reaction has been to workers showing up with their own protective gear?

ORR: Yes, I'm glad that you brought that up. LEAN and the Lower Mississippi Riverkeeper is distributing protective gear. When our folks, our fishermen folks had their respirators on, they were told to take them off, that they would be fired if they use them.

OLBERMANN: Fired. For wearing.

ORR: Said they were not allowed to use them.

OLBERMANN: What was the premise of that?

ORR: Fired for using safety equipment. I think that perhaps they'll afraid that they all meet some sort liability, that there's a problem in the air if they allowed them to use the respirators.

OLBERMANN: Dr. Ott said last night that the president needed in the speech to order that respirators be used by all clean up responders, full hazmat gear and whatever else might be a secondary step, but the first to do would be some nasal and oral protection for what they were breathing in. Was she right? And where was the president on this topic tonight in your opinion?

ORR: She's absolutely correct. **What we're distributing is a hat face respirator with organic vapor filter, nitrile gloves. They're protective gear. I notice that the president, unfortunately, did not really talk a whole lot, at least I didn't hear, about worker safety. I didn't hear anything about protective gear, I didn't think, hear anything about the dispersant issue kit. We have one million, 100,000 gallons of dispersant in that water out there. And we have the dispersants and then the oil together. It spells, we think a lot of health problems for a lot of folks. To say nothing of the little animals.**

OLBERMANN: All right. You put the numbers there in terms of the supply of these toxins. Do we have any idea how many people are affected? Is there a guess at this point?

**ORR: I don't even think there's an estimate. We get calls on a daily basis, we get air quality calls, we get calls from people saying that there have been more frequent asthma attacks. There are concerns when they have been burning these slicks, you name it. Folks have been**

**reporting health problems and then of course, the workers who are out on the water, they certainly are very affected and have been afraid to talk about it. They do not want to lose their job. We think BP should provide protective gear to those folks.**

OLBERMANN: Congresswoman Maloney of New York compared in terms of the exposure to toxicity. What's happened to the clean-up workers in the gulf to what happened to the clean-up workers at Ground Zero in New York. Do you feel that's an apt comparison?

ORR: I think that's right on the money. We actually work with Naish (ph) which is the group that still working since 9/11. Just like the folks who went down there to save everyone after 9/11, our folks want to run out and save the gulf. We don't want them to save the gulf at the extents of their health.

OLBERMANN: Indeed. Marylee Orr.

ORR: Absolutely.

OLBERMANN: Executive Director of Louisiana Environmental Action Network, LEAN. Great, thanks for your time tonight. Good luck.

ORR: Thank you, Keith, so much..."