Key Informant Interview 6 USVI

Date:

Stakeholder Group: NGO

Years of Experience in Occupation/Field:

Community/Area/Location:

Speaker 1: ... Interviewee, could you start by describing a little bit about your involvement with USVI fisheries and marine ecosystem?

Speaker 2. [...] we do environmental work for the National Park Service, the territorial Department of Planning and Natural Resources. [...]. So we work with four different entities currently, and we do coral treatment for stony coral tissue loss disease. [...] lionfish removal and culling since 2009, and we've been involved with the banning of toxic sunscreens. That's basically got three main thrusts of direction.

Speaker 1: So Interviewee, would you say that US Virgin Islands coastal communities are highly dependent on fisheries in your perception?

Speaker 2. Let's rephrase, let me get a little clarity on your question dependent you mean in a monetary sense, or like... Tourism is huge, of course. But as far as fishing, actually, the taking of fish for a living is a very small percentage of what goes on here. Let me see. I would say that the fisheries, if we're speaking about fisheries as just what fishermen bring in to sell on a daily basis, that is maybe 5% of the gross that is generated from tourism and people coming here to snorkel and scuba dive. I'm not sure what... Give me again exactly what you want. Do you want like a percentage? What, what exactly? In the tourism context, absolutely.

Speaker 1: Okay. And what about... So sort of that follow up question about would you say that fishermen themselves are highly dependent on fisheries for their livelihoods as sort of a full-time activity?

Speaker 2. The professional fishermen that do fishing for a living? Absolutely, because that kind of answers itself. It's what they do, but this is not a big fish take area like the Northeast Store, even the Pacific coast. There's a [ciguatera 00:04:57] concern, so there is a wariness of locals to eat fish, reef fish, because of the possibility of getting that pathogen from those fish. Yeah, I know the fishery part as the taking of fish is minimal. It's a small percentage.

Speaker 1: Okay. And just a small clarification. When we were talking about tourism in a context of fisheries, are you thinking more sort of the recreational fisheries or the seafood that's being sort of... Restaurants and hotels and that kind of...

Speaker 2. Yeah. Recreational only really. Well, recreational people looking at the fish for recreation. There is a market here for deep sea fishing. There's one person who does it on St. John. I think there's three or four who take people out marlin fishing and such on St. Thomas, and I'm not sure about St Croix, but they have, I believe they have less than 10 people doing commercial marlin-style fishing.

Speaker 3: I have a quick question for you. What island are you based out of?

Speaker 2. I'm on St. John. Now CORE is distributed amongst St. John, St. Thomas and St. Croix. We have teams on all three islands because we're conducting coral restoration on all three islands.

Speaker 1: So Interviewee, would you say... So sort of a similar question, but now in terms of dependence on coral reefs, would you say in your perception that USVI coastal communities are highly dependent on coral reefs?

Speaker 2. Yes, definitely, to the tune of millions and millions of dollars. Yes. People coming here to snorkel and scuba dive.

Speaker 3: Sure. Okay. So Interviewee, just to continue on some of these questions related to the fisheries and the corals, what would you say are the major problems that are facing fisheries in the US Virgin Islands?

Speaker 2. So on the CORE team, we have four or five different marine biologists, and one of my favorite people on the planet is Dr. Jeff Miller, and he works for the USGA, geological services. USGS, sorry, not the USGA. And the USGS works hand in hand with the National Park. They work almost side by side, out of the same building. And his big thing is yes, we need to treat coral that's diseased with stony coral tissue loss disease. We need to look at ways to eventually micro fragment and then grow coral in the labs that are disease and climate resistant. But, and there's the big "but," we need to change what we're doing. We need to increase the water quality. That was just degraded by improper septic tanks or septic tanks that have worn out. Cruise lines, dumping their refuse and effluence directly into the ocean, which comes ashore. Sargassum seaweed, which has exploded in densities because the nitrates coming out of the rivers from farmers near the rivers. Yeah, just the betterment of water quality. We are affecting the water quality around these islands many different ways, and it's all detrimental.

Speaker 3: So Interviewee, of those issues that you listed, if you had to rank them based upon their order of importance, which would you say would be the most important issue to address?

Speaker 2. Of improving the water quality? I would put septic tanks right up on top there, especially if it's a larger community near the shoreline. St. John is mostly National Park, so we don't have the density of human populations and their effects, but it's still an issue because human fecal content carries pathogens that kill coral. So yeah, I would rate that right up there. There's a lot of things that we're doing that impact the ocean almost like secondary. The runoff when it rains carries the septic water down to the ocean, the stony coral issue loss disease came out of South Florida in 2014, so if it's a new disease, was that brought about by human action? Was there somehow a human link to that because it is relatively new and you wonder if it was an existing disease that mutated because it had a lot of nutrients from big sugar dumping their waste into the Atlantic and into the Gulf? Yeah. There was a lot of unanswered questions for sure.

Speaker 3: Okay. So I think you probably have addressed some of these already, but what would you say are the most significant environmental changes that have occurred in USVI in the last couple of decades?

Speaker 2. A major die off of coral reefs. We've lost anywhere from 50 to 80%, depending on where you're at and the majority of those die offs were first, timeline wise, the global warming. When the coral is sitting in too hot of water long enough, it starts to bleach where it's ejected [zooxanthellae 00:12:25] symbiotic partner algae. And then once it ejects that algae, which is 85 to 90% of its food, [inaudible 00:12:35] in a weakened state and it's susceptible to diseases. So because of coral bleach didn't mean it was dead. It looked dead, but the animal was still in there. It was just slowly starving to death. And it would make a comeback year after year, but there was always a rate of attrition. You'd always lose a certain percentage every year, and over the years, it had a noticeable impact in the death of the reefs. The global warming be number one.

Speaker 2. And we've been fighting this stony coral tissue loss disease for a year and a half now, and we have lost more coral in the last year and a half than we had lost in the last 30 years. It's been devastating, and just the people that are on our teams that are applying... We mix amoxicillin in a powdered form with a carrier called Base 2B, which is... Think of a creamy peanut butter consistency. But it's real sticky, and it keeps the Amoxicillin viable for about three days. So you mix that, you put it in a caulk tube, like a caulking gun, and you'll dive down. You'll find a disease incursion, and you will put a fire break around that infection. And it will stop it about 80 to 85% of the time. The problem is the pathogens in the water column, and you've just, you've just isolated a certain amount of animals on that coral head. That coral head is still susceptible to being reinfected, right? Corals are many different animals on colony.

Speaker 1: That's interesting. Actually have a quick follow up question. So a lot of these issues that you were talking about, which are super important, how do you see them relating to the fisheries? I mean, is any way the fisheries are impacting, influencing, compounding any of these issues, or are there any ways that you see these issues affecting the fisheries either directly or indirectly?

Speaker 2. So I don't see the fisheries really impacting the fish stocks around these islands. It's really, like I said, a small percentage.

Speaker 2. Now when you lose the coral reef, you lose a lot of fish. Consequently, when you lose a lot of fish, you lose [pelagic 00:05:11] fish as well because they're feeding off of these reef fish. So I think there has been a decline in overall fish populations. That's just my own intuition and having been a dive instructor in the Virgin Islands for 33 years, I have definitely seen a change in fish populations and the coral reefs cover.

Speaker 1: And you think that the most important impacts on that fish population stem from these habitat and sort of impacts that you just mentioned?

Speaker 2. Yeah. The loss of habitat.

Speaker 3: Okay. So Interviewee, I know that you have already talked a little bit about global warming and the effects of warming waters and bleaching of the coral and the relationship to the loss of the algae that's living with the coral. But I also wanted to just expand that a little bit and say, have you observed any other changes in the USVI fisheries and-or the environment that you think can be attributed to climate change?

Speaker 2. You would have to decide if you wanted to link the stony coral tissue loss disease into climate change or not. It's a relatively new disease. As far as our scientists know, it came out of Florida in 2014. And I try to explain this to people without being overly depressing. Imagine an underwater forest fire burning slowly, and that is what's happening with our coral reefs. I just don't even want to think about this disease getting loose in the Pacific. It is just devastating. Now. It's not killing every species. There's 20 different susceptible species that can get stony coral tissue loss disease infections, but those species are your stony corals, like your brain corals and your star corals, the orbicellas, [faveolas 00:17:27], the [inaudible 00:17:30], those are all reef builders. They are the ones that actually over the millennia create the reefs and this disease is targeting those so, yeah, there's going to be a big habit loss. I'm going to give you a little footnote because this is very dear to my heart. I have these teens, we have about 30 people trained to apply the treatments to corals, whether they're in the National Park or territorial waters. And one of the things that they're experiencing is that they get burned out. You're going out to these same reefs over and over because that's all you can do. You have to keep returning to the same reefs, and what happens is you start to get burned out because you're seeing the death all around. It's like working in a graveyard, I think. And while we are successful where we're at, the overall is a sense of loss, of devastating loss. I kept explaining this to the Marine biologist. So I'm like, "You know, most of my people are not scientists and I don't think they're able to compartmentalize what's going on as a scientist." They're divers. Technical divers, but divers, and we need something to hold out a light at the end of the tunnel. Otherwise, they're just going to completely burn out and not want to do this anymore. And I don't know, are either of you aware of the micro-fragmentation technique? There's a laboratory called Moat Marine laboratory out of South Florida. And they work, they work hand in hand with the University of Miami. They had an accident in one of the labs. One of the corals they'd been growing for years and years got dropped or broke into a bunch of pieces, and the person that let it break was devastated, figuring there goes years and years of work. And they picked up all these little micro fragments, almost individual polyps, and that's the size of an eraser head, generally. They can be smaller or bigger and they took them and they put them in the aquarium they were heading towards, and then they probably forgot about them until they came back about three weeks later and went, "Oh yeah, I want to look at it and see what happened." Well, something unexpected, amazing unexpected, happened, that the growth rate accelerated by 40 to 50 times. So you could take a coral, an old coral, and grow it. Grow these individual polyps, and it would accelerate 40 to 60 times. You could grow a hundred year old coral in like two to three years, and a hundred year old coral is a breeder and a spawner. They're much more able to reproduce than a younger coral. So now what they're doing is they're... I'm starting to get involved with this with the CORE Foundation, but my caveat is this. It's like, "Look, I'm not going to put all this effort into growing coral that's just susceptible to the things that killed it to begin with, the other corals around it." So we need to identify naturally disease resistant corals, which we're doing. We're tagging and identifying with the GPS coordinate where these corals are of those species that were basically wiped out but these sole ones, and those were keeping in a database, and eventually we're going to take small sections from those, take it back to the lab or the grow tables and grow those disease resistant corals. There isn't another bright spot. Every now and then you'll treat a coral, it'll have an infection and you'll treat it, and then you never have to treat that coral again. It's almost like it communicated all the coral animals on that coral calling and communicating with each other and some type of immune response was stimulated. Now you'll go and see the exact same species of coral you treated, and then you've treated and you've treated, and after the fourth or fifth time, you're just like, "I'm sorry, coral," you start talking to the coral. It's like, "You're just not going to make it." And so that's really interesting. There's a lot of cutting edge... There's leading, cutting edge science going on because this is all new. Nobody, the marine scientists were really in the dark about what's going on with the pathogen. They recently found out... They brought... Believe it or not, you know coral's an animal. They brought in a veterinarian from the... He's basically USGS from Hawaii, and I took him out diving and he took samples of the coral that was diseased, and using electron microscope, he found that it wasn't just a bacteria. Everybody thought it was only a bacteria because the amoxicillin worked on it? But he found there was a virus involved as well, so you have a combo of viral and bacterial, and they're currently working... Antivirals are much more difficult to manufacture than antibiotics. It's a completely different endeavor.

Speaker 1: That's really interesting. I'm just curious, Interviewee. I have a follow up question to you. You're talking about these really interesting efforts. Do you or your organization involve people... And I know that you said some of your divers are not necessarily scientists, but do you have any outreach or sort of community involvement or other stakeholders who are involved in any of these efforts that you're doing of data collection or restoration or any of that? Do you...

Speaker 2. Yes, definitely. We work hand in hand with the University of the Virgin Islands... ... And we're working with the Department of Planning and Natural Resources for the territorial government of the US Virgin Islands. And then CORE is a community-based group. While we do have, like I said, four or five biologists that are actively treating coral, I would say the majority of them are just advanced divers with a hundred dives under their belt, and then they have to go through a pretty extensive of training to be able to differentiate between what stony coral tissue loss disease is compared to the variety of existing slow mortality coral diseases like white plague or black band. Because those don't really react to the amoxicillin treatment, so you have to be careful to not waste resources, time, human and material alike.

Speaker 1: I thought I lost you for a second. No, that's super interesting. And, are any fishermen involved in any of the efforts that you...

Speaker 2. No. Very little. They're too busy making a living. Now our lionfish. We have a whole lionfish group in CORE, and some of the fishermen, they're reluctant to deviate from earning a living, but if they bring up a trap and there's the invasive predator of the lionfish in that trap, they will kill it before they dump it back into the ocean. So basically let the reef reabsorb it. And most of them do that, but they don't get certified to carry a spear and swim in the National Park and... The things that... Yeah. So there is involvement, but it's limited.

Speaker 3: Interviewee, is most of the work that you're doing with corals in the National Park?

Speaker 2. On St. John, but St. Croix and St. Thomas... St. Croix has the National Park slash National Monument called Buck Island and we are currently gearing up to do coral treatments over there. We're actually in the last final stages of signing the contract on that. And so generally only on St. John, is where we're working in the National Park. St. Thomas and St. Croix are territorial waters.

Speaker 3: Okay. So Interviewee, in your opinion, do you think that the US Virgin Island fishers are concerned about climate change?

Speaker 2. Yeah, as it impacts their bottom dollar with the bottom line. There has to be an overall depletion of fish stocks. You would have to talk to a fisheries person with DPNR, with the Department of Planning and Natural Resources, and I'm sure that they're keeping track of fish stocks and how they've declined. Now, there are some positive... I'm going to share with you some positive stuff, because I found that's important. If all you do is report doom and gloom, people turn off. One of the things that happened here was about 25 years ago, the local fishermen had figured out where the grouper, and there's 10 different species of grouper from the conies to the hinds to the actual groupers, and they all spawn in the same area. It's called the Grammanik Banks, which if you can imagine the Virgin Islands as peaks of a volcano, the water doesn't get really deep off the St. John and St. Thomas until about five miles out north or south. And the depth between the island and that dropoff is 100 to 160 feet maximum. And then you get to the ridgeline of that drop off, and within a hundred feet, it drops down 12,000 feet. There's a bank that's more gradually sloping is where the grouper go to spawn. Well, there was nobody regulating anything, and the fisherman went out there and just hauled in species-affecting limit takes, and there was no limit on it. So NOAA eventually stepped in and made those banks, the Grammanik Banks, off-limits during spawning season. You couldn't take any fish, groupers, jacks, anything. And over time, you started to see a slow repopulation of the grouper. About three years ago, I would be out doing lionfish and I would see a grouper, and I think that's a good thing because grouper, I believe, will prey on lionfish when lionfish are small enough... ... The one-to-two inch, and grouper and lionfish share the exact same habitat structures, like overhead hanging ledges or hollows under a coral head. That's what they like, and so I think they're in direct competition with each other and they're opportunistic. I think the grouper will learn to start eating the lionfish, and I do believe ... Nobody's done a study on this, but as I've seen the grouper populations start to come back, I've seen an overall depletion of the lionfish. So there's your bright spot in the dark.

Speaker 3: So Interviewee, in your opinion, do you think USVI fishery managers and researchers and decision makers are concerned about climate change?

Speaker 2. Absolutely. Especially, again, if we tie this into the stony coral tissue loss disease. It's so devastating that the territorial government worked hand in hand with the University of the Virgin Islands and wrote protocols and treatment strategies. A lot of it was based off of what South Florida had pioneered, because they've been dealing with it longer, but I have to give them credit. They really, really jumped on it and they basically contracted with CORE to do the majority of the treatments. But to give you an idea, we've done 400 dives in 14 months, and we've treated 7500 corals in that time for stony coral. So yeah, we have about 30 people actively treating coral three or four days a week. Now the thing is, this is not an answer. It's just, you're saving corals, but you're still losing the overall war or fight. So that's why I was always tying this back into the micro fragmentation, growing of disease and climate resistant coral and there's some amazing science coming out on that. Moat Laboratories and the University of Miami are using DNA markers to identify... They would look and see if corals had never been infected. And so they did a DNA breakdown on it and they're finding markers that indicate corals that are disease and climate change resistant. So they can go to a coral, take a little piece of it, a piece of DNA material out of it, and they go back and look at it and they can tell if that coral is disease or climate change resistant. And then that's going to be a combining that with the natural selection that my divers seeing, I think is how we're going to slowly move forward with growing and replacing corals.

Speaker 3: Do you think this is also happening to address coral bleaching or other of climate related changes? Speaker 2. They're all tied together. They're all depleting the resource, yes.

Speaker 1: I have a couple of questions about sort of the relationships in the fishing communities in the USVI. My first couple of questions have to do with the relationship between fishers. Do you have any experience or would you be able to talk a little bit about your views on how... What's the relationship like between fishers in the USVI and these fishing communities. If they're cohesive, if there's conflict... How do you see that?

Speaker 2. I have to think about that question because it's pretty broad. Is there conflict amongst the fishermen? Yeah, pretty much always, but they generally get along. They'll have permits to put just traps out and you know that sometimes one fisherman's area will encroach on another fisherman's area, so there's a competition for resources there. They're a pretty tight knit community. It's interesting how on St. Thomas, you had a large population shift... Well, large... It was large for that area. From St. Barts, the island of St. Barts, to the island St. Thomas about a hundred years ago. And they're all French descendants. It's not a derogatory name, it's just what they call them here. That group of people are called Frenchies and they got heavily into two industries, the fishing industry, the trapping of fish, and farming, and it's still true today. There are local West Indians that are into fishing, but on St. Thomas, the majority of fishermen are of the French descent.

Speaker 1: Interesting. And can you think of any examples of the fishers getting together to address a specific issue?

Speaker 2. No, I'm just not that familiar with them. The chief of field operations for CORE is a [Quetel 00:34:48] his last name is Quetel, and that is one of the founding family members that came from St. Barts. But he really did not get in... He does fishing with his brother every now and then who has a permit. But Jason is, he works for UVI as a technical diver, and he's also working on the animal husbandry of growing corals, and he would be the person to talk to. He could give you a much better feeling of what the pulse is of the fishermen.

Speaker 1: Okay. And what about the relationship between the fishers, the fishermen, and the fishery managers in the USVI? How would you describe that?

Speaker 2. Yeah, I can't. I can't comment.

Speaker 1: No worries. Go ahead, Speaker 3. You just have a couple more questions.

Speaker 3: Yes, I do, so I can just finish them up. So thinking a little bit about fishery management, do you feel that fishery management in USVI is fair in the decisions that they make?

Speaker 2. I do. I would say my main beef with the fishery, fish and wildlife, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, is that they are strictly grant-driven. They are not... If they don't have grant money coming in, they're not working. And to me, it should be a full-time, paid position in the territorial government. And so they were policemen, school teachers. I really think that that division should no longer be strictly relying on grant funding, and they should be on a regular paychecks, and all of that that goes with it.

Speaker 3: And I know that you mentioned the local government. How about the federal government? Do you feel that fishery management in the USVI is fair in relationship to the decisions that the federal government is making?

Speaker 2. I do. I think the federal government has actually done a pretty darn good job with responding, and I'm speaking specifically of the Department of the Interior and NOAA and the National Park Service. They've done a pretty good job of responding to specifically the stony coral tissue loss disease and to a degree, the lionfish. I'll give them a B-plus.

Speaker 3: Okay. So again, these last two questions, maybe you're going to say you're not able to answer them, but I'm going to ask you them and we'll take it from there. So do you think most fishers in the USVI understand how fishery managers make decisions?

Speaker 2. That's a good question. I think it depends on the generation. The younger generation do understand it much better than the older generation, and I would bet that if you looked across the entire United States where there are fisher communities that that would ring true. Well, I have a very good friend who is a biologist for Fish and Wildlife for the state of Florida, and one of his jobs is he would go to the boat ramps and he would examine people's catches. The older generation, people in their sixties and up, were very reluctant. They were wary of him as a government official, and they were afraid he was going to fine them or anything. He was just doing studies. And so they were reluctant to show them what they had caught, whereas the younger generation, say 40 and younger, they understood the impact that Fish Wildlife was having on helping the fish stocks recover. And so that... He explained that to me and it made very much good sense.

Speaker 3: Okay. And if they exist, how do you think conflicts between fishers and fishers, or fishers and fishery managers, are resolved?

Speaker 2. Talking to each other, communication is the key. Explaining how taking numbers at a boat ramp, how those directly affect their ability to form a plan to mitigate the loss of the general fish stocks. They know what fishes were being impacted, and like we discussed what kind of pressures were placed on them.

Speaker 3: Okay. So do you think that communication is true for both the fishers and the fishers, and the fishers and the fishery managers?

Speaker 2. Absolutely. I'll share a little with you, I'm a man of experiences. I think that's all we are at the end of our life, is but a compilation of our experiences. The National Park after Irma and Maria, a lot of the National Park on St. John's housing was destroyed. Well, they still had people who had to come in like the deputy superintendent. Well, they didn't have a house for him, so they rented a private house from a friend of mine and every Friday night we'd have a little get together and this individual has been immersed in the community, whereas if he was staying at public housing, he wouldn't have got it. You know, imagine how would you go to a foreign country? You're going to learn that language much faster if you're immersed in it. And so I think that having him at a private residence, it was a godsend in a way.

Speaker 1: And so, Interviewee, is there anything that we haven't talked or anything else that you would like to add?

Speaker 2. We need a dynamic shift in how we think about the oceans and what we're allowing our civilization to drift into the oceans from runoff from commercial waste, from manufacturers to septic tanks and runoff from that. We found there's certain elements in sunscreen that kill coral, and that was something that fought hard. It was really interesting. You'd have the scientists coming up with these answers and then the large beauty... Like L'Oreal and stuff would have their attorneys come in and they'd fight it tooth and nail, and spread around a bunch of misinformation and they'd water down the law. And it happened in Hawaii so much to the effect that their law was almost nullified and then it was pushed off a couple of years. Whereas we knew that there were people from the Surfrider Foundation that came and helped us, and they said, "If we drag our feet and we wait, this is what's going to happen the US Virgin Islands." So being the president of this foundation, of this nonprofit, I went to the other presidents or directors of the local nonprofits and I said, "Let's form a collaboration group, and push the legislature to get this sunscreen law through before L'Oreal and the rest of those big pharmaceutical beauty product industries get wind of it and send their troops down here." And we did. We jumped on it and we got a really comprehensive coral destroying sunscreen ban in place, and I definitely think it's having an effect. No doubt.

Speaker 3: And is the ban preventing the sale of these product on the island?

Speaker 2. Yes. Like your oxybenzones, there's a list of toxic... What it is is there's two types of sunscreen. There's a physical sunscreen like zinc. You remember the lifeguards would wear on their nose and their lips, the white stuff, which is really just a reflector. It's like putting on a piece of clothing. Whereas the chemical sunscreens, there's a chemical reaction. When the sunlight hits your skin and you have that chemical sunscreen on there, there's a chemical reaction that keeps your skin from burning. And that chemical that they're using, and there's a variety of them, but they all work the same way, are endocrine disruptors. And I don't know if either of you... I have to be careful about what I say. If you've ever been on birth control, birth control is an endocrine disruptor, so it's a hugely powerful product they're putting in there. And when they studied the coral, what they found was happening is the baby coral, when they're in their larval stage, instead of building a reef for them to grow on top of or in, they would grow a hard shell completely around themselves and expire. So yeah, that was enough. Again, that was a ray of sunshine there to see that happen. Now policing it is the trick, because you know you're not going to have sunscreen police on the beach. That wouldn't be good for the industry. You try to catch it. You try to. I think, I mean call me Pollyanna, but I believe most people are good and if you give them the information, they'll make the right decisions. So that sunscreen battle was really a public education issue more than anything else.

Speaker 1: Yeah. You know, one of the things that impressed me. A couple of years ago, I went to Hawaii for a conference, and I remember that in the plane on the way there, they had a video about this and they were selling the good sunscreen on the airplane. And there's like this whole thing at the airport. And you could it really was sort of targeting also the tourists that were coming in, and I haven't seen anything like that in the USVI. Is that something that you think would be... How do you see sort of these outreach campaigns? And I'm just asking out completely out of curiosity, because this is just super interesting.

Speaker 2. So there's an entity of the territorial government called the Department of, basically, Ports, and they have sway. There are semi-autonomous government agencies over it that's called the Port Authority of the Virgin Islands. And they gave us permission to put signs at the cruise ship docks and the ferry docked between St. Thomas and St. John, and they originally gave us permission to put information in the airports. And then by the time we came back to them and said, "Okay, we have our signs. We're ready to go," the answer was, "Well, we got to think about this." And it's amazing how, if you give a little bit of time at the wrong time, it can be very detrimental to what you're trying to do. Sometimes you have to move quickly before big money comes in. Well, like I said, L'Oreal, and I'll just go back to L'Oreal. It was major. It wasn't just them so don't quote me as targeting them. I don't want to hear from their attorney. But what they would do is they would spread disinformation. They'd hire their own scientists with an agenda, and then they'd come in with a bunch of misinformation and then you have people disbelieving what they originally read. And these people could be Port Authority, they literally could be people at the University of the Virgin Islands. I was like, "You are a scientist. How could you be doing this?" But that was just a few people and isolated incidents really.