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WHAT'S  
NEW

September 4, 2003

## Senior EPA Specialists Comment Today On Deletions of Warnings About 9/11 Toxins

Two senior specialists with the federal Environmental Protection Agency commented Thursday on emerging information about the White House role in early press releases from the EPA about potential health hazards in lower Manhattan after the 9/11 attacks.

The comments, by Cate Jenkins and Hugh Kaufman, were released by the Institute for Public Accuracy on Sept. 4, a day after an NBC News interview with Nikki Tinsley, the Inspector General for the Environmental Protection Agency. During the NBC interview, in response to a question about whether an EPA news release soon after 9/11 was misleading, Tinsley said: "It was surely not telling all of the truth." [See: [www.msnbc.com/news/961109.asp](http://www.msnbc.com/news/961109.asp)]

The EPA Inspector General recently issued a report which found that "when the EPA made a September 18 [2001] announcement that the air was 'safe' to breathe, it did not have sufficient data and analyses to make such a blanket statement." The report also concluded that "the White House Council on Environmental Quality influenced ... early press releases when it convinced EPA to add reassuring statements and delete cautionary ones."

The following two specialists are available for a limited number of interviews. (The views of these individuals differ about motivations for EPA's actions after 9/11.)

- CATE JENKINS, [cate.jenkins@epa.gov](mailto:cate.jenkins@epa.gov), [PDF file: [www.nyenvirolaw.org/PDF/Jenkins-7-4-03-documentary-d2.pdf](http://www.nyenvirolaw.org/PDF/Jenkins-7-4-03-documentary-d2.pdf)]

Jenkins is a 22-year specialist with the EPA's Hazardous Waste Identification Division and the author of a 432-page memo to the EPA's Inspector General as background documentation for the recently released IG report. She said today: "The White House deleted from EPA press releases the recommendation for professional cleaning, and that resulted in people going into their homes with shovels, brooms and mops -- without any protection like HEPA-respirators --

to clean up the toxic dust containing asbestos, mercury, dioxin, silica, PCBs, etc. This is a similar risk to being a first responder at Ground Zero -- it's the same dust."

- HUGH KAUFMAN, [hughbkaufman@webtv.net](mailto:hughbkaufman@webtv.net), [www.multinationalmonitor.org/mm2002/02april/april02interviewkaufman.html](http://www.multinationalmonitor.org/mm2002/02april/april02interviewkaufman.html)

Kaufman, who has been with the EPA since its inception in 1971, was the chief investigator for the EPA Ombudsman's office until he was removed after issuing critical reports. Kaufman sued, and the Labor Department ordered the EPA to reinstate him, determining that Kaufman "had been prohibited from performing [his Ombudsman-related duties] in reprisal for performing a 'too effective job' in support of the Ombudsman Program." In 2002, EPA's then-Administrator Christine Todd Whitman dissolved the Ombudsman's office altogether and transferred its duties to the Inspector General. Kaufman said today: "The EPA under Administrator Whitman told us that lower Manhattan was safe and not contaminated. Based on that false information, the insurance companies saved hundreds of millions of dollars -- one of those insurance companies was Citigroup, with which Mrs. Whitman's family has substantial economic ties. Mrs. Whitman's husband, John Whitman, used to be a Citigroup officer and is now the managing partner of Sycamore Ventures, a \$550 million venture capital firm that was spun out of Citigroup but still manages a substantial amount of the company's money.... The WTC area contains contaminants including asbestos, fine particles, lead, PCBs, dioxin, fiberglass and other hazardous materials. These chemicals have spread throughout lower Manhattan and have landed in apartments, in schools and in office buildings. The EPA itself has done tests and found contaminants and in fact used their own testing as a basis to properly clean up their own regional headquarters building, which is based in lower Manhattan.... The first responders received the major acute problems and of course we're seeing now that over half of those first responders are sick -- it is possible that a large number of them will die early because of cancer and other health effects."

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