

# **The Climate Monologues**

By Sharon Abreu

## **Script**

(running time approx. 75 mins.)

Introduction: 1 minute (or less)

1. Maria Gunnoe: Bob White – monologue 3:42, song 1:38
2. Fr. Robert Athickal: Tarumitra – monologue 2:45, song 1:57
3. Lea Bossler: One Good Thing – monologue 3:00, song 1:25
4. Jewell James: Every Breath In-Between – monologue 3:40, song 00:64 (or 00:44)
5. Kathy Egland: Never Give Up – monologue 3:20, song 00:40
6. Bob Hallahan: Back Down to Earth – monologue 2:09, song 1:15
7. Abby Brockway: Mother Up! – monologue 3:50, song 1:05
8. Steve Garey: A Just Transition – monologue 4:43, song 3:00
9. Ken Gale: Swamp Fox – monologue 4:00, song 1:51
10. Leslie Glustrom: Something Left Worth Fighting For – monologue 3:14, song 1:49
11. Ed Wiley: The Third Day – monologue 4:36, song 3:22
12. Hunter Lovins: Help Me Lose a Bottle of Whiskey – monologue 4:24, song 1:13

Monologues: 44 mins.

Songs: 20 mins.

Transition time: 11 mins

Total running time: 75 mins. (max)

## **Introduction**

*[Smiling]* I'll bet you're worried. *I'm* worried. I'm really scared about global climate change.

The big question for me is - "*Why?*" When the vast majority of climate scientists around the world have told us what we need to do to stop global warming, why aren't we doing it? We have to dig through so much information and misinformation to try and get at the truth.

There are warmer, fuzzier things I could wrap my mind around besides climate change – but none as HOT!! And climate change connects everything I care about. So I've joined in a chorus of voices with passionate people who care deeply about other people, our planet and all its inhabitants. They're not rock stars or movie stars or sports heroes, but to me [us] they're true heroes, and I'm [we're] privileged to share their stories, here with you today.

(Note: "I'll bet you're worried" are the beginning words of *The Vagina Monologues* show.)

## 1. Maria Gunnoe: Bob White

The town that I live in is called Bob White. It wasn't named after a man – it was named after a bird. The cliffs on the back side of my property is where the bobwhite quails nested at. When the birds would call through the morning and through the evening, you could hear 'em throughout the valley. It echoed. It sounded like 20 birds was calling instead of one. It's been probably close to 15 years now since I've even *heard* a bobwhite quail. This is the most biodiverse region in the United States, second on the globe, you know, and we're blowin' it up.

My grandfather and my family before me worked as underground *union* coal miners. And it was very hard for me to begin organizing against coal because coal had always been such a source of *pride* in our family. Coal is the basis of the whole economy here in West Virginia, and they very much control the employment here. There's one area that we're working on to preserve that is viable for wind energy. That's jobs *forever* – and it's *renewable* energy – *clean* energy. And the coal company wants to blow the mountain up. If they blow the mountain up, it's no longer wind viable. So, you know, I mean, this is permanent. It's permanent if they blow up that mountain, and it's permanent if we put windmills on it.

For more than a hundred years now, there's been a massive taking from the people of central Appalachia. The prosperity is showin' up on Wall Street, but when you look at the places here where this coal was being extracted, prosperity is not what comes to mind.

I've lived on this property all my life. And as a kid, I spent my life playin' in the stream that runs through this property. In 2000, the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection permitted this stream to be what they called a national pollution discharge elimination system. Now, they don't openly call it that – they call it an NPDES stream 'cause it sounds so nice. But once I investigated and found out what this meant, it was like, "Oh my goodness!" There's toxic levels of Selenium in the stream that runs through my property now. I didn't have a say in that process. You know, we have a functional farm, and throughout my life we've raised our own meat. We've raised our own gardens. And when your ground water becomes polluted, you can't do that anymore. People's water is being polluted *by* the coal companies, and it's silent. People know nothing of it - until they start having health impacts.

This is the headwaters of the drinkin' water, throughout the southeastern United States. This is not just mine and my kids. It runs from here into the Kanawha ["kuh-NAW"] and into the Ohio and into the Gulf. Exactly how many people are drinking the water that runs by my house? I often wonder that. I've lost friends that I went to school with of cancer. My 15-year-old daughter lost a classmate to cancer. The *process* that coal starts with is what makes it dirtiest of all.

And now fracking is very much impacting northern WV. Kids wake up with blood on their pillows from nosebleeds from the benzene used in fracking. Everyone is getting sick. Cows are droppin' over dead – from the natural gas pipelines goin' through their pasture. We *know* that wind and solar are clean, sustainable, renewable, and available. We should put our money towards that.

You know, 25 years ago when I started doin' this work, it was like I was talkin' to a brick wall. And now I hear young people sayin' the same things I was sayin' back then. Some are divesting from fossil fuels! So you know it's happening.

I see global warming as being a reason for people to start realizing the impacts of our energy usage. As a country, we do not recognize *our impact* on our children's future. If I knew that my life was sustained by taking my children's last drink o' water, I wouldn't take it. And that's exactly what we're doin'. We are taking *our children's future* away from them.

## **2. Fr. Robert Athickal: Tarumitra**

I was in Delhi, our capital, for about five years studying there, and Delhi in the 80s was the most polluted city in all of Asia. I could, you know, wipe my table clean and in five minutes the table would be covered again with dust. Then I came away from Delhi to where I am now, Patna. I felt, you know, this should not happen to my city. So on one occasion we had a large gathering of students. We talked to the students about it and their response was electric – they said, “We must not allow this to happen!” And so, over 20 years back, in 1988, when very few people thought about environment, these kids came out to hold a rally here in the town – about 5,000 kids, and they started shouting the same thing: “We want a greener earth!” And they came together and formed an organization known as TaruMitra - means friends of trees. I still remember I went to my principal in the school and talked to him about environment. He *laughed* and he said, “What do you want to waste your time on this? This must be a problem of the Americans, not of India.” You know.

In 2002, Vatican asked me to represent the State in the U.N. - we had a climate change conference in Delhi. There was this Japanese scientist who presented before us a picture of what is happening over Asia. He said America and Japan together put a satellite over Asia to watch the climate, and the climate model showed the whole of India will be a near virtual desert by 2025 [two-thousand twenty-five]. And the reason he said was the water cycle was intercepted by the climate change.

When I came here 35 years back, we used to wear woolen clothes by mid-October. Now we put on woolen clothes end of December. So the five month long winter has shrunk into just two months – in 35 years. If this is not climate change, what else is? Now last year was a drought year for us. We did not have the monsoon. Very few rains. And this year is a drought year again for us.

I would suggest we need a concerted effort from every party – everybody must cooperate. And to say that the third world will cooperate only when the first two worlds have made reparations, no - that is defeating the whole thing. The prime minister in India – he has announced already that whether America moves or not, India will go to solar. By 2050, 50% of our energy would come from solar. We have to keep on raising the consciousness of as many people as possible to enhance the greater safety for the Earth. In all the years, this has become part of my faith. You see, God is here everywhere - He dwells in the heart of everything. And today I realize more than ever, that this Earth is the body of God. And if I could do something here it's an act of worship.

### 3. Lea Bossler: One Good Thing

It started with hurricanes. Um, I positively *love* storms, actually [laughs]. But when I realized that, with climate change, these storms could intensify or become more common – that’s when I started thinking about the *climate*.

For me it really started with Hurricane Katrina, which I remember ‘cause it happened on August 29<sup>th</sup>, and my birthday is August 28. And I remember seeing that so many people’s lives were being pretty much - *devastated*, and I was like, “Wow, I don’t know how I can celebrate my birthday while this is going on.”

I didn’t really actually *realize* that it *truly* was climate change I was interested in until I got to the University of Montana. I heard that they were starting this program – the Climate Change Program. And I thought back to how passionate I started to feel about society’s being functional through a crisis like Hurricane Katrina.

Actually it was my best friend from college - she asked me to take the “Nature and Society” class with her last year. I had *absolutely* no clue what it was gonna be before I went. I went on the first day and I was like “I *LOVE this!* [laughing] I *absolutely LOVE this!*” You cover *everything* – *EVERYTHING* [whispered], in that class.

It was all about the relationship between humans and nature through history. We started at Biblical times, and looked at how our relationship with nature - *shapes* - through time. We went over all the great thinkers, and all religions, and then we covered *law*, and sustainable agriculture, and water issues, and then it just – there was no turning back for me after that [laughing].

To people who say that - global warming’s just part of a natural cycle of warming and cooling, I’ll say, “Well, you know, humans haven’t been active on the Earth in the way that we are now. And the effects of it are virtually unknown.” Yeah - And I’ll just want them to *think* about the *unknown* part of it. Because I don’t want to tell them what to think or what is happening because they’re just not gonna *believe* it. If they aren’t believing articles in newspapers, they’re not gonna believe me.

I would like for the general public to have a *calm, collective* understanding of climate change – for people to understand that they’re not separate from nature – that they’re very much part of it. If people start thinking, “Oh, it would be a good idea for me to get a solar panel to put on my roof to help offset the fossil fuels that I consume,” I think that *that* would be really, really great. And – and even just looking at areas where you say, “Okay, this is a place where wind power could *really*, really be useful.”

In Montana there’s Hellgate Canyon. The amount of *wind* that comes through there is – *phenomenal*. And every once in a while when I’m like hiking up in the mountains, I’ll think: “Gosh, if there was just like a little wind thing right here - even just *one*, I mean, you could produce *so* much energy with that.

For me, my biggest goal is to make *one - big - difference* – like just -- even if it’s just one good thing. It’s really *exciting* to me to talk about it, ‘cause sometimes it’s a little – I wonder why I go to school, and then I think: “Oh, I’m actually doing something that’s important.” [laughs] So, Yeah. It’s good. It makes me feel good.

#### **4. Jewell James: Every Breath In-Between**

I've lived here all my life - on the Lummi Indian Reservation. We had a traditional village site where Bellingham is, all the way up to Cherry Point - 3,500 years ago. Back in the 1980s, we formed the House o' Tears Carvers and started putting totem poles outside the reservation in areas we're all battling to protect. We even carved a pole for the children that lost their parents in the Twin Towers. So now we have art spreading all over, from California to New York and Washington, D.C.

We had heard about the First Nations up in British Columbia and the Yankton Sioux in South Dakota, fighting the oil pipelines. *We* were battling coal at Cherry Point. So it's coal trains and tar sands oil and Bakken oil. They're all highly toxic, highly explosive, and they're all comin' through our territory. So in 2013 we carved a totem pole and we took it to Otter Creek in Montana, 'cause Otter Creek would become the biggest strip mine in the United States, if it's successful. Then we did *media* stops all along the way till we got the totem pole up to the Tsleil-Waututh Nation in British Columbia and we raised it there.

This year we took a totem pole to Standing Rock in North Dakota, where tribes and others are trying to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline and protect the drinking water for millions of people along the Missouri River. All along these totem pole journeys, we've built alliances, callin' for the churches, the environmental groups and citizens groups to work with the Native communities that stand up for the Earth.

People can get in real despair. They start thinkin' nobody cares. Nobody hears them. Well, we want them to know we do care - we can't forget 'em. So we do somethin'. People tell us "thank you" and they start feeling like all the fighting they've been doin' is worth it.

This area, Cherry Point, where Peabody Coal tried to put this coal export terminal was a strategic place during negotiations of the 1855 Treaty, because during that time we had two rivers *full* of salmon, and Cherry Point was a major reef net site. Cherry Point is zoned heavy industry. There's a herring population that spawns on the shorelines. We want that area protected, for the birds and the salmon that eat them. The tribe and communities all along the Salish Sea appealed to the Army Corps of Engineers to make sure the coal terminal permit got denied. The argument that actually prevailed is our 1855 treaty. And of course, we're all happy. But we need to look at all the ways it could be resurrected, because it will come back and bite you in the rear end while you're celebrating.

We still got Bakken oil coming in by rail, and we got tar sands oil coming down. Those super tankers are gonna be carryin' 4 times more than the Valdez oil spill in Alaska.

Our relationship with the Earth is a *sacred obligation*. Our ceremonial cleansing requires us to go in the mountains in winter and try to find the coldest spot in the river, surrounded by ice and snow is the best. But now with global warming, there's practically no snow, no ice. We practice meditations in the forest, at daybreak. What the Natives believe is like this: *Whew---* The rays come over the mountains, in-between the rays you tuck your prayers, and they travel with the sun, till it sets. So, start at daybreak. They say your first breath is sacred. And your LAST breath is sacred. The measurement of your life is how you used every breath in-between. We only ask that you - take a moment, to do what you can, to save the world for the next generations.

Last year on the totem pole journey, the ancestors came to me in a dream, and they said, "Sing that song" - and our little grandchild sings it now. I'm a dreamer and that song came to me at daybreak, and when those dreams come at daybreak they're for a purpose. I'll sing what we call a verse.

## 5. **Kathy Eglund: Never Give Up**

(Notes: slow down, musicality in her voice)

I lost two dear friends of mine when Hurricane Katrina hit Gulfport. And when I saw what was left of my city, I made a conscious decision, and since then it's been like full speed ahead. In the back of my mind, I knew we were going to have these climate disasters, but I never thought it would be right here, literally, in my own front yard. I'm living less than four miles from a coal plant that the NAACP gave a *failing* grade of *D minus* in its report "CoalBlooded." And then, five years after that, here's the BP oil spill. I live within walking distance of the Gulf of Mexico - I can walk down from my house and see the *sludge* - so, you know, I'm pretty motivated.

I'm a retired educator myself. My sister, who's an environmental scientist, would say things on a scientific level, and I'd think, "Okay, I'm not sure just what she said but I know it's important." The *lack of understanding* - that's a big issue and one that I have been struggling with: How do we *demystify* the science to all of this?

We had to go up against the energy companies, because they were saying that only the *rich* people are gonna be able to afford renewable energy, and the cost of maintaining the grid was going to be shifted to the *poor* people. But climate change is something that is *borne* on the *backs* of *poor* people. So I explained it to the community - I asked for hands of how many owned a cell phone, a laptop, 15 or 20 years ago, and no hands went up. I asked how many own them today, and a lot of hands went up. I told them that's the case with solar. It is *more affordable* - it *will be* within your reach.

There are people just trying to put food on the table. We need to try and explain to them that this isn't a quote "white people's issue." The energy company was building this coal plant - in a majority African American county, with a high poverty rate. The Sierra Club filed a suit against them building the plant. But the energy company went in, telling residents this is gonna bring jobs to your community, and *those* are just a bunch o' *rich white* people - *they* care more about *trees* than you havin' a job. They actually *tried* this with *me*! I got really upset about it and I told them, "Don't try that with me."

We do a lot of training, so, bit by bit, people are coming to understand that addressing global warming is *as essential* as putting food on the table. You might even be able to put *more* food on the table!

I was at the climate march in New York in 2014. I looked at all the children, and I remembered when I was their age I was marching in Mississippi with Dr. Martin Luther King, and now, I'm marching again for just some basic civil rights - you know, the right to breathe clean air and the right to have a safe climate. And that connection of civil rights then and civil rights now - I looked at the *diversity* of people in that march - and I started wondering what Dr. King would say if he were living today - I'm sure he'd be there at this march.

I have four adult children and I have grandchildren, and that is one of the things that drives me. I won't be happy until we're *fossil free*.

I always tell people: Be *persistent* and *never give up*!

## **6. Bob Hallahan: Back Down to Earth**

*(Notes: youthful, enthusiastic, strong)*

The military – they have to *plan*. The Navy knows that something like three-quarters of the world's population lives within a hundred miles of a coast. And they rely on fish as their main source of protein. Coral reefs and shellfish have become endangered through ocean warming and acidification. When people lose their food source, they become *unrestful*, right? We've already started to see some of the first climate change *refugees*.

I flew planes for the Navy, and I saw most of the islands of the Pacific. The more I saw of the islands over time, and the more I read about how endangered they were - those concerns got me into the climate movement. Every color of the lexicon is here at these South Pacific Islands. In these areas where the air is more clear, the color differences between taupe and sand, and blue and azure, all the different colors of a place like that, they really come out strongly. I'm like "Oh, my gosh, that's what they mean by seafoam green!"

Some populations are being forced to move because of sea level rise, like the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, some towns in Alaska, and one in southern Louisiana. Others are being forced to move because of droughts, like in Syria. Migrations happen when people are *forced* to move. Your heart goes out to them. You have no idea what that's like, when the place where you grew up becomes unlivable. It's hard to imagine.

The Navy is seeing sea level rise effects on our coastal bases. There's billions of dollars of taxpayer real estate, endangered by rising sea levels.

We need to put pressure on Congress, because federal legislation is like the major missing piece right now. General public opinion is in favor of action on the climate, and in favor of green energy and clean air, but we don't have laws right now that are really encouraging it. That's why I got involved with the Citizen's Climate Lobby.

The head of the Pacific command, Admiral Locklear, when he was asked by the *Boston Globe* in 2013 "What's your biggest security issue" He said climate change was the #1 threat to his security environment. This guy was the head of the United States Pacific command - a 4-star admiral. So, the Navy gets it. Let's hope, ah – everyone else does, too.

## 7. Abby Brockway: Mother Up!

My daughter and I used to go to Carkeek Park and play on the playground. When the ground would vibrate, we'd hold hands and run as fast as we could to this overpass - it felt like a rollercoaster. We could feel the wind and the power of that train moving *right* under us, but we felt safe on this bridge. In 2012, I learned about all the proposals for coal and oil trains that would be coming through our communities - 18 to 38 more trains a day! Sure enough, my daughter and I noticed lots more coal trains with uncovered railcars going through the park. I found out that these trains were losing about 500 pounds of coal dust per trip and I thought, "Oh, my gosh, this doesn't seem safe anymore to have my child near these trains."

In 2013, an oil train derailed and exploded in Lac Megantic in Canada due to brake failure. The town was demolished. 47 people were killed. A year later, Curtis Rookaird was *fired* from BNSF Railway for doing a break inspection. Then a BNSF train derailed under the Magnolia Bridge here in Seattle, a *mile* from my daughter's school!

We found out the oil and coal companies were planning on shipping *all* of these fossil fuels to *Asia*. We had to do something about this, so my daughter and I went to an action camp. Five adults decided we were gonna do an action. So on Labor Day of 2014, working with Rising Tide Seattle, we erected an 18-foot metal tripod. I climbed to the top and four others locked down to the base of the tripod in the Delta Rail Yard in front of a mile-long Bakken crude oil train headed to the refinery. We blocked it for 8 hours before being cut out, arrested, and booked into jail for 24 hours. We became known as the Delta 5.

We had petitions asking the governor to call a moratorium on coal and oil trains until they were deemed safe. But really, I don't think there *is* a safe way to transport them. The train that derailed and exploded in June in the Columbia River Gorge happened under perfect conditions.

The Delta 5 went to trial. The judge allowed us to try the *necessity defense*, to try to prove that it was *necessary* to break the law to protect our communities and our planet. The five of us had been trying for years to get our elected officials to act. We were the first in the country to be allowed to present this defense in a climate case. We had expert witnesses testify before a jury of our peers so they could make a judgment about what is *more burdensome*, the action that *we* took, or these *trains* that are *fueling* our climate crisis. This spring was so *hot* that it melted the snow pack on the mountains. You know - that's where we get our *water*.

But the judge was bound by legal precedent *not* to allow the jury to consider any of the expert testimony they'd heard, so the jury found us guilty of trespassing. Still, the judge made it possible for us to appeal to a higher court, and that's what we're doing. In his ruling the judge said that we were "tireless advocates of a kind we need in this society to prevent the catastrophic effects that are coming." The jury foreman said that had the jury been able consider the expert testimony, we would have been acquitted.

I have this cloth heart that I pin over my own heart. It says "Mother Up!" It was inspired by Sundance Chief Rueben George in Vancouver, B.C. His mother, Amy, told him to "warrior up," and it became an energizing theme that he and the tribes have used fighting the oil pipelines. Sitting for 8 hours, up on that tripod, I contemplated what "Mother Up!" meant. And up there I finally felt *power*, I felt *peace*, I felt that these were important steps to breaking free from fossil fuel. I wanted to hold that experience and carry it with me. This heart reminds me that I am a mother protecting this world so that my daughter - has a *future*.

## **8. Steve Garey: A Just Transition**

I *just* retired last year. I spent the 25 years before that workin' at the Shell-Tesoro oil refinery in Anacortes. That's where I started *really* becoming aware of climate change. It's kind of funny – learning about climate change at an oil refinery. But our union, the Steelworkers, would have these conferences and we'd hear all this stuff about global warming and the *need* for a *Just Transition*. The term Just Transition's been out there since the 70s but not many people have heard it. *Just Transition* is about *protecting* jobs *and* helping people make the transition to *new* jobs. To combat global warming we *have* to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. And the impact that'll have on refinery workers is obvious. So, a Just Transition program has to be *well organized and funded* in order to provide adequate job training, benefit protection, retirement protection, and relocation expenses, when that's needed.

The Steelworkers actively look to build alliances with the environmental community in order to *help* people *understand* the concerns about climate change and *jobs*, and to play some kind of role in the solutions. As part of the *BlueGreen Alliance* of labor and environmental groups, our goal is to protect workers from policies that would impose much greater costs on *them* than necessary. Because to do something that causes them to feel *threatened*, or *afraid* that they won't be able to support their families, really, it causes workers and communities to do just the *opposite* of what's helpful for themselves. It causes them to either ignore the problem or to run away from it - or to *fight* it.

We talk about job protection, *first* and *foremost*. We can't guarantee those jobs. But we will do *anything* and *everything* we can to protect existing jobs as long as possible, so those workers will have *good* jobs to transition to. That way we make it more likely that workers and communities *become* part of the *solution*.

And while there *is* a market, the jobs should go to Americans, *not* overseas. *And*, in order for a transition to be *just*, you have to consider the impacts on low-income communities, many of which are communities of color. They're the *least* responsible for the situation we're in, and yet they're subject to some of the most *catastrophic* costs.

*Smart* policies that reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and invest in renewable energy will create *millions* of jobs. The trick about Just Transition is *how* do you *get* there. We're seeing what happens when decisions get made by the elites and the corporations, and the workers and communities are just caught flat-footed, by surprise. The coal company declares bankruptcy and all of a sudden they have no job, no pension, and nothing in place to help them through. We have to learn from that, to try to help others *avoid* that fate. But it means those workers and communities *have* to play a much more *meaningful* role in the solutions.

We're starting to see little signs of progress. One of the bigger coal companies just renegotiated a contract with United Mine Workers, which takes the economic pressure on coal and the transition that they *know* is comin' into account. It's noteworthy simply because the coal company, lookin' at bankruptcies all around them - at least this *one* company is tryin' to get it *right*, and they're workin' *with* the *union* to get it right. It happened because organized workers had a *real* voice.

Local communities taking matters into their own hands and winning a few now and then, I think is going to be instrumental in moving **Just** Transition forward. We can't sit around and wait for the feds. To the extent local communities find their *voice*, state and federal governments will eventually follow, but I don't see them *leading*!

And we have *got* to address the role that “*free trade*” has played in literally *rewarding* corporations for taking American jobs and shipping them *overseas*. More and more people understand that *one-tenth of one percent* of Americans should *not* enjoy *90%* of the wealth. People are catchin’ on, and they’re increasingly outraged. And rightly so.

The *most important* thing that people need to understand about global warming is that you *have* to think past the end of your own nose, and consider *not just your own best interests*, but the best interests of *everyone else*. We got farmers who understand that you can’t take water for granted, and fisherman can’t take fish for granted. And people in Eastern Washington can’t take *anything* for granted when *everything* is burnin’ down around ‘em.

You know, I’m the kind of person who just – I have a dream or a thought and I say, “I can *do* that,” and I just *start*. All I’m doin’ is goin’ one day at a time in a direction I think is smart. I’m trying to focus on what I can do *right now*, talking with people about Just Transition and what that would look like. My grandkids will eventually ask me what the hell did I do? Well, I wanna be able to say that I *did* somethin’.

## **9. Ken Gale: Swamp Fox**

Where I grew up in New Jersey, there weren't any kids my age. I wanted to play baseball with the older kids, but they wouldn't let me 'cause I was just a little kid. So one time I picked up one of their home run balls on the edge of a swamp, showed it to 'em, and then I ran across the swamp without getting mired or wet. To chase me, they had to go *around* the swamp. Hence my nickname, *Swamp Fox*! I started out a scrappy kid and I'm still at it. I took on the big kids – now I'm taking on the corporations. I've been hosting *Eco-Logic* on the radio for 25 years, and I've learned *a lot* about climate change and energy in New York.

During Hurricane Sandy four years ago, I was looking out the window in the WBAI studios on Wall Street and I saw the water from the East River come *surging* across South Street. I called my wife and I told her, "Wall Street is now *Canal* Street because there's water all the way up the lampposts, to the *top* of the *traffic lights*! We lost power and weren't allowed to leave the building until the next day. Then we weren't allowed to come back for two weeks and they were *still* pumping water out of the buildings. *That storm* had politicians who *never* talked about climate change talking about climate change, and taking *seriously* what environmentalists have been saying for *years*. But the powers that be are still determined to squeeze every last dollar out of fossil fuels.

Spectra Gas wants to put in all these pipelines so they can export natural gas to Europe. All the risk of explosion is being borne by the people of Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts - but the gas is going *overseas*, and the *money* is *not* going to these communities. *We* get the risk, *they* get the profit! In New Jersey, the pipeline companies are threatening to take people's land by eminent domain.

In New York, we managed to get a ban on fracking – where they inject toxic chemicals into the ground to try and get at the *natural gas*, which is basically *methane* – it's a very powerful greenhouse gas. Every time the governor went to a ribbon cutting or a fundraiser – no matter what he did, there were "fracktivists" there – for *years*. *Every photograph* of him had some fracktivist in there somewhere. He wouldn't go to his *own fundraiser* – 'cause there were fracktivists there – and we wore him down.

We've been dealing with major threats for many, many years. For example, the Indian Point nuclear power plant, just north of the city, is *built* on an *earthquake fault*. ***Every other month***, there's an accident at Indian Point, which is operating without a license! There are routine releases of radiation *every single day* - stuff like radioactive Strontium that gets into your body and your body thinks it's calcium and puts it in your bones. That's where leukemia comes from. *Now*, people who *were pro-nuclear* are suddenly worried because there's a high-pressure natural gas pipeline so close to a nuclear power plant, *and*, over an earthquake fault. And that area is overdue for a big earthquake. Ya know, the nuclear industry has gotten *hundreds of billions* in *taxpayer subsidies*. If you took those subsidies *away* from nuclear and put them towards *solar*, you wouldn't need any subsidies at all in a very short time.

Oh, oh – I *have* to tell you my Bayonne High School story! My friend Tom installed solar panels on Bayonne High School in New Jersey. When Hurricane Irene happened, because the solar panels were connected to the *grid*, when the grid went down, the solar panels were not making electricity for the *school*. So, they called Tom up and they said, "We're an *evacuation center*. We need *power*. Can you set something up so we'll have power next time the grid goes down? So he set up a battery that would power the building if the grid went down. When Hurricane *Sandy* happened, Bayonne High School was the *only place* for miles around that had electricity. So *every emergency worker* was charging their equipment at Bayonne High School, not to mention people coming in and charging their cell phones and stuff. So they were literally saving lives by having solar panels at Bayonne High School. After Sandy, Tom was hired to put solar panels on *all* the schools in Bayonne.

Once we get off fossil fuels, get energy efficient, start *really using* renewable energy, we'll have cleaner air, safer drinking water, and we'll save money! And you know we can *all* use that. You don't have to be *Swamp Fox* to figure *that* out!

## **10. Leslie Glustrom: Something Left Worth Fighting For**

When I lived in Arizona in the 80s and 90s, I was teaching at a small college about climate change. But I didn't have aaaaa-ny, any, any, any, any, any idea how *horrible* it was until the bark beetles got the trees in Arizona in the summer of '02. Warm winters don't kill off as many bark beetles. And drought-stressed trees can't create the sap they need to fend off the beetles. Then we moved to Colorado and had a pretty big drought year here. And those two things combined led me to go back and read much more of the actual science on climate change. When I did that I realized, "Oh my gosh, they've been trying to tell us that there are these *tipping points* and that we were gonna lose a lot of the forests, all over the United States, and we're talking about losing 30 to 50 percent of the species – wwwwwhat does that mean? I was like, "Oh my gosh!" One degree warming for the planet is a really big deal.

In Colorado, like most of the country, our largest source of greenhouse gases comes from coal plants. A typical coal plant's a mile long train of coal getting turned into carbon dioxide every day. It's a huge problem – we've got to stop it. We're about 30 years behind in preparing for the shift to renewable energy, but there's a lot being done with solar and wind power in a bunch of states now.

Our utility Xcel Energy analyzed that when they add 600 megawatts of wind to their system, it saves us over \$400 million dollars. If they add 600 megawatts of wind *and* 400 megawatts of solar, it saves us over \$500 million dollars over the next 40 years. Renewable energy is beginning to win in a big way. But, we're still not moving at a scale that matches the *scale* of the climate crisis. Our utility tells us that when we add wind and solar, we're gonna *save* money. So why are we still at 77% fossil fuels?

It's important that everybody help, because it really, really is urgent. It's like my house is burning down with my children in it. I'm not gonna smile sweetly when someone says, "Oh, no, your house isn't on fire," you know? The only way we really drive this country is from the tail end. You've got to create that momentum in your community and in your state and then, low and behold, the quote unquote leaders will jump to the front of the parade. There's no doubt the transition's gonna happen. The question is how fast, and given how much CO2 there is in the atmosphere, that really matters. And we're way late in getting started.

It's so important how we keep our spirits up, 'cause you can't work on climate change without having your moments where you're just like, "Oh my God!" you know? But minimizing the time that you spend there and maximizing the amount of time you spend doing something. Maybe that's 15 minutes a month, maybe that's 15 minutes a week. We have lots of mothers with little kids, and they're out pushing their babies in a carriage, and they're callin' their legislators while they're pushing the babies, you know? And then they feel much better 'cause they've done something, and they get excited about the progress we're making, and everybody starts to feel good instead of everybody feeling depressed.

What I try to help people understand is that it's probably too late for many things, and that just requires profound grieving. But it's never gonna be too late for everything. This planet has abundant life on it and there will always, always, always be something left worth fighting for.

## **11. Ed Wiley: The Third Day**

I love West Virginia. I feel protected by these mountains. My family's been here for over 300 years. It was six years ago that I got involved with the problem at Marsh Fork Elementary School. I got a phone call three days in a row to go to the school and pick up my granddaughter, Kayla 'cause she was sick. That's when I got woke up about the issues at the coal mine, which is right behind the school. I actually worked *at* that coal mine at one time - you know, the silo's only 250 feet from the playground - and didn't realize that I and other people was putting those children's lives in danger. I just never, never give it no thought whatsoever that I was doin' any harm to anybody. I don't really have a reason why -- I kinda blame it on the long hours -- I was workin' 16, 17 hours a day seven days a week. I blamed it on the money that I was makin'. I was kinda blinded by the money. I really didn't have an excuse besides that.

Kayla'd come home before with slight headaches from the school and it'd kinda, you know, go away quickly. We had a front porch and she'd have her little friends over, and I'd hear 'em say things like, "Well, we didn't get all of our recess today - Miss Brown rushed us in because it got too dusty out there." We was hearin' those kids say that, but it wasn't registerin'. But it was **the third day** when I picked her up at school. She was all discolored, the bottom of her cheeks was all swelled up, her eyes was all dark underneath, when I walked in to get 'er, she looked like she was just wore plum out. We left the school yard. I looked to see if she had her seat belt on, an' I said, "Possum, buddy, you okay?" Her little nickname was Possum. She was starin' over at the coal mines, she turned and looked at me, and tears was pourin' down this child's face and she said, "Gramps, these coal mines are makin' us kids sick." And it just hit me like a sledge hammer.

I was blamin' myself, I was thinkin' about the chemicals they use there at the plant to clean the coal, all the dust from the silo. I was thinkin' about some o' the shortcuts that I knew happened back 'ere that we performed ourselves, and I had a big lump in my throat, tryin' to keep from cryin' myself. I realized I hurt my *own granddaughter*. It really woke me up. I thought, "Well, I'm gonna call the School Board. I'm gonna call the Health Department, and get this took care of, and get these kids outta here, and it'd be over with." And it turned into a five-year battle. You know, I understand West Virginia's political leaders are -- coal. It's been coal for over a hundred years, and they've got to learn how to change. But what I don't understand -- how can you put a *money value* on these children's lives? **Nobody** wants to say *why* there's a problem concerning coal. But anytime you have a 2.8 billion gallon toxic slurry pond, sitting within 400 feet of a school, there's highly concerns. This particular dam has over 240 federal violations. If certain occurrences happen, this dam will fail and kill 970 some lives. And the children would be the first that gets it. They're sitting at the toe of this dam. I went to that slurry pond an' got a sample of the toxic waste -- this is the clean coal technology that they're talkin' about. They got 17 heavy metals outta there - arsenic, lead, uranium, manganese, the list goes on and on. Three of the rooms in the school that were tested had chemicals in the air like a thousand times over the national standards.

When we seen that the county School Board, the state School Board, and the politicians we approached was not gonna build these kids a new school, we started *Pennies of Promise* to raise the money ourselves. With the constant pressure that we put on this over the five years, finally the county School Board stepped up in askin' the state School Board for the money, and also approached the coal company for the money, too. And just a few months ago, the money came through for the new school. It was everybody that done it -- it was so many people that helped. We worked real hard and prayed for the school children that it was a done deal. We got to get the children outta there. Kayla's been outta that school now quite a while. She went to a junior high a pretty good ways from this area. There's no coal mining around there. She doesn't complain about the headaches no more. Our biggest worries now is the chemicals they use and extract from the coal can lay in your body 10 to 15 years. It can cause birth defects. It can cause liver damage, and respiratorial problems, so it's kind of a sit-an'-wait tickin' time bomb, you know, not knowin' what the future is for your granddaughter.

## **12. Hunter Lovins: Help Me Lose a Bottle of Whiskey**

Colorado's been home since I was 15. I rodeoed professionally for about 20 years. I was on a horse before I could walk. I went to law school and got pretty disillusioned, so I went to work on a thoroughbred horse ranch raising baby horses - which I *loved*, I *thoroughly* loved, but after a few months I just got *itchy*. In '76 I teamed up with my future husband, Amory Lovins. He wrote an article in which he laid out this theory that it's cheaper to meet your marginal energy needs once you've gotten energy efficient. And then it's cheaper to meet those needs through renewable energy than through fossil fuels and nuclear. Kicked off a shit storm. The conventional energy industry reared up and sought to squash him. We wound up writing a book called *Amory and His Critics*, and then we traveled around giving speeches and consulting.

Until something begins to really impact people, it's hard to get their attention. The drought in California this year started to get some people's attention - the fact that agriculture in the San Joaquin Valley was zeroed-out for water for a long time because *there was no water*. We had a wild land fire in Boulder, Colorado on January 16<sup>th</sup> last year. It was 71 degrees. We had no snow. That's climate chaos. There are scary things happening, and people need to know that. At the same time, let's assume the skeptics are right - climate change is a hoax. If all you are is a profit-maximizing capitalist, you'll do exactly the same thing you'd do if you were scared to death about climate change - 'cause we can solve this problem at a *profit*. So let's go! Let's just do good business! Oh, and by the way, we solve the climate problem.

The whole environmental movement took out after the climate change problem as, "Oh, ain't it awful - we're all gonna die." It really wasn't until quite late in the game that we began to understand the *business* case for climate protection. And it's really only been in the last couple of years that we have just *irrefutable* evidence - things like studies from [laughs] environmental wide-eyed radicals like Goldman Sachs showing that the companies that are the leaders in good environmental policy have 25% higher stock value than their competitors.

The energy *efficiency* opportunities are GINORMOUS! And the more you push on efficiency, the less you have to push on supply, and the more you improve your standard of living, at very low cost. For example, you live in a house, in the summer in the south it's hot. Put insulation in your attic, it's not as hot. Oh, and you're not using as much coal-fired electricity. When it gets cold in the winter, gee, you're warm now. If you built the house right in the first place, it would need *no* electricity or gas or external energy to keep it comfortable year round. There's this mentality that, unless we Americans strain our standard of living and endure voluntary poverty, the world's going to hell in a peach basket. It's not true!

Now the Chinese are investing in efficiency, solar and wind, as the basis of their industrial policy. Because they recognize it gives them more jobs, and *innovating* in this realm will give them the *economic power*. If you look at the waves of innovation, Americans ruled the world, economically, politically, militarily, *because we innovated*. What's next? If the next wave of innovation is the green technologies, who's gonna rule the world? The Chinese are quite serious it's gonna be them. [Laughs] And *our* country's in a *fracking* frenzy! Nuclear is being touted as a low-cost option. It's not. Nuclear's one of the *most expensive* ways of supplying electricity. We are shooting ourselves in our own economic future - by *not* committing, in a massive way, to this green innovation. We *know* how to do it. It really is just a question of political will.

In 2009, I was on Danish National Television with the Energy Minister Connie Hedegaard, bettin' her a bottle of whiskey that the U.N. climate meeting in Copenhagen was gonna fail. I said to a big crowd of people I spoke to that night, "C'mon guys, your job is to help me *lose* a bottle of whiskey!" But at the U.N. climate meeting in Paris in 2015, all nations agreed that global warming is an urgent threat to humans and the planet and must be dealt with. Now it's *our* job to help implement a program to cut energy use, shift to renewable energy, reform the transportation sector, and ensure food supplies in a warming world.