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# The SeaBreeze

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## Bayside

# BRIEFS:



### Man who raped baby gets 99 years, while woman who filmed it gets off scott free

On January 27th, Jason Michael Grant was sentenced to 99 years in prison by a Galveston County jury which had found him guilty of the sexual assault of his 14 month-old granddaughter in Bacliff. The crime occurred in February of 2012. According to testimony at trial, Grant sexually assaulted the child while his girlfriend, Alisha Drake, recorded the act on her cell phone. The child can be heard screaming as she is being raped in that chilling video, while Alisha Drake is heard speaking in the background.

The little girl had been left with the couple in Bacliff by Grant's adult daughter Brittney, who had asked the pair to babysit for her overnight.

The crime came to light when Drake had her cell phone stolen a few days later. The video was found, and the phone was turned over to police, who arrested Drake and Grant.

Grant confessed to police shortly after his arrest.

Drake was charged with production of child pornography, a 2nd degree felony which carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in state prison. She was convicted and sentenced to 15 years in prison in 2013, but her conviction was successfully appealed and she will never face a retrial.

She is free, apparently because the evidence used against her was obtained illegally when her phone was stolen.

The victim in the case, who is now five years old, remains in the custody of Child Protective Services.

The Grant case had been scheduled for trial over a year ago, but the attorney representing Grant presented evidence that he was incompetent to stand trial. He was found competent late last year and the case finally moved ahead.

It took the jury just 15 minutes to find Grant guilty.

Grant was given the maximum sentence allowed by law. He will never be eligible for parole under Texas law.



Jason M. Grant

Alisha M. Drake

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Something good on every page!



## Clean Harbors may be the death of Dickinson Bayou

When you think of the name "Clean Harbors" you might picture in your mind a pristine little bay or cove, with pelicans gliding past and mullet jumping in the unspoiled waters. You would be wrong. In fact, the company that calls itself "Clean Harbors" continues to amass a record of assault on the environment that is now an imminent threat to Dickinson Bayou and those who live along the embattled shores of that once-pristine body of water.

A meeting was held at the Johnson Community Center in La Marque, Texas on Monday, January 25th at 7 pm. Over 100 people attended. This meeting was to discuss Clean Harbors San Leon's permit application which was made to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. This permit asks for permission to dump up to 350,000 additional gallons of "cleaned" water from oil and petroleum waste into our already fragile Dickinson Bayou. According to Clean Harbors, the water has been cleaned and meets all state requirements to be allowed to be dumped into the bayou.

The obvious question was asked by the president of the San Leon Municipal Utilities District, Joe Manchaca: "If it's good enough to dump into the bay, it certainly should be good enough to reuse again for your processes." A representative from Clean Harbors responded that reusing the water could not be done because doing so would require a different type of permit.

If so, why doesn't Clean Harbors simply apply for the different permit? The obvious answer is that the water they wish to dump into Dickinson Bayou may not be as clean as they are saying it is.

Terry Singletary and I have been sampling water from Dickinson Bayou and monitoring continuous fish kills in efforts to get someone to understand the critical condition of this waterway for the past six years. The bayou has a high concentration of fecal matter (human excrement). This is due to an occasional upset in the sewage plants that dump into the bayou, and by old and broken septic tanks along the bayou's edge.

In sampling the dissolved oxygen concentration in the water, we have discovered that the oxygen content is depleted, causing over four miles of a "dead zone" which will not sustain aquatic life. This four mile dead zone is growing at approximately a quarter of a mile every year.

Dickinson Bayou has turned into a deadly brew of treated turds with four sewer plants dumping their allegedly clean water into it. The state has allowed this to go on, but has also put up warning signs saying "Do not swim in this water or eat fish or crabs from this water." Thus the State of Texas proves by its own actions that the treated sewage dumped into the bayou is not clean and not safe, yet they allow it to continue.

The community of San Leon banded together three years ago to temporarily halt a one million gallon per day sewer plant from being built on this bayou. Now, we are once again facing a similar threat to our local ecology.

Clean Harbors purposely held this meeting as far away from San Leon as they could, in order to discourage San Leon residents from participating. They underestimated our resolve. Shame on you, people from Dickinson. This bayou runs right through your town with your houses right along its banks, and Dickinson folks didn't even bother to show up or voice an opinion. Are San Leon residents the only people in Galveston County who give a damn about the bayou?

Local marine biologist Roger Mills asked the state environmental regulators why they did not have an environmental impact statement, as per the Federal Clean Water Act, along with the permit. They replied that the state can regulate this permit without the Feds being involved. These are the same state officials who put up the signs saying it was unsafe to swim or consume fish from this bayou, yet they are the same two-faced bureaucrats who are wanting to allow even more waste to be dumped into this toxic waterway. Due to the extremely poor condition of the Dickinson Bayou watershed, I believe it is critically important for the federal government to step in and take a hard look at this bayou.

Clean Harbors officials say they are using two third-party facilities to do the state required daily or twice weekly testing of the waste water. The question is, can Clean Harbors be trusted with this vital resource? Will they do the right thing?

We have a statement from a Clean Harbors employee who states that the Clean Harbors facility intentionally releases pollutants into the air at night, under the cover of darkness, so the clouds of smoke cannot be seen.

During the past 5 years, the company has been ordered to pay almost \$6 million in penalties for 57 different violations. About once a month, they are fined \$100,000 by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency and other agencies for violating US laws. It seems to be their corporate philosophy that it's cheaper to just pay the fines than to comply.

Here are some of the many online statements made by employees and former employees of Clean Harbors:

"Management tries to hide incidents"; "I reported an incident and was threatened with my job."; "Do not trust anything they tell you, all lies"; "This company nurtures a culture of non-compliance. When you want to do your job and abide by the law, you are ordered by senior executives to shut up and keep quiet."; "This company blew up one of their facilities near Buffalo, New York. The local authorities there denied them approval to rebuild. So they used the insurance money to rebuild the facility in Thorold, Ontario. Through gross incompetence they blew this facility up as well."; "Rushed out of safety meetings and they try to make you skip safety steps just to start the job sooner."; "Safety program is there to protect the company not the workers"; "It was not a safe place to work and managers made people do unsafe things"; "Management only cares about numbers and safety is dead last."; "I'm incredibly surprised that this place hasn't burned to the ground with how they shuffle the hazardous waste or how the state even continues to let them operate."; "They try to cover up accidents and spills."; "All the GM cares about is his bonuses for safety, even if it means he has to brush some things under the rug."; "They tend to get rid of employees who are into compliance with the laws."

Can we really trust an outfit like this when they say they are going to keep our bayou clean?

The water that Clean Harbors wishes to discharge into Dickinson Bayou flows through a ditch that is owned by Larry Burks, owner of Mainland Concrete. He said that he does not want this water from Clean Harbors San Leon to flow through his property, period! Mr. Burks said he is looking into stopping this flow through any and all legal means.

Dickinson Bayou cannot revive itself. This bayou needs help from the very same people who have tried to destroy it for the last fifty years. I would personally like to thank the people from San Leon who showed up at this meeting and voiced their opinions. I am very proud of each and every one of you. The battle is never going to be over until we learn that it is shortsighted to destroy the environment simply in the name of the Almighty Dollar.

(Steve Hoyland Sr.)



Just another working day at CLEAN HARBORS SAN LEON, a company which has been fined nearly \$6 million during the past 5 years for 57 different violations. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality seems to think this company can be trusted with Dickinson Bayou.