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J. O. Midkiff

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WEST VIRGINIA STRIP MINING

Public Hearing held by: WV Dept. of Energy

June 28, 1988

SPEAKER: J. D. Midkiff

WVSM-12

Public Hearing held by W.Va. Department of energy in Lincoln County, West Virginia on June 28, 1988 regarding an application by Black Gold Coal Company and Mountain Black Diamond Coal Company to strip mine at Six Mile Creek in Lincoln County.

Statement by J.D. Midkiff:

My name is J.D. Midkiff, and I live up at Branchland, and I have 15 years mining experience, believe it or not. After hearing all these experts testify here, I feel I'm out of place. And the thing that a man comes around to look at a seam of coal, the first thing he looks for has it got sandstone on top of it. And here these fellows'll tell ye, [inaudible]...and all such stuff as that. And talking about shale. There's not any shale in this country. Nowhere. I think that fellar should go back to school. [laughter] It...it takes....I've had a few classes in Geology, too, ah, it'd take a week here to straighten up all the lies that's been told. If you take Mr. [inaudible]...he's a workin' off the land, and he got a grant from the State of W.Va., taxpayers money, to help him put in a plant over at Hamlin. A furniture factory. Then he come here and fight taxes. Now, I tell you one thing, W.Va. is in dire need of money. Well, you don't work any way, so that wouldn't worry you! [laughter] Uh, talked about a golf pile up at the mines up there, I, we did have a slip there, and it wasn't God. It was mostly coal that caught on fire and we put it out. It slipped over the hill and I never had a citation against me in all of 15 years at the mines that I've owned and operated. I've been a taxpayer of this county ever since the '30's. I was in college when the big depression hit here, and the first job I got, when I got out of college, was over [tape blurred]County Coal Corporation, right there in the center of town; played baseball in the league that summer. But now, the things that bothers me, they talk about plants that's on Six Mile. They've never mentioned the right plant on

Six Mile. The right plant is...[tape blurred]. I was up there when Mr. Kitchen [blurred] the bulldozer [blurred]...and said, "you owe me \$200". [blurred]...on over to Hamlin and try to collect \$200 off Sandra Perry. You'd have to figure today to see what was wrong here. A pound of coal don't bring very much. [blurred]lucky if you can get \$30 out of it. Alright....a ton of marijuana, man oh man, that's gonna run into millions; the way I got it figured up, it'll bring \$30 million and \$50 to \$500,000. And they talked about them good springs up there. That's right--they never go dry; right around them you'll find plenty of marijuana plants. [laughter] Right up on top of the hill there there's a house built in the woods. I've been there; a marijuana place, to press it, to get it ready. That's whats wrong with Six Mile. I don't say...and if you don't...you doubt what I tell you, you go over to Hamlin to the Circuit Clerk's office and you'll see, who's been arrested, who's been put in jail and who's been fined as much as \$2500. I've been there; I know, and we had one girl go up there. And she said none of her family had ever been convicted of anything about marijuana or any other drug. Don't let anybody tell you that; go to the Circuit Clerk's office over at Hamlin, and you'll find out. They've been more lies told...it's take a week here to straighten up this...the lies that's been told here. Now Phyllis, that told me about it coming close to her house, it does not come close to her house. They won't be a truck runnin'...uh, the truck's laying there at the mouth of Mill Branch, and all such stuff as that; that's been told here tonight. And you can't mine, without meeting the strict rules and regulations....they send men out on the job. I got along fine with the inspectors...the Federal and the State. I did what they told me to do. Now that's all you

can do, or get shut down. They'll snut you down; close you down. They'll fine you. Now...Lincoln County...they make you take a big look to tell what we don't have; take a big look. I don't know of a public swimming pool in Lincoln Coutny--I've been going around in Boone County and in Logan County, and Wayne County...now, it was very mild coal test of PMC Company from Brentwood, Tennessee. They didn't bother them. But they hopped right on us. And that's discrimination. They'll be some people sued on that grounds. They've already got another permit, PMC, and here we don't have. You cause an awful lot of financial troubles and you're gonna pay for it. Now, this lawyer that you've got, he's a city slicker. He don't know anything about coal mining; he's never been around it. He's had a silver spoon in his mouth all his life. I had to work; I worked all my life. I spent 18 years right here at this school as principal, and I want to tell you one thing, I never had one bit of drug problem till Jerry Muler-Greenburg came here and tried to pass out pamphlets in the school over there into the students getting off the schoolbus and he really got roughed up. He mailed out seeds to people throughout the county; three marijuana seeds in an envelope. Now, that's some of the things that's been brought in here. He's gone now; I saw his picture the other day. He's left; he'll be back if you need him. He went to the Legislature and tried to get marijuana legalized. I want to tell you something; I had a battle over here at this school, after he got in here. I had to stand out there in the cold of the morning, to watch the buses, to keep him away from 'em. I even got on top of the schoolhouse one morning. We...we never had any trouble till then. Not till then. I had one girl go out here and jump in the river; she was a senior. It was the coal dust all over her and

brought her back to school; got the home ec teacher and some of the women teachers to clean her up and wash her clothes, dry 'em in the dryer. She never would come back. I went to see her. She said she was too ashamed to come back. Too ashamed to come back to school. On drugs. Now, we've already lost one generation; you need to doubt it; right now we've got a lost generation. Simply because people won't work. They steal. I've been targeted two or three times, at least three times, up there where I live, and I had to go buy a doberman. They don't come and shake hands with him now, I tell you that much.

[interruption] Okay. I thank you.