

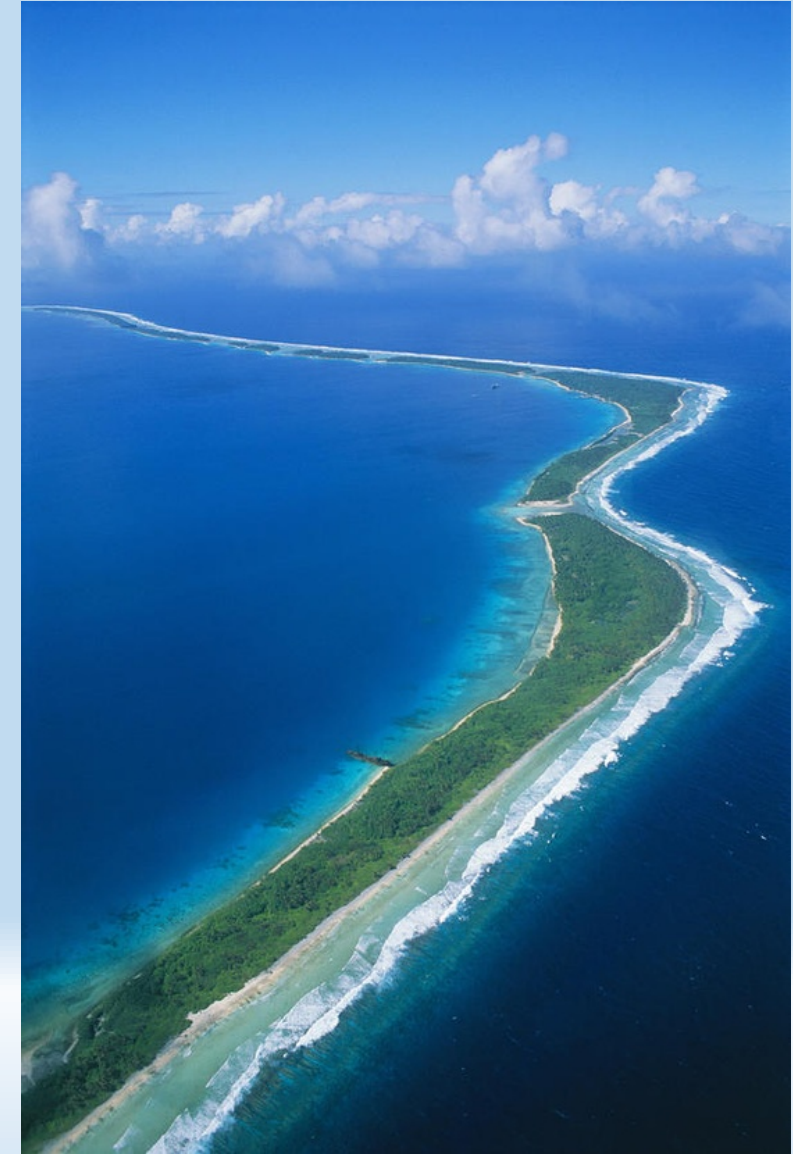
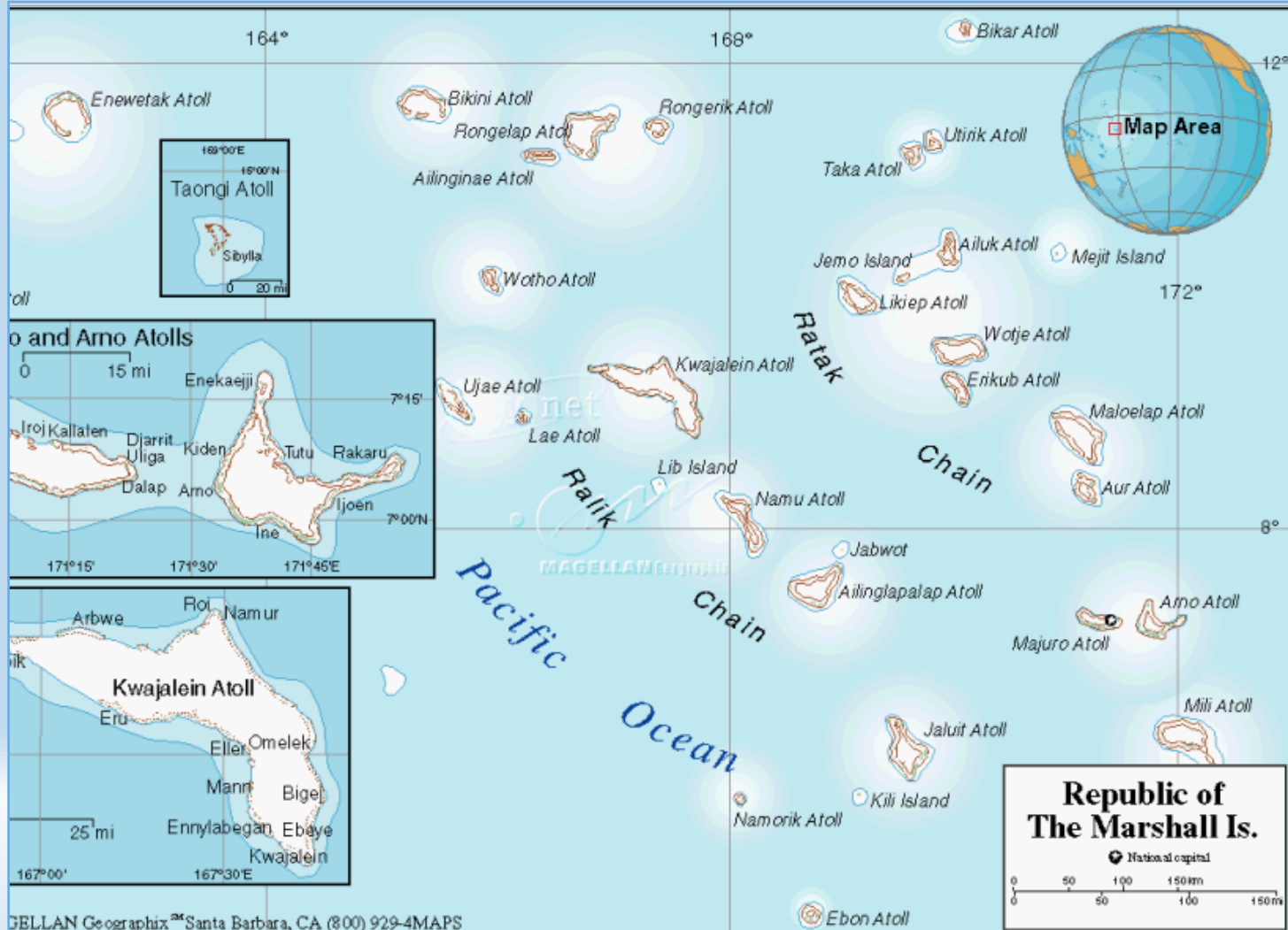
“From Godzilla to Sponge Bob: The Cultural Fallout of US Nuclear Testing in the Marshall Islands.”

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- I. Background
- II. US Response
- III. Cultural Fallout
- IV. Path Forward

I. *Background:* The Marshall Islands

- 33 low-lying coral atolls; 1 million square miles of ocean; 70 sq. miles of land
- Population, language, region



Background: Political context

- Post-WWII, UN created 11 trust territories;
- 1946-1986, a US territory (colonial relationship);
- The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, the only “strategic” trust territory;
- Security Council rather than General Assembly;
- Geopolitical interest in the area.



Background: 67 atmospheric tests, 1946-1956

- Bikini and Enewetak = ground zero;
- Obliteration of 7 square miles of land;
- “Bravo” = largest US bomb
- All weapons = 1.6 Hiroshima bombs every day for 12 years;
- Applause for whom?
- Mar 1, 1954;
- A living laboratory.



Background: human radiation experimentation



- Project 4.1;
- Residents of Rongelap and Utrik Atolls;
- Internment camp – Kwajalein Atoll.



II. *US response*: deny, minimize and cover-up

- Why don't people know?;
- An “accident” (weather, ship)
- Project 4.1 unplanned (1953);
- A weapons laboratory leads the health program;
- Project 4.1 continues until 1996.



US Response: Only “Bravo,” only 4 atolls (Bikini and Eniwetok, Rongelap and Utrik)



- 66 other weapons;
- Atolls other than Rongelap and Utrik (253 people);
- Resettled on contaminated islands;
- Born and raised on contaminated islands;
- Subjects of experimentation, including control populations;
- Marshallese workers employed by the USG;
- Second and third generations (mutagenic).

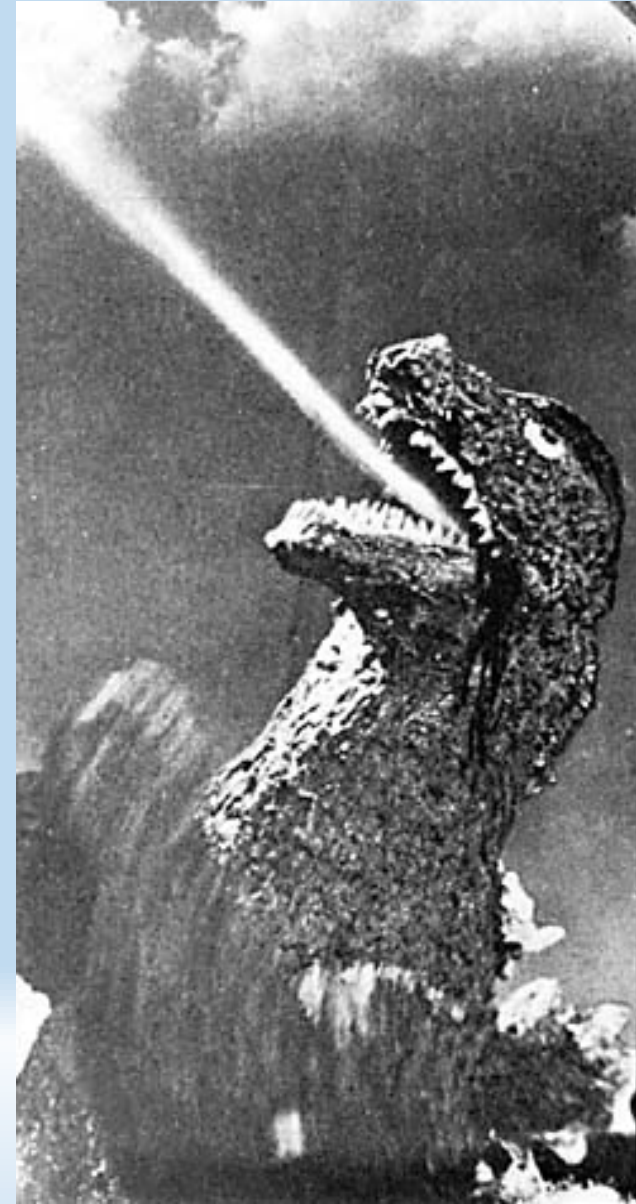
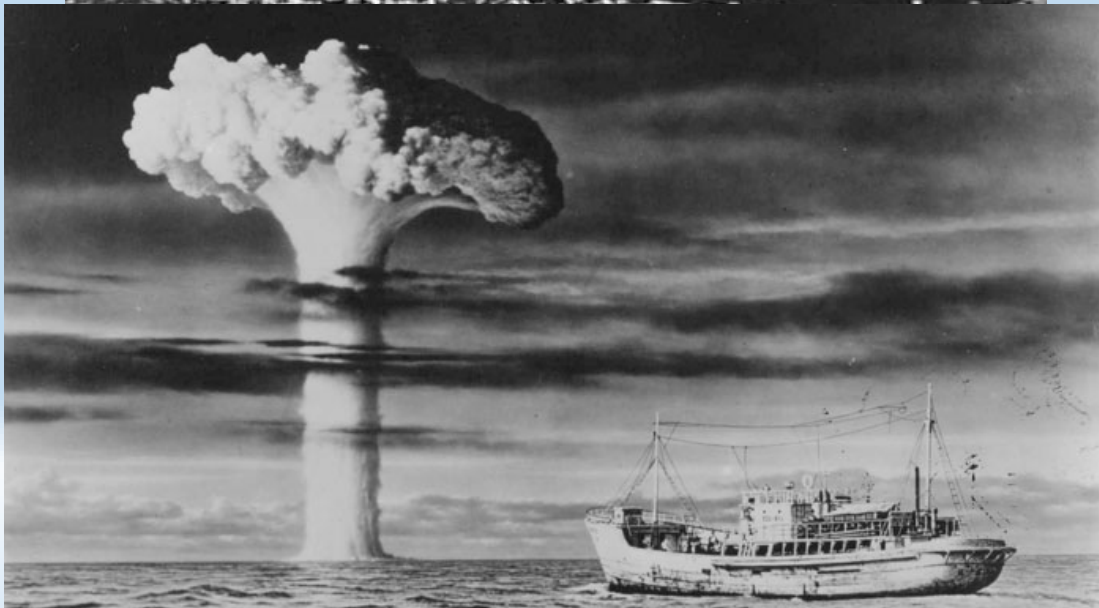
NUCLEAR SUPERHEROES



- Denial of ill-effects continues a love affair with nuclear energy;
- Superheroes with nuclear powers: Spiderman and Dr. Manhattan (positive effects), Hulk and Daredevil (struggle with negative effects);
- Superheroes have powers that enable them to shape reality.

Source: Cory Littleton

III. *Cultural fallout:* Godzilla, Lucky Dragon



Cultural Fallout: Godzilla rages like nuclear weapons; death on earth for the Japanese, and the Marshallese.

- Our radioactive beasts (superheroes) are different from Godzilla.



Cultural fallout: Bikini. Pikinni = pik, ni "surface of coconuts".



Small islets:

- **Lo-ṁwilik** ṁwilik "place where frigate birds sleep".
- **Wajelke** wa, lōke "canoe we depend on".

Land on the island of Pikinni:

- **Eomeḷañ** eomeḷañ "land reserved for chiefs".
- **Aḷeḷap-eṅ** aḷe "large catch of fish".
- **Lo-piti** piti "twist it" "place for making sennit".
- **Lo-wūleej** wūleej "cemetery".

Passes between islands:

- **Jab-toḷoñ-eṅ** toḷoñ "cannot pass through".
- **Toon-ḷounlep** ḷoun, lap "passage of great magical power".

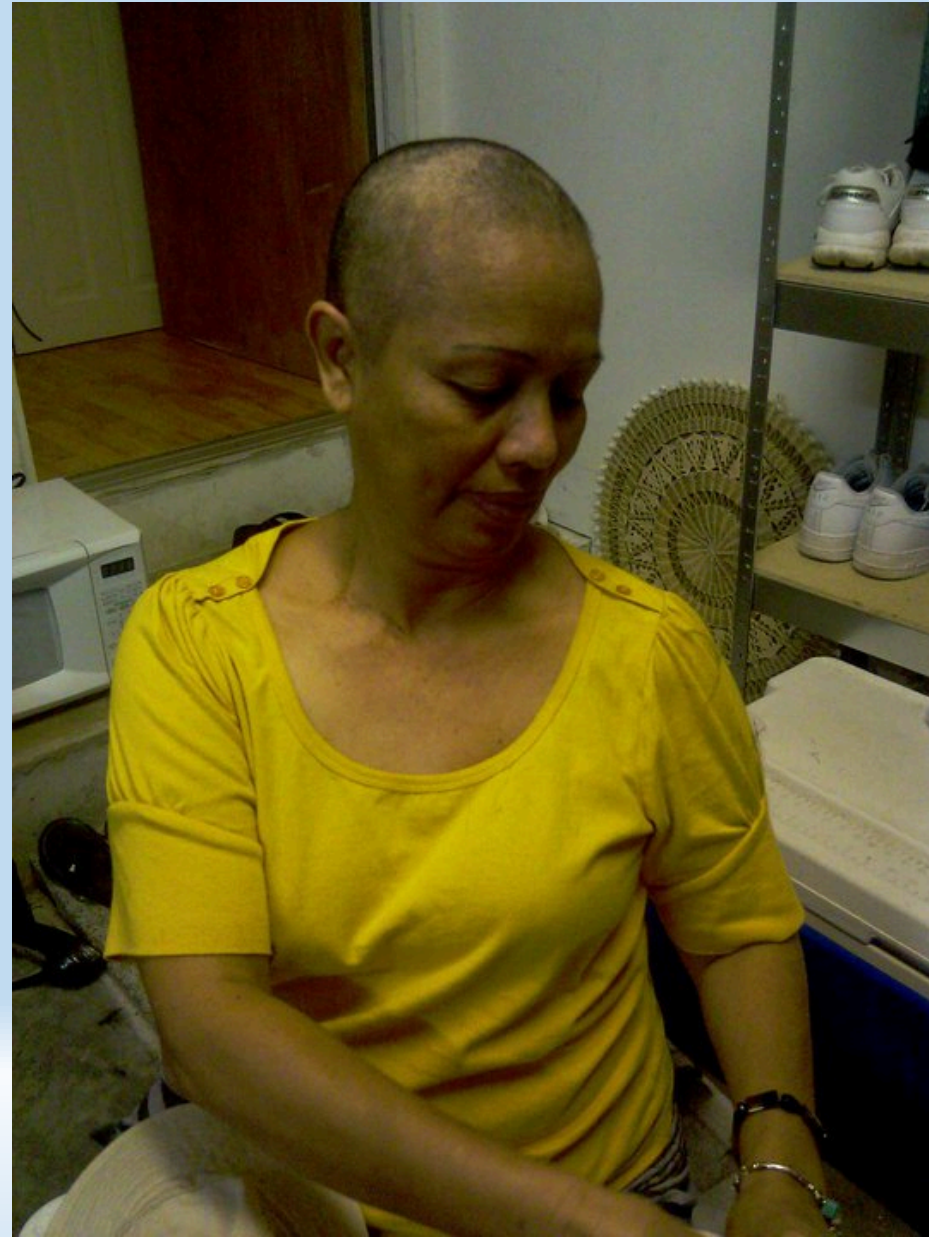


Cultural fallout: 1946 – first war-free summer



- Competing French designers feeding off a liberated mood of the people;
- Jacques Heim, designer, created the “atom,” the world’s smallest bathing suit;
- Louis Reard countered by splitting the atom in half and making an even smaller swimsuit, the bikini, named after Bikini Atoll.

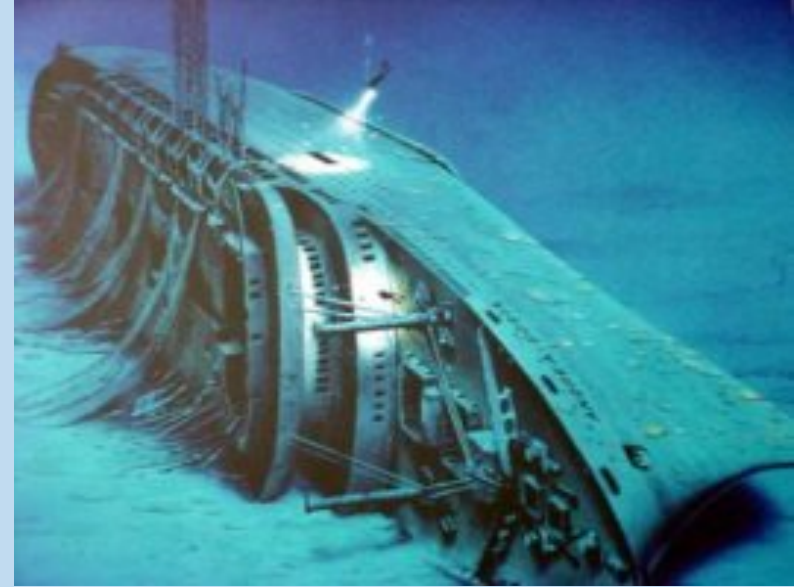
Cultural Fallout: Bikini – silenced the history.



- Whose body has the privilege of health?

Cultural fallout: Sponge Bob

- **Bikini Bottom** is a mutated world;
- Mutations are funny;
- Who has the privilege to laugh?



Cultural fallout: cleanliness and weaponry

- “**Clean bomb**”= atom bomb leaving little or no radiation;
- “**Clean strikes**” = no civilian casualties;
- “**Clean-up**” of radioactive sites.
PU-239’s half-life of 24,000 years.



“NO! NO! That’s a Dirty Bomb!”

Cultural fallout: notion of safety.



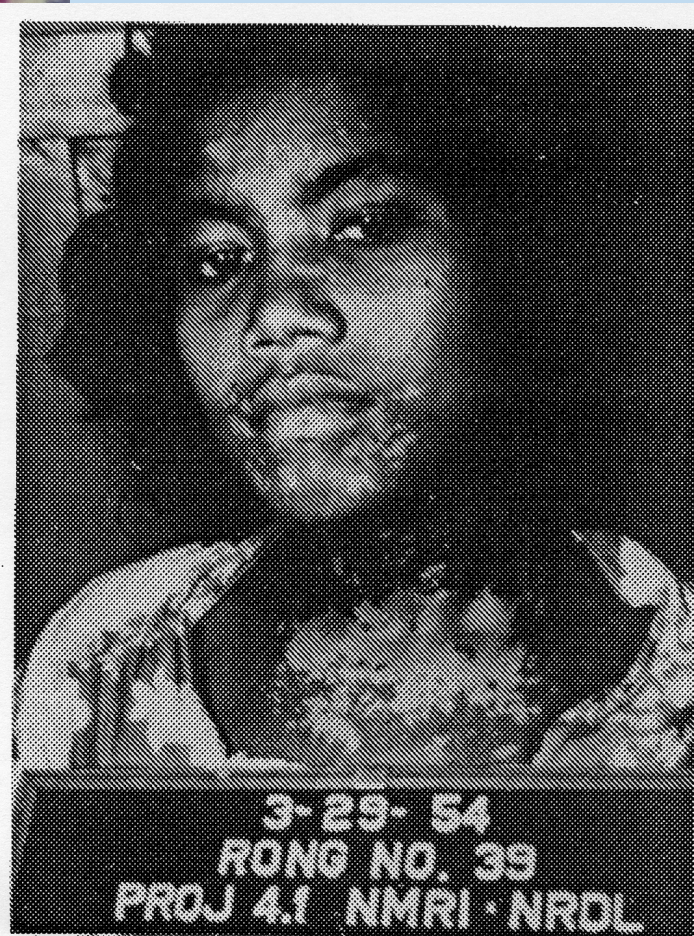
- Whose families, lands, health?

- **Nuclear Regulatory Commission** = federal agency assigned to cast a critical regulatory eye on the operations of the nuclear industry.

Cultural fallout: privilege and nuclear waste.



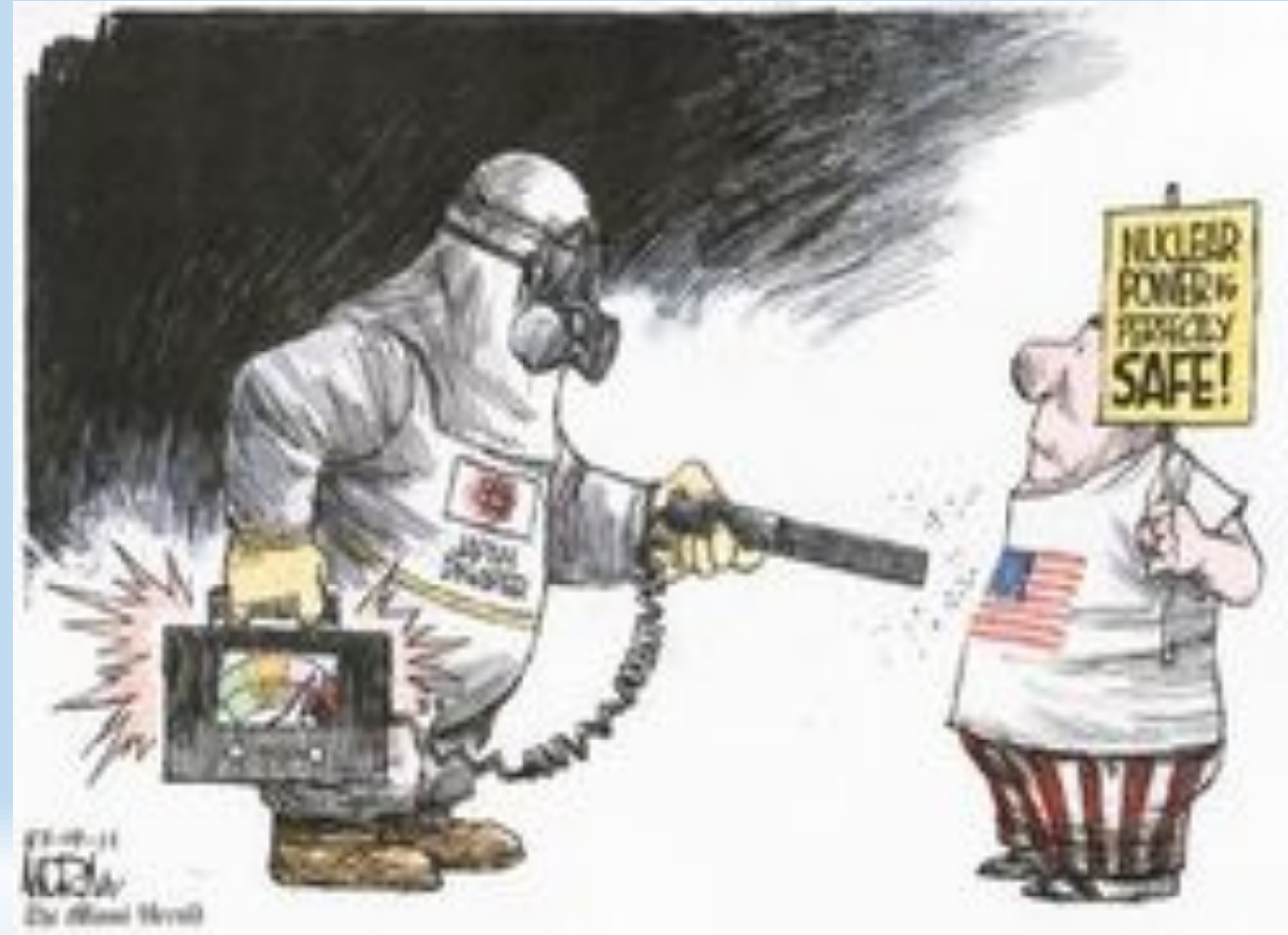
Cultural fallout: Haunted house in MD



- “The Warehouse: Project 4.1 is a new indoor haunted house opening for the 2012 Halloween season in Rockville, Maryland ... Based on Project 4.1, a government study of radioactive fallout, the 37,000 sq. ft. attraction features attacking zombies, decaying bodies, vicious military men, mad scientists, and much more.”

Source: <http://dc.about.com/od/fallfestivalsandevents/ss/Haunted-House-Rockville.htm>

IV. *Path Forward*: How do we make the invisible visible again?



Path Forward: The Arts.

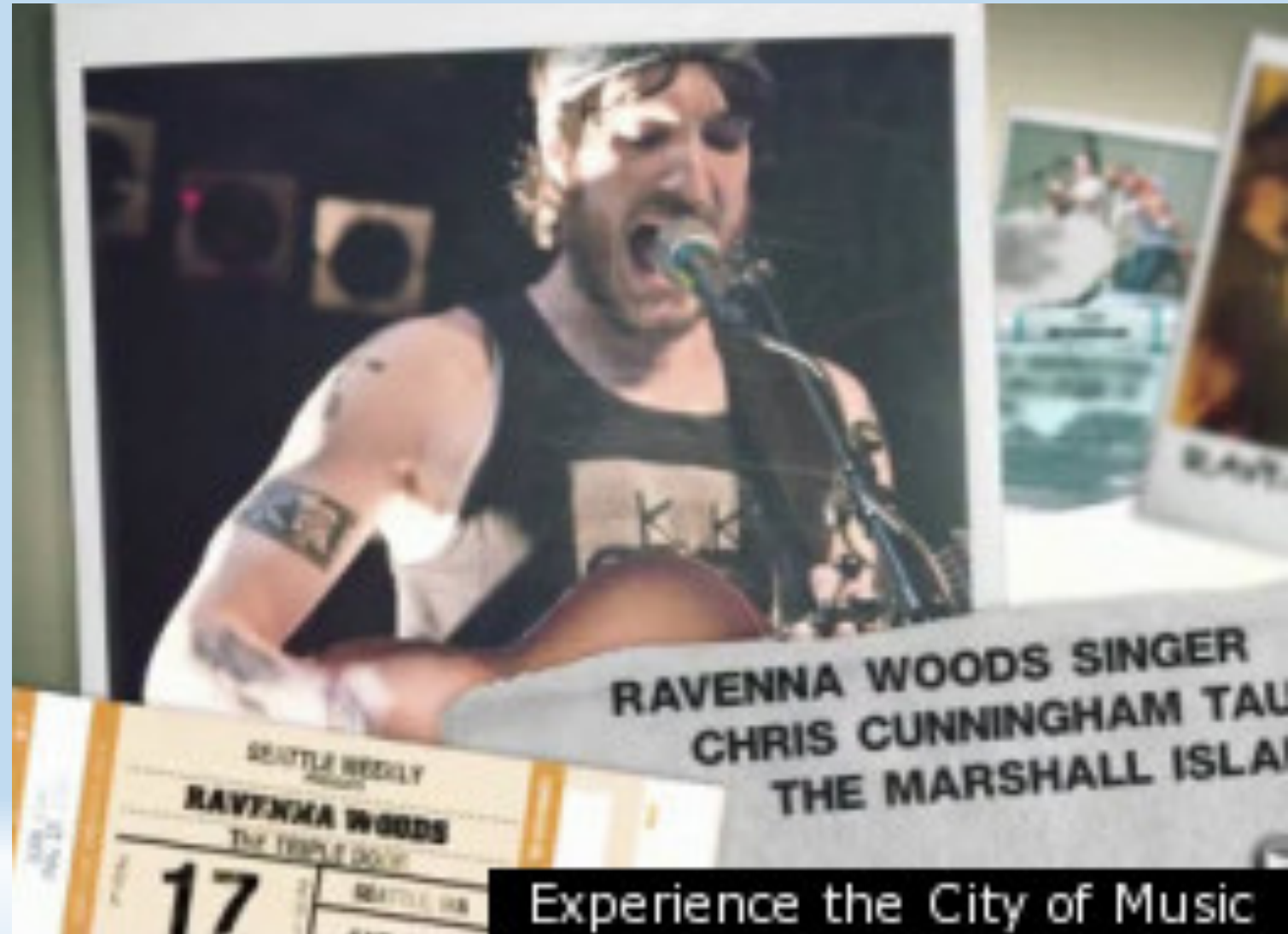


<http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/312630/june-15-2010/tip-wag---marshall-islands---disney-world-fate>



Path Forward: Education. The importance of the next generation.

- Ravenna Woods, “Ghosts” – reaches thousands, social media;
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJiTwm107JI>
- Understand how the well-being of the Marshallese is linked to our own well-being.



Path Forward: Friendship and solidarity.



Path Forward: Learn from the Marshallese.



- Cold War survivors, not passive victims;
- Culture change;
- Community;
- Adaptation;
- Resilience;
- Resistance;
- Ingenuity;
- Laughter.

Path Forward: Contact your elected officials.

- Citizenship: request US standards of healthcare and environmental restoration for the Marshallese;
- “Bravo” for the Marshallese!



Questions?

