

What Really Happened in Maui?

Analysis by [A Midwestern Doctor](#)

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Many competing narratives have emerged to explain what transpired in Lahaina (e.g., it was all due to "climate change")
- › Readers in Hawaii contacted me to share their experiences and I've done my best to put together a clear picture of what happened, who dropped the ball, how the local community truly came together to help each other, and the most helpful things I can share for the people there
- › What happened in Lahaina was horrific, much of it is still being concealed by the media, and many of the survivors will face physical, economical and psychological challenges for years to come
- › Ensuring that the truth about what happened in Lahaina becomes known will be vital for both the people of Maui and the world around them in the years to come

One of my main goals with this platform has been to help and support people who do not have the voice be heard (e.g., the forgotten victims of medicine). Since the Maui Wildfires started, I have received a lot of requests over email from readers in Hawaii to discuss what is happening there, so I've spent the last week trying to get a clear idea of that and what I can share which will be the most helpful to the people in Maui.

Video Reports

There have been a lot of videos going around describing differing narratives over what happened in Maui. Of the videos I have reviewed, these are the two I believe most accurately depict the current situation and provide the most useful information for those wishing to help. The first one is shorter (12 minutes) the second one is longer (58 minutes). Points from those videos will be referenced throughout this article.

Note: Colleagues I trust who know Bruce Douglas and Paul Deslauriers informed me that they hold both of these individuals in high regard. They also emphasized that both Paul and Bruce have repeatedly succeeded in making a large impact (which is rare for activists), and they have been consistent in their work for decades (which suggests they won't be bought off).

How to Help

A few major issues are currently afflicting the victims of this disaster. The most immediate ones are medical complications for the survivors, a lack of shelter and a lack of necessary supplies. The organization everyone has told me is doing the most to directly help the people affected by this disaster (and did so from the very start) is the one mentioned in the previous video, [Hungry Heroes Hawaii](#), so if you wish to support a group, I would encourage supporting [them](#).

Note: People on the ground have told me that The Red Cross has also been helpful. Unfortunately, since it is a larger organization, a significant amount of the money donated to them goes towards administrative costs rather than directly helping people in need.

Regarding the medical issues, I believe the largest issue is the PTSD survivors of Lahaina experienced – what they went through was horrific and something guaranteed to leave many with nightmares for years to come.

I know that initially, many different local healers and therapists worked pro bono at the shelters to try and help the survivors psychologically recover, but as time went on, the shelters became much stricter with who was and was not allowed in. In short, the need

for appropriate psychiatric care will likely be an unmet need for years to come (e.g., [consider this account](#) of how survivors from the California Paradise Fire are faring five years after the fact).

Note: I believe two of the most effective methods for resolving past trauma are EMDR and removing trapped emotions. Both of these were discussed [in this article](#).

I also believe there will be issues with toxic smoke inhalation and burns. From the reports I've heard, smoke inhalation has not been as big an issue as it was in the larger wildfires and is primarily an issue for already sensitive patients (e.g., those with COVID-19 vaccine injuries and other chronic inflammatory disorders).

I believe the most helpful and easy to use approach for healing wildfire toxicity is nebulized glutathione (which was discussed [in this previous article](#) on the mechanisms of and treatments for wildfire toxicity).

Regarding burns, severe burns requiring hospitalization were initially an issue, leading to many burn victims being shipped to O'ahu (as more medical care is available there), but that appears to now be over. More people were affected by less severe burns, which while extremely unpleasant, did not require hospitalization.

Burns (especially severe ones) have always been quite challenging to treat, and I believe this is due to the blood clumping burns create throughout the body ([the forgotten research](#) on zeta potential and blood sludging discovered this). Since this concept is not recognized within conventional medicine, it hence is only indirectly addressed.

Presently, my preferred ways for working with burns are as follows:

- Use aloe vera topically (beyond my own observation, [there is real evidence this helps](#)). The major issue with this approach is ensuring the quality of the aloe vera used.
- Use Chinese burn cream (Ching Wan Hung). This readily available ointment is one of the most effective Chinese herbal formulas I have ever come across (the other being [Yunnan Baiyao](#) – which will be the subject of a future article).

- Be around a negative ion generator. A lot of (sadly forgotten) research (detailed [within this book](#)) was done on patients in burn units and found it dramatically improved their recovery (much more so than any other available therapy).

I believe this worked because the negative ions, through imparting a negative charge on the surfaces they contact, directly [restore the zeta potential](#) of the burn site and antidote the blood sludging from the burn. Unfortunately, negative ion generators vary in quality and not all work for this function.

I have also heard of a lot of other approaches being used for burns (e.g., certain topical cold laser treatments reportedly were quite helpful for hospitalized burn victims). However, since I have no direct experience with these I cannot comment on them.

In addition to these immediate issues, there are also broader ones the people of Maui will have to deal with, such as:

- **Retaining employment** – much of Maui’s economy is tourism based, so Hawaii’s governor encouraging people to stop coming to Maui was devastating for locals who are already stretched thin making ends meet (Maui has become prohibitively expensive for locals to live in since COVID).

For this reason, one of the most helpful things you can do for the people of Maui is to encourage those you know to resume vacationing there (most of the island was unaffected by the fires).

- **Which narrative ultimately becomes “truth”** – that this disaster was the unpreventable result of climate change or that this disaster was a result of massive incompetence by Hawaii’s government (and the corporate interests that control it).

The great fear everyone I’ve spoken to holds is that the non-affluent natives who create the spirit and aloha of Hawaii will be economically displaced by affluent outsiders who only care about their own enjoyment and corporate interests primarily motivated by profit. If the state is able to escape its culpability for what happened, nothing will constrain it from following a path that leads to this occurring and there are already many signs that is the long term plan for Lahaina.

The Politics of Hawaii

Hawaii has a curious political situation – from the top down it has one of the worst state governments in the USA, but from the bottom up, it has one of the best grassroots movements in the country. For example, many of the most extreme and long lasting COVID power grabs were done by Hawaii's government, while many of the most effective citizen actions against the COVID policies (e.g., the mandates) were also done in Hawaii.

Likewise, despite its relatively small population, a disproportionate number of my readers come from Hawaii.

While Substack doesn't show me an island by island breakdown, based on the emails I receive, I believe many of them are in Maui. For example, I've received multiple requests to cover a concerning deployment of lab altered mosquitos (designed to control the existing mosquito population) being forced onto Maui and then the other islands despite it being currently challenged in court – which is discussed [in this article](#) and [this article](#) written by a coalition opposing it.

My best explanation for this contrast between the Hawaii's grassroots networks and their state government is that island nations (due to the distance from a central authority) tend to have significantly more dysfunctional and corrupt governments. Conversely, something about the environment in Hawaii tends to make locals be much more connected to their hearts and communities, so they are more likely to go out of their way to make things better for everyone.

A recent illustration of this contrast can be seen in how these fires were handled. The state government, especially at the start, largely failed to meet the needs of those hurt by the fires, but the locals dropped everything they were doing to care for their fellow Hawaiians – and were remarkably effective in doing so.

The history of this contrast traces back to 1893. At that date, Hawaii's government, against the wishes of both the native Hawaiians and America's government, [was](#)

overthrown by American corporate interests, before long becoming our territory and later still a state.

Because of this, those corporate interests (and their descendants) have both been able to exert significant influence over Hawaii with less than adequate oversight from the federal government and continually been at odds with the native Hawaiians.

Presently, a “Democrat” political machine controls the state government, where residents will overwhelmingly vote in favor of the Democrat candidate (e.g., 92% of the state senate are Democrats, 88% of the state house of representatives are Democrats, and 64% of Hawaii voted for Biden).

Because of this, the party bosses control the state legislature, and (I’ve heard this from insider sources) if elected Democrats do not comply with the wishes of those party bosses, they are effectively neutered and unable to do anything during their legislative tenure (e.g., their bills go nowhere and they do not end up on any committees).

At a local level (e.g., members of a city council), party preference has a much smaller impact, so those who are elected are much more able to create change in the system. Until recently, many of the key governmental positions in Maui were directly appointed by officials beholden to corporate interests.

That changed due to **a 2018 citizen’s initiative**, which until 2022, was able to elect a majority on the local town council who did not serve corporate interests and then set about reforming many longstanding issues (e.g., how key officials were appointed).

So, as best as I can tell, a similar tension to the one being seen throughout the world exists in Maui, where groups which for generations have held power over the people no longer can do so in the face of new tools for promoting Democracy. Since people never like to let go of power, the transition typically is quite turbulent.

Business on Hawaii

The primary factor which motivated overthrowing Hawaii's government was the money to be made there – which at the time was through selling tropical crops such as sugar cane and pineapples (e.g., **Sanford Dole** was appointed as the new leader of Hawaii after the old government was overthrown and his cousin founded Dole Pineapple).

Over time, it became less and less profitable to produce tropical cash crops in Hawaii and tourism displaced agriculture as the predominate industry. For example, on Maui, there was a longstanding 41,000 acre sugar cane plantation residents frequently protested against (due to the pollution cane burning practices created).

That business gradually stopped being profitable (e.g., workers had to be paid more rather than being treated as indentured servants, subsidies and tariffs stopped being provided to protect its market and much cheaper sources of sugar were found). After 146 years of operation, in 2016, the plantation closed **and was sold** to California farm company and a Canadian investment firm for 246 million.

Note: In California, **many believe** the primary cause of its recurring wildfires are poor forestry management (e.g., not creating firebreaks in the forest, aggressively suppressing smaller fires and not conducting controlled burns) that has resulted from longstanding political forces (e.g., environmental lobbyists) preventing the appropriate forestry management from being implemented.

In Maui, a similar situation exists, as the sugar cane plantations replaced native (fire resistant) plants with easily combustible grasses. Many felt this was a fire risk and petitioned for it to be addressed, but neither the sugar cane plantation's management nor its new owners were willing to do so.

As agriculture lost its profitability in Maui, luxury living replaced it. In turn, the economic force behind the island became the developers (many of whom I have been told are descended from the same families who originally took over Hawaii), and there has been a constant push and pull between the natives and the developers for land they can turn into lucrative property.

Lahaina has been at the center of this because it has extremely valuable land (it's at the center of Maui's tourism district) and until 1842 was the capitol of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Because of its historical ties to the native Hawaiians (e.g., they consider it to be a sacred site and many parts of their cultural heritage were located there) many Hawaiian families had lived there for generations and were not willing to give their land up to developers.

As a result, a variety of battles had been fought over what would be done with Lahaina's land, and until the fires happened, the developers had been kept away from key districts of Lahaina. Many (especially those who had spent years fighting this) thus believe the fires were a backhanded way for the developers to gain access to that land.

Energy in Hawaii

One of the major challenges Hawaii faces is producing energy due to its isolation – making energy significantly more expensive there (e.g., in 2022, it was 2.47 times the national average). The typical way this challenge is addressed is through nuclear power, but in Hawaii's case, no nuclear reactors exist on the island (presumably because Hawaii does not want the various environmental risks they entail) and instead fossil fuels are imported from far away to run their power plants.

For this reason (along with Hawaii's wealth and liberal population) Hawaii is often at the top of the list for a transition to green energy (e.g., wind or solar). As a result, the share of energy in Hawaii produced by renewable resources has been rapidly increasing (e.g., in 2022 roughly 30% of its energy came from renewable resources) and a state law requires 100% of it to be from renewable sources by 2045.

Note: Although Hawaii has had a decent amount of success with traditional renewable options like solar or wind, I personally believe the best existing energy option for Hawaii would be geothermal plants on the island of Hawaii (since it has active volcanos), which is then stored as hydrogen and distributed to the other islands.

The **pilot geothermal plant** on Hawaii has successfully produced a lot of energy, but it has not been scaled up, yet alone has anyone consider how its energy could be transferred to the other islands.

On the surface, I strongly support the idea of adopting green energy technologies, but I simultaneously do not because (as discussed **in this article**) the ones that are ultimately chosen tend to be expensive and damaging to the environment rather than technologies that offer a significant improvement over existing fossil fuel systems.

Presently, I am not sure how much of the high cost of Hawaii's electricity comes from the inherent cost of its situation and how much of it comes from their energy company overcharging the state (Hawaii Electric – which has a monopoly and produces 95% of the state's electricity). Often, when you have private for-profit institutions controlling a public utility (e.g., electricity), costs are raised while necessary maintenance (which the increased costs should be paying for) is deferred.

One of the most notorious examples of this price gouging was what **Enron did to California** in 2000-2001. By taking advantage of recent deregulation of the state energy market, Enron was able to spike electricity costs by up to 20 times their normal amount, creating rolling blackouts and ultimately costing the state 40-45 billion dollars.

More recently, PG&E (California's primary private utility) was successfully sued for its role in numerous wildfires, including the 2018 wildfire (which was one of the largest and most devastating ones in history). The lawsuits were successful, and due to the billions it owed, in January 2019, PG&E declared bankruptcy.

Note: Although the lawsuits were successful (e.g., there was a 13.5 billion dollar judgement) **almost none of that money** has gone to the victims of the 2018 fire and as a result, the less affluent were the largest victims of it. Unless Hawaiians unite, I suspect something similar will happen here.

"Investigators with the California Public Utilities Commission found that there were systematic problems with PG&E's oversight of the nearly 100-year-old power line that sparked the (2018) Camp fire.

The lawsuit filed by the trust sought to hold the former executives accountable for not properly maintaining vegetation around electrical equipment and for not installing power shutoff equipment at the time of the 2017 fire. The suit also argued that the utility company did not properly update 100-year-old equipment in connection with the Camp fire.”

Now consider **the charges** against Hawaii Electric:

“The lawsuit filed Wednesday contends that since 2017, as Maui’s fire risks increased, Hawaiian Electric nonetheless paid out tens of millions in increased payments to shareholders every year.

The plaintiffs accuse the utility company of years of inaction and negligence, and argue that it should have had plans in place to shut down power systems [so they can’t spark fires] before fierce winds blew across Hawaii.”

Note: Hawaii Electric had ample warning before the fires started that their power lines had a significant fire risk during the high winds and needed to be turned off.

“In explaining potential upgrades to its systems, Hawaiian Electric’s funding request last year specifies that California’s power shutoff plan is among electric industry strategies “used to mitigate wildfire risks until more robust preventive measures have been implemented in an area.”

Watts, who said his team has been approached by hundreds of potential plaintiffs, said his lawsuit is aimed at preventing the islands from ever experiencing fires like this again. He said similar litigation in California has led to safety improvements and processes that have limited recent wildfire fallout, and that Hawaiian Electric was aware of those efforts.

The lawsuit details multiple instances and documents [dating back years] in which Hawaiian Electric and public utility officials acknowledge the dangers of wildfires, and the potential for downed power lines and grid infrastructure to start them in areas where vegetation growth was not mitigated. The risks were

outlined in Hawaiian Electric news releases, documents it filed to the state, and in its own expenditure plans.

In one instance, a 2022 [funding request](#) for \$189.7 million from the Hawaii Public Utilities Commission to harden its power grid statewide, Hawaiian Electric said that the risk of its utility system “causing a wildfire ignition is significant.” Despite the request being approved, Hawaiian Electric did not act, the lawsuit alleges.

“Unfortunately, for the residents of Lahaina, these proposed grid hardening expenditures were deferred,” according to the lawsuit filed Wednesday. The suit states the company hadn’t spent any funding on power pole upgrades or wildfire prevention in 2021, 2022 or 2023, nor had spent anything on hazard tree removals in 2021 or 2022.”

Since everyone is aware of the precedent set by the California wildfires, Hawaii Electric’s stock has already dropped by two-thirds, and it is very possible that like PG&E it will have to declare bankruptcy. My hope is that this will result in it becoming a public utility (so its revenue is used to restore the power grid rather than just making as much money as possible), but given Hawaii’s political climate, I am doubtful this will happen.

Note: As you might have guessed, some degree of corruption appears to have impeded Hawaii Electric adopting a safer power grid (e.g., [this article](#) documents financial conflicts of interest between Hawaii Electric and Hawaii’s public regulators). This is similar to a longstanding problem in the medicine – the regulators responsible for approving or mandating dubious pharmaceuticals often have financial conflicts with the [pharmaceutical manufacturer](#).

Previous Disasters

Large scale environmental disasters are often shown to be the result of a corporation being warned an existing practice had a high risk of causing the disaster, and the

corporation then declining to spend the money (which was often not that much) needed to address the issue.

Greg Palast's [Vulture's Picnic](#) shows how this has happened with many major disasters including the [Exxon Valdez Oil Spill](#), the [Fukushima nuclear meltdown](#), and BP's "unprecedented" [Deep Horizon Oil Spill](#) in the Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill, which was due to a risky drilling practice that had caused an identical blowout in Azerbaijan [17 months beforehand](#).

Like the recent wildfire, all of these examples illustrate a longstanding problem with our current economic model that we also see in other areas like unsafe but profitable pharmaceuticals (e.g., the COVID-19 vaccines) being pushed onto the market. Since corporations shield officers of the corporation from liability for their conduct, there is no incentive for them to avoid reckless practices that inevitably lead to disasters.

Furthermore, due to political lobbying, the corporations being "too big to fail" and bankruptcy protections being available, in the rare case where something catastrophic happens and the corporation is found liable, it can still continue to make money for its shareholders.

Hawaii Electric for instance was fully aware of the liability it faced for doing exactly what PG&E had done, but nonetheless completely ignored it. That proves the current penalties for this type of conduct are not sufficient to prevent it.

What Caused the Wildfires?

From looking at the available information, I feel certain the following are true:

- Some of the wildfires were sparked by downed electrical power lines.
- Fierce winds knocked the power lines over.
- Fierce winds made the fires spread rapidly.

However there are two things, I am much less sure of. First, were those winds were due to the hurricane? In the interview with Dr. Malone at the start of this article, a very strong case is made that they could not have been due to the hurricane – something at least one mainstream outlet [is now beginning to acknowledge](#).

If the winds were not due to the hurricane, this is important for people to be aware of, as the mainstream media will almost certainly try to argue that it was and hence that Hawaii's government had no culpability in what happened. Instead, it will simply be argued that Lahaina proved it is critical to continue our War Against Climate Change (which as a lifelong environmentalist, [I believe has been extremely detrimental to the environmental movement](#)).

Second, I am unsure if all the fires were started by downed power lines, as numerous ones erupted over a very short time span, some started in areas without power lines, and I was told some of those locations were also far enough from the road that it is unlikely they were started by a cigarette being thrown out the window. For example, [this video](#) was recently shared with me by a reader:

Assuming that is the case, it means the most probable explanation for some of the fires was deliberate arson, which becomes even more probable given that (as discussed in Dowd's interview) Maui has a longstanding arson issue.

It's less clear who the arsonists were, as locals have told me that amongst other things, cars will periodically be stolen, stripped of parts, and then set alight in a field to hide the evidence but it is also possible something more nefarious occurred that was deliberately intended to burn Lahaina down.

When I looked further into this, I came across a report stating that a suspicious individual may have been seen in the same location where one of the fires later started, but since that witness was not confident in what they saw, I wasn't sure what to make of it.

Note: Wildfires also broke out [on two other Hawaiian islands](#) and may also provide an important part of the picture for what happened.

What Turned the Fires Into a Disaster?

When disastrous events occur and root cause analyses are performed after the fact, a frequent observation is that numerous small errors compounded to form a catastrophe a situation analogous to that described by [Murphy's Law](#) – “Anything that can go wrong will go wrong, and at the worst possible time.” Because of this, the normal goal of a root cause analysis is to identify those errors and put policies and procedures in place so that they cannot happen again.

Sadly, they typically do not get adopted until a major disaster (or multiple similar ones like California and then Maui's wildfires) occur that prove their necessity.

For example, in the infamous 1911 [Triangle Shirt Waist Fire](#), 146 workers died because a variety of terrible policies were followed such as locking the exit door shut so workers would not attempt to take breaks during their shift (leading to them being trapped inside once the fire started and forcing many to jump to their deaths to flee the fire). Outrage at the disaster in turn led to fire codes and laws to protect laborers being implemented across the state of New York.

In addition to Hawaii Electric making catastrophic blunders, Maui's government did as well. Some of these are difficult to believe, but I am relatively sure all are true:

Firefighters took a long time to respond to fires. I heard reports I deem to be credible that emergency services had to be repeatedly contacted (e.g., for over an hour) to respond to a fire that had started.

Likewise, many believe Maui's firefighters left Lahaina prematurely after extinguishing the initial blaze, which many suspect allowed it to reignite into a much more devastating blaze. Both of these indicate Maui had a systemic shortage of necessary fire fighting resources.

No warnings were sent out to people in Lahaina – either over cell phones or with the sirens (which are regularly tested to warn Hawaiians of a potential tsunami).

Thus far, the government **has not** provided an acceptable explanation for this profound failure which killed a lot of people (currently it is being argued the sirens might have caused people to inappropriately flee to higher grounds). Because of these failures, many did not realize the fire was coming until their house was on fire.

In Lahaina, one witness reported that electrical power went out and cell phone service switched to emergency calls only **prior** to heavy winds hitting the area (which in turn preceded the fires hitting the area). I still am not sure what to make of this, but it helps to explain why residents were unable to warn each other of the impending fire.

The fire hydrants in Lahaina (and in Kula the other major fire site) stopped working. Exactly why this happened is still unknown (e.g., its theorized that houses combusting depressurized the water system – although that has not typically been observed in fires).

Maui's deputy director for water resource management **refused to release water to landowners near Lahaina** after **it was requested to the supply the firefighters**. When the water was finally released 5 hours later, it was too late.

Police blocked the exits from Lahaina and refused to open them up when individuals attempted to flee the fires – as a result, only those who disobeyed the police officer, knew backroads to take, used a bicycle or fled on foot (e.g., to the ocean) survived. This is an incredible accusation, but multiple witnesses have attested to this on camera, and people I trust independently corroborated it.

Note: This closure may have been in part due to a minor fire earlier in the day, or a fear of a downed power lines further down the road. The police officer who blocked the road trapping everyone in the fire zone stated that he did so because he was ordered to, which has made many suspect the police leadership made a catastrophic blunder (or worse).

Schools were closed because of the early morning fire near Lahainaluna High School. Many children may have thus been home alone while their parents were at work and

not prepared to flee their homes when the fires arrived.

If each of these is looked at in isolation, they could be explained by poor training or a general lack of competence. However, when viewed together, they become much more suspicious.

Note: I also suspect the older construction of Lahaina (which may not have not been up to code due to having been grandfathered in) likely made it more vulnerable to a fire engulfing it. Likewise, many residents had no real understanding of wildfires and thus were not prepared to react quickly to the risks they were facing (as Dr. Malone explained, being inside one can be terrifying and disorientating, especially if you have no prior familiarity with them).

Why Is Lahaina Being Hidden From the Public?

The fires started on the morning of August 8 and were essentially contained by the morning of August 10.

At the same time, heavy restrictions were placed on who could enter Lahaina (initially no one could and then only residents could) and after significant public protest (along with a recognition the restrictions were not feasible), those restrictions were lifted on August 13. In parallel to this happening, [a no-fly zone was enacted above Lahaina](#), making it impossible for drones to be flown that could see what was happening below (their default software prevents this).

Note: In addition to it being confirmed in the above news report, contacts in Maui have also reported this to me.

Because the area was locked down, individuals attempting to bring supplies into Lahaina were blocked from entering, which resulted in many losing trust in the government and locals then bypassing the road blockade by bringing relief supplies in by boat.

Exactly why the road closures happened is more debatable. The least accusatory explanation is that the government's standard operating procedure is to close disaster sites down since that may prevent further injuries from occurring (e.g., due to toxic fumes), prevent looting, prevent obstructions to the search and rescue operations and prevent hysteria from breaking out at the disaster site (e.g., from someone seeing their house burned down).

None of those appeared to be applicable in Lahaina's case, but since the fire situation was overwhelming and confusing, the government may have just looked for the safety of following the SOP.

The more accusatory explanation is that they wanted to hide the extent of the devastation from the public – a hypothesis supported both by the no fly-zone above Lahaina and the fact that while the roads have been opened, barriers were placed around ground zero (including near the highway) that make it impossible to clearly see what is occurring at the disaster site.

As other [commentators have noted](#) in previous disasters (e.g., in New Orleans after hurricane Katrina) locking down the site appeared to have been done to prevent the public from learning about certain suspicious aspects of the disaster.

In the case of Lahaina, I believe the most plausible reason why the site is being locked down is because the carnage and devastation there is really bad publicity for both the government (which wants a blank check to decide what happens to Lahaina after these events) and the tourism industry (which the economy depends upon).

For example, after the exit roads were closed, many people realized their only option for survival was to run to the ocean and jump in (which according to some reports required jumping through a layer of ignited ash on the water's surface).

Once there, they had to find an area that was not too hot (which required going far enough from the shore they could no longer stand and hence needed to tread water) but not too far away that they became hypothermic while simultaneously not suffocating

from the smoke. At the same time this was happening, many had to watch their livelihoods burn down and help keep children from drowning.

Ultimately, people were trapped in this nightmarish situation for 3-8 hours, and an unspecified number died. Since this happened, I've begun to hear (still unconfirmed) reports of dead bodies washing up on far away shores, which seems plausible given what happened.

Likewise, it is almost certain a large number of children unnecessarily died (e.g., because they were sent home without their parents earlier in the day).

I suspect that because of how strongly their deaths will spur the public to action, there has essentially been radio silence on the issue — no estimate on the number of dead children has been announced and so far I've only seen one report viscerally discussing this (it mentioned that families were found inside their homes huddled together as the fires consumed them).

At this point, 115 deaths have been confirmed, and 1100 people have been reported missing (e.g., [see this facebook group](#) of individuals trying to locate lost loved ones and which hosts google spreadsheet compiling the missing individuals). Given that Hawaii has a longstanding homeless issue (many states fly their homeless population to Hawaii), I suspect additional deaths also occurred in that population which never may be reported.

What Needs To Be Done Now?

Typically when disasters like this happen, the media works very hard to establish a narrative that then becomes fact (e.g., this was all climate change rather than gross incompetence). However, as Paul Deslauriers pointed out, in the early days of the event when people still have strong feelings about it, that is the best time to get an alternative narrative out that can remain part of the discussion far into the future.

I believe the single most important thing to do is for a citizen's commission to be established which independently investigates what actually caused the fires, what

human errors led them to become devastating, and what policies need to be implemented so nothing similar happens in the future.

In order for this to work, there has to be an independent panel (as the government will inevitably try to cover things up) that is both competent to objectively conduct the investigation and fully trusted by the local population. Although this is a lot to ask for, I believe the grassroots network in Maui is uniquely suited for this task and may be able to accomplish it, especially if the alternative media and costly lawsuits help to promote the commission's findings.

W. Edwards Deming is widely credited with rebuilding Japan after World War 2 into the economic power house it is today and hence is considered to be one of the most effective managers in history. A key point Deming made is that when things go wrong in industry, the error is typically not due to a specific person screwing up, but rather existing policies and procedures which made the screw up possible.

In looking at the Maui disaster, it's easy to want to blame a specific person (like those mentioned earlier in the article). Yet, at the same time, so many errors happened, in total, it suggests a general lack of competency and preparation for something like this rather than a single person being at fault (assuming the disaster was not deliberate — which is possible but in my eyes the less likely possibility).

If that commission does ultimately come together, one idea I would like for them to seriously consider is adopting a resolution for part of the money from the inevitable lawsuits going towards funding the State of Hawaii buying a Canadair CL-415 "super scooper" aircraft.

Typically when wildfires happen, resources are mobilized from a large geographical area to contain the fire, something which is simply impossible due to Hawaii's island geography (and why Maui's fire department rapidly became overwhelmed by the fires).

Super scoopers fly over the water, filling a 1,400 gallon tank with water and then turning it into a fine mist which can be dropped on a fire and rapidly put it out (and given Hawaii's proximity to the ocean do this at least a dozen times per hour).



Although these aircrafts are expensive (around 30 million dollars) that is a drop in the bucket compared to the billions in damage from this fire and the billions which will come from lawsuits.

Furthermore, it is an aircraft that can reach all of Hawaii, a single adequately maintained one should be capable of meeting the fire suppression needs of all the Hawaiian islands. However, I am less sure what the maximum wind they can operate at is and it is possible that once the winds reached 60-80 miles an hour in Lahaina, it would not have been possible to fully utilize the aircraft.

More than anything else though, my hope is that these events remind the people of Hawaii of the importance of direct democracy and help to inspire a grassroots push to elect a local government the people can both trust and rely upon.

Note: Many people understandably are extremely upset with the mayor of Maui. Per my understanding, the local activist community supported his election because he had a reputation for being fair and honest in his dealings.

Given the difficulty of having candidates like that make it to office, my hope is that these fires can lead to a collaborative relationship where the mayor is pushed to stick his neck out to do the right thing with the recovery effort of these fires rather than an antagonistic one where the mayor serves as a lightning rod for understandable outrage over what happened.

Conclusion

A year ago, [an article](#) was written which encapsulates much of the mission of this Substack. It discussed the history of propaganda, and shared that at the same time the science of modern propaganda came into existence, a major problem was facing American leadership – technology had made society complex enough that the general population could no longer understand much of what was needed to make society smoothly operate and thus the citizenry could no longer be relied upon vote for policies that were in the nation's best interests.

Two schools of thought then emerged. One argued that the educational system needed to be revamped so the population retained an understanding of how everything worked and thus the citizenry could be relied upon to vote for the best interests of society when accurate information was presented to them.

The other camp argued that a group of competent experts who could understand that complexity should make the decisions needed to run society and then have the emerging propaganda apparatus trick the society into supporting those decisions and unifying behind the public good.

Both sides had very strong feelings, but after the World Wars (especially the fear Hitler's propaganda would conquer the world unless we beat it with better propaganda), the propaganda model "won." Once that happened, a vertical model was developed where an effective (and manipulative) message would be concocted and then distributed to every media outlet in society.

This for instance is why local “independent” news stations around the country are often observed to disseminate the exact same message ([this partisan montage](#) is the clearest example I have seen but countless others exist too).

The internet put a major wrench in that model because it made mass decentralized horizontal messaging possible. For example, [Robert Malone](#) now has more viewers than CNN, and for a relatively small cost (a lot of his and his wife’s time, travel, putting a simple studio together in their house and the help of volunteers) he is arguably providing a greater impact on the public than the \$882 million CNN spends on operating expenses each year.

Likewise, there are countless more people (e.g., me) who with no cost besides our time are periodically able to get highly impactful narratives out that change public opinion.

This means the existing propaganda model of governance is rapidly becoming obsolete – if people in charge lie, they do not have anywhere near enough money to counteract citizens across the globe exposing their lies. As a result, propaganda is now accomplishing the opposite of its intended effect – rather than creating trust in the government and social cohesion, its repeated deployment is creating increasing distrust and division.

In many ways, this mirrors the practice of medicine. Many doctors follow a paternalistic model where they decide (often by [following corrupt guidelines](#)) what’s best for a patient and then use their authority (or the guideline’s authority) to pressure the patient into following that plan.

Patients hate this, and especially since COVID and the interest in alternative medical narratives on the internet, patients are starting to demand physicians who work with them in a collaborative manner that explains what is going on in an understandable manner and then empower the patient to make the decision that best benefits them.

From my own observations, it appears a lot of doctors don’t have the capacity to follow the collaborative model, but at the same time, many do and many more are being forced to by the economic pressures of the public demanding this type of care.

Furthermore, no viable solution yet exists to overcome the internet facilitating horizontal communication that bypasses the vertical propaganda (be it medical or non-medical). Our leaders can't cut off the internet entirely because too much of the economy now depends upon it, and any attempt to censor things online simply gets bypassed and increases interest in the censored message.

As a result, we are now in a tumultuous situation. Those in power don't want to let go of their ability to make decisions in secret that many might not agree with and then enact those decisions through vertical propaganda. Instead they are doubling down and using more and more extreme methods to control the society (e.g., the massive coordinated fear and censorship we saw throughout COVID-19 which again ultimately backfired and increased distrust in the central authorities).

Like the authors of [that article](#), I believe we instead need to seriously look at the second option; empowering our citizenry to understand the complexities facing us today and transparently presenting sensible options we can support in a mature and rational manner. My hope is that the world's love for Maui and the egregious nature of the situation will force an honest conversation to be had on exactly what happened there.

In conclusion, I would like to thank each of you for your help in bringing awareness to Maui's situation and sharing articles like this with those who can benefit from hearing that alternative narrative. The key weakness of the vertical propaganda model is that it cannot overcome people who are united and talk to each other with open hearts – something the people of Maui are well known for.

A Note From Dr. Mercola About the Author

A Midwestern Doctor (AMD) is a board-certified physician in the Midwest and a longtime reader of Mercola.com. I appreciate his exceptional insight on a wide range of topics and I'm grateful to share them. I also respect his desire to remain anonymous as he is still on the front lines treating patients. To find more of AMD's work, be sure to check out [The Forgotten Side of Medicine](#) on Substack.