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Monsanto Investigator in Illinois Laughs They Are Doing 'Rural Cleansing'

By Linn Cohen-Cole

As of last night, a US marshall, 2 state police and a county police are all over Mr. Hixon's area, serving notices to farmers that they are being sued by Monsanto. They arrive in pairs, with two cars parked a quarter mile and half mile down the road. They've served 3 so far and said "a bunch more are coming." No telling how many will be served since Hixon has between 200-400 farmers he cleans seeds for and these farmers have been repeatedly threatened by Monsanto thugs for the last two months, getting "visits," letters, and calls daily.

Farmers report that a Monsanto investigator laughed that they were doing "rural cleansing."

Steve Hixon is a seed cleaner in southern Illinois. He has equipment that takes the plant materials and "cleans" it so that the seeds are separated out and can be given back to farmers to save for the next season. It's a mechanized step up from farmers hand picking seeds off their own plants, which, with hundreds of acres - or even 10 - would not be easy to do.

Mr. Hixon has the non-distinction of being attacked by Monsanto. He is far from alone. Monsanto has been picking off seed cleaners across the Midwest, having already done its thuggish thing in Pilot Grove, Missouri, and in Indiana, attacking Maurice Parr, destroying business for all of them.

Mr. Parr reports that when he was sued, the first think out of the judge said was how "honored to have a fine company like Monsanto in my courtroom."

"Shortly after someone broke into Mr. Hixon's office and he found his account book on his truck seat where he would never have left it, every one of his remotely located and very scattered customers had three men (described as goons with "no necks") arrived at each farm, going out onto it without permission ... Mr. Hixon and state police who were called in, believe a GPS tracking device may have been put on Mr. Hixon's equipment." [Click here.](#)

In 2002, when Mr. Hixon was at the state legislature for a meeting, he said he told a Monsanto representative there, "If you guys wnt to tak over the seed industry so bad, you

ought to buy guys like me out." The Monsanto agent is supposed to have responded "**We'd rather put you out of business, it's more fun that way.**"

Mr. Hixon says that when he is cleaning seeds, he is pouring \$13,000 a hour into the local economy, which right now is being hit. A fence company has gone out of business and other businesses are in trouble. And in using seeds that have been cleaned, those seeds have carbon footprint, by Mr. Hixon's figures, less than a fraction of 1% of that of GMO seeds delivered over 1000s of miles at 5 miles a gallon that semis require to run.

But Monsanto's GM-soy and other seeds have a much heavier carbon footprint that the absurd transport of seed across the country by semis. Petroleum-based pesticides are the essence of genetic engineering, and Monsanto has a poorly known history of their relation to warfare.

"Huge excesses of nitrogenous compounds that accumulated during World War I provided the basis for the beginnings of the mass production of synthetic nitrate fertilizers. DuPont -- now the sole owner of the world's largest seed company, Pioneer HiBred -- was the largest manufacturer of gunpowder in the United States during the early 19th century and the first World War. **Monsanto increased its profits 100 fold during the World War**, from \$80,000 to well over \$9 million per year, supplying the chemical precursors for high explosives such as TNT.

"In the 1930s, chemists working for the German company Bayer discovered the highly poisonous properties of organophosphate compounds. As all of German industry became absorbed into the growing Nazi war machine, Bayer's organophosphate compounds were developed simultaneously as agricultural pesticides and as nerve gases for military use. These included such notorious chemical warfare agents as sarin, soman and tabun gases, all of which are still manufactured today. ...

"In the 1930s, scientists at the Swiss J. R. Geigy Company were searching for new compounds to disinfect seeds and prevent moths from feeding on wool. ... These researchers' key discovery was that DDT ... could accomplish both of their desired ends and more. ... DDT was seen as the "atom bomb of insecticides," capable of permanently eliminating various pest species.

"After World War II, DDT became the most widely applied chemical in human history The widespread use of DDT -- for both agricultural and household uses -- led to a dramatic shift in the chemical industry's

approach to pest control ... was in many ways a direct outgrowth of its wartime origins. ...

"During the 1960s, Monsanto was a leading manufacturer of the herbicide 'Agent Orange,' which was used by U.S. military forces to obliterate the dense jungles of Vietnam. Today Monsanto's Roundup-family herbicides play a central role in the U.S. "drug war" via its widespread use to eradicate coca and poppy plants in Colombia and other countries...."

The shift to genetically engineered food seems a welcome change from such a history. But it appears there has been no change, only a more thorough and disguised means of ensuring its sales.

"Of all of Monsanto, DuPont and Dow's agricultural products, genetically engineered food crops might appear to be the least tainted with immediate wartime origins. But this technology emerged from a period when the future of chemical agriculture appeared very much in doubt. With the rapid expansion of the agrochemical industry during the post-World War II era, these companies and their European counterparts had established a profound degree of control over agricultural practices.

But as public pressure and the weight of scientific evidence curtailed the use of DDT and many other chlorinated pesticides in the 1970s, executives and corporate scientists saw the potential for limitless advances -- and ever-expanding marketing potential -- in the incorporation of technological advances into the genetics of seeds. During the 1990s, Monsanto alone spent nearly \$8 billion acquiring leading commercial seed suppliers in the United States and internationally; DuPont and others quickly followed suit, leading to today's widespread proliferation of genetically engineered food crops." [Click here.](#)

Today, in Illinois, our federal agents and police, working on behalf of Monsanto, are terrorizing ... whom? Drug dealers? Financiers who have stolen this country blind? The people who took us to war based on lies and have profited while thousands of American and 100s of thousands of Iraqi have died? No. Our tax dollars are being used to turn our marshals and police into Monsanto agents to terrorize our disappearing farmers.

Terror is palpable in rural America. It defines American farming communities now.

Monsanto, with its history of warfare and creating chemicals to "cleanse" both enemies and agricultural pests of any area desired, appears to bring this power and

method of thinking to all it touches.

"Rural cleansing" is its stated goal, and our farmers the pests to be eliminated.

Where is the Illinois ACLU? Where is Amnesty?

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[Vilsack's nomination nears, a Monsanto appointment](#)

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Where are all of us?

Authors Bio: I'm a mother and grandmother. There is no way I can leave my family or anyone else's children, things as they are now.

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