

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Office of Inspector General

- **Review of EPA Response to Flint Contamination Incident**

- **9/5/2018**

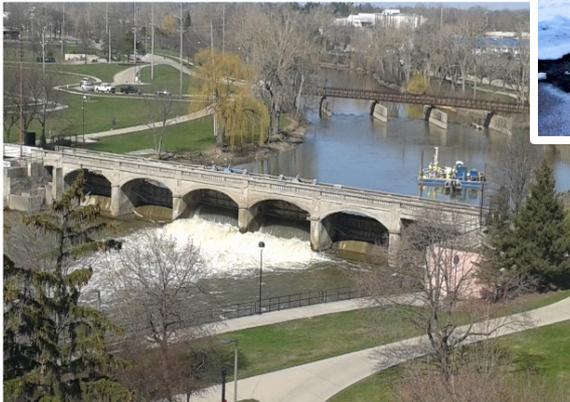
- **Khadija Walker**

Project Manager, EPA OIG, OA&E Water Directorate

- **Charles Brunton**

Team Lead, EPA OIG, OA&E Water Directorate

Why We Did This Review



Methodology

Timeframe



Documentary evidence



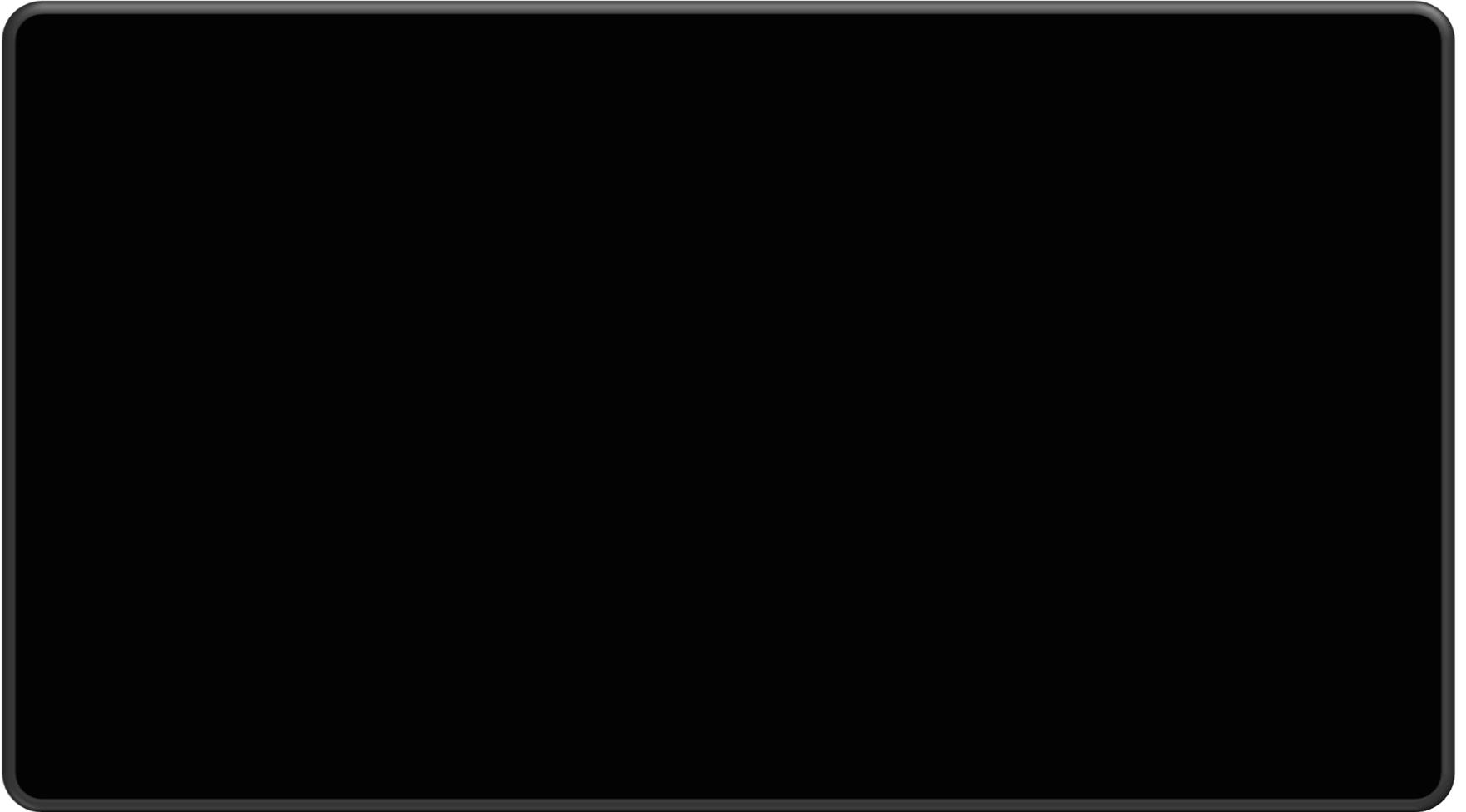
Testimonial evidence



Analytical Evidence



EPA OIG Flint Multimedia – Video 1 (Oct 2016)



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No Corrosion Control = Deadly Pipes



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Effects of Crisis

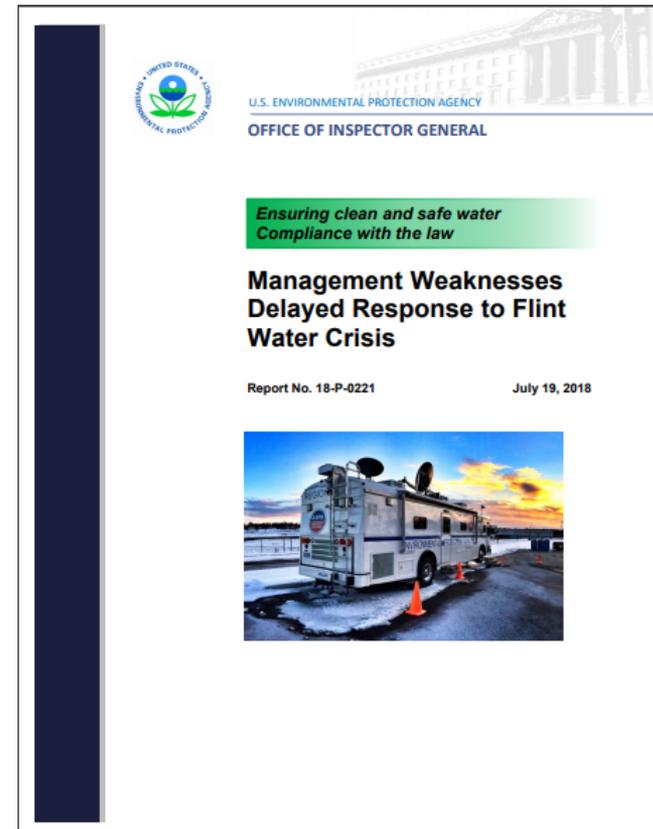
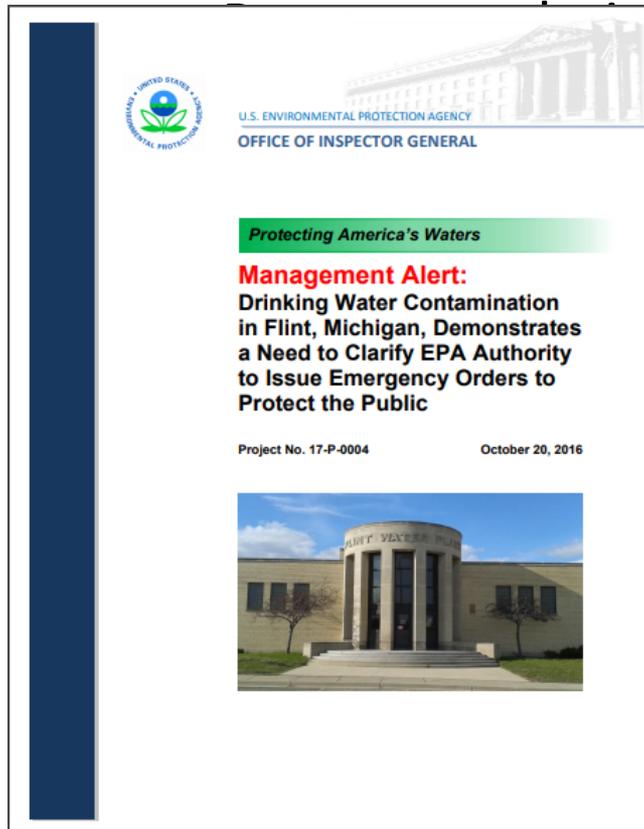
- Nearly 100,000 residents exposed to poisonous water.
- 12 deaths from Legionella; other health effects, some studies linked over 200 fetal deaths.
- Federal, state and local “States of Emergency.”
- 15 state and local officials indicted.
- 5 investigations/reviews.
- Citizen and NGO lawsuits.
- 2 Congressional Hearings.



Results of Review

Two Reports with 11

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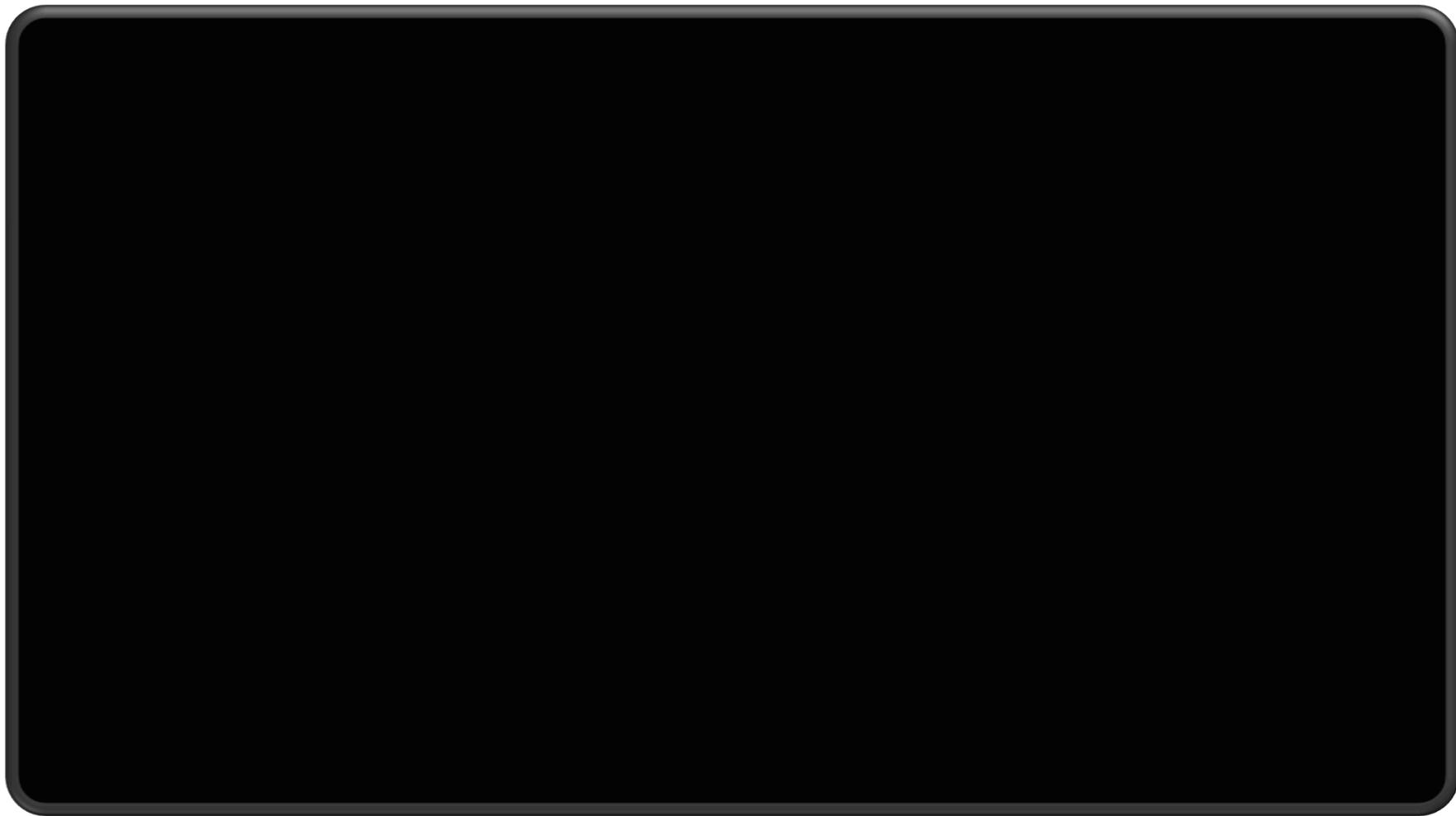


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EPA OIG Flint Multimedia – Video 2 (July 2018)



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Findings

- EPA could have intervened earlier.
- EPA Region 5 did not recognize or use available authorities and tools.
- Weaknesses in EPA oversight of the state drinking water program.
- Communication breakdowns between the State and EPA and within EPA.
- No effective system to identify risks at state and local level.



Overall Improvements Needed

Clarity on Authorities

Internal Controls



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Safe Drinking Water Act Section 1431 Intervention Requirements

The contamination may have presented imminent and substantial endangerment to human health.

Appropriate state and local authorities did not act to protect the health of persons.



Evidence of Growing Risk

May 2014

- EPA Region 5 learned of Flint drinking water source switch.
- EPA Region 5 received first citizen complaints about drinking water quality.

August 2014

- First total coliform violation occurred.

December 2014

- First total trihalomethanes violation occurred.

February 2015

- EPA Region 5 learned of elevated lead level in Flint resident's drinking water.
- EPA Region 5 manager voiced concerns to colleagues that sampling protocol is biasing lead results.

March 2015

- Engineering firm contracted to work on the Flint drinking water system issued report, which recommends the addition of corrosion control treatment.
- EPA Region 5 learned that Genesee County was investigating an increase in Legionella cases.

April 2015

- MDEQ staff member told an EPA Region 5 manager that the Flint system does not have any corrosion control treatment.

June 2015

- EPA Region 5 learned that at least four homes had lead in drinking water above the action level.
- EPA Region 5 manager shared interim report on high lead levels in Flint's drinking water with an affected resident. The report was subsequently released to the public.



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EPA Could Have...

- Taken enforcement action under SDWA §1414.
- Issued an Order under SDWA § 1431.
- Alerted Flint residents.



Recommendations

Update

- Policies on SDWA Authorities.

Train

- Staff on SDWA Authorities, Lead and Copper Rule, and associated Agency policies.

Verify

- States are monitoring in compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule annually.



Recommendations

Implement

- A system to track and resolve public complaints to the Agency.
- A system of elevation for EPA staff and managers.
- A system to identify risks at the state level.

Revise

- Lead and Copper Rule to improve effectiveness of monitoring and corrosion control treatment.

Document

- Clear roles and expectations between EPA and Michigan.
- Program Reviews of MI Drinking Water Program



EPA Response to Date

1

Oversaw
Emergency Order
and Amended
Order. Grant
awarded to City
of Flint for lead
service line
removal.

2

Conducted a
program
review of MI.
Published
findings and
status of state
corrective
action.

3

Agreed to
Implement 10 of
11 EPA OIG
recommendations



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House Bill 6147

- Requires EPA to implement recommendations
- Ties Implementation to Appropriation



Media Attention

EPA OIG Flint reports = news coverage

ABC News:

Lapses at all levels of government made Flint water crisis worse: Watchdog

Bloomberg BNA:

Want to Avoid Another Flint? Monitor States, Inspector General Says

Circle of Blue:

In Flint Water Crisis, EPA's Friendly Relationship with State Regulators Delayed Use of Legal Authority

CNN:

Watchdog says lack of EPA oversight helped cause 'catastrophic' Flint water crisis

Michigan Radio:

Audit critical of EPA's handling of Flint water crisis;
EPA Inspector General Blames 'Management Weakness' In Flint Response

After Flint, Watchdog Urges E.P.A. to Monitor Drinking Water More Closely

Let Flint serve as a warning: Congress must do more to improve the nation's infrastructure
CONGRESSMAN DAN KILDEE ON EPA INSPECTOR GENERAL'S REPORT ON THE FLINT WATER CRISIS
IG urges stronger oversight after Flint crisis

IG Pushes Back On EPA's Cooperative Federalism Focus In Flint Report
IG Flint report finds lack of urgency

Inspector: EPA 'management weakness' prolonged Flint crisis
In Flint Water Crisis, EPA's Friendly Relationship with State Regulators Delayed Use of Legal Authority
After Flint debacle, EPA must strengthen oversight of Mich. drinking water programs, watchdog says
Flint water crisis prompts call for more federal oversight

Federal watchdog urges better EPA oversight after Flint water response

EPA'S watchdog urges better water oversight after Flint, Mich., crisis

EPA needed to act more quickly, forcefully on Flint water crisis, report says

EPA watchdog urges agency to strengthen oversight of state drinking water systems after lead crisis in Flint, Michigan

EPA watchdog faults 'management weaknesses' in Flint water crisis

EPA Report Faults Response to Flint Water Crisis

EPA inspector general points some blame for Flint water crisis response

The EPA Was Too Slow To Respond To Flint's Water Crisis, Says A Scathing New Report

Lapses at all levels of government made Flint water crisis worse: Watchdog

TRUMP'S EPA FINDS CHRONIC MANAGEMENT WEAKNESS DELAYED FLINT WATER RESPONSE

Watchdog report urges EPA to heighten oversight in wake of Flint water crisis

Watchdog calls on EPA to strengthen oversight of state water systems after Flint crisis

Watchdog to EPA: You Need to Do Better After Flint Crisis

The scandal over Flint's water is a tale of poverty and race

Internal Watchdog Blasts EPA's Response to Flint Water Crisis in Blistering Report

After Flint, Watchdog Urges E.P.A. to Monitor Drinking Water More Closely

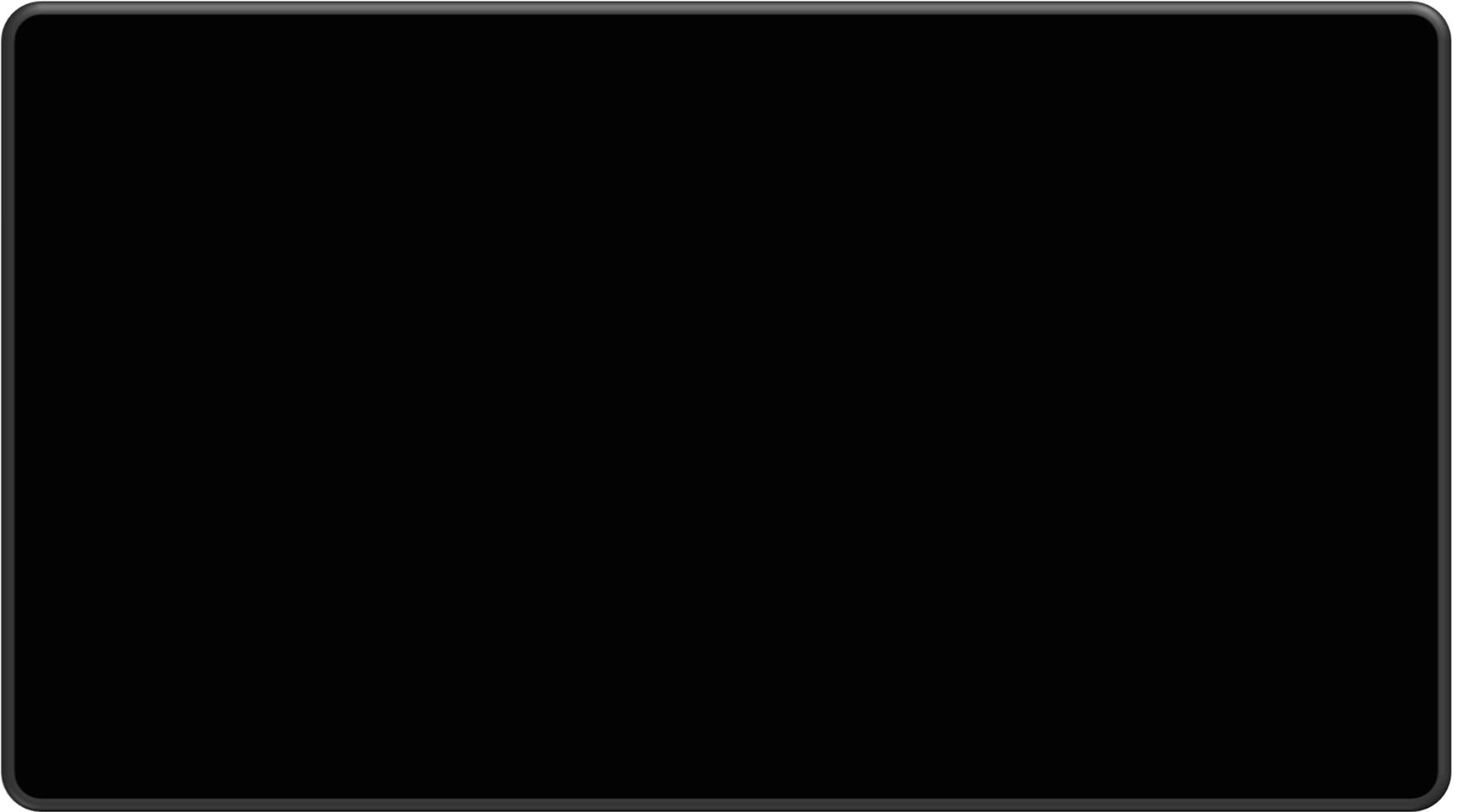


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Media Attention – Video Compilation



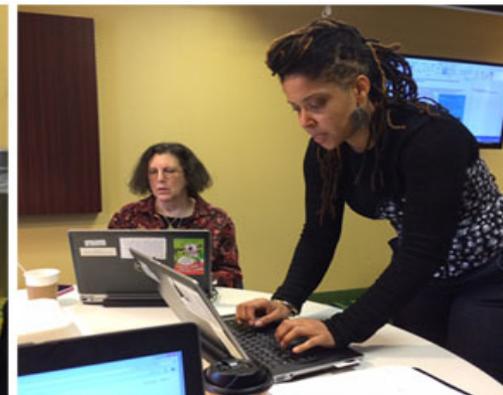
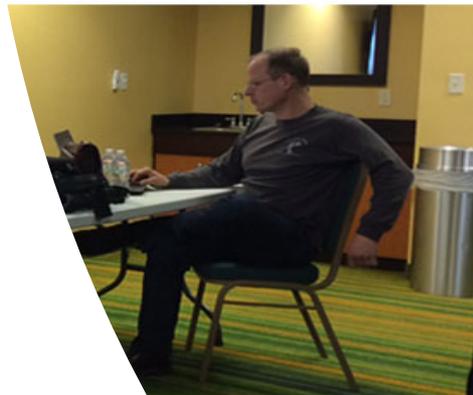
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OIG Flint Team

- Khadija Walker
- Charles Brunton
- Kathlene Butler
- Stacey Banks
- Allison Dutton
- Tiffine Johnson-Davis
- Fred Light
- Jayne Lilienfeld-Jones
- Tim Roach
- Luke Stolz
- Danielle Tesch



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Questions?



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