

# The 1976 Swine Flu Vaccine Scam

## 1979 CBS '60 Minutes' Show, "Swine Flu" Transcript

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In 1976 there was ostensibly an “outbreak” of a swine flu. The consequences? A major vaccination program, 1/4 of all Americans vaccinated, lots of money for Big Pharma, and many people getting Guillain-Barré Syndrome from the rushed vaccine. From the flu itself: 1 dead and 13 hospitalized.

Below is the full transcript of the 1979 broadcast from the CBS investigative news program ‘60 Minutes’ with Mike Wallace, on government propaganda around the 1976 swine flu scare. The program was aired on Sunday, November 4, 1979.

See the video here: ["Dangers of the Swine Flu Vaccine" CBS 60 Minutes 1979](#)

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(Indented paragraphs are video interviews.)

MIKE WALLACE: The flu season is upon us. Which type will we worry about this year, and what kind of shots will we be told to take? Remember the swine flu scare of 1976? That was the year the U.S. government told us all that swine flu could turn out to be a killer that could spread across the nation, and Washington decided that every man, woman and child in the nation should get a shot to prevent a nation-wide outbreak, a pandemic.

Well, 46 million of us obediently took the shot, and now 4,000 Americans are claiming damages from Uncle Sam amounting to three and a half billion dollars because of what happened when they took that shot. By far the greatest number of the claims - two thirds of them are for neurological damage, or even death, allegedly triggered by the flu shot.

We pick up the story back in 1976, when the threat posed by the swine flu virus seemed very real indeed.

PRESIDENT GERALD FORD: [video clip] This virus was the cause of a pandemic in 1918 and 1919 that resulted in over half a million deaths in the United States, as well as 20 million deaths around the world.

WALLACE: Thus the U.S. government's publicity machine was cranked into action to urge all America to protect itself against the swine flu menace. [Excerpt from TV commercial urging everyone to get a swine flu shot.] One of those who did roll up her sleeve was Judy Roberts. She was perfectly healthy, an active woman, when, in November of 1976, she took her shot. Two weeks later, she says, she began to feel a numbness starting up her legs.

JUDY ROBERTS: And I joked about it at that time. I said I'll be numb to the knees by Friday if this keeps up. By the following week, I was totally paralyzed.

WALLACE: So completely paralyzed, in fact, that they had to operate on her to enable her to breathe. And for six months, Judy Roberts was a quadriplegic. The diagnosis: A neurological disorder called "Guillain-Barré Syndrome" - GBS for short. These neurological diseases are little understood. They affect people in different ways.

As you can see in these home movies taken by a friend, [video of home movies] Judy Roberts' paralysis confined her mostly to a wheelchair for over a year. But this disease can even kill. Indeed, there are 300 claims now pending from the families of GBS victims who died, allegedly as a result of the swine flu shot. In other GBS victims, the crippling effects diminish and all but disappear. But for Judy Roberts, progress back to good health has been painful and partial.

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WALLACE: Now, I notice that your smile, Judy, is a little bit constricted.

ROBERTS: Yes, it is.

WALLACE: Is it different from what it used to be?

ROBERTS: Very different, I have a – a greatly decreased mobility in my lips. And I can't drink through a straw on the right-hand side. I can't blow out birthday candles. I don't whistle any more, for which my husband is grateful.

WALLACE: It may be a little difficult for you to answer this question, but have you recovered as much as you are going to recover?

ROBERTS: Yes. This - this is it.

WALLACE: So you will now have a legacy of braces on your legs for the rest of your life?

ROBERTS: Yes. The weakness in my hands will stay and the leg braces will stay.

WALLACE: So Judy Roberts and her husband have filed a claim against the U.S. government. They're asking \$12 million, though they don't expect to get nearly that much. Judy, why did you take the flu shot?

ROBERTS: I'd never taken any other flu shots, but I felt like this was going to be a major epidemic, and the only way to prevent a major epidemic of a - a really deadly variety of flu was for every body to be immunized.

WALLACE: Where did this so called "deadly variety of flu", where did it first hit back in 1976? It began right here at Fort Dix in New Jersey in January of that year, when a number of recruits began to complain of respiratory ailments, something like the common cold. An Army doctor here sent samples of their throat cultures to the New Jersey Public Health Lab to find out just what kind of bug was going around here. One of those samples was from a Private David Lewis, who had left his sick bed to go on a forced march. Private Lewis had collapsed on that march, and his sergeant had revived him by mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. But the sergeant showed no signs of illness. A few days later, Private Lewis died.

ROBERTS: If this disease is so potentially fatal that it's going to kill a young, healthy man, a middle-aged schoolteacher doesn't have a prayer.

WALLACE: The New Jersey lab identified most of those soldiers' throat cultures as the normal kind of flu virus going around that year, but they could not make out what kind of virus was in the culture from the dead soldier, and from four others who were sick. So they sent those cultures to the Federal Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia, for further study. A few days later they got the verdict: swine flu. But that much-publicized outbreak of swine flu at Fort Dix involved only Private Lewis, who died, and those four other soldiers, who recovered completely without the swine flu shot.

ROBERTS: If I had known at that time that the boy had been in a sick bed, got up, went out on a forced march and then collapsed and died, I would never have taken the shot.

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DR. DAVID SENCER: The rationale for our recommendation was not on the basis of the death of a - a single individual, but it was on the basis that when we do see a change in the characteristics of the influenza virus, it is a massive public-health problem in the country.

WALLACE: Dr David Sencer, then head of the CDC - the Center of Disease Control in Atlanta - is now in private industry. He devised the swine flu program and he pushed it.

WALLACE: You began to give flu shots to the American people in October of '76?

DR. SENCER: October 1st.

WALLACE: By that time, how many cases of swine flu around the world had been reported?

DR. SENCER: There had been several reported, but none confirmed. There had been cases in Australia that were reported by the press, by the news media. There were cases in -

WALLACE: None confirmed? Did you ever uncover any other outbreaks of swine flu anywhere in the world?

DR. SENCER: No

WALLACE: Now, nearly everyone was to receive a shot in a public health facility where a doctor might not be present, therefore it was up to the CDC to come up with some kind of official consent form giving the public all the information it needed about the swine flu shot. This form stated that the swine flu vaccine had been tested. What it didn't say was that after those tests were completed, the scientists developed another vaccine and that was the one given to most of the 46 million who took the shot. That vaccine was called "X-53a".

WALLACE: Was X-53a ever field tested?

DR. SENCER: I - I can't say. I would have to...

WALLACE: It wasn't.

DR. SENCER: I don't know.

WALLACE: Well, I would think that you're in charge of the program..

DR. SENCER: I would have to check the records. I haven't looked at this in some time.

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WALLACE: The information from the consent form was also supposed to warn people about any risk of serious complications following the shot. But did it?

ROBERTS: No, I had never heard of any reactions other than a sore arm, fever, this sort of thing.

WALLACE: Judy Roberts' husband, Gene, also took the shot.

GENE ROBERTS: Yes, I looked at that document, I signed it. Nothing on there said I was going to have a heart attack, or I can get Guillain-Barré, which I'd never heard of.

WALLACE: What if people from the government, from the Center for Disease Control, what if they had indeed, known about it, what would be your feeling?

JUDY ROBERTS: They should have told us.

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WALLACE: Did anyone ever come to you and say, "You know something, fellows, there's the possibility of neurological damage if you get into a mass immunization program?"

DR. SENCER: No

WALLACE: No one ever did?

DR. SENCER: No

WALLACE: Do you know Michael Hattwick?

DR. SENCER: Yes, uh-hmm.

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WALLACE: Dr Michael Hattwick directed the surveillance team for the swine flu program at the CDC. His job was to find out what possible complications could arise from taking the shot and to report his findings to those in charge.

WALLACE: Did you know ahead of time, Dr Hattwick that there had been case reports of neurological disorders, neurological illness, apparently associated with the injection of influenza vaccine?

DR. MICHAEL HATTWICK: Absolutely.

WALLACE: You did?

DR. HATTWICK: Yes.

WALLACE: How did you know that?

DR. Hattwick: By review of the literature.

WALLACE: So you told your superiors - the men in charge of the swine flu immunization program - about the possibility of neurological disorders?

DR. HATTWICK: Absolutely.

WALLACE: What would you say if I told you that your superiors say that you never told them about the possibility of neurological complications?

DR. HATTWICK: That's nonsense. I can't believe that they would say that they did not know that there were neurological illnesses associated with influenza vaccination. That simply is not true. We did know that.

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DR. SENCER: I have said that Dr Hattwick had never told me of his feelings on this subject.

WALLACE: Then he's lying?

DR. SENCER: I guess you would have to make that assumption.

WALLACE: Then why does this report from your own agency, dated July 1976, list neurological complications as a possibility?

DR. SENCER: I think the consensus of the scientific community was that the evidence relating neurologic disorders to influenza immunization was such that they did not feel that this association was a real one.

WALLACE: You didn't feel it was necessary to tell the American people that information?

DR. SENCER: I think that over the - the years we have tried to inform the American people as - as fully as possible.

WALLACE: As part of informing Americans about the swine flu threat, Dr Sencer's CDC also helped create the advertising to get the public to take the shot.

WALLACE: Let me read to you from one of your own agency's memos planning the campaign to urge Americans to take the shot. "The swine flu vaccine has been taken by many important persons," he wrote. "Example: President Ford, Henry Kissinger, Elton John, Muhammad Ali, Mary Tyler Moore, Rudolf Nureyev, Walter Cronkite, Ralph Nader, Edward Kennedy" -etcetera, etcetera, True?

DR. SENCER: I'm not familiar with that particular piece of paper, but I do know that, at least of that group, President Ford did take the vaccination.

WALLACE: Did you talk to these people beforehand to find out if they planned to take the shot?

DR. SENCER: I did not, no.

WALLACE: Did anybody?

DR. SENCER: I do not know.

WALLACE: Did you get permission to use their names in your campaign?

DR. SENCER: I do not know.

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WALLACE: Mary, did you take a swine flu shot?

MARY TYLER MOORE: No, I did not.

WALLACE: Did you give them permission to use your name saying that you had or were going to?

MOORE: Absolutely not. Never did.

WALLACE: Did you ask your own doctor about taking the swine flu shot?

MOORE: Yes, and at the time he thought it might be a good idea. But I resisted it, because I was leery of having the symptoms that sometimes go with that kind of inoculation.

WALLACE: So you didn't?

MOORE: No, I didn't.

WALLACE: Have you spoken to your doctor since?

MOORE: Yes.

WALLACE: And?

MOORE: He's delighted that I didn't take that shot.

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WALLACE: You're in charge. Somebody's in charge.

DR. SENCER: There are -

WALLACE: This is your advertising strategy that I have a copy of here.

DR. SENCER: Who's it signed by?

WALLACE: This one is unsigned. But you, you'll acknowledge that it was your baby so to speak?

DR. SENCER: It could have been from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. It could be from CDC. I don't know. I'll be happy to take responsibility for it.

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WALLACE: It's been three years now since you fell ill by GBS right?

ROBERTS: Right.

WALLACE: Has the federal government, in your estimation, played fair with you about your claim?

ROBERTS: No, I don't think so. It seems to be dragging on and on and on, and really no end in sight that I can see at this point.

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JOSEPH CALIFANO: [video clip] With respect to the cases of Guillain-Barré ...

WALLACE: Former Secretary of HEW Joseph Califano, too was disturbed that there was no end in sight. So a year and a half ago, he proposed that Uncle Sam would cut the bureaucratic red tape for victims suffering from GBS and would pay up quickly.

CALIFANO: We shouldn't hold them to an impossible or too difficult standard of proving that they were hurt. Even if we pay a few people a few thousand dollars that might not have deserved it, I think justice requires that we promptly pay those people who do deserve it.

WALLACE: Who's making the decision to be so hard-nosed about settling?

CALIFANO: Well, I assume the Justice Department is.

WALLACE: Griffin Bell, before he left?

CALIFANO: Well, the Justice Department agreed to the statement I made. It was cleared word for word with the lawyers in the Justice Department by my HEW lawyers.

WALLACE: And that statement said in effect..?

CALIFANO: That statement said that we should pay Guillain-Barré claims without regard to whether the federal government was negligent, if they - if they resulted from the swine flu shot.

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GENE ROBERTS: I think the government knows its wrong.

JUDY ROBERTS: If it drags out long enough, that people will just give up, let it go.

GENE ROBERTS: I - I am a little more adamant in my thoughts than my wife is, because I asked - told Judy to take the shot. She wasn't going to take it, and she never had had shots. And I'm mad with my government because they knew the facts, but they didn't release those facts because they - if they had released them, the people wouldn't have taken it. And they can come out tomorrow and tell me there's going to be an epidemic, and they can drop off like flies to - next to me, I will not take another shot that my government tells me to take.

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WALLACE: Meantime, Judy Roberts and some 4,000 others like her are still waiting for their day in court.