

# The Drinking Bleach Hoax

## How it was done

By Scott Adams

(Also known as the Injecting Disinfectant Hoax)

On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, President Trump held a press event to talk about progress in finding Covid solutions. A major focus of the event involved the concept of killing Covid on external surfaces using sunlight and UV light. Light as a “disinfectant” was collectively mentioned 21 times by the experts – Dr. Bryan and Dr. Birx – and by Trump.

Importantly, Dr. Bryan explained that light was the best solution they tested, and it killed the virus “in one minute.”

The “one minute” comment is key to understanding that Trump was always talking about light as the “disinfectant,” in the same way the expert used the word when talking about light. (But in Trumpian fashion, he exaggerated 2 minutes to 1 minute.)

Trump clearly specified light as the disinfectant when he began his speculation about “moving it inside the body,” but at one point in his comments he used the word “disinfectant” without specifying light. He wrapped up his speculation by reminding the audience he was talking about light. The transcript I include here later highlights these points.

The hoax was perpetuated by the media simply by leaving out the following information from the reporting:

1. The main theme of the expert’s presentation was *light* as disinfectant.
2. Trump specified light when he started speculating aloud.
3. Trump clarified after his speculations that his interest was *light* as the disinfectant.
4. “Injecting light” inside the body – via a catheter-like device – was being tested exactly when Trump mentioned it, and his supporters that he followed on old Twitter were talking about the tests and tweeting the company’s press release on it two days before the event.
5. In a follow-up question that you probably never saw, Trump queries Dr. Birx about the effectiveness of light as a disinfectant on porous surfaces

such as skin. From start to finish, Trump was talking about light as a disinfectant on the human body, and no other substance. Only the expert and the reporter mentioned other substances (bleach, isopropyl alcohol). Trump was fixated only on light because it was the superstar of the recent tests. Trump likes winners. Bleach and other chemical disinfectants were presented as the also-ran (losers) compared to light.

President Trump was known to follow the livestreams and tweets of cartoonist Scott Adams as well as several other political accounts that retweeted the information about Aytu BioScience testing light therapy via catheter inside the throat.

Soon after the “drinking bleach” hoax saturated the media, Aytu BioScience confirmed in the Wall Street Journal that they were the technology Trump referenced. The company created content on YouTube, Vimeo and old Twitter to explain their technology. They didn’t want the “drinking bleach” hoax to hinder their efforts.

What happened next? Did the clarifying video content lead to media corrections and apologies to Trump for knowing more than anyone at the event about light as a disinfectant inside the body?

Of course not.

Instead, YouTube and Vimeo removed the video. Twitter canceled the company’s account.

Why?

You probably know why. It’s because that video debunked the hoax. It broke no rules on any platform. It was simply inconvenient to the hoaxers who controlled all the social media platforms at the time. Keep in mind that during this period, the media was aggressively censoring both false and TRUE medical and scientific content with equal enthusiasm. At the time, banning accurate information was widespread, sometimes out of concern about the accuracy of the information, but also politics.

What follows is the timeline of events, the full transcript your news sources don’t like to show, the Wall Street Journal article about the technology, and my speculation about why Trump later tried to dismiss his comments as “sarcasm.”

## Timeline

### **April 20, 2020**

Aytu BioScience announces in a press release the Healight technology trials that would move light inside the body via a catheter in the trachea to “disinfect” the throat area of Covid virus.

### **April 20-21, 2020**

Scott Adams tweets about the Aytu BioScience press release and discusses it on his livestream. White House insiders confirm that Trump and his senior staff routinely watched Adams’ livestreams and followed his tweeting. Other political accounts retweeted Adams’ material that day, giving Trump several other ways to hear of it.

### **April 22, 2020**

Trump mentions using UV light “inside the body,” which was (probably) inspired by seeing reports of the new technology, but it is less clear he would remember where he saw the information. Presidents are busy.

### **April 27, 2020**

The Wall Street Journal publishes an article written by The CEO of Aytu BioScience, confirming Trump was talking about a real technology. (The technology did not pan out in the long run. But that was not known at the time.)

## Wall Street Journal article about Aytu BioScience

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/an-experimental-ultraviolet-light-treatment-for-covid-19-takes-political-heat-11588005938>

### **An Experimental Ultraviolet Light Treatment for Covid-19 Takes Political Heat**

Trump’s musings prompt social-media censorship of information about an experimental treatment.

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By Josh Disbrow

April 27, 2020 12:45 pm ET

I ran an obscure pharmaceutical company until a few days ago. Then we got famous. Early in the Covid-19 pandemic, Aytu BioScience made a commitment to find ways to help. One of those ways came through our newly formed relationship with a prominent Los Angeles hospital.

On April 20 we put out a press release titled “Aytu BioScience Signs Exclusive Global License with Cedars-Sinai for Potential Coronavirus Treatment.”

The treatment is called Healight, and it was developed by research physicians at the hospital’s Medically Associated Science and Technology Program. The technology, which has been in development since 2016, uses ultraviolet light as an antimicrobial and is a promising potential treatment for Covid-19.

Aytu and Cedars-Sinai have engaged with the Food and Drug Administration to pursue a rapid path to human use through an Emergency Use Authorization.

But hardly anyone noticed—until Thursday, when President Trump mused, “. . . supposing you brought the light inside the body . . .”

My team and I knew the president’s comments could trigger a backlash against the idea of UV light as a treatment, which might hinder our ability to get the word out. **We decided to create a YouTube account, upload a video animation we had created, and tweet it out. It received some 50,000 views in 24 hours.**

**Then YouTube took it down. So did Vimeo. Twitter suspended our account. The narrative changed from whether UV light can be used to treat Covid-19 to “Aytu is being censored.”**

These days, politics seems to dictate that if one party says, “The sky is blue,” the other party is obligated to reply, “No, it’s not, and you’re a terrible human being for thinking that.” That leaves no room for science, in which the data speak for themselves, regardless of ideology, and only when they’re ready. Unfortunately, the visceral excitement of political conflict draws far more clicks and better ratings than the methodical world of science.

Technologies like Healight, which if borne out through clinical studies may represent a viable way to kill coronaviruses, aren’t provided the clear-headed consideration they deserve but are instead flushed into the political mosh-pit of “us vs. them.”

Twitter, YouTube and Vimeo are under enormous pressure from political activists. They also need to ensure that information on their platforms is safe and accurate. That’s exactly why Aytu decided to post videos and tweet about Healight.

We at Aytu BioScience are confident that treatments for Covid-19 will be found. We hope we can help. But above all we hope science will ultimately speak louder than politics.

There is still much work to do on Healight—much to study, and much to verify. But I can assure you that, should the FDA approve this technology to treat Covid-19 or other infections, no physician will check a patient’s party affiliation before beginning treatment.

Mr. Disbrow is CEO of Aytu BioScience Inc.

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## **Transcript of the April 20, 2020 Press Event**

I edited out some parts unrelated to the topic, but you can see the complete version at this link:

Source: <https://www.rev.com/blog/transcripts/donald-trump-coronavirus-press-conference-transcript-april-23>

I highlighted the parts that are most relevant to the points. I recommend fast-scrolling to find the highlighted parts.

### **Things to Look For**

1. Trump's tease and excitement about the guest expert indicated he was most excited about the discovery that light was killing the virus. He never showed interest in any other topic but light. It also suggests he was aware it was in testing by Ayu BioScience at the time. Otherwise, it is less likely his excitement about light would be so palpable.
2. Trump's "in one minute" reference is your signal he was talking about light, because only light killed in one minute, per the expert.
3. Trump asked Dr. Birx specifically about light working on porous surfaces, such as hands. That shows you he was thinking of light as a treatment for humans. Bleach was only ever mentioned by the expert.
4. Jim (Acosta of CNN?) created the hoax during the event by misinterpreting the president in his question. You can see the exact moment it happened. Given the history of CNN and Jim Acosta in particular, it would be common for him to intentionally misinterpret the president's words and turn them into the ridiculous. This was more of that.

(Intro remarks omitted.)

Donald Trump: (05:37)

As we continue our battle against the virus, the data and facts on the ground suggests that we're making great progress. In 23 states, new cases have declined in the peak week. 40% of American counties have also seen a rapid decline in new cases. 46 states reported drop in patients showing coronavirus like symptoms. That's a big number. To keep America gaining momentum, every citizen needs to maintain the vigilance and we all understand that very well. We've gone over it many times. This includes, practicing good hygiene, maintaining social distance and the voluntary use of face covering. Safe and phased reopening of our economy, it's very exciting, but does not mean that we are letting down our guard at all in any way. On the contrary, continued diligence is an essential part of our strategy, to get our country back to work, to take our country back. We're winning this, and we're going to win it. And we're going to keep watching, and we're going to watch very closely for the invisible enemy.

Donald Trump: (06:44)

With each passing day, we're learning more and more about this enemy. The scientists at DHS, have released a report offering a number of insights about how the virus reacts to different temperatures, climates and surfaces. The findings confirmed that the virus survives better in colder and drier environments and does less well in warmer and more humid environments. **I have to say that very excitingly, we're going to have somebody up... Bill, will be up in just a little while, that was a great report you gave. And he's going to be talking about how the virus reacts in sunlight.**

Donald Trump: (07:47)

We must be careful in all conditions, but we will get this done. We're very close to a vaccine. Unfortunately, we're not very close to testing because when the testing starts, it takes a period of time, but we'll get it done. **And I want to thank the head of DHS Science and Technology, Bill Bryan, for what he's going to be doing and what he's going to be saying and the report that he's about to give. I think it's going to be a something that nobody has ever heard,** it would be brand new information and very important information.

PENCE: As the president mentioned, we'll... You'll receive a report that our task force received formally this week from Bill Bryan, of The Science and Technology Directorate, at The Department of Homeland Security. **He will outline, as the president said, encouraging news about the impact that heat and sunlight have on the coronavirus,** which will increase the confidence that we feel about the coming summer.

With that, Mr. president, I'd be pleased to call Bill forward. Bill Bryan leads the science and technology directorate at the Department of Homeland Security and now will make a presentation on their recent study.

Bill Bryan: (23:27)

Thank you, Mr. vice president. Thank you, Mr. president, for this opportunity to do this today. Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Bill Bryan and I lead the science and technology directorate at the US

Department of Homeland Security. Over the last several months, we've intensified the department's R and D efforts to identify and deliver information that informs our response to COVID-19. S and T is working to identify, develop, deploy and deploy the tools and information to support our response to this crisis. As part of our efforts, we're leveraging the capabilities of S and T's National Biodefense Analysis and Counter Measure Center to study the biology of the COVID-19 virus. This center is a high biocontainment laboratory located in Frederick, Maryland. It was established in the early 2000's in response to the amerithrax attacks and where we study, characterize, analyze and develop countermeasures for biological threats to the homeland.

Bill Bryan: (24:22)

We work closely with the CDC, FDA, HHS, and also our Department of Defense colleagues and many others. Yesterday, I shared the emerging results of our work that we're doing now with the coronavirus task force and today I would like to share a certain trends that we believe are important. If I may have the first slide please. And while that's coming up, **our most striking observation to date is the powerful effect that solar light appears to have on killing the virus, both surfaces and in the air.** We've seen a similar effect with both temperature and humidity as well, where increasing the temperature and humidity or both is generally less favorable to the virus. So, let me illustrate with this first slide. If you look to the right, you'll see that term half-life with a bunch of timestamps on there. First, let me tell you what a half-life is. We don't measure the virus as far as how long will it live on a surface. We have to measure the decay of the virus in terms of its half-life because we don't know certain-



Bill Bryan: (25:27)

... That has a bearing on how long the virus is going to be alive and active. So, we measure it in half-life because half-life doesn't change. So, if you look at an 18 hour half-life, what you're basically saying is that every 18 hours the life of the virus is cut in half. So, if you start with 1000 particles of the virus, in 18 hours you're down to 500, and 18 hours after that you're down to 250 and so on and so forth. That's important as to explain the rest of the chart. If you look at the first three lines, when you see the word surface, we're talking about non porous surfaces. Door handles, stainless steel, and if you look at as the temperature increases as the humidity increases with no sun involved, you can see how drastically the half-life goes down on that virus.

Bill Bryan: (26:09)

So, the virus is dying at a much more rapid pace just from exposure to higher temperatures and just from exposure to humidity. If you look at the fourth line, **you inject the sunlight into that, you inject UV rays into that, the same effects on line two as 70 to 75 degrees with 80% humidity on the surface and look at line four but now you inject the sun, the half-life goes from six hours to two minutes. That's how much of an impact UV rays has on the virus.** The last two lines are aerosols, what does it do in the air? We have a very unique capability, I was discussing this with the president prior to coming out, he wanted me to convey it to you on how we do this. I believe we're the only lab in the country that has this capability, but if you can imagine a five gallon Home Depot bucket, we're able to take a particle, and this was design developed and designed by our folks at the NBAC. We're able to take a particle of a virus and suspend it in the air inside of this

drum and hit it with various temperatures, various humidity levels, multiple different kinds of environmental conditions to include sunlight. And we're able to measure the decay of that virus while it's suspended in the air. This is how we do our aerosol testing.

Bill Bryan: (27:22)

We worked with John Hopkins' applied physics lab and we actually developed a larger drum to actually do more testing and it's four times the size of that. So, this is the capability that we bring to this effort. So, in summary, within the conditions we've tested today, the virus in droplets of saliva survives best in indoors and dry conditions. The virus does not survive as well in droplets of saliva, and that's important because a lot of testing being done is not necessarily being done, number one, with the COVID-19 virus and number two, in saliva or respiratory fluids. And thirdly, the virus dies the quickest in the presence of direct sunlight under these conditions. And when you look at that chart, look at the aerosol as you breathe it, you put it in a room, 70 to 75 degrees, 20% humidity, low humidity. Half-life is about an hour, but you get outside and it cuts down to a minute and a half. **Very significant difference when it gets hit with UV rays.** Mr. president, while there are many unknown links in the COVID-19 transmission chain, we believe these trends can support practical decision making to lower the risks associated with the virus. ¶ ¶could have my next slide and while that comes up, you'll see a number of some practical applications.

Bill Bryan: (28:34)

For example, increasing the temperature and humidity of potentially contaminated indoor spaces appears to reduce the stability of the

virus, and extra care may be warranted for dry environments that do not have exposure to solar light. We're also testing disinfectants readily available. We've tested bleach, we've tested isopropyl alcohol on the virus specifically in saliva or in respiratory fluids and I can tell you that bleach will kill the virus in five minutes. Isopropyl alcohol will kill the virus in 30 seconds and that's with no manipulation, no rubbing. Just bring it on and leaving it go. You rub it and it goes away even faster. We're also looking at other disinfectants, specifically looking at the COVID-19 virus in saliva. This is not the end of our work. As we continue to characterize this virus and integrate our findings into practical applications to mitigate exposure and transmission. I would like to thank the president, thank the vice president for their ongoing support and leadership to the department and for their work in addressing this pandemic. I would also like to thank the scientists not only in S and T and the NBAC, but to the larger scientific and R and D community. Thank you very much.

Donald Trump: (29:46)

A question that probably some of you are thinking of if you're totally into that world, which I find to be very interesting. **So, supposedly we hit the body with a tremendous, whether it's ultraviolet or just very powerful light, and I think you said that hasn't been checked, but you're going to test it. And then I said supposing you brought the light inside the body, which you can do either through the skin or in some other way. And I think you said you're going to test that too. Sounds interesting, right? And then I see the disinfectant, where it knocks it out in one minute. And is there a way we can do something like that by injection inside or almost a cleaning**

**because you see it gets in the lungs and it does a tremendous number on the lungs, so it'd be interesting to check that so that you're going to have to use medical doctors with, but it sounds interesting to me. So, we'll see, but the whole concept of the light, the way it kills it in one minute. That's pretty powerful. Steve, please.**

Steve: (30:50)

You said that the country will be in a better place by early summer. Does that mean you're going to need to extend the social distancing guidelines until then?

Donald Trump: (30:57)

Well, we may and we may go beyond that. We're going to have to see where it is and I think people are going to know. You're going to know, I'm going to know. I think people are going to know just out of common sense, at some point we won't have to do that, but until we feel it's safe, we're going to be extending.

Steve: (31:12)

You have 23 States where new cases are on decline. What does that mean about when the country can be safely reopened to a more normal point?

Donald Trump: (31:24)

Yeah. It means we're going to watch those cases very carefully. I think we've all gotten very good at it. We've gotten good at tracing. We see where the cases are, where they're going, and we're going to be watching it and it's called containment. At a certain point, we're going to be able to contain, and when you see this, a lot of people have been talking about summer. Maybe this is one of the reasons. I once

mentioned that maybe it does go away with heat and light and people didn't like that statement very much. The fake news didn't like it at all and "just threw it out as a suggestion, but it seems like that's the case because when it's on a surface that would last for a long time, when that surface is outside, it goes away very quickly. **It dies very quickly with the sun.** Yeah, go ahead.

Speaker 4: (32:09)

You said yesterday that you're going to look into Senator McConnell's suggestion for allowing states to declare bankruptcy versus the-

Donald Trump: (32:16)

Yeah, we'll look into it and "have been looking into it. "ve been talking to a lot of the different senators, but "don't want to talk about it now.

That was a very interesting presentation. Go ahead, Jim.

Jim: (32:24)

Well, "wanted to talk about McConnell's suggestion that aid to the states amounts to a-

Donald Trump: (32:29)

"just told you "m not talking about it and we'll talk about it later.

Jim: (32:32)

Okay.

Donald Trump: (32:32)

"d like to talk about something that right now is of more interest...

Speaker 5: (32:36)

May "ask Mr, Bryan a question?

Donald Trump: (32:37)

Yeah, sure.

Speaker 5: (32:42)

Thank you. When you started your presentation, you described this as an emerging result. Does this mean your study is conclusive? Is there more work to do?

Bill Bryan: (32:51)

We're continuing with that. For example, on the aerosol side, you notice the figures were 20% humidity. We're looking at higher humidity levels. We would expect that would even have a greater impact on the virus. We're looking at other types of disinfectants and so, as a scientific community, we are continuing to study the virus to understand its characteristics.

Speaker 6: (33:11)

Mr. Bryan, can you explain why some hot spots we've seen in the US are hot and humid, like new Orleans for example?

Bill Bryan: (33:19)

Let me explain. If you look at the coronavirus as a chain with many links, what we've done through our study is we've identified some of the weak links in that chain that the transmission of the virus depends upon. We identified that heat and humidity is a weakness in that chain. We've identified that sunlight, solar light, UV rays is a weakness in that chain. That doesn't take away the other activities, the guidance from the white house, the guidance from the CDC and others on the actions and steps that people need to take to protect themselves. This is just another tool in our tool belt, right? Another weapon in the fight that we can add to it and in the summer we know that summer light conditions are going to create an environment where the transmission can be decreased and that's an opportunity for us to get ahead.

**Jim: (34:05)**

**The president mentioned the idea of a cleaner, bleach and isopropyl alcohol emerging. There's no scenario where that could be injected into a person, is there?**

Bill Bryan: (34:16)

No, I'm here to talk about the finds that we had in the study. We don't do that within that lab at our labs.

Donald Trump: (34:22)

[crosstalk 00:34:22] **It wouldn't be through injections, [inaudible 00:34:25] almost a cleaning and sterilization of an area. Maybe it works, maybe it doesn't work, but it certainly has a big effect if it's on a stationary object.**

Speaker 7: (34:35)

Mr. Bryan, are we simplifying too much by saying that it'd be better with the warmer weather and the sun coming out more and more, that people would be outside than staying inside their home, confining to the four walls of their house?

Bill Bryan: (34:49)

It would be irresponsible for us to say that we feel that the summer is just going to totally kill the virus and then if it's a free for all and that people ignore those guidance, that is not the case. We have an opportunity though to get ahead with what we know now and factor that into the decision makings for what opens and what doesn't.

Donald Trump: (35:06)

He's saying on surfaces, the heat, the hot summer and whatever other conditions, humidity and lack of humidity, that that would have an

impact. So, that on surfaces where it can be picked up, it will die fairly quickly in the summer. Whereas, in the winter it wouldn't die so quickly.

Bill Bryan: (35:24)

Yes, Mr. president, **when it's exposed to UV rays, take a playground equipment for example, the UV ray's hitting a piece of playground equipment will kill the virus** when it hits on the playground

equipment. But underneath where the sun does not get, if someone touched that and had it on their hands, it could still be there, right? It has to be in direct light of the UV rays.

Donald Trump: (35:42)

Well, if it's on somebody's hands, right? And they haven't touched their face and all of that-

Bill Bryan: (35:47)

**And it's exposed to the sun, it'll-**

Donald Trump: (35:49)

**I know, but if they're outside, right, and their hands are exposed to the sun, will that kill it as though it were a piece of metal or something else?**

Bill Bryan: (35:56)

**I don't want to say it will at the same rate because it's a non-porous surface, but what we do know is-**

**Bill Bryan: (36:03)**

**Same rate because it's a non-porous surface, but we do know, what we do know is that we looked at the worst case scenario, and the virus lives longer on non-porous surfaces. So porous surfaces, it doesn't live quite as long, so in theory what you said is correct.**



**Donald Trump: (36:14)**

**This is sort [inaudible 00:36:14] on pores, this, right?**

**Bill Bryan: (36:16)**

**Yes, Mr. President. [crosstalk 00:36:18]**

Donald Trump: (36:22)

Wait, wait, wait. Okay, go ahead.

Speaker 8: (36:24)

Mr. Bryan, how should governors who are opening their states working on that incorporate the findings of this study into those guidelines?

Bill Bryan: (36:31)

I would leave that up to the governors. This factors into their decision process. As I mentioned, with knowing this knowledge and having this knowledge as we continue to study and further know what the virus does and how it reacts, it could impact the way a governor will look at what he opens in a state, how he opens it, and what environments these things are opened up. But I'd leave that up to the governors to make that decision. [crosstalk 00:36:52]

Speaker 9: (36:52)

Obviously at the moment the advice is stay at home. By the summer, could we be flipping that and saying you'd be much better off being outside with UV rays or the humidity that Washington brings in August?

Bill Bryan: (37:09)

I would not go contrary to the guidelines that had been issued right now. I think though to tell you that if I'm having an event with my family, I'm doing it in the driveway or in the backyard, not inside the house.

Donald Trump: (37:19)

With the children. In fact, I'm thinking about moving outside to the Rose Garden now. No, it's a very interesting question, actually. Okay. Please, go ahead.

Speaker 10: (37:26)

Mr. Bryan, how much more research, how much more time would it take to have conclusive results that could be used? You said these were emerging results.

Bill Bryan: (37:34)

We first were able to receive the virus back in February is when we started testing, and it is a science based approach. Science is a process and the doctor can attest to that. It doesn't necessarily line up with goals and targets and other things. It is what it is. But we are now starting to get results and every week or two weeks, we're starting to find out something new and something different. And in talking to the task force and the Vice President, he's already asked us to come to him every time we come up with some new discoveries that we could share to the public.

Donald Trump: (38:06)

Bill.

Speaker 11: (38:07)

Sir, have you compared notes with your counterparts in other foreign governments or in private industry who might've been studying the same thing, and do their findings show the same results that you've found here?

Bill Bryan: (38:17)

We have. We do have a very good partnership with a lot of our allies.

We work closely with them on this particular topic. We actually authored a document called The Master Questions List. If you go to DHSS and T's website, we've already had about 17,000 hits on this document. It actually outlines what all the countries in the world are doing to fill the certain gaps of knowledge that don't exist within the virus, and what we do know, and that is really what targets and drives the science community to say, "All right, what don't we know now so we don't duplicate what other people have done?" So we've championed that document. It's well referenced and I would encourage you to look at that.

Donald Trump: (38:53)

And we are working with other countries on vaccines, as you know. Yeah, go ahead, please.

Speaker 12: (38:57)

Thanks, Mr. President. If there is a summer ebb with this virus, what would the federal government need to do to take advantage of that time?

Donald Trump: (39:05)

Say it at the beginning. What?

Speaker 12: (39:06)

So, if there is a summer sort of ebb with this virus, what would the federal government need to do to take advantage of that time to be better prepared for a possible resurgence in the fall than we were the first time?

Donald Trump: (39:17)

Well, I'll tell you one thing. I think a lot of people are going to go outside all of a sudden. People that didn't want to go outside, they'll be going.

To me, this was really a very interesting meeting. We covered in great detail and these are incredible people at that. We could call it a laboratory because that's essentially what it is. It's a super laboratory. It's a lot of things going on at that laboratory, a lot of very interesting things going on in that laboratory.

Speaker 12: (39:41)

What would you and other areas of the government need to do on testing, for example, or other things like that to be prepared that came back in the fall? How would you take advantage of the summer?

Mike Pence: (39:50)

It's actually a very good question. It's something the task force already has begun discussing that we are, if a combination of factors, let me say again. As states put into practice the guidelines to open up America again, implement safe and responsible plans to open up their economies along the lines that the President unveiled a week ago today, as people continue to properly exercise social distancing as is recommended in each phase, that in combination with some of these findings could well give us a summer respite from the coronavirus. And our team is already speaking about working on a continuous basis through this summer.

Mike Pence: (40:37)

Every single day we're increasing testing. Every single day, Air Bridge flights are coming into the country. I can promise you with the President's direction, there will be no letting up on making sure that our hospitals have the equipment, have the personal protective supplies for medical personnel. There'll be no letting up on the development of therapeutics by our great pharmaceutical companies,

are driving toward a vaccine as soon as it is possible to make available to the public, and there'll be no letting up on continuing to scale testing already more than anyone in the world, but by next fall we'll have a broad range of testing, a variety of different means, and that's why we say with confidence that should the coronavirus re-emerge at any point next fall or next winter, we will be prepared to deal with it, identify it, do the contact tracing and isolation, to ensure that we deal with this epidemic in the manner that we deal with infectious diseases.

Donald Trump: (41:45)

Okay? Go ahead.

Speaker 13: (41:49)

Mr. President, on the subject of medical research, why have you stopped promoting hydroxychloroquine as a cure?

Donald Trump: (41:56)

□haven't at all. □haven't at all. We'll see what happens. [crosstalk 00:41:58] We've had a lot of very good results and we had some results that perhaps aren't so good. □don't know. □just read about one, but □also read many times good. So □haven't at all. And it's a great for malaria, for lupus, for other things, and we'll see what it is. But □guess, Deborah, they have many, many studies going on on that. So we'll be able to learn.

Speaker 13: (42:19)

What did the veterans study that shows that [crosstalk 00:42:21].

Donald Trump: (42:21)

□have not. □haven't seen it. □have not seen it. Go ahead, please.

Speaker 14: (42:24)

Mr. President. We're now over 26 million new jobless claims over five

weeks. The Vice President talked about this summer getting better, but what do your economists tell you about the time it's going to take to you and the U.S. to create [crosstalk 00:06:43]-

Donald Trump: (42:41)

Well, I know a lot about economists.

Speaker 14: (42:43)

August. September.

Donald Trump: (42:45)

Sure.

Speaker 14: (42:45)

October.

Donald Trump: (42:46)

Well, let me know. We know the rest of the question. Right? So I know a lot about economists, and the answer is they have no idea. I think I have as good an idea as anybody and I think our economy will start to pick up very substantially as soon as the states get open, and that's happening as we speak. And it's actually very exciting and people are just thrilled to see it because our country has to get back to work. They want to get back to work. You see that whether it's a demonstration or just in talking to people. They're going to get back to work and they're going to get back to work very fast. States are advanced. I look at Gavin Newsom was very nice today. He wrote a beautiful statement about we sent them a lot of things that he needed, okay, different things that he needed. We got it taken care of. They've done very well in California, as you know.

Donald Trump: (43:35)

They're doing really well in Florida. They're doing well in a lot of places.

New York and New Jersey got hit very hard. They're doing very well. I spoke again with Governor Cuomo, with Governor Murphy. They're doing a great job, and here's the thing, we have to see. They got hit hard, everyone close together, tied in. People don't realize New Jersey is very tight. You realize that because you've been covering it for a long time, but very tight. New York obviously is very tight. They're doing a terrific job. I think for the most part, I'll be able to tell you when it's all over, but a lot of the governors have done a really terrific job. Some I don't think have, to be honest, but we'll be talking about that in future. Yes. Go ahead.

Speaker 15: [\(44:17\)](#)

Thank you, Mr. President. In a new interview today with TIME magazine, Dr. Fauci said that the U.S. is not in a situation where we can say we are where we want to be with regard to testing capacity. He said we need much more testing capacity as well as tests. So why do you keep saying we have a tremendous testing capacity, and do we have a national strategy that goes beyond tracking just what the states are doing?

Donald Trump: [\(44:46\)](#)

The answer is yes. And the answer is, as you know, and as I've said many times, we're very advanced in testing. Other countries are calling us to find out what are we doing, and by the way, within two weeks, you'll see numbers and you'll see different forms of testing, just like we came up with the Abbott Laboratories machine, which gives it to you in five minutes that everybody wants. Everybody's asking, can we get that? But you can only make them so fast. But as you know, we've done more testing than every other nation combined and that's a big statement, and you know when they talk about different tests and different things,

we're also a bigger nation than most. And so when they look at statistics, because statistically we're doing phenomenally in terms of mortality, in terms of all of the different elements that you can judge.

Donald Trump: (45:33)

When you look, Germany and ourselves are doing very well. We are very accurate in the reporting of numbers. In fact, I'll go a step further. As you know, in New York they actually added quite a few deaths to a list that was done in New York, and they added a number of deaths, were very, very highly accurate. And then you'll look at certain lists of other countries. Some are so obvious just to look at where obviously the number's ridiculous in the form of low because they're not accurate counts. They're not even close to accurate counts. In fact, they're insulting to look at them. So we've done very well. Again, testing, we're doing very well on testing. We've tested far more than anybody else, anywhere in the world, and within a short period of time you'll be hearing about new tests that are coming out that are going to be incredible. Steve, go ahead.

Speaker 15: (46:25)

Do you agree with Dr. Fauci that we're just not there yet?

Donald Trump: (46:28)

No, I don't agree with them on that. No, I think we're doing a great job in testing. I don't agree. If he said that, I don't agree with it. Yes.

Steve: (46:33)

Are you considering ways to ramp up production of that Abbott's rapid testing?

Donald Trump: (46:38)

Well, they're doing it. I'll tell you, Steve. They're doing it at a level that



they've never done it before. Abbott is a great company. It's a very big, highly respected company. They came up with this machine where you do it. We've done it both ways. We've done it this way and I didn't like it, and we've done it the Abbott way where you literally just touch, and five minutes later you know the answer, and we use them in the White House. I think you folks have been given that opportunity, which is much more pleasant than the first way that they looked at you. Right?

Donald Trump: (47:08)

We're making them hundreds of thousands of machines. The advantage to the other tests and the laboratory tests that are we can get millions and millions of those tests done. It takes a day or two days, but you know, because it's really a delivery situation more than anything else. The test itself goes quickly once it gets to the laboratory. But as we have found, and as we have, I think shown everybody in the room, we have many laboratories. We have so many laboratories. A lot of the governors did not know that we had this capacity, but we have many laboratories all over our country. Every state has laboratories and some have a lot of them. So I think we will come up with things as time goes by. Again, when I started, we ended up, we started with nothing, essentially. We started with a broken test, a test that didn't work. We started with a test. They did very few people, not millions of people. The problem is if we did 350 million tests, one for each person, the media would say, "Oh, you should have done two for each person."

Donald Trump: (48:15)

No matter what you do, it doesn't make any difference. It's just like the ventilators. I talk about it all the time. Nobody ever mentions ventilators. One of the hardest things are ventilators, and now we're

making thousands a week, thousands of ventilators. And they're calling from Mexico. They're calling from many countries. I've received today four calls. "Would it be possible to send ventilators?" Right? I got four calls today. I got three calls yesterday. No country is equipped like we are. We have 11 different places making ventilators. Our country doesn't need them now. Our governors are very happy. But that's different than tests because with the tests you can always say, "Oh, we need more." No, I think we've done incredibly well, obviously with ventilators, we also have 500 million masks, 500 million masks that are very shortly going to be here.

Donald Trump: (49:09)

We've made millions of masks. We have ordered millions of masks that have arrived and been distributed. We gave one hospital in New York City 300,000 masks. Before the virus, they were using 10,000 and now we got them 300,000, and they got rid of them very quickly, which I sort of say, how did that happen? Why? Because they became very valuable, the masks. So I say, how did that happen? But we've done an amazing job and we've worked with the governors, and when the governors weren't able, again, they're the first line. When they weren't able to get something, like ventilators, they couldn't get ventilators. They could have bought them. You could have bought them, but most of them, many of them chose not to. So they all needed ventilators and we got the job done.

Donald Trump: (49:56)

I'll be introducing the team when we're finished with this whole nightmare, this whole curse, this whole plague, but the team that worked on the ventilators was incredible. And it's a little bit

interchangeable, but the team that's working on the testing is truly an incredible team. These are brilliant people and they're doing it for the country. They're not doing it for other reasons. Some have been very successful. They're doing it for the country.

Speaker 16: (50:22)

Mr. President, the House has now passed, since you were here, the relief bill.

Donald Trump: (50:26)

Right. They're signing it probably tonight.

Speaker 16: (50:29)

As you know, there's no aid to states and localities in that bill. Mitch McConnell, of course, has talked about states seeking bankruptcy protection. He's also, his office, referred to this as the idea of aiding states is a blue state bail out. What do you say to that? Do you agree with that or do you agree with Governor Cuomo that that is a vicious attack on these states?

Donald Trump: (50:53)

[crosstalk 00:50:53] I don't think it's a vicious attack, but certainly some people do look at it that way. I've spoken to Mitch about it. I've spoken to numerous senators about it, and we're working with senators that are on the other side of the issue and we'll see what happens. But we're looking to do what's right for the people of this country. We're looking to do what's right for a particular state and we'll see what happens. But it's certainly the next thing we're going to be discussing because some states have, in all fairness, John, some states have not done very well for many years long before the virus came. You can't blame the plague, this horrible plague that came in, and all of a sudden they can't blame

that. You look at Illinois. Now, he's got a lot of problems long before the virus came in. And so we'll be talking about it [I'll be a subject for a period of time.

Donald Trump: (51:38)

And right now we've made this incredible deal for the workers and for small business. And I'm very happy that Harvard didn't get covered. We actually never sent them the check, but they were very nice about it. We never sent them the money, the old fashioned where's the check? The new way is send them the money, and we didn't send them the money, but they were very understanding and they were very nice about it, so was Princeton, so was Stanford, so were a number of other schools that you just don't associate with this money. So were big companies as you know, you know many of them. [I was a relatively small amount of money compared to the haul, very small amount of money compared. But we want it to be fair. We want it to go to the people that are supposed to go to.

Speaker 16: (52:25)

Are you open to this idea of state and local [crosstalk 00:52:28]-

Donald Trump: (52:28)

I'm open to ideas that are going to be great for the people of this country [crosstalk 00:52:32], and if we can help states, we're always going to help states. Now there's different ways of helping states. Some ways are better than others. So we're looking. [I is interesting that the states that are in trouble do happen to be blue. [I is interesting. You know, if you look around, I mean the states that seem to have the problem happened to be Democrat and-

Speaker 16: (52:49)

New York and New Jersey got hit by this virus [crosstalk 00:52:54].

Donald Trump: (52:53)

But New York and New Jersey were in a lot of trouble long before the plague came. They had a lot of problems long before the plague came. I spoke with Governor Cuomo about it, spoke to Governor Murphy about it. I spoke with Gavin Newsom about it, and I'm speaking to a lot of people about it because it's probably going to be the next thing on the list. A lot of people understand very well what Mitch is saying, and they also understand the other side of the problem and I'll be speaking about it. We're going to do the right thing for our country, the right thing for our country, and the right thing for a lot of great people. Okay? Yeah, please.

Speaker 17: (53:26)

Mr. President, after the presentation we just saw about the heat and the humidity, is it dangerous for you to make people think they would be safe by going outside in the heat, considering that so many people are dying in Florida, considering that this virus has had an outbreak in Singapore, places that are hot and humid?

Donald Trump: (53:43)

Here we go. Here we go. The new headline is "Trump asks people to go outside. That's dangerous." Here we go. Same old group. You ready? I hope people enjoy the sun, and if it has an impact, that's great. I'm just hearing this, not really for the first time. I mean, there's been a rumor, a very nice rumor that you go outside in the sun-

Donald Trump: (54:03)

...rumor that you know, a very nice rumor that you go outside in the

sun or you have heat and it does have an effect on other viruses. But now we get it from one of the great laboratories of the world, I have to say. Covers a lot more territory than just this. This is probably an easy thing, relatively speaking, for you. **I would like you to speak to the medical doctors to see if there's any way that you can apply light and heat to cure. You know? If you could? And maybe you can, maybe you can't. Again, I say maybe you can, maybe you can't. I'm not a doctor. But I'm a person that has a good... You know what. Deborah, have you ever heard of that? The heat and the light relative to certain viruses, yes, but relative to this virus?**

Dr. Birx: (54:47)

**Not as a treatment. I mean, certainly fever is a good thing. When you have a fever, it helps your body respond. But, I've not seen heat or light as a-**

Donald Trump: (54:57)

I think that's a great thing to look at. Okay?

Philip Rucker: (55:00)

But, essentially, You're the president and people tuning in to these briefings they want to get information and guidance and want to know what to do. They're not looking for rumors.

Donald Trump: (55:09)

Hey, Phil. I'm the President and you're fake news. And you know what I'll say to you, I'll say very nicely... I know you well. I know you well because I know the guy, I see what he writes. He's a total faker. So are you ready? Are you ready? Are you ready? **It's just a suggestion from a brilliant lab by a very, very smart, perhaps brilliant man. He's talking about sun, he's talking about heat and you see the**

numbers. So, that's it. That's all I have. I'm just here to present talent. I'm here to present ideas. Because we want ideas to get rid of this thing and if heat is good, and if sunlight is good, that's a great thing as far as I'm concerned.

## Why Did Trump Say He Was Being Sarcastic?

Why did Trump say he was being “sarcastic” about his light-inside-the-body speculation when every observer could see it wasn't?

I can't read Trump's mind, but I observe he had no better option, so I assume he tried to dismiss it in any way that sounds plausible to casual consumers of news. Imagine the alternative. It would look like this:

“I'm sure I saw – somewhere on social media – there was some sort of test of UV light inside the body, but I don't recall the details.”

If Trump had said something like that, how would the media have treated his direct and honest clarification?

If past patterns held, the media would have reported he was lying. They would *not* report that the technology was real, and being tested. They would say he should let the experts talk because he's a big dumb, orange clown. And most importantly, his critics would use his denials as another reason to tell voters he “suggested drinking bleach.”

One thing Trump knows for sure is that repetition feels like truth to citizens. My best guess is that Trump said he was being sarcastic in a failed attempt to take energy out of the story.

It didn't work.

He didn't have a better play.