April 21, 2021 — With each passing day, Seasciry becomes increasingly irrelevant, buried in the never-ending content cue of the world’s largest streaming platform. The last month has been full of fact checks, flame wars, and funding accusations. Though it brought out the worst of everyone on social media, it brought the marine science and stakeholder community together. There is a clear consensus that the film was awful. Even Ray Hilborn and Daniel Pauly agree!

I sneer at the filmmaker’s silly “fact page,” a regurgitation of each false claim in the film listed in chronological order. But I acknowledge—the joke’s on us. The filmmakers had no intention of presenting facts or having an honest discussion about ocean health; they sought to create a piece of horror entertainment by slandering the seafood industry. And they succeeded. For those of us in the sustainable seafood world, the cut is deep and unlikely to heal soon.

Sustainable seafood businesses didn’t deserve this. Those referring to the best available science, making public sourcing policies, exercising due diligence in their supply chains, and seeking certifications are disproportionately impacted. The film concluded that there is no such thing as sustainable seafood, making liars and cheats of those seeking it. A seafood company that makes no sustainability claims is now less likely to receive negative feedback than one that does.

Herein lies the most disgusting part of this film: it disincentivizes sustainability. Sustainable seafood products are often more expensive than unsustainable alternatives, and studies suggest consumers are not willing to pay a premium for environmentally sustainable seafood. Attempting to source seafood sustainably costs time, money, and perseverance. Like brushing your teeth, you can’t just do it once and be considered clean. A diligent seafood sustainability program requires regular re-assessments and constant attention, or else plaque will accumulate. Commitment to sustainability prohibits a fisherman from fishing in a marine protected area even though it might be full of valuable fish; it stops a chef
from putting a popular item back on the menu; it requires a mid-size grocery store chain to invest valuable resources into a seafood certification program each year.

Read the full story at Sustainable Fisheries UW

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