

■ Investigative Desk

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Investigative Journalistic Perspectives

Susanne Rust

Los Angeles Times

Investigative Desk • Environmental Accountability



Dedicated Reporting on Waste & Plastics

Los Angeles Times

Investigative reporter focused on environmental accountability.

Waste & Plastic Beats

Deep-dive coverage of global supply chains, recycling claims, state laws and regulations, and industrial impact.

CORE MISSION

Uncovering impactful, untold stories that hold corporate and public institutions accountable.



Background & Origins

From Primate Research to Journalism



FIG 1.1: FIELD NOTES & PRIMATE RESEARCH SAMPLES

Scientific Career Path

Degree in Biological Anthropology

Academic foundation in biological systems and evolutionary science.

Field Research in Venezuela

On-the-ground investigative study focusing on white-faced saki monkeys.

Behavioral & Hormone Correlation

Quantitative analysis connecting primate social behavior directly with hormone levels.

AAAS Fellowship Transition

Awarded fellowship leading directly to newsroom reporting at the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*.

Industry -funded studies heavily influenced government health assessments on plastics.

Investigated Bisphenol A (BPA) Health Assessments

Comprehensive review of 250+ live animal studies evaluating chemical toxicity and exposure safety.

90%

Of overall studies showed harm

Conflict of Interest

Of the 10% showing no harm, 90% were industry-funded.



True investigative reporting reveals how industries operate behind closed doors.

Key Investigations

- **2015 ExxonMobil Investigation:** Joint report with Columbia University revealing corporate strategy.
- **Arctic Oil Exploration:** Revealed climate science was directly used for infrastructure planning and resource extraction.
- **Plastic Industry Policy:** Tracked California plastic bag ban pushback and aggressive industry lobbying efforts.



Closing Advice

Good Reporting Relies on Patient Sources

Core Mandate

Prioritize impactful, non -promotional narratives over quick press releases and marketing pitches.

Source Guidelines

- **Source Quality:** Reporting is strictly only as good as its sourcing.
- **No PR Pitches:** Not looking for product PR, promotions, or corporate marketing.
- **Target Systemic Issues:** Seeking derailed laws, false research, or illegal waste shipments.
- **The "Uncle Test":** Narrative must be genuinely new, different, and impactful.

SCIENCE & MEDICINE

Leaked emails reveal industry plan to kill California's plastic and recycling laws

