

Cable News Network, Inc.



1050 Techwood Drive, N.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30318
404-898-8500

July 5, 1984

Dan R. Bishop
Director, Environmental Communications
Monsanto Company
800 N. Lindbergh Boulevard
St. Louis, MO 63167

Dear Mr. Bishop:

I have received your letter of June 28, 1984, relating to a report on CNN June 21, having to do with a news report about the Monsanto Company.

I became executive producer of Prime News on CNN as of July 2, 1984. I did not have responsibility for the broadcast before that date, and in fact I do not recall the report about which you write.

I am forwarding your letter and attachments to Ed Turner, executive vice president of CNN. I am sure that he will deal appropriately with it. Thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'David Farmer'.

David Farmer
Executive Producer, CNN

cc: E. Turner
C. Crawford
T. Hendrick

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C10168

R. T. Berendt - E2ND
T. M. Bistline - E2ND
J. F. Hussey - F3EA
G. D. Ingenthron - F3EB
W. J. McCarville - G3WG
J. T. Nolan - D1A
L. J. O'Neill - F3EE
D. F. Snively - E2ND

Monsanto

PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

Monsanto Company
800 N. Lindbergh Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri 63167
Phone. (314) 694-1000

June 28, 1984

Mr. Dave Farmer
Executive Producer
Prime News
Cable News Network
1050 Techwood Drive NW
Atlanta, Georgia 30318

Dear Mr. Farmer:

I am writing this letter following several unsuccessful attempts to reach you by telephone today.

I want to point out some blatant inaccuracies and other problems with your Thursday, June 21, prime news segment on a lawsuit involving Monsanto Company as the defendant and several former and current employees of our Nitro, W. Va., Plant as plaintiffs.

The segment aired at 9:30 P.M., EDT, during a news show anchored by Charles Crawford. The field reporter in Charleston, W. Va., was Tom Hendrick. I saw a copy of this program today.

As the segment pointed out, Monsanto was invited to participate in the story and declined. You should know that we declined, reluctantly, only because we were right in the middle of jury selection when Mr. Hendrick called, and we didn't want to do anything to upset the judge, vis-à-vis jury tampering. We are no longer impeded by this restriction, so please give us a call if you want to do a follow-up story sometime (314) 694-2891.

- As to the inaccuracies, in his report, Mr. Hendrick said: "Since 1981, 15 of the 176 former employees who filed suit have died from chronic illnesses widely attributed to dioxin exposure."

In the first place, the only chronic illness that has ever been attributed to dioxin exposure, "widely" or otherwise, is chloracne, a non-life-threatening skin disease. This conclusion is "widely" shared by Monsanto and many independent experts, including medical specialists from

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C10169

Mr. Dave Farmer
June 28, 1984
Page 2.

the American Medical Association, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the British Advisory Committee on Pesticides, the World Health Organization (WHO), and researchers from Mount Sinai Hospital in New York who conducted a study of the Nitro work force (which was financed by the union representing the plant's rank and file).

Secondly, while we don't agree with your figure of 15 deaths (we have confirmed 10), we do not wish to make an issue of this discrepancy. However, I would like to point out that the ages at death ranged from four in their 70's, two in their 60's to four in their 50's.

Causes of death included lung cancer and emphysema (with smoking histories), heart failure and heart attack, aneurysm, acute alcohol intoxication, and one case of bladder cancer. The only cause of death that could possibly be associated with workplace exposure is the bladder cancer, and that is related to the chemical Para Amino Biphenyl (PAB). The plant ceased using this chemical in 1955 when its cancer-causing potential was suspected.

- Beyond the inaccurate nature of this CNN statement on its own face, we have a serious problem with the context in which it was presented. It came across as a fait accompli, i.e., that these people died from exposure to dioxin. This is inarguably not true.
- Later on, Mr. Hendrick said "...the ultimate cost to Monsanto could be as high as \$2 billion." We don't know where that dollar amount came from, but it's wrong, too. In actual fact, the plaintiffs are seeking some \$700 million in total.
- In his intro, Mr. Crawford characterized dioxin as "deadly." Far be it from Monsanto to defend dioxin. To be sure, it is an unwanted, useless, toxic contaminant -- but no human death has ever been attributed to dioxin exposure. While the term "deadly" has become a catchy buss word in news parlance, it is not an accurate or responsible characterization of dioxin.
- And finally, Mr. Crawford referred to Monsanto Company as "Monsanto Chemical Company" -- a minor nitpick -- but an inaccuracy all the same.

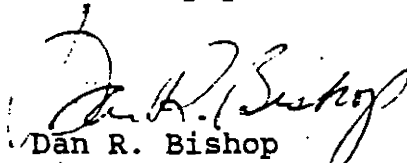
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C10170

Mr. Dave Farmer
June 28, 1984
Page 3.

I have enclosed Monsanto background material on this litigation for your file. As the case proceeds, I would hope your news staff will find this information useful. And again, please call if you have additional questions or need a Monsanto spokesperson.

Sincerely yours,


Dan R. Bishop
Director,
Environmental Communications

DRB:ec

Enclosures

CC - Mr. Charles Crawford - CNN
Mr. Tom Hendrick - CNN

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C10171

CNN PRIME NEWS TRANSCRIPT

June 21, 1984 -- 9:30 P.M. E.D.T.

FROM TURNER BROADCASTING SYSTEM
THIS IS CABLE NEWS NETWORK

Charles Crawford

A legal battle with far-reaching implications is scheduled to get underway in West Virginia in a case in which the Monsanto Chemical Company is charged with knowingly exposing workers to the deadly chemical dioxin. Tom Hendrick has the story from Nitro, West Virginia.

Tom Hendrick: The case against Monsanto Chemical alleges the company hid health risk from employees and over a thirty-year period many suffered a systematic poisoning affecting their skin, muscles, livers and nerves. Since 1981, 15 of the 176 former employees who filed suit have died from chronic illnesses widely attributed to dioxin exposure.

Employee: I was 27 when I got it on me and I've been going down hill ever since. I worked because I had a family to raise. Now, I don't know what I might have passed on to my children in finding out about this dioxin. I don't know whether I've passed it on to at least three of my children. Something that may in years to come affect them.

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C10172

Tom Hendrick: Only seven cases were chosen for the first trial in a test of legal and factual issues which could lead to similar law suits across the nation.

Stuart Callwell, Plaintiffs' Lawyer: This case may further define those kinds of unacceptable activity on the part of employers that would subject an employer to common law lawsuits against them for deliberate torts.

Monsanto contends the medical problems reported are not related to dioxin exposure. Our requests for interviews were denied. There are many chemical companies in the Kanawa Valley of West Virginia where federal testing for dioxin contamination is ongoing and some residents say all this fuss is crazy.

Elmer Fike: People smoke cigarettes around here and that kills about 100,000 people a year so from that standpoint it's highly contaminated but you know people don't seem to worry about it.

Unidentified Man: With any job there is you know risk so far as for their health and everything but where there's younger generations coming up they need jobs too.

Second Man: I would hate to see the plant close down.

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C10173

Hendrick: This trial is expected to last six months and with many more to follow the ultimate cost to Monsanto could be as high as \$2 billion. Meantime, many residents, while sympathetic to the plaintiffs, worry more these days about the economic health of their community. As one put it, if the chemical companies leave the Kanawa Valley, we're all dead.

I'm Tom Hendrick, CNN, Nitro, West Virginia.

-oOo-

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C10174

STURGEON LITIGATION

FROM THE FILES OF D. Bishop

THIS FILE HAS BEEN REVIEWED BY LINDA SHAPIRO

FOR:

- Documents describing the presence or potential presence of dioxin in Monsanto products.
- Documents referring to the toxicity of any Isomer of dioxins.
- Documents referring to the toxicity of any Chlorophenol or Chlorophenol product.
- Documents referring to health effects as they relate to the above.

DATE

4/22/85