Message

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Sent: 8/12/2008 7:39:12 PM
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CC: Knott, Bob [Bob.Knott@edelman.com]; Vander Laan, Matthew [Matthew.VanderLaan@edelman.com]
Subject: Poisoned Profits - Interview Notes

All,

Below are our notes from this afternoon's interview with the Shabecoffs on the VoiceAmerica radio station. As the name of the show, "Autism One: A Conversation" suggests, the main focus of this broadcast generally, and today, specifically is autism. The notes below probably do not accurately reflect the degree to which the host attempted to steer the conversation to autism, and thus strayed from the contents of the book.

Monsanto came up only once, during a segment that lasted approximately two to three minutes. During a conversation about pollution in Woburn, Mass. (scene of *A Civil Action*), the host asked the authors whether Monsanto or GE were involved in the Woburn case. The authors said no, but then turned the conversation to PCBs, focusing mostly on their toxic effects and GE's purported role. Anniston was not mentioned.

The most significant portions of the broadcast are outlined in order below, the PCBs exchange appearing fifth in sequence.

Feel free to pass along any questions you may about the contents of the broadcast.

-Brian

Interview Notes

"Autism One: A Conversation" - Guests: Authors Alice and Philip Shabecoff (as well as "contributors" Mark and Elise B.)

- **Introductory Exchange with Philip Shabecoff:**
  - Question: What did you see in your work? What made you step outside the box?
    - A lot of good reporters trying to do a good job in the news world
    - The problem is the news organizations, a lot of pressures that keep the reporters from doing the jobs [Ed. Note – note the implied reference to his demotion at *The New York Times*]
    - I look for things that the public should know, I accumulate all the facts and present them as honestly as I can
    - I *tried to write balanced stories*, but not at the expense of the reader
- **Introductory Exchange with Alice Shabecoff:**
  - Question: Why write about this?
    - We noticed in our grandkids generation, it is just so obvious that there is something going on in American and all developed countries that isn't right
- **Dickson, Tennessee**
  - Dickson is a small city about 30 miles outside of Nashville
  - Pollution came from landfill (industrial chemicals had been leaking into the town water from the waste dump and chemicals had also been illegally buried)
  - The authors told that in a 2 year period, 19 children had been born with clef pallets and clef lips
  - The authors went to the town and spoke with parents and lawyers
  - Parents weren't getting much help from government -- parents were accused of drinking or doing drugs that caused these issues in the children

- **Woburn, Massachusetts** [Ed. Note – the book and movie *A Civil Action* are based on real life events that took place in Woburn, involving alleged pollution by W.R. Grace and Beatrice]
    - Children dying of Leukemia
    - Causes similar to Dickson, chemicals being dumped in the water
    - The kids who died first, were kids of mothers who drank the most water and the kids who went into remission had mothers who drank the least amount of water
        - No definite proof of this
- **Monsanto and GE (PCBs)**
    - Host asked if GE or Monsanto were connected to Woburn, Shabecoffs said no, Woburn was only a small case that wasn't a focus in the book
    - PCB's are the key chemical/focus of GE in the book
        - Chemicals in the river and in the ground of the homes
        - Wide evidence that PCB has caused a number of serious disease, cancer to neurological diseases
    - The hosts' favorite part of the book was covering GE
        - Documents that said "confidential, read and destroy"
        - Not just for GE and Monsanto but Dow as well
- **Dow** [Ed. Note – apparently no mention of Philip Shabecoff's position as a consultant to Dow]
    - Dursban
        - Banned in household uses
        - Contacted by the lawyer of a family in Indiana
        - The children of the families that moved into new apartments were healthy and 3 years later had various mental diseases or disorders (retardation) – Dursban was present in the building
        - DOW had hidden and failed to report these mistakes...were fined, but that isn't much for a multi-million dollar corporation.
    - Focusing on children gets peoples attention
- **Global Warming**
    - Alice Shabecoff: "most of the energy industry... continues to deny that its emissions contribute significantly to global warming or even that there is a threat of global warming"
    - Philip Shabecoff: Claims to have written his first article about global warming in the 70s and no one took it seriously, they held on to his first article for 10 days and then put it on page 48, hid it. [Ed. Note – This would have occurred during the period where there was considerable debate over global cooling. We have access to the NYT archives from the 1970s and will check on the veracity of this assertion.]
        - Corporations have developed a whole new industry called "manufacturing doubt"
            - Pay lawyers, PR firms, etc. to challenge scientific evidence that shows there is a problem (compared to tobacco industry hiding the fact that smoking is bad for you)
            - Honest scientists are challenged by bogus info and publicity by polluters
            - The biggest PR firms in the world are working to attack the people that bring up this evidence
- **Solutions**
    - Technology pushed by market
    - Citizen demand
    - Parents have the power to move advances forward
    - There is only so much that parents can do – they can't control the air and water and products
    - Must act as citizens and voters
    - Need a government that will protect us from what the polluters are doing
    - In recent years, the government has fallen behind
    - Solutions on page 236 of the book