

March 25, 1976

TO: Mr. Bill Stephenson
FROM: Tony Biesada
RE: Media Coverage - Talcs

FYI. Attached are transcripts of follow-up coverage of the asbestos-in-talc story triggered by Dr. Langer of Mount Sinai Hospital. While falling short of a direct retraction, this amplification of the issue is as close as anyone is likely to come. These broadcasts by the major TV networks came after considerable heavy pressure from Johnson & Johnson.

Tony B

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AAB/kek
Enc.
cc: Messrs. Nazarewicz
Stolte

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41 EAST 42ND STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017, 697-5100

FOR PFIZER AND COMPANY

PROGRAM NEWS CENTER 4

STATION WNBC-TV

DATE MARCH 23, 1976

5:36PM

CITY NEW YORK

BROADCAST EXCERPT

CHUCK SCARBOROUGH: Asbestos fibers have been implicated in causing cancer in humans, so recent reports that some talcum powders contained excessive amounts of asbestos fibers created a widespread furor; but that report, say the experts at Mt. Sinai Hospital where the studies were done, has been overblown. Frank Field has a report for us. Frank?

FRANK FIELD: Two weeks ago a news report from Washington revealed that many leading brands of talcum powders for baby and body use contained asbestos fibers. Now, the scientists apparently went along with the story at the time, but now they have reservations and they say what was not revealed was the fact that the talcum powders tested were several years old and not representative of what is on the shelf today.

MAN: We know of no evidence that babies' talcum powders as marketed today is in any way dangerous to the health of the infant.

FIELD: Well, where was this story from? Where was this scare?

MAN: The story has been around since 1970 or so, since -- and it's been known that occasional talcum powders did contain asbestos. The scare started, really, because of the report that a number of specimens were found out in Mt. Sinai to contain asbestos, but what was not pointed out in the initial report was that those were old specimens which were used during the development of a method, and that they did not include talcum powders advertised for babies, except for one which had been bought five years ago and which had only, we hear, only a very small percentage, less than one percent of the market.

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FIELD: Well, what is the situation as far as you know it today concerning asbestos fibers in talcum?

MAN: I believe that asbestos has got to be looked for in talcum powders on a regular basis so that any appearance can be picked up before it gets on the market, and that's the Food and Drug Administration's job, to survey talcum powders to be sure. But as far as we can tell, and especially as far as baby talcum powders are concerned, they are clean.

FIELD: According to the Mt. Sinai authorities in a release which was given out this afternoon, the research data which lead to the premature story of asbestos in talc should have first been published in a scientific journal and then reviewed by experts before receiving any publicity. That's a tough thing to do nowadays.

SCARBOROUGH: Frank, what would you suggest for anybody who put the talc away after hearing our story, do with it now?

FIELD: Well, obviously the Mt. Sinai authorities feel that the basis for the original story, as you said before, was an overblown version of what had happened and that they consider it safe to use. There are many questions yet that remain unanswered, there are other substances found in talc that have not been thoroughly tested, but at this point I would simply go along with what the good doctor said.

SCARBOROUGH: Thank you, Frank.

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FOR RELEASE TO COMPANY

PROGRAM EYEWITNESS NEWS

STATION WABC-TV

DATE MARCH 23, 1976

6:20PM

CITY NEW YORK

BROADCAST EXCERPT

ROGER GRIMSBY: Several weeks ago we reported on findings at Mt. Sinai Hospital that some brands of talcum powder had unsafe levels of asbestos. Today Mt. Sinai says those findings were made over three years ago; the hospital says more recent data shows baby talcum powders to be safe.

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FOR PFIZER COMPANY

PROGRAM NEWS

STATION WCBS-TV

DATE MARCH 23, 1976

6:42PM

CITY NEW YORK

BROADCAST EXCERPT

STEVE BOSH: Earlier this month we reported the results of a study conducted by two doctors for Mount Sinai Hospital, a study which showed that nine of the 19 baby and baby powders they tested contained asbestos fibers. Prolonged exposure to certain forms of asbestos can cause cancer. The company's involved insist their products are safe, but on March 8th John Stossel asked Dr. Arthur Rolfe of Mount Sinai, one of the two researchers who worked on the project, what his conclusions were.

JOHN STOSSEL: After the study would you use talc?

DR. ARTHUR ROLFE: Certainly not. I think -- there are enough problems with asbestos without using something like this. I would suggest corn starch as a substitute.

BOSH: But today Dr. Thomas Chalmers, President and Dean of Mount Sinai, released a statement on the report in which he said the original purpose of the research was to develop effective techniques for measuring the presence of asbestos in talc, the research of the highest quality. However, the samples actually used had been purchased more than three years ago, a fact which was not mentioned in the media reports. Dr. Chalmers also said any implication in the news stories that most of the talc powder currently on the market contains asbestos is not borne out by the most recent data from the FDA. It is the opinion of Mount Sinai's Department of Pediatrics that baby talc is a useful and safe product.

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FOR: PFIZER A COMPANY

PROGRAM TEN O'CLOCK NEWS

STATION WNEW-TV

DATE MARCH 24, 1976

10:30PM

CITY NEW YORK

BROADCAST EXCERPT

JOHN ROLAND: A couple of weeks ago we told you about a new study from the Mount Sinai Medical Center on dangerous, cancer causing asbestos levels in talcum powder. Today, Mount Sinai modified that report somewhat. They said the samples they used were up to five years old and therefore did not necessarily represent the talc currently on the market.

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