

FILE NAME: Westinghouse (WH)

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Barry Castelman



Barry Castleman, Sc.D. environmental consultant

January 10, 1996

Mr. Mike Wallace
60 Minutes

Westinghouse

Dear Mr. Wallace,

You interviewed me as an example of an over-deposed expert witness in the asbestos litigation in 1984, just before the first edition of my book about the history of the asbestos industry came out. I had been deposed by industry lawyers 17 times by then, the total is now 99; my book, a doctoral thesis before its 2d edition, is being readied to appear in a 4th edition in March or April.

I have read with considerable sympathy reports on your efforts to save the soul of 60 Minutes from the bean counters in the executive suite. It was scandalous the way Tisch interfered with the tobacco cover-up broadcast. And I fear that what one writer called "a reputation for power" could assure that people at 60 Minutes may not even propose a story that would upset the executives at Westinghouse. The Mormon Church probably doesn't have to censor the broadcasting stations it owns, either.

I share your hope that somehow, something can be done to salvage the honor of 60 Minutes and serve the millions of people who have come to regard 60 Minutes as the source of hidden truths about life in America. For what it is worth, I am sending you the section on Westinghouse that will appear in the next edition of my book. This company is remarkable even in the asbestos industry in: its ruthless firing of workers who legitimately protested asbestos hazards in 1973; evidently subcontracting hazardous work (1973, 1976); resistance to federal government attempts to obtain records for health studies on employees (1980); and developing a comprehensive plan for the destruction of "smoking guns" in historic corporate records (1988). Westinghouse is less unique in the asbestos industry in its longstanding ^{failure to control} ~~recognition of poorly controlled~~ asbestos hazards to employees, failure to inform employees that their chest X-rays showed signs of asbestosis, and resistance to the use of warning labels on asbestos products.

As the acquisition of CBS by Westinghouse was announced, I added a closing sentence to the Westinghouse section in the page proofs. This raises the concern that 60 Minutes will be unable to remain a beacon of light where wrongdoing by Westinghouse is concerned. Perhaps this will be of use to you in some way in resisting corporate censorship and informing the public in the longstanding tradition of 60 Minutes.

With warm personal regards and encouragement to keep fighting for your freedom of speech and ours.

Sincerely,

Paul Laenenwaite
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