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By facsimile and email

Mr. Bill Moyers
NOW
WNET
450 West 33rd Street
6th Floor
New York, NY 10001

Dear Mr. Moyers:

I have just read the on-line transcript to the Nov. 28 NOW broadcast on which you interviewed author Jim Bouton about his book on a proposed baseball stadium in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. On the program, Mr. Bouton made a number of false charges against General Electric, among them that: GE was responsible for derailing Mr. Bouton's book deal with a publisher; GE contaminated land in Pittsfield on which a baseball stadium was to be built; and that GE is among a "gang of four" that controls life in Pittsfield. In a commentary posted on the "NOW" website, you then personally assert that GE was responsible for an independent publisher's decision not to publish Mr. Bouton's book.

These are serious charges, requiring that you make some effort to determine whether they are true or not. Amazingly, you did no such thing. You aired unsubstantiated allegations without contacting GE or the publisher involved, PublicAffairs. In doing so, you abdicated your responsibilities as a journalist.

Had you attempted to contact GE before airing this story, we would have told you:

- Mr. Bouton has never contacted GE about anything. He has never asked us a question about the stadium, possible contamination or any other matter.
- GE had no position on the proposed stadium in Pittsfield. One GE Plastics employee in Pittsfield was an individual supporter of the new stadium but there was no company position on the issue.
- GE has had no involvement with the land owned by the local newspaper, the Berkshire Eagle, on which the new stadium was to be built. As I understand it, the land was tested for PCBs and the resulting report indicated the results were "non-detect" for PCBs. This could be checked with the state environmental agency.
- To state that GE conspires with the Berkshire Eagle and others to control the social and political agenda of Pittsfield is preposterous. The Eagle has been a harsh critic of GE for many years, and we have disagreed publicly on many issues.
- Neither GE nor its general counsel, Benjamin Heineman, ever made any comment to PublicAffairs about any aspect of Mr. Bouton's book. To state, as you did, that GE or Mr. Heineman attempted to have any influence on the editorial decision of Peter Osnos, a publisher with the highest reputation for independence and integrity, is false and defamatory to GE, Mr. Heineman and Mr. Osnos.
- No one at GE ever told PublicAffairs to remove any material related to GE from Mr. Bouton's book. This categorically did not happen. Nor did anyone in GE express any opinion whatsoever on the content of the book before it was published by Mr. Bouton. In fact, Mr. Heineman, who is well known for leadership on integrity issues, has never seen the book.

You compound your journalistic failure in a commentary posted on the NOW website in which you state, "his (Mr. Bouton's) book publisher received a call from somebody close to GE, the big league publisher caved and wouldn't publish the book. ..." You also allege that GE was involved with others in "little profit-making schemes" related to the proposed stadium. You make these false assertions blindly as you made no effort to investigate the veracity of Mr. Bouton's claims.

In failing to contact GE about Mr. Bouton's allegations, you have turned your back on the most fundamental job a journalist must perform - to attempt to get both sides of the story. Your failure to act responsibly has allowed the public airwaves to be used for a defamatory and fallacious attack on GE.

We seek a retraction and an apology for your wholly unsubstantiated and false report. I await your reply.

Sincerely,

Gary Sheffer