

Environmental Coalition Slams Chevron's "Phony" Coverage

WASHINGTON-- (BUSINESS WIRE) — May 03, 2009-- To promote a misinformation campaign about its role in the oil contamination of a pristine area of the rainforest in Ecuador, Chevron recently produced a video that copies the format and style of television news shows and portrays Texaco, now owned by Chevron, as completely blameless in the dumping of billions of gallons of toxic waste into the Amazon jungle.

Chevron has bought online advertising on Google to promote the 13-minute video ahead of the airing tonight of a 60 Minutes segment, reported by Scott Pelley, that is expected to expose the company's complicity in what is considered the world's worst oil-related contamination. Chevron never reveals it paid for the video, which is designed to look like an "objective" CNN news report and is narrated by former CNN correspondent and current corporate consultant Gene Randall.

Two environmental groups are blasting Chevron and Randall for engaging in the deceptive practice of producing a corporate news video that looks like a news broadcast. They called on Chevron to stop airing the video until the company makes a full disclosure.

"Chevron is using false information in this deceptive video to mislead the public, its own shareholders, and Chevron employees about its responsibility for an environmental disaster of epic proportions," Mitch Anderson, Executive Director of Amazon Watch, an environmental advocacy group in San Francisco.

"Randall should be ashamed to lend his credibility built up over years as a legitimate journalist to an oil company trying to evade accountability for a disaster that is literally killing off indigenous groups and destroying the rainforest," added Anderson.

"If I were CNN, I would be furious because Randall essentially is getting paid by Chevron to use and dilute CNN's brand without permission."

The video can be seen at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v0YMCGC-2ytE> [1].

Chevron faces a potential civil liability of up to \$27 billion for the Ecuador contamination in an epic 15-year trial in Ecuador's courts brought by dozens of indigenous groups and farmer communities. The damages assessment was produced by a team of 15 experts and is contained in a 4,000 page court report that analyzed the evidence in the case and places blame squarely on Chevron for the problems.

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A final decision on the case is expected later this year.

The trial is taking place in Ecuador at Chevron's request after it was transferred from U.S. federal court in 2002. At the time, Chevron submitted numerous sworn affidavits praising the fairness of Ecuador's courts, although with a decision in the case imminent the company now claims those same courts are treating it unfairly.

The Chevron corporate video uses paid Chevron consultants and employees who cite discredited information consistent with the company's talking points on the case, said Karen Hinton, a U.S.-based spokesperson for the rainforest communities. Randall advertises himself as a producer and narrator of corporate videos with a "news flavor". For more information about Randall, see <http://www.generandall.com/> [2].

The Ecuadorian man who has led the communities in the battle against Chevron said the company should either pull the ad or inform viewers it produced it.

"Telling the truth isn't easy for Chevron because the company has put out much misinformation about the harm Texaco did to my country and its people," said Luis Yanza, President of the Amazon Defense Coalition, an Ecuadorian group that represents the plaintiffs in the lawsuit.

The hiring of Randall is not the first time Chevron has tried to use the veneer of the news media to promote its misinformation campaign, said Hinton. Chevron paid a little-known San Francisco-based online newspaper publisher, Pat Murphy, to write positive news article about Chevron in Ecuador without revealing Murphy was paid, said Hinton. Collaborating with Murphy has been the online blogger Zennie Abraham, known as Zennie 62, who parrots Chevron's talking points in his blogs. For more information regarding Chevron's use of Pat Murphy and Zennie Abraham as proxies to disseminate the company's propaganda, see <http://chevrontoxico.com/news-and-multimedia/2008/1024-chevron-a-keed-to-disclose-relationship-to-pat-murphy.html> [3] and <http://chevrontoxico.com/news-and-multimedia/2009/0331-chevron-p-director-donald-samson-behind-secret-payments-to-bloggers-to-hide-ecuador-liability.html> [4].

Chevron has not denied charges that it funnels money to seemingly independent journalists, including Murphy and Abraham, to post what appears to be editorial content that is actually paid advertising, said Hinton.

The Chevron video misleads viewers on several important elements of the lawsuit, as demonstrated by evidence in the 4,000-page report prepared by a team of court experts, said Anderson. Some of the misleading facts are as follows:

- The video quotes Pedro Alvarez, a Chevron consultant, as saying the contamination in Ecuador poses no risk to public health. In fact, several parties - including Chevron - have found dangerous contaminants and carcinogens such as Chromium VI at levels thousands of times higher than

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allowed by law in Ecuador.

- The video falsely claims Texaco earned \$490 million in profits from Ecuador. In reality, Texaco earned between \$25 billion and \$30 billion; Texaco's fourth-tier subsidiary, Texpet, earned \$490 million.
- The video falsely claims the case was brought under law passed in 1999, after Texaco left Ecuador. In fact, it was brought under a provision of Ecuador's civil code dating to 1861 - a fact Chevron has admitted in court.
- The video claims Ecuador's courts are "unfair" but fails to reveal that the charge was made only after the evidence at trial started to point to Chevron's culpability. It also fails to disclose that Chevron argued as recently as 2007 in another case that Ecuador's courts are an adequate forum.
- The video claims that Ecuadorian lawyer Pablo Fajardo, who has won a CNN "Hero" Award for his work on the case, tried to stop Ecuador's state-owned oil company from cleaning Texaco's contaminated sites. In fact, Fajardo tried to get that company to clean the sites properly rather than just cover them with dirt.
- Chevron tries to claim the health impacts such as cancers are caused by fecal matter in the water. There is no scientific evidence to support the claim that fecal matter causes cancer.
- The video lies when it claims that the billions of gallons of water of formation dumped by Texaco were "treated" before discharge. In fact, Chevron's own environmental audits, in evidence in the case, show the water contained carcinogens and was not treated.

See this link for more information:

<http://chevrontoxico.com/news-and-multimedia/2008/09102-chevron-environmental-clean-up-in-ecuador-falls-far-short-of-company-claims.html> [5]

To obtain additional background about Chevron's oil contamination in Ecuador, download the press kit at

<http://chevrontoxico.com/news-and-multimedia/press-kits.html> [6].

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Links:

[1] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v0YMC GC-2ytE>

[2] <http://www.generandall.com/>

[3] <http://chevrontoxico.com/news-and-multimedia/2008/1024-chevron-asked-to-disclose-relationship-to-pat-murphy.html>

[4] <http://chevrontoxico.com/news-and-multimedia/2009/0331-chevron-pd-director-donald-samson-behind-secret-payments-to-bloggers-to-hide-ecuador-liability.html>

[5] <http://chevrontoxico.com/news-and-multimedia/2008/09102-chevron-environmental-clean-up-in-ecuador-falls-far-short-of-company-claims.html>

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