

Despite subpoena, San Diego Union-Tribune journalist refuses to answer claims she took money to discredit local businessman

Penni Crabtree, staff writer at the newspaper, is amongst journalists being investigated for taking money from rival pet company.

January 25, 2008 Wilmington, DE: Investigators for Simon Brodie, the inventor of a revolutionary pet diagnostic product and the developer of new breed of "lifestyle pets", including the hypoallergenic cat, are investigating claims that Penni Crabtree, a reporter for the Union-Tribune newspaper in San Diego, may have taken money from Idexx Laboratories to discredit Brodie in a number of articles written in their newspaper during 2006. Although Crabtree was subpoenaed by Brodie's attorneys, she has so far failed to agree to any questioning.

The articles written by Crabtree began appearing a few weeks after Brodie's veterinary diagnostic company, CYNTEGRA, issued legal proceedings against Idexx Laboratories. CYNTEGRA began this action after Idexx Laboratories threatened to retaliate against the country's largest veterinary distributors if they carried Brodie's life-saving diagnostic product. In the articles written by Crabtree, she failed to mention any of the details for the Idexx case, even though she was made fully aware of Idexx's actions and the serious threat this action would cause to many of the country's pets.

For Brodie, these revelations have struck like lightning: "It makes absolute sense now. The articles appeared just after we sued Idexx. Crabtree wrote a number of negative articles about me, my "lifestyle pets" business ALLERCA and our hypoallergenic cats, but never once mentioned Idexx. So let me get this right: Crabtree somehow forgot to write about a large company like Idexx squeezing out life-saving groundbreaking new technology – an action that now threatens people's pets, and as important, has the potential to save thousands of human lives as well?"

In one of the articles, she accused Brodie of illegally taking donations through an animal non-profit (so the headline read), even though she was aware that the non-profit web site was a pure design concept, had not been launched and no donations were ever taken. As such, Crabtree was never able to produce a single person who she claimed had paid money to this non-existing non-profit. Crabtree also reported Brodie to the California business authorities when she claimed that his company was taking deposits for a proposed franchise program; however, after investigation, the authorities proved that Crabtree's claims were in fact false as the company had never taken any franchise based funds. Much of this information used in these articles came from a laptop computer that Crabtree was aware had been stolen from the company.

Brodie states: "My attorneys asked Crabtree to meet and answer our questions, but she refused, and hid behind a California law that gives journalists the ability to shield questioning." Continues Brodie: "She did provide a brief written response in which she refused to answer questions but at the same time Crabtree may have committed perjury when she stated she had not had any communication with a

former disgruntled employee – however, I am sitting here with copies of emails between her and that employee Cyndi Loeffler, sent to me anonymously, so what gives?”

Brodie notes: “Also of interest is that as part of our case against Idexx, I spent two days being deposed by their attorneys. Surprisingly, for a deposition that cost Idexx shareholders tens of thousands of dollars, their attorneys spent most of that time going over the articles that Crabtree and others wrote, spending only about thirty minutes discussing my groundbreaking technology – at the time, it just didn’t seem a good use of attorney time, but I understood their strategy later: these articles were subsequently used to tarnish my character in front of the courts.”

Most serious, Brodie claims, Crabtree was clearly made aware that as someone involved in cutting edge animal services, Brodie had received a number of serious threats from animal rights activists and that his personal security was always a concern. Says Brodie: “Crabtree’s response? Publish my address in her next article, which caused me to move and put my partner and child in danger. I guess she was really trying to provide the best service possible to Idexx.”

This not the first time that Crabtree’s credibility has been called in to question. She previously wrote a number of scathing articles attacking a company developing alternative medical products, but failed to mention to the Union-Tribune readership that her husband’s company was developing similar products.

Also under investigation on claims that she took money from Idexx is Kerry Grens of The Scientist magazine. Says Brodie: “Again, we have a so-called reporter who can dig back fifteen years into my past, and yet can’t find out what went on fifteen months ago, with Idexx? About a situation where millions of cats and dogs may suffer unnecessarily or die early because of Idexx’s actions?”

A few weeks after the Union-Tribune articles appeared, one of ALLERCA’s hypoallergenic cats was successfully tested on a number of national, live television shows. Brodie’s company has since delivered dozens of these special cats to very happy customers, many of whom are willing to extol the cat’s virtues on the Allerca website. The cat was subsequently voted one of TIME magazine’s best inventions of 2006. Says Brodie: “Conveniently, Crabtree, Grens and others failed to mention our success.”

Brodie expects the results of the investigation to be turned over to the authorities. Says Brodie, “Regardless, the actions of these journalists has had very direct, real results: thousands of pets have died unnecessarily because their attempts to discredit me served Idexx’s cause and made it more difficult for me to obtain the required investment to go up against Idexx in the market. So if your cat or dog has died unnecessarily, or you face huge vet bills, don’t blame your vet: blame these two so-called journalists and their publications – they are directly responsible. And take your anger out on Idexx, which has done this type of thing before and will likely continue to monopolize the veterinary diagnostic market, to the detriment of every pet owner.”

In the meantime, documents have been submitted to Securities and Exchange Commission detailing allegations that Idexx failed to report details of legal case to shareholders.

Additional information can be found at www.simonbrodie.com

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