

Subject: For Script Clearance Dept, re upcoming "Merchants of Doubt" Sony Classics release: potential major legal entanglement?

Sony Classics staff,

Regarding the "Merchants of Doubt" movie <http://www.sonyclassics.com/merchantsofdoubt/> you are no doubt aware the movie is based on Naomi Oreskes' book by the same name, and the overall insinuation made by the book that skeptic climate scientists are involved in efforts paid by the fossil fuel industry to lie to the public, in a manner not much different than what tobacco industry shill experts did years before.

As seen in the FAQ page at the site for Oreskes' book <http://www.merchantsofdoubt.org/faq.html> Oreskes states, "... *we had both noticed that some of the people who were challenging the scientific evidence of global warming had previously questioned the evidence of stratospheric ozone depletion and the harms of tobacco. Then we found evidence connecting them to the tobacco industry, and we knew we had a story.*" Concerning atmospheric physicist Dr S Fred Singer, one of Oreskes' targets, widespread rumors claim he denies the hazards of smoking. He has never done so, but instead quite specifically asserted that the EPA under Carol Browner engaged in "scientific overreach and regulatory overreach" when they sought to classify second hand smoke as a Class A carcinogen, a ruling that was later overturned in a July 1998 Federal court because (as reported in the *Washington Post*), "*EPA had wrongly used provisions of the 1986 Radon Gas and Indoor Air Quality Research Act in determining that secondhand smoke is hazardous.*"

Arguably, Ms Oreskes' statement that she 'found evidence' proving a parallel of tobacco / fossil fuel industry conspiracies is not enough to prove skeptic climate scientists themselves are in a quid pro quo arrangement with the fossil fuel industry. This is something you need to check for yourselves, asking whether she has provided - in any of her publications or presentations - physical evidence (full context document scans, undercover video/audio transcripts, leaked emails, money-transfer receipts, etc.) proving skeptic scientists were paid to fabricate demonstratively false science papers, reports, assessments or viewpoints. Further, since Oreskes is not the originator of the accusation but is instead a repeater of it, you should ask whether her source of the accusation offered such proof - not mere quotations of alleged evidence, but the actual evidence itself.

You may soon see that both the upcoming Oreskes documentary and the book it is based on has, at the very least, the appearance of being beset with a significant legal problem. This is not to suggest the film shouldn't be released, but simply that it may require a re-examination by your Script Clearance Department and possibly additional material added to it that mitigates any potential appearance of libel/slander.

Respectfully,
Russell Cook