

May 13, 2005

Glenn A. Fine
U.S. Department of Justice
Office of the Inspector General
950 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Ste. 4322
Washington, DC 20530-0001

1 page via fax: 202-514-4001

Dear Inspector General Fine,

We are writing to insist that the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) investigate whether University of Wisconsin professor John Webster provided false information to the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) submitted in a federal grant proposal (which was approved). We also urge the OIG and the NIJ to withhold funding for the study until this matter has been thoroughly investigated.

The proposal—application number 2004-90388-WI-IJ—was submitted for the “Less-Lethal Technologies, Fiscal Year 2004” grant solicitation by the NIJ. Webster and his partners have been granted \$500,000 to assess the safety of the Taser International Taser Energy Weapon.

As part of the proposal, Webster provided the *curriculum vitae* of each researcher and consultant working with him on the project. However, Robert A. Stratbucker and Wayne McDaniel failed to disclose their affiliation with Taser International, the company whose weapon is to be studied.

Dr. Stratbucker’s *curriculum vitae* fails to disclose that he is the medical director of Taser International. Nothing in the documentation provided states that he has conducted studies for Taser International concluding that Taser weapons are safe.

Mr. McDaniel’s *curriculum vitae* also fails to disclose that he has been paid by Taser International to conduct studies and write papers for the company concluding that Tasers are safe. Mr. McDaniel even went so far as to omit publications he wrote for Taser from the list of published works on his *curriculum vitae*.

We are certain that Dr. Webster was well aware of Dr. Stratbucker and Mr. McDaniel’s affiliation with Taser International—Webster and Stratbucker are colleagues who have worked together on several studies. It is our assertion that Webster, Stratbucker, and McDaniel conspired to provide the false documents to the NIJ in order to hide this obvious conflict of interest and secure the grant.



PETA

PEOPLE FOR THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

501 FRONT ST.
NORFOLK, VA 23510
757-622-PETA
757-622-0457 (FAX)

PETA.org
Info@peta.org

AN INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATION DEDICATED
TO PROTECTING
THE RIGHTS OF ALL ANIMALS

What makes this even more insidious is that the safety of the Taser weapon has been called into question because of the rising number of Taser-related fatalities. Webster has publicly stated that he believes Tasers are safe to use on people, and Stratbucker and McDaniel have also published findings with the same conclusions. Webster's public declarations of the weapon's safety, as well as the attempts to mask the presence of Taser personnel in a study purported to be "independent," make it clear that the investigators are not without bias. This will certainly place the safety of both civilians and law-enforcement officials at risk.

The fact that this is clearly not an independent study means that taxpayer dollars will be wasted and that animals will be cruelly and unnecessarily killed so that Taser International can continue to sell a product whose safety is dubious in its present capacity as a "nonlethal" weapon.

We urge the OIG to immediately cancel funding from the Webster study until questions regarding Webster, Stratbucker, and McDaniel's falsification of documents have been answered. We also ask that the OIG investigate the culpability of the University of Wisconsin and its oversight failures.

I look forward to your response regarding this important matter. If you have any questions, I can be reached at 757-622-7382, extension 8105, or via e-mail at ChrisF@peta.org. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Chris Ford".

Chris Ford, Research Associate
Research & Investigations Department

Cc. Sarah Hart