

**Email from Lane Franks, Liberty Petroleum Corp.
to Jonathan Gant, Global Witness, 3 March 2015**

Dear Jonathan:

First of all, I have done a bit of research on Global Witness and it seems that you are a credible news agency that tries very hard to be a watch dog for corruption and exploitation of innocent people. I was raised by a father who always taught me and my siblings to be a crusader for the innocent and for victims who don't always have a voice. So at the outset, I want to say that I know you guys have a noble intention and I don't doubt that in the least.

I do feel some of the things said or implied in the article, though non malicious in intent, have truly misaligned Liberty and could potentially hurt our reputation in the industry for years to come. For instance, even the mention of the death of this innocent individual that recently died in the context of your article was so profoundly inappropriate. Even though you were objective enough to say that you were not intimating any linkage with our company still does not prevent a subtle linkage that is simply outrageous and I profoundly disappointed that you did not address this in an unrelated article. Secondly, the allegation of potential bribery on our part when there is not a hint of evidence supporting such a proposition is also very unfair to Liberty. You also talk about Liberty as if we are a company with no credibility and I think the word dodgy was even used. Jonathan these three things really seemed profoundly unfair. It is likely that there are other news agencies that are less competent and less altruistic in core values than Global Witness that will pick up on some of the comments made in your article and run with them to create sensation and slander that might help them sell papers or subscriptions but further do injustice to the truth and I am deeply concerned about that secondary effect more than the negative impact of your article... We have worked over fifteen years to earn a good name in the industry and an article like this can wipe it out in an instant. Perception, however unfounded, can stay with a company forever and I am really upset about this. We believe that a good name is worth more than silver and gold and I am afraid this article has truly hurt our good name. I take that very seriously as I am sure you would if someone leveled certain unproved allegations against Global Witness or your personally as a writer. Consequently, I have taken time to prepare this objective rebuttal to key concerns in the article. To stay on point and avoid extensive verbiage I will offer some of my responses in the form of bullet points.

- 1) Until reading your article we had no knowledge of the individual that died. This is heartbreaking even if it was from natural causes and we sincerely offer our sympathies and prayers to the surviving family members. I think you can only imagine the outrage we would naturally feel if there was even the slightest innuendo or linkage between the death of this precious individual and our bid round!
- 2) There was also a strong hint that Liberty somehow paid a bribe related to this bid round. It is absolutely and categorically untrue and we profoundly reject any such notion or accusation. We have zero knowledge of a payment of \$31,000 to the senator you spoke of. The only monies Liberty paid related to the bid round were two legitimate fees that were required in the regulatory process. \$15,000* for the pre- qualification application fee and \$50,000 for the permit fee. I give my word before God we paid no other fees or benefits to gain favors in this bid round process.
- 3) We may not be a giant conglomerate company but we are not dodgy. :) We have an International track record that is quite credible in the industry having

received over fifteen different PSC/Permit awards since our inception. We can also humbly but fairly claim and prove we have never defaulted on any work program as of yet. We have a credible history related to the exploration and development of those blocks. We have traditionally facilitated the development of these many blocks through farmin negotiations. That is where we give up a portion of our equity to a larger company in exchange for their funding and operatorship of those blocks. This is a common industry practice. Many of the giant companies bring in joint venture partners to spread risk themselves. Although completely independent, we have worked with partners such as Conoco, Apache, BHP and others. We are known in the industry as an honest and credible exploration company even though I might add that we have never once been accused of any FCPA violation until now. This continues to grieve my spirit.

- 4) I also offer a correction. Liberty Petroleum Corporation Liberia II (the legal corporate entity that applied for the block has only two shareholders which are myself and Travis Franks) The other Liberty corporation you referred to has zero ownership in LB-16. It is almost exclusively focused in Australia.
- 5) I feel it also relevant to point out that we truly care about the people of Liberia. Although I have never met the honorable Madam Sirleaf, I was privileged to attend her second Inauguration years ago and I was deeply stirred by her inspirational speech. She seemed to truly care about the people of Liberia and the principles of opportunity for all, including women. We see Liberia as a shining light in Africa that is trying to model many of the values of freedom of our founding fathers in America who believed so profoundly in "One Nation Under God, Indivisible and with Liberty and Justice for all." We know Liberia is not a perfect country but we can honestly say all your leaders we have interfaced with, particularly those associated with NOCAL, have been warm, professional and full of absolute integrity in all of their dealings with us. We truly believe they have tried to conduct themselves as it relates to this bid round in a way that the citizens and leaders of Liberia could be proud of. In fact I think it is important to point out that although our PSC has been ratified by the legislature, NOCAL is holding off on final recommendation to the President to sign our PSC into permanent law and publication into the handbill until certain remaining regulatory requirements on the part of Liberty are met. This world-wide oil price plunge makes it a very definitive challenge to meet some of these requirements and we cannot say with certainty if we are going to meet those guidelines. We will know soon. I suspect some of the other bidding companies are in the same dilemma because of this global oil crisis and that is why progress is slow as to the announcement of award status on the other blocks. Again, I can honestly say NOCAL has held us to a fair regulatory standard and the jury is still out as to whether we will ultimately comply with those last remaining standards. They have made it clear that out of integrity, until Liberty does meet certain remaining conditions precedent, that they simply cannot move forward with final award. That does not sound like the actions of an irresponsible government body to me.

As a closing thought, I just want to say a bit about our company. We are motivated by more important things than just a sole focus on commercial goals. Our company has been quite involved in charitable work in Africa for over ten years. We helped build a Christian school close to Abuja Nigeria where today over 250 little kids continue to get a good education under the leadership of Pastor Johnson Love of Miracle Assembly Church. We recently made a donation to build a protective wall to keep the kids safe from Boko

Horam kidnapers. We also helped build another small church in Kenya and have for many years supported another orphanage in the Tanzania area. We have made donations to an Internationally recognized organization to drill water wells in Sudan and other drought areas in Africa. Keep in mind that we have no production in any of these areas I have just mentioned. I have spoken to thousands of people over the years through an organization called Unity for Africa to offer a Christian message of hope and conciliation between the tribes and various factions. Many of these charitable efforts have occurred in areas where we have zero commercial interest. Please understand I am not mentioning these points to draw attention or boast. I simply mention them to let you know we have a company and personal history of caring deeply for the African people beyond any oil or commercial interest. I guess that is why it really did hurt us to be hit with articles like the kind we have seen. We want the African people to know we truly are an honest company and we do care. They say that a picture paints a thousand words so I have selected a few photos to document some of our work in Africa over the years. I would pray that actions speak louder than words or careless accusations. In one of the photos you will see a little girl sitting all alone in the orphanage in a green chair isolated from the other children. I asked why, and they told me she was dying of aids. I later held her in my arms and wept. My group told me I had to be someplace else to keep up the schedule. I got a bit angry and said I would not be rushed away from these precious little kids. I hate for any of these people to read articles that make us look like bad guys.

In summary, I know your organization truly cares about Africa and many people around the world that are often victimized because of corruption, aggression, and exploitation. Your staff and your board are clearly trying to be a voice and a clarion advocate for justice. I admire and wholeheartedly support you for that. I only pray that you will use your journalistic instincts to sense that we are sincere and that we are truly innocent of allegations that have hurt our honor and our name. Please feel free to interface with me at any time. We feel it helps to get our side of the story out and we trust you will at least let our voice be heard.

Most Respectfully,

Lane Franks
President
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* Correction: In the 3 March email sent by Liberty to Global Witness, this amount was stated to be US\$ 25,000. In a second email sent by Liberty on 6 March, this figure was corrected to US\$ 15,000.