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**Atrazine EXPOSED** Unsealed by the Court & Exposed by SourceWatch

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**From:** Adelman Jessica USWS  
**Sent:** Friday, August 28, 2009 10:08 AM  
**To:** Goldsmith Steven USGR; Ford Sherry USGR  
**Subject:** FW: In the News - 8/28/2009

Great piece here -- she is the one who did the good job the other day on MSNBC? She's a great weapon. Well done - JCA

## NYT Terrifies Over "Weed Killers" in Water

American Council on Science and Health  
22 August 2009

All the news that's fit to scare. That was the thrust of this weekend's New York Times article by Charles Duhigg entitled "Toxic Waters: Debating Just How Much Weed Killer Is Safe in Your Water Glass."

As president of the American Council on Science and Health, I have been following environmental and health media articles for some three decades -- seeing how they measure up in terms of "honors" for exaggerated risk, biased reporting, misrepresented science, and pure sensationalism. The Duhigg article is clearly a contender for the all-time worst.

Duhigg argues that the widespread use of the herbicide atrazine is polluting our supply of drinking water and putting us all -- but particularly pregnant women -- at risk. He consistently refers to "recent studies" (but does not cite them) and concerned "scientists and health advocates" (but does not name any mainstream experts) who think that the Environmental Protection Agency is not protecting us from atrazine -- and that the manufacturers of the herbicide are somehow poisoning us. He cites "new research" showing that atrazine is hazardous even at low levels but does not specify his sources. He seems oblivious to the work of the most famous early toxicologist (Paracelsus, circa 1500) who set in place the time-honored premise: only the dose makes the poison.

Atrazine is a widely used herbicide -- applied on a variety of crops (corn, sugar cane, sorghum, and more). It is a tightly regulated chemical, and levels in water (where there could be spill-off from agricultural or other applications) are closely monitored by environmental agencies. It has been in safe use for over fifty years. There is a huge "safety factor" built in -- so that permitted trace levels are some hundred-fold less than what could have an adverse effect on human health. The Safe Drinking Water Act requires monitoring water for a multitude of chemicals, including atrazine. You would drown from drinking the huge amounts of water needed for you to be affected by trace levels of atrazine in any American water supply.

Duhigg appears to be playing to the fears (phobias) of consumers who (a) do not know where their food comes from -- and are unaware that without the use of agricultural chemicals like atrazine (which allow farmers to fight weeds, insects and disease) our food supply would be diminished by about half -- and (b) think that even a trace amount of any "chemical" in food, water, air, or consumer products is intolerable. The reality, of course, is that everything, including natural foods, is comprised of chemicals -- most of which are toxic and/or carcinogenic in animals at high dose but are perfectly safe when we consume them.

How much "weed killer" in your water is safe? Well, how much arsenic in your natural baked potato is safe? (Arsenic occurs naturally in potatoes.) The mere ability to detect a chemical in a substance -- in food, air, water, consumer products, or even human tissue -- does not signal that there is a public health hazard.

Nowadays, when we have so many serious public health risks to face (cigarette smoking, obesity, swine flu, and more), Duhigg has given top priority to a bogus risk. And this is irresponsible. As a result of his article, he hopes that Americans will be demanding zero tolerance for atrazine in the water supply -- and we will incur huge expenses to accomplish this dubious goal, with absolutely no resulting health benefits, since there were never any health risks in the first place. Even the Environmental Protection Agency (the most stringent regulatory agency in the world and the most powerful, not known for downplaying chemical risks) stated that atrazine posed no known health risks when they approved re-registration of it in 2006. EPA has evaluated hundreds of studies finding "no evidence of a link to birth defects."



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So why did the New York Times give such prominent coverage to a bogus risk? It is part of a general wave of "chemophobia." Earlier this month, the Times accepted a paid advertisement (an "op-ad") on their editorial page, paid for (at a price of about \$50,000) by New York's prestigious Mount Sinai Hospital and Medical Center. The paid-for editorial copy claimed that industrial "chemicals" (phthalates, BPA, etc.) were imperiling our children, when there was no basis whatsoever for such an assertion.

So it is "in" to scare people about "chemicals" in their air, food, water, and consumer products -- and apparently Mr. Duhigg and the Times elected to exploit this phobia. Unfortunately, scaring people about the quality and safety of their drinking water is not only without scientific basis, it is completely counter-productive, distracting us from the real public health hazards we face today.

By Elizabeth M. Whelan, Sc.D., M.P.H., president of the American Council on Science and Health (ACSH.org)

**From:** Barnes Andrea (ext) USGR

**Sent:** Friday, August 28, 2009 10:10 AM

**To:** Abbott John USGR; Adelman Jessica USWS; Akins Jonathan USGR; Allan Gregg CAGU; Alvarez Graciela MXMC; Alventosa Vince USGR; Arino Gigi USGR; Bassi Bobby USGR; Becker Barbara CHBS; Beidler Tom USGR; Bell Margaret USGR; Belles David USGR; Bennett Wayne CAGU; Bernens Jack USMN; Beutke Bill USGR; Blackney Barbara USGR; Bradshaw Jay CAGU; Breckenridge Charles USGR; Braggi Neal USRE; Brownell Keith USGR; Brune Elaine USGR; Bryan Ann USGR; Burnell Keith USGR; Calhoun Wendell USGR; Carpino Don USGR; Carroll Beth USGR; Cholewa Jeanne USMN; Christensen Thomas USGR; Covington Susan USGR; Crouse George USGR; Dawson Kim USGR; Delp Bryan USVB; DeMers Mary USGR; Dickinson Travis USGR; Dodson Jo Heather USGR; Drotschmann Alex USGR; Duan James USGR; Dufort Marianne USGR; Eichlin Kathy USGR; Elser David CHBS; Escalante Roberto MXMC; Fischer Valdemar USGR; Fister Ken USGR; Flippin Charles USGR; Flores Maurilio MXMC; Ford Sherry USGR; Foresman Chuck USGR; Freed John USGR; Garman Chip USGR; Goldsmith Steven USGR; Gonzalez-Valero Juan CHBS; Graef Henry USUW; Hackett Dennis USGR; Haley Jacqueline USGR; Hamilton Tom USGR; Hawkins Vern USGR; Hendley Paul USGR; Henry Kevin USGR; Hertl Peter USGR; Hinderliter Daniel USGR; Hook Barbara USGR; Howard Chris USGR; Howard Stott USDM; Hull Sarah CHBS; Hundley David USGR; Irrig Heidi USGR; Jackson Tommy CAGU; Jenkins Jim USDM; Johnson Jim USDM; Kelly Angus USWS; Kelly Dennis USGR; Kimm Jay USDM; Klages Nathan CAGU; Klaveano Ryan USRS; Kuhn Eric USGR; Lachney Ralph USGR; Langkamp Scott USGR; Larson Ross USDM; Lawson Scott USGR; Licata John USGR; Ligon Steve USMN; Lower Geoffrey USGR; Mack Mike CHBS; Macken Kevin USMN; McFarland Janis USGR; Miller Stephanie USGR; Mitchell John USGR; Molitor Pam USMN; Moreira Eduardo USGR; Moride Lisa USGR; Moseley Carroll USGR; Moss Michael USGR; Nadel Alan USGR; Neill Rob CHBS; Nicholson Michael USSG; Ouzts Clark USGR; Palma Evelyn CHBS; Paoli Gerry USGR; Pastoor Tim USGR; Pearson Charles USGR; Peters Greg USGR; Peters James H USGR; Peters Jeff USGR; Pinon David USGR; Pulliam Keelan USGR; Pyle Steve USGR; Quarles Beth USGR; Ramsey Mickey USGR; Ratliff Randy USGR; Reasons Scott USGR; Riggs Laurie USGR; Rios Francisco MXMC; Rose Dan CHBS; Salas Guadalupe MXMC; Sandlin Lynn USGR; Santanam Ramesh USGR; Shivrain Vinod USGR; Somody Carol USGR; Zingg Carmen USBO; Barlow Todd USGR; Chaudhuri Sumita USRE; Clemens Christopher USGR; Collins Ashley USRE; Cueva James USGR; Currie Angela USGR; Day Lloyd USWS; DeRose Rick USRE; DiPaola Michael USGR; Dowling Luis USMN; Farmer Danelle USGR; Flakne Dave USGR; Glasgow Les USGR; Gonzalez Ivan CHBS; Goolsby Robert USMN; Hanes-Miller Amber USBO; Holzworth Brad USGR; Ibarra Rodolfo MXMC; Jalthaide; Jepson Ian USRE; Langley Chris USGR; Lara Angel USRE; Lee Erica USGR; Lord Melissa USGR; Lycan Darren USGR; Marten Sebastian CHBS; Martin Rex USGR; Miano Jeffrey USRE; Micali Juliana USGR; Milan Jose USGR; Miranda Marybeth USRE; Olah Kriszta CHBS; Pauwels Dimitri CHBS; Pizzo Emanuele CHBS; Plunket Bob USGR; Porter Don USGR; Powell Joe; Razo Carly USGR; Renner Rob USGR; Savinelli Caydee USGR; Schmidt Lynn CAGU; Schuyler Jack USGR; Schwenke Stephanie USGR; Shah Jigar USGR; Sharma Shachi CHBS; Shaw Jennifer USGR; Shaw Judy CAGU; Sheehan Tricia; Shope Matthew USGR; Sippell Dave CAAR; Smith Jeff USGR; Spain Steve USGR; Staton Tanja USGR; Stavola Pat USGR; Steffens John USRE; Stewart Rich USGR; Strong Neil USGR; Stypa Marian USGR; Suarez Fernando USGR; Sutton Rick USGR; Tally Allison USGR; Tao Joan USGR; Tedford Eric USGR; Teoli William USGR; Tierney Timothy USMN; Tilger Carsten CHBS; Tout Nancy CAGU; Tuckis Jeffrey USRE; Turner Kendall USDM; Vail Gordon USGR; Venello Jason USGR; Walker Martin CHBS; Wall Sharie USGR; Warner Simon USRE; Watson Eileen USGR; Weber Aaron USGR; Wendt Rusty USGR; Wichert Rex USGR; Willenbrock Pat USGR; Williams Ron USGR; Wimbush Alexander CHBS; Winch Braydon SGSG; Wojciak Jim USGR; Yates Fred USGR; Yocum Jennifer USGR; Zang Larry USGR

**Subject:** In the News - 8/28/2009

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