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PHILADELPHIA COUNTY
COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
TRIAL DIVISION

IN RE: PARAQUAT PRODUCTS : May Term, 2022, No. 559
LIABILITY LITIGATION: Page 1-263

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Videotaped Deposition of JOHN ABBOTT,
PH.D., was taken pursuant to notice, at Kirkland &
Ellis, 1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC
20004 beginning at 8:07 a.m., on Wednesday, July 24,
2024, before Sherry L. Brooks, Certified LiveNote
Reporter and Notary Public.

Job No. 2024-948233

1 foundation.

2 A. Actually, I have not.

3 BY MR. DICKENS:

4 Q. Well, certainly, EPA personnel had rapidly
5 shifted from their government position to jobs within
6 Syngenta itself, right?

7 MR. HONG: Object to form.

8 A. Ask me that question again, please.

9 BY MR. DICKENS:

10 Q. EPA personnel has shifted from their
11 government position within the EPA to jobs at
12 Syngenta, correct?

13 MR. HONG: Same objection.

14 A. We have hired some EPA personnel, yes.

15 BY MR. DICKENS:

16 Q. You worked closely with Doug Wolf, right?

17 A. I have.

18 Q. He worked at the EPA?

19 A. He did.

20 Q. There's others as well who went from the
21 EPA directly to Syngenta?

22 A. There are others.

23 Q. You're aware of others who've applied for
24 jobs --

25 (Whereupon, Madam Reporter asked for

1 clarification from Counsel.)

2 MR. DICKENS: Okay. I'll slow down.

3 BY MR. DICKENS:

4 Q. You're aware of others who've applied for
5 jobs at Syngenta while they were working at the EPA,
6 correct?

7 A. I am aware of one, yes.

8 Q. Okay. Who was that?

9 A. Thurston Morton.

10 Q. Anyone else you're aware of?

11 A. I'm not.

12 MR. DICKENS: While we're on the topic,
13 I'll mark Exhibit 10 for the record.

14 (Exhibit Number 10 was marked for
15 identification and was attached to the deposition.)

16 BY MR. DICKENS:

17 Q. You're all set?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay. Before we get to Exhibit 10, you
20 mentioned you're aware of Thurston Morton, correct?

21 A. Correct.

22 Q. And Thurston Morton applied for a job at
23 Syngenta?

24 A. He was -- I actually don't know if he
25 applied, but there was -- his -- he had expressed an

1 interest.

2 Q. Expressed an interest to who?

3 A. To -- to me.

4 Q. You personally?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. And what do you recall about that
7 conversation?

8 A. Just simply what kind of role are you
9 looking for and I'll put you in touch with our
10 product safety colleagues who are engaged in the
11 hiring of those kinds of roles.

12 Q. What type of position was he looking for?

13 A. I think he's a risk assessor.

14 Q. And this was while he was working at the
15 EPA?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And do you recall when this was?

18 A. No, not exactly.

19 Q. Was it within the past several years?

20 A. Four or five years, sure.

21 Q. And did you know Thurston Morton
22 personally prior to him reaching out and expressing
23 an interest with Syngenta?

24 A. Yes, but only on a very cursory level.

25 Q. And that was through his role with the

1 EPA?

2 A. Actually, he and I went to the same
3 university at one point.

4 Q. And you knew each other at that
5 university?

6 A. Very, very limited.

7 Q. Which university was that?

8 A. The University of Rhode Island.

9 Q. And you -- was that for undergrad or
10 graduate degree?

11 A. Graduate degree.

12 Q. Is that where you received your Ph.D.?

13 A. Yes, sir.

14 Q. Was Thurston Morton also there for
15 graduate school?

16 A. I think so, but I don't recall exactly.

17 Q. But that's where you met him is at the
18 University of Rhode Island?

19 A. Yes. And, again, very limited
20 interactions.

21 Q. Did you stay in touch with Thurston Morton
22 after Rhode Island?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Now, Thurston Morton was involved with the
25 review of Paraquat at the EPA, right?

1 A. I don't know.

2 Q. He was one of the individuals responsible
3 for the 2019 registration review or interim review on
4 the issue of Paraquat on Parkinson's disease, was he
5 not?

6 MR. HONG: Objection. Lacks foundation.

7 A. I don't know.

8 BY MR. DICKENS:

9 Q. You don't know, one way or the other?

10 A. I do not know.

11 Q. You understand that published review on
12 Paraquat and Parkinson's disease, that health review,
13 was published in 2019?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. It's fair to say that Thurston Morton
16 applied or expressed interest in a job at Syngenta
17 after 2019, right?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Do you know if Thurston Morton is still at
20 the EPA?

21 A. I believe so. I haven't interacted with
22 him in several years.

23 Q. Turning to Exhibit 10, in the middle of
24 page 1 you wrote to a Patrick McCain, Charles Levey:
25 "Please keep this confidential, but if you have any

1 feedback, it will be welcomed."

2 And this is with respect to an applicant
3 from the EPA for a position in Basel, right?

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. And that's the main office for Syngenta
6 overseas, correct?

7 A. Correct.

8 Q. And so an applicant from the EPA was
9 applying to Syngenta, and you're asking for some
10 feedback, right?

11 A. In response to the hiring manager seeking
12 any inputs.

13 Q. And you seek input from a Patrick McCain
14 and Charles Levey, correct?

15 A. Correct.

16 Q. Who were they?

17 A. So Patrick McCain -- let's see the date,
18 2018, Charles Levey -- so I believe at the time Chuck
19 -- or Charles Levey would have been the insecticide
20 team lead for the U.S. and Pat McCain was -- I don't
21 exactly know what his role was at that exact period
22 of time.

23 He could have been a regulatory manager in
24 the seed treatment area or he could -- he ultimately
25 ended up being a team leader role. So I don't know