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September 15, 2021

Amber Scoriah, Individually and as Partner-President of Lioness
Ariella Steinhorn, Individually and as Partner of Lioness
Lioness.co
Board of Directors of Lioness
Via email: amber@lioness.co
Via email: ariella@lioness.co

RE: Cease and Desist: Lioness should not publish a false story

Dear Ms. Scoriah, Ms. Steinhorn, Lioness, and its Board of Directors:

This firm represents Deepak Chopra, M.D. This letter responds to your email dated September 14, 2021.

Your email threatens to publish on the internet a false story in *Lioness.co*, which you own. It is my understanding that *Lioness* is a public relations company that earns money by soliciting and selling stories of alleged discrimination, sexual harassment, and situations that you contend show "mistreatment." A story about Dr. Chopra would seemingly be your biggest story since *Lioness* was launched in 2019.

You have said that a woman, who you have refused to identify, wrote an "essay" about Dr. Chopra that *Lioness* intends to publish "this week". You gave Dr. Chopra one day to respond to her unsupported allegations. This woman alleges (falsely) that she had sex with Dr. Chopra while she was his "patient" at an unidentified time and location in the "1990s". This woman is incapable of providing a date, other than sometime during a ten-year-period approximately twenty-five to thirty years ago. An allegation that a doctor had sex with a patient is defamatory per se, which poses substantial liability problems for you, individually and as owners of your company, should you decide to publish this woman's false allegations. Because you have refused to identify this woman for Dr. Chopra, you have precluded him from even confirming whether

she was a “patient.” Do not publish that she was his patient without first providing Dr. Chopra with her name and time to respond to this point and more.

While it is difficult to respond here due to your time constraints and refusal to tell us the accuser’s name, what you have so far revealed shows that her allegations are a sham, and you did not do even the most basic fact-checking. If you publish her allegations, such publication would be malicious, and you may be sued for defamation per se, where you, individually and as owners of *Lioness*, will be subject to pay both compensatory and punitive damages. Once libel per se has been established, the defendant has no defense as to stated facts, unless he can persuade a jury they were true in all their particulars. *New York Times v. Sullivan*, 376 U.S. 254, 267 (1964). As you may know, a publisher or reporter’s actual malice can be proven in a defamation case in various ways, including by proving that the publisher *failed to do a true investigation*, the publisher *relied on sources known to be unreliable*, (here, your accuser is unreliable—she admittedly was or is a severe drug and alcohol addict, and her almost thirty-year-old allegations do not add up), the publisher relied on sources known to be biased against the plaintiff, the publisher relied on people who are not in a position to know what things they speak of, among other factors. See *New York Times v. Sullivan*, 376 U.S. 254, 280-284 [actual malice]; *St. Amant v. Thompson*, 390 U.S. 727, 731-733 (1968) [reckless disregard]; *Reader’s Digest Assn. v. Superior Court*, 37 Cal.3d 244, 256 (1984) [New York Times standard]; *Gordon v. Boyles*, 99 P.3d 75 (2004) [summary judgment improper where statements were defamatory per se]; *Nguyen v. Do*, 2011 Cal. App. Unpub. LEXIS 4352 *24-28 (2011) [libel per se]. You asked Dr. Chopra for a comment, but you have refused to provide the name of the accuser. Therefore, you are intentionally avoiding the truth, which should expose you to liability. See *Harte-Hanks Communications, Inc. v. Connaughton*, 491 U.S. 657, 682, 691-692 (1989); *Vandenburg v. Newsweek, Inc.*, 441 F.2d 378, 380 (5th Cir), *cert denied*, 404 U.S. 864 (1971).

This letter is also notice under California Civil Code section 48a that you should not publish the false statement that Dr. Chopra had sex with a patient, for all of the reasons in this letter. Section 48a enhances damages for plaintiffs.

Some of the evidence that shows that this woman’s allegations are false includes the following:

One, you are concealing the accuser’s name. We, unfortunately, live in an age of guilt by accusation. It is a sickness in our society that *Lioness* benefits from, at least. Are you willing to risk damaging a good man’s reputation with false accusations without allowing him a true opportunity to defend himself? Dr. Chopra is the founder of the Chopra Foundation, a non-profit entity for research on well-being and humanitarianism, and Chopra Global, a modern-day health company at the intersection of science and spirituality. He is a world-renowned pioneer in integrative medicine and personal transformation, a clinical professor and adjunct professor at various universities, and author of over 90 books translated into over forty-three languages, including numerous New York Times bestsellers. For the last thirty years, Dr. Chopra has been at the forefront of integrative medicine and the meditation revolution. TIME magazine has described Dr. Chopra as “one of the top 100 heroes and icons of the century.” As I am sure you know, making these false allegations online could have a terrible effect on Dr. Chopra’s life, his good name, his foundation, and his business, Chopra Global. Dr. Chopra cannot fully defend

himself when he does not know the name of the accuser. Please provide her name before you publish anything. And please give Dr. Chopra sufficient time to respond.

Two, you allege that this occurred “in the 1990s” at the Chopra Center. The Chopra Center was not even established until 1996. That is strong evidence that you did not do any legitimate fact-checking, which is evidence of malice. It calls into question your entire story. Please provide the date of the alleged conduct.

Three, you allege that this woman was Dr. Chopra’s patient “in the mid-1990s.” Dr. Chopra did not see patients at that time. That, too, is strong evidence that you did not do any legitimate fact-checking, which is more evidence of malice.

Four, you allege that this woman saw Dr. Chopra for therapy. Dr. Chopra is an endocrinologist. Dr. Chopra is not a therapist, he is not a psychiatrist, and he is not a psychologist. Again, your inability to get basic facts correct is strong evidence that you did not any fact-checking, which is more evidence of malice.

Five, you allege that this woman went to “Dr. Chopra’s center seeking rehabilitation for alcohol and drug addiction.” Dr. Chopra’s “center” provided no such services. Again, that is strong evidence that you did not do basic fact-checking.

Six, your contention that the alleged behavior occurred during the 1990s, narrows it down to a ten-year time period, which is plainly unhelpful. Moreover, your position on this point does not add up. You said that you reviewed her diary. If you reviewed her “diary”, then you should know when these allegations allegedly occurred. Yet, you have refused to provide a date. You have not even provided the year. You are being intentionally vague and that makes the whole thing not believable. Again, please provide the date that this unidentified woman’s allegations allegedly occurred.

Seven, her story contains mostly boilerplate accusations, such as he allegedly kissed her. Did he kiss her cheek? Did this woman omit the details because she has no memory of the details? Did she omit the details because she admittedly was a severe drug addict and alcoholic who cannot clearly recall what happened? While I feel sincere sympathy for people who are addicted to drugs or alcohol, that does not make it okay for you to smear a good man’s reputation to advance your starter company. How do you know that this woman’s drug or alcohol addiction did not affect her cognitive ability to recall events from approximately three decades ago? Do you care?

Eight, you say that you fact-checked her story. However, when asked, you refused to provide any evidence of your “fact-checking.” That, too, discredits her allegations.

Nine, if this woman’s allegations from twenty-five to thirty years ago were true, and they are not, then, at a minimum, it would have made sense for her to come forward at least in 2006 when the MeToo movement started, or in 2016 when the #MeToo movement exploded in the media. Why did she delay until September 2021? Did she delay until now because she needs money now? And she thinks that by putting herself out there with salacious allegations, she will get attention and money? Or are you trying to advance your starter company, *Lioness*, to get online clicks, and

therefore money? Dr. Chopra and I applaud the work of the #MeToo movement and support it when it is right. This is not such a case.

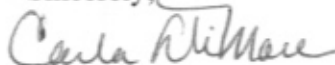
Ten, just because a woman makes an allegation of sexual misconduct does not make it true. You have a legal and ethical duty to your profession and the larger community to not knowingly or recklessly ignore the falsity of her story. This letter has outlined substantial facts that show her story is implausible, and you should have serious doubts about her allegations. Therefore, you should not publish it. As the Supreme Court said in *St. Amant*, “[t]here must be sufficient evidence to permit the conclusion that the defendant, in fact, entertained serious doubts as to the truth of his publication. Publishing with such doubts shows reckless disregard for truth or falsity and demonstrates actual malice.” *St. Amant v. Thompson*, 390 U.S. 727, 731 (1968). I am confident that your company can succeed in finding and publishing legitimate stories. This isn’t one of them. Dr. Chopra is a healer who has spent his career trying to make a positive difference throughout the world. Please stop and think about what you are doing. Do you want to ignore the fact that her bogus allegations do not add up, are almost three decades old, and may damage the reputation of a good man who is trying to serve the world? Please find a real “story.”

If you publish this woman’s allegations after reading this letter, that will show that *Lioness* is reckless and willing to publish anything to get publicity for itself. If you intend to publish her allegations, then, pre-publication, please provide the information requested in this letter, and give my client sufficient time to respond. Also, if you intend to publish her allegations, I suggest that we meet pre-publication so that I can review all of the “fact-checked” evidence that you claim you have. Alternatively, kindly email your alleged evidence to me. If you decide to publish her false story, you should also publish all of the counterpoints itemized here which show that her story is fabricated. Cherry-picking from counter-information to mislead a reader is evidence of malice.

This letter does not attempt to be a complete or exhaustive statement of Dr. Chopra’s or his company’s rights or claims against you, and nor do any of the statements contained herein constitute a waiver or relinquishment of any of his rights or remedies, whether legal or equitable, all of which are expressly reserved.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Carla DiMare

CC: Dr. Deepak Chopra