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Ms. Taylor Dolven
Miami Herald
tdolven@miamiherald.com

RE: ***“Pilots at MIA’s biggest cargo airline warned execs a crash was coming. Then a plane went down.”***

Dear Ms. Dolven:

I write in response to the above-referenced news article that was published this morning in the *Miami Herald*. Although the article is replete with factual inaccuracies and errors-by-omission, many of which are addressed below, something much larger is at play with respect to the publication of this article. That is, either wittingly or unwittingly, your publication of this clearly biased and poorly researched article has made you a participant in the “corporate campaign” currently being waged against Atlas by the Teamsters Union.

A corporate campaign is an organized assault by a union against a company with which the union is engaged in contract negotiations. It typically involves economic, political, legal, and psychological warfare against the target company. The attack almost always centers around the news media, where the union attempts to redefine the image and tarnish the reputation of the target company. The central goal is to undermine the company’s relationships with its key stakeholders: customers, employees, shareholders, regulators, and the general public, among others. A corporate campaign attempts to create pressure points to which the target company must respond.

There can be no question that your article is just another piece of the ongoing corporate campaign being waged against Atlas by the Teamsters and its operatives. By failing to adhere to traditional journalistic standards, you have now become one of the union’s operatives. For example, your article contains numerous quotes from Mr. Michael Russo, whom you identify as an “Atlas captain.” You fail to mention, however, that Mr. Russo also serves as the Strike Preparedness Committee Chair for the Teamsters Union, Local 1224, which represents the Atlas pilots. You also rely upon statements from Messrs. Dan Wells and Bob Kirchner, both of whom you identify simply as “pilots.” But once again, you fail to mention that both Mr. Wells and Mr. Kirchner are heavily involved in union activities. Mr. Wells is President of the Local 1224 union and Mr. Kirchner is the Chairman of the corporate campaign. As you know from the written information we provided to you prior to the article being published, leaders from the union have been making factually inaccurate statements about this incident as part of its corporate campaign in an attempt to gain leverage in ongoing contract negotiations. This is all part of the union’s

standard corporate campaign playbook. Failing to identify your sources' titles and positions with the union ignores their clear bias and creates a false narrative of the facts. This is unacceptable.

Worse, the article utilizes an illegal recording from a conversation at a safety-focused conference between Atlas managers and its most experienced pilots who serve as line check airmen. To the best of our knowledge, the recording was made illegally without two-party consent and the existence of the recording was not conveyed to Atlas during our communications with you. It is unfortunate that you did not reveal the existence of this illegally obtained recording so that Atlas could comment and place the recorded statements in the proper context. Had you done so, you would have learned that the recorded meeting was, in fact, a confidential training session designed to promote pilot safety. As was explained to you before publication, Atlas hires and trains highly experienced, qualified pilots. Our training programs are continually updated and refreshed to meet pilot needs. Atlas completely rejects any assertion to the contrary. Again, the false narrative created by your article is but one piece of the union's corporate campaign against Atlas. Your failure to recognize it as such is truly astounding.

As noted above, your article is littered with factual inaccuracies and errors-by-omission. The most striking misstatement of fact is the assertion that “[t]he National Transportation Safety Board has cited pilot error as the likely cause of the crash. But some pilots at the company claim that the true cause lies elsewhere.” This simply is not true. Contrary to your reporting, the NTSB has not issued a formal statement or made a final determination regarding the cause of this tragic accident. It would have been quite easy for you to have fact-checked your statement, but you neglected to do so. See <https://www.nts.gov/investigations/pages/dca19ma086.aspx>. Although you provide a hyperlink in your article to a *Wall Street Journal* story as support for your factual assertion, the author of that story merely stated that pilot error was “suspected” by investigators to be the “likely” cause of the accident. As such, your statement about the NTSB having “cited” pilot error is false and must be corrected immediately.

Despite being provided with accurate information about Atlas and its excellent safety record, you chose to publish an article in which you create the false impression that Atlas acts recklessly with respect to safety and, more specifically, the hiring and training of its pilots. Based upon the facts presented to you, you know that such a narrative is inaccurate. Atlas's new hire pilots have an average of 5,738 flying hours, which is significantly higher than the 1500 hours required by the FAA. Many of our experienced captains have more than 10,000 hours of flight time. Atlas has established an outstanding safety record over its 26-year history and has passed all of its International Air Transport Association Operational Safety Audits (IOSA) – the prevailing international standard – with zero findings since the onset of the program. Atlas has a robust and compliant Safety Management System that was implemented before it was even required by the FAA. It also is worth noting that Atlas is audited by the Department of Defense and receives excellent reviews.

The safety and training of our pilots are the highest priorities for Atlas. The company is constantly evaluating and updating our procedures to ensure the safety of our crews and passengers. Our training facilities are widely recognized as some of the best in the aviation industry. The managers of our training department include highly experienced pilots with long military and commercial aviation experience. Atlas takes all safety incidents seriously, analyzes them thoroughly, and takes corrective action to avoid similar incidents in the future. While we

take every incident seriously, the four incidents you mention in your article are a slight fraction of the 180,000 takeoffs and landings that Atlas crews conducted during the same period. Moreover, the pilots involved in each of the incidents were highly trained and experienced. As such, there is no truth to the assertion that a lack of training or experience caused these incidents. It is unfortunate that the union is trying to capitalize on the tragic loss of three lives by attacking their level of training and experience. The union's tactics, as well as your reporting of the union's demonstrably false information, are abhorrent at best.

None of the foregoing factual information is contained in your article. Instead, you chose to rely upon the statements of obviously biased union leaders who, as a part of the union's corporate campaign, have a long history of making false statements about Atlas. Your article contains a significant number of factual misstatements that add to the union's false narrative about the company.

Based upon the foregoing, I trust that you will take the steps necessary to immediately correct the false and misleading information contained in your article. I also caution you to be more cognizant of the way in which individuals engaged in corporate campaigns often manipulate journalists into becoming a weapon against the companies they are targeting. This is a serious matter. Please treat it as such.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JDC', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jeff Carlson
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