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General Mills, Inc.
P.O. Box 1113
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Dear General Mills:

I am what doctors call a chocoholic. It is similar to the malady that alcoholics and drug addicts suffer, except that my addiction is to chocolate. I have been addicted to chocolate since before I was born. My mother worked at the chocolate factories in Hershey, Pennsylvania right up until the day I was born. She ate her share of chocolate, but the doctors tell me that my addiction arises more just from the fact that I (she) was around chocolate for 12-16 hours a day and that both the flavor and the odor of chocolate became an integral part of my environment as a gestating fetus.

You see my friends, I must have chocolate at every meal twice on Sundays or else I suffer from terrible withdrawal headaches. And, as I'm sure you know, the alxies and druggies (as some of them prefer to be called) both have AA meetings they can go to for help with their addictions, but since an addiction to chocolate doesn't create the same kind of adverse health and behavior problems, there are no 12 step programs for chockies. But, to be honest, I am glad of that fact because I couldn't live without my daily dosage of Ding Dongs® and Mars Bars®.

I sometimes enjoy those macaroni and cheese dinners, but I have to prepare them with chocolate milk instead of the normal white milk. That adds a distinct flavor to the mix. I'll admit that it's an acquired taste, but friends, I've got to tell you that until you've tried it you DO NOT know what you are missing!

Since I was a kid growing up in America's Heartland, (mom moved us out of Pennsylvania after the chocolate shortage in '73 -- a harrowing time for me I must tell you) I have enjoyed chocolate flavored cereals. During that chocolate shortage, mom once brought home a box of Cap'n Crunch®, but after the withdrawal hallucinations and vomiting spells I had due to a lack of chocolate, she never made that mistake again. I don't mean to insinuate that Cap'n Crunch® is a vomit inducing cereal -- I am sure that it is a fine product, it just didn't have any chocolate to satisfy my addiction. But then again, they are a competitor, so maybe you WANT to get the message out that it makes you vomit...

I believe I have tried all of the chocolate flavored cereals on the market, but none have satisfied me the way that yours have. My two all time favorites are most definitely Cocoa Puffs® and Count Chocula®. The Count takes top honors. Those chocolate marshmallows are the Bomb! Have you or any of the fellows in your marketing department ever considered packaging the marshmallows and selling those separate from the cereal? I must tell you, my friends, that you have a HUGE marketing goldmine on your hands!!! If you should decide to do this in the future,

would I be entitled to a percentage for suggesting the idea? Please send me the proper forms to fill out in this instance.

Anyway, let me get to the real reason for writing to you today. For the longest time, I could not find Count Chocula[®] when I went shopping. I am now grown up and living on my own, so there is no danger of mom buying an unchocolate cereal, because I buy them myself! I had to rely on other breakfast cereals for my chocolate fix for many years, so I cannot tell you how excited I got when I saw that the Count was once again haunting the shelves at my local grocer! But we now have another serious problem.

When I purchased my first box of Count Chocula[®] I discovered that, in addition to a number of different sizes and shapes of chocolate marshmallows, there were also white marshmallows shaped like Casper the Friendly Ghost, and pink marshmallows shaped like Wendy the Witch. Now don't get me wrong, I like Casper and Wendy. I am a little embarrassed, but not ashamed, to admit that I even had a bit of a crush on Wendy as a young child. But the problem is that these are not chocolate flavored marshmallows and they disrupt the absolute chocolate flavor of the cereal that I recall as a boy. Mom always bought Count Chocula[®] for its pure chocolate content, and not for any white or pink marshmallows which dilute the chocolate.

I am assuming that the net weight of the cereal has not changed in this process of adding different marshmallows, so given two possibilities: (a) only chocolate marshmallows; and (b) chocolate marshmallows plus pink and white marshmallows -- it must mean that I am paying the same price but getting less overall chocolate for my money. And the obvious solution for this chocolate deficiency ratio will not work in my case, because I ALREADY use chocolate milk on my cereals. So that won't help me here.

Is it possible that this addition of other marshmallows is only a temporary marketing plan of General Mills? Please tell me that it is! Here's an idea: why not bring back the Fruit Brute[®] cereal? If I recall, that fourth monster cereal never did that well back in the day, and production was eventually stopped altogether. Well, here's your answer. Bring back Fruit Brute[®] and increase its sales by including other fruity flavored marshmallows shaped like Casper the Friendly Ghost and Wendy the Witch! ... HUH??? How bout it? I won't even ask for any percentage on the sales you make with that idea! What a deal for General Mills!

Please write to me and let me know the direction General Mills plans to go with its chocolate cereals. Do you have any free promotional baseball caps you could send to me? Adjustable size will be fine.

Rusty Lucas

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p.s. Were there any U.S. Servicemen named Mills in the Armed Forces who attained the rank of General? Is that where the name for the company came from? If so, I would love to have a photograph of that great American to salute each morning when I get out of bed and enjoy my chocolatey breakfast! If not, please explain the origin of the company name to me.