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Schering-Plough HealthCare Products, Inc.  
Coppertone Suncare Products  
P.O. Box 377  
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Dear Coppertone:

I recently heard that a child was temporarily blinded by your product when it accidentally got into his or her eyes. The story said that the little boy or girl got the lotion in his or her eyes and began screaming because it was burning. His or her mother or father tried to wash the little boy or girl's eyes out with water, but that the water didn't work because the sunscreen was waterproof. The mother or father eventually called poison control and was urged to rush his or her son or daughter to the Emergency Room where they used other medicine to wash out the boy's or girl's eyes. The story said that the boy or girl would have gone permanently blind if the mother or father had not gotten to the hospital when he or she did.

My friends, I was mortified with this story, until I realized that I was reading a copy of the "Idiot's Guide to Urban Legends." I has forgotten that this was a book debunking urban legends as opposed to a book about true life horror stories. I laughed at my own reaction once I realized it was a hoax.

Anyway, I thought that maybe some other people would read this story in a less than worthy newspaper or an e-mail. Remember that guy or girl who worked for the New York Times and got fired for making up stories that he or she never really did actual real life reporting on? It is my guess that HE or SHE is responsible for this story and maybe also the urban legend about the alligators that live in the sewers underneath New York City. But since he or she already lived in New York City and didn't have to fake his or her travel to where the alligators were at and pretend to "report back" to his or her editors, maybe he or she DIDN'T scoop the sewer alligators story. I bet instead that he or she is the one responsible for the Roswell, New Mexico urban legend about the guy or girl who ate pop rocks and coke and died from an overdose. Since that story is based out west, the New York Times reporter probably sat at home in his or her apartment and faked the whole thing. I am **glad** that he or she got fired!

Anyway, there is a chance that he or she (the reporter from the New York Times) started this whole story of burning and blinded eyes as a result of your top notch line of waterproof sunscreen products. I think you should fight back and ask the New York Times to issue a

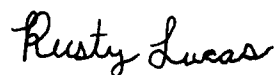
retraction. They might do it without much prodding since they would want to distance themselves from any of the false stories published from their liar reporter. But also being a responsible paper that has hopefully learned its lesson, they might not want to print any news about the blinding effects or not of your products without first verifying that the product does or does not cause blindness.

That is where I come in. I would be willing, if you so desire, to serve as a test case for your products' affect on the human eye. For a small fee, I will squirt your various sunscreen products into my eyes and allow them to react with my eye to see if they burn or blind me. You could have me read an eye chart before the test (just to prove that I can, in fact, read) and then after the test, bring in a second different eye chart for me to try to read. That would prove once and for all whether I was blind or not.

But I wonder if the differences in the adult human eye as opposed to the child human eye would make a difference in the test. After all, the story said that it was a little boy or girl who was blinded, not an adult. In that case, I have a four and a half year old nephew or niece that I would be willing to perform the tests on. He or she has good eyesight and can read letters just like I can. You can even test him or her five times with five different eye charts before squirting the sunscreen into his or her eyes -- just in case the New York Times skeptics think that he or she just got lucky at guessing the letters the first time. That would ensure an accurate control reading.

Please write back and let me know how much you will pay me to take these tests (or for my niece or nephew) and whether we can do them at my house or if I would need to go to New York. I also wondered if you could get me an autographed photo of Liv Tyler. Can you pull any strings? I really liked her in *The Lord of the Rings* and *Heavy*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rusty Lucas".

Rusty Lucas

p.s. I would also be pleasantly surprised if you sent me a baseball cap with your company logo on the front. ::wink wink::