



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY  
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February 7, 1994

OFFICE OF THE  
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT  
FEB 09 1994  
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

To: Dr. Benton Coconaugh, Provost

From: The silent majority of the chemistry department

Despite extreme coercion and intimidation by our "most distinguished" professor, many of us have resisted signing a letter condemning the actions of Professor Bockris. While some of us may not believe in the science that he is trying to demonstrate, we defend his right to carry out his research. In short, we believe in academic freedom. We are pleased that the university investigative committee has found no impropriety on his part.

It is unfortunate that many of our distinguished professors were not able to cope with the personal one-on-one intimidation that they were subjected to and signed the letter sent to you. One would think that these eminent scholars would have tried to hear both sides of the story before their acquiescence to the whims of one individual.

While Professor Cotton contends that Bockris's actions embarrass the university, it is a good question as to who is causing the embarrassment. Even some of our colleagues who signed the original Cotton letter are appalled at the viciousness of his personal attack. This is far from being the first time that Cotton has directed this type of attack against someone he perceives as an adversary. When Cotton ran for the presidency of the American Chemical Society about ten years ago, he sent out hundreds of letters viciously attacking his opponent as being incompetent. These letters were widely circulated showing the extreme arrogance of our distinguished (?) professor. As a result, Cotton was overwhelming defeated by the relatively unknown industrial chemist. There are dozens of additional "Cotton stories" attesting to his extreme arrogance.

We apologize that this letter is not signed, but please be assured that this represents the view of many of us. We believe that there have been enough signed letters already. Furthermore, we frankly do not want to subject ourselves to the attacks that would result. We do hope that there is enough backbone in the university administration to stand up to the attacks that inevitably will continue from this one individual, if not at Bockris, then at anyone else that gets in his way.