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TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF LIBERIA  
DIASPORA PROJECT

PUBLIC HEARING  
HAMLINE UNIVERSITY  
June 13, 2008  
St. Paul, Minnesota

TESTIMONY OF  
MIATTA ADOTEY

TRC Commissioners:  
Chairman Jerome Verdier  
Vice Chairperson Dede Dolopei  
Oumu Syllah  
Sheikh Kafumba Konneh  
Pearl Brown Bull  
Rev. Gerald Coleman  
John H.T. Stewart  
Massa Washington

Court Reporter: Mary P. Mitchell, RDR, CRR

1           The following proceedings were had and made of  
2 record, commencing at approximately 9:22 a.m.:

3           CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Good morning, ladies and  
4 gentlemen. We say welcome to the fifth day of the TRC  
5 Diaspora hearings here in Minnesota.

6           To begin this morning, I ask all of us to please  
7 stand and observe a few moments of silence. Thank you.

8           (All stand in silence.)

9           CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Thank you very much.  
10 Please remain standing and let's administer the oath.

11           (Oath administered to Miatta Adotey, who responded  
12 as follows:)

13           MIATTA ADOTEY: I, Miatta Adotey, do promise that  
14 my testimony I have come to give to the TRC of Liberia is the  
15 truth and nothing but the truth, so help me God.

16           CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Please be seated.

17           (Oath administered to Interpreter, who responded  
18 as follows:)

19           THE INTERPRETER: I, D. Nalon Kaine, do promise  
20 that the interpretation I have come to do on behalf of Marie  
21 [sic] Adotey, will be done to the best of my ability, so help  
22 me God.

23           CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: We'll say good morning.

24           MIATTA ADOTEY: Good morning.

25           CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: We are very glad that

1 you have decided to come and talk to the TRC.

2 MIATTA ADOTEY: Okay.

3 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: This is a forum where we  
4 sit down and discuss about what happened in Liberia, so we  
5 can know what went wrong and then we can find a way to  
6 correct the wrong so we cannot have war in our country again.

7 MIATTA ADOTEY: We all know what happened in  
8 Liberia. But since you are here to hear from me about what  
9 happened, I'm willing to tell you what happened.

10 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Thank you very much.  
11 Mr. Interpreter, we appreciate that you could come to do the  
12 interpretation.

13 THE INTERPRETER: Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: And we just want to  
15 request that through the interpretation, you kindly speak in  
16 the first person. Okay. That would be, speak as if you are  
17 her and not "she say" or "she said" and something like that.

18 Okay, we'll take this time and introduce the  
19 commissioners to you so that you can get to know us, because  
20 you will be interacting with us over the next few minutes.

21 Sheikh Kafumba Konneh. Pearl Brown Bull. Gerald  
22 Coleman. Dede Dolopei. John Stewart. Oumu Syllah. And my  
23 name is Jerome Verdier.

24 So to begin with, we'll ask you a few questions  
25 before you give your testimony. Please tell us your name.

1 MIATTA ADOTEY: My name is Miatta Adotey.

2 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Can you tell us your age  
3 or date of birth?

4 MIATTA ADOTEY: I don't know the year.

5 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: But can you remember the  
6 president that was in office when you knew yourself?

7 MIATTA ADOTEY: Yes.

8 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Please tell us.

9 MIATTA ADOTEY: From the time I was born, the  
10 president I met in the chair who was the president is  
11 President Tubman.

12 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: When you were born,  
13 President Tubman was in the chair? Or, when President Tubman  
14 came to the chair you were a young girl?

15 MIATTA ADOTEY: He was -- he was the president.

16 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: When she was born? Or  
17 he was the first president she got to know?

18 MIATTA ADOTEY: From the time I was born up to  
19 five years, it's President Tubman that was, that was the  
20 president.

21 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Where do you live in the  
22 U.S.?

23 MIATTA ADOTEY: In Minnesota.

24 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: When did you come to the  
25 U.S.?

1 MIATTA ADOTEY: The year 2005.

2 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Do you do any work in  
3 the U.S. now?

4 MIATTA ADOTEY: No, I'm not.

5 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Okay, thank you very  
6 much. You can tell us your story now.

7 MIATTA ADOTEY: What happened to me during the war  
8 from the time I was little, that was my first time seeing  
9 war. Lot of things happened to me. I forgot about almost  
10 everything.

11 What is in my heart is, my son was taken to become a  
12 driver. He was not a driver, he was just a mechanic. When  
13 we heard about the war coming towards us, one day the son was  
14 sick. They close all the hospitals. And he told me he was  
15 taking his son to Kakata to take him to the hospital. He  
16 left the house on Saturday. And went to Kakata.

17 When he left and went to Kakata, the next day car  
18 could not come back to Salalah, but at Salalah a lay. He was  
19 there for five days.

20 We left our houses and went to the farm. On the  
21 sixth day, I saw him with his wife. And I saw two soldiers  
22 behind them. I asked, "Why are you bringing soldier behind  
23 you?" And he said, "I was arrested because I'm the mechanic  
24 in town here. So I will be with them fixing their vehicles."

25 So he was pointed out by others within the town, who

1 say he was a mechanic.

2           They came to our -- the soldiers came to our house  
3 and there they were. The first soldier that was in our house  
4 was called Sid. I asked Sid, I asked Sid and said, "My son  
5 is not a driver, he's a mechanic, so don't be behind for car  
6 business."

7           Sid heard me. Sid did not get in vehicle. Sid was  
8 with us for eight months. There was no problem between us  
9 and Sid.

10           I left then at the house and went to Batala, where my  
11 father was sick. I left the house on Monday, and Saturday I  
12 got the news that he was killed.

13           I said, "What happened he was killed?" I send my  
14 husband to go and find him. He walked five days in the bush  
15 to reach Salalah. At that time my father was sick.

16           When he got there, the boy was already killed. He  
17 asked, "I left my son here, what happened he was killed?"

18           So the commander was the one that sent him to Ivory  
19 Coast for them to go and purchase goods. The commander name  
20 was Tako. He send him to Ivory Coast to go and buy things  
21 and bring it.

22           While on their way, approaching the border in Nimba,  
23 they had accident on the hill. The car could not climb the  
24 hill, so he started to reverse. So the car came back down  
25 the hill and had accident. And two persons -- two persons

1 died, two other brothers died.

2 He was arrested and taken to the gate in prison.

3 They send message to Tako. Message was that the  
4 person you send, the driver you sent had an accident and  
5 people die. Baki was brave, he went to the gate, arrested  
6 him, and kill him. And said, "Why did you kill my wife?"

7 Those that were at the gate were all mad about it.  
8 When he returned he said, "If I see any relative of Baki, I  
9 will kill him."

10 Sid was in the house while they were mad about it.  
11 Sid said, "I have not heard that (inaudible) have accident  
12 and he was killed for that." And he replied, Sid, saying,  
13 "This -- your power is not here, this is my power."

14 So I heard the news and my husband went to go and  
15 find out what happened. My husband went and brought the  
16 child and the mother. The son was with me until he started  
17 to walk. The boy say he wanted to come to see the mom.  
18 While there with Ben, he had chicken pox and he die.

19 So I decided I was -- I was going to Salalah to see  
20 Tako, so he can kill me also. Because this the first time  
21 I've seen a driver have accident and they kill the driver.  
22 If a driver has accident and he die during the accident, they  
23 would not go and arrest the car owner and kill them.

24 So I went and met with Tako. People introduce me to  
25 him. I told him, "The person you killed, the driver you

1 killed the other day, I am the mom." I started to cry. I  
2 said, "Tako, I'm here for you to kill me so I can go with my  
3 son. Because this the only son I had. He did not take gun  
4 to go and kill. He was not up already in the vehicle and  
5 kill somebody. Car has the power. So if it crash and kill  
6 somebody, it's no reason for you to kill my son."

7 So that is what. And I think about my son, it hurts  
8 me, it has made me sick up to today's date.

9 A lot of things happened to me during the war, but  
10 that's the main one that is bothering me.

11 I had lot of things in the house. I had sink, I  
12 bought sink. I wanted to build a house. I had dishes. My  
13 daughter send me money. But they took everything.

14 So all what happened to me, it was Tako, because he  
15 killed my son. That's what happened to me during the war.

16 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: We say thank you for  
17 taking up your time to come and share this experience with  
18 the TRC.

19 It's true what you said that lot of things happened  
20 during the war. And many of the things that happened, other  
21 people or we in Liberia may never know what happened.

22 Because the pain and the suffering we went through is in our  
23 heart, and only us know about it. That's why they organized  
24 the TRC, so we can go around and know what happened to  
25 people. And that way we share your griefs, we share your



1 pains, and all of that, so that you know that the whole  
2 country, all of us, are reviewing what you're going through.

3 All of us were in Liberia and plenty things happened  
4 to us, but we -- the way it affect us is different, everybody  
5 experience them becomes different.

6 So we say thank you. And we say you have our  
7 sympathy for what happened to you.

8 You lost your son and then you lost your grandchild.  
9 And all happened for nothing because of the war and somebody  
10 had gun to take advantage of another person.

11 So the way you have come to the TRC, what you're  
12 doing to be strong to come, you're not doing it just for  
13 yourself, but you're doing it for thousands other mothers who  
14 also lost their children but they can't talk. So by coming,  
15 you'll be helping the country to find a way to make sure that  
16 we have peace, and those things that happened would never  
17 happen again.

18 So you have made a very important contribution to  
19 peace and reconciliation in Liberia.

20 So once more, we say sorry. And then we'll ask you  
21 some questions so that we can understand and know more about  
22 what happened.

23 Can you tell us your son's full name.

24 MIATTA ADOTEY: My son name was Baki Kromah.

25 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Do you know his age at

1 the time he died?

2 MIATTA ADOTEY: My daughter might be able to help  
3 us.

4 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Can you tell us?

5 DAUGHTER OF WITNESS: He was 26 I think.

6 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Do you know the year he  
7 were born, his birth date?

8 DAUGHTER OF WITNESS: Oh, I can't remember.

9 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: You can't remember the  
10 birth date? He was older than you?

11 DAUGHTER OF WITNESS: No, I'm older than him. And  
12 I wasn't present when he was born, so.

13 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Okay, but you estimate  
14 around 26?

15 DAUGHTER OF WITNESS: Yes.

16 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Mama, can you tell us  
17 what year this thing happened?

18 MIATTA ADOTEY: It happened 1990.

19 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: What part of Liberia did  
20 it happen in 1990?

21 MIATTA ADOTEY: I was in Salalah with my husband.

22 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Salalah, that's Bong  
23 County, right?

24 MIATTA ADOTEY: Yes, it was Bong County.

25 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Do you know which of the

1 warring faction Tako belongs to?

2 MIATTA ADOTEY: He was fighting for Charles  
3 Taylor.

4 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Lastly, you know the  
5 full name of Tako?

6 MIATTA ADOTEY: The name I know is I heard people  
7 calling him David.

8 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: So it should be David  
9 Tako. One last thing. Can you describe him? Is he tall?  
10 Short? Bright or dark-skinned?

11 MIATTA ADOTEY: He was bright, huge and bright,  
12 tall.

13 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Okay, thank you. And we  
14 say sorry again. Sheikh.

15 COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KONNEH: Madam witness, good  
16 morning. I want to say sorry for the brutal killing of your  
17 son. You know, as people come before us and give their  
18 stories, we continue to see how senseless was this war.

19 How can one ask a person to do a job that he does not  
20 know? And how an accident -- punishment for accident can be  
21 execution? So we can understand never more.

22 For we know it is painful to conceive a pregnancy,  
23 bore it for nine months, took the delivery pain, see such  
24 child grow up, became man. At a time that you're supposed to  
25 be benefiting from the child, somebody just come and take

1 away from you.

2           So it's painful for a parent that prayed to get a  
3 child, and for that child to succeed them and become the  
4 heir, to see that child precede in them.

5           So we can't ask you a question to find out whether  
6 this Tako may stay alive, and if alive, whether you ever see  
7 him, because you're away in America. But up to your  
8 departure, did you see him?

9           MIATTA ADOTEY: They are all frightened when it  
10 come. After certain time they leave. So they all left and  
11 went where they had to go.

12           COMMISSIONER SHEIKH KONNEH: Well, you and myself  
13 may not know where he is, but God knows where he is. I  
14 believe that if he is alive, God will expose him. We know  
15 your child is not the only one -- was not the only one that  
16 he did such act to. So thank you for coming, and have our  
17 sympathy.

18           COMMISSIONER PEARL BROWN BULL: Ma Miatta,  
19 (speaking in non-English).

20           As a mother, you will never forget boy man Kromah,  
21 your son. Liberia will never forget boy man Kromah, a son of  
22 Liberia who die in war. That's why we ask for his name and  
23 his age. Because we're supposed to write down the name of  
24 everybody who die in the war. And they will be remembered in  
25 the history. Like our chairman said, you sit there and you

1 talk, you're talking for all the mothers who lost their  
2 children. And thank you for all the thousands of mothers.  
3 You are chosen to come to speak for them in America, ya.

4 So you're not alone. And thank you for giving the  
5 opportunity. I sit down here too, I lost my son in the war  
6 to killing. So when we hear, we understand what you're  
7 talking about. EE-shaw.

8 MIATTA ADOTEY: EE-shaw.

9 VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Ma Miatta, thank  
10 you for coming. Today you come here to give voice to your  
11 son, to Baki. And you also come to give voice to your  
12 grandson. And all the plenty thing that happened to you  
13 during the war, you come here to prove that God is alive in  
14 your life, and that he made you to survive to come here today  
15 to tell us what happened to you. So we say thank you for  
16 your life.

17 Your father name was? You did not give us your  
18 father name.

19 MIATTA ADOTEY: My father name was Dolu.

20 VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Dolu. Dolu what?

21 MIATTA ADOTEY: Dolu Kwali.

22 VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: Kwali?

23 MIATTA ADOTEY: Kwali.

24 VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: How about her  
25 grandson?

1 MIATTA ADOTEY: Abu.

2 VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: What Abu last  
3 name?

4 MIATTA ADOTEY: Abu Baki. Because her father name  
5 was Baki.

6 VICE CHAIRPERSON DEDE DOLOPEI: We say thank you  
7 for coming once again. And like you say, at least if you had  
8 your grandson, you would have something to look up to as  
9 remembering your son. But at least today, I know they are  
10 happy where they are. Because they know today you've come to  
11 tell Liberia what happened to them. So we say thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Good morning. Let  
13 me join my other colleagues in extending sympathy to you for  
14 the loss of your son. We're very sorry to hear that.

15 The person who kill your son, the commander, you say  
16 his name was David. You know any other name for him?

17 MIATTA ADOTEY: No, I don't, that's the only name  
18 I know.

19 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: You know if David  
20 had any other commander or boss who were higher than him?

21 MIATTA ADOTEY: I used to see David, I don't know  
22 anybody -- know his bosses because we were all afraid.

23 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Ask her if she  
24 knows the name of the person where they had her son lock up  
25 before they executed him.

1 MIATTA ADOTEY: He was killed at the border.

2 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: At the prison at  
3 the border?

4 MIATTA ADOTEY: I don't know the name, but the  
5 prison was at the border.

6 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Okay. Since the  
7 incident with her son, if she ever saw any of these fighters  
8 anymore she could identify any of them?

9 MIATTA ADOTEY: No, I only know David because he  
10 committed the act.

11 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Is David still  
12 living in the same place? Has she heard anything about him  
13 at all whether he's still alive, whether he's still there?

14 MIATTA ADOTEY: No, I have not.

15 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Anybody else from  
16 the family who might still be in the area you think that  
17 could give us any further information on David?

18 MIATTA ADOTEY: Well, the only thing is that David  
19 was married to somebody from the town. David was married to  
20 somebody from the town and that how I got to know him.

21 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Okay. But does  
22 she know the name of the person David was married to or any  
23 of David's family's name, so if we need to find him it could  
24 be easy?

25 MIATTA ADOTEY: Yes, the lady that David had, I

1 know her, I know all her families, I know their names.

2 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Can she give us  
3 some of their names.

4 MIATTA ADOTEY: The lady name was Kulah.

5 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Ask her for Kulah  
6 full name.

7 MIATTA ADOTEY: Kulah dad's name was Varney.

8 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Any other person  
9 name she can remember?

10 MIATTA ADOTEY: Kulah mother's name was Nimba.

11 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Okay. So if we  
12 went to this place, at least we will find them. Okay.

13 Since the incident happened, ask her if they ever  
14 harass her family, David or any of the other fighters been  
15 back, they harass her family, anybody else suffer as a  
16 result. Or it was just that one incident?

17 MIATTA ADOTEY: I say I was not in the town, I was  
18 in Batala, and it happened in Salalah.

19 COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: But she didn't  
20 hear if they specifically targeted her family, if even after  
21 that, after the war was ended, they went back there to bother  
22 the family?

23 MIATTA ADOTEY: What I heard was that when he  
24 returned from Nimba after he killed the boy, he said, "If I  
25 hear any of the family member cry, I will kill them."



1           COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Okay. My last  
2 question, Ma Miatta, if, if you -- if you can see David now  
3 today, ask her if she -- if she sees David today, what, what  
4 would she expect?

5           MIATTA ADOTEY: I can't stand David to give me  
6 money or to do anything. All I want for people to talk for  
7 me to cool down of why that happened.

8           COMMISSIONER MASSA WASHINGTON: Okay, thank you.

9           COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: Good morning.  
10 And I join my colleagues in saying, expressing sympathy to  
11 you for the tragic loss of your son and grandson and other  
12 relatives during the course of the war.

13           You told us that there are many things that you saw  
14 and experienced during this war. And what you have just told  
15 us is what that hurt you most.

16           But to have a full picture, can you tell us some of  
17 the other experiences you had, some of the -- those who were  
18 doing these things. Can you throw some light on that if you  
19 can. If you don't want to, you don't have to. But it would  
20 be --

21           MIATTA ADOTEY: Lot of things happened to us.  
22 They beat us, they took our clothes. They beat my brother,  
23 he was vomiting with blood, they bring out a rescue team.  
24 But all those things passed. The main thing that hurt is my  
25 son. When you are beaten and wounded from the beating, once

1 it get okay, you forget about it. But the main thing is my  
2 son.

3 COMMISSIONER JOHN H.T. STEWART: Thank you very  
4 much. Sorry again.

5 COMMISSIONER OUMU SYLLAH: Ma Miatta, thank you  
6 very much for coming to share your experience. And I join my  
7 colleagues to say sorry for what you experienced in the death  
8 of your son and your grandson and the rest of your family.

9 Now, you said after your son was killed, you went  
10 back to David and tell him, since he have already killed your  
11 son, let him kill you as well. What did David tell you that  
12 day?

13 MIATTA ADOTEY: David said I should forget about  
14 it.

15 COMMISSIONER OUMU SYLLAH: Thank you very much for  
16 coming. It's very important for you to share your  
17 experience. We know you're hurt, but it's important.  
18 Because once you talk about it, gradually it helps to heal,  
19 it help you as an individual. Thank you for coming.

20 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Did he, David, did he  
21 apologize? Did he look sorry for what he did?

22 MIATTA ADOTEY: When I got back to town I was  
23 crying at my house. And people went and told David that,  
24 "The child you killed, the man you killed, the mother is  
25 here." And he came at the house. What he said, I should

1 forget about it. But I didn't listen to it.

2 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Did anything happen to  
3 other members of your family, like David [sic] father, during  
4 that time -- your husband?

5 MIATTA ADOTEY: I had Baki then, but the father  
6 was dead long ago before that.

7 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Were you able to bury  
8 David -- I mean your son?

9 MIATTA ADOTEY: No, there was no body to bury. So  
10 if I understand that, he was killed and the body thrown into  
11 the river.

12 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: We say thank you again.  
13 And all of us, I am sure all the people of Liberia who offer  
14 peace and reconciliation, we say sorry to you for what  
15 happened.

16 Is there anything you would like to say finally  
17 before you leave, something that is still in your heart?

18 MIATTA ADOTEY: Yes, I want to ask you people.

19 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Please do.

20 MIATTA ADOTEY: What I want to know from you  
21 people is, I have explained everything; I want to know if you  
22 have a vehicle and give it to a driver and the driver has  
23 accident and they kill somebody, I want to know whether they  
24 can pay, the person can pay for it, the owner of the vehicle  
25 can pay for it or what?

1           CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: What happened to your  
2 son and what David Tako did is wrong. And that's one of the  
3 main reasons why they organized the TRC, because we realize  
4 that a lot of wrong things were done throughout the conflict.  
5 What happened is what we call the violation of human rights.  
6 And under Liberian law, under the United States law, under  
7 the laws of the United Nations, under the laws of OEU or  
8 ECOWAS, it's also wrong.

9           Even if somebody kills another person, one man cannot  
10 just take gun and kill the person back. People can go to  
11 court to find out how the person was killed, why the person  
12 was killed, and then they determine what a punishment  
13 supposed to be. So even if your son was wrong, David Tako  
14 had no right to do what he did.

15           And then accident, accident -- the accident, if the  
16 driver is responsible for the accident, there can be  
17 punishment. But if it's a case where the driver is not  
18 responsible, sometimes the court doesn't see any reason why  
19 the driver should be responsible, the person may be set free.

20           But in any case, the punishment for accident cannot  
21 be death. So no matter what happened, David Tako can never  
22 be right for what he did. He is absolutely wrong.

23           And that's why they established the TRC, so that we  
24 can find out all the wrong things that people did because  
25 they had arms, and all the people who they treated were

1 armless.

2 Anything else?

3 MIATTA ADOTEY: Nothing else. That's what I  
4 wanted to ask -- that is the question I wanted to ask.

5 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: All of us say thank you.  
6 You have our sympathy again. And you can go now.

7 MIATTA ADOTEY: Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN JEROME VERDIER: Okay.

9 (End of testimony.)

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## REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, MARY P. MITCHELL, a Registered Diplomate Reporter and Certified Realtime Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing pages of typewritten material constitute an accurate verbatim stenographic record taken by me of the proceedings aforementioned before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia, on the 13th day of June, 2008, at the time and place specified.

DATED: July 14, 2008.

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