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HOLLYWOOD VS. AMERICA

Newspaper: Moore faked its headline Used it to back his assertion 'Gore won election'

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An Illinois newspaper has accused filmmaker Michael Moore of "falsely representing" its front page in his blockbuster "Fahrenheit 9/11."

The Bloomington Pantagraph published an article in which it said if Moore "wants to 'edit' The Pantagraph, he should apply for a copy-editing job and not simply show made-over and 'falsely represented' pages from the newspaper in his movie -- or he should at least ask for permission first."

The newspaper had a law firm draft a letter to Moore's distributor, Lions Gate, seeking an apology, an explanation of how "such a strange discrepancy occurred in his movie" and compensatory damages of \$1.

"While we are highly flattered to be included in the movie, we are a bit disturbed that our pages were misrepresented," said Pantagraph's president and publisher, Henry Bird.

Early in the virulently anti-Bush film, newspaper headlines about the Florida election recount in 2000 flash across the screen. A purported Dec. 19, 2001, edition of the Pantagraph blares in a large headline, "Latest Florida recount shows Gore won election."

But the paper says the front page image was falsified, borrowing from the Dec. 5, 2001, issue a headline that appeared above a letter to the editor, reflecting only the opinion of the writer.

Moore's version also had a different typeface and a different headline size but used the correct font for the newspaper's name.

The paper said previous attempts to reach Moore through Lions Gate by phone and e-mail were unsuccessful.

The letter to Moore says, "In an instance that The Pantagraph prints materials in which there is a mistake, it is corrected. It is our hope that you would adhere to the same high ethical standard and correct the inaccurate information which has been depicted in your film."

In its news story, the paper said, "The letter calls into question the ethics of how Moore made his movie, a movie whose primary purpose is to call into question the ethics of the Bush White House."
