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CLINTON ADMINISTRATION QUIETLY DROPS 5-YEAR CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION AGAINST THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY

LOUISVILLE, KY — On the day the Clinton Administration announced with great fanfare a lawsuit against the tobacco industry, the U.S. Department of Justice very quietly dropped its 5-year criminal investigation against the manufacturers.

"The Justice Department today admitted that its five-year investigation of alleged criminal activity within the tobacco industry has been closed with no findings of any wrongdoing," said Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corporation.

"The Justice Department's confirmation of 'no pending Criminal Division investigations of the tobacco industry' was buried at the bottom of a news release announcing the federal government's lawsuit against the tobacco companies.

"Over the past half-decade, Justice Department officials have selectively leaked information relating to secret grand jury inquiries in an effort to cast a cloud over the actions of employees of Brown & Williamson and others.

"Today's announcement by the DOJ confirms B&W's statements over the years that neither the company nor its employees have engaged in any illegal activities.

"Until today, the Justice Department refused to confirm for Brown & Williamson that the investigations had ended, despite news media reports over recent weeks that the probes had been concluded."

Homepage

News Archives



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