



Strauss Radio Strategies, Inc.

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**Putting Risk in Perspective: Why Do Americans Worry So Much?
ABC's 20/20 to Air Two-Hour John Stossel Special: "Worried in America"
Friday Night Television Special to Address Risk and Worry in America**

Risk Expert Dan McGinn Available to Speak on Radio Regarding Risk and Society

(Washington, DC) With so much talk about risks tied to bird flu, shark attacks, terrorism, salmonella, and Mad Cow disease, other more likely risks facing our society each day are being routinely overlooked.

"Clearly we've lost all sense of proportion when it comes to risk," says risk related expert Dan McGinn, President of the McGinn Group, based in Arlington, VA. "We hear so much sensational news about the latest terrible risk, no risk seems particularly worse than the other."

McGinn was interviewed for ABC television's 20/20 John Stossel special entitled, "Worried in America", set to air this Friday, February 23rd at 9:00 PM ET.

"Media reports tend to focus on the little things and distract our attention from more significant risks. Our new-found, knee-jerk reluctance to take any action because something might go wrong or to spend scarce resources to eliminate small risks might be the biggest risk of all," McGinn said.

Consider the following facts:

- **A Google News search yielded more than 12,208 hits on the search for "Bird Flu" while a general Google search during the week of February 19, 2007 found nearly 15-million hits.** There's been fear that bird flu will kill tens of millions overseas before making its way to the US. However, the World Health Organization notes that bird flu has only killed a confirmed total of 140 people since 2003. Contrast that to the yearly flu season. Yes, it gets attention, but not nearly as much as bird flu. And each year, between 5 percent and 20 percent of Americans contract the flu through person-to-person transmission, primarily by coughing and sneezing. About 36,000 people die each year as a result, and more than 200,000 are hospitalized from complications of the flu." *Sun News*, 10/5/06
- **Cell phones and brain tumors. We've all seen the headlines and media coverage suggesting there may be a link.** Yet the American Cancer Society says, "there is now considerable epidemiologic evidence that shows no consistent association between cellular phone use and overall risk of brain cancer." Compare this to medical mistakes. "According to the Institute of Medicine, some 98,000 deaths occur each year in the U.S. because of preventable medical errors, or roughly the same number who die from breast cancer or car accidents. One million more are injured by such mistakes." *Medialifemagazine.com*, 10/5/06

- **While there were major headlines over the threat of Mad Cow Disease, out of a scant 195 cases of the disease globally, only two have occurred in the U.S. to date and are likely to have originated in Britain.** Compare that number with other, more common risks: lawn mowers cause 74,000 injuries each year (*USA Today, June 15, 2006*) and in 2005 alone, there were 24,000 kids who were treated in emergency rooms for shopping cart related injuries (*CBS Early Show, August 7, 2006*).
- **Shark attacks are extremely rare, but when one occurs, it gets major headlines in the top news media outlets throughout the country.** In 2005, however, there were only 58 confirmed unprovoked shark attacks on humans compared to the millions of swimmers in waters worldwide. Of the 58 unprovoked attacks, there were a total of four deaths. (*Florida Program for Shark Research, Florida Museum of Natural History*) According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the biggest threat at the beach is the pollution from drainage systems in the water.

Note to editors, reporters, talk show hosts, and producers: To speak with Dan McGinn, President of the McGinn Group, please call Richard Strauss at 202-638-0200 or feel free to e-mail at rstrauss@straussradio.com.

Dan McGinn – Strategist, Counselor

Dan McGinn is CEO of The McGinn Group, a risk and innovation consulting firm located in Arlington, VA. For the past 20 years, CEOs, general counsels, university presidents, elected officials and media executives have turned to Dan for advice and counsel on some of the most complex and high-profile disputes of this era. Examples of assignments Dan and his team have had include environmental issues for Texaco, Y2K for IBM, air contamination issues for the EPA, natural disasters for the Red Cross, and obesity for the beverage industry.

Prior to founding The McGinn Group, Dan worked for 15 years on Capitol Hill for several members of Congress and the Ways and Means Committee. Dan is a very entertaining and provocative speaker and has made hundreds of presentations to law firms, business groups and senior management teams. He is the author of a weekly feature in The Washington Post called “Hidden in Plain View” and he is quoted frequently in the media on risk and litigation stories.