

Media Decoder

Behind the Scenes, Between the Lines

May 5, 2011, 5:57 pm

Plaintiffs Drop Suit Over Jimmy Carter Book

By JULIE BOSMAN

A \$5 million lawsuit against Simon & Schuster over a book by former President Jimmy Carter was dropped by the plaintiffs on Thursday, three months after it was filed. The plaintiffs in the class-action suit had argued that Mr. Carter's "Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid," about the Arab-Israeli conflict, was falsely marketed as "absolute truth."

When the suit was filed in February, Simon & Schuster immediately condemned it, calling it frivolous, without merit and a "chilling attack on free speech."

On Thursday, after the suit was dropped, Adam Rothberg, a spokesman for Simon & Schuster, said in a statement: "In the face of a powerful argument for the rights of free speech for authors and publishers, the plaintiffs wisely withdrew their action. We hope that they will consider this the end of the matter.

Mr. Rothberg said there had been no financial settlement between the parties.

The suit was filed by David I. Schoen, a lawyer in Montgomery, Ala. He said the book contained inaccuracies that the publisher refused to correct. Some reviews of the book, which was published in 2007, said that Mr. Carter had included misrepresentations of the history of the conflict in the Middle East. Writing in the *The New York Times*, Ethan Bronner called the book "a narrative that is largely unsympathetic to Israel." Mr. Carter was especially criticized for his use of the word "apartheid" in the title.

In an interview on Thursday, Mr. Schoen said the lawsuit, which was filed in Manhattan federal court, had “technical jurisdictional concerns.” He said he intended to file suit again in state court, beginning in New York.

© 2014 The New York Times Company