

ID 213

Interview with Dr. Jan Lieben by Marks and Miazga at the FMC Corporation Headquarters in Philadelphia at 10:00 am on 4/24/74. See interview with Dr. Evans and Mrs. Shanahan for information about Dr. Lieben.

Dr. Lieben said that he has been obtaining permissions for exhumation in the radium program for about 12 years. Before the Center was founded and took over the MIT Radioactivity Center, Dr. Lieben had acted in a similar capacity for several of those 12 years for Dr. Robley Evans at MIT. His active pursuit of permission in the plutonium cases began in April 1973. Prior to that time he received a request from Mrs. Shanahan in Phoenix to proceed with obtaining permission for exhumations on a list of individuals with the usual starting information about the location of relatives that she provides but without any indication of the nature of the isotope deposition that the deceased may have had. There was also some indication of unusual secrecy regarding this particular group of cases. He was disturbed by the secrecy and insisted that he would not proceed without having further information. At that point, Mrs. Shanahan suggested that he contact Dr. Stehney directly at Argonne to obtain further information, which he proceeded to do. When he found out that the activity was proper, that the element was plutonium but that he was not to mention the term plutonium, he discussed with Dr. Stehney the manner of presentation to the survivors that he would be contacting. They agreed that an appropriate approach would be to say that the Center was investigating the composition of radioactive materials that had been injected at an earlier date in an experimental type of treatment. Since the composition of the injection mixture was not well known, there would be considerable scientific interest in investigating the nature of the isotope mixture and any effects that the deposited isotopes might have had. This was the presentation that Dr. Lieben made to the various survivors that he contacted. He has contacted relatives in all ten cases, but since a

PROVENANCE

REPOSITORY: OFFICE OF HUMAN RADIATION
EXPERIMENTS (OHRE)

COLLECTION: PLUTONIUM INJECTION INVESTIGATION
FILES (OHRE 1)

BOX: 2

FOLDER: EXTRA COPIES FROM ROCHESTER FILES

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valid permit may require the consent of several individuals in a single family, he had completed his mission for only one deceased in addition to the case that is already exhumed when the program was stopped. He turned that case over to Mrs. Shanahan for final action in accordance with customary procedure, but she has not done anything about the case.

Dr. Lieben mentioned that in the case of the already exhumed body, he interviewed a brother in addition to the sister who was interviewed by Dr. Evans and Mrs. Shanahan. Dr. Lieben was concerned that any discussions with families already contacted be compatible with his own presentation to the people. He was also distressed at the thought that repercussions from the plutonium program might have an adverse effect on the much larger and, in his estimation, more important radium program.

S. Marks
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Interview with Mrs. Mary Margaret Shanahan and Dr. Robley D. Evans by Marks and Miazga conducted in the Southwest Field Station of the MIT Radioactivity Center; the Field Station is located in Mrs. Shanahan's home in Phoenix. The interview was held at about 3:00 pm on 4/22/74. The MIT Radioactivity Center is the principal satellite of the Center for Human Radiobiology. The Southwest Field Station is the headquarters for operations to obtain permission for exhumations for the CHR. Mrs. Shanahan is a Deputy Director of the MIT Radioactivity Center and Dr. Evans is a consultant to the Center.

Dr. Evans mentioned immediately that he had briefed Mr. Edward J. Bauser of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy thoroughly on the human plutonium injection program on the Saturday before our visit.

Relative to the matter of obtaining permission for exhumations, Dr. Evans and Mrs. Shanahan recalled that this program was an outgrowth of the activities at MIT. When Dr. Evans and Mrs. Shanahan transferred their principal locus of activity to Phoenix, they continued to obtain permission for exhumations for Dr. Rowland at the Center for Human Radiobiology. Their principal contact person in the field is Dr. Jan Lieben who formerly performed this function for Dr. Evans when Dr. Lieben was a public health officer in the state of Pennsylvania. Dr. Lieben continued this activity when he left the public health field and assumed his current responsibilities in the FMC Corporation.

Authorization to obtain permission for exhumation of the plutonium cases was provided in a memorandum from Dr. Stehney to Mrs. Shanahan. The memo also provided guidance with respect to what would be told to the survivors in order to gain the permission. The memo, which is available in our files, authorized permission for exhumation to be obtained for ten cases.

Dr. Evans and Mrs. Shanahan contacted the sister of the exhumed patient (HP-4) and obtained permission from her. Dr. Lieben obtained permission from the brother of the deceased in this case. Dr. Evans said that he and Mrs. Shanahan rather than Dr. Lieben sought the permission because the sister

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lives in a town near Phoenix and was, therefore, conveniently located. Their approach to the sister was to request permission to study the composition of a mixture of radioactive isotopes and the effects of this bone seeking material that had been given to the deceased patient at some time before her death. Since the sister did not inquire into the reason for the injections, that issue was not discussed. Before discussing the matter, Dr. Evans acquainted the sister with his and Mrs. Shanahan's credentials as scientists by showing the sister a copy of the book, "Delayed Effects of Bone-seeking Radionuclides" in which the authorship of a chapter includes Dr. Evans and Mrs. Shanahan. The sister was responsive to the request for permission, which she granted.

Dr. Evans and Mrs. Shanahan said that the instructions from Dr. Stehney did not call for mentioning plutonium. When the instructions to seek permission for exhumations were transmitted to Dr. Lieben by Mrs. Shanahan, Dr. Lieben refused to do anything about the matter until the mysterious nature of the project was dispelled for him. Then Mrs. Shanahan discussed the matter briefly with Dr. Lieben and also had him contact Dr. Stehney to get further clarification. After that, Dr. Lieben proceeded to seek permission for exhumation of the plutonium cases. However, at the time of the interview only one complete permission had been obtained, and the exhumation was performed already for that case.


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