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Kelley

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ALAMOS SCIENTIFIC LABORATORY
(CONTRACT W-7409-ENG-24)
P.O. BOX 1663
LOS ALAMOS, NEW MEXICO

BY HAND
DATE: 1

January 5, 1958

Dr. R. V. Shute
Shute Institute for Clinical and
Laboratory Medicine
London, Ontario, Canada

Dear Dr. Shute:

Thank you for your interest in our radiation accident. Unfortunately the man died approximately 36 hours after his exposure as a result of a very massive overdose of radiation. His death falls into the category where the central nervous system must be regarded as the critical organ which, of course, automatically implies that his whole body dose was undoubtedly in excess of four to five thousand rems. We know this to be the case also from our own calculations.

The man's dose was a mixture of neutrons and gamma radiation so except for a generalized erythema, there were no "burns" involved. Had there been some beta ray burns, however, we have had enough experience with these to know that it is pretty difficult to alter the natural course of events significantly except by primary excisions and skin grafting. We have had here in Los Alamos not only a fair amount of practical experience with these lesions, but also have carried on a fairly extensive research program.

In the case of our recent casualty, I am convinced that his exposure was so massive and overwhelming that we could not have expected him to respond to any form of therapy. The matter of the time he was not particularly uncomfortable and our main problem was to keep his blood pressure up to a satisfactory level. He very nearly died in a state of shock in the first two or three hours.

Again let me thank you for your interest.

Very sincerely yours,

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Health Division Leader

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