University of California at Berkeley
The Bancroft Library/The University Archives, Berkeley CA
COPY

*** C O P Y ***

December 28, 1944.

Captain Roger G. Metcalf, [illegible]
Strong Memorial Hospital
Rochester, New York

Dear Captain Metcalf: Re: Donald Johnson

You have undoubtedly received the summary in the case of Donald Johnson who was admitted to the Memorial Hospital in New York City on September [illegible], 1944 and died November 1, 1944. His history, as recorded by Dr. Craver, is the same history which I obtained. It should be noted that he had some exposure to a double ring benzol compound between 1939-1941, which is not supposed to be harmful, according to Dr. G. H. Gehrman. He was also exposed to radioactive sources between November 1943 and April, 1944.

The following is a copy of the substances which Mr. Johnson gave me when I visited him in the hospital:

1929-1939: cellulose nitrate, cellulose acetate and ethyl cellulose plastics.
Solvents most commonly used: ethyl alcohol denatured with ½ of 1% benzol; ethyl acetate, ethyl methyl-ketone acetone, methyl acetate; xylene, hexane.
Plasticizers: camphor, tricresyl phosphate, triphenyl phosphate, ethyl [illegible], dimethyl phthalate, diethyl phthalate.

1939-1942: nylon monofilament development. No particular chemicals used in process. Powtherm A, a 50% mixture of diphenyl and diphenyloxide used for heat transfer medium. Phthalic anhydride and sodium chlorate used for cleaning extrusion equipment. Cellulose, nitric acid and sulphuric acid.

1942-1943: smokeless powder manufacture using diphenylamine, aniline, dimethylamine manufacture, starting with benzine. Nitric acid manufacture, starting with ammonia.

1943-1944: Special development work. Varying amount of X-ray exposure.

Mr. Johnson could not tell me about his chemical contacts between 1943-1944 because of the secrecy connected with them.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

University of California at Berkeley
The Bancroft Library/The University Archives, Berkeley CA
COPY

Re: Donald Johnson 12/2[illegible]/[illegible].

-2-

There is one statement which was made by Mrs. Johnson in the presence of Mr. Johnson which I think should be investigated. According to Mrs. Johnson, Dr. Bentzell of the Dupont Company stated "we are getting quite a few leukemia cases recently". This statement was supposed to be made in the presence of Mr. Johnson and Dr. Norwood.

His physical examination, his blood studies and his bone marrow studies all point to leukemia, and it is my belief that this type of leukemia is myelogenous. In view of the large liver and spleen, I do not think that it is very acute, in point of time, but certainly must have existed several months, at least six.

The autopsy report substantiates the clinical findings and indicates quite clearly that the patient died of myelogenic leukemia, probably sub-acute in point of time.

The important feature in this case is the possible relationship to his various contacts in his work. I have no positive information about the details of this, but if he was subjected to any appreciable amount of benzol and X-ray exposure, the possibility of causal relationship cannot be denied, although it cannot be proven. I believe that the people connected with the Dupont Company are in the best position to determine this exposure to benzol and X-ray.

I am assuming of course that you have Dr. Craver's summary of the physical examination, blood counts and autopsy findings, so that it is unnecessary for me to send you a copy of these.

Very truly yours,

Paul Beznikoff, M. D.

Bhrs

Copy to: Dr. L. F. Craver
Mrs. Donald Johnson