

Memorandum on Call Made by Mr. Dees on Mr. [REDACTED]
at His Residence, 100 Park Drive, Catonsville, Md.,
Tuesday Afternoon, Between 2:00 and 3:00 P.M.,
August 13, 1940 Prior to Mr. Witter's Becoming
Irrational and Hospitalized at
University Hospital

When I called, Mrs. [REDACTED] said that Mr. [REDACTED] had been talking "out of his head." She asked him if he would see me, and when he replied in the affirmative, Mrs. Witter took me up to his bedroom on the second floor. Mr. [REDACTED] was in bed and appeared restless, tossing and turning in the bed. With barely a word on my part, he immediately started talking about the tank cleaning, rambling at some length about the fumes in the shower room when he took his bath Friday evening. Throughout the next three-quarters of an hour, I obtained the information from Mr. [REDACTED] as included in a separate memorandum. Although he rambled considerably and did not follow particularly well any one train of thought, most of what he had to say was relevant, with one exception; that is as follows. Mrs. [REDACTED] returned to the room after about twenty or thirty minutes, and he asked, "Is it all right to eat?" Mrs. [REDACTED] replied, "Yes, you can eat anything you want to, but it is not time to eat." Mr. [REDACTED] said, "Well, I'm not hungry; I've just eaten." At this point, Mrs. [REDACTED] who was out of the range of Mr. [REDACTED] view, looked at me and moved her finger in a circular motion by her head -- the motion often used to mean "nuts" or "screwy". When Mrs. [REDACTED] returned to the room, she said, "Hope this fellow is not talking too far off."

My primary purpose was to obtain information indicating whether or not there had been exposure and to obtain the number and the names of the men involved in the work. When it was learned that the masks had been removed, no effort was made to obtain his reason for removing them, as it was considered unwise in view of his condition. It was impossible to obtain accurate information on the names of the men who had been in the tank or even on the number. Mr. Witter thought that there were six but perhaps more. It was considered inadvisable to try to push him further on this point, as Mr. Wise, Terminal Superintendent, was said to have the payroll list.

He was quite concerned about his men, especially one whom he said had not been located. This man, whom he described as "the one who always takes his bath in the boiler house," had not been located according to Mr. [REDACTED]. He apparently had checked with either Mr. Wise or Dr. Rubin, or both, over the week-end. Mr. Wise advised later that afternoon that the man in question had been located and was under medical care. He had previously advised Mr. Witter of this, but apparently it had not registered.

Mrs. [REDACTED] said that she had talked with Mr. Benner that afternoon, and she seemed to be relieved as a result of that conversation.

Upon the mention of Dr. Howell's telephone call to our office, Mr. [REDACTED] said that he had suggested to Dr. Howell that he telephone. He said [REDACTED] thought just hit him that morning. At that point, Mrs. [REDACTED] broke in, before any other comment was made, and said, "Oh, I can't believe it's anything like that; I think it's just a combination of the heat and everything else."

When Mrs. [REDACTED] had first returned to the room, I asked her if she thought that I was staying too long, and she replied, "Oh, No," and further indicated that she thought it was quite all right for me to continue my talk with Mr. [REDACTED] if I wanted to. We talked a few minutes on other subjects, ranging from penny banks to the weather, after which I departed.