

ETHYL CORPORATION

HOUSTON PLANT

March 29, 1973

PLEASE ADDRESS REPLY
TO: BOX 472
PASADENA, TEXAS 77501

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.
Kettering Laboratory
Eden and Bethesda Avenues
Cincinnati, Ohio 45219

Dear Dr. Kehoe:

My experiences with the seamen from the M.V. EID who absorbed large amounts of organic lead in July 1972 have been most frustrating and entirely unsatisfactory. The ship is leased by Ethyl from Marine Transport Lines and is under British Registry. Ethyl's International Division has never given me an entirely candid story of how the men were exposed. I believe the significant exposures were as follows.

Sometime in June 1972, there was a spill of fluid on the deck of the ship while it was discharging fluid at the Canary Islands and another at Dordrecht in Holland. On July 12, 1972, Dr. Faltsis in Greece sent teletypes to Dr. Roush and to me which read, "Following lead urine results obtained on samples of EID crew members when in Thessaloniki after June 23, 1972. Allsop 0.195, Mesquita 0.2, De Olivera 0.155, Jose Lojo 0.19. Denied any incident involving contamination. Possibilities are either contaminated urine samples or involved directly or indirectly in 2nd Mate Cathro incident." Dr. Roush determined that the "Cathro incident" was the spill at the Canary Islands.

The ship was at that time in Dordrecht, Holland and scheduled to depart for Houston that day. Dr. Roush directed Ethyl's International Division to hold the ship and sample everybody aboard. This was done by some non-medical person and the ship departed Dordrecht for Houston July 14. I am sure Dr. Roush's intentions were that it be held at Dordrecht until the problem could be resolved.

The voyage to Houston took from July 14 to August 5. The Captain had been told there was a high lead content in the air in the void space between the cargo tanks and the wall of the ship, and that he should keep the hatches closed. But he decided a better strategy was to ventilate these void spaces, so for 21 days he had a large canvas "funnel" rigged up to force air into these spaces and this, I believe

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Dr. R. A. Kehoe

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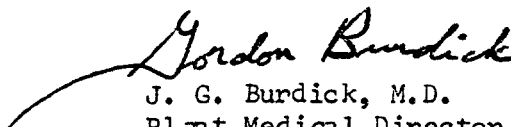
brought organic lead fumes continuously onto the deck, and for much of the time into the quarters of those crewmen on the starboard side of the ship. I have never been officially told why the void spaces were contaminated but the fact is that there were some cracks in the cargo tanks which were leaking some fluid into these void spaces. These, of course, were subsequently repaired.

Sometime I will see you personally and will give you a detailed verbal report of the many difficult and really impossible situations involved in the whole affair. Despite the fact that many of these men had very high spot lead in urine values that persisted a long time, they never had very convincing symptoms. I speak enough Spanish to elicit symptoms and none of these men admitted to much insomnia, dreaming or headache until they were coached by attorneys and others. By the way, Drs. Bucklin and Rhem are practicing attorneys as well as medical doctors.

I don't know what records you were sent, but the seamen were examined by a group of internists who head Baylor's Internal Medicine Department and found to be essentially symptom free and with no evidence of illness. A competent neurologist, Dr. Good, also found no convincing C.N.S. symptoms or findings.

I hope this answers your principal question. Maybe I will see you in Denver next month!

Sincerely yours,



J. G. Burdick, M.D.
Plant Medical Director

JGB:W

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