

Unfinished Complaints - 1948-1950
(See Safe for Harry Miller Case and
Unfinished Complaints - 1944-1948)

April 14, 1949

Mr. A. H. Chenault,
Ethyl Corporation,
977 West Sixth Street,
Los Angeles 14, California.

Dear Mr. Chenault:

The letter of Mrs. Victor Horney addressed to Shell Oil Company in San Francisco, copy of which has come to my desk, presents something of a problem, which, in my opinion, should be handled in its initial stages by Shell. It would seem not very difficult for them to trace this man and to find out something of the nature of his illness and the identity of his physician or physicians. If this were done, and if the matter were brought to our attention in that manner, we could take the necessary steps.

If the letter had been addressed to me by Mrs. Horney or if it had come to Ethyl Corporation, I would have answered it directly, despite the difficulties of so doing. Under the present circumstances, I should not like to take this course, if only for the reason that this is the responsibility of the Shell Company, and if I were to get them into any complications, they could properly feel somewhat critical.

I suggest that this be worked out locally with the Shell people. If Mr. Littlefield can obtain information on their behalf and be of assistance, he should do so. If then the matter is passed on to me for handling, it should be with the approval of the Shell people.

I feel quite certain that this will not be a very great problem, since the tone of the letter is such that one could feel reasonably certain that it is a straightforward appeal for assistance. We should be glad to provide any such assistance, even to the extent of making arrangements to examine Mr. Horney at a convenient time if this course should be necessary or desirable.

Meanwhile if some one in the Shell organization wishes to reply to Mrs. Horney's letter as a matter of courtesy, they could very properly point out in such a letter that, according to their best advice, there is no reason to believe that a service station operator could or would develop lead poisoning in any form as a consequence of his handling of leaded gasoline. It might be pointed out that in the entire history of the industry, no case of lead poisoning has ever been seen from this cause among the many thousands of filling station operators in this country.

With best regards,

Cordially yours,

RAK ef

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

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