

Douthitt, Milton S.

ETHYL GASOLINE CORPORATION

CHRYSLER BUILDING
405 LEXINGTON AVENUE

SAFETY COMMITTEE

O. B. LEWIS
CHAIRMAN

NEW YORK July 12, 1938

Dr. W. F. Machle
Kettering Laboratory of Applied Physiology
College of Medicine
Eben Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Dear Dr. Machle:

We are attaching hereto copies of a letter from our safety engineer, James S. Krick, together with the memorandum mentioned therein, regarding an alleged case of lead poisoning to a [REDACTED] an employee of the Kendall Refining Company.

Will you please give the attached whatever attention you feel it merits.

Very truly yours,

O. B. Lewis.

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Enclosure

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OLEAN HOUSE OLEAN NEW YORK

July 5, 1938

Mr. R. C. Murphy
Division Manager
New York City

Dear Dick,

RE: KENDALL REFINING CO. BRADFORD PENNA.

The following letter was received by the writer July 4th.

July 2, 1938

Mr. J. S. Krick

Dear Jim:

At your earliest convenience will you pay us a visit. We need the benefit of your experience as well as that of your medical department in a case which has come up, involving one of our tank car loaders whom the doctors claim is suffering from chronic lead poisoning supposedly attributed to his exposure to leaded gasoline fumes while loading tank cars.

Naturally we discount the possibility of such an illness from the above mentioned cause and would like to provide you with the facts in an effort to straighten up the situation.

Yours very truly,
Kendall Refining Company

By J. W. Stewart.

Mr. J. W. Stewart is an assistant to Mr. E. E. Brown, the refinery superintendent. On July 6th the writer contacted the above two persons in connection with the above letter of July 2nd.

I am attaching a memorandum dated July 6th covering [REDACTED] case. I believe that this memorandum is quite clear. They do not have a copy of the letter which no doubt was written by the Doctors of the Pennsylvania State Hospital for the insane at Warren, Penna. On page 2, in the second to the last paragraph, it states that the doctors at Warren attempted to make a diagnosis, but preferred to leave the case as unclassified. Although they have not classified the case they feel that the cause of the nervous disorder may be due to breathing leaded gasoline fumes and claim that there is a chronic lead poisoning which may be causing this disorder.

The last paragraph on page 2 states that Dr. McCutcheon, the Bradford doctor in an off the record statement says that the Warren specialist have no real basis for their statement that the cause of the nervous disorder can be attributed to the breathing of leaded gasoline fumes and a resultant chronic lead poisoning.

At the present time the Kendall Refining Company are letting this case take its own course. They have not as yet called in their insurance company and no action has been taken by the man involved.

They do not at the present time request that our medical department interview the man's doctor. I explained that one of our company doctors might be in western Pennsylvania within the next three or four weeks and if anything came to a head during that time, to let us know.

Mr. Brown would appreciate a letter from our medical department stating that there was no possibility of a man acquiring lead poisoning in the operation of loading leaded gasoline tank cars, at the relative amount of lead in gasoline. If the medical department wishes to send any information to the Kendall Refining Company, please address this to Mr. E. E. Brown, Superintendent.

Yours very truly,

James S. Krick

KENDALL REFINING COMPANY
BRADFORD PENNSYLVANIA

July 6, 1938

[REDACTED] CASE

On November 20, 1934, the subject man entered the Bradford Hospital under Dr. J. G. McCutcheon for treatment for an ulcerous condition of the stomach. At that time he was operated on by Dr. McCutcheon and was discharged from the hospital December 8, 1934.

During the early part of the year 1937 his physical condition was evidently not up to par and he consulted Dr. Luke D. Garvin. On March 22, 1937, Dr. Garvin suggested that he was suffering from secondary anemia and the following letter was sent by Dr. Garvin to Mr. E. E. Brown, Refinery Manager:

An employee of yours, [REDACTED] who has been under my care has asked me to advise you concerning his condition.

He is returning to work following an illness with acute sinusitis and secondary anemia. This man is receiving treatment for anemia. However his work may be a factor in producing and continuing an anemia since the fumes of benzene and related products can cause anemia when inhaled in sufficient amount.

In his work as tank car loader he says it is impossible to avoid considerable exposure to the vapors of gasoline. I believe it would be advisable to put him on some other work if this can be arranged for a time. If this were done I believe his recovery would be expedited.

On May 8, 1938, while on a fishing trip with Kenneth Dininny, another tank car loader, [REDACTED] suffered a severe vomiting spell and had to be helped to the car. On returning home he evidently consulted Dr. Garvin and he was admitted to the Bradford hospital on May 10, 1938.

The following memorandum was written by J. W. Stewart to Mr. E. E. Brown on May 20 which gives the subject of his telephone conversation with Dr. McCutcheon regarding [REDACTED] illness which began on May 8, 1938.

About May 11 after [REDACTED] had been admitted to the Bradford Hospital, I called Dr. J. G. McCutcheon relative to the case and learned at that time that Dr. McCutcheon was not in a position to diagnose the illness saying that although he had treated [REDACTED] some time ago and finally performed an operation for ulcers, he did not believe that his present condition was caused by a re-occurrence of that illness.

On May 19 I again talked with Dr. McCutcheon and our conversation in substance is as follows:

Dr. McCutcheon felt on admitting [REDACTED] to the hospital that the illness was due to some central nervous disorder. However, he feels now that the illness is due to a stomach disorder and possibly a re-occurrence of the ulcer condition. He made the statement that he didn't believe that [REDACTED] would be able to return to work for about two weeks.

I then informed him of Dr. Garvin's diagnosis of May 1937 in which Dr. Garvin suggested that [REDACTED] was susceptible to toxic poisoning caused by working around gasoline fumes and that [REDACTED] was at that time suffering from anemia.

Dr. McCutcheon made the statement that he discounted this theory and that [REDACTED] blood was perfectly all right at this time. Also inasmuch as he felt there was no good basis for the toxic poisoning theory that there was no reason why [REDACTED] should not return to his Loading Rack work rather than be shifted to some other type of work.

Concerning Mr. Stewart's conversation with Dr. J. G. McCutcheon on June 1, the following information was obtained. (Dr. McCutcheon is the Bradford surgeon who originally operated on [REDACTED] for the stomach ulcers). This conversation revealed that further x-rays had shown [REDACTED] to have a re-occurrence of his ulcers of the stomach. Also that on consultation with Dr. Floyd Hayes (eye, ear, nose and throat specialist of this city) that there were indications that [REDACTED] might be suffering from a brain tumor and further they were arranging to have [REDACTED] case diagnosed by a neurologist.

[REDACTED] was discharged from the Bradford Hospital June 5, 1938.

On June 5, 1938 [REDACTED] was admitted to the Pennsylvania State Hospital for the Insane at Warren, Pa. and was released on June 19. On June 28 the following conversation took place with Dr. McCutcheon and revealed the following. That while [REDACTED] was in the hospital at Warren, he was under the care of 5 doctors. The doctors at Warren attempted to make a diagnosis, but had preferred to leave the case as unclassified. However, they have discounted any evidence of there being a brain tumor. Although they have not classified the case they feel that the cause of the nervous disorder may be due to breathing leaded gasoline fumes and claim that there is a chronic lead poisoning which may be causing the disorder.

says

Dr. McCutcheon in an off-the-record statement/that the Warren specialists have no real basis for their statement that the cause of the nervous disorder can be attributed to the breathing of leaded gasoline fumes and a resultant chronic lead poisoning. Dr. McCutcheon suggests to Kendall Refining Co. that they send the case to their insurance company.

[REDACTED] has not made any claims for compensation for this illness and has been drawing the contributory insurance allowed for sickness and accident which are not compensable.

[REDACTED] employment record shows the following:

Employed 8-26-31 as a laborer and continued under the classification until 3-7-32 at which time he was released. He was re-employed 5-3-32 as a laborer and continued under the classification until 11-17-32 at which time he became a tank car loader. He has continued as a tank car loader from that date to the present.

The present status of this case is as follows. [REDACTED] is unable to return to work and there is no positive indication when he will return. Some days he stays in bed and other days he is up around the house. While in the Bradford Hospital he was unable to keep any food on his stomach, but after entering the State Hospital at Warren, for observation, this condition was evidently temporarily cured, for it was learned through intimates who had visited him regularly that he ate well while in the State Hospital.

However, since returning these same friends claim that [REDACTED] informs them that from time to time he has re-occurrences of severe vomiting which occurred on May 8 when his case first became serious.

There are two reasons why he does not come back to work; first, from time to time he has trouble keeping food on his stomach with a resultant weakness and secondly, that on the days when he is confined to his bed he claims he suffers pains in the joints of his bones. (Both legs and arms)

[REDACTED] will be 39 years old September 2, 1938.