

INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: D. R. Lynam

FROM: J. F. Cole

February 10, 1972

NBC Chronolog Program

Phil Robinson, Jerry Smith, Bob Rogers and I met on February 9 to discuss the possible approach to NBC to try to obtain some time to balance the attach on lead presented in their Chronolog program.

We went over the transcript page by page and I want to point out to you, just in general, the points which were brought up in our discussions and also the points you may want to use in backing up any argument with NBC. Phil Robinson indicated that he will meet with you at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, February 15, in preparation for the meeting with NBC which will be held at 2:30 p.m. that same day in Room 610, RCA Building, Rockefeller Center.

Page 1. Most of this refers to the Staten Island Zoo and you are thoroughly familiar with the background on this. I suggest that you point out that LIA tried very hard to be cooperative with the Staten Island Zoo curator but we were never permitted to see any of the data nor have they ever come back to us with a time to begin air sampling.

Page 2. Strebel comments that lead in the soil is accumulating because of lead in the air and states that his proof is that the soil of the Central Park Zoo had over 500 ppm. Certainly, this does not constitute proof since the average of 10-15 ppm is composed of may highs and lows. Further, it should be pointed out that 500 ppm is not necessarily an unsafe level since this really is only 0.05%. Further on this page, you could refer to Dr. Zook and his feelings about the etiology of lead poisoning in zoo animals.

Page 2. I have seen no evidence that babies being born today have high lead levels. I doubt that this is true since Stopps' data (see review in the Lead--
Air Quality Criteria File) showed that the blood lead concentration of the population has not been increasing over the years. 

William Ryan says that 400,000 children are afflicted with lead poisoning. Of course, this is an extrapolation based on high blood lead ^{levels} and has nothing to do with symptomatic lead poisoning. The comparison with polio is not valid since polio was certainly a symptomatic disease.

Page 3. Jack Newfield says that re-poisoning guarantees permanent brain damage. This is not true. Brain damage occurs only after severe encephalopathy.

Page 7. While there may be lead in the paint of pencils above the permitted level, I know of no case on record where a child was poisoned from chewing on pencils.

Page 11. Utley says that lead in the air in Los Angeles is increasing by 7% a year. This is probably based on the Seven Cities Survey and I would not hesitate to use the National Air Sampling Network Data to refute this. San Diego is based on Chow's data and this was reviewed in the NAS document. 7-24

From
Sketch R.

The health official (John Goldsmith) says that lead is absorbed and retained in California to a larger extent than elsewhere because the levels of lead are higher there. Use the Seven Cities Survey to refute that.

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— Pb in Rain water - E.S. & Tech. Article Jan, 1970.

Page 12. The filters do not show that there is less lead in the air where there are not many automobiles. They do show that there is less black particulate. It may be useful to point out that lead makes up only a very small percentage of the total lead particulate in the air. 1-3 70

There is little that you can do to refute Patterson because everything he says is based on speculation and extrapolation. He has no proof of anything. I would perhaps be prepared with all the letters (Lead Environment file) which were published in the Archives of Environmental Health after Patterson's original article in 1965. → A comment by Newfield regarding the \$30,000 refers to pediatric lead poisoning and is certainly out of place in this discussion of airborne lead.

E Kennedy

Page 13. You might refer to our study, LH 114--The Effects of Chronic Plumbism on Neurological Behavior in the Rhesus Monkey to refute Patterson's suggestion that lead is affecting our central nervous systems and making us less rational and more irritable.

On this same page, the remarks attributed to Heinrich Schlemmerhorn were really made by Henry Schroeder. You might make reference to Schroeder's corrections in his own paper showing that he was feeding five times as much lead as he originally reported plus the fact that he had neglected to include chromium in his diet and that after the experiment was repeated with chromium in the diet, even at a very high level of lead, no ill effects were noted. You might suggest that NBC contact Douglas Frost if they wish some substantiation of these criticisms.

Page 14. Ruckelshaus says that "our information shows that the health effects of lead in the atmosphere, above certain levels, can be serious." Certainly, we have no argument with this. The whole thing is what are the levels which are critical? We don't believe that the levels to which man is being exposed today present any health problems, but I would also not hesitate to say that we do not feel that levels of lead in the atmosphere should be allowed to increase substantially.

Page 15. Ruckelshaus again makes a statement with which we can agree. He says that the determination of what should be taken out of the air and how much of it to take out should be left up to scientific determination. Certainly, we agree with this and wish that EPA would practice what they preach.

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— Utley's statement - Ruckelshaus did not say he planned to abolish Pb.

Page 16. Utley says that there are experts on both sides of the argument. It should be pointed out that NBC presented only one side.

In general, you are likely to be told that since lead is poisonous, we should add none to the environment. The best argument against this philosophy is the dose response concept. One could point out that caffeine in coffee is a deadly poison as is salt, alcohol, etc., but none of these agents are toxic as their intake is maintained below the threshold of effect.