

June 30, 1932

Mr. E. W. Webb
Ethyl Gasoline Corporation
305 S. Kenosha Avenue
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Dear Mr. Webb:

Having received your wire this afternoon, I hasten to comply with your request and I am indeed glad that you are planning to be in Tulsa for it simplifies matters greatly that you are on the spot.

Dr. Schradin has returned to Cincinnati and has given me a detailed account of all of the matters which came under his observation, both in the way of medical information and in the way of any other facts which might have a bearing on the situation. Thus, I shall attempt to give you a resume of the matter as I see it as well as to acquaint you with the somewhat difficult situation in which we find ourselves from a medical point of view.

On Dr. Schradin's arrival in Tulsa, he found that Mr. [REDACTED] had arrived in an apparently normal state of mind but that some time on Tuesday, he began to show mental aberrations which shortly after developed into delirium. This was succeeded by an acute mania which continued until coma developed, resulting in death on Saturday at about noon. At this point, attorneys employed by the family took charge of matters and because of the attitude of the family, it became very difficult for Dr. Schradin to make any move which would clarify matters. The matter of a diagnosis was in considerable doubt. None of the physicians in the case were sure just what the situation was. Dr. Schradin, therefore, urged on the family the necessity for an autopsy in order to ascertain the facts. This was denied but subsequently when the doctor in charge of the case indicated his inability to make diagnosis, the attorney came to the conclusion that autopsy was advisable, whereupon the consent of the family was obtained for an autopsy. In this matter, Dr. Schradin assumed no responsibility. Pathologists having been engaged by the attorney for the family. The tissues were removed at autopsy, were placed in the proper preservative in apparently chemically clean containers and which are now being held in the hands of pathologists at the Hospital. Some discussion was held as to the disposal of these tissues. The attorney first felt that it was advisable to turn them over to this laboratory for analysis and report. The family disagreed with this,

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would not permit it at all so that Dr. Schradin then attempted to have the tissues divided, so that a portion would come here and the other portion would go to some other laboratory. Dr. Schradin suggested upon my advice, that they be sent to Dr. Aub at Harvard Medical School. There was no agreement upon this matter so that after the family left Tulsa, the tissues were impounded in the hands of the pathologist where they are at the present time. Dr. Schradin's relations with the physician and the pathologist were of the pleasantest. These gentlemen apparently felt that his interest in the matter was entirely proper and that in fact his only desire was to establish facts. The very antagonistic attitude of Mr. Graham's family made it impossible for any proper cooperation, although it seems that their attorney would have been quite agreeable to any arrangements which we wished to make.

Dr. Schradin called me up and acquainted me with this situation. Knowing nothing of the laws of the state of Oklahoma in such matters, I suggested that he consult an attorney after obtaining proper advice from Mr. Ronan and other persons who were in position to know, in order that he might do anything that could be done to provide safety for the tissues in the event that there was no legal means of his gaining possession of them. In this morning's mail, I received an opinion from an attorney which Dr. Schradin consulted, which I am enclosing with this letter for such use as you may wish to make of it.

The difficulty from a medical point of view is that it is not possible at present to make an accurate diagnosis. The condition may have been the result of an infectious encephalitis, in which case, presumably, the Corporation is not in any way at fault. Mr. [REDACTED]'s exposure did not justify a diagnosis of lead encephalitis. Furthermore, the extremely acute course of the illness was of such a sort that lead poisoning could have been responsible for it only on the assumption that a rather large dose of lead had been absorbed very recently. The possibilities in this matter are open to speculation. It is not possible to have any more than an opinion as to what may have occurred. On the other hand, a properly carried out analysis of the tissues would show not only whether or not lead was responsible for the illness, but in all probability also, the approximate time at which the absorption had occurred. Thus, if the distribution of lead in the tissues were to correspond to that immediately following the absorption of a large dose of tetra-ethyl lead, one would then have adequate analytical confirmation of our suspicion. From the whole course of events, one is justified in suspecting that Mr. [REDACTED] ingested an appreciable quantity of tetra-ethyl lead, either with the idea of obtaining positive findings in his excreta which we had planned to examine, or that he had deliberately taken a large dose with suicidal intent. This suspicion, of course,

is postulated on the diagnosis of acute lead poisoning. Obviously, if the condition was infectious in origin, which I doubt, it is not necessary to have any such suspicions.

Our problem, therefore, is to have these tissues analyzed in a proper fashion. If they are turned over to some small improperly equipped laboratory, analyses will mean nothing either to us or in a legal sense. I doubt very much the possibility of finding any laboratory in which analytical evidence can be obtained which can be put in its proper relationship to the knowledge which we have on the distribution of lead in tissues. On the other hand, if they must go to some other laboratory, perhaps the best place would be to Harvard Medical School, where there can be no question of bias, but where unfortunately the analyses will not be done with an accuracy which will not permit of the type of interpretation which I think is necessary in order to arrive at an accurate conclusion in this case. Now that the family has had time to think, it may be that they could be persuaded to let us examine into the facts. On the other hand, it may not be possible to do this. I feel that it is very important for us to obtain a portion of each of the tissues available, if we are ever to know really what happened. This might not be of any legal value. As to that, I am not competent to judge. However, this leaves you with as complete an understanding as I can give you of the situation as it appears to me. I am very glad indeed to be able to put the matter into your hands for such action as seems wise.

Sincerely yours,

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