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"CHEMICAL PERIL" PART 2

TO: FRANK STOWERS

FROM: ANN THOMPSON

RE: PLAYBACK AIRED ON WCHS AT 6 & 11 P.M. ON FEBRUARY 22, 1979.

DATE: FEBRUARY 23, 1979

PLAYBACK AIRED ON WCHS-TV AT 6 & 11 P.M. ON FEBRUARY 22, 1979, WITH JIM READER REPORTING.

JIM READER: LAST NIGHT WE LOOKED AT THE EFFECTS OF A CHEMICAL CALLED VINYL CHLORIDE BUT THAT'S JUST ONE OF THOUSANDS OF CHEMICALS THAT ARE PRODUCED IN THE KANAWHA VALLEY. TODAY, IN PART TWO, OF A SERIES CALLED CHEMICAL PERIL, TERRY ANZUR LOOKS AT SOME OF THE NEW STUDIES INVOLVING CHEMICALS IN THE MARKETPLACE AND IN THE ENVIRONMENT. TERRY.

ANZUR: WELL JIM, A CLEAR PIECE OF PLASTIC LIKE THIS DOESN'T LOOK VERY THREATENING BUT SCIENTISTS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE CHEMICALS THAT ARE USED TO MAKE THIS TYPE OF MATERIAL AS IN THE CASE OF VINYL CHLORIDE. INDUSTRY IS FUNDING SOME EARLY STUDIES OF POSSIBLE HEALTH HAZARDS. THE CHEMICALS UNDER THE MAGNIFYING GLASS INCLUDE VINYL DENE MIXED TO FORM MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF PLASTIC. INDUSTRY IS ALSO STUDYING THE INDUSTRIAL CHEMICAL VINYL ACETATE. AND WHILE INDUSTRY SOURCES WON'T BE SPECIFIC ABOUT THE HEALTH HAZARDS THAT MIGHT BE INVOLVED, R. N. WHEELER OF UNION CARBIDE TOLD ME THAT WE WOULDN'T SPEND THREE MILLION DOLLARS ON A STUDY IF WE WEREN'T PRETTY SURE WE WERE ON TO SOMETHING. HEAVY METALS THAT ARE USED IN THE WORK PLACE ALSO HAVE INDUSTRY CONCERNED. UNION CARBIDE IS MAKING A SPECIAL STUDY OF LEAD EXPOSURE AMONG ITS WORKERS.

UNIDENTIFIED SPOKESMAN: IT DEPENDS ON THE HEAVY METAL THAT YOU ARE CONCERNED WITH, BUT I THINK SOME OF THEM CAN ATTACK THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM IN HIGH ENOUGH CONCENTRATIONS. NOW WE DON'T HAVE VERY MANY HEAVY METALS IN THIS PLANT AND THE ONES WE HAVE WE FIND THAT THERE ARE VERY LOW CONCENTRATIONS. WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE THAT THEY CONSTITUTE A HEALTH HAZARD TO OUR PEOPLE, BUT WE CONTINUE TO MONITOR FOR THEM.

ANZUR: THE FACT IS THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS PROPOSED SOME TOUGH NEW RULES ON LEAD WITH SOME MEMBERS OF INDUSTRY FIGHTING ALL THE WAY. N. L. INDUSTRY, WHICH IS CLOSING IT'S LEAD OXIDE PLANT IN SOUTH CHARLESTON FOR ECONOMIC REASONS, HAS JOINED IN A LAW SUIT TO BLOCK THE TOUGH NEW STANDARDS, BECAUSE, WHEN NEW LAWS GO INTO EFFECT, THE OLDEST PLANTS HAVE THE LEAST CHANCE OF MEASURING UP AND THAT'S PART OF THE PROBLEM IN THE KANAWHA VALLEY WHERE SOME PLANTS DATE BACK TO 1915.

"CHEMICAL PERIL"

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UNIDENTIFIED SPOKESMAN: I HAVE THE FEELING THAT WE ARE TRYING TO MAKE OLD WORN OUT PLANTS STILL TURN OUT CRANKY MATERIALS IN WEST VIRGINIA. YOU DRIVE UP AND DOWN THAT ROAD AND YOU LOOK AT THOSE THINGS AND THEY GASP, THEY HEAVE, THEY POP AND THEY EXUDE JUNK OUT INTO THE AIR AND YOU SOMEHOW HAVE THE FEELING; IF SOMEBODY WOULD START REPLACING THOSE ALTOGETHER, NOT ONLY WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO KEEP THEM FROM WHEEZING ALL OVER THE LANDSCAPE AND POURING OUT THEIR POISONS, BUT THEY PROBABLY WOULD END UP WITH A FAR MORE EFFICIENT PROCESS.

ANZUR: WELCOME TO NITRO, A TOWN THAT HAS ALMOST AS MANY CHEMICAL PLANTS AS IT HAS CHURCHES. BUT MOST DAYS YOU DON'T NEED A SIGN TO TELL YOU WHERE YOU ARE. THERE IS A DISTINCTIVE SMELL ASSOCIATED WITH THIS TOWN AND THOSE WHO HAVE STUDIED IT SAY THAT THE EMISSIONS FROM AT LEAST FOUR PLANTS ARE CONTRIBUTING TO THE ODOR AND IF A PROBLEM THAT IS AS OBVIOUS AS A BAD SMELL IS GOING UNVOLVED, YOU MIGHT IMAGINE THAT THERE ARE A LOT MORE SUBTLE EFFECTS ON THE COMMUNITY OF WHICH THE EXPERTS ARE NOT EVEN AWARE. BEGINNING IN APRIL, THIS MONSANTO PLANT WILL BE THE FOCUS OF A NEW STUDY BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE LABORATORY OF MT. SIANI HOSPITAL IN NEW YORK, THE SAME RESEARCHERS WHO DOCUMENTED THE DANGERS OF VINYL CHLORIDE. EYEWITNESS NEWS HAS LEARNED THAT DR. MARION MOSES, A ST. ALBANS NATIVE, WILL HEAD STUDY OF 245T WHICH USED TO BE PRODUCED HERE. IT IS A MAJOR INGREDIENT IN AGING ORANGE, A DEFOLIANT USED DURING THE VIET NAM WAR. IT HAS BEEN LINKED TO BIRTH DEFECTS.

UNIDENTIFIED SPOKESMAN: ONE OF THE FRIGHTENING THINGS ABOUT 245T IS, EVEN THOUGH IT'S NO LONGER MADE HERE, IT'S BEING SPRAYED AROUND HERE BY THE POWER COMPANY TO KEEP VEGETATION DOWN AROUND THE POWER LINES.

UNIDENTIFIED SPOKESMAN: RESEARCHING THE EFFECTS OF ONE CHEMICAL WHICH YOU MIGHT FIND IN THE RIVER IN OUR AREA TODAY, TOMORROW IT MAY BE MIXED WITH SOMETHING ELSE AND CHANGED INTO A SECONDARY BY-PRODUCT AND ETC., ETC., AND TRYING TO FOLLOW THAT FOR TWENTY YEARS, WHICH IS WHAT IT TAKES, THIRTY MAYBE, TO FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON. YOU KNOW BY THE TIME YOU HAVE DONE THAT FOR THIRTY THOUSAND NEW CHEMICALS COMING ON THE MARKET ANNUALLY, YOU JUST CAN'T GET TO WHERE YOU OUGHT TO GO.

ANZUR: TOMORROW, WE WILL LOOK AT NEW EVIDENCE OF DANGERS OF LIVING IN THE KANAWHA VALLEY AND WE WILL HEAR FROM SOME PEOPLE WITH NEW IDEAS FOR CLEANING UP THE ENVIRONMENT.

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