

some suspicious-looking shadows on her X-rays."

AS I was arriving at the Environmental Sciences Laboratory one day, I happened to notice a newspaper clipping tacked up on a bulletin board near the entrance. The story, which was from the *Times* of September 2, 1967, started out as follows: "The scene looked wintry on Madison Avenue, between 57th and 58th Streets, yesterday. Flurries of what seemed to be snowflakes fell on the area from between the 25th and 30th floors of the General Motors Building, which is nearing completion on the site of the former Savoy Plaza Hotel." The article went on to say that residents of the neighborhood had complained to the contractor, and that one of the project engineers had explained that the white flakes were fallout from breproofing material that was being sprayed on the structural steel girders, beams, and decks of the fifty-story skyscraper. According to the *Times*, the engineer would not identify the insulating material, which was being applied with spray guns, "because I don't want to read newspaper stories about how we are messing up city streets." He was also quoted as saying, "This is a job condition all over the city." The last paragraph of the article read, "The city's Buildings Department said that it had not received any complaints about the Madison Avenue 'snowfall.' The department said the use of tarpaulins was required for spraying operations in construction work to prevent inconvenience to neighborhoods." Beneath the article was this typed notation: "Examined in our laboratory, the material was found to contain amorphous glass fibres (presumably rock wool), and chrysotile asbestos. It is known that other sprayed insulating materials contain amosite asbestos (rock wool), while still others contain asbestos fibres alone."

When I asked Dr. Selikoff about the bulletin-board items, he said that the biologist in the laboratory, Dr. Arthur M. Langer, had collected a sample of the material and identified its composition by means of electron diffraction and electron microscopy, and with aid of the electron microprobe. He went to a shelf and took a small glass jar that contained a wad of fibrous-looking stuff, the size of a half dollar. "This is sample Dr. Langer brought back analyzed," he told me. "It comes in a type of insulation material that is twenty-five per cent asbestos."



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