

March 20, 1958

Mr. Wayne A. Becker
US VA Hospital Building 77
Roanoke, Virginia

Dear Mr. Becker:

It was not my intention to give offense or to be patronizing in my letter of March 14. Nor was I being either oracular or omniscient in my statements. As it happens, I have spent the greater part of my professional and scientific life in the investigation of lead poisoning, and perhaps more specifically, in the study of the physiological and pathological behavior of lead in the animal organism including man, with some special attention to some of the organic compounds of lead, principally tetraethyl lead. In view of my long experience with the practical problems of the lead industries, including those of the tetraethyl lead industry, with which I have worked since its origin, as Medical Director of Ethyl Corporation, and as the Chief Consultant to Ethyl Export Corporation and its successor, the Associated Ethyl Company, Ltd, as well as my familiarity with the medical and scientific work of colleagues in many countries, I should know a fair amount about lead, including tetraethyl lead, its use and its potentialities for harm. I hope this background and experience have made me no less of a physician and no less sensitive to human anxiety and suffering. It was, therefore, my thought to give you as good and kindly advice as I could. I trust you will accept this as a simple and straightforward statement of my intention.

Inasmuch as I seem to have laid myself open to misinterpretation, I am entirely willing to make amends by offering to have carried out in this Laboratory for you certain tests, which are designed to demonstrate somewhat indirectly, the lead content of your tissues - the so called "body burden". For this purpose, I would be glad to send to your physician the necessary containers with instructions for the collection of certain samples for analysis. I shall report the results to him with a written interpretation, and then if the results offer any prospect for further productive observation, I shall make such suggestions as may seem to be useful. As I indicated in my original letter, I think the outcome of these tests to be predictable, but I have no such stubbornness or pride as to be unwilling to be convinced by evidence, to the contrary.

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As an alternative suggestion. should you prefer to come to Cincinnati for a consultation and for the conduct of such tests as I have in mind, I shall be glad to have you do so. I would prefer that this be done on the advice and with the full cooperation of your physician, on the understanding that I will report fully to him on our findings and my opinions.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

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Gentlemen: