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"17 Cysts Cut From Back"

2 Workers Tell Of Job-Induced Ailments

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After 20 years of service at Nitro's Monsanto plant, Estil Dailey wears an iliostomy bag beneath his vest pocket instead of the traditional gold watch. The small clear pouch taped to his abdomen takes the place of his cancer-eaten bladder.



SMITH

Cleo Smith wears scars representing more than 20 bouts with surgery. At 55, he isn't able to work and feels he "couldn't get a job if he were — not after Monsanto."

Both men say they were exposed to para-amino-biphenyl (PAB), AJON-C and 2-4-5-T while working at Nitro's Monsanto plant, and both claim their exposure left them severely disabled. Both came to a special meeting held last night by the United Steel Workers union to discuss an upcoming study on the health of Monsanto workers.

Dailey, 72, was retired from Monsanto 14 years ago with a small pension after his cancerous bladder was removed. In the 1950s, it was his job to load reactors, weigh exposed PAB, dump it into huge vats to dry and then crush and bag it.

"The fumes got in my bloodstream every day. My kidneys threw the chemical off into my bladder and I turned up with tumors. It's simple as that, the doctor told me."

Dailey says he also helped make 2-4-5-T, which contains dioxin, which the federal government says causes liver cancer, nevous disorder, problems with reproductive system and skin diseases.

"The company has admitted my cancer was caused by the stuff I worked with, and I get a pension. But I don't get anything near the pension I would have gotten if I'd worked until I was 65," Dailey said.

Dailey says he doesn't believe the company knew how dangerous the substances were. "We'd breath the fumes of the hot PAB, and the dust when we were crushing it without a thought or a warning."

Nowadays, Dailey "can't do anything. I take colds in my back and hips all the time, and I have a real bad nervous problem. The other men I worked with are all having the same problems."

Smith has been off the job five years, and claims he "ain't worth two cents any more." His is a story set in constant trips to and from the hospital; always preparing for or recovering from surgery.

"I have had cancerous cysts cut out of me all over — 17 the size of eggs from my back alone."

Smith, who says he was exposed to the same chemicals as Dailey during his 30 years in the plant, said the company was reluctant to admit blame for his problems.

"I was in the hospital passing blood all the time and in awful pain. Their doctors never told me anything. When I'd ask for some pain medicine, they'd tell me how they didn't want me to become an addict. Meanwhile, they were tearing me to pieces removing the cysts.

"I had to go to my own doctor to find out they were cancerous. After he wrote a letter about that, company people went and really jumped all over him. He thought they were going to mob him," Smith said.

Smith claims he knows more than 100 people who died from ailments caused at Monsanto. "I can name every one of them, and I am going to.

"I don't have a chance of ever working, even at an easy job. When I tell them where I worked last and why they retired me, there ain't nobody going to hire a man with cancer."

Smith gets 80 percent disability, but insists he should get 100 percent "at least, just for the time I laid for months in the hospital, the nights I couldn't sleep. There have even been times people were afraid to get near me because of the way I was broke out."

He claims he worked with 2-4-5-T "off and on for about 12 years; in it, out of it and around it. And I'm cut all to pieces, my eyes are raw, and it's like a slow cancer that will never let up. It's just eating me up little by little."

Monsanto had no comment today.

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