

[REDACTED] - a negro employee of Tank Cleaners Incorporated - a company directed by a Mr. Williams of Jacksonville, Florida, (Tel. 55663W), was engaged with others in cleaning four fairly small tanks at the Cape Fear Terminal near Wilmington, N.C., of one of the oil companies.

The tanks were seen by Fritz Mercer of Ethyl Corporation and by Mr. Williams. They were reputed to have been used for the storage of kerosene only, but 8 years had elapsed since they were in service and one could not be sure of their state. They had been left uncleared, and they contained sludge with a water bottom overlying. Mercer advised that they be cleaned with all precautions in view of the uncertainty.

[REDACTED] was sent up from Miami (or perhaps from Jacksonville) on this job because he was an experienced man. He worked, with one or more other negroes, under the direction of a foreman. The names and conditions of the other workmen are not clear at this time, but the matter is being checked.

[REDACTED] worked Saturday and Monday (June 19 and 21) and became ill on Monday afternoon. At first he was thought to have appendicitis, and an operation at Wilmington was considered. However, this was not done and he was sent to Jacksonville; just why, is not apparent. He was originally under the care of a negro physician in Jacksonville, but when it became apparent that the case was probably industrial in origin, Dr. John H. Mitchell (Doctors Building, Jacksonville), who operates an industrial clinic and takes care of the employees of many industrial organizations, including Tank Cleaners Incorporated, in the area, took charge of the case.

██████████ is in the Brewster Hospital. His condition is serious, with hyperirritability, disorientation, opisthotonus, and at times near coma. His previous treatment is not entirely known, but at present Dr. Mitchell is following the suggestions given last night and using barbiturates, forcing fluids, maintaining nutrition and otherwise giving supportive treatment. I neglected to advise spinal tap.

Another man, ██████████ is alleged to have worked all day on Wednesday continuing the work, under suitable protection, whether he worked under conditions of exposure earlier is not evident, but he was said to be ill last night and was put on a bus for Jacksonville at 7:30 P.M., where he is supposed to arrive on Thursday afternoon. He will be seen by Dr. Mitchell also.

Our function is to see that the sick men are cared for as well as possible and that a diagnosis is substantiated. The entire story of the work and exposure should be assembled.

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

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