

Garrett file

John Everingham
Hotel Constellation
Vientiane, Laos
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Dr. Matthew Meselson
Harvard University
Cambridge, Mass. 02138
U. S. A.

Dear Dr. Meselson,

Bill Garrett of the National Geographic Magazine spoke to you some weeks ago about the possibility of spray used against opium poppies in Laos killing village babies.

I was with Bill when we discovered the story of this spraying. As yet there is no positive proof that the fields were sprayed. All the Meo described it in some detail, yet government officials of all likely bureaus strongly deny that this ever happened, and claim a frost killed the poppies and the tribesmen are trying to frame them for damages. While I find the Meo villagers claims rather too detailed and well witnessed to dismiss, I really don't yet know the truth. I'm hoping that an answer lies in these soil samples and would ask if you could kindly arrange for them to be given the closest examination for traces of spray residue.

This would be greatly appreciated by both myself and Bill Garrett of the Geographic. I would be very grateful also if you could send Bill Garrett a copy of any results, conclusions, or speculations that come from this little bit of soil. He wrote about this incident in the January issue of the Geographic. You might be interested.

The fields are alleged to have been sprayed in Nov. '72, so there has been one heavy wet season to wash out any residue. The samples were taken from fields said to have been worst affected. The plants were said to have turned blackish when they died.

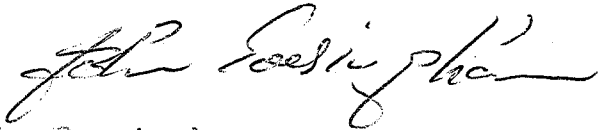
These samples were taken from four places in the one field said to have been badly hit. The two moist samples were taken from the edge of a small receding stream that runs through the field. Samples were taken from a depth of about two inches.

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This year's poppies are very miserable indeed, though this is wide spread due to a lack of rain at the correct time. You might be interested in some of the poppies I picked from the supposedly sprayed area.

This assistance would be of great worth to both Mr. Garrett and myself. I shall be very grateful if it can be arranged. Also I would ask that any results be kept confidential. I am a journalist and would write the story in full should tests prove positive.

Yours sincerely,



John Everingham

Note I am sending the soil in 2 packets by different mailing routes.