



walter c. mcrone associates, inc.

CONSULTING: ULTRAMICROANALYSIS • MICROSCOPY • SMALL PARTICLE PROBLEMS • SOLID-STATE CHEMISTRY

25 September 1985

The Editors
Scientific American, Inc.
415 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10017

To the Editors:

I would like to add my observations to those described by the authors of the Yellow Rain article in last month's issue. In the past 10 years I have received three samples of yellow-to-brown spots collected from automobiles in connection with suspected air pollution from nearby factories. In each case microscopical observations confirmed that the spots consisted almost entirely of pollen grains representing a variety of species and devoid of proteinaceous cellular contents.

The deposits all occurred in heavily populated areas of the eastern United States and I found it hard to believe such "mass cleansings" could occur unnoticed. However, in all three instances the bees were never observed and thus the local population blamed the nearby industries for befouling their automobiles. Perhaps it might be informative to interview these U.S. victims of "Yellow Rain", who blamed its occurrence on nearby industries and compare their stories with those of the Southeast Asian villagers who blamed their experience on chemical warfare.

Sincerely,

Skip Palenik
Senior Research Microscopist

SP:fe