

University of Montana
Missoula, Montana 59801

(406) 243-0211

January 6, 1970

Department of Zoology

Dr. Mathew Meselson
Harvard Biological Laboratories
Harvard University
Cambridge, Mass.

Dear Matt:

It was good to talk with you yesterday and congratulations on being given the opportunity to head the investigation of the defoliation in Vietnam. I enclose the interview I gave in Paris to Le Monde plus the word by word notes that I took as a South Vietnamese witness talked to us in Phenom Phen. I find it most interesting to go back over these notes in the light of what you told me about the current use of CS2. I want to stress that the notes that I have set down here are those that I took before I had any knowledge of what you told me about CS2 yesterday. I hope you've been in touch with Westing and that he has supplied you with whatever information is useful to you. I look forward to talking with you soon.

Best regards,

Bert

E. W. Pfeiffer
Professor of Zoology

EWP:jb
Encls. 2

P.S. As I said on the phone, one can account for the witness' account of plant destruction if one assumes the area was also hit with herbicides.

EWP

Statement of Le Van Hai, 60 years old, peasant who lives at My Tho , Vietnam to E. W. Pfeiffer on January 2, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Mr. Hai is 60 years old. He stated that at 7:00 AM on February 20, 1969 he was harvesting rice when a reconnaissance plane appeared. Sometime later three jet airplanes bombarded a spot one kilometer from him and one hour later one two-propeller helicopter (Chinook) came and flew around, then dropped numerous containers. Four of these containers were dropped 600 meters from him. He described the containers as being about 1 meter long and about $\frac{1}{2}$ meter in diameter and cylindrical in shape. When these containers exploded, smoke came out. It appeared to him to have a coffee color. When the smoke hit his face, he felt as though a severe blow to his face had occurred. He began to have pains particularly in his eyes, the tears began to flow and he could not see. He said his eyeballs began to swell out and he stated that they "came out of their sockets". It was a fact that this man had lost his right eye. There was nothing in the socket.

After losing his sight, he sat in the field not being able to move. A member of his family brought him home. He tried to get to a hospital along with many other men, but U.S. troops prevented him from going there; This hospital being one in his town of Ben Tranh. He stated that four American soldiers lived in this village and prevented him from going to the Hospital. He then went via river to the hospital at Vinh Long. This Hospital is within the Saigon-U.S. control. He was given care by four Philippine physicians in this Hospital. After the first examination, they came back three days later and examined him again. His eyes were bandaged and he was given drugs. He was then told that he needed surgery and that one eye would have to be removed in order to save the other eye. This surgery was carried out. Later he was told that his cornea must be removed in order that he could see. After 15 days he could see some light in his left eye. He was treated for 43 days after which he went home and now can see for a distance of 100 meters. At noon when the sun is bright the right side of his head aches as does the top of his head and his right ear is deaf and function of his right arm is abnormal, he states. During treatment he was unable to eat anything but rice and fruit. Meat made him vomit. On his return he learned that a total of nineteen casualties had been caused by this smoke or gas. He states that the family of a Mrs. An~~h~~ consisted of 5 children, all of whom died from this gas. In addition the wife and neice of a Mr. Luong also died from this gas. Mr. Luong was unharmed because he was in a shelter. The number of persons killed in this incident was seven. He stated that the dead looked as follows: the lips are blackened, the eyes are always open, the skin becomes a light tan color throughout. Two girls in his family were not so deeply affected because they were in a trench. The witness stated that over the months those who were affected by the gas become weaker and weaker. He states that 200 ducks died from drinking the water affected by the gas. He said that buffaloes lose their hoofs after walking in the affected water. These buffaloes cannot now work and tears continued to be formed in the eyes of the buffaloes. He stated that the smoke withered the ears of the rice. It is now eight months since the smoke and new rice is affected. Rice is abnormal with no grains. He states that at the time of the attack 200 hectares of rice died, banana, mang~~a~~, coc~~o~~ trees, 80% spoiled. He estimates 20 million piaster damage. He later described in more detail the effect of this smoke

page 2.

or gas. He said he felt the stinging of his tongue which became inflamed. He states the smoke is "like a dry powder" and is fawned colored. It rose to a height of 30 to 40 meters. He seemed to have no breath at all when the smoke hit him. (that is he felt asphyxiated). I have a note that he did not mention this however, until we asked whether this was one of the symptoms. The first symptom with all the people was lacrimation followed by swollen eyeballs. He stated that the American soldiers avoided the area for a long time even though they previously used this area for many patrols, etc. I have annote here that we decided that it looked like an experimental procedure by the Americans and not an operational thing, because it was done in an area under U.S. control. But this area was often in dispute.

Grant Hoffe