



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE
MATERIALS RESEARCH LABORATORIES
CORDITE AVENUE, MARIBYRNONG, VICTORIA
P.O. BOX 50, ASCOT VALE, VIC. 3032
TELEX: 35230 — FACSIMILE: 318 4536
TELEPHONE 319 4499

Crone
SEP 30 1985

Telephone 319 - Ext. 3563

In Reply Quote:

64/9/36

Date: 20 Sept 1985

Professor Matthew Meselson
Department of Biochemistry and
Molecular Biology
Harvard University
7 Divinity Avenue
CAMBRIDGE.
MASSACHUSETTS 02138. USA.

Dear Matthew,

Your Scientific American article certainly leaves no loopholes for doubt, and the matter is settled; or the yellow spots matter is. The chemical warfare allegations are obviously a completely separate issue, and whether there was any seed of truth in the allegations is something we may never know.

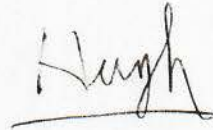
Looking back, I kick myself for missing the obvious. Initially I believed the yellow spots must be man-made, as they were so regular. The possibility of insect droppings did not suggest itself to me, but now I see yellow faeces everywhere. We were fortunate we had a good consultant to do the morphological typing of the pollen. My attempt to use the presence of uric acid as a marker of insect origin did not work too well, and your use of a protein dye was a better approach.

On another topic, our Royal Commission on the effects of chemicals on Vietnam veterans has just reported, as you are no doubt aware. They have failed to find any chemically-induced problems in veterans, and are outspokenly critical about the pseudoscience that has supported some claims. There is no doubt that the Agent Orange - veterans' health connection is non-existent, excepting any specific future problems in very heavily exposed groups. On the separate issues of ecological and human health problems in Vietnam we have less information, but what is available suggests that ecological damage may be the one major consequence of Agent Orange usage. As an early critic of the herbicide usage, you may have different views.

Finally, I would be glad of any comments you may have on the draft chapter (enclosed) from the book I have written as a private venture. It is to be published by Cambridge University Press and the m/s has just been delivered to them. I can incorporate minor amendments to the text, but any comments would be welcome; the book might survive to another edition. Do not show the text around too widely at the moment, in case anyone is tempted to plagiarize it.

There is nothing particularly confidential about any of the above comments, but they are my personal ones, not necessarily the Department's.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Hugh", with a horizontal line underneath.

(HUGH CRONE)

Encs.