



July 9, 1982.

Department of Sociology
La Trobe University
Bundoora Victoria
Australia 3083.
Telephone (03) 478 3122
Telegraphic address
Latrobe Melbourne

Dear Professor Meselson,

please find enclosed a book manuscript which sets out to critically analyse the allegations of chemical warfare in Southeast Asia today. It is something I have been researching for a couple of years alongside a more general book on the Indochina region since 1975. I would be interested in any critical comments you may have on it.

Beside the fact that I know you are concerned with the issue I was hoping that, if you thought the book good enough, you could help me try to find a publisher for it in the United States. I am sure that you are a very busy man, but I gather from the New Scientist that you are acting in some advisory capacity to an American group which is opposed to CBW re-armament. If you are too busy to assist possibly you could see if they could somehow act as agents for me in America to help find a publisher.


/ I am sure that you will agree that the issue is a matter of urgency and it would be good to get it published as soon as possible.

Could I ask you to advise me whether I should draw the attention of the UN investigating team to the work that I have done? They would be interested to look at it wouldn't they?

I have also sent a copy to your colleague, JP Robinson in England.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours Sincerely,


Grant Evans.

Prx - part 3

— surveys of fungi in SEA

Spent on

Temp opt not realized by S.

NAS task

my testimony

Fwd: Switzer dinner? Hickey?

More about author

great weakness is lack of systematic eval of audit

interviews — is claims.

the lack of defn of what would be acceptable.

p 86

opium

Print white paper & side-by-side comment.

List villages ~~is~~ "attached" with

comment on each

Visited by Mammies —

Cross check possible, inconsistencies

Li no allows visits

Still existing after, photos present —

Ch 8 is very poor. More references, side-by-side approach.

Gather all the whys in one place —

At its best — at its worst.

Sequences

Continued

trial by analysis.

Unchanged

pattern

June 27 1971



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Yours Sincerely,


Grant Evans.

Prx - pax 3

Evans



Australia 3083.
Telephone (03) 478 3122
Telegraphic address
Latrobe Melbourne
Telex No. (AA) 33143
La Trobe University

August 22, 1982.

Dear Professor Meselson,

many thanks for taking the time and care to comment in detail on my manuscript on 'yellow rain'. Using it along with a number of other responses from friends and colleagues I should be able to turn a rough first draft into a much more focussed and precise piece of work. I am beginning work on a re-draft now.

Arthur Wang's comments are very depressing as I expected the topicalness of the subject of yellow rain to be a selling point. I would appreciate it if he could give me further advice on publishing possibilities in the US. I will try to get it published as an academic monograph before I consider a magazine format.

I hope to be returning to Laos in mid-September with a television team from the Australian Broadcasting Commission to advise them on the making of a documentary on yellow rain. One of the things we hope to do is to interview refugees in the Thai camps who claim to have been gassed in the last month for e.g. and then cross into Laos and go to the places of the alleged attacks and interview people there. We also hope to visit the area around Phu Bia and other places regularly named as the sites of attacks. Let's hope the Lao government doesn't suddenly get cold feet.

You ask about the Thai evaluation. As far as I can tell the Thais are divided, which was brought out at a panel discussion of the Science Society of Thailand in March this year. Certainly some elements of Thai intelligence believe it is happening and have given selected journalists a look at their evidence. The Australian journalist who bought the 'mycotoxin rocket' for e.g. was shown what Thai intelligence had but he was sworn to secrecy about it. Not very useful. Maybe I will get closer to it this next trip.

Thanks for the Cullen contact. I shall send you the re-draft when its done.

yours sincerely

Grant Evans ✓

Evans



Department of Sociology
La Trobe University
Bundoora Victoria
Australia 3083.
Telephone (03) 478 3122
Telegraphic address
Latrobe Melbourne

October 5/82

To: Prof. M.S. Meselson.

Dear Professor Meselson,

please find enclosed the re-write of the book on Yellow Rain. It has been substantially re-organised and re-written in some places, and it has been toned down considerably -- which most often meant substituting proper argument for political rhetoric. I am much happier with it, and unless something dramatic happens I am considering it a final draft which may only need minor alterations.

The manuscript is now typed into a DEC system 10 computer and a magnetic tape of it could be provided for any potential publishers, thereby considerably cutting their costs if they can plug it into a compatible system.

The Lao Government has granted visas for me to go there with a TV team from the ABC. One of the key members of the team is sick which has delayed our departure until the end of this month. Interestingly the Thais are being difficult about us visiting the camps there. I expect to be away all November but I'll have someone here picking up the mail if there are any urgent messages.

Naturally I would be interested in your opinion of the re-write, and thanks again for your help.

Yours Sincerely,
Grant
Grant Evans.

Department of Sociology

August 28, 1983.



La Trobe University

Bundoora Victoria
Australia 3083.
Telephone (03) 478 3122
Telegraphic address
Latrobe Melbourne

Dear Prof. Meselson,

please find enclosed a copy of the speech given by the Australian Government Minister for Defence Support, Brian Howe, when he launched my yellow rain book two days ago. I thought you may be interested in top level opinion on this here in Australia and I have been informed that the book has been well received in all the relevant sections of the Australian Government.

I shall be in America in October and would welcome a chance to meet with you. Recently I met with H.B. Schiefer of Canada who was in Melbourne in his professional capacity. We had an amiable, if inconclusive exchange of views over a few glasses of gin. I hope we could do the same.

best wishes,



Grant Evans.

Evans
DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY



7 Divinity Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

September 13, 1983

Mr. Grant Evans
Department of Sociology
LaTrobe University
Bundoora Victoria
Australia 3083

Dear Mr. Evans:

Thank you for your letter of August 28 and the statement of Brian Howe. I look forward very much to meeting you here. Please let me know the dates when you will be in Boston once your schedule is determined. I plan to be here throughout the month of October.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Matthew Meselson".

Matthew Meselson
Professor of Biochemistry

MM/db

Evans

Evans

Department of Sociology



La Trobe University

Bundoora Victoria
Australia 3083.
Telephone (03) 478 3122
Telegraphic address
Latrobe Melbourne

September 29, 1983

Dear Professor Meselson,
thank you for your
letter of September 13. I shall let you know
my movements in the US as soon as I hear.

Please find enclosed three documents
which recently came into my possession: two
by the rather bizarre Dr Townsend and one
by one of his assistants. I thought you may
find the comments on bees interesting.

Regards,
Grant Evans.
Grant Evans.

Evans



January 13, 1984.

Department of Sociology
La Trobe University
Bundoora Victoria
Australia 3083.
Telephone (03) 478 3122
Telegraphic address
Latrobe Melbourne

Dear Mathew,

many thanks for your hospitality while I was in Boston. Overall I think the trip went well, though I must confess that I was relieved to get to Europe.

I visited Laos on my way home to try to help set up a visit there by Jeremy Taylor of the BBC. You may be interested in a little story I picked up while I was there which bears on yellow rain. It was at a speech given by the President, Souphannouvong, of all places. A young Lao who was at the function and works for the Foreign Ministry approached me and asked if I was the author of the book on yellow rain. Naturally I said yes. He then treated me to the following story. He had returned to Laos from the Soviet Union, where he had been studying for four years (languages, politics, etc), in January last year. When he returned he heard over foreign radio all these stories about yellow rain. Well, in early March (as far as I could ascertain) he was on the outskirts of Vientiane when he suddenly found himself covered in this yellow 'dust'. He quickly brushed ^{it} off as he feared it may be the poisonous yellow rain he had heard about. He wanted to know if I thought it was. I told him not to worry as I thought it was probably bee shit. He seemed prepared to accept the word of an 'expert'. The interesting thing about the story, besides the timing, is that it was told by an educated Lao who works fairly high up in the Foreign Ministry! God knows how many stories like this are circulating on the grapevine...

Find enclosed what I found to be an extremely interesting article on the Korean Germ Warfare allegations. I'm sure you'll find it interesting as well if you haven't already seen it.

best wishes,
[Signature]



26 September 1985

OCT 03 1985

Dear Matt,

Lovely to hear from ^{you}, and to receive the Scientific American piece. I read it with great interest and enjoyment. You people have done a great job.

Enclosed is a piece from the Age -- the main daily here in Melbourne -- which plunders the article by Kucewicz from the WSJ. The writer, M. Barnard, is one of Australia's most conservative columnists, and not influential like Kucewicz. In fact your opinions have had a good run here. Nicholas Wade's article from the NYT was run some weeks back. However, if you have time, I would be interested in some clarification of the statement from you which they both quote concerning the "bee theory" not being "attractive any more". It's being taken as a statement that you are repudiating the theory. I'm interested because I'm still regularly approached by media to comment on these things, so some clarification would be very helpful to me.

To Jerry Daniels: Early this year I met up with Major Alec Longhurst from Australian Military Intelligence who is working on secondment with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He is a very nice guy. Well, Alec was working in Thailand at the same time Jerry Daniels was there and they both worked together on and discussed matters relating to yellow rain. Initially Alec too believed the allegations, with some reservations, and it was only after he returned to Australia, read my book, talked to other people in the defence establishment here, that he began to have serious doubts. These doubts were hardened by the poor performance of the US team which came here to brief the Australian Government on yellow rain some two years ago. Alec is an expert on artillery, and with respect to the allegations from Kampuchea sees the various descriptions given as matching a very skillful use of artillery and smoke shells, as much as anything else. Anyway, Alec has kept in touch with Daniels, whom he likes and trusts, (Daniels is now based in Hong Kong he tells me) and says that Daniels no longer believes the yellow rain allegations, and it appears ^{he} was ignored and treated quite badly when he returned to Washington because he expressed doubts about the charges.

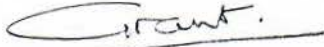
That's about all I know. However I'm sure you could contact Alec for more information. He is very approachable and pleasant. If you wanted to write to him simply address mail to the Indochina Desk, Department of Foreign Affairs, Canberra, A.C.T., Australia. Or, phone 61 2512. At home: 48 9249. Meanwhile, I shall send a copy of your SA article to him and tell him that you may get in touch.

Julian told me in a letter earlier this year that he had heard while in

Washington that I had been put up to writing my book by the Australian Government.
What is the attitude to it there now? Is it considered amateurish, left wing
eye-wash, or simply ignored?

Give my regards to Jeanne.

best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Grant Evans", written over a horizontal line.

Grant Evans

'Orange' — and other lemons

I HAVE just finished reading the report of the Royal Commission on the Use and Effects of Chemical Agents on Australian Personnel in Vietnam. I hope many others do so.

Volume 8, 'Conclusions, Recommendations and Epilogue', deserves nomination for Book of the Year. Not merely because of Mr Justice Evatt's finding that chemical agents used in Vietnam cannot be linked to ill-health among Vietnam veterans, birth defects among their families, cancer, post-traumatic stress disorder or mortality, but because of the detailed and dispassionate manner in which the epilogue, in 46 pages, traces how the Agent Orange myth took hold — first in the US, then among allied countries — through a bizarre mix of politicking scientists, North Vietnamese propaganda and an overly receptive media.



COMMENT

MICHAEL

BARNARD

First, however, an essential note on the veterans. No man or woman can make a greater sacrifice than to bear arms for their country or a common cause, and as such they and their families deserve every special consideration in rehabilitation.

Indeed, the commission's recommendations point that way, and it is to be hoped that the Government in its final deliberations will opt in all cases to take one step beyond that which may be deemed cautiously generous.

But that having been said, it is important to note the broader impact of the commission's findings, which is one of highlighting histori-

cal aberration and hysteria. Or as the commission puts it in surveying a whole range of professional ecological doomsters of the Rachel Carson, Paul Ehrlich and Barry Commoner ilk:

An understanding of the Agent Orange phenomena is impossible without an insight into an era. It is far from unique: it was fashionable: it came during a score of years which produced a glamorisation of politicised scientists practising pseudo-science. This glamorisation occurred because the media made lions of those who spread the gospel of chemical doom.

It is also important that the Government eventually spells out its own understanding in detail. Through Senator Gietzelt it has, of course, already accepted the thrust of the commission's findings: "On the basis of the scientific, medical, statistical and other evidence relied upon by the commission, the Government accepts that the case for a link between Agent Orange and health problems among Vietnam veterans has not been established."

But Senator Gietzelt said also that the Government was not to be taken as endorsing "the particular terms in which the commission's central finding is expressed", or as necessarily endorsing all its specific findings.

Fair enough, but if after all due diligence the Government fails to find any convincing rebuttal of the commission's detailed puncturing of the Agent Orange myth, it should admit so forthrightly, for it is the historical process by which the various breeds of doomsters operate that is the key issue today.

By way of slight (but not irrelevant) digression it is interesting to note that a scientist named by the commission as being an early driving force behind the US campaign against Agent Orange is Harvard biochemist Matthew Meselson.

It is the same Professor Meselson who in more recent years has been doing his best to pronounce the US administration wrong yet again, this time in the case of the deadly "Yellow Rain" attacks which have killed or disabled countless guerillas and civilians where Soviet-backed Vietnamese forces have been operating in Indochina.

The US Government, with some backing from international investigators, has maintained throughout that Yellow Rain, with its potent

trichothecene mycotoxins, is a Soviet-supplied biochemical agent that has been used in Laos, Cambodia — and also Afghanistan — in violation of the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention.

Professor Meselson, on the other hand, has insisted that Yellow Rain is a natural phenomenon, propounding a theory that the deadly toxin is a natural contaminant of excrement dropped by Asian honey bees in flight. Indeed, only last month, in the 'Scientific American', Meselson and four colleagues attempted to cement the "bee faeces" theory ('The Age', 13/8) — no doubt to the comfort of the handful of Australian left-wing academics who have enthusiastically latched on to the same line.

Yet according to the 'Wall Street Journal' (6/9) Meselson now admits his long-running much-publicised bee theory is "not very attractive any more".

And more, the WSJ says, Meselson further admits that samples of bee droppings he and another academic took in Thailand last year, when an overflight of bees generously obliged with seagull-like abandon, have all proved negative on testing in British and Canadian laboratories to which Meselson sent them.

According to the journal, Meselson explained in an interview that these tests were not mentioned in the 'Scientific American' article because there was not room to include them, and "lots" of data had to be left out. Hmmm . . .

"Mr Meselson said that he now generally accepts the work of Canadian toxicologist Bruno Schliefer that trichothecene mycotoxins do not occur naturally in South-East Asia — at least not to any significant extent that may cause a health problem," the WSJ reports.

Hmmm . . . again. This leaves many toxin-tortured bodies, not to mention the accounts of scores of refugees, still to be explained by the Meselson school.

But as anyone who studies the Australian commission's Agent Orange chronicle will discover, it is nigh impossible to prove or disprove anything when people who should know better allow personal bias or political conviction to stand in the way of contrary scientific or other substantial evidence. Or who, conversely, allow their convictions to run ahead of their own supporting evidence.

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