

September 11, 1969

Dr. Joseph T. English  
Administrator  
Mental Health Administration and Health Services  
Department of Health, Education and Welfare  
9000 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda, Maryland 20014

Dear Joe:

Thank you for your letter of August 27 on water security precautions.

I hope we don't have to choose between armed guards at every installation on the one hand and a complete indifference to security issues on the other. As my picture of the San Francisco water supply "temple" illustrated, there are today any number of sites that seem to be an open invitation for sabotage, and at least these could be discreetly secured. Furthermore, as you did promptly point out, there is very little mention of anticipating the steps that should be thought about as reactions to a possible event.

I will also make myself objectionable by raising a couple of technical questions: exactly what is the experimental documentation behind the assertion that low chlorine levels will neutralize LSD? I know there must be a first order answer to this question, but I would like to scrutinize it more critically.

A related point is that anyone with the savvy to get any reasonable amount of LSD will also already have read that it is supposed to be neutralized by chlorine and will have no difficulty in taking precautions to protect the agent, namely adding a slug of sodium thiofulfate or something of the kind along with it.

All this is focussing a lot of attention on just one agent, although possibly one of the more likely ones to enter the psychotic mind. It should be thought of, however, as illustrating the general problem.

These ideas are unfortunately entering the general consciousness of the community, as I regret to have to report, for example, from something I could not help seeing in the Stanford Daily, and which is enclosed herewith.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics