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Consultant in Forensic Science

September 3, 1997

Dr. Thair R. Dieffenbach, Ph.D.
Medical Arts Counseling Services
10441 Quality Drive, Suite 303
Spring Hill, Florida 34609

Dear Dr. Dieffenbach:

Mr. Otto Snow has asked me to write to you in reply to your letter of June 1997. I do not know if anything I can say will be of help to you and to him but I believe that he wants independent confirmation that the events he has described really happened and were intended to be as harrowing to him as he feels they were. That I can do, as I was there.

From August 1973 to July 1996 (when I sold my laboratory and retired) I ran a laboratory to analyze submitted evidence for all police departments that chose to use it. Although I was not consulted or even notified beforehand, I was required by the Maine State Police to accompany them on the raid of the Snow residence in October 1985 because, they said, they were "taking down an illegal drug lab". I am sure Otto has described the subsequent "search" to you. It was, to say the least, horrendous with troopers Hayden and Pratt shouting (screaming, almost) right into Otto's face while beating on the wall with their fists or flashlights.

Now, let me comment on the search warrant and what was, or was not, found:

1. No scheduled drugs were found; 2,5-dimethoxybenzaldehyde, nitroethane and nitromethane were found. The first two could be used to produce 2,5-dimethoxyamphetamine but could also be used to produce many hundreds of other compounds which are not scheduled drugs. Nitromethane is not used in the synthesis of the named scheduled drug but also can be used to produce several hundred compounds, a few of which might be scheduled drugs. These three materials alone are not sufficient to produce anything - there must also be several solvents and several other reactants at several different steps in the syntheses. None of these other chemicals were found.

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2. No laboratory was found. Very little lab equipment was found and it would take quite a stretch of the imagination to call what was found "paraphernalia used in creating scheduled drugs".

3. Notes, records and books concerning chemistry certainly were found - a couple hundred pounds of them. However (and I read or scanned virtually all of it), this material was only peripherally connected to synthesis of, and did not advocate the use of scheduled drugs.

Concerning the basis for the Affidavit of Dennis Hayden (pp. 3-6, his, paragraph numbers):

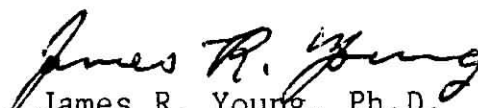
2. I do not know Jack Fasanello but if he really is a chemist I doubt that he said that nitromethane is a precursor to 2,5-dimethoxyamphetamine. It is not, although it can be used with other necessary materials to produce a scheduled derivative of this drug.

6. Again, I do not believe that a real chemist would state "....when the 2/5 Dimethoxy Benzaldehyde and Nitro Ethane are mixed together the only product is 2,5 Dimethoxy Amphetamine". This is so false it is pathetic. In the first place, they would not react and nothing would be formed. In the second place, if one put in all of the necessary chemicals for reaction, and in the proper proportions, and treated it in the proper fashion for reaction, the product still would not be 2,5-dimethoxyamphetamine, it would be a nitrostyrene. The amphetamine requires additional steps, including purification of intermediates, and additional chemicals.

8. The intermediates for the formation of the amphetamine are not explosive. The nitrostyrene intermediate can be readily decomposed but does not ordinarily do so explosively. Both nitromethane and nitroethane can be made to explode by detonation with a powerful blasting cap but they are as safe to handle under all ordinary circumstances as any other flammable liquid. UPS routinely ships them under the same conditions as they ship camp stove fuel, paint thinners, etc.

I have read much of what Otto has written over these past many years. His ideas are often innovative and his chemistry is well-researched and detailed. I count him among my best friends and I very much hope that you can help him put this unfortunate experience behind him so he can move on to better things.

Sincerely,


James R. Young, Ph.D.
Forensic Chemist

cc: Otto Snow