Interoffice

National Radio Astronomy Observatory

Socorro, New Mexico

November 4, 1975

To: Gareth Hunt

From: John H. Lancaster

Subject: Report of Plague Infected Rodent

On Wednesday, October 29, 1975, a bat and a mouse were taken in the Antenna Assembly Building and forwarded to Albuquerque for a rabies check by the New Mexico State Public Health Service. On Sunday, Bill Horne received informal advice that the fleas found on the mouse were positive for plague. On Monday the State Environmental Improvement Agency confirmed this preliminary conclusion and sent an environmental scientist to the Site to take additional samples for confirmation.

There is attached a newsletter from the State authorities, dated November 4, 1975, which gives data on the disease, the symptoms, and how best to protect yourself and your family. We understand that there have been no reported human plague cases in Socorro or Catron Counties for at least twenty years and that, if promptly treated, there is little danger to life, but nevertheless we must all be on our guard.

There are several items which should be done by all of us: first, lunch refuse and other food product waste should be placed in the containers in the lunch room; second, no house pets should be taken to the Site, and, if they have been taken lately, they should be dusted for fleas; third, it would be best if children were not brought to the Site, or, if they are, they must be closely supervised as the majority of plague cases occur in children; and, fourth, any rodents or rabbits found dead or in distress should not be approached, but reported to Forrest Wells or Emory Egler.

We intend to work very closely with the State Health authorities and follow their recommendations to the letter. You will be advised periodically of any additional information which is developed.

John H. Lancaster

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Enclosure