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October 11, 1982, UNITED STATES EDITION

SECTION: NATIONAL AFFAIRS; Pg. 32

LENGTH: 2825 words

HEADLINE: The Tylenol Scare

BYLINE: MELINDA BECK with SYLVESTER MONROE in Chicago, LINDA R. PROUT in Ft. Washington, MARY HAGER in Washington, RON LaBREQUE in Los Angeles and bureau reports

BODY:

Twelve-year-old Mary Kellerman of Elk Grove Village, Ill., awoke at dawn last Wednesday with a sore throat and a runny nose. Her parents gave her one Extra-Strength Tylenol capsule and at 7 a.m. they found her dying on the bathroom floor. Mary Reiner, 27, of nearby Winfield, took two capsules for a mild headache. She was dead within hours at a local hospital. Paramedics found 27-year-old Adam Janus collapsed in his home, his pupils fixed and dilated. Despite emergency-room efforts to keep his heart going, Janus died. Later that day his grieving relatives shared a bottle of Extra-Strength Tylenol they found in his home. Adam's brother Stanley, 25, died that evening. Theresa, 19, Stanley's wife of three months, held on for two days -- until doctors abandoned efforts to save her.

By the weekend seven Chicago-area residents had died and authorities braced for still more victims in what had become the biggest consumer alert in memory and a public-health drama more gripping than any episode of "Quincy." Its source: capsules of Extra-Strength Tylenol laced with cyanide, a poison so deadly that it kills within minutes. Tylenol's manufacturer, Johnson & Johnson subsidiary McNeil Consumer Products Co., recalled two batches of the medication -- 264,400 bottles nationwide -- and the federal Food and Drug Administration warned Americans not to take any Extra-Strength Tylenol capsules until the mystery was solved. Drugstores and supermarkets from coast to coast pulled Tylenol products off their shelves. The consumer alert was sadly ironic, given Tylenol's remarkable commercial success as a "safe" aspirin substitute that would not cause stomach upset. In just nine years the acetaminophen-based analgesic had captured 37 percent of the \$1.2 billion pain-reliever market, outselling Bayer, Bufferin, Excedrin and Anacin combined.

Investigators in Chicago labeled the deaths homicides, all but ruling out the possibility that the capsules had been contaminated at manufacturing plants. But their theory that individual bottles had been tampered with -- perhaps at some point in the distribution chain (chart, page 35) or, more likely, after they reached retailers -- raised the even more chilling prospect that an "over the counter" terrorist was at large, murdering randomly with products millions of Americans used every day. It was a modern version of poisoning the water well, and it struck home with the force of an ancient fear. The routine purchases of everyday life at once seemed ominous and threatening. "I prefer to call this 'American roulette' -- Russian roulette with drugs," said Cook County medical examiner Dr. Robert Stein.

Panic: Some experts feared that the episode might set off a widespread panic among consumers -- and in the wake of the Chicago deaths, there were signs that they could be right. Poison-control centers as far away as San Francisco and New Orleans were flooded with calls from frightened citizens. Some consumers marched into local stores with boxes of Tylenol, demanding their money back -- or asking for other pain-killers in Tylenol's place. In cities across the country, consumers threw away all the Tylenol on hand, and many discarded other drugs as well. Health officials patiently explained to worried caller after worried caller that if they were able to manage the telephone, they probably did not have cyanide poisoning.

It was by sheer luck -- and some diligent medical sleuthing -- that investigators zeroed in on the poison pills so quickly. At first the baffling deaths in separate Chicago suburbs had seemed unrelated. Doctors initially believed that 12-year-old Mary Kellerman, the first victim, died of a stroke; Adam Janus, the second, appeared to have suffered a massive heart attack. But Dr. Thomas Kim at Northwest Community Hospital in Arlington Heights grew suspicious when Janus's brother and sister-in-law were admitted with dilated pupils and very low blood pressure that did not respond to treatment. Kim reported the symptoms to John B. Sullivan Jr., the doctor on duty at the 24-hour Rocky Mountain Poison Center, an advisory agency in Denver. Sullivan asked if the victims could have been exposed to hydrogen sulfide, a poisonous gas. When Kim discounted that possibility, Sullivan replied, "There's only one thing -- cyanide." Later, after taking blood samples, Kim called to confirm Sullivan's suspicions. "The levels," he said, "are tremendously high."

'Wild Stab': Almost simultaneously, two off-duty firefighters stumbled upon the Tylenol link. Distraught over her daughter's death, Jeanna Kellerman heard about the mysterious Janus deaths and called Arlington Heights firefighter Philip Cappitelli, the son-in-law of a friend, wondering if he knew any details. Cappitelli called his friend Richard Keyworth, a firefighter in Elk Grove Village. Though Keyworth was on vacation, he had gone into the Elk Grove firehouse to collect his mail, and remembered hearing from paramedics there that Mary Kellerman had taken an Extra-Strength Tylenol capsule before collapsing. "This is a wild stab -- maybe it's the Tylenol," Keyworth told Cappitelli. Cappitelli then checked with the Arlington Heights paramedics and learned that the Janus family had taken Extra-Strength Tylenol as well. Within hours, Arlington Heights and Elk Grove Village police had retrieved two bottles from the Janus and Kellerman homes. Both bore the manufacturer's lot number MC2880.

By dawn Thursday the Cook County Medical Examiner's office was at work examining the remaining capsules. "I could smell the cyanide as soon as I opened the containers," said chief toxicologist Michael Shaffer. Ten of the capsules were slightly swollen and discolored, their usual dry white powder replaced with a moist, gray crystalline substance that smelled, characteristically, like bitter almonds. One of the capsules contained as much as 65 milligrams of deadly cyanide -- well over the usual lethal dose of 50 milligrams.

Alerted by Chicago authorities early Thursday morning, officials at McNeil and Johnson & Johnson announced an immediate recall of all 93,400 bottles in the MC2880 lot, a batch produced in McNeil's Ft. Washington, Pa., plant and shipped to 31 Eastern and Midwestern states in August. By noon that day, the firm had also dispatched nearly half a million Mailgrams to physicians, hospitals and wholesalers, alerting them to the danger. But that afternoon the threat widened when authorities linked the sudden death of 31-year-old Mary McFarland of Elmhurst, Ill., to cyanide. Investigators found five contaminated capsules of Extra-Strength Tylenol in her purse -- and another at her home, in a bottle marked lot 1910MD. Still another bottle, marked lot MC2738, was found -- empty -- in her trash.

The case of a sixth victim, 27-year-old Mary Reiner of suburban Winfield, who also died Thursday, was even more disturbing. Investigators found four cyanide-laced Extra-Strength Tylenol capsules at her home, but Reiner, who had just delivered her third child, had mixed them with a bottle of Regular-Strength Tylenol, and their lot number was untraceable. By Friday McNeil expanded the recall to include all 171,000 bottles of the 1910MD lot, produced at its Round Rock, Texas, plant and shipped to distributors in Chicago and the West. The FDA also urged consumers nationwide not to take Extra-Strength Tylenol capsules of any lot number "until the series of deaths in the Chicago area can be clarified." Officials at McNeil insisted that the poisoning had not occurred at either of its plants, although analytical labs on the premises do keep cyanide supplies on hand. "Our quality control is very rigid," said a Johnson & Johnson spokesman. Most health and law-enforcement authorities agreed. The fact that cyanide-laced capsules had been found in lots produced by both plants and had so far turned up only near Chicago prompted Illinois investigators to conclude that any tampering must have occurred once the shipments reached Illinois. "We have a madman out there," declared Illinois Gov. James Thompson.

Bullhorns: With the worst of the threat seemingly localized there, Chicago health and law-enforcement officials took to the streets to warn area residents of the danger, urging them not to take Extra-Strength Tylenol capsules and to bring suspect bottles to police for testing and possible evidence. Police cruised

neighborhoods, shouting over bullhorns. Boy Scout troops went door to door and church groups launched telephone drives to reach shut-ins or elderly citizens who might not have heard radio and TV warnings. School officials sent notices home with children, and on some buses and trains transit workers spread the word. Police made the rounds of taverns far into the night, and anti-cyanide kits, complete with antidotes, were distributed to all paramedic units.

The warnings apparently never reached at least one Chicago resident. Late Friday night police found the body of a seventh victim, 35-year-old flight attendant Paula Prince, lying in her Near North Side apartment -- just steps away from a bottle of Extra-Strength Tylenol capsules. The pills were from yet another lot number, 1801MA, and Prince was the first victim found in Chicago, not its suburbs. An autopsy revealed that a suspected eighth victim -- an 18-year-old suburban Summit resident who died suddenly Friday and had Extra-Strength Tylenol capsules in his locker -- was not, in fact, a victim of cyanide poisoning. But some authorities grimly feared that still more bodies -- perhaps those of shut-ins or single people -- might be discovered even days after they took contaminated capsules.

There were false alarms elsewhere around the country. A 72-year-old man died in Livingston, Texas, after taking Extra-Strength Tylenol; an autopsy revealed he'd had a stroke. A Cleveland-area woman who had taken the capsules was treated for low-level cyanide poisoning, but health officials found no trace of poison in her remaining capsules and they pointed out that minute traces of cyanide can be ingested by eating some types of fish or unwashed fruit.

Still, some poison experts were taking no chances. The Pittsburgh Poison Center sent nine people who complained of nausea and tingling feet to area hospitals. Six were kept overnight for observation. "The early signs of cyanide poisoning can resemble anything from the common cold to hyperventilation," said the center's director, Dr. Richard Moriarty. "We decided to play it conservatively." Other symptoms include sudden headache, nausea, vomiting and extreme agitation. After their onset, death usually occurs swiftly. "It's like the old spy movies -- you crunch down on it, and you're dead," said Dr. James Easton of the Massachusetts Poison Control System. At Georgia's Regional Poison Control Center in Atlanta, Fred Graves became so weary of dispelling fears about minor physical complaints that he began asking callers why they had taken Extra-Strength Tylenol in the first place. "Invariably," he said, "the answer came that they were already sick."

Betting: Across the country, citizens received confusing signals from local health authorities about just what threat Tylenol posed. Some state health departments went far beyond the FDA's warning and banned sales of all Tylenol products -- including tablets and liquids. Authorities in San Francisco warned consumers not to flush Tylenol down toilets, lest they contaminate the sewer system. Some retail stores, meanwhile, removed only the suspect lots of Extra-Strength Tylenol from their shelves while others stopped sales of Tylenol in all forms. And in one curious measure of the public mood, state lottery officials in New Hampshire, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island had to halt betting on the numbers 2880 and 1910 when wagers reached maximum "liability" levels.

In Chicago, though, the mood was deadly serious. On Saturday officials found poisoned capsules in an unsold bottle of Tylenol they had removed from a store for testing. Investigators from 15 federal, state and local law-enforcement agencies searched for clues to the Tylenol terrorist -- or even an apparent method to his madness. Investigators searched police records for suspects who had used poisoned medicines in the past and sought lists of employees at all wholesalers, distributors and retailers who had access to the shipments somewhere along the line. Since two tainted bottles had been purchased at outlets of Jewel Foods, a major Midwest retailing chain, investigators focused their efforts on its suburban central warehouse. But other bottles were traced to unrelated stores. "In Illinois alone, there are 100 distribution points -- and 11,000 retail outlets," said chief investigator Tyrone Fahner, Illinois's attorney general.

Reward: Many experts thought it was unlikely that any tampering occurred along the distribution chain, since packages of Tylenol are "shrink-wrapped" in plastic in groups of six at the factory, and adulterating individual bottles before they reached retail stores would be readily apparent from the broken wrapping.

Some investigators had not discounted the notion that the contamination occurred at the McNeil plant or plants -- either deliberately or by accident. Late last week McNeil officials, who have offered a \$100,000 reward for information leading to a conviction in the case, backed away from initial assertions that no cyanide was used at the firm.

Still, the most likely theory was that someone had simply removed individual bottles from retail stores -- selected, perhaps, at random -- filled a few capsules with the deadly poison, and sneaked them back onto the shelves for unsuspecting consumers to purchase. If so, the culprit could be virtually anyone -- a disgruntled employee, for example, of McNeil or Johnson & Johnson\* or an overzealous competitor; after all, aspirin manufacturers, bloodied by Tylenol in the battle for market shares and lately stung by government studies suggesting a link to Reye's syndrome, seemed to have the most to gain from the Tylenol scare. But many experts thought that the culprit was simply a psychopath with a diabolical idea for anonymous murder.

\* The damage to Johnson & Johnson could be considerable. Although company stock rebounded last week from a quick 3-point drop after the deaths were made public, the long term danger was that the good name of a best-selling product would be irreparably damaged. Tylenol is the corporation's biggest single revenue-producer; analysts estimate that the poisoning episode could result in losses of \$50 million.

If that is the case, investigators face an extraordinary task in tracking down the madman. He could switch products or poisons or locales or lie low for months. For nearly a year California officials have grappled with a simihar product-sabotage case, though it is apparently confined to one supermarket chain, Alpha Beta Food Markets in a small part of Los Angeles. It began last December when eight people were injured using eyedrops found to contain bleach or acid. The stores kept the drops offshelves for eight months, then sold them restrictively. Then in July, two weeks after regular sales resumed, two more injuries were reported and eight more contaminated bottles found. In August customers reported finding mineral spirits, a type of paint thinner, in one bottle of Skagg's oil and one bottle of laxative. The FBI is investigating -- and there are hints that extortion might be involved. But so far, no arrests have been made.

"Consumers really don't have a defense" against such random attacks, says Susan Bond, supervisor for the food and drug division of California's Department of Health Services, who has followed the case closely. FDA deputy commissioner Mark Novitch conceded last week that for all the FDA's tests and standards and requirements, "there is no system we can devise to guarantee that people are protected against a bizarre situation." Some experts, including Bond, have long argued that all over-the-counter medicines should be individually sealed at the factory to guard against undetected tampering, a consumer cause that gained much momentum last week. Chicago Mayor Jane Byrne, for one, proposed a city ordinance that would require all OTC medicines sold there to carry protective seals.

No Guarantee: But if individual medications need protective seals, perhaps so do individual fruits, vegetables and a wide range of other products. Even then, there would be no guarantee of safety, and a madman determined to harm consumers would surely find some way to thwart the precautions. "The magnitude of the possibilities is what frightens me," said Illinois Department of Public Health toxicologist John J. Spikes last week. "We know what we are dealing with. We just don't know when and how." Or, most disturbing of all, why -- and whether similar horrors can be prevented in the future.

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SECTION: NATIONAL AFFAIRS; Pg. 30

LENGTH: 544 words

HEADLINE: Tylenol: Many Leads, No Arrests

BYLINE: MELINDA BECK with SYLVESTER MONROE in Chicago and JERRY BUCKLEY in Washington

BODY:

He had a skull and crossbones tattooed on both forearms. He worked as a dockhand at a warehouse that supplied Tylenol to two of the five stores where deadly bottles had been purchased. An amateur chemist, Roger Arnold admitted that he had used cyanide for a "project," and when police searched his apartment, they found a cache of weapons, literature describing how to kill people by stuffing poison into capsules and two one-way tickets to Thailand. But as intriguing as the circumstantial links were, Chicago authorities said they had no concrete evidence that Arnold, 48, was the "madman" who planted cyanide in capsules of Extra-Strength Tylenol and killed seven Chicago-area residents. Charged with possessing unregistered firearms, Arnold was released on \$6,000 bond.

Almost as soon as Arnold was released last week, the investigation took another dramatic turn. The break came when the investigation of a \$1 million extortion letter sent to Tylenol's manufacturer led Chicago authorities to a Chicago travel agency -- and then to Robert Richardson, the husband of a former employee. Richardson's handwriting allegedly matched that on the extortion letter, and authorities issued a warrant for his arrest. Police in Kansas City recognized Richardson's picture on the TV news as that of James Lewis, a tax accountant charged in 1978 with the murder of an elderly man whose dismembered, partially mummified body was found in an attic. The case had been dismissed when a judge ruled that evidence belonging to Lewis, including textbooks that discussed the use of poisons, had been seized illegally. But Lewis was still being sought in connection with real-estate swindles and phony credit-card purchases.

Prints: Police in Amarillo, Texas, reported that Lewis's picture closely resembled a composite sketch of a suspect in a \$ 100,000 jewel robbery two weeks ago, and the FBI began a nationwide manhunt. In Chicago, authorities stressed that they still had no evidence linking Lewis, alias Richardson, to the actual poisonings. But late last week his fingerprints were flown to the FBI in Washington for comparison with partial prints found on contaminated Tylenol bottles.

Meanwhile, federal Food and Drug Administration officials continued to receive reports of illnesses and deaths possibly related to Tylenol, but none proved to have any link to the Chicago poisonings. Drug manufacturers and federal officials moved ahead with efforts to develop national standards for making all over-the-counter medications tamper-resistant. A drug-industry task force recommended that the standards allow for a variety of protective packages, and FDA commissioner Arthur Hayes Jr. told a House subcommittee that the regulations would be ready by early next month. But Hayes said that it could still be many months before all manufacturers could produce the new forms of packaging, and stressed that even then it will be up to consumers to "look at the medicine they take" to see that seals and wrappers have not been broken. Meanwhile, the FDA quietly began to design a more efficient system for quick reporting of poisoning incidents: under the present system, officials warned, incidents similar to the Tylenol poisonings could go unnoticed for years.

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November 1, 1982, UNITED STATES EDITION

SECTION: NATIONAL AFFAIRS; Pg. 30

LENGTH: 1146 words

HEADLINE: The Tylenol Manhunt

BYLINE: MELINDA BECK with DONNA FOOTE in Chicago, RENEE MICHAEL in New York and ELAINE SHANNON in Washington

BODY:

One psychic said she "saw" the name of the murderer flash across her TV screen. Another kept agents busy for two days chasing plausible-sounding leads -- until she revealed that her source of information was a "magic pen." One caller even suggested that the culprit might be G. Gordon Liddy, who had included a recipe for murder by poison in his Watergate memoirs. In the three weeks since authorities linked the sudden deaths of seven Chicago area residents to capsules of Extra-Strength Tylenol laced with cyanide, citizens have called in more than 1,000 tips, theories and leads -- and frustrated investigators are pursuing every one. "This case won't be solved by deduction," said Chicago police Lt. August Locallo. "Someone has to come forward and give us the key."

Last week the investigation centered largely on James and Leann Lewis -- also known as Robert and Nancy Richardson and by a variety of other aliases. Chicago authorities say they have linked the couple to a \$1 million extortion letter sent to Johnson & Johnson, Tylenol's maker, and though investigators have repeatedly said they have no evidence connecting the pair to the actual poisonings, a link seemed at least conceivable. Kansas City police, for example, recognized Lewis as the local tax accountant charged with the murder of an elderly man, who was found dismembered in an attic in 1978. Lewis's natural mother told NEWSWEEK of his tormented early years, and how she had to abandon him as a small child. Lewis was said to have attacked his adoptive mother with an ax at 20, and he was twice confined to mental institutions.

For a while last week, the Lewis connection seemed even firmer. A Chicago TV station released a grainy, indistinct drugstore surveillance photo showing one poison victim, flight attendant Paula Prince, buying her fatal bottle of Tylenol -- and a bearded man who resembled Lewis watching in the background. A possible motive surfaced when a police officer from Lewis's hometown, Carl Junction, Mo., reported that Lewis had long blamed Johnson & Johnson for the death of his five-year-old daughter, Toni, a victim of Down's syndrome who died after open-heart surgery in 1974. Authorities even had the first solid lead to the couple's whereabouts when they received a tip that Leann Lewis had recently worked as a bookkeeper at a New York real estate firm. On Oct. 18 -- shortly after photographs of the pair were published nationwide -- a man who said he was her husband called to say she had been hospitalized with kidney tumors and arranged to pick up her last paycheck, but never arrived. Checklist: The trail to New York did not surprise Chicago investigators. They had found a checklist in the couple's apartment on Belden Avenue in Chicago that included such notations as "Look for Belden-type apartment in Manhattan," "Plan production schedule" and "Travel strategy for metropolitan area." Police in New York discovered that the Lewises had just vacated a \$95-a-week room in Manhattan's Rutledge Hotel, leaving behind a large map of United States. New York police, joined by more than 100 FBI agents, immediately began searching the city for the couple. They checked every route between the Rutledge and the real-estate firm, questioning deli workers and shop owners who might have seen them. They visited other cheap hotels and area hospitals and alerted New Yorkers to look for a brown AMC station wagon with license plates EPX 042 -- a car the couple had driven in Illinois.

But ironically, the New York sighting seemed to rule out the Lewises as prime suspects in the murder case. Registration records showed that they had been at the Rutledge since Sept. 6 -- well before the last week of the month, when authorities believe the tainted Tylenol bottles were placed in Chicago stores. Leann Lewis had reported to work faithfully between Sept. 20 and Oct. 14, usually meeting her husband at lunch and after work. Authorities checked all available bus, train and airline records, but found no evidence the pair had returned to Chicago during that period. The other connections seemed to evaporate as well. Computer enhancements of the drugstore photo revealed that the man in the background was probably not James Lewis, and Leann's mother, Delia Miller, dismissed the notion that the Lewises blamed Johnson & Johnson for their daughter's death.

Sightings: Still, Lewis was officially charged with authoring the extortion letter, and last week, lawmen across the country tracked reported sightings of bearded men and brunette women who fit the couple's description. At Boston's Park Plaza Hotel, a brunette carrying suspicious ID cards was arrested for passing bad checks, but she was not Leann Lewis. A Texas woman named Richardson mistakenly identified her own son as James Lewis. One caller insisted that he had spotted the pair at a World Series game. When police pressed him, he admitted he hadn't been at the game himself -- he merely thought he'd seen the couple when a TV camera scanned the crowd.

Back in Carl Junction, at least six residents thought they saw the fugitives. Police rushed to an abandoned house where a woman thought Lewis was hiding -- only to learn that the mysterious guest was a 19-year-old neighbor, feeding his pet gophers. Hair stylist Pam Griflberg caused a stir when she reported that a nervous man fitting Lewis's description had come into her Klip and Kurl salon to have his hair bleached, then bolted out when she casually mentioned the Tylenol murders. Later, the man sheepishly identified himself to police, and explained that he had suddenly realized that he wasn't carrying enough money to pay for the dye job. One sighting police did not immediately dismiss came from a clerk at a local convenience store who said the couple had stopped in once for candy bars, and again for cigarettes, driving off both times in a station wagon with license plates EPX 042.

Late last week, just as the leads had all seemed to turn cold, Chicago investigators got the first solid news they had had in weeks. Lab technicians testing hundreds of thousands of bottles of the Extra-Strength Tylenol removed from store shelves or returned by consumers found one more bottle containing cyanide-filled capsules. It bore the lot number MC2880, just as the first bottles had, and had been purchased at a North Side Chicago supermarket just a half block from where Paula Prince purchased hers. Authorities hoped against hope that the decomposed but otherwise untouched capsules might at last yield traceable fingerprints, and investigators began canvassing North Side taverns and stores anew. But some lawmen were beginning to express doubts that they would ever find the Tylenol terrorist. "We have here a case that's the stuff of mystery novels," said one highranking investigator. "I'd love to read it -- but I don't like living it."

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November 8, 1982, UNITED STATES EDITION

SECTION: NATIONAL AFFAIRS; Pg. 32

LENGTH: 440 words

HEADLINE: The Tylenol Letter

BYLINE: MELINDA BECK with DONNA FOOTE in Chicago

BODY:

A three-week nationwide manhunt failed to turn him up but, late last week, James Lewis, charged with writing a \$1 million extortion letter to Johnson & Johnson and wanted for questioning in the Tylenol murders, came out of the cold long enough to send a letter to the Chicago Tribune. "My wife and I have not committed the Chicago-area Tylenol murders," the letter said. "We do not go around killing people... We are not armed... no matter how bizarre the police and FBI reports." Postmarked Oct. 27 from New York City, the letter was signed Robert Richardson, one of many aliases police said Lewis had used.

The note made no mention of the extortion letter that had threatened more poisonings unless \$1 million was sent to a Chicago bank account owned by Leann Lewis's former employer. But in a separate letter, Lewis charged the owner of the travel agency with shady practices, and he sent along a packet of documents allegedly backing the claims. "Does the FBI and the attorney general do the sensible thing and investigate the bona fide criminal?" Lewis asked. "No . . . these well-paid lawmen have needlessly made the informant's name a household word . . . I, too, am a victim, but so what . . . I hope the law finds whoever poisoned [sic] those capsules . . . But what are the chances of that in the hands of the FBI and Fahner's Fumblers?"

FBI officials said they had no reason to doubt that the letters were genuine. A spokesman for "Fahner's Fumblers," an apparent reference to the task force headed by Illinois Attorney General Tyrone Fahner that is investigating the Tylenol deaths, said he had no comment. Records showing that the Lewises had stayed at a New York hotel during September, when the tainted bottles were apparently placed on store shelves, had seemed to rule out the couple as prime suspects in the murder case. Authorities said the murder investigation is continuing.

Meanwhile, the wave of "copycat" crimes continued around the country. Since the seven Tylenol deaths, the federal Food and Drug Administration has received more than 270 reports of citizens finding chemicals, pills, poisons, needles, pins and razor blades in everything from food to drinks and medications; 36 proved to be confirmed cases of tampering. Brands of hot dogs, brownies and caramel apples were pulled off store shelves last week in the wake of the reports. Facing the Halloween holiday, more than 40 communities banned trick-or-treating, and scores more issued warnings to parents to check all Halloween goodies carefully. "Hysteria," said Michael Quinn, an FDA official in Denver, "is not totally unjustified."

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December 27, 1982, UNITED STATES EDITION

SECTION: NATIONAL AFFAIRS; Pg. 19

LENGTH: 321 words

HEADLINE: A Librarian Ends A Tylenol Manhunt

BODY:

Authorities had searched for him in fleabag hotels and bus stations and as far away as Amarillo, Texas, and Carl Junction, Mo. But when they finally found the fugitive last week, it was in a reading room of a New York Public Library annex. Alerted by a librarian who recognized him from a wanted poster, FBI agents quietly surrounded a man in a bluejacket copying the names and addresses of newspapers to which he apparently planned to write. When one agent approached and flashed his badge, James Lewis made a choking noise, but then was led away peacefully -- ending a 10-week search for the man accused of trying to extort \$1 million from Johnson & Johnson in connection with the Tylenol murders in Chicago.

Job: Police had tracked Lewis and his wife, Leann, to New York in October, but then lost the trail and flooded the city with wanted posters. Despite the publicity, Leann managed to hold down a job as a bookkeeper in Manhattan under an assumed name. But after learning of her husband's arrest last week, she contacted an attorney, flew to Chicago and turned herself in to authorities there.

But the case was far from closed. In another bizarre twist to the story, Chicago officials disclosed that the White House had received a threatening letter, allegedly in Lewis's handwriting. According to Chicago newspapers, the letter threatened more Tylenol deaths unless Ronald Reagan changed his tax policies -- and also warned that remote-control model airplanes would be used as buzz bombs to blow up the White House. In custody, Lewis denied writing the extortion letters. Police planned to question the Lewises about the Tylenol murders, but they still had scant evidence linking them to the killings. Indeed, authorities conceded they were probably no closer to catching the "madman" who spiked Tylenol capsules with cyanide and killed two men, four women and a 12-year-old child for no apparent reason.

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April 25, 1983, UNITED STATES EDITION

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HEADLINE: Tylenol Comes Back As Case Grows Cold

BODY:

Six months ago America faced the biggest consumer alert in history when seven people in the Chicago area died after taking cyanide-filled Tylenol capsules. Today Johnson & Johnson, the pharmaceutical company which lost millions of dollars on the Tylenol recall, is on the comeback trail; but the trail of the murderer grows colder every day.

Illinois investigators have chased down more than 2,000 leads and filed 57 volumes of reports. One hope fizzled when authorities caught James Lewis, who was wanted for allegedly writing a \$1 million extortion letter to Johnson & Johnson, but could not connect him with the actual poisonings. Another break in the case seemed promising in January. The Cook County medical examiner found that three deaths previously linked to drug overdoses were actually caused by cyanide poisoning, but agents couldn't establish a link with the Tylenol murders.

With time the number of tips has dwindled, the Tylenol hot line has been disconnected, and the special task force has shrunk from more than 100 agents to 20. "We don't have any significant leads," reports one investigator. "And we have no decent suspects. We've got nothing. It's depressing."

Meanwhile, Johnson & Johnson has confounded the marketing experts who predicted that Tylenol wouldn't recover from the scare. Since the company switched to tamper-resistant packaging, Tylenol has slowly climbed from 4 percent of the analgesic market to 24 percent -- just 11 percent less than when the bizarre killings began. One analyst calls it "one of the greatest comebacks since Lazarus."

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February 24, 1986, UNITED STATES EDITION

SECTION: NATIONAL AFFAIRS; Pg. 25

LENGTH: 800 words

HEADLINE: Again, a Tylenol Killer

BYLINE: MELINDA BECK with SUSAN AGREST in New York and bureau reports

HIGHLIGHT:

With one dead, the FDA issues a nationwide alert

BODY:

The nightmare seemed to be starting all over again. Twenty-three-year-old Diane Elstroth was visiting her boyfriend's home in Yonkers, N.Y., last week, and took two Extra-Strength Tylenol capsules before going to bed. Within minutes she was dead of cyanide poisoning, and police found three more capsules laced with cyanide in the family's brand-new bottle. Westchester County health officials removed all Tylenol capsules from area stores -- and found cyanide in five more capsules in a bottle from a nearby Woolworth's. Even more chilling, the seals on both the box and the Tylenol bottle itself seemed unbroken. Had the madman who poisoned seven Chicago-area residents with cyanide-laced Tylenol in 1982 returned? Or was it the work of a copycat killer? Whatever the answer, the murderer has obviously raised "over-the-counter terrorism" to a more sophisticated level.

Just as in the Chicago case, the federal Food and Drug Administration warned consumers nationwide not to take any Tylenol capsules until further notice. More than a dozen states banned sales of the product, and health officials from coast to coast fielded calls from anxious consumers. At the weekend no more tainted capsules had been found out of more than 200,000 tested in Westchester County, and Johnson & Johnson, Tylenol's maker, stopped short of a nationwide recall. The poisoned capsules had been made at different plants, one in Pennsylvania, one in Puerto Rico, and had turned up only in the New York area, leading authorities to believe they were looking for a local killer. Buttressing this theory was the fact that cyanide would have eaten through the capsules in 8 to 10 days, thus all but eliminating the possibility contamination occurred at the plant or somewhere else early in the distribution chain.

Illinois authorities offered to share some 6,000 leads with New York investigators. Most involved disgruntled employees of wholesalers, distribution firms and drugstore chains, but none had produced solid leads by 1984 when the Chicago Tylenol task force disbanded in frustration.

Johnson & Johnson, meanwhile, braced for a new round of shattered consumer confidence. As the company's stock plunged \$4, to \$47.75, on Friday, chairman James C. Burke called the tampering "terrorism, pure and simple." The firm lost \$100 million in the wake of the 1982 murders, but sales of the popular analgesic rebounded quickly, nearly recovering its 37 percent share of the market for over-the-counter painkillers. Burke offered a \$100,000 reward for information leading to the perpetrator's arrest. But a similar bounty has gone unawarded in Chicago.

Back in New York, authorities thought they had a break in the case when U.S. Secret Service agents arrested three people in New Rochelle on charges of credit-card fraud and one suspect confessed he had written an extortion letter from "Tylenol Killer #2" demanding \$2 million from Johnson & Johnson. But investigators soon decided the letter was a hoax. A similar extortion letter led the FBI on a nationwide manhunt for a Kansas City couple in 1982, and the husband -- James Lewis -- was eventually convicted on charges of attempting to extort \$1 million from Johnson & Johnson. But there, too, investigators found no

evidence linking Lewis to the killings. Lewis himself is in prison on the extortion charge, and most investigators have concluded he did not commit the murders.

Model glue: Beyond the mystery of who planted the tainted capsules and for what twisted purpose, authorities remained baffled over how the killer thwarted the bottles' triple seals. In the wake of the Chicago killings, the FDA ordered that all over-the-counter medicines be equipped with tamper-resistant packaging. Tylenol's was perhaps the most extensive, including a glued box, a red plastic covering over the bottle's cap and neck and a foil seal across the bottle's mouth. But FDA officials have long warned there was no such thing as "tamperproof" containers, and experts said a skilled, determined killer could conceivably replicate the packaging using heat-sealing equipment and perhaps some model glue. "We don't know how to improve the tamper-resistant package," Burke lamented, and he hinted that the company might stop producing Tylenol in capsule form.

The larger danger seemed to be the chance of still more copycat consumer murders, perhaps involving other over-the-counter products. A psychopath could poison meat or fruit or vegetables, which are normally sold with even less protective packaging than pharmaceuticals. Aware of the deadly possibilities, authorities could only redouble their efforts to find the killer before he struck again, and hope against hope that he would not serve as a murderous example for someone else.

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October 12, 1987, UNITED STATES EDITION

SECTION: UPDATE; Pg. 10

LENGTH: 262 words

HEADLINE: The Tylenol Mystery

BODY:

Five years ago last week, a 12-year-old Chicago-area girl named Mary Kellerman died after taking a capsule of Extra-Strength Tylenol, and investigators discovered that it had been laced with cyanide. Six other deaths soon followed, and a nationwide panic was on. Hundreds of thousands of bottles of Tylenol were taken off the shelves, manufacturer Johnson & Johnson's sales plummeted -- and tamperproof packaging quickly flooded the marketplace.

No one has ever been officially charged with the killings -- investigators still get 10 or 15 leads a year -- but one key suspect, James Lewis, is now serving a 10-year prison sentence for attempting to extort \$ 1 million from Johnson & Johnson. Lewis gave authorities an elaborate description of how the poisoned-Tylenol murders "might" have been committed, but he suddenly stopped the interviews and refused to take a lie-detector test, which he called "voodoo electronics."

Maj. Tom Schumpp of the Illinois state police, who headed the original investigation, won't come right out and say he thinks Lewis was responsible for the poisoning. But Schumpp does "lean heavily in Lewis's direction," he says. "He's a guy we've never been able to exclude." Current state police director Jeremy Margolis questioned Lewis in 1982 as part of the prosecution team. He won't say whether or not he suspects Lewis, but he is sure of two things: that the case will eventually be solved (given "a lucky break") and that Tylenol is once again very safe. "I took two Tylenol the other day," says Margolis. "The caplets."

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October 23, 1995 , UNITED STATES EDITION

SECTION: PERISCOPE; Update

LENGTH: 132 words

HEADLINE: Release in the Tylenol Case

BYLINE: LUCY HOWARD and CARLA KOEHL with bureau reports

BODY:

IT WAS A CRIME THAT forever changed the way we buy over-the-counter medications. Thirteen years ago, seven people in the Chicago area died after taking Tylenol capsules that had been randomly laced with cyanide. No one was ever charged with the murders. But last week James Lewis, 49, was released from prison after serving 13 years of a 20-year sentence for trying to extort \$ 1 million from Johnson & Johnson, Tylenol's parent company. About a month after the deaths, Lewis wrote Johnson & Johnson demanding money or he'd strike again. Officials traced him in part through a fingerprint found on the letter. As a result of the case, regulations were adopted requiring tamper-resistant packaging. The crime cost Tylenol's makers \$ 100 million for the recall of 31 million capsules.