Mr. and Mrs. Robert B. Greenlee, were relaxing on their fiberglass-screened, roofed patio in Dunnellon, Florida. The temperature was in the 90's, the sky was overcast, and there was a slight drizzle; the Greenlees had heard thunder some distance to the west of their immediate vicinity. Mrs. Greenlee and a neighbor, Mrs. Riggs, were seated a few feet apart in aluminum chairs, and Mr. Greenlee was standing about three feet from Mrs. Greenlee. Mrs. Greenlee had just swatted a fly when a ball of lightning the size of a basketball appeared immediately in front of her. The ball was later described as being of a color and brightness comparable to the flash seen in arc welding, with a fuzzy appearance around the edges. Mrs. Riggs did not see the ball itself, but saw the flyswatter "edged in fire" dropping on the floor. The movement of the ball to the floor was accompanied by a report "like a shotgun blast." The entire incident was over in seconds.

None of the witnesses felt any heat from the ball, and Mrs. Greenlee showed no signs of external injuries, although she complained of pain in the back of her neck and has had occasional headaches since. The explosion was heard by a neighbor about 150 feet away, and it was subsequently learned that another neighbor's electric range had been shorted out at the same time. There was no damage of any sort at the Greenlees, nor were there any marks on the patio floor where the flyswatter had fallen.

With regard to the fly, Mrs. Riggs commented, "You sure got him that time."

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Animal-Care Legislation: Why Scientists Do Object

Morris Goldman's letter (17 Dec. 1965, p. 1536) urging passage of federal legislation controlling the procurement, care, and use of laboratory animals makes nonspecific and unsupported charges of "frivolous and cruel usage" of animals and sets up straw men to destroy. Responsible scientists do not ask, as Goldman suggests that they do, "Why should [I] be penalized" for occasional errors of others?

The persons in the scientific community who are opposing regulatory legislation at the federal level do so primarily on the grounds that such legislation would be contrary to the public interest. I testified for the National Society for Medical Research on 30 September 1965 before the Subcommittee on Health and Welfare of the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce. The transcript of the hearing will show that I concluded one portion of my testimony by saying "Let me assure you of one thing. It is not scientists as persons who would be hurt by passing bills like H.R. 10049. It is the public which would be hurt." Scientists who oppose legislation that would multiply the bureaucratic red tape involved in research and teaching in which animals are used do so not because it would complicate their lives, but because it would delay or prevent scientific discovery, cause deterioration in medical and other biological education, and increase the cost of the biological science enterprise out of proportion to any probable benefit to animal welfare.

Goldman depreciates the importance of self-regulation in maintenance of standards of ethical concern for animal welfare. It would be interesting to know whether he has any proof that laboratory animals are in general better treated in Great Britain where there is national regulation than they are in the United States where there is not. I have worked in both countries and it is my impression that in the institutions in which I have worked, the self-regulation in the United States has resulted in conditions as good as, and in many instances much better than, those in the nationally regulated laboratories in Britain. Furthermore, the British system has not been compatible with effective work on many problems in relation to which American scientists have made great progress, as in open-heart and other surgery, the management of burns and traumatic shock, and in other important human problems.

If any scientists are opposing federal regulation of animal experimentation simply because it would be troublesome to them, they should cease and desist. The pertinent and valid objection to such regulatory legislation resides in the damage it would do to the public welfare.

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