spray several times, so I requested to see the label on the insecticide bomb. It read: "Airosol Company Inc., G-1152 Aircraft Insecticide Bomb, Neodesha, Kansas. Active Ingredients: Pyrethrins 1.0%, DDT 3.0%, Cyclohexanone 5.0%, Mineral Oil 6.0%. Inert Ingredients: Dichlorodifluoromethane 59.5%, Trichloromonofluoromethane 25.5%." What really caught my eye was not so much the fact that DDT is in truth being sprayed in tightly packed, poorly ventilated aircraft, but the warning at the bottom of the label in bold black letters "*Avoid Inhalation of Aerosol Mist*," and what I assume must be both the source of the caution notice and the order to spray the aircraft, "U.S. Public Health Service (71.5.3E)."

The aircraft in which I was a passenger was sprayed three separate times before three separate landings, several times while passengers were drinking beverages served by the stewardesses. Although it is a relatively short flight from San José to Miami, it is difficult to hold one's breath that long, and contrary to what Jukes might think, we have learned something about the effects of DDT on human health since 1959 . . . or have we?

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Sonic Booms over Cities

It is surprising that F. G. Finger and R. M. McInturff, after giving *quantitative* accounts of many meteorological problems facing the supersonic transport planes ("Meterology and the supersonic transport," 2 Jan., p. 16) discuss the sonic boom in *qualitative* terms only. Why not inform the readers that the sonic boom overpressure will be 2 to 4 pounds per square foot and that this is twice the overpressure used in the 1964 Oklahoma City sonic boom tests—which resulted in damage payments exceeding $94,000?

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We were concerned "only with the atmospheric influences on sonic boom propagation, and with the prospects for predicting the location and intensity of the boom." Although, as we pointed out, there are other problems related to the sonic boom, it seemed to us more appropriate to give a reference to a comprehensive discussion of these problems than to attempt ourselves to delve into an area outside our specialty (*1*).

In the interest of fairness, we offer the following quotation from a speech by John H. Shaffer, FAA Administrator, on 17 November:

"There will be no sonic boom nuisance or annoyance, because the whole program is based on the President's policy that the plane will not be operated at boom-producing speeds over populated areas."

FREDERICK G. FINGER
RAYMOND M. MCINTURFF
National Meteorological Center, ESSA, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Reference

1. K. D. Kryter, *Science* **163**, 359 (1969).

Mistaken Identity

The carelessness described by Goldman (Letters, 16 Jan.) is not limited to suppliers of radioactive biochemicals. We recently received nonradioactive samples of epinephrine and norepinephrine from a major supplier of biochemicals; unfortunately, they were in bottles bearing the opposite labels.

We first used the material labeled L-arterenol bitartrate as a substrate for phenethanolamine *N*-methyl transferase, the enzyme that methylates norepinephrine, and knew something was amiss when we found no activity in an assay used daily in our lab. Thin-layer chromatography showed that the bottle marked L-arterenol bitartrate actually contained epinephrine (in this case, the product of the enzyme). Another bottle from the same supplier was labeled L-epinephrine bitartrate; that bottle contained norepinephrine.

We were lucky that our experimental situation readily revealed the error. Possible scientific disaster awaits others with the same preparations if they happen to be working with one of the many experimental situations in which norepinephrine and epinephrine react qualitatively the same. The pharmacologist studying adrenergic blocking drugs, for example, might obtain results that he would accept, but which would be quite wrong. I therefore feel obliged to provide the name of the supplier and the lot numbers of the erroneously labeled catecholamines to anyone who