

*Mom was an inveterate letter writer. Whenever she felt she had been wronged or that intolerable situations were allowed to persist, she would sit down at her typewriter and fire off a letter to newspapers, doctors, lawyers, civic or religious organizations. Usually she would keep a carbon copy of the letter she typed to verify that she had sought recourse from some authority.*

*The following pages bring a sampling of her letters. The first is an example of her persistent and valiant efforts to find some cure for Cynthia's damaged brain. She attended mass regularly throughout the week, prayed incessantly to any number of saints, and in the late 1960s arranged for a family trip to a shrine in Montreal that had a reputation for miraculously curing illnesses. I believe this letter is one of her last appeals to the Catholic Church—a source of solace and consolation for her throughout her life. Nothing came of the trip to Lourdes. I'm not sure that she found the response from Catholic Information Center helpful at all. Not soon after this letter, Mom's life-long devotion to the Catholic Church began to wane. She had given up on the power of prayer and went to mass less and less frequently. I'm not sure which event was more traumatic for Mom: giving birth to a brain-damaged daughter, or having the Church fail to help her out in her hours of greatest need.*

*The next three letters were written to her sister, Helene, in February 1981. Mom had severed relations with her shortly after Cindy's birth in November 1967. Mom felt that Helene was largely responsible for causing the birth defect and never really forgave her. While it is not improbable that Helene was a contributing factor, it is more likely that negligent environmental management was the true culprit. The Surrey Place development, into which our family moved in June 1965, was built over a landfill in which all kinds of toxic materials were buried. Kids born in Surrey Place in the late 1960s were susceptible to all kinds of maladies, including cancers. The three letters transcribed here show how deeply traumatic Cindy's birth and unexpected longevity were for Mom. Yet Cindy is not the focus of these exchanges. It is Nan, Mom's mother, a woman who spent much of the time between 1967 and 1984 with our family in Cherry Hill. Mom's anger, frustrations, and sense of helplessness are palpable, as she lets all kinds of skeletons out of the closet. In fairness to Helene, though, the letters should not be read outside of context. That's why a copy of Helene's typed response to Mom's first letter is presented in an accompanying PDF. She may well have written other responses, but this is the only one remaining in Mom's personal effects.*

*The next letter was written to Aunt Ruby and Uncle John, relatives of Dad who for some reason contacted Dad in the late 1970s. Evidently they visited Mom and Dad once in Cherry Hill, and Mom and Dad visited them once in Seattle. I don't know anything about either of these (distant) relatives, but Mom seems to have enjoyed their company—hence the long letter—and feels comfortable enough to share information about Nan's physical and mental decline.*

*Mom wrote numerous hand-written and typed letters to me while I lived in Germany and Ohio. The sixth letter is typical of those that she wrote to me once she had a grandchild to dote on. She would regularly send us envelopes full of coupons for foods, drinks, diapers to help us make ends meet during our lean years. There were usually updates on the store and on family life. This*

*one shows the festering ill-feelings towards Helene. For more context, you should know that Berta and I were in the process of finalizing travel plans for our Christmas trip to Cherry Hill.*

*Letters 7, 8, and 10 are examples of Mom's efforts in the early 1980s to trace Cindy's brain-damage to pharmaceuticals and pharmacist negligence. By this time she had completely abandoned the Church and was seeking answers from governmental agencies and (dubious) consumer advocates. What I find impressive is her efforts to conduct research in the Physicians' Desk Reference. This is not an easy work to read! Nonetheless, she was intent on sparing other mother's the profound grief that she continued to suffer from—even though, once again, her call for greater supervision and regulation does not seem to have been successful.*

*The north letter is a rare letter written to her older brother, Jim. He had married in the early 1960s and moved to Huntsville, Alabama, a few years later. And there he stayed. I do not recall Mom ever having any phone calls with him as long as I lived with the family (up through 1974). She certainly never had the kids say anything to him on the phone. The photo below is the only one showing Jim's family with ours. It was taken in June 1974. Notice that neither Helene nor her family are present for this one-time visit. Of course, neither are Gerry and Mildred*



*Front Row: Neil, Jamie, Bambi, Steve  
Second Row: Me, Cay, Mom, Nan, Jim*

undated, Fall 1972

Catholic Information Center  
1604 Walnut Street  
Phila, PA 19103

RE: Lourdes, France. Most recent "declared Miracle"

Gentlemen:

Five and one half years ago when my only daughter was born [sic] severely Brain-damaged, I have often thought of taking her to Lourdes to bathe in the waters but have been discouraged by my family every time I bring the matter up. In August of 1971 our local newspaper carried a picture and brief account of a six year old girl named Frances Burns of Glasgow, Scotland who was supposed to be a declared miracle of Lourdes after bathing in the waters and completely recovering from what doctors called a Fatal disease.

Has this been declared a "Miracle" or was there any truth at all to this reported Miracle. If you do not have some information can you possibly tell me who to contact to find out the information as I am still considering going to Lourdes with my daughter before she gets too large to carry around.

Any information you can give me will be appreciated. Also, do you know if there are ever any group pilgrimages of the sick to Lourdes from the Phila/NY area anymore.

Thank You,

Mrs E W Weintraut

3 February 1981

Helene,

Rather than put Honey in the middle again because I am sure she does not enjoy having to pass message back and forth, I'll write directly to you. You are not going to like it but I wrote a letter ten days ago to Dr Onifer because when I took mother home on Monday, Honey said you wanted the doctor's bill paid for the visit about mother's throat. It was \$70. Honey said you were shocked by the amount and so was she. Honey said she believed Medicare paid \$12 towards an office visit. I brought the bill back up with me the next week and asked Honey to see that you got to it and Honey said she believed you wanted me to take care of it.

After showing it to my family we all agreed it was an outrageous fee for an office visit and I decided to writ to the doctor. We also think he was quite negligent in not informing us of her chest and blood tests IMMEDIATELY. NOT 8 OR 9 DAYS LATER. Your are not aware of the seriousness of this problem. You do not have mother in your home overnight of for meals to observe her. This was critical. She had not been eating for almost two weeks. If he thought it so necessary to put her through such an extensive physical to be followed by dangerous throat X-rays and blood tests he should have left instructions with the labs to either call immediately with the results or tell you while you waited. As I told in my letter, it was just fortunate for us and him that things turned out well. HOWEVER, IF I HAD NOT BEEN KEEPING MOTHER HERE FOR TWO WEEKS AND GONE BACK TO THE DENTIST THAT TIME SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN RUNNING IN AND OUT OF HER APARTMENT, IMPROPERLY DRESSED, AND SURELY WOULD HAVE HAD SERIOUS COMPLICATIONS.

I am sure if one of your children was having a problem swallowing their food for two weeks and you went to a doctor and had all these tests taken, you would not have waited for 8 or 9 days for there results. You would have been on the phone every hour with the doctor. He has never responded to my letter and request to adjust the fee more fairly so I guess all mother will get from him is another statement for \$70 and God knows what he will charge for the next visit where he sets aside "three patient times" for her.

I seem to be getting sucked into more and more care of mother. Besides having her every weekend, driving her home on Mondays because I have found it necessary to see that she has food supplies as everything in her refrigerator is old, dried-up food, see that she has her hair done every week, dentist when needed which seems to be happening more often. Taking her to the bank to have her rent check prepared, seeing that she bathes. Your contribution is taking her to the doctor when needed. I think you should see and follow the payments or have them sent to your home. Mother getting these payments from Medicare is confusing because we cannot keep track of what she is receiving and for what. She received a check from Medicare dated 26 January in the amount of \$48. I do not know if this is payment for the doctor's \$70 (12 December) visit to towards the lab tests. If you are in her apartment try to find the bottom half of this check. Perhaps it will state what the payment was for. We have to straighten these things

out. Whoever takes her to the doctor or the dentist is responsible to see that same is paid, not pass everything on to me. It's very simple: you take mother to the bank with you, have her sign a withdrawal slip for the amount needed in a bank check and mail it to whomever needs to be paid.

Jim said he spoke with you about taking mother for an equal period of time. He said you agreed, although you told him to "go first." Well, if and when Jim gets to it—I've had everything packed for mother since the New Year—you are second. As Ed said, we have more than done our fair share of caring and taking care of mother. We have more problems than any of you and none of you have mother in your house overnight. We do not have any spare bedroom. Our boys always have to double up when here/

Mother is starting to have problems with her throat again. We are observing her closely. I am taking her to the dentist again to see if something is wrong with the new plate but she does not seem to chew. She keeps putting food into her mouth without chewing and then tries to swallow if all, resulting in choking. It is quite upsetting and disturbing to all of us who share meals with her. You should try something.

I don't know if you have another appointment scheduled with the doctor. I don't know when or if Jim is coming up for her but I do know she is incapable of caring for herself, shopping for groceries, dressing properly, and taking care of her finances. Her attitude is better, sometimes her memory seems better, but she does not have common, ordinary sense to survive alone or take care of herself.

Please check on the receipts from Medicare so we know what she is receiving payments for. I cannot spend any more time driving back and forth to her apartment. My family and home have been neglected too much because of this extra burden

—- Dorothy

10 February 1981

Helene,

I had no intention of writing any further letters to you and you request not to receive any if they were not friendly. Then I suggest that before you read any further, you destroy this now. As usual, you have yourself smelling of roses and me as the villain. I did not say anything about your "family" in that letter. In fact, I showed it to my sons after receiving your letter and they said they felt my letter to you was a statement of fact concerning mother. I did not list all the things I have been doing for mother to get praised or something. I was just pointing out how more and more things are being expected of me. When I buy mother a dress, I shorten it and fit it to her. When you buy her a dress, **I have to short it for her**. All these little things take time and I live so much more farther away than you do. I know you buy her panties, etc. I just was pointing out how to get her ready to go to Jim's I had to go to her apartment, get all her clothes, have them cleaned, buy new things that were needed, etc, etc.

I realize a couple of weeks ago you had mother for dinner in your home. Most often you take her to Roy Rogers or someplace else with Honey. You cannot possibly observe her eating problems (rather the extent of her eating problems when you are in a restaurant and talking to Honey). Mother is sneaky. You would have to have her for three meals a day to see the full extent of the problem [*NB: Nan would lay napkins on her lap and sneakily wrap food in those napkins rather than eating. She would sneakily dump the napkins into the trash can after the meal—EJW*]

As far as the doctor is concerned, I am going to call him about the tests because Honey kept telling me "how worried you were because the doctor had not called with the results." In fact, Ed was furious, he said "Give me that damned doctor's name and I'll get the results." I told him it was **your [Helene's] job to handle** the doctor and we should keep out of it. Later that week, when I called to cancel her appointment, because of the snow or something, I expected to ask the doctor about the tests but he wasn't there. His answering service answered. **THAT'S WHEN HE CONTACTED YOU ABOUT THE TEST RESULTS BECAUSE HE KNEW HE HAD LET THAT SLIDE TOO LONG AND HE WASN'T GOING TO SEE HER FOR ANOTHER WEEK OR SO.** I doubt if you or one of your family had viral pneumonia you would paint it so lightly as you did in your letter. **AS I TOLD YOU IN THAT LETTER**, if mother had not been staying here for two weeks because of dentist appointments, I would say for certain she would have had complications because I kept her warm and inside at my home, whereas if she was in her apartment, running in and out, improperly dressed, she could have developed serious problems. You did not think your doctor was so wonderful a few years back and he kept billing you for an office visit you had canceled. He seems money-mad just like all the doctors.

You say I am bossy and treat you like a child. You are one to talk when you tell everyone else they should go first taking care of mother. Treat you like a child, anyone that saw mother's leg a few years ago the night before we saw her and thought nothing of it, certainly does not show

much maturity. When mother had to have the throat X-rays and had to be watched not to drink anything, how come she was taken by you to her home and kept overnight for observation instead of putting that responsibility on Honey who is most kind. Same way with all the lab tests: she is supposed to be watched before those tests and you have never taken her overnight in your home to see that she did not eat anything.

*The first page of this letter is missing. It might be a continuation of the letter of 10 February 1981. What exists is a carbon copy of a typed letter that is rather smudged and hard to decipher at times*

... Even after bringing mother home from the hospital instead of having some compassion and taking her to your home for lunch, you dropped her off at her apartment confused and disoriented because you were in a rush to get home to Diane for lunch. Mother fell at that time. Anybody coming out of the hospital feel list and alone and disoriented and really needs someone around for a couple of hours to get adjusted.

You say it is my fault I brought mother into my home. When you threw her out of yours and she was upset and no place to go what did you expect I was going to have to do. Mother was always dependent on me—even as a child. I had to do all her grocery errands for her no matter how far I had to walk. She trained a conscience in me to always put her first. She did the same to Jim only he escaped by moving so far away which left me since she could not go to your home.

You ask why I hate or dislike you. I don't know that I would call it hate. I would call it **self-protection** as you have always been a destructive force in my life. The main reason for responding to your letter which I at first decided to ignore was your statement at the end: "TO SOOTHE MY CONSCIENCE TO GRANT MOTHER HER REQUEST—THAT WE BE FRIENDS." All my life, I have been doing what mother wanted me to do to make her happy and each time it has cost me dearly and the last time it destroyed my life and the daughter I always wanted.

You apparently forget that: in the summer of 1966, I invited all of you to my home, for mother's birthday. Jim, Cay, Gerry, and Mildred had accepted. You were hesitant. Next thing I know Jim canceled out because after talking to you, you had convinced him that traffic in New Jersey was too heavy on a summer weekend and it wasn't a good idea. I was furious with you because of that, and we did not speak for several months. Mother kept after me to make up with you FOR HER. Finally, at Christmas, I invited you and Fred to a dinner which fell on your birthday. You brought little Fred over for mother to mind. He was sick, he had a 104 temperature and vomited in our bed which I cleaned up the next day. I did not know that I would conceive in the next few days of what Fred had. You were ailing at the same time which was later diagnosed as Mono. I became very sick and when I found out I was pregnant a couple of weeks later. I attributed feeling sick to being pregnant but I had Mono. The book tests taken after Cindy's birth showed a high nitre [sic!] of Mono. So because I made my mother happy by making up with you left a sick child in my home and destroyed the only thing I ever wanted in my life: a healthy, normal daughter.

Then, when she was 2 1/2 months old and diagnosed severely brain damaged, blind, and you called me all you had to say was "What can I say except I guess I believe it, but yes, you were right." Cay called me and was sobbing uncontrollably. She is kind and compassionate to people with problems. Your husband at that time made a statement to one of the family that "Hitler



had the idea idea in disposing of the unit at birth.” Since you are a pair, you don’t think I would ever want him around us knowing how he feels about my daughter?

No, I don’t hate you, but for my own sanity and protection I could not bear to see you with your healthy, normal daughter, enjoying her company and pride in her development when you were the instrument (unintentional) of destroying the only thing I ever wanted—a healthy, normal daughter to share my life with. Don’t expect me to grant mother’s last wish. Mother has taken too much of my life already.

As far as care of mother is concerned, when necessary, we can certainly be civil. If the plan with Jim works out, I will take her for the Summer and you can have her for the Fall, early winter. She will have to get much more disoriented before any kind of outside help or care can be looked into.

As far as cousins, we never knew much of the Lougherys or the Currans—i fact, nothing would have been gained by knowing them. I was them as I got older and we had nothing in common.

Perhaps this letter will clear the air or make you understand my feelings. I do not wish to communicate further nor did I wish to write this letter, but your four-page answer to my 1 1/2-page letter needed a response of some kind.

—- Dorothy

Also, you said, you know your doctor: No news meant good news! How could you say that! The tests were not negative. The blood test showed an infection of some kind and the chest X-ray showed haziness. The only time I ever heard that indicative tests showing something was wrong came under the classification “no news is good news”

22 September 1981

Dear Aunt Ruby and Uncle John,

We were very pleased to receive your letter last week and while I have the typewriter out, I'll try to respond. I just finished writing to my brother and my aunt [Honey], giving the latest information on my mother so before I put the typewriter away and get started on my much neglected housework, I'll drop you a few lines as in another week or so I will most likely be helping out at the store as Christmas is not too far away.

As you know, my mother has been staying with us and the burden of closing up her apartment (without her being aware of it!) was mine and she lives in Pennsylvania, an hour's drive from here, so it was a few hectic trips and tensions until it was all over, then we had trouble with her. As terrible as her memory is, she remembers she does not have her apartment and a couple of days there, she actually walked out of here and I had to lock her in the house, an inconvenience for the whole family. After about one week of that she calmed down but sits brooding (when she remembers off and on during the day) and that is depressing to all of us as we have made the boys double up and gave her a room to herself, privacy, and most of her little novelties around the bedroom. She really is incapable of living alone as she burned black all of her pots and pans and just burned my formica counter top by putting a boiling hot, empty pot on my counter and the formica scorched and popped. It would require doing the whole U-shaped island over again as it was one large piece of formica that covered it. I have to take her to the hairdresser every week, plus had her eyes examined, blood tests taken and a physical. I take her with me when I go out to keep the house safe and also to try to keep her from sitting around brooding. If she were cooperative, we could all enjoy her and she would be happier but her mind is very bad and there are also problems with her love of the bathroom—she is in there every five minutes of every day. The doctor said that becomes the love of their life as they regress back to childhood: the bathroom and the evidence of it. Outside of the trauma of Cindy's birth, I think I was as close to a nervous breakdown as I have ever been a couple of weeks back when I had to keep her locked in the house.

Cindy has been fine and is quite beautiful. She would have been in high school if she were normal and quite a pretty, tall girl. The State also suddenly said they would not transport her to school unless we purchased a new wheelchair for her—this would cost around \$1200 and we have no personal use for one—she is only in it a total of one hour every day traveling to the State Day Car Center. They gave everyone else a new used wheelchair so I don't understand their demands so all these things are a great source of aggravation.

Ed has not heard from Leona in quite some time which is good news as usually when you hear from her it is some kind of bad news. The weather is cool and beautiful—nice days in the 70s and evenings in the 50s. We are considering a cruise in late April on the QE2 which is coming to Philadelphia and sailing five days to London, England. It is a bad time of the year for Ed to leave the store but it is the only date it will be here. It is a 13 story ship! We were not planning on

taking another cruise for at least four or five more years but if it comes to Phila we hate to pass up the opportunity. However, with all the responsibilities we have, I don't know if your plans will work out. I never really wanted to see Europe but our oldest son thinks we should go as we would love it. Also, my brother said if he lived in Phila he would not pass it up. We don't have many cruise ships leaving from here in the past several years or so, so we will wait and see what develops.

Ed and I are taking personal computer classes starting tonight for eight weeks. I guess we will be the oldest students there. Steven is a junior in high school and doing very well. Neil lived in the dormitory at Drexel for three months and took his computer with him, breaking Steven's heart. We were already [sic] to buy Steve a new computer when Neil moved back in for a few weeks but now he found another room at the Dormitory so is planning to move out again for a few months. We want Steven to wait because IBM just came out with a new personal computer and we want to hear more about it before putting money into another computer. The prices will go down as the field becomes so competitive very rapidly.

When we see those magazine ads of the skyline of Seattle, we remember our visit with you. Our pictures of Alaska do not do justice to the actual bring there. You cannot feel or understand the height of the mountains or the towns from the pictures. You really have to be there to get the feeling. None of the movie pictures turned out because the camera was not working. Ed sent it away to be repaired.

By the time you receive this, Uncle John will be starting enjoying his long-anticipated retirement and you will be leaving for California. I know you will enjoy that. It must feel so good to be free of responsibility and to take off for somewhere whenever you can. I wonder if I will ever see those days while I am still able to function. From here today, it seems an impossible dream.

Well, I'll say so long for now. Enjoy your trip and we will keep in touch. Maybe Ed will add a word or two as I'll leave him some room

— Dorothy

21 October 1982

Dear Eddie, Roberta, and Teddy,

Enclosed are some coupons. The Beechnut Baby Food expires 31 October 1982. Sorry I did not mail them sooner but I just kept stuffing weekly coupons in a box, never got around to sorting them and today I started and came across these. Give Teddy a big hug and kiss from all of us. We sure would enjoy seeing his progress. The weather has been very nice and quite beautiful here. We are supposed to get rain but it never came. The TV set Bob bought from Aires last year—the picture tube went so I guess it was used a lot as a floor sample. I think it is still under warranty.

Neff was robbed of 32 diamond rings last night by a group of ten people who distracted the help while one of them lifted a tray of rings. Wednesday night is not a good night to be open in town. The new boy is not working out. He is very slow and lazy with a big ego and is quite argumentative. Roadknight and Mark do not seem to be getting along although he was supposed to be Roadknight's friend. When he first started he said he wanted every other Saturday off so your father told him he has off this Saturday. Now he is demanding to work Saturday for time and a half, but business is slow and we do not need him. Guess who invited your father over for a "talk and drink." Right! Tom Burke! He wants a job at our store and wants to be pad under the counter so he does not have to report his income. He also wants to take jewelry out of memo and try to sell to flea markets. Bob said No Way and so did I. But your father thinks he could get along with him if he lets Mark go. I doubt it as Burke is so bossy and demanding. I think your father and he would be enemies after a few weeks.

Helene sent everyone a letter she claims her son Freddy wrote to her concerning Nan's death. She claims that everyone who read it is deeply moved and breaks down. I found it totally cold, impersonal, and unfeeling. Your father felt the same way. I'm enclosing a copy and see what you think. It's hard to believe that this 20-year-old young man is addressing his mother on his grandmother's passing so formally and without deep emotion.

Dad and I do not know what you would like Teddy to call us so we will leave that up to you and Teddy. We will answer to anything you decide but we can't decide which sounds more comfortable. You are very poetic, maybe you'll think of a good name for Teddy to call us.

Take care and have a nice Hallowe'en with Teddy.

So long, will talk to you soon

Love

23 October 1982

Pubic Citizen  
Health Research Group  
2000 P Street NW  
Washington DC 20036

RE: Donnatal  
Susano Elix Halsey (generic)

Gentlemen:

As soon as your book *Pills That Don't Work* was available, I purchased it and used it for reference before having prescriptions filled. Unfortunately, with so many people using it, it became misplaced. My 82-year-old mother developed a problem swallowing her food—the same thing happened two years ago and no cause was found and after several weeks with no medication, it corrected itself). The doctor we took her to ordered an upper GI evaluation and prescribed Donnatal. He said it was antispasmodic and a mild sedative. He told me to give it to her four times a day (1 teaspoonful) and if it made her drowsy to reduce it. I only gave it to her 2 or 3 times a day because she hated the taste and said it burned her throat. The upper GI showed nothing that would cause swallowing problems. She was only on the medication 4 1/2 days and the last two days the only thing she complained about was how dry her nose and mouth were. She did sleep a lot and was agitated. Unfortunately, she died during the night at home. It was a cold night and she had the window open and no blankets on.

I mention all this because after the funeral I got to the library to look up the PDR on Donnatal and was quite upset at the adverse side effects, especially to elderly people. I also was upset because the pharmacist substituted a generic brand for a name brand and wondered if the generic was not as controlled in manufacturing. I still have the medication and am considering contacting someone (FDA?) to have it analyzed to see if it is too potent. With all the tragedies you read about, I think doctors should be more informed of these drugs that can be so damaging to the very young, the very old. I am really outraged that a doctor would prescribe this drug after the information you published last year in your book about this particular drug's ineffectiveness.

In the PDR, under adverse reactions it states: Elderly people react with symptoms of excitement, drowsiness, and other untoward manifestations to even small doses of the drug. Overdose dryness of the mouth, difficulty in swallowing. My mother weighed only 94lbs, was eating only liquid food and at the end even rejecting them because her mouth was dry and we were considering putting her in the hospital for further tests (it was a Saturday that she started getting weaker) but before morning she had passed away ... [NB: end of letter missing]

18 November 1982

FDA  
2101 Berry venue  
Camden NJ

RE: Susano Elix Halsey  
Generic Brand of Donnatal

Gentlemen:

I would be interested in knowing if you have any information on the generic brand Susano Elix Halsey named above.

My 82-year-old mother developed difficulty in swallowing and the doctor I took her to thought she might be having spasms of the esophagus so he prescribed Donnatal. The pharmacist substituted the generic brand.

My mother complained each time I gave her this medication that it burned her throat and tasted terrible. I deducted it from 1 tsp four times per day to three times per day and 1/2 tsp. She died suddenly during the night four days later and the last two days she was complaining how dry her nose and mouth were.

After the shock of her sudden death, I went to the library and looked up Donnatal. I was quite upset at the side effects which included dryness of the nose and mouth. It also said even small doses could cause untoward manifestations, especially in elderly patients, could cause irritability, agitation, drowsiness, palpitations, etc. Even could cause difficulty in swallowing. A peculiar drug to prescribe for an elderly woman with a swallowing problem to begin with. I will state that the four days on the medication must have affected her taste as she ate very little—even things she usually liked.

My concern with all the tragedies about OTC drugs recently in the news is that perhaps this generic brand was too potent or not controlled enough in its ingredients as compared to the brand name. I still have the bottle of medication and if you would care to analyze it, I would be glad to deliver it to you. If you have any information on this generic drug and its ingredients and testing on it, I would appreciate knowing anything.

Yours truly,

(Mrs) Dorothy C Weintraut  
609-667-3131

10 November 1982

Jim:

When I moved mother's things from the apartment, there was a box filled with snapshots of all our children, etc, plus many greeting cards sent to her by all of us through the years. I never went through the box until last week and I found an insurance policy with Prudential taken out in 1942 for you. I called Prudential and they checked it out and said it is good so they will be sending you all the information as to current value. They said it will take-out one month to get the information together. She must have had a small policy on you also as I do remember that she once wanted you to cash in the point and keep the cash but you insisted that she use herself and buy a washing machine. She lived on McMahan at the time and either you were going to get married or had been married a short time.

She also had a Sun Life of America policy on Gerry from March 1933. I also called Sun Life and it will take about three weeks of so for them to find out if it was paid in full or dropped or what the value of it is.

She did not have a policy on Helene or me. I also found some of your report cards from LaSalle and I am enclosing them in case you want them as mementoes.

I know you said that she never wrote to you but I found another letter written to you and I guess since she had it in her possession she must not have ever mailed it to you. It seems she wrote letters in her loneliness and never mailed them. It must have been written after her release from hospital for her leg, possible 1976.

There is nothing else. Just pictures and greeting cards, but I'm glad I decided to check the box and find your insurance policy.

Her four certificates mature on 25 December. If we do not hear from lawyer by then, I suggest we put them in her bank account so that they will draw interest and then can be withdrawn without penalty at any time. The fifth certificate matures 2 March 1983.

It is a strange coincidence that the funeral director made up holy cards with her name and the prayer for St Francis of Assisi. A postage stamp was released a few weeks previously to her passing honoring St Francis. It depicts him with birds. You know how mother loved birds. I miss her filling my two bird baths and cleaning them every day. There has been quite a controversy about the St Francis stamp, according to the stamp collector books Ed receives. Religious objections. I intend to buy several sheets of the stamp in mother's memory on all my mail. One is attached to envelope.

-- Dorothy

17 December 1982

Ms Joan A Godal  
FDA  
20 Evergreen Place  
East Orange, NJ 01708

RE: Susano Elix Halsey (generic Donnatal)

Dear Ms Godal:

Thank you for your letter of 9 December 1982 in response to my letter inquiring for information about the above generic drug and the effect I felt it had on my mother.

I tried a few times to phone you but each time you weren't available. Could you please advise me if there are any labs I could send a sample of this prescription for analysis to see if it is too potent or not prepared the way it should be? I am sorry we did not have an autopsy and we would never have one now. I am not interested in any kind of thought of lawsuits. I would like to settle my mind that it was not something with this medication as I told you, my mother was only on it for four days, she complained of how it burned her throat each time she took it and I know now that the common side effect is what she really complained of: dryness of the nose, throat, and irritability.

I have heard other customers at the pharmacy bring back generic brands the pharmacist substituted saying that they did not think they were effective or that the taste was horrible. I did not know which drugs they brought back but the pharmacist gave them the brand name they wanted and which was prescribed originally.

I would like to have it analyzed. It can't help my mother now but perhaps if something is wrong with it, other elderly people should not take it as even the brand name is supposed to cause "untoward manifestations in elderly patients even with small dosages" (PDR Reference on Donnatal)

Thank you for any information on labs

Yours truly,

Dorothy C Weintraut