

# Nexus Products Company

by Sean Lovelace

Dear Sir or Madam:

It is like 4:30 in the morning and I sitting here at my desk (my dachshund Flash snuggled below my feet) sipping Red Bull and writing this memo concerning one of your cosmetic/beautification products, a conditioner, specifically, Nexxus Phyto-Organics Nectaress Nourishing Conditioner. It is in a plastic bottle the color of a pack of Newport cigarettes, or maybe diet Coke spilt on a doctor's office carpet, or maybe coffee just as the creamer is spinning within it—kind of off-white, liverish, with a tinge of cream of mushroom soup, and the bottle is ergonomically shaped and fits the hand of an average adult and is # 4010800/29060-V3 and is round and smooth and cool to the touch, like a 20mg Dexedrine tablet, which may or may not be relevant here. Hopefully, with my descriptors, you can identify this bottle/batch/industrial unit.

At any rate.

I am writing due to a failure in the conditioner consistency. Ever since I had to crash at my girlfriend's girlfriend's loft in downtown Minneapolis, Minnesota (this was after several days and nights at the city's semi-annual Jackalope Sundaes Insomnia Rave—looong story), I have always used Nexxus Phyto-Organics Nectaress Nourishing Conditioner in my thrice daily (sometimes more) washings of hair, and the product has at all times had a glossy, creamy, steamy, velvety texture, with just a thickening hint of coffee bean (my guess-timation), which I find refreshing.

However.

This time was different. On June 14, 2003, I first became aware of the problem. It all began with the conditioner delivery process, as I was up all night and washing/conditioning my hair repeatedly and suddenly I was forced to squeeze the Nexxus Phyto-Organics Nectaress Nourishing Conditioner bottle with excessive intensity, huffing and grunting and grinding my teeth and, yes, cursing, just to get the conditioner to exit the bottle and settle into my open palm. I

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found this alarming. Usually, this particular conditioner *flows* from the bottle, in an agreeable manner, like chocolate syrup on Sunday morning corndogs. Sir or madam, it did not flow. No. It slugged, yes, then spat, drooped, and congealed. There was no way I could *apply*, *work through*, or *leave in for one minute* this dusty nugget of conditioner. It looked like old phenylephrine paste, or rubbery caulk one would find in the bathroom corners of a rehab center. It reminded me of a dead slug, or crack-house mattress linen—I mean it was decrepit and dry and pinkish and gummy and altogether *horrible*.

Can you explain? I can't. I have hypotheses, naturally. The conditioner might have been in some way dehydrated. My mind goes immediately to the coffee beans (again, I'm assuming Nectaress refers to coffee bean nectar), possibly inferior due the recent drought, number of devastating brush fires, and persistent political instability in central Columbia. Or maybe the bottle had a sealant failure? Like the shuttle with the O-rings, you know? That blew my mind when the shuttle exploded! I'd been up for like 34 days and I was all, "NOOOOOOO!" So, I checked out the bottle and even used a small magnifying glass I got from CVS pharmacy and I saw absolutely no failure of the exterior seal or casing. Next, I thought of sabotage. I mean, like anyone else, I have scores of enemies and bill-collectors, but who would tamper with a man's beauty supplies? Oh god, I don't even want to consider the implications.

As you can see, I find this dilemma worrying. Excessive worrying, you're probably thinking, but all of us are different. We all have our little "thing" we worry over. For me, it's my stomach. No matter how many Phentamine tablets, or how many crunches, I have to check my stomach in the mirror at least ten times a day. I don't know why. I think fat will just appear, like a narcotics cop at my door, or something. My mom worries about The Bomb. Still! I told her the Cold War is so over, but she doesn't listen. And there's this lady, friend of my mom, Mrs. Gorman, who lives three blocks over and worries I won't show up every two weeks to trim the dandelion shoots from around the post of her mailbox (a gaudy plastic thing in

the shape of a chicken barn). I mean she sits out there in this old red porch swing waiting on me all day and I always show up (admittedly, sometimes late in the evening and/or early morning) and she always says, "I thought you weren't coming." Why? Why would she say that? For ten and a half years, every 14 days, I have trimmed the dandelion shoots from the post of her mail barn, even in the winter when not even one dandelion shoot exists. (Though she insists I show up, I don't charge her in the winter.) Why, I ask you? Why does Mrs. Gorman imply I might not show up to complete a job I've been doing for over a decade? Who knows? Who can answer such questions? I mean why does God allow SUVs? Why do people take naps? How does Oprah gain and lose all that weight? And so on.

Well.

What I'm saying is I guess I know how Mrs. Gorman feels. I am comfortable with cosmetic sameness. Time and again, without fail, I want an excellent, excellent, excellent conditioner. Basically, I am conditioned to my conditioner. That's a joke. But this issue is no joke. I really need to know the next bottle of beautifier will be like the last bottle. It's important, a comforting routine, like morning Ritalin, running sprints in the driveway, cigars at lunch, Mountain dew at midnight, a neighbor boy dropping every two weeks to trim an old lady's dandelion shoots . . .

Two days ago, I inverted my bottle of Nexxus Phyto-Organics Nectaress Nourishing Conditioner and I peered deep inside its opening (now clogged) and I squeezed and clutched and strangled, and once it finally released its grubby little chalky dab of conditioner in my hand, I have to admit my lips formed the words: "I thought you weren't coming." Yes, just like pitiful old Mrs. Gorman.

I want my old conditioner back. Please, please, please, don't make me switch conditioners—the last thing I need right now is a big decision in my life. I've got all kinds of relationship problems and an ingrown toenail and MC Hammer-like credit card debt and an appetite problem and a small IRS situation and my girlfriend's girlfriend keeps calling from Minnesota and...well, I digress.

Please reply with an explanation of your conditioner breakdown. I must know. I really must. For now, I'll add Diet Dr. Pepper to the remaining product and do my best. That's what I do, whether washing my hair or trimming dandelions or eating the cotton from inhalers or making a sandwich for my dachshund or seeing an out-of-state girl, my best. I expect the same.

Sincerely:

Sean Lovelace

