

Rt 8, Frederick, Md. 21701

10/2/69

Dear Jim,

Since reading in the N.O. paper of your hospitalization I've been intending to write you, but the pressures of my own life frustrated it. The last two trips I made to your city apparently took a heavier toll on me than I then anticipated. Physically and emotionally they were difficult. On the last one, I just blacked out for a while, a short while. In doing it I suffered an impairment to my sense of balance that has not yet returned to normal, and I injured a knee that apparently prefers continuing to annoy me.

Since then I have been under medical injunction to take it easier, get more rest, etc., and gradually I've gotten to the point where on most nights I get the generally-recommended amount of rest. Last night, which is still this night, is an exception, so I use the extra time for what I intend as a word of cheer.

The paper reporting your release from the hospital (if it can be said that anything in your papers is "reporting"), arrived yesterday. I hope this means that you have recovered from whatever is wrong with your back.

You have joined a rather large brotherhood. I've just "celebrated" my 30th year of membership. Much of the time has been uncomfortable, but I cite the duration as evidence of a rather high survival rate.

Back injuries, like women and friends, are of all different varieties. Some are worse than others. I am fortunate in sharing my life with one not the worst, one with which I've been able to coexist once I determined that, with a lifetime to share, I'd be the master. Since reaching this conclusion, not a single thing that I've wanted to do has my back kept me from doing.

Last week, bending down for a light object, I kicked mine out again. For several days it was impossible for me to straighten up. However, I kept up with my program of physical activities, designed, hopefully, to restore some of the muscles lost in five sedentary years. Although I had to do it sitting down or kneeling, I took down two 30-foot trees and then, without a tractor, dragged each 400-500 feet, to where trimming them out would make less of a mess on the place. I do not know that Paul Bunyan would approve, and it must look funny, were one to see a man swinging an axe while kneeling, sawing while sitting, but the fact is I did fell the trees.

While I cannot and do not pose as an expert on back injuries, I do assure you that some seem much worse to begin with than they actually are. I hope yours is of this character.

The most difficult thing for me is to stand still, in one position, as before a podium. But I have yet to find the audience that resented my sitting while I addressed it, as almost invariably I have.

And I do hope, if and when the time for swinging in your campaign comes, you'll be able to.

My own output has been slowed somewhat by stretched ped-time and the physical activity, but it remains one of which I do not shame. Aside from continuing inquiries and keeping up with the day-to-day work, I've completed two books since I was last there. One, which runs not less than 200,000 words, is in the form of an addition to an earlier one not printed, COUP D'ETAT. This addition deals with the King/Rey case alone. Several others, on which the research is completed, are in various stages of incompleteness. My continuing investigations have been rather fruitful. I think they have produced what may eventually prove to be the most useful evidence yet.

If it can be said the campaign can be watched from your papers, I have been watching it with some interest. Aside from my early newspaper experience, before I cast my first ballot I worked for the Senate. So, I see politics as other non-participants often do not. The Washington Post, while finding you a very dangerous man, concedes. For this work of scholarship they assigned their top ~~political~~ investigative reporter and the upgraded former chief of their national desk.

If I can read between the lines accurately, Charlie Ward began with the support of the local papers but didn't live up to their expectations. Because I know, personally - first-hand, having been told it by Wesley - the high regard they had for him, I find the States' endorsement of Connick telling me Charlie is done. As I read what Connick says, I reach other conclusions, and I am unimpressed with the protestations of his poverty. He is, I feel, far from alone and, when he needs the wherewithall, will have it, probably in the stretch, when suddenly he'll have the TV money he needs. I recall a number of elections in which new techniques were developed for hurting the popular incumbent. Two of the classics were here in Maryland. A nonentity, John Marshall Butler, got into the Senate that way on one occasion. On another, basic changes were brought about in the form of government of the county in which I then lived.

Connick's, I believe, is non-local sponsorship. I believe I can anticipate some of the last minute dirty-work. If it interests you, I can always get to a clear phone in a very short time, ten minutes at most. I do not believe the NOAC phones need be clear, however.

So, I hope you are feeling well, that whatever has happened to your back is not permanent, that it will not require surgery, and that you'll have the last-minute ~~energy~~ energy for a successful conclusion to the campaign.

Good luck and best regards to all.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg