

Dear Phil,

4/14/85

Reur 4/9, my recollection of Jonn Christian is that someone is allegedly always robbing him as he reports it while he is busily engaged in robbing anyone else who is convenient. I have no idea how Rev. Owen could steal Jon (and Turner's) book and do not see how that is possible. (Turner is no less an accomplished thief.)

There was a man, Hal Verb, who was very effective in arranging promotions, including of me, on the JFK assassination in the San Francisco area. Hal once booked me more than around the clock. He scheduled a press conference for a half hour before my plane landed! Except for that, Hal arranged it and I did it when I got there, without any problems. Then, how I do not now recall, Jonn moved in and soon replaced Hal, and I was not as well booked. When Oswald in New Orleans appeared (and it was when Jonn and Hal were ostensibly working together) and that was after Pocket Books broke its agreement with Parallax and refused to distribute it, Jonn got Parallax to send him 5,000 copies to use in both sales and promotions. I doubt he used two dozen in promotions and I know he sold some and there never was a cent for the printing. Then I heard that he had several thousand stored in the basement of the apartment house in which he lived and I asked for them. He refused to send them without prepayment of the shipping costs, and when he got the guarantee on that he fell silent. It is not only that he stole them, not only that I could have sold them, it is that people who wanted them did not and could not get them.

When you say that you are trying to decide where in your house you'll locate a woodstove I visualize an old house with many chimneys or a new one without any. If you have an old house I strongly urge that you have a professional evaluation of your chimneys to be certain that they are safe. Some old houses had chimneys with no liners, sometimes mortar deteriorates, etc. When I say professional I mean really experienced. Many laymen are, as are chimney sweeps. Some fire departments will do this. And when you are using wood as a fuel, you should have the chimney cleaned every year, during the off season, when the rates are lower. (\$35-50 here).

It would probably be a good idea to seek advice on where to locate a stove, and that may indicate the kind of stove to get. Walls interfere with the flow of warm air. I am fortunate that we have an open house, but I still use two low-velocity fans and am thinking of a third. Jerry's house also is fairly open, but he's added a ceiling small low velocity fan, to force air into the next room. These are small and efficient. I have a ceiling fan that is really a cooling fan, the old-fashioned kind that blows air downward. I use it on lowest speed for winter, highest for summer. The downward flow in the winter is then directed away from the stove by the blower on the stove. But do consider the walls that can interfere with movement of warm air. It will go upstairs without help.

Modern stoves are more efficient and many makes and styles are available. If you have anyone at the university who is informed I'd ask and learn what is best suited to your needs. Otherwise you'll have to depend on the honesty of dealers or if you are lucky, as I was, informed friends. But if I were making an installation for the first time now it would be different, find a stove as I have and well as it works. I did not know then what I know now. I'm wasting a fair amount of heat in the chimney with an insert when the hearth is large enough to accommodate a free-standing stove from which I'd lose none of the convection.

Be aware that those who fell trees also are crooks, so get written estimates from more than one. Get it to include the estimated hours and if as happened here it takes less, don't pay for more than the time it takes. I got ripped off by half because I was not foresighted under the identical circumstances, trees close to the house that had to be topped. Include also brush disposition if you do not want to use it, as for animal shelters, as I did. But some branches are quite good and

having them saves the work and waste of splitting larger pieces for the necessary small wood for a fast or hot fire. Example: the local utility, without advance warning, which would have enabled me to see for lumber the trees they removed, came here and asked for immediate approval because the hired crew (Asplundh) was within two days of getting here. I asked for all branches 2" or more to be sawed to length. Where I could see it they did, where I couldn't they didn't, and when I discovered this I complained. I also had other complaints, so the line official of the utility came, agreed with me, saw other things that should have been done and didn't, and came with the crew when it returned. I got a full large pickup load of useful wood that had been hidden under brush. (He also seed where the trees were removed and removed a tree that had been ignored when it was a danger to uninterrupted service.) I got about 10% of next year's wood that had been discarded. And left to become an nuisance.

You ought know what stove you'll be using before the wood is cut to length. You may select a stove for which it ought not be longer than 16-18" and if it is cut to 20-24" you'll have a problem and work. (The sap is up now anyway, so you have time.)

Straight branches or small firewood ought also be used as skids on which to stack the forewood after it is cut. Do not let it rest directly on the earth. It will be damp and attractive to bugs. Mice will hide in it anyway, but it will discourage some if off the ground. Two inches is ample height, just so the forewood does not rest on the ground. If you've never stacked any, let me know and I'll make a few suggestions. It is a good idea to cover the top to keep rain off the top. Keep the sides open for drying.

Jerry's address is 5439 Shookstown Road. I phoned and his wife told me he is mowing the grass today. He's been rather busy at school, so busy that I've seen very little of him. I asked that he phone when he gets in the house and I'll let you know.

Back to the firewood: save several straight branches of hardwood about 2" in diameter about 15" long to use as "gluts," as they were known around here. Use them as large wedges. Sharpen one end to a wedge shape and make a square cut on the other and wrap a few turns of steel wire around the squared end and twist it so the wire will not give. It works like a steel band around an old wooden-headed maul or ledge hammer, keeping the wood from spreading. Oak probably won't last as long as other woods. Dogwood has the best reputation. I'm using a sassafras about five years old, and about shot and two made, of all things, of privet, the parts of those neat hedges that will grow like a tree if untrimmed and given space. We had one higher than the house. It was struck by lightning so when I noted how hard and heavy the wood is I saved a couple of the straighter piece. I've saved a couple of lengths of ~~some~~ bush honeysuckle to try because it also is very dense. If you find that the wedges do not force the wood apart, use a glut or two of them after the split has been started with the wedges. If you do not have a splitting maul, I recommend one, and examine the handle with care. Ash is best. It is better than an ax for splitting most wood and you just turn it over instead of reaching for a sledge hammer.

When I'm splitting, and I'm now very inefficient at it because I must sit most of the time (and use a 3lb engineer's hammer instead of a sledge), I like a portable radio. I tune to the all-news station in Washington. You ought be able to do that with WEEL, which used to be all-news.

If the wood has been sectioned well it often saves effort to put one piece on top of another, using the bottom piece as a chopping block, so to speak. And if you'll have much to trim in the branches, having a wide and longer cut for a chopping block is a good idea. I have two at different ends of the wood stack, each 24" or more. Safer that using two for chopping branches because the top one can's skid or move if it is all one piece. Oak will not take contact with the ground well, so put a couple of bricks under it. If you have any locust, that endures very well. Used for fence posts, etc. After 5 or more years my locust block shows no rot at all.

I hope that reading at least some of those papers was gratifying!

I think it more likely that the stonewalling of the fee-waiver is first, SOP, so they can run their statistics up while wearing you down, and in part motivated by a desire to cook up what can enable them to get away with rejecting a legit request. I think it is likely that based on prior experience Jim will recommend going after the fee waiver in court first and keeping things as simple as possible.

Excuse the typos. I'm baby-sitting my 95-year-old mother-in-law so I'm not going to try to correct the errors that by now you should read almost at sight because I repeat them.

Good luck,



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April 9, 1985

Dear Harold:

Having read 54 essays (averaging 6 hand-written pages each) on MLK and 54 on RFK, I am now in a position to catch up on some backlog (your 3/8/85, 3/16/85).

Indeed the advice "listen to your body" is extremely sound. I do so while jogging so I won't drop dead while doing (I would not want to become Penn Jones' #378). Chopping is something I do so sporadically and with, usually, such a backlog of felled trees that I usually do not start as slowly as I should - but this time I will.

I suppose that the fact that your books are much-stolen is a backhanded compliment to its importance, but the New York Times' audacity is striking. Re Jonn Christian - He claims that Rev. Owen and Harper and Row stole his book. Why and how did Christian steal your book? Anyway, I have told my library to order a complete new set of your volumes.

I assure you, I will not attempt to fell the oaks by myself. I will pay pros to do it. They are of such weight and stature that they could easily crunch my house. I will use them for fuel and shall follow your advice about sap and processing, etc. We are trying to decide where in our house to locate a wood stove.

I wrote McKnight but got no response (3 weeks). Do you have a home mailing address for him?

We have heard nothing from the FBI on Greg and my RFK request. Jim says that the Bureau will take its sweet time in deciding about our fee waiver (5 weeks or so, so far) because they do that when they might have to grant one.

Note - Bantam edition HSCA final Rept. p 58 - Violence is a necessary condition for Oswald's guilt. Then, 424-33, for Ray, violence is dropped as a necessary condition (because they could not even fabricate a good case that Ray was violence-prone).

Take care of yourself,

Best,

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER