

12/11/69

Dear Dick,

This morning I have to take Lil to DC for a medical appointment. There are 15 minutes or so before I'll awaken her, giving me this time to write you. We are both okay but I think we've had strep throats. Mine lingered slightly in the form of a slightly sore throat, after the brief initial fever. Hers has been more severe, so she's shifting from a dental appointment to a second medical one, to get that, too, checked out. We are at the years where our members trouble, and she had a long-standing orthopaedic consultation set. Aside from her discomfort, which was fairly considerable, the main effect has been to slow down the indexing of the ROME add. And in DC today it will curtail what I'd have done, for I'll bring her back immediately, necessitating another trip to do what I would have. How I wish I could replace this ancient machine so far past an earned retirement!

I have several reasons for writing. Archives delay in sending you the picture I had taken of 399's base is so inordinate, I think you should have the knowledge. I asked Howard to send you an enlargement of his. They've cut another hunk off it! As soon as I saw his I knew this. He sent me an out-of-focus enlargement and will send me a better one. I do not now want to pinpoint this at the archives, so I'm not getting it from the negative. So, there is the fragment it lost before they shot it for me, and now, with Howard's, clearly, taken long after mine, there is still another piece missing. Naturally, it is the piece that permits argument that a longer fragment was possible, the sort of partition between the flaws. I need not emphasize the significance of this to you. I do emphasize the urgency of silence, for only you and Howard know. But among the many importances of this is the entire basis of their argument that the thing may not be touched for "security". I expect to pull it on them in court, not until then. I am not telling John, who is overloored with what he has. My suit will not duplicate his and he has a few unnecessary legal problems I think we can avoid. I tell you this, taking the joy of discovery away from you, because you should have the knowledge for your own thinking and because you have a kind and the kind of technical knowledge that may make of it what it may not. I add to it this: I now have some material that was withheld from the WC. This includes the most indefinite possible "receipt" for a "missile" removed by James. My inquiries seeking its identification as an exhibit have been fruitless (which may be the most fruitful), only Rhoads' seeming kindness of calling to my attention the existence of the exhibit with the minuscule dot-like fragments. However, there were larger ones. I've forgotten the size of the one behind the eye and reading Howard's work last night reminded me we do have the "diameter" (a point dismissed) of the piece from the back of the head. Now the X-rays are from more than one projection, so they knew more than the "diameter" (6.5mm, naturally). The particles Rhoads' suggests are hardly to be called and receipted as "missiles". Besides, these are more than one and the receipt is for a single one. You can perhaps understand why the WC never had this and why it has taken me since the Spring of 66 to get it. I also have proper official denials of its existence, too. I await Vesuvius.

Howard's piece was on my mind, so I instead of plugging away at my own accumulations, I read it and gave him a taste of suggestions I'll mail this a.m. For one of his years it is a remarkably fine job. It discloses understanding and knowledge many of his seniors do not have. But it is also largely unoriginal, a thing of which I think he is painfully aware from the impassioned letter he sent with it. In some cases, he had to know it. In others he no doubt had the problem others have, not now knowing whether something is his own original observation or is not independent but comes from others. Much as I like him and although I did not go into this, I suspect many cases are not his. I do not really care if he used my work and did not credit it. I care more if he could not resist the

temptation. He is such a fine sapling, I'd like the tree to be tall and straight. For example, he knows the panel report discloses fragments in the thoracic area but not that the autopsy doctors' job for Clark earlier acknowledged this. If he spotted one, he'd certainly have spotted the other, and ordinarily, if he'd missed it in the doctors', he would have recalled their ellipsis or he'd have checked back. Instead of mentioning this and many other cases, I asked him to rethink his original source of what he cites merely (and quite inaccurately) as "administrative papers". I have little doubt he got this from Thompson, with whom I also have little doubt it was not original. He gets around not crediting Thompson with a meaningless, unnecessary footnote crediting him with a paraphrasing on the qualification of forensic pathologists. Now Tink is hardly a source on this, and many others, including experts like Helpert and Decut said it better, but it does permit a little self-salving in crediting Tink. There are several cases where he uses my exact words where there were to his liking (one I still recall is skid-row bum re quality of the autopsy).

I did not raise any of these questions with him in any serious way, but I did ask him if the 100mm was his own observation and if Tink wasn't really his source as above. I do not care, personally, about his use of my materials (accompanied with what amounts to a plea that I had failed to get my stuff published, so he should be permitted to succeed, standing in line as publishers will be for his!). But I do care that with his brilliance he cannot now adequately cope with what his elders cannot. I'd like him to be bold to battle himself now because it gets harder later. I tell you this not for you to belabor him but because of the great respect he has for you so that you can be alert to it in other contexts and give him the little help he needs. He has a fine mind and he does have great potential. And, unlike so many others, he has made original discoveries and will make more. He has helped me, as with the Tink quote I'd forgotten and would never have checked back to find simply because there is no time for it, and with the Tink fragment, which redoubled my efforts on the "missile" receipt that paid off. I was aware of this possibility but I still gave him access to everything and I've since suggested that before he writes he should go over my unwritten material, which is in a separate file.

He has an excellent idea in stereo viewing. Which reminds me, I cannot get the slides made as I'd hoped, so I'd appreciate it if, when you can, you have X200-5 made for me, and 190-3. If possible, I'd prefer 35 to 16mm.

I leave it for you to decide is, after your own reading, you want to and feel you can raise the foregoing questions with Howard. It is hairy. Consider only whether, aside from doing it, you can do it in a way from which he can benefit, for there is no other constructive purpose to be served. It is immaterial to me for personal reasons, believe me. I am more disturbed by what his elders do, like John preempting from me what I told him in confidence, and that has not turned me off of John. It is not immaterial to me if he can learn young, for this can benefit him. But it will not be easy to do, not without the deepest embarrassment to him. That alone can have bad consequences. If you feel you cannot, I might feel that way. I haven't thought it through, but there seems no easy way. What occurred immediately I did on tape, as above re: Tink and administrative papers, where I told him bluntly these are not administrative papers.

I'll will have breakfast soon, so I'd better shove.

Best,