

2/21/70

Dear Dick,

Yours postmarked 17 & 18 arrive today.

The clippings on the study of the press interest me much. I'd heard a somewhat different story on radio, saw nothing at all in the papers, but did hear from a British correspondent, who had been queried by his own paper. The first report was the Italian paper's. It said more than the Telegraph. Thanks. I suspect this was a leak. It seems to be a much larger (and probably unconstitutional) thing. The CBS incident is getting fuzzy in my mind. I seem to recall it as the Masferer bit, but it may have been earlier or there may have been two.

By the time you wrote yours of the 18th you had not gotten the copy of the letter I had written John, telling him as explicitly as I felt I should that unless I got the assurances repeated I'd take those steps I consider necessary. The time has expired, but I'll wait a few days, then I'll write LOK and send him a carbon. I do not suggest that you or anyone else intercede, for I think it will redound to the harm of whoever does. You do not know John if you think reason can be pressure on him. Nor his concept of self.

Brener-Sprague: Suggest leaving it alone. He pays no attention to anything inconsistent with his own concepts.

Bringuier book: Bud ordered long ago, but hasn't arrived. I have asked another to get me a copy, so I may have two, one of which can be yours-if you are not in a hurry. It is not available here.

Sculpturing? Great-even if it weren't good!

Gary is very busy. Heard from him today. Short staff and increased schedule.

Got the Judy Bonner book today. What Lil read to me is precious, even for a Dallas reporter turned pr gal (is there a difference, except in pay?). I'll be writing her shortly.

Best regards,

17 Feb 70

Harold:

Enclosed for your interest is a news article published in yesterday's Whig-Standard. I have not yet made efforts to get other info from Canadian or American papers, but I shall.

I suggest that if you want the British paper named as the source, write to your friend in England. I would prefer not to contact Dawnay. I am not sure whether we get the Evening Standard in our library. If so, it will arrive in about a week. If I get the article, I'll send it to you.

I send this because I am not sure that it will make the U.S. papers. There was no notice of it on US TV, and I'll bet AP won't touch it-- same for UPI. NY Times might have something, but we won't get that here for a few days.

If I follow up any of this or get more on it, I'll tell you.

Possibly I'll contact Dempsey and see if this is where they got the funds to rent the plane for the Haiti raid. I believe he said it cost \$5,000 just for the rent of the plane. I doubt whether he would tell me though.

If I get time to type it, I'll enclose with this a reply to Roffman's 12 Feb letter. I still have not had a good chance to reply to all of yours. I'm writing footnotes and bibliography for my thesis, and tracing obscure references in the library-- with the result that I am climbing up the wall.

I note in past correspondence that I had told Nichols about Roffman's info that Archives lost a "flake" from 399 base. It ~~may be~~ is likely that I am the one who first informed him of this, though he was in touch with Roffman too. I'll write more later.

Still,

Dick

17 Feb 70

Roffman
Phila.

Dear Howard:

I am still quite busy and must write quickly regarding your 12 Feb. mail. Please excuse.

399: I doubt whether crimp has any but the most negligible effect on the stability of bullets like 399. Did not even think of it in reference to memo. The effect of the crimp is so slight that FMC bullets that have had the copper ~~xx~~ filed off the nose (to get a cheap version of a "soft-nose") often separate from the jacket inside the barrel during passage of the bullet. ~~xxxx~~ Say "sometimes", not "often". What I mean is that if a shooter files copper from the nose, he runs the risk of having the lead core separate from the jacket, and having the jacket lodged in the barrel after the bullet is fired. The shooter may not know of the separation and fire another round through the barrel before clearing it of the obstruction. Very dangerous. NRA and others who advise on firearms matters give specific and emphatic warning not to doctor military rounds. Anyway, this should indicate that the crimp has no bearing.

Sketch on p. 3 of memo is slightly exaggerated, but after all it was only a sketch and intended to illustrate the phenomenon, not to reproduce it exactly.

I do not ~~understand~~ understand how your photo of bases vitiates what I say about cotton batting. The base on the left was fired through goat flesh, was it not. The two in the middle are Frazier's, fired through cotton. I see not ~~any~~ squashing of them. There is protrusion of lead from the jacket, but no squashing.

No use arguing about the apparent difference between the base in your photo and Harold's, for the matter can be settled by observation--in time. I still disagree that there is a difference in the base, but we'll see.

Lifton: Harold noted reference to L in my recent letter to you. As I recall, it did not explain circumstances of my mentioning him to you. I'll have more to say of him later.

Still,

cc to Eisberg

John

18 Feb 70

Dear Harold:

I finally have a bit of time and can say a few words concerning Nichols. Not that I have much to say, or anything that might ease this situation.

Understand that in speaking of Nichols I have to speak on two levels: my personal experiences with him, and my knowledge of your experience. Each elicits a different response.

In my own contacts with N, I am disappointed only that he has not confided his work to me in the degree that I would like-- not because I am greedy for personal benefit, but because I think there are a lot of things I could help him with. I imagine that your attitude is pretty much the same.

I confided in him rather more than now seems warranted. I did this both because he had given me some help and encouragement, and because I knew that you too had confided in him. Regarding things that I sent him for use in his suit, I gave him carte blanche to use them in any way he and his lawyers deemed fair. He retraced some of what I had done, collected his own exhibits, and copyrighted in his name. In the course of all this he kept me fully informed about what he was doing, sent me copies of the exhibits, and the like, so I got no sense that he was doing anything underhanded. If at that point I ~~did~~ did not have the ability to stop him, neither did I have the desire.

Indeed, he went out of his way on one occasion to assure my control of something that he knew I wanted to control. When I was well into writing that article on the cartridge cases that we all thought would pan out into something very important, he sent me the necessary forms for copyrighting the thing in the States.

On occasions when I have asked for advice and opinions on medical matters that I did not fully understand, he gave it.

So, in terms of my own ~~contacts~~ dealings with him, I have no complaints. I can't say whether I won't have future complaints, but presently I have none.

His relationship with you, however, is bothersome in the extreme. Your own remarks to me in person and some things Gary said in past correspondence made me aware that N was potentially troublesome-- even possibly disastrous, so your recent correspondence regarding N does not surprise me-- but it does bother me. I think you are right in pressing N for an explanation of what is going on, and that you should press to the extreme if there seems no innocent motives behind his activities. I cannot fully understand the business of the Archives and the 399 base photo, but--superficially, at least-- it appears that this could be Archives' doing, and not Nichols'. In this matter I advise caution-- at least toward N, for it seems that he could hardly be responsible for where the Archives files its pictures. Surely Archives should know better than to make such errors, but I don't see how N can have anything to do with that. There is, too, the remote possibility that the error is deliberate-- to cause confusion and friction-- but I think it very unlikely. In any case,

on the matter of the 399 base photo, I would bear hard on Archives, but not on Nichols.

In other matters I see nothing wrong with what you are doing or with what you are~~y~~ proposing. I wish that~~b~~ there were some good advice that I could give so as to get this off your back, but I really have nothing to say that you have not thought of yourself.

I could, however, get in touch with Nichols myself and try to put some pressure to bear from this end-- friendly pressure, for as ~~yet~~ he has not treated me badly. I leave this up to you to decide. I don't want to contact him about your mutual friction unless I have your OK. I don't have any ~~xxx~~ idea yet what I would say, but perhaps there is some good that I can do. If it's all right for me to bring this matter up with Nichols, then tell me so. Otherwise, I'll stay out of ~~it~~ direct involvement in it. I have not been in touch with N for some time, and have no definite prospect of writing to him soon about other matters. You let me know.

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Brener:

I have your long letter re Brener in response to my note. I regret that in the note I did not indicate how little implicit credence I give to what Sprague says. Often he believes what he wants to believe, so I treat cautiously whatever he says. I passed the note since you had indicated interest in Brener.

Thanks for the info in the note. I am not sure yet whether I'll feed some of it back to Sprague, for I am not sure it will do him any good. If I do contact him further, I'll not mention you as the source.

I ordered Brener's book, but have not yet received it.

Bringuier: I have not yet ordered this, and won't until I hear from you or others that it is out. I do want to read it, so let me know when it is available.

New 399 base photo: Let me know the cost. I'll pay at least half, and will pay all if I have the cash on hand. (It's an awkward way to make an offer, I know, but my budget soars and dips erratically). Anyway, count me in for half of the cost.

899 missing metal: There is no point in guessing more about this since we shall have a definite answer when we get a new photo. I'll sit tight on guesses until then. Every new bit of material adds so much to our knowledge, and often in unexpected ways, so I look forward to seeing a new photo.

Z slides: You know what I have, so you can make up your mind whether to use my facilities. Understand, however, that the slides that I make from prints show no perceptible deterioration of quality in the thing photographed. What's nice, too, is that I can easily make blow-up slides from prints.

Newcomb had mentioned prearing sets of slides for distribution. That was months ago, and he has not mentioned it since. I'll ask him what he plans to do. If I can get slides made from his copy I would prefer that.

We had a thaw here and some rain that ruined the ice skating rink that I had built for my kids. Too bad; it was a dandy.

I have been easing my mind lately with something that I had not done for years. You may recall that about ten years ago I had considerable training in sculpture-- studied for five years in New York under a sculptor named Arthur Lee. Well, around Christmastime I started doing it again, without having touched a lump of clay in all that time. The results are marvelous. I made and cast into plaster a 3-foot relief of Michelangel's "Adam" from the Cistine Chapel, and I'm well into the making of one of his athletes from the Chapel. When that is out of the way, I shall probably do more. I'll send you pictures when I get ~~XXX~~ them. With as much modesty as I can summon, I tell you that it is damned good work-- especially considering that I hadn't done anything like this for ten years. In time I may make busts of my kids, but presently reliefs are best, for I don't have much equipment or room to work. Reliefs are good too because I don't need a model for them as I would if I were doing figures in the round.

It's like finding ~~xxx~~ a dear lover that you havn't seen for oh so long; really nice. And I need it as thrapy after digging though old books that nobody ever reads in order to find minuscule reference to people so obscure that I think maybe even their mothers didn't know about them. I bet you never heard of Erchanbert of Freising; and I bet his mother never heard of him either. But I have, and I wish that I hadn't.

Take care of yourself, and stay well.

Still,

Dick

cc Schoener

PS. I have not heard from Gary in a very long time, and I do not even know if he is getting the things I send him.