

Dear Mary,

12/17/80

We are sorry to hear of Buck's heart attack and we do hope that as time passes he builds up again and becomes his vigorous self again.

I'm also sorry not to have been able to inform everyone of what happened to me. When I got home from the hospital I drafted a letter I could use for all purposes, to send to those to whom I did not really have time to respond and to send to friends, but I didn't like the idea and I didn't find the one letter appropriate for both purposes.

By today's report I'm getting along OK, but that means little except by comparison. I had my regular checkup at Georgetown Univ. Hospital and the expert, who is internationally famous, opined that I'm making good progress. I don't have to go back for a month.

What happened is that I was having additional venous thrombosis. My local doctor found no pulse in the left foot so he sent me to this specialist, who had been seeing me off and on since 1877, to check on that. The initial check showed inadequate arterial service in the left thigh. An arteriogram showed two partial blockages that could be corrected. About the middle of September they gave me an artificial artery from the groin to the left knee. The operation was a great success and I was getting along fine but the leg remained swollen, so belated further testing showed the venous thrombosis I'd suspected. After medication for that I was discharged only to have to return immediately because blood clots broke loose and settled in the leg and foot. A second operation cleaned the artery in the leg but the vessels of the foot were not that accessible. I was in the hospital for a month.

The foot remains numb, which presents problem, and my ability to walk is returning only slowly. I can't walk to the end of the lane and back without pain and having to stop. Until last night, when there was some improvement, I was up every 30-45 minutes, after which I'd walk around a bit and could get back to sleep fast enough but the process repeated itself all night. I was able to sleep to 4 this a.m. and there were longer periods of sleep before I was awakened.

There isn't much circulation in much of the foot and leg and there was additional damage from oxygen starvation from the time the clots clogged things up until they could operate again. I don't know how much is going to be permanent and how much can correct itself. I'll find out, though.

I can't be in the cold much. I've been told I'll be lucky to be able to take 10 minutes at a time. My old car doesn't heat up fast. I just had a new thermostat put in but it still takes 20 minutes. I can waste that kind of gas at home but I can't get back to the car in some parking lot away from home and sit and freeze for 20 minutes, so I do little driving. Besides, if the leg is down for long it swells and gets more cumbersome.

This does not mean that I'm entirely inactive. I still bring our firewood in, however much it pains, and I'm heating us with wood. Just yesterday I won a major victory in the JFK Dallas and New Orleans field office cases. I've not yet seen the DJ decision, but I was told of it by phone. It will require some reprocessing of records that were provided, it will require the reprocessing of some of the pages withheld as classified, and it requires additional searches, files not checked. (The amount of work required to get to that point is fantastic- two file drawers of appeals!)

I hope Buck can adjust. To a degree I have. I don't fret about what I can't do and I don't even do all I might. I spend some time now just reading for pleasure and I even look at an occasional TV show with Lil.

You'd probably find it hard to believe that I could get as many records as I have since I was first taken ill in 1975. Paul has probably given you an idea from his inspection this summer. I've gotten a dozen and a half cartons, large cartons, since then.

Please excuse the typos. I want to write my mother and someone is due to get here soon.

Best to everyone, and out hopes for a good holiday and a better year,