

3828 Livingston St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20015

January 13, 1975

Dear Harold & Lil,

Here are a few more clippings from the "Times" and "Post." I realize that you get the "Post," but thought that with all of your other activities, some of these items might possibly have slipped by without being culled. As one of the world's really great snipper-outers (not to mention careful interior house-painters), I'll be glad to keep forwarding you the fruits of my scissor-work, if you like. Please let me know.

As little Dimitri (who is now BIG DIMITRI, replete with a beard) used to say, when he had to go to the dentist: he was going to be "dented;" I, too, am in the same situation. I am still being dented, but feel an awful lot better and no longer look like the moon-faced phantom of Livingston Street. In another week, Dr. Maxwell will be finished with the repair of "our" teeth, as I have always fondly referred to my permanent bridge, so I'll once again I'll be my usual self and again operating normally. (whatever that means).

If Sunday, January 19th, is a convenient time for you, I'll drive out for a longer visit, this time getting an early start to prevent the "Good Ship Lollipop's" (that's what I've always called mother's Ford, because of the latter's ample dimensions) headlights from curtailing our conversation. Please let me know if this would be a good time, in terms of your plans.

Before leaving the Lollipop's headlight problem, I should mention that an electrician (who's supposed to be reasonably competent) looked at the wiring over this past weekend, but could find nothing wrong. In fact, in the true tradition of the-perversity-of-inanimate-objects-theory, the headlights didn't even flicker, let alone dim down to nothing, while he was checking. Not until he'd left, did the Lollipop do "her thing"! If I did not know better, I'd swear I heard her (I believe the Lollipop is a SHE, because of her rather super-wide rear end) snicker!

If you happen to speak with your repair expert out there, you might mention to him that the car has been rewired completely; that the voltage meter is perfect; that the battery is in excellent condition; that none of the switches on the dash (most of which have been replaced 2 or 3 times to no avail) is shorting out; that the steering column (in which all the wiring for the directional signals and the dashboard connections from same + the battery warning light and "cold" light are, for some dumb reason, housed) has been removed twice to check the wiring and replace a shorting-out wire that went to rear lights from the brake pedal; and that the problem has been chronic from the day my uncle first got the car, through the time my mother had the car, and up to the present, albeit the car has just now hit 28,000 miles.

Further, the problem is still more elusive, in that: 1) going over bumps does not cause the up and down light-level to take place (which would be the case, if it were a simple case of a loose connection); 2) accelerating and decelerating do not bring on the dimming problem (which might be the case, were the voltage meter the culprit); 3) the problem occurs, when it wants to, whether the car is standing still with the motor running or whether the car is in motion (so the battery is pretty much in the clear).

The only consistent fact is that the problem occurs, WHEN IT DOES, only after at least 15 to 20 minutes of driving with the lights on. The dimming takes place on both the front and rear lights simultaneously, but none of the lights go completely out..just almost to the point of being out. Then, by themselves, they come back up to normal light output for a brief time and then the dimming business starts all over again. I wonder if HEAT, engine heat, could have something to do with the problem? Perhaps the electrical weakness, whatever and wherever it is, is exacerbated by engine heat, by whatever temperature is reached after 15 to 20 minutes of running.

The local, nasty Ford dealer horsed around with the system, and I might add to the tune of \$100. worth ^{with} ~~of~~ no-remedy, and succeeded only in screwing things up so badly that when I stepped on the power foot brake, both directional signals came on simultaneously. Then he tried to fix that and the signals wouldn't work at all, but all the lights on the dash came on and stayed on, at once. That finally got fixed, but the headlight problem remained and still remains, with the clown telling me it would be better to drive the car in the daytime and not worry about ^{fixing} ~~fixing~~ the problem. As he put it, "When there's a problem-light that can't be fixed, and when it's been that way from the beginning, it may not be fixable. Why don't you trade the car in?" So much for constructive suggestions!

The Ford regional office (factory what-have-you) in nearby Virginia, advised that I take the car to a competent Ford dealer (recommending the dingbat I'd been to), and disavowed any knowledge of any type of similar problem that might have existed in this particular model/year/serial no. series of Fords. I guess I'll have to write to the factory in Detroit, but frankly don't think I'll get much satisfaction there. All I want is to be able to drive the car at night, for having a daylight "only" car is a bit restrictive.

Any help your man might be able to offer would be greatly appreciated. Please let me hear from you about both the headlight problem and also the 19th of January, as a good or UNgood visiting day. Meanwhile, I want to get this in the mail to you now, so will close here. All the very best to you both, as always,


Dottie