

Mr. Sol Rabkin
75 Henry St.
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201

1/19/76

Dear Sol,

Let's strike a bargain: I'll excuse your handwriting (which actually is less illegible than mine) and you excuse my typing. The reasons I'm pressed for time will become apparent.

I guess we are getting to the age when the kinds of personal tragedies and problems you report can be expected. Lil's mother and mine, for example, both well over 80, insist on living independently. For their desires for independence they are right. For the concerns of their children they are wrong. We have to hope that nothing happens, as with each in different ways it can.

For the first time in my life I'm seriously ill. This does not mean that I could not put in 22 hours one day last week, the kind of day that would exhaust a kid. But it does mean I should not have and did only because there was no alternative.

I may have phoned you in April, toward the end, when I was in New York to make a speech at NYU law school, got sick and had it read by my friend and wonderful human being associate, Jim Lesar, a lawyer just starting practice who has been to the Supreme Court four times without being before a jury. A New York doctor diagnosed it as pneumonia. I had only a few days earlier reported to my own what turned out to be typical symptoms and they were ignored. Otherwise I'd not have gone to New York at all. I spent two miserable, days in a hotel (not the best) unable to lie down and sleep because I also had pleurisy and was not told about it until I got home, and without a chair that came above the small of the back. I left twice before the New York doctor (a real bloodsucker) discharged me. I held a remarkably successful press conference with a fever of 102°. WCBS for example taped the whole thing. They used a selection each hour for the first 24 and after that I know only that they continued to use different excerpts for six days. In my own news experience something like this is without precedent. It was a week of more before I could get into bed. But as you may remember, I've always been pretty tough. If I never fully recovered my previous strength and endurance, I did take this as a sign to slow down and get more rest thereafter.

It now turns out that I have phlebitis - without the side benefits now associated with them in the popular mind. And on Saturday, when I was in New York to discuss a new book with a friend, I learned that I may have had a thrombosis in April rather than pneumonia. He is a friend and if there was in his mind the question should he make the investment with questions about my health I'd find this proper. However, he asked me to see his internists. He'd asked earlier if he could make an appointment with a specialist through his internist when I was there and I welcomed a second opinion because by then I'd developed concerns of my own. But one of two things seems clear now: I had a thrombosis then and my own medical insurer ignored it by sheer negligence; or by equally negligent care (for which we pay \$1200 a year) he ignored the well-known possibility of phlebitis following pneumonia. I reported the symptoms typical of phlebitis when he made a perfunctory and belated check on the pneumonia and he dismissed them as mechanical and a consequence of aging. His examination after I returned consisted of having the nurse take my pulse and blood-pressure and then his listening to my chest. Only when this apparently conscientious internist started asking me questions Saturday about the results of tests, none of which were made, did I begin to realize the extent of the negligence.

I did the last of the work in which I was indispensable in the printing of my most recent book when it was quite uncomfortable still believing that the lag pain was mechanical. They were hard and long days. The next day I phoned my doctor and saw him the following day. He was optimistic in diagnosing the development of the ailment and prescribed a drug that could not and did not work. Five days later he hospitalized me.

earlier books now close to out of print. I've just made a profitless arrangement with a distributor on all the books. It will get them out and take the time of packaging and mailing off of me. It is also an arrangement that does not encourage further indebtedness to reprint because he'll have all except the individual orders, all commercial sales.

But I have promises to keep and I hope many miles yet. And much writing.

This time of the year, while it brings other problems, finances are taken care of by Lil's tax work.

I'm as much as three ~~xxx~~ months behind in filing. What goes in the lower drawers mostly from when I had trouble bending. Now it is not comfortable and not impossible.

I hope I've remembered everything.

I was about to leave for Lil and take an evening walk on the level in the large shopping center in which her office is. Instead I'll hit the mountain again right now while there is a little sun. It is quite cold.

I'm sorry it did not work out for Nancy but over the years I've formed the belief that if it doesn't work out the sooner it ends the better.

Best to all we know,

sincerely,

SOL RABKIN
ATTORNEY AT LAW
75 HENRY STREET
BROOKLYN, N. Y. 11201
522-7466

Jan 13, 1976

Dear Howard and Ed,

I was going through some piles of paper which had accumulated on my desk for purposes of doing what I should have done some time ago or throwing out what was now past doing, and I came across an envelope containing your address. There was a glow of recognition accompanied by a twinge of conscience. Hence this letter.

First Freda and I wish you a happy, healthy and prosperous new year. Second, while we have read stories about Howard and his claims to numerous injuries and even seen him once on a TV interview show, we still do not know as of now what is happening to him and to you, Ed. How are you? What is the situation? Is the economic problem solved or at least eased?

Second, we have had some troubles. My older brother, Morris, 2 years older than me died as a result of a fall in the subway. He fell Dec. 16, 1974. He was in the hospital three months until he died of pneumonia and heart failure on Feb. 9, 1975. Meanwhile, I, in addition to visiting him in the hospital every day and seeing to it that he got the care he needed had to help care for

his wife Rae, who was housebound invalid with Parkinson's, diabetes and circulatory problems and who could not walk without a walker. She died in her sleep on Jan. 29, 1975 just eleven days before Morris died. He was vocal and much of the time because of his fractured skull and meningitis. He never knew Rae was dead. The doctors forbade my telling him.

Then came the two month job of burying them and clearing out their apartment, handling their estates, paying off their bills etc. Morris' estate is now closed. And I inherited his job as family liaison which included caring for our 84 year old cousin in Los Angeles, getting her into a home for the aged then, visiting her taking care of her affairs, etc. So it's been a busy time and one full of sorrow.

Now the estate is near closing. Lucie still requires care and travel. We spent from Dec. 17 to Dec. 31 in the L.A. area visiting her at least every other day. And there are troubles in Nancy's marriage. She is divorcing Steve.

But otherwise all goes smoothly. Let us hear from you

Regards
Sot