

Dear Jim,

6/20/80

This is a world of coincidences so I report what follows as a coincidence, or several of them, in/the absence of proof that what under other circumstances could have killed me is other than coincidence.

When I got to my car at the parking lot at the bus station on return from DC, I had the impression, as I turned the key to unlock the door, that the door was not locked. I am certain that early this morning I did lock it.

It could be that my impression is without significance. But usually I can feel the lock unlocking.

As usual I started the car by depressing the gas pedal first, to activate the automatic choke. I took my foot off, reached over the lower the opposite window, straightened up, and depressed the gas pedal again because raising the motor disengages the automatic choke and I can move the car without placing stress from a racing motor on all the involved parts. Only instead of returning to normal idle when I took my foot off the motor revving raced faster than I can recall. I figured the pedal was stuck, which I can't remember happening with this car, so I tried to return the pedal to normal with my foot. That didn't work so I leaned down to do it and the pedal was loose, attached to nothing. I could see the linkage to it, all free, but no missing part.

I called Lal to tell her I'd be delayed, so she wouldn't worry, and when Rae answered the phone I asked her to call a mechanic she's used who was only about 5 minutes away. He came promptly, fortunately, because he could make only a temporary repair.

He found that under the hood, in addition to what I report above, the spring that returns the gas to normal was off. It looked as though the end had broken off, but from the condition of the rest of the spring there is no explanation for this immediately apparent. The rest of the spring was good.

He'd figured there could be spring trouble so he brought a new one and put in on. He'd placed the old spring on the top of the fender well and I thought maybe it would be a good idea to save it, so I picked it up. I noted then that there was a flay, sheet-steel lock-washer of thin substitute for a nut there, so I figured he'd put it there. Otherwise, it would seem, that in all the driving I've done since the last repair, many months ago, it would have bounced or blown off. When he said he needed a washer he did not see I asked him if this other thing he'd put next to the spring could be what he was looking instead of the washer.

If it had happened on the road the consequences could have been serious. Strange it didn't happen this morning, on the way into town and the bus station, if it was due to happen normally. Or that both ends went kaput simultaneously, inside the car and under the hood. That there was this thing the mechanic used as a washer when I've not had the hood up in months. That I had the distinct impression that the car door was unlocked.

The temporary repair had the motor revving too fast - up to 40 mph with my foot off the gas, so I stopped at the local Plymouth agency and had them check and adjust.

In haste, I'm about to take Lal out to dinner.

I called home just as Rae was about to leave. I asked her to get all the 1996 transcripts I have out so I can again go over all of them. I will and will prepare notes. I think it would be a very wise thing to get the newer ones we don't have as soon as possible. Please order them as soon as you get this.

I forgot to tell Dad, for when he comes up and goes over my separate filing of records by subject, that I made copies of those records about him I thought it might be good to be able to retrieve. Not all of them, but some. He may want to go over them. Would you please tell him so I won't forget if and when he is here?

Thanks,