

Dear Dave,

9/4/80

The femoral arteriogram disclosed a second blockage and that both can be fixed. The first time the operating room and the doctor will both be available has me returning to Georgetown for the job on the 5th. I'll be there 8-9 days. I have no other details because I didn't ask for any. If I knew anything else it would mean nothing and make no difference. As you may have gathered, I have enormous respect for this doctor, from his reputation (he was the consultant on Nixon's surgery, which was in the same general area) and the impression he has made on me as a person. With the confidence I have in him and my ignorance I felt no need to ask anything else.

Well, I did ask two questions. Lil and I had talked it over because my own doctor had explained long ago that one doesn't have an invasive test because although the risk in them is slight there is a risk, unless surgery is to be considered. This one had told me a week earlier that he recommended the arteriogram because the ~~blockage~~ blockage shown by the electronic gadgets might be remedial and because if not it still would be good to know more about it. So when he returned night before last, with the entourage of a teaching professor, to report that afternoon's results, and said it could be fixed, I asked first if it could be done the next day and when he explained he'd have to check, nothing else until he returned, when I asked how long to expect to be hospitalized.

The hospital is new, pleasant, and all the people were great, even the man with whom I shared the room the one night, a black who earned his master's degree long enough ago to have a son of college age. I was treated as though I were really somebody, without asking for anything. The resident, not an orderly, took me down to the X-ray department and remained with me until the assistant chief of surgery came. It turned out that he participated in the test. It also turned out that despite the possibilities of nausea and pain there was no nausea and no real pain. The test consists of an injection into the arm or the opposite arm, at the hand. I suppose it was something like sodium amatyl because before long I became aware that my speech was slurring. When they decided I was ready they made an injection into the groin, from which I remember only pressure. Then they took the X-rays, then they said it was all over until they were certain that all the film was clear, then they said they'd made three of the thigh and one of the lower abdomen and they were clear. That was all there was to it except that I was told to stay abed for eight hours, I suppose to assure that the puncture of the artery healed and there was no chance of bleeding from it.

I must have been and remained pretty relaxed because my blood pressure and pulse, taken four times after return to the room, was 110 and 112 over 60 and the pulse from 50 to 60. The interns and nurses asked me if I'd ever been an athlete! They said these are signs of a good, strong heart. Actually, I'd never known them; the blood pressure to be that low. It used to be about 128 over 70-78.

I was impressed that this busy man, Hufnagle, gave up his normal supper hour to give me the results himself and that he returned himself to tell me that the operating facilities were not available until after he had to leave for several days and to tell me to make a date with his secretary the next morning. He also told me that he was changing the vascular dilator I've been on.

I'd reported that walking had become painful. He'd told me to build up to a non-stop hour. He remembered my having reported this, so when he returned he suggested that instead of walking in pain to stop until the pain passes, then walk again, etc. So with much time when I checked out yesterday morning and a fair breeze despite the heat I decided to try to walk to Lesar's office, where I was to meet the ride home. So I walked all 30 blocks without real pain. (It was all ~~up~~ level or down-hill.) So all in all, I felt pretty good when I got home and I look forward to the benefits of the surgery. Because I was off the anti-coagulant for 5 days I luxuriated with an extra drink with Bud yesterday morning, to celebrate the good walk. Although I was a little tired from it ~~EX~~ I felt fine because I could have walked much farther if I'd had to. I'll keep you posted. Best to all,