

Dear Js,

9/23/72

Your kindnesses, which are always the best of medicine for us, have a way of timing themselves for when medicine is needed. Your letter of the 19th and the announcement of the shipping of the Craig almost crossed with a letter of different character.

I've been getting increasingly tired. I suppose it is partly emotional. But there is some physical to it, again supposition, that I don't get enough exercise not to feel it. Yesterday morning I walked more vigorously, and felt that when I returned, and in the afternoon I did some mowing, again feeling it. So, instead of working at the desk after supper, I decided to read. I found myself falling asleep. I actually went to bed about 9, with a few pages of The French Connection to read, and dozed over them. So, I went to sleep. Awakened pretty wife awake at 1 but returned to sleep. Again around 4-5 and was going to write you and do other things when Lil roused and asked me where I was going. (I knew she had not been sleeping well and was up late night before, unable to sleep.) So, I said "Nowhere if you want me to hold you so you can sleep." And I did and she did sleep. I awakened again something after 6:30 but she slept so soundly I let her sleep past the usual time when she is going grocery shopping. When I did awaken her with her mate she fell asleep again immediately. So, I let her sleep longer but instead of writing the explanation of why not to take the time to inquire about a duplicate cassette recorder finished Connection, got and read the paper, etc. I did and do feel weary, not uncommon after what for me is much sleep, and a bit weak and unsteady.

All officialdom hereabouts is kind to me. I appear to enjoy a good reputation going back to my farming days and the publicity attendant upon my private Peace-Corps like projects. So, when I'm going to be away or go into town, I phone the post office and they hold my mail for me. We got it. I had a stop to make across the street from the post office. I gave Lil the mail, telling her there was a letter from you. When I returned and asked her what you had said she merely smiled and said she'd rather I read it for myself. Not until the end of the morning's expedition did I have time, while she was where I'd not have to carry the groceries, where she could bring them to the car in a cart.

It meant and means much. Not to shoulder weep but to give it context, I'll explain. For I had decided against even thinking of getting another cassette machine. The only money we have is a little left over from the insurance settlement on the fire damage to our farm property. We used it to keep the bank quiet until into next year, and now will not have that particular annual \$2,600 bearing us down, taxes, other insurance, etc., and the insurance company cancelled the policy. No other one will write the insurance until all the damage is repaired. I wonder if the little we do have plus the \$50 monthly Lil gets from a bookkeeping account will carry us to her first "lock check in January. When I say "carry", I mean at our sub-subsistence standard. Out only extravagances are mine: wine, which is really used as a tranquilizer; cigarettes, for which there is but the obvious justification; and coffee.

Then, after I wrote you, we had the auto accident. Turns out the man who hit us is not insured. He says he'll pay, and I can only hope. Repairs thus far cost \$24.00 and the body-shop estimate is \$168.00. Meanwhile, I've run out of file space again. Last filing cabinet I bought was damaged. Instead of the 25% refund they promised, that company sent me a credit for it. And they are 40 miles away. So, when they had an add for a cheap cabinet, I decided to risk getting one of them on the theory that the need is more urgent than to be able to dub efficiently. I'm picking it up Monday or Tuesday when I'll be that way, and it is costing only \$35.00 for a new metal cabinet.

Of course it is oppressive having to live this way. But there now is nothing I can do about it were I tempted to try. With my "past" I am as close as possible to unpublishable and unemployable. The kinds of things others ignore we can't. And we've been the victims of rather extensive crookedness. (I had hope to hear by now from a new lawyer to whom I've written in New York. Dell has to owe me more than \$35,000 and O&D more than \$4,000. And Meredith has yet to pay for what they reprinted in The Weight of the Evidence, where they used what was not included in the contract, too.) If we had what truckers and wholesalers alone owe us we could live like decent people for a couple of years. The cost of suing is greater than 100% collection where the claim is for about \$2,500. I've tried it. And now we have a beautiful case on the helicopter damage and the lawyer doesn't do any work. I just heard that in two months he has done nothing when he was to have finished what he had to do in a week of two. He actually dictated some of it with Lil and me with him then.

Don't underestimate what this could mean with an established precedent, my own. What could be involved here with not a great amount of work on the part of the lawyer could easily be a quarter of a million dollars. Plus a precedent that could be of incalculable value to millions of other people and a whole new legal career for him. But everyone is so centered on the immediate buck he is blind.

From such things we go to the picayune. We were defrauded of \$150 last year by a guy who "fixed" our TV aerial. He put up a new one saying the old was corroded. Not until later, when I had to move it (fortunately he didn't take it away) did I find there was nothing wrong but a broken leadin wire! He has toyed with us for a year on replacing it. He finally put the old one back and we have a better picture than with his new aerial. But it was still not good. And with both of us having bad eyes and Lil's glaucoma? So, I had another man come out, one described as honest to me, and the first thing we discovered when he was seeing what he has to do is that with a whole year of fooling around the crook had the UHF aerial connected to VHF and vice versa! Meanwhile, Crook also fixed the hi-fi so it wouldn't play at all, meaning we have been without decent music for a year. He has had it for six weeks now, was supposed to have returned it Monday, and we haven't heard. On and on with such petty stuff that is significant to us. I'll have to sue him as my own lawyer and I will. The county blocked the flow of water from our lane, promised to correct it and in a year and a half hasn't. Last winter was mild or we'd have been blocked in. Unless he doesn't keep his word, a man is coming this coming week to correct this, and then I'll have to sue the county. After I borrow the money to pay him. It means we have to raise the end of the lane to where the water can flow out on the road, and then to rebuild the shoulders on the low side of the lane so they will channel the water of an entire hillside away from our front lawn and into the gutter along the road. I had done all of this by hand and had a lane as good as paved after we moved here, hundreds of hours of hand labor. Now it has to be macadam.

Are you beginning to get a notion of what it means for us to be so broke, how small sums loom large, and how with each thing I do to make work possible it is a hunk out of our lives? That minor thing on the copying machine was an enormity for us, it is that hard.

And with it all, having to spend time on such things when there is so much to do!

What I was doing when Lil read your letter was trying to get a plumber to come here to give me an estimate on some repairs we paid for before we moved in! We've lived with leaking pipes and pans that have to be dumped every couple of days for five years all but seven days. And the air valve on the water tank (does this mean anything to the former farm boy?) has been bad for about a year. Periodically I drain the tank and pump it full or air with a tire pump, by hand. But the damned pump runs so much that our electric bill for last month was actually \$72.00. It will be less during the heating season because the pump on the swimming pool will not be running in a day or two. We can still use it. Also good medicine. And there is a leak in the pool I've not found. Unless I keep it full of water the winter's freezing will cave the sides in. We have a friend in the business, but all summer we have not been able to get him to come and see if he can find it. Until we find it we can't get it fixed. And with the winters here, there are times when water will turn to ice before it can go the 20 feet to the pool. Assuming the water supply inside the house doesn't poop out from use. The pump and tank are 20 years old.

If this is not all, it is enough to tell you how much more meaning your thoughtfulness means to us when these are some of the circumstances of our lives. And when you remember that all of those means, not people like you who have to work for their living, have found some way of costing us when we do things for them. From the partners in Hutton & Co., the Fieldses down.

So, we are delighted with your disguised ~~self~~ kindness, pretended selfishness that you make it. As soon as it gets here I'll teach Lil how to use it and will remove the stack of book atop a speaker on which I'd put the TC 40 when there was something to tape from TV. I'll put it there and it won't need the books to get it up high enough to pick up the TV sound. On the alligator patchcord, I have one from our old Cobcord ~~XX~~ 330s, of which I have two. It has a Japanese plug at the recorder end and clips at the speaker end. When the aerial people come, if they keep their appointment on Wednesday, I'll see if they can remove the sealed back of our set and attach them. The male plug should fit the Craig. I could take the back off myself, but I can't handle the weight of the set myself. I guess this cord would be comparable to the one you offer. (One of the disadvantages of living in

the country is a manpower scarcity today. Not like when everyone got together to thresh. (My next neighbor is getting over a heart attack and the one next to him is arthritic.) If the serial men will do this, and in this compartmented society who know? They would not wire in a jack, for I asked them several days ago, then I'll be able to tape fast from TV, too. By the way, do you get the Sunday talk shows repeated on radio out there? Like Meet the Press, Face the Nation, etc.? If you do, I won't think of them for you. Like tomorrow, Larry O'Brien is to be on one. I know that in Chicago CBS repeats their TV on radio. If KCBS radio and KGO radio do, I won't bother with them.

Unfortunately, I do have to keep the TC 40 at the phone. Night before last we got three hassling calls. First time in a long time. Three times nobody on the other end. Can't guess why unless it is Watergate or long bureaucratic delay. It must be more than a year since I've had a threat. My office phone is wired to a plug that I keep in the TC 40 when I'm home, which is now most of the time. The thing that coincides with this, strangely, is Lil's sister's unsuccessful effort to call us at about the same time. Five consecutive unsuccessful efforts. She dialed and nothing happened. The most obvious possibility is something at the switchboard. I can't attempt anything by phone now. But I think the manager of the phone company will have our pair checked by someone not assigned to our automated exchange if I ask him. The guy who fixed my phone for my own direct tap made a bread hint on such things when he did it. If you do not know what they do, whoever has the pull with a phone company employee has him wire directly to the phone to be tapped and connect to a phone he has himself. It amounts to a parallel connection. ...Isn't it unt enough?

I have so many tapes I'd like to dub for which there just isn't time. However, when I have to, your gift will also make this possible. Like a week ago Jerry sent me one on which he wanted an extra dub. So, this meant I had to pay it twice. And if I make another investigating trip on the Ray case - I hope I don't have to - then I now won't have to take the several days I had to on the last to make dubs for the lawyers. Now I will be able to use the stove timer and dub while doing other things!

I guess the one thing I'm likely to need is the right kind of patchcord. What I have is phone to Japanese and German to Japanese (VOM uses old pin type of Norelco kind.) I also have Japanese to Japanese that came with Concord, with built-in attenuator. If that doesn't work from TC 40 to Craig, then I should be able to get the right kind locally. The phone-sized plugs are for a, reel-to-reel Wollensak I have that needs repair I haven't been able to think of. It doesn't record. I presume the TC40 instructions give the number and it will be the same for Sony as for Craig.

So, I'm very happy about all that money I'VE saved for YOU!!!! Many thanks! The Chinese culture lingers!

The radio transcripts (where ~~does~~ Je get all the time?) do include what I didn't hear and wasn't in the Post on Watergate...I fear the GOPs are going to get away with it. The old sock-it-to-'em Truman approach, not the quiet dignity futility, is what is both needed and missing.

...Somebody who hasn't been in touch with me for a very long time, not since before they renumbered the local rural routes, has sent me the August Realist from Washington, without return address, addressed with an unfamiliar typewriter. If you have need for an extra copy, I have it filed under Mae...Jerry Ray is back with Stoner for a month. He may visit us on his way back to Chicago, unless Stoner has some mission for him to handle with James. That would take him perhaps 600 miles out of his way coming here...Connally has made the first Nixon TV commercial we have seen. It is as effective as it is artificial. ...There has been total silence on the Wecht operation...And an hour late because of nephew implications we think he'll not comprehend, Lil has lunch.

Again, thanks,

