

29 September 1975

Dear Harold:

Because it has been obvious how busy you have been, and how overburdened with irrelevant intrusions, I've foreborne sending anything on the Hearst case, or, with a single exception, on either the Fromme and Moore ladies. However, in assembling the enclosed to send along, I decided it wouldn't take too much of your time and might even provide a little comic relief if I mentioned some of the most outstandingly phony features of all three cases.

The main thing about the Hearst capture seems to us to be the probability that the fugitives and the feds and the family had reached some sort of deal some time ago and the general impression is that Patty, the Harrises and Miss Yoshimura were just waiting to be taken in. It was all pretty casual and nobody seems to have been the least bit uptight in spite of the rumor that Patty wet her pants when the FBI told her to freeze. Only the Chronicle carried that, and it fits nothing else in the story. Presumably someone on the Chronicle is anti-Hearst. When you share publishing facilities with a Hearst outfit like the Ex, I suppose you can be excused if you make a show now and then of not liking it. The Hearst line on Patty since she turned revolutionary has been from the beginning that she was brainwashed. The Hallinans, pere et fils, are cornball enough to go along with that. Now F. Lee Bailey has appeared in the picture, but it remains ^{to be seen} if he will pursue the same argument.

In any case, we wonder how much the FBI's troubles with the Senate and House intelligence committees had to do with the decision to haul in the SLA survivors just at this particular time.

Regarding the two ladies who allegedly tried to fill Mr. Ford full of holes, this appears to us to be a case of bad going to worse. We thought the Colorado Congressman was right on target when he remarked after Miss Fromme's act that at long last, for the first time since William McKinley, a Republican President has been found worth shooting. (Remember Nixon's phony assassination attempt incident in New Orleans?).

The significant thing about Miss Fromme seems to be that she made no attempt to melt into the crowd, but instead wore her Little Red Riding Hood costume and in general attracted as much attention as possible before she pulled the gun. When she did, she didn't even pull back the cocking mechanism, and to make absolutely sure no one was hurt she saw to it that although four bullets were actually in the magazine, none was in the chamber. Curiously, the press has had little to say about Mr. Boro, the retired McClellan AFB employe who is supposed to have lent her the gun and is rumored to have staked her to a VW bug and other helpful things.

If it was realized that Miss Fromme's basically unarmed condition was a mistake, tending to suggest a lack of credibility, the next job, by Miss Moore, was made to look a little better -- in that respect but in that respect only. She actually had a loaded .38 and actually fired it, albeit with a target practice charge instead of a regular bullet. However, from there on the whole thing went to pieces.

It's worth recalling that Miss Moore was a paid informer for 1) the local police, 2) the FBI, and 3) the local office of the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Bureau of the Treasury Department. The night before she called ~~her~~ her friend in the cops and told him she was worried about what she might do the next day. He told her he couldn't arrest her because he had no charge to lay against her. But he did inform both the FBI and the ~~Secret~~ Secret Service, both of whom talked to her. The Secret Service actually picked up her .44 automatic, but again, no one would arrest her.

The next morning she went back to the private (rightwing) gun collector in Danville who had sold her the .44 and bought the chromium plated .38 she used later in the day in Ford's general vicinity. Who was with her when this transaction took place? An agent from the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms bureau.

These are merely some high spots I thought might amuse you. There's much more, but they'd be wasting your time.

Is all this to convince the right wing that Ford is more nearly worth shooting than Reagan, and therefore a better candidate? One can understand GOP ego problems, but are they that bad? And does no one realize that the riffraff attracted by informers' pay make the poorest possible assassins from the standpoint of credibility?

It's true, of course, that Ford's bitch has had nine pups, so things may not be as bad as they seem, imagewise, but in general it does seem that the Democrats no longer enjoy a monopoly on a state of congenital disarray.

You bettah off, it's to be hoped.

Best,


jdw

P.S. -- we recently had to renew our subscription to the Post, and in so doing dropped the Sunday edition, which costs disproportionately by mail in relation to what hard news it carries, which is very little usually. No need to protect us on it unless you see something you think would be unquestionably essential. There has been none such in any Sunday issue for a long time. Some good stuff, but not essential.

jdw