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5/7/04

Dear Mr. Sandberg,

Your response to my note arrived last evening. I do appreciate the promptness of your reply. And again you've managed to strike a chord.

My two youngest children were born in Milford. And during the time I lived there every thread I wore came out of S & W Clothiers in The Village. That was likely prior to your father's association there... perhaps his father owned the company then. We moved to Houston in '63 so I don't recall any names from that era. But I liked Milford and retain many good memories of my time there.

I learned many years ago not to pay any attention to what's written in the papers and other media. Since none of those people responsible for those stories has ever spoken to me they've either repeated the utter b/s heard from "anonymous" sources who claim to have known me or they've fabricated it entirely. I know this from people who do know me well who have read/seen the idiosyncrasy and told me parts of it. I simply ignore it all. Your insinuations are dead-on in regard to my trial. It was an absolute travesty. And there's nothing I can do to reverse it.

Let me explain a little of my current situation. I have been here for more than ten years. That I should die in this cage is accepted. The government doesn't like me very much. That is perfectly fair because I don't care for the government at all. I have no contact whatsoever with anyone other than the guards who bring my food and other supplies. I rarely speak to them nor they to me.

My space is 10' x 12' with an 8' ceiling. A slab of concrete along one wall and the back is the bed. It is some 18" above the floor. The mattress is a plastic covered mat that was once some three inches thick. It isn't a hell of a lot softer than the concrete. Next to the bed on the back wall is the shower. It is a four-to-eighths steel structure some 3 1/2' x 3 1/2', scabbed on to the back and side walls. The shower curtain is clear plastic. Heavy dew mat exist sun there. Between the bed and shower on the rear wall is a window. It is 4" wide and 4' vertically. I can see only the sky... the A/C is in a hole. The window faces south... toward Japan. The natural light is appreciated for reading/writing. My vision is not what it was once.

There is a small black and white TV/radio unit at the foot of my bed. Aside from CNN and an occasional program on the History Channel, I watch very little TV, opting instead for NPR... I can do other things while listening to the radio. Beneath the concrete shelf on which the TV is located is a second concrete shelf, somewhat larger, some 3' above the floor. A concrete stool, apparently formed by filling a 10-gallon paint container and allowing the concrete to harden in place on the floor, is fixed in front of the larger shelf or table. It can be used for writing and eating. Above that is a three-position fluorescent light fixture. The sink and commode is a single unit, also stainless steel at the front of the cell.

The front wall is of standard steel bars. A door, operated electrically, makes up half that barrier. Above

the sink is a mirror of plastic composition in a steel frame that's set into the wall. Beyond the base is a pally part some three feet deep and the outer solid steel door (electronic) and well, the other side of which is the hallway. In the steel door is a window, 4" x 18" vertical for viewing. Along the outer wall is set a larger window for viewing the cell. It's about a foot wide and some four feet vertically. I never leave the space except for an occasional visit from immediate family or a lawyer.

There are twelve cells, identical, along the tier, side by side... nothing opposite. The walls are thick so it is futile to attempt to converse, even if any of us could communicate. It is very, very quiet... one can hear a mouse piss on a piece of cotton except during occasional when the doors are opened. Rarely one of the residents flips out and begins kicking or banging the shower with his fists. That can be heard throughout the state I suspect.

Now, one might think on reading this description I am bored to tears and would welcome any distraction. In fact this area it nearly enough bore in my day. I'm busy as a one-legged man in an ass-kicking contest. I determined early on the security measures were beyond my control. So I've chosen to ignore that aspect of my environment.

In order to survive with any semblance of sanity it was, therefore, essential to concentrate on the positive to be found in any situation, no matter how extreme. This place is singularly unique in its security level. But I have no particular objection to my own company.

The quiet is wonderful for studying/researching/writing. The sleepers never bother me. I have 24/7 to do whatever I wish. I choose to write and undertake those chores associated with that pursuit. The secret of life, no matter the circumstances, really doesn't change. If one doesn't find a way to fill the hours with something he finds stimulating and worthwhile he's going to be miserable. I'd certainly like to have better technology but this job is it. So I'll make do. I can order books needed for my work, up to you in my possession. A computer and the internet would be wonderful... but it's verboten. I don't allow those things beyond my control to distract from the reality.

It is 2:42 A.M. as I write this. Obviously there are very few on this planet who would trade places with me. But there are tens of millions who would kill to have even a few hours each day to do with as he pleases, to have complete leisure (why they drive themselves). Most never manage to achieve it. I'm not happy with my situation certainly but I do try to maintain my perspective and make the best of it. So far I've managed to avoid becoming an automaton who writes the Sunday soap operas and magazines. I do feel for those here who are functionally illiterate... and they are many from what I hear. This place must be hell on Earth for those poor bastards. They have only their radio/TV.

I wish you good health and contentment

Very truly yours,
C. Harrison