

*Please
John: SCS
book letter*

Jerry Richardson

Thursday, Aug. 3 1995

Henry,

Lou and I thoroughly enjoyed reading your new book. It's a classic. I plan to keep it among my collection of things written or printed by people whose work I greatly admire. Thank you for sending us a copy.

You did such a meticulous job of journal keeping, then translating it into lively, very readable text. A few years ago I unearthed an NDSU alumnus in Washington, D.C., who had been a kind of Big Man On Campus back in the mid-1930s. I had heard stories that he had been involved in the decision to drop The Bomb, while working in the State Department and in the military during World War II. When I found him, he had been retired for at least 25 years, and was quite flattered that someone had taken the trouble to look him up. He has since died, and his widow sent me a thick typescript of his memoirs in the hope that I could assist her in getting them published. Alas, they are crashingly dull. I've never been able to make it all the way through them, and have had no success at all in eliciting any interest from a potential publisher.

You must feel a lot of satisfaction in having been able to chronicle your life and career in such a lively and interesting manner. I particularly enjoyed the little personal episodes such as the spontaneous jazz concert in Dalmatia, your brush with the CIA, the poor little beggar boy in India, and the meals you had around the world. I recall eating deep-fried octopus in Japan onetime. I'm sure I wouldn't have the stomach for all of the exotic things you've tackled in your travels.

It always rather amazes me when I read something like your book, or watch the credits for a film, parts of which were made all over the world, or a war involving troops from a dozen disparate countries, how remarkable it is that people from widely different backgrounds, cultures and languages are able to work together to produce something with unity and coherence. From my own much narrower experience I know how difficult it can be to have something positive come out of a collection of big egos and personal biases.

Lou and I have been seeing things in the paper that look as though they might have been triggered by the publication of your book. Only one of them, an AP story out of Minneapolis, credited you by name (it was drastically shortened in The Forum and our local broadcast media.) Jane Brody cited Dr. Dean Ornish in her column the other day. It sounded to me suspiciously like some of your pioneering research. Such is life in science and academe.

I also enjoyed your description of the low coronary risk male. It sounds a little bit like my life in retirement, except that lunching daily at the VIP Room does not bode well for one's heart health.

I've had sort of a humdrum summer (rapidly drawing to a close). In the past Lou and I usually managed to work in ~~a major trip~~ of some kind of a major trip, either in the U.S. or abroad. Maybe we're getting too old for that now. I think we've made a grand total of three weekend trips to Lake Byron all summer.

Lou is involved in Gordy's restaurant almost to the point of obsession. She leaps out of bed at 6:30 a.m., to dash downstairs and do the dishes from last night's baking and work on his bookkeeping. She's off to the restaurant about 10 a.m., to get home usually after 5, just in time to begin the evening baking. Gordy's threatening to start opening evenings in September. I'm not sure how that will affect our lives.

When Jay and Amy deposited Bryce on our doorstep back in June they didn't happen to mention that his other grandparents have apparently gone out of the daycare business, so I've become the sole, full-time owner and operator of the South Ninth Street Daycare Center and Home for Wayward Boys, all day, everyday, five days a week. I'm beginning to feel a little like Father Flanagan. Bryce and I have gotten very well acquainted over the past couple of summers, which is nice. My grandfather Richardson died four years before I was born, and the other one lived 500 miles away in Iowa. That was a major trip in the 1930s.

Drew is slated to arrive Tuesday evening. I've been trying to persuade her to drive down to Nebraska with me. I've been corresponding with the Nebraska Historical Society about some archaeological digs that have been going on at a place called Ft. Atkinson, north of Omaha. My great-great grandfather served there in the 1820s (and died soon thereafter). It was apparently a terrible, unhealthy place. The army abandoned it after seven years. I'm at least glad that Asa Richardson found the strength to produce a male offspring before he toddled off.

If you and Stacy run out of things to do in Minneapolis, you might be interested in seeing a photo exhibit by my friend, Fred Scheel, up on the third floor of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Fred was the fellow I ran into on the beach at Anna Maria a couple of years ago. He has a valuable collection of photographs that are displayed along with his own. I think there may be a display of photography by Richard Avedon there right now, too, which would probably be even more interesting.

I had sort of half-way hoped that sending Stacy and Beth and Drew stationery for their birthdays might suggest something. Alas, to date, Drew is the only one who took the hint. Lou and Stacy have these long phone conversations punctuated by exclamations--"That's terrible!" "That's wonderful!" laughter and tears. But when I ask what they talked about she says, "I can't remember." Congratulations again on a most impressive book.

Jerry