

Subj: There IS a God?
Date: 95-09-10 13:44:57 EDT
From: PiChrtr
To: Sagebrush3

AKA LES AUCOIN,
MY BROTHER

LES AUCOIN
THE DIRECTOR, OREGON

September 9, 1995

Dear Les:

Can't imagine what you must be thinking now, but I hope you are at peace, serenely catching rainbows and basking in a glorious sense of closure as the political class of Oregon begins its tawdry maneuvering for succession. You were right, the voters wrong, and now everyone knows it. The sordid diaries will dispel any lingering doubt that might have existed on that score (and may have the additional benefit of scuttling some presidential ambitions and possibly a few reelection campaigns in the bargain!)

Muftia (the parliamentarian you don't like, but who seems to adore you) called to tell me the news of the Ethics Committee vote and to confirm that the Gov. of Or. was a Dem. (I'd forgotten about Oregon's recent "clean government" foolishness that stripped him of appointment powers.)

When she began an uncontrollable wicked giggle at the prospect of you being appointed to the seat which was rightfully yours to begin with, I offered an opposite appraisal: that Ethics might be proposing the harshest penalty as a take-it-or-leave-it proposition because they didn't think there were votes to impose it. "Lee," she said, "it is so seldom in this life that we get to imagine an opportunity for justice so perfect as to be pure poetry, I don't want to think about other possibilities."

I didn't tell her I thought we are experiencing exactly that.

I am sorry you didn't win, but it is now clearly established that you didn't *lose*. The tragedy gives the subsequent triumph an epic proportion worthy of a Pat Conroy novel. The far different but no less worthy outcome from the one the hero sought reaffirms that Life is bigger than us all, but neither cruel nor malicious and that good and decent men will still prevail. Indeed, in the end the hero is better off than if his wishes had been fulfilled.

I don't know if recent events have tempted you to consider getting back into it. I suspect they have, however fleetingly. But if you question whether the hero of this epic is truly better off, ask yourself how many weekends in a row you could have spent with Sue if you'd won? How many spontaneous trips would you and she have been able to take? How much fly-fishing would you have done, how many magnificent rivers would you have missed?

In this town, fish and rivers are considered trivial compensations for a seat in the Senate but it is precisely that "either/or" alternative that is so pitiful and so wrong. When I stared into the eyes of those deer on the Shenandoah River, I felt like an integral part of a profound unified mystery that was river and sparkling sunlight, wildness, dappled forest, sky, universe...everything. Try getting that on the fucking floor of the Senate.

It isn't all there is, of course (that's the error New Age hippies, cultists and back-to-nature purists of every stripe make) but it is an essential part of a complete and well-lived life. Taoist and Buddhists insist that wholeness can only be achieved by obtaining balance--seeing the forest and the trees simultaneously. They believe any other existence is not only hollow and limiting, but life-denying and ultimately harmful both to the individual and the product of his labor. Garbage in/garbage out.

Can anyone consider the sorry state of politics today and what it produces and question that appraisal?

As I watched the spectacle of him on the floor of the Senate, (the Post compared it to a "wake, but one in which the corps keeps rising up to shake hands and hug the mourners.") I remembered his performance at the Bend debate and how astounded I was to learn that, before that, he'd just been told Post was going with the story. The man has no heart, no blood, no soul.

I called Crane and told him my impression that, right from the beginning, he had plotted out a time-line for avoidance that was truly awe-inspiring in its reptilian cold-blooded cunning: beginning with the tepid admission, checking into a clinic, laying low, coming out on Barbara Walters, delay, delay, delay, etc. Republican control of the Senate must have made it seem almost too easy.

In the end, it was his strength that did him in. It's a pity that he'll never appreciate the eloquence of the irony; that the cold, calculating one-dimensional single-mindedness which had made him a "good politician," would now ruin him. He would have been censured if he hadn't used the Senate like so many pieces on a chessboard. When he made them walk the plank against open hearings and then demanded them, it was obvious he'd do *anything* to keep his seat; that for him there are no forests, no trees, honor, duty, dignity, no life--just his precious little Senate seat. Senators don't like to be manipulated like they were his constituents. He jerked *them* around, they jerked back.

I read today that he was on 20/20 last night worrying that he might be remembered more for his sexual assaults on women than his legislative accomplishments. Bet on it, Bob.

And you, Les, will be remembered as the candidate they should have picked. Fuck 'em. Myopic little pricks had their chance, now you have yours.

Let's go back to the Shenandoah sometime this fall. Take a couple sleeping bags and some visqueen; fish 'til dark and set around a campfire getting roaring drunk and howling at the moon. Maybe get arrested (Who cares???) for disturbing the peace!

As the Rolling Stones once sang: "You can't always get what you want but if you try, you just might find you can get what you need."

Peace.

Pi