



**United States Department of Justice**

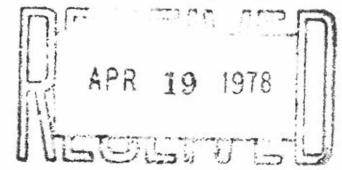
**OFFICE FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN THE  
ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE**

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RONALD P. SOKOL

U.S. OFFICES



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Dear Ron:

It is good to hear from you again, but I am amazed that my last two letters took so long to reach you. All along I have had the uneasy feeling that there is something strange about government mail. In any event, I hope this communication does not take as long.

I filled out the form for the Summer seminars and have mailed a copy to the three schools. I am very happy to give you the highest recommendation. Indeed, it seems to me that you are an ideal candidate for this type of seminar, and I have told them so in this form. I must say that these seminars have strong appeal to me. I can imagine that, given the right grouping of persons, they could be extremely interesting and worthwhile. Somewhat along this line, an effort is going forward to institute at the University of Virginia Law School a graduate program for appellate judges. I have been tentatively approached to serve as director of that program after I leave here and get back to the law school. It is a fascinating idea, one I have had in mind for several years, so I am inclined to take up this proposition, but that would be over a year away from now. Meantime, some planning is going forward. My hope is to have something that goes far beyond the usual discussions of judicial administration which one encounters at judges' gatherings. The point is to have a curriculum where a judge can pursue all subjects traditionally associated with university graduate study. It will be heavily oriented toward jurisprudential subjects and will have some interdisciplinary offerings in fields such as economics, psychology, history, and others.

Mr. Ronald P. Sokol  
Aix-En-Provence, FRANCE  
April 12, 1978  
Page 2.

I think your comment about the unavailability of things such as dictating machines and tape recorders in recent years probably does account for some of the dearth of the treatment of blindness in existing literature. However, I'm not sure that that is the whole explanation. I shall be thinking more about this and also thinking further about what I may want to say in print. I've pretty much decided that I cannot treat the present problem by itself. It seems to me to involve now my whole life, and that is a considerably larger subject, though perhaps one of marginal interest to persons other than myself.

Since last Summer, I have thought a number of times of the analogy to a prisoner. I mean the old-style, hard-core prisoner without TV, movies, libraries, and other amenities which have crept into the contemporary correctional situation. I and the prisoner of the old style share a number of things in common. One is the deprivation of mobility -- the loss of liberty to go when and where one pleases (shades of the test of "in custody" which you may recall from Jones v. Cunningham). Moreover, we share the loss of access to libraries, books, and the visual aspects of TV. Of course, this analogy can be taken too far, but I do think that it is not wholly inapt. This has been reinforced in my mind recently, as I have just finished reading Albert Speer's diary, Spandau--The Secret Diaries. This is a fascinating book which I think you might enjoy. Though it may sound strange to say so, I find much in common with Speer. There is something similar in the sense of being cut off from the world and of having to develop various plans to cope with the situation.

Presently, I am set to return to Boston on April 21 for another examination, with the possibility of another operation to follow immediately. There will undoubtedly be another operation at some point; the only question is one of timing. I am anxious to go ahead, but of course will not buck the medical advice on the point. Whenever the operation occurs, it will be the final fork in the road. I will either get back some vision or will know that I will not.

Coincidentally, the night before my appointment in Boston, I am scheduled to speak in Denver. I'm going to attempt to sort out and relieve an enormous array of confusion about appointments to office. My theory is that federal judges and U. S. Attorneys are not necessarily to be treated the same way in

Mr. Ronald P. Sokol  
Aix-En-Provence, FRANCE  
April 12, 1978  
Page 3.

terms of the appointment process. Moreover, "merit" and "politics" are much misunderstood. I do not pretend to have ultimate wisdom on these topics, but I do think I might be able to attempt to dispel some misleading confusion; at least I shall try.

I am sorry to hear that you think that you will not be in Washington this Summer. If your plans change and you can come through, please let me know. We have a space at our house to sleep you and would be delighted to have a visit.

Sincerely,



Daniel J. Meador  
Assistant Attorney General