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May 5, 2002  
Mailed on May 10, 2002

Dear Dan,

Sometime in December of last year I switched to Windows XP and for about a month my Outlook program with all my addresses disappeared, thus raising an insurmountable barrier to my sending out Christmas cards. In mid-January with the help of Microsoft's technical assistance I resurrected my Outlook, found my addresses and figured that I would send out Christmas cards in late January and no one would mind, but one thing led to another and before I knew it March had arrived, and it began to seem ridiculous to send out Christmas cards for 2001 when we were in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2002. So if you were wondering why there was a great silence emanating this year from my direction that is the explanation. A computer program goes down, and my mail stops.

We did get your card with your family news, and more recently I had the pleasure of reading your piece on Cahaba in the VQR. I actually subscribed to the VQR after your visit to us of a few years ago, and I have enjoyed perusing it ever since. I usually find an article or two of interest to me, and I find the Notes on Current Books of interest. The Cahaba piece was of course utterly new to me, quite different from your other writing, and I thought very good. I certainly read through it at a sitting with pleasure. You should do more in the same vein.

That raises the question in my mind of what you are up to now. Has the law disappeared entirely from your mental scene? Are you working on any more novels? Have you settled back into a relaxed retirement or are you active?

I am still practicing law and still struggling (now in my 30<sup>th</sup> year of struggle) to gain a balanced perspective of the French civil law system even as I practice in it and suffer its slings and arrows. Of course I do American law as well and was recently in Miami to negotiate a license agreement for a French client who has exclusive distribution rights for a product that an American company wants to manufacture. Then I returned to France to argue a labor law case in the French labor court. I was representing an American engineer who had been fired in France by the German affiliate of a California company, and the question was what law applied.

Ronald P. Sokol

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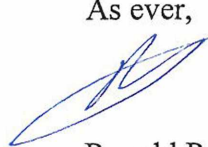
I argued that French law applied because he had been fired in France. The employer argued that German law applied because his written contract provided for German law to apply.

The following week I went to Nîmes to argue a child-kidnapping case in the family court. The French mother had refused to return her child to its American father in New York, and he had invoked the Hague Convention on the civil aspects of international child abduction. While there, I of course contemplated once again the Maison Carré which inspired Jefferson's design of the Rotunda. This week I shall be preparing a waiver application for an English lady who was convicted in England some 20 years ago of possession of 5 grams of marijuana thus putting herself into the category of an "inadmissible" alien under our immigration laws. As her elderly parents live in the N.H., and she is unable to visit them, I shall try to convince the INS to waive the inadmissibility. I also hope to have a decision this week from the INS for another client. He is a young French *sommelier*, and I endeavored to convince the INS that this is a profession that involves creativity and is culturally unique to France, thus rendering him eligible for a P-3 visa which will enable him to accept a job offer with a California company. These few cases should give you some idea of the variety of what occupies me.

A month or two ago I was invited by a friend to accompany him to Scotland to visit St. Andrews University to which his daughter had just been admitted. I had never been to Scotland before, and I found it an intriguing spot. It also got me back into James Boswell. I am now reading his London Journal and his Edinburgh Journal and then plan to reread his Life of Johnson. My present thought is that if for some silly reason I had to select just one book in the English language that it would be Boswell's Life of Samuel Johnson. I am curious to know whether I shall feel the same after a rereading. It has probably been 30 years since I last read it. I have spent the last year reading Dickens having only previously read a volume or two. I have now nearly completed him plus having consumed two thick biographies. While I had initially thought he would be dated and difficult to read, I did not find him so at all. I found him wonderfully readable and with an extraordinary sense of humor and ear for language.

Today is national election day, so I think I shall close and try to discover what is happening. I hope Jan is as well and that you are both enjoying your retirement. This weekend my classmates are celebrating our 40<sup>th</sup> reunion which I was unable to make. Perhaps I'll come for the 50<sup>th</sup> if I am still around. Just as you are able to return to Cahaba, I can jump the 40 years with ease and still hear and see your procedure lectures and even more your Federal Courts (although that was only 39 years ago).

As ever,



Ronald P. Sokol

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