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October 26, 1987

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Dear Ron:

You may remember my old friend L. Q. C. Lamar. About twenty-one years ago I stored in the attic two large cardboard cartons filled with research notes and drafts of chapters for a projected book on him. I had about concluded that the day would never come when that material would be resurrected. But, miraculously, a piece of it was called into service in the spring of 1986.

In March of last year I was at a meeting with Chief Justice Burger. He approached me to say that the Lord Chief Justice of England had previously accepted an invitation to deliver the annual lecture to the Supreme Court Historical Society but had just canceled out. He asked me if there were any chance that I could deliver the lecture, then just two months ahead in May. I asked for twenty-four hours to consider the matter.

On returning home I went immediately to the cardboard cartons in the attic. I had in mind a segment of the Lamar material that I could deliver for this lecture. And sure enough, there it was, hidden from human eye for twenty-one years -- the draft chapter on Lamar's nomination to the Supreme Court and the ensuing confirmation fight. Fortunately, this chapter was in a fairly complete condition and seemed to require only a modest amount of editing. I then responded to the Chief Justice that I would give the lecture if he would accept the story of the Lamar confirmation fight as the subject. He readily agreed. Thus, I dusted off this ancient draft, supplemented it, touched it up a bit, and delivered it in the original Supreme Court chamber in the Capital, the chamber where Marshal and Taney sat, which has now been restored to the state it was in in their day. Telling this story there was a lot of fun. Orally, I could embellish it a bit beyond the written page.

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In any event, it has now appeared in print in the Supreme Court Historical Society Yearbook. Because I remember warmly our various conversations about Lamar, I enclose a copy, with my compliments. The photographs and their captions are entirely the doing of the editorial staff. The selection is pretty good, although I see no point in having Cleveland's entire cabinet. Whether any other segments of the Lamar story will ever come to light remains in doubt. He is a colorful story, and I would like to put it to use in some way some day.

Well the Bork story is now closed. Closed, that is, officially, but far from closed in the literature. I predict that there will be writings about it -- copious writings, probably -- for a long time to come. The whole process raises quite an array of unusual and disquieting questions. I myself may even be moved to write something about some aspects of it. Incidentally, a former president of the American Bar Association, Justin Stanley, a Chicago lawyer, wrote a letter to the Chicago Tribune calling attention to my Lamar lecture in the Yearbook and pointing out what he considered to be somewhat of a parallel to the Bork problem. There are some touches of similarity, but there are also differences.

Louisa Dixon popped into my office this past August when she was home on leave from her job in France to tell me of her visit with you last spring or summer. I had given her your name, saying that if she had a problem or needed help you were there as an American lawyer. I had no idea that she would in fact pay you a visit. I think she enjoyed the experience, and I am glad that she had the opportunity to meet you.

I am still busy with the judges' program. We are now beginning an admission season for the next class, to enroll next summer. This will be the fifth class in the program. Thus far, 118 judges have been through it in the eight years since its inception. It is interesting, but it does take a lot of time throughout the year, especially the fundraising, which is the least attractive part of my involvement. In addition to that program and my teaching duties here, I now have two external responsibilities. I am chairman of the ABA Standing Committee on Federal Judicial Improvements, a post I took with great reluctance, as I do not believe that the ABA really wants to do anything significant about reforming the Federal Courts. Anyway, I will give it a run for a year. The other post is a member of the Board of Directors of the new State Justice Institute. The only responsibilities are to make decisions about disbursing federal money to assist in the improvement of state courts.

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In general, all is going well here, with nothing especially dramatic to report. I hope that things are in good shape there. I gather from Louisa Dixon that you are in good spirits, and that I am glad to hear.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Meador

DJM/pew