

2-22-92

ONCE IN A LIFETIME MEMO REGARDING RICH'S HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING.

COPIES:

ACE

ALICE

EDNA

MARIE

JOE

LORETTA

HELENE IS TAKING GOOD CARE OF RICH. HOWEVER, HE IS STEADILY GOING DOWN-HILL. HE HAS TROUBLE STAYING AWAKE, CAN'T RAISE HIMSELF UP WHEN LYING DOWN, HAS TROUBLE GETTING OUT OF A CHAIR, IS CURRENTLY USING A "WALKER". HE SEEMS TO BE LOSING CONTROL OF HIS BOWEL MOVEMENTS. ONE DOCTOR SAYS TAKE "WATER PILLS" — THE OTHER SAYS "NO!" HE IS SWELLING UP — CAN'T WEAR HIS CLOTHES OR SHOES. OFTEN HE YEARNS FOR A SPECIAL FOOD BUT THEN IT DOESN'T TASTE LIKE IT SHOULD. SOMETIMES, HE EATS SMALL PIES OR CHOCOLATE COVERED NUTS. HE WON'T EAT LEFT-OVERS — SEEMS TO WANT FRESH FOOD EACH DAY. HIS BODY IS TURNING YELLOW — LIVER ISN'T WORKING. HIS SKIN IS BREAKING OPEN AND HELENE IS PUTTING NEOSPORIN ON IT. HE IS EXTREMELY WEAK BUT PROUD — DOESN'T WANT ANYONE TO HELP HIM WHEN HE GOES TO BATH-ROOM (DOESN'T FULLY REALIZE HE SPRAYS AND MISSES).

BUT, LET ME TELL YOU THIS — YOU CAN BE PROUD OF THE WAY YOUR BROTHER IS DYING. LETS HOPE WE CAN ALL EMULATE HIM WHEN OUR TIME COMES.

RICH GIVES THE IMPRESSION THAT HE DOESN'T KNOW. HE KEEPS SAYING:

a) I FEEL A LITTLE BETTER.

b) THE DOCTOR IS TRYING SOME NEW MEDICINE.

c) MAYBE I NEED TO TAKE THE MEDICINE LONGER.

d) DOCTORS HAVE ALL KINDS OF TECHNIQUES TO HELP YOU.

e) HE HAS GOMMERS IN HIS BACKYARD — HE SAYS "I WILL SHOW RICHARD HOW TO SET TRAPS WHEN I AM FEELING BETTER.

f) ASKS US IF WE WANT A DRINK

ON THE OTHER HAND, RICH HAS TO KNOW HE IS DYING -- HE IS GETTING WEAKER, LOSING CONTROL OF HIS BODILY FUNCTIONS, SWELLING UP, TURNING YELLOW (URINE IS DARK). I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY TO HIM, BUT HELEN DOES A GOOD JOB AND ALWAYS FINDS CHEERY WORDS.

RICH DOESN'T SEEM TO BE IN GREAT PAIN -- ONLY WEAK AND TIRED. WANTS TO GET OUTSIDE IN THE SUN OR JUST PUTTER AROUND THE HOUSE. BELIEVE HE HAS PAIN PILLS TO TAKE WHEN HE NEEDS THEM.

I TRULY BELIEVE RICH KNOWS HE IS DYING AND IS TRYING TO MAKE IT EASY ON THOSE AROUND HIM. THE DOCTOR WON'T TELL HIM UNLESS RICH ASKS A DIRECT QUESTION. RICH OFTEN SAYS HE WANTS HELENA TO ASK THE DOCTOR WHY HE ISN'T GETTING BETTER.

SOMETIME AGO, HE SAID "I'D LIKE TO SEE YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK AGAIN". I WOULD HAVE TAKEN HIM BUT HE WAS NOT IN GOOD CONDITION FOR TRAVEL.

WE TRY TO VISIT HIM OFTEN AND ACE SPENDS A LOT OF TIME WITH RICH. ACE RECENTLY SENT OVER SOME HOME-MADE SOUP AND WE TOOK OUT SOME CHOCOLATE COVERED NUTS.

SOME OF RICH'S HOT WATER LINES ARE GIVING HIM TROUBLE. RECENTLY, DENNY WOLFE FIXED A LEAK UNDER THE GARAGE FLOOR. THEN, ANOTHER LEAK DEVELOPED NEAR MASTER BEDROOM TUB (FLOOR WAS COVERED WITH HOT WATER). HELENA CALLED US -- WE WENT OUT AND FOUND LEAK IN HOT WATER PIPE UNDER THE CONCRETE. CALLED A PLUMBER -- HAD TO JACK-HAMMER OUT A 1 FT. X 1 FT. PIECE OF CONCRETE (HAD USED A LEAK DETECTOR TO PIN-POINT

ACTUAL LOCATION OF LEAK (COST ABOUT \$400-\$500), THEIR INSURANCE COVERS ALL BUT \$250 DEDUCTIBLE.

SOMETIME AGO, STEPHAN (LISA'S HUSBAND) AND PAUL (ACE'S SON) FIXED RICH'S RIDING TRACTOR (FOR MOWING LAWN).

HELEN SOMETIMES TAKES HELENA SHOPPING.

RECENTLY, THERE WAS A LEAK UNDER DRIVE-WAY. RICHARD AND CONNIE DUG UP EACH SIDE. ACE AND I MOVED HIS OUTSIDE SPIGOT TO OPPOSITE SIDE OF DRIVEWAY -- RAINED AS WE WERE FINISHING UP. DENNY LATER FOUND A SLIGHT LEAK AND FIXED.

RICH'S OLD CAR WOULDN'T START -- ACE AND I CHANGED UP HIS TWO BATTERIES (DIESEL) AND GOT IT STARTED. HAS ANOTHER PROBLEM -- DEAD AGAIN NEXT DAY. SUGGESTED THEY SELL IT.

NEW CAR (BUICK) HAD PROBLEMS INCLUDING TRANSMISSION. RICHARD TOOK IT TO GARAGE BEFORE WARRANTY EXPIRED. BELIEVES ITS NOW O.K.

RICH IS ALWAYS COLD -- KEEPS TURNING UP HEAT, USES BLANKETS. CONNIE BOUGHT HIM AN ELECTRIC BLANKET.

RECENTLY, I CLEANED UP PART OF RICH'S GARAGE. RICHARD AND CONNIE CLEANED UP HIS WORKSHOP OUT BACK.

DENNY RECENTLY INSTALLED A HIGHER TOILET THAT RICH HAD BOUGHT -- RICH HAD HARD TIME GETTING UP FROM LOW SEAT.

ACE HAS BEEN CUTTING RICH'S HAIR

RICH NEVER COMPLAINS -- ALWAYS SAYS HE HAD A GOOD DAY,

(4)

HES GOING TO GET BETTER. SOMETIMES, HE ^{EATS} ~~EATS~~ APPLE PIES FROM McDONALDS. HE RECENTLY TRIED AN ICE CREAM CONE BUT COULDN'T FINISH IT.

HIS FEET WERE SO SWOLLEN, SO ACE & HELEN BOUGHT RICH A PAIR OF DARK TENNIS TYPE SHOES WITH VELCRO STRAPS -- HE LIKED THEM BUT RIGHT NOW, I DON'T BELIEVE HE CAN WEAR THEM.

RICHARD TOOK A WEEK OFF FROM WORK TO BE WITH HIS DAD.

HELENA TALKS TO HELEN WHEN RICH ISN'T THERE AND OFTEN CRIES. DOCTOR FIGURED ABOUT 3 MONTHS FROM DEC. 11, 1991. DOUBT IF HELL LAST THAT LONG (~ MARCH 11).

HELEN GAVE ME MORE NOTES - SO I MAY REPEAT SOME ITEMS.

- a) RICH NOW DRESSES IN TOPS OF PAJAMAS (CAN'T WEAR CLOTHES)
- b) VERY SWOLLEN, SKIN CRACKING, TENDER
- c) SHOWED ACE, TESTICLES SWOLLEN.
- d) HELENA ~~PUTS~~ PUTS NEOSPORIN ON LEGS, ETC
- e) HELENA WAITS ON HIM NIGHT AND DAY.
BATHES HIM, LIFTS, HELPS GO TO BATH-ROOM.
- f) RICH AND CONNIE MOW YARD, CLEANED UP WORK-SHOP,
SPEND TIME WITH RICH.
- g) DOCTOR FOUND RICH HAD A BROKEN TOE -- HE FALLS OFTEN.

KEITH, KAREN, VICKI, PFERMAN, MELVIN AND DOROTHY WENT TO SEE HIM.

SOME OF HELENA'S RELATIVES VISIT HIM.

RECENTLY, RICH ASKED ACE TO GET HIM SOME PEACHES, PUDDING AND JELLO. HE WON'T EAT LEFT-OVERS -- EVEN

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WANTS FRESH STEAKS. KEEPS TALKING ABOUT ROAST BEEF, MASHED POTATOES AND GRAVY. BUT OFTEN, HE CAN'T EAT MUCH (NO TASTE).

FINANCIALY, I BELIEVE RICH AND HELENA ARE IN GOOD SHAPE:

- a) BOTH GET PENSIONS AND SOCIAL SECURITY
- b) HAVE MULTIPLE INSURANCE COVERAGE
- c) POSSIBLY OWE ^{\$15,000} ON THEIR HOME BUT MAY HAVE SPECIAL MORTGAGE INSURANCE IN CASE OF DEATH.
- d) PROBABLY OWE ON NEW CAR
- e) BELIEVE RICH HAS FAIR AMOUNT OF LIFE INSURANCE.
- f) POSSIBLY STILL PAYING ON PRE-BURIAL CONTRACT.
- g) OWN A LARGE HOME (~3500 SQ. FT) ON 1 ACRE LOT. WORTH \$200,000 OR MORE.

RICH'S HOME IS NOW 18 YEARS OLD.

- a) HOT WATER PIPES SEEM TO BE A PROBLEM
- b) WILL NEED A NEW ROOF SOON
- c) ONE ACRE OR MORE -- LOT OF WORK TO MOW, TRIM, ETC. USE IRRIGATION, LOTS OF TREES IN FRONTYARD.
- d) HAS 5 BEDROOMS, ENTRY, HALL, FAMILY ROOM, LIVING ROOM, DINING ROOM, LARGE KITCHEN, LAUNDRY ROOM, 2 CAR GARAGE, 2 HEAT PUMPS.
- e) BEDROOMS & GARAGE CABINETS ARE FILLED WITH FURNITURE, ANTIQUES, ETC.
- f) HELENA IS IN POOR HEALTH -- SHE WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF THIS PROPERTY. SHE WILL HAVE TO SELL BUT THAT IS HER BUSINESS.
- g) RICHARD AND CONNIE LIVE AROUND CORNER (~1 MILE). HAVE HIGH MORTGAGE ON THEIR HOME, HAVE DOGS & CATS.

IT IS HARD TO SEE RICH DYING BUT IT IS EVEN HARDER TO SEE HIM LIVING LIKE THIS -- WISHING HE COULD ENJOY HIS FOOD, WISHING HE COULD GET UP AND FIX THINGS AROUND THE HOUSE, WISHING HE COULD SIT IN THE SUN, WISHING HE COULD GO FOR A

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RIDE IN THE CAR, WISHING HE HAD STRENGTH TO GET OUT OF HIS CHAIR, APOLOGIZING FOR FALLING ASLEEP WHILE WE ARE VISITING HIM.

I KEEP CRYING AS I WRITE THIS -- THIS MAN, THIS BROTHER OF MINE NEVER HURT ANYONE IN HIS WHOLE LIFE. WHY COULDN'T IT HAVE BEEN ME? NOT HIM! HE DESERVED BETTER. HE WORKED LONG AND HARD FOR HIS RETIREMENT. HE ASKED SO LITTLE OF LIFE.

THEY SAY THE HOFFMANS HAVE A TEMPER. IF RICH DID, HE KEPT IT UNDER CONTROL. I LOOK BACK TO MY POST HIGH SCHOOL YEARS AND I RECALL HOW JOE TOOK CARE OF RICH'S 1942 OLDS, HOW RICH, ACE AND I TOOK A MONTH OFF IN 1947 AND TRAVELED 8000 MILES ACROSS COUNTRY AVERAGING 18 MILES/GAL. THE WHOLE TRIP COST US ABOUT \$200 EACH.

I REMEMBER RICH BUYING ME A DEER RIFLE (30-06) WHEN I WAS IN COLLEGE AND HE THOUGHT I WANTED TO GO "HUNTING". I REMEMBER RICH LENDING ME HIS CAR EVEN FOR A WEEK AT A TIME. HE DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO SAY "NO".

BUT, IN TRUTH, OUR WHOLE FAMILY HAS ALWAYS BEEN LIKE THOS. DAD BROUGHT US UP CORRECTLY -- WE KNOW THE VALUE OF A REAL FAMILY AND KNOW WE CAN COUNT ON EACH OTHER.

I APOLOGIZE FOR THIS LONG LETTER -- I HAD INTENDED A FEW PAGES TO GIVE YOU SOME REMEMBRANCES OF YOUR BROTHER SINCE YOU CANNOT BE HERE.

IT IS HARD WATCHING RICH STEADILY GOING "DOWN-HILL" AND UNABLE EVEN TO ENJOY SIMPLE PLEASURES OF LIFE: GETTING UP, SEEING THE SUN RISE, TALK TO YOUR WIFE OR FAMILY, ENJOY A GOOD BREAKFAST, FIX THE PLUMBING,

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GO FOR A CAR RIDE, SEE A GOOD MOVIE, GO FISHING, ETC.
THEREFORE, I CANNOT WISH HIM A LONG LIFE UNDER
THESE CONDITIONS. LET US HOPE HE PUTS IN A "GOOD WORD"
FOR THE REST OF US.

→ I SUGGEST YOU WRITE HIM SOME CHEERFUL NOTES --
HE CANNOT COME TO THE PHONE. HE HAS A HARD TIME
GETTING HIS THOUGHTS TOGETHER AND SAYING THEM.

WHEN RICH "PASSES AWAY", HELEN AND I WILL GET
HIM SOME FLOWERS AND MASS CARDS FROM ^{ALL OF} OUR FAMILY
(POSSIBLY \$20 EACH FAMILY). WE WILL PICK OUT THE
FLOWERS, ATTEND ALL SERVICES AND INFORM YOU ABOUT
THE FINAL SERVICES AND BURIAL.

BE PROUD OF YOUR BROTHER AS I AM. HE DOES NOT COMPLAIN,
HE DOES NOT GRIPE, HE DOES NOT CRY! HE MERELY WISHES.
HE DIES FULL OF HOPE.

THIS IS THE TRUTH
AS I SEE IT.

Al Hoffman

I BELIEVE MY WIFE, HELEN AGREES WITH THIS AS SHE
HAS GIVEN ME MANY INPUTS AND HAS SPENT MANY
HOURS "CHEERING UP" RICH.