

November 29, 1971

CONFIDENTIAL

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Dear George:

Thanks for your letter of November 23rd.

I think, however, that you have misunderstood my letter to you about Paul Craig, and perhaps I had better explain. I have no intention of entering into any controversy with him, even by way of undertaking any type of answer to him or to the article which he wrote for the Saturday Review of some weeks ago. I took note of the article, of course, but my interest in him related to his association with Brookhaven National Laboratory. It seemed strange that he would presume to speak with the voice of authority on such a matter, from the background of his supposed standing as a physicist. I noted that he was once in the California Institute of Technology, and I assumed that he had been influenced by an association with Claire Patterson, who is rabid on the subject of lead.

I have never undertaken to discuss the matter of lead in gasoline with the bitter opponents of this use of lead, and I have no intention of doing so. This matter, from the aspect of the facts, is one thing, and from the feelings of the self-appointed environmentalists, is something else again. It resembles, in the intensity of the antagonism aroused, the controversy over the fluoridation of water, which is, indeed, the most senseless pseudo-scientific joust of our time. And while I have done all that I could to get this matter looked at unemotionally by governmental authorities, I refuse utterly to engage in the polemics of the situation with people who should do their homework before talking so much. It is not possible to bring rational thought into this environmental stew in which we find ourselves, through allowing oneself to be involved in its politics and emotionalism, and I have no wish to contend with windmills. Moreover, one cannot expect even his work to exert any noteworthy influence upon intelligent and thoughtful people if he joins the noisy rabble.

Nevertheless, I am curious about people and their views and about the means of their arriving at their views, and I wrote to you about Craig because I thought that you might know about him. I appreciate the wisdom of your advice, but in this instance I am not in need of it. I've had all manner of dead cats cast at me within the last several years - some by villains, no doubt, but mostly by people who know no better. I cannot maintain - certainly not in speaking to you - that I am entirely undisturbed by this, for I would prefer to be regarded favorably by all men and especially by those who have shown competence in their own field, but I have lived too long to be surprised by capable but foolish men who have made asses of themselves in spreading over into matters of which they have no intimate knowledge. But enough, I'm sorry to have troubled you with this small matter, and yet I'm glad to have met up with you again. My best greeting to you and to your family.

Sincerely,