

10 August 1955

Mr. Giles Greville Healey
Big Sur, California

Dear Mr. Healey:

A couple of days ago the Carnegie pamphlet and the reproductions of the paintings at Bonampak arrived. We think the paintings are strikingly beautiful. I am going to try to arrange to frame them because they are extremely decorative and should be hung where my friends, too, can enjoy seeing them. I thank you for remembering me and hope you will accept my check, herewith enclosed, to cover the cost. I've already read the pamphlet and got a lot out of it. Why didn't Carnegie show authorship of the thing? Did you write it?

The book you were trying to recall when writing your letter of 28 July is:

Yardley, Herbert O., The American Black Chamber.
Indianapolis: The Bobbs - Merrill Company, 1931.

You will have difficulty in buying a copy because the book can not be reprinted in this country. The Government passed a special act that prevents it — the only case I know of in our history. However, you could get a copy from England either under the same title, put out by Faber and Faber Ltd., 24 Russell Square, London WC 1, or you could buy exactly the same book from that same publisher under the title Secret Service in America; The American Black Chamber. The last-named edition apparently was put out under that title in 1940 but all three books were printed from the same plates.

In this country the American edition of 1931, when any copy is available, is sold more or less "under the counter" and you would have to pay somewhere in the neighborhood of eight to ten dollars for a copy, whereas the British edition can probably be bought for two or three dollars.

I do not recall whether you ever told me the significance of the Maya hieroglyphs which you have assembled on your letterhead. I see that they are dates, preceded by the sign for initial series. But what dates are they? I'm awfully rusty on my calendrical lore now! In this connection did I ever send you a copy of our book plate which was done for us by the late Professor Gates of Johns Hopkins? I enclose a copy and am glad to say that it is quite effective in seeing to it that

friends who borrow books from me return them. (I will admit that my writing down on a charge card who borrowed what and when helps a lot!)

I enclose a copy of a letter which I wrote months ago to the United Fruit Company. I never heard from them, not even receiving an acknowledgment of receipt of my letter. Do you know this book? If so, do you suppose I could get a copy and do you know how much it would cost?

While I'm on this subject, I want to add that my interest in Maya writing is, of course, one of many years' standing. Perhaps the time has now arrived when I can do something about attempting to read the non-calendrical hieroglyphs, for as a consequence of two coronary occlusions, one in April, and the other in June, it has been deemed best for me to retire from active office affairs. However, I have lots of ambition left yet -- and many things to occupy me. The Maya writing is high up on my list. Do you suppose United Fruit might be interested in supporting a modest project in which I could devote time and study to a real attempt to solve the riddle? I've had over 35 years' experience as a governmental cryptanalyst and that should make a good foundation for the work. Please let me know what you think I should do in this connection. Should I write United myself, or do you know somebody high up you could interest in my behalf?

Thanking you again and with cordial greetings, I am

Sincerely,

WILLIAM F. FRIEDMAN

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