

May 3, 1971

Mr. Elliott Richardson
Secretary of Health, Education
and Welfare
330 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Richardson:

I have discussed with my editors the possibility of printing your letter in my column. They are opposed to the idea on the grounds that my column then becomes a political forum. On April 20th, the Ann Landers column was most unusual. I departed from the regular format and I would like to tell you why.

Before I went on the line for S-34, I did a great deal of investigating, consulting and soul-searching. I serve on the A.M.A. Advisory Committee and on the Resources and Development Committee for Harvard Medical School, so you can see I have many good friends on the other side. My decision to back S-34 was predicated on the belief that our government's priorities for spending (120 billion for Viet Nam) reflects neither the wishes nor the best interest of the American people.

Why cancer? Because cancer has sex appeal. People relate to it. Mr. Nixon thought so, too, which is why he offered 100 million dollars "to conquer cancer." I believe a mighty offensive, patterned after N.A.S.A. just might produce the miracle. We would not have put a man on the moon had Russia not scared us to death in 1957 with Sputnik. We would probably still be fooling around with the Federal Aviation Agency. I saw here an opportunity to alert my 54 million daily readers and avail them of the opportunity to express themselves.

Why not use the existing machinery, the N.I.H. and The Cancer Institute? Because the existing set-ups are a jungle of red tape through which a good many dedicated people have tried to hack a path and finally gave up -- exhausted, and frustrated.

Mr. Elliott Richardson

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The key question is not, however, whether Cancer Research should be done by the N.I.H. or A National Cancer Authority, but that there be a realignment of government spending -- that health and medical research not be given the scraps off the table while the military gets gourmet meals. The National Cancer Authority provides the opportunity for an all-out fresh, new, massive assault on a killer disease. And since all cancer research is based on molecular biology, scientists everywhere are bound to benefit.

I apologize for the length of this letter. No one should have to read a letter this long. But as Pascal said, "I did not have time to write a short letter, so I wrote a long one."

Sincerely,

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