

MEMORANDUM for:

Frank Lynn

You may wonder why we have not sent you to cover the Pope's visit. I discussed the possibility weeks ago on an advisory basis with the Executive Editor. I think you have a right to know what my feelings were. My feelings, Frank, were that you are too close to your religion and would not have been able to conduct yourself at all times as a reporter for The New York Times. I have noticed your interest in religion before and it is what I told the Executive Editor. Art Gelb agreed with me. If we had sent you, there would have been times when you would have been a supplicant. There would have been other times when you would have been a communicant. There would have been still other times when you would have simply been a believer. We cannot have this. We cannot have supplicants and communicants and believers covering the Pope. We need reporters. This is in the interest of preserving and maintaining the integrity of The Times. The Executive Editor thought you might be able to overcome your religion. But I did not think so. And, as I said, Art Gelb agreed with me. Art and I prevailed.

I do not want you to think that my advice to the Executive Editor reflects in any way personally on you. I do not make personal attacks on people. I am sure that in your own way, you are a very intelligent person. Please do not think I have anything against you. That is not the case. The Times has always had a few Irish Catholics on its staff. They were never as good as we hoped they would be but many of them have worked out reasonably well. The late Leo Egan was one of my dearest friends and a great raconteur. I hold Mickey Carroll in great affection and I will tell you confidentially that I wept on the day that he resigned. I wept the day that Frankie Clines went to London. I wept when Jim Clarity went to Philadelphia. I wept when Bill Farrell passed away. I wept when Deirdre Carmody married Peter Millones and I wept when their first child was born. I wept when Ron Sullivan married his wife, whoever she is. I even wept the night that Paul O'Dwyer lost the mayoral election. My first wife is Irish. I may have rejected her, but I did not reject her because she was Irish.

I have never wept for you. I may never weep for you. You and I have never been close. Why is that? Why have I always sensed a certain attitudinal problem in you? What troubles me in your case, Frank, is that you do not seem to understand that we cannot permit our emotions to rule us. If we go to a place as a reporter, we cannot act as though we were supplicants, communicants or believers. We cannot permit our religion or our culture to influence what we write. I may be wrong about you. It may be that you are every bit the reporter that Leo Egan was and that I should care as much about you as I do about Mickey Carroll. If that is the case, do not be offended by this letter. I only do what I think is best for the paper and for my readers, in that order. But I am only mortal and we mortals make mistakes.

  
A. M. R.

September 21, 1987