

Capt O C McDavid O403566
DSO, Hq 31 Inf Div, APO 31
C/o PM, San Francisco, Cal.

9 November 1944

Mr. Webb Holmes
McComb, Mississippi

Dear Mr. Holmes:

I just today learned, through my wife, of the awful incident concerning my son, Gene. Perhaps you can imagine the concern I feel, but it is possible that you cannot understand the deep hurt this unfortunate occurrence has caused both Mrs. McDavid and myself. Most of all, however, I am concerned with the effect the accusations and public humiliation will have had upon the boy. However justified you and Mrs. Holmes may have felt in casting suspicion upon my son, the fact remains that the so positive accusation and certain identification of him as the miscreant cannot result in anything less than an irreparable injury to his youthful pride.

Being so far away from home, I am put at a disadvantage in this matter. I would like so very much to discuss this with you personally, and feel that if such were possible we could reach a better understanding. I have no way of knowing your side of the incident, but I don't think my wife would intentionally misrepresent the facts.

These facts, as I get them, are briefly as follows: You surprised a boy wearing a blue Navy sweater peering at a window at your home. Both you and Mrs. Holmes positively identified my son as that boy, stating unequivocally, "That's the boy. I'd know him anywhere I saw him." Then, despite the fact that Professor Bowlin, Coach Moore and others testified that Gene was at the football field, acting as linesman at a football game at the time of the incident, you persisted that he was "that boy." As I understand it, you did not say that he looked like the peeper, nor that he wore the same kind of clothing, but stated without question that my son was the guilty person. Then, the police caught a boy peeping at another home, and this boy confessed that he was the one who had peeped at your home.

My wife states that, following this revelation, you offered apologies to her and stated Mrs. Holmes would do likewise at a later date. Mrs. McDavid tells me, however, that you offered no apologies to my son. That is the reason I am writing you. Gene is nearly fourteen years of age, in the formative years of his life, and his feelings are naturally much more acute than those of an adult. Don't you think that the least you could do would be to go to the boy and try to make amends to him personally for the wrong I'm sure you will agree has been done him? Don't you think, although he may appear to be a child to you, he after all has feelings and pride. He is a good boy and I am proud of him. He has been falsely accused and I hope you can assure me that you have done the decent thing and made amends insofar as words are possible. When you have

given me this assurance, I will be glad to consider the incident closed. I have known you a number of years and feel sure that your sense of fair play will enable you to see my position. You cannot know the hurt and shame I feel and I cannot describe it. For that reason, as I stated before, I am intensely sorry I cannot talk face to face with you.

Let me assure you that I have no desire to enter into any controversy with you over this matter. But I would appreciate a letter from you stating exactly your position in this matter is and the action you have taken.

Sincerely,

O. C. McDAVID