Recruiting Letters

D. Robert White*
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Abstract

Every recruiting letter has one of three basic messages: (1) yes; (2) maybe; (3) no.
Recruiting Letters

D. Robert White*

Every recruiting letter has one of three basic messages: (1) yes; (2) maybe; (3) no. If the letter you get says "no," you don't care what else it might say. But if it says "maybe" or "yes," it's important for you to be able to read between the lines in order to know where you really stand. To aid you in this process, set forth on the following pages are two pairs of recruiting letters. In each pair, one letter shows you what the firm said, the other what the firm really meant.


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THE "YES" LETTER

What the firm said:

Queen & Sprawling
1 Peachtree Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30319

November 23, 1993

Mr. James T. Pinch
906 Johnson Hall
Columbia Law School
New York, NY 11743

Dear Mr. Pinch:

I enjoyed talking with you when I was at Columbia. You have an excellent record, and on behalf of the firm I would like to extend you an offer of employment.

We would be pleased to have you visit our offices to meet more of our attorneys. If you would be interested in pursuing this invitation, please call me or our recruitment coordinator Ellen Shady to arrange a mutually convenient time for your visit.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Barbara J. Bookman

What the firm meant:

White

Queen & Sprawling
1 Peachtree Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30319

November 23, 1993

Mr. James T. Pinch
906 Johnson Hall
Columbia Law School
New York, NY 11743

Dear Mr. Pinch:

For a guy from a trade school in Harlem, you make quite an impression. Your pale complexion and emaciated physique, combined with your incredibly high grade point average, suggest that you are precisely the sort of compulsive, library-loving grunt we’re looking for.

No doubt you will have a lot of offers, because hard-core zealots like you aren’t a dime-a-dozen. Someone so patently willing to sacrifice his health and social life is a real find.

I wouldn’t want to introduce you to a client or have to eat a meal with you, but I’ll bet you could rack up enough billable hours in a year to reduce your salary to the equivalent of $1.95 per hour.

I hope we can sign you up.

Sincerely,

Barbara J. Bookman
Queen & Sprawling
1 Peachtree Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30319

November 23, 1993

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Sincerely,

Barbara J. Bookman
THE "MAYBE" LETTER

Craven, Swine & Less
43 Park Avenue
New York, New York 10016

Mr. Russell A. Williams
413 Johnson Hall
Columbia Law School
New York, NY 11743

Dear Mr. Williams:

I enjoyed talking with you when I was at Columbia. You have an excellent record, and although I am not able to make you an offer of employment based on our meeting, I would like very much to have you visit our offices for further interviews.

If you would be interested in pursuing this invitation, please call our recruitment coordinator, Laurie Munch, to arrange a mutually convenient time for your visit.

I look forward to seeing you again.

Sincerely,

D. Carter Covington

November 23, 1983

What the firm said:

What the firm means:

Craven, Swine & Less
43 Park Avenue
New York, New York 10016

Mr. Russell A. Williams
413 Johnson Hall
Columbia Law School
New York, NY 11743

Dear Mr. Williams:

I must say I was surprised that a person like you would bother to interview with Craven, Swine & Less. Your record gives new meaning to the word mediocrity.

On the other hand, a bald willingness to ask for something you have no right to is worth something in this line of work, as you’d understand if you could have heard some of the arguments we used recently in a big antitrust suit. You’ve definitely got guts.

You couldn’t possibly have a real future with us. We always need more twaddles, however, and you might be okay for two or three years. Besides, we can bill your time as highly as that of our good associates.

I’m not willing to take sole responsibility for hiring you, so you’d better come down and meet some others. Since you’re in the same city it won’t cost us much to have you in.

Sincerely,

D. Carter Covington

November 23, 1983
THE "MAYBE" LETTER

Craven, Swine & Less
43 Park Avenue
New York, New York 30319

November 23, 1983

Mr. Russell A. Williams
413 Johnson Hall
Columbia Law School
New York, NY 11743

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Sincerely,

D. Carter Covington

What the firm meant:
If the Law is a Jealous Mistress, What Ever Happened to Pay Toilets? A Digest of the Legally Profound

Scott M. Solkoff*

In these days of religious skepticism and increased litigiousness, it was only a matter of time before someone sued the Devil. So woe to Gerald Mayo, the wise Pennsylvania resident who, when all else failed, futilely attempted to defeat the evil deity with the brunt of the American civil justice system.1 Interestingly, Mayo was unable to find an attorney and was forced to sue the Devil pro se.2 Mayo alleged that Satan has, "on numerous occasions caused plaintiff misery and unwarranted threats, against the will of plaintiff, that Satan has placed deliberate obstacles in his path and has caused plaintiff's downfall."3 Perhaps due to Mayo's lack of legal finesse, he was unable to properly plead the case and his petition to proceed in forma pauperis was denied.4

The court cited three reasons why it was unable to try the case on its merits.5 First of all, Judge Weber questioned whether the Western District of Pennsylvania was the proper judicial district in which to obtain personal jurisdiction over the defendant.6 Although the court could find no reported cases wherein the Devil was amenable to suit within the United States, it did note an unofficial account of a case wherein the Devil acted as plaintiff in a mortgage foreclosure action.7 Next, the court considered whether the case would more properly be brought as a class action.8 The Judge noted that the claim appears to meet the requirements of Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23 in that the class is so numerous that joinder of all plaintiffs would be impracticable, that there are questions of law and fact common to the class, and that the claim of the representative party is typical of the

* Student of Law, Shepard Broad Law Center of Nova University, B.S., University of Florida, and from listening to far too many lectures on legal conundrums.

2. The record is unclear as to whether Satan secured counsel for his defense. Either way, it would probably be safe to assume that Mayo fell short on legal resources.
4. Id.
5. Id.
6. Id.
7. Id. In that case, Daniel Webster acted as counsel for the defense. He alleged that the Devil was a foreign prince with no standing to sue in American courts. Judge Weber noted that the defense in that case was overcome by overwhelming evidence to the contrary.