



7 November -

Dear Rufe -

Visited Ben at the hospital today -- where he has been all of the time; family must have been at Vung Tau -- and it was good to see him.

After 3 years it is hard to say but to me he looked younger and lighter weight. On the surface, as always, he held his own but underneath he is deeply emotional, deeply hurt. Tears came to his

eyes at the mere mention of your name and Barbara's.

He apparently is troubled with ^{diabetes} ~~anemia~~ but is receiving good care and expects to be out in 4 or 5 days.

I asked him whether he had been released conditionally or fully; whether he had to report weekly. He answered that he had been released fully and did not have to report but then went on to say that the Government ^{keeping} was,



~~things~~ in a confused state
because of his property which
matches all of my other
reports. He said that as
things stand he cannot leave
the country.

I asked him if he
would go abroad if he could
and he answered, "Yes, if
only for 10 days to see
my children". He added that
VN is his country and his
job is here but indicated that
he would like to go abroad
if he could. He implied that
the Government is concerned
that some of the mal-confiscation
of his property will be exposed.
(Thought occurs to me that
to shoot for a 10-day visit
to his children and return
would be a smart thing. Once
passport has been reissued,
a second and longer trip
should be easy). Incidentally, a
few days ago a VN friend
was told by the Visa Branch
Ministry for Security that
Buu cannot leave the country.
After seeing him I am
convinced that he should take



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a 3 or 4 month rest away
from VN if he can. You
recall that I didn't think
so before.

He is looking forward
to seeing Jim. Appears at
a bit of a loss as to
what his next move should
be. The Dept. of Transporta-
tion (?) still has his ships;
making a trip a month which
is no change over the recent
past; continuing only through
Government subsidization. I
asked if any of his property
had been returned. Negative.

I will see him more
often now. Although I think
he has seen (or will see) L.
Concerning this first visit
with your representative was
a tough one for him. I
didn't probe deeply and there
may be much more to his
exact status that would
take a deeper discussion to
bring out so treat the information
accordingly -- general not precise.



I don't have time this
afternoon to write Tim too
so would appreciate if you
will telephone or send him
a copy of this.

Best regards - Barbara -

Regards -

George
(George Melvin)