

December 3, 1982

Fred Hardwick
1116 Cynthia Drive
Dothan, Alabama 36301

Dear Calvin:

As for your revised marching orders, I'll be brief: My sentiments exactly. Now you're not only talking, you're reading my mind. Good man. Yeah. That's what I'm a saying.

Ya'll shouldn't even consider making the first attempt to entertain us or feed us. We'll bring that sort of stuff. Wouldn't have it any other way. I want this to be the best Ridge expedition ever. I talked to your folks Wed. before Thanksgiving, and I talked to Siniard at his Huntsville abode this past Wed. I confess to telling them all that if the time has arrived when you must edit your guest list, then I am just very thankful to have made the cut. However, if you have simply chosen to form an expedition with Gilmer, Faircloth and Jones at another date, then I feel funny (again, I readily told Siniard to his face) being relegated to hunting in the sissy group. If the others had to be axed, Poole, too bad, but I can't be worrying about them. You have to look out for yourself, you know. Let 'em take up water polo or polar diving. If they are coming, ^{later} I'm very glad. I am unquestionably in the "fun" group, but you've got to admit you got me swimming in the baby pool. Hell, I'm glad we're talking about annual tradition and all that, because it'll take forty years to bag anything with this bunch. Obviously, with Siniard and Mendelsohn, I'll be expected to assume a role of leadership. I accept this burden of responsibility and will do my sincere best to mold the boys, to teach them the sacred rites of the Ridge. *I guess this means I'll have to drink and lie more.*

Can't wait to get my pith helmet. If worse comes to worst, I can always pith in it.¹ If it's still packed, you can send it C.O.D. by U.P.S, or you can just save it till I get there. Just save it. It'll be a greater gift if I wait and open it with ya'll.

Your friend,

Fred

¹Poole, Elisha C., "Conversation At Random"