Dear Bill:

[illegible]

[illegible] angeles [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] canyon [illegible]

Help!

blow up

[illegible]

[illegible] clothes [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] texture [illegible] ugly wrinkled torn up black.

[illegible]

allergic

pen

18

O.K.

Bill

Kenny

car

[illegible]

[illegible] Mitzi [illegible]

Tammi.

Fred

P.S. [illegible] Dennis [illegible] Strauss

[illegible]

Halloween. [illegible] Worry

[illegible] O.K. [illegible]

[illegible] Dennis [illegible] Strauss

[illegible]

[illegible] Kenny T

[illegible]

11-24-66

Dear Bill:

I thought you'd like to know what exactly happened the day of the fire. Ir was in the Angeles Forest in San Fernando. We went down a steep grade - ridge. It was almost straight up and down. We would go along the ridge picking up spots and got to an area and started cutting a line down the ridge. Several times we would pull back because the fire would flare up in front of us and get too hot. Then we went down a real steep part cutting line all the way. Then we went across a rock slide. We were all strung out. Then we started through a small canyon that went down, and went down in pairs of three to avoid knocking rocks on each other. We got strung out down this ravine through some thick brush area. We were trying to prevent the fire from jumping that ravine. There were 4 guys (I think) at the back of that line that made it from the fire, at the top, starting their way down when GK who was my supervisor call all the shovels forward, of which I am one. We went down there and then he didn't need us so we went back up to our positions. And everybody was working and all of a sudden it just blew up. It looked to me like the fire was coming at 90 miles an hour right up the canyon at us and all of a sudden everybody started ro run and you just couldn't get away from it. I dived on the ground and buried ~~and buried~~ my nose in the ground to avoid inhaling the heat. I watched my buddies' clothes and mine catch on fire. The fire didn't really hit us, it was the heat that got us. Some of the shoes got burned by flame. I watched my buddies burn. I watched their skin turn from a beautiful texture to ugly wrinkled torn up black.. I along with them yelled ever so loud and my whole body rang with pain, It was an experience I hope never again to have to go through. Then the heat passed but the rocks were still hot and every time the helicopter went over me my clothes would ignite because the heat was still in the area. I could hardly breathe because my whole entire back was burned and so were my arms and right leg and parts of my chest. And I was still yelling for help My left leg was the best, it was just burned a little. My chest got burned but not badly. I still don't know how many guys were killed, if any at all.

What made me mad, the State crews with the Water Trucks were just below us that could have driven up as close as they could to the base of the mountain and slowed the fire down. The blow-up probably never would have happened. This is my opinion.

At first they couldn't get anyone to come up and rescue us. Finally, a helicopter came in. That's what started my clothes on fire again They finallygot a helicopter with s stretcher and strapped me in. and my face rang out with pain against the wire stretcher. I looked down and there was nothing below me for 100 feet. They got me down to the bottom and put me in a truck and took me to the hospital. I thought my superintendent was dead but they brought him in after me and we were both yelling for morphine? I kept yelling that I was allergic to penecillin. Finally they gave me a shot and it killed the pain. My superintendent was yelling asking me to forgive him for leading us down into the trap. I forgave him.

I may be 18 but I cried. They took my clothes off and packed me in ice. My hands and my feet and ankles are O.K. because I wore gloves and heavy boots

Bill, I appreciate you and Kenny for keeping my car going. Someday I'll be out of here and see you. Maybe a little sooner but I'll see you. We'll go out the three of us on the town. Give your parents my best wishes and your sister and Mitzi abd Tammi.

FRED

P.S. Tell Dennis and Strauss I'm looking forward to next Halloween. I don't worry about my face, it's O.K. now. Tell Dennis and Strauss I think they're a couple of great guys. But you and Kenny T. are the greatest.