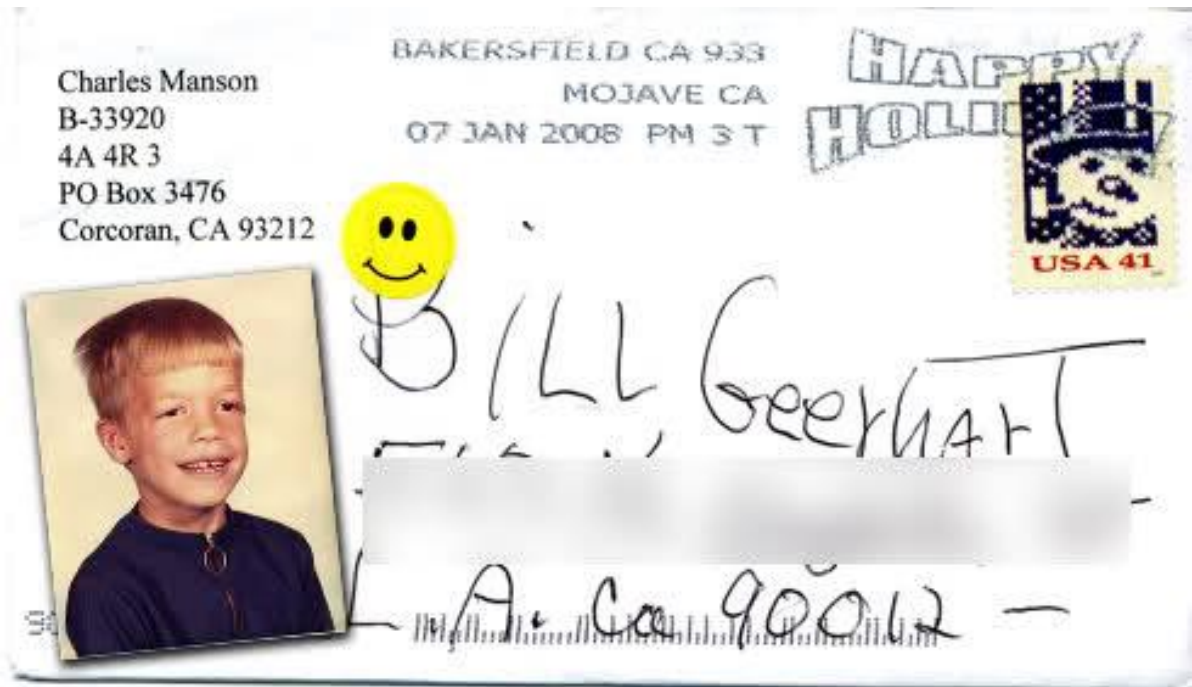


The Billy Letters

What better mentor for a 10-year-old than Charles Manson?
Little Billy seeks life advice, and America's most notorious
killers are happy to oblige

Bill Geerhart

2008

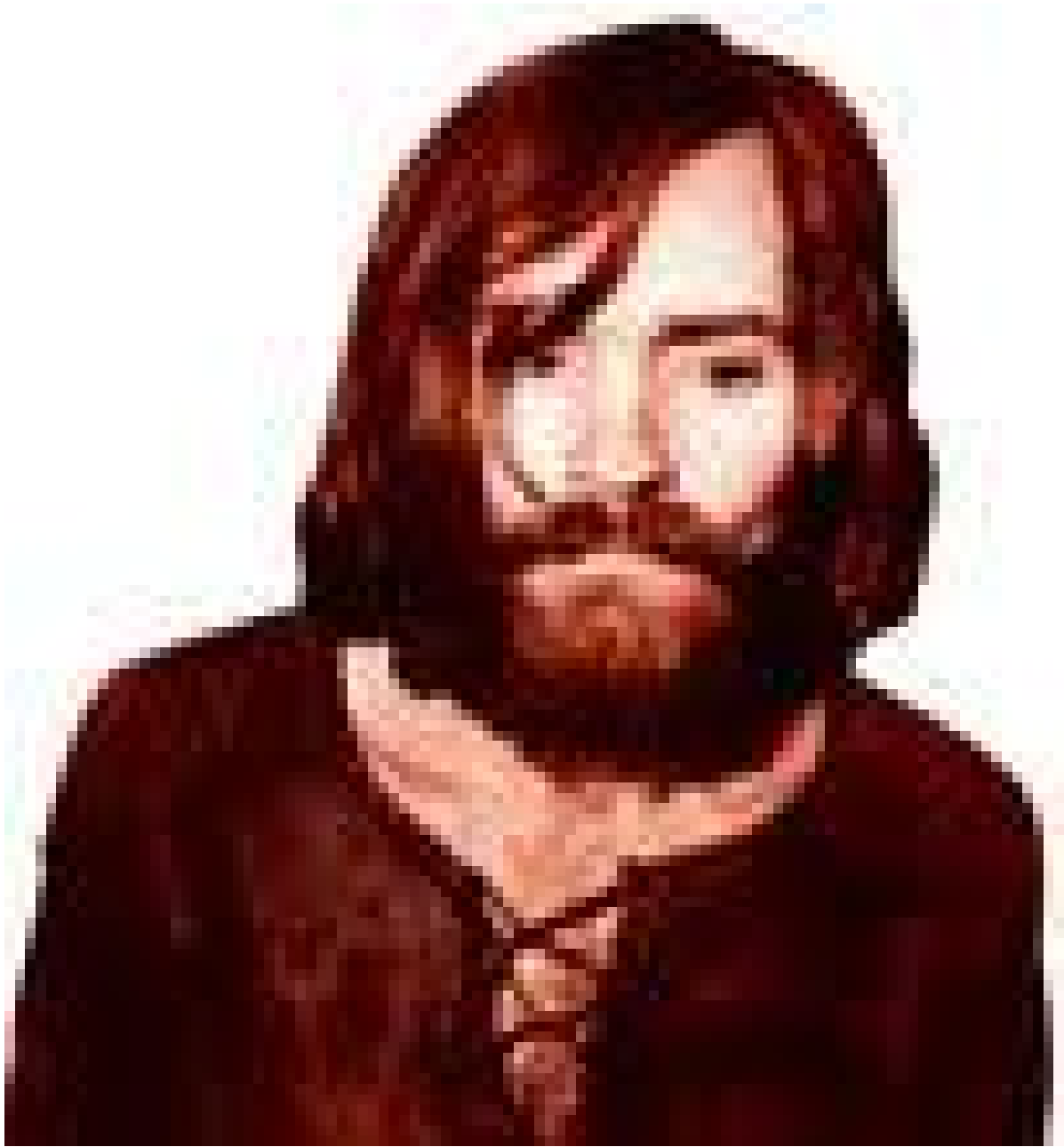


SPECIAL DELIVERY Geerhart as an actual 10-year-old; the original envelope he received from pen pal Charles Manson

In the late '90s, pop-culture historian **Bill Geerhart** had a little too much time on his hands and a surfeit of stamps. So, for his own entertainment, the then-unemployed thirtysomething launched a letter-writing campaign to some of the most powerful and infamous figures in the country, posing as a curious 10-year-old named Billy. To his surprise, replies soon started pouring in. Everyone from **Dick Cheney** and **Donald Rumsfeld** (on tree-fort diplomacy) to **Oprah Winfrey**, **Mister Rogers**, **Janet Reno**, and members of the Supreme Court had words of wisdom for Billy. ("I like the Egg McMuffin," wrote Justice **Clarence Thomas** when asked about his favorite McDonald's food. "Actually, I like almost everything there.") Responding to Billy's idea for a "*Hustler* for kids," **Larry Flynt** wrote back encouraging the fourth grader to "Hang in there. You'll be 18 before you know it."

As it turns out, no group hates to disappoint a child more than convicted killers, all of whom responded promptly to Billy's questions about dropping out of school. Their letters, published here for the first time, range from criminally insane to downright sensible, offering snapshots of the personalities behind some of America's most hideous crimes. Recently, *Radar* asked Billy to follow up with his mentors as a college student. (Click hereto skip ahead and read Billy's correspondence with **Arnold Schwarzenegger**, **Larry Flynt**, and other non-murderous celebrities)

Résumé: As leader of the L.A.-based cult known as The Family, America's most notorious psycho masterminded the slayings of Hollywood starlet **Sharon Tate**, her

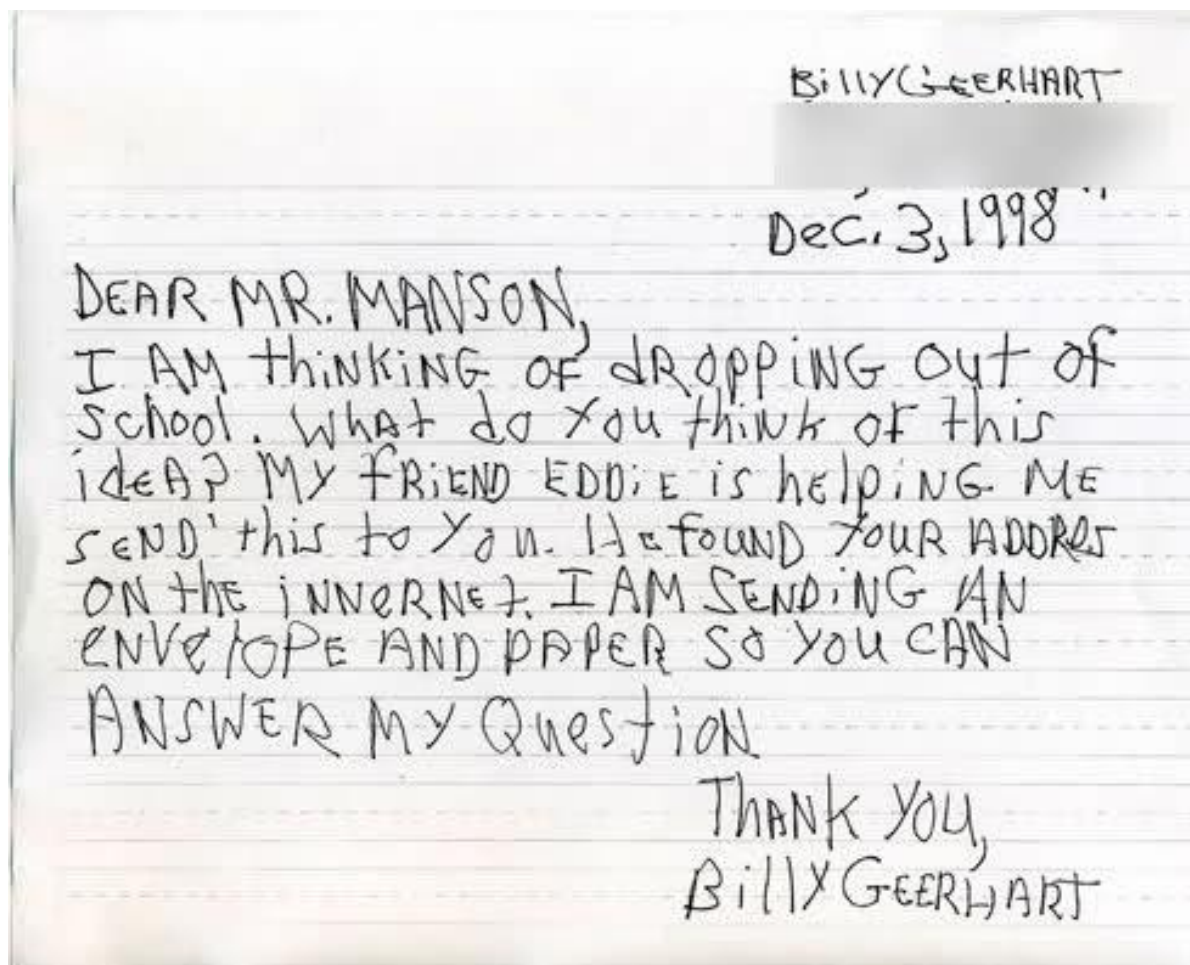


Charles Manson

unborn baby, and four of her friends at the home she shared with her husband, director **Roman Polanski**, in 1969. The following night, Manson and his disciples murdered supermarket mogul **Leno LaBianca** and his wife at their Los Feliz residence, misspelling "Helter Skelter" in blood on their fridge. (Manson preached that the Beatles' song was a prophecy about an imminent race war.) A resident of Corcoran State Prison in California, he has received more mail than any other prisoner in U.S. history.

Notable Quote: "Just to forgit I didn't take your money when I had all your credit cards locked up in my dreams."

Little Billy's original letter:



BILLY GEERHART

Dec. 3, 1998

DEAR MR. MANSON,

I AM THINKING OF DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS IDEA? MY FRIEND EDDIE IS HELPING ME SEND THIS TO YOU. HE FOUND YOUR ADDRESS ON THE INNERNET. I AM SENDING AN ENVELOPE AND PAPER SO YOU CAN ANSWER MY QUESTION.

THANK YOU,
BILLY GEERHART

Manson's first response:

I bet you don't remember
this - you don't even
know where it's at
+ IATA I got you
then Charles Hanson
Easy Biker



To: Billy
From: Charles Manson
Received: December 15, 1998

Find out why the *L.A. Times* hasn't sent my newspaper —Charles Manson.

P.S. O-yes HI BILLY

Easy easy EASSY

(Manson also attached the mysterious picture of a barn, above.)

I bet you don't remember this —you dont [sic] even know where its [sic] at. HAHA.
I got you there.

Charles Manson

Easy BILLY

Little Billy's follow-up letter in 2007:

Manson's response:

To: Billy

From: Charles Manson

Received: January 7, 2008

Hay Lo Soul,

Good To Too Two 2 here from you. I thought things got so good for you that you just 4 GOT WHAT you could of remembered or could remember what you don't forgit. Where is your mind—must you watch TV all day to go to night school to be a D.A. JUST to forgit I didn't take your money when I had ALL your credit cards locked up in [*continued on second page*] my dreams—Rife with Con Va Lution due 2 subjewgashen. My spelling got better—see when you go to school you learn to spell—oh well I'm just playing clown words to say I didn't forgit Hellbilly—Bill we always had good days + I'm glad your gonna be a D.A. Be one who works for justice + not one who wants to win win + and don't care if people didn't do rong—anyway be as good as you are when you git a job + don't let the job make you bad you make the JOB good.

Easy Charles Manson

Letter Marginalia:

You even typing now—Cool. A HILLBILLY that can type—FAR OUT.

I know if you payed what you owe you would be brok brok in like broak ones a panter brock + that they is a crook

Résumé: The devilishly handsome Satan-worshiping rapist and serial killer terrorized Los Angeles in 1985, racking up more than 25 victims. Known for nocturnal home invasions and occasional impotence, Ramirez was an equal-opportunity madman, using guns, knives, and blunt objects to slay single women, couples, teenagers, and senior citizens. He currently sits on death row in California's San Quentin State Prison, though he managed to marry his number one fan, fellow crazy person Doreen Lioy, in 1988.

Notable Quote: "Send some girls in bikinis."

Little Billy's original letter:

Ramirez's first response (on personalized stationary):

Charles Manson, B-33920
4A 4R-23
P. O. Box 3476
Corcoran, CA 93212

December 22, 2007

Dear Mr. Manson,

This is a belated letter of thanks. You probably do not recall, but back in 1998 I wrote you a letter seeking advice on whether or not to drop out of elementary school (see attached). Your wise counsel persuaded me to continue with my education and today I am an undergraduate at Harvard University. I am at home for the winter break and I came across your letter today while going through some of my papers. It occurred to me at this time just how much I owe you.

Thanks to your timely response to my letter nine years ago, I am now well on my way to realizing my dream of getting my college degree and then going on to law school (my goal is to eventually become a prosecutor).

I bet you never realized that you had that kind of influence on people, did you?

I could go on and on, but I think I should probably just leave it at "thanks."

There is, however, one question that I have for you: what was the deal with the photo of that shack that you sent along with your letter back in '98? I've often pondered its significance.

I look forward to hearing back from you. Thanks again for helping me find my path.

Kindest Regards and Happy Holidays,



Bill Geerhart



Richard Ramirez aka the Night Stalker

BILLY GEE RHART

JAN. 4, 1999

DEAR RICHARD,
I AM THINKING OF DROPPING
OUT OF SCHOOL. WHAT
DO YOU THINK OF THIS
IDEA? MY FRIEND EDDIE SAID
I SHOULD ASK YOU.

THANK YOU,
HAPPY NEW YEAR

BILLY

P.S. I'M GIVING YOU SOME
PAPER FOR YOUR REPLY

NightStalker

E37101 • SAN QUENTIN, CA 94964

Billy,

Greetings. Got yr letter. What school do you go to? Who's yr friend? you should stay in school. Send pictures.

R.L.

To: Billy
From: Richard Ramirez
Received: January 21, 1999

Billy,
Greetings. Got your letter. What school do you go to? Who's your friend? You should stay in school. Send pictures.
Richard
Billy's follow-up letter in 2008:

Richard Ramirez, E37101
San Quentin Prison
San Quentin, CA 94964

January 18, 2008

Dear Mr. Ramirez,

Thanks to your wise, succinct advice back in 1999, I decided to stay in school and today I am studying law at a prestigious university. This is just a letter of thanks.

By the way, I noticed on your LostVault.com Pen Pal ad that you have a good sense of humor. Do you ever read Radar magazine? It is hilarious. Let me know. I'd like to get you a subscription if you want one. Or are you more a Mad Magazine kind of guy?

Best,


Bill Geerhart

Ramirez's response:
To: Billy
From: Richard Ramirez
Received: February 22, 2008

Bill,
Greetings. Received your letter. Glad to hear my letter to you in '99 made a difference. When do you graduate? Yeah, get me a subscription to *Radar* Magazine. What is it about? Know any Asian girls willing to correspond? Send pictures. You can photocopy 5 on 1 page or send 'em singular. Nothing scenic though. Send some of girls in bikinis. Do you go clubbing? Seen any good movies? Saw *3:10 to Yuma* the other day. It was an OK Western. Didn't do too good at the box office though. Do you have family? I'm youngest of five. That's all for now. Take it E/Z write when you get a chance.
Your friend,

Bill,

Gretyl received your letter.
Glad to hear my letter to
you in 99 made a difference.
When do you graduate? Yeah
get me a subscription to Radar
magazine. What is it about? Know
any asian girls willing to
correspond? Send pictures. You
can photocopy 5 on 1 page or
send em singular. Noting scenic
though. Send some of girls in hiking.
Do you go out klubbiz? Seen
any good movies? Saw '3:10
to Yuma' the other day. It
was an ok western. Didn't
do too good at the box office
though. Do you have family?
Are the youngest of five. That's
all for now. Take it E/Z with
when you get a chance.

Your friend
Riff

Richard



Ted Kaczynski aka the Unabomber

Résumé: Until his arrest in 1996, Kaczynski sent out 16 mail bombs in 18 years, killing three and injuring 23, and was the target of one of the most extensive investigations in FBI history. His 35,000-word manifesto on the evils of industrialized society,

which he forced newspapers to publish on the threat of more violence, was remarkably free of spelling and grammatical mistakes. He's now doing life in Colorado's Federal Supermax prison, where he has apparently been too busy to follow up with Billy a second time.

Notable Quote: "I can't advise you about whether to drop out of school, because I don't know anything about you."

Little Billy's original letter to Ted Kaczynski:

Kaczynski's response:

In 2001, Little Billy sought the council of *Hustler* magazine's founder and publisher, Larry Flynt. The first-amendment activist took the time to respond to Billy's query: How soon is *too soon* for a *Hustler* magazine subscription?

Notable Quote: "You should read the Sears & Roebuck catalog."

Little Billy's original letter:

Larry Flynt's response:

In 2004, Little Billy reached out to California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger: How should he deal with an unfair punitive response? After all, he had only given one of his female classmates an appreciative pinch on the tush. If the Governor could relate, he didn't let on.

Little Billy's original letter:

Governor Schwarzenegger's response:

BILLY GEERHART

MARCH 25

DEAR MR. KAZINSKI,
I AM THINKING OF DROPPING
OUT OF SCHOOL. MY FRIEND
EDDIE SAID I SHOULD
WRITE TO YOU AND SEE
WHAT YOU THINK OF MY
PLAN. HE SAID YOU WERE
REAL SMART. PLEASE
WRITE BACK.

THANK YOU,
BILLY GEERHART

EDDIE HELPED ME FIND YOUR
ADDRESS.

TED KACZYNSKI
to
BILLY GEERHART

March 30, 1999

Dear Mr. Geerhart:

I can't advise you about whether to drop out of school, because I don't know anything about you. In order to give you advice of that kind I would have to know you very well and know a great deal about your situation.

I'm sorry that I can't help you with advice, but, whatever you decide to do, I wish you the best of luck.

Yours sincerely,

Ted Kaczynski



Larry Flynt

Dear Mr. Flynt, July 22, 2001
My parents said I could
subscribe to your magazine
when I turn 18. That is a
long time from now, My
friend Eddie asked me to
ask you if there is a
Hustler for kids that would
not make my parents mad,
Please let me know,
Thank you!

Billy

Larry Flynt

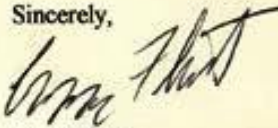
July 26, 2001

Billy Geerhart
[REDACTED]

Dear Billy,

Your parents are right. You can subscribe to Hustler when you turn 18. Hang in there - you'll be 18 before you know it. Until then, you should read the Sears & Roebuck catalog.

Sincerely,



Larry Flynt

LF:rrw

C:\FPL\CF\ltn\Geerhart.wpd

8484 Wilshire Boulevard • Executive Office • Beverly Hills, California 90211 • Phone 323-651-5400 FAX 323-651-0488



Arnold Schwarzenegger

April 9, 2004

L.A., CA, 90027

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger,

Today I was sent home early
from school for pinching

Bonnie Youker's butt. MY friends

Eddie said you do this all

the time and I should write

you to get my teacher

MS. Buchalt fired. Please

write me back and send

me a cool picture!

Thanks,
Billy



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

July 2, 2004

Billy Geerhart
[Redacted Address]

Dear Billy,

Thank you for your letter requesting my photo. I have enclosed one for your collection, with my compliments.

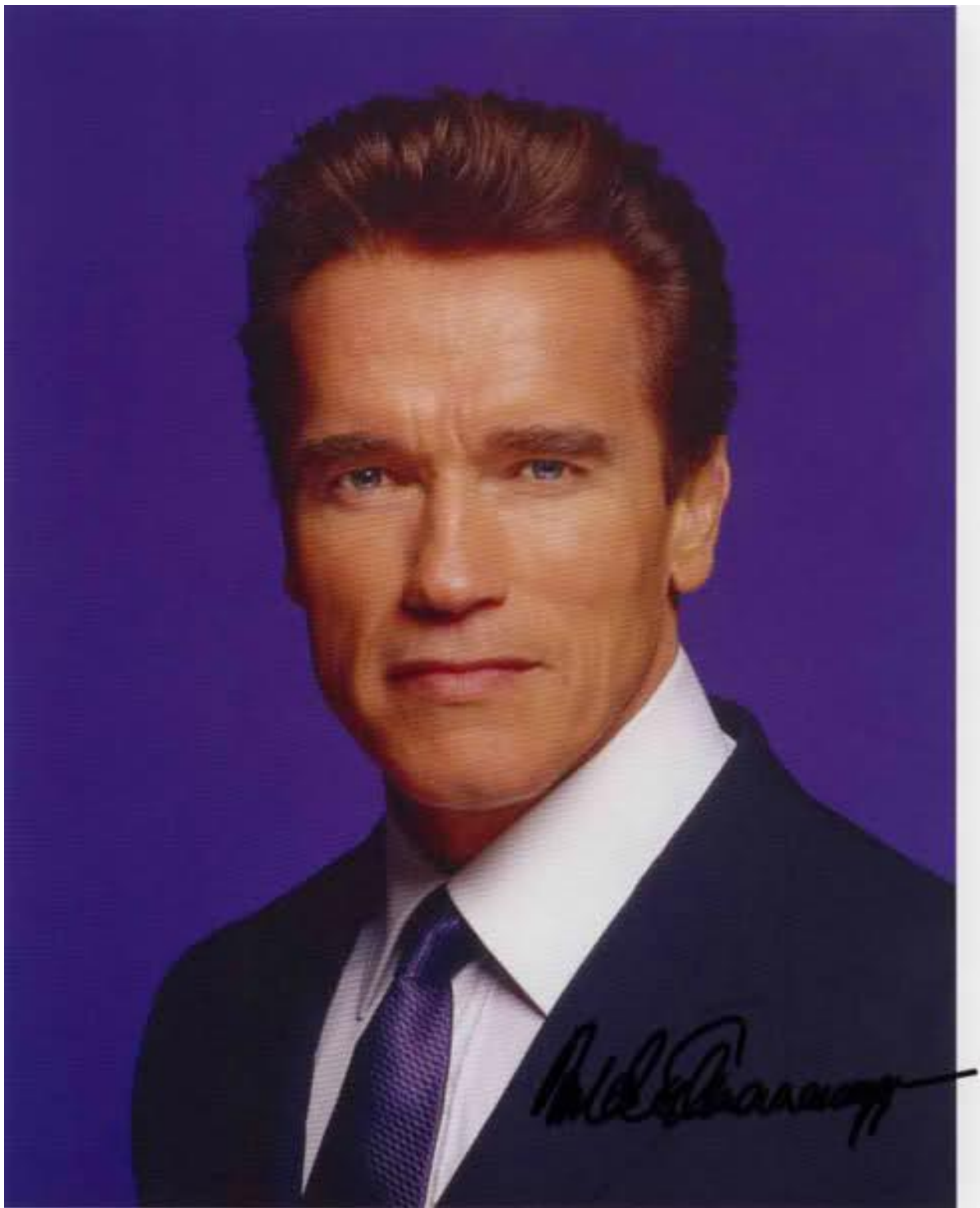
Again, thank you for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Arnold Schwarzenegger". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Arnold Schwarzenegger

Enclosure



The Ted K Archive

Bill Geerhart

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2008

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radaronline.com & livejournal.com

This is a small selection of letters that were turned into a book called: Little Billy's Letters.

www.thetedkarchive.com