

JULY • 1909

From William Henry Lewis

Boston July 2, 1909

Dear Mr. Washington: I cannot tell you how much I appreciate your kindness in calling me up over the phone this morning, in fact, I have been "down in the mouth" for several days. When the letter to the District Attorney, copy of which is enclosed, was brought to my attention I felt very much as Lincoln said the boy did, who stubbed his toe "hurt too badly to laugh and too big to cry." Since last March in view of promises made and the support of earnest friends I had hoped for something different, perhaps for too much.

You will see by the letter that the Attorney General asked that I be retained as Assistant in the office of the District Attorney here at my present salary "assuming that you will have enough work in your office to keep him employed."¹ In the first place there is not enough work there as there are three assistants in the office at present. Before my first appointment in that office there were only two. Mr. French² himself while kindly disposed toward me, and as you probably saw from his letter endorsing me for Assistant Attorney General is willing to help in any way, frankly said he was somewhat annoyed by the request. He appreciates my feelings in the matter and says I ought to have been given something better. As I said to you over the wire, the appointment is purely a political one and an unnecessary one. However, Mr. French is willing to do whatever I suggest about it. I have not yet seen his letter to the Attorney General.³ From my point of view, the appointment is a retrograde one although it carries the same salary. It takes me back to the Federal Building where I am not my own boss and *I feel absolutely certain that if it is a permanent one when it becomes known will necessarily provoke criticism.*

I cannot explain the result except upon the one theory, which you know. (race) The Attorney General stated to Mr. Searle that he never saw a finer endorsement of anyone. As I said in my letter, I cannot afford to remain longer in the Federal service unless there is some chance for promotion. If I could get a chance in Washington in the Department of Justice, I feel certain that I could "make good," and put race prejudice to flight in that department. I regret