

Dear Dad, June 23, 1993      Guess what? I got a temp job at the New York Philharmonic! I'm playing the oboe.

No-- just answering phones, etc. up in the PR office. It's pretty mellow. I may be working here for a few weeks as I've encountered a serious economic shortfall. The encyclopedia pays some wages; I've only been working for Mirabella about ten hours a week due to their slowness, and the Japanese school, while they insist that I'm still officially hired, won't allow me to *start*. All in all, I'm broke and have been driven to this extreme of wearing hosiery again, and filing and so forth. There are tons of various PR paraphernalia around, if you'd like an 8 X 10 glossy of any of the orchestra mementoes or Kurt Mazur, let me know.

Right now I'm on my lunch hour in the windy Lincoln Center Plaza. I'm facing the Julliard, and to my right is Avery Fischer Hall (where my office is). You would like it here at Music Headquarters. On my way up to my office, I pass the open back stage door and get to peek in at rehearsals. Everyone is very nice.

Some bad news is that our house was broken into on Sunday evening. Worse, I was home along during the event. I WAS UNHARMED but extremely terrified for about three minutes. I was on the main level of the house and heard a crash and some thumps on the lower level. I didn't think my roommate was home, but wasn't sure. I called her phone from the upstairs number—when I got her machine, I got worried. I opened the big front door and looked down to her front windows; one was clearly broken. However, I was barefoot and had no keys, so quandered for a moment about whether I should run out of the house and get locked out if someone had just thrown a rock through the window and run off. But I decided that if someone was in the house, I'd better get out. So I left and was in the process of running to the neighbors when the actual robber came strolling out of the downstairs door as calm as you please. We saw each other! I was really scared and ran to the neighbors at top speed. The worst was when I was at the neighbors' door, ringing the doorbell frantically, as the guy was walking right by me. He was just a kid – very clean-cut-looking actually, and was as scared of me as I was of him, I think, but I didn't know if he had a gun or was crazy, or wouldn't want me to be able to identify him, etc. Thankfully, the neighbors were home, called 911 and calmed me down.

The cops came and blundered around for a while, messing up finger prints and messing up my description of the guy and generally not listening to me. I had to drive around with them for a while, which was no fun, looking for the guy while a lot of angry black people looked in at me. Anyway, I guess the cops have someone they want me to come look at in a line-up.

July 1 I'm still at the Philharmonic answering questions about the 4<sup>th</sup> of July in Central Park. Last weekend my office was involved with Pavarotti which drew 500,00 people! On Monday night it was a routine concert of small scale, "oh, 100,000", people answer with a sigh. No big whoop.

My fiscal crisis continues....I just didn't get it that all these people had misled me about my jobs for the summer. It's so strange. Anyway, I've yet to get paid from the Philharmonic, although I'm about to finish my second week there, and will hopefully work next week as well. It would be great if I ended up working there for all of July or something. We're getting along well—people keep finding more and more projects for me and I'm trying to get my hands on one which is really long and involved.

We're a little worried about terrorism around here as you might imagine. As for me on the 4<sup>th</sup>, I'm staying away from crowds of infidel dogs celebrating the birth of this capitalist dog nation, as our Arab terrorist friends would say.

I got your letters—thanks a lot and thanks for the video. I hope to watch it this weekend. I'm sorry the boys aren't coming this summer, but I'm sure I'll still be here next summer. I'm not even sure I'll graduate

in May anyway because it's a rare soul who actually *does* this program in two years. In order to do so, you have to take more than a full-time course load each term (I did this both terms this year) and finish your book by February of your second year. The course work is do-able but the book isn't do-able along with it. Also, I really miss Russian and want to start talking it again this fall, which will slow me down.

As it is right now, I'm trying to convince Ben to get a teaching job here in NYC in 94-95 so that we can live together up here. He hates Philly and hates his school there but must stick it out one more year at least in order to ever be hired again by another school. A first year teacher who leaves after one year is a leper in the teaching world.

An update on the police. The other night they called me over to the station and showed me some mug shots. To my great surprise, I found two people who looked like the guy to me—I'd expected not to recognize anyone because I didn't really get a look at this face. Anyway, it seems that one of them is the guy they have in custody because they were really happy about my choice and are going to ask me to look at the guy in a line-up sometimes soon. The cops were so funny and utterly unsubtle. It was clear to me which of the two they wanted me to pick, but I was resistant because I really wasn't sure. The precinct was straight out of *Hill Street Blues*. Anyway, it seems that this guy robbed four houses on our block *that day*. He's been a one-man crime wave so if I can identify him, it will be a good thing. Now I'm really jumpy when I'm in the house alone. The other night I had a scare because I thought no one was home---then I heard someone walking around upstairs. It turned out to be a guy who stays over sometimes and has a key--but he scared me out of my wits. Then I was glad he was there because I wasn't alone anymore. This house is so big it's really hard to hear one another or any intruder. I asked Patty Smith to leave her little yappy dog Muffin with me this weekend because everyone will be out of town....except Mom and Max who will be here for an art show. They have plans to stay at a hotel but I'll invite them to stay in Patty's suite on the fourth floor, which is luxurious and available this weekend, including a Jacuzzi and all free!

Anyway, I have to get back to work. See you soon. Love, Catherine

*The above is a letter from Catherine Park to her dad, Warren Park, in summer of 1993, when Catherine was living in NYC attending Columbia University and working towards a master's degree in creative non-fiction writing. She was staying in a house with a roommate in Manhattan, and taking odd jobs during that summer wherever she could to make ends meet. This letter tells a story of life in the big city and a scare from an intruder.*