

January 31, 1946

Mr. R. T. Anderson
General Passenger Agent
Santa Fe General Office
Topeka, Kansas

Dear Mr. Anderson:

I wish to report a case of discourteous conduct on the part of your Conductor Straight, who was in charge of train number four East bound on December 25, 1945.

I had made arrangements with Mr. Louis Cote, your Santa Fe ticket agent at Lawrence, Kansas, for our Varsity Basketball Team requiring eighteen tickets for Oklahoma City and return. We were to play in the Collegiate Basketball Tournament down there and it was imperative that we get out of Kansas City the evening of the 25th so that we might participate in tournament play at two o'clock the next afternoon. I constantly checked with Mr. Cote during the afternoon of Christmas Day to find out whether train number four would be too late for this connection. Mr. Cote checked and advised me that we would make connections okay; otherwise, we were going to drive to Ottawa, Kansas, and catch the Oklahoma City train there. Mr. Cote informed me that he used every reasonable device at his command to notify the train officials that we would be on that train bound for Kansas City.

I do not handle the tickets, that being in charge of our team trainer Mr. Dean Nesmith. When the train pulled in rather late, Mr. Nesmith handed Conductor Straight the tickets and he refused to take them, saying there were too many passengers to board that train. I was in the far background and did not hear the conversation until I was told by Mr. Nesmith that the conductor refused to allow us to board the train. By that time I came upon the scene and told him that it was absolutely imperative that we board that train and, further, that we had pullman reservations for Oklahoma City out of Kansas City and now it was too late for us to make arrangements to go to Ottawa. Conductor Straight was not only downright discourteous, but he was reprehensible, repulsive, and repellent.

I tried to reason with him until I saw that was impossible, then I said to him, "We are going to ride this train to Kansas City whether you say so or not." Then I told two of my men to hurry to the station agent to notify the agent of our plight. It happened that number four was switched over on the opposite track, which made our effort to get to the depot rather difficult. Conductor Straight, seeing what we had done, signalled the train ahead. When I saw him do this, we made a dash for one of the pullman cars. A naval officer, who was a passenger, had opened the top door of the platform to look out. I yelled at him to open the remaining part of the opening on the platform landing. He said he could not, and so I ordered one of our men to jump up on the platform and open the door from the inside, which he did. The train was now moving off and we boarded the moving train under severe hazards. We went on back through the pullman coaches to the observation car, where we were given seats by the porter.

One of our party, Mr. Don Pierce of Topeka, Kansas, our publicity man, whom I had asked to notify the agent, had to swing onto the back end of the moving train at great risk to his personal safety. In the excitement of going to the depot his bag was misplaced and it has never been found. It contained his travelling wardrobe, together with a set of \$150.00 contact lenses, which were highly necessary and valuable to him.