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Subject: Sony--Update
I don't ve got some negative news. Today I decided to jump the gun and squeeze in a quick trip to Burbank (on this last "half day" of the year) my intention being to beat the rush hour traffic, retrieve a fully workable machine, and get moving to the next step of the project. Upon arriving (and managing to get in the Express Line), I presented my paperwork, a SONY rep called up my work # and told me, "Yes, your machine is ready. But not fixed. The parts are no longer available." (PNLA, they call it). After a sharp exchange as to how in the world somebody down the line could leave the totally incorrect message (or at least impression) on my telephone answering machine, we got down to business. Can this machine be restored? The answer is: SONY only restores things "to spec"---meaning every part has to be available, and most of the parts needed for my TC-800 are now simply "PNLA". However, he explained, there are places that work with "generics", and he gave me the card of one (Smith and Larsen, in Van Nuys). Also, he very generously took the time to photocopy the key pages of the service manual, showing an "exploded view" of the machine, and the official parts list; and also the technician's report---the actual working notes of the guy that opened my machine, and noted the approx. 8 items needed. Then I went to Van Nuys and to Smith and Larsen and left the machine there, for an appraisal (which I'm promised by next week). Actually, the service chief came out, and took a look, and seemed optimistic---as long as I don't want "record" mode, which I told him wasn't necessary. Just play mode. Re his optimism: who knows. I've been burned once now, so maybe it's best to be cautious. Also, I'm curious as to how much \$ he would want. The SONY rep went over the parts list and some old pricing information and told me that if every part was available---with labor and all it would have run \$200, plus or minus. The SONY rep also gave me the names of places to: 1) Rent 2) Buy (possibly) Next week (or even Friday, Jan. 2) I'll start doing some phoning to find out just what is available, rental-wise; and for how much; and just how much it would cost to purchase a machine that would play back (we don't need record mode) at 1-7/8 ips and 3-3/4, the two speeds involved. I'm also going to discuss this by email and phone with Patrick, who I know wants to move on to the next step here. I'm very sorry all this misunderstanding has occurred. First, back around 8 weeks ago, I was (mis)-informed by SONY that while there would be a special surcharge, they could probably repair this machine (a TC 800); then, I brought it in (and got the skeptical looks I told you of in a previous email); then came the incorrect and misleading phone message leading me to send you the falsely optimistic email just the other day. Well, we're finally facing the reality: SONY cannot restore my machine, and some machine---whether this one or some other--is going to have to be found which will play these tapes. By next week, I should have learned more about the options, and the cost of each. I suppose the problem I'm having restoring this machine

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