

1 September 1966

Dear Lillian,

This is the first chance I have had to write you and say how very sorry I was to hear of your husband's illness, and to send you my heartfelt wishes for his full recovery now that he is back home. Ray Marcus has sent me frequent bulletins on your situation and I was truly happy to know that there was sufficient improvement to allow your husband to leave the hospital.

The pace of events since that first page-one story in the Washington Post on May 29th has been indescribable and, although there was important news in the press this morning (the USSR ban on the WR) there was an abrupt slump for me personally, for no particular reason, and it is a welcome respite after a really lunatic pace of activity week after week without relief.

One of the drawbacks of such constant flux and urgency is that you don't get any chance to examine and evaluate things in perspective (also there is a penalty in that when the traffic does slow down you feel lost and disoriented!). The various dramatic happenings during the last few months would have been inconceivable last year. I would say without any hesitation that the WR is dead and discredited and from here on in will get only lip service. A terrific disillusion has set in, in almost every segment of the press (politically and geographically). I have been getting press-clipping service (now petered out, just as things are getting even more interesting) and have been quite astonished by the favorable reviews of all the books, even Lane's book, from writers who had fixed views which have been shaken, from reviewers who admit that they considered Lane a creature who had crawled out from under some rocks but that they now feel that he should have been listened to in the first place. Radio and TV coverage in this area has at times reached saturation level--2, 3, even 4 times a day, focus on the WR in one form or another.

All this is to the good--yet, where are we really, and where will we go from here? I cannot even venture a guess. Maybe it will continue to build to the point where some action can be forced; maybe inertia will set in and nothing will happen. There is a frustrating feeling sometimes that somewhere behind the scenes there is some attempt to formulate strategy--we are of course in the dark and excluded. I suppose a terrific interest will manifest itself when Manchester's book begins to run in LOOK--we can count on that, even if nothing else happens from now until January. Another sad and frustrating but perhaps inevitable development is the divisiveness and rivalry among the critics--especially those who are becoming more obsessed with the success of their books than with the original objective, taking attention away from the real issues and sooner or later involving everyone, one by one, in the internecine warfare. Some days I feel so utterly disillusioned and disappointed in the people with whom I have frequent contact that I ask myself what I am doing and note with foreboding how I am changing, against my will, into a distrustful and often resentful person...So I value all the more the original friends and partners, those with whom there has always been complete understanding and a shared purpose and commitment, and mutual help and encouragement. You--Maggie--Arnoni--Sauvage--and a few others.

Penn Jones and his wife have been here--I saw them on Monday and Tuesday, then an abrupt silence; perhaps they will turn up again. He is a dear nice man--very specialized on the peripheral crimes and deaths but not too strong on the case as a whole. Weisberg is really in command of every major and minor fact...but...he is, shall we say, a little egocentric. If the subject were not so important, I could sit back and enjoy the comedy of the competing egos that is being played these days--but, dammit, the cynicism, selfishness, vanity, and opportunism are crowding what is really meaningful and urgent out of the scene.