

25 July 1966

Dearest Maggie,

One penalty of our "success" is that it has become impossible now to keep each other reasonably well informed or even to catch up with news tardily and at a later stage. Thus, I am doubly grateful for your letters; but chagrined that our correspondence at best covers events only in outline, and that I have not been able to write or phone more often. First of all, I must tell you that your letter to Arnoni is as magnificent and inspiring as the editorial which provoked you to write; I know that he will truly value your wonderful tribute and acknowledgment of the contribution, and it is indeed a unique one, made by TMO. Second, let me clear up what seems to have been a misunderstanding—my press clipping service is not on Ed's book; but on the Warren Report and the assassination of JFK. Thus, I get stories on Lans, Popkin, Fred Cook, Salandria, Weisberg, as well as Ed's book; and any news stories which develop on Ruby, Marina (she is said to have named her baby Mark Wayne!) Revill, etc. If it is not too late, I strongly advise you to broaden your press clipping service coverage in the same way. I am grateful for your offer to send me copies automatically but it would be wasteful if we are each getting the same clippings to start with. Perhaps we can work out some method of informing each other of what is received, and exchanging only those where your service, or mine, missed out. Shall we try for that? I have never even attempted to send anyone copies of everything because some days I get as many as 70 clippings; and I don't always have access to the thermafax machine (only in lunch hour and if there is no official stuff being copied). So I have tried to send you only the exceptional and significant clips, and I am sorry to say that I have probably missed as many as I have sent, because it was physically impossible to keep too many balls in the air at the same time.

I don't know if I could do a satisfactory job even if I spent full-time on the case but these last months have been filled not only with the Trusteeship Council assignment but with some family legal problems which have caused me such great distress and grief and so much time and worry that this is the first time I have even been able to bring myself to mention it even in these general terms. I was about to write that I am not trying to exonerate myself—but I guess I am, and I might as well admit it.

This weekend just past has been unbearably full. I don't get time to digest anything because there is such a flood and no respite between courses, if you will pardon the mixed metaphors, and maybe the worst strain of all is the injunctions and conditions almost always placed upon the material, whether or not I can digest it. Friday night, a two-part discussion of the WR on educational TV channel, first half Harold Weisberg, second half Ed Epstein. At the same time (although I didn't know it then) Weisberg (on tape on TV) live on Philadelphia radio, together with Vince and Curtis Crawford (hopeless pedant, beyond redemption for even after all the shocking new evidence uncovered he persists piously and with inexcusable intellectual dishonesty in defending the WR). Saturday, invited to the Arnonis for the day, the Salandrias also to be present. At 1 pm when I should be on the bus to N J, I am sitting damp from the shower, unable to make the life-and-death decision to get dressed and go, from sheer physical and mental exhaustion. A few months ago such a dilemma would have been inconceivable, for I knew that Vince was bringing with him some material for which any researcher would gladly give a quart of blood. There I sit. Only a miracle and perhaps Arnoni's intuition saved the day for me—he called and said firmly that he was coming to get me. I almost burst into tears of sheer relief and posed no objections, even feeble ones, as always before when he had offered similar acts of generosity. So I got there, and Vince brought the material (transcript of a taped interview with Arlen which is all I am able to say about it; but even if I were not under prohibitions, I would find it quite impossible to describe, because it is truly indescribable, Maggie—I can promise you that he only tightened the noose around his own neck) and other material, which there was no time even to look at. We had another TV discussion to watch, this time Weisberg solo for 2 hours, which started well but ended on a deplorably low crude and ugly level, a sheer waste of invaluable time which might have been used to discuss evidence.

The Salandrias drove me back at 2 am and stayed in a motel in town, ringing my doorbell unexpectedly the next morning (I had asked them to dinner) to drag me along to see Jones H. I finally crashed the sanctuary, and quite a sanctuary it is—perhaps you remember the set in the movie of Philadelphia Story with K Hepburn? (She has the house next door, by the way.) He showed us some of his top-secret photographic researches and he has gotten some impressive results—almost enough to make one overlook his utter lack of courtesy and worse shortcomings. As Jones knows everyone, Jones has everything: on his table, a copy of Lane's book, heaven only knows how obtained, since I spent three fruitless hours this morning trying to get a copy for myself.

Sauvage, who has gone away today on vacation, kept his promise to get the galleys of his book to me. They arrived just before I left the office and I have only had time as yet to take a very quick look at the "American Postscript" chapter written in June 1966 and the only material which was not in the French edition. I found at the very end of it a tribute to me in such extravagant and wholly unexpected terms (I had no reason to expect any mention of me, and did not expect one, much less anything in such unbelievably generous form) that I was absolutely floored. You know how understated and distant Sauvage is; after this whole year, we still address each other as Mr S and Mrs S in the most formal manner, and exclude any personal conversation whatever. So his remarks come as a tremendous surprise, bringing me close to tears, whether of embarrassment or something else I am not sure.

If I can only get through the next two or three days, I will have that respite from battle-fatigue, by starting my vacation from the office. What an unbelievable luxury it will be to have only one full-time job instead of two. That will give me much more time to organize information, place things into context, and, hopefully, to write more coherently.

Yes, I have had the Popkin article; wish I had more time and energy to comment on it but I imagine our reactions are similar. I'm disappointed, of course, that you won't be here en route to Paris but by all means you are wise—and you have a duty—to spare yourself to the maximum, and I do beg you Maggie to learn to be as selfish as humanly possible, and not to accept any strain that is avoidable, for any reason whatsoever. That is the best gift you can give to those who love you, and I include myself.

That you have had to experience so many disappointments with Ramparts is disillusioning because you have kept faith with them so unfailingly; if they were not such crass opportunists they would have made an effort to spare you some of those disappointments; if they do not pay you, after everything that has transpired, then nothing I ever said about them at the worst of my rage was intemperate enough, and they must be marked off as too contemptible for words. The very delay of two weeks is an affront, under all the circumstances.

Maggie, I send all my love and all my wishes for a wonderful Paris visit. I know that you will write as and when you are able but I absolutely ORDER you not to write if you are busy tired or merely disinclined. Enjoy the trip and try to make it a true vacation from your truly monumental labors, carried out sick and well, interrupting pleasure only for such good news, if and when it may develop, as will increase your satisfaction with the way things are going. By the way, it just occurs to me that I did not tell you about the letter General Walker addressed to me—demanding that I explain why I characterized him in my Index ~~under~~ under "right-wingers and neo-nazis" and why I did not have a classification "left-wingers and neo-nazis"! My reply had to be cleared by my attorney and the attorneys for my publisher, and was therefore less colorful than originally drafted. Isn't he the bloody end? (I don't ALWAYS mix my metaphors.)

The most important development to date is, I think, the Richard Goodwin review and the consequential story in the NY Times yesterday, which I mailed you this morning. What do you think? (Here I was interrupted—Arnoni called, having just read your letter to him. He said he was "moved to the very bones" by your beautiful letter and will be writing you soon.) Much love, dear.