

28 September 1966

Dearest Maggie! Oh, I am so overjoyed at the news of the 2-S! I was becoming very apprehensive and fearful that no-news was bad news, and just an hour later, there was your very welcome letter. I am very, very happy for you, for the dilemma you had been facing was truly heartbreaking and terrible. Perhaps—dare we hope?—perhaps by next June the situation will have changed so as to remove this danger completely. The UN is trying, truly striving, to influence USA policy; a very strong and very fine speech today by the French foreign minister. But can any voice reach those who have taken us into this black pit? Shirley Martin inquired recently about you, after seeing your letter in TMO; I wrote back outlining our close friendship, your tireless work on the case, and your feelings about Vietnam, which Shirley shares completely. She asked me to send you her great sympathy and good wishes, and she will be glad to hear about the reclassification.

Shirley is a fine and bright and delightful person, one of the pioneers on the case, as you know. She is erratic; sometimes she "quits" but then she resumes her detective work; she has fixations, i.e., an unreasoning enchantment with RFK and all the Ks, but even her faith is very shaken these days. Speaking of the Ks, there was a fascinating article dealing mainly with Manchester in the London Sunday Telegraph of 9/25/66. Arnoni borrowed my copy and when I went to buy another I found it was sold out—so I can't quote even the author, much less the contents—But what I remember is that he made quite snide remarks about Manchester and his lack of modesty and then went on to say that Mrs. JFK holds LBJ responsible for the death of her husband, because he was so overbearing in urging and insisting that he go to Texas; that that is why she has refused to see LBJ or even his wife, even socially, despite many overtures; and that her friends consider that her bitterness toward LBJ is almost a psychosis. Jones Harris immediately and authoritatively declared that this was complete nonsense...but...I wonder if it is?

Only 2 days to go until the great debate—Sauvage, Popkin, and me vs. Griffin, Liebeler, and Macdonald (tho I'm told Macd. has veered sharply in the direction of the critics and at worst will be neutral rather than an advocate of the WR). I am having some flutters of the nerves but I guess I'll be okay once the moment is upon me. A few days ago my morale was so low that I considered withdrawing entirely. Thankfully, things are less grim now. The family problems are still very sensitive, but we did win a summary judgment from the Court that strengthens our legal position (although it does nothing to resolve the estrangement and bitterness between my two younger nieces and their older sister, a very unhappy situation for me personally as well as for them). As for Isabel, she has been a raving evil maniac, completely unrecognizable; she has been blacklisting me completely for some weeks, when I would not comply with her demand that I be a party to something unjust and brutal toward our mutual friends. However, I took the bull by the horns yesterday and phoned her to invite her to the Friday night debate, and she was moderately pleasant, so I feel better about her.

In the middle of this painful situation, both with Isabel and with the nieces, something unbearable happened, and that is what really flattened me. This must be strictly confidential, Maggie, please (in fact destroy this letter, or this part of it). Arnoni, suddenly and shockingly, turned on me with terrible anger and hatred, for a remark I had made long ago in a casual conversation—a remark at worst tactless, which he regarded as ridicule and attack. His anger fed on itself, and he produced more and more grounds for denouncing me, including some that he invented out of whole cloth (but believed devoutly to be true and undeniable).

Ever since we met some three or four months ago, my friendship with Arnoni has been a joy, a terrific support and comfort, and one of the most important elements in my daily life. Often we saw each other daily; but always, we at least talked on the phone. When he departed in rage, I was in a state of shock. For the next 10 days, complete silence. I was not too proud to make the first move and call him, but much as I yearned to do so, I feared it more. I felt that his attack was so unfounded and extreme that it could only be a manifestation of some inner stress that really had nothing to do with me; and I did not want to increase that stress by calling, since for all I knew his warmth and friendship were permanently erased. As it turned out, he too was stricken and, like me, immobilized and incapable of even working (during that terrible period I could not even comprehend, much less care about, important developments on the case, such as Kupferman's proposal in Congress for a new look at the WR and a new investigation). He called Vince,

wishing him to act as an intermediary and help us toward a reconciliation. Vince made a special trip and spent four hours with A., then 2 hours with me, and then all but forced me to accompany him back to A's house, that very day. I was very sorrowful and very fearful that it would only make things worse—and I was right, for although I didn't defend myself and was willing to apologize abjectly if I had offended him even unintentionally, A. was utterly unyielding and unremittingly hostile. We left and got into the car, where, I will admit, I wept in misery. Vince felt that I was completely vindicated; he said that A. had treated me very unjustly and even sarcastically and in view of his professed dedication to justice, Vince was deeply disappointed and felt that his own friendship with A. was at an end. We both agreed that the estrangement was now final and irreversible. Somehow or other I managed to get through the evening (Vince and I had been invited to dine by the Sauvages; I can't remember anything now except the lump in my throat as I tried to conceal my misery and make conversation).

The next day I struggled all day with the impulse to withdraw from the debate and from the case and from everything and everyone. Then, when I got home, the phone rang. It was A., asking if he could come by. I said yes, and he came, and we agreed not even to discuss anything that had happened, and tacitly resumed the warm devoted friendship that had been insanely interrupted.

The strange thing is that this friendship has been a non-personal one—that is, a non-intimate non-sexual one. Yet the loss of A. hurt me no less than the termination (enforced termination) ten years ago of the most important love relationship I have ever had. I cannot understand why this split with A. desolated me so very much—why, in fact, I should be writing about it at such great length. I am not attracted to him in the usual male/female way—not because he is not an appealing man but because I "retired" long ago and am completely absorbed in the case—or so I thought I was completely absorbed. Yet I was almost ready to withdraw, even from the case, because of this episode. Now I am deeply puzzled, by what happened, by my complete demoralization, and even by the reconciliation. But I will leave well enough alone, I think; and let this be an end of it.

All your news was most absorbing. I am terribly sorry about Lillian. I wish we could do something to comfort or help her at this dreadful time. About Dave L., yes, Ray had told me of the difficulties; and like you I do trust Ray's maturity and fairness, and I agree with your feelings completely. The Liebelar/Rankin/Redlich letters were obtained by Dave and copies given to me on my solemn promise of absolute secrecy. I assumed that if Dave had told Mark Lane about it, he had surely told you. But I guess I should not have made such an assumption and should not have mentioned it at all. Still, Lane has discussed it in public, so what's the secret? In short, Dave had impressed Liebelar sufficiently with the 4 missing frames so that L. wrote to Rankin suggesting an inquiry; Redlich sent a snide reply, shrugging the matter off, which Rankin endorsed. And that was that. About the RPK/Trever-Roper business, I feel certain that it is an exaggeration if not a complete invention. Lane gave Vince a different version some weeks ago; now you indicate a still earlier version. (I must interrupt now, a visitor—I will continue tomorrow, at the office, if I can.)