

29 August 1968

Dear Sylvia:

Thank you for your letter. When I wrote about Lane and Jones, I had a sudden thought that you would probably be out of town and not receive my letter until Monday but, as I was writing as soon as I learned of the dates of their appearances, I mailed it anyway. Sorry about that.

As it happens, even I will have to listen to the tapes to know what took place since I was transfixed by a most astounding thing taking place in the ugly box in our living room. I did phone Mark Lane but the questions may or may not have been covered by him before.

In the newspapers, on the radio and on TV I was continually informed that the Democratic National Convention was to meet - and then, that it was meeting - in Chicago. Now I am at a loss to know why all three of these media chose to cover something else entirely.

What I heard, saw and read about has been a production - obviously produced in a totalitarian country not yet identified - in the English language and using all characters with familiar names. It was miraculous to note that the actors had an uncanny resemblance to real individuals in this country. Were it not for the content of the presentations, I would accept without question that these actors were indeed the individuals in the U.S. with whom we are all so familiar.

This morning I watched, on the "Today" show, the actor portraying Humphrey as he spoke his lines concerning a civil disorder last night. One of the two of us was not watching the same show and yet, according to the script they used, he was supposed to have been there in person when the scenes were shot.

If you are confused by the above three paragraphs, there is an explanation. If I, for even one minute, allow myself to accept that what I saw, heard and read about was actually real live coverage of the much touted Democratic National Convention, I will start screaming and I am afraid I will not be able to stop. Ever.

If this was the real convention I, like millions of others, will be unrepresented during the next four years. There will be no one for whom we can vote. To me, there is no lesser of the three evils. All are equal.

If the events in the streets of Chicago were a horror in black and white, what must they have been on color TV? To have been present in person would be undescrivable.

I had reconciled myself to the very same three candidates we are offered, being a believer in the theory that the candidates of the two major parties are hand-picked by whoever is really in charge as those that could be controlled for four years. Now it is my opinion that these faceless rulers have chosen Nixon as the man most controlable. Surely, by allowing the world to observe the spectacle in Chicago, they knew the Democratic candidate would not be acceptable to enough of the public to elect him.

It occurs to me that Prague may have been more serene than Chicago. Certainly, this country is left no moral right to criticize the Russians for their invasion. What was condoned in Chicago is more indefensible. Both make me sick, truly.

Steffen is fine. He is his usual fractious self, in a snit about one thing or other, taking umbrage where least expected - in other words, being Steffen for whom I have great friendship and confusion. His comments on Chicago should be priceless.

Even before hearing from Steffen, I know there is at least one point on which I will be in full agreement: The best thing about Chicago is that the whole world has been able to witness the catastrophe.

I have to get some more tape to make copies of the Lane and Jones programs to send to you but you will have them.

Thank you for the news about New Orleans. Wish I could comment on it in view of what may have been stated on the two radio programs - wish I had had time to hear them or play back the tapes.

There was a very short item in the news today (the 30th) concerning the intent of a member of the Florida delegation to challenge, in court, the legality of Humphrey's nomination. Wish I had any belief this suit would succeed.

One of these days things have got to be better for all of us.

Wishing you all the best,

As always,

Helen