

4666 - 27th Ave. No.
St. Petersburg, Florida 33713
21 August 1968

Dear Sylvia:

Please forgive my long silence. It has been due to the extreme heat that makes coherent writing next to impossible. Each year I try to promote air conditioning and each year I lose. Today my husband, Bob, had to play one of the early morning TV shows and so I am taking advantage of the only cool time of the day.

Thank you for the copies of your letters. I appreciate your thoughtfulness so much. Mr. Fensterwald sent me a copy of his CD listings. Wish I could ever finish mine. Thank you for suggesting that he send me a copy.

Mark Lane will be the guest on the "Open Mike" radio program Monday, the 26th, and Penn Jones, Jr., on Wednesday, the 28th. You will receive tapes, naturally.

Are there any questions you would like to have put to either of them? Send me a couple for each of them if you do.

I don't know how the newspapers there have covered the riots here; I have been told that at least one northern paper headlined something to the effect that St. Petersburg was all in flames. The overall area involved runs from Central Ave. (which would be zero avenue) south to 26th Ave. So., and from 9th St. to 31st St. South. The main trouble area was from 5th Ave. So. to Lakeview (22nd Ave. So.) and from 16th St. to 22nd St. So.

Since we have a straight numerical system for streets and avenues, you can see that our home is far enough away so that we would never have been aware of anything if we didn't hear it on the news.

St. Petersburg has a city manager form of government. There is a mayor but he is no more than a figure head. The mayor is the only city official who seems to realize there is more to quieting things than calling out the riot squads but he stands alone. The rest of the city council back the city manager all the way and his watch word is "Law and Order". Only the mayor mentions Justice. The newspaper has tried to arouse some kind of interest in the white community but TV stations continue to recite the position of the city manager.

Both black and white citizens are arming to the teeth. Except for the Hartmanns. We own a Japanese rifle, a war souvenir with no ammunition available to fit it and it couldn't be fired even if we could find ammunition. And a water pistol that leaks like crazy.

Truthfully, I don't worry about our safety - not so far as the Negro is concerned. I would worry more about being the innocent person who got hit by the police. I come in contact with only the garbage men and they are well aware of my attempts to accomplish something on their behalf. When I have talked with them, it has not been on the basis of my trying to help them; it has been stated by me that it is 'our' problem and that I am not satisfied with what is being done to 'us' - never 'what can I do to help you?'.

*Handwritten note sent
8/26/68*

Bob Ruark, the moderator on the "Open Mike" program, has resigned to set up a new radio network covering the state of Florida. He will be conducting the same kind of program again but this time there will be statewide participation. The new man on "Open Mike" is Harvey Shelton who has been with a radio station in Norristown, Pa. He has really put the listeners into a state of shock with ideas and beliefs they have not heard locally before - except from a few of us brave souls who did not concern ourselves with whether or not the right wing approved of us.

There is much more I wanted to write about but it will just have to wait until it is cool enough to think and write clearly.

I have not heard any news for some time from New Orleans and so do not know what is going on there. Probably if I would write to some of my correspondents I would find out but I don't have the energy.

Send me some good questions for Mark Lane. I won't be able to evaluate his replies but they will be on the tape for your benefit.

I hope all is as well with you as it can be.

With personal best wishes,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Helen".