

15 January 1966

Dear Louise,

Take heart, our numbers are growing. You will see from my letter to Shirley Martin and Penn, copy of which I mailed him last night, that we have a new, rich, powerful and prestigious ally--RAMPARTS. The letter I received yesterday from the news editor of that magazine brings far more than any of us ever expected or dared hope for--a continuous and indefinite campaign against the Warren Report until such time as the case is reopened. It is magnificent, heartening news.

I feel profoundly complimented that you wrote to me and trusted me with your feelings and your fears. I shall keep your letter very carefully, as you asked, and will not show it to anyone. Believe me, I empathize with your anxiety and fear for Penn's safety and well-being. Anyone who is probing around in this Augean (misspelled) stable would be stupid not to be on guard. However, I think Penn has excellent insurance against misadventure or framing in the very fact that he has been outspoken and hardhitting, in print; any attempt to silence him would defeat its own objective but calling attention to matters from which they want to divert attention and by sounding a terrific alarm, convincing those not already convinced that there is a ruthless powerful conspiracy that is capable of the most extreme acts. That, in my opinion, explains why Mark Lane has not suffered physical harm, or any of the others who have publicly and strongly denounced the Report.

Of course I am not overlooking Kilgallen; and I am far from satisfied that her death was fully explained. So I admit that there is a small element of risk, even for those who have tried to alert people by publishing their scepticism. But there is some risk in every human activity, and there are causes which justify taking every risk, great or small, because to retreat and cheat on what your conscience tells you to do is sure death, figuratively. Hang on to the tail of your comet, Louise--and don't entertain doubts about his being right. He is definitely right, and what he is doing is right. Don't ever feel alone and isolated--we have a lot of colleagues and supporters, and the ranks are increasing. But even if that was not true, we would just have to go it alone or risk self-respect and peace of mind. If you don't have the same high energy and physical strength as Penn, help him with all the energy you do have, and give him your moral support and confidence, which I am sure is indispensable to him, as well as the help and confidence of your two sons.

I'm afraid I've sermonized enough to irritate any worried wife. I just wanted you to know that I really do understand how you feel, and I'm fond of Penn already just from the letters and phonecalls, and feel enormous admiration and respect for him. I think he is probably incapable of chickening out; if he did, it would diminish him to himself, and that's worse than a lot of other dangers in life. Maybe I'll get to see you both soon; sight unseen, I regard you as my good and close friends. Do write the formal letters to four people--it won't hurt--but try not to worry too much, there are a lot of us in the boat with Penn, too many to knock overboard or smear or silence. With warmest friendship,

Sincerely,