

Note for the record

I did not reply to attached letter but while I was in Los Angeles 1/13-16/67, Lifton tried repeatedly to see me or speak to me on phone. I finally accepted his phonecall late Sunday afternoon 1/15/67. He tried to minimize and justify his contacts with WJL and shift the onus of tattling to Jones Harris. Said Jones Harris had called WJL in middle of night re new evidence discovered--a bullet fragment from Gov.C. retained by a Parkland employee as a souvenir. (Seems be nothing to it.)

Wants to see me when he comes to NY to live his parents for some months. I made no commitment. Wants to show me his sensational work. Admits his great big discovery, the one he took to WJL, is flash in pan. Asked if I am limited to specific number of pages in my book--apparently has weird idea of riding into print on my back. This fidiculous immature big-mouth doesn't seem to get ~~ix~~ it through his head that I don't like him or trust him and coldn't care less about his affairs.

Jan 2, 1967

Dear Sylvia,

Within a few days of receiving your letter of November 10, an incident occurred which initially convinced me that you are a woman capable of unbelievably vindictive actions and not too different from those generals who are willing to blow up the whole world merely because they think they're right and the other fellow is wrong.

I drafted a very angry letter to you, which I retyped and redrafted several times. Before it was ready to be mailed, I went to San Francisco to address a course on the "arsen" report, and appear on a radio show; upon returning, I almost immediately became involved in a crash project with Ramparts to suddenly bring out that article and to reprint it, slightly extended and completely illustrated, in the student paper (this coming Thursday).

I just received ~~my~~ a copy of your complimentary letter to Ramparts concerning the article, and for that I want to say thankyou very much.

Meanwhile, the draft of this letter I had written to you remains here, the issues are very important, and I have never had any intention of letting your 2 letters go unanswered. Also, there are several peripheral topics which I do want to bring up. To start with, let us go back about 6 weeks...

Your letter of November 10 quotes from my letter of October 13 and attempts to show that I am guilty of a breach of faith because, several weeks after October 13, I acted in a fashion which was not in accord with what I had originally stated.

I have always thought that whether or not an action is or is not moral depends on one's knowledge at a given point in time. Since several weeks passed between the time I wrote the letter on October 13, and the time I acted in such a way as to offend your moral sense, please be informed that this principle is the one that explained my actions. Therefore, my position is that the statement you chose to throw up at me from a previous letter/^{was} simply no longer

binding. I am sorry that I was not omniscient enough and wrote such a statement that did not even survive a 3 week test of time. In any event, I am not a liar as you so nicely implied.

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It seems to me that you did not try very hard to think of alternative explanations if the only one that came to mind ~~wasXXXX~~ after what I did, ~~wasXX~~ that I was guilty of a breach of faith. Also, you should realize that I am not bound by the advice you give; in fact, I considered it carefully. But I cannot now explain in detail why I didn't take it. I will some day.

Your Nov 17 letter makes a big fuss over the fact that some source has told you that I once discussed your opinion of the Commission attorney's, a piece of highly classified information which seems to come through every time you write, anyway. Yes, there was such a discussion. We once discussed the hangups of the attorney's with respect to the critics' criticism, and vice versa. I never realized this topic was so hush hush.

The same, however, cannot be said for you. And this brings me to the incident referred to in the opening paragraph of this letter. If there is any ~~thing~~ ^{thing} ~~which~~ exhibited a deliberate, malicious, holier than thou end-justifies-the-means double standard, which tends to discredit your reliability as a person in whom trust can be placed, it was your deliberate action the very next day in rumor mongering after our last telephone conversation. This resulted almost immediately in a long distance phone call being placed by Jones Harris to Liebler, conveying a horrifying version of what I told you. Speaking of "compulsive indiscriminate babbling"!!

How could ~~XX~~ I ever confide information in a person who proudly and authoritatively announces during the phone call that she does not consider anything that was said to be in confidence? If you claim the power of veto over my work and decisions, then you cannot expect cooperation from me. And if you dare consider it your right to coerce me by threatening revelation, then count yourself out as a person I can trust when the chips are down. You can't be both a friend and a friendly blackmailer.

There are several points I'd like to make with regard to this. First of all, inasmuch as your information is quite limited, did it ever occur to you that your guideline (which seems to be: "Despise the Commission Attorney's Who Are the Perpetrators of the Warren Report) might not apply to every

conceivable situation? Secondly, if you wish to apply it for yourself as your constant guiding credo, that's fine. But I have a mind and a life of my own. Did it also ever occur to you that your action constituted a reckless disregard for another? How can you say you wish me no ill will when your action the very next day show just such a motive?

This rumor mongering, from this end, appeared to be not much more than a shotgun attempt on your part to torpedo a relationship whose existence offends you and whose value you were not in a position to comprehend.

I must say that for many months, I had always thought of you as simply a very able scholar, and had no idea----until just recently, the elements of your personablity that lie beneath. If I sounded the least bit confused in our last two phone calls, it ~~is~~ simply that I was so taken with suprise with these elements of your personality to which I was treated in the fashion of a cram course. When I am negotiating the ledge of a cliff, I don't need a screaming shrieking woman telling me what I should and should not do, and subsequently shooting off her mouth to see that I fall and break my neck if she fails to get me down by powers of persuasion. If this was done in pure spite, I hope any pleasure you experienced was worth it. Because you may rest assured that me and my work suffered some bruising.

I could also spend a thousand words or so trying to understand why, despite all my previous actions and my own committment to and investment of time and money on this case, I end up with practically no trust or moral credit on account with you. But that would be speculative. It would mostly concern what I believe to be your guillibility in swallowing hook, line, and sinker, third party views of my work, motives, and character. Or am I supposed to believe that you live in ignorance of the Los Angeles Cold War: 1966? This includes my time varying relations with Ray Marcus, and his tendency to play vigilante with respect to me to various third parties. Your actions and hair trigger anger leave me with only two alternatives: either you normally overreact to situations in the most extraordinary way, or things I did and said were completely misinterpreted in the context of preconceived notions you hold about me and, in that context,

simply confirmed your "worst fears" based on third hand knowledge.

Also, amidst the shrieks, you screamed something about me being a moocher. Now where did this come from? I cannot help wondering, therefore, whether you ~~are~~ somehow ^{have} seen, have been read, or have been shown ~~along~~ along 7 page highly innaccurate and propogandistic letter which reads more like an indictment and which was prepared by Ray, mailed to me, and shown — I know for a fact, ~~to~~ to another.

Let us suppose there were no rights and wrongs in any of these matters: then wouldn't it be wise to ignore what you hear? And if there ~~are~~ rights and wrongs, wouldn't it be wise to apply adversary procedures before drawing judgements?

The fact of the matter is that despite all the feuding and arguing, the researchers are doing more to bring out the truth in this case than the 14 staff attorney's ever did. However, the more communication there is, the more cross fertilization of ideas is possible. Eventually, the ideas will blend and the best parts of each person's published and/or unpublished work will survive. But the more liason there is, the quicker progress will be made. For example, work that 2 people are doing which relates will only joined, if there is no lieason, after publication of the work of each, as a separate event at a later time.

I can only assure you that confronted with a unique situation some weeks ago, the options open to me were severaly circumscribed by what I wanted to accomlish, who I knew, and who I could trust. My phone calls to you were a complete disaster. Both your words during and actions after were as subtle and as destructive, respectively, as a bull in a china shop.

How can I coopeate with anyone who considrs it her right if not her obligation to grab the ball and run away with it if she disagrees with me? And since this seems to be a matter of high principle with you, then I suupose we wach have to do what we think is best.

It is dismaying when I realize that despite your previous letters which decried all the infighting and backbiting, you have not resisted the temptatōn to step right in and get in your licks. That is to bad. Over the long run, it probably won't matter. But over the short ran, progress will suffer a bit.

What we will need is a newsletter: then personalities wouldn't enter into what information is shared with whom. As it is now and has been for a long time, any information I have gotten concerning you and your work has been almost random heresay. It is obvious that the mere existence of a common cause is not enough to create close friends when the going gets rough. Your attempts, both on the phone and in writing, to imply that close relationships exist which in fact do not strike me as being a bit hollow and not unlike crocodile tears cried a bit too late.

A small example ~~would be to~~ go back to last October. At that time, I had several meetings with the executive producer of a large ^{TV} network affiliate who wanted to air a 1 hour documentary summing up the critic's case on Nov 22. Everything seemed to be OK except for the fact that another man of equal rank at that network station happened to be the best man at Arlen Specter's wedding. That week, USNWR published that long interview which unduly impressed him. Although I spent quite a bit of time, in person, knocking down the arguments one by one, I learned (a bit late) that you had actually written a complete point by point rebuttal which would have been invaluable inasmuch as it could be reproduced and taken home by this fellow for study. Maybe his position would have shifted a bit. Maybe my oral presentation would have been better. Who knows? Anyway, I certainly did not receive a copy of that item, and learned of its existence by mere chance. Perhaps I should not have felt presumptuous and uncomfortable in asking you for a copy under those circumstances. But the real point of the story is that you have never gone out of your way to cultivate any bilateral lines of communication with me. And given the state of affairs out here (and the signature distribution on a certain letter to the TMO about sums it up) then any information I get concerning you and your work is, as I said, random heresay.

I happen to think you have a completely distorted view of my ability, personality, and judgement. Since almost all information concerning me would have to come from people with whom I frequently feud, this would ^{not} surprise me. And what results? My unasked for opinion is that two people who should be communicating often don't.

I want to close with the following. I intend to send you a certain memorandum I have prepared Re: Whitewash II that completely disproves two "finds" in that book. Besides sending one to Harold, I am also sending a copy to Vince (and to the LA people). It is NOT meant for non-critic consumption, and I think you will find it enlightening. (You may have heard of some of this by phone).

Also, I have been able to raise a certain amount of money and intend to devote full time to ~~his work~~ ^{my research} until about June 1. I will be travelling to Dallas, spending considerable time in the archives, and spending time writing and researching at home in New York City. I probably won't start the Dallas-Archives-NYC part of this work until after the Liebeler Lane debate. Besides, there is much I can do out here until then. By June, I hope to have finished my work in all areas. Besides the fact that my money will have run out, I will have finished what I set out to do. To go further, I would literally need the power of subpoena. You can be as cooperative as you wish. Maybe you will remain forever furious with me.

I also want to assure you that I refrain from talking to Professor Liebeler about any personal incidents. I will be particularly careful about this. ~~KIM~~ Correspondingly, I wish you wouldn't jump to the conclusion that everytime he makes a smart alek remark about you, that I provided him with information. For example, he received from elsewhere some info that you either were or are interested in UFO's, and has a jolly good time with it.

As I finish typing this letter, I want you to know that I realize that all that feedback to Liebeler's ear just might have been an accident without intent. If this is the case, I would appreciate your letting me know. For your information, Jones Harris got practically all his information from a Mr. Thompson ~~XX~~ who, he told me, got it from Liebeler. I can't believe the last part.

(In any event, he used his Thompson info to get you to talk).

I hope this whole thing will eventually die down so that there can be some form of communication between us.

Respectfully yours,
David
David