

2 April 1966

Dear Shirley,

Many thanks for your letter of the 31st and for your kind words about the tape. Your comments on your trip to Dallas of course thoroughly fascinated me. I realize that you couldn't go into much detail writing by hand but I hope you will be able to have a typewriter session before long and fill out some of the tantalizing items you mentioned.

What did you say to make Ruth Paine furious? I think she must be a woman who is filled with suppressed anger and bitterness--she was rejected by her husband in perhaps the most damaging of ways, not in passion for another woman, not as the climax of dispute, not in any huge emotion, but in a spirit of massive boredom, indifference, and somewhat guilty kindness. Then she found Marina, for whatever purpose she served, and I am not at all sure what it was. But she needed Marina, and here too the climax was icy disdain and callous insult. I am not usually receptive to a Freudian or neo-Freudian interpretation of personality or events but Ruth Paine has to be in inner inferno, from that double devastation of her sense of worth--and from whatever else unknown to us is weighing on her conscience. Is Michael Paine still living with her? What are her children like?

You say you did some leg-work on the jacket. That is of particular interest to me and I would value your opinion about it as well as anything you feel able to tell me about what you turned up. Was it in relation to the jacket that you had two encounters with the Dallas police? Were they difficult, or threatening? Did you know their identity--i.e., were they officers who were involved in the case? Did you learn anything about Curry's resignation?

(This is not a questionnaire--just an indication of some of the questions provoked by your letter, if and when you feel you want to add anything.)

Now I come to the parts that really baffle me: your reference to "an enormous amount of slander" and your discouragement with the behavior of "many of us"--following on your comment that you spent an evening with Penn and his wife. The implication is unavoidable that you were distressed by Penn's attitude, activities, or character--which is of course dismaying to me. If I am making a wrong inference, please let me know; but if I am correct, Shirley, please do explain what it was that had such a negative impact on you. I have not heard a word from Penn for a couple of months, it seems.

The second item that puzzles me so greatly, and to be frank, that troubles me as well, is your closing lines to the effect that we should leave this case alone and let the Kennedys handle it. Why? What reason is there to believe that the Kennedys WILL handle it? There has been only one sign of their possible activity paralleling our group's efforts--that is, the commissioning of Manchester. But I heard recently that Manchester has had a mental breakdown and is no longer in the picture. I would need a great deal more information of a persuasive and compelling nature before I would even consider abandoning a purpose which is a matter of conscience and commitment and which has already animated hard labor and considerable personal sacrifice. Shirley, if you answer nothing else, please do explain as fully as possible why you believe that we should leave things as they are. You know that I will certainly respect your judgment but first I must know your reasoning.

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