

April 29, 1966

Sylvia:

I'm so happy the Index is out; I'm mailing for it today. What a relief it must be for you to have the job done and published.

There isn't anything new here. Penn didn't have an editorial this week; this coupled with the news that Mike has a scholarship thing with Michigan State indicates they may be traveling. Who would want to "twirl" for MSU? It looks to me as though Michigan has twirled enough for one University lifetime! Wasn't the Ramparts article good? This is where Marina went to learn English wasn't it? Great balls on a duck. I wonder if Porter is a graduate of all this nonsense?

The Times has been running a wry sequence on the CIA. I adored some of the references:

"First, there are those engaged in the really dirty business...While such operatives may be known to the 'Chief of Station'--the top CIA officer in any country--they are rarely known to the American Ambassador, although he may sometimes be aware of their mission. In fact, these deep agents are not known to the CIA's Intelligence Division in Washington, and their reports are not identified to it by name... Often, unknown to each other, the deep agents masquerade as businessmen, tourists, scholars, students, missionaries or charity workers and defectors." (NY Times, 4/26,66)

"The CIA acknowledged in Federal Court here today that it 'develops' sources of foreign security information through refuges and emigre organizations in this country...the agency had 'foreign intelligence sources existing within or developed through' emigre groups." (NY Times, 4/26/66) Poor Dallas. Poor NTS.

Isn't it funny to read "The University of Michigan Band has, at the request of the State Department, played an eight week concert of the countries of Europe." How to sing and dance your way through Europe for the CIA! If it weren't for the horror and the seriousness, they could all be dismissed as boring, dirty little children. Adults playing James Bond.

At any rate, as I told you, there isn't anything more for me to do. I agree that "Man's thinking dies from resignation and cynicism, his best hopes die, and finally the whole man." And so I'm now unwholesome and I admit it. But I'm going to accept it. I'm one of those disgusting people who isn't "concerned" anymore---just tired. If this country wants to accept the unholy joke, Dallas, 1963, then let ~~ix~~ it. If they want to accept the Hiss case, and the Oswald case, and the Remington murder, the Baker case, the Dodd deviousness, the LBJ vomit, then let them. If they want to bore themselves with their little houses, little backyards, adulteries and soulless churches, let them. I will sit here either contemplating the universe or my naval.



I remember the Dallasite who told me in all seriousness that Oswald ~~x~~ was doing peripheral investigation for the Dodd Committee (the gun bill) when he (Oswald) sent for the rifle and the gun. O.k., so what? I was very excited at the time; now I don't care anymore. If Oswald was such a dolt to be used as he was, what can I, or anybody else, do for him now?

Of course, I'll watch Ramparts and their series on the WCR with interest. How could I help it? But I really don't care anymore. I think everything (including myself) is very silly. All a lot of ego-aggressiveness, the my-butt-is-blacker-than-yours sort of thing.

My predictions for the future? This country is finished. If I were any kind of a patriot, I'd try to stall the end, but I'm not and, besides, I can't. We will be leveled as flat as Germany was. It's just a matter of time. Then, after, we'll rebuild. It will ~~add~~ be all to do over again, brave new words, a brave new world. All horse shit. That poem in Ramparts about JFK: "...c'est un milieu." That was so good, exactly what I've come to believe. Probably the President felt the sacrifice would be enough. And it may be in time, but not for one nation alone. You will be angry at me, after all my defense of Kennedy to you, for saying anything against him; but after the inauguration, when the flyers came back, I thought this was terribly theatrical. My British tradition is appalled when a hand is overplayed-- or when people over-react. I can't stand the wrong ring, the wrong tone, although I'm often guilty myself. Still, I'm not in public life--thank God.

You and I have the same response. When you wrote the insult of it, to be expected to assimilate mentally ~~the idiot Warren Report~~ the idiot Warren Report, to read it and feel the ugly atmosphere of it, and to see the ugly lies printed on paper, is really too much, I agreed with you with all my heart. Then to pick up the paper (I sent the clipping to Penn) and read that this was par for the course for Warren, that he was known during his younger days in California, for adjusting to fit the situation, and for "leaking" things routinely to the press that were in fact in secret, what a heartsickness. And they ask us to picture him in holy sanctuary in his black robes, with his judicial expression. But when I think of him, I see him on the bench, naked, with his old flesh hanging over his accomodating soul, and his wrinkled old hams smuggling himself into his seat of prominence. What a delicious joke: now I think he should be impeached, too!

So, because you are such a good, dear friend who I love already, I will have no other contact. A recent letter from Joesten, Harold, one a few weeks ago from Thayer, these will go unanswered. I want no more contact with any of them. ~~And~~ Like a slug, I'll trust to you for every new thing I am to learn about the case. In the meantime, with the move to the new area, I'm hoping to spend my time with the SPCA where I can get <sup>down</sup> on my hands and knees every morning and clean the cages, a place where I can accomplish something, at the same time being in a coincidental position of prayer (!). Is this where earth and heaven meet?

Oh, Sylvia, I am in a backsliders mood. Can you overlook it? Much, much love and admiration for your courage.

Shirley.



3 May 1966

Dear Shirley,

Your letter of 29 April 1966 was written from the blackest pit; small wonder, in this world. I might be there with you but I have had a secret source of optimism (for whatever it proves to be worth) the last two months ~~ore~~ more. I have been under the strictest injunctions to keep my usually-vociferous mouth shut, and I still am--but as the enclosed item has appeared, I can at least communicate that much. Epstein asked me to read his ms and check the accuracy of his citations; later I indexed his book from the page proofs. Shirley, it is a book that SHOULD, and maybe will, change the whole filthy situation we have been living with since 11/22/63. It vindicates just about everything we have thought and written and conjectured about the dirty old man Warren (I adored your word-portrait of him..."in holy sanctuary in his black robes"...etc) and his lackeys. The book will be out early June; if you have a bookdealer, order your copy now. When you read it, phone...wire...or write immediately. I am by now losing confidence in my own evaluation of Epstein's work--frustrated as I am from discussing it with anyone--is it really the GREAT fulfillment of all our hopes, as I have felt from the moment I read it, and still feel? I will value your opinion on it, very very much.

I hope you will not be disappointed with the subject index. I put together a home-made "errata" sheet but I am all-out. I may have a few more copies in my desk in the office; if so, I will mail you one, or make up a new one for you. If you don't get it soon, please remind me, ok?

I'm usually well-organized and reliable about sending such items...but this is hardly a "usual" period, for many reasons. I have been burdened not only with an interminable, pretentious, organized-imbecility--i.e., the annual session of the UN Social Commission, which does not realize after 20 years that its high-sounding oratory does not make one whit of difference to the two-thirds of humanity that is living at a level far below that of our house-pets. I even have to contribute to the banality with occasional statements of my own, on instructions from Geneva. Yesterday I had one but in the event, out of sheer resentment of the hollowness and hypocrisy of the entire farce in which I was again acting out my well-paid part, I read the first sentence, omitted the next 30 lines, and closed with the last sentence. It made no difference, except to save a little time and tedium. Today I was even more "useful"---I broke a deadlock between one group of countries who wanted to use the word "approves" in a resolution, and another group that wanted to delete "approves" and substitute "notes." They went at it for no less than one hour; when I suggested to one of the conferees, more in fun than anything else, the phrase "notes with interest," the negotiations ended successfully and the meeting proceeded. Isn't that really earth-shaking?

Shirley, I feel very complimented by your feeling that you want to continue your correspondence with me, while letting others lapse. I don't know if I will always be able to keep you advised as developments occur--it depends on available time after UN work is done. After the Social (or Anti-Social) Commission, I have an even more important session coming up --Trusteeship Council. When that is over, it is July and (with luck) vacation time. I will try; but please understand if I am not always prompt or thorough. Anyway, the only really important foreseeable development is Epstein's book. Please watch all papers and magazines you get for book reviews, and I will do the same. Maybe it will lift you out of the black pit? But you will probably lift yourself, and soon, because you can't keep a good woman down. As always,