

June 18, 1966

Sylvia:

Am still waiting for the three books (your Index, Inquest and White-wash); don't feel I can say anything intelligent (?) until I have them. Sometimes I am paranoid about my mail, but ultimately it comes through. Is it my reward for living in a town called Hominy?

The Dallas News mentions the death of Captain Frank M. Martin from a sudden illness (which struck him while at work): I reread his testimony (Vol. XII). On page 284, he does indicate knowledge which it would be "better" for him not to impart. It says in the obit that Lt. George Butler was a pallbearer.

I wrote last week to the three ladies of Endor--Eva, Ruth, and Marguerite. First contact I have made in a long time. I called Ruth at the same time; we had a friendly talk. She and Michael are going East for the summer.

Interesting that Dallas is getting the General Services plum--Oak Cliff, to be exact. Dallas News glows with the information that the Dallas FBI and new Chief of Police, Batchelder, are chums again. Dallas police officers have reinstigated their bi-annual trek to FBI headquarters in Washington, which was held in abeyance until Curry spun out.

Johnson holds Texas in a 59% poll, while the U.S. in general gives him a 46 percentage. Dear Texas. How they hated Kennedy. The Dallas News, Tulsa World, and the Daily Oklahoman (all right-wing) have been having fits over Robert Kennedy's trip to Africa, claiming he made it only to win Negro votes; but failing to realize that this is one group of American voters Bobby Kennedy does NOT have to campaign for. At any rate, the Southwestern newspapers are as hot and heavy as ever on their hate-the-Kennedys campaign, which in '63 helped assassinate the President; but as far as LBJ is concerned, they are moderates. The main criticism here (expressed in a courteous way) is that Johnson is not escalating fast enough in Vietnam. ALL they have to do is wait. As Penn says, Johnson will be the right-wing candidate in '68, and the Birch Society will help re-elect him.

Curious that Bill Lawrence (ABC) indicated Johnson may not run in '68. Since Fleming (ABC) is Moyers' right-hand man, one imagines Lawrence's information had a base of some kind. A columnist (Reston? Krock?) recently hinted that Westmoreland might be the G.O.P. candidate for '68. But my thinking is more devious--I think (if we have a big military win in Vietnam) Westmoreland will be named by Johnson at the '68 convention to succeed him. Westmoreland is a Southerner, his father was a close friend of Jimmy Byrnes; it is hard for me to imagine him running on the G.O.P. ticket. Still, as the columnist said, any chance of his being nominated on either ticket rests on a big military victory in Vietnam, which I pray to God will not take place.

The Meridith shooting brought me to my feet as nothing has for a

long time. I was ready to tear apart any institution I could get my hands on. On top of this, the news was so slow coming through. I imagine Washington was terrified of armed uprisings in certain Negro communities, as it should be. On the other hand, I am sick of Stokely Carmichael (SNCC), too. He terrifies me. I told the kids that from now on my name is "Black Power"--"Mrs. Black Power." That ought to have me for awhile!

Seriously, I sit here each day hoping to God there will be nothing I will have to do when the time~~x~~ comes. No decisions for me to make, no sides to join. Two mockingbirds are re-building a nest in a tree ~~xxx~~ near my window. A tornado touched down in Hominy Thursday night and blew their first nest away. Steven found a pale, blue-speckled, cracked egg next day on the grass. Every morning I get up and hope my day's problems won't extend past watching those birds re-build their nest. But I know problems are too insidious to be overcome this easily. On top of this, we have to leave these 40 acres the middle of August to settle on 5 acres near Tulsa--leave the ponds, and the Indian Camp, and the horses, and the beautiful graveyard to the south of us, and the Osage hills all around us. Here I have no neighbors; there I will be surrounded by people and their boring, petty, ugly natures. I am not much of a humanist, I'm afraid. But I realize when the time~~x~~ comes and the line is drawn, I will step over it. I have really gotten to the point where I cannot tolerate the ascendancy of the goon-squad, the Iron Cross youth, the White racist, the Johnson aura. But I doubt very much, Sylvia, if you and I have the strength to stop them. We Americans are like the ancient state of Chou gone wrong, and I can't say I see any valley-dweller of the Tao to guide us. I have felt for a long time that Robert Kennedy could pull us back from the brink, but now I know he won't survive to do that. I noticed (in "Newsweek") the same pessimism in him. When asked by a friend about the '72 election, he replied: "Who knows where any of us will be six years from now?"

Vickie is going to type this for me. Typing is such a chore when I do it. Write when you can and let me know how things are going. Doesn't the UN seem more and more useless? I don't know too much about it, but why don't they take a firmer stand against some of our criminal acts? If they continue at this rate, they'll be as pertinent as tits on a boar. So much of what they do is a boring, petty, ugly diplomatic facade, mewling and puking at one another for first this individual advantage and then that. On the other hand, I'd probably do the same. I'm just as boring, petty, and ugly as they are.

Much love,  
Shirley