

Received
10/3/66

Sylvia: I'm sending a copy of a letter to a friend. He has written a book which I think is very good, part of which will be a discussion of the Dallas murders. My letter to him makes a few comments on the case which have been bothering me lately. Like you I am going through my second experience with wanting to pull back. (I'm inferring here that you too want to pull back, which is the case, of course. What I meant was that you have been going through a stressful period too, but in another regard.) I think what I am trying to "see" through is delineated in this letter to some degree. Maybe not. At any rate, the announcement this morning by Rep. Cong. Kupperman about appointing 5 Senators and 5 Representatives to examine the "adequacy" of the WR made me even more upset. This will result in a whitewash of a whitewash. And brings me around to what I said in this enclosed letter, we are in for another trying period of manipulation, not for the sake of manipulation, but for the sake of mutual back-scratching.

You said to prepare ourselves for the counter-attack. Do you think this is it? After all, won't the Senators and Representatives be just as son-of-a-bitching busy as the Commissioners were? And to whom will they delegate their authority! Crap.

Sylvia, I must ask you seriously to consider how sick Kennedy really was at the time of his death. I get nowhere with Vince on this subject and have learned to my regret that Vince has absolutely no respect at all for my judgment. On the other hand, Vince could be 100% right. (I am not implying that Kennedy had himself assassinated--not with Jackie and Mrs. Connally in the car. He would NOT do this. As Vince has correctly stated: "This is not the Kennedy style.") But I wish someone would reconsider what my friend has written about Lehman and look to see how this can be applied to the situation. If I am being oblique, it is because I am so alarmed at being thought irrational. I putter away quietly first at one aspect of the Report and then at another, but the paragraphs from the book (enclosed) struck a chord and I cannot shake my apprehension that we are in waters we may wish to back out of someday.

Still, Kupperman's proposal in my mind is ridiculous. What do you think of it? I wish someone would do an article on the Colonel. Aside from the assassination, the Colonel (whether Castorr or not) was ^{robbing} the American government blind. Isn't this illegal? What if a Leftist tried to do it? HA!

I am convinced that the Left is on the wrong track in attacking RFK. If they lose this chance to align with power (and in my eyes this is legal, responsible, compassionate power) then they have lost this country for good. I think the cause is lost anyway. I

*without
a name
base*

think the Left has made too big an effort to substitute power for power without ~~stopping~~ stopping to see that this effort would result in a resounding smash back to the Right. There has been a great deal of pride involved without ~~enough~~ enough genuine interest in what was at hand. The Left has no candidates that stand a chance at this moment. Even the excellent showings *made* recently are last gasps, like the sudden improvement before a tb death. There is too much intransigence and general boorishness on the Left, equalled by the same dosage, only worse, on the Right. The liberal-left-of-centre-middle is horse shit--and powerless now. Not worth a damn because they haven't had a shred of gut for over 20 years for sure. The whole damn bunch, liberal, left, and middle and Far Left haven't had the brains God gave a sheep. If they had, why did they let the Hiss case go unchallenged and that god damn typewriter. I haven't any particular sympathy for Hiss (a Michael Paine type), but the Left should have degutted that rotten mess--that is, if they are anything like the "intellectual" Left they claim they are.

So I suppose for me it winds up in disenchantment all the way around. Even to a minor detached applauding for the vicious cynicism of LBJ and Co. At least one has an idea who and what they are: they are bad. All bad. And we recognize it. Yet the Left and the Liberal ~~masquerade~~ masquerade around pretending all kinds of vapid "good" and nothing comes out but the same old excreta. Excreta is excreta--whether it is intellectual or working class. What I see taking place worldwide, not just in the nation, is enough to make anyone shudder. Yet none of the Left (to judge ~~from~~ from their magazines) seems to see it. Unless they see it and are afraid to call it. To make full circle: when we go around the Warren Report a few times, when we have our go at the Commission, when we have seen the fake X-rays and turmoiled ourselves over the Dallas murders sufficiently, when we have nauseated ourselves beyond repair, will we still be sitting around not facing up to that bloody typewriter. It all starts back there--and that hasn't been faced up to yet. I imagine an exposure of this thing (the WR) will be just as finally destructive of the New ~~Left~~ Left as of the Far Right. And ~~as~~ much as I hate it I am wondering if we aren't beyond our depth already. But this is a state I'll recover from. I've been through it before. Still the ~~Lehman~~ Lehman allegation (enclosed) comes bugging back. Will the time come when opening the WR would be a "disaster" to us as well as to the others and ~~it~~ a "good and proper" thing to avoid looking at it any more closely?

I think the entire assassination was a set-up (for Kennedy and Lee), a play ~~acted~~ acted out for all our benefit. I ~~think~~ think even what we are doing now is a part of the gullibility and that we are saps. I think what we are doing is exactly what was wanted and that the FBI release to the Archives (contradicting the WR) was done deliberately in order to "use" us for the next step, which is to let the New Left get rid of Earl Warren, just as the Far Right has wanted for years. They are going to let Staughton do it.

Oh, Sylvia, now is your turn to say "Cheer up." Let me hear from you. Love, S. The Second Oswald book was OK, but a little far out. A few minor errors. I can imagine your pique. Because he is a ~~PHD~~ PHD he gets his book published, whereas you will have a little fight for it. Never mind. I'm sure yours will make it and be among the best.

September 29, 1966

The book is excellent. And I am not saying this because I like you so much. Vickie and I have been wondering if the fact we know you has anything to do with our attitude, and have decided it has not. Do you know what your style reminds me of? Sheen's. Am I spelling this right? Vincent Sheen and his Personal History. Did you ever read it? Many many thousands of years ago when I was young and Vickie was a tiny baby and due to circumstances beyond my control I had to spend hours in some isolation, I picked up ~~the~~ the Sheen book. I have dated my interest in the world since reading it, although I'm sure I had interest in various things even before this or I wouldn't have bothered with it. Still, Sheen did a great deal for me. He explained the Marxist thing for me, which at that time I had no grasp of. He explained the Jewish (Israel-Arab) thing--and of course he and I later on shared a mutual passion for the Mahatma.

At any rate, your style, content, etc., reminded me of this other happy occasion when another man ~~had~~ explained what seemed almost unexplainable things to me--which, of course, is what I have been asking you to do ~~for me~~ in regard to the whole horrible assassination mess. There are some people, darling, like myself, who have no way to approach an era of general evil without help from a master of some sort. Before this puffs you up too much, realize how far I have to go. Why you have latched on to me even this much (to send me your ms) is more than I can understand. When and if you do chapters on the Kennedy-Oswald murders, I will help you every way I can in research. As I said before, I'd be proud to help in any way.

What I want to do is discuss each Chapter, one at a time. First let me point out that the chance of my visiting you has nearly vanished with the description read of your wild, wild youth. Again, you come across as the custodian of a flagrantly immoral era (Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Sheen, etc.); these men are and were your ~~seniors~~ seniors, but you ~~obviously~~ obviously learned from them! While I was admiring Sheen for his insight, you were no doubt studying his romance with Rayna Prohme! Mrs. Prohme, by the way, was an unsung heroine. ~~It~~ If I believed in reincarnation, ~~it~~ I'd say I was Rayna Prohme revisited--or something. Nevertheless, that puts me on your shit list, doesn't it? Don't you hate Marxists? But did Sheen influence me outrageously--just as you do? Was Boredin, for instance, a hero or a crook? ~~Was~~ the "long view" that Rayna and Boredin gave Sheen (and which he passed in turn to me) a bogus item--or should I value it? Did I or did I not see this

long view reflected in JFK--and now in RFK? Is this why I argue and fight against so many of my new friends of the New Left in regard to their bias against the Kennedys? What is this feeling of relief when I read what you say on Kennedy? (p. 4)

"This process, now operative for nearly half a century, was interrupted just twice, by Franklin Roosevelt's first term and by the brief tenure of John Kennedy. The first deviation ended through mutually acceptable compromise; but in the second instance, more drastic measures were required to regain control."

I keep repeating what you told me once (to the point of boredom on your part, I'm sure) that you and I, neither one, is "meant for the ramparts." O.K. Then I see a picture of a burned Vietnamese child, burned beyond repair from American napalm, and I swing violently back to wanting to get on some kind of boat, traveling under some kind of revolutionary flag, even just the flag of human nausea. Yet I know very well that I am new at this and most of all grossly inept at political thinking--~~political thinking~~ thus, I am dependent to a degree. I'll admit I am influenced by what I read--and that the only subjective, objective, scientific instrument I use to reach my conclusions is female intuition. (I think I told you once before to stop laughing when I say that!)

You were very frank about your mother. I think the divorce probably had some kind of shattering impact on her to make her change that way. So of course you grew up wanting to go the other way, tired of the overdone patriotic displays. Divorce is very frightening to some women--the censorious (I cannot spell, I admit it, laugh again!) attitude is hard for me to understand. You can imagine how much of the same stuff I see here (my mother-in-law is a frightening example, bless her heart, of this frozen-to-life condition). I delight in anybody's happiness. I think situations that cause great pain to children should be avoided, but as far as adults are concerned, love and marriage and all that horse shit can be overcome. Like Sinclair Lewis, I am too involved in the new world (to me) of ideas to worry very much who is doing what with who (whom?). My vague thoughts of the era along this line go only so far as to ~~that~~ feel very very good that Elizabeth Taylor had at last found a man worthy of her (Burton). It is silly to stick to romance as a touchstone. Men come and go as do women, but words, thoughts, ideas, this makes living worthwhile. A woman has her children to consider and in this regard morality is important. Children base their future lives often on the memory of their mother, but a woman with no children has no obligation to any one--certainly not to any silly man. So, I sympathize with your mother. I am not trying to say you judged her harshly, because I thought what you wrote was in good taste and written with a generous serving of forgiveness. Still, it is easy for me to put myself in her place and to wonder that if I had lived (walked) in her shoes, I might have been the same?

I liked the tidbit on Harding, one of the most fascinating mysteries of our time. Your sentence: "Silent Cal was, indeed, a cool customer, in much the manner of a mackerel," was an example (to this inexperienced reader) of a perfect sentence that I wish I could do--the "e's" and "m's" stuck in unconsciously to make a smooth (euphonious?) whole. and then of course on p. 10 is the best paragraph from my point of view (i.e. interest in the Warren Commission whitewash):

"Manipulation in our country has never been a matter of concerted and coordinated action by a homogeneous group, sect, band, or godsp, with common goals and a well-defined modus operandi. If it had been, something might have been made of the country--not anything noble, necessarily, but at least a recognizable, multi-dimensional shape."

Don't you think this paragraph could be used to criticize the WR? I have never felt this ~~was~~ (the Commission) was one of those deliberate let's-do-it-whitewashes, but instead a stumble bump sort of thing, a manipulation for the sake of manipulation, a don't-question-Harry-he-works-for-George paradox. As you write, if the WR had been more deliberate it might have been not "noble" but atleast "a recognizable, multi-dimensional shape."

One other fascinating retort on p. 18: "...it had been good and proper to avoid possible disaster to the career of such a man as Herbert Lehman."

If you really believe this (and I am inclined to take your word for it) then you and I should talk someday about a number of things connected with the Dallas tragedies. I have theories (just as all the investigators do, I'm sure); we hold back on them because we dread exposure (being laughed at?). Too, I think most of us hesitate to be demonologists, subscribers to a complete conspirators' theory of history, etc. But twice during this case I have been inclined to pull back on it--for the reasons found in your sentence on Lehman. The first time I felt this way I got over it and after a hiatus of two months or so went plunging back. Now I am feeling this way again and not all the strong words from Penn (who has a tendency to fear nothing, unlike me) seem to help. (Penn is in LA right now on a radio, tv tour). At any rate, I do intend to see you someday, in spite of my fears over your sexy past. (I want the name of that movie star!) In the meantime, I am moving on to Chapter 2 and will send comments on it directly--if you can bear with this typing.

Seriously, I think your book is great. I am sure it will find a publisher. If I come across things I don't like, I'll tell you, but Chapter 1 was excellent, cynical, chatty, instructive, not a bit pompous or boring to read. What else can a reader ask when he reads something to instruct? I liked that comment by Steffens. But I suppose I shouldn't. Much love to you both, S.

LBJ's recent decision to rescind SS procedure of
recommending the motorcade route prior
to the Presidential visit is interesting -

Allegedly LBJ feels this "alerts" possible
assassins to the President's route.
But this rationalization doesn't make
sense. If a President (such as JFK) visits a
local in order to be seen by voters, then the
route must be announced soon enough for
an assassin to function.

However, if we
are talking about

a conspiracy in which
timing & coordination are

of prime significance,

then LBJ's new dictum

takes on added

meaning.