

December 7, 1966

Historic date.

Oh, Sylvia, don't worry about being cranky and short-tempered at a time like this. We all are. After such a dry spell, after so much fun being made of us by people who ~~never~~ never cracked a single volume, after so many lonely hours pouring over so much small print, our reaction is normal. We are human, after all. If we were saints or angels, we wouldn't be here. We will fail, fail, fail in human relationships--over and over again--but really not any more so than the secretary or the truck driver. It seems to be part of the human response <sup>to</sup> quarrel with his kind. Besides, I have maintained for years that TRUE friendship cannot exist without squabbles and irrationalities on all sides. This was one of the things that made the I LOVE LUCY show so charming to me: Lucy and Ethel, Fred and Ricky were always fighting, fighting, fighting--and then making up. Very realistic. I don't know anymore about Lifton and Epstein than you do (much less, I'm sure), but I have my opinions as regards their public statements on a number of occasions. Actually some of the things I have heard attributed to Ed, for example, are hearsay. When I was told them, I was furious at him, but when his book came out I found it scholarly and worthwhile. In the long run, the book will be the only thing that counts; it and the ripples it created. (How in hell do you spell "scholarly"?)

Steven is home today with another cold, and I am eating french fried potatoes out of frustration--which leads me to another thought: your remark that you were told I was attractive is kind, whoever your source was. (It may have been Penn or Vince.) But actually, I am far from anything in that line. I am forty-two years old, fat where I should be lean and flat where I should be fat. I am gray and quite wrinkled. I have spent my adult life forgetting to cream my face or brush my hair at night. I will not wear a brassiere or a girdle or stockings unless I have to. I am totally convinced (due to a childhood fixation) ~~xxx~~ that I am ugly. My common sense recues me to the point of admitting I am ordinary and that if I took care of myself and dressed properly I would pass as an average housewife; but I am too busy to keep up even these appearances; so all in all your informants were full of shit. I only hope they are not so far wrong in their opinions on the WR.

Harold Feldman kindly sent me a translation of the foreign article. But I haven't got the magazine. The only fault I had to find with his presentation on me was the "left her children in the lurch" remark. I never went to Dallas without all or some of the kids. As I told Harold, I am too smart an old bird to move in masculine circles with my chaperones. I am always afraid the FBI lies in wait for dopes to blackmail or intimidate. The remark that I spent "thousands of dollars" was made as a ~~x~~ joke to indicate Marks (Martin) constant screaming about my extravagance. Naturally I didn't spend "thousands of dollars". But since this was just about my first experience with the press, I guess I got off nicely. I understand they can twist things pretty badly.

Where is it going from here? I wish I were as smart as I think I am because then maybe I could conjure up an answer. With my interest in the Kennedys I am awaiting the Manchester book. Recent articles (by a British writer) on ~~the~~ Manchester ~~thing~~ leave me absolutely nonplussed. I have my ideas of course. But not enough confidence. I keep telling myself that I KNOW what the Ks are doing; but do I?

I have sat down <sup>at the typewriter</sup> a dozen times in the past month to read various articles and remarks from Connally, Liebel, Hubert, Boggs, Alberts, etc. but something always stops me. Two years ago I would have been ecstatic to have the chance, but now I want to wait--and I don't know why. I keep telling myself I want to see the direction, who is in charge of the direction, in which camp the power lies. I suppose with a real interest in truth I shouldn't care; but truth like beauty has so many faces. And I am distrustful of any "truth" that might be pursued out by the Johnson-Hoover forces.

Certain facts I have: Lee Oswald was not a Marxist; the rifle was bought for the Dodd investigation; the WR is a pile of shit; but of course no one has publically come to any of that. And maybe I am all wet ~~on that~~. I have my own opinion on some of the undercurrents in Dallas; I read the Dallas papers daily and I am not immune to what Dallas was and is. There is an atmosphere <sup>there</sup> that had a great deal to do with what happened and I read in the ads that Manchester will deal heavily with this. Schlesinger's handling of the assassination (in 1000 Days) intrigued me mightily months ago as did the reaction of the DMN to Schlesinger's treatment of ~~same~~. Altogether, I feel I must wait awhile to see.

I find much that is pertinent to the assassination (in my opinion) in other books on the times. Exercise of Power, Making of the P., 1964, RFK at 40, etc. My 12 Years with RFK. You have seen RAMPARTS reprint of Barbara Garson's McBird. She sent me two copies two or three months ago, and although I disagree with her assessment of RFK's handling of such a possible situation, I did write back to her that I enjoyed it enormously. She is very talented. RAMPARTS says the play is being done off-Broadway; will you get a chance to see it? Barbara's husband ~~was~~ a nice person, a real character. He spent two months in Dallas living at the Tippit murder house. (I should have said living in the house on 10th Street in front of which Tippit was killed.) Marvin hasn't gotten enough credit. He spent some dangerous and lonely hours.

Why was Penn depressed? I haven't heard from him since the Boston trip. He sent a postcard from there saying he might be going on to LA. Did he share the program with Vince? How did it go? I think this was the first time Penn and Vince were to get together. I hope they liked one another. No use getting depressed. We are in for a lot more "dryness of the soul" before this thing is over. The assassination in Saigon this morning has the same old smell, doesn't it? Although I haven't gotten too many details yet.

Garry S. and Richard Lewis were so nice. At first they made me laugh. Dressed up to the teeth--at least by Okie standards. Actually it was very Hollywood, I guess; and I am so backwoods I had to stare! I don't know which segment of my voice they'll use. I did some swearing, but then after they left I listened to the Lenny Bruce record which had some swearing too!

