

7/29/67

Senator Robert Kennedy
Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator Kennedy:

If your staff keeps a file on letters to you, they know how devoted I have been to your cause. I think I understand your motives, and I am sure I have correctly judged the basic kindness and fairness in your nature. So, I am even more upset perhaps than many others by your recent outright endorsement of LBJ, and in particular was I repelled by your reported effusiveness.

Mr. Johnson is a complex man who has broken in one form or another nearly every law in the United States. J. Edgar Hoover, in deploring filthy-speech movements and riots in general, has remarked that a nation "cannot live with lawlessness, unbridled vulgarity, obscenity, blasphemy, perversion and public desecration of every sacred and just symbol," yet Mr. Johnson, who is closer to J. Edgar Hoover than any of the past five U.S. Presidents (including Herbert Hoover), breaks speed laws at will, uses unbridled vulgarity, obscenity, blasphemy, is no stranger to perversion and adultery, is guilty of outright felony, has broken voting regulations, and has by some even been accused of murder for business and political ends. This then is the man you have endorsed. And while I am fully aware of the bind that arose in Los Angeles during the 1960 convention in that city (and in this context appreciate the position the late President was in in regard to the choice of a Vice Presidential candidate), I cannot see that you are in a like bind in regard to Mr. Johnson in 1967.

No one is asking you to castigate Mr. Johnson publicly; no one is asking you to rise up and shriek: Cast the bum out. But how is it possible for you to endorse this man, who, in one form or another, is far more guilty of crime and lawlessness than any Negro rioter in America? Perhaps with their great sense of soul and intuitive reasoning (a quality of all "suffering" people) the Negroes have been the first to realize the blood-sickness in America, the fraudulency that exhibits as President of this once-honorable nation, a man who is a cheap Texas crook. Certainly the Negro has no reason to be law-abiding, when the President of the United States has broken every law I can think of. My pain at the moment is that you have chosen to sanctify him. I really cannot understand how you could rush back from London and then stand up at that damn dinner and endorse Johnson! I am sure there are reasons that you think are excellent, and I have spent a lot of hours at this typewriter telling people that you know what you are doing. The thing that puzzles me is: Do I really care anymore?

Sincerely,
Shirley Martin
Box 226
Owasso, Oklahoma
cc:5

* Accidental President and A Texan Looks at Lyndon.