

16 October 1964

Dear Shirley: Enough already with Bobby! I hope and pray he justifies all your confidence in him and that I have to eat crow and retract my suspicions of his past and my dismay at his present silence and my apprehension about his future plans—not about the plans as such but about what he is ready to do—or not do—to achieve his destination. Had a phonecall from Maggie this morning and she read me an excerpt from a story in the current BOOKS, reporting (for what it is worth) that Jacqueline is now putting on the pressure for complete suppression of the Manchester book. Conferences are going on with Harper & Row; they are considering holding up an American edition but maybe letting the book come out in Europe, to cushion the uproar in the press that they expect. What does it all mean? Are the Ks trying to kill the Manchester book because it supports the WR? or because it tells tales on LBJ that will increase the loathing with which he seems to be universally regarded? And if the latter—why? To maintain unity in the ranks of the Democratic Party? In "the national interest"?

The last few days have been nightmarish with constant stress, strain, and activity, lots of it gratifying and good but without any rest, not even for half an hour, so that I am almost in collapse from sheer exhaustion. But let me try to be coherent. Wednesday night I went to Philadelphia to do a broadcast, from 10 p.m. to midnight on a 10-to-2 am talk show. The host, Jack McKinney, has already given 27 hours to discussion of the WR. He is a very, very nice guy; has become knowledgeable about the case, and has literally educated his large Philadelphia-and-30-State audience about the case. He gave me free reign to discuss the WR and the evidence without interruption except for commercials and without baiting, first because he is not one of these acid-tongued professional baiters like Joe Pyne or Long John (I don't know if you get either of those in Oklahoma but they can make you ashamed of the whole human race) and second because he is completely on our side now that he has heard both sides of the issue (his previous guests on the subject included Sylvan Fox, Sauvage, Weisberg, Salandria // Crawford and Jacob Cohen). Anyway, it went well, and at the end of the first hour, he urged me to stay four hours instead of two. We had lots of phonecalls from the listeners, every one intelligent, no cranks. I did stay to 1 p.m. missed the last train and got home by bus at 5 a.m. I was too beat to go to the office and intended to spend the day in bed—but then I got a call asking me to be on the Barry Gray program that night, together with Sauvage and Kupferman and some other people who are not specifically connected with the case but have some collateral field of interest or competence—one man interested in curbing the sale of firearms and one who is the head of the trial lawyers association. I went mainly because I wanted to get a lead on Kupferman. All I can say, after the broadcast and a few minutes conversation with him afterward, is that he seems to be genuine in his feeling—thinks there are mistakes, but believes they are not deliberate or conspiratorial, just honest carelessness and ineptness. Which is not to say that he would not change his mind if he is shown proof to the contrary. And that is where I tried to concentrate—showing the repeated conflicts between the WR and the H&E in instances where it cannot be anything but deliberate. I'm told that I had a tour de force—not difficult for anyone armed with facts and opposed by people who are uninformed or plain ignorant.

I got back at 3 a.m. and had to go to work the next day, tired or not; and first thing I got a call from Ray Marcus, one of the California researchers I had known by mail and phone. He was here all day Saturday and today (Sunday), joined today by Vince. They just left an hour ago and the endless talk, interesting as it was, has utterly pooped me. So please understand if I don't do justice to your very interesting information about LBJ and H&E. I hear more and more sinister stuff about LBJ but I am beginning to wonder how much is inspired by sheer loathing and disgust. For example, Ray Marcus (who seems to be very close to Mark Lane) tells me that Lane told him that Gore Vidal told him confidentially, but has since repeated publicly on British TV, that Jacqueline Kennedy told him that on the plane she went in to the room where the coffin was and when she opened the door she found LBJ standing there over it and chuckling. Have you ever heard that? I tend to discount it—I doubt if she said it; she was in shock that day anyway.

I'm not going to start another page; I just realized that I am just too weary to make good sense. But never fear; our friendship has plenty of room for disagreement, about RFK or anyone else. I know we are working toward the same ultimate and paramount objective—the truth, whatever it happens to be.