

16 December 1969

Dear Sylvia,

Maybe you hadn't heard but Garrison was not the only lovable big-city DA re-elected this November. We met some people from Philadelphia last week and they told us that Specter was re-elected. UGH! What really pains me is that I fear my mistakes ~~which~~ ~~made~~ made him look much better than he deserved on that TV program. That is one of the things that I regret more than anything else in the whole history of the last three years -- that I blew my cool and let that slippery bastard get away. I also see that Harold Medina will soon be playing legal games with F. Lee Bailey for Time Inc.; both parties ~~to~~ to this dispute are so awful that I can't figure out whom I want less to lose.

It has been not much fun being an American in Copenhagen the last month. For the Danes the MY LAI disclosures simply confirm the findings of the Russell Committee that held hearings near here at Roskilde in 1967. This is such a troubling case. On the one hand, I want every seventeen-year old who shot down those women and children to be properly punished. "Properly" is a tough word -- do I really mean a firing squad? No, life imprisonment will do. Yet on the other hand it's so clear that they were only pawns in carrying out a fundamentally criminal policy. And like all criminal endeavours, it looks like the little fish may get scooped up in the net while the big ones get away. And of course old LBJ will get away scot-free. All these respectable, phrase-mongering, highly educated, dark-suit-wearing murderers -- Bundy, Rusk, McNamara, Johnson, Wheeler, Westmoreland -- all going on to fine jobs and admiration among their fellows while the poor farm boys who did their killing get caught. The only good thing that I can see coming out of this awful war is the possibility that revelations like this might splinter some of the confidence of the "silent majority" in their own beneficence and respectability. Fat chance!

Intriguing to hear the latest chapter in the saga Arnoni. Yet of course what I remember about him is not his rather shrill commentary on American history pronounced to Vince and me as we ~~drove~~ drove back to Philadelphia, but the fact that he told Vince and Ray Marcus where to get off when they were deadset on smearing me. He was damned honest and upright about that, and that's what I remember most about him. But what a strange and tawdry tale makes up the last chapter. What stands out in your relating of it is the terrific "weakness" -- a man whom I would have thought is stronger than most turns out to be incredibly weak. Strange.

I'm enclosing the clipping about Fensterwald which Don Preston sent me because I suspect you don't keep up with the Nyack papers. What doesn't come through the article is the quiet desperation -- the dowdy office, the hoping, the nutty tangents -- that is close ~~to~~ to the center of his situation. Nor does his essential niceness come through; he's a truly nice guy, I think, and I don't mean that facetiously. But as for anything significant coming out of his work -- not on a bet.

I thought of you this afternoon when I saw in the Tribune that New York was expecting a fairly substantial snowfall. I'll watch my motorcycle if you'll watch those New York City taxi drivers.

Affectionately,

*Tim*