

116 Washington Street
Ithaca, New York 14850
29 September 1971

Dear Mrs. Meagher,

~~XXXX~~ It certainly seems as though it's been a long time since I've written to or heard from you. I hope that you had a good vacation. As you can see from the above address, I'm "back home" in the only place on earth where I can be happy. No, I have not returned to school (God forbid!)--I'm working as a clerk and office assistant for Cornell University for the minimum wage (1.85 per hour) while keeping my eyes open for something better here in Ithaca. I'm being considered for a position with the county library and sooner or later will almost definitely get some job through the Tompkins County Civil Service Commission. For now I'm living on a very tight budget and must keep reminding myself that "perseverance furthers." The past few months of job hunting have convinced me that the rat race and the struggle for survival are a monstrous joke--as the old saying goes, "so funny I forgot to laugh." I wound up getting exactly one (yes, one) job offer, ~~XX~~ and began working as a Claims Representative Trainee for Social Security in late July. I hated every minute of it--it was dull, difficult, and dehumanizing to the "nth" power. When I felt my sanity slipping away I quit in mid-August and returned to Ithaca. I may be economically insecure for quite some time, but at least I now have both feet on the ground. The prospects for a ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ well-paying, ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ high-status, prestige-filled job here in Ithaca are non-existent, but I'm not overly concerned with that--I'll take whatever comes along and use my mind for my own purposes, rather than for the purposes of some money-grubbing ~~XXX~~ company or inhuman governmental agency.

It may sound as though I have ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ developed an ascetic repugnance for the so-called real world. It's not quite that strong--I am not about to go to a monastery or a secluded cabin. But I have developed a rather disdainful attitude toward the way most people live. I hope I don't sound like a snobbish elitist, but it seems to me that the great majority of people today don't have any idea what true value is--they cannot discriminate between the essential and the non-essential, and, as a result, their main purpose in life seems to be to postpone death for as long as they can, while grabbing as much as possible until that time. They hope that by pursuing material goals and pleasures they will find happiness and inner peace, and are baffled when they find only misery and discontent. This is because they put the cart before the horse--whatever happiness is attainable on this earth can only come after the needs of the spirit are satisfied. Or, as someone once put it, "seek ye first the kingdom of heaven..." The things ~~XXXXXX~~ with which most of us are concerned--money, status, friendship, health, etc.--are all transient and illusory; all can disappear in one moment. This is not to say they are meaningless, but rather that their meaning is only relative, and can only be understood in relation to spiritual truth. No, I haven't become some kind of evangelical crusader, but I truly believe that if more people could try to find their own way back to God, we would have much less ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ misery and dissatisfaction, and--as a result--fewer wars, less crime, less hatred, and less political oppression. But, then, that's only my opinion...

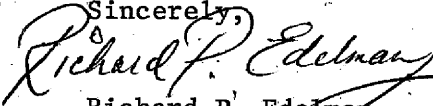
It may be obvious ~~XXXX~~ to you that my experience with the assassination investigation gave me a strong push toward the views expressed above. By last winter I decided to give it all up, as I came to the realization that the whole story would never be known, and that even if it were miraculously divulged, it ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ would have no impact on a skeptical and uninterested public. The impossibility of reconciling all the various theories--or even of deciding which one was most probably accurate--led ~~XX~~ me to ask, as Pilate asked Christ, "What is Truth?" Like Pilate, I received no reply--for, as I ~~XXXX~~ now understand, each one of us must find truth for himself. To have it thrust upon us by an ~~XXXXXX~~ outside force would ~~XXXXXX~~ only cause the doubtful part of ~~XXX~~ our nature to reject it. One must decide that he really wants to know the answer to that question for himself; then, if he sincerely seeks, he shall some day find the answer. I by no means claim to have arrived at that exalted state, but I can rest assured in the knowledge that I am on the right track.

Please pardon the melodramatic and hortatory tone of this letter--indeed, I'm not really certain whether I should have written ~~XX~~ it. I'm not even certain why I did (over)

write it, except that I have inferred from your letters that your experience with the JFK matter (and no doubt with many other things) has filled you with a similar feeling of revulsion and distaste for things as they are--not only in the political and economic spheres, but in ~~XXX~~ the sphere of life itself. I ~~XX~~ especially remember your remark of last winter that you fear^d that a new ~~M~~ "dark age" was coming. Indeed, it is here already for most people. But I don't think it has to be--perhaps I am naive and ~~XXX~~ foolish, but I believe that it is an age of darkness only for those who cannot--or will not--see the Light.

I think I'll stop here, as ~~XX~~ I've probably said a lot ~~XXXXXX~~ more than I should have. I just ~~XXXXX~~ hope you won't take this letter the ~~XXXXXX~~ wrong way. Believe me, even though I may sound audacious, I really feel quite humble.

The address given on the ~~XX~~ reverse side is probably only temporary, but I will arrange for mail to be forwarded if I should move. I do hope I shall hear from you.

Sincerely,

Richard P. Edelman

P.S.--Although I'm no longer actively pursuing the JFK case, I would be interested in hearing about any new information you may have come across, if such exists--for auld lang syne, if for no other reason!