

Dear Sylvia,

10/16/72

Your note of the 12th, enclosing a xerox of your letter of the 10th, reached me as I was leaving town for an unhappy occasion, the unveiling of my step-father's tombstone. The driving was 250 miles. During most of it, both ways, your letter was on my mind. My wife read it to me as we left the post office.

You set the tone at the outset, saying I "no doubt" had "some reason" for the note on the envelope (~~the~~ "exhortation") telling you not to worry. What you had said of the terror with which you greeted my letters of the past, leaving some lay unopened for a while, and that Jerry had told me of your emotional as well as physical collapse, prompted me to tell you on the envelope that it contained no fecrimination.

You wasted little time asking for it. However, that is not my purpose. I respond immediately for the reason I had been silent so long, because your letter fortifies my concern for your health. Until recently I would have considered it impossible for you to put your name to such a thing or to use your mind in this way. The fact is, I do not think this is the product of that fine mind.

Rosa Guy not so long ago persuaded a number of youthful blacks whose lives had been of denial to write essays on their yearnings. Rosa titled the book, ~~THE~~ Children of Longing. I think we are of longing, and sometimes children, too. Our longings replace every intellectual ~~capacity~~ ^{faculty} every logical reaction, every rational thought. This longing becomes a thing unto itself, and it justifies the unjustifiable. It leads people ordinarily incapable of it to ethical and moral debasement promptly labelled principle, to the invention of citations that no less immediately and certainly are alchemized into unquestionable fact. There is nothing not fitting and proper when this longing is pursued, nor is there any lesson of the past that can deter it. The past is for Santayana to write about, not for the relieving of those who can't learn from it. It is hardly a step for the innocent to become the guilty, the victim the aggressor. All of this is labelled purity, as you know.

My concern for what withdrawal from the prescription of 20 years could cause you was enough for me to read a book on the subject, to send Howard excerpts so he could understand and, if you were in touch with him, be guided thereby. Although we spoke last night, I did not ask him and he did not volunteer, for he also had received your letter and asked me if I had. He had, as I recall, just gotten it, having just gone for his mail. I was and I remain concerned. We live in a world in which it is not healthy not to have emotional problems, for to be without them is to be indifferent to unspeakable evil, to be unmoved by the greatest and most permeating corruption.

You may not now and may not ~~they~~ have believed them genuine, but you got my letters to Ned at the time he slit my throat, or tried. You found some intolerable. But you do know that I ~~was~~ tried to caution him to put his head together. You know that whether or not you then considered me sincere, Ned was not the only case, and in at least one and I think more you formed an independent assessment that is not far from mine. It was not long before all of you shared Ned's lust, became his partner, hid his shenanigans because they suited your prejudices, hates and preconceptions, none tainted by fact, and, of course, with no more serious crime than that of silence you were all in your own eyes innocent.

When I found you unresponsive to an invitation to think, I could not avoid the conclusion that you simply would not. It is and could not have been that you couldn't. Only that you wouldn't. If you were not alone, that is immaterial. This meant only that you and others shared frustrations and lusts, not mental incapacity, you least of all.

I could not but wonder if this subconscious and so atypical a posture for you did not have a synergistic effect on the withdrawal and that which led to the need for the medicine. So, believe me or not, I was deeply disturbed about your health. If this letter convinces me the fear was justified, it will also be my last effort to get you to make the effort to heal yourself. Such things are always unwelcome, merely get distorted by those I would like to help, who find this their escape, and ~~fakeful~~ the emotions not really hidden, not by you, for example, despite the seeming effort, from the time I first took Epstein apart (I remind you that this knowledge did not discourage me from making the offers I made to you, did not keep me from sending you what I did, did not prevent the repetition of invitations to come here and see everything I have. This is known in some circles as my paranoia.)

There is little in your letter to Ed that stays in touch with reality. I will not take time for all of it. I will, having just come home, take time for what I think should be enough if you are willing or able to try and plumb that tremendous mind of yours.

"Early in ~~my~~ the course of my illness...I learned ~~that~~ from Cyril Wecht that he had finally received a go-ahead from Burke Marshall." Wrong. We all knew it much earlier, first that he would, then that he had. What hadn't been set as of the time of your illness is the date.

"I did not disclose to Wecht at that time the serious degree of my disability...." You didn't have to. It was done promptly for you. He was never without the knowledge. Ask Jerry. Nonetheless he "virtually suspected that I had been 'reached' by the CIA..."? Naturally, as you say, anyone who would not become part of his self-aggrandizement had to be CIA. This makes a white knight of Garrison.

But, ~~XXXX~~ "to discuss all aspects and implications of his opportunity to inspect the autopsy material" was the purpose of the proposed convocation of the learned. That is the one formulation I never heard. And if he was going in to see and come out and report what he saw, and nothing else, I have yet to be told what "backgrounding" was required. For propaganda, perhaps, but not for "pure" science.

There follows what is rather poorly disguised, "there ensued a series of bitter accusations and quarrels among WR critics, some of whom regarded Wecht as 'the enemy' (you do know your Garrison, dear Sylvia!) and therefore refused him their cooperation". (That "others" could "bury him under an avalanche of facts of figures" is hardly an endorsement of his knowledge or competence or suitability for the task others though he would perform. That immediately follows.) You are toalking of me adobe, and with deliberate falsity. To this day I never "refused" him what you call "cooperation". I said two things: that I did not consider my association with it would make right out of wrong; and that I could not make a final decision until I knew all the circumstances. Neither Howard nor I would have anything to do with what you pretend was non-existent but was to your knowledge the reality, for you told Cyril to break it off, something he never did, the CIA insanity. Whether you believe it or not, and Howard was present, I directed Graham to Wecht with a big buildup. I ~~gave~~ gave him all Cyril's phones and went farthur, offered to background him.

But remember you write this after you knew he labelled Oswald at least one killer, depending on the story two. As you found this tolerable in Epstein, ever whose work you swooned, you forget it here, among the many things you pretend did not happen to this point in your self-justification guised as "information"

"Seldom have I witnessed such a display of hysteria, pettiness and pomposity - such juvenile self-righteousness or such mutual malice." I take the conclusion to be the assumption of a modicum of ^{responsibility for} that of which you. But regardless of whether of not this is a decent, fair or any other kind of representation, you say this after the record is made. Right and wrong judgement have been delineated, Sylvia. This is not the fiction you would have willed into reality now, this is after it all came to pass. One position was validated, one invalidated; one prediction did come to pass, with accuracy the likes of which I'd welcome a rival to. So, who was hysterical, petty, pompous, juvenile, self-righteous, malicious!

There was, indeed, "greater sanity in the psychiatric ward". But who was insane? Is it now that the one proven right by events become wrong, insane and all the other things? "Grotesque behavior" indeed! Whose? Those who said what they had to say and fell silent of those who further buried truth and reality?

We do have a record. We do now have fact, established fact. Why all this nonsense that can't help but demean you? Do you think there is any one who reads your letter who today does not know these things?

Graham's story was "a self-fulfilling prophecy". No, dear girl, it is a you and a Cyril and a Jerry and a Gary and a Lifton and a Ned and a CIA-fulfilled prophecy. Only one person predicted it, including to Graham, who denied his story would take such form. Here indeed it is set forth that to be right is to be wrong! That you were shocked by the Graham story at that late date is not naivete but closed eyes and closed mind. You knew enough about him knew he had an inside and what would happen had been spelled out pretty well. You were a lusty, vocal part of the preparation, dragooning all you could into it.

If you think Wecht wasn't a "creature of the" CIA is because you wouldn't listen and do not know what really happened. It did and they take full credit. He is ~~without~~ without audible, public denial and the fact is that the last time I was in Bud's office, then on a Ray matter, there just happened to be a conversation between Smith and Wecht's secretary that Jerry called eavesdropping because I was there!

If you feel Wecht can't be portrayed as a "buddy of the lunatic Garrison", I'd like to see major disagreement. Or why you should have expected it after the Long John Show.

You did not like Garrison, so he is a lunatic. But as I did, you liked and respected Cyril. To you, not to me, he was not a lunatic when he said exactly what you make Garrison one. Your passion is subdued, but that makes it no less far out.

The rest of this was not disclosed to you for the first time in his past-examination pontifications. There is nothing new in them.

But what is new to me is this description of the Lifton you last described to me as the vilest creature ever created: "...to hear from a ~~colleague~~ colleague that a critic who had crossed the continent to give Necht the benefit of his wisdom and advice..." This is the same Lifton you described to me as a raving maniac. Suddenly the manics only can give "advice", and they alone have "wisdom".

It is no less that "wisdom" to "resign ourselves to the fact (ugh!) that the autopsy photos and X-rays support the conclusions" of the WR.

There then follows excuse for what can never be excused, least of all in one from Cyril's discipline: talking about what he doesn't know about.

What kind of big deal is it is a "forensic pathologist" speaks out bluntly and other ways? He alone can profit from it. You and I can't. So what makes it so special is he did, if he never had anything of his own to say? He is great and you are not? Nichols doesn't count? He is ego-sick and in his own way mad, but he had done what Cyril would never do, and he has spent money. Cyril spends his time making it, not spending it.

You please tell me what Cyril has contributed with all that jazz about giving "his time and expertise to various WR critics"? My personal experience is that he took only. He refused his time and expertise as a witness in court after promising it. Stop pretending to yourself, because almost all the others know better.

Ascribe what he has done to what the whim of the moment leads you to. Others need no explanations here. And does it make any difference why? Is not what he did enough?

It is true that you "confidently expected a dramatic turn-about". But this was the lingering self-deception of long standing, that some trivial news story would do the trick. I made a fairly extensive exploration with the press, including a number who agree, and I had 100% forecasts to the contrary. I made some in high enough political circles. Ditto. I didn't delude myself, so I become villainous. You refuse to learn from a clear history, and that become "confidence". not self-deception, and justifies all that happened in its wake. Like Belin, for openers, on what the record should have told you.

"We had an opportunity to reverse events" (I'm ignoring what you lined through, but I read you clearly enough.) All you "wes" had a long-standing opportunity to do that in a way that, if its prospects did not glow, were better, and without exception you would not. You here kid only yourself.

There are other things to which I could address myself. I do not. My purpose is to get you to open that glorious mind to the reality, for it will not be well as long as you feed it fictions and retail its embellishment of them. You make, rather, a laughing-stock of yourself except with the Jerrys, the Spragues and the other CTIAs. I hate this, for you.

At some point I do hope you can review the past without the longing, without the passion, without the other emotions that have so long bound that great mind. I am not concerned with whether you do again the fine work you have and of which you are capable, for I think we are past that point and the conditions of your life and the corruption of the national life, tragically, make that impossible. I am concerned about you, more when you do not shame to send such a thing to those as bright as Ed or as informed as I. I don't know anyone except Howard besides, but I presume it was widespread enough. Let it be the last such. It is immaterial to me on a personal basis. It is not as a friend. You will do nothing to help me, you have tried enough to hurt me, you have dignified it by calling it purity, and that I don't give a damn about. In any event, it is past and not worth troubling the future with. I really would like you to snap out of this doldrum. But you won't without abandoning this posturing and self-deception. None of these and the many things you do not address become reality by your putting them on paper. They are not reality in your mind deceiving you. There is no way of making them truth or reality. There is no justification in any aspect of it. But there is health, there can be a degree of satisfaction, in saying, well, I've joined the rest; I've made a pretty bad one to. We all have. We all will. If Jesus could trust Judas (as it is said he did and that he didn't), can not even Sylvia slip up a bit? Relief comes from facing things, not making out they do not exist. relieve yourself! Be yourself again! Or. to put it another way, throw this great weight off your shoulders.

I do wish you the best, and I do not expect an answer. Not debating points. thought.