

11/12/71

Dear Jerry (HR only),

Lil put a new ribbon in and you phoned just before we had lunch. I found then that I was quite edgy, something I think Lil also detected. There were mentions of Ned here now causes that with both of us. Unfortunately, neither you nor HR were here and you have only the representations of what happened that began with Ned. They are not faithful, as you should have learned from the representations originally made to you and what followed.

Lil told me rather bluntly that she wants nothing more to do with Ned. She can't take that kind of experience and having to live with me and what I do is in itself more than any woman should have to take. To this she added that in her opinion he is too unstable for any arrangement to work. He makes it and abandons it, and what are we to do then? She added to this, and I suspect correctly, that I begin with trust, find the trust abused, and am disturbed by it. Ned made me a proposal, I trusted him, accepted it, and he started changing it right away. It is still being changed and is not yet back to where it began. So, while I told you I had written him what I was willing to do and what I am not, I also, without her asking, give Lil veto rights. I doubt she could accept Ned here again. I am telling you what I think, not what she said. She has been through so much more of this than you can imagine, with so many self-righteous people. When you are again here and she seems like she is in pretty good shape, ask her about Salandria, for example.

You have only an academic understanding of our problems. They are many, serious, and beyond your capacity to help, although I am sure you would want to if you could. Any unnecessary ones added become immediately intolerable. We carry too many. You will find that although he has been almost 100% silent on Ned, Gary, who is a psychologist, will tell you we carry a load of which he knows more than most would conceive possible.

Ned got me started correcting PM for publications in a general edition. I now have no choice but to continue. I hope to complete the two earlier parts, correcting them, that is, before I have to leave. It may turn out to be a total waste of time. When you are here, I can show you what of an important personal nature this means I have to lay aside. This is at some cost to Lil. But despite Ned's vacillation, because I had begun, I have to complete this, otherwise an enormous labor for both of us is wasted. And, I am not really preparing for the trip as I should be, for I can't do all things at one time. The preparation will be in the last minute.

In trying to explain to you the central point of my writing now may get lost, so I'd best get to it. Neither of us can take any more of this. If there is anything more with Ned, and we both, really, do want to forget him and what he has meant here, let it accumulate and let us have it at one time, after I am again home. Should you phone in my absence, don't mention Ned, please. Lil will be worried enough, for although she makes no mention of it, and I don't think you are aware of it, she probably has a notion of the potential of what I am heading into. There is some physical hazard. Without this there was too much. I've gone off to meet some of the roughest, but these cats this time are of a different species. I am aware of it, and for the first time it intrudes into my consciousness. I begin spending a couple of days with Jerry Ray, whose last exploit was shooting a man, which means he has a gun, doesn't it? And he comes from the NSRP, which has been keeping him for a while. We'll be staying together at Harriman, Tenn. I never carry my gun, except for dog dogs. Real ones, not figurative ones. That is the easiest part of this trip. Which also comes at a bad time in our personal problems. From Knoxville I got to Memphis, thence to N.O., thence Dallas.

What Ned reflects is that I got through to him more than he says or you realize. Whatever, if there are any developments, please put them on paper and let them stack until you know I am here to get the mail. He is, in my view, trying to save his own self-respect, no more. I'd like to be wrong and then to believe that I could trust him again. And don't forget Lil. She says little, but do not expect me to do anything she opposes, regardless of what it is, what it costs or means, even if she is wrong.

Best