

Dear Roger,

2/14/91

Your memo on Sylvia's papers is excellent, I'm glad you wrote it for several reasons, while they are not mine to make I also agree with some of your decisions, if that means anything to you, I have only a few minor disagreements to which I'll come, and although I was not aware of any reaction while reading it, rather while finishing reading it just before going to bed, I think that for some reason I can't figure out, it kept me from falling asleep. and that is extraordinarily rare! While lying away for more than an hour and a half, perhaps closer to two hours, and after getting up this morning, I could not decide what had this effect.

Through all my serious surgeries and the minor ones I've never had any trouble going to sleep, and I had two operations I was not expected to survive. The doctors ordered sleeping pills ad lib and through all the operations there was only one time I asked for one, when I'd stayed up for a baseball league championship game in the west. It left me keyed up, and that portion, ironically, was wasted because I had hardly been asleep when I was awakened for blood tests! I wake up at night urinate and, including last night, I never have trouble returning to sleep, probably in less than a minute most times.

In recent months, after sleeping well, I awaken tired and stay tired, meaning more than usual, for about a half hour. For that time I sit and read. This morning I could not pay attention, could not get my mind on the reading. So, I sat and thought and I've reached a few conclusions that may explain my inability to get to sleep—even though I'd arisen at 3:30.

Sylvia was an unusually intelligent woman, really brilliant. In spite of some of what I'll say, believe me, I still respect her greatly and I think her book is magnificent. Despite her rare gifts she was still human and like all of us made her mistakes. She was capable of terribly bad judgement while at the same time being as sharp a person as I ever knew. For example, she spotted Garrison for what he was immediately. I didn't and I made bad judgements I won't now go into. When her feelings, perhaps emotions, were involved, she also could be dishonest. and, generous as she was, stingy in a petty way.

Because I mention these things, I am not sending a copy to Jerry or Wrono. and I wonder why you excluded McKnight when her papers for now at least are there. Thanks to him they had and have a safe place. *I asked him but he did it.*

She went ape for Epstein. I trusted her judgement when she raved about his book, which I think she indexed, and helped the bastard's publisher publicize it before I read it when Epstein himself would not. Even when she knew he was yellow and had other character faults she was still his strong supporter. as late as when her books was in page proof I showed her an error in it involving him, and me, and she did not correct it. Read her introduction, on the sequence in which the books appeared. She read the limited edition of mine in 1965. She got one about May 6 or 7 when I printed it, 1966. Epstein's was as she knew published that June, the end. It makes no difference to me and it did not bother

then, except as it reflected on her. Yet with her mind she should have known on first reading that it was a pro-FBI anti-liberal book. There is nothing wrong with being anti-liberal or anything else if it is honest. Epstein's was a political diatribe she should have recognized for these things. I think she did not miss them and she did not change. Perhaps she did later.

There are other things that are small & won't go into. My point is that she was human and made human mistakes we all in varying degree make.

Those with you were not small. She was dishonest and her judgement was wretchedly bad. She abused your friendship and your trust. You may be right on how this came about but determined as she could be when I knew her, absent something already happening in her mind she should have been, to be honest, to continue to be a friend to a friend, and in her own selfish interest, etc.

I am sure I told you that I believe we should not censor the history of the critics and that this extends to not withholding nasty and untruthful things I think she has on me. The one that sticks in mind is the consequence of the lousy thing that bastard Harry Schiller did. He edited the tapes he made and was extremely dishonest about them. He also had me saying about Sylvia what I did not say and if one stops to think about it, could not have ^{said} made because it was before her book was out. What I'd said about Kopkin, who made a book out of Lane's, Epstein's and mine, he had me saying about her. As soon as I read that I wrote and told her the truth. I do not recall any response. If she did respond, it did not stick in my mind. *I think she believed Schiller.*

Whatever the reason, her judgement was miserable about you, the best she could have hoped for, and not a bit better in selecting Greg.

She could have done, if she really wanted her papers at CUNY, what I did. I found ~~an~~ out. Here the interest was so great at Wood that the president, the vice president, the librarian and a couple of other officials came with McKnight and they took care of everything. They had their lawyer draw up what I wanted, without cost to me. If she'd asked CUNY and it wanted her papers, it would have done the same thing. The things that you say need to be done are the usual responsibility of the university and its staffs are competent and can do them. (I was not aware that she had the unpublished manuscripts of others but that need not present any problem that competent professional librarians cannot handle properly.)

What you say about her being influenced by relatives makes sense and I can think of no other explanation. But the Sylvia I knew would not have been dominated by anyone, including relatives, no matter how strong a feeling she might have had for them. So I think that there may have been changes in her that you did not perceive.

It is time for me to go out for the morning papers if I am to read them without taking the time for what I want to do later in the day and I want to leave a little earlier

take it would be to use on her papers. He also gave different sums he said Stone had offered. I find myself wondering whether he had in fact accepted Stone's money and had second thoughts and did they push him across that thin line?

I think it best that you did not mention the names of those she feared might vandalize her papers and at the same time I'm curious and would like to know because increasingly I'm finding things of which I have a clear recollection missing. People do come here and if I wanted to supervise their access, which I don't, I can't.

Don't worry too much about the tapes of shows not surviving. Wrono has all of Gandolfo's and he missed nothing.

You get to Hood at the bottom of 15. I had nothing personal in mind when urging Greg to deposit them at Hood. My thinking was related to her papers. Compared to what is and will be available they are small. I think that most genuine students, other than if anyone were making a study of Sylvia, would be attracted to the largest deposit. It is one of the reasons I thought there would be more use of hers once made available at Hood than elsewhere. While it is true that there are more students in and near the larger cities, of which Boston is one and there after years Epstein's papers are not used at all, you are not talking about in-depth scholarship or study if you talk about two days or a few more during a break.

Aside from those who live in the New York area and can work on papers while living at home, you'll not find a place as economical for any student as here. I tell you a story about a stranger who was in touch with me by mail. He was an instructor at Penn State while working on his doctorate, on the Commission and communications. He had little money. He wanted to spend a week here. I did not ask Jerry. I've forgotten who phoned on the administrative end, but they got him a room in town for something like \$2-325 a week. I have no doubt they'd do something like that for any student and if a woman, I'm sure if a dorm room were empty should be welcome to it. If the student has a car - and I don't know what they'd do about eating with their students, but I think they would allow it - and has to live economically, without any of the junk/fast-food joint \$5 or a little more a day could cover food adequately. Not fancy, but substantially and not junky.

There is a chance, as you say on 16, that her work could suffer from competition. But not for the period of her work. I think you should examine into your own thinking on this. It comes across to me like you want her work examined rather than any other by making it more accessible to New York area students. It is a fact that her work is dated. But anyone making a real study of the field would have read her book and would certainly not ignore her work in any large deposit. Her work itself would not suffer, not the Sylvia I knew. But it includes only the earliest days. If more, not much of it.

When you talk about faculty "qualified or interested in supervising," how many places are there with anyone who meets this qualification? Hood does have a small history-political science faculty but they are superb. and you'll not find anyone better than Jerry

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McKnight. He does take time, to much ^{from} ~~for~~ his own work. He is probably the most popular member of the faculty and a couple of years ago some of the students wrote him in for governor or senator.

I think you should ask yourself questions about other items on this page. Aside from what represents metropolis provincialism. How, for example is where Sylvia lived or ~~sent to work~~ ^{ad} related to the best place for her materials ^{to} be used seriously, a work I emphasize. What difference does it make that a couple of experts on sound did anything at all? and then chickened out.

If there is really serious interest, for a thesis or a book, would her papers alone be what had to be consulted? Could Washington be avoided? How much is there in Washington that is not more accessible here? (and what a difference in environment and living costs!) They can get the nut stuff at Fensterwald's but nothing serious that isn't here with so much that isn't there and the hours of access in the FBI and CIA reading rooms are limited and what a different environment.

My recollections of Starnara not clear but I think he was bright, opinionated and not much else, with not much case knowledge and his own disconcerting at best Prejudices. again, so limited to the earliest.

I think your decision ~~is~~ to disociate yourself from her papers is wise and it is in your interest. The more you have to do with it the more unpleasant memories return. If I may make an additional suggestion, have nothing you can avoid to do with "elanson. I can't begin to make comprehensible to you how truly awful a person he is. In this field he is the exact opposite of a scholar. His books are terribly bad, egotripping, misleading, dishonest - really disinformational. He is trying to stake out a claim to owning the subject on all the assassinations and Greg has just widened the areas in which he can continue to make dishonest and baseless such claims or representations.

I also fear Lifton's evil influence out there.

I hope that ~~LeMat~~ gets and send me the copy of the will and the note he promised. I think we should be certain that it really is a will and not just something he wrote out when he was not in his right mind.

The more you have to do with this the more you'll be reminded of a breach of trust and of betrayal, including betrayal of friendship. I ~~id~~ ^{id} no more have expected that ~~that~~ you did and I know it has to be hard, so why not detach from it?

I think you should want all of your own work back, even if you have copies. In the long run, your work may be more important. Except what she imparted because she was so bright, her fine work is duplicated. Yours is not.

If you have the NYTimes 2/8 story on what ^{Just} liver stone plans I'd appreciate a copy of it and of anything else like it so I can keep up.

Thanks ^{Harold}

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 10, 1991

TO: File

FROM: Roger B. Feinman *RF*

CC: Harold Weisberg, David Wrone, Jerry Policoff

RE: DISPOSITION OF SYLVIA MEAGHER'S WORKING PAPERS AND
LITERARY ESTATE

Preliminary Remarks

The purpose of this memorandum is to set forth some of my recollections and thoughts concerning the disposition of the papers and literary property of the late Sylvia Meagher in the light of the suicide of her beneficiary, Gregory Stone, on January 29, 1991 and a batch of memoranda received from Harold Weisberg on February 9. This memorandum is based upon a file which I opened shortly after Sylvia's death, including notes of telephone conversations, personal notes, and copies of pertinent correspondence. It is not intended to be a comprehensive history, but rather to provide my personal perspective on what happened prior to January 29, 1991, and what tasks were left unfinished.

Because sensitive considerations personal to Sylvia and to me have a bearing on this subject, in the interest of clarity I shall allude to them without amplifying beyond what is necessary to a mature understanding of their impact upon the ultimate question of the disposition of her papers and copyrights.

Background

To the degree not already known by those who may read this in the future, the nature of my friendship with Sylvia Meagher has already been described in the Eulogy which I delivered at her memorial service.

Sylvia Meagher and I were not only colleagues who kept each other abreast and assisted each other with respect to our mutual interest in the JFK assassination, but we also developed a close personal friendship. Common interests and a sense of humor aside, the most likely catalyst in the breakthrough from impersonal collegiality to a close and confidential relationship was the fact that each of us had experienced in our respective families the destructive and

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debilitating effects of intra-family disputes over the distribution of a deceased relative's estate. In discussing these matters, we discovered a common appreciation for the importance of having close friends to tide one over during such periods, as well as the importance of family and the hope for eventual healing and reconciliation within a family.

During the late 1970s, Sylvia told me she wished to leave her papers in my care. She repeated her expression of intent through 1980 and 1981. She did have a Last Will and Testament drafted in 1981 containing this disposition. While I had several discussions with Sylvia up until near the end of her life concerning where her papers should go, after March 1981, I deliberately refrained from having any discussion with her about her Will. My concern in that regard (which I shared with her), was that her estate plan could conceivably be upset by her relatives if they desired to make an issue out of my being a lawyer and close friend, as well as a beneficiary. While she discounted that possibility and did not appear to understand why anyone would accuse me of "undue influence", we never discussed her Will again.

In general, my discussions with Sylvia were along much the same lines as the apparent nature of her later understanding with Greg Stone. There had been discussion among several of the leading critics of the Warren Commission as to the desirability of establishing a central repository for their files. At that time, no such facility appeared to be taking shape, and Sylvia (even to the end of her life) was always in a quandry as to where her papers should go. She was adamant that they should not go to a private organization such as Bud Fensterwald's, because she felt that such organizations were dependent upon the charismatic leadership of their founders and had an uncertain future beyond the founders' lifespans. She very strongly preferred that her files be placed with an appropriate institution of higher learning. The understanding we had was that I would have the opportunity to work with her files for a brief period of time to derive whatever assistance from them I may need in my own research, then donate them to a university or college of my choice so that they could be made available to students, researchers, scholars and journalists.

With respect to her literary estate (i.e., the copyrights to her work), it was Sylvia's belief that these had no monetary value. She very often professed that she had never earned enough money from her work on the case to cover her expenses in researching it (e.g., trips to the National Archives, ordering photocopies, travel to other locations, etc.). In the course of rendering legal advice to her per-

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taining to her publishing contracts, I inspected some of her business records and can at least corroborate here that her income from her work was abysmally modest. In fact, it chagrined her that she had not had the benefit of competent tax-related advice with respect to the deductibility of her expenses as "moonlighting expenses" during the years that she was simultaneously earning a salary from the United Nations and working on the case. With respect to her book, *Accessories After the Fact*, it was her belief that, while it remained a valid study of the Warren Commission, it was no longer current and not suitable for republication in view of the House Select Committee's investigation. After completing her index to the HSCA volumes, she was not inclined to undertake the task of either updating the book or writing a new one. She had regained full ownership of all rights to the book from Random House following the paperback edition's publication in 1976. Sylvia's desire was that there be some mechanism in place following her death whereby authors who wished to quote from her work would be able to ask someone in authority for permission, and if someone attempted to plagiarize or misappropriate her work, there would be someone with authority to prevent it and seek any necessary redress through the courts. Of course, she freely shared her work with others, but also wanted its integrity (and her own reputation) upheld.

I am absolutely certain that she never anticipated the type of situation which recently arose with regard to the film director Oliver Stone. In absolute rather than adjusted dollar amounts, Stone's offer to Greg for the theatrical film production rights alone amounted to more money than she ever earned from her work during her lifetime. It was definitely not her intention that anyone working on the JFK assassination derive a personal financial gain directly from her literary property (e.g., revising and re-issuing the book, selling portions of her rights, etc.). The only reason why the bequest of her papers and copyrights was drafted as such, and not as a trust, was to afford her beneficiary complete and unfettered discretion in making decisions regarding their use and disposition.

I specifically discussed with Sylvia whether she might prefer to leave her materials to her family. She maintained that her family had nothing to do with her work on the assassination.

In addition to our own discussions of her disposition of her work to me, I know that she also mentioned this to several of her closest girlfriends and colleagues on the case.

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The foregoing was my understanding (as well as theirs) up to the time of Sylvia's death. She did not disclose to any of us the existence of a second Last Will and Testament or the disposition to Greg Stone. I know that she was calling for me from her hospital deathbed during the final few hours of her life, but that a member of her family refused to give her nurse my telephone number so that I could be contacted. Since I doubt that she simply wanted to say "goodbye", it is my belief that Sylvia wished to communicate with me about the second Will so that I would not be caught unprepared by the news.

Of course, in addition to bereavement over the loss of a dear friend, I went through an extended period of puzzlement and great emotional distress over Sylvia's failure to apprise me (or others) of this change. I initially felt that I had somehow disappointed her or failed her in some way. Her executrix (one of her three nieces), cut short my attempt to inquire about this subject when I saw her at Sylvia's apartment a few days after Sylvia's death, and she asked that this discussion be deferred to a later date (it never came up again, however, in the few subsequent conversations I had with the niece). I eventually undertook a quiet investigation of the circumstances of this second Will by speaking with three of her closest girlfriends (women who had known Sylvia for between 30-35 years and were her closest confidants), other critics, and the attorney who drafted her second Will. I also inspected that Will once it was filed with the Surrogate Court for probate. Correlating the facts I derived from these contacts with my own recollections of Sylvia's behavior and our discussions over the last several years of her life, the essence of the situation as it appeared to me was that there may have been some concern within her family over our friendship and their expectations of inheritance which was brought to bear upon her at the time of the making of her second and final Will.

In or about September 1985, shortly after her last summer at Fire Island, when Sylvia had invited me (as she had in previous years) to spend time with her and certain members of her family, the husband of one of her nieces took Sylvia to see a lawyer for the purpose of making a new Will. The nieces also accompanied them, and the attorney later told me that he felt that some family influence was being exercised upon Sylvia at the time. She had apparently also received a lecture from a member of her family regarding loans she had made to a number of her friends (I was one of her debtors at the time, but eventually repaid her all that I owed). He spoke to her about allowing people to take advantage of her.

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I know that Sylvia's first version of her Will contained a "forgiveness of debts" provision about which she felt very strongly. It was her feeling, at least as of 1981, that she had been fortunate in her life to be able to help friends in need, and that if they were unable to repay her before her death she wanted to spare them the embarrassment of having to deal with her family. This provision was absent from the second Will. Remarkably, it was about the time of the making of that second Will that she spoke to me and other close friends about people taking advantage of her. This was a dramatic and sudden change in her behavior and attitude, which was noticed by her closest girlfriends.

Recalling certain conversations I had with Sylvia during the Fall of 1985 and the winter of 1985-86, it is very clear to me in retrospect that she did undergo, at least temporarily, a period of reappraisal regarding our friendship which may have caused her to reconsider her plans for the papers. On the other hand, I have learned since her death that she spoke of me to her closest girlfriends as though I were like a son to her. Regardless, our friendship ultimately continued unabated until her death. This brief period was an anomaly in our 15-year friendship, and it is now my general sense that possible discord in her family was influential in her behavior.

She regarded her family as being primarily concerned with mundane matters, especially money, while she preferred intellectual and cultural pursuits. It is my belief that Sylvia made this change primarily for the purpose of maintaining peace within her family, assuring them that her first love and loyalty was with them, and ensuring as well that there would be no squabble over her Will after her death. By leaving her literary property in the care of someone whom she could trust, but whom the family did not know at all, and who had no connection to her work, she effectively thwarted the possibility of a challenge to her estate plan from any interested party while accomplishing the most essential of her objectives for the preservation of her work.

Although I deal with Greg Stone in detail below, one interesting and perhaps relevant observation belongs here: Greg seemed to place a very high priority during my conversations with him the week after Sylvia died upon getting Sylvia's assassination files and books away from the family as expeditiously as he could. I did not want to press him too hard on why that was, but I had the feeling at the time that this was not in any way related to the family's plans for closing the apartment (they kept it until the end of February), but that he was following oral instructions he received from Sylvia. I do know that Susan Kaplan raised an

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issue with Greg regarding the books, which included rare first editions and out-of-print books on the assassination, and the 26 Warren Commission volumes annotated in her own hand. The family wanted to keep the books, raising an issue whether the Will provision covered them (it did, and they were foolish to even try this nonsense). Greg got the books anyway.

Oddly enough, I was told on February 13, 1989 by one of Sylvia's closest personal friends, Lenore Gomez that, even as recently as within the past several months, Sylvia had spoken to her of leaving her files to me. Lenore insisted that Sylvia never indicated to her that there was any change. What is also interesting about this conversation I had with Lenore Gomez was her statement that Lenny Kaplan (Susan's husband) "intimidated" Sylvia; Sylvia told Lenore that "Lenny thought he knew everything like a lawyer."

Lenore Gomez retained me without fee to obtain a copy of Sylvia's Will and determine whether she had been named a beneficiary. Lenore Gomez died one year after Sylvia. Based on four conversations I had with her, and a subsequent conversation with her daughter, Marlene Rassasso, Lenore Gomez went to her death without ever knowing that her friend of 35 years had named her and her husband the beneficiaries of \$5000 for the maintenance of Sylvia's cats (whom Susan had wanted to destroy).

My personal recollection is that the subject of the disposition of Sylvia's files continued to crop up in our conversations after 1985, and the gist was where she wanted the papers to go. She was very mercurial on this. She spoke to me within the last few months of her life as though she had not decided where the papers should go, except that they should go to a university. I did not interpret this conversation as an indication that she had changed her disposition to me; I would have followed her wishes in any event.

Finally, Sylvia was holding some written work of mine, together with documentary support, pertaining to one of my long-term projects, and it had been agreed between us in 1986 that this material was strictly confidential and under no circumstances to be disclosed to anyone. At her memorial service, Susan Kaplan gave me a manila envelope addressed to me in Sylvia's hand and marked "Confidential" with a red stamp. The scotch-taped seal of the envelope had been broken. The materials were there, but whether Sylvia had left any notes for me during the week of her final illness is something I will never know.

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Greg Stone and Sylvia Meacher

None of this is meant to detract from the very high regard and deep concern she had for Greg Stone. Quite obviously, she would not have made him her beneficiary were that not the case.

Sylvia had been devastated by the death of Greg's mentor, Allard Lowenstein. Lowenstein had come to see her about the JFK case, and they had dinner together several times toward the end of his life. She was very flattered by his interest in her, even though he was infallibly and outrageously late to their meetings. She had been cultivating Lowenstein to become more interested, and as publicly outspoken on the JFK case as he was on the RFK case. I believe she saw him as a potentially powerful ally.

During Sylvia's lifetime, I had only one personal contact with Greg, this by telephone, and it concerned my assistance to him in locating a little-known but poignant and beautifully written speech by Al Lowenstein about Andrew Goodman (of Goodman, Schwerner & Chaney fame) at the dedication of Andrew Goodman Hall at Queens College which Greg might wish to include in his book on Al. Sylvia, however, would advise me whenever she received a call from Greg (as was her custom with most of her callers and correspondence). She expressed especially serious concern that Greg was so committed to pursuing Lowenstein's work on the RFK case that he had not taken any steps to build his own career. She said on more than one occasion after hearing from Greg, "I'm worried about Greg. I'm afraid that once he comes to a dead-end on the RFK case he'll have nothing left to keep him going." Although she never told me she was leaving her materials to Greg, it may be that she was trying to impress upon me her feelings toward him. (It should be noted here that Sylvia suffered her own bouts with depression and had to be hospitalized for it on at least two occasions that I was aware of. I have little doubt that she recognized the signs of depression in Greg.)

It is noteworthy, however, that Greg had never done any work on the JFK case. As of the time I worked with him in Sylvia's apartment following her death, he had never read a book about the case. He had never even read Sylvia's book. He appeared to have no interest in the subject. And, he needed to ask me a great many questions about the people whom Sylvia knew and worked with over the years. This reinforces my belief that there were ulterior motives to Sylvia's final bequest. During her 25 years of work on the case, dozens of young men passed through her life, some of them troubled, obsessed, or even maniacally deluded. She tried to help some of them, and wanted to be left alone by

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others, but I never knew her to make a decision pertaining to her work on the case based upon compassion, sympathy or similar emotion. She always approached those decisions with cool detachment.

Contacts with Greg Stone concerning Sylvia's Papers

In candor, my immediate uncertainty over Sylvia's motives prompted concerns about (a) whether there were any elements of my personal unfinished work on the case remaining in her files; (b) establishing and maintaining a working relationship with Greg in order to assure my personal access to her materials; and (c) attempting to determine whether there had been something untoward about Sylvia's relationship with Greg which may have affected the disposition of her materials. Since one of the few things I knew of Greg was that he had written a book on Lowenstein, I was worried that he might be the type of person who would seek personal gain from Sylvia's work. Once I had satisfied myself that Greg did not appear to be the type of person who would seek to personally profit from this bequest, and that he seemed to have some very exciting and interesting ideas regarding the handling of Sylvia's papers, I resolved to help him, since he confessed that he had no knowledge of her work on the case.

At the same time, it would be fair to say that, from our very first face-to-face meeting, I could see that Greg was carrying a weight on his shoulders. I had the eerie sense in his presence of being transported back to my college days during the late 60's and listening to polemics from a member of the SDS. He had the same cataclysmic sense of doom and gloom about him that was prevalent in many student quarters back then.

After meeting Greg at Sylvia's memorial service (after which we had a bite to eat with Jerry Policoff), I spoke to him on January 17, 1989. He explained to me that he regarded himself as a "trustee" with an obligation to fulfill Sylvia's wishes regarding making her materials available. He further explained that he had had a discussion with Sylvia, sent notes to her, and she told him what her feelings were about the issues involved. He invited me to join him at Sylvia's apartment to orient him to the scope and organization of Sylvia's papers, as well as her collection of assassination-related books.

When I arrived at Sylvia's apartment, Greg was out purchasing some stationery, and Susan Kaplan let me in. Following my attempt to inquire into the circumstances of the Will, Susan (who had asked me to speak at Sylvia's memorial) spontaneously warned me not to remove any books

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from Sylvia's apartment. She said, "I will take all necessary steps to protect the rights of my sons." Although she would later call my office to ask if she had the right to purchase Sylvia's apartment (Sylvia was a renter in a building turned co-op), she never apologized for that disgusting outburst, and I have always regarded it as revealing of the fears and misunderstandings she and Lenny (neither of whom had ever met me prior to Sylvia's death) may have had, and relevant to Greg's sense of urgency.

Upon his arrival, Greg explained that he had a short-term need to find an "interim repository" for the papers which would afford "absolute and total security", and access for him and whoever else is involved.

I joined Greg for two days at Sylvia's apartment that first week following her death, and I seem to recall that I also dropped by for an additional evening. During that week, I took a very cursory and general inventory of the organization of her files.

Sylvia Meagher, in addition to leaving a Will, left numerous notes to her niece/executrix containing instructions regarding the handling of her possessions. She also apparently had some very detailed discussions with Greg Stone, imparting certain instructions to him regarding the handling of her assassination files. Susan Kaplan told me on February 13, 1989 that ~~the family did destroy several of Sylvia's files which were marked "Destroy-- Do Not Read"~~. Those files destroyed by the family were thought to contain highly personal (i.e., love life) memorabilia from Sylvia's younger days, although one cannot be entirely certain. Separate and apart from those purely personal files, there were other materials related to her work on the case that Greg was orally instructed to destroy.

One issue which he specifically consulted me on was something called "The R-4 File", which Sylvia had instructed him to destroy without reading. This was a telephone call from Greg on January 19, 1989. He asked me whether I had ever seen the file, and recounted a conversation he had with Sylvia in 1985, from which he took notes. She had told him to destroy the file. I explained that I had noticed correspondence mentioning an R-4 in her files, but did not recall a specific folder labeled "R-4", although I may have missed it. I am generally familiar with what this is about, but will not go into the details here.

My notes also reflect that I told Greg of Sylvia's private agreement with me that the stuff we worked on together would not be disclosed to anyone, that some material had already been returned to me by the family, and that my entire

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collection of papers would someday be placed with Sylvia's. I felt he had a right to know that there might be a gap in her papers with respect to her involvement with me in my own work, and that there was an explanation for this.

Greg was uncertain whether to destroy the file. Jerry Policoff and I had discussions between us about this. It was our feeling that Sylvia's wishes must be followed implicitly. Greg, however, wanted to give himself time to reflect on whether the file should be destroyed or sequestered. To this day, I do not know what he did with that file or others that Sylvia may have wanted destroyed.

Greg and I spoke about making efforts to locate a place for temporary storage and possible permanent placement of Sylvia's papers. He authorized me to make some inquiries on his behalf, which I did with:

- a) Harvard, which I recall had a general policy of asking for endowment money to process such collections;
- b) MIT (a similar story); and,
- c) Southeastern Massachusetts University (per Phil Melanson, who doubted they'd be interested).

I made several calls on Greg's behalf and reported the results to him.

I also had a friend who was the Special Counsel to the Chancellor of the City University of New York. I contacted him about the papers, and he requested that the authorized representative of Sylvia's estate (which in the case of her papers would have been Greg himself) write a letter to him to start the process rolling.

I spoke to Greg about this contact on January 20, 1989, as a result of which he was to draft a letter to CUNY.

I also suggested to Greg on that date that he have his own Will revised or, if he did not have one, drawn up to provide for the disposition of the Meagher literary property in the event of his death.

In our conversation, Greg expressed a desire to "mobilize awareness of Sylvia Meagher's legacy". He wanted to find a place, for example, which would establish an award for the best paper based on research in Sylvia's materials, and he spoke of looking for "potential vehicles" for her papers.

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The next day, Greg was busy boxing records at Sylvia's apartment, and preparing to leave New York to go to Virginia.

I later received from him a copy of a letter he sent to CUNY that day.

Also on January 21, we discussed the type of future security arrangements that could be implemented for the papers. I sent him a blank document removal form of the type used in law offices when managing large collections of discovery documents in litigation. He encouraged me to continue making calls to people I had not yet hit. (To the best of my knowledge, he never made any inquiries of his own to any college or University other than Hood College and (at the recent suggestion of David Lifton) UCLA.

Greg also asked me during this period to advise him on the types of provisions that ought to be included in a temporary storage agreement. On or about January 24, he sent me a draft of a memorandum agreement, which I received on January 30. I recall sending him back a long letter reviewing his personal draft of such an agreement and suggesting additional provisions.

I received a call from him on January 31, 1989. He set up an appointment to meet with two high officials of the CUNY.

On February 4, 1989, I called Greg Stone at his home in Alexandria, Va. He had spoken to CUNY on Tuesday and said it "looks more promising in the long run than in the short run." He had a 1/2-hour talk with them. CUNY was concerned about the amount of time in temporary storage. Greg wanted to go back to L.A. for 6 months to work on RFK, and wouldn't be able to inventory the papers until then. He planned to talk to Hood that week, and if he was able to make an interim arrangement with them at that time, would put papers in Hood.

When he was next in New York, Greg informed me on February 16, 1989 that he had reached an interim arrangement with Hood College for the temporary storage of the papers. He was about to purchase file cabinets in which the papers would be kept locked. He intended to move the papers from Sylvia's apartment the following week. He spoke of the need to inventory the papers, which he had not yet done. He authorized me to make whatever inquiries I wished to make with universities regarding a permanent archival arrangement.

Basically, Greg and I both discussed and agreed that certain tasks needed to be performed and certain issues ad-

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dressed before the papers could be placed in a permanent home and considered ready to present to the public. These are outlined in the section "Unfinished Business".

After Greg placed the papers into temporary storage in Hood, however, I ceased my efforts to help him find a permanent home. I was beginning to feel very uncomfortable with the idea of talking to universities in hypothetical terms, knowing that everything would have to be cleared anyway with Greg as the owner of the papers. He seemed to have very interesting ideas on what he wanted to do. I decided to keep an eye on his activities and offer whatever help I could when needed.

From then until January 7, 1991, Greg and I spoke only two or three times. It was clear to me that he was not doing anything with the papers. I also understood that he had had extensive discussions with Harold Weisberg, who is a strong proponent of donating the papers to Hood College. Greg seemed to be in favor of putting the papers there "because that's where Weisberg's papers are going."

On January 7, 1991, after a considerable lapse of time, I received a call from Greg, and it was the last time I spoke to him. He told me that he was "burned out" and "can't do anymore" on the RFK case. He advised me that he had just that day received an offer from Oliver Stone's production company to buy the theatrical film production rights to Sylvia's book. He wanted to know what Sylvia would have done and how to look at this from a legal standpoint. We discussed the issue. I later asked him if he had done anything with Sylvia's papers, to which he replied that he had not invested any time or done anything with the papers. I expressed my disappointment that he had done nothing with the papers. I told him that two years had passed, and it was a shame to just leave them sitting there in the basement of the Hood library. For the first time, I asked him outright to donate the papers to the CUNY so that I could work with them there and make them available to other researchers. Greg told me that he was "heavily leaning" toward Hood College as a permanent home, but had not foreclosed CUNY.

When we last spoke, neither of us knew the nature of Oliver Stone's film project (which I have since learned is intended to make a folk hero out of Jim Garrison). Accordingly, we spoke in hypothetical terms. I suggested to Greg that, if he decided to accept the offer, he set aside a portion of the proceeds to endow Sylvia's papers. I note for the record that he said he was thinking of using the money for other purposes related to his foundation.

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He never followed through on any of the ideas he discussed with me shortly after Sylvia's death. He never even looked at the papers. I now believe that he had no real interest in the matter, and may have seen this as a burdensome distraction, albeit an honor bestowed upon him by Sylvia. Greg started out with some good ideas, but never followed through on any of them. Of course, I realize that his illness may have prevented him from marshalling the enthusiasm and energy to tackle this project. Nevertheless, although Sylvia died over two years ago, her work is still another six months-to-one year away from being opened for others to use, were the ideas Greg discussed with me to be implemented.

I might also add here that another issue concerning Sylvia's literary property arose during the two years between Sylvia's and Greg's deaths. From previous correspondence you already are aware that Jerry Rose published a complete copy of the memorandum Sylvia had submitted to the HSCA, which he apparently obtained from one of the other participants in the HSCA colloquium. Although I raised a strong objection to this with Rose (partly because I was the co-author and partly because Sylvia was no longer around to approve the publication of the memo), I don't think that Greg was ever even aware of the matter. I never discussed it with him.

Unfinished Business

The following is a list of the tasks and issues which Greg and I discussed at Sylvia's apartment and on the telephone in the immediate aftermath of her death:

- a) The papers had to be catalogued.
- b) An index might be prepared.
- c) For a possible permanent location, we would look to:
 - 1) A college or university, located around
 - 2) The Boston/Washington/New York axis
- d) Among the criteria for the selection of a permanent repository were:
 - 1) The motivation and ability of the institution to get students involved in working with Sylvia's papers;
 - 2) Practical accessibility to researchers;

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3) The collection should not become a part of some broader politically motivated collection.

e) The collection ought to be preserved in the nature of "the tools of a critic" (my idea, as I recall, but looking at the laundry list I cannot be sure.)

f) Protection

1) Security: we discussed certain people who seemed to bear a grudge against Sylvia and might have a desire to vandalize or destroy her papers (I will not mention the names.)

2) We discussed the possibility of eventual transfer of the hard copy files either to

a) Microfilm; or

b) CD-ROM

g) Rules respecting access to/Photocopying of/quotation from the records.

h) Confidentiality of some things she had, e.g., letters, information that was imparted to her in confidence by others. These might have to be sequestered for a period of time.

i) Sylvia was an outspoken and opinionated woman who was not reluctant to express her views toward others, including people who worked on the case. Some consideration would have to be given to any derogatory comments in her files which might unfairly damage the reputations of those still living and whether or not to sequester such materials for a period of time.

j) Sylvia may have retained unpublished manuscripts of articles or books she received from others for critiquing. If so, the authors would have to be contacted and consulted.

In addition to the foregoing issues which Greg and I formulated for future consideration, there seemed to me to be some urgent necessities with regard to the maintenance of certain portions of her collection, which I never discussed with Greg. For example, she had an extensive collection of audio tapes of radio talk shows from the early days of the controversy over the case. (It is doubtful that some of those radio stations still have such tapes in their own archives!) The tapes, however, were in the old acetate-backed reel-to-reel media (those were the days before mylar

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tape came into wide use) and would probably crumble if attempted to be played today and should be carefully transferred as soon as practicable to modern audio cassettes. Also, she had an extensive collection of newspapers and newspaper clippings. Some of these were already in a terrible state of disintegration. I recall shards of newspaper falling onto the floor of her living room closet when they were handled. These newspaper items will have to be dealt with in a suitable archival manner.

There is a question in my mind whether Sylvia's family retained her telephone notebooks or whether they were included in the collection taken by Greg. It was Sylvia's custom to take note of her telephone conversations on the case in stenographic-type notepads. She also mingled personal conversations with her notes on the case, however, and the family may have retained some of these. The issue ought to be clarified.

Sylvia's earliest copyrights are edging very close to the time when they will have to be renewed.

The matter of the "R-4" file or any other materials Greg was orally instructed to destroy must be clarified.

Conclusions

1. I was very impressed by Greg and I was shocked and saddened by his death.
2. Sylvia, I regret to say, showed poor judgment: She apparently hoped to get Greg to substitute one obsession for another, when what he really needed was medical treatment.
3. Greg may have been unwise to accept the assignment. While I can understand that it probably meant a great deal to him that Sylvia thought so highly of him as to leave him this bequest, he was simply not up to tackling the responsibility he had assumed.
4. To the best of my knowledge, Greg never followed through on any of the ideas which he discussed with me shortly after Sylvia's death.
5. I was never in favor of Hood College. My main concern was the issue of accessibility of the campus to students/researchers for the extended periods of time one would need to work with the papers in order to derive any real benefit from them, say at least several days or a week at a time. Also, when I went down to Frederick, Maryland to visit Harold in April 1989, the Hood librarian told me that the entire school was shut down for the Easter break and

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there was no staff at the library. Now, how the hell is a kid who wants to go down there on his Easter vacation going to work with her papers? I had other concerns as well.

a) One of my concerns was that Harold has done so much more work under the FOIA than any other researcher, that his collection of materials literally dwarfs anything that any other researcher/writer has done. I remain concerned that, since Sylvia's files were not anywhere near as extensive, appreciation for her work might suffer by comparison, whereas it might best be appreciated on its own merit, just as she believed it should when she was alive.

b) Other than the person of one professor, Jerry McKnight, I am unaware of any other faculty qualified or interested in supervising student use of the materials.

6. In my opinion, the thought that some of the critics had many years ago of establishing a central repository have really diminished in significance due to the advent of personal computer and CD-ROM technology, whereby the collection can eventually be made available to universities all over the country, if not the world. I envision that alumni donations and private foundation support might be solicited to bring this about in the future, although there may be other avenues to investigate, such as the establishment of a not-for-profit endowment fund.

7. While my first preference is the CUNY, the fact remains that Greg did not conduct any real investigation into other possible locations, and this should have been done. CUNY is one possibility because:

a) Sylvia lived and worked in New York City her entire life.

b) Her only higher education was adult education courses at CUNY.

c) Professors Weiss and Ashkenazy of Queens College contributed the controversial accoustics analysis of the Dallas Police Radio tape which played such a prominent role in the HSCA hearings, thus the CUNY has a symbolic significance in the case.

d) The CUNY has a strong faculty in the disciplines of History, Political Science, and Communications.

e) The CUNY includes the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, where many law enforcement personnel are trained.

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- f) A vast number of students attend the CUNY.
- g) New York City is readily accessible. A student can spend time here on a budget at a YMCA or youth hostel, or find a cheap room to rent, or stay with a relative, friend, or friend-of-a-friend.
- h) A colleague of Sylvia's, the late Thomas Stamm, donated his papers to Baruch College of CUNY
- i) New York City has vast libraries for the conduct of collateral historical or sociological research, including the Museum of Broadcasting, the Columbia School of Journalism, the Newspaper Branch of the New York Public Library, and many many others.

I am informed as of Thursday, February 7, 1991 that Greg Stone left a Will, but that it does not appear to contain any disposition of the legacy he was bequeathed by Meagher. In any event, I must assume that he left some sort of instructions to his family.

As indicated above, while seeking to resolve my personal anxiety over this bequest, I subordinated my own feelings and personal concerns and did what I could to help Greg. One can only imagine what it felt like to someone who was closely associated with Sylvia for 15 years to frequently be asked, "What would Sylvia have done?" or "How did she feel toward (this or that person)" by a young man who never was interested in her work on the case yet inherited her legacy to history. I sincerely regret that the first and only time I lost my self-control with Greg was the last time I spoke with him. Ownership of and authority over the disposition of Sylvia's legacy has apparently now passed into the hands of a complete stranger -- a relative of Greg Stone -- a person who never knew or spoke to Sylvia, let alone had anything to do with the subject matter of her work. I find this chain of events as sickening as they are tragic. For reasons of my own well-being, I have resolved not to render any further assistance relating to the handling of Sylvia's work on the JFK case. Each time this subject arises, it revives painful feelings that I thought I had overcome. Whatever her intent, her final Will must be allowed to stand as mute and inscrutable testimony to her condition and frame of mind, as well as her sense of responsibility toward her work and her colleagues.