

Dear Dave,

3/2/91

The enclosed letter from Roger Feinman is, of course, a shock. It disturbs me not as much because the entirely baseless accusations are indelible but because it worries me very much about his state of mind. I fear that he is unable to cope with his own frustrations.

And there is what I'm sure he'll misunderstand, entirely of his own making by his insistence on using MCI mail when I've told him that it only delays what he writes me. In this instance, they actually sent his letter to Naperville, Ill. whence it was mailed me on the 29th, the day it would have reached me by regular mail. As too often happens, when I'm as immobile as I am a clutter develops on my desk and either yesterday or the day before I came on a fat envelope addressed to him that, without examining, I just sealed and mailed. He'll assume it is a long response to what I just got today because he wrote it the 28th and ~~sent~~ faxed it into the unnecessary delay.

Of course because I've known Roger only a decent and caring person this is more troubling because it is out of character, factually incorrect, in some instances not rational, and because he is irrationally attached to Sylvia and the loving memory he has of her.

As soon as I opened the letter, before reading anything, I had the highlighter because I can't trust my recollection and I thus highlight what I want to respond to. It was not until I got to the last sentence that I realized it is a futility.

Greg Stone, 40 or 41, is a "boy." The burden Sylvia imposed on him is "overwhelming mercy and compassion." She knew he was devoted to his Lowenstein/RFK endeavors, she knew he was working on his doctorate, and giving him this obligation was "overwhelming mercy and compassion." Were he rational he'd be asking himself whether it is the burden Sylvia imposed on Greg that added the extra weight he could no longer carry.

I did tell Greg twice, which is more than once, not that Hood ~~is~~ "would handle everything" but that it would take care of the accessioning, which is what Greg told me he had to do and made clear it was the last thing in the world he wanted to do. As Roger also knows, I urged Greg to get Roger to do what had to be done so he'd be free to return to his doctorate. I'm absolutely certain I told Roger that. Both that all Greg talked to me about ~~was~~ accessioning and that I'd urged him to get Roger to do the rest. Knowing very well that I'd urged Greg to have him do what had to be done other than accessioning, it simply and to Roger's knowledge is not true that I could have said that Hood would do "everything." Moreover, I knew nothing and still know nothing about what Sylvia left. As I also told Roger after he told me, I had no knowledge that she had unpublished manuscripts of others. I'd assumed from something Greg said about the time he picked her boxes of papers up that the question that existed was of confidentiality. I knew of nothing else.

It is irrational of Roger, save that apparently whatever Sylvia did has to be right so it cannot have been irrational of her, to overload the ~~same~~ "boy" that much more with JFK assassination materials in which he never had any interest at all.

It is simply a lie to say that I talked him out of his "own natural inclinations." He spoke of having to look at Sylvia's records as an affliction. That is why he liked the idea of Roger doing it instead. The "cruelty" he refers to does exist, but it is, alas, Sylvia's, no matter how fine her motive may have been. The way Roger puts the rest of this sentence on "considering" going to Hood to go over the records is not the way Greg spoke to me. He clearly wanted not to have to put any time in on that at all.

What does all this come from, other than ~~whatever~~ ^{what} murkies his mind up? My belief that Sylvia's papers would find more use at Hood, which will have the largest collection, the one real scholars are more likely to want to use. The notion that all by themselves in NYC they hold what will be a magnet to scholars makes little sense to me. While I do not have the remotest notion what is in those papers other than her correspondence and notes on her own work, and drafts of it, as I'm sure I told him it is quite dated and thus is more limited in the appeal it can have if by itself.

This, coming out of the blue, worries me. For Roger. He has not been able to make a living since his law firm closed down, the owner behaving very badly in how he did it. He, with a New Yorker's provincialism, believes that Sylvia was damaged. (He may have been because he told me he intended to work on his own work in them.) I'm sorry there is nothing I can do to help him and I fear that if I try he'd just get wilder. I'm worried about him.

Handwritten signature

This letter was electronically transmitted and distributed by MCI Mail

February 28, 1991

Harold Weisberg
Route 12
Old Receiver Road
Frederick, MD 21701

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

After 17 years, this is the last time I shall correspond with you, and I must ask you to cease writing to me. Sylvia Meagher did make an error in judgment and -- yes -- she should have left her work in my care. But you earn no points for agreeing with me. She gave this boy (Greg Stone) a project to work on. She must have known that he didn't know the case. It was a gamble, but also an act of overwhelming mercy and compassion: All he was supposed to do -- all she asked of him -- was to look through her papers to prepare them, but if his interest happened to be piqued by what he read in her files (i.e., if by chance he were to get hooked on the case and decide to work on it), so much the better.

You and your colleagues talked him out of that project. You told him (more than once), in effect, not to worry; Hood would handle everything. You persuaded him not to follow through on Sylvia's instructions (and let's think, Harold: if she trusted her relatives to destroy her personal materials, she could just have well as trusted them to follow instructions for her JFK files; she wanted Greg to go looking). You persuaded him not to follow his own natural inclinations when it would have done him the most good -- when he was at the end of the RFK case. You took away from him the project Meagher apparently hoped would keep him going. The cruelty of it all is that he appears to have actually considered returning to Hood to review the papers. Sylvia almost succeeded. You are the reason for her failure. Were it not for you, Stone might still be alive and continuing to receive medical treatment.

Greg Stone may have dug his own grave, but you, Jerry McKnight and Dave Wrone were standing nearby with your own shovels, ready to fill it in with dirt. If Hood College keeps Sylvia Meagher's legacy, that school will permanently bear the taint of how it was obtained: contrary to the purpose of her bequest, and at the possible cost of a young man's life.

A fitting addition to your self-monument. I suggest that the inscription read: "Don't worry, Greg. Hood has its own responsibility. They'll handle it for you."

When it comes time for you to meet your maker, Harold, you'd better take a scented bath first, because the morticians will have a helluva time dispelling your odor of sanctity.

All letters will be returned unopened, marked "delivery refused". Do not write to me again.

Very truly yours,

Roger

Roger Bruce Feinman
Attorney at Law
237 Park Avenue
21st Floor
New York NY 10017

Harold Weisberg
Route 12
Old Receiver Road
Frederick, MD 21701

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