

Mary McHughes Ferrell
4406 Holland Avenue
Dallas, Texas 75219-2133
(214) 528-0716

March 30, 1993

Mr. Harold Weisberg
7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, MD 21702

Dear Harold:

Harold, after reading the two letters I received from you yesterday, I decided to share the last letter from Harrison. Peggy DOES NOT HAVE THIS LETTER. You are the only one I am sharing it with. I am giving you permission to use it in any way you see fit. However, I am not sending it to anyone else.

The reason I was so devastated by the letter deserves an explanation. I do hope you will be discreet about what I am going to share with you now. Harrison's rabid accusations -- White Citizens Council and Ku Klux Klan -- do not bother me. Everyone who has ever known me has known that I am fiscally conservative and extremely liberal on social issues. Perhaps I am being silly to be so touchy about the following -- but, here goes!

Buck and I were married by a Justice of the Peace more than 53 years ago. Later, we were married by a Catholic priest to make my mother happy. I have been Atheist for most of my adult life but have reared my children in the Catholic Church. In 1956, Buck was drinking to excess and was not contributing to the support of the children. I divorced him. He instantly became a model husband. Came home and stayed home. Worked and contributed to the household. Stopped drinking and joined Alcoholics Anonymous. In 1957, Larry informed us that he wanted to go to a seminary and become a Catholic priest. I was a bit surprised but felt that he was old enough to make up his mind. I did not feel that Larry would stick with the decision but I did not try to talk him out of it.

In June, Father Jerome Calcagno came to visit us and wanted to see Larry's Baptismal Certificate and his Confirmation Certificate. He then asked for our Marriage Certificate. I brought all the documents out but added when I handed him our Marriage Certificate, "Father, we are actually divorced but this is our original Marriage Certificate when we were married by the priest." Father Calcagno said, "There is no problem. Just go quietly and get a marriage license and I will remarry you at the rectory." I protested and said, "Father, I'm not sure I want to remarry him. He behaves better when he doesn't have that legal hold on me." Father Calcagno seemed shocked and said, "Oh, Mary, we have to be certain that you two are legally married." I answered, "I thought the Catholic

Church maintained that 'once married, always married'." He agreed, but said, "The Church must satisfy civil laws. What if Larry should someday become Pope." I asked how the Church handled the case of Saint Augustine who was a bastard.

Father Calcagno was completely disgusted with me and said they would not accept Larry in the seminary unless we were remarried. I felt certain that they needed priests so badly they would relent. However, the summer passed and Larry was to have gone to St. Louis on August 31, 1957, but it became obvious that they were not going to let him go. Finally, Buck went and got the marriage license and we were remarried by Father Jerome Calcagno on the morning of August 31, 1957, and Larry left Dallas for St. Louis that afternoon.

In with this terrible letter, Harrison enclosed a Xerox copy of that marriage certificate. He did not refer to it in his letter and did not refer to it during his visit that Saturday afternoon. It seemed he was just trying to let me know that he knew all the bad things about me there were to know. I don't know what he intends to do with it. Perhaps he is going to write that Buck and I reared four children before we were married.

As I stated earlier, feel free to use the handwritten letter in any way you see fit. I trust your judgment. However, I trust that you will keep confidential the information about the marriage certificate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary".

Mary M. Ferrell

/mf
Enclosures