

Mrs. Katherine Deber
103 Beacon Road
Bethany, CT 06524

4/12/93

Dear Kathy,

Lil and I are both surprised, really shocked, at what you report. Neither of us doubts you a bit but it is all entirely the opposite of what we knew about your father.

Personally and with regard to money.

While it could easily have been true that he had more than one woman friend at a time I never had even an inkling of that. I can remember only one that I met aside from Fran and until I met your mother. I knew of one other about whom he told me a story, Ambassador Dodd's daughter Martha. If you are interested I'll tell you more. It sort of smacks of what you have told us.

The only foreign women I can remember him mentioning are those he got to try to help me. One was the much older Baroness Maura Budberg, who then was Sir J. Arthur's mistress and brains, according to Sidney and the other was an official at the German publishing house Fischer AG. The former placed my first book ^{with Collins} and the spooks moved in and had a don give a bad opinion of it and the second they killed by intercepting the mail to me from Fischer. Plus the returned manuscript when I did not respond to the letters offering publication. Which I never got! I think her name was Stephanie.

I never heard of Beatrice Rosenfeld. But when you were about 10 we were not in contact.

What a wretched way to treat a fine woman like your mother and a child like you!

Your mother was a real Griselda!

And you wrote your letter on my 80th birthday!

As I try to recall how others who knew us both regarded him, I recall nothing at all like what you report. Perhaps they did not know, perhaps they did not talk. And perhaps he was different when in Washington. Or more circumspect.

I'm glad to learn on what was a bad day anyway, makes it easier in a way.

It is really sick that he did not acknowledge you or your children in his will and it is monstrous that he could have done what could have subjected your mother to prosecution.

Jekyll and Hyde and we never had a clue!

Hope you get no more reminders in Ireland and that your visits ^{are} as all joy.

Our love, and sympathy,

Katharine Weber

108 BEACON ROAD, BETHANY, CONNECTICUT 06524

April 8, 1993

Dear Harold,

I didn't want too much more time to pass without responding to your several mailings. Thank you for the Martin Luther King book. I look forward to reading it. We were skiing in Colorado, and work has been oppressive since our return. This isn't, in fact, the response your letters deserve. The toy farm was mine, not John's. It occurs to me, in fact, that those hours spent arranging that farm possibly caused what I think psychoanalysts call a reaction formation resulting in my being so at home in our little farmhouse in the countryside of West Cork. The Irish landscape, particularly along the West coast, is very similar to that of Cornwall, where we spent part of a summer when I was six. I'll be in Ireland in May, and again in August.

(That summer I was six was when I met Angela, the woman my father was involved with in London for all those years. She was with him when he died.)

Your incredulity at my description of Sidney fits, in a way. So often, people who knew him knew him either as the sort of good, virtuous, dedicated man you describe, or they knew him as a swindling, lying, deceiving poseur. He was both. His estate is just now, this week, wrapping up. The mess has taken ten years. He was a serious tax cheat, and he left Andrea in a position where she might have been liable for criminal prosecution. He did not acknowledge me in his will, nor my children, his grandchildren. At least now there is a little money in trust for John, of which Nick is the trustee. There are lawyers in New York at the law firm we have used who call it "the estate from hell." And I wonder what Beatrice Rosenfeld is up to these days. I knew her as a child, and I knew she was Sidney's girlfriend by the time I was 10. That romance, which predated my mother, as you know, also clearly ran through all these years. I wish I hadn't found the evidence I did -- letters, hotel receipts, etc. -- which make that so abundantly clear. Sidney's letters to her talk about his marriage and his children. It's sad. It's also not very nice. And there were so many others. I must have met half a dozen women over the years with whom Sidney was involved. It posed a conflict of loyalty that is not fair to a child, to a teenager, to an adult.

Well. Sorry to fume so. I've got to get back to work. (I'm playing with a fictitious interview with Philip Roth, based on two real ones I've done.) Better letter later....

love to you both -
Katharine