

Dear Jim,

10/26/77

Your letter of the 19th is remarkable, beautiful and a real reassurance about yourself. You, too, have been much on my mind in recent months. If I hope I never have to go through such experiences as you have for so long I would also hope to be able to come of of them with a modicum of the stability with which you have.

I look forward to your having time to tell me more about Janifer. I retain a very clear picture of her in Paul Elder's as of a very disconcerting afternoon that followed on many almost sleepless nights. I can tell you exactly where each of us was and relate that to the store and the streets and the books, the picture remains that clear. If in part this was from the extraordinary buildup from Hal Verb, one I was to learn was understated rather than exaggerated, I recall only one other person from that afternoon, the cousin who had been like a father to me and who I'd thought was in suburban Philadelphia that day. Save that Hal took me to Elder's I have no other recollection of him of that day.

Lil, who wants to write you but is at a loss, hopes that your trip east includes us as of course I expect. And want very much.

Recently she read an article in the Post about hospices without any reference to yours. She was indignant.

She ^{also} has been accumulating clippings for you, many fewer than before, mostly on China. She believed, quite correctly, that if I kept them in the amazing clutter of my office they'd get lost. Much has. When you see a third-class mailing you'll know what it is and can let it wait if you want to.

A few years ago I would have had trouble with your portrayal of your (plural) serenity. Today I do not. In part this is because you forecast it, whether or not consciously. Now I can understand what earlier I had never considered.

We are both very deeply involved in FOIA matters, making other than losses of what appear to be losses in court and collecting unprecedented records from the FBI on the King case. Skimming them requires much time. As more than 30,000 pages may indicate. Lesar also is snowed under with these cases and the struggles they require of us.

I'm also getting some of the records on myself. This also means more battling with the FBI. The fabrications are hard to believe even with them in front of me. One has a reversal of the No Left Turns twist in Hoover. It may amuse you.

In Whitewash I report his answer to the question asked by the Warren Commission, why did Oswald not fire while the motorcade was approaching on Houston Street. The Founding Father assured the Commission, which knew better, that this was because trees along Houston Street blocked Oswald's vision. There being not a single tree along Houston I noted this and reprinted a Secret Service pictures showing it.

Utter FBI consternation followed. The Director had been accused of error! Unheardof! So either the head of the General Investigative Division or one of the Assistant Directors provided the reassurances that concluded that the Director had not erred. Dealey Plaza and Elm Street were converted into "the park." There were trees in the park. So before the motorcade was in the park and because there were trees in the park after the left turn (the words are dared) there were trees that did too block Oswald's vision. Even if there were no trees the Director was right. The ludicrous was written in a way that would stroke ~~th~~ him, ending with the magical words that he was indeed right. not wrong.

Now also I have some of what they fed Lyndon Johnson. Like our celebration of the Russian Revolution every year. It was actually two months earlier and was an annual outing for Washington area service personnel arranged by a rabbi friend with the Jewish Welfare Board. Once they put it together there was no need to limit distribution to the White House. I have records of the same stuff going to all the AGs and their Deputies, others in DJ and elsewhere, even unnamed Tennessee officials.

I think you know what we wish for you.

21 October 1977

Dear Harold and Lil:

As she had hoped, Jenifer died peacefully early last Wednesday afternoon, Oct. 19th.

It was rather like a light being turned off. She had been pain-free nearly all the time for several weeks and was quite comfortable, serene and calm as always. She knew, of course, that her lungs were filling up with fluid and could overwhelm her at any time. Oxygen helped to keep her more comfortable, and she had even resumed eating a bit here and there during the last week or so.

I had given her the few bites she'd take for lunch, watched her drink most of a small tumbler of apple juice and was reading as she went readily to sleep. I heard a small sound of choking, and by the time I could get to her, only a few feet, she already was in a coma. The nurses pumped out her throat, but her pulse and respiration faded rapidly and in an hour were gone.

I stuck around, waiting for the doctor to come and write up his final report, then cleaned out our things and came home to write her obit, which I took into San Francisco that night to the relevant agencies and papers. Today I went with her body to the crematorium at San Rafael. Her ashes will be blended later with mine and together we'll return to the Pacific. She wanted no funeral, of course. If you wish to, you can send a small contribution in memoriam to Hospice of Marin, P.O. Box 72, Kentfield, Calif. 94904.

The Hospice people made the difference between utter horror and a bearable experience for everyone concerned with many periods of beauty and serenity. She was smiling and joking even in her last moments of consciousness. She never complained, humbling and astounding everyone who took care of her with her calm resolve to remain herself. She succeeded. Her face was still that of a young woman, perhaps 30 years younger than her 65 years.

Some day when I have a bit more time available I shall tell you some interesting things about her, things no one here knows and which made her the person she was. In the meantime I have a lot of loose ends to tie up, including sorting out the mess that has accumulated at 35 Castle Rock in more than six months of neglect. Eventually I hope to make a trip east, but can't now predict when.

Meanwhile, many heartfelt thanks for your kindnesses and considerateness during these past months. They're over now; a beautiful life has ended fittingly and I can no more fail to face the future than she did. She taught me well, as always.

Best to you both, and with every certainty I can include her wishes with mine.


jdw