1 November 1965

The Most Reverend H. E. Cardinale, D.D., J.C.D.
Apostolic Delegate in Great Britain

Your Excellency:

It is my considered judgment, made after much prayer and reflection, that I should give you the information that I have on the marriage and civil divorce of Robert Kaiser and Susan Mulcahey Kaiser. I am also submitting my own observations and conclusions on the relevance of this information to the validity of Susan Mulcahey's original consent to her marriage with Robert Kaiser.

In May, 1963, on my return from a year in the Middle East, I had the opportunity to renew and deepen my friendship with Mr. and Mrs. Robert B. Kaiser who were then living in Rome. I had met Bob and Sue a year earlier and we had immediately struck up a friendship that was kept alive by correspondence during the following year. When I came to Rome that May, I saw them every day for a period of three weeks and our friendship became very close. Bob and Sue had been married three years, already had one child and were expecting a second in August.

My impression of Sue at that time was generally favorable but with reservations. These reservations centered on her immaturity. She was a young girl with youth's likeable and unlikeable qualities: spontaneity, naturalness, instability and flightiness. Subconsciously, I tended to think of her as a child-bride who had somehow fallen into a life that was beyond her. Others who knew her better and longer had apparently made this same judgment. At dinner one evening, when her mother and father were present with other guests, she leaned over and whispered to me: "Mother, you know, will never think of me as anything but her little girl. She still treats me as though I had not grown up."

Her naïveté was evidenced in her attempt to copy her husband in his work. I was amused to see her struggling to write an occasional column of news notes about the Vatican Council for a Catholic magazine in the United States. It was such an obvious imitation of her husband that I could not help but think of a very young daughter both mimicking and competing with her father.

The source of her news for these columns was Fr. Malachi Martin, S.J., who was very much in evidence at this time. He was especially friendly with Sue and made an obvious effort to curry favor with her and to bolster her ego. While Bob was working in his office, Fr. Martin and Sue would engage in long telephone conversations, often two or three times a day. She always referred to and addressed Fr. Martin as "Mal" or "Malachi." Since Fr. Martin could be witty, charming and solicitous, I thought that the degree and kind of attention he was showering on Sue could be dangerous for a young and impressionable girl. I also thought her imprudent and over-friendly in her relations with Fr. Martin. But beyond this judgment of Sue's immaturity and Fr. Martin's imprudence, I did not then suspect anything more sinister.
The following winter I heard from Bob that he was having serious trouble with Sue and he would tell me about it on his way to his new assignment in Los Angeles. I met him in New York in April, 1964, and he broke the news to me about the affair between Fr. Martin and Sue. He also told me that a few weeks before his own departure from Rome she had suddenly and without warning taken off for the United States with the children and had left no word of her purpose, her destination or her address. It was an incredible story, but as Bob kept filling in all the details I found it easy to believe him. The seemingly innocuous pattern of relations that I noticed between Fr. Martin and Sue in Rome now proved to be fully bordering on madness. Ecclesiastes reminds us that "the minds of men are filled with evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live," but we never really know the depths of that evil and madness until they are revealed to us in acts.

A month later Bob called to tell me that he had located his wife and children in Boulder City, Nevada, where Sue was putting in the brief residence required for divorce in a state where it is easier to get a divorce than a fishing license. He gave me her address and I decided on my own initiative to call her. It was a long and expensive call, during which Sue did most of the talking as she babbled on about Bob's unsuitability for marriage and his paranoid personality. According to her story, Bob was in such a bad mental state that he had become impossible to deal with and to live with and therefore the only solution was a divorce. Her talk was filled with psychiatric jargon, and knowing her intellectual level as well as her suggestibility, I heard the voice of Sue Kaiser but I recognized the words of Fr. Malachi Martin. But she did not mention him and neither did I. The long monologue ended when I told her I would drop in to visit her on my way to California next month.

A few weeks later, in mid-June, I saw her in Phoenix, Arizona, where she was staying with her brother. She had come down from Nevada for a short visit after obtaining her divorce decree there. I spent about three hours with her that afternoon and I began by deliberately avoiding any suggestion of a moralistic or censorious attitude. I was simply the friend who was in great distress over what had happened to two of my best friends. She had changed somewhat since I last saw her in Rome a year ago. She now affected a lofty and arch manner, world-wide, knowledgeable, self-assured. She had also added a new dimension of sexiness to her demeanor and dress. Adultery, I could see, had matured her. She was no longer her mother's little girl nor Bob's child-bride but a sophisticated woman of the world.

She spent the first part of our visit repeating her charges against Bob's character, personality and sanity. She added a new idea when she told me that Bob's nine years as a Jesuit scholastic had rendered him unfit for marriage because he knew nothing about women and never would and she now realized what a mistake she had made in marrying a man with such a background.
After I had listened to enough of this, I said to her: "Sue, I can see that you are not going to change your mind and that it's all over between you and Bob. I hope to remain your friend so that I can give you any help you may need in the future, but as your friend I expect to be given all the facts in the case. For example, what is the story on these rumors I've been hearing about you and Fr. Martin?" She then launched into another attack on Bob for the damage he had done to Fr. Martin by his accusations. I heard her out and again asked: "But is there any truth in these reports? You could at least be honest with me and confirm or deny the story."

She smiled slyly. "Frankly," she said, "the story is true. Malachi and I are in love and we plan to get married in the near future." Then she gave me much of the detail of the recent past as well as her plans for the future with Fr. Martin.

Now that I had the whole story, and from her own lips, I abandoned the role of the listening friend and became the pleading friend. I pointed out the effect that her proposed future would have on the children. She had no fears or regrets about that. The only regret she expressed was for her parents and the heartbreak her actions would cause them. I told her that at least they would now know that she had grown up. This remark baffled her, but I did not elaborate. I called her attention to a basic inconsistency in her position: she claimed that Bob's seminary life had made him unfit for marriage but now she planned to live with a priest who would presumably be even more unfit for marriage. She laughed and freely admitted the inconsistency but thought that things would work out better this time.

I concentrated my most earnest pleas on the issue of her fidelity to the consent she gave to her marriage contract with Bob. I said to her: "If Bob is the mental case that you claim, then what did you understand by your marriage contract three years ago when you consented to take him for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, until death parted you? It seems to me that if Bob is as sick as you say he is, then this is the time that he needs you most, this is the time that you should be at his side, helping him, supporting him, as you promised three short years ago, rather than fleeing from him the way you did and then divorcing him. Didn't you mean it when you consented to that marriage contract such a short time ago?"

"Oh, that!" she replied. "I don't think I ever belonged to Bob. Besides, he's not losing anything. He's not really losing me, because Malachi has a part of me that Bob never had."

Toward the end of our conversation the mailman arrived with several letters for her. Two of them were from Fr. Martin. One of them, the latest in a series of letters he had been writing to her about their future together, was in code and Sue was so pleased with its cleverness that she showed me the letter and explained the code. The other was an
urgent letter which contained a letter that Bob had sent to Fr. Roderick A.F. MacKenzie, S.J., Rector of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. Bob's letter to Fr. MacKenzie, written about a week earlier, had contained a photostat of a very compromising letter written by Fr. Martin to Sue. Fr. Martin had intercepted this letter in Rome, kept the photostat and sent Bob's covering letter to Fr. MacKenzie back to Sue along with a letter of his own. Sue let me read both letters. I was interested chiefly in Fr. Martin's letter. In it he told Sue that this latest episode in Bob's paranoia proved conclusively how ill Bob was, that she should forget Bob, and that he was now speeding up his plans to leave the Jesuits and the country and would be in touch with her as soon as he made these moves. Sue was aglow with the excitement of all this and so I took my leave as soon as I could. I now knew all the facts and their inescapable conclusion: Bob Kaiser was the innocent victim of a cruel liaison between a devil and a fool.

I had one other visit with Sue shortly after this. It was relatively brief because it was clear that she would allow nothing to deflect her from her chosen course. I told her frankly at this time that her actions not only had messed up five lives, brought heartache to relatives and friends, caused scandal to countless other people, but that they would also carry their own special retribution in this world. That retribution, I said, would come from Fr. Martin. He did not love her because such a man was incapable of love. He would not marry her because he was a devil, not a fool. She said she would take her chances on that. "This is the way of an adulteress: she eats, and wipes her mouth, and says, 'I have done no wrong.'" (Prov. 30:20)

The question to be considered now is fundamental and inescapable. Was Susan Mulcahey psychically mature enough at the time of her marriage to Bob Kaiser to give an adult consent to that marriage contract? The question could easily be answered if we had the testimony of a psychiatrist who had had the occasion to analyze Sue at that time. However, she underwent no such analysis and therefore we have no relevant medical testimony. Nonetheless, I do not believe that this lack should preclude any further consideration of the case by a Church court.

A psychiatrist's judgment on Sue's maturity at the time of her marriage would have depended for the most part on what Sue told him about the phenomena of her psychic life at that time. But these phenomena are fluid states that may or may not be significant. Their real significance depends on whether or not they are eventually translated into overt acts. It is only in acts or events that a person discloses his inner self and tells us what he really is.

For example, from what is revealed in analysis the psychiatrist can make the judgment that this person has suicidal tendencies. But he could not go on from there to make the judgment that this person will one day commit suicide. Many persons with suicidal tendencies never commit suicide. Conversely, however, we know that a person who commits suicide has certainly had suicidal tendencies. We can know the seeds of the past in the
fruits of the present. Although we cannot with certainty read the future in the present, we can with certainty read the past in the present.

Here common sense is a better guide than psychiatry. We learn what people are from what they do. This truth is enshrined in countless proverbs and axioms: "agere sequitur esse," "handsome is as handsome does," "actions speak louder than words," "we know a tree by its fruit," "what I do is me." A person's actions disclose his character, his personality. We can use these actions to make a probable prediction, an educated guess, about what this person might do in the future. On the other hand, however, we can read with certainty a person's past, especially his recent past, from his present actions. We can tell what he is now and what he has been in the past because of what he has done now. The person with suicidal tendencies might or might not commit suicide; the person who commits suicide has certainly had suicidal tendencies.

Such is the case with Susan Mulcahey Kaiser. We can tell what her real self was at the time of her marriage to Bob Kaiser from what she did early in her married life. Three years after her marriage, while still pregnant with her second child, she carried on a lengthy love affair with a Jesuit priest, suddenly and without warning fled to the United States, hid from her husband in Nevada while obtaining an easy divorce and justified all this to herself on the grounds that her husband was mentally unfit and mentally unsound. To this date, more than two years after all this began, she has not given the slightest sign of regret or repentance. From these immature acts of Sue Kaiser (to put the matter in its most charitable light) we can with certainty conclude to an enduring state of immaturity in her personality and character.

It is important to note the accumulation of circumstances in this case. This very accumulation is the decisive point that forces upon us the certain judgment that Sue Kaiser was too immature (again to use the most charitable word) at the time of her marriage to give an adult or mature consent to her marriage contract with Bob Kaiser. Her betrayal of that contract was not confined to a single act of infidelity, or even several such acts, to which she succumbed in a moment or period of weakness and which she subsequently repented. That would have been sad enough, but it would have told us no more than the simple fact that Sue was a weak human being. What she did was totally different because she betrayed and renounced her marriage contract completely, absolutely and finally. Here was not an act of betrayal, but a state of betrayal which could have proceeded only from a thoroughly and persistently immature personality. She has acted like an irresponsible child because she has always been an irresponsible child. She never achieved responsible adulthood.
Sue Kaiser had a good family, a happy home, a very comfortable life; she was well thought of in Rome, principally because she had a husband who was devoted, generous, intelligent and influential; she could look forward to a bright and secure future. But she threw all this away. She deceived her husband, carried on an affair with a Jesuit priest, abruptly abandoned home and husband, showed herself callously indifferent to the well-being of her children, obtained a divorce in hiding, made plans to marry this priest, turned her back coldly and contemptuously on her family, her religion and her marriage contract. All this took place over a period of two years and shortly after the third anniversary of her marriage to Bob Kaiser.

All these circumstances taken together add up conclusively and certainly to the fact that Sue Kaiser did not have simply a weak character or a momentary lapse from virtue but rather a personality that had never matured and a psychic life that had never evolved from its state of psychological immaturity. Any woman who would do what she did, in the substance and the manner and the timing of her actions, would clearly and certainly indicate by these actions that she had been psychically incapable of giving the proper and mature consent required for the validity of her original marriage contract. Susan Mulcahey's actions did not proceed from a temporary weakness in her character but from a psychopathological state in her personality that rendered her incapable of entering upon a marriage contract with Robert Kaiser with that type of consent required for the validity of such a contract.

I have the honor to be, Your Excellency,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

William Van Etten Casey, S.J.
Professor of Theology