
Charles Whitman's Notes and Letters

Transcribed by ANNA LANGMAN, M.F.A.

These are the collected notes and letters left by Charles Whitman. Typos and misspellings have been preserved. Conjectured words are bracketed with a question mark; illegible text is indicated with a question mark alone. Missing text is indicated by bracketed ellipses. Paragraph indents have been standardized.

Letter Written After Killing His Mother

[Handwritten:]

Monday

8-1-66

12:30 AM

TO WHOM IT MAY Concern,

I have just taken my mother's life. I am very upset over having done it. However I feel that if there is a heaven she is definitely there now. And if there is no life after, I have relieved her of her suffering here on earth. The intense hatred I feel for my father is beyond description. My mother gave that man the 25 best years of her life and because she finally took enough of his beatings, humiliation and degradation and tribulations and I am sure no one but she and he will ever know — to leave him. He has chosen to treat her like a slut that you would bed down with, accept her favors and then throw a pittance in return.

I am truly sorry that this is the only way I could see to relieve her sufferings but I think it was best.

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Let there be no doubt in your mind I loved that woman with all my heart.
If there exists a God let him understand my actions and judge me accordingly.
Charles J. Whitman

Letter About Killing His Wife

[*Typewritten:*]

Sunday

July 31, 1966

6:45 P.M.

I don't quite understand what it is that compels me to type this letter. Perhaps it is to leave some vague reason for the actions I have recently performed. I don't really understand myself these days. I am supposed to be an average reasonable and intelligent young man. However, lately (I can't recall when it started) I have been a victim of many unusual and irrational thoughts. These thoughts constantly recur, and it requires a tremendous mental effort to concentrate on useful and progressive tasks. In March when my parents made a physical break I noticed a great deal of stress. I consulted a Dr. Cochrum at the University Health Center and asked him to recommend someone that I could consult with about some psychiatric disorders I felt I had. I talked with a Doctor once for about two hours and tried to convey to him my fears that I felt come overwhelming violent impulses. After one session I never saw the Doctor again, and since then I have been fighting my mental turmoil alone, and seemingly to no avail. After my death I wish that an autopsy would be performed on me to see if there is any visible physical disorder. I have had some tremendous headaches in the past and have consumed two large bottles of Excedrin in the past three months.

It was after much thought that I decided to kill my wife, Kathy, tonight after I pick her up from work at the telephone company. I love her dearly, and she has been as fine a wife to me as any man could ever hope to have. I cannot rationally pinpoint any specific reason for doing this. I don't know whether it is selfishness, or if I don't want her to have to face the embarrassment my actions would surely cause her. At this time, though, the prominent reason in my mind is that I truly do not consider this world worth living in, and am prepared to die, and I do not want to leave her to suffer alone in it. I intend to kill her as painlessly as possible.

Similar reasons provoked me to take my mother's life also. I don't think the poor woman has ever enjoyed life as she is entitled to. She was a simple young woman who married a very possessive and dominating man. All my life as a boy until I ran away from home to join the Marine Corps

[*Handwritten:*]

friends

interrupted

8-1-66

Mon.

3:00 A.M.

Both Dead

I was a witness to her being beat at least one a month. Then in her [...] took enough my father wanted to [fight?] to keep her [...] the usual standard of living.

I imagine it appears that I brutally killed both of my loved ones. I was [?] trying to do a quick thorough job. If my life insurance policy is valid

please see that all the worthless checks I wrote to this weekend are good.

Please pay off all my debts. I am 25 years old and have never been financially independent. Donate the rest anonymously to a mental health foundation. Maybe research can prevent further tragedies of this type.

Charles J Whitman

Give our dog to my in-laws please. Tell them Kathy loved "Schocie" very much.

R W. Leissner

[?]

If you can find in yourself to grant my last wish Cremate me after the autopsy.

Letter to His Brother Pat

[Handwritten:]

8-1-66

Monday

3:00 M.M.

Pat,

You are so so ~~work~~ wrong about Mom. Maybe someday you will understand why she left Daddy. Pat, Mom didnt have any desire to [?] Daddy whatsoever she just wanted what she had worked for. She really needed that \$40.00 Thanks for sending it. She'll never [?] about that Grandmother or not.

Charlie

Note to His Brother John

[Handwritten:]

8-1-66

Monday

3:00 A.M.

Dear Johnnie,

Kathy and I enjoyed your visit. I am terribly sorry to have let you down.

Please try to do better than I have. It won't be hard.

John, Mom loved you very very much.

Your brother,

Charlie

Note to Himself #1

[Handwritten:]

8-1-66

I never could quite make it.

These thoughts are too much for me.

cjw

[Typewritten:]

THOUGHTS TO START THE DAY

READ AND THINK ABOUT, EVERY DAY

STOP procrastinating (Grasp the nettle)

CONTROL your anger (Don't let it prove you a fool)

SMILE — Its contagious

DON'T be belligerent

STOP cursing, improve your vocabulary

APPROACH a pot of gold with exceptional caution (Look it over — twice)

PAY that compliment

LISTEN more than you speak, THINK before you speak

CONTROL your passion; DON'T LET IT lead YOU — don't let desire make you regret
your present actions later (Remember the lad and the man)

If you want to be better than average, YOU HAVE TO [WORK?] MUCH HARDER THAN
THE AVERAGE

NEVER FORGET; when the going gets rough, the ROUGH get going!!!!

YESTERDAY IS NOT MINE TO RECOVER,

BUT TOMORROW, IS MINE TO WIN OR TO

LOSE. I AM RESOLVED THAT I SHALL

WIN THE TOMORROWS BEFORE ME!!!

Note to Himself #2

[Handwritten:]

Whitman

1. Grow up. (Think — don't be so ready with an excuse)
2. Conduct with superiors. (time & place for everything)
3. Know your status and position and conduct yourself accordingly.
4. Courtesy. (Generally show respect for seniors but lets personal feeling towd. indiv. show.)
5. Organize yourself and your work so that the insignificant is not a major crisis.
6. When time permits exhaust all effort to find answers before asking the simplest of questions.

[Typewritten:]

GOOD POINTS TO REMEMBER WITH KATHY

1. Don't nag.
2. Don't try to make your partner over.
3. Don't criticize.
4. Give honest appreciation.
5. Bay little attentions.
6. Be courteous.
7. BE GENTLE. [SS.I]