

LETTERS FROM "THE WILLOWS"

-- Fall 1964 --

September 14, 1964

Well I'm here at last. It's really more like a sanitarium. At the present I'm rooming by myself, until Sunday. When my father and I drove by it at first, believe me we both burst out with laughter. That night I stayed all night with my daddy at the "Glenwood Manor". ...

My letters from now on won't be so long and newsy. For one thing there are no planned activities. You just have to entertain yourself. I have done some painting, playing cards, and T.V. watching. The exercise area is really terrible. It's about the size of one-fourth of my parents' driveway. ...

It really was great to hear your silly voice tonight. Remember, [redacted] when you call me -- make it before 9 o'clock because everyone still is up. When you call ask for [redacted] only! You don't give out last names. Please do write me, [redacted] and tell me what's going on in [redacted]. Are you being a good "D-D"? I hope so! ...

I asked her about visitors -- I can see people and go out with them for a couple of hours. It's wise to be alone. If you do decide to come, call first, because I have to get special permission beforehand. Okay? I really do miss you, [redacted]. Please be good until I get home. Can you wait for me, honey? You'd better!! "I love you." ... Love, [redacted].....

September 15, 1964:

This is one of those nights when I can't get any sleep. Today has been a little more exciting. I had blood taken from my arm for the first time in my entire life. I got weighed today plus my blood pressure check. Tomorrow I have a complete physical. ... Have you been good? Never mind, don't answer that. I have, that's for darn sure. I really miss you [redacted] we have really been split up. I hope it's good in the long run. Just think when I'm home we won't have any problem what-so-ever, except maybe my parents. ...

September 16, 1964

Today all I did was talk with the girls about everything. Late this afternoon the "Doc" came to see us. Would you believe the date is now set for October 28 -- 3 days from Halloween. He said he was sure it was a "boy-type spook." Are you happy? ...

September 20, 1964

It seems like I haven't seen you for ages, but it has only been 8 days. I really wish I was home right now. I miss my family and most of all -- you. I hope you are finding some time to think about me. You really are making me worry about you. I hope you can stick it out for 6 more weeks. ...

September 21, 1964

Well I feel great tonight. I don't know why. I guess because it's already Sept. 21. ... "Butch" has settled down quite a bit today. He'll probably gang up on me tomorrow. He says hello and that he loves you. Wasn't that sweet? ...

September 23, 1964:

Well, Friday night and all I've done is watch this darn T.V. I swear when I get home I never want to look at another deck of cards, paints, or T.V. ... I just found out that I wouldn't be able to see you here without their having my parents' permission. I really would rather wait and have you see me when I get home. That way maybe you'll want me more. ... I have lost 1½ lbs. and my blood pressure has gone way down. Now I have to start taking vitamins twice daily. Well that's my medical news for today. ...

Well, anyway "me" is doing just fine. I don't think I will have to worry about it being weak. Believe me it has more energy than 10 men put together. He keeps me lying awake half the night, just like you would (ha ha). [redacted] when this thing happens -- what if you aren't home? How would I leave a message? Well, I will leave it up to you, okay? ...

October 3, 19[redacted]

Only 25 more days left until the day. Have you been a good boy? I am trying to figure out what I am going to do when I get home. I don't know whether to go to school or find another job. ... Don, are you going home for Thanksgiving? I hope not, because that means by the time I get home (if "it" is late) you will be leaving. ...

It is pretty out tonight. It is a typical fall evening. What am I doing, but sitting in an ole stuffy hallway typing you a sweet note. At least you know that I am thinking of you. I just wonder what you are thinking about now. ... I do love and miss you, Don. I will try to come to your rescue as soon as I am able. ...

October 4, 19[redacted]

Today Mrs. Nichols, our social director, talked to me about us. I'm sending you a paper for you to answer. Answer all they ask, okay? Don, I feel so funny filling out all these papers. I wish you were here with me. I just thought -- do you realize what we're doing, honey? It's for the best, I guess. Maybe we'll have our chance again, at the right time. ...

Right now I'm sitting here listening to records. I'd give anything to come home right now. If only I could leave and see people besides these stupid-looking girls. Well, I guess maybe I shouldn't be talking. ... Do you have any desire for finding someone else? [redacted] when I come home I want to know what to expect. It's really funny, but I don't want you to see me until I get home. If you saw me now, I'll probably not have a chance at all, right? ...

October 6, 19[redacted]

[redacted] how have been behaving? You sounded awful devilish on the phone tonight. I know I'm just nervous now. Everything seems to bother me. So don't think anything about it. ... Well honey, I feel like "it" is ready for me to retire for the evening. Be good. ...

October 10, 19[redacted]

I'm going to try my best to hurry this thing on. [redacted] I'm getting so I can't wait to come home and see you. I'm so scared that I'll be acting like a frigid ole nut. Wouldn't you love that -- you'd probably go crazy, right? Well, I'm sure you'll be able to straighten me out. ...

Well you're probably dying to find out what I had for dinner and supper. Dinner: roast beef, cabbage -- cooked, peas, corn bread, and $\frac{1}{2}$ pear. Supper: hamburger patty, baked beans, jello, tomatoes. Now you can't tell me that that really sounds appetizing. The food here really has gotten me down. I can't even walk up one flight of stairs without gasping for breath. It's really going to take a lot to regain my energy. I just hope I have enough energy to go through all this. It just seems funny that I'll be going through all this by myself. But I hope you'll be thinking and praying about me even though you can't be here. ...

Would you believe my hair is $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches long? Do you like that? Right now it looks almost 2-toned. It's time for my monthly retouch. ... Yesterday I went outside and painted. It felt great to be out in fresh air. This is my favorite season of the year. Everything is so beautiful. I only wish I could go walking miles and miles. ...

October 11, 19[redacted]

These past few nights I haven't been able to sleep. Maybe it's because it's coming so close to the 28th. ... Today we had a total of 1,125 calories for all 3 meals. Could you live on that? I doubt it! ...

October 13, 19[redacted]

This morning I was on my way upstairs and I fell. I just froze after hitting the floor. I thought maybe I could have been hurt. Well, that shows you how graceful I have gotten. Another thing that happened was by the time I reached the top of the stairs, I was panting like a tired horse. ... I hope I'll be home within 3 to 4 weeks if not sooner. If you've waited this long, I'm sure you can give me a few more weeks. Right now I'd give anything to be home with you. ...

I got your letter today. It made my day a happy one. Thank you [redacted] for being so prompt in returning you history. Now it wasn't so bad writing me a letter, was it? ... I about died when you wrote me about your uncle finding out about me. Now I know I won't have a chance with your family. ...

October 16, 19[redacted]

Well it's now Sunday night and I'm sitting here listening to records. I wonder what you're doing now and what you're thinking about. Guess what, honey -- only 12 more days left (maybe!). ... I can't wait to go out on a real live date with you. I wonder what we'll do, Don. We'll probably just talk all night (ha!). I'm afraid I forgot how to kiss you. You'll probably have to teach me all over again. Are you willing to put up with me, [redacted] ...

Just think, we can keep on dating -- pretending like none of this happened. To me it will seem too unreal to have been true. I'm going to try and put it all in back of my mind. But I won't ever forget this. I'm afraid I'll keep on wondering where it is. I wish you could be here with me when I see him(?). I'll need you, [redacted] ..

I haven't seen you or the family for over a month. When I get home I'll have to go out and find me another job. As of now, my parents have decided not to let me fly home. My dad wants to drive me home -- sweet thing! ... Honey, about your sweater, I'll have to wait until I get home. Is that okay? ...

October 25, 19[redacted]:

Only 3 more days (I hope). Then it'll be all over and I'll be home -- then we can go from there, okay? ... Happy belated anniversary!
October 21 -- "9 months"! Do you still love me? Miss me? I hope so. ...

October 28, 19[redacted]

Thanks so much for calling me today. It really did something wonderful to me and on this particular day. I'm so tired and very much excited. I have a funny feeling that it may still be another week. But I know it has to come soon!! ... Love you "D-D" ... [redacted] ...

November 4, 19[redacted]

Honey it looks like I'm going to be here a little while longer. I really can't understand what's holding things up. Believe me -- I can't stand being here any longer. I'm getting at the point where I'm beginning to go out of my mind. It's terrible not being able to breathe fresh air and see people, in other words, the outside world. .. [redacted] I do miss you and I can't wait to come home and be with you. Pray that I'll go pretty soon. I hope I'm home at least for Thanksgiving!! ...

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