

September 19, 1984

The Honorable Ronald Reagan
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As I listened to your acceptance speech, especially when you explained how the Olympic Torch was carried through my beloved, adoptive country until it arrived in Los Angeles, you explained that a Vietnamese refugee with his little son on his shoulders, was running after a black man who was pushing a woman in a wheel chair (and who was holding the torch) and you said: "This is what America is all about". A picture came to my mind which took me back to when I was 19 years old, in the year 1951, on the East German Border. I was caught by the police trying to cross the border into West Germany.

As I walked all day, wondering what I should do next, I knew that I had to get across. I was so close and yet a million miles away but I had to try because I was in great trouble with the STATE. Late that night I knocked on a door and I asked for help, knowing full-well this could be the end of me. After having a meal and some rest I was instructed on how to accomplish my task. This is a very long story in itself, so I will only say that when I finally got through the border (across a river) I ran for about 50 yards. By then my heart was beating so fast I thought it would burst in my chest. To relax myself I took a deep breath and then it happened, that realization I have tried to explain again and again--I was free!

There was something in the air, something wonderful, and then I realized it, My God, even the air was free. There was freedom in the air! Only 50 yards, yet the air smelled so different. I wanted to shout, "I am free, I am free", but no words came from my lips because by then my heart was in my throat. There I stood in silence, having no one else to share that moment with me, and being lost in the wonder of Freedom.

In a little town just behind a hill 2 miles away, the lights were turned on. The Olympic fireworks of 1984, as spectacular as they were, could not compare to what I saw that dark night. Then I turned East toward Communism and it was so very dark, not one light. I had come out of the dark into the light. There are other high points in my life: Meeting my husband--and seeing for the first time, in May 1956, that great Lady in New York Harbor, the Statue of Liberty holding out her torch of freedom for me.

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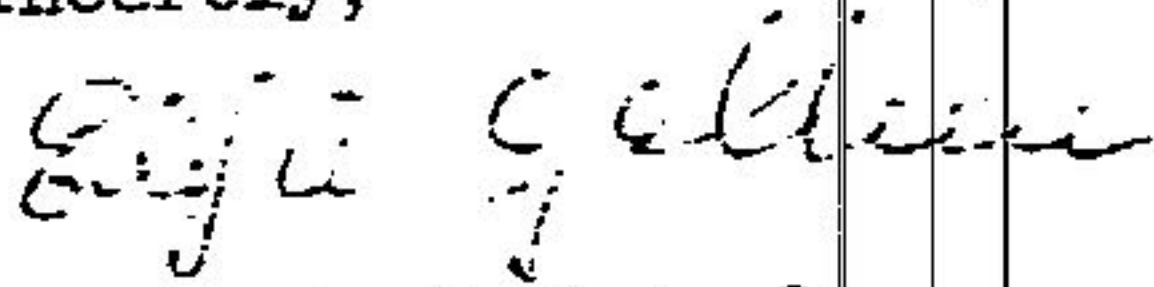
The Honorable Ronald Reagan

And now, Mr. President, there are people in this country who would try to divide us again. Please don't let them do that. When you were elected you held out hope and encouragement to America. We have started on the right way with your help and inspiration. Please tell Mr. Mondale for me to give America a pat on the back and not to cut it in half.

When I crossed that border so many years ago, I was unaware of what Patrick Henry had said many years earlier. When I became a citizen I was given the Declaration of Independence. It is framed in my home and like Patrick Henry, I say, "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death". I have been there. Never, never "better red than dead".

God bless you!

Sincerely,



Mrs. E. A. Gallun, Jr.

P.S. I and my family pray for you. If I told you my crime against the State of East Germany most Americans would find it hard to believe that a regime could be so oppressive or extreme in it's treatment of their people.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 13, 1988

Dear Mrs. Gallun:

Your husband recently sent me a copy of a letter you had written some time back describing your journey to freedom from East to West Germany and finally to the United States of America. I just want to let you know how moved I was by it.

Those of us who were born free and have known freedom all our lives sometimes forget what a precious blessing it is. Your experience in a totalitarian country has given you a special appreciation of the God-given gift of freedom, an appreciation you can share with others. One look around the globe is enough to remind us how rare and fragile a thing freedom is and how each generation is called upon to make the necessary sacrifices to safeguard it. Examples like yours shine therefore as a beacon of hope for others. That path you followed from darkness to light is truly the way to the future for all mankind. I pray that someday soon all nations may travel it together.

Again, thank you for writing, and God bless you.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

Mrs. Edwin A. Gallun, Jr.

