

Dear Tony,

23 Feb 80

Sitting here in the sunshine of a drought-threatened Area, wondering whether we will have water enough to get us through the coming year, I am also wondering whether to thank or to chide you for having had a copy of Chapter X forwarded to me. The threat of a waterless existence is more vivid than the possibility that I can be of any ~~xxxx~~ help to you in your search for the identity of the putative Brother Bishop. I will try to put my worries to one side for a moment though and see if I can't make a stab at saying something worth while.

Most of my difficulty with Chapter X stems from the paper itself not with the problems it seems to address. If a case officer had turned over an analysis of the quality of Chapter X for my perusal, I would have put him on my out-placement list. Just too many questions. Let me put a few of them so that you can see what is bothering me. I am sure that you have thought of them, and that it is probably impossible at ~~xxxx~~ this time to obtain answers, but what the hell, here they come.

1. What was the background to the initial approach to Veciana? Did it just occur to Fonzi (or whomever the chap was that did the 'investigating') that it would be worthwhile to tap this guy? Was it routine, or did someone provide some sort of a tip? 2 March 1976 was not the beginning of this thing. What was the beginning?

2. What were the details of Veciana's arrest and trial? It seems odd that Fonzi gives us the benefit of Veciana's speculations as to ~~xxxx~~ who framed him as if it were a cardinal fact that he was framed. It is a pity that the committee did not see fit to wonder this same thing. Our ~~xxxx~~ judicial system is not the best, to be sure but it does keep rather good books. Has anyone checked the record ~~xx~~ for hints as to Veciana's character and activities? I do not see how you could proceed much ~~xxxx~~ further down this path without getting ~~xxxx~~ a hold on this whole episode. He would appear to be either very greedy or terribly stupid, or both. Greedy if he was into drug ~~xxx~~ trading, and had just recently been the beneficiary of \$253K and stupid if he had that kind of cash and could not afford the best lawyer in the ~~xxxx~~ US to help him beat a bad rap.

3. Why didn't the committee check on the \$253K? At the time of the investigation, Congress had a tight grip on CIA's ~~xxxx~~ throat and could easily have confirmed the existence of a disbursement of that size. I can assure you that payments of that magnitude stand out like camels on the Saharan horizon. In 1973 money was very tight. The Agency was doing dog's work to flush money down the Vietnam drain and was cutting heavily into the flesh of operations the world over. \$250K to someone who had never been on the payroll but had been on the 'right side' pushes beyond fantasy into madness. But don't take my word for it. There are ways of making certain that the payment was ~~xxxx~~ made or not. Even ~~xxxx~~ though I know that such a payment was never made, it is ~~xxxx~~ important for your case to focus on it.

4. Then, what did Veciana do with the money? Chapter X is just terribly remiss in not hounding him on this one. Not to have done so indicts the entire report.

5. Did Bishop speak Spanish? If so, how well? Did he have any sort of accent? How good was Veciana's English? ~~xxxx~~ Did he have the sense to detect any linguistic peculiarities?

6. Why did Veciana change his mind about the source of his 'recommendation' to Bishop? First it might have been Lobo (whom I handled from early 1963 to May 65 at which time he moved to Spain. I was the highest level he ever reached in the Agency and at the time I was pretty much of a ~~xxxx~~ Field Black, though he had convinced himself that I was Dick Helms. Fact.) then it was Lopez-Fresquet. Why did he think these things? Did he ever, over the course of 100 meetings, try to ferret out an answer?

7. Third parties were used on a number of occasions to set up meetings. Who were they? Give us one name so that at least there is one confirmation that a Bishopesque person existed.

8. In late 1960 Veciana and Bishop ran some 'very successful' operations on peso destabilization. What were the mechanics? Who ~~else~~ else was involved? Press plants? Radio commentaries? Did they use Lopez-Frequet? How often did he meet Bishop during the course of these operations?

9. How could Dave Phillips, ~~xxx~~ if he were Bishop, free himself from the intense demands ~~xxx~~ of the Pig Operation which was in full, frantic swing, at that time to sneak into and out of an increasingly hostile Cuba to devise and run these operations? One thing you ~~xxx~~ have learned about the Agency is that once one had become a Chief, he does very little Indian work. No one would have allowed Phillips to descend from his position, with all the Pig Plans cluttering up his mind, to scuttle over to Cuba to run a couple of dinky currency operations. Things just don't work that way.

10. During this period, Bishop gave Veciana Kails name and that of a "CIA employee". Who was that man. What was his position? Very dubious to say the least, for if there is one thing that even ~~xxx~~ officer's as ~~xxx~~ sloppy as Phillips don't do, is gratuitously hand out the names of colleagues. ~~xxx~~ Further, until the late 60's it ~~xxx~~ was extremely rare that the term CIA, or even Agency would be used by any of the officers in referring either to their ~~own~~ own or a colleague's affiliation. This ~~tradition~~ tradition began to break down ~~in~~ as a result of the Pig, but did not erode entirely until the mid-70's, and then only because of the Angleton scandal.

11. On p. 39 the implication is clear that Bishop was still in Havana in at least mid-61. Where did they meet? Bishop stated that ~~xxx~~ he had decided to knock off Castro 'the only thing left'. Was this a personal opinion? Did he claim any official authorization? Was it expressed over drinks, in the park, at night or in the daytime? Was there any followup at ~~any~~ anytime by Bishop? Wasn't it a little dicey for Phillips to have been wandering around in super-heated Havana? I ask only so that you can catch the full absurdity of one, the statement or two the investigator's handling of the matter. No staff officers were in Cuba after the Pig. We may play fast and loose with the lives of others, but we take care of our own. It is obviously super-critical to get this matter straightened out. The only way that this portion of the deposition can be read is that Bishop was ~~in~~ in Cuba after the Pig. ~~xxx~~ Else why all the trouble on Veciana's part to assure Fonzi that it would have been no problem, later, for Bishop to have ~~xxx~~ sought him out in Miami. My view: ~~xxx~~arrant horseshit.

12. What were the details of Veciana's employment in La Paz? Surely ~~xxx~~ the committee--if it would go to the trouble to interview the folks in Cuba and others in Venezuela--could have chatted with Veciana's colleagues in La Paz. I know that AID doesn't work all that hard, but if he had ~~not~~ done banking work, wouldn't there be someone around that could have been talked with? State ought to have had some record as to who ~~xxx~~ was manning the passport office at the time. ~~xxx~~ Four years are a long time.

13. Where and how often did he meet with Bishop in La Paz? It's Dinksville. What sort of 'intelligence' information did Bishop provide? How often? When precisely did Bishop discover that his ~~xxx~~ op was ~~being~~ being fouled up by Veciana's associates?

13. There were five meetings in Dallas at the time of the Oswald sighting. What was the substance of these meetings? We know that one took place in the building of the blue facade. Where were the others. Was this set of meeting arranged directly by Bishop, or through ~~xxx~~ one of the ~~xxx~~ third parties?

1971
Castro
Santiago

14. What was the substance of the meeting which took place in Miami, a couple of months after the assassination? When exactly did it take place? I hate to belabor it, Tony, but in any matter of importance it is always necessary to get all the ~~xxxx~~ little bitty stuff. It's this material that makes or breaks a case. All we are getting ~~Chapter X~~ is chaff flying ~~xxxx~~ around like straw in a Kansas wind.

15. What is the nature of the newspaper reports of Oswald's meeting with the couple at the border? Surely you have your hands on this. Every time Oswald spit and someone saw it, it ~~became~~ became a part of the record somewhere.

16. Why did Bishop think that a Cuban IS officer would put himself on Castro's hit list by confessing to a meeting which ~~would~~ would implicate the Cubans in the assassination? I thought that Veciana was a Cuban not a Kraut, vintage 1933. Did he not advise Bishop that it would be unlikely that Ruiz would take a dive for a few bucks? Do you really think that this was likely? If so, then Dewey's must be putting out a ~~xxxx~~ 150 proof label that I have never seen. Please send me a fifth.

17. An irrelevant but fun question: What would Sam Kail do after he learned the name of the CIA officer who was using his name? Did he tattler? Did he punch the guy out? Did he cry? I have never had the slightest professional regard for the WH case officers of that era, but clodhoppers that they were, they had no need to resort to the kind of ~~xxxx~~ trick of which they stand accused. Needless risk. The kind of thing that would have put an end to an officer's plush Havana assignment. Why did Kail say this? Otherwise his meagre depositon is OK. He was working out of OpaLoka and since this was an agency facility maintained as a community effort, of course we paid the bills. The bleeding insinuations are dumb, especially in view of the glaring professional errors of the investigation.

18. Not a question, just a fulmination. You can trash the entire turgid glop involving Poseda, Alvarez, Ruiz, the Shrink and Mam ~~Veciana~~ Veciana. If I didn't know better, I would tend to believe that Fonzi was running a disinformation op.

19. What earthly good would it do for Veciana to lie about ~~not~~ knowing Phillips? How would that put him back into Bishop's good graces so that together they could march once again together against the infidel? Para 173 is the stuff of ~~Mary~~ Mary Jane with a Jack Daniel's chaser. How could anyone keep Fonzi on the payroll after ingesting such a series of garbage-laden inconsistencies?

20. Why was it necessary for Phillips who was not in the Para military business and who was retired and who had been straining his brain to keep in the limelight to have remembered Veciana's name? The fact is we tend to refer always to our agent's by their cryptonym more often than not, forgetting their names. We even referred to Castro as AMTHUG not as Castro. I would have been suprised if Phillips had known Veciana's name even if he had heard it some ten years before. To base part of one's case on this kind of gossamer is suicidal.

I am not going to comment on the back and forth involving Cross Guppton, ~~McCone~~ McCone and the ineffable B.H. Just too much pseudo legalistic horseplay to make it worthy of attention. The only time B.H. Could have worked on a daily basis with ~~Phillips~~ Phillips would have been before October 1961. After that the man was in Mexico city padding about in his usual bungling way.

I have the same kind of feline mind that is bedevilled by curiosity as the next. Won't yeald an inch on it. But I have lived too long to believe that curiosity alone gets one very far. Unless one were to go to ground on the kinds of questions I have sprayed out here, it would be close to nutty to take Chapter X seriously. Personally, I wouldn't take step one before spending a week or so with either Fonzi or Veciana or both in that order. If I had something better to do, I would do it first, for by now things are so hopeless bothed that the Lord himself couldn't untangle it. The combination of incompetence and systemic lying is unbeatable. I couldn't beat, that much, as our friend Sadat would put it, is for sure.

I am sure that I have been of no help, Tony, and if I have made a bad thing worse, I apologize. You seem to be a fine fellow, a friend of a friend of Bob Crowley can't be all bad. As I noted, I would break a lance to make sure that the public knows what a crowd of bunglers most intelligence organizations are and that they ought to be watched over with a mean-spirit and the coldest eye possible. I doubt if there was an officer in the service whom I despised more rigorously than I did Dave Phillips. He was the epitome of the foolish, flannel-mouthed adventurerers who gave a bad name to a business that is inherely unstable. But I can't hang a rap on him on the basis of Chapter X.

Sorry that all this has been put together so inelegantly, and that I let my pehchant for scorn show though so often. When I was a schoolboy, one of my preceptors advised me that of all the fallacies in the book the worst is to take seriously what which would not be so taken.

Good luck to you in all undertakings,

Sincerely,

