

7/18/72

Dear Js,

Want to make a note for the Duncan Ockie things, so because some of it may interest you, I do it in a letter. It came to me during the night this way:

I've really been trying to sleep longer, so last night I went to bed a little earlier than usual. Lil, who wasn't feeling well, was already there. I took a transistor radio and put it under the pillow. Ordinarily I can get a fairly decent signal on it from WBBM Chicago, a clear-channel, 50,000 watt station that is all-news. Often there is news that will take my attention, distracting me from whatever is on my mind. The signal was poor on the old set last night, but I fell asleep soon enough. However, I awakened about 4, for years my usual getting-up time. I remained abed, but there was no signal most of the time. Intermittently I'd hear a fragment of something

I suppose that like most people I dream nights. Generally I am not aware of it, recalling no dream. When I awakened I was aware of a strange dream. I was at a Chinese banquet, meaning Chinese Chinese, not in an American Chinese Restaurant. Why I have no idea. There was a woman waiting table. I remember two dishes and eating too much. One was a shrimp dish and the other was a boat-shaped concoction, with what I never identified encased in a hardened rice shell that held its shape. My last recollection is wanting to eat more when I was stuffed. No recollection of fellow diners.

While I was amusing myself trying to attribute some meaning from my subconscious to this dream, suddenly the signal picked up, after the beginning of the item. It dealt with the story in the current Ramparts on U.S. Intelligence operations. That has been getting some radio play for a day or more hereabouts, local stations. In this development, Mark Stone, who has done p.r. for Ramparts for years and is Izzy's brother, was quoted as saying they'd produce their real source, a man from San Diego whose name was given, at a N.Y. press conference today.

Well, there I was with what I don't generally have, thinking time, so I just lay and think. The story as aired has us monitoring all transatlantic phone calls, having broken all Russian codes, and intercepting just about all Russian communications, including internal. Fantastic story.

That reminded me of the call I had last week from Donald Smith, mg. ed. of Potomac, the Post's Sunday magazine. I later figured out how he got my Duncan Ockie story, a simplification intended for the National Enquirer, which found it too complicated for its readers. The Post had carried one of their stupidities about nuts and assassinations, and in writing Ben Bradlee, probably carboned you, I sent a carbon to him, asking that he give it to Paul Valentine because he had covered the Ray trial. Paul is also one of those who, like you, I asked to ponder the note. He never mentioned getting it and I forgot the whole incident. Smith didn't know how it got to him, but he was fascinated and spent an hour or so asking me questions about it and my "candidate", non-Manchurian.

Now the wierd thing is that when this guy called me the second time, he really unloaded. He told me all about his experience as a translator for intelligence in Europe, I think Germany, and the kinds of things he had translated. He appeared to be of the right and to think Oswald a red. He told me he was working at the Library of Congress, about to retire on disability. He was going to work at the Univ. Miami (Fla), what this meant in total income, comparing increase in income after taxes with cut in pension, etc. All about his broken marriage and his kids with his parents in Texas. He also said that his major function was translating the Russian intercepts when they scrambled on our overflights. And of these he told me what I had not heard before, that they had begun earlier than I'd known. He said they began with the RB47s. I knew of the Van shootdown and the one up around Murmansk. He claimed much deeper penetrations. I don't know how true this is because it seemed to me that if two could get shot down, more would have been and such a project couldn't succeed. What was graphic in his story is the account of Russian reaction, how they went crazy with word, instructions and excitement. According to this guy, we taped every word and translate I feel now what I felt then, this must have been a veritable Babel of words and a tower of pages of translations. But the story was consistent. He didn't trip himself up, said the same thing about each detail as he repeated himself. As I saw the way it was going, I turned the tape recorder on, but I don't know what happened to the tape. Perhaps I reused it when I made an appointment to come up the coming Tuesday. At the end I remember asking him if he'd use his claimed language expertise on this Duncan Ockie thing. I think he claimed fluency in seven languages. He agreed and I haven't heard from him since. Strange, HW