Was there surveillance on my 4/10-11/74 trip to Jacksonville? HW 4/13/74

One number was written incorrectly on my ticket for the 11 a.m. flight via Norfolk. There actually was a flight that evening with the wrong number and despite the correct time on the ticket, I was actually confirmed on the wrong flight. This made a problem because the flight on which I wanted to be was completely sold out.

When National discovered the error, I was put on priority standby.

The plane was at the ~~gate~~ gate early but was delayed leaving, no reason being given. There could be many, as there was an unusual one on the return flight, also innocent.

Jim Lesar met me at the gate to give me some papers.

As we emplaned I noted that a man who looked familiar was making arrangements to get another man of both of them on the plane in first class, I thought. But with the plane sold out and the priority standby not accepted until after loading started, I wondered about this, called to Jim, encapsulated this for him, and he went over to listen to the conversation. It seemed innocent to him. He then so told me.

I don't know why this man seemed familiar. I am sure I have seen him before. He is large, meaning both tall and heavily built, broad in frame. He looked at me at National Airport as I looked at him.

He was not carrying any kind of attache case, not even a portfolio or an envelope of papers. He was carrying a plastic carry-on bag. Not the folding kind that fits under the seat but the kind through which hangers go at the top, like dry-cleaners' bags. There was more than one suit in it, it seemed from the thickness. These may also be normal for that man, but it does seem strange that a man would travel in midweek, in first class, and carry no sign of having any business to transact.

I was seated at the rear of the plane. First-class passengers leave first.

When I got into the corridor at Jacksonville Airport, there was this same man standing and talking to another on the left. He looked at me as I walked past, as I did at him. And his standing and talking in the corridor may also be innocent, although one would expect friends to go to their transportation together. It is possible that the second man was returning to the same plane which from Jacksonville was kind of like a Toonerville Trolley in the stops it had scheduled en route to Houston.

My reservation at The Heart of Jacksonville Motel was made by phone by a man who it then turned out was of official interest and then reported by him to me by phone several days before I left. And there was what I am certain was accidental delay in leaving the airport. The air bus driver did not follow a schedule but awaited a full load. As a result he lost at least three of the original passengers before after close to an hour we did leave. That service seems to be bad enough. I inquired about the return and made what is required there, a reservation for a stop the next morning to give me at least a half hour more than I needed at the airport. That was confirmed in the a.m. because I didn't want to miss the non-stop plane or waste time. But the airbus did not come. There were at least a half-dozen calls because I was anxious, each with assurances that the bus would be there in a minute, made first by the desk and then by the experienced bell captain, without whom I would not have made the plane. I made three, with the same assurances on the first two and to demand a cab immediately on the third. On the third I heard the dispatcher admit that the scheduled airbus had broken down and they had not told me. So this does not seem like harrassment.

After an afternoon meeting to which I carried my portfolio I had a working dinner scheduled at a swanky place. It did not seem appropriate to take an inexpensive plastic portfolio to such an establishment, so I went through it and stuffed all the only copies into my jacket pockets as well as those I wanted to be sure to give. Much remained in the portfolio. I saw no choice but to leave it in the room. So, I decided where to position it on the table and experimented with a paper of matches to see if I could determine if the portfolio had been moved. I found that only by lifting the portfolio straight up and with care would the matches remain in place. When I returned, about three and a half hours later, the matches were under the portfolio only several inches each way from the corner in which I had positioned them with care. From this I take it that the portfolio had been moved in my absence. Our dinner reservations were made from the phone on which my trip had been discussed. That man had just been charged with a gmabling violation in which there had been wire tapping and apparent entrapment by phone.