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9504 Forest Rd.
Bethesda Md. 20014

THE AMERICAN CRYPTOGRAM ASSOCIATION

Official Magazine "The Cryptogram"

Dear OSPREY:

Thank you for the materials and letter of Nov. 14.

We'd like to look at the material more carefully before venturing more than tentative opinions. However there are a few points you might be able to clear up that occur to us at first glance.

The grille, if such it is, doesn't turn but stands or at most flips. Were those the only pages with marks? Since most of the marked letters are not legible it's impossible to say, even if we had enough Russian to speculate on anagramming, whether or not there is any meaning. Perhaps you have more information on this or clearer copy.

Concerning the letter: there seems to be no source in the documents for the number clues given by "X". By "3 letters in Nov." he might mean N O V as 1,2,3. The rest of that sentence makes no sense at all for the P.O.Box number is not 34567 but 6225. There is nothing to show how or why he "scrambled" 34567 to get 47365; similarly then 6225 becomes 2652 for no obvious reason. (Why not 67453 or some other arrangement)? BADC or BEADC defines the scheme but there is no source for it..again why not ADBC or ADEBC? One could as easily just anagram selected words from the text which is what he next does.

This sort of "deciphering" is common to those who suspect null messages everywhere. The true null shows itself normally without such manipulations. As an example of the sort of paths down which this type of speculation can lead as well as a criticism of them you might refer to William & Elizabeth Friedman's book "The Shakespearean Ciphers Examined". With such a short text and no system known to be used one can read any message one would like into such a letter. The message "X" seems to find is far too ambiguous for any rational system of communication. A prime rule of any communication is that there be no room for interpretation, esp. if there is possibility of a mechanical garble as there would be in a systematic null such as suggested here.

While this might be of historical interest if there were indeed messages, there is not enough internal evidence now to warrant publication in The Cryptogram. We'd be interested in any further work you do. However we can't promise it would be anything to interest the Krewe in general. We know of no one now who has expressed an interest in the subject so can suggest no one who might work on the project with you.

All in all, it doesn't look too promising, esp. since at least some gov't experts have already had a look at the whole array of documents, and have found nothing worth the bother. We are aware of criticisms of the Warren Report. At the same time one must leave open the possibility of deeper, less public investigation which has, as yet, turned up nothing publishable. If there were continuing work, relevant documents would probably not be public; the possibility of outsiders, esp. amateurs, contributing anything would be very small.

If you would like the materials returned, please let us know.

Good saying.