

5/16/72

Dear Larry,

Appreciate your last night's call on what you saw found at Bremner's Haven. It is as far out as anything can be. As you may have understood, one of the foci of my work has been the FBI. Its complete unprofessionalism in this case is an eye-and-mind-grabber. As, of course, is Bremner's unprofessionalism.

Before getting into that, for which I also want to make my own record of s-typicality, let me note for you that if this is the same man identified by a sharp-eyed WTOP-TV employee in footage they took earlier at Wheaton, this assassin is the one with smiles. He was absolutely beaming in this footage, and whether in elation over Wallace or anticipation of what he planned (and why not then and there?) I'll leave to the inevitable shrinkery.

Your man must have gotten there relatively late, or you were late learning and phoning, yet so much was there? When it was a crime to harm any federal officer and the police were first to know Bremner's ident? You suspected your competition had beat you, but we now know that a WISN crew was there when it was still daylight, needing no lights, and it was a crew, from the footage, unhurried enough to mount and use tripods inside and out. From recollection, aside from the interviews, and with a sound-track quoting the assistant manager of the bldg as saying that the FBI had already been there, the shots showed the gun manuals (looked like things like "Ammo", standard works of that size) in the far left corner of a small table, the box of bullets in its foreground, with two removed and on display for the camera, and so many other things the FBI should and ordinarily would have seized, one must wonder. Especially at the contrabands. They not only seize everything in sight, they take what the local cops have. As much as they can get. If they left anything in Memphis, it was a single pair of shorts. When the Dallas cops held back a single rifle shell, they snatched that at 2 a.m. In neither of those cases was there federal jurisdiction, so when they finally have one, they take only what would be prejudicial to their later announcement, that Bremner has left-wing ties (we heard this on NBC-TV, which broke into their Monday night movie with a bit that included some reruns and new footage of the Md. State Police, things like that. This is the first such police announcement that comes to mind that was proper, with regard for the rights of the accused.

I'd appreciate what you paper carries on this in the early days, including the remarks, if it is not too much trouble, and the little interest I have, for I can't cover as much as I'm into, is the assassin and the FBI's work. I'm the wrong guy to tell they don't know their business. I lived with them on a job for four months. Take them out of politics and they are pros. If Hoover was careful always to avoid selection from the top third of graduating classes, he also avoided the bottom third and their training is at least adequate. They are not the world's best, but they know straight crime work ok. And on Bremner, the smiling assassin, whose mental illness would seem to be obvious, I am interested in anything showing his interests. One of the things that has repeated itself regularly without being nailed down is interest in the occult and strange groups. None of this was in Manson, etc. I'd be interested if this seemingly sick man was under such influence.

What you said of your man's finding school records, including W-2s as late as he was there was duplicated on the WISN footage. They sure grabbed this kind of stuff with everyone else. Can't understand why they left it or anything else.

Provocatively, an unprofessional weapon was again used. And the shooting was as close to incompetent as it could be. If Wallace dies or is permanently paralyzed, remember, even Ruby, who also had not killed earlier, made it in a single shot. If I think the police and SS can't be faulted for ~~xxxx~~ failing to prevent, or in failing to halt all but the first shot as they did with Ruby, I do think that anyone have a clear first shot from less than touching distance, if he knew what he was up to, would have needed no more. The CBS footage is distinct on the shots. They are evenly-spaced and rapid, so the grabbing of the arm at most deflected, and it may be added tragedy that the deflected arm caused the major wound. Five shots were clear, as I counted them, but the reruns may be more dependable.

Anyway, there are some pretty fair judges on the Federal bench in Baltimore. This is where the Federal charges will be tried. The prosecutor's office leaves much to be desired. I've had some experience with it. Best, HW

Handwritten note:
FBI
WISN
Keg No

1st add, Wallace, 5/16/72

Because I knew Lawrence Pierce had shot good footage, I look at the entire CBS-TV a.m. news, almost all on Wallace, opening with a 22-minute recap and by and large good electronic journalism, despite the traditional shrink and the Oswald comparison. On the way to voting I listened to inde radio all-news WAVA. They had only half-hourly stuff, and on the way back, at 8:30, they had a few quotes from the notebooks to which your man had referred, comparison with Sirhan's. One word was unclear, and the difference can be vast. The line began "My country tis of thee, sweet land of" and then it was unclear to me whether the final word was "bigotry" or "pigotry".

CBS, which showed father and brother, gave spelling as "bremer", whereas State Police spelled out with two "ms" from license, if both accurate another lead for shrinks.

CBS had one, Abrahamsen (right), Scandanavian accent. He departed from norm to blame the faults of an inadequate society for the flaws in people, isolating as causes of personal insecurity such things as a lack of complete medical protection. When Hart asked him if he were not condemning society, he at first started to hedge but finally acknowledge he was. However, his professional opinion was rendered on such scanty knowledge he was a third wrong on the age of the accused.

Most interesting to me was the opening segment, which featured one of the surgeons, a Dr. Joseph Shanno, whose itemized the wounds, more than had been noted at first and specifically including at least two the examining doctor at the scene said he had looked for and not found. There were, he said, five wounds (and three others also were wounded, so there were a total of at least 8 wounds). He said he could not be certain whether four or five bullets caused these wounds. With arm wounds, it would depend on the position of the arm at the time of shooting whether one or ~~two~~^{both} of the wounds to the torso were or could have been caused by a bullet first hitting the arm or shoulder. The latter was described as a grazing wound, and one could conjecture it caused the neck wound to the SS agent. (He is quite clear in Pierce's footage when, as it was aired, it is blown up.) Hitting the shoulder would not likely have deflected it downward but could have in other directions. Or, not at all. We do not know enough, or I do not, about the other two injuries to conjecture. No details have been broadcast about them that I have heard, except for the description as minor. Haven't looked at the papers yet. (Locally, most page 1, only other major story incredible record of a drunken driver in smashing cars and people, one killed, heart of downtown.)

From the record at our polling place, where we have 1,500 registered, advance predictions are quite wrong. This is the first time we did not have to wait, even in a primary. Always we get there when it opens, 7 a.m., and then have to wait and there is always a line when we leave. Today there were no voters there (two machines), we walked in and out. While Lil was voting I talked to officials. Only comment one she solicited, knowing the voter comes from Ala (and is anti-Wallace). Only 20 had voted in the 80 minutes prior to us, and this is Wallace country. Aside, the Wallace followers here are also those with all the anti-gun law car stickers, like Register Communists, Not Guns. This is a big deal hereabouts, but the inconsistency is that these same nuts complained to the police when I started wearing my Savage automatic (collector's item) after being set upon repeatedly by their dogs.

WAVA's play was cool, beginning at 6 a.m. Nothing between half-hourlies until, possibly, 8:30, and what I heard then may have been end that half-hourly wrapup.

= CBS could not have made less reference to the FBI, which is strange. And no quotes. Aired local prosecutor, straight stuff and nothing prejudicial. They also had more on students (nix on notebooks, not even reference), including ref to Confed. flags in plural. Your man reported, as I recall, the FBI's taking of one. By the time the pix aired this a.m. were shot (and they had night shots of the outside of the bldg., so I presume this is not the WISN footage at all) stuff inside had been moved and they used tight shots. The top one of the two manuals is a standard, "gun Digest". One of most common. Dependable lit. Student quoted as saying box bullets in closet, not as WISN showed, on table. Probably confirmation in what I noted earlier, the posing of two bullets on the table. By the time these shots were made, the FBI still had not collected the bullets, for they were not only visible but one shot was posed with a bullet between thumb and finger. Added point here: where there may not now be any reason to suspect conspiracy, one of the possible clues to any would be prints on the bullets, which do take and hold them. Apparently a rather large collection of school records were there, for one student was quoted in comment: poorer marks in lower grades, improving as he went higher, finally mostly As and Bs.

Conspicuously missing was any mention or shot of his car. They had his wallet and driver's license, so they had to have had his registration, I would presume. If it were in the car, as some states require, I think, how many Wisconsin cars could there be in a suburban Md. shopping center? How long would it have taken to look? Don't know why, except to repeat, this is not the FBI I know, nor the police. Aside: the jail to which he was taken is not federal, not in the county in which the crime was committed, but to the one in the county I mentioned to you as having an alert intelligence unit in its police dept., with a real expert on the radical right with whom I've worked.

The apt shots included something I could not make out with the word "SEX" in it.

Toward the end was a sequence of interview with Reporter David Dick and Cameraman Lawrence, both of whom had covered Wallace and both of whom had noted suspect earlier and they think repeatedly. Pierce, having noted him, went up to him to interview at this shopping center. It appears to be his picture that WTOP-TV used as a still, as I reported to you yesterday. In that sequence, full face, head on. In the sequence in which he went up to him, left profile, both instances that frozen smile. But when Pierce got to him, he wouldn't talk. Walked away. Dick, having noticed him at earlier rallies, and he thinks before those in Md., was going to interview a typical member of the audience until he walked up to this guy (at Wheaton, I think) and found him so loaded with Wallace adornments but decided he was not only a Wallace worker but so pro-Wallace he was unsuited for a selection as a fair representation. Incidentally, I would think that if the agents noted him at the various rallies, they might have assumed he was a Wallace worker and have been without suspicion, for which no suspicion need attach to them.

The doctor said the shots came from the front and to the right. The unenlarged pictures I saw last evening, I am pretty sure show a puff of smoke to the right of W's back. Or, not where the shots originated. At the beginning, the assassin seems clearly to Wallace's right, seen from what was Wallace's back, but so much is cropped in the enlarging that the only thing of which I am reasonably certain is that he does move forward, that is, to Wallace's left, and the pistol is held and seen while he is still to Wallace's right. So, the doctors' report is consistent with the CBS pix, to the degree I can be certain, but possibly not with the puff of smoke.

I have had but one call from the press to date, this a.m., from a friend on The National Enquirer. I'm glad we spent so much time keeping my phone busy last night, for I think conjecture at this point can do no good and that the only thing that occurs to me would be taken as inappropriate. This is the harvesting of the wind. The bible put it well with living by the sword. Despite his quieter methods, this is the apostle of violence. His every word inspires no, no matter how much he has sought to muzzle them. How can one say anything honest when the man has been so severely injured, and when one is so opposed to all violence, particularly assassinations?

Glanced at first page Post, bulldog, press time unknown, but with a quote of an announcement made close to 8 p.m. It had Bremmer's ident. and little else. Haven't seen jump on this or other stories. Doubt they could have had story from Milwaukee. Any of these you may see could interest me. Post, by the way, adds to the reported red-white-blue shirt similar sox, and he ain't Abbie Hoffman! and between ~~ix~~ where earlier reported as plasted with Wallace stuff and scene, if not as I think also Wheaton, he got rid of all but one thing, a left-lapelled large button. Wheaton is west and a little south of Laurel, perhaps 30 miles separating them. Laurel is between DC and Balt., perhaps half way. Wheaton is north of DC, on Connecticut Ave. extended and still called that. There was more confusion on hospitals that radio reported, but understandably, and it seems odd that the beating of Bremmer could be attributed to crowds when he seemed to have been siezed immediately by police and surrounded. CBS shots show a bare left arm grabbing his hand. It (grabber) had a wristwatch and the dorsal side was to the camera. If cop, plain-clothed and clearly abreast Bremmer or he'd have used right hand. Don't think lefties wear watch that wrist.