

Oak Ridge 5/12 background and the surprised and surprising Dr. Martins

The day had started in St. Louis with my getting up before the morning call. I used the common bathroom, then awakened Jerry. He rouses easily, but gets out of bed slowly. This slowly: I shaved, dressed and packed and he was still bed, awake and smoking. It had been our plan, not being able to predict morning traffic - and we had to go to the airport at rush hour - to pack, eat and get an early start, which would free him for any personal matters he wanted to attend to and me for reading if we got to the airport early. So, when I was ready and he was not, he suggested that I have breakfast alone, which I did. By the time I returned he had still not dressed, was only beginning to shave.

He had very little packing to do. Everything he has in in the trunk of his car. He carries a small sippy back and two suits or sports coats on a hanger. He didn't wear either once when he were together after the Sunday night TV show. He took them to his room each night only to avoid having them visible hanging from the rear window of his car.

We were not late. He was breakfastless. We parted at the airport to avoid his leaving to park the car. I checked in and honored Childress of the Wash. Journal and Willard Kurborough who, since his entry into politics, rarely gets to the paper, works on his own. That day he was about to leave on a trip to Virginia for some stories and he asked me to stay over so we could meet and talk (that having also been impossible in November, when my visit coincided with election day). He also asked me to ask James to consent to an interview, stipulating that he would submit it to both James and Bud for approval before giving to editors (James declined, without prompting from me.) Y's reporting has been fair to James. Childress was tied up that night so I asked me to see his city editor or his assistant, Tom Sweeten or Jim Bennett.

The fastest way to get to Knoxville from St. Louis and the only way without changing planes is the southern 10:25 flight that goes by flying a square pattern around the state, first to Memphis, then Chattanooga, then Knoxville, and from there to the Tri-City airport, two being Bristol and Johnson City.

We had a long wait at Memphis. After 15-20 minutes past departure time it was announced that the work visibly in progress was on one of the radios, which had gone out. It exceeded the predicted additional quarter hour time. So, by the time we got to Knoxville, I was worried about getting to see James at all that day. I had placed a reservation for a Budget car, preferably a small one, from St. L. I phoned the number given and was told a driver awaited me at the Delta baggage claim. He was there as I left the entrance, before the plane's baggage was available (I had carry on only because of a new bag making it possible). As I walked up, he left - empty! Without a single pickup! I phoned Budget and when he got there, they sent him back for me. At their place, which is but across the highway from the airport, there was a further long delay because the man renting a car was arguing about everything, politely and pointlessly. Finally I was given a bronch Vega and I was on my way. In a vehicle slower than my truck I have ever driven despite its newness (4,400 miles). This was no great problem, but it was annoying. It had a stick automatic, and I was not certain if was in Drive it was so sluggish and slow. The attendant had warned me that Highway 129 was then under intensive police surveillance for speeders and that the limit was 55. Thus going and coming I saw no single cop. It is close to 15 miles to Interstate 40 W, which leads to the roads to Petros. As soon as I could find a place to stop on I 40 I did, to be certain I had the shift in D. I did. The car was that slow. By pulling the seat forward, I could get to press harder on the gas pedal and thereafter could go closer to the speed limit. But after turning off onto Lovell Road, which leads to Solway, which is taken to Tenn 68, leading through Oak Ridge to the turnoff on State 116 that goes toward Petros (a road leading for Warburg, I was often the object of the resentment of of drivers ranging for those in a real hurry in their private cars to an assortment of trucks, one I remember being an overloaded and ancient pickup on the flat bed of which enormous heavy-duty tires were stacked high on their treads. Once we had to slow down, it was impossible to keep a four-wheeled and recalcitrant mule from passing me. My interest was not in the exhilaration of speeding but in getting there. I never reached the allowed 70 on the Interstate. But on the side roads, where speeds to 65 are permitted, there are frequent and

announced "speed zones", meaning non-speed zones, and curves not safely travelled at the speed limit. As one nears and passes by Oak Ridge (the road skirts it on the south), there are frequent traffic lights. It is surprising how many there are at Oliver Springs, which is so sparsely settled it hardly seems worth noting on the maps, and each time that brand new and by today's standards sporty Vega slowed down or stopped it seemed to take an interminable time for it to get up to road speed again. I did wonder if I'd get to see James at all before the warden left for the night.

I did. Just before he left I got his OK to stay as long as I wanted. Having anticipated getting there late, I had thought out what I would do, and that I did do, seek to limit what I'd go into then to what I wanted for habeas corpus affidavits. (Where he had knowledge, Foreman having been much more careful with him, it is entirely consistent with what all the others had told me.) Jimmy knew I was coming some day toward the end of the week. The warden feared he'd miss supper, but supposed he'd have enough attached away in his cell to quiet any hunger pangs. Jimmy, however, had eaten early.

Delays did not end when I got to the jail. He was delivered promptly, and the warden gave me the chaplain's office to use. (The next morning he asked the chaplain to find things to do outside his office so I could again use it in what I presume is privacy.) I had hardly gotten to talking to James when a guard came to tell me that a turn signal was flashing. I had noted that the indicators on the dash did not work, but I figured the signals were and had been unconcerned. So, I stopped interviewing, rushed down to the visitors' parking lot, the most remote part of it, unlocked the door and manipulated the arm until I was sure it was in neutral, then rushed back. Soon another and also-pleasant, somewhat overstuffed guard was knocking at the door to tell me my flasher was going and to express his fear that it would kill the battery. I thanked him and then told Jimmy I'd take the chance. It was the flasher, something with which I'd had no previous experience. It seems that in showing me the special anti-theft device on the Vega, which requires the depressing of a small arm on the steering column for the removal of the key (and the gadget worked hard), the attendant had also depressed the flasher button, something I did not discover until getting back to the car and examining everything. All of this tended to make me a bit nervous, but it turned out that rushing to get there, or intending to get there as quickly as possible, was a good idea, for James gave me the leas from which I was able early the next morning to get the warden's ok to interview up to three other prisoners. (I got two only, perhaps because of the reluctance of the third, who had seen and heard Foreman say on Houston TV right after the minitrial that Jimmy is crazy. It is Jimmy's view that if Foreman believed him crazy, he should have entered such a defense. I think that if superficial, it might well be added to other things dealing with the voluntariness of the plea and the effectiveness of counsel.)

I interviewed Jimmy for a bit more than an hour, for there came a time when we just chatted and there was no need to record the interview. Without that, it takes almost the entire side of the 120 cassette.

Instead of returning to the airport to use the motel Jerry had selected near it last time, which meant an extra hour of driving each way or, aside from the time he wasted in getting lost on four of the six trips, I checked in at the Oak Ridge "Holiday Inn, a mere 30 minutes from the jail, even on that Vega. It was then 6:30. And I was so tired that, although I'd had no lunch, I decided not to sup, either. I just didn't feel hungry. I phoned the Journal, got Bennett, and he asked me to come in. I told him of my fatigue and asked if he could come out. There was too much work. I asked when he finished his trick, suggesting that perhaps he might want to come on his own time. After satisfying him that I could be somewhat restored in energy by then, he agreed. He was to finish work at 9:30. I told him I'd nap. But by the time I got my bag hanging, the toilet goods out, had removed my jacket, shoes and tie (it was a hot day and the sun had poured in the large window facing the west and getting full sun, and then closed the drapes and tried to sleep, I couldn't. I tried to phone Bud to check some legal priorities with him. The maid asked that I return the call in 15 minutes, not for my number so he could. I did, and he was gone for the evening, something I didn't like. So, I called Jim, and got the legal knowledge I wanted for him--and made arrangements for him to meet me at National Airport at 3:03

the next afternoon, for debriefing and to take me to Bud's home, where I had parked my car to save heavy airport-parking charges. (Jim said he and Bud had an all-afternoon conference with an ACLU lawyer, but would send Bob Smith. It turned out that he didn't remember, becoming excited because that was the day of his official admission to the bar. He had time because the ACLU-typed broke their date. After wandering around carrying a three-suitier bag and a 30-lb attache case looking for Bob, I phoned him to learn that this was all news to him. I phoned Bud's office and spoke to Jim, who spoke to Bud, who suggested that I take the air bus to the corner near his office and then go to his home with him. When I asked? Jim relayed the word, about 6 p.m. My response was, I am sure, taken as extreme in politeness. It was profane. So, after pinching pennies for a week I had to pay for a cab for those perhaps ten miles at the very end and was delayed just enough to get clogged in rush-hour traffic on both the beltway around DC and the Interstate north, on which there have been ~~major~~ repairs for the past year and nightly jams because of them.)

In between times I tried to call Lil. It was disturbing to get no answer. I always fear she may fall in my absence because of her knee and ankle weaknesses. As it turned out, she delayed falling until shortly before I got home. I also knew her sister's husband was on the verge of death from my previous conversation. So, when I finally made the arrangements he promptly forgot about with Jim and got legal confirmation of my lay opinion of the new leads I had, I found trying to sleep pointless, that while tired I was also wide awake, so I decided to eat.

Aside: In checking-in, the woman clerk asked me if I'd like to "take a chance on a \$50,000 travel policy." I assumed this to mean a raffle, the prize being a year's insurance, something like that. I said OK, so she showed me where to initial the blank. When I checked the bill on getting home, this turned out to be a three-day policy for which the charge was \$2.00, itemized as "Misc." on the bill, to which the policy was attached. But when I checked out in the early a.m. after but four hours sleep, and to save time had breakfast served in the room, for me a real extravagance (as it was in fact, a glass of orange juice, a cup of coffee an egg and a single sausage patty costing \$5.23), I had not taken time to check the bill.

It was German Night at the Inn. I decided to try the sauerbraten. Everything was mediocre except the sliver of German cream pie that came with it and the glass of J&B it took a little doing to get. The liquor laws have been a bit liberalized. The bar is now a club. The room key serves as membership in the club. But the waitress can't serve the liquor. I had to stagger to the bar, pay for it, and carry it back myself. No Al Hurt law in liberalizing Tenn.!

By the time I'd eaten it was dark enough to attempt sleep again, after trying Lil without success. Sleep did not come easily, so each 15 minutes I'd phone again. At about 9, still sleepless, I was aware of the arrival of a motorcycle. I was just about to doze off, and the recollection is hazy. Almost immediately I thought I heard a key in the door. It didn't scare me, but I did wonder. About the time I must have decided I heard the key from the next room, the door opened, someone turn the overhead lights on, and there stood an apparition in crash helmet and a rather gaudy combination of clothing. "What are you doing here?" he demanded. "Trying to get some sleep," I replied, asked him what the hell he meant coming into my room, too hazy to understand that he had to have a key to do it. "Your room?" he came back. "It is mine. I rented it for three days and when I left this morning to get my bike I told them I'd be back tonight." When I'd checked in, I'd asked for a first-floor room, not to have to tackle the steps, tired as I was, and they assigned me to 101, the corner room nearest the main entrance. I suggested to the visitor that he call the desk and straighten it out, saying I wanted to stay in this room because I was unpacked and too darned tired to move. He argued that he wanted his expensive bike near the front, where it could be protected by stronger lights. Maybe they have another that will do, I suggested. So, he came over and used the phone while lay there, dressed save for tie and shoes. He did give the clerk hell. "I stay here a week every month", he protested, and I always reserve and have this room, and I told you - from the time it had to have been a different clerk I'd be back, to hold the room for me, and here is someone in my bed!

It was like the fairy tale of the three bears.

The funniest part was the way he opened the conversation with the clerk:

"This is Mr. Zinkins." It was delivered as though he were saying "This is J.P. Morgan."

Whoever in the hell Mr. Zinkins is, he considers himself an important man. He must have means from some source. He appears to spend a week each month at this one motel. His accent is local. He had his bike close enough so that, whether or not he had done any work or engaged in any activity during the day, he could have driven his car to where he keeps his prized bike and have returned on it. Which, especially when combined with his gauzy, if apparently expensive sports garb, and especially that elaborate headgear, like for a space shot, hardly suggests his are ordinary business pursuits.

When he got the empty room next door, 103- and despite his staying there a week each month when he was offered the room 103 by phone he didn't know where it was (I told him when he cupped the mouthpiece and asked me, although this was the first time I'd checked in there - and might one not have assumed it was no more distant than the second room?). So, he appeared mollified, accepted and replaced the receiver. He then explained all over again what left the same mysteries, all about his staying there a week in each four, all about going for that precious bike that a.m., and all a out wanting it well lit at night, accounting for his insistence on 101. Now it had happened that there had been no space at 101 and I'd had to park the turtlish Vega about four cars away from it and the light much earlier. So, Brother Zinkins parked his vehicle right outside the office, in the no-parking driveway. It was a white spectacular, as I observed, with many others, on checking out in the a.m. Everyone stopped to look at it. Several commented on it to me as I walked past without stopping. I'd never seen one quite like it. It was sparkling clean despite its total whiteness, as though he had washed it before rearing. It has built-in pouch-like boxes on each side of the rear wheel, somewhat like the side-cars of police motorcycles, large but instead on the one supported by the third wheel, these are balanced on both sides of the wheel. I guess the overall width must be close to a yard, and they are a good 15-18" deep and more than that from front to back. Much else was elaborate and a bit much about this bike, I felt as I thought about it later, but it did not then interest me. Getting going did, and I did get going as fast as I could.

In retrospect, innocent as it undoubtedly is, the affair of Zinkins seems odd. What the hell is a man who lives close enough to get a bike doing spending a month at the best motel near the "atomic energy plant? Can he travel thus, dress thus, and transact business? What kind of business clothing can he carry on (surely not in) such a conveyance? How would he look appearing for business meeting, even attempted sales, on a motorcycle, despite its quite obvious expensiveness?

As I lay abed, the lights out, thinking about these minor mysteries, I was about to doze off when Jim Bennett knocked at the door. He is a pleasant, attractive, blondish young man, bespectacled and wearing the mod large lenses, gold-rimmed. He wears his wavy hair (as I recall it slightly wavy, almost as though styled that way) only a little full, not long by current styles. Coatless. I had just placed a call to Lil. I asked him if he'd care to read a few files I'd brought while I completed the call, and gave him the memos on the spectro appeal, pointing out the Kleindienst parts and the Frazier affidavit, and the full ring autopsy, complete with attached affidavit by Dr. Francisco and the rubbish he got from the surveyors. That time Lil was in. She failed to tell me of our brother-in-law's death, of which she knew, having just returned from the hospital nearby in the next state, West Virginia.

I loaned Bennett both files, telling him he could keep our memo, of which I have extra copies, and that he could copy what I'd attached to it and the government's memo. I pointed out where it certified to the court what Mitchell had already made clear in the last-minute backdown in an effort to avoid a hearing, that Kleindienst is a liar. The other things, given verbally, were off the record, for his and Childress' info only. I told him

of the report of bugs in that special Memphis James Earl Ray cell and its continued use as a punishment cell, and that I would let him know if I got what I considered confirmation (the next day, from the airport, I left a message with 'hildress' secretary, Bennett not yet having gotten to his desk). I went into what I understood to be the legal situation and what I was working on and how it seemed to stack up. I asked him his opinion of the local federal judge. He identified him as Taylor and said he had just left to preside over what would be a sensational trial in Illinois, of a political figure whose name he could not recall. My first guess, Keener, was right, and he then recalled the first name.

"Don't go into his courtroom without a jacket, and a tie, too," he said. "He told me the story of a reporter who was reading the briefs in another case when Taylor was presiding over the one before it and of Taylor spotting this and dressing that reporter down. Each case is to be paid attention to by each one in his court while it is being presented. He is old-fashioned in his ways and attitude toward the law and courtroom behavior, a stickler, but fair. In Bennett's opinion and in his reflection of Taylor's local rep., he is a good judge. If the habeas corpus and any other federal-court actions are to be in his court, as I'd presume to be the case with Petros no more than 50 miles away and James confined at Petros (pronounced not like the Greek, for stone, but Peet-raws), I felt better. The state judges are all atrocity-minded. I suppose that the action can be brought against the Commissioner of Corrections, hence in Nashville, which may be and probably is in a different jurisdiction, for it is in the upper western corner of the state, a relatively long one, with Knoxville toward the eastern upper end.

Paper policy prohibits the use of tape recorders in phone interviews without the permission of the interviewee or the use of a beeper. I wanted to phone Francisco and ask him what Frank told me, that he had made a mistake in his autopsy report and that the two wounds were one, what appeared to be the second being actually the result of surgery. This is inherently impossible, for can there be a doctor who can't distinguish between an exploded out wound caused by a fragmenting bullet and the clean, sharp edge of a scalpel-caused wound? And what surgical process? The trakes are performed from the front. They are not in the side of the neck, down onto the torso from it. But I feel any admission of any error in the protocol, used as it was in the extradition, hidden as it was, and misrepresented as it was in the ministerial, may have some legal potential. However, if he pursues this, it may end up with Bennett's word against Francisco's. I told him I doubted Francisco would agree to the taping and also be forthright. But he may try it. He is to tell me the result if he does.

He agrees it is a good story, but whether his paper will is another story. We'll have to wait and see. I told him how to get a tape of the Frank comment on the Bill Fields Show on KPLB and when it was made.

I had suggested, as soon as I'd talked to Bill, that we have a drink. We went to the bar. By then there was "music", as loud as I'd ever heard anywhere, and in so small a place, it not only made conversation impossible, it hurt the ears. I suggested, directly into his to be heard, that we take our drinks to my room. I ordered a J&B in water, which the barmaid managed to hear, he a beer. Although he was right next to me, I could not hear the brand he asked for or the kind (draft vs bottle), but the barmaid, much further away, with the entire bar between them, apparently has learned to read lips!

I don't recall all the aspects we covered, but except for the things I gave him, none were for use. I offered him a better copy of the protocol should they want to reproduce it, as I hope, with their own checking on the parts not in the protocol. I showed him the verbal description of the second wound, calling it that, and the charts.

When I returned the Vega I told the attendant it had been adequate for my purposes, that - really had and was making no complaint, but that it was the most sluggish vehicle I'd ever driven and had the least pickup. I thought it was the single car that was defective. Not so, according to him. All their Vegas are, he added that the same is true of the Pinto. He asked, "Have you ever driven a Pinto?", as though to suggest it performs even more poorly than the Vega. They are considering unloading all they have of each, although new.