

9/26/67

Dear Paul,

Your 9/23 of Jim's absolutely fascinating discoveries about Davison came just as I was taking a break, so I read that and I reply immediately, having made but two phone calls in between.

Our local bookstore has no copy of the Penkivsky papers. If the local library does, I haven't time to go there now. I have phoned a trustworthy British correspondent friend who had read all of my unpublished work, etc., and he also has no copies, but at lunch time he'll check the DC bookstore near his office and he'll canvass his British correspondent friends to see if they have the British or Russian editions.

This is possibly one of the more significant discoveries. I urge you to communicate none of it to any others, for if it is what it can be the hazards are numerous and great and the leaking of it into the wrong-even just garrulous hands could have the most serious consequences. Gary will get this and will know my feeling about it.

I am not taking the time to go back and read the memo I wrote in May after getting Jim's first on this. There is nothing less likely than that a run-of-the-mill employee of the Moscow Embassy would give his mother's home address/phone to a defector known to have announced his turning over military secrets to the USSR. It is even less likely for a military person to do this. I suggest this means there is some special knowledge Davison had to have had about Oswald, as the absolute minimum. The possibility of Oswald's visiting Atlanta en route Dallas is so close to non-existent it can be accepted as such. He was known to be impoverished, therefore he would have no car. If he had, his going to Atlanta took him hundreds of miles out of his way. Ditto with bus. By air, there are too many through flights to hedge-hop thataway. It would be like your telling someone going to LA, by the way, when you stop in Reno...

Now, it is safe to assume that when Davison was sent to the Embassy, he had some special qualifications. Language is the most obvious. But it is not likely that he, a doctor, was sent there with a language specialty alone....And so many years later he seems still to be a bachelor...What this really also amounts to is his telling Oswald how to reach him, where his home in the US was, and for the future. One of the possibilities of this kind of interpretation is that they had something in common, something they might want to talk about, rehash, compare notes about.

It is pretty obvious Davison did not mistake 1962 and 1964 or late 1963. He knew damned well the woman with two kids, if there were one, was a different person than Marina Oswald. It is certain he did not forget the Oswalds. He is, then, dissembling, with or without FBI help and/or inspiration. ..CE2705 is merely the cover on a file. The rest of the file should be there. Do you want me to go there and get it or would you rather ask for it?...I enclose an article from the SEP that Jim may find pertinent. Issue dated 12/18/68...Interrupted and lost train thought. Penkovsky was serialized here, but that would not likely have had what is not in book. There were also lengthy articles, possibly in LIFE or Look...I can also see Wise in D.C. at proper time. I've met him....Is it possible to get access to the 12/63 articles in Russian press? Is there not a Stanford Institute where this would likely be available?

DR. ALEXIS H. DAVISON

Synopsis: Oswald's notebook contains the name and Atlanta address of the mother of Alexis H. Davison, who served at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow as a medical doctor and an assistant air attaché. He was barred from the USSR in May 1963 after being implicated in the Oleg Penkovsky espionage case.

Details: (This is just a tabulation of my information at this time -PLH, 9/23/69)

Oswald's notebook contains the following entry: "mother of U.S. Embassy doctor / Mrs. Hal Davison / 4047 Tuxedo Rd. / Atlanta, Georgia / (in Russian, and apparently part of this entry:) Natalia Alekseevna " (16H50; CD 205, p. 685 (listing of notebook))

CD 235, synopsis: "Mrs. HAL DAVISON, Atlanta, Ga., advised LEE HARVEY OSWALD unknown to her; stated her son was former American Embassy doctor in Soviet Union and may have examined OSWALD or his wife upon their departure from Soviet Union." (Report dated 12/26/63.)

From Synopsis of CD 409 (dated 2/5/64): "Dr. ALEXI S DAVISON (sic) formerly located at American Embassy, Moscow, USSR, stated examined attractive Russian female with two children a few months ago and woman was emigrating to U.S. He also conversed with woman's husband and gave address of his mother in Atlanta. He could not definitely state these people were the OSWALDs."

I have ordered the relevant parts of these CD's, and whatever else may be in the name files.

The November 1967 Atlanta telephone directory lists DAVISON ALEXIS H MD, with home and office numbers; the Yellow Pages indicate his specialty is internal medicine. Also, DAVISON HAL M 4047 Tuxedo Rd NW.

According to the State Department Foreign Service Lists, Captain Davison served as assistant air attaché (one among several) starting February 10, 1961.

On Davison's involvement in the Penkovsky affair, see Wise and Ross, Invisible Government, p. 268-9; New York Times, May 8 & 14 1963, p. 1 (Excerpts attached ?)

The following sources were checked on Davison, with negative results except as indicated above:

Indexes to the major CD's; WR index; Vol. 15 index; Sylvia's index; Manchester and Bishop books; Who's Who in America' Who's Who in ~~the~~ CIA; NY Times, 1960-1967; State Dept. Biographic Register (apparently does not include military attachés). (I couldn't find The Penkovsky Papers in English; the French version has no index. Did the Russians publish their version?)

As an applicant for an immigrant visa, Marina was required to take a medical exam at the Embassy (22H44). CE ²⁷⁰⁵ is a document dated May 24, 1962, and signed by Davison, "re clinical test for Marina Oswald." (As published, this CE looks incomplete.) It is noted that this was 18 months before the assassination, and that the Oswalds had only 1 child, age about 3 months (cf. CD 409).

Sept. 23, 1969
Paul L. Hoch
(Original discovery
by JNS)

New York Times, May 8, 1963, pp. 1,3

(Reporting on Penkovsky trial).... Capt. Alexis H. Davison, a United States Air Force officer, who was the embassy's doctor here, and Hugh Montgomery, an attaché, were named in the indictment as the recipients of signals from Mr. Penkovsky when he had left intelligence data in the apartment cache.

Captain Davison left Moscow yesterday upon completion of his normal tour of duty. Mr. Montgomery is still on the staff of the embassy.

The US Embassy has denied as unfounded the charges against the accused aides.

The trial indictment did not press the charges of complicity against Captain Davison or Mr. Montgomery as vigorously as was done in December in articles published in the Soviet press....

May 14, 1963, pp. 1, 14 (5 US and 5 British diplomatic personnel barred from USSR, including Davison. Photo, p. 14.) ... Captain Davison and Mr. Montgomery were accused in the indictment at the trial of having been telephone contacts for Mr. Penkovsky. Captain Davison left Moscow the day before the trial began. The Embassy said he had been transferred on normal rotation....

No other index references to Davison, 1960-1967 inclusive.

WISE + ROSS, 'INVISIBLE GOVERNMENT'

V. Penkovsky was the deputy chief of the Soviet State Committee for the Coordination of Scientific Research, and very likely was also a colonel in Soviet military intelligence. At his show trial in May, 1963, he confessed passing 5,000 frames of exposed miniature-camera film, containing classified information about Soviet rockets and other secrets, to American and British agents.

The Russians charged that Penkovsky, a "money-hungry traitor who loved to dance the Charleston and the twist," would hide his information in a matchbox behind the radiator in the hallway of a Moscow apartment house at No. 5-6 Pushkin Street. He would mark a circle with charcoal on lamppost No. 35 near a bus stop on Kutusovskiy Prospekt.

The Soviets said he would then telephone either Captain Alexis H. Davison, an assistant air attaché at the American Embassy (who was also the embassy doctor) or Hugh Montgomery, the internal security officer.

Davison would go to the lamppost, the Russians claimed. If he found the charcoal circle it meant there was something ready to be picked up at the Pushkin Street drop. According to the Moscow version, Richard C. Jacob, the twenty-six-year-old embassy "archivist" from Egg Harbor, New Jersey, would go to the radiator and retrieve the little package. When the information was picked up, the Americans would make a black smudge on the door of the fish department of a Moscow food store (presumably after a casual purchase of a pound or two of sturgeon as cover). Then Penkovsky would know the transfer had been accomplished.

The Russians also sought to link Penkovsky to Rodney W. Carlson, the thirty-one-year-old assistant agricultural attaché at the embassy, and to William C. Jones III,* the second secretary.

* All five Americans were declared *persona non grata* on May 13, 1963. The Russians claimed two other American Embassy personnel were involved in the case—Robert K. German, second secretary, and William Horbaly, agricultural attaché. They also ousted two embassy aides in October, 1962, just before the Penkovsky case surfaced publicly. They were Commander Raymond D. Smith, of Brooklyn,

Penkovsky, it was alleged, also passed information in a box of chocolates to Greville M. Wynne, a London businessman who was actually working for British Intelligence. Wynne supposedly got the chocolates out of Moscow by giving them to the children of a British diplomat.

The Russians convicted Penkovsky and later announced he had been executed. Wynne drew an eight-year prison sentence.

Considering the fact that no fewer than twelve Americans and British diplomats were linked, one way or another, to a serious charge of espionage, London and Washington were exceedingly quiet about it all.

But there are likely to be more spy cases involving diplomats. The Kennedy Administration, while Dulles was still the CIA director, made some efforts to reduce the number of agents operating under diplomatic cover in American embassies. But embassy cover is still central to the agency's operations.

There is a great danger in relying heavily on diplomatic cover. If relations are severed between countries, or war breaks out, then the CIA tends to be cut off from its sources of information. In January, 1961, for example, when Washington broke off relations with Havana, the CIA lost its embassy base in Cuba. Ironically, the Cubans retained two legations in the United States—their delegation to the Organization of American States in Washington* and their UN mission in New York.

CIA agents operating abroad under commercial cover pose, as the term implies, as legitimate businessmen, rather than as diplomats. Not long ago a CIA man in Washington told all his friends he was quitting the agency

assistant military attaché, and Kermit S. Midthun, of San Francisco, first secretary. Smith was arrested in Leningrad on October 2, carrying a tiny tape recorder, a Minox camera and high-powered binoculars. The Russians said he was photographing naval installations. The American Embassy said he was taking a walk in the park. Midthun, forty-one, was accused on October 11 of having tried to get secret data from a Soviet official. The Russians also expelled five British diplomats in the Penkovsky case.

* Until Cuba was expelled from the OAS in January, 1962.

2537 Regent St., Apt. 202
Berkeley, Ca. 94704
September 24, 1969

Gary Schoener
Box 392 Mayo Hospital
Minneapolis, Minn. 55455

Dear Gary,

Here are ~~the~~ draft memos ~~with~~ with the information Jim Schmitt and I have just dug up on a ~~couple~~ couple of probable intelligence agents.

Davison is certainly interesting. I guess it is possible that an Air Force doctor-spy with a Russian mother might befriend the Oswalds, perhaps not knowing LHO's background?, and give them his mother's Atlanta address (maybe LHO indicated he would be going through or to Atlanta?), but it doesn't seem horribly likely. We mustn't forget, however, that an "air attaché" probably ~~spends~~ spends most of his time in non-intelligence-connected work.

"G. Walter" Moore has been one ~~of~~ of my favorites for some time. You might want to check into him when you are in Dallas.

Sincerely,

Paul

cc: Harold ←
(encl. for HW - JNS supplemental reply to
your 24 July 1969 letter)

DAVISON, Dr. Alexis

Further on Dr. Alexis Davison and his activities while stationed at the U.S. Embassy, Moscow.

From page 268, "The Invisible Government", Wise & Ross, Bantam Books:

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*Footnote pp 268-9

"All five Americans were declared persona non grata on May 13, 1963. The Russians claimed two other American Embassy personnel were involved in the case--- Robert K. German, second secretary, and William Horbaly, agricultural attache. They also ousted two embassy aides in October, 1962, just before the Penkovsky case surfaced publicly. They were Commander Raymond D. Smith, of Brooklyn, assistant military attache, and Kermit S. Midthun, of San Francisco, first secretary. Smith was arrested in Leningrad on October 2, carrying a tiny tape recorder, a Minox camera and high-powered binoculars. The Russians said he was photographing naval installations. The American Embassy said he was taking a walk in the park...."

JNS, Sept. 1969
References: 16H50 (Davison's mother's address in LHO notebook); CD 235; maybe more.

PLH