

Harold Weisberg  
Route 8  
Frederick, Md. 21701  
5/26/72

When a mediocrity like Arthur Bremer can stalk prominent political figures through two countries and countless states, be arrested and photographed by the police, be observed and photographed at rally after rally, and yet be undeterred in attempting still another of the proliferating American political assassinations, the potential of a brilliant but sick mind can be beyond human calculation or anticipation.

I know. I have had experience with one such threat. It was referred to me after the Secret Service dismissed it as no more than a "nut" letter.

Understanding it requires other than police training and experience. Its author (or authors - a case can be made for two different minds or a split personality) is an exceedingly intelligent, subtle and sophisticated, unusually well educated person with knowledge of a number of languages, history, philosophy and little-known literature.

Had it not been that there were threats against two U. S. Senators in his ego-indulgence of composing and sending the threats, deciphering it could have been as much an intellectual sport as putting it together undoubtedly was for that sick mind.

In fact, it was a direct challenge to me, personally. It was headed, "Can Mr. Weisberg translate?"

Mr. Weisberg could - and did - but not without much time and considerable help from a number of carefully selected friends. Not the kinds of friends most police have on tap. They include:

Two poets;

Two novelists;

Three reporters;

A clinical psychologist and a man experienced in areas of psychiatry;

A physicist who as a hobby has studied political assassinations;

Several trained researchers with knowledge of political assassinations;

An editor specializing in educational works;

Two Chinese experts, writers who had lived there;

A linguist especially skilled in German and Russian; like me, with war-time intelligence experience;

An advertising junior executive; and

The sharp-witted wives of several.

It took the combined efforts of all to acquire sufficient understanding of the hidden threats in the intellectual cat-and-mouse game in which the lives of important men could be the stake.

If our initially unknown genius had had the intent or capability of immediately implementing the threats, our unraveling would have been too late.

Perhaps the strangest part is that this person went to the trouble of learning about me what is not generally known or easily accessible. And why did he challenge me rather than, say Jim Garrison or Mark Lane, both of whom are more widely known? How did he know they had long since abandoned active interest in the assassination of President Kennedy?

A nimble mind like this can play with the police indefinitely, enjoy the sport, and leave the wonder, is he serious, is he the

exception, the man who telegraphs his hits?

With the mentally ill, this is not impossible. With the genius, cannot the game become so engrossing that the mind becomes father to the act?

The problem is complicated by official explanations of all political assassinations (all of which are attributed to lone "nuts" even where officials know better) amounting to invitations to the mentally ill to assassinate. In turn, this is magnified by the media, which uncritically repeats the official mythology.

If this unintended solicitation can appeal to the disturbed of average intelligence, how much more tantalizing is it to the sick but exceptional mind!

Without the gross professional deficiencies that characterize the official investigations of all the major political assassinations, it would still be close to impossible to locate and immobilize a keen but disturbed intellectual. The only hopes could lie in his ego-indulgence, carelessness or what characterizes some mental illnesses, a tendency toward self-destruction. Indulging the latter or ego - with enough time - could lead to exposure.

But when scholarship in antiquity, familiarity with logic and philosophy, foreign languages, exotic cooking, obscure literature and the archaic meanings of words in current usage not part of instruction in police science, how, from this one case in which I was directly challenged, can the most dedicated police be expected to know what is afoot?

How can they be expected to protect the politically prominent if they dismiss as gibberish the subtleties that are beyond them?

The Hercule Poirots are in novels, not police agencies.

Let us take part of this threat, whether or not ~~it~~<sup>it</sup> began with serious intent, to show what the sick but spectacularly smart can say and yet hide.

On April 8, 1971, a small envelope was mailed in Rockville, Maryland, a suburb of Washington, D. C. It was addressed to J. M. Rothstein, who is the administrative assistant to Senator Mike Gravel of Alaska.

On June 4, after the Secret Service dismissed it, Rothstein sent it to me with a note saying, "At first I thought it was a joke by one of my friends. After investigating it further, I decided the humor looked too black to be a joke. As a very long shot, I wonder if the letter may have been meant for you."

There was a very special reason for sending this threat to Rothstein to the exclusion of any other of the more important Congressional staff members. A time-consuming check of the addresses of each of the many shows that he is the only one with so suggestive an address:

Dead Run Drive.

It is in McLean, Virginia, another Washington suburb.

The fictitious return address also is not without point. It reads, "I. F. Stone 1940 Luke St."

"Izzy" Stone, for decades a well-known Washington reporter, did not live in Rodville, and Rockville has no Luke Street.

But this can be translated, as the challenger invited. There is the Book of Luke in the Bible. The words of 19:40 are, "And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." Thus, there we account for the complete address that does not exist and a threatening

meaning. With "if" and "stones". Complete! Nothing wasted, nothing meaningless, nothing obvious - prior to "translation".

Jesus' descent from the Mount of Olives is dealt with in four Books, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. But this content is in Luke alone. Perhaps the language immediately preceding and following also can hold other intended threats or warnings:

37. And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen;

38. Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

39. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

40. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

41. And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

42. Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes.

43. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

44. And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation.

45. And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought;

46. Saying unto them, It is written. My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves.

47. And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and chief of the people sought to destroy him.

To this point, from the envelope alone and for whatever meaning, note the six repetitions of "stone" in varying forms: twice in the quotation from Luke, in the return-address name, in the postmark (Rockville), in Rothstein (red stone from the German), even in Gravel, the Senator employing Rothstein.

(Inside the envelope there was more that could be relevant to the "stone" not in Rockville.)

The most common stone in a threat is a tombstone.

If far-out, can the intent of a sick mind be read with certainty, or can far-out interpretations be dismissed with safety?

With Teddy Kennedy hidden in the message, Gravel addressed and Presidential aspirant George McGovern mentioned without coding - all liberals - this biblical language can be rich in meaning.

Of what remains on the envelope, one thing only could not have had meaning to those who read this before me. That is the date. It is my birthday! There is but one chance in 365 that this is coincidence, that the challenge-to-me/threat was mailed that day.

Two different typewriters were used, one for the envelope, the other for the enclosure. Two people? Two clues? Two meanings?

These are questions. Fact is that inside were two "signatures" other than the spurious one on the envelope. The message is broken into two parts. The first is signed "Duncan", the second "Ockie". The first has added, "R.S.P.", roughly the opposite of "R.S.V.P.", reply without pleasure, a curse.

Most obvious, and ominous, interpretation of "Duncan" as applied to Kennedy is Macbethian. Another is no less frightening in terms of anti-Kennedy threats. Standard biographical sources disclose a long-dead but once-famous industrial chemist, Robert Kennedy Duncan.

"Ockie" is much less obvious. My first hunch was that it is a nickname for Francis Parkey Yockey, author of the American Mein Kampf, Imperium. After arrest, Yockey died mysteriously in a San Francisco jail, of poison. And reportedly after a visit from A. Willis Carto, publisher of Imperium and entrepreneur and political force of the far right.

Before I had time to dismiss this, three of those from whom I had sought help reminded me of the English scholastic, philosopher and theologian, William of Occam (1285-1349). Aside from his philosophy, Occam is known for having dared contest the temporal power of the Pope. Occam asserted the independent authority of the king in civil affairs.

In philosophy and logic, Occam is remembered for his theory of minimalism or parsimony, that the likeliest answer to a problem, or the first to be considered, is the simplest. The likeliest answer to the problem of a liberal politician is what? Killing him. That is the essence of all parts of the enclosure.

Although little known, Occam is not entirely forgotten. Fifteen years ago there appeared a work of science fiction described by one of my sources as "a remarkable tour de force in writing". It is an account, years before the first human was in space, of a time-slip in which two inhabitants of another world are stranded on a Caribbean island.

(It may be too subtle, but it also may be relevant, that two men in this novel are stranded and lost, and two are threatened in the message.)

The title of the novel is Occam's Razor. The author?

David Duncan!

So, in addition to the appropriateness of Occam's history and philosophy of direct and simple solutions, and the possible aptness of the novel, there is the last name of the author signed to the first part of the message, "Duncan", and a nickname for Occam, "Ockie", signed to the second. Using "Occam" would have been much too obvious, beneath the subtlety of the author of the threat.

"Duncan's" first words are, "The Constable from Barnstable (known to mothers as magister of horse), asks: 'Wesn't Lee in Irving's bedroom?'"

I suggest the last words are not a homosexual allusion. Rather do they ominously state a truth, that the night before the assassination of President Kennedy, Lee Harvey Oswald slept with his wife in an Irving, Texas, bedroom.

Barnstable, the resort town on Cape Cod, includes Hyannis. Hyannis and Kennedy are synonymous.

This opening is a reference to the tragedies of Chappaquiddick. To Teddy. This is repeated with the medieval British meaning given to "Constable", the commander in the absence of the ruler.

A middle-ages meaning of "magister" is similar, the highest-ranking official of a royal household or court. Again Teddy, the ranking Kennedy.

"Magister of horse" also clearly means master of the hunt. (Another ancient usage of constable is a "count of the stable".) If the words "known to mothers" are taken literally, and the concern of mothers for the welfare of their daughters is borne in mind, this requires no further interpretation, although more - a pun - is obvious. The reference is to a master of a hunt for women.

If we analyze the complete threat, short as it is, it could take indefinitely. The concluding line, immediately above the signature "Ockio", is one of the less complicated:

"Next! Vigoro de lilacs sheers the ears of Senator McGovern."

The "sheering" of the ears (this is the misspelling or the double-meaning of the message) of Senator McGovern is explicit enough.



"Next" - after John and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, McGovern has not been. But on "translation" the suggestion is apparent. "Vigoro" is the trade name of a well-known fertilizer. The lilac is the state flower of New Hampshire, where the first presidential primary was then yet to be held. That McGovern would fertilize the lilacs is a fairly explicit threat, if it did not come to pass.

This whole thing is shot through with other double meanings sometimes doubled and redoubled. The six references to stones on the envelope, for example, are not all of them. Others are in the text. The Greek for stone is petros, also the name of the disciple, Peter. One need not infer tombstone only to wonder why.

Below another is mention of fission. It is bracketed with "Ball & Chain". Among the possible purposes of ringing in the phrase "Ball & Chain fission", which superficially seems to be senseless, can be reference to the accused killer of King. James Earl Ray is confined at Petros, Tennessee. The closest town on the map is the nearby home of fission, the famous atomic-energy installation at Oak Ridge. "Ridge" is still another stone, as are all those Tennessee mountains.

If this is intended, then all the major political assassinations are referred to in the body of the message, which concludes with what is "next".

I have never asked Tom Kelley, the betroubled head of the Secret Service's protective unit, why his people decided this had to be no more than a "nut" letter. Yet entirely ineffectual men who can barely move and who are confined have been, to my knowledge,

of Secret Service interest.

While I was working to complete the "translation" with which I had been challenged, and when there had been absolutely no public attention to this letter, I got several odd telephone calls from a stranger. The name he gave me is a real name. The position he said he held in a world-famous federal institution of learning a man of that name did hold.

He boasted an earlier career in anti-Communist intelligence of the most super-secret nature. c

This was an erudite man, a scholar, a man who said he was fluent in seven languages. A man who voluntarily confessed marital problems, inferentially to emotional troubles. A talker.

I had never heard of him.

His self-portrait to me is of a super-patriot, an anti-communist (and who is not "red" to the disturbed "patriot"?), a man who might assassinate and deem it dedication and loyalty.

He phoned again to make a date to visit me. I asked him if he would care to use his language and cryptographic skills in helping decipher a cryptic political threat. He hung up, and I never heard from him again.

At that point, when he so fully <sup>met</sup> filled the qualifications required of the author of this challenge to me, and when he had called me for no apparent purpose, he had to be considered a prime candidate for author, if not intended assassin.

Although, from his own account, he seemed to be in perfect physical condition, he awaited a disability retirement.

He said he was leaving the Washington area.

I fear checking where he said he was going - to Miami.

Both political conventions are to be held there this summer!

Whether or not this man, who has the prerequisites, is the author of these threats, and whether or not they were intended seriously or are no more than the cunning exercise of a sick but acute mind, I shudder to think of the potential when such big brains, not mediocrities like Bremer, get turned on to assassination.

The more political protection and other police work are computerized, the less chance there is for employment of the intellect, for deciphering such sophisticated seeming gibberish so loaded with hidden meanings.

Computers can keep records, but they cannot think. Nothing illustrates this better than the recent decision of George Gustafson, executive secretary of the California State Teacher Preparation and Licensing Commission. He "fired" his computer and replaced it with a single man. The computer, he said, "just couldn't compete with people".

He converted "from a complex and costly automated system to a streamlined, fully manual operation" that gets the job done better, faster and cheaper - with 80 fewer employees.

Imagine what would come out if any attempt were made to feed this message and the envelope in which it was mailed into a computer! Nothing but question-marks and a plea for a "computer "shrink"! But no answers, no identifications, no meanings.

"Nut" letter, indeed!

The government itself, aided by all the major media, has propagandized two notions: that only the mentally ill assassinate; and that they have a compulsion to kill the famous for their own fulfillment. It is almost like advertising for assassins.

Hidden in the part of the message I have not quoted is what can be taken as a reference to famous lines from Gilbert and Sullivan:

A policeman's lot is not a happy one  
When constabulary duty's to be done.

If this is a sample of the future in political assassinations, a future in which finely-trained minds may toy with their intended victims and the protectors of those victims, the lot of the protective policemen indeed will not be a happy one!