

Transcript: Strange - Jda

6/7/68

Dear Jim,

In between other things today I have given a hasty reading to the Howard interrogation of February 25. I have not yet had a chance to read my own. They are, for the most part, pretty consistent. There is much you have not on the tape and of this I have no knowledge.

Some place you should have a memo from me of about February 17 in which I repeat Jerry Cohen's confirmation of the essence of Howard's story that Cohen and others influenced them to go to court against you. He did not confirm and Howard did not tell me that Shaw's lawyers would be involved (there were inferences of Jensen). Hall had earlier told me this, hence my questioning of Howard. However, Cohen did confirm it. We had lunch the next day at the LATimes cafeteria. I took Steve Burton, who was a witness. It was Cohen's lame excuse that this was a journalist's device. At some time, the papers being what they are, it may be desirable for you to recall this.

On page 2, the bit about Jack Martin is interesting. How did Howard and Martin get together? Is this Warden of the discussion Bill Warden? If so, I have information from one of my west-coast friends that one Bill Warden had rented space in the Trade Mart, had one John Hunley as his assistant, and his source is now, or was recently, available to him. He also quotes this source as knowing that a St. Charles Ave. beauty shop run by a "Mr. Dee", really Edwin Davis, was really owned by a lover of Clay Shaw. This may be known to you, may not be of interest, but I have asked for all the available information. The owner is said to maintain a social relationship with Shaw.

Page 5: Howard should be asked about Joseph Moore by his real name or a variant he also used, Jose Morejon (More). You have a memo on this from me dated, I think, in April, confirming an earlier one.

Page 8: I do not recall whether I asked Howard, but I should have. By then I knew of the boat owned by the man John George said he had worked for, the Sea Raider of Rider. As I recall the name is Thornton. He has a plant in Midlothian, so if you cannot find the memo I left, I think last November, Penn will know his name. He is a clothing manufacturer. Perhaps this man was to have provided or had been expected to provide a boat. I recall his name as Thornton (close enough to Thornley to cause confusion).

Page 15: I had had the same question about abandoning the trailer in Dallas. Hall gave me exactly this explanation, that if they took it to Florida without provision for a safe place, there was too great a chance of having it taken by federal authorities.

Page 22: Although he is unsure of the date, and the transcript here has Joaquin for Bourke, note that Howard believes it was October, confirming my recollection of the date Hall gave me, coinciding with Ferrie's presence in Guatemala.

Page 32: I have no way of knowing whether he had any such activity going from your office in Baton Rouge, but I have heard that there was Cuban training activity in that area, in the neighborhood of False River.

Page 56: there is casual reference with Tom Duncan. Perhaps it is because up, that Hall and Seymour got back from here this is fascinating. Did you carry it of something I do not know, but on it not be, now?
any further elsewhere? If not, should it not be, now?

Beginning here the Masferrer story is consistent with what he gave me. Missing is the name of the owner of the island, or that part, whose permission he, not Masferrer, had to use it. That name is on my tapes and should be in the transcripts. What seems inconsistent is the 1963 date for an operation that didn't come off for four more years, unless Masferrer had an identical operation planned against Haiti both years. I cannot say he didn't, but I have no reason to believe he did. That parley invasion was 1967, early, as I recall it.

As his story of the key and his operation continues, it fascinates me that he indicates he was under Tony Varona, which would mean that the CRC was kind of overseeing at least that part of the raids and planned raids. Now the CRC was in the pay of the CIA until April of 1963. Beginning on 81 there is, I think, some confusion about two things: when Tony Varona took command of the CRC, which was much earlier - well before Arcacha left it - and about Arcacha's connection with Varona. I have several independent, identical reports that Varona never appointed Arcacha, that somehow Arcacha just came in and took over. One may have been from Alberto, or may have been from another who attributed it to his father. Another was from Oreste, who went to Miami to complain about Arcacha and was told he was unknown. This should be in the statement I got from him.

Is it not even more interesting if a) the CRC was still being financed by the CIA and b) Arcacha just went there and took over - and is sheltered by Connally when others are not?

My source of the intelligence that the CRC was still on the t^{hat} is the New York Times, copy enclosed. In getting it to make a copy for you, I discover that apparently Varona was not the head, as I had recalled, and I can only wonder why Pena went to see Varona in late 1961 or early 1962 about Arcacha and why Howard makes these references to him. It is possible Maceo was succeeded by Varona, which would explain Howard but not Pena. Varona, I now recall, was of the Frente at the time the CRC was organized, March 18, 1961.

I will be getting photocopies of these NYTimes stories and when I do I'll send you copies. Is not the bottom note interesting?

After reading your questioning of Howard I feel the same as I did when I completed my own. I do not say he wasn't truthful. I do feel he is holding back. Perhaps, not on the tape, you got what I feel is missing. I have the definite feeling he knows things that are pertinent and that he hasn't said. I can understand his desire to shelter others. When I turned him on, one of the things I suggested to him, to which he seemed receptive, is that the FBI really framed him. He gives no reflection of this in your interrogation. I think that as of the time I questioned him, less than ten days earlier, he believed that the most likely explanation.

One other thought: could there have been Frente-Varona activity in N.O. coinciding with CRC and for which we have been giving CRC credit?

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg