

PROFESSOR POPKIN & THE ROBOT ASSASSIN

'Dear President Ford: I Know Who Killed JFK...'

BY DICK RUSSELL

SAN DIEGO—There is no longer any doubt in my mind that the world has gone mad, and I wish it. The story you are about to read is not fantasy. It is lunacy. And it is absolutely true. How to begin? Perhaps with the telegram.

This telegram was dispatched at approximately 1 a.m., Thursday, June 19, to Gerald Ford, White House:

"I have documents indicating that U.S. intelligence agencies had a laboratory producing robot murderers (Menchurian Candidates) and that at least one of them took part in the assassination of John F. Kennedy. The programmer of this robot murderer is presently at large. I will provide the information to you at your convenience."

The sender was Richard H. Popkin, author of "The Second Oswald," and professor of philosophy. A reputable, scholarly gentleman who lectures at Oxford and the Sorbonne, edits the Journal of the History of Philosophy, co-directs the International Archives of the History of Ideas, and once translated Pierre Bayle's 17th-century dictionary.

Unfortunately, this will not be the full tale of how the absconded professor found unopened a five-year-old letter from an Oriental hypnotist, flew off to meet with him, and ultimately barricaded himself in a hotel room with a thousand pages of the hypnotist's explosive research. Popkin is currently at work building his case and will then

attempt to negotiate a deal with a variety of interested media—from television networks, to major publishing houses—for the greatest sum possible. Therefore, I was permitted to see the documents only on the condition that I would sign a pledge not to reveal their contents.

At this point, I can tell you that I've spent the better part of the past six weeks investigating the veracity of Popkin's evidence. I did this for Popkin himself. He needed someone to verify certain leads in the Midwest, and he paid the expenses of a young Los Angeles investigator and myself to check the leads out. I personally have met the mysterious hypnotist and have done enough legwork to be convinced—with certain reservations—of the story the documents tell. The attorney general's office is not convinced, the Church Committee might yet be.

But all that must wait. This chronicle is necessarily but a footnote to the history of "The Popkin Papers." It sometimes the tone seems disrespectful or even totally disconnected from such incredible subject matter, it can't be helped.

The account that follows is a journal of five days spent in the Richard Popkin household overlooking San Diego bay. Five days of bizarre telegrams, bugged telephones, and strange conversations with Jim Garrison, Dick Gregory, and Bernard Fensterwald.

Five remarkable days in which the author of "The History of Skepticism" first concluded he had found the solution to one of the darkest puzzles of recent times.

SATURDAY. Stepping out of the San Diego airport, I am confronted by a fervent, bearded young man thrusting a leaflet in my face: "WHO SHOT KENNEDY? By MOSES DAVID." It is copyrighted by the Children of God, and a tiny circle in the upper right-hand

corner says: "donation suggested." I give the fellow a nickel and hail a cab.

Yesterday morning, the tip-off that "something huge is happening in California" had come from an acquaintance at the Assassination Information Bureau in Cambridge. He didn't know exactly what Professor Popkin had unearthed, but along the grapevine that monitors the assassination business, the rumors had never been so electric.

After about an hour of busy signals, I had managed to reach the professor by phone. "I'm in a slight state of hysteria," he began, and proceeded to tell of two JFK assassination plots in 1963—the first foiled by a double agent, the second including a killer programmed somewhere in the Midwest. He said he'd give the story only to those "who've been on our side," that the National Tattler had already mentioned six figures and could

The Village Voice come close to such an offer? If not, I was still welcome to come observe history-in-the-making. They even had a spare bed.

So I had headed West. After all, what was beyond possibility anymore? The CIA had hired mob hit-men to try to bump off Fidel Castro. The army had been "turning on, tuning in, and dropping out" 10 years before Timothy Leary. The navy supposedly had run an assassin training school. If Nelson Rockefeller and the Nightly News were willing to reveal this much, what other horrors might be twisting slowly, slowly in the conspiratorial wind of Watergate?

For some time, a growing segment of the country had been turning back the clock to November 22, 1963. Finding out who really killed JFK, RFK, and MLK had become far more than the pastime of a few "lone nuts" asserting the innocence of a few other "lone nuts." Indeed, a considerable chorus had begun wondering if America was run by lone nuts.

Was it merely a bunch of people getting off on their own paranoia? A lot of hucksters and false prophets gleefully boarding another media bandwagon? Partly, maybe. Still, a gut feeling persisted that somewhere in the muck of the last 12 years, a truth did wait to be discovered. And if Richard Popkin had found it. . . .

Thus do I find myself riding past the Pacific Ocean on a cool summer evening, reading a nickel message from the Children of God: "Save yourselves from this untoward generation of vipers who would destroy the Earth!"

The Popkins' ranch-style home sits on a hillside in the plush suburban environs of La Jolla. The Del Charro, where J. Edgar Hoover used to huddle with cronies, is now a vacant lot a few hundred yards down from their picture-window. Dr. Popkin (henceforth to be called "the professor") is sitting



with a few guests at a dining room table cluttered with manila folders, disheveled typescript, and a collection of mailgrams.

The first impression he exudes is one of hair. Wildly curling black hair with specks of gray, bushy eyebrows, and gray sideburns. A prominent nose on a long thin face overlaps a bristly mustache. He has a tendency to mumble into his thin beard, causing some to refer fondly to him as "Snuffy Smith." He wears glasses, suspenders, and baggy pants. Fifty-one years of manic energy.

His wife Julie, dark-haired, bespectacled, and pleasant, offers me the last of some steak and informs I'm the fifth visiting journalist of the week. Newsday's Marty Schramm, who in 1973 broke the exclusive about Bebe Rebozo's wheeling-dealings, led the way for lamb chops on Monday evening. Next came Howard Kohn of Rolling Stone, renowned for exposing Detroit police corruption. Then a CBS team of Lee Townsend and Brooke Janis, working on a two-hour assassination special for the fall. New Times' Robert Sam Anson was due in a few days. The National Tattler had been visited personally by the professor in Chicago.

Seymour Hersh, he is saying as I sit down, will soon be sorry he hadn't shown more tact on previous associations. In the meantime, tonight's Western Union message is almost ready.

"Do you want to call it in?" the professor asks me. "To have the fun of listening to what happens?"

A fellow who is book review editor of the Journal of the History of Philosophy suggests it might be dangerous.

"Anybody can get away with it," the

professor replies. "They're in the business of selling telegrams. They'll make \$20 out of this one."

I consent to go as far as listening in on another extension. The professor dials, intimating that he's sure the phone is tapped.

"I'd like to send a telegram to President Ford."

"Go ahead, sir."

"I have documents indicating that Fidel Castro tried to foil the plot to assassinate John F. Kennedy, but that the FBI prevented him from stopping the assassination. I will present these documents to you at your earliest convenience."

He asks this also be mailgrammed to Henry Kissinger, Frank Church, Howard Baker, George McGovern, John McClellan, Nelson Rockefeller, Mike Mansfield, Edward Levi, Clarence Kelley, Bernard Fensterwald, Fidel Castro, Dick Gregory, Richard Dudman of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and David Rosenthal, a former student who keeps a collection.

"Night letter or cable, sir?" asks Western Union.

This done, the professor ushers me quickly into his office, also my temporary bedroom. I'm asked to examine the other journalists, statements of silence and write me of my own. Then, and only then, will I be able to examine the documents. Slender as they are of allegiance, I am told, they are the key to a crash course.

The utmost caution is required, the professor says recklessly. At this moment, somewhere in the Midwest, there is a stake-out on the house of a man who helped program one of the JFK assassination team. And in Los Angeles, at a secret residence, is the ex-CIA man who knows all about the earlier plot in 1963.

Two hours later, nearly staggering into a bookcase in which is prominently displayed a volume titled "The Historian As Detective," I take a set of the documents to my room. Begin to read about a spy who came in from the cold. A young Latin ready to kill at the utterance of key words. There is a tape transcript from a deep-trance deprogramming session carried out by a hypnotist employed by the intelligence service of a U.S. ally. The wildest imaginings of John Le Carre, Len Deighton, and Richard Condon—Can it be?

Confused, but feeling the thread of a certain diabolic logic, finally I fall asleep. My last conscious thought takes in my sleeping quarters. A wall-to-wall sprawl of papers whose catacombs might conceivably alter the face of recent history. In the living room, the professor is playing pinochle.

SUNDAY. The clacking of typing keys had come pulsing through my bedroom door at approximately 4:15 a.m. At breakfast,

sitting with his wife, Julie, and 13-year-old daughter Sue, I am told the professor had felt a sudden need to finish a letter about Napoleon's emancipation of the French Jews in 1806. Julie had curtailed the brainstorm, and he was now sleeping in.

The new theory about Napoleon's Messianic complex was another of his current interests. Julie says it's always been his passion to uncover material never before seen. It started in France's Bibliotheque

Nationale in 1952 with some forgotten documents that led him to a whole unsuspected strain of philosophical skepticism beginning with Descartes, the fuel for a book that "didn't make him a popular figure, but a respected one."

"The Second Oswald" was similarly skeptical and scholarly. It appeared in 1966 as one of the early alternatives to the Warren Commission inspired by reading Bertrand Russell on a midnight train and dedicated "To my mother who has always encouraged my interest in the unknown and unexplained."

(Mother Zelda, I later learned, is a renowned writer of Jewish mystery novels. The professor's father was, incidentally, one of America's pioneer public relations men, having arranged Einstein's tour of the U.S. and managed Alf Landon's New York campaign and promoted Harry Houdini. Today the professor's brother performs similar services for the Red Cross disaster service and writes books about earthquakes.)

"The Second Oswald" also certified the professor as a big-league assassination buff, and over the years he had become a kind of data bank of the dark side, annually hibernating at universities until about the Ides of March.

Springtime was when something always seemed to build. Two years ago, the professor had learned of a Secret Army Organization of San Diego right-wingers with mislaid plans to terrorize the 1972 Republican Convention (published in Ramparts). Last year, it was a possible government plot on Nixon's life.

This particular spring had seen a succession of disappointments. First he'd put together a story for Universal Press Syndicate identifying Robert Bennett, a former E. Howard Hunt associate, as Woodward and Bernstein's "Deep Throat," but few papers seemed interested. Next he zoomed off to Toronto to check out a man claiming new film evidence about the JFK assassination, but then everybody involved clammed up. So it was back to Washington University in St. Louis and the humdly humdrum life of a Professor of Philosophy and Jewish Studies,

until . . .

"If I hadn't been nagging him about cleaning his study," Julie is saying—it is almost noon, audible stirrings in the bedroom—"none of this would have happened. Dick never sorts his papers. His mind is very orderly, but the flesh is different. Well, finally he agreed to try and suddenly he was in the kitchen shouting 'Look at this letter! It will boggle your mind!'"

The elusive letter, from a long-ago admirer of his Oswald book who'd been secreting his own sensational documents in sealed plastic under a washer-dryer in Canada for the last five years, was a scenario from the professor's fondest nightmares. Shakily, he had dialed the old phone number. The chain reaction that followed, he was currently living through. We all were.

Before flying off to make history, the professor had packed up in St. Louis and prepared to move the family back to summer in San Diego, where he chaired the university philosophy department through the 1960s. Then they all headed up to New York for a quick visit to his mother before she left for Israel. There, the night they put Zelda on her plane, a young colleague was called in for the first of numerous special missions.

"In addition to philosophy, this young man is a great bugger," Julie recalls. "My husband has coterie of faithful helpers everywhere. So, on our wedding anniversary, we spent the evening tapping in on Dick's conversation with Dick Gregory. That was also the night of the first telegram." For a time, Popkin had taken to bugging his own phone, taping his conversations for history.

"He's been pretty caught up in telling people he's making history," Sue adds. "The

first couple times he sent telegrams, he told the operator she was making history."

About this time, the professor is emerging, wandering into the kitchen in pajamas to the tune of a jangling phone. It's Jim Garrison.

"Your reputation will be vindicated in a few days," the professor is saying. "Unfortunately you can't produce Ferrie or Shaw except in the graveyard. . . . I'll be called as a witness, that's for sure. . . . I sent another telegram last night. I didn't put you on the list because it costs a dollar for every one, but I'll read it to you. . . ."

Jim Garrison feels like he's being vindi-

cated at last, he says, hanging up. He ponders momentarily about getting a set of all the telegrams to Frank Church immediately, then remembers: "Washington doesn't work on weekends. That's why Pearl Harbor worked so well."

Within a half hour, we are driving to his office at U.C. San Diego to xerox documents and dictate letters. Also he has a long-postponed paper to work on about the philosophical basis of racism. Everyone here is working on papers. Julie is doing one on Drugs and Keats. The professor has begun calling me his Boswell.

Evening floats in on the vapors of a spent copying machine. All the visiting media have been given copies of the documents, even though they're forbidden to use them. Tonight, some people called the Dykestras are having a dinner party and Herbert is coming. Herbert Marcuse, philosopher-hero of the New Left and instructor of Angela Davis in the late 1960s, brought from Brandeis to San Diego by none other than the professor.

Waiting for a chile relleno soufflé in a living room on La Jolla's outskirts, as 77-year-old Herbert Marcuse walks in with his mid-30s girlfriend Ricki. An aristocratic white-haired gentleman with a paunch and a cane, full of vinegar. He and the professor face each other across the chip-and-dip. Marcuse slams a palm down and cries? "What is most important is to get it out!"

The professor talks at dinner about the Secret Service. He became familiar with their ilk during his investigation of the Secret Army Organization. Suddenly he gets up and beckons his hostess and the wife of his book review editor into a bedroom. Picking up the phone, he gets the number of the local Secret Service and dials.

"Hello, I have knowledge of a plot to assassinate President Ford." Brief silence. "Well, is Mr. Perez in? I'll talk to him about it. He's not? Well, I'll call back then."

A wide grin crosses the professor's face as he hangs up. It seems to say: See? I told you so. They could care less. "If Perez heard my name, he'd have to leave the country," he adds. "He knows I connected him with the Secret Army."

Dinner is over and Herbert Marcuse is lying on a heat pad on the couch. His back is bothering him, Ricki is making him comfortable. The professor starts preparing his nightly telegram, one pointing up newfound Warren Commission fallacies. He asks Marcuse if he'd like to receive a copy. However, Marcuse, who is hard of hearing, thinks it's a telegram about assassinating Ford and is concerned about getting involved. Things are getting confusing.

"Why does he do it? Marcuse demands. "Those people get telegrams like this every day!"

The professor explains that the Sacra-

mento Bee is publishing the full texts of his telegrams. The professor also wants a dollar from Marcuse to add his name to the list of recipients.

"Did anyone watch CBS News to see if there was anything?" the professor asks everyone.

Our hostess is selected to read the telegram to the operator. Julie is trying to get her husband to stop talking. He says he wishes she'd quit arguing with him. Marcuse is making a joke about Oswald's wife sleeping with Earl Warren.

Soon it is time to depart. The professor

meets Marcuse at midroom, beside the couch.

"Got the dollar?" he asks.

"Keep up the good fight, old man," Marcuse says, and obliges.

MONDAY. Another long day of xeroxing at the office. On the way home, the professor takes me downtown to see his bank, where a set of documents is kept in his safe-deposit box. The Southern California First National Bank, La Jolla branch. The bank is apparently a prime local attraction. The bench outside faces the bank, not the street. Inside are artificial olive trees, gold and lavender swivel chairs, ostrich plumes in the corners, a Mexican tapestry on the wall behind the tellers, little picnic-type waiting tables with multicolored director's chairs, and a free coffee dispenser. The professor is seeing an official about setting up the Richard H. Popkin Foundation with the money he'll soon be getting.

"Give me something my wife can sign right away," he instructs. "In case I get bumped off, like Sam Giancana." He winks at me.

Back in the car, he realizes his address book is missing. "I remember getting some cigarettes out of my pocket. Well, if it's not at home, we'll just commit suicide. I've got more spies in there than a CIA man." (The address book was later discovered in his bedroom.)

He remembers he should try to reach Peter Dale Scott in Berkeley. Scott is one of the more meticulous buffs, his latest manuscript running somewhere in the neighborhood of 3000 pages.

"A very good researcher, but he can't tone it down," says the professor. "He's a medievalist by trade—"Beowulf"—a timeless view. We'll call him tonight and see what he thinks of the telegrams. He knows I'm not crazy, that I wouldn't say anything unless I had the evidence, though I am a trifle less cautious than he."

It's 6 p.m. when we arrive home, and Dick Gregory has just phoned. Gregory, who lectures all over the country, had kindly footed a portion of the professor's traveling

bill in the interest of truth. Gregory also has a demonstration planned for the White House lawn, and the plan is for the professor to present his documents in Washington concurrently.

The professor reaches Gregory at home in Rhode Island. He's just received letters from John C. Keeney (acting assistant attorney general, Criminal Division) and Philip Buchen (counsel to the president). Why they are addressed to Gregory, I'm not sure. Anyhow, they acknowledge the first telegrams and inform tactfully that the White House has passed the buck to the attorney general's office, which Mr. Keeney writes

would be pleased to review the material.

The professor seems to take the replies a bit further. "I'm going to ask a bodyguard to accompany me to Washington," he says.

"That's beautiful," says Gregory.

I am being allowed to monitor the conversation.

The professor: "I'm afraid to go by myself. I want a bodyguard and I'm at their disposal if they send one, and with you present."

Gregory: "Let's be careful with that. They might say they'll send someone to pick it all up."

The professor: "I'll say I'll show it only to the President and attorney general."

Gregory: "Let's play with it. Don't even concentrate on it. They made their move, now ours is the next move. Okay, if we decide to go the bodyguard route, that's my suggestion, not yours, you follow me?"

The professor: "Let me tell you something completely different. I'm sending you off a paper, 'The Philosophical Basis of Racism.' I think you'll enjoy it."

Gregory: "We're in good shape, doctor. You know what's gonna wipe you out, don't you? When you see White House stationery with words like Martin Luther King, John F. Kennedy, assassinations, CIA. It's amazing what a telegram can do, isn't it?"

The professor: "Would you have believed back at Christmas we'd be at this stage?"

Gregory: "Okay, I gotta get outta here. Hit the highway. Peace and love."

The professor: "I'm not gonna send off more telegrams after this."

Gregory: "Keep 'em hoppin'."

The professor: "I'm going to demand to see only the President or Levin."

Gregory: "But that's not protocol. In a minute you force the President's hand. We can do it, but it'll have to be worked out a different way. Cleverly worded. Only someone that would speak for the President."

The professor: "And also someone who's not implicated. We don't want to give this to co-conspirators, don't want to go the way Sam Giancana went."

Gregory: "Have you heard the latest

news on that? The cops have admitted they heard the shots outside, but they thought it was beer cans popping."

The professor: "Beautiful. Lone nut beer cans now." (A pause) "They can send Air Force One out here for me if they want."

Gregory: "Probably the only safe way you can travel."

End of conversation. In the kitchen, the professor looks at his Boswell—me—apologetically. "I'm sorry," he says, "somehow we lost the bug that goes on the phone. Then you wouldn't have to take notes. I'll get Dan over here tonight to replace it."

He picks up again to call his literary agent in New York. "Hello, Cyrilly? The White House has invited Dick Gregory and myself to come present our evidence."

Cyrilly Abels, who among others handles Katharine Anne Porter, Eldridge Cleaver, and the professor's mother, reports that Rolling Stone's owner hasn't shown much interest. The Newsday man sent a memo to his boss, who wasn't in today.

"I warned you not to count on more than you should," says Julie. "What about the Tattler?"

"Cyrilly called, but they closed at five o'clock."

Another call, this time to Howard Kohn of Rolling Stone, who refers to negotiations there as "an Armenian rug deal." The professor takes a tranquilizer. We sit down for dinner.

A former student drops by. She has brought along her mother Ethel, who begins talking about her husband, who was in military intelligence in Mexico City, but killed in a plane crash in Panama in 1953. Aroused, the professor goes into his office and comes back with copies of E. Howard

the village VOICE September

Hunt's "Undercover" and a Hunt biography "Compulsive Spy." He begins looking up where Hunt might've been at the time, but this project keeps getting curtailed by the ringing phone.

Searching vainly in a closet for more papers, he mumbles: "I wish you'd stop cleaning house every day. It's not helping."

At last, the professor and I settle down to our second taping session, a complete chronology of his life since spring.

"Starting tomorrow, every expense is coming out of the institute," he says at midnight. "Friday we'll draw up corporation papers. Saturday my accountant will be down. The addition to 'The History of Skepticism' may have to wait until fall. I intend to offer the library here my archives in exchange for a wing. It's a monstrosity, totally underused. We may go back and forth between . . . Louis and San Diego. Well, I'll take my ginger ale and sleeping pills now."

TUESDAY. First thing in the morning,

CBS News calls about a possible interview with Daniel Schorr. The professor is inspired to the phone once more. Bill Turner, onetime FBI man turned assassination scholar in San Francisco, apparently agrees to serve as bodyguard for the Washington excursion. The bad news is that the stakeout in the Midwest has been lifted for lack of action. There's also some advice from Bernard Fensterwald, the Washington lawyer with such diverse clients as James McCord and James Earl Ray.

"Fensterwald says I'm crazy to go into the President's office with Gregory," the professor is telling me in the car. "He thinks Gregory might tell the President about flying

saucers or something. But I'm too committed to Greg. Fensterwald is my lawyer, I want his advice, but there are times I must make up my own mind."

More bad news. The National Tattler has apparently gotten a call from a Russian-sounding name with a bad conscience and sent its reporter "off to God-knows-where to meet him. There's every reason in the world now for the real assassins to send these guys on a wild goose chase."

We are driving to the office of his local lawyer, Roger Ruffin, the man who put financier C. Arnholt Smith behind bars. A

spent hours in the professor's garage helping clip and file the newspapers. It's getting dark when the doorbell rings again and, casually, Julie goes to answer it. The professor turns to me confidentially, whispering: "Don't you think she should be a little more careful?"

All perspective is fading. I remember a conversation about ex-neighbors, how Barry Goldwater used to haunt La Jolla and Gerald Warren even lived next door. I remember the professor wondering aloud: "Is Care CIA?" I remember the Midwest stakeout starting up again with some students from the New German Critique, a radical journal.

'Marcuse and the professor face each other across the chip-and-dip. Marcuse slaps a palm down and cries: "What is most important is to get it out!"'

quick trip to talk about the foundation. One of Ruffin's secretaries has found a key to the professor's safe deposit box in the parking lot, where he had lost it earlier. The professor is grateful.

Back at the house, a call to Donald Freed in L.A. to compare notes about hypnotized assassins. Freed, co-author of "Executive Action" with Mark Lane, has a new book coming out about the programming of Sirhan Sirhan.

"I stayed up until 4:30 last night marking passages in the documents for you," the professor tells him. "Just don't get your movie out before I get my story out!" (Freed is seeing Orson Welles these days about movie rights.)

Outside, the ocean breezes sponge the air. A few students are dropping by once again, veterans of Wargate. That means they

The last thing I recall is sitting on my bed transcribing a taped interview with a CIA man about murder attempts on Castro. The professor is on the floor below, sifting through reams of files. A car is screeching up outside. Anxiously, I peer out the windows. I walk around in a zombie-like state checking that all the doors are locked.

WEDNESDAY. A girl named Jan arrives to assist with the files. I try to pack around her. Jason Epstein of Random House calls to talk about a book. Sue is helping comb her father's hair and fix his suspenders while he talks, so he can go to the hospital and visit a friend with an amputated leg. More calls. John Molder of the Tattler. New Times can't afford any grandiose fee, but Anson is coming down tomorrow anyway.

On the way to the airport, the professor is

wondering about the ethics of letting the National Endowment for the Humanities fund his project on "Milleniarism and Messianism." He's read a Penthouse article that the NEH is really a CIA front.

Before I know it, I am standing before airport security. "Is that a typewriter?" A tingle of paranoia swivels up my spine.

But the guards allow me to board.

EPILOG. And this is only the beginning. First of all, the professor passed up his joint venture with Dick Gregory, a lucky thing since Gregory went and got himself arrested. The professor did keep eventual appointments in D.C. with aides of the attorney general and the Church Committee. He also suffered a slight breakdown of nerves, but has recovered splendidly. The attorney general's office pretty much gave him the brush. The Church Committee showed interest and took copies of some of the documents to look into on their own.

In the meantime, nobody has yet broken the true story contained in "The Popkin Papers." Popkin is currently holding back, letting his agent handle negotiations with the media, while he and his team of investigators continue to make their case ready for public acceptance.

In fairness to the professor—a lovable gentleman whom I don't mean to slander or malign—the days since have brought greater calm and reality to both his life and mine. If after reading this chronicle, you hold doubts about his credibility, try putting yourself in the place of an 18th-century scholar born under the sign of Capricorn who falls upon the last piece of a jigsaw puzzle five years late to solve a 12-year-old murder with implications of mind-warps. Then put yourself in the place of his Boswell. Then go read William Burroughs. □