

Jim (HR, PH) More on Burke Marshall's Oral History interview with Hackman HW 3/4/73

The damned thing was addictive. I stayed up last night and finished it, You and I talked about it little, so I may misread your estimate. Mine is that it holds many future values and I'll have to get a new supply of paper as soon as I can because copying the pages I will want will consume what I have. There was a point at which I thought the entire thing would be worth having, but there is too little on the third tape, which seems to be where the masking was heaviest.

Of course, I have different interests in him. My own recent minority position on the Cyrilling is but one example. From my own efforts of this past there are others, including rare self disclosures PH and HR may or may not recall or have detected. I sent both copies. In the simplest expression, two questions are why did he do some of the things he did and how can he say he did them in pursuit of any Kennedy interest, he being their lawyer, in effect, if not in fact.

This interview adds to questions I had raised earlier, how can a man so often wrong remain trusted? He documents his own errors in judgement.

Hackman is a terrible interviewer. Nothing about Marshall emerges in it. Nothing of his background, for example, what was he before JFK made something of him.

= Yet there is good stuff in here, even for FOI suits. Marshall had no such intention.

It appears that he had a family connection before his appointment.

He discloses these oral histories include an interview with Walter Sheridan. I think that is worth having. With Bud's view of New Orleans, I'm surprised he hasn't gotten a copy for that alone. If he does, there may be things in it not clear to him that can have meaning to me because of work I did down there. This included interviews with a fair number of people Sheridan interviewed and a couple he used. So, I'll be glad to go over it and tell him what I see in it.

My interests range from a single sentence on a page to a subject dealt with in length, like Hoover's wire-tapping and bugging, not only on but largely about King. It is interesting that he acknowledges without spelling it out that Hoover had been doing this for 40 years, meaning that he began it. When that art was primitive. Before there was this business of the AG had to o.k. One of the few aspects handled almost competently is how Hoover conned the AG's into doing what they didn't know they were doing and how stupid all were to have no records of what they'd agreed to. Even after the days of the xerox.

Despite being on the inside, Marshall seems to have an inadequate understand of bugging and tapping, trying to make a distinction he can't and not realizing that some forms of tapping include bugging.

The censoring is not for the protection of the innocent but, if I can deduce from where it happens and what is not censored, for political reasons and to avoid embarrassment to those it is not desired to embarrass. What should have been masked wasn't, and it was repeated, the name of the man allegedly a Communist International Agent with whom King was said to have had some kind of unspecified relationship. Levison. With that kind of charge, any decent editing would have masked the name at least. As any decent kind of questioning would have taken care of it. Or any decent answers.

The consistent self-characterization of Marshall is of a conservative, not of a liberal, which seems strange given his relationships but not given his record. I can't recall a single liberal recommendation or position in all these pages.

There is, however, a ^{bit} of dissembling in them, an occasional, undetected respite to the editorial "we" which leaves the "we" undefined and undescribed and in at least one case does not include Marshall, although the thrust of the question did.

The impression I form is that Marshall is a good-family, educated mediocrity, a fluent man who was reluctantly into things he knew, below the level of consciousness, were beyond him, things in which he persisted because of a sense of obligation (almost in the sense of serving the king). There should be interest here for orthodox historians.