

Threat, 2725 a.m., 1/30/69

Harold Weisberg

When the phone rang this morning at 2:25 a.m. my wife answered it from in bed while I was putting a robe on. She identified the caller as a "Mr. Harris" and I took the call in my office. Because this is the name given me by a stranger who phoned the afternoon of 1/29, saying from Philadelphia, and was content not to put the call through again when I told him there was a bad connection and I could hardly hear him, I wondered about this call and connected the tape recorder.

On Tuesday he had asked me about the New Orleans case, indicating he was going there. He then indicated he had read OSWALD IN NEW ORLEANS but seemed to be neither unusually well informed nor unusually ignorant of the subject.

Everything was strange about the early-morning call, not just the hour. He began it as though without purpose, soon switched in - and I mean it sounded like actual switching - some program he later identified as an excerpt from his "favorite movie, Shane", by George Stevens (he offered to play more of it for me. I did not make out whatever he piped in the phone and at first thought it was the voices and noises of people wherever he was. He offered to play more of it for me. I suggested he was unusually equipped and he said he was, having the things he like having. It became clear that in his own way he was coming up with a message. And I began to get ideas about him, like he could be NSRP.

He spoke good, grammatical English but without unusual vocabulary. He had what he described as a poem he had written he wanted me to hear. It was a two-line doggerel about President Kennedy playing games with the world. The clear import that I got him to spell out is that this is why he was killed - and his killing was right. It was over such things as the Bay of Pigs.

I told him he didn't phone me at that hour of the morning to give me such an unoriginal idea or in any event that I didn't appreciate it and he continued with a pretended analysis of my interest in their assassination. As he began the conversation by calling me "Mr. Weisfelt", knowing better, he began by reference to "Jewish person" in what seems awkward, even to him. He soon abandoned this and was saying Jew is a way not intended as friendliness. The anti-Semitism was undisguised. And, of course, I am getting rich. What pleased him more than anything else is his verse, "The Jews are through in '72".

He described himself as an alcoholic who liked to call people in the middle of the night. He didn't sound drunk, didn't speak as though he were drunk, and did proceed to a point, as was obvious from the beginning. I got the impression he had planned this out to go so far, like a game that would be resumed when he chose to. I do not recall my wife ever listening in on any late-night call. For some reason she held the phone last night and listened to the end. It disturbed her deeply. It seems wrong as soon as I used his first name to my wife, for I remembered he had called himself Fred. Probably not. No southern accent, but a sort of slight metallic quality to his voice. He used the "Jewish person" bit as I had heard Arab propagandists use it, sort of an awkward pretense, more to himself, of dispassion and impartiality.

As I wonder why, at this juncture, this kind of call, I also wonder if it can be connected with either current activity of the ms of COUP D'ETAT, which is known to very few. He had anti-Semitic jokes, a few Eichmann's (he was hanged for "burning trash on Sunday") at which he laughed. From the size of the tape it looks as though perhaps the machine did not start when switched on. Although he was not explicit, he clearly was threatening me.

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