

2/1/90

MEMO TO FILE RELATING TO WITHHELD FBI RECORDS

In the appeal 89-1077, I refer to FBI records that state I had a, quote approximate, "personal relationship with a Soviet national in" its Washington Embassy. I didn't. I think this may come from an FBI tap on their phones and the story that follows.

I was still farming when Khrushchev was announced as coming to the United States to visit President Eisenhower. There had been the "kitchen debate" with Nixon and their pretense that they would engage in "peaceful competition." I was certain Nixon didn't mean it and I had no reason to believe that Khrushchev meant or expected it.

I delivered out poultry and eggs in Washington every Wednesday. One of my customers was Bill Costello, who had been a CBS radio correspondent. He had an office in the Investment Building, first with Tommy Corcoran, one of FDR's early assistants (he and Ben Cohen were usually lumped together) and then he had his own office. Sometimes we chatted briefly. As we ~~discussed~~ discussed the peaceful competition thing I told Bill I had half a mind to challenge the USSR to peaceful competition in chicken-raising. He liked the idea very much, urged me to go ahead with it, and said he knew someone in the government who would be quite interested. He then sent me with the draft of the letter I had prepared to the United States Information Agency, to a Mr. Walter(s), who had a German accent and was in charge of what I now think was the Europe desk. Walters fell in love with the idea, I gave him a copy of the letter and USIA aired it. I had to redo it to include something else he suggested. I do not now recall whether the addition was his idea or that of the State Department. The addition was to invite the Khrushchev's to our farm when they were travelling to or from Camp David and would go right past it.

I now do not recall all that I did to get ready, but I am clear on my concern because we'd never been able to complete our home and some of the buildings were still under construction. I do recall having to get the fencerow along the road cleared of the accumulation of trash growth, weeds and the like, that are usual in fencerows that are not kept clear, as I then did not have time to do.

Not long after this I got a telephone call from a man who gave me the name, phonetic, of Hollis Lowry or Laurie. He was with State, knew all about this, and asked me if I would agree also to teach the Russians how to grow better chickens and to have their hens more productive. I did have a reputation for the highest quality and that was confirmed at the first national dressed-poultry competition, where we won first prize for individual-service size and second or third for large roasters. Pfizer also held a "science comes to the farm" exposition at the Waldorf Hotel, in New York, and asked us to show our poultry. This although they then operated the world's largest privately-owned experimental farm in Indiana. (I'd done some experimental work for them and they were familiar with our product.) The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Beltsville experimental station asked me for advice from time to time and the University of Maryland's Poultry Department also did, mostly in marketing. We did have that kind of product and although I never, ever, made any effort to exploit our customers, they included John Foster Dulles' home. They ate our poultry and used them in their fanciest entertaining. Including for Mamie Eisenhower, who went down to the kitchen to ask the cook where she got such birds. (which led to a limited relationship with the Eisenhowers I do not now go into.)

Lowry told me they'd like me to go to the USSR but could not pay my transportation. They could pay all other expenses. He asked if I could do that or get it done. I told him I might be able to make the arrangements and in fact I did, through the Northeast Poultry Producers' Counsel, based in Trenton, N.J. (I staged an egg promotion for it that was a big success, at the Capitol. We delivered to more than each member boxes of double-yolk eggs. This does not begin to indicate how I got eggs on the TV nets and individual stations but it was a smash success.) I spoke to the director, whose name ~~was~~ was Dick Ammon, and he said they'd take care of the transportation costs.

As I thought about what was asked of me, teaching them how to raise better chickens and chickens and eggs more efficiently, I realized that one of the basics was nutrition.

I had no idea how the Russians fed or what they fed their poultry or what kind of feed plants they had but it seemed to me that a relatively small operation, like the cooperative that mixed and delivered my feed, would be a plant that would be within their technical and financial capabilities. It was managed by a friend, the late Harold Staley, and I spoke to him to see if they'd be willing for a visit and to provide explanations and anything else the Russians might want to know. They were glad to and I recall speaking to the USSR's agricultural attache and extending the invitation.

We also discussed, not this attache but someone^{else} there, the possible visit by the Khrushchevs. The last word I had on that was from State. I was told that Ike and Khrushchev would not have time but the Saturday they were together they planned to stop off with Mrs. Khrushchev. She didn't make it because she was delayed in Virginia, on a visit to people whose name I may not have right after all these years but I believe was Thayer.

In those days, whether or not still, there was a limit to how far from Washington Russians could travel without special permission. A visit to Frederick required this special permission. I do not know whether it was sought or granted.

But nobody from that Embassy ever visited us. We had a number of visits from other embassies over the years, but none from behind the iron curtain.

And after this State suddenly fell silent. I am sure that it ^{is} heard from the FBI, but no record provided by it or the FBI in response to my requests makes any reference to any of this challenge ~~is~~ or to my being asked to go there by State or to the Khrushchev invitation or to the USIA's ~~is~~ broadcast. Of course I never went there.

With regard to the allegation that I had such a relationship (and the foregoing more likely relates to the alleged visit from the embassy that never was) as I thought about this today it occurred to me that this was an exaggeration based on clandestine photographs that all reporters, pretty much, knew the FBI made from the second floor of the old National Geographic Building then across 16th Street. They supposedly photographed everyone entering and leaving the embassy. When I was a magazine correspondent I was there on a number of occasions, all 100% nonproductive and some counterproductive: they stole the ideas I took to them that required their cooperation and used them where they'd get more attention, ranging from LIFE magazine, when I asked that Mrs. Litvinov, the ~~ambassador~~ ambassador's English wife, write an article along the idea, "What I Like About Americans," to an article by their champion sniper, a young woman named Ludmilla Pavlichenko. She was credited with killing more than 200 Nazis. They planted that with the wire service, then UP, before it consolidated with the International News Service, becoming UPI. The USSR's Press attache, or at least the only one I ever saw, was a young man named Vladimir Pastoiev. He was never of any help but he was always friendly. One day he suggested that we lunch together. We went around the corner to a small restaurant on L Street, I paid for my meal, he for his, and that is the extent of our "relationship."

Years later I was at the embassy again and rather than having any "relationship" with the cultural attache in connection with having Whitewash published there we had words and it was unpleasant. (He said they do not contract for books, merely take them. I asked him if they paid and he said sometimes, but only in rubles that could be used only in Moscow. This led to my making a few comments on their concern for workers and the rights of workers, which writers are, and to an indignant letter to Mme Furtsiva, who was their Minister of Culture. I never got any response and I'm sure it was intercepted because in those days everything was being intercepted and what they wanted they copied. (This is in the Church committee records and testimony. I have what they published.) This reflects no such relationship.

In about 1941 I went there to get some simple information for an artist to use in illuminating a story by Walter - suddenly his well-known name slipped my mind - was it Muranty? He'd been the NYTimes correspondent and what I wanted was enough information for the artist to draw a sheaf of wheat where wheat was grown, oil derricks where that came from, etc. which on a magazine page might be 1000 miles from where it really was and

they refused even that. It was, of course, silly. ^{that information} And it was also rather well know to all interested governments. When they turned me down I went to the Commerce Department. It loaned me a newspaper-size atlas that included the USSR, I sent that to CLICK, in Philadelphia, its artist drew the map and the symbols on it and I returned the atlas to Commerce.

I not only had no relationship - I couldn't even get the time of day there!

More, I have reason to believe that they have me blacklisted. I have this in a file "USSR," which is a very, very small file that I started after Whitewash. After we moved here, maybe 10 years ago, I had a letter from a member of their Academy of Science, as I recall, asking if he could see me when he came to the United States. I replied with an invitation. Both are in that file. I never heard from him again. I can't recall that any USSR correspondent ever spoke to me or asked me anything about the political assassinations or about my work. (What I've seen of their stories is atrociously wrong.) So, I suppose that the USSR also had its intercepts of mail and that the scholar was spoken to.

On the slight chance that he might be willing to help I wrote Senator Sarbanes and sent him copies of the appeal, with attachments. In explaining to him the extent of what remains withheld and ignored on appeal I told him that it is pretty clear that the mail intercepts prevented publication of Whitewash in ~~the USSR~~ purpose. This was the case with Fischer A.G., the major German publisher, and in England, with Sir Leslie Frewin. Frewin was drafting the contract when he was fed bad information. Fischer wrote me several times after reading the ms., which they liked and wanted to publish. I never got those letters so of course could not respond. When I did not respond they mailed the ms. to me. I never got it. In that same general time period but a little later, all my mail to my London agent was intercepted and held for two months, when it all, or so far as I know all, was delivered to him in a single mail. That was largely the chapters of Whitewash II as I wrote them. The Church committee hearings established, with the appropriate FBI witnesses, that they intercepted the mail for the CIA at a number of points, including New York, whence mail from this area to ~~purpose~~ went then.

So, the FBI had much, very much, of which this is but a sample, that it withholds because it would be so embarrassing to the FBI, not to me. It also withholds to defame and malign me..

The false information connecting me with the USSR embassy is in FBI disclosed documents that are based on much longer documents it merely mentions and cites in short and untruthful mention about as brief as I indicate. The underlying documents were identified by their file numbers in those documents and my appeals that remain ignored include the file numbers, so no real searching was required by the FBI or the appeals whitewashers.

What I have relating to my early efforts to publish is in a single, separate ^{"BOOK"} file.

* Pfizer is the drug house. Because of a blizzard the live chickens never got to NYC. I carried the dress^{es}/ones frozen on one of the only three trains that left Washington the day we left. For those who know me and didn't then, those dressed birds were the display that was most attractive to the food editors for whom Pfizer staged the affair. The picture of me on the back of Whitewash is from Pfizer's picture of that display.

* None of the records the CIA let me have in response to numerous requests has anything relating to these interceptions but its Office of Security had a record it withheld from its general counsel reflecting that it had two files on me. Nothing has been disclosed from either. Publication by Fischer in 1965 could have meant a big difference in many ways. Also in 1965, the major British publisher, Collins, liked the book and gave it to John Sparrow, warden of All Souls and reportedly an intelligence recruiter. He killed the book and later attacked all critics and criticism of the official account.

Not necessary for file but perhaps amusing to those to whom I will send this:

Probably triggered by the weather and other concerns Lil got a terrible migraine on the way to New York. We didn't get there until about four hours late, close to or just after midnight, and then had trouble getting a cab and then + had to get the frozen chickens to a hotel freezer. By the time I got to our room a maid was changing the sheets on the bed and Lil was quite visibly upset. After the maid left Lil told me that she prepared for bed and when she saw the sheets she could hardly believe she was in the Waldorf. There were innumerable stains and the ashtrays were overflowing with different kinds of cigarette stubs. The room, obviously, had been used by a whore.

At the end of the Pfizer exposition the two chemists with whom I'd been working for quite some time, both then friends, invited us to Teacock Alley for a few drinks and relaxation. I remember only one of the food editors who joined us. During the conversation one of the chemists brought up the subject of sake they'd made from a recipe they'd gotten from Lil.

We had a neighbor who'd been in Japan for our government and came back with that recipe. We liked the sake so we got the recipe and Lil made a 10 gallon crock of it behind the large wood stove we then used for heat. It turned out fine, so fine that just the promise of a bottle of it to each of the two men I needed to bring baled hay in out of a coming rain on a Saturday evening agreed to for a bottle. Of course I also paid them. When one of the Pfizer chemists sampled some on a visit he had to have the recipe and Lil gave it to him. He gave a copy to the other chemist.

And they each made a batch of sake from the same, simple recipe that both this government employee and a farm housewife had used with great success.

One chemist's sake was like gelatin. The other said his never stopped "working."

Neither could make the sake from a simple recipe. Perhaps their knowledge of chemistry was their problem?

Experts!

Security experts, too. Like those in the USSR embassy who thought they had to keep secret what was well known.

President Eisenhower wanted for his farm some of the mallard-like Rouen ducks he raised. One developed a sport of an attractive pompon of multicolored feathers on its head and + bred that in and had a number. I took a crate to his Gettysburg farm, where his "White House factotum" named West, who later wrote a book, was expecting me. We got to the farm and the gate was wide open. As I drove in a car came rushing down. The Secret Service. I told them why I was there, they kept me waiting until they found West, and he led us past the old stone farm house to near a pond, where we turned those ducks loose. West was friendly. He'd been to our farm to get some of the dressed chickens for Ike, and we chatted. I noticed that they had one Canada goose only, a female. I asked why they had no male so they could have the young. I digress for what + forgot. We drove to a certain point and then West said to park and we'd carry the crate of ducks. He explained that the place was loaded with security devices and he didn't want to set them off. He walked us around them. No security on gaining entrance to the farm but all this around the house. Why they had no male Canada geese? I should explain that geese make wonderful watch dogs, as Rome learned, better than watch dogs, who failed to give the alarm that the geese then did give. They had no male because he'd been stolen! Catching a wild goose, even a domesticated one, is not at all easy. They can fly away and they do fight and can hurt. Well, West told me, and he laughed in telling me, their male had been stolen!