

Sherman Skolnick Dialogue

A wide grin creases Sherman Skolnick's face when you ask him if he sleeps well, or whether his dreams are a nightmarish pastiche of shadowy intrigues and dark conspiracies. "Sure I sleep well," he replies, but there's something in the way he says it that suggests that Skolnick's nightmares begin not when he sleeps but when he awakens. For from that moment, Skolnick is a man for whom every ring of the phone, letter in the mail, or knock on the door takes on the ominous tone of a Kafka novel. It is an existence that Skolnick has not quite grown accustomed to—like Alice in Wonderland, except that Skolnick's "wonderland" is far more violent and bizarre than anything Alice ever witnessed. Since 1967, in a virtual one-man crusade, Skolnick has bucked crooked politicians, the syndicate, corrupt government officials, and a suspected agent provocateur or two.

Confined to a wheelchair because of polio, running the show out of his living room with the help of a small, dedicated volunteer staff, Skolnick has nonetheless managed to gather enough evidence to knock an Illinois governor out of his seat, remove several corrupt judges, and predict the resignation of former Vice President Spiro Agnew months before he stepped down from office. All of which has taken its toll on Skolnick. He has been arrested, harassed, and discredited by his powerful political enemies, much along the same lines as Jim Garrison, Mark Lane, and Martha Mitchell.

In fact, Skolnick has managed to step on so many thumbs that he has had more government agents calling on him than have neighbors down the block. But if Skolnick has proved to be a Jeremiah of sorts, on some occasions he is still more the master of the art of startling disclosures—many of which still remain to be proved true. For instance: He strongly asserts that the United Air Lines plane that crashed in Chicago in 1972, and which carried Mrs. Howard Hunt aboard, was planned by govern-

ment operatives. And he presents a stack of evidence to prove his claim. Skolnick also maintains that Rennie Davis, Abby Hoffman, and most of the Chicago Seven, leaders of the Yippies during the 1968 Democratic National Convention, are all CIA agents. Here, again, he cites argument after argument to make his case. Skolnick is equally adamant about the conspiracy theory involving President Kennedy's assassination. But most startling of all, he broadly hints that Nixon himself may have had a hand in the tragic affair.

It was with such claims in mind that COQ recently sat down with Skolnick to discuss these and other matters. The talk lasted almost five hours. At one point the phone rang and the other end went dead. Earlier, Skolnick's one-armed chauffeur mysteriously worded a message to his boss and suddenly hurried off. It was Holmes, Chan, and a bit of Bond combined. It was Sherman Skolnick—muckracker, gadfly, fighter of the never-ending battle for truth, justice, and the American way—in the setting he likes best.

The interview was conducted by Steven Feldman, François Robert, Nancy Sundquist, and Lesley Sussman.

COQ: How did you get into this racket?

SKOLNICK: Some 15 or 16 years ago, my folks put some money in trust for me, and the people who were supposed to administer the trust absconded with the money. From there we ended up in the courts. In the beginning I had a lawyer representing me, and we spent some nine years in the courts trying to get the money back. We finally ended up in the State Supreme Court, and by that point I had studied enough law so that I was able to represent myself. Round about 1961, I took up the study of law on my own. My house at one time had 6000 law books. I found out going through the courts that there was really no justice. There was more conflict of interest. I found that there were other people similarly situated who had been "done in" in the courts. I spent years in the courts, and I couldn't get any satisfaction. The case involving my trust fund banged around five times to the U.S. Supreme Court. I also became interested in doing some public good, and I worked on some public-interest cases that didn't involve me personally. Sort of what are loosely known as "class actions." As a result of that,

cases with my name on them have gone to the Supreme Court about 44 times. So for better or worse, I hold the dubious distinction of having been to the Supreme Court of the United States more times than any other person in the history of the country.

COQ: So you never got your money back?

SKOLNICK: No. But the point is that I found that other people had also been swindled in the courts. Therefore in 1963 we formed the Citizens' Committee to Clean Up the Courts. We figured this was a name that no illiterate, crooked judge could possibly mistake as to what we were into. We made a study of all the bank cases in the Federal Court of Appeals covering a ten-year period. We found that there were 27 cases, and 26 of them were won by the banks. We then determined who the judges were hearing these cases, and they were bankers. We compiled information on the state of bribery. We figured out exactly how you go about bribing a judge, and things of that sort. You don't bribe him in an alley, by the way.

COQ: You've branched out from investigating the courts to include political figures. For example, you've charged that the Chicago Seven were on government payroll.

SKOLNICK: We traced their money to the CIA through foundations. Besides, they got half a million dollars for the street riots five years ago.

COQ: Who got it?

SKOLNICK: Oh, Rennie Davis and those people. That's why I got arrested. During the taping of a TV show I confronted Rennie and he wouldn't answer. Instead, the police showed up and took me away.

COQ: How did you develop your information? Where did you get your first inkling that there might be something . . . ?

SKOLNICK: Just from putting bits and pieces together. We compile information on foundations, and after a while you get to know which foundations are connected with Central Intelligence: the J.M. Kaplan Fund in New York, the New World Foundation of Chicago, and others.

COQ: Can you prove these connections?

SKOLNICK: Sure, some of them have come out already. The National Student Association, the World Group of Jurists, and others like these were

identified in February 1967 as CIA fronts. These are the foundations that supplied the Chicago Seven with all the money.

COQ: How do you know they got money?

SKOLNICK: The foundations are the only entities in the country that must file public tax returns. We compile those, and we were able to show, for example, that the Parvin Foundation, headed up by Justice Douglas, was a CIA front.

COQ: Do you have any views on Watergate?

SKOLNICK: Watergate to us does not stand for burgling, it stands for murder. Since June 17, 1972, several hundred people have been murdered because of the break-in. One of Donald Segretti's associates, for example, was murdered in an alleged accident. There have been other attempts at murder. Watergate is a continuation of a decade of political assassinations.

COQ: You're the latest in a growing list of people such as Mark Lane, Jim Garrison, and Martha Mitchell who are ridiculed for their conspiracy theories. How do you feel about it?

SKOLNICK: Well, I answer it with a joke. It's a paranoid subject. But the way things are going in this country, if you're not paranoid, you're crazy. We've found that government complicity exists in the assassination field, in the political field, in the peace field. A percentage of the bombing of government buildings has been done by provocateurs. Well, how are the taxpayers served when government agents bomb government buildings?

A notorious example was in Seattle. As a result of the unemployment there, people were getting restless. The FBI staged an incident to blame on the radicals—they bombed the post office. But the FBI has got toilet-training hang-ups. They're always bombing johns. During the Haiphong harbor mining protests, they bombed the women's john in the Pentagon. What great radical thing is bombing a john? You find that the czars did the same.

COQ: Did you know that Stalin was a member of the Czar's secret police?

SKOLNICK: Well, if you want to get into a broad philosophical subject, I can show you documentation that the Russian Revolution was financed in New York through the Rockefellers as an experiment in socialism. How many people know that Standard Oil

and Ford Motor never had their facilities appropriated when the Bolsheviks came to power?

COQ: You've been on a Rockefeller thing lately. Is something going on?

SKOLNICK: The reason we got into that is that it helps explain some phenomena in this country that otherwise are inexplicable. So one of the hip things we got into was this plane crash.

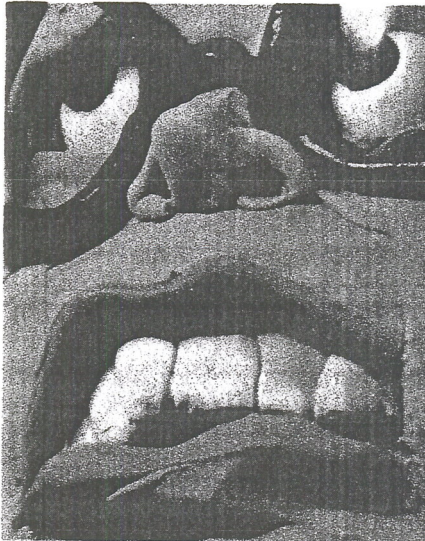
COQ: The one at Midway Airport in 1972, with Mrs. Howard Hunt on it?

SKOLNICK: Yes. At first we wanted to turn back on it because a lot has happened to me and my friends which would have made anybody with more sense than us give up.

COQ: What do you mean?

SKOLNICK: I mean we were fucked over so much. We should have quit.

COQ: Who fucked you over?



SKOLNICK: The FBI, different government phenomena. My closest friend spent 40 days in jail without a trial because of this Midway crash.

COQ: What was the charge?

SKOLNICK: There wasn't any. We picketed the street for five or six weeks. We raised all kinds of shit. It was an illegal detention.

COQ: How did you get him out?

SKOLNICK: We raised all kinds of noise. For the first time in the history of our group we picketed the streets. I don't like to picket. The weather is bad, you know. And publicly I usually go in the wheelchair. I don't want to wear out the tires on my aluminum wheelchair.

COQ: How does this tie in with Rockefeller?

SKOLNICK: We found out who was involved in the crash. We did a study of the whole thing. Who had an interest to crash the plane? Who are the

MUST YOU BE A STOCK HOLDER TO SABOTAGE!

principal stockholders of United Air Lines? Rockefeller

COQ: What if Mrs. Hunt had booked a flight on American?

SKOLNICK: You want to go through the whole corporate study of United Air Lines? You're forcing me to go into a little philosophy. Two factions struggle for control of this country.

The one faction you're all aware of is Nixon and his group of whatever you want to call them. Nixon was a Rockefeller man. When he lost in politics in 1962, he supposedly was broke. He then moved into a \$175,000 condominium in Rockefeller's building, the same building that Rockefeller lives in, and then went on a \$200,000-a-year speaking tour. Just to keep him busy. He then became a partner in a law firm that does a lot of Rockefeller work. From 1962 to about 1966, he was in Rockefeller's pocket. Nixon got wealthy. What Rockefeller either wasn't aware of or overlooked was that Nixon, from the Second World War on, was very much in with the gangsters. *Sundance* magazine went into a whole detailed study of Nixon and the Mafia from about 1944 on. Nixon was in with the people who were in the tire recapping rackets during the Second World War. Nixon at one time wanted to set up a business in Havana during the Batista regime. And there were two people who headed up the Bay of Pigs, two overseers: Richard Nixon and E. Howard Hunt. And so Nixon had quite a bit to do with the Mafia. A lot of the people recruited for the Bay of Pigs were gangster types. They were not paid in money, they were paid in heroin, and they sold that and raised money with that. But from 1966 on, Nixon departed from the super-elitists, the intellectuals, the liberals, as they call them, and fell back into his previous background with Rebozo and Lansky.

There are two things that are in the works now which will force Nixon either to leave office or leave the country. I attended a conference on political assassination research last Thanksgiving weekend. One of the things that's coming up, which is very hip, is that Nixon is going to be implicated in President Kennedy's assassination. There's a link between Dallas and Watergate. You've got to read a book called *Farewell, America*. It's one of the books that's banned in the United

States, and it tells about the CIA's involvement with the assassination. We've got very few copies left, but I'll give you one. We obtained some copies by devious means, and we use them to raise money for our organization. In other words, you donate ten dollars, I give you one free. Bookstores cannot sell the book. They can't import it, it's illegal. U.S. Customs doesn't allow it. The book shows that leaders of the assassination attempt met the night before, or two days before, and planned the last-minute things. Nixon and J. Edgar Hoover two days before Dallas met at an oil millionaire's ranch, and on the morning of the assassination Nixon took flight 82 to New York.

The other major accusation against Nixon will concern a gambling place called Paradise Island. The gambling casino is known to the press, but they're waiting for a strategic moment. It's owned by the international gangster Meyer Lansky, by Bebe Rebozo, and by Richard Nixon.

I associate with reporters from all over the world. Occasionally, they say, "Hey, I've got this story, I can't move with it, you got an idea?" In April I was detailing what was going to happen with Agnew. When did Agnew get put to the wall? On the day that the Senate Watergate Committee recessed for the summer. On that day the press started in with Agnew. Why didn't they start in April? They had all the facts. It's a scenario. It is orchestrated by what is loosely known as the Rockefeller element, what is known as the Council on Foreign Relations. They pushed Agnew out. Agnew is very much in with Rockefeller. They threw one of their people out in order to get at Nixon.

COQ: Why?

SKOLNICK: In *Heritage of Stone*, Jim Garrison says that Gerald Ford is one of the people the CIA likes the most. Ford sat on the Warren Commission, as did Leon Jaworski as special counsel to the Commission.

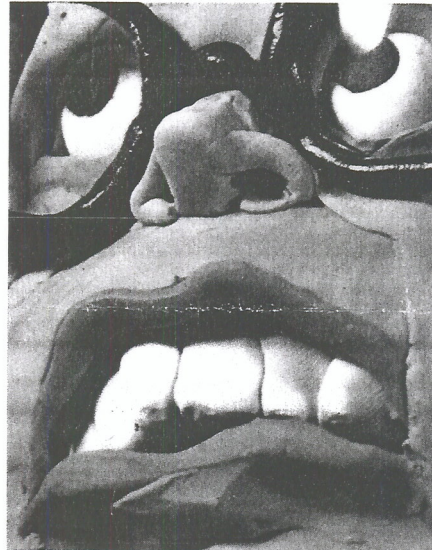
COQ: What about Archibald Cox?

SKOLNICK: Cox for years has been one of Rockefeller's people. Rockefeller surrounds Nixon now. He's got Haig in there, he's got Kissinger, who used to be a director of the Rockefeller Foundation. Nixon is surrounded, he's not the President anymore. There is a book that only circulates around in a limited way called *David* from Lyle

Stuart Publishers. It's about David Rockefeller. The Rockefellers own, you might say, the mass media. They own 17 percent of CBS, they're the principal stockholders in RCA, which has as a subsidiary the NBC network, and they have a major interest in ABC. So the three networks are owned and operated by the Rockefellers. Then through their various banking interests in Chase Manhattan Bank and others, they have a good working interest in every major paper that you want to talk about: *The New York Times*, the Field papers, etc.

COQ: How would you describe Rockefeller?

SKOLNICK: He's not an American. I mean, in the broad sense, he's not an American. He's got his foot in two countries, and as our resources here



become depleted he will put his foot stronger into the other country, Russia. Like some of the other oil millionaires, he has no country. Their country is where the business is.

COQ: Did you say that Ford was a Rockefeller man?

SKOLNICK: Well, in a way.

COQ: So why did Nixon pick him?

SKOLNICK: Nixon had nothing to do with it. He's no longer in control. It is of no consequence what Nixon does.

COQ: Why doesn't he fight?

SKOLNICK: His options are diminishing. He's getting down to the point where he's implicated in the Kennedy assassination. They'll shoot him and get away with it. His options are gone.

COQ: Why doesn't he flee the country?

SKOLNICK: I made a study of that. Do you know where he has his Florida White House? It's not in the United States. It's in old Spanish territory that

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was never made a part of the United States. If he ever goes to his Florida White House, he's not in the United States. We can't serve a summons on him or do anything.

COQ: Presumably Meyer Lansky could help him get to the Bahamas.

SKOLNICK: Yeah.

COQ: Your credibility, which has never been very great. . . .

SKOLNICK: Credibility with whom?

COQ: With a mass of people who follow you. You went before the Midway plane crash hearing and couldn't really back up your charges.

SKOLNICK: Now wait a minute. When I showed up with three suitcases filled with documents, I spread them out on a big table. Reporters had heard of this hearing and came from all over the Western world. I spread out on the table the entire government file on the crash which I told the Safety Board then in session that I had stolen. If they wanted to prosecute me that would be the time and place. We had over 1300 pages of exhibits, reports, photographs, and diagrams, which, when you analyze them step by step, show that this was not an accident.

The government proposed to suppress this like the Warren Commission documents. Except we headed it off by stealing it all. Therefore, if your judgment about my credibility is based upon what the media ran, then you rightfully say that I have no credibility. However, the Associated Press ran a story that was accurate. They said Skolnick today was at a special hearing of the National Transportation Safety Board and has presented a heavily documented case of sabotage. This wire service story was not run by any major paper in the United States, even though it was on the A wire. It ran in a couple of small papers near Seattle and in a few small Southern papers. The rest of them took a different position entirely.

COQ: Let's try to make sense of the United Air Lines crash. What do you think happened?

SKOLNICK: Mrs. Hunt carried two million dollars of valuables traceable to CREEP. We have two witnesses to that. She had what amounted to a document that was probably one of the most controversial documents in recent history. It shows that two weeks after Jack Kennedy's election in 1960, the incumbent President, Eisenhower, for reasons which he thought were

best for the Republic, signed an order for Kennedy's removal. It was authorized by the National Security Council and to be put immediately in the archives. Mrs. Hunt was carrying that document. Now, whether her husband fabricated that document based on other historical evidence or whether it is a true document, I don't know. But four documents that she had with her on the plane by some miracle flooded away from that plane, beyond the crash zone, beyond the FBI, and got caught in a bush. Some little old lady had it for several months. This lady is not in politics, she is not a spy. She didn't know what to do with it. It finally ended up with us.

COQ: You have these documents?

SKOLNICK: We are in possession of them. We have written a book about it, and the book is going to be published, I think, in Europe. I don't think it can be published in the United States, because the document so much as says that Nixon, who was a member of the National Security Council, ordered the demise of Jack Kennedy for what he thought patriotic reasons.

COQ: How do you know that is an official document?

SKOLNICK: It fits in with other known facts. There is no way of verifying it. I am not with the government.

COQ: May we see that document?

SKOLNICK: I won't show it to anybody. It will come out in our book.

COQ: You see, Sherman, you should be open with people. You're playing the same government games that you're supposedly against.

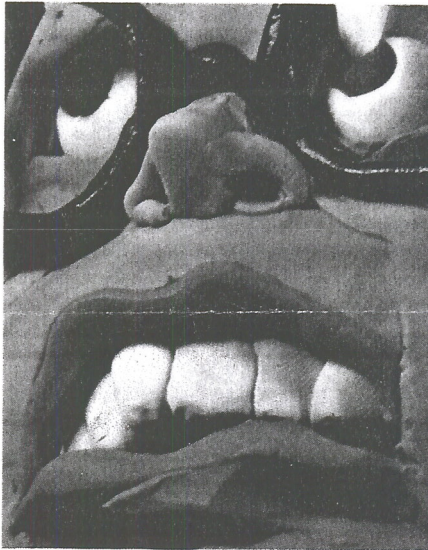
SKOLNICK: No, no, you can interview the witnesses.

COQ: That's not the point. Could we see the document?

SKOLNICK: I can show you a facsimile of it. I'll tell you something. Six months ago, if a reporter came to me, I would show him practically everything that was in the house. I gave up that idea after what *Rolling Stone* did to me. Their reporter, Terry Sheridan, whom I've known for more than three years, once wrote a story that was objective about us. It didn't necessarily praise us but merely told the truth about our work. So then Terry Sheridan writes a four-page story in *Rolling Stone* without referring to the documents. He was there during the two days of hearings. Instead he wrote that while he was at my house a week or two after the hearings

we ordered a large pizza. He wanted everything on it, and it cost \$17.95. So he tells this joke. That was a good joke. COQ: You've charged that the plane had extraordinary amounts of cyanide. But the official report denies that.

SKOLNICK: That's much in dispute. By the way, the pilot had an interesting name, Captain Whitehouse. Of the three people in the cockpit, the pilot is the only one who had cyanide, and he had 3.9 micrograms per milliliter. You don't breathe after 1.0, you're wiped out, while 3.9 is impossible by inhalation. Only by injection or ingestion, not by inhalation, can 3.9 milliliter be gotten in your body. Therefore, this pilot was four times dead, thus indicating foul play. There is other circumstantial proof to show



the pilot was dead before the crash. Flight regulations provide that, at minimum, the pilot must fly the first five minutes and the last five minutes. During the last two and a half minutes we don't hear from the pilot at all. He is not flying. The copilot and the second officer are talking.

But our case does not stand or fall on the cyanide issue. For example, most of the food tables were in the serving position. When the plane's landing, those food tables have got to be down, and the biggest crash in the world cannot dislodge those food tables. This indicates that the ground controllers misdirected the plane, so that the crew thought they were in a landing pattern and not about to land. The FBI and the Safety Board did not tell the public that many died by being crushed against the food tables. What do they tell you when you're approaching the airport? Fasten your

seat belts and fold up your food table, right? Well, you could say that one person forgot to fold up his table, but how could most of the food tables be folded out?

No doctors or nurses or ambulances that responded to the crash emergency were allowed to go to the plane. They were all kept in a garage 30 to 40 feet away. One doctor went toward the plane and a nameless, faceless person, who the doctor thought was FBI and who had the area blocked off, said that everybody was dead and there was no need for doctors. An ambulance driver was not allowed to go any closer either, even though he heard people screaming on the plane. Hundreds of FBI men had taken the area over and kept everyone out, including police.

COQ: Why were there so many FBI agents?

SKOLNICK: Of the 12 Watergate people who were on the plane, one survived. She is half out of her mind by terror because of this crash. She keeps moving every month to a different address. She's got triple locks on her house. She told one of our staff people that when she gets to know us better she will tell us about the terrible things that went on in the cabin before the crash. We believe that some of Mrs. Hunt's luggage was stolen. She had some under her seat that was stolen before the crash. We believe she was murdered. Why else did the FBI not allow the body bags to be examined and refuse last rites to be administered?

COQ: Wasn't there any autopsy?

SKOLNICK: No. The FBI had stripped all the bodies of all their possessions, all their rings, credit cards, everything. The press was either not diligent enough to know about all this or didn't want to know, because reporters for all the major papers simply put their bylines on press releases.

COQ: What advice do you have for young people?

SKOLNICK: The United States is the last place in the world for those who want to lead a life of freedom. We are the last place, there is no other place to go. There was a thing called the American Dream, but it has probably been gone for a hundred years now. It has been taken over by the Rockefellers, the Marshall Fields, the Carnegies, and the rest of them. There is no such thing as free enterprise. There is no such thing as justice. **COQ**