

14 September 1973

HW:

This is in response to Jim Lesar's memo on a conversation with a VVAW leader, dated apparently 9/6/73 (part of the date is cut off) which you sent in your mailing of 11 Sept73.

In the second paragraph the VVAW leader Lindley is quoted as describing one Mel Stevens, an \$80 per day VA consultant who worked for Colson in the EOB and is now on an "extended driving tour" of Europe.

In June of 1967 Hal Verb introduced us to a Mel Stevens and his wife, Esther, who were part of his assassination study group at that time. He never said how he met them or how they happened to join. However they appeared keenly interested, and we saw them on two occasions about a week apart, the latter time consisting of a dinner here with Hal followed by a dash into San Francisco to watch Hal and Paul Hoch on a Harv Morgan program on the JFK assassination at KCBS radio.

Stevens at that time appeared about 25 and his wife about the same. He was about 5'-6", perhaps 150 pounds, dark curly or wavy hair and good looking. He seemed somewhat intense, almost driven in some obscure sense. He represented himself as a graduate of some crash course in Russian language and as employed by some totally unidentified outfit as monitoring Russian language communications, he never said where but indicated it was aboard ship. He made no mention of military service of any kind, but did say he was staying temporarily in this area and was quartered at Vallejo (the site of the Navy's Mare Island Naval Shipyard where they make nuclear-powered subs). He was proficient in taping and had what was then a rather sophisticated multi-speed recorder which he brought to the house to record automatically the Harv Morgan program while we ~~were~~ were all attending it in San Francisco.

His wife described herself as of Hungarian descent, but spoke without accent and was almost a compulsive talker. It would be fair to say that both appeared young, enthusiastic and without political bias one way or another.

That's about all I can recall from that time. However, some what to our surprise we have had at least two long-distance telephone calls from Esther since then, one of them some years ago from Portsmouth, N.H. (another sub base) following the RFK assassination or something of that nature. She just wanted to keep in touch and to talk with someone about what was happening.

I also find a letter ~~dated~~ from Esther, undated but postmarked New York, March 3, 1970, in which she describes their wanderings and seeks to bring us up to date and inquire about Verb, Mark Lane, Joe Dolan, etc. In this letter she says that a foreign assignment they had been hoping for had been delayed by an Army Reserve call-up by about a year, following which they went to Europe where she lived in Amsterdam ~~while Mel worked~~ following September, 1969, while Mel worked in the North Sea on a "Navy Oceanographic Unit."

In New York they were staying at the Hotel Iroquois at 49 West 44th, but on the back of the hotel envelope she put this printed sticker for future correspondence (which we never used): ~~XXX~~ Bunker Ramo Corp., Oceanographic Unit # Two, USNS Dutton (T-AGS-22) FPO New York, N.Y., 09501. At the time she wrote, they were about to return to Amsterdam and the North Sea.

We may have heard once more by telephone from Esther, possibly from South Carolina where they were staying at one time (she did not say where), but from then nothing until early this year when ~~she~~ she called, she said from the Los Angeles ~~area~~ area where she said Mel's or her family was living. This time she wanted mainly to know the address of a UFO investigation group we had discussed when they were here in 1967 and which she said she now wanted to get in touch with.

Shortly after May 17 this year I spotted a reference to a Mel Stevens in a Washington Post story on the CREEP dirty tricks program, describing him in much the same terms as the Lesar memo. I wrote Verb a note, giving the gist of the reference to Stevens and asked whether he thought this could be the Stevens to whom he had introduced us. He replied by telephone that he thought not, that he had not heard directly from the Stevenses since 1967, and appeared unwilling to pursue the matter further.

I enclose a copy of the Post story to provide context to the reference without your having to look it up.

If the two Mel Stevens are the same person, it would mean the Army reserve hitch needs explaining for a Navy man with eight years in that service. Otherwise, there is nothing essentially contradictory in the two identities as I have described them.

Verb did not recall any reference to actual military service, nor do we.

Esther's call early this year inclines me to think her husband may be one Lindley talked of, but no firm conclusion is justified without further checking. She was customarily vague about their plans, although the implication was they were just visiting family in the LA area. One cannot rule out USC law school (a Lindley detail). Her inquiry about the UFO organization would ^{be} consistent, since all such organizations are closely watched and presumably infiltrated, although there is every effort to make it appear otherwise.

If I hear anything further I'll advise. I'm not asking Verb again since he was definitely not giving when I asked him about the story in the Washington Post.

jdw