

Excerpts from discussion between Walter and Miriam Schneir, authors of Invitation to an Inquest (Doubleday 1965) and Nathan Glazer, who reviewed the book (NYTimes Book Review, Sept. 5, 1965), moderated by Burton White of KPFA. Broadcast Dec. 26, 1965.

White: To go along with what was for me, in reading the book, the most shocking and alarming point that you brought up, and that was the possibility that a major piece of evidence, that is, the hotel registration card, had been forged, and it seems clear that if it was forged by anybody it was forged by the - some agents within the prosecution. I wonder whether this might be discussed, because so far as I understand your presentation of your thesis it all is involved with a certain amount of questionable (if you're correct) activity on the part of the Department of Justice.

Schneir: Yes. Well, as I mentioned before, at this trial there was no conclusive documentary evidence, and so what documentary evidence there was on the part of the prosecution had in effect to go a long way.

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Now in the course of our research we came to the conclusion that this card, which was introduced as a photostat, is a forgery, and this of course, as Professor Glazer says, is a very serious charge, and as I think he would agree, it's also a very sad charge to have to make.

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I think that these charges in our book really cannot go unanswered or should not go unanswered. The Department of Justice should answer them, and I'd like to tell you - I think you'd be interested to know - that, you know we have been talking a great deal about this case and unfortunately we have not really mentioned Morton Sobell very much. But Morton Sobell - this was a conspiracy case and Morton Sobell was a defendant in this case who was sentenced to 30 years in prison and is still in prison, having served 15 years. I would just like to say ... that because this was a conspiracy case, anything that was chargeable to any of the conspirators - to any one of them - was chargeable to all of them, so that even though there was no allegation that Sobell knew anything about any of these Jelle box top meetings, atomic espionage and so on, by the somewhat quaint laws of conspiracy all these allegations were also chargeable to Sobell. So we're talking about Sobell at the same time as we are talking about these other things.

Now Sobell's attorneys, therefore, are going into Federal Court in New York very shortly and they are going to be saying that Sobell was denied a fair trial because in the case against him and the Rosenbergs the prosecution used forgery, perjury and also suppressed evidence. And he will seek a hearing. And of course if a hearing is granted then it will be possible to secure answers one way or another to some of these things. But as a preliminary to this effort to secure a hearing, Sobell's attorneys wrote to J. Edgar Hoover recently, and they said, "Could you produce the original of the Hotel Hilton card?", since the card was introduced as a photostat and it seemed that as a first step the original of the card should be secured so that it could be examined by experts and so on. Whatever might be learned by it could be learned by it.

Glazer: Now there is a second card which you consider genuine - is that the original or a photostat too?

Schneir - That's a photostat also.

Glazer: Both cards indicating trips to Albuquerque are photostats?

Schneir: Yes.

White: Before we get too far, what did Hoover reply? - or did he?

Schneir: Yes, Hoover replied directly. The answer came from Hoover and he said, and I quote, "Due to the passage of time, the card is no longer available."

Now of course attorneys for Morton Sobell obviously are going to seek a deposition from Hoover. They're going to ask questions which I think we'd all agree are cogent questions. They're going to ask for the history of the card,

under what circumstances it had come into the hands of FBI agents, what agents, when, what memoranda are available in the files regarding its history -
Miriam Schneir: And why the card is not available.

Schneir: Yes. Was it destroyed, by whose order was it destroyed, when, or is it still retained somewhere, and - you know, I think when those questions are answered we'll all know, perhaps know, a great deal more about this case.