

2 August 1975

Dear Harold:

In a recent note about the Olson case you asked if this wasn't reminiscent of Forrestal. It was, and I not only had made the connection immediately but always ~~x~~ have had doubts about Forrestal. I can think of no notes or files from that period, but have the impression that at the time I felt what happened to him was more suggestive of Jan Masaryk than anything else. Since I can't dig back on it, I can only cite a hazy suspicion at the time that he somehow was hanging back on the full-speed-ahead signal for the Cold War when he went out the window in 1949. In terms of time, there is a possibility of an LSD factor. It was discovered in Switzerland during the 1930s -- time enough for even OSS to have found out about it and got to work. We'll probably never know.

Assuming that you assume, as we do, that what has come out recently is only the tip of the iceberg, this is a good time to review other possibilities we've considered here for some years. Three possible areas come to mind -- strokes, heart attacks and cancer. I think these and other possibilities should be kept in mind as names crop up in references to the past, particularly in cases where the deaths involved were fortuitous for the victim's opposition. Let me mention a few cases recalled offhand.

FDR was in bad shape already by the time of the Yalta conference, but he had aged very suddenly, and if you want to look at it that way he could have been slipped a mickey that didn't quite work. If so, the follow-up in April did. He had caved in to Stalin's demands for postwar security, and it took Truman and the Cold War mentality to undo even partially what mischief FDR's opponents were convinced he had done.

I don't recall what Estes Kefauver ~~was~~ came down with (uncertain whether it was a heart attack or a stroke) but there is no question about the toes he was stepping on at the time, both in his committee's investigations and in his presidential ambitions. I recall the look of what seemed to me to be terror in the face of his wife the few times I saw her picture after he died. The same look was worn by the widow of Sen. Clair Engle, who finally succumbed to a ~~paralytic~~ stroke of some kind at a time when he was switching to a liberal line and, as I recall it, messing up the plans of Richard Nixon.

We come now to the heart attacks, far more numerous and probably entirely feasible with well-known drugs such as the one from India long known as rauwolfia which is used to treat heart ailments but which in overdose causes death with the symptoms of an ordinary heart attack. It is improbable that far more sophisticated and easily administered drugs have not been developed. One of the best known victims could have been Adlai Stevenson, who was about to meet with NLF and North Vietnam leaders in Paris when he was stricken on a London sidewalk. Two others occurred on tennis courts and could have been perfectly natural deaths of middle-aged or elderly men overdoing the exercise bit. One was Desmond Fitzgerald, then CIA Far Eastern specialist and the divorced father of the girl who wrote the well known book on Vietnam, Fire in the Lake. Curiously, the divorced mother was Marietta Tree, the lady who was with Stevenson when he died.

Henry Luce was the other Tennis Court case. He dropped dead just when he was getting in touch with Chou En-lai to visit China, which meant not only a drastic personal reversal in policy but a serious threat to anyone bent on "saving" the China issue for possible later use.

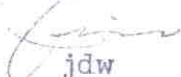
The possibilities of cancer implantation (one completely unconfirmed report claims oral implantation in food is possible) are even more interesting and recall David Ferrie's work with rats and the mysterious death of the woman scientist with whom he was collaborating (she burned to death in her living room chair; nothing else much was damaged). Jack Ruby's galloping case is of course a prime possibility, occurring only after he had won a judgment for a new trial. But there are others.

We knew a brilliant Brazilian physician with impeccable credentials: educated in England and Boston, married to a woman from a very wealthy family, head of his internal medicine division in Rio's biggest hospital, who developed another case of galloping cancer. He had offended the status quo by training himself as an amateur astronomer and developing into one of the most high-powered UFO investigators in the world. He had ~~retrieved~~ retrieved physical evidence from a UFO crash and worse, investigated thoroughly and reported fully on one of the most sensational personal encounter cases on record, all supported by every scientific test and consultation possible and available. He is by no means the only UFO investigator to kick off from one cause or another just when he was becoming too successful and effective for comfort.

A third case concerns our old friend Ed Snow, who was in excellent health otherwise until he suddenly developed cancer just when Time-Life had signed him to report Nixon's trip to Peking. This not only would have crowned his long career (anti-climax in a way after Mao had him and his wife by his side during the previous October's triumphal parade at Tien An Men) but Nixon's trip would not have been possible without the work Snow had done. In any case, we know who can't stand being upstaged.

There are many other cases in all three categories. I mention only those I recall offhand. No doubt there may be other categories to be discerned. Let's keep it in mind.

Best to you both,

  
jdw