Interview with Former Special Agent of the FBI

on October 25, 2008
By Stanley Pimentel

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Stanley A. Pimentel/
P: Today is October 25, 2008, and I’m here with R. Jean Gray. The “R” stands for Russell which he does not use frequently. We’re at the Sheraton Hotel in Tysons Corner, Virginia, and Jean has been advised or has already reviewed the Copyright Release and Background Form and has signed it. And I’ve signed it. And, Jean, if you will, tell us a little about your early background, where you were born and raised, and your schooling.

R. Jean Gray/
G: I was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and have been a lifelong resident of the Minneapolis area. Actually a place called Excelsior, Minnesota, now called Greenwood, Minnesota, at Lake Minnetonka, just west of the Twin Cities.

P: Minnetonka?

G: Minnetonka means “Big Water.”

P: Oh, okay.

G: My father moved out there when I was about two years old, so, let’s say 1931-32. And I live within two blocks of where I moved in 1932.

P: Huh.

G: I went to the Excelsior Public Schools and then to the University of St. Thomas which was then called the College of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. Graduated from high school in ’47 and the university in ’51 with a degree in Political Science. Part of the St. Thomas program at that time was ROTC for all four years. In your junior and senior years, you could stay in Advanced ROTC and be commissioned. And in those days everybody was going into the military, so I went into the Air Force as a Second Lieutenant. And to my amazement, I, I was sort of interested in police work because of some aptitude tests that put printing and police work as aptitudes.
I don’t remember what I applied for, but when my orders to active duty came, it said report to the OSI Training School, Office of Special Investigations (IG), USAF. And I said, “Well, this sounds interesting.” The orders were written wrong. I went to Offutt Air Force Base in Omaha where I was going to be assigned after Training School and they said, “Why are you here?” And I said, “Well, I have orders to come to Offutt Air Force Base.”

And they said, “That’s what it says, doesn’t it? But that’s not where you’re supposed to be. You’re supposed to be at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington, DC. So get over to the flight strip where we’ve arranged for you to go down in a --.” What it turned out to be was an A26 or B25, I can’t remember which --. It was some type of attack plane with two big prop engines and I sat in the gunner’s seat. And as we took off down the runway of Offutt Air Force Base on my first day on active duty, the engine failed on one side. The plane spun out at the end of the runway, and I was looking down at a railroad track in a ravine when we finally got it stopped. And I said, “This is the Air Force?”

But, anyway, I got to Washington. I went through OSI Training School. I was assigned to District 13 based in Omaha, but I actually worked in the Dakotas. I spent most of my time at Rapid City Air Force Base, in the detachment there. I traveled in the Western Dakota, Nebraska. I worked also in Des Moines, Iowa.

Actually when I was in Rapid City, I met the FBI Resident Agents from Rapid City who loved to come to the air base to eat lunch because in those days it was like seventy-five cents at the Officers Club to go through the cafeteria line. So they showed up with some regularity. And a guy named Lynn P. Smith and George O’Clock, and they used to be out there. And George is still alive and living in Rapid City.

Well, anyway, we worked a couple of joint cases together. We had a burglary of the Officers Club and worked with Art Sullivan, who was later, was assigned to the Minneapolis Office. He was from the East Coast but he retired in Minneapolis and passed away a couple of years ago.
G: Art Sullivan and I both had this case because civilians worked in the Officers Club. The FBI had joint jurisdiction. In the course of that I learned a lot about how the Residents Agents operated out there. And I think it was Lynn Smith who said, “Why don’t you think about joining the Bureau when you get out of the Air Force?” And I knew I wasn’t going to spend my career in the Air Force.

So I did. I went home and I worked for my dad for a year. He founded a manufacturing company, the Gray Company, Inc. and I worked there. So I was in the Air Force, July ’51 to July ’53. And I came home. Went to work at the company. Didn’t really feel that I was interested in making the equipment they made, and so I applied for the Bureau without telling anybody.

P: What did your dad do? What did he make?

G: Lubricating equipment. To grease cars. Equipment to grease and lubricate automobiles basically. Today the company is called Graco, Inc. and makes a wide range of fluid handling equipment.

P: Oh, oh, okay.

G: Dad presumed I was going to be one of the heirs apparent of the company and I just wasn’t interested in what the company did as compared to what I had been doing for the last two years at the Air Force.

So without telling him, I applied for the FBI. Figured if I didn’t get accepted, he would never know. (chuckle) But one day I told the company that I was reporting to Washington and I was leaving.

So on January, 1-24-55, January 24, 1955, I reported to the Old Post Office Building and started my career in the FBI, with training school followed by first office in Charlotte, where I was sort of the utility player. How much, how much of reminiscence do you want about --?

P: Any interesting cases you worked in Charlotte?

G: Well, first day I got there, all my personal effects were in my automobile. And my car was parked outside the old Charlotte Office which was downtown. And I went up --. And this was the place where a lot of new Agents went to get trained. And, of course, I was all primed from what they had told us in training school to expect. I went in and reported to the ASAC whose name as I recall was Andy Dinsmore. And he said, “What are you doing here?” (chuckle) That was my greeting. You know, it was like “Why did they send you here?”
G: And I said, “Well, I have my orders and I’m reporting.” He says, “Have you, have you moved in any place?” And I said, “No. Everything I own is in my car.” He says, “Good, because you’re leaving.” (chuckle) He says, “Go to Hot Springs, North Carolina, and report to the Senior Resident Agent. They’ve got a bank robbery up there and they can use you doing neighborhoods and stuff.”

So I hadn’t been in the office two hours until I was gone. And I went, drove up to Hot Springs, North Carolina, and I’ll never --.

P: Where’s that?

G: Hot Springs is now --. It’s on the Appalachian Trail.

P: Oh, okay.

G: And it’s not too far from the Virginia line. It’s in north central North Carolina. And it was real hillbilly country. They called, they called it Bloody Madison County because they hadn’t had a conviction for first-degree murder in that county since the Civil War because the juries accepted almost any, “He stepped on my property, so I shot him,” type of excuse.

So I go out, walked into this bank in this little tiny town. It’s about two blocks long and I see a guy with a suit standing there and a bunch of guys in old clothes down doing something on the floor in the lobby of the bank. And I walked over to the man in the suit and I said, “My name is Jean Gray. I’m reporting for duty from the Charlotte Office.” He says, “What are you talking to me for?” He says , “I’m the sheriff. The fellow you want to talk to is on the floor down there.”

So here’s this guy in a red lumberjack shirt with a pistol sticking out of his back pocket and he is taking something up off --. I can’t remember what he was doing. He was on the floor. I went over and I said, “Charlotte Office sent me up to assist you, sir.” He said, “They did?” “Oh, yes,” he says, “Go down to the motel and get a room and then come back.”

So I went down to this motel and came back and he says, “I don’t know what I’m going to do with you.” He says, “I know what I’m going to do with you.” He says, “You get in the car with the sheriff and go --. The sheriff knows the route that we think they took.” And he says, “You go out and do the neighborhood.”

So I climb in the car with the sheriff and he was a ‘good ole boy’. Had an old black Ford. He knew everybody in the county. People pushing mules out in the field would stop and wave when the sheriff went by. We didn’t get any information. I don’t think he really talked to anybody. And we came back, and by this time they were sort of wrapping up whatever the unseen investigation was and they said, “Why don’t you go over to the motel and we’ll be over in a minute.”
G: So I go over to the motel and here’s Samuel B. Smith, who is a NA graduate. SA type - who came in during World War II. And he was a really ‘good ole boy’. And he’s down on the sidewalk with a, with a guy, and they’re sitting on the sidewalk and Sam Smith is dissolving slugs with moonshine whisky he’s got in a Mason jar like you’re supposed to carry it down there. He had a moonshine jar of whisky and he was pouring it on slugs and he was talking to this guy. And I didn’t stop. I just went, went to my room.

So afterwards the SRA comes over. And I can’t remember his name at the moment. He says, “What’d you think of the sheriff?” I said, “He’s very nice.” I said, “We had a very pleasant conversation.” He says, “Well, you know we got him indicted for election fraud. We’re going to put him on trial next month.” So I said, “What? I didn’t know that.” (chuckle) He says, “Well, you didn’t need to know that,” you know.

So end of the day they said, “We’re going to interview a couple of people but we’re not going to do any more neighborhoods today. You can, you can call it quits. Get yourself settled, just get settled down. Talk to you in the morning.”

So I come out in the morning. Well, this is a town that has people wandering around with pistols and shotguns and stuff. And so it’s really strange, you know. And there’s an Agent there from South Carolina who came up to respond to the bank robbery. He’s from the Columbia Office. And I looked around and the place is empty except for us. We had almost the whole hotel there, motel. A little tiny motel. I said, “Where is everybody?” He said, “They’re in Ohio.” I said, “What do you mean they’re in Ohio?” He said, “Well, you remember the guy that Sam Smith was talking to on the sidewalk?” He says, “Well, he was being a cooperative witness but it turns out that he was the lookout.” And the more that Sam gave him the interview with the moonshine, the more the guy started to reveal the inner workings of what the bank robbery had been.

I said to the fellow from South Carolina, “Well, what do we do now?” He says, “Well, I don’t know about you, but I’m going to get a haircut.” (chuckle) I said, “Well, let’s go have a cup of coffee anyway. I haven’t had breakfast.”

So off to breakfast and a couple of locals are in there and they saw us and we started talking. So we could hear them saying, you know, “Well, hell, I guess they got away with that one. Nobody’s going to figure who done that job,” and all this. In the meantime we knew that they knew who did it and they were up in Ohio and they came back. I can’t remember whether they brought the subjects with them or whether they locked them up in Ohio. I think they locked them up in Ohio. Then we had a removal hearing.

And that was my introduction to the field of FBI. And I said, “This is not like what they told me was going to happen in training school.” (chuckle) But it was quite effective because they locked up three people for bank robbery on one day, you know.

P: Yeah. Going back, you said that he was putting moonshine over slugs or--.
G: Yeah, like, slugs that come out of your garden, like, like the snail-type of thing.

P: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

G: And I never knew that would dissolve them.

P: Yeah.

G: I mean that’s how strong it was. And that was moonshine country down there. Oh, North Carolina was just full of moonshiners. And the chases that used to go on between the Highway Patrol (NCSHP) and the, and the --. The guys with the Mercury coupes, the old ’40 something Mercury coupes that had the big trunk which converted into a tank. They’d fill that with moonshine and then run these terrible races through the mountains with the Highway Patrol. It was really an interesting place to be. (chuckle)

P: They still do it, by the way. I’ve seen it here in the newspaper. I own a place down in north central North Carolina right near the Virginia border.

G: Okay

P: And every once in a while you hear about these, these races between the North Carolina State Police and sheriffs, and going after people making moonshine.

G: Yeah.

P: So it’s still going on till this day.

G: Yeah, that was my introduction to the FBI. I worked in the, in the Fayetteville Resident Agency most of the time I was in Charlotte and had two or three counties and did the routine criminal work. And then, everybody had cases on Ft. Bragg.

P: Yeah. How big an RA was it?

G: I think there were four or five of us. Bob Stevenson was the SRA and Lacy Wallace was ASRA; James Broderick from Brooklyn, NY. I had a whole slug of cases, old deserters and Selective Service and, you know, the usual, car theft and that sort of stuff.

And I remember they’d given me some guy that had been missing for thirty-five years and he was a bond jumper. And I went over to the Sheriff’s Office and Fayette Police. At the Fayetteville Police, there was a guy from New York who was the sergeant at the desk and he kind of liked the Bureau agents, and so I asked about my fugitive and got the last information they had.
And I drove over to another county and drove up to the house, house of the last address, and here’s the guy. He’s got one missing finger and (chuckle) and I said, “Hello, are you Mr. So and So?” He said, “Yes, I am”. I said, “You’re under arrest for failing to report for a bond hearing, a bail hearing.” And I said, “Would you mind getting in my car?” And he says, “No.” So he gets in my car and I brought him back to the Fayetteville Police Department and had him locked up. And the sergeant looked at me like, “You mean this guy’s been gone for thirty-five years and you got him in about two hours?” And I said, “Well, I just went to the address where he was listed. (chuckle) And there he was.”

We had some wild fugitive cases because those guys would --. Lot of runners down there. And one of them I remember was noted for him ability to vault an automobile while running. He could, he could run towards an automobile and vault over the top of it. He was a real sprinter.

I forget how we found out, but we knew he was in a barn. And we went out at night. And here I am crawling through cornfields on my stomach and I suddenly realize that my pistol is no longer in my holster. (chuckle) This is not good because when I started into the cornfield, it was. (chuckle) So I backed up down the cornfield and I found my pistol. And we found this guy. That was the type of stuff we did there.

Yeah.

It was, it was, you know, kind of a rural, a rural thing.

Very interesting.

I had a lot of fun.

Yeah. How long were you there in Fayetteville?

About, about a year.

Samuel D. Smith was a legend in the country. He was the Hickory, North Carolina, Resident Agent. And I got sent up to Hickory to help him do something. I forget what it was. Oh, I know what it was. He was under investigation for, oh, civil rights --. He was being investigated for a civil rights violation in that he had interviewed a prisoner without following the provisions of the Manual. And I forget what he did. So then somebody charged him with Denying the Rights of the Prisoner.
G: So I was working with Sam who was a ‘good ole boy’. In those days, you know, you didn’t take a Bureau car home ever. It was in a garage some place. So I go up to the RA and I said, “Well, now what do we do?” He says, “Well, we’ll go get a Bureau car and we’re going to go out and do something, whatever we’re going to do.” And I said, “Well, how do we get there?” He says, “It’s about four or five blocks away.” He says, “But we won’t walk.” Goes out on the sidewalk, sees a police motorcycle coming with a parking thing, with a three-wheeler, with a compartment on the back so --

P: Yeah, oh yeah. Right.

G: -- they could keep their paper work and stuff. He waves him down and he says, “Hop on the back of this thing.”

So that was my introduction to Hickory, riding on the back of a police motorcycle down to the garage.

There was a fugitive up in the mountains there that had a warning system. He lived in a deep ravine. He was an Army deserter. And we used to go up apparently on a regular basis. That was one of the things I did while I was there. Went up there.

Well, we were going to have a rendezvous. Sam knew everybody, so he had the sheriffs and the highway patrol and I don’t know who all, going to come so that we could make an attempt to find this guy who lived up in this hollow. And we said, “Meet at this certain intersection underneath the big tree.”

So, we get there. And there are all these guys with their arms folded, looking very unhappy with Sam. “Sam, where you been? You’re supposed to be here at nine o’clock. It’s quarter of ten.” Sam says, “Ah,” he says, “sorry boys,” he says, “but I got tied up. I was poling a hog.” And they said, “You done what, Sam?” He said, “I was poling a hog.” “What is that, Sam?” “Well, you know how --.” Around here the hogs have a hard time finding stuff to eat. “I found this poor hungry pig standing beside the road by a chestnut tree and I got out and I stuck a pole up his rear end and held him up in the tree so he could eat chestnuts. And that’s what tied me up, fellows. I was poling a hog but here I am and let’s go up in that hollow.”

G: Well, that was working --. Really fun to work in North Carolina in those days. (chuckle) I had a good career. That was the, that was the roaring, the roaring start.

I got then transferred to the Washington Field Office.

P: When was that?
G: I got there in about July, June or July of 1956, and one of the guys, Ed Murphy, who was another Charlotte guy, we both got transferred to WFO because they were expanding the Intensification Program which was having, increasing the coverage on the Soviet Bloc countries. President Eisenhower at that time had ordered that. Five hundred more Agents were put into this program. So they were taking First Office Agents and assigning them either to New York or Washington Field to work in the program. The Intensification Program.

And I was put on street surveillance which I really found very pleasant. Worked shift work. Days, nights, sometimes midnights. We spent, I spent, I suppose, two, two years or so. And then I had an interesting --. Could have been a very unfortunate incident, but it was an interesting incident. A guy named Scharf, Bob Scharf, was the Street Supervisor.

P: Okay.

G:

So I’m sitting there in the booth and their big question was … they lived near Meridian Hill Park which in Washington was on the edge of a very turbulent area, 14th Street. Upper 14th Street was, was quite a high crime area, and this is 15th, between 15th and 16th at the top of the hill up from the White House at Euclid Street. And they said, “You know, our wives go to the park and we see these people go by who we fear will attack our wives. Would you fellows, if you happen to be in the park, defend our wives?” I said, “Of course we would.” “Oh, that is good to know. We wanted to know that.”

P: So these two guys knew who you were?

G: Yeah, well, you know, surveillance, everyone makes you.

P: Lock step.
So, bang, the next day I am off the street. And I’m sitting outside of Court Jones, a wonderful man. Just turned ninety-one.

P: Right.

G: Court Jones’ office. And Bob Scharf has put me there. Bob says, “I don’t know what they’re going to do with you.” He says, “You’re either going to get fired or you’re going to be an SAC. And I can’t figure which it’s going to be.”

P: (chuckle)

G: And I said, “Well, I thought it was an interesting evening.” He said, “You had no authority whatsoever and you knew you weren’t supposed to make contact with the Soviets.” I said, “They came over and talked to me.” Well, anyway, I explained it.

P: Wrote a memo?

G: Yeah. Court Jones revealed to me later, years later, that they were really concerned about me. And he, to my great good fortune, told Ludwig von Oberndorf, Security Coordinating Supervisor, that he would take me on his squad. “Bring him in off the street. Put him where I can see him and I’ll watch him.” (chuckle) I never knew this until years later. Court and I are good, really good friends.

P: Court’s good people.

G: Yeah. So I went on the, the Cultural Section, the Cultural Unit of Squad 3A at the Washington Field Office. And we had a lot of good cases. We had a lot of KGB stuff. But the way that it was divided in those days was that the way people were assigned in the embassy, was the way the Squad covered them. And I worked on the Cultural Squad. The Cultural Unit.

And there was a guy named Boris Krilov and my dear friend, Tamara Georgievna Mamedova. (chuckle)

P: You’ve got to spell that.

G: My reporting on her was one complete file volume of correspondence per month. She was --. If the cell phone had been invented, that woman never would have been off of it. She just loved to talk on the phone with people. And it was a pretty good way to keep track of her, but, my gosh, she knew everybody in the United States.
G: When she was doing --. The one, the one incident I’ll tell you. She was doing the Bolshoi Ballet. They were coming and there was a guy in New York, can’t remember what his name was, who supposedly she was having an affair with, the New York Office told me later. Even though I was Office of Origin, they kept that little tidbit from me as New York was prone to do in cases. Name was Dowling, Robert Dowling. He was the impresario who was bringing the Bolshoi Ballet, the first time since the revolution, to the United States.

So to back up a little bit, Tamara went on home leave and it was like I was on vacation. I mean it was wonderful. She wasn’t there. And then I got word from the State Department that her visa had been renewed and she’s returning to the United States on such and such a date. She’ll be arriving from train from New York.

P: Usual spelling?

G:

She could not resist finding out who I was. So she followed me. And she says, “Who are you?” And I said, “I can’t really tell you. My name is Mike and you cause me more work than I really care to tell you. I’m in charge of keeping track of you.” “Oh!” She walked away in a big huff, you know.

G: So, she’s up in New York to work the Bolshoi thing with Robert Dowling and she comes back. And I’m with a guy named Bob Dawson on surveillance at the Union Station. And this is now what I’m working, case work. I’m not on the Surveillance Squad anymore. I’m, I’m now, now trusted. (chuckle)
G: So, Tamara comes off the train and she sees me. Bob Dawson was called “The Shadow” because he could disappear. I mean, he really could. You could be standing next to him, he’s gone. So, Tamara comes off the train and says, “I protest.” She sticks her finger out at me. She must be twenty yards away. She sees me. She’s coming at me. She says, “I protest. I protest.” I don’t know, I never even saw Dawson leave. He was just gone.

I said, “What’s the matter?” She says, “The State Department --.” Our favorite --. Everybody’s favorite agency. “The State Department,” she says, “they are causing me so much trouble. I don’t know what to do. I’m going to protest. I’m going to protest the State Department in New York. I’m too upset to get this thing going.” “Okay.”

So, then I can’t remember then what the next sequence was but she says, “Would you like to see the Bolshoi Ballet?” And I said, “Well, of course I would.” She says, “I’ll get you two tickets.” “That’s wonderful. Thank you, Tamara.”

I go find Dawson who was hiding in a magazine rack out in the main lobby and he says, “Are we in trouble? She’s going to protest what we’re doing?” “No, no,” I said, “The State Department’s in trouble. She loves us.” (chuckle)

So she had told me --. I was the guy with the liaison at 1500 16th Street which was the building that the Mamedovs lived in. Her son later became the Foreign Minister and he’s now the Ambassador to Canada, I believe, the last I heard. But he was a little kid. Her husband was Enver Nazimovich Mamedov – editor of USSR Magazine, a Soviet/English language magazine based in Washington; in 1962, he became Deputy Chairman of State Committee for Radio and Television in Moscow and later a top advisor to the Novosti Press Agency. Her son, then a child, is Georgiy Enverovich Mamedov, who became Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia and is currently (2008) Russian Ambassador to Canada.

I had liaison with the apartment house. A friend of mine had a Soviet living in that building. In order to keep lines of Agents from going into places, one guy would have a building, and anybody living in the building, he --. Well, everybody in the office of the building knew me.

P: Uh, huh.

G: So I went up to the counter and I said, “Would you look in Mrs. Mamedova’s letter box? There’s supposed to be an envelope in there for Mr. Mike and I’m Mr. Mike.” Well, they knew who I was. And I get, I get these really weird looks from these two ladies behind the desk.

P: (chuckle)
And so here are two tickets to the Bolshoi Ballet. So I go back to the office and Carolyn Bachman, at that time her name was, was Court Jones’ secretary. And I said, “Carolyn, we’re all working so hard on this.” (I think Khrushchev might have been there at the time. I think it would coincide with Khrus [code name]. I can’t remember what for sure.) But anyway, I said, “Would you like to go see the ballet? We’ve all worked so hard on it.” Oh, she’d love to go.

So Carolyn --. I wasn’t really dating Carolyn or anything. I just used to sit across from her. And I said, “Well, we’ll go down to RKO Keith’s” or whatever it was on F Street in those days --.

P: RKO?

G: I think it was the RKO Keith or something.

P: Oh.

G: It was, it was when F Street was still a theatre street and all that. About 14th and F.

And we go in, and they take us to our seats and we are seated in the box of the Cultural Counselor, Yuri Krilov and his Russian, his party of guests for the ballet.

P: (chuckle)

G: And we’re in the back row. And here they look around like, “How did you get in this box? And who are you?” And we just said, “Good evening,” you know, “lovely seats, wonderful, nice to meet you all.” And we got out of there and Carolyn says, “Where did you get those tickets?” I said, “Carolyn, I can’t tell you.” She says, “Jean Gray, I don’t know about you.”

P: (chuckle)

G: Well, I think a lot of people didn’t know about me. I had a lot of fun with the Soviets too.

And to sort of jump ahead many years, I was in Moscow about four or five years ago on one of those spy reunions. And I went to see --. Well, we had, we had a meeting where there was a Russian woman who was the translator and what not. And I said, “Would you please call the Foreign Minister for me?” And she looked at me like, “Uh?” I said, “Would you please call --.” I forget what his first name was, Georgiy or something. “And ask him where his mother lives.”
And she says, “You want to know where his mother lives?” And I said, “Yeah.” I said, “I know his mother.” “Okay, well, I will.” So she called, but she got his personal secretary and he said that she had died a couple of years before. I was going to go see her. I hadn’t seen her in thirty-four years.

P: Uh, huh.

G:

So my contacts with Mrs. Mamedova went into a --. Never went into file. They went into a folder. And I had to write up these contacts for protection of everybody.

P: Sure.

G: Mr. Hoover didn’t know what --. I don’t think Mr. Hoover ever knew. And so we had a file, a folder that Court kept in his safe with all of the transcripts of what I had, my conversations with Mrs. Mamedova. And it was, it was a really good program. She was, I don’t really think she was an intelligence officer. In fact, I think I asked one of the guys in Moscow at one time whether he knew who they were, and they knew who he was because he was head of Novosti. And they said, “No, not KGB.”

So anyway. So I did that, I was in the Washington Field Office --. And, you don’t want to hear about a lot of the cases because, you know, we had --.

P: Any other unusual or interesting cases?

G: Well, we had the usual double agent stuff. And there was also in those days some fear of a penetration by the KGB while I was there.

P: That was before Angleton’s time.

G: Well, Angleton, I never knew Angleton, but he was at the same time. That was in the 1950s. I was there until 1963. And I worked either on the street or on the Soviet Squad. I became a Relief Supervisor.

There were two Agents called the “Blackbirds” who were working surveillance who had some unauthorized contacts with the Soviets that were, I never understood what it was all about. But there was some fear that there might have been some compromise of information. Worked stuff like that and I couldn’t really comment on it because I really didn’t know anything about --. If I remember their names, I’ve forgotten them.

P: Did you work, did you work Fedora or Top Hat at any time?
G: No. They were all in New York.


G: Washington at that time did not have a really high level recruitment in place.

P: Rivalry between New York which, and Washington Field, which I know still existed for many years.

G: Yeah, it’s still there.

P: Still.

G: But I, you know, we were so busy down in Washington, except that my subject was going back and forth to New York all the time. New York actually did prosecute – I’m not sure. What’s his name? Rockwell Kent was Chairman of the National Council of Soviet/American Friendship [front group] from 1957 to 1971, when he died. He was named to the Academy Arts of the USSR in 1966 and received the Lenin Peace Prize in 1967. And he was a big contact of Tamara. He lived in the Hudson Valley, north of New York.

And they did prosecute somebody that she was very close to for, I don’t know whether it was being a Soviet agent, unregistered agent of the Soviet Government, or whatever. But it was, it was a front group type thing. And they went to prosecution, but I wasn’t part of that.

I suppose the most interesting thing that happened in Washington Field was the Cuban Missile Crisis.

P: In 1960--?

G: ’63.

P: ’63.

G: In October. ’62.

P: That’s right. ’62, yes.

G: ’62. Because President Kennedy was shot in ’63.

G: The year before that. How did --? How did I get into that? The --. Oh, I had the case on Aleksandr Fomin.

P: Okay.
G: Aleksandr Fomin, whose true name was Feklisov. That was, that was his cover name. Feklisov was the handler of the Rosenbergs.

P: Oh.

G: In fact, I believe this piece of paper you got probably --

P: Yeah.

G: -- has his name in it. He wrote a book later. And came back to the United States and appeared in a special on, I believe, the History Channel.

P: *The Man Behind the Rosenbergs*, by Aleksandr --

G: Feklisov.


G: Yeah.

P: Yeah. I’ll pin this to the part of my notes with the article here.

G: Yeah. I was his Case Agent. And we, we were under the assumption and it’s a fairly true one that rezidents are not active case handlers and so I was more or less just collecting anything that was easily available on him because he seldom seemed to be doing anything.

When the Cuban Missile thing was really starting to heat up, in and around September or October, Court called me in one day and he says, “We’ve got a --.” This is, I believe, it’s all, it’s in the book too. So I’m not revealing any big secrets. “We have a request from John Scali, ABC News White House Correspondent, to be interviewed by an Agent concerning Aleksandr Fomin. So, you do it.”

And so I drove, I called John A. Scali and made an appointment and went to his house for breakfast, out in, out in Montgomery County, as I recall it. Out Mass Avenue someplace. And over breakfast he told me that in the course of his activities he had met Aleksandr Fomin socially, you know, at these Russian receptions and what not. And since Scali had really good access to the White House, Fomin was sort of cultivating him. And at this point, he began to think that with the way the world was going that normally this wasn’t, you know, the news media, he said he came to the conclusion he had to tell somebody what was going on so it was known to the government.
G: And so he agreed to keep me informed of what Scali, Scali would keep me informed of what was happening between him and Fomin. And my recollections of this are rather slim at this point and I know that I met with him several times and spoke to him on telephone frequently. And I would report, instantly practically, to the Bureau what he had learned from Fomin.

And the crisis was coming to a real head. This was the “seven days that shook the world” or something.

P: Right.

G: And I remember --. Oh, I did things like going to the ABC News Bureau which was across the street from the Mayflower Hotel in those days, up on Connecticut Avenue. And I remember one time I needed to get him so bad that I went in and there were, and looked for him in his cubbyhole back in the newsroom. And this other guy says, “Who are you?” And it was even another correspondent you saw on television all the time. And I said, “FBI. I’m looking for John Scali and he knows I’m coming. He knows me.” “Well, if you say so.” You know, but those things with Moscow are really, it was really tense in those days. When we didn’t know what was going to happen. And in truth, you know, Kennedy had moved, start moving troops to Florida and all this.

So, Scali called and he says, “I just got off the phone with Fomin” or he’d just seen him. I can’t remember which. “Here are the terms that the Soviets are going to offer to suspend the Cuban Missile confrontation.” And he dictated over the telephone to me, while I’m scribbling away in long hand, the terms. And he says, “Fomin says he’s on the way to the White House and I thought they ought to know before he gets there.”

So I went into Court Jones and I said, “Guess what?” And he picks up phone and I don’t know who he called at the Bureau who could write even slower than I did. And Court is reading my notes over the phone to him and he says, he says, “Just take it down and call it through.” He says, “The guy is on the way to the White House.” And the idea was that Mr. Hoover was going to call the President or the Attorney General, Bobby Kennedy, so that they would know before Fomin got there what the terms were and they could, you know, anticipate it.

This was all so harem-scarem and the way things were going at that time, I don’t think anybody even acknowledged from the Bureau that we’d gotten any, that we’d even done anything, you know. All I can figure was somebody over there was writing this stuff down like he was going to take lunch and then think about whether he was going to tell anybody. I, I just couldn’t believe it.

P: At the Bureau?
At the Bureau, yeah. And I’m sure that I’m exaggerating. Because I remember I was so nervous I was stalking around the room, and Court is bent over, and we’re reading, “That’s not what is says, Court. This is what it says.” And Court would say, “Correction,” you know. It was a very dramatic incident.

Yeah. And the next day, you know, the ships turned around or something and all that good stuff happened.

It was a very interesting thing and then, of course, John Scali was not, not a regular source. I mean, he wasn’t a guy --. He was the White House correspondent, but he wanted, --

Yeah.

-- he wanted to have a channel to the Government --

Uh, huh.

-- and I was it. And it was really interesting.

So a year later, other than case work, there’s some interesting stuff. When President Kennedy was shot in November, 1963 --.

November 22\textsuperscript{nd}.

Yeah. I was, I was one of the people at the, at the office in Washington Field that had access to the Passport Office. And I was talking to somebody over at the State Department yesterday October 24, 2008). You know, we were here for the AFIO meeting. And there was a woman named I believe, Frances Knight.

Yes, Frances Knight was in charge of the Passport Office for --

For how --.

-- God knows how many years. Fifty years, I think.

Yeah, and she and Hoover were close.

Yes.

As a result of that, Kenny Haser.

Oh, yeah. Kenny.
G: And I, and I’m not sure who else, had access to the Passport Office just as if we were employees of the Passport Office.

P: Right. Right.

G: We’d, we’d walk in the Passport Office and show our creds and head to the back and look for the passport application I needed and there were no intermediaries. I just went in there and did it.

And when Kennedy was shot, they called Ken Haser and I in, and they said, “Go to the State Department. Find anything you can find on Lee Harvey Oswald’s passport applications, anything else, anything. Come back and write a summary airtel and --.”

P: Okay, we’re on the other side. (Tapes changed.)

G: Okay. “Write a summary airtel. It has to be at the Bureau at the opening of business the next day.” Seven o’clock in the morning they wanted it over there.

So Kenny and I went to the State Department on the afternoon of November 22, 1963. And we went into a big conference room where a meeting was being presided over by an Undersecretary of State. The Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, was in the Far East and he was flying back. And so this was sort of a senior guy on board and they were preparing a State Department summary of what they knew about Oswald.

And it was really interesting because Kenny Haser and I are sitting at the table. And there must have been five or six, maybe more, other people, all from State Department, and this Undersecretary or whatever he was, presiding.

“Well, gentlemen, we must find the information on the passport application.” And there was silence. Kenny Haser said, “Well, sir, that would be in Room 223, probably down the corridor to the right.”

P: (chuckle)

G: And then there’s this look, the looks exchanged around the room and every time that they would say “we need to find this particular document,” it was Kenny Haser who would tell them where they could find it in the State Department.

So Kenny Haser and I went down and did that. And about midnight we got back to WFO. And they had held stenos over and everything and we dictated an airtel and we walked it across the street, handed it to the Night Supervisor whoever it was at Headquarters, and said, “This has got to be up on the Director’s desk in the morning,” you know.
G: And I suppose it was two or three in the morning when we got out of there. And the last thing I remember Kenny and I said to each other says, “If we missed anything, it will be bye-bye Washington Field. We’ll be out of here.” And he says, “You’re right. But I don’t think we missed anything.” And we apparently did not, because we never were criticized as having overlooked anything, even though all of the stuff that went on afterwards. And that was about as much as I worked on the Kennedy thing.

P: You got all the background from the Passport Office?

G: Yeah. The Passport, and anything other thing that you --.

P: Lee Harvey Oswald, yeah.

G: Yeah. I think State security had some kind of … Had some stuff on him.

We dredged, we dredged up everything and Kenny knew, Kenny practically knew which drawer to look in in that huge building over there. He could walk down the hall, go in and --. All he needed was somebody with a key to let him in. I don’t think he had a key.

P: (chuckle)

G: So that was another one. That was a pretty good one.

And then I had been in In-Service and I went to see the Director. There’s two parts to this when I think about it.

P: Was this the first time that you went to see the Director?

G: Well, you know, other than New Agents class where you shook hands with him.

P: Yeah.

G: And you know, the first thing they asked you went you went in In-Service was, “Does anybody want to see the Director?”

P: Right.

G: I raised my hand. Okay. You know, I didn’t expect to see him. I just thought, you know, it might be interesting.

So it got to be about the second week of the course. The counselor comes in and he says, “You’re on standby.” I said, “What do you mean I’m on standby?” He says, “You’re on standby to see the Director.” And I said, “Well,” gads, whatever --.
G: So about four o’clock in the afternoon on my last day at In-Service, they said, “Go.” Go down. Ms. Gandy sends me in. “You’re Mr. Gray? Sit down.” The phone rings. Yep, yep, yep. Which I gather was his standard procedure. Ms. Gandy would ring his phone and if he didn’t like who he was talking to, he’d say, “I’m sorry. I have something else. You’ve got to leave.” But he said, “No, no, everything’s fine.” Polite. Hangs up the phone. Fascinating fifty minutes. Fifty-five minutes.

P: Fifty-five minutes!

G: Yeah. I mean I was there --. And, of course, you know how things worked in those days.

P: Right.

G: People at the Washington Field Office --. The SAC was Allan Gillies and he was in trouble. And they knew I was in the Director’s office and I really, yes, from what Court has told me later, some people thought I was a loose cannon. And maybe I was. And they knew I was in the Director’s office and it was like, “What’s he’s doing in there?” (chuckle)

P: (chuckle) As if you were unloading on the Director.

G: Yeah. “Man, you ought to know what’s going on in that building down the street.”

Well, the Director told me all sorts of stuff. You know, stuff like, like he’d just been up in New York, walking down in the corridor of the lobby of the Waldorf Astoria, and Frank Costello, head of the Mafia, was sitting there. He said, “I went over to him and I said ‘Hey, Frank, you don’t look too good.’” Frank says, “John, you know, yeah.” Whatever it was, “got the ague or something.” And John says, “Well, you know, take care of yourself.” And I thought, “Why was he telling me this stuff?”

And then he starts off on the Soviets. And I had worked on the Soviet Squad at this point for probably the best part of five years, or more than five years. And he starts telling me about individual cases on my squad. I told Court Jones later, I said, “He knew more about what our squad was doing then some of the people on this squad know about it.” I said, “The only, only mistake that I can detect that he made was that he put, said somebody was a GRU officer when he was a KGB officer, we thought, you know.” I couldn’t believe it. He just had an encyclopedic knowledge of things.

So he talked about that and he talked about, oh, various and sundry items. Oh, it’s been so long ago, I can’t remember it all.

P: Yeah.
G: But I was in there fifty-five minutes. And lot of it was very, you know --. You know, as Jim Miller told me, he says, to get him off the track, he said, “What do you, what do you do for --? What do you do for fun, Mr. Hoover?”

P: (chuckle)

G: And he liked, he liked to read detective novels. Western novels. And they started to talk about western novels.

Anyway, my, my way of getting off of it was to say, I said, “Mr. Hoover, I just came in here today to tell what a great experience it’s been working for the FBI and I wanted you to know I really appreciate the opportunities I’ve been given.” Then I said, “Allan Gillies is really a good SAC. He’s made a big difference in the Washington Field Office and things are really, really working good over there.” “Oh, good, good, good.”

So at the end of fifty-five minutes with all this long, long, mostly listening, conversation, I’m out. I’m like taken captive. (chuckle) “You’ve got to go over to the field office right --. You’ve got to go to the Old Post Office Building right now.”

So off to Gillies’ office. “What did he say?” I told him. And I said, “I put in a good word for you too, Mr. Gillies,” because he had made --. I was a Relief Supervisor and so, you know, SACs know Relief Supervisors like, --

P: Right.

G: -- like twenty-three layers down below them. And Allan Gillies, I learned later, within two weeks there had been a sea change in the way he was being perceived in the Bureau because Mr. Hoover must have written something when I went out of there saying, “Let’s give Gillies a better look” or something, you know.

P: Yeah.

G: Interesting. And then, of course, I told Court all this and they just --. I couldn’t go home until I was completely debriefed.

P: Debriefed?

G: Yeah, about my meeting with the Director.

P: (chuckle)

G: But at this turning point in my career, at this point in this class is Churchill Downing who was the head of the Cryptographic and Language Unit.

P: Churchill --?
G: Churchill Downing. And he was kind of a --. I’d never met him before, but, you know, things were done alphabetically in those days, and “D” and “G” weren’t too far apart, so I think we ended up, oh, we ended up sitting near each other.

And we started to hit it off. So he was trying to fill a language class, so he calls me up on the telephone. And he says, “Do you know you’re being transferred to Headquarters?” And I said, “What? I don’t want to go over there.” He says, “Well,” he says, “they’re going to have an opening in the Correspondence Unit of Crime Records.”

You know, that’s where you answered Mr. Hoover’s mail and it was a great place to get letters of censure I was told by everybody that ever worked there. “And you, your name was up on the list,” he says, “but they discovered that you’re up for a grade raise and they’re going to wait, let you get your grade raise so it doesn’t hold it up, and then you’re going to get transferred to Headquarters.”


So this is before the Kennedy assassination occurred in 1963. Just before it. So when we were doing the Kennedy stuff, I was already on orders to go to language school.

And I went to language school in January of 1964 at Monterey and spent six arduous months of listening to tapes and looking out my window at the sea otters breaking abalones on their chests with rocks. Because I had to get an apartment overlooking Lovers Point. And I would sit in my window listening to my tapes watching the surf roll in. It was really a --. Somebody had to go, I guess, and I’m glad I went.

I went to San Diego from there and worked on the Security Squad. Worked on what they called the BOCOV, the Border Coverage Program.

P: Is that when Mr. Hoover said, “Watch the borders.”

G: Well, that’s part of this big debate that’s going on. I understand DeLoach thinks it was actually, it’s really to look for the --. Before I got to Mexico they had one of the big communist fugitives --

P: Right.

G: -- go over the border. And they think that’s what it was. But, you know, the folklore is that it was his borders of the memo.

P: Right.
G: And so I got down there and I worked with Arnold Orrantia and Johnny “the blue-eyed Mexican” Jones. Johnny Jones was an Irishman whose mother was Mexican and he had blue eyes and he spoke Spanish like a Mexican.

P: San Diego?

G: Yeah. San Diego. And Arnold Orrantia. And his son was a Bureau Agent or is retired probably now.

P: He’s probably retired, yeah.

G: They sort of roped me in on that and my Spanish was marginal coming out of language school. And, you know, there I hung around with the Army guys rather than the Bureau people. And we used to go and do the, we went every Friday night to Salinas, California, and saw a double-feature of a Mexican movie. After having pizza at the officers’ club at Fort Ord, we would slip out the back gate and go to --. Sit with all these Mexican compesinos and watch two shoot ‘em-up Mexican movies. And we were the best --. The guys who rode over to that thing every Friday night had the best scores in the comprehension test because we watched Mexican movies, double features. (chuckle)

But anyway, Orrantia was a great guy. He did pretext phone calls and I used to listen to him and he was Mr. Cisneros or something and he would call down the other side of the border and talk to these people we were interested in and convince them that he was Mr. Cisneros and they --

Anyway, I learned a lot from those guys and I did, I did general case work. Did everything from bank robberies to ship burglaries. Stealing a safe off of a destroyer. Whether it was civilian welders on board --? Jack Keith was the ASAC and I was on Complaint Duty on Saturday and I got this complaint about a safe that had been stolen or broken open or something on a destroyer in the Navy Yard. I said, “Well, it’s an ONI case.” They said, “Well, no, there are civilians on board welding or something.”

I turned it in on Monday morning, and Jack, he says, “Your case.” I said, “Well, I work security.” He says, “You took the complaint. It’s your case. You have any problems with that?” I said, “No, sir.” Jack was a really nice guy, but he was showing me who was in charge right then and there.

So I worked that and my, my impression was the Navy people won’t like it, but I wondered how the Navy ever got out of port with some of the people that I interviewed on that ship being in charge of moving it.
G: Oh, we had interesting work. I enjoyed San Diego very much. But I did the Security Squad stuff. We had a real whacko group out there that, the worst of which was the Socialist Workers Party. The secretary lady used to sit in the restroom with the doors open so that she could continue taking notes during the meeting when she had to, when she had to really go to the restroom.

P: (chuckle)

G: And then with great, with great fanfare one evening they read a letter from Herbert Marcuse, who was the professor at Berkeley, telling them how much he admired their work. Makes me think of the current political situation. And I said, “How could a guy who’s a professor at Berkeley write a letter to a bunch of nuts like these people are and tell them that he’s very proud of them with the work they’re doing?”

Well, I worked that sort of stuff. San Diego being a small office, worked several bank robberies including one where we went to Tijuana looking for the subject which was an eye opener because I didn’t hang out --. I used to go to jai alai games in Tijuana, but I didn’t hang around in Tijuana. It was, you know, a dump. And, gads, we went down into some terrible bars there, looking for this guy who we thought robbed the bank.

And then there was a Senor Muñoz. Luis Muñoz was the chief liaison with the Mexican police. He was an FBI Agent. And all you had to do was tell the Tijuana police that you worked with Mr. Muñoz and the door was opened.

P: Uh, huh.

G: In fact, they had to rescue a guy who ran into Mr. Muñoz’ car when he was pulling out of a parking space on a main drag in Tijuana and the guy bumped into him and the police were practically going to kill this guy for hitting Mr. Muñoz’ car. And they had, they had to rescue this Mexican from the police, you know.

So Muñoz was the key to everything. And I had the Ensenada run. I had a contact with the police down there and I was responsible for going to Ensenada every month and checking up on whatever cases I had and getting an update.

Then after Lyndon Johnson sent the Airborne, the 82nd Airborne, into the Dominican Republic when they had that coup or whatever it was --. I forget what --. After Trujillo was killed, they had officers of the --. The colonel who they were afraid was going to be a leftist and --

P: Right.

G: -- they opened a Legat in Santo Domingo and they pulled all sorts of people out of Mexico City and sent them to Dominican Republic.
P: Uh, huh.

G: You remember how the deals were with the, with the Inspectors? They’d pick out an Agent at random and spend the day with him to see: (a) was he following the plan he had laid on the number 3 card, --

P: Right.

G: -- and (b) what did he do? I’d been out of the office with this guy, can’t remember who it was, and the radio comes on and says, “Call the office immediately.” I said, “Okay.” So I go to the phone and they said, “You’ve been transferred to Mexico City and, you know, Legat, blah, blah, blah.” And I came back to the car and said to the inspector, I said, “I just got transferred to Mexico City.” He said, “How’d you do that?” I said, “I don’t know. It just happened.” He said, “What are you going to do?” I said, “I don’t know. I don’t think I’m going to do what I planned to do today.” He says, “Oh, I agree with you.” And that was the end of my, my --.

P: You were still in San Diego?

G: I was still in San Diego.

P: So you never went to Santo Domingo?

G: No. See, I replaced somebody that went to Santo, I don’t know who.

P: Oh, okay.

G: I, I just filled a slot that was vacated by the Santo Domingo opening.

P: Yeah.

G: So I got to Mexico City. I drove down from --

P: When was that? ’65, ’64, ’65?

G: I left, I think it was October, 1965. I drove to Mexico City from San Diego. To begin with, I lived in my car. I mean, everything I owned I could put in my automobile. I’d never owned a house or anything. I was renting an apartment in San Diego and I got to Mexico City and I remember meeting legendary people like Ann Arnold --

P: Who?

G: -- and Maurice Power. And then the first weekend, they said, “How about going down to Cuernavaca and having lunch at Las Mañanitas. And here it is, how many years later from ’64, --
-- and I’m still eating at Las Mañanitas. And I settled in there. Hank? Hank Henry who? We had just --. The Legat who was in Santo Domingo “temporarily,” Henry Johnson --. The Legat’s name will come to me. He was a well-known, many years, Legat. He was sent to Santo Domingo to run that office. Henry Johnson was there as the Assistant Legat in Charge. And we had about ten or twelve people in the office.

Henry Johnson got into a terrible dispute with the Ambassador. Henry Johnson was a very blunt undiplomatic individual on a diplomatic assignment and we had an Ambassador who was quite well regarded in the State Department. And Fulton “Tony” Freeman. And Mr. Freeman told Mr. Johnson that he would start sending copies of all office correspondence through his office so that he could see what we were doing. And Johnson, instead of saying, “I’ll have to check,” says, “No way, Jose,” and just apparently told the Ambassador to buzz off.

So a great conflict arose. And Freeman was on his way to Washington. And he came and he said, didn’t tell me but apparently told Johnson. He said, “Tell J. Edgar Hoover that I will receive him at the State Department while I’m in Washington at his convenience. Call me for an appointment.” Well --.

Johnson, Johnson said to his aide, “What do I do now?” Well, he sent it in and, of course, Mr. Hoover did not go to the State Department and Mr. Freeman apparently must have talked to somebody back in Washington and our private communications continued. He wanted a copy of all teletypes and all this and --.

That was my introduction to the office. It was pretty tight because the Ambassador was really down on us.

[According to “Our Man in Mexico” – Winston Scott and the Hidden History of the CIA by Jefferson Morely with forward by Michael Scott, University Press of Kansas (2008), page 258, when Ambassador Freeman arrived in Mexico in 1963, he became involved in a dispute with Win Scott, long serving CIA Station Chief, over Scott’s close relationship with the President of Mexico and Freeman’s desire to have closer oversight of the CIA Station.]

And, so I worked security stuff again. But, being a bachelor, I’d hardly been there when they decided to send me to Mazatlan to replace Bob [Robert J.] Oglesby who was being transferred to Guadalajara to replace somebody who was retiring.

And if we could stop there for a moment.

We’re back again.
G: Yeah. And it was Clark Anderson for the record who was the Legat who was sent to Santo Domingo and Henry Johnson had taken his place temporarily as Acting Legat.

So I got sent to Mazatlan to replace Oglesby and I had seven Mexican states and the Baja Peninsula from the twenty-five kilometer zone south, as my territory. I had everything west of Jalisco basically. Had Durango and all this stuff.

And that’s where I learned to speak Spanish. I, I went over there and there was a guy named Abraham Vigil, who was the Consul. And I had my own office and it was a very chummy little place. We had four Mexican employees and, I believe, most of the time, two Americans, myself and the Consul.

And Abe was a nice guy to work with and he didn’t interfere, but he asked me to help him occasionally looking for a lost American or something. And I did all that stuff.

But I had a lot of work. And I drove around. We had sources all the way up and down and we had to make the police contacts and I drove as far north as Hermosillo, Sonora. We had a very good contact there who was a high official of the police and he used to help us with anything that we needed to get done in Sonora below, below the 25-kilometer limit. And I don’t think I ever went to northern Baja California.

But we got a call that three Americans were in jail in La Paz, Baja, because they had stolen an airplane and had been arrested when they landed at La Paz. The first thing, they didn’t know what to expect obviously. The first thing that happened was that the Mexicans said, “Where are the license and papers for this, ownership papers, for this airplane so that we can enter it as a tourist vehicle?” And they had nothing, so they went to jail.

So we got, I got a phone call and I went over there and, by the time I had gotten there, these guys, I don’t remember the exact sequence of events, but they had escaped from jail after killing the guard. And I went to see the head of the territorial police. I don’t think it was a state at that time. And he was the guy that looked like Moose Cartwright. Who was that big --? Who was the guy in --

P: Oh --.

G: -- in *Bonanza*?

P: Hoss.

G: Hoss Cartwright. He looked like Hoss. He wore a buckskin jacket with fringe. And he wore pistols and he had a big ten-gallon hat. Man, he was a big man and he was out for these guys. And, of course, with the liaison rules in those days, you didn’t go along. I said, “Well, I’ll be here in La Paz and I’ll try to coordinate any, any help you need.” At this point, I didn’t even have a credit card.
G: I’m over in La Paz with no money. Had to send a wire on Telegrafos de Mexico to get the office to forward me funds through the LaPaz post office. And I’m living at this motel and I’ve acquired a cab driver as my constant companion to go wherever I needed to go. And I think it must have been a really slow time because this guy was always there.

G: So one day (chuckle), we were up, I think I had to go see somebody. Oh, I made some contacts. I met some people and I talked to people. And while I’m waiting for this chase that’s going on out in the desert to come to a conclusion, this cab driver says to me, he says, “Well, why don’t you go see the Governor?” The cab driver. I said, “Well, that sounds like a good idea.” He said, “Well, we’ll go over there.”

So he takes me over in his cab and I go into the Governor’s office and speak to his private secretary. And I said, “Hello, my name is Gray and I’m a member of the Consulate in La Paz, or, in, in, excuse me, --

P: Mazatlan?

G: -- in Mazatlan, and I’m here working on the case of the missing Americans who are the escaped Americans who are in the desert being pursued by your police, and I thought it was my duty to inform the Governor of my presence. And if he has any questions, I would be glad to talk to him.” “Come back tomorrow at eleven o’clock in the morning.”

So I go off and do whatever I did. I can’t remember what I did. I used to go around town, talk to people and, you know, get acquainted and find out what was happening in La Paz.

Next morning I arrived at the Governor’s office. And it was very nice. Walk in. Introduce myself. Give him my calling card and say, “I’m making a courtesy call, sir. I don’t want you to think that I’m in your area doing anything without your knowledge. And I’m here because of this case of Americans, three Americans.” And it must have lasted fifteen minutes.

And, in those days, my Spanish was primitive. And I struggled to talk to this Governor and he sat there with this big smile. “Gracias Señor, Professor,” you know, “Thank you for coming in and it’s been very nice to meet you and I’m glad you’re here helping us capture these bad people and --.”

I go out and I get in the cab. (chuckle) The cab driver says, “How’d it go?” I says, “Pretty good.” I said, “But my Spanish, as you know, is not really that great.” He says, “Well, you know, he went to the University of California. He speaks --. He’s perfectly bilingual.” He never --. Of course they never do.

P: No, they --.

G: He would never let on that he spoke English.
P: Yeah.

G: And he was just enjoying me squirming --

P: Squirming, yeah.

G: -- trying, trying to --. But I did the right thing. And they caught these guys out in the desert. And the Chief of Police, I remember calling him and asking him were they all right. You know, he had just had a guard killed in the jail --

P: Yeah.

G: -- and all this. “You want to know if they’re all right?” And he says, “Well, they’re a little tired.” He said, “Agotado.” And I didn’t know what the word meant. And I said, “What was that, sir?” And he said, “Agotado.” And I said, “Oh, okay.” You know, I --. But anyway, they --. I don’t know, they may still be in jail over there in Baja for all I know or if they haven’t paid somebody off to get out.

But that was my, one of my experiences. It was, it was “wonderland.” I figure that most of the police officers that I knew were either in jail or dead within five years.

One of the cases I had was to go to Culiacan which was the capital of Sinaloa and Sinaloa is the headquarters of the poppy industry and the opium capital of Mexico. And we didn’t work drug cases in those days.

I’m in the --. It’s a crummy town to start with.

P: Oh, it’s bad. Yeah.

G: You can hear gun fire at night, you know, down in the --. And the hotel was covered with June bugs or something. I mean, you could hardly get in because of all the bugs creeping around.

And there’s a rap at my door at about ten o’clock at night. And I opened the door and here’s this big Mexican guy and he says, “Are you so and so?” And I said, “Yes, I am.” He says, “We should know each other.” And he’s a DFS, Direccion Federal de Seguridad. (The Federal Security Directorate and resident agent for Culiacan.)

And he says, as was not unusual, he says, “You know, we could work together and I could provide you with information for which I would be compensated.” And he says, “And I have a sample of what’s available.” And I said, “Well, I really don’t know.” And then he saw my ten-year key, ring. And he says, “And I want one of those rings.” And I said, “Well, I don’t know if I can do that for you.” He says, “Well, you take this and see if it’s worth what I think it’s worth.”
He gave me about twenty pages in Spanish, typed. It was the whole break down of the drug cartel in Sinaloa. And it included the governor, and the attorney general, and the chief of police, and all the people that you’d expect to be in a drug cartel in Sinaloa.

I took that back to the Embassy, or I sent it to the Embassy. And I kept a copy of it. And sent it to the Embassy and BNDD (Bureau, Narcotics & Dangerous Drugs), at that time said, “Gee, that’s probably very interesting. We don’t have time to translate it.” And I said, “Well, I’ll translate it. I’m out in Mazatlan. I can sit at evenings and do it page by page. And I’ll learn something about my state.”

Well, what I learned about was, worked out well because I was sent to Culiacan again. They had two guys, two Border Patrol Agents, who had been murdered at the border in Arizona. They had been handcuffed to a stove in a line shack and then shot to death. How, how they did it, I don’t know, but the Phoenix Office knew who did it. So they had the identity and a car description of two guys who were headed south. And, of course, the closest road from the border went through Mazatlan. And they thought they might stop in the Tres Rios Motel in Culiacan which was a nice spot and a lot of well known ---. And a couple of other places.

And they said, go up to Culiacan and find out if these guys are in any of the motels. So I hopped in my trusty Chrysler, we had to have Chryslers, and zoomed up to Culiacan. I drove to the state police headquarters where I really was, had been maybe once or twice.

The Chief was an Army captain who was on detail as the state police commander. And I went in and I told him what the case was about. He picks up the phone and he says to somebody, “Jorge, (somebody or other),” He doesn’t speak any English. But he says, you know, “Come in here. I have a friend who has a little problem.” Two guys killed two Border Patrol Agents.

So the man he called comes in and he turns me over to this group commander, who speaks really good English fortunately. And I’m sure that’s why he’s picked anyway. Because my Spanish at this point was beginning to get better, but it wasn’t really that great.

And so we go out of the office into this place - the place with a hollow courtyard and an entry driveway that you go in. And once you’re in through the gate, you’re in the interior of the police department, Sinaloa State Judicial Police Department. And the detectives were so dangerous that they were kept unarmed in a kind of a waiting room, in case anything came up.

So they roar in with a pickup truck, an empty pickup truck, and they get about five guys out of the bullpen, and issue them rifles out of a rack and behind a gate, get them all in the truck and away they go. And Jorge says to me, “We’ll be back.” And I’m sitting there. I find myself in this courtyard under a tree, you know. (chuckle)
And I suppose an hour later they come back. Nothing. They’ve checked all --. They’ve checked every place. Whether they did or not, I don’t know what they did. Anyway, they said, “There’s nothing. We’ve checked all these places. No record. They didn’t come through here. Nobody’s seen them.”

And Jorge says, “You know Bob Oglesby?” And I said, “Yeah, I replaced him.” “Oh,” he says, “He’s a good friend.” He says, “Tell him when you get back to Mazatlan or wherever --.” I said, “I’m going to call him. He’s in Guadalajara. He likes to know what’s going on over here.” Says, “Tell him that I said hello.” I said, “I certainly will convey your --.” When I got back to Mazatlan, I called Oglesby in Guadalajara and tell him what’s happening with the case and then I said, “Oh by the way, I met this guy, Jorge, and he sends his regard.” Bob says, “Oh, yeah.” He says, “We got a case on him, you know. He’s wanted for murder in Los Angeles. He and his wife are homicides.”

“Homicide subjects.” But since they’re Mexican citizens, we can’t do anything about it and he speaks good English and he works for the state police so he’s a contact.” I said, “Well, I got another contact.”

And then, you know, to get a flavor of that place --. I had a friend who --. Well, he wasn’t a friend. He was the chief, the chief, chief of the State Judicial Police in Mazatlan. And he had, he told me that the way you got into the police department in Sinaloa was that before you were hired, you were given a wanted poster. And you could bring whoever was on that poster back, dead or alive. And if you brought them in, in any condition whatsoever, then you were hired as obviously a promising young officer. He says, “A lot of people get killed going out trying to get a job,” but he says, “If you get the job, then it’s a good job.” You know, he ended up in jail or killed. I can’t remember which. This, this guy did.

It was a different world. It’s still a different, it’s even worse now than it was then, you know.

But then I got transferred back to Mexico City when they decided to close Mazatlan and move the RA up to Hermosillo, Sonora. I was put on the Security Squad and I did some of those revolutionary organizations, parties that we had cases on. We were trying to identify people that they might be sending to the United States so that we could notify INS to keep them out. Also, have an idea what these parties were doing in general.

And it was there because, being the bachelor and liking to travel, I became the ‘Road Trip Agent’ and I did all of Yucatan on a regular basis. I drove down to the coast of Veracruz once a month. And when 1968 came along, lot of things happened.
G: First was, got a call from the Bureau. “Martin Luther King’s been shot. And there’s a black attorney in Los Angeles who said he just flew back from Puerto Vallarta and, while he was in the car going to the airport, in a taxi going the other way, he thought he saw James Earl Ray.” And that was the kind of lead that, you know, Washington was burning and Lyndon Johnson was telling Hoover, “Find that man.”

P: Yeah.

G: And Mr. Hoover was personally supervising the case I’m told. And so they said, “Get on a plane and go to Puerto Vallarta and find out what this is all about.”

In the meantime, the Chicago Office had come up with an address for a film that was evidence. In those days you sent your Kodak film to a processing plant in Chicago. They’d come up with something from Eric Stavro Gault at the Hotel Del Rio in Puerto Vallarta --

P: Oh, yeah.

G: -- which was the, which was his alias. Ray was using it down there. He had escaped from the Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary once before and had gone to Mexico and had stayed for several weeks in Puerto Vallarta. He really liked it there. Nice place.

And so he was known as Eric. And so I found out that this was the real hotel which is still there. A guy named Roberto Wong Calunga was the desk clerk at the Hotel Del Rio. He knew Eric really well. And I showed him a picture of James Earl Ray. He says, “Yeah, that’s Eric.” And I said, “He, he lived here?” “Yeah, he lived in this hotel for whatever, six weeks or something like that and hung around town.”

And then we got further confirmation that it was him because MEX 24, of happy memory, found that, traced a tire, a Mexican tire that was found on the white Mustang back in the States after the assassination. Traced it back to a place which is now a big shopping center, but, in 1968, it was the tire shop across the street from the Hotel Rosita, where I was residing. On the ground floor where I could get in and out quick.

And so we knew that we had him. It was the right guy.

P: Uh, huh.

G: And I developed over that period of time at least four, maybe five, people who were closely associated with Eric. One of them was the bartender at the Oceana Hotel which is featured in the Night of the Iguana, and he knew Eric very well. Used to hang around together after the bar closed. And he knew where Eric went.

So I developed the bartender. I developed Roberto at the hotel. I developed, to my delight, the Dairy Queen owner.

P: (chuckle)
G: Our, our, our murderer used to go to the Dairy Queen every day for a hot fudge sundae and I, of course, had to be there in case he came in. I had a hot fudge sundae every day at noon in case he came in. (chuckle)

And he went to a house of prostitution called the *Casa Suzanna*. It was up on the hill behind downtown. And I went up there, introduced myself, and told them who, who I was. Who I was looking for. “Oh, yeah, I remember him.” And I told them there was $100,000 reward. I told everybody, there’s a $100,000 reward out there and that really stimulated them.

So the bartender showed me the place. I went back later to see the operator and said, “How am I going to find out if he’s here?” “Well,” he says, “Here’s a key.” You go in the stockroom door and they have one of these bars that they could stock it from behind by pushing bottles into these, you know boxes. “You can come in from the street, go into the stockroom bar, stockroom, and look through the bottle holes and you can see everything that’s going on in the main lower level there.” And besides, he said, he had a girl friend here. *La Chilindrina*, which means “a piece of cake.”

And I said, “I’d like to visit with *La Chilindrina* if that could be arranged.” And they said, “Yes. Why don’t you come early some afternoon before she goes to work and she’ll be here.”

So we made an arrangement that I would be there to meet *La Chilindrina*. And so I put on my best long-sleeved, what do you call it?

P: Guayabera?

G: -- with my gold cuff links and all, looking very official. And I went up there to interview *La Chilindrina* who was seated in a beautiful white dress on top of her bed, with the pillows, and lace.

And I said, “Hi, I’m here to talk to you about Eric.” “Oh, Eric, yes, what a won --. You know, I liked, I really loved Eric.”

You know, I had the interview-. Her name was Maria Montez Meza or something like that. And she was very pleased to talk about Eric. I said, “If Eric calls you --. Or if Eric comes back trying to get in touch with you, you tell the guys downstairs and they know what to do.” What they were going to was, they had a police radio underneath the bar.

P: Uh, huh.

G: And they would radio the patrol wagon and have him thrown in the patrol wagon. The guy at the Dairy Queen dug what we called the Tiger Pit.

P: (chuckle)
G: He dug a hole some place in the woods on the mountain. And he had it fixed so that he could drop somebody in there and then close it from the top and cover it. And he was going to get Eric up there and drop him in the pit and cover it. And when I gave him the $100,000, he was going to give Eric to me.

G: I can’t, I can’t remember everybody who was involved in this harem-scarem thing. But there were, there were several people that had plans including one guy then that just concluded that I was really not after Eric, I was after his brother who was a murderer.

And I got word back through some of the other sources that this guy that ran the Kodak shop knew that I really wasn’t looking for Eric, I was looking for his brother, and he was going to take care of the things, you know. I said, “I couldn’t care less about what his brother does. That’s a Mexican thing.”

I was there for one month and I made the rounds every day. Yeah, I discovered that Mismaloya, which is now the scene of a huge hotel complex, was at that time a deserted beach - that Eric used to go to swim at Mismaloya.

At that time the road didn’t go south even. I rented a Jeep, four-wheel drive, and went down through the construction of the road, Mexican Highway 200. And got as far as Mismaloya. Went swimming on the beach all by myself on this beach except for a kid that was selling soda pop under a tree. And Eric wasn’t there, but I checked the water thoroughly and I couldn’t find Eric.

P: (chuckle)

G: So at the end of the month Court Jones --. Court Jones. This time it was Nate Farris was the --

P: Oh, yeah.

G: Nate Farris was the Legat. One of the great things was, John Foarde was the Assistant.

P: Yeah.

G: At that time, 1968, Puerto Vallarta had three long-distance telephones that could call out of the city. In order to make a long-distance phone call, you had to go down on Morelus or whatever the name of the street was to the telephone office and make an appointment to have a call to Mexico City or wherever you wanted to call. And you gave them the number, and the Rosita Hotel which was really not a big hotel, had one of the three extension telephones from the office, from the --. Otherwise, you had to sit in the phone company and wait until they gave you a booth.
And I would go back and they had a pool-side telephone. Each day at five o’clock in the afternoon, I would go to the telephone office and I would say, “I’m ready to make a phone call to Mexico City, I’m at the Rosita.” And they said, “Well, just go wait. It probably will be forty-five minutes or an hour before we have a line available.”

And I would sit at the pool side waiting dutifully to make my report to John Forarde, and I would give it --. Because Mexico City had to send a summary teletype every day of what they were doing.

And at the end of the month Nate said, “It appears he’s not there.” I said, “I agree. I got about five people that if they see him are going to lock him up, put him away some place --

P: (chuckle)

G: -- and let us know how we can get him back for the $100,000.” When was it?

Oh, then, they said, “Come on back in, but before you go,” he says, “We sent you lista de curreus, you know, the open list at the post office. We sent you a bunch of our wanted flyers and this and that. Go to the State Judicial Police Office in Puerto Vallarta and give them this stuff and tell them you know, if the guy comes back, to call Luis Echeverria’s office.” Luis Echeverria at that point was the Attorney, was the, I guess, the Attorney General --.

P: Yeah, Minister of the Interior?

G: Minister of the Interior. He says, “He knows what we’re doing. And they’re to call Luis Echeverria if they get this guy and he will get in touch with us and it will be handled that way, because if you tell him to call Echeverria, they’ll know it’s important, you know.”

P: (chuckle)

G: So I go down to the state police and I introduce myself as being an FBI Agent who had been working in Puerto Vallarta for the last month and was interviewing numerous people in an attempt to locate the guy who had killed Martin Luther King, Jr. And at first they were sort of amused. And then when they realized that I for one month had been interviewing citizens and walking the streets of that city --

P: Oh, boy.

G: -- and no one had ever, of course wisely, ever told them anything. They were completely shocked.

P: Let’s stop right there, so I can change tape, okay?
G: Sure. Yeah.

P: Okay. We’re on to Tape 2, regarding Echeverria (elected President of Mexico n 1970).

G: Yeah, so when I told the cops to call Luis Echeverria that got their attention because Echeverria was a Jalisco/Nayarit type guy anyway and being Minister of Justice, whatever it was, Interior, yeah, Gobernacion Interior, they knew it was important and they would do it. And I left and went back to Mexico City.

When I was a Section Chief at FBI HQ in the late 1970s, I was called to testify before the staff of the U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee on Assassinations about my part in the search for James Earl Ray. I was interviewed extensively and it was apparent to me that the questioners were reading from reports based on information I had telephoned from Puerto Vallarta to John J. Foarde, Jr., in the office. In the portions of the reports that were disseminated, my identity was covered by the “T-Symbol” as I was working undercover in rural Mexico. To me, that meant the administrative pages with the identities of sources within the reports had also been given to the committee.

The staff was very interested in information I had developed about Ray being involved in a fight with black sailors who had come to the Casa Susanna. They all had been drinking and an argument and a scuffle ensued. The staff wanted to know if I thought this was proof Ray was a racist. That was an opinión question and I suggested they draw their own conclusions. The sources at the Casa Susanna spoke little or no English so I was unaware of the pretext for the fight. The Committee’s Chief Counsel, G. Robert Blakey, was there listening intently throughout, although he was not my questioner. I was never recalled by the committee staff.

And I got back to Mexico City one night and when I drove into the driveway of where I lived, Jack Page’s wife, Lib, was out on the balcony up above. Saw me come in the driveway. And she said, “Jean Gray, where were you?” And I said, “I’ve been in Puerto Vallarta.” “Because you weren’t here, Jack had to go to Cozumel.” Well, that’s my territory. I said, “Oh, why?” She said, “I think James Earl Ray has been sighted over there.” And I said, “Okay.” She said, “He’ll be back tomorrow. He’s got to play the flute in the orchestra.” (chuckle)

I went to the office the next day and Jack comes in. I said, “I understand you were in Cozumel.” He says, “Yeah, because you weren’t here I had to go to Cozumel.” I said, “Did you get to the beach? Did you enjoy the place? It’s really a beautiful island.” This was in the days before it was this big tourist trap. He says, “No.” He says, “I used those hammocks on the hooks at the airport to stay overnight.”
G: He says, “I flew in the morning, did my leads, missed the last flight out. Took a hammock, hooked it up at the airport and slept underneath the overhang at the airport until the first flight to Mexico City in the morning so that I could get back to play the flute.” I said, “Jack, you go to Cozumel and you never even went to the beach?” He says, “No, I went to see the guy that you were supposed to see and it wasn’t, obviously, wasn’t James Earl Ray, and so I came back.”

Well, hardly a day later they say, “You’re on your way to Isla de Mujeres. James Earl Ray is a cook in a hotel over there.” And I said, “Yeah.” And they said, “By the way, stop in Merida and --.” Our good friend, Ernesto Abreu Gomez, who was the Chief of State Police, or actually at that time he was head of the Identification. Very fine professional Mexican police officer. “He will give you --. He will help you get, you know, what you need.”

There was a small airline that flew out there which was terrible. And what did we do? I forget how we got out there, but anyway, he gave me this Gilberto somebody or other who was a Mexican detective, police officer, judicial police, and we went over there. And to another state. That’s in Quintana Roo. And we crept in the darkness through the bushes around this hotel, Zazil Ha. Usual spelling.

P: What’s that?

G: Zazil Ha. And we found the guy who was supposed to be James Earl Ray and we could see him through the basement window we could see him cooking. And I said, “That isn’t him. Just look at the picture.” Didn’t even look anything like him. So, he says, “Okay, well,” he says, “we’ll go back in the morning then.”

So we go down and he says, “Let’s go see the police chief.” And I said, “Yeah, fine, let’s go see the police chief of Isla de Mujeres.” And the guy says, “Oh,” says, “Yeah,” he says, “Since you’re here, we have this murderer that we’re trying to get back to Merida. Do you want to take him?”

And at this point we couldn’t get on the airplane, so we get on this little boat with this murderer who had one eye, and he was really a mean looking so-and-so. We had him all handcuffed. Get on this boat. Go across. We can see the sharks following the boat. We should have thrown the creep off the boat.

At that time Cancun was a coconut log --

P: Right.

G: -- that you could sit on while you waited for the bus from Merida. It was a little turnaround, or something like that. I can’t remember. But that was Cancun. All you did was --. There was no paved road. We sat on this coconut log, the three of us. (chuckle)
G: The murderer, the cop, and I. And we loaded this guy up on the bus and it was a four hour, four hour, at least a four hour bus ride. We had to stop for deer tacos in the middle of, in the middle of the Yucatan jungle. And got into Merida, and I went back to Mexico City and lived happily ever after and, I guess, the guy went off to jail.

P: (chuckle)

G: Interesting little road trips. That was 1968 when the near-revolution in Mexico occurred. The year of the Olympics.

P: Uh, huh.

G: And there were lots of demonstrations and I can remember going out into the demonstrations outside the Embassy. One day we had thousands of people going down Paseo de la Reforma, shouting they were --. And there was a guy named --. Oh, what was the Ambassador’s name? And the Mexican government had sent a tank and a platoon of infantry to the Embassy and they were living in the driveway. And cooking fires and everything else. A typical Mexican, Mexican Army operation.

And this tank was sitting in between the Maria Isabel Hotel and the Embassy. And Ambassador Robert H. McBride called up, probably Echeverria, and he said, “Get this tank out of here.”

P: (chuckle)

G: “We do not need a tank at our Embassy. Our Embassy is not part of the problem.” It was obviously a government attempt to be able to show films of protecting the American Embassy from these demonstrators.

Well, the medical students came from the University of Mexico, UNAM, and formed a barrier around --. And there were also the fences that are up now, you know, to keep one from throwing rocks. They were outside the fence. Well, I being stupid, you know, went out and joined them. And these people going by. And the mounted police, well, if you never saw them, they’re really bad.

P: Yeah.

G: They carried rifles and they would swing a rifle and knock some guy down and drag him out of the street. And all these medical students are there and I said, “What are you doing here?” And they said, “American Embassy is not where we’re going. We’re going to the National Palace and we are here to keep the students in Reforma headed toward the Zocalo.” I said, “Well, it’s really nice of you guys to be out here and it’s a pleasure to talk to you.” And I went back in I told, told, you know, Nate, or whoever it was, what was going on.
G: In my opinion that was a near revolution in Mexico. And a series of events which would take a whole book to --.

But the night of October 2, 1968, I was sitting in my office. Being a bachelor I had nothing better to do than work. Well, some of the time. And I was sitting in my office in the evening. Of course, the office was really on full alert. The balloon was ready to go up. The Olympics were over. That had put a temporary stop to all the demonstrations, but the National Strike Council was being sought by the government. They were the people that had closed down the UNAM and I don’t know what all.

I had my window open. It was a beautiful fall evening.

P: UNAM, I want to indicate is the Autonomous National University of Mexico.

G: I’m sitting there and I had a police radio. And I had found the Mexico City police frequencies, which for no reason or other just to have it on, I used to listen to. And I was sitting at my desk. Had the Mexico City police frequencies on and I started to hear machine gun fire. I mean you could, it was really gun fire. Just tremendous amounts of gun fire. And then the radio start saying, “All cars go to Tlatelolco and all ambulances --.

P: Usual spelling?

G: Tlatelolco, “The Plaza of Three Cultures,” at Tlatelolco. The new Foreign Ministry was there. The old was the Aztec pyramid and ceremonial center.

P: Right.

G: The second culture of the San Jeronimo Church was there. And the modern apartment houses were there surrounding behind the church and that’s where --. And the courtyard of this whole big block of apartment houses which fell down in the 1985 earthquake was filled with people. There were thousands of people there.

The National Strike Council was up in the buildings apparently. And there was a big operation to capture them. We were not in any way part of this, but we, we knew something big was going on.

P: Monitoring.

G: Monitoring. We were monitoring the situation to keep the Bureau advised. And so there was something every day. I mean, we just, we were out on the street talking to cops and informants and what not just like every day. Pouring out this information.
And I remember Tony Freeman was the Ambassador. He thought we were exaggerating the threat. And we said, “You know, they’re planning to have twenty thousand people show up on July 26th to celebrate the Cuban Revolution and it’s going to be an anti-American demonstration.” “Uh, they won’t get five hundred people.” And then we get thousands, you know.

Anyway, as a result of that, I got tagged to write the Legat’s summary of what happened on that night. And we did it with our sources without talking to any other entities within the Embassy. And, if I do say so, I think that the teletype I wrote has now been declassified and is now considered to be probably one of the more accurate accounts of what really happened.

The feeling is that the government, that the Agency had so highly penetrated the Mexican government that they had become dependent on the Mexican government to tell them what had happened.

And the Mexican government told them what they wanted them to know. We in the meantime are talking to our cops and we had lots of people that talked to us. And lots of them were there that night. And we came back with this horrendous story.

General Hernandez Toledo who was the commander of the airborne that had led the last cavalry charge down the streets of Morelia, about two months earlier, and had attacked the University of Sonora and all this with his, with his troops. He was in charge of ringing the buildings with troops from the Airborne Division. And the cops were in there looking for the National Strike Council which was supposed to be up in the buildings. So there was a mass meeting going on.

So it began to get out of hand and Hernandez Toledo sent a major and another, somebody else, in with a bullhorn. An electronic, you know, an electronic speaking device. To sort of read the riot act we’d say. Told people to disperse and all this and that and the other thing.

And he’d hardly gotten in to the midst of the square when he was shot. And then Hernandez Toledo, the general, who was very popular with his troops --. He was sort of like General Patton or something - goes into the square and he’s wounded. And at this point, the cops tell us that these guys in the airborne had been sitting out there for hours in their vehicles and they’re smoking pot and they’re, they’re really unhappy. And the word gets out that someone has just wounded their commander and they went berserk. And they went in there with their armored personnel carriers and they started raking the buildings with machine gun fire.
That’s what I was hearing up at the Embassy. They were just going floor by floor. And we were told that the bodies were being stacked in the middle of the square and that there were at least two hundred fifty to three hundred dead bodies stacked in piles and that people were being taken away, etc., etc.

The Embassy is told by the Mexican government that perhaps thirty-five people at the most had been killed and the situation is under control. Well, we have two hundred fifty to three hundred people killed and stacked. Plus, you know, the Army took a lot of them out to Camp 1 and ran them through the incinerators after they’d talked to them, and cremated them. They just disappeared. Were cremated.

And we reported this and I remember going out myself and everybody I guess that had sources, went out and really took a great effort to really interview these guys that we talked to and find out what they knew. And we had, we had a lot of different people who didn’t know about each other who were in different places that night. And we had probably the, I think, the definitive report on that.

And that was probably one of the most traumatic or interesting things I ever did in Mexico.

So then, let’s see, we’ll get out of Mexico. What happened?

As an aside, I spoke to a guy who was involved in this shooting --

Yeah.

-- and he claimed that it was their perception that the people inside the building were just armed to the teeth.

Yeah.

And they were, the soldiers were fearful for their lives and that’s why they started shooting.

We were told that the Trotskyites had a sniper team.

Right.

Trotskyites sniper team up in the building

Yes, yes.

It also turns out that there was an Army sniper team up in the building.

There was, there was an Army team --.
And then one was arrested. There was a lieutenant and a sergeant or something arrested as he came out of one of the buildings and was taken, he was taken captive by the airborne and he told them he was an Army lieutenant and he was undercover working for the Secretary of Defense.

Yeah.

There’s a lot of stuff that, lot of stuff that nobody has ever yet figured out.

That guy by the way just called me the other day.

Yeah.

He just called me. He had just spent eight years in jail for something else.

Yeah.

But that’s funny.

Yeah.

“What goes around, comes around.” And, of course, the Mexican government continues to claim that only thirty-five or forty people were killed in that incident.

Oh, there were hundreds killed.

Yeah, there were hundreds. Yeah.

And then many of them died days later, but in --

Yeah.

-- Camp 1. After interrogation they were cremated.

Right.

So Mexican justice triumphed again. And then, you know, Echeverria was elected with the pledge that he would get to the bottom of this. Of course he was the bottom of it to start with so he knew where to look. And when he became president, hardly had he gotten in there than they had the Jueves de Corpus incident, the Corpus Christi Thursday, the Polytechnic Institute students were marching down Ribera San Cosme.

Uh, huh.
G: And the Falcons, who were Echeverria’s thugs, roared up in their unmarked white trucks and killed about seventeen marchers. And then there was another promise that “We’ll get to the bottom of this.”

It was a really traumatic time in Mexico.

P: Well, this, this was about the same time in the States we were having the same problems here with the SDS and the Weathermen Underground and all those folks.

G: Yeah. So, that was ’68, ’69. Well, I was there until the end of 1971.

I was walking down the hall one day. Bob Nischwitz at this point had become a Legat and I was working my usual stuff. And don’t remember any huge things that would be of interest to this interview. Just the usual work.

I’m going by the office, he’s on the phone. He waves me in and he says, “You’re transferred to Manila.” And I said, “There’s no office in Manila.” He says, “There will be when you get there.” (chuckle)

P: (chuckle)

G: So I got transferred to Manila, Philippines, over, as I later learned after I made friends in the Embassy, over the great objections of the Ambassador and others who didn’t want any more people at the Embassy. And they didn’t want an FBI Agent at the Embassy.

There was a battle that went on between State and the Bureau for several months.

P: Right.

G: I was learned later that I was part of what was called the HILEV Program where Secretary Kissinger wanted to beef up the FBI overseas as another source of information.

P: When did that HILEV Program get started more or less?

G: Oh, I think it was probably in the --. Let’s see. I got to Manila in January, ’72, so it probably was in the late ’60s or early ’70s. It was sort of in the wind-down phase of the Vietnam War when Kissinger was Secretary of State under Nixon. And I think that probably what stimulated that was the Operation SOLO reporting on the Soviets, which was really very good. And he thought maybe they could emulate. That’s my opinion. That they could emulate FBI’s reporting elsewhere. And they did get some good reporting from some of the offices. From the overseas offices.

I’m told that Buenos Aires predicted a coup. And the coup occurred as predicted and nobody else at the Embassy had picked it up, whatever --.
P: Well, Bob Scherer was there and he would have known.

G: Yeah, yeah. I went down there with Scherer.

So I got transferred after months of haggling between State and FBI, the week before Christmas, 1971, I was told “Launch, and be there within a week.” And fortunately I was ready to go.

I drove my car to San Francisco. Got on an airplane and flew to Manila. Had my car shipped over because cars in the Philippines were hard to come by. And went by way of Hong Kong, because Hong Kong had been covering the Philippines. And I ended up with an office in Manila which I had to create and a road trip that included Australia and New Zealand.

P: Huh.

G: And Homer Boynton who later became a senior official of the Bureau was a New Yorker. He had been transferred to Canberra to have Australia and New Zealand. And the State Department says, “You can have one or the other, but you can’t have both.” Homer got his transfer cancelled. He became like Number 3 in the Bureau under Clarence Kelley and I went to Manila. And had that road trip.

It was a very interesting thing. The Philippines was in turmoil as it always is, and while I was there, Marcos declared martial law in 1973, I believe it was.

A description of what my office was like. I reclaimed what had been a Legat office a number of years before. It had a safe, a big vault, a walk-in vault where the teletype machine and all that stuff was. And it was in the main Embassy building. It was a nice space. It was around the building from our neighbors, the Agency.

P: Uh, huh.

G:
G: After about one month I went to Australia and New Zealand. Was gone for six weeks. I went to every state, made contacts with every state police agency, the national immigration service in each country, and all this, and built up a list of contacts of people that we could call if we had a case.

And had a great woman named Alta Fowler who was a consul in, in Sydney and she loved cop stuff and she just wanted to be my, my partner down there. So I’d send her a teletype and she would relay it to the police through their system. I had instant contact through Alta Fowler with everybody down there. I know, I was really amazed. And she would throw parties at her house and invite all the cops. And she loved the cops. The cops loved her. A lot of fun. And really some good contacts, good police contacts.

But, meanwhile back at the ranch in the Philippines, it was really getting bad. And Marcos, Marcos had set out to be re-elected to a third term. And he’d really, he had really been re-elected by a landslide apparently, legitimately. But the election procedures over there are rather bloody.

P: Yeah.

G: He called a constitutional convention to rewrite the constitution and allow his re-election for a third term. And there was a lot of resistance to this and newspapers were against him.

Philippine Independence Day is in June some time, I believe. And they have a ceremony at a park that’s about two blocks from the Embassy called Rizal Park. And I had recently arrived and Ambassador Henry Byroade was supposed to be the official representative of the United States at the Independence Day.

And, as usual even though it was a holiday, I was at the Embassy checking my teletypes and all that. And I was talking to the marines out in front in the driveway, and the Cadillac is there with the doors open and the flags are on the bumpers, and waiting for Byroade to come out and go to the park.

And pretty soon somebody closes the doors on the Cadillac and Cadillac pulls away and a Ford pulls up with flags on it. I said, “What’s going on?” They said, “Well, the President is not going to speak so protocol says, the Vice President is going to speak, protocol says that the Deputy Chief of Mission should go.” What, what is the name?

P: DCM.

G: Yeah, the DCM should go. So he comes down, gets in the Ford and goes away. I don’t think much of it. Well, it’s shortly after all of this that I turn on my radio at home one morning --. And, maybe a funny aside on this, living in the Philippines. I didn’t like it. I’d just come from beautiful Mexico City and in the ‘70s, Mexico was just a great place to live.
G: Manila is not a great place to live. But I lived in a pretty nice neighborhood which was about four or five miles from the Embassy. And it started to rain. And it rained, something like seventy-two inches of rain. The streets were --. Manila is flat and it’s about six feet above sea level. And the streets are flooded.

And we couldn’t drive our cars to work. And the Embassy started to send an Air Force bus from Clark down through the neighborhoods on a route. And if you wanted, if you wanted to get to work --. I arranged to take off my shoes and carry them and roll up my pants and wade out to the bus and get on the bus to go to work.

And we went down the big boulevard and the water --. The guy had a, the driver had a guy standing in the stairway and when the water got above the first step, then he knew it was going to flood the motor and he’d find another route.

So we’re going down the big boulevard. I can’t remember the name of it. And the guy on the steps starts saying, “Water, water, water,” you know. (chuckle) So the driver goes down the street, and I’ll never forget the name of it, Pasong Tamao. Don’t ask me how to spell that, but like P-a-s-o-n-g T-a-m-a-o. Pasong Tamao.

And here we are and this bus is like a cabin cruiser. It’s going down this street that is absolutely flooded and all the Filipinos in their little nipa huts made out of bamboo are in the windows. And they all used to say, “Hey, Joe.” And here we go. And we’re like a cabin cruiser throwing waves right through the front doors and through the windows of these houses and the kids and people inside saying, “Hey, Joe,” waving the “V” for victory sign.

And I said to myself, “I’ve been here six months. If these people can take a US Air Force bus throwing a wave through their living room and think it’s funny, and say ‘Hey, Joe,’ I can live in this place.

And that was it. That was the day I turned around. And then I really started to like the Philippines. But any way, back to the martial law. The rains had just been coming and martial law was declared. I got up to go to work. I had a car to go to work and there was nothing on the radio, there was nothing on the roads, the Army had just --. Just amazing. Everybody was just amazed at the Philippines who, it seemed, were so disorganized most of the time absolutely closed Manila down just like bang.

P: Why was martial law declared? There was a revolution going on, wasn’t it?

G: There was, there was a plot to kill the President.

P: Oh, okay.

G: And because of the constitutional convention and all that. Maybe I’m getting the constitutional convention out of sync. But any way. No, it was going on.
So I had identity and diplomatic plates on my car and I started out and I got through about three checkpoints and got to the Embassy and went in to Ambassador Byroade and I said, “Is there anything I can do for you, sir?” And he says, “Yes, as a matter of fact.” He says, “here’s an envelope with a picture of an American who’s trying to kill the President. Would you please handle this case?” And I said, “Delighted to.” Of course, you know. He says, “Two Air Force officers from the Philippine Air Force are here this morning and there’s a description of this guy and his name and a picture. And he’s wanted for an attempt to assassinate President Marcos.” And what was his name? His name will come to me.

Henry Byroade had been a general in Stillwell’s Army in the China/Burma/India theater and was an old Asia hand. Anyway, I came to the conclusion later that this was a test of me. This guy according to the Filipinos was an FBI informant. I hadn’t the faintest idea who he was. And I ran the teletype machine, along with my secretary, Nola Mae, and I did a heck of a lot of my own communications stuff. And she wasn’t in. It was a holiday. And I sat down at that darn thing and wrote a coded teletype to Headquarters and saying, “This guy’s supposed to be from New York. His name is August McCormick Lehman, Jr.”

And within a day I get this thing back and it says, “He was under development as a property theft criminal informant.” He wasn’t an authorized criminal informant. He was a guy who was being looked at as a potential criminal informant who could report to them about property crimes. Interstate Transportation of Stolen Property or something. And the last anybody knows of him, it’s in the file up there, is that he had called the Night Supervisor in New York about two months before and he says, “Tell so and so and so I’m going out of town on a hit and I’ll let him know what’s happening later.”

And, of course, the Case Agent the next day is calling this guy. “Where, you know, where? What do you mean you’re going on a --?” He, he couldn’t find him. They looked all over for him. They couldn’t find him.

Well, he was, he was, he was a potential criminal informant. And they said, “You can, this is information you can release to your contacts.”
G: And xxxxx and I went into the Command and met the General. And I told him what I had. And I’m convinced that they already had this guy in jail. And when he said that he was working with the FBI, they thought that the FBI was trying to kill President Marcos. I’m sure they did.

General Ver didn’t know me. And I went in and told General Ver exactly what Headquarters had told me. And I had typed it up on FBI stationery and I remember the DCM was a nice guy named Skipper Gibbons. Skipper says, “You aren’t going to give this to them, are you?” And I said, “Yes, I am.” I said, “I’m authorized to release this and this is an attempt to assassinate the President.” Well, you know. So I gave it to them.

And then it turns out that now they apparently could trust me, so they started to let me in on some other stuff that’s going on. And there are a number of Americans. This guy that --. Oh, gads, his name will come to me. This guy that was the informant supposedly was a sharpshooter. Liked to shoot. No, he didn’t. He didn’t know how to shoot well, but he pretended he could shoot. That was it. He pretended he was a sharpshooter.

P: (chuckle)

G: This is typical Philippines. He pretended he was a sharpshooter and they thought he’d be a great assassin. And I don’t know, the contact, Silverman, was back in the States that got him into this. But he was hired to go to the Philippines to do an assassination with a rifle. And he was taken down to the ranch on Cebu of the previous, a previous candidate for President that Marcos had defeated, Sergio Osmeña, Jr. Famous man in the Philippines.

G: And they had the plan. Whacko as usual, where this guy was going to be in a church tower across the river from the President’s Palace. The President played golf all the time. And they were going to have somebody, a diver or somebody. The President used a pontoon boat to cross the river to the golf course which was on the other side. They were going to put some kind of a target thing on the side of the pontoon boat and then connect it to an aiming point. They would swim in, attach explosive devices which would be set off by hitting the target.

And this guy was supposed to be in the church tower and when Marcos went putt, putt, putt across the river, he was supposed to shoot that target and blow the boat up.

And somehow they found out about it. I don’t really remember how. His name is going to come in about thirty seconds. (chuckle) So that was going on. Osmeña, Sergio Osmeña. He might even be a former president, I’m not sure. But he was defeated by Marcos in Marcos’ election cycle. And Osmeña had a huge ranch down in Cebu with a target range and all this. He was involved in that. He had a machine shop where Lehman tried to construct a silencer for the rifle.
G: Then it turns out that the reason that the President didn’t go on Independence Day to speak was because they had mined the speakers’ rostrum. And they were going to blow it up while he was giving the Independence Day --. He found out about it and he sent the Vice President who was behind the plot to kill him. A guy named Lopez who was the Vice President. And he was plotting to kill Marcos. This is sort of a party dispute of some type.

Oh, there’d been others. After he declared martial law he called a meeting of businessmen and somebody put the flag poles in and the flag poles were lined with dynamite. They were going to make --, put them beside where Marcos was speaking from and they were going to blow up the thing.

And a relative of the guy who did this is invited and put in the front row and his brother says, “My brother’s in the front row. You can’t do this to him.” He reported the plot and stopped the meeting and took the --.

Another great one was they were going to blow up a hole of the golf course at Camp Hay up in Baguio which Marcos used to play on. It was then a US base. They had a nice golf course. They were practicing. They were going, when he putted into the eighth hole, they were going to blow up the green.

And they tried it out in somebody’s back yard down around Manila somewhere. And, of course, the neighbors seemed to notice this huge explosion blowing up pieces of the yard. And they caught them. They were going to kill him.

And I remember watching President Sukarno come in, come up from Indonesia and come down Roxas Boulevard in front of the Embassy. And he and Marcos went by in the Presidential procession up to the Palace from the airport at about eighty miles an hour. It was just “Zoom.” (chuckle) They used to drive that, they used to drive that limousine from side to side of the street with the cars. It was like a slalom race. And that was because they thought that the culverts had been lined with explosives and they were going to blow up the motorcade as it went over a certain culvert. So to be sure, they drove really fast. It was, it was really wild.

And by this time I was also getting too close to the NBI, the National Bureau of Investigation. Here’s a funny story. Is this going on too long?

The Consul General, when I got to Manila, Lawrence Lawrence, told me that you had to make calls with everybody, you know, in the Embassy. I would be there three years. There’s much more to this. It’s a very dramatic interview. And I said to myself, “Well, doesn’t have anything to do with me. I work for Mr. Hoover.” Mr. Hoover was still alive. It was about the time Mr. Hoover was passing away, but anyway --.
G: Lawrence had a large drapery covering a chart showing Manila had the highest rate of fraudulent visa applications in the world – and more ... He says, “The first year, my vice consuls come in and they say, ‘Mr. Lawrence, we ought to close this visa unit completely. Just pull out of here.’” Because they had like bank teller windows --

P: Right.

G: -- because people would spit at them and they’d slide the papers in underneath like they do with cash, you know. And then he said, “The second year they come in and they say, ‘Look at this counterfeit passport. This is a real piece of art. There must be, across the street from here someplace, there is a forger who is just unmatched in his ability to forge Philippine passports. This is really good.’” He said, “That’s the year two.”

“Year three they come in and they say, ‘Hey, Larry, you know, we got so darn many regulations. If we just did it like the Phils do and we just sort of gave them the visa and got them out of here, that would work so much better.’” He said, “That’s why at the end of Year Number 3, Mr. Gray, you’re out of here.”

Well, it was true. Without getting into a lot of detail, I was getting so close to the NBI, I had to go home.

Went on the Inspection Staff for a year. And that would be the year of 1975 from like, like January through November. Al Connelly and I were doing the European inspections because he didn’t know anything about being Legat and he decided he’d take me along. be --.

P: Yeah. Okay.

G: And his wife was a Brit. And he wanted to go to Europe. We were in our office in Bonn. I had just taken a wonderful tour around the Wall in Berlin because we were invited up by the Special Forces to see Berlin but he didn’t want to go. I went up and I got to ride the daytime patrol helicopter around the entire Berlin Wall. It was a fabulous thing to see.

And he gets a phone call in Bonn and he looks at me and he says, “You’re going to Chicago as ASAC.” And I said to myself, “They’re out of their minds.” (chuckle) I mean, here I am from a one-man Legat to ASAC, Chicago? And I haven’t been in a field office in nine years. Fortunately, I had been on the Inspection Staff so I had pretty well gotten up on what was happening. The procedures, anyway.

Got to Chicago. Worked for Dick Held. And Buck Revell was ASAC Number One. I had met Buck because he came to Manila as an Inspector about three years earlier and we’ve been good friends ever since.

P: Uh, huh.
G: And I was in Chicago for about a year and a half. But Revell got transferred to Headquarters when Held became Associate Director and his last words to me when he went out the door were, “I’m going to be the head of the Career Board. If I can’t stay in Chicago, you can’t stay in Chicago.” I said, “Thanks a lot, Buck.”

P: (chuckle)

G: John Hogan came in as ASAC Number Two. And I became ASAC Number One briefly. I really enjoyed Chicago. I think that was probably one of the most enjoyable field office experiences I’ve ever had. And I liked Washington Field, but Chicago was an office with great, great work, great camaraderie, gung-ho group of guys. It was really a good work crew, and the supervisors were good. I just loved Chicago.

P: Of course you had Mayor Daley.

G: Mayor Daley died when I was --. I remember the day that Mayor, you know, you remember the day Kennedy died. I remember the day Mayor Daley died. The city almost came to a stop. Ambulance 42 coming from that tennis court where he collapsed while he was dedicating a tennis court. Came down through the city and the city just stopped. I mean it was just amazing.

And so I was there for a year and a half. I did the Security side of the house, what Mr. Held used to call the “hookey-pookey side.” Bill Beane was my second SAC there. He couldn’t figure me out for about three months, and then he finally decided that I was either harmless or helpful, but not a threat, (chuckle) to the stability of the office.

G: And I got transferred too, by Mr. Revell who couldn’t stand being alone in Washington any longer. I became Section Chief of CI-3 in the Intelligence Division under Bill Cregar who was an old friend from WFO days although he was a hard guy to work for in some ways. He was a real demanding task master and a very good Assistant Director. Bill, really, he took stuff home at night and read himself to sleep practically. He had a safe at home where he could lock stuff up. Hard guy to work for but he, he was a driver. And Tom Leavitt too was Assistant Director at one point there.

Tom Leavitt and I had been squad mates on Court Jones’ squad. And Cregar had been across the hall, so that little circle around Court Jones all showed up at the top, --

P: Eventually, yeah.

G: -- at the top of Division Five.

P: But Court Jones never really went to the Bureau.
G: Yeah. Well, you know, I think it was because he stuttered and he didn’t want to go. Court stuttered. He had a terrible stutter. “He, he, did, try, to, to tell you, to go.”

I remember when he made the Principal Relief Supervisor and I was in the Cultural Unit and he told me to come and sit by “Squeezies,” who we called, I forget what her name was. Because she could squeeze, with the old manual typewriter, if she left a letter out, she could squeeze it in. (chuckle)

And he said, “I want you to sit where I can see you.” And I said, “What do you mean?” (chuckle) I had a window. I was looking over at the Commerce Building. And upon the fourth, fifth floor there, he says, “I want you where I can see you.” I said, “But, Court, I’m just looking at a pillar.” He says, “I want to look over my desk and see you sitting there.” I said, “You’re not serious?” He says, “I am serious. Move from there to there where I can see where you are.” (chuckle) And I did.

P: This is where you --. After you had gotten too close to Tamara?

G: No, no, no. This was, this was just --. Court depended a lot on Relief Supervisors because he was often getting other stuff to do.

P: Yeah, yeah.

G: And he was very trusted too, you know.

So, anyway, where were we?

P: Tom Leavitt.

G: Well, we’re going to Headquarters. My, my Section was CI-3 which was Research and Liaison.

P: Right.

G: And it had the Legat program. It also had training for the Foreign Counterintelligence (FCI), for the Intelligence Division in those days. And it had the FCI School. It had the technical support and analytical units. And I worked for both CI-1 and CI-2. Peterson and Sullivan were the Section Chiefs.

Petersen was kind of difficult to work with, but I enjoyed them. They were very demanding people too, which was good.

P: Uh, huh.

G: So I had Gene Peterson. Eugene C. Peterson. And I can’t remember what Sullivan’s first name was right off hand.
G: And we had some rather tricky stuff that went back to Chicago that, that I helped Sullivan’s section with. We can’t really go into it.

P: Yeah.

G: We had some very deep stuff in Chicago. And that’s where I learned about the SOLO cases because they were run partly out of Chicago.

So where am I now? I’m at Headquarters. And because I had been in the Legats for nine years, I, I had --. Joe Marion was my Liaison Unit Chief. And he’d never been out in the Legats, I don’t think, as I recall it.

P: Yeah.

G: He might have been in Canada, but it was later. Because I knew how the Legats were out in left field all the time, I used to write a newsletter. And I took more interest in the Legats and visitors, than most Section Chiefs did.

P: Let me switch over the tape here.

G: Okay. And go speed her up.

P: Okay.

G: Yeah. So I really got involved with the Legats. And because of that I got to meet Director Webster, who, when he first came to the Bureau, was very distant. He didn’t know what he was getting into. And as he became more, more at ease I guess would be the best way to put it, I frequently would go up there with, with visitors.

And I can remember going up with Mexican people from the prosecutorial side and Under Secretary of something, of the Interior Ministry, who was quite enthused with his treatment. We had taken him to a nice dinner and shown him around town, and now he’s up in the Director’s Office. He took me over to one side and he said, “Tell the Director if he ever needs anybody eliminated down in Mexico, we’ll handle it for him.”

P: (chuckle)

G: So I did. I went over to Mr. Webster and I said, “I thought you’d like to know who you’re dealing with here, sir. He just offered to kill anybody you’d like to kill down in Mexico. Just let him know and it will be handled.” And the Director hardly even batted an eye. He says, “Thank you for telling me.” (chuckle)

P: “I really wanted to --.”

G: “I really wanted him to know that.”
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G: I didn’t see the Director that much, but he picked me to be SAC in Richmond after I’d been Section Chief for about two years. Just before the end of the Section Chief thing, I don’t know if you have time for one more story.

P: We have time. It’s only twelve o’clock.

G: Okay.

P: You, you got late checkout till one.

G: Yeah, and I don’t think they’re that busy. And who’s going to go out in the rain?

P: Exactly, yeah.

G: Where am I?

P: Before you went to Richmond.

G: Yeah. Before I went to Richmond I was on transfer out as SAC. And whoever the little Mormon, the Mormon guy who was the bishop of Argentina and Legat. And he was on home leave. He was due for his home leave.

: Scherer, Bob Scherer was down there working on his TELEBOMB case or whatever it was called, the Letellier bombing.

P: The Letellier case, yeah. CHILBOM, CHILBOM.

G: Yeah. And Joe Marion comes in to me and he says, “You know, we don’t have anybody to replace the Legat with. He’s going on home leave. I’m proposing that you go to Buenos Aires as Legat.” I said, “Joe, I’m on transfer out as an SAC. I’m the Section Chief.” He says, “There’s nobody else. It’s you.”

So I went to Cregar, and I said, “They’re going to recommend, unless you tell them not to, they’re going to recommend that I go to Buenos Aires,” for two or three weeks, whatever it was, like three weeks. And I went to Buenos Aires.

I went to Buenos Aires in 1979. Martial law. I mean, if you thought, if you thought things were bad anywhere, it was bad in Argentina. It was martial law. People with machine guns all over the place, you know. My favorite parking sign was at the Defense Ministry. It said, “Do not park here or sentinel will open fire without warning.” I thought, “That’s a pretty effective ‘No Parking’ sign.”

P: Uh, huh.
Bob Scherer picked me up at the airport. We were living in the Legat’s house. The Legat was on vacation. Scherer was working his bombing case. It was really --.

Oh, Wachter was the Legat.

No, it was after Wachter, after Wachter.

Scherer became Legat.

No, Scherer, Scherer is now assigned to Headquarters.

Oh, okay.

And he’s on TDY down there working this bombing case.

Okay.

He’s in the bombing case.

Okay.

And he’s working it out of Headquarters. I didn’t know Bob Scherer at this point. We’re staying --. This is when we first, I noticed that he stumbled. I said, “What’s wrong with you?” He says, “I, I got something wrong with my leg.” You know, he later was really in bad shape.

My first introduction to what going on is he, he’s sitting in the Embassy and I’m trying to get acquainted with the girls and how to find the mail and what to do, you know. And he brings in an Argentine army colonel or something. He said, “I want you to meet Colonel Alphonso Rodriguez because I’m going to lunch with him and Lt. Colonel Jose Ramirez. Remember those names. We will be at the Officers Club and I will be back by 2:30 pm at the latest.” It was like, “I want all sort of witnesses to who I’m going with, where I’m going, and when I will be back.” I thought, “This is a happy place.” (chuckle)

(chuckle)

He got back okay but it was scary because he was working on bringing down a colonel in the Chilean air force, and who knows who else he was going to drill, you know.

So I went on a road trip. I went to Chile, which despite all of the stuff about Pinochet, was rather a happy place compared to Argentina. Then I went to Peru and saw somebody up there in the National Police and came back and they showed me this teletype. And it’s from Ambassador Robert White in Paraguay.

Wonderful Robert White.
And he is absolutely steaming over a teletype that he has received from FBI Headquarters to him saying, “Locate and apprehend --

(chuckle)

-- a Croatian terrorist from New York.” Well, I knew a little bit about the case because I had heard about it. I’d read about it in the paper or something. It was connected to an aircraft air jacking/murder case that had a Chicago factor. Scherer says, “Not to worry.” He says, “The Ambassador would like to see you and I have told him that you are the leading expert on Croatian terrorism in the FBI and that you will be at his disposal as soon as you return from Peru.”

I said, “I don’t know anything about the case except what I read in the paper.” And he says, “Well, you’re going to Paraguay to explain to the Ambassador about --.”

So I sat down and read some rather poorly written stuff out of New York. At least I knew what the case was about. And I sent a message over saying --. It was the Fourth of July, 1979. I said, “I will be arriving from Buenos Aires on the Fourth of July, 1979, and request that accommodations be made and that I will be available at the Ambassador’s convenience at the opening of business on July 5, after the holiday.”

And so I go over there. And I get to the airport and here’s the Ambassador’s car and the Ambassador’s chauffeur. And he says, “Are you Mr. Gray?” I said, “Yes.” He says, “He’s waiting for you.”

So I get to the Embassy. I said, “Where am I staying?” He says, “We don’t know yet.” (chuckle) I get to the Embassy and I meet the Political Counselor who is a woman. I can’t remember what her name was. The Deputy Chief of Mission and a guy who I figured out had to be the Station Chief. And they’re all looking at me like they’re planning to be witnesses at an execution, you know.

“Come into the Ambassador’s conference room. We’re waiting for him now. He should be here shortly.” There’s an Embassy reception for the Fourth of July starting at 10:30 or 11:00 o’clock in the morning. I’m always early. I really went early.

He comes in. “Who in the devil sent me this teletype telling me to locate and apprehend somebody? What do they think this is down here?” I said, “Mr. Ambassador, I certainly sympathize with you. There are people at our Headquarters that just don’t understand the niceties of the diplomatic service. But I was nine years at Embassies and I completely can see what your reaction to this is. It’s completely uncalled for. It was done by someone who just wasn’t informed of the proper channels, and I am here to help you.” (chuckle) “I’m here to help you.”
And we talked about the case and he realized that it was important. And there was a guy in Paraguay President’s Alfredo Stroessner’s personal staff that was protecting this Croatian terrorist. And he was just doing something like running a massage, gymnasium or something.

I said, “Mr. Ambassador, what they really want, [would] like you to do is to intercede through your contacts with either the Foreign Minister or the President and arrange to have this man sent out of the country back to the United States, informally.”

“Uuh. Well, we’ve got to write a teletype.” I said, “Well, let’s write the teletype.” So the two of us sat down at the conference table and wrote the teletype back to the FBI and State, while the other three observed. What the plan was for him to do this. He says, “Now let us go to the reception.”

We went to the reception and the leader of the opposition had just fallen into --. He was so drunk he had just fallen into the birthday cake for the USA (chuckle).

And there were all these people in the yard. And I said to the Ambassador, “Where am I staying?” And they said, “The Deputy Chief of Mission’s house.” And, as you can imagine, I was really up tight because I thought I was about to be assassinated by an Ambassador. Since I had emerged unscathed from the conference, the Station Chief took me home for lunch. He’s obviously enjoyed what had transpired. We returned to the Embassy and a driver was instructed to take me on a tour of Asuncion, Paraguay, and deliver me then with my baggage to the Minister’s house. And he was, he was there, but he was going out to give a speech to some group about American Independence Day.

And he says, “I’ve arranged for you to have dinner here tonight.” He says, “My maid will prepare a steak, and here’s the bottle of wine, and you’re on your own. And in the morning, we’ll go back to the office.”

I can remember he had, he had some kind of an animal skin rug in front of his fireplace and the fireplace was like it was in the South, you know, it’s winter. And I drank I think the half, at least half of that bottle of wine. Had a steak. Went to sleep. And I was sleeping on the floor in front of his fireplace when he got back. (chuckle) It must have been an interesting day for everybody.
And the next day I go back and I said, “Well, I’ve got to get back to Argentina. I’m the only one, I’m the only guy with Bob Scherer who’s working our case.” Ambassador says, “Have you been to Iguaçu Waterfall?” I said, “No.” He says, “Well, you can’t go back without going to Iguaçu.” I say, “Is it on the way? I don’t even know where it is.” He says, “Yeah, it’s on the way.” He says, “You will rebook your flight, you’re going through Iguaçu.” I said, “I’m the only one down here. What happens if I have to do something?” He says, “I’ll send a car and we’ll drive you to Buenos Aires.” I said, “Okay, I’ll go to the waterfall.”

I, you know, walked in the woods at night to see Iguaçu by moonlight and all that good stuff that I wasn’t supposed to do. Got back to Buenos Aires. Over the next couple of weeks, we did whatever we were going to do with the Legat stuff and I told Bob Scherer, I said, “I’m going to head out, I’m going to go back. Instead of flying back to, to DC from here direct from Buenos Aires, I’m going to take all the mail, do all the work up through Ecuador on the way back up, and go back from Ecuador. And I’ll be back in Washington in several, four or five days, whatever it was going to be.”

I get to, I get to Lima, Peru, on a Saturday night. Go to the Embassy. Tell them where I am staying and I look. I’m a born traveler. I said, “Machu Picchu is here.” So I went to the hotel’s travel desk. It was the Sheraton. I said, “I want to go to Machu Picchu, Sunday.” Saturday, whatever it was. Yeah. So they booked me on the train. I went over and came back.

Next morning, Monday, I go into the Embassy and a Marine takes one look at my passport and he says, “Oh, are they looking for you.”

“Report to the Administrative Officer immediately.”

So I go in and the guy says, “Where have you been?” And I said, “I’ve been in Machu Picchu.” He said, “They’ve been looking for you. You were supposed to go to La Paz, Bolivia, to be there when the plane with the terrorist arrived.” I said, “What --?” He said, “They’re (sic) the Croatian terrorist from --

-- from Paraguay, has been expelled and they didn’t know where he was going to be expelled to because the Paraguayans were going to take him to the airport and put him on a plane that was leaving. And they didn’t know which plane they were going to put him on.” And they sent, oh gads, I forget who. They sent a really good guy who spoke Portuguese to Sao Paulo and that’s where he showed up.
G: And he had the Brazilian marines arrest the guy. And they got him. He beat me back to the States. They sent Bob Oglesby to La Paz in my place. He probably flew over me at Machu Picchu!

(chuckle) Who knows what would happen to me. I got back to Headquarters, went over to Division Six, to the guy that had the case and confessed the whole mess down there. And he was delighted because they had their, they had a guy they didn’t think --.

And those winds really coming up. And there’s snow. He thought they’d never get this guy back and he beat me back.

P: Yeah.

G: And I said, “Yeah, that’s the way we do things in the Legats.”

P: (chuckle)

G: Well, I went to Richmond which was a marvelous experience. I was SAC at Richmond for about a year and a half. A wonderful office. Really nice people.

It’s the only time I ever threatened to fire an Agent because he wasn’t following an instruction of mine, and he did follow it and it all came out nicely in the end for both of us. It could have been a very bad situation for the office I think. And it was handled without any official, I handled it unofficially. I did a couple of things maybe anecdotal stuff.

Agents were interrogating a prisoner or somebody. I don’t know if he was a prisoner or -. I think he was a prisoner. And somebody had come into the office and laid his pistol on the desk. About three desks away from where this guy who was interrogated was sitting. So I just looked the thing over. Walked through the squad room. Stuck the pistol underneath my coat and walked out and never said a word to anybody.

About 5:30 that evening, I went on the PA system and I said, “If anyone out there is missing a pistol with a serial number so and so, you can find it in the SAC’s office.” Well, this very sheepish Agent came in. And I said, “Put the word out. We don’t leave our pistols on the desk. If you got a prisoner in the office --.”

P: Yeah.

G: They’ll put the word out instantly, you know, because the word is the SAC’s got his pistol. (unintel)

I found that was --. Operating informally many times without leaving a big paper trail and getting people in trouble, made the guys listen. And they, they accepted that was --. Somebody got saved from something he didn’t deserve --.
Right.

-- for something that was trivial. I, I really liked Richmond and I found out later as I got my transfer to New York that there was a pool in the office – betting on whether I would accept the transfer to New York or retire.

(chuckle)

Because I was eligible to retire. I remember the last Inspection report written on me as an SAC in Richmond, it was said, “Gray, age fifty-one.” And I said, “Age fifty-one? Am I really fifty-one? Can’t be fifty-one.”

What year were you born?

1929.

Okay

That will be in my obituary. (chuckle)

I went, I went over to the State Fair and I found a demonstration of a pioneer farm. Log cabin, mules, all this stuff. I got a pair of bib overalls. Got myself with Tom the mule, all harnessed up with a plow. Standing there with my straw hat and my bib overalls, holding the mule’s lead, and had my picture taken.

(chuckle)

So I sent an airtel to the Director, Mr. Webster, attaching the photo. And I said, “Delighted to hear that you are sending me to New York. I will not be disenfranchised. I will leave from the polling place on November 2nd, or whatever date it was, and drive north to New York. In the meantime, I also got to find a home for old Tom here. And when I get that finished, I’ll be able to pull on up north.” (chuckle)

I got a thing back from Webster that says, “Delighted to hear you’re taking care of old Tom. Hurry. We’ll really look forward to seeing you in New York.” (chuckle)

(chuckle)

Webster was finally getting a sense of humor.

Yeah.

So I got to New York in, right after the election in 1980. On my calendar at home, it says “RUC Jimmy Day.” And I spent four years as Special Agent in Charge of Division, New York Division Three.
P: Security Division.

G: Yeah. FCI-Soviet Division. And had everything. It was exclusively a Soviet division.

P: Uh, huh.

G: And there was a lot of stuff you don’t want to talk about. My first ASAC was Mike Donovan who later went on to Headquarters to head some type of an engineering unit that was in charge of a tunnel that doesn’t exist.

P: Oh, yeah.

G: And I’m sure that Mike staved off his death (from lung cancer). He died in the chair at home right after being told that the job was done; he wouldn’t die until it was done.

And, of course, when I first got there, I had a Supervisors’ conference every week in my office. And the Relief Supervisor on an off-site operation was a man named Robert Hanssen.

P: Uh! Wonderful. Robert Hanssen, the Soviet spy?

G: Yeah. H-a-n-s-s-e-n. Two “s’s.” And I really didn’t know him. There were a couple of guys in the Division that were really pretty good with computers. And I was trying to computerize the lookout system. But Headquarters didn’t have any money for that. I mean, they would let Agents sit and review manually surveillance logs by the hour and they were spending their computer money on, you know, something in the Administrative Division or something.

I was really frustrated because I got Toys-R-Us to explain to me how their inventory system worked. How did they know which --

P: Right.

G: -- which, which store had which products?

P: Right.

G: And when were they shipped and when did they --? That could have been converted to tell us --

P: Uh, huh.

G: -- who was where. What time they left the place. What time they showed up some other place. You could put in your subject; I was going to give each subject their Universal Product Code so they could just --
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P: Right.

G: -- swipe it. The lookout’s going to have a reader, swipe the UPC, when Stan Pimentel goes out the door. You swipe it. It says, “Stan Pimentel out of Section, out of Location Number One, 10 a.m.” “Stan Pimentel back in at 11:32 am.” Couldn’t get that done. (unintel) That wasn’t practical. We had more important things to do. Would have been a marvelous analytical tool. I understand now that they can do something like that.

P: Yeah.

G: So, a lot of bright guys. Hanssen apparently was, in addition to working his off-site thing, was active with the Intelligence Information System which was just in its infancy in those days. The Computerized Records System.

I was retired when he was arrested. And I remember calling back to Eddie Kenney who was one of the Supervisors saying, “Is he the guy who used to come to my conferences and look like he was smirking standing against the wall and never said anything? Big, tall, dark guy.” And he said, “That’s him, boss. That’s him.” I said, “Oh, man.”

So I, I was in New York four years.

P: 1980 to ’84?

G: Yeah, I left in --

P: When did you retire?

G: May of ’84.

P: Okay.

G: I got there in October of ’80 and left in May of ’84.

P: May, what day?

G: May 2, or something like that. It’s in my retirement --.

P: Uh, okay.

G: And I went to Yosemite Park the next day. I retired from the Resorts B-Casino in Atlantic City at the, at the retirement seminar. Handed my --.

P: Oh, that’s okay. This is another one --.
G:  Handed, handed my credentials to Joe Hengenmuhle who at that point was my ASAC. Great guy. Great --. One of the really great Russian Agents.

P:  Passed away, didn’t he?

G:  Yeah. He died on the operating table while he was working for CIA as a contractor.

P:  Yeah, yeah.

G:  My last meeting with Joe Hengenmuhle, I had retired. I had just been to the Soviet Union for the first time in 1988 or something like that. And I came to New York. And he was working for the other Agency and he was doing an inspection of their New York operations.

P:  Uh, huh.

G:  But, anyway, Joe was a really rough New Yorker, you know. I said, “Joe, I’m inviting you to have strawberries and cream in the Palm Court of the Plaza Hotel. Let’s meet there.” And that’s my last memory of Joe, was listening to the string quartet, eating strawberries and cream in the Palm Court of the Plaza Hotel. I said, “Joe, this is the way to go.” (chuckle)

P:  (chuckle) Any great cases, I’m sure you had tons of great cases.

G:  There were good cases. Washington Field was the place where the big inroads were being made and those who were the guys were murdered as a result, or executed, as a result of Hanssen.

P:  Hanssen. Yeah.

G:  I often thought --. Well, I’ll tell you one funny one. We had a Soviet who we trapped through an undercover operation which I won’t go into because it may still be running.

P:  Right.

G:  Of course the Soviets know about it. Because Hanssen would have told them.

But anyway, this guy was drawn into our web and the undercover Agents who were running this thing convinced him that he should be working for the United States Government and that they knew somebody who could help him.

Well, Dave Majors, who runs the cicentre.com (the Centre for Counterintelligence and Security Studies)… Back up.
So, this guy was ready to go. And they said, “We need a high-ranking official from Washington to come up and tell him that he’s being accepted and it’s you.” And I said, “Why me? I’m the SAC. What are you getting me in an undercover operation for?” They said, “Boss, you’re the one. You can do it. You can be the high-ranking official from Washington.”

So I went to Headquarters for authority because the SAC doesn’t really do stuff like that.

P: Yeah, yeah.

G: And they said, “Good.” Eddie O’Malley (Edward J. O’Malley, Assistant Director, Intelligence Division) was mad at me at the time. Thought this was --. Finally, I was doing something he liked.

So we went to Trump Tower. Forget the name of the restaurant. There’s a restaurant with a waterfall in it. And the waterfalls kill sound. We got a table at the waterfall. This Russian and I. And I told him that I was, you know, very pleased to announce that we’re ready to conclude an agreement with him. And we would do whatever he needed to do to bring this thing to fruition. He says, “Meet me in Omaha in a week.” I said, “Okay. Done.”

Went back to the office. Told Bureau what had happened. Said, “We’re going to Omaha.” And Hengenmuhle says, “I’m going too.” Joe was just a charger. (chuckle) “I’m going too.” I said, “Okay, Joe, we’ll both go.”

We go out to Omaha. Met with this guy. Closed the deal. Omaha Office was great. They didn’t ask what we were doing. They just set us up with a place. We met him in a basement of a hotel or something. Made the arrangements for him. He had a drinking problem.

So we come back to New York. My brother has a condominium in Florida and I’m in Florida for a weekend or something at Sanibel Island and I get this phone call saying, “So and so has been arrested and he’s in jail with the NYPD. And the Embassy has found out about it, the Consulate has --. And he’s going to be returned home.”

Oh, there were a lot of “hanging, hanging chads” in those days on the telephone, or who you’re going to call, when are you going to get there. And --.

So he’s under house arrest. But nobody knows that he’s talking to us. But he’s a drunk. Well, he isn’t a drunk. He got arrested for drunk driving or something after he had a couple of drinks.
G: And so he’s under house arrest and the guy who is assigned to watch him is a KGB officer, security type. This guy turns out he’s a co-optee. Told us he was co-opted by the KGB in security and he was part of the reporting on the other people at the Embassy, at the Consulate and all that.

And he says to, to the minder, and we’re listening of course, that he wants to go shopping for one last time and take his family to a mall in New Jersey. And we get the word that they’re going to the mall in New Jersey. And I forget how the guys got in touch with him, but they slipped it to him that he would be met as he went into the shopping mall and spirited away with his whole family.

So the wife and kiddies hop in this van with this guy who wants to go with them and the guy, you know, the Russians in those days were really just buying anything they could. The guy who was the minder goes in first. The family goes in a revolving door and goes three hundred and sixty degrees through the revolving door and comes back out and gets into our van and is gone.

And Joe Hengenmuhle said, “I got to go, boss.” So I said, “Yeah.” He confessed to me later that he took his daughter along so she could see something happen. And they loaded up the whole family and they took them off to a safe house down the Jersey shore and all this.

Next day on the telephone, the guy who’s the Chief Security Officer for the Embassy and the KGB, called in from someplace. He says, “How are things at the --? How are things at the mission today?” They said, “Nothing to report, sir.” He says, “Not even somebody getting lost in a revolving door to report?” (chuckle) The guy’s probably going to have his throat cut too and he’s --

P: Right.

G: -- at least trying to see the funny side of it.

P: (chuckle)

G: But anyway, we had some interesting times there.

P: Yeah.

G: Good times. I really enjoyed it. And I retired out of New York in 1984 and living happily ever after.

P: Yeah. And any interesting case you can talk about? TOPHAT. And what was the other one?

G: TOPHAT was before me.
P: Before you, yeah.

G: General Dimitri F. Polyakov. He was one of those who was betrayed by Ames and the Russians wouldn’t believe it.

P: Right. Yeah.

G: And then when Hanssen comes in, you know, the first thing that Hanssen did was to betray TOPHAT.

P: Right.

G: Back in the 1970s. He sent the TOPHAT information and they tortured that man to death.

P: They killed him.

G: Yeah.

P: Yeah. Killed a number of others.

G: Yeah. Mostly as SAC I guess it would be --. Oh, we had a very good case, I can’t remember too much. The guy’s name was Arne, something. Norwegian. My Section 37 run by Frank Gilhooley, got the case.

Two Norwegian Security Service officers were sent to my Division and I greeted them with a sign obtained in Minnesota which said, “Warning,” big warning traffic sign, saying, “Norwegian Crossing, Be Careful.” (chuckle)

P: (chuckle)

G: Put it down where they had their desks in a little cubby hole of their own.

Arne Treholt, Arne Treholt was a television personality who like in some other countries gets named Ambassador. He was a Soviet agent.

P: Huh.

G: And the Norwegian government had come up with it. And they wanted to stop him because he was on track to become Foreign Minister. He and his wife were television personalities and high-profile celebrities and they were afraid that he would become --. They knew that he was a Soviet agent and they wanted to get him before he became Foreign Minister. And we again --.

P: Okay. We took a little break here. We’re back. It’s 12:30.
G: Yeah. Arne Treholt had an apartment in New York and Section 37 was able to rent the apartment next door to him. And we started an undercover operation. I believe the names of the Agents were James W. Downey and her last, her last name was Beirnat. Barbara Beirnat, yeah. And they posed as a couple living in the apartment next door and they were able to install all sorts of electronic equipment.

And so we had Arne Treholt’s life live and in living color twenty-four hours a day. Plus they became best friends of Arne’s, whose wife was back in Norway. And they would invite him out to dinner and they’d go to sports events and what not.

P: (chuckle)

G: They became his closest friends in New York. And I do not recall, I just do not recall what the overt act was that they brought him down on, but as it was coming down, these two Norwegian officers moved in. Since Arne’s technical coverage was, lot of it was in Norwegian, they did, they did the translating of the text. They were completely involved in the case. They had access to everything. They lived in my Division.

P: Yeah.

G: Barbara Beirnat and Jim Downey and I think a couple of other guys went to Oslo and testified at Arne Treholt’s trial.

P: (chuckle)

G: And he was convicted of being a Soviet agent based on their excellent work. And it was a real cause célèbre in Norway because, as I say, they were --. He and his wife were famous television personalities and he was on his way to becoming Foreign Minister.

P: Incredible.

G: So we took him down. And I just, I just don’t remember their overt act.

P: Yeah, yeah.

G:
G: And he knew the city. He lived on Long Island. Knew everybody, you know.

P: (chuckle)

He thanks us very graciously and asked his wife to leave the table for a moment. And he said, “No.” He says, “This has been a very pleasant lunch and really enjoyed meeting you fellows, but,” he said, “I’m going home.” And I said, “Well, okay. We just wanted to let you know that you had an option and we would be very interested in having you stay.”

“Well,” he says, “I got to go. We’re buying floor tiles today.” (chuckle) “I got to go buy floor tiles and send them home to Moscow.”

P: (chuckle)

G: So he went home. After I’m retired I go on the first spy reunion. I’m sitting with a three star general in the KGB at dinner at the Foreign Correspondents Club in Moscow – that was one of their favorite cover positions abroad. And I said to him --.

P: Where were you?

G: I was retired at this point.

P: At the Spy Museum in DC?
G: No, it’s run by David Majors.

P: Right.

G: Dan Mulvenna was there. I don’t think Dave Majors was there. Dave Majors may have been there.

G: But Dan Mulvenna had me at the table with this three-star general, retired, who’s writing the history of the Soviet intelligence services. And he’s saying that he’s gotten up as far as World War II and now it’s becoming very difficult because he has to be protecting sources. And we were talking very frankly, professionally though.

P: (chuckle)

G:

P: Uh, huh.

G: I said, “There is a source that passed this to the KGB and this general knew about it. And I sent a couple of things to the Bureau, one of which turned out to be that they had already arrested the guy. But he was a Czech, a Czech in penetration of CIA.”

But I, I detected a couple of things in my ramblings on these spy tours that I thought were --. That was one of them.

P: Uh, huh.

G: And I don’t doubt that Hanssen knew that we ran the --

P: Yeah.
P: Yeah.

G: -- Hanssen debriefing was.

P: Right.

G: But I was just so upset by that. I went back to the room and wrote that up, mailed it in. Never, never got a reply from the Bureau. I sent it Registered Mail, Return Receipt Requested, and it just disappeared.

P: Yeah.

G: I finally went down and I found a guy that used to work for me in New York. After I retired I went up to Division 5 and I got him in and I said, “I don’t know what’s happening. I’ve sent in two letters.” I said, “You’re a guy that I think I really, somebody I can tell this to.” I told him about the two letters and I said, “I can’t --.”

Some guy called me a month later from, from Headquarters and they said, very polite, “Yes sir, Mr. Gray, sir, I’ve been authorized to reveal to you that in response to your letter to so and so, so and so has been arrested and that they are presently serving terms in the --. You were correct. There was a source that gave away something there.” But they never called me on the other one and I think that was Hanssen.

P: Yeah. Probably.

G: So that sort of takes you up to where I go to Resorts B Casino in Atlantic City, New Jersey, to hear the retirement lecture, hand in my credentials, and Joe Hengenmuhle says, “Hey boss, don’t give these to me. You might need them.” I said, “Joe, I went off the rolls at 5 pm and I’m headed for Yosemite Park tomorrow.”

Had my retirement party at the, at the Regimental Armory up in Upper West Side. Upper, Upper Manhattan. I think that’s where it was. Inspection Team was in the office at the time. All the Inspectors came. And the office came. We had a big night. And I made an idiot of myself. I brought my sombrero, waving a machete, and saying “Vive Mexico,” and toddled off the scene.

P: That’s good. But you’ve been very active throughout your retirement and --.

G: I did a little work for Vadja Kolombatovic. I did an investigation of the murder of the son of the President of Costa Rica.

P: Uh, huh.
G: Which apparently was just a random shooting as it turns out. And one of the guys, I guess, was caught after I was down there just by accident.

P: By accident, yeah.

G: Yeah. And did a couple of other things for Vadja down in Mexico. Corporate type inquiries.

But I’ve basically been active with NPH, Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos, the orphanage. I’ve been a Board Member of the Minnesota support group. I spent eight years as President of the Father Wasson Legacy Endowment, Inc. I was the Founding President. Took it from--. Not myself, but presided over it going from zero dollars to two and a half million or three in the bank, I guess when I left. Then they just got another five, so they’re up around eight or nine, unless the market’s taken them back down to two or three.

P: Yeah.

G: And then I was an international member of the NPH International Board. For three years it was a Mexican board and then like things in Mexico, Bylaws were drawn up pro bono by a Mexican attorney who was supposed to be really good. Since it was pro bono he gave it to a law clerk or something who didn’t realize that foreigners couldn’t be on Mexican boards. You had to either be a citizen or a legal resident. So, then I became an advisor, still on the Board. The Board would vote and they’d say, “Now the three of us who could really vote, will vote.” So I’ve been around the world with them.

P: Yeah. And you’ve done good work with the NPH. Well, it’s now twenty minutes to one.

G: That’s too much already.

P: It was a nice story and I enjoyed it very much. And thank you so much on behalf of the Oral History Project.

Okay, señor?

G: Si, señor.