

Notes

from

The Kleinkaufs

FEBRUARY 1, 1993.

DEAR LARRY,

FOLLOWING YOUR SUGGESTION HERE ARE SOME RANDOM NOTES COVERING A PERIOD OF TIME IN THE BUREAU'S HISTORY AND WHEN I HAD THE UNIQUE EXPERIENCE OF WORKING IN A CAPACITY WHICH TODAY WOULD BE UNHEARD OF.

MY CAREER DATES BACK TO MAY 15, 1931 WHEN I ENTERED THE BUREAU AS A MESSENGER AND WAS ASSIGNED TO HEADQUARTERS LOCATED IN THE DENRIKE BUILDING AT VERMONT AVENUE AND K STS. N.W. THE BUREAU OCCUPIED THE 3RD AND PART OF THE 4TH FLOORS. THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE, ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION, FILES SECTION, CRIMINAL SUPERVISORS AND CHIEF CLERK'S OFFICE WERE LOCATED THERE. THE IDENTIFICATION DIVISION WAS LOCATED IN THE OLD SOUTHERN RAILWAY BUILDING AT 17TH AND PENNA. AVE. N.W.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR CLYDE TOLSON WAS IN CHARGE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND PERSONNEL SECTIONS.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HAROLD NATHAN WAS IN CHARGE OF THE INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION. INSPECTOR JAMES EGAN AND HARRY COONIN SUPERVISED THE ACCOUNTING SECTION. ALL OTHER CRIMINAL VIOLATIONS WERE SUPERVISED BY AGENTS WORKING UNDER INSPECTOR VINCENT HUGHES. SOME OF THESE WERE CHARLES APPEL, WHO LATER HEADED UP THE DOCUMENT SECTION OF THE FBI LABORATORY, FRANK BAUGHMAN, WHO LATER HEADED UP THE FIREARMS SECTION, W.I. CONWAY AND TWO OTHER AGENTS WHOSE NAMES I HAVE FORGOTTEN. THEY WERE THE ENTIRE SUPERVISORY STAFF. THE CHIEF CLERK WAS HARRY OVITT. CHARLIE WEEKS, WHO RECENTLY PASSED AWAY, WAS A CLERK WORKING UNDER OVITT.

AFTER WORKING AS A MESSENGER FOR SEVERAL MONTHS I WAS PROMOTED TO A CLERK IN THE FILES SECTION. THERE OVER THE NEXT YEAR I WORKED WITH A NUMBER OF OTHER CLERKS, MOST OF WHOM WERE ATTENDING COLLEGE AS I WAS AND HOPING TO BECOME SPECIAL AGENTS. MANY OF THEM DID, BUT THE ONLY ONES I CAN RECALL WHO ARE STILL LIVING AND WHO WERE THERE IN 1931 ARE O. GEORGE MEDLER, WHO NOW LIVES IN FLORIDA, AND THOMAS J. CONNOR, WHO NOW LIVES IN CONNECTICUT AND WAS A CHARTER MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY. CHARLES CAFFREY, THE BROTHER OF RAYMOND CAFFREY WHO WAS KILLED IN THE KANSAS CITY MASSACRE IN 1933, ALSO WORKED THERE BUT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE HE NEVER BECAME AN AGENT.

IN 1932 I WAS ASSIGNED TO NIGHT CLERICAL DUTY. WORKING WITH ANOTHER NIGHT CLERK THIS DUTY CONSISTED OF REPORTING TO THE MAIL SECTION, LOCATED IN THE FILE ROOM DIRECTLY ACROSS THE HALL FROM THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE AT 3:00 PM AND WORKING UNTIL 11:00 PM ON WEEKDAYS AND SPLITTING A 12 HOUR SHIFT ON SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS WITH THE EXCEPTION OF CHRISTMAS WHICH WE HAD OFF. WHEN THE DIRECTOR AND HIS SECRETARY, HELEN GANDY, LEFT, USUALLY AROUND 5:00 PM THE DOOR TO THE FILE ROOM AND THE DOOR LEADING INTO THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE WERE LEFT OPEN SO WE COULD HEAR THE TELEPHONE AS I WILL DESCRIBE LATER.

OUR DUTIES WERE VARIED. ON WEEKDAYS WE WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR GETTING

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mail,

ALL THE BUREAU MAIL INCLUDING MAIL SENT OVER FROM THE IDENTIFICATION SECTION, PROPERLY SEALED AND MAILED.

A MORE DEMANDING RESPONSIBILITY WAS ALSO PART OF THAT POSITION DUE TO THE FOLLOWING FACTOR.

THE BUREAU HAD NO SWITCHBOARD IN THOSE DAYS. ALL CALLS TO THE BUREAU CAME THRU THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE BOARD. WHEN THOSE OPERATORS LEFT AT 5:00 PM THEY CONNECTED A NIGHT LINE INTO THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE AND ALL CALLS FOR THE BUREAU CAME IN ON THIS LINE ON WEEKDAY NIGHTS, SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS. IN THE ABSENCE OF THE DIRECTOR OR HIS SECRETARY WE WERE ASSIGNED THE DUTY OF ANSWERING SUCH CALLS, NOT ONLY DURING THE WEEK BUT WEEKENDS AND HOLIDAYS. WEEKDAYS WE WORKED FROM 3:00 TO 11:00 PM. SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF XMAS DAY, WE WOULD SPLIT THE HOURS BETWEEN US, ONE OF US WORKING FROM 9:00 AM TO 3:00 PM AND THE OTHER FROM 3:00 PM UNTIL 9:00 PM ALTERNATING EACH WEEK. WE HAD A KEY TO THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE AND WOULD SIT AT HELEN GANDY'S DESK TO ANSWER THE INCOMING CALLS. IT WAS THEN OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO NOTIFY THE DIRECTOR AT HOME OR AN APPROPRIATE BUREAU OFFICIAL OF THE SUBJECT MATTER. UNTIL THE BUREAU LATER HAD NIGHT AND WEEKEND CLERKS IN SOME OF THE FIELD OFFICES WE WERE THE ONLY BUREAU EMPLOYEES ON DUTY IN THE ENTIRE UNITED STATES WITH THE EXCEPTION OF AN EMPLOYEE IN THE IDENT DIVISION ASSIGNED THERE TO HANDLE TELEGRAPHIC REQUESTS FOR IDENT RECORDS FROM POLICE DEPARTMENTS. IN LATER YEARS, AS AN AGENT, AND HEARING SOME BITCHING ABOUT REQUIRED OVERTIME, I OFTEN THOUGHT BACK TO THE ABOVE YEARS WHEN AS \$1800 CLERKS WE WERE WORKING 364 DAYS A YEAR, AND GOING TO COLLEGE AT THE SAME TIME. AS COMPENSATION FOR THE OVERTIME HOURS WE WERE PERMITTED TO BRING OUR BOOKS AND STUDY WHEN NOT OCCUPIED WITH OUR ASSIGNED DUTIES. CAN YOU PICTURE AN \$1800 A YEAR CLERK STUDYING IN THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE? I CAN BECAUSE I WAS THERE.

BEGINNING WITH THE KANSAS CITY MASSACRE IN 1933, THE PASSAGE OF THE KIDNAPING ACT AND THE CRIME BILLS OF 1934 THE BUREAU ENTERED WHAT HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS THE "GANGSTER ERA". WITH THE EXPANSION OF JURISDICTION AND THE WAVE OF KIDNAPING AND OTHER CRIMES TAKING PLACE THE NUMBER OF AFTER HOUR TELEPHONE CALLS WHICH WE RECEIVED INCREASED GREATLY AND WE WERE PRIVY TO ONGOING DEVELOPMENTS IN MANY MAJOR CASES UNDER INVESTIGATION. A MOST INTERESTING JOB AND REWARDING US FOR THE OVERTIME WE PUT IN. SOME EXAMPLES OF THE CALLS I RECEIVED DURING THAT TIME WERE:

SUNDAY NIGHT, JULY 22, 1934 I RECEIVED THE TELEPHONE CALL FROM MELVIN PURVIS THAT DILLINGER HAD BEEN KILLED. I IMMEDIATELY TELEPHONED THE DIRECTOR AT HOME AND HE CAME DOWN TO THE OFFICE TO HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE. I HANDLED THE CALLS TO THE VARIOUS REPRESENTATIVES WHO IMMEDIATELY CAME OVER

1933

LABOR DAY IN 1934 I RECEIVED A TELEPHONE CALLS FROM FRANK BLAKE, SAC AT DALLAS, WHO IN HIS TEXAS DRAWL SAID "YOU BETTER LET THE DIRECTOR KNOW THAT HARVEY BAILEY ESCAPED FROM THE DALLAS COUNTY JAIL LAST NIGHT". BAILEY WAS ONE OF THE CHARLES URSCHEL KIDNAPERS. THE DIRECTOR CAME DOWN IMMEDIATELY ALONG WITH HAROLD NATHAN AND I HAD TO PLACE CALLS TO ALL FIELD OFFICES. BAILEY WAS CAPTURED/A SHORT TIME, I BELIEVE SOMEWHERE IN TEXAS.

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ON NOVEMBER 27, 1934, AFTER THE GUN BATTLE AT BARRINGTON, ILL. WITH "BABY FACE" NELSON, THE DIRECTOR ASKED ME TO CONTINUE TO STAY ON DUTY THAT NIGHT TO RECEIVE ANY WORD ABOUT SAM COWLEY WHO HAD BEEN SEVERELY WOUNDED. I RECEIVED THE TELEPHONE CALL FROM MELVIN PURVIS AT 3:00 AM, THE MORNING OF NOVEMBER 28TH, THAT COWLEY HAD DIED, AND CALLED THE DIRECTOR AT HOME WITH THE SAD NEWS.

I WAS PARTICULARLY SADDENED BY COWLEY'S DEATH AS WE HAD BECOME QUITE FRIENDLY WHEN HE WAS BROUGHT IN FROM THE FIELD TO SERVE AS HAROLD NATHAN'S ASSISTANT IN 1934. HE HAD A SMALL OFFICE, NEXT TO THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE AND OFTEN WORKED LATE IN THE EVENING AND WE HAD A MUTUAL INTEREST IN THE SIGMA CHI FRATERNITY TO WHICH WE BOTH BELONGED. I ALSO HAD MANY CONTACTS WITH HIM TO FURNISH INFORMATION COMING IN BY TELEPHONE AFTER HOURS ON CASES HE WAS SUPERVISING. ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HAROLD NATHAN WAS SENT TO SAM'S FUNERAL IN UTAH TO REPRESENT THE DIRECTOR. MY RECOLLECTION OF THE LAST SENTENCE OF NATHAN'S EULOGY AT THE SERVICE WAS "WE NOW SAY GOOD BYE TO YOU SAM, ON THIS YOUR LAST INVESTIGATION INTO THE GREAT UNKNOWN".

AFTER COWLEY HAD BEEN SENT BACK TO THE FIELD IN 1934 TO SUPERVISE THE DILLINGER CASE, EDWARD TAMM WAS BROUGHT IN FROM PITTSBURGH, WHERE HE HAD BEEN SAC, TO TAKE COWLEY'S PLACE AS NATHAN'S ASSISTANT. I ALSO BECAME WELL ACQUAINTED WITH HIM IN MUCH THE SAME WAY.

THE BUREAU DID NOT HAVE A TELETYPE IN THOSE EARLY YEARS. THE ONLY OTHER MEANS OF COMMUNICATION WAS BY TELEGRAM. WE HAD THE ADDITIONAL DUTY OF RECEIVING THOSE AND RELAYING THE INFORMATION TO THE PROPER BUREAU OFFICIAL. WE ALSO HAD TO RELAY TO THE PERSON IN THE IDENTIFICATION DIVISION ANY TELEGRAPHIC REQUESTS FOR RECORDS FROM POLICE DEPARTMENTS AND PREPARE THE ANSWER. MANY OF THE TELEGRAMS RECEIVED FROM THE FIELD OFFICES (GO TO
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WERE IN A CODE THE BUREAU USED AND WE HAD TO DECODE THEM. DURING THE INVESTIGATION OF THE LINDBERGH CASE, FOR EXAMPLE, THE DIRECTOR WANTED A TELEGRAPH SUMMARY SENT IN DAILY. THE TELEGRAMS WOULD BE THREE OR FOUR PAGES LONG AND WE HAD TO DECODE THEM AND CALL THE DIRECTOR AND NATHAN AND READ THE CONTENTS.

AS I PREVIOUSLY INDICATED, DUE TO THE FACT WE WERE THE ONLY EMPLOYEES ON DUTY AT THE BUREAU DURING THE PERIODS MENTIONED WE WERE OFTEN REFERRED TO AS THE "NIGHT DIRECTORS". TO MY KNOWLEDGE, I AM THE ~~ONE OF THE LAST~~ *ONE OF THE LAST STILL LIVING* OTHERS WHO WORKED IN THAT CAPACITY, BEFORE ME, WITH ME OR AFTER ME, WERE WALTER GRAY, ROBERT L. MOORE AND AL SCHLENKER, ALL OF WHOM BECAME AGENTS BUT ARE NOW DECEASED. ONE OTHER WAS HOWARD KENNEDY WHO WENT BACK TO OMAHA TO PRACTICE LAW AFTER RECEIVING HIS LAW DEGREE AND WHO PASSED AWAY SEVERAL YEARS AGO. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, CHARLES SCHILDECKER IS THE ONLY OTHER ONE LIVING - HE WENT ON TO BECOME AN AGENT AND NOW LIVES IN FLORIDA. SEVERAL RATHER AMUSING INCIDENTS OCCURRED DURING THOSE YEARS.

IN EARLY 1933 MELVIN PURVIS WAS IN A CONFERENCE WITH THE DIRECTOR AND IT CONTINUED BEYOND 5:00 PM. HELEN GANDY APPEARED AT THE DOOR OF THE MAIL ROOM AND SAID "IT'S AFTER FIVE O'CLOCK CAN'T SOMETHING BE DONE TO BREAK UP THIS CONFERENCE?" HOWARD KENNEDY, SAYING HE WOULD TAKE CARE OF IT, WENT OUTSIDE THE DIRECTOR'S DOOR AND YELLED "FIRE, FIRE". THE DOOR OPENED QUICKLY AND THE DIRECTOR ASKED US WHERE THE FIRE WAS. WE REPLIED WE WOULD CHECK IMMEDIATELY AND REPORTED BACK IT MUST HAVE BEEN A FALSE ALARM. THE FOLLOWING DAY THE DIRECTOR AT LUNCH TIME BOUGHT ~~THE~~ A TOY FIRE ENGINE AND GAVE IT TO HELEN GANDY WITH THE COMMENT THAT IT WAS FOR FUTURE EMERGENCIES. SHE HAD SQUEALED ON KENNEDY AND FROM THEN ON THE DIRECTOR CALLED HIM THE "FIRE CHIEF".

SOMETIME IN 1933 OR EARLY 1934 A RADIO PROGRAM ON FRIDAY NIGHT CALLED "GANG BUSTERS" WAS BASED ON BUREAU CASES. THE DIRECTOR REQUESTED THAT WE RECORD THEM IN THE EVENT HE DID NOT HEAR IT. THE ONLY RECORDING EQUIPMENT IN THE ENTIRE BUREAU WAS AN EDIPHONE SYSTEM ON THE DIRECTOR'S TELEPHONE OPERATED FROM GANDY'S OFFICE. TO COMPLY WITH THE DIRECTOR'S REQUEST WE HAD TO TURN ON A RADIO IN THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE, SET HIS TELEPHONE NEXT TO IT, OPEN UP THE LINE TO GANDY'S OFFICE AND START THE MACHINE. ONE EVENING BOB MOORE AND I WERE DOING JUST THAT AND LISTENING TO THE PROGRAM IN THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE, SITTING IN SEVERAL OF HIS CHAIRS, SMOKING CIGARS AND WHO SHOULD DROP IN BUT THE DIRECTOR AND TOLSON, RETURNING FROM DINNER - ONE OF THE VERY FEW TIMES THEY EVER RETURNED. THE DIRECTOR'S COMMENT AS I RECALL WAS THAT HE HAD BEEN WONDERING HOW THE SMELL OF STALE CIGAR SMOKE WAS GETTING INTO HIS OFFICE.

WHENEVER THE DIRECTOR WAS AWAY HE WOULD ALWAYS CALL IN AT NIGHT AND WE WOULD READ ANY IMPORTANT MEMOS GIVEN TO US FOR THAT PURPOSE. ONE NIGHT AL SCHLENKER WAS ON DUTY, THE DIRECTOR CALLED IN FROM CALIFORNIA AND IN THE MIDST OF AN IMPORTANT PART OF A MEMO AL WAS READING ALL THE POWER WENT OFF AND AL WAS LEFT IN THE DARK. AFTER ADVISING THE DIRECTOR, IN RESPONSE TO HIS INQUIRY, THAT HE DIDN'T HAVE ANY FLASHLIGHT OR MATCHES TO FURNISH LIGHT TO CONTINUE,

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THE DIRECTOR INSTRUCTED AL TO MAKE CERTAIN SOME TYPE OF AUXILIARY LIGHTING WOULD BE AVAILABLE IN THE FUTURE. A FLASHLIGHT FROM THEN ON WAS STANDARD EQUIPMENT FOR THE "NIGHT DIRECTOR".

AL HAD RELIEVED ME AS "NIGHT DIRECTOR" IN 1935 WHEN I WAS TRANSFERRED TO DAY DUTY AND WORKED AS AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY IN THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE HANDLING HIS APPOINTMENTS, TELEPHONE CALLS AND SPECIAL TOURS FOR VIPS. AGAIN A VERY INTERESTING POSITION, MEETING MANY WELL KNOWN PEOPLE PARTICULARLY THOSE IN THE ENTERTAINMENT FIELD COMING IN TO TOUR THE BUREAU. I CONTINUED IN THAT CAPACITY UNTIL I FINISHED LAW SCHOOL IN 1939.

IN 1939 I BECAME A SPECIAL AGENT.

I HOPE IN ALL OF THE FOREGOING RAMBLINGS YOU MIGHT FIND SOMETHING WHICH YOU THINK WOULD BE INTERESTING ENOUGH TO USE IN AN ARTICLE FOR THE GRAPEVINE. AT LEAST THIS WILL BE SOMETHING THAT WILL FIND A PLACE IN MY MEMOIRS AS MY WIFE HAS BEEN TRYING TO HAVE ME PUT DOWN ON PAPER ALL OF THE FOREGOING WHICH SHE HAS HEARD ORALLY, MANY TIMES.

MANY THANKS AGAIN FOR ALL YOUR COOPERATION IN THE PAST,

FOND REGARDS,

Charlie.

P.S. NATALIE THINKS I SHOULD MENTIONED SOME OF THE NOTABLES I MET IN THE PERIOD FROM 1935 TO 1939 WHILE HANDLING SPECIAL TOURS AND THE DIRECTOR'S APPOINTMENTS, SO HERE THEY ARE. IN THE ENTERTAINMENT WORLD - JEAN HARLOW, JAMES CAGNEY, PAT O'BRIEN, SHIRLEY TEMPLE, WALTER PIDGEON, VICTOR MOORE, BILLY GAXTON, BEN BERNIE, GUY LOMBARDO, TED LEWIS AND MANY OTHERS WHOSE NAMES ESCAPE ME. ALSO WALTER WINCHELL, COURTNEY RYLEY COOPER, WHO WROTE THE DIRECTOR'S FIRST BOOK "PERSONS IN HIDING", ELEANOR ROOSEVELT AND ALL THE ROOSEVELT CHILDREN.