

July 25, 1950

IFG-1

(Mr. Donegan)

Bentley

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E L I Z A B E T H B E N T L E Y , called as a
witness, having first been duly sworn by the
Foreman, testified as follows:

BY MR. DONEGAN:

Q Miss Bentley, will you give your residence address?
A It is care of my publishers, Mr. Donegan.

Q All right, give it that way. A Care of the
Devin Adair Publishing Company.

Q ^New York City? A That is 23 East 26th Street,
New York City.

Q Miss Bentley, I have previously examined you,
on a number of occasions, before Federal Grand Juries, and
you understand that this is a Federal Grand Jury and you
are here in response to a request, and a subpoena has been
served upon you since your arrival - - is that correct?

A Yes.

Q I would like also to repeat for the record,
Miss Bentley, as I have told you on a number of occasions
before, that you have the right to refuse to answer any
question if you believe that the answer to the question
might incriminate or degrade you. You understand that,
don't you? A Yes.

Q Now, Miss Bentley, the Grand Jury is interested
in hearing your testimony concerning your association with
Abraham Brothman. Particularly, I would like to question
you as to when you first met Abe Brothman. A I would say

it was the fall of 1939 or early in 1940, roughly. It is a long time ago, and I can't be absolutely certain of the date.

Q And how did you meet him - will you explain in your own words the circumstances? A I was introduced to him by Jacob N. Golos, who was my superior in the Russian Secret Police; and he told me that Abe was a Communist Party member, and that he had information that was valuable, and that he thought I could take care of him as a contact.

Q At that time you were engaged in activities as an espionage agent, is that correct? A Well, I suppose technically it was. Actually, I don't think I had come into any espionage then.

Q Well, will you briefly, in a few words, explain to this Grand Jury what you mean by that. In other words, you were working for Golos, or you were making some contacts for him, ^{but} you say later on you came into active espionage work? A Well, I had been a member of the Communist Party since March, 1935, but in October, 1938, after I had taken a position with the Italian Library of Information, which was a branch of the Italian Propaganda Ministry in this country, I was put what you call "underground" in this country.

I no longer attended regular Communist meetings, and I had one contact, and when that job was finished I

continued on with this contact, meeting people for him - - Mexicans and Canadians, and so on.

I think the first person I had that gave any information was probably Abraham Brothman. It was later on in 1941, after Germany attacked Russia, that I actually went into what is technically called espionage - that is, handling Communists who were placed in high positions in the United States Government.

Q And you would obtain information from them, and transmit it to your superiors, who were representatives of the Soviet Government, is that correct? A That's correct, yes, sir.

Q Now, you had a number of meetings with Brothman, is that correct? A Yes. I generally met him about every week; sometimes it might be every two weeks.

Q Where did you meet him? A Oh, in various localities. I met him in front of a Chinese Restaurant on 33rd Street, between 6th and 7th Avenue; and then that had a fire and burned down. Then I met him in front of that Automat on 8th Avenue and 33rd Street. I met him in front of the Mosler Safe Company on 5th Avenue, and I believe 32nd Street, I am not sure exactly.

Q Were these meeting places selected for the purpose of avoiding any possible scrutiny? A Oh, definitely. We agreed to meet where I wasn't known and where he wasn't known.

Q And at these meetings did Brothman turn over to you some blueprints, plans, or notes or drawings, or anything else of that sort? A They were blueprints of kettles, which I understand were a form of commercial vat, but I am not much more enlightened on that. Sometimes he got duplicates and gave them to me. They were labeled with the name of the company that made them, and with the name of the company for whom they were being made.

And sometimes he couldn't get duplicates, and so I had to go around and find a blueprinting shop that made duplicates, and then return the originals to him. I used to go down to a little shop on Liberty Street, and then there was one on 42nd Street that made duplicates.

Q Did you have any conversation with Brothman to the effect that this information was going to the Russians? A I remember once he asked me if the Amtorg people liked what they were getting.

Q Did you ever identify yourself to him as one who had worked for the Amtorg? A No, I never had. I was introduced to him as his Communist Party superior, and he was to give me dues and information.

Q Did he give you his Communist Party dues? A Yes, he did.

Q On how many occasions, would you say? A That would be hard to say. It wasn't every week, but it might be roughly every month.

Q Did you give him receipts for the payment of dues?

A Yes, I did. But they were not made out in his name, like all of our people; they were made out to "A Friend."

Q Did he give you any other sums of money, outside of money identified as his Communist Party dues? A No, I don't think so.

Q Did you ever pay him any money? A I never paid him any money. I don't know whether Mr. Golos did or not, but I personally didn't.

Q Now, will you tell the Grand Jury approximately when you last saw Abraham Brothman? A I would say probably it was in the fall, early fall of 1941.

Q You have previously identified photographs, before Grand Juries, of Abraham Brothman, isn't that correct?

A Yes, I have.

Q And there is no question in your mind as to his identity? A Yes. At least, I think it was before a Grand Jury, Mr. Donegan. I have identified it several places, and I am not quite sure it was before a Grand Jury.

Q My recollection is that it was before a Grand Jury. Now, did you have a conversation with Abe Brothman to the effect that you were going to place him in contact with another individual? A Yes, I did.

Q Will you give that conversation, to the best of your recollection, to the Grand Jury? A Well, I was told by Mr. Golos that his superior had decided that Abraham

Brothman should be put in contact with someone who knew more about engineering and chemistry than either of us did; and therefore I was to tell Abe that he was to be turned over to another contact.

Well, he didn't like the idea, and he complained very bitterly, and I finally had to bring Mr. Golos to see him and the two of us ^{finally} convinced him that he had to do that.

Finally, when we got him adjusted to the idea, he was told to give me the license number of his car. On a few occasions he drove his car into town, and sometimes he didn't, but on this occasion he was to come with his car and I was to be given the license number, and he was to park somewhere in 27th or 28th Street, somewhere along in between, I think, 7th and 8th Avenues, in the early evening, and an individual was to come along and climb into the car. That was to be the method of identification.

Q Did you have any conversations with him subsequent to his meeting with this individual? A Yes. I believe that some months after he was in contact with this new man, he called me up and said he had lost his contact.

Q Did you receive any information as to the identity of this new man? A No, I didn't. Neither Golos nor I were supposed to know who he was. That is

the way the system operated.

Q With reference to this new man, did you turn over the information on the license number of the car to Golos? A Yes, I turned it over to Golos, who told me that he would turn it over to his superior, and would arrange the meeting. Then I was told to set the date with Abe, and then to relay that back.

Q Did you give Brothman any information or any code words, as to how he could identify this new contact?

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A I think, as I remember it, they had a -- one was to say one thing and one another. But offhand, I don't remember. We have done it with so many people, I don't remember.

Q Were there any names used for the purposes of identification, any first names or last names? A As I remember, he had known me as "Helen." As I remember it, the man would make some reference to "Helen." But I don't remember the exact phraseology of it.

Q In other words, your recollection is that this man was to identify himself to Brothman by using your first name, "Helen"? A Yes.

Q Which is not your true first name, but the name -- A No; that was the name I used mostly with those contacts.

Q And you say that subsequently Brothman told you that he had lost his contact with this new man? A Yes.

Q What did he want you to do, or what did he ask you to do? A Well, he wanted to be put back in touch, and I just told Golos about it and he took care of it.

Q Did Brothman subsequently report to you that he had been recontacted? A No. That was the last time.

Q You never had any contact with Brothman since that time? A No, I never have seen Brothman since then.

Q Have you ever heard of the name Harry Gold or the last name Kessler as being the contact that you arranged with Brothman? A Not from anything within the apparatus, no.

Q And when did you first hear of the name Harry Gold

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or identify it as being the individual -- A Oh, I can't remember when the FBI told me about it.

Q You heard it through the FBI? A Yes. But I don't recall when.

Q Did you ever give any instructions to Brothman as to what type of information he was to obtain for the Russians?

A He was told to bring interesting blueprints. And I remember in one case the firm was about to make kettles, I think -- is it the Edgewater Arsenal? Is it Edgewater?

Q Yes. A Edge-- something Arsenal, was to make kettles for it, and I know that interested Mr. Golos very much and he insisted on producing those. Now, when I left him he hadn't that far produced these particular blueprints. I don't know if subsequently they were passed over or not.

Q Did you ever have any conversation with Brothman, wherein he was instructed that he should only turn over industrial or commercial information? A No. Mr. Golos saw him off and on himself; he might have done so. But I don't believe that Brothman had anything but commercial or industrial information.

Q Did you ever have any conversation with Brothman -- or, did Golos ever tell you that he was restricted in the type of information that he should furnish to the Russians, that Brothman was restricted in the type of information that he should furnish to the Russians? A The Russians never restricted anyone. They took whatever they could get.

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Q Was it your understanding that if Brothman brought you some information concerning national defense matters, that you were to accept it from him for the Russians?

A That was never said to me. But judging by their policy later on, I would say definitely that's probably what Golos told him.

Q At the time when you were in contact with Brothman did you consider him as being engaged in gathering information for the Russian government? A I don't know what I would have considered it at that time, because I don't think I myself was too clear on what was going on. I just took instructions and got it, and I don't think I thought too much about it.

Q Well, what I'm endeavoring to determine, Miss Bentley, is whether there was any question in your mind as to the fact that Brothman was engaged in some activities which had to be kept secret, since you were meeting on street corners and so forth, and that the activities were possibly illegal and that this gathering of information in this surreptitious manner for the Russian government was something that wasn't --

A Oh, we knew it was illegal, because I remember his saying that many times competitors of the Republic would send in people to steal blueprints and that it was an illegal offense. We knew that very definitely. I knew it was for the Communist but I don't think I connected it up with the Russians at that point.

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Q Well, beyond the sense of being illegal -- in other words, stealing under the violation of the penal law -- with reference to espionage, did you have any concept at that time that he was acting as an espionage agent? A No; because I hadn't any concept of espionage, myself, at that point. It was only in '41 that it became clearer to me.

Q Any questions by the Grand Jury?

[WITNESS EXCUSED]