

# A LOOK AT THE PAST

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## THE WAY WE WERE

### PREFACE

These reminiscences were intended initially only to give an historical glimpse into ONI's presence in Upstate New York, 1950 through evolution to NIS in 1966. The opportunity also was taken to include random bits of ONI's past learned through the FOIA and recollections of agents of those ONI years. Each of us has a story to tell. Before our ranks thin further, we should write them down or give oral histories.

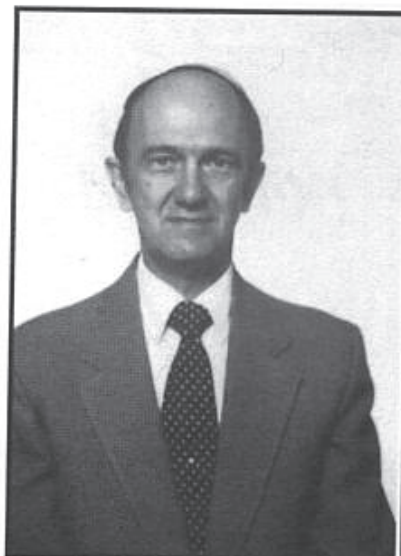
### PRELUDE

The year was 1939 and forward-looking officers in ONI recognized the need for a stable civilian investigative service. Their proposal established this cadre as OPI6-B-3 which was to be known as the NAVAL INTELLIGENCE INVESTIGATING SERVICE (NIS). The Table of Organization & Equipment had this to say about the cadre's composition:

Persons considered for such positions should not only be possessed of considerable culture, but should be of a broad-minded, understanding type, sometimes described as "men of the world." They should be practical and imaginative realists who habitually face life with a frankly analytical outlook in accomplishing their purposes. (Underscoring in original.)

An independent source of income is just as desirable, and perhaps more necessary, for executives of the secret service as it is for Naval Attaches.

There had been civilian investigative billets within ONI before, variously labeled "CADIO" (Civilian Assistant to the District Intelligence Officer) at least as early as 1930; "Confidential Employee" at least as early as 1938; "Contract Agent," "Agent," and "Special Agent." In 1930, the DIO-3ND CADIO was referred to as "Detective" and even "Secret Agent." In 1938, a Contract Agent-turned-Soviet spy was identified in a celebrated espionage case as a DIO- "Confidential Informant." (Contract Agent was correct.) The CADIO billets remained into the 1960s, their seats at the right hands of the DIOs. By then they seemed more the sinecures and no one quite knew what they did. "Contract Agents" ended only when the agent corps was assumed entirely and at once into civil service in 1966 (excepted). There was a certain hairsplitting about who was an "agent" and who was a "Special Agent." Agents were said then to be the creations of the DIOs who had them under contract with ONI's blessing. "Special Agents" were found, it was said, only at ONI's headquarters. Somewhere along the line the distinction blurred but at least through the 1950s new DIO hires were taken on as "agents." Special Agent status attached after a several-months probationary period, with cre-



dentials from -ONI issued usually sometime after six months.

Arguably the most storied, very early agent was Robert

J. Peterkin (aka: Detective Peterkin, CADIO Peterkin, and even a reference to "secret agent" Peterkin - the latter has a certain resonance) of DIO-3ND. Hired about the

time of World War I, the writer met him in 1957 when he held an advisory or liaison billet in the office of the Admiral commanding 3ND. He retired in early 1958, replaced by Special Agent Bob Martin. A most startling revelation about Peterkin was published years after his death by Jeffrey N. Dorwart in the Naval Institute Press in 1983, in a book titled CONFLICT OF DUTY. Dorwart writes that the DIO, LCDR Glenn Howell, USN, and his "civilian assistant, Robert J. Peterkin, a former police inspector," in early 1930 under direct orders from President Herbert Hoover delivered out of government channels by an intermediary, "a trusted Wall Street banker," broke and entered the Democratic Party's New York City headquarters searching for documents prejudicial to the President. In his private diary Howell wrote, "a devilish awkward job." Dorwart writes, "...DIO had already participated in several undercover operations-including the breaking and entering of offices occupied by local Communist Party and Japanese Consular agents." DIO-3ND was chosen for Hoover's job because it was considered more "leak proof" than other contemporary agencies. No incriminating evidence was found and word went back to the President that he need not worry about the "ham-and-egger" Democratic Party hack who had run the office. (See pages 3-6 in CONFLICT OF DUTY for an intriguing account.)

Another prominent early agent was Wayne Masterson who on 1 August 1938 was hired as a "Confidential Employee" of CAPTAIN (later, Admiral) Ellis ZACHARIAS, then Assistant DIO-11ND, San Diego. Pay was \$1,680 per annum "salary and expenses," and credentials were not issued. He was an expert in radical and subversive activities, and had "an extensive knowledge of all phases of Communist and Socialist activities." He also had a Chinese language capability. On 3 April 1940, his status was changed to "Special Employee" under indefinite contract. By December 1943 he was earning \$3,600 per annum. He was "terminated (honorably)" on 15 May 1945, the last entry in his file (a 5"x7" card at NIS). He was employed mainly as an "undercover man," ONI's premier source



involved in labor, subversive, and espionage investigations. The file is silent on whether credentials ever were issued. (Name surfaced in a WWII report.)

Hafis Salich was a DIO-11ND contract agent (also mislabeled a "paid informant" and "confidential informant") who during 1937 and 1938 sold classified information on a continuing basis to Soviet spy Mikhail Gorin. Salich received a total of \$1,700. On 12 December 1938, both were charged by the U.S. Attorney, Los Angeles, with violation of Title 50, Section 32, USCA, and prosecution was authorized. Initially, both were remanded to jail in default of \$25,000 bonds. Significantly, the Soviets were very concerned with collecting intelligence on West Coast Japanese.

Salich made a full confession. Trial was set for 21 February 1939. (Results unknown to writer.) Records pertaining to Salich's employment as a contract agent were missing from NIS files when checked about 1980. Details and certainty of his employment, however, are abundantly clear in the investigative reporting. These reports also provide a potent background of the mix of intelligence interests and Soviet spying on our West Coast in pre-World War II days. The case file also provides a classic assessment of character defects and financial needs that made Salich particularly vulnerable to recruitment as a spy for the Soviets. Until about 1943, ONI was the agency responsible for tracking Japanese activities in the United States. It is understandable, then, that the Soviets would seek to penetrate ONI. A forgotten chapter in our history. (FOIA release.)

There are other forgotten chapters in our history, an intriguing one concerns ONI and DIO-3ND involvement with the initial investigation of German saboteurs who landed by submarine on Long Island, 13 June 1942. Intelligence summaries were provided to the FBI. Detailed debriefing of German planners after the war set forth German personnel problems and high-level doubts prior to launching the operations. (FOIA release.)

West Coast relocation of Japanese in World War II: The "U.S. Naval Intelligence Service," DIO-11ND, reported extensively on pro-Japanese sympathies, planned and outright thugery, and disobedience in relocation camps. First generation Japanese as well as those of the second generation educated in Japan were identified by DIO-11ND assets undercover in the camps as having organized for the purpose of fomenting strikes, disputes, terrorizing, and causing discontent among evacuees. These assets were Japanese informers loyal to the United States, incurring considerable risk to life and limb. Visiting consular officials of neutral Spain~ visited the camps and were used to transmit intelligence to the Axis. A few Nisei who refused induction into the armed forces were sentenced to prison. (FOIA release.)

As the investigative arm of ONI morphed into a civilianized agency following World War II, increasingly gone were the naval officers who had rotated into the billets as steps on their career ladders. Investigations from the 1920s and 1930s era show young lieutenants in what were, or were to become, the agent billets. Old war-time and earlier records were destroyed. Serious hir-

ing of civilian agents began about 1950 with irregular increments, a few here and there, through about 1958 with the next significant increment in the early 1960s, particularly the 1962-1965 range. With the coming of FOIA in the mid-1970s, researchers in particular deluged the FBI for historical records. Through the decades, ONI had disseminated copies of intelligence and SEC reports to the FBI which carded the names and marked the reports for permanent retention. ONI reports, some dating to World War One and to Josephus Daniels (SECNAV) of the early 1920s, were returned to NIS for processing, thus affording another glimpse into ONI's illustrious past. NIS declassified and released these old historical jewels. More's the pity that FOIA law did not permit reintroduction of the material into NIS Central Files, instead the material was committed to NIS FOIA files to be destroyed after five years. With proper references, the material can still be accessed at the FBI. Names and subject matter are all that is required (and a willingness to pay for reproduction costs).

#### *DIO-3ND, Upstate New York*

There was a presence in Upstate New York before the first resident agent office was opened in Buffalo in 1950. A WWII holdover at DIO-3ND HO, S/A George Tarbox, said that when the caseload built up before 1950 he "would throw a bunch of cases in the back seat" and head there for "three or four weeks."

In early 1950, S/A Arnold W. Colgrove opened the first office Upstate at the USNRTC, Buffalo. In November 1950, S/A Donald N. Wilcox was assigned to Syracuse with an office at the USNRTC, Liverpool. Between these dates, S/A Gerald Woolsey was assigned to Scotia, near Schenectady, with an office at the USN Correspondence Course Center. All were WWII veterans. Colgrove had a side interest in real estate. Wilcox and Woolsey were retired lieutenants of the NY State Police. Wilcox had been a member of a group of troopers commissioned as warrant officers who had formed the nucleus of a Naval Intelligence Unit in New York City with the mission to identify Japanese who would be a threat in case of war. (Indeed, the unit went into action on December 8, 1941 rounding up these Japanese.) The civilian agent billets at DIO-3ND after the war included several war-time ONI personnel. The most storied of these post-war agents, a legend in his own time, was the late Harry C. Durand who became Supervising Agent in early 1957. He also had been a NY State Police trooper out of the Malone Barracks, Troop B. He deserves special mention for having overseen ONI's expanded mission Upstate. Harry evoked deep loyalties, saw things the way they were, and when he called you "lad" you would glow all over and do anything for him.

In 1956, S/A George W. Gurnee was detailed to Binghamton, and in May 1958 SRA William C. O'Riley was detailed to Utica; both reporting to SRA Wilcox, Syracuse. In the early 1950s, S/A Tom Hausherr was detailed to Buffalo, and in early 1956 S/A Frank Lynch to Scotia to replace S/A Bert Carson; In the early 1950s, agents from DIO-3ND had



been assigned tours Upstate; however it was realized that to BE happy there you had to have roots there. Thus it was that agents were recruited purposely from the locales in which they were to serve. Supervising Agent Durand would direct, in effect, "Do your own recruiting. We don't have an extra body to send. Find someone and we'll have him screened and do the BI." We did just that, too, and recruited, among others, a Latin teacher, a hardware merchant, a ~WWII Bomber Pilot,

a professional photographer, and, from a university laboratory a technician. None had a law-enforcement background. All were stalwart men, productive, and inured to North Country winters. We thought it was an enlightened personnel policy at its best and who is to say it was not? The practice continued until January 1968 when the SRA at Utica was transferred under the new order out of NISHO featuring "the 12 list." The rank and file were transferred into the new Defense Investigative Service in 1972 which was created to assume the mission for all background investigations within DOD. That's another whole story some day for the campfire circle.. At peak strength there were 14 agents assigned Upstate in the mid-1960s, five out of Buffalo and nine out of Utica. One "Upstater" went on to greater things, S/A J. Brian McKee who became DIRNIS. His billet was in the legendary RA#4.

Upstate resident agencies were organized approximately along troop borders of the NY State Police - theirs alphabetical and DIO-3ND's numerical. RA#1, Buffalo; RA#2, Rochester; RA#3, Syracuse; RA#4, Scotia; RA#5, Westchester County (also: RA#6, Garden City; RA#7, Newark; RA#10, Hartford (including New London); IU9, New York City waterfront). RA#2 was only conceptual; its geography came under RA#1 from the start, but as many as three agents were assigned to Rochester at any one time. There was a brief unsatisfactory interlude about 1954 or 1955, in the days of manual Underwood typewriters, when yeomen were assigned Upstate. Before and after that, clerical support was at DIO-3ND HQ. About 1963 or 1964, civilian GS-4 secretaries were assigned to RAs #1 and #3. Nearly all agents worked out of their homes and had mailboxes in places like Saratoga, Rome, Herkimer, Binghamton, Endicott, Rochester, and Scotia. Mailed assignments from DIO-3ND went first to the SRAs who repackaged cases and leads as appropriate for the field agents. Secretaries made the administrative work easier. You recruited your own secretaries and processed them for clearances. In this manner, one was a graduate of secretarial school who also had worked as a fashion model which didn't hurt a bit when she applied. Upon appointment, a steely-voiced Assistant Supervising Agent said, "All right, if you are sure you know what you are doing." There was a fear factor that maybe it wasn't all right, but that dissipated when she proved to be outstanding and later went on to a managerial billet in the new expanded mission of things at NISHQ. So, a good call.

Before placement Upstate, newly hired agents were required to spend six months in training at DIO-3ND in Pay Grade 7, at the end of which you were promoted to PG-8 (and six

months after that to PG-9). There was no further training Upstate, per se, notwithstanding annual .38 calibre qualifications at borrowed police ranges. Syracuse had the best range. Some agents reported aboard without weapons, the writer was not issued one for at least two years. Reality, after all, was ringing doorbells and pursuing the "H/L/T/RecPot" questions, not criminal investigations.

In July 1966, upon the retirement of Supervising Agent Durand, his replacement said forthwith, "Get rid of those numbers, now!" And, we became at once O3BF, O3UT, etc.

### THE MISSION UPSTATE

That offices were established Upstate had to do with industrial clearance requirements on classified research and development projects, like the Sidewinder Missile and the swept-wing F-111A fighter. General Electric was the major player with facilities with stirring names like Heavy Military Electronics Department and Light Military Electronics Department strung out along the State's east-west axis and south to Binghamton. The INSMATs oversaw clearances and facility security. One SEA railed at the unfairness of INSMAT's having a better grade structure (which was true). INSMAT also had cognizance over a lot of defense R&D at Griffiss AFB. Another major player was the Knowles Atomic Power Laboratory, GE, Schenectady. There was a Nuclear Power Training Unit above Schenectady at Balston Spa where nuclear submarine crews were trained. Case work there was scanty, an occasional 6-J case or barracks theft and once even a marijuana case! The Supervising Agent's direction sometimes was, "Go and see what the CO wants. Get statements and give them to him with a briefing. We are not initiating a "case pending." That would have diluted the BI mission and taken up more time than it was worth. He used to say words to the effect, "Besides, they're just pinning medals on these guys now and honorably discharging them." A "BI" was something a man could get his teeth into. "BI" later conformed to the industry-wide "PSI," but then everyone knew that, didn't they?

By 1957 there were 60 or so agent billets in DIO-3ND. Agents at DIO-3ND HQ were apportioned among four squads headed by a squad leader, PG-10 or PG-11. Three squads were dedicated to the normal run of investigations. The fourth, the elite "3 Squad" was exclusively concerned with Category 3 investigations. Agents in the squads were first-year PG-7s and 8s and PG-9 or 10 journeymen. A few agents did hold coveted special billets. The Supervising Agent was PG-12 and his assistant PG-11. SRAs and agents in the numbered RAs by 1958 were limited to PG-9s. Promotion to PGs 10 and 11 was governed by ONI's observance of the "pyramid" which dictated that half of the corps would remain at PG-9 or lower, and promotion was not automatic but required passing an exhaustive and much feared examination from ONI HQ put together by diabolical examiners on arcane points such as describing how you would organize a Category 3 investigation or requiring almost a verbatim recitation of the Delimitations Agreement. You HAD to know that!. Some agents were old World War II hands



while others generally came from police and various investigative ranks. There was an all-hands (over one year's service) in September 1958, the highest scorers receiving promotions to PG-10 or 11.

The writer's personal story follows~ Recruited Upstate for a billet Upstate, numerical replacement for a disgruntled agent who had gone to 90 Church Street and thrown his credentials at the DIO. File was lost somewhere and 18 months passed before a billet was offered. Hired in 1957, PG-7, \$4,790 per annum, a princely sum in those days. Sworn in on a Monday and was working BIs alone on the street on Wednesday. Having been a police officer was told that should know how to conduct interviews, and taking statements was something any officer should know how to do. Another trainee who identified himself to interviewees only by badge ("New Yorkers respect the badge") a while later spent a day showing the writer the system. In fairness, he was an outstanding interviewer and interrogator. One "heavy" Category 3 investigation was assigned in the "coming of age" spirit. As the one assigned to the writer had an origin that exceeded three years, the NAC and LACs had to be redone. Three years was not that unusual. Emphasis was put on not letting investigations get over a year old, but this one had slipped by. The Supervising Agent's secretary said in 1955 when she came aboard there were five-year old investigations still waiting to be worked. So, three years really was progress. The first thing you did was to check whether the subject was alive and, if so, did he still need the clearance. And so, when the "3" was done the writer was released~ to go Upstate.

#### ON CREDENTIALS

The agents of today might find it difficult to believe how casually some things were done yesterday. The writer's first credential was a short typed paragraph under DIO-3ND letterhead informing that the named bearer was authorized to conduct investigations. Fold it up and put it in your breast pocket. The jaded businessmen of Wall Street must have thought the bearer was REALLY special. The following week a white encased card about the size of today's credit card, sans photograph signed by the DIO was issued. Given the alternative the former probably was the better of the two. About two weeks later, "agent" credentials with photograph were issued: a well traveled, limp faux leather case with sort of a yellowed plastic window for the one-sided ID within. You were identified as an "agent." At the nine-month gestation the permanent credentials arrived from ONI HQ. They said "Special Agent," and a proud moment it was, too, and thus the probationary status passed. Prominent signature of the authorizing ONI officer was (fnu) BROMLEY, and many's the person upon seeing it referred to the writer as "Mr. BROMLEY." It became a joke among the time's "BROMLEY agents."

#### ON PAY

Pay was twice per month which meant sometimes three weeks could go by. DIO-3ND's paymaster was "C. Benz" who

hand-wrote the checks on ordinary bank issue. No mention of the government. You had to set up an account somewhere and convince the bank's office you were legitimate. You were not supposed to let anyone outside of official business know you were with Naval Intelligence and that created a problem with schools for children and stores where you wanted credit. The Supervising Agent wrote a special letter to the writer's bank certifying employment when the writer applied for a mortgage.

It was June 1958 and government employees had not had a pay raise in eight years. Congress passed a modest pay raise but it was vetoed by President Eisenhower. Not to worry, however, because Congress overrode the veto, only the second time the President was overridden in his eight years in office. DIO-3ND's highest paid position had been the Supervising Agent, PG-12, at about \$8,000 per annum. Pay Grade 9(1) now was approaching a lofty \$6,000 which seemed like a lot of money, and it was.

#### ON VEHICLES

Into 1959, the main fleet of vehicles in DIO-3ND had the moniker "gray ghosts," 1950 chevrolts cast off by other more affluent activities, like recruiters. An Upstate agent complained that his ghost, showing 98,000 miles and asthmatic, just had to be turned in. The servicing 3ND garage in New York City issued another sorry old ghost with 99,000 miles in worse shape. The agent was devastated, but there soon came a time when consumption overtook the gray ghosts, they coughed their last, and were replaced by a sorry variety of other cast-off clunkers. In 1959, some Corvairs ("unsafe at any price") entered the fleet, to be replaced in 1960 by Falcons, both contract rather than Navy-owned vehicles. The Corvairs' heating systems likely as not didn't work and the transmissions in the Falcons had a history of freezing up. Both had horrible maintenance records and mercifully were returned to the contractors. In mid-1965, RA#3's fleet was running on bald tires, there being no money for replacements, and the brakes on two were so bad the agents were afraid to drive them. Deus ex machina! ONI came through at the end of the fiscal year with funds for tires and brakes. Of course, no seat belts, no air conditioning, no radios, no emergency kits, etc. There came a short time when a few new Dodges were procured which elevated the spirits, but that mistake was not repeated.

#### ON VANS

In 1965, the Upstate has received several vans, big boxy black, ugly abortions, difficult to drive, harder to maintain, impossible to park, and incomprehensible to often bemused others ONI's penurious ways. One heard the vans were gotten cheap, or even as a gift. Perennially short of cash, ONI was glad to get them. Parked on an incline they were prone to leaking gas. One agent, short in stature, complained he had trouble reaching the pedals. He resigned, blaming the van in part for his disaffection. The vans were assigned according to case production. The more you closed the less likely you were to get one. The DIO's XO compiled a monthly list of the unlucky agents. The



agents then mustered at interstate rest areas to switch sedans and vans. Was it punitive? Perhaps. Let's say it was the only fair way. (Tongue in cheek on that one.)

In the annals of ONI, one of the best stories, one about a van, came out of DIO-3ND which also had a ration. The account was told at a command performance at an ONI seminar attended by the writer. It was a rapt audience of senior people including ONI's top civilian, PG-15 C.R. (Dick) Wilson. DIO-3nd had been levied to supply two agents as part of the Secret Service detail providing security for Secretary of Defense MacNamara who landed by helicopter atop a building in downtown Manhattan. The USSS and others in the detail failed to show, leaving only our agents. The senior agent approached Secretary MacNamara and offered assistance. He requested a ride Uptown to an appointment. When he saw the van in which he was to ride, he declined and instead had the agents hail a cab. Our agent in the retelling remarked to the effect, "And there went one of the most powerful men in the world alone in a cab disappearing up the road, without a protective detail." The Secretary survived and not long after that the vans joined the gray ghosts in the junkyard of history. We would have liked to think that Secretary MacNamara said something to somebody about vans and professionalism being a poor mix. The incident probably had the unintended consequence, a favorable one, of calling attention to ONI's needs. When it came to automobiles it seems ONI was forever the Navy's poor relative.

"Poor relative" is a label that seemed to stick. As an aside but relevant neither to contract agents nor to Upstate, in 1971 before the RIF the vehicle fleet in DIO-9ND, presumably as elsewhere, was virtually grounded except for the emergencies for the simple lack of gasoline. No money. Agents in some locations took to driving their own cars at their own expense. One enterprising SRA would send three or four agents out in a single car, dropping them off along the way to do leads the old-fashioned way, walking, the driver then proceeding on to the farthest point to conduct business before picking up the "walkers" on the return home. So, even five years after NIS was born it was still the poor relative. The writer that year conducted an exit interview of a promising young agent whose valedictory was, "I can't wait another five years for NIS to work out its future." He cited vehicles and a dismal prospect for promotion as his major complaints.

#### *RA#3 MOVES TO UTICA*

Upon the retirement of SRA Wilcox, RA#3 was moved from Syracuse to Utica in April 1965. No expenses. Do it yourself. The USMCRTC let us have a "6-by" and driver for a day. We took a desk, the IBM electric typewriter, three filing cabinets and a few supplies from the office, cumshawed three desks and chairs from INSMAT, old stuff being surveyed anyway, and made the 50-mile trek over the NY State Thruway to Utica. Sort of like the "Okies" in the "Grapes of Wrath." The new office was a no-rent accommodation at the USNRTC, a back

room that we had to surrender on Reserve meeting nights. One telephone shared by the SRA and secretary. The Station's floor safe was another cumshaw. We designated it for TS material and evidence. That was OK because we never had either so they didn't get mixed. Classified - waste was burned daily in a barrel in the parking lot. Our own money went into small improvements and furnishings. After 18 months the Supervising Agent came by to see how things were going. He directed that a sign be placed over the door to identify us. The station keepers knew who we were. The only now-recalled visitor in three years was the NYSP Sergeant on a liaison run, responsible for monitoring subversive activities for the State in Central NY. But, there was the sign for the public to see if they wandered undetected into the station. Five dollars out of pocket for the sign. A new agent came aboard toting an Underwood manual typewriter from DIO-3ND, with instructions that if he repaired the platen at his own expense he could use it, subject, of course, to the six-month typewriter inventory. Lose those and we'd be out of business. Repair at the SRA's expense was \$9.10 which put a dent in the doughnut money for a while. That's an unreimbursed \$14.10. Mid-1960s dollars, too. With a modest interest over 38 years it would bring a tidy sum today. Still a rankle factor of "8" but down from "10" with the mellowing of the years. You paid for things like that, and that was that.

#### *SAGA OF THE PAPER CLIPS*

The parsimonious "C. Benz" doled out a few supplies from time to time from New York. We requested a few basic items to get the office up and running, things like carbon paper which the world seemed to run on, and paper pads and paper clips. If you have read this far you should read a bit further for it is the writer's (almost) favorite story on how tight things were. C. Benz cobbled together a few supplies and said that to save the expense and bother of shipping they would be delivered via a Navy recruiter on Sunday morning at the Utica Thruway Interchange. He was on his way to Buffalo and would be glad to drop them off. And verily came to pass that is how it happened. The paper clips obviously were themselves well traveled and were in a soiled brown paper lunch bag. C. Benz apparently had gone desk to desk pinching a few here and there. Thus it was that RA#3 was supplied with paper clips. The government should be grateful for the economies of C. Benz. Every office and agency, especially in these times, should have it's C. Benz. (The first name was Charlotte but she carried the honorific "Miss" before her surname and you used it when deferring to her.)

#### *ON LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE CALLS*

Don't call long distance to DIO-3ND unless it really was important and then make it collect to the Supervising Agent. His Secretary was truly a marvelous person and she had his confidence and would screen his calls and herself give you solid advice. If you needed to reach an outriding agent on a more or less routine matter, send him a memo in a franked envelope. RA#3 did not have an FTS line but the agents could place calls



from some Reserve Centers that did or manage calls from GE which always was good to us. One SRA would get himself in a stew about important things usually dealing with BI coverage, and, obeying the injunction about (unnecessary) long distance calls, would charge them to his home telephone. "G—d— it, Harry," he'd shout, "I'm paying for this call!" Maybe he thought he could shout at the Supervising Agent because he'd outranked him in the NY State Police, a lieutenant outranked a corporal any day. The SRA could vent his frustrations but the Supervising Agent won every encounter. In the world of Special Agents, a Supervising Agent outranked an SRA by a couple of stripes.

### *152s and 119s*

You would have to be aboard for almost 40 years now for these numbers to mean anything to you but "back then" they governed your life. Assignments arrived at the RA from the DIO, originated either there or on relay from ONI or other DIOs, on Form 152, the "Yellow Sheet." Maybe you know it as the NOCP. The 152 covered an SPH and provided any details on the coverage required. There also was a PHS questionnaire, a Personal History Statement, also called a "folding wonder" which included spaces for information about your grandparents and a subject photograph. You learned soon enough what coverage was to be afforded, different emphasis for White House, Midshipman, Agent, Reliability Program, Industrial, NSA, even some special background recalled now only as "Y" which was supposed to be pretty darned important. Peel off the 152, roll up the SPH and stick it in your inside pocket and keep your notes on it if you wanted. Field reports were handwritten or typewritten and sent to the DIO after a chop by the SRA. There, a squad of ladies prettied them up, corrected the grammar, and created finished 119s, the "Blue Sheets," in later life commonly called ROIs. We old boys still refer to 119s and 152s and numbered has sometimes in talking to each other. "119," that has a certain panache lacking in "RID," don't you agree?

If you were an old, old agent, you could call the 119s "green sheets" because that was the war-time and 1940s color. The 119 had space on the blue synopsis sheet for 26 typed lines and you were supposed to fill it up on one-page reports so the originator would know he was getting value. The "amen" line was the classic "Files of DIO-3ND contain no information pertinent to this investigation except as set forth or referenced herein." And, don't forget it. The yellows and blues changed to whites with the coming of machines, ASRs 33 and 35. Great-advance, too, you'd cut the tape at the RA, fold it into a special figure 8, and mail it to the DIO. Job creation. The one-page 119s could carry a "CL" designation before the character in the format when there was absolutely no discrepant or derogatory information. We were told that in the rush of things just the sight of the CL permitted the reviewers to sign off without actually reading them. There was at least as much attention given to formatting as there was to reporting, and the final reviewer at DIO-3ND, the Assistant Supervising Agent, was a grammarian. God forbid that nouns and verbs should be at war with each other, if syntax was scrambled or if punctuation was incorrect or a semi-

colon did not precede an adverbial conjunctive. The writer once received a handwritten admonition for placing a period outside quotation marks at the end of a sentence. After all, persons in high places would be reading the 119 and what would they think of ONI's professionalism? "OK, Tom (Egan), I got your message".

### *ON THE CASELOAD*

Fifty or sixty per agent was not that unusual and occasionally it could exceed 100. The DIO asked for an inventory in May 1965. RA#3 reported 450 pending investigations of which all 450 were Category One. That was at the beginning of the Certification Program when the Army and Air Force took over ONI's backlog which had reached alarming proportions. Cases stopped coming and by August, with a full complement of agents, RA#3 was down to zero. The Supervising Agent said to put everyone on "basket leave." Just check in with the SRA in the morning and take the rest of the day off. Two agents were detailed to DIO-12ND to help work the backlog down there. In the RA, a 6-J case came along rarely and a few stray leads on other cases, like Category 3 or a dependency allotment. Category 3 could come out as 1(d) or 7(b), and don't ask why. Perhaps over 90 percent of cases were Category 1(d) which, in the event you've forgotten, were contractor employees. How long since you've heard 6-J? Can you remember how the Certification Program worked?

### *ON PER DIEM*

In the late 1950s, it was \$6.00 per day, only the first day out it was \$5.00 as it was assumed you'd have breakfast at home before leaving, even if you didn't. - On the last day it was \$3.75 as it was assumed you would be home in time for dinner (or find it waiting). Supervising Agent cautioned against excessive per diem claims as that "would kill the goose that laid the golden egg." \$6.00 was enough providing you could develop friendly motel owners who would give a government rate of \$3.00. Local telephone calls in some places were still a nickel and in others a dime. Try to cadge free calls, like at police stations, when you can.

### *ON THE POLYGRAPH*

It was a two-week course taught by the legendary Jack Barron at ONI HQ. You came away with a certificate in one hand and lugging a very heavy, spring-wound, two-needle machine in the other - and don't call it a "box." Mr. Barron said he favored spring-wound because electrical sources were not always reliable and could adversely affect the needlework: Only you interpreted the charts, and you'd better get it right; there would be no help or review by Mr. Barron or Others. Show him a chart and he'd say, "Hmm, interesting pattern." SAs McKee and O'Riley were the operators. Upstate, which was before there were "examiners."



### *ON PERSONAL APPEARANCE*

You wore a suit and white shirt with tie and shined your shoes and wore a hat, which latter requirement lasted until about 1960. In winter you wore a dark overcoat, black was popular. Twice in that garb the writer was mistaken for a priest. "I'm a Special Agent, ONI..." That's all right, father, come right in." Mr. Barron, in 1961, said that sports jackets and trousers were now acceptable "as long as they weren't at war with each other," a classic expression applying equally to nouns and verbs.

### *ON THE WRITER'S PROMOTION*

Notified in February 1961 that had passed the 11 Exam the previous November but since there was no money for promotion would have to remain in PG-9. The exam qualified only for a year. Supervising Agent said to get out the "bible" and study for the 1962 exam. But, in mid-May 1962 ONI came through with the promotion which meant a \$700 pay increase to \$7,700 per annum. Not retroactive. A little less water in the soup and new shoes for the kids. -

### *THE WAY WE REALLY WERE*

One Upstate agent escaped Basic School at ONI for eight years before it was realized, or maybe it WAS realized. In the writer's own Basic Class (Fifth Floor, Pentagon, then) there was one agent with eight years and another over ten.

There came a time in late 1958 when an Upstate supervisor was outranked by a subordinate who had scored higher in the all-hands, general upgrading that year. The situation was remedied by a special one-man examination that restored the order of things. "who's buried in Grant's Tomb?"

The Moose Lake community in the Central Adirondacks was serviced only by a once-a-day train, and if you got in on a Monday you couldn't get out until Tuesday. The writer made a couple of telephone calls from the railhead at Eagle Bay, to the postmaster to complete leads. The SRA was not entirely pleased. Copy the NYSP who commandeered a pumped handcar when they had to go in. Was this considered? No good answer to that one, and besides there was no second agent nearby to help pump.

On a Monday morning, in the town where you started the week, go to the U.S. Post Office and have postal card date/time Stamped and addressed to SRA. Don't bother calling, no one would have been at the office anyway and no message service on the telephone. The NYSP had done it this way.

To catch up with you the SRA would call the local police

where he knew you'd be working. "Call your boss."

You needed a few bucks for something and the Supervising Agent would tell you in those days just to claim a few extra Thruway tolls on your expense account. It all came out of the same pot and avoided the extra paperwork.

On Pay Grade VS Civil Service: "ONI will always try to match pay raises granted to the Civil Service." They were pretty good to their word, too, but not always. In 1963 or 1964, ONI came up short and didn't match the raise for a few months. In fairness, ONI did find some extra cash near the end of the FY and made it up retroactively. That's benevolence.

At one of the infrequent agents' gatherings, the SRA had us go to our cars, open the trunks and stand by for inspection. The writer was giggled for having battery cables out of the box. That was trivial compared to another agent who had hamburger wrappers in the back seat.

There was a time when the SRA had the writer prepare his own and another agent's evaluations. Such impeccable prose went into them, too. The writer was giggled on his first evaluation for what amounted to wearing a scarf and overshoes in the winter. Real men ignored the wind and wet feet. We went on a lead together once, and he said, "Leave that G—D— scarf in the car." And, the writer did. Gear like that was for sissies.

When we put in for annual leave the slips went directly to the Supervising Agent who put them in his desk drawer. If nothing happened on your beat and you came back safely, the leave was not debited to your account. When he himself was absent, his assistant and another trusted agent would purge his desk of the evidence.

There's more, there's always more, but better left for another day.

### *VALEDICTORY*

We were survivors of tough times. The old ONI contract agents were a special breed of men in keeping with the highest traditions of service. It had been a long March until 1966. We carried ONI's torch then and the successor NCIS agents of today should know our history. Yours is an expanded mission with different specialties and training and technology and prestige and the funds to pay for it all. To you; never forget your roots. You are where you are because we were there and endured. There was a previous life, one of contract agents.

With personal recognition and thanks to S/A J. Brian McKee of RA#4 who was there and can also bear testimony to the way we were.

Yours truly,  
/S/ SRA Emeritus, RA#3