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CONFIDENTIAL

27 January 1976

Bob:

1. Our general policy in all cases involving losses to pickpockets or purse snatchers is that, if the individual is in a section of town because we sent him there to make a payment to an agent or otherwise conduct official business, and he would not be there except for the official chore, we will pay him. In those cases where the individual is on personal business, shopping or sightseeing, he can hardly say that it is the government's fault that he was there, and he is not entitled to reimbursement.

25X1A 2. The operation that cost the claimant his $259.51 was well known in [redacted], especially in the areas where the Americans spent all their time. Children ages 5 to 10 would gather around the American, tugging on his pants and begging for money, and generally getting under his feet. While the victim is trying to extricate himself without hurting anyone, one of the kids will lift his wallet. The most effective protection in such cases is to put both hands in your pockets and start kicking them. That makes it a little more difficult for them to get your money out of your pocket or your watch off your arm. The bystanders all know what is happening, but they regard it as only a mild form of amusement. I was escorting a visitor downtown one day and we were caught. My friend lost $20 but, while it was embarrassing to be "had" by children, it never occurred to either of us that it was the government's fault.

3. I have never heard of an insurance policy that protects anyone against pickpockets. If subject has one, we should ask him to bring it in and let us read it. If he does in fact have such a policy, the CCS letter might be the basis for paying him the amount the company would pay him. As you say, it might have a "deductible." Incidentally, in reading the package I don't see anything where the claimant states that he had an insurance policy. The only references to insurance are in the memos from the IG and the Claims Board. However, he has not asked to be reimbursed on this basis.

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4. Insofar as the tax deduction is concerned, I don't think that we should get involved in that. We cannot prove to IRS that he lost the money -- that is his responsibility. I think that we should get involved in this only if we were to state that, in filing his return, he could not acknowledge that he was in [redacted] I don't see why the claim on a tax return would involve any cover problems which go beyond those of reporting other income and deductions. I filed my own tax returns involving service in [redacted] problems. Again, if he is prohibited from using this on his income tax return, we could apply the deductible and then reimburse him a percentage of the loss, depending on his tax brackets. However, he has not asked for this and has not submitted data to support it. 25X1A

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5. The fact that he was living at the [redacted] and could not leave money in the room is not relevant. Everyone followed the practice of leaving passports, tickets, money, and other valuables in the Station offices. Subject presumably had access to the station, and probably did leave valuables there.

6. I had [redacted] review other cases to be sure that the policy I describe in the first paragraph is being followed. The only two pickpocket claims which were paid have involved (a) a man who was in an airport waiting to board an airplane for official travel, and (b) an employee who was caught in a crowd and knocked down while returning from an operational meeting. The others were disallowed.

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7. I would suggest that claimant be told that, if he can support claims under paragraphs 3 or 4, he can do so. Otherwise, the facts don't support payment of the claim.

8. Let me know if you have any other questions.

[redacted]

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