

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

DD/A Registry
File Security

OGC 76-0801

20 February 1976

24 FEB 1976
28 FEB 1976

Mr. Willie Morris
c/o Washington Star-News
225 Virginia Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003

Dear Mr. Morris:

On January 25, 1976 an article appeared in the Washington Star-News attributed to your authorship in which you indicated that you had in your possession classified documents given to you by former Director of Central Intelligence, Allen W. Dulles. Since those classified documents are the property of the U.S. Government I would very much appreciate hearing from you as to the appropriate means for us to recover the classified documents you so identified in your article. After we review the documents, perhaps many could be declassified. I may be reached by telephone number 351-7531.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

TATINTL

Associate General Counsel

cc: DD/A



DDA Registry
Security

Director of Security
Rm. 4E-60 Hqs.

Att: DD/A 76-0555

Bob:

The attached is for your information.
Mr. Blake is interested in knowing when
a lawyer is contacted. As indicated in
his note to the Director, he would like
to be kept posted on this matter.


 EO-DDA 7D-26

2/11/76

STATINTL

Distribution:

Orig RS - Adse w/orig att
① - DDA Subject w/cy of att
1 - RFZ Chrono w/o att

EO-DDA/:nh (11 Feb 76) STATINTL

Att: Memo to DCI fr John F. Blake, DDA, dtd 4 Feb 76, subject re:
background of Willie Morris (w/att news article from The
Washington Star of 25 Jan 76 re Allen Dulles)

Next 2 Page(s) In Document Exempt

ATTACHMENT
Form

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Another CIA Story Still Lurks in a Shopping Bag

Willie Morris is the Star's current writer in residence. His column appears Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays in Portfolio.

I can thank the CIA, moiling now in the revelations we are given of it, for my first true introduction to this town, to the responsibility and thrall of its theatrics. I hold the CIA culpable also for my first glimpse of your precinct of Georgetown, which claimed me, as it does many of us, in a nearly trance-like vise, until some moment along the line when I must have grown up.

This was 1965, and Arthur Schlesinger and Ted Sorensen had just published, in two reputable mass-circulation magazines which are no longer with us, the chapters on the Bay of Pigs from their forthcoming books on John Kennedy. I had not yet turned 30, a very junior editor on Harper's magazine, hoping most of all, as I recall, to find my way in the tangle of Manhattan literary politics, from which Capitol Hill — if it ever acknowledges a master in its own game — might one day acquire valuable insights into logrolling and the hegemony of mayhem. Allen Dulles, the former director of the CIA who had been out of power since late 1961, had told my boss at Harper's, John Fischer, that he wished to write a rebuttal to Schlesinger and Sorensen, a defense of the CIA in the Bay of Pigs.

Willie Morris

Fischer sent me down to Washington to help Dulles put his piece together.

I ARRIVED ON an Indian summer afternoon, one of those elusive late-September days when the white facades of the official town seem to swim in the sadness of its transience and memories. The old man who greeted me at the door of his mansion on Q Street in Georgetown was legendary long before, surely not at all an ordinary mortal. "It's hard to operate with legendary figures," Kennedy had said of him, when the consequences of the Bay of Pigs were finally in, and I was fearful that he might be as cold and rigorous as his brother John Foster had been — a Calvinistic specter to me when he was secretary of State, with his un-

bending rhetoric on massive retaliation and brink-of-war—or as forbidding as his own occasional photographs on the front page of the Times. But from the moment we sat down to our 12-hour work days in a study overlooking a sedate walled-in terrace I knew I was in the company of a courtly and civilized man, a little precious at first on the arcane calling which had obsessed him since his OSS days in Bern, but still an easy man to be with, curious and feeling about his fellow creatures, a casual and entertaining host, and — best of all — an engrossing raconteur, especially with stories about spies.

We worked hard, he with his sleeves rolled up at the table where we met each morning, I with a small pile of notes gleaned from much of what had been published up to then on the Bay of Pigs. He relied on me to pose the right questions for his answers to Schlesinger and Sorensen. I came across a few of those questions not too long ago in a yellowed notepad. Why did he, and the other planners overestimate the strength of the Cuban resistance organizations: Why did they believe a successful beachhead could be established so easily? Why did they not see the impossibility of an escape into the Escambray! Were they wise in envisioning a continuous enlargement of the perimeter around the beachhead for a long period? And there were many more.

IN THIS HEADY exercise, my attention was drawn to a sizeable collection of bound JCS (Joint Chiefs of Staff) and CIA documents which he had brought with him when he left office, all stamped in red: "Top Secret — For Eyes Only." He referred to them constantly, keeping them in front of him on the table as if they reassured him by merely being there, quoting and paraphrasing them as I took notes, mulling over them in long silences. His mind wandered as the day waned.

His family was at the Dulles compound in Watertown, N.Y., on Lake Ontario, and in the summer twilights, after my questions and his soliloquy, the two of us took walks around Georgetown. The first lamps flickered above the rusty brick sidewalks and I looked into the enormous lower rooms of those mysterious dwellings and saw the bookcases lined with books and the impeccable furnishings; I never saw real people stirring around inside, although I felt there had to be people about somewhere. We must have been a most unlikely pair in these aimless walks, the old gray eminence and the ambitious young editor, chattering about the Cuban Brigade or those early meetings with Kennedy and his new men in the Cabinet Room. Then

continued

back to the terrace behind his house for two or three scotches before our lonely dinner, where I asked him what Europe was like during the War.

Suddenly one afternoon he said:

"WELL, MORRIS, I've been telling you my secrets, but I don't know anything about you. For all I know you've been sent here by the Soviets" — the last word said crisply, bitten off at the end.

Emboldened by the scotch, or the strange camaraderie I felt we had established, I remember replying: "Mr. Dulles, I was your man in Budapest for five years."

A widening of eyes, a gesture of the brows: "Yes, I can imagine."

His rebuttal was going badly, and we arranged to meet a few days later in Watertown. This time I flew in from New York with a highly unsatisfactory draft of what we had discussed, along with a dexterous young secretary named Millie Matasia who had scored the best in shorthand among the entire publishing corporation of Harper & Row. Our deadline was approaching, but the difficulties now became insurmountable. Dulles' daughter and his sister, the latter a living image of their brother John Foster, gave every indication that they suspected me of having been dispatched to compromise him, to damage his most esoteric defenses, and to embarrass him before the judgment of history.

IN THAT SYLVAN milieu — a large house on the water and a cottage hidden in pines where Allen Dulles and Millie Matasia and I went about our labors — I was reminded of Henry James' The Aspern Papers, in which an impecunious Englishman comes peregrinating around the villa

in Venice where the aging mistress of a long-deceased heroic poet, presumably Lord Byron, is ensconced, the Englishman plotting to make off with the poet's dog-eared love letters to the old crone, to offer to such literary fences as to this day do commerce in the melancholias of tormented artists.

Not that any of this bore the faintest resemblance to my own innocent motives. My mission was much that of the young lawyer sent to assist an illustrious client: But the mistrust among the client's blood-kin was tangible, as if the two of them, daughter and sister, feared the alien world of Manhattan publishing as much as they feared the world of Kennedys and Washington politicians and other dissemblers just as John Foster had. Working in the cottage in the woods on his dictation, I would hear the rustlings of leaves from outside the window, and then have a quick glimpse of Allen Dulles' tall daughter peering in suspiciously at Miss Matasia and me, her hand over her eyes to shield sun from shadow; or overhear the muted whisperings of sister and daughter in the big house; or catch the swift wisp of a warning to him to be very careful.

IN THE END none of this distrust, understandable as it might have been, mattered at all. I knew up there on the Great Lakes that my magazine would never get his rebuttal, much as I would still work hard with his words, not because those dearest to him were wary he might be hurt, or that in their solicitude of him they knew he was vulnerable — but because I had come to realize he was old and weary, that something had been lost to him forever from those days of

derring-do and adventure with Nazis and Italians that could never now be retrieved, that men other than he had really planned the Bay of Pigs, and that somehow this had less to do with a failure of honor as an inability to perceive true dimensions. Or was that the whole of it?

Near the end of our last day he had a pinched nerve in his back, from leaning down to pull in a boat, and he walked about bent over and in pain. "Well now," he said to us, "what haven't we addressed ourselves to?"

I suggested that he had yet to confront what would have been the minimum adequate air cover on the day of the landings — the strikes which had been cancelled at the last moment by Kennedy.

"Yes." He turned to his documents, paused for an instant, gazed into the woods touched now with the nip of early winter. "Miss Matasia. Take this down!" Momentarily he spoke of four or five Navy jets, no more than that number, and then gradually of other things, until out of his memory he was dwelling on something else entirely.

I SAW HIM AGAIN the next morning, for the last time, out in the cabin. I looked again at the documents marked "Top Secret — For Eyes Only."

"Mr. Dulles, it certainly would help if I could take these back to the city and work with them."

"Well" It was only a whisper. Then, from a closet in the cabin, he brought out a large shopping bag. The two of us packed the documents inside. "But don't on your life get caught with these," he said. "If you do my name is mud."

That was almost 12 years ago. The client is dead, and the junior editor is not so junior anymore.

The Bay of Pigs, for all the regrets and acrimony, has receded into a footnote to the Kennedy years, to be replaced by a new and infinitely more ominous accumulation of knowledge. But what I remember most from those days is not the nuances of adequate air cover, but the tales over scotch whiskey of spying against Hitler in the 1940s, and Georgetown unfolding sensually for me in a September sunset.

And the top-secret documents in the shopping bag? They are there today, somewhere, in some boxes I have in an attic in a house on the far-most littoral of eastern Long Island, among the old debris and paraphernalia of those days.

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional) Willie Morris
 (Author of article which appeared in
 The Washington Star on 25 January 1976)

FROM: Robert W. Gambino
 Director of Security

EXTENSION: 6777

NO.:

DATE: 26 JAN 1976

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

	DATE		OFFICER'S INITIALS
	RECEIVED	FORWARDED	

COMMENTS: (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

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