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DEBRIEFING OF FRANCIS GARY POWERS

Tape: #15
Date: 18 February 1962
Time: 1224 Hours

Present: [redacted]

Allen: This will be tape No. 15, Sunday, 18 February 1962, and we are starting at 1224 hours, Mr. Powers and [redacted] talking. On our last tape yesterday, which was No. 14, we concluded the narrative statement when Gary went across the bridge. These questions that we are going to ask today of Gary are specifics and are merely asked for the record. It must be remembered that Gary has had no chance for serious reconsideration or thinking because of the very short time elapsed, but we are going to ask the questions to help the record. Now, Gary, as far as your narrative is concerned, you have given us as complete and full a possible - as possible statement under the present circumstances.

Powers: Yes, I think maybe with questions asked I could recall more things that may be of interest, but just a general narrative, I'd say its fairly complete and full.

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[REDACTED]

My next question to you, Gary, are there any previous incidents to 1 May that you think could be connected in any way with the shoot-down incident?

Powers: I've thought about this quite a bit while I was there and I could think of no - of nothing that I could connect with it.

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[REDACTED]

Nothing of a suspicious nature, or odd, or in any way that would link it up?

Powers: I could never think of anything.

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[REDACTED]

I'd like to ask you, Gary, as my next question, have you mentioned to us all of the United States planes that you discussed with the Soviets? Of course you talked about the U-2 and the RB-47 - can you think of any other planes that were discussed with you technically or otherwise?

Powers: Well, I knew nothing technical about anything except the U-2 and the T-33. I was only asked if I had seen these other - lets see, the RB-47 and I think they said RC-130. They asked me, also, about the - no great detail - about airplanes I had flown in the Air Force, and that was T-6, the F-80, T-33, F-84G, F-84F. They didn't seem too

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interested in too much detail about them. As far as I know that was all the aircraft discussed, as well as I can remember.

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[redacted]

Now, Gary, this is a question which I think we ought to have answered. Did the Soviets ask you about any future designs that you might be familiar with? Of planes?

Powers:

No, not that I can remember. Besides that, I am not familiar with any future designs anyway.

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[redacted]

I was going to ask you the question, do you have any knowledge of any future planning or designs?

Powers:

Nothing that hasn't appeared in the newspapers. There was quite a bit at one time about the B-70 but they - seems like that might have been mentioned but the only thing I knew about the B-70 was what was in the papers.

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[redacted]

Any gossip among your fellow pilots about any future designs or anything that you recall?

Powers:

Oh - this was before May 1st - there had been speculation among the pilots about a plane that would replace the U-2,

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maybe higher altitude or something like that but I told them nothing about these speculations.

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[redacted]

This was only down in [redacted]

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Powers:

Yes, among the pilots themselves.

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[redacted]

You didn't talk about this at all to the Soviets?

Powers:

No.

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[redacted]

Nor did they ask about it?

Powers:

I don't remember whether they asked or not - I don't remember - if they did they didn't press it and I completely denied any knowledge of any - any such things.

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[redacted]

This has been mentioned before, but were you asked concerning anything having to do with atomic or nuclear matters?

Powers:

No, they asked nothing about that and that surprised me also.

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[redacted]

I will expand that question a little - were you asked about atomic or nuclear weapons?

Powers:

No.

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[redacted]

Were you questioned about supersensitive electronic matters?

[redacted]

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Powers: They probed me about - a - electronic counter-measures I think, asking me if I knew anything about such equipment, but I didn't know anything about it.

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[Redacted]

So you gave them no information based on the fact that you didn't know anything, is that correct?

Powers: Right, and they didn't press this too much.

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[Redacted]

Now, in the realms of communications - this, I believe you've covered before, but this will be clear on the record. I think you mentioned that they asked you about some cryptographic matters.

Powers: They asked me if I knew any crypto and I told them no, that the only code I knew was Morse Code and not too well on that.

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[Redacted]

They didn't ask you about any code machines or anything like that?

Powers: No.

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[Redacted]

Did they ask you about any advanced types of communications?

Powers: No, they were very interested in our communications setup but the only thing I told them that was that it was completely restricted and no one could get in except the people who work

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[Redacted]

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there - messages came through - no one saw them except the people who were supposed to see them and I had no idea how they did it or where it came from or anything like that.

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[Redacted]

Did they ask you about tracking devices on our own planes such as the U-2 so that our people could track our own craft?

Powers: I believe this did come up.

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[Redacted]

Can you fill in any details as to how and the nature of your answer?

Powers: They were very interested in knowing if I had contacted our people at the time of this incident.

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[Redacted]

You mean at the time of the shoot-down?

Powers: Yes.

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[Redacted]

Whether you had notified our people?

Powers: Yes

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[Redacted]

And -

Powers: And, later on I told them no. At first I didn't because - well, I'm sure in analyzing the radio equipment that they found on the airplane they could tell that the range was fairly short and 1200 miles was just too far. It seems as if they asked me if they could be tracked by radar and I

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[Redacted]

told them as far as I knew, no, because the range of radar was - due to the curvature of the earth was too small to track very far.

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[Redacted]

And this was the limit of the talk on those lines?

Powers:

Yes, as well as I can remember it is.

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[Redacted]

Gary, if I jump around in my questions its only because I jotted them down as they came to mind, so you just bear with me on that. Now, my next question to you, prior to 1 May, and I'll use that always as the - prior to 1 May, had there been approaches to you of any type by Soviet or Satellite types?

Powers:

No, none that I would recognize anyway as such.

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[Redacted]

None that you would recognize, and this would be in the United States?

Powers:

It would be prior to 1 May.

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[Redacted]

In the United States?

Powers:

In the United States, Turkey, Germany, everywhere I've been.

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[Redacted]

The answer is across-the-board negative?

Powers:

Negative. I've often thought that maybe some of the people I might have come in contact with could have been types like

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that but if they were I never knew anything about it.

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[Redacted]

I'll expand a little now on this question. Did you ever meet anyone prior to 1 May that you thought or suspected was acting on behalf of the Soviets or Satellites?

Powers: No.

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[Redacted]

Now, at any time prior to 1 May was a recruitment effort made in your direction by any one, friend or foe?

Powers: No, - none at all - no offer of job no -

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[Redacted]

No bribes, bonus es, - anything?

Powers: No.

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[Redacted]

That could be construed as a pitch for recruitment?

Powers: No.

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[Redacted]

An effort to get you to do some work of any type for them?

Powers: Not a single thing.

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[Redacted]

Now, after the shoot-down, or 1 May, do we have any attempts at recruitment by your -

Powers: There was only one thing that I mentioned on this tape before that I thought might be something in that direction but it was never carried any further than what I mentioned.

Shall I go into that again?

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[Redacted]

I think I would just repeat.

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Powers: That was possibly close to the 15th of May and it was this Rudenkov, the prosecutor at the trial. I don't remember just how it came up - it seems that they had told me at that time, or maybe a little earlier - I can't remember - that Khrushchev had mentioned that I had been shot down in the Soviet Union and that I was alive and that my family had been notified and so forth. And, it came up in this meeting that - well I told them that there wasn't much need for me to talk to them because whether I told them anything or not I would be shot anyway, so it made no difference. I said there's no way out for it, and this man said there may be a way out, and I asked him what he meant, and he said I just think you ought to think about it a while and this immediately came into my mind that it might be a counter offer of some kind and I tried to get them to explain themselves further but they wouldn't, and I waited several days waiting for this to come up again to see what was going on and it was never mentioned. So, I mentioned it to this interpreter, Rodochev, Rodochev?

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Powers: In one of the interrogations - I asked him what the man meant? He looked at me and said, "You don't know?", and I said "No", and he said "Well, maybe you ought to think about it some more", and that was the last time it was ever mentioned.

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[REDACTED]

Nothing similar to this or a subtle hint or anything occurred after this one peculiar series of statements?

Powers: No, that's the only thing that happened that led me to believe that there might have been thoughts in their minds at one time along this direction.

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[REDACTED]

I want to ask you as my next question, Gary, were there any threats specifically made to you for failure to cooperate or something like that? You, of course, mentioned previously that many times before you were sentenced they pointed out that you could get the death penalty. Now can you recall - was this the only type of threat?

Powers: This is the only type, yes. It was never mentioned - they would tell me that the sentence could be from seven to fifteen years or death, depending on the court, and I

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kept thinking I was going to be tortured and I told them that I expected to be and they kept saying that I would not be but I didn't believe them. But, as far as threats of physical harm to me in any way there was none such as that. They kept telling me that - that - when they would mention this seven to fifteen years, and death - that it was always taken into consideration that a person was truthful and frank and answered all their questions and all this, but that's an answer you would expect.

25X1 Did they, or were they, I should say, ever foul and abusive or threatening along those lines?

Powers:

There was only one time and that was on the 1st of May at Sverdlovsk and they were trying to determine whether I could speak Russian or not and I am sure they used some pretty vile language just from the tone of voice, and I had an ear that was plugged up some way or the other and I stuck my finger in my ear trying to clear it out and one man grabbed my hand and threw it down fairly hard down to my side, but that was all the - that was the only thing that happened along that line.

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[Redacted]

Not in Moscow?

Powers:

No.

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[Redacted]

Not in Vladimir?

Powers:

No.

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[Redacted]

Your treatment, then, as a whole, Gary, was decent.

Powers:

Yes, it was. It was much better than I expected.

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[Redacted]

You weren't starved.

Powers:

No they tried - it worried them, I think, that I wasn't eating there at first and they asked me what I would like. They even suggested steak and so forth but I told them the food was all right, that I wanted nothing.

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[Redacted]

And bodily comforts such as warmth and toilet facilities although not good,-

Powers:

Were adequate -

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[Redacted]

Now, Gary, I want to ask a series of questions, which I think you will understand are very important, and this is the type of question I am going to ride right into the record because it has to be answered and I'll read them very slowly and carefully and you can give me your answer. Were any instructions given to you by the Soviets to be carried out after you crossed the bridge?

[Redacted]

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Powers: No instructions but this Colonel asked me not to repeat his name, which I didn't know anyway. It's the one that I think is the same as the Soviet author, and I told him I wouldn't tell because if I ever heard it I think my cell mate had told it to me and that's where I get the impression that it was the same as one of the Russian short story writers. I had forgotten it and didn't know it, and I told him I wouldn't do it.

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[Redacted]

We'll find that out.

Powers:

But, I will, if I can just think of it.

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[Redacted]

No instructions specifically as such were given?

Powers:

Not after. They just said when you get to the middle of the bridge if things don't go right - if the negotiations don't come off - you will turn around and come back with us.

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[Redacted]

But no far-reaching instructions?

Powers:

No.

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[Redacted]

None that were given to you in Moscow?

Powers:

No.

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[Redacted]

My next question. Were you given the names of any individuals and told to look them up in the United States?

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

Powers: No.

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[Redacted]

No names were given to you in the United States or elsewhere.

Powers: No names at all.

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[Redacted]

My next question - were the names of any persons given to you whom you could call on or get in touch with in the event you got in trouble?

Powers: No.

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[Redacted]

They didn't suggest if you get in a bind why don't you see so and so, or hunt up this attorney, or -

Powers: No, no suggestions.

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[Redacted]

Did this man, Hallinan, you remember?

Powers: Yes.

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[Redacted]

Say to get in touch with him in any way?

Powers: I can't remember too much about the conversation we had -

I wasn't paying too much attention because I didn't particularly like him when I saw him there - it seemed to me that he was just talking to hear himself talk and saying very little. He told me that he had been in prison and that a person could take it and he more or less suggested that - he said, I believe it was something like this - that he didn't

[Redacted]

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think that I would be given any political instructions but if I were, listen to them - I could make up my own mind etc. like that.

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[Redacted]

Certainly there was no offer for help there?

Powers:

No. And, I am fairly sure that he didn't say anything about any contacts in the future. I believe that I would have remembered if he had.

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[Redacted]

All right. My next question now. Was any address or addresses given you for sending mail to after you had crossed the bridge?

Powers:

No, except I promised my cell mate I would write and he promised he would write. I don't know whether he expects it and I don't know what I will do. It would depend on you -

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[Redacted]

No addresses, then, in the United States or outside of the iron curtains were given to you?

Powers:

No.

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[Redacted]

And no instructions as to use these addresses if you want to or anything like that?

Powers:

No.

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[Redacted]

My next question - did the Soviets say that they would be

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[Redacted]

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in touch with you after you had crossed the bridge?

Powers: No.

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[Redacted]

Were there any hints along these lines?

Powers: No, none that I took as hints anyway.

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[Redacted]

This will be a repeat, Gary, but I think we ought to put it now in the record here. At any time, first before 1 May and then after 1 May, were any bribes or offers of money to be placed in a bank in Switzerland or anything like that anywhere in the world, outright offers or any suggested offers be made - or made to you?

Powers: Definitely no outright offers, and if there were any suggestive, I didn't get the suggestion.

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[Redacted]

My next question. Were any direct threats, or suggestions of harm to Barbara or any members of your family unless you cooperated?

Powers: No.

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[Redacted]

My next question - were any instructions given you on what you could or could not say after you crossed the bridge?

Powers: No.

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[Redacted]

Were there any threats of blackmail made to you unless

[Redacted]

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you performed according to given instructions by the Soviets?

Powers: No.

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My next question, and it will be somewhat of a statement.

You recall we discussed photographs of several individuals shown to you?

Powers: Yes.

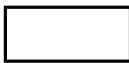
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I want you now to try to recall once more - were any other photographs shown to you than the few you had mentioned to us that one time?

Powers: I am almost positive there were no others except the time about the B-47.

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Now, were there any other photographs of planes of any type shown to you?

Powers: No.

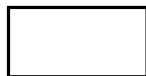
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Now, at any time, were photographs of the pieces of wreckage shown to you?

Powers: Yes.

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Fill in that detail.

Powers: Most of this was, in fact maybe all of it, was when I was reviewing the case they had against me - the evidence -



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I don't remember at any specific time during the investigation that they brought in photographs of pieces but they may have - I don't remember - I know they brought in all my personal equipment and stuff like that and wanted me to identify - ah - what this stuff was - a knife, firestarter and stuff like that. But, as far as wreckage and photographs of wreckage - well, there was no wreckage , I definitely know that - no pieces of metal. Photographs? There might have been - I can't be positive.

25X1

[Redacted]

When this fat man came down to visit you at Vladimir - he didn't bring photographs?

Powers:

No photographs.

25X1

[Redacted]

Drawings or charts or anything?

Powers:

No.

25X1

[Redacted]

Were photographs shown to you of any other type of thing and you were asked to identify or comment on?

Powers:

I don't think so.

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[Redacted]

Another question, and I am again changing. Were you told by the Soviets what might happen to you after you crossed the bridge? In other words, what the United States authorities would do to you, or perhaps the press?

[Redacted]

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Powers: They mentioned the press, that I would probably be in the news quite a bit. They also mentioned that I would probably be approached to tell things - or asked to tell things that had not happened and they said they wanted me to tell the truth about my treatment and so forth there and I told them I would.

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[Redacted]

This was not in connection with a threat of any kind?

Powers:

Oh, no, this was - well it was not during an interrogation or anything - I don't remember exactly when it was -/it was this same Colonel who accompanied me, but I believe it took place there at prison several months ago.

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[Redacted]

But they weren't - you weren't told that when you crossed the bridge you'll be villified and you'll be attacked - you're liable to be put in jail or anything like that?

Powers:

This "put in jail" business might have come up during the investigation but not after that. It seems that maybe it was mentioned during the investigation sometime. It was something in connection with the - ah - what was it - I don't know what to call it - the paper that I had signed that I would not reveal information - fine of \$10,000 - 10 years or both but that was the only time that

[Redacted]

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that was brought up.

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[redacted]

They quoted from a federal, United States Government document?

Powers:

I don't know whether they had a document or not. Well, I had told them that I had signed something like this -

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[redacted]

A national secrets oath or something like that?

Powers:

Well, I didn't know what it was call and I still don't - just that I would be -

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[redacted]

Subject to penalties?

Powers:

Subject to penalties for revealing information - secret information that I would be in possession of while I was working.

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[redacted]

And was this in the nature of an implied threat against you?

Powers:

It doesn't - as well as I can remember - I didn't take it as a threat or anything like that - it just came up that I would be liable for prosecution.

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[redacted]

Another question - have you omitted anything from the story that you have given so far, or answers to these questions that you can think of?

Powers:

I tried to answer them as fully as I could but I am sure

[redacted]

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that there are other things that I will remember later -
that will come up.

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[Redacted]

No details have been omitted for any reason?

Powers:

No.

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[Redacted]

Merely lack of memory?

Powers:

That's right. Confusion -

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[Redacted]

Of course.

Powers:

There's this group of names that I was telling you - that
I mentioned there - if I could get a roster of the personnel
I think I could pick them all out. As far as remembering
them, I can't seem to recall them all - I don't know -

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[Redacted]

I was going to ask that, Gary, could you recall any other names
than those that you have given so far? I know that you are
trying to recall the names, but no more have turned up.

Powers:

Lets see, I think I mentioned this to the doctor also and
I think maybe a name or two came up there or maybe to
these other people that were here the other day - I don't
remember just the ones that I had mentioned, but -

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[Redacted]

Perhaps we'll omit further on this question because you
have given those names on the tapes before. I just want
to know had you thought of any other names?

[Redacted]

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Powers: Well, I don't remember which ones I gave on the tape, but - I don't know whether the name [redacted] on the tapes or not - maybe that was just to the doctor.

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[redacted] [redacted] was what?

Powers: Something to do with communications, but not the - I think the electronics end of the airplane equipment.

[redacted] This is not an individual's name?

Powers: Yes.

[redacted] Oh, this is a man who -

Powers: [redacted]

Powers: And [redacted] I guess - [redacted]

[redacted] [redacted]

Powers: Yes.

[redacted] Now, you think you possibly mentioned these names?

Powers: Yes. I've got a little list down in my room that I've been trying to jot down. I'll try to think more about that today and let you know a little later.

[redacted] Sure, we'll work it out.

Powers: If I can get the roster of the personnel I can - I think - I think this is very important that you know these people.

[redacted]

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[redacted]

Yes, yes. Now, again I am going to switch -

Powers:

I'd like to say this - I don't know why I did this. I realized later that it was absolutely stupid on my part and I could have gotten by without it, I am sure - without causing any harm to myself or to anyone else. And, I'm afraid that maybe I have caused some trouble for these boys someway - maybe their jobs - and its bothered me more than any single thing. I really regret it and - well - its a little late now -

25X1

[redacted]

I am going to switch my questions now, Gary.

Powers:

Yes.

25X1

[redacted]

Do you recall any serious invitations or bids for you to return to the U.S.S.R. ? You remember you told me that Shiskin said "come on back as a tourist" or something like that.

Powers:

That was on the bridge there when we left and someone told me that that was Shiskin that spoke to me. This Colonel had mentioned that I would be welcomed back as a tourist but not too welcome if I came the same way again. But, other than that - no.

[redacted]

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[redacted]

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[redacted]

Nobody along all the line of interrogation said "Well, you can come back and see us any time you want to" or "We'll welcome you back," or anything like that?

Powers:

Just this tourist -

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[redacted]

Just that -

Powers:

Saying that its all right to come as a tourist but as a spy - no. Lets see - that was both during the interrogation and at the prison that this was mentioned. I sort of went along with it and said I would like to see the Soviet Union from a different angle and at some time in the future I might come back but that was just playing along with them.

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[redacted]

Now then, just because I am about ready to conclude this, and I think [redacted] will be in here in a minute, and he may have a question or two, so we will just hold for a second.

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Powers:

OK.

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[redacted]

[redacted]

at this time had come into the room had no further questions to ask and I am going to conclude this tape, or at least stop this tape for the present. This is tape No. 15, 18 February 1962 and the time is now exactly one minute of one p.m. Mr. Powers and [redacted]

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[redacted]

have been talking. End tape.

[redacted]

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