

TAPE #37--SIDE B
JOE POCHE--NOVEMBER 13, 1981

KF The team got first class tickets.

JP Jay got a first class ticket.

KF I'm going to ask you about the decision he should go. Did he talk to the Colonel about that?

JP There were some discussions in Paris. Everybody is in Paris. That I recall, Ralph was there, Glen was there, ^[Schwebach] Suyback, Davis. I think that was everyone that was in Paris at the time. And different people had different roles and the decision was whether or not, how many we should send.

KF Account to me how many, that was decided by how many tickets.

JP The decision was made to how many tickets are there, there are only three tickets that could possibly be gotten. That's all there is and the xxxxx processing, Jay and the Colonel thought about who would do what. Then the question came down of who the people should be three. The Colonel and Jay. In actuality, I think there were four tickets because ^[Boulware] (Bulwark?) did go with us to Switzerland.

KF Oh.

JP And four of us did go forward to Switzerland. Jay, Ralph, Colonel and myself.

KF Why do you think you and Ralph went rather than anyone else?

JP There was a conscious decision was the reason Ralph went because Ralph was closer to Gaylord than anybody else. He could deal with Gaylord in ensuring him that everything was being done to help him out.

KF Out of prison?

JP A familiar face. Ralph's role in the exercise was by Ralph knew the city. He knew business people that we needed to deal with in Tehran.

KF But didn't everybody know Tehran? Everybody had been there.

JP Well they had been there. Different degrees. I mean, some people... I had been there the longest.

KF OK, you knew it best, that is why you were the driver. That is why you were one of the four.

JP I think that perhaps the reactional. I don't know how that decision was made. There was some discussion about it and I thought that I was not involved.

KF Oh, I see. To speculate anyway. Boulware because Gaylord knew him well and Boulware knew the city well. Jay because, for similar reasons plus Jay had done the evacuation command. So he knew.

JP He knew the US officials the Iranian officials.

KF In Zurich, only your standby tickets did not turn into confirmed tickets. Jay went off, you and the plan with Boulware to find a hotel. There was some confusion about the hotel.

JP Well, we went to one hotel and it was full so we went to another hotel. So we went to another hotel. That is all the confusion was about that I am aware of.

KF Except that the Colonel chewed out the XXXXX, I understand.

JP No. He was just impatient because xxxx didn't check out. Do you have a hotel room, Yes, and they fumbled around and well, xxxxxx come back in the morning type attitude. So we went to another hotel.

KF The next day you....

JP He made a terse comment, he didn't chew the man out. He didn't dress him up and down. That is certainly not the Colonel's style. I mean, it's just like anybody who goes to a hotel and you don't get any type of communication that is meaningful, you get impatient. The Colonel wasn't the only person who made a terse comment. Ralph or I would have probably made the same terse comment.

KF OK. Next day you got two more tickets?

JP Yes, the reason we got two was that all we needed because that night in Zurich we got a phone call from Merv, I believe it was Merv, in essence said that Ralph should not go back to Tehran because they are look for Ralph.

KF OK.

JP That is my impression of that.

KF No. I have been told that, I had forgotten it. OK. So you and the Colonel went to Tehran the next day. What was your impression of Tehran. You had been away for two weeks, notice any changes?

JP No changes.

KF OK. Where did you go on your landing?

JP We went to.....I'm not sure if we saw Jay or not, I'm positive we saw Jay, Jay had a car. Jay picked us up we went to Keane Taylor's house which is up near the northwestern portion of the city.

KF Remember the address?

JP No. I know how to get there. I can take you there.

KF No. I just wanted the address. Keane doesn't know it either.

JP Some alley. It is next to the soccer stadium. I can show you on a map where it is.

Shows on map where it is from sounds in background.
Cannot understand words.

JP So there is a soccer stadium about a block and a half away. So Keane Taylor's house is about a quarter of a mile, if that much, from the stadium.

KF Did you do anything the first evening?

JP No we went to Keane's house and it was very. We actually went to sleep. Flying on the airplane, jet lag and all that stuff we just. And there was no heat in Keane's house.

KF Keane was not living there anyhow?

JP No he was not. I think he had moved to a hotel. So we really didn't do anything. Jay, I think Keane came back later and the electricity was off at the time. That's not a big deal. Over in Tehran that was a frequent situation. Reading something Paul and Bill wrote about. When they were in prison the lights would go out and the electricity would go out and the people would light candles. I never could figure out

JP why we never lit candles. I always kind of having the lights out
Cont. because it was different.

KF Next day you went to (Rickanorsis?) the Ministry of Justice.
Temporary the detention unit where they were being held.

JP I don't know if that was the next day, but we did go do that.

KF Tell me about that trip.

JP Well, the trip to where they were located was a familiar part of the city to me. We went down to (Hoffez?) circle, from there we cut across the city toward the West and I don't remember what street we took us right there. Traffic in Tehran is terrible. Paris traffic, take Tokyo and Paris traffic and put them together, without any order at all Paris is unruly anyway. Tokyo traffic is better xxxxx. Cars are going the right way on the right side of the street. Cars cut in and out of lanes constantly. Side streets are coming into the main arteries. People rolling through the stop signs, not really stopping. You know, you never do more than five or ten miles an hour. It is quite, quite crowded there.

KF The day that you went down there?

JP I don't remember if it was the second day or not. I had a log six months but not too long. For me it was just a typical drive in Tehran. The car I was use to driving was a Renault IV, what they call it in the United States. I don't know what they call it, I think it is called a Renault in Europe.

KF They have started to call it LaCar.

JP That's what I had when I was over there and we tried a larger car, which I was familiar with but I just hadn't driven it that much. So anyway, we drove through the Traffic. It was a fairly maneuverable car so that it wasn't hard to get around. As we went down there we

JP passed military people. In some cases they had the roads blocked off.
Cont. At one point in time, we encountered maybe one maybe two demonstrations of people marching up and down the road. Close to the band. The military let it go on. We were parked right next too, we were in a traffic jam. There were all these marchers screaming and shouting up and down the streets. Some were running on the side streets. Cars burning were packed right next to us. Huge traffic jam. They never once did anything to us. We were stopped in a traffic jam and Jay got out and bought some bread. What we call ^[Barbari] (Barbery?) bread. It's a long, thin loaf. They have some other bread over there that is very thin, very dry. This bread has some texture to it. It is fairly good to eat with some butter or cheese on it. So we bought some of that. Buy it by the kilo. Which you do everything over there. Then we went by the prison. When we drove by the prison we all looked at each other and said it is not exactly what we thought it would be. It was more formable situation. Rather than being on a corner as it had been described to us, based on what people had said where they were, was actually in the middle of the block. We drove all around that area looking at it from different perspective. We drove back and ran into more demonstrations.

KF Now Jay recalls that there was a courtyard with a fence as it was described, but it seemed to be complete separate from the actual prison.

JP Correct.

KF He recalls it as being just some kind of a park or garden.

JP It was a garden next to the prison, along beside it.

KF And it was pretty clear that this was not where they were being exercised.

JP That is correct. When we drove up there the first time we actually saw it it was very clear that what we had been told was their exercise area was in fact adjacent to where they were being held and **was** not really where they were being exercised.

KF Did you observe about the prison from the point of view of somebody to get in or did you leave that to the Colonel?

JP No. From the point of view of how we were going to get in.

KF OK. What were your thoughts about that?

JP Well, we made an approach to the prison. Its a typical Persian street. Everything is built very, very close to the street. Large stone building grey in color. It is not painted, it is actually grey. (?) didn't really change his color either. As I recall, a much higher than 12 foot fence in front of it may 16 or 18 feet. It could have been much more than that. You couldn't see through it.

KF No railings?

JP It had railings up higher. Part of it may have been masonry, I don't recall. The actual gates themselves were wrought iron but the wrought iron had been coated with sheet metal. Now whether that sheet metal was iron or whether it was tin I do not recall.

KF Sheet metal on the inside?

JP Double layered, one on the inside and on the outside. We could see where the bars had been. People had been hitting on it. You could see the outline of where the bars were. Just normal wear in Iran. Or even where the xxxxx were. As I recall it was cream color or a very light green.

KF Do you recall a low building to the left of that gate?

JP As you face the building there are two entrances, as I recall, in the middle there is a small building between them, the entrance and exit. Which is typical of most administrative buildings in Iran.

KF OK. You drove back. Did you begin to discuss with the Colonel what you should do. Tell me about that.

JP We talked about very things. The conclusion that we drew is that we needed to get inside to find out exactly what was inside. If we could get into the gates, which we felt we could without a lot of disturbance, quietly, under a variety of disguises. What we would confront went we got in. The conversation what revolved around the fact that there was a colonel of the prison that had a separate office where he sat between the two gates in the courtyard. We would somehow a way to get Paul and Bill into that thing based on a visit from people. From that we would then extrogate them from the prison. But, that was eventually ruled out because of the fact that there seemed to be some sort of exterior look like a very (ring), but interior we found out that there was some sort of guard, fairly well armed guard. They exercised very early in the morning and late in the afternoon. They had some sort of formation and seemed to be very The information Jay was able to get from inside. That was the situation. So we talked about it some more and basically by the time we had almost ruled it out, they were moved to another prison.

KF By that time you thinking about driving a car.

JP I'm not aware of that. I know that there was some conversation about that but ...

KF This is now about the 20th of January that they moved. How had that situation in the streets developed during that period?

JP Well, myself personally looking at Tehran it was a time of a lot of tension there. Maybe I did not observe other things. I believe everything that was going on was continuous but became more widespread. There was always the constant agitation of different factions actions against the military, against the police. The military became more withdrawn and there was more withdrawn and more open agitation among groups to immediate authority at that time.

KF Any shooting yet?

JP No. Shooting had been going on since. Must have started about September when things were turning bad in Tehran.

KF You didn't mention any shooting. I assumed you had seen that.

JP There was no shooting that I heard. There may have been a shot here and there but there was nobody, there was not a lot of shooting. There was not a day that went by in Tehran where you didn't hear a shot or two from the time we left there. When I left I did not hear any shooting. There was no shooting at all. The last shooting I heard in Tehran was I guess it was the night of the 15th of February. The night after we went into the American Embassy.

KF It must have got worse over there for you?

JP Oh yes, there was always constant shooting. I had friends who lived down in that part of the city, and had been living under this constant shooting where I lived up in the middle portion of the city who would always hear shooting in Tehran all of December and all of January and all of February. Some nights it was constant shooting, some nights two or three shots. It just depended on what part of the city you were in too. Down around the bazaar area there was a lot, up around the palace there was very little, in between there was some. It was sectionalized in different parts of the city. Down around the (Modulous?) there is a whole lot of things, that is where the bazaar area is. That is where a lot of the fighting took place. Over near the

JP last prison where Paul and Bill were kept. Around the University Cont. there was a lot of fighting, a lot of fires, civil disturbance.

KF After they were moved, wait a minute, you have moved now as well. You have moved out of Keane Taylor's place and moved into (could not understand). That was pretty early on. I wonder how many days?

JP Probably four or five days.

KF Why did you move?

JP No specific reason that I can...other than Keane's house was a little more out of the way. We had been there for awhile. Some curiosity had developed and we wanted to move to a place which was less conspicuous.

KF How did that curiosity (could not understand).

JP It is my understanding that the neighborhood that we were in there were a lot of xxxxxx. They were a very curious, very suspicious people to outsiders. So we felt it would be better to. The neighbors were asking people who lived next door what was going on.

KF Was the landlord hanging around?

JP I don't know if the landlord said anything to us.

KF Was he in the building?

JP I don't know. (Could not hear).

KF You leave before and you move to the Dvoranchik place. That was where you spent most of your time. Seemed like after you moved, Paul and Bill were moved. You then went to the prison.

JP Yes, we went to the prison.

KP Tell me about that. What did you see at the prison?

JP The fortress firstly. It's not built like any prison. Very high walls all around. Built out of some sort of stone, either brick or other stones.

KP I think it was stones. I have been told it was stones. How high were the walls?

JP Eighteen or so feet. It is very hard, the architecture in that whole area you have all these very very high walls. Because that whole area is a military police training ground. I had some friends who lived out in that area, so I was familiar with that area. So when we went down there I wasn't, it wasn't anything unusual to me.

KF You had seen it before?

JP Not that physical prison, I had seen the area before. I knew what to expect. I knew where to go. I knew precisely how to get there. You get on this one major road and you are right there.

KF OK. But obviously looked at the place from the point of view of breaking into it.

JP No. It was quite obvious that you could not break into it.

KF Tell me why?

JP It is a prison. It is the classical class of, not Alcatraz, take any prison you see in the Midwest which has high stone walls around it which has guardpost distributed around it.

KF About how far apart were the guardpost?

JP Couple hundred yards?

KF What would you say the acreage of that compound was?

JP Half a block.

KF Did you drive all around it.

JP No I did not. I went up to it and passed down one side.

KF So you do not know the actual acreage of it. Gaylord recalls it as being in the order of 40 acres, the whole compound. It is much larger than you thought it was. I am surprised that the Colonel did not want to ride all around. That is astonishing!

JP If you had seen it you would know.

KF But the back might have been different?

JP The general neighborhood there is the same.

KF This is not the Colonel's way. You see what is surprising me. He is so thorough and meticulous. And he didn't even look at the back of the prison.

JP I didn't find it amazing, it was very obvious. Drive up to any major prison in the United States and . . .

KF But still you are not in the United States you are in Iran. That is what I would have said and done.

JP Well to drive up to any prison in Europe, same thing.

KF This is Iran and . . .

JP Those guys are no dummies, they build prisons stoutly and their civilization has been around longer than ours. They were able to build something formable.

KF Still.

JP Maybe you are right, maybe completely right, I didn't find it unusual.

KF Eighteen foot stone walls, guardposts about every couple of hundred of yards.

JP It couldn't been stone walls. Paul and Bill were able to break through.

KF That was a place where there was some construction under way.

JP But the whole makeup of the area, they were either fired bricks or mud bricks. The walls were not stone.

KF You are sure they were not stone?

JP I had been in the area a hundred times, I had to say that all the walls in that area are made up of fired bricks and plaster and stuff like that. It has been almost two years since I have seen that place but that all area. I know where the police academy is and the way the walls are.

KF So you are pretty sure they are fired bricks?

JP Even the Qazvin prison is the same way. The prison over there. The only places where I remember any stone walls were buckerages along the highway. They were green colored.

KF What did the Colonel say about the Gasre prison?

JP It would take time to get in and get out. It was obviously not the solution.

KF And then did he began to discuss other solutions?

JP Yes. Other solutions we talked about. We in fact actually persued is once they get out of the prison and felt comfortable that there was a way to get them out without force. In essence, what we would do would move them from place from place until we had lost whatever tails we supposed were on them and then take them out of the country. At that time there should have only been five of us. But that is not what happened.

KF Did everything happen quickly. Did you ever go to visit Paul and Bill?

JP They did not know I was there.

KF Why did you feel comfortable that they could be got out some other way?

JP Because we felt that either through negotiation some sort of personal reconnaissance that either that way or some bribe, or posting some letter of credit so that they could at least be let out of prison and into the public. Given some sort of furlough from the prison. There were a lot of options as I recall that could have allowed. They were not locked in cells and chained as I understand it. That possibility.

KF So you began to hope that they would be basically legitimately released from the prison. You began to rely on the negotiation team to get them out?

JP That was the other thought that we could buy them out of prison. Not necessarily the negotiation team, but to buy them out.

KF Did the Colonel talk to you about the possibility that the prison would be stormed?

JP No. Because of the general situation of the city and the fact that very very late in the game, 7th, 8th, and 9th of February the city was in tremendous turmoil. There wasn't two or three hours of constant gunfire. There had been some prisons in other portions of the country as well as the very, very southern suburbs of Tehran that had been broken into and prisoners were released. So from that respect it became clear that that could possibly happen or could be manufactured to happen.

KF So you don't remember actually discussing it with them?

JP Not in the sense that how do we get somebody to do this.

KF By this time, second week in February, you had been closeted with the Colonel for awhile in the Dvoranchik's apartment. Can you describe that apartment?

JP Sure. It was about a half flight up. You come up a very large onto a very narrow street where the Dvoranchik's house was located. It was located about half block down the street. Probably two houses on one side of it three or four on the other side of it. There were houses that were much, three or four stories high across the street that overlooked it as you went into the courtyard there was a small swimming pool. If you face the house, to the left hand side the landlord lived I believe on the ground level. I don't recall if they lived above or below the Dvoranchik's. And I believe there is a basement in the Dvoranchik's and then the landlord lived upstairs. I remember that we went up there and visited there one day. He went up a half flight of stairs to the apartment. As you came into the apartment there was a room about 12 feet by about 24 feet. It had a bookcase as you walked first into the house. There was a desk over in the left-hand corner when you came in with a nightlight on it. There was a set of doors that went into the living room. A set of doors that went out into a

JP small hall to the kitchen and to the bathroom and to another bedroom
Cont. that was of to the right. You couldn't see that bedroom as you
looked. As you first came in there was a bedroom very directly to the
left-hand side of the room up another two or three steps up into a
small bedroom up there. There was a larger bedroom off of the small
hallway that took you to the kitchen. As you went down the small
hallway you had the availability of a bedroom, a bathroom, a washroom
(washer, dryer and that type of thing). Then there was the kitchen.
Directly off the hallway to the left was a dining room and adjacent to
that was a little, there was no wall separating the dining room. So
there was a room about another 12 feet probably 48 maybe 60 feet that
represent the dining room and living room. There was a kitchen.

KF Now many bedrooms? Two or Three?

JP Two.

KF Who slept where? There were three of you.

JP The Colonel slept in the large bedroom with the Dvoranchik's. Jay and
I slept wherever. But we slept in the smaller bedroom. There were
double beds in there. Two double beds. I slept to the one close to the
wall and Jay slept in the one near the door. It was very cold and
everything. The temperature was never more than 50 degrees. We
wore our cloths the whole time.

KF To bed?

JP Yes.

KF What kind of cloths did you have?

JP I had a pair of corduroy trousers. I think I some bluejeans and a couple pair of trousers with me. I had a couple of heavy cotton shirts. Sweaters and jackets that we had found in various peoples houses; plus we brought some jackets with us. Warm socks.

KF You had bought boots. What kind of boots did you have?

JP They were brown in color, kind of work boots, kind of sole that resisted oil.

KF What kind of coat did you have?

JP It was a type of nylon, polyester, Parker stuffed with, not Down, but some sort of fiber that retained heat. You can buy them in Penney or Sear stores. Fairly common.

KF In this period when you were living there did you go out much?

JP Colonel and I would go periodically we drove periodically for a long time to different houses. First ten days or so we drove around the city a lot.

KF Why?

JP To find out what were in the houses that we could use. Flashlights, food, fuel to gas the automobiles that we had that we were trying to gather. Any type of thing we could find. One time very late we went to a guy's house near the mountain, very far up the mountain to find walkie-talkies that he had in his house. Which I did find and did bring back. But I went by myself. But we did drive around quite a bit. We out everyday for at least a couple of hours every day to see what was going on. Some days, there may be a week or so that we stayed in the house there was a lot of street fighting and stuff at the very end, the first part of December. Especially the first part of February when Khomeini first returned there was a lot of activity in the streets. Nobody every tried to break in anybody's house or anything like that

JP I am aware. There was a lot of conflict in the streets. Cars riding up Cont. and down the street shooting at various things, at each other.

KF You spent a lot of time in that apartment with Simons? Other than the operation, what did you talk about.

JP Talked about religion, politics, sex, pig farming, work.

KF What did he say about religion?

JP We drew the conclusion that religion is something that an individual has and displays, at least for he and I. Philosophy wise more my philosophy than his in a sense that I cannot really remember all of the things that he said. My philosophical points were that if you belong to an organized religion you have to be able to live that religion very distinctly. You can't do it part way. And that religion is more of a private thing than a public display. My thoughts, I think, that his thoughts the things that you see predominantly that people explain their religion as opposed to living their religion. There was no denying that there was some external that caused all of this to be put together. What it is, everybody has a name for him. Philosophically you have to rely on something beside yourself on God. Neither one of us. He never denied the existence of a God. He was not an atheist or anything like that.