

TAPE #53--SIDE A
HAROLD KIMMERLING--NOVEMBER 20, 1981

KF Let me tell you how this came about. I said to Ross that I was hoping to spend a couple of hours with this psychiatrist in New York this week-end. Tell him or her everything I know about Simons and just see what he would say. He said, "Of course, the problem with that is that you have never met Simons, so it is third-hand." He said, "These doctors that had worked with Simons toward the end are all very bright and they knew him. Let's see if we can't get you to talk to one of those. So go ahead." What I am trying to get at, and I may never achieve it, is to try to figure out what made Simons tick.

HK I think that is going to be a very difficult problem. Because he was a very quite intro person. He never spoke much, very quite. He was very quite. I guess it was a long time before he ever told me anything. Of course, you have to preface all of this knowing that he had a serious illness. He knew he had a serious illness. I am sure that that had a lot to do with him being very quite. One day he came up and said, "I've got my things from Iran." I said, "You did. What do you mean." Finally he elaborated and said, "We were in this hotel at Tehran and suddenly we got a telephone call, nobody said anything on the other end. We all bailed out." I said, "What do you mean, bailed out." He said, "We all just left. We left everything." He did take his passport, but the rest of his stuff, including his credit cards, American Express, and so forth, he left there in the hotel. He went on to say that he felt that this was a very bad sign, that they were all should have been seeking cover elsewhere so they pulled out. I don't know how many were with him at that time. That was before the raid. But that took a long time before he got ever got around to even talking about that. He had that one son that came to visit. He worked on a boat that went back and forth from the shore out to the oilrigs in the Gulf. He very rarely said anything to him. What he did say was very kind. When the boy came, apparently he had been a real problem

HF to him during the years. There was nothing ever derogatory said
Cont. about this boy at all. He did, however, talk a lot about his guns that
he was making down in Florida at this ranch where he lived. He was
extremely competent and was not only a marksman but he could
assemble and make these guns right from scratch. But I think that
this was the type of individual, that was the way he was able to lose
himself and get away from people so to speak. I don't know that I am
beginning to give you any insite as to the type of person he was or
not. There was this Swedish girl that was on board the plane, I am
sure that you have heard. . Have you talked to her?

KF Anita? No, she has gotten married and gone to Sweden. We are trying
to track her down but we haven't been able to. I have been told that
their relationship was not a romatic one.

HF Well, I just wonder.

KF I just wonder too.

HF She was in her late 20s, very thin, very chic and sort of a wild girl
in a way. I don't think they had never met before they were on this
plane coming back from Turkey. ??? log cabin up-in, and she, from
what I gather, that was sort of a musical ??. There was Bull, there
was this Norwegian ski instructor, and then there was another male,
but there were three girls or at least two girls. That place only had
four bedrooms upstairs. There was plenty of room to sleep in there.
The gal who was suppose to be the caretaker up there said she never
knew who was going to come out of what bedroom. Apparently, he
went along pretty well with what she did. He got sort of attached to
her. I think there was more to it than just paternal type of
relationship. She spent a lot of time with him at the hospital, granted
she was being paid to do so. When they went out to Ross's guest
house, they shared the same bedroom.

KF She had the same bedroom?

HF Yes.

KF That doesn't sound too paternal to me.

HF Just before he was to go in for his heart surgery, he gave her a Rolex watch. I am sure that if he had of lived, he would have been faced with making a decision. Was she going to be romantically inclined with him, or it was going to be still whatever relationship he had with her. Apparently they got on very well. She could, so to speak, (could not hear). She changed a whole lot too. She got into this world of money so to speak. Because anything that he needed, Ross made sure that he had, got it. She began to like that sort of life. She stayed at the hospital all the time with him. When he went out to Ross's cottage, they stayed in the same room. At least, there wasn't another bedroom in that cottage. That is where they would stay.

KF In that case, I really had better try to track her down.

HF I would image that she could tell you an awful lot because they were together constantly from that time on until he died. Did you know about the watch part?

KF The watch part? No.

HF Him giving her the watch?

KF No.

HF He gave it to her up in intensive care at Baylor. Of course, it was a circumstances. He had twenty-four hour guards on the door. They were off duty policemen. Swatt policemen, they were twenty-four hour guards there at entry to his room. Everybody had to be cleared before they could get into this room.

KF Didn't he also have a gun under his pillow?

HF Yes he did. I don't think he had an ammunition for it. It was a past time, he would draw it to keep up on his fast draw. He would practice that.

KF It sounds to me that that must be against hospital regulations.

HF I think they were bent a little.

KF (Cannot understand).

HF I don't anyone would want it, ammunition in it. I don't know if they ever knew it was there.

KF I gather he learned a lot about the heart while he was there.

HF He has a very inquisitive mind. He wanted to know about everything. He had some friend up in at (Cathedral?) clinic and he would talk to apparently. I think Ross knows who it was. He became very knowledgeable as to his problem. We were very open with him and let him know what his problem was. He knew his problem. He knew what his chances were?

KF What were his chances?

HF He had, at the time of his heart attack, he blew a hole between the lower two chambers of his heart. What we call a ventricular ceptal defect.

KF Ceptal?

HF Ceptal. That's the division between the chambers of the heart. That is called the ceptal. He blew a hole between the lower two chambers and then the area which was on the backside of heart is result of the heart attack, bloomed out until he got an aneurysm.

KF He understood all that.

HF He understood all that. He had three coronary catheterizations where they attached the (could not understand) directly from the blood supply to the heart. So he had that on three occasions. These films were sent to the ? Clinic, so they knew what was going on. They got sent to Mason (too low). At time of surgery there was just too much. His heart had gotten too large, this aneurysm or this balloon in that area on the back of his heart had gotten the size of a grapefruit. He had also all along the coronary artery that had actual blockage of the blood vessels which caused his heart attack in the first place. I think it was very interesting. Do you know about how he got his heart attack?

KF No.

HF Well, this girl Anita wanted to see the sunset at the top of the mountain at Laos. So they had made arrangements to get a snowcab to drive them up to see the sunset and then come back down the on this ski trailer. She was the one driving this snowcab and apparently she was pretty wild, he got (too low) scared.

KF Oh really.

HF When he came back down is when he had his heart failure. He had been having complaints of his shoulder. Now whether this heart pains or what keeping him off the ski slopes but all of this bunch had been going out and really living it up there in (Vail?) all these different places. One night they apparently went out to a Greek restaurant and

HF drank, danced on top of the tables. Anita can give you all the inside Cont. of that. That is all second hand.

KF Sounds as though he had a good time.

HF He did. Then they had all this musical bed business and he was a one year widower. His wife had died one year previously and he was ready to live it up.

KF You are the first person who has said that. Everybody else has been fairly sure that there was no romance between Anita and Art.

HF I don't know. I couldn't say that there was. But there was sure every indication that there was something going on.

KF Did you get any clues as to what made his tick. He was a driven man for the most of his life. He was a perfectionist. He could not make it in civilian life as a younger man, he had to go back into the military after the war. He could not be content with the kind of life, for example like his brother. Almost obsessed, not really obsessed. He did not know how to relax. He always had to be doing something, using his brain. I just wonder what it was that drove him on.

HF I don't know. I don't think he communicated this sort of a thing. He was a very quite individual. He never talk much. It was only on rare occasion that he would every come out and say anything. One day, it had been a long time, he said that he got lots of mail after the raid and all the publicity.

KF This is the Iranian or Son Tay raid?

HF The Iranian raid. He said most of it was from prisoners, US prisons that wanted help about getting out. (Laughter) He said he had also got a number of marriage proposals. Then he didn't elaborate any. He was just not a talker at all. Have you talked at great length to Ross?

HF I am sure that he knows a great deal about the man. I think he was
Cont. able to get closer to him than anyone.

KF Yes, I have talked to people who have spent hours and days talking to him. In fact, that when you got close to him he would talk a lot. Talk about a variety of subjects at great length. But that didn't happen very often. It happened when they were on this mission. Long hours to spend in hiding. Then he talked a great deal. He talked to some extent about himself. But nobody knows much about him, as to why he was the way he was. His brother thinks the war did it. Turned him from an unusual young man. Very strong, intelligent and capable young man into the character that people came to know as the "Bull." Stanley said he wasn't like that to begin with. So, it may have been the war.

HF Of course, we were dealing with him under different circumstance. We were dealing with him as a sick pain. A man who had a very serious illness, he knew it, and he was extremely cooperative. He did everything we asked him to do. There wasn't any belligerence about him, any test we wanted to do he would go along with. He did want to know what we were doing. I think that was basically his inquisitiveness.

KF He reacted well, very well?

HF Yes. We had about three severe crisis with him where we felt we were going to lose him. One of the big problems we had was to just keep him out of heart failure. We could just barely keep the fluid from filling up his lungs. His heart was just not that good. There was just too much damage to it. He just couldn't respond that well to the medication. He was just barely holding it, it didn't take too much to trip him.

KF He knew that?

HF He knew that.

KF From what you said, he was cooperative.

HF He was extremely cooperative, there was no problem there.

KF Did he get depressed?

HF Yes. He did have periods where he was extremely silent. We would go in and he wouldn't say anything. He just wouldn't say one thing. We would ask him questions. If he felt he just had to answer, then he would answer. So I think he did get depressed. He had every reason to get depressed. We rushed him back to the intensive care too many times. We just didn't think he was going to make it. We would run into a big problem. He was in the hospital for I think the first time around about two months after we brought him down from Laos, before he was ever allowed to get out of the hospital at all. Then he went out to Ross's guest house with Anita.

KF Doesn't sounds as if she could be too good for his heart.

HF Now whether they did anything or not, I don't know.

KF But even the temptation. . .

HF She was a good looking gal.

KF Yes. The temptation should not be too good for a weak heart even if he never uses it.

HF She just sort of took over. She certainly had some feelings for him. Whether they were true, were just strictly a paternal type or romantic type feeling, I don't know. She just really took over. She really guarded him like a mother with little chicks. You need to talk to her.

KF What did she look like?

HF She was a tall gal, 5'8", thin, blond hair. Sort of like the model type.

KF Dressed glamorously?

HF She didn't have too many clothes because I don't think she ever had any. She was never exposed (could not understand). She wore some of the same things repeatedly. She looked good in whatever she wore.

KF We may never unravel that mystery.

HF I bet she would tell you.

KF We will certainly try.

HF Get Ross on it. If he get his mind made up to find her, he will find her.

KF Do you think that the life he lived was responsible for the fact that he died the way he did?

HF No. That had nothing to do. The reason he died the way he did. He was in marvelous physical condition. We sort of grounded him when he got so bad. If it hadn't been for the fact that he was in just good physical condition.

KF Do you think that his heart was always weak?

HF He had serious problems, he had serious blockage in some of the main blood vessels.

KF What cause that?

HF Hardening of the arteries. You get deposits, and then it just like a pipe. . .

KF I mean what in a person's life causes it.

HF Stress is the big factor. He certainly had a stressful life. He smoked, and that was a big factor.

KF I mean these raids he was on.

HF That could be a tremendous precursor to a current heart disease. He always had his hands moving. He either had that gun out and twirling it or drawing it, he was constantly doing something with his hands. He had several books, but he did not read books. He watched TV. They got him a video tape recorder. He watched Patton several times. Anita would go out and bring him in food and they would sort of have picnics in there. But he was not a type of reader. He used other means to keep himself amused. I think that gun work he did, apparently he had a full workshop, was really his true interest. They thought he was going to come out here and live and Ross was going to put him out at that place he had bought out in Plano. That is one of the big things they were going to do. Bring all of that gun workshop up here for him.

KF Basically, stress and heavy smoking.

HF Those are two big factors. Of course, I don't know about his family life. His mother and father, uncles and aunts, as to whether they had a lot of problem with hardening of the arteries. Those are the two biggest... You could not have two worse factors against you. He was 60 years old. The ideal time would have been to find out about his problem before he got into trouble. Of course, that didn't occur. He had a tremendous amount of pain. They kept a tremendous amount of narcotics they gave him at Vail. We had to give him a tremendous amount bring him back to Dallas. It took a week or so. That would

HF have kept him sort of out of touch with reality as to what was going
Cont. on. Then we had these crisis where he would fill up with fluid. We
had two or three of these episodes where we would have to rush him
back to intensive care. That lots of crisis with him (could not hear).
That was the first month. Then the second month was before you have
a really good chance to talk to him at all. He never really opened up
to me at all.

KF He really never opened up to anybody. He told people. Some people he
gave a lot of information to one way or another. You wouldn't really
call it (could not hear). He seemed to have had his emotions under
very tight control.

HF He was a very controlled individual.

KF Maybe too much so for his own good.

HF Even with all the problems that he had he never opened up and had
any open anxieties. All of that was (too low, could not hear). This is
where Anita may be a big help. She was there with him hours upon
hours.

KF Well, I think that is it. What do you think?

HF Of course, I know that when he was up in Vail he didn't talk to those
people who (could not hear). They didn't know any of this stuff. I
was up there afterwards and I filled in on a lot of this stuff. I think
Anita could give you the information. I know he felt for Ross greatly.
Ross has a way of getting information out of people. Of all the stories
I heard, I wouldn't have believed them but I heard them from Ross.

HF The thing he really told me about was getting the letters. Even when he got down to the end and he knew that it was a life or death situation, he didn't come out with any display of emotion. He was extremely controlled. Almost calculating. He was anxious about it but he never spoke about it.

KF OK. Thank you very much.

End of Tape.