

FBI Interview of Dr. Daniel O'Connell

01/18/1996

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Precedence: ROUTINE

Date: 01/18/1996

To: San Francisco

Attn: SA Kathy

From: CIRG Investigative Support Unit

Contact: SSA James R Fitzgerald, (703) 640-1350

Approved By: Montgomery Robin L

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Case ID #: 149A-SF-106204 (Pending)

Title: UNABOM;

MAJOR CASE #75

Reference: San Francisco EC, dated 12/20/1995, of SA Duguay's interview of Dr. John Martin Ellis, and telephonic request of SA Kathy Puckett to SSA James R. Fitzgerald to attempt to attain other professional opinions regarding the theory of Dr. Ellis.

Synopsis: Interview of Dr. Daniel O'Connell, Professor of Psychology, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., regarding the Germanism theory of Dr. Ellis, as it applies to the UNABOM investigation.

Details: Dr. Daniel O'Connell, Professor of Psychology at Georgetown University, was telephonically interviewed on 01/15/1996 by Supervisory Special Agents Fitzgerald, of the Investigative Support Unit (ISU), and Sharon Smith, of the Behavioral Science Unit (BSU), regarding his review of the UNABOM manuscript and any indications that the author may be influenced by the German language, the German culture, or any other aspect of Germanism. He was earlier provided a copy of the manuscript and spent a considerable amount of time reviewing it, which subsequently led to his conclusions as illustrated below.

By way of background, Dr. O'Connell, who is a Roman Catholic priest, has been associated with Georgetown University for many years. He is a former chairperson of the psychology department and is presently teaching both undergraduate and graduate courses there. His area of specialty is in psycholinguistics. He is fluent in the German language and spends at least three months every year in Germany. He is the co-editor of a German journal entitled Kodikas/Kodd which is published at a German university. The journal is designed for German students and/or writers who are native German language speakers attempting to learn the English language. As co-editor, he is familiar with many of the idiosyncratic pitfalls which manifest themselves as the writers attempt to write in the English language, but from a native German language heritage. O'Connell states he is not a Germanist, but is familiar with the discipline and all that is associated with it.

O'Connell is of the professional opinion that the author of the UNABOM is a white/male who is a native English speaker. He feels that manuscript reflects little, if any,

characteristics of the German language, or even the German culture. He bases this opinion on several factors within the manuscript. First, the continued use of discourse markers (well, because, I mean, I know, etc.) throughout the manuscript is common to the English language and is indicative of someone who is very familiar with it. Second, the use of contractions, many of which are found in the manuscript, is common in English writing but not in German. Third, numerous American idioms are utilized throughout the work, which, for obvious reasons, would not necessarily be very well known to an English-as-a-second- language writer. Fourth, the sentences are in many cases short in length, a factor not common in German. Fifth, O'Connell advises that he did not find a single German word or German cognate throughout the article. And last, the sentence structures repeatedly were generally of a proper English grammatical structure with no indications of periodicity. Periodicity is common in the structure of German language sentences in that the verb or the actual meaning of the sentence is not clear until the very last word of the sentence. This was not found in the manuscript.

O'Connell acknowledged that there were several examples throughout the manuscript with which one could present somewhat of an argument that the writings are of German origin. For example, the writer's use of capital letters on numerous occasions is common to German writings. Also, the use on at least three occasions of the word "leftish" could possibly be construed as being derived from German, i.e., a modified version of "leftisch." ("Isch" is a common suffix in German.) In addition, the use in paragraph 194 of the term "green party" is possibly a reference to the environmentally oriented Green Party presently in existence in Germany.

O'Connell referred to some other examples throughout the manuscript which, while not necessarily indicative of German origins, are reflective of poor grammatical and punctuation skills. An example of this is the writer's practice of improper hyphenation in such words as "stressed," "passed," and "destroyed." Also, the obvious uncorrected misspellings such as "presseure," "licencse," "fulfilment," "skilful," etc., are not the spellings that a skilled writer would utilize.

O'Connell continued to provide other examples of flaws and unique writing examples throughout the manuscript. However, the sum of his review of the manuscript as it relates to the Germanism theory is clear. There is no overt, overwhelming evidence that the writer is anything but a native English speaker, born in the United States, with no direct link to the German culture. He advises that it is possible that he is a second or third generation German-American, or that he grew up in a German community, but it would be to no greater extent than that.

Aside from any Germanist connection, and from a strictly psycho-linguistic examination, Dr. O'Connell drew some other conclusions from the manuscript. He opines that the writer is a white/male, born and raised in the mid-western area of the United States, raised in a politically conservative environment, approximately forty-five years of age, and probably a college graduate with some graduate school experience. His academic background is primarily in the social sciences with an interest level extending to current history, philosophy, and government. He has little education in the field of

psychology. His formal education would have taken place in the 1960s and 1970s. As his writing style is "scattered," O'Connell feels that the author has no experience in publishing. (Other than, of course, The Washington Post.) However, he may still have ongoing contact with the academic community at some level.

O'Connell also brought up an interesting point that has virtually nothing to do with the matters discussed above. Upon reading the manuscript he noticed that in paragraph 161 the writer uses the term "lab schools." O'Connell has taught at or has been associated with numerous universities throughout the country. Throughout the years, he has only heard the term "lab school" in relation to one institute of higher learning. That school is the University of Chicago (UC). There, students and teachers alike refer to the laboratory facility as the "lab school," a term which O'Connell has heard nowhere else throughout the academic community other than at UC.

Dr. O'Connell advises that he is available for other consultation regarding any documents produced by the UNABOM subject and UTF can contact him through ISU and SSA Smith.

CC: 1 - SSA Smith (BSU)

1 - SSA Wright

The Ted K Archive

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01/18/1996

Professor of Psychology Dr. Daniel O'Connell provides a statement regarding theories as they apply to the UNABOM case

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