

## A F F I D A V I T

of HELEN THOMAS + OLIVE SCHULER

In February of 1993, I was at dinner with Frank and Olive Schuler at their apartment in Arlington, Virginia. The Schulers had also invited Helen Shaffer, an old acquaintance of theirs from their State Department days in 1941. Frank, a former Foreign Service Officer who had served in Japan for ten years before Pearl Harbor, had met Olive when he returned from Japan in the fall of 1940. Olive was a secretary in the Division of Far Eastern Affairs where Helen Shaffer also worked. Olive had, on several occasions over the years, told me conversations we'd had about Pearl Harbor, that in 1963 she had renewed her friendship with Helen who had offered her a job in the firm where she was employed.

Olive had told me years before that in 1946, when Frank was working for the Office of War Information, he had been invited to dinner at the home of an old friend, William Turner, who also was a Japanese expert. That evening, Bill revealed to Frank the fact that after Pearl Harbor, the officials in the Division had secretly removed from official documents any and all incriminating evidence which would place blame on those responsible for the misguided advice given to the Secretary of State, Cordell Hull and President Roosevelt which led to the disaster at Pearl Harbor.

Returning to 1963 above -- at that time, Olive asked Helen Shaffer if she had continued to work in the Division after Pearl Harbor? When she said she had, Olive then told her about what Bill Turner had told Frank and asked her if she knew anything about what Bill had euphemistically called "Bally's Project," so-named because it was Joseph Ballantine, one of Hull's advisers, who was in charge of it. Helen thought for a moment and said she did recall it, that in fact, she was the secretary assigned to Ballantine on the project. She had been told that it was a "secret" project; admonished she was not to tell anyone what she was doing; that she had worked in a locked room in which no one other than the few involved were permitted to enter; also that the room was filled with filing cabinets which had been transported there from the central files.

In 1972, when the Schulers began their research on Pearl Harbor, Olive asked Helen Shaffer if she would be willing to sign an affidavit attesting to what she had said in 1963. Unfortunately, Helen had returned to work for the State Department in order to build up her government status for retirement benefits and said she couldn't possibly do it. She

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reinforced her refusal by saying, in a somewhat angry tone of voice,

"Don't you ever ask me to do this again. I don't want what happened to Frank to happen to me." I was both surprised and crestfallen. I understood only too well what she meant about what had happened to Frank. That was the first time she had made such a statement to me. However, because of her moral integrity I realized that she was as angry at herself as she was with me.

During dinner that evening in February of 1993, Helen Thomas and Frank and I kept wondering how we could appropriately bring up the matter of State's "cover-up" after Pearl Harbor. We hoped that by this time, Helen Shaffer, having retired from State a number of years before, might be forthcoming on the subject. For a half-hour or more we discussed the domestic political situation and the changes that might be expected with a democratic president in the White House again. Suddenly, as though she was reading our minds, Helen Shaffer, looking directly at Frank, abruptly changed the subject by blurting out:

"You must know, Frank, that they were really out to get you back then," meaning his three superiors in the year leading up to the attack in December of 1941.

Helen Thomas immediately asked, "Why would they have been out to get him?"

"Because he opposed the policy. They thought he was interfering."

Helen Thomas said, "But he turned out to be right!"

"That was the problem!" she exclaimed. "And they felt they had to do something about that."

"Olive told me you had said that they rewrote documents from hindsight, that, in fact, you did the retyping," Helen Thomas said.

"Yes I did. I got so tired of retyping those damned, long documents on those clumsy typewriters. Not only that, but they revised parts of the Foreign Relations Series. I finally asked for a transfer out of the Division."

"But what they did was a crime! How could they have done that?" Helen Thomas asked her..

"Well, I guess they felt that was the only way they could absolve themselves of blame."

The above is an accurate recollection of the conversation I

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had with Helen Shaffer that evening in February of 1993.

Helen Thomas

After Helen Shaffer left our apartment, Helen Thomas remarked: "Well, that's an incredible and astonishing story. She's a very substantial woman. I could tell that no one can put words into her mouth."

I attest to all of the above as accurate and true.

Olive L. Schuler

SWORN BEFORE ME THIS  
12<sup>th</sup> DAY OF *December 1994*  
(RLB unreadable)  
My Commission Expires *March 31, 1997*

Note: Helen Thomas is UPI White House correspondent.

Hand written: *Helen Shaffer died of cancer shortly thereafter.*