

January 31, 1951

Elitcher

Re: John Doe

Presented by Myles J. Lane, Esq.

10.

M A X E L I T C H E R , called as a witness,
having first been duly sworn by the Foreman,
testified as follows:

BY MR. LANE:

Q Now, Mr. Elitcher, you may recall that you
appeared before this Grand Jury before, in connection with
the Rosenberg case - - is that correct? A Yes, I did.

Q Now, will you tell the jury - - first of all,
you know Julius Rosenberg, don't you? A Yes, I do.

Q You have known him for some time? A Yes.

Q You went to school with him, didn't you?

A Yes.

Q At City College? A Yes, at City College.

Q Did he have occasion to visit you in Washington
in the summer of 1944? A Yes.

Q Where did you live in the summer of 1944?

A 247 Delaware Avenue, S. W., in Washington.

Q And at that time were you working for the Navy?

A Yes, I was.

Q What were you doing? A I was engineer-
draftsman in the Fire Control Section in the Bureau of
Ordnance.

Q Was that secret work? A Yes; it was class-
ified work.

Q And you were quite familiar with that work,

were you not? A Yes, I was.

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Q At that time were you in the Communist cell down in Washington? A At that time, yes.

Q And you were married? A Yes.

Q Now, did Julius Rosenberg have occasion to visit you at your home at - what was the address?

A 247 Delaware Avenue, S. W.

Q - - a short time after June 6, 1944? A Yes, he did.

Q And was your wife there at that time? A Yes, she was home.

Q And did you have any conversation with Julius? A Yes, a private conversation.

Q Was your wife present at that conversation? A No, she was not.

Q How do you fix that conversation with reference to June 6, 1944? A Well, it was some time after D-Day, I don't know exactly how long after, but he had mentioned in the conversation a celebration he had made in regard to D-Day, and I believe that before he left he proposed that we have a drink and again in celebration of this event.

Q By "he" you mean Rosenberg? A Yes, Rosenberg.

Q And something was said about the Russians at that time? A Yes.

Q Now, will you tell the jury what the conversation was with respect to your work and with respect to

the Russians? A Well, he first opened the private conversation - -

Q You mean Rosenberg? A Yes, Rosenberg opened the private conversation by saying that the Russians were doing very well in the war; however, they would do much better if they had been given more help by the Allies in regard to military equipment that was being developed, and that some people here were not cooperating and not willing to give to the Russians such classified information - - that is, officially give it to them - - and he said, to help the Russians the people were helping by giving information illegally.

He asked me what I was doing, and what type of work I was doing generally, and then asked whether I would be willing to help the Russians by contributing such information to them as I might be able to get my hands on.

Q What, if anything, did he say about a man named Sobell? A Well, during the conversation he was using arguments to persuade me to do this, to go into this venture of contributing, and as one of his arguments he said, "Well, you know that Morton Sobell is also helping out," remembering that Sobell had been a friend of mine at school and had been my roommate for some time before he left Washington, so he said, "Well, you know he is helping out, too," sort of as a spur to get me to agree.

as far as Sobell is concerned. That is important, and don't you hold back. Tell me what he said, and give it to me as strongly as you gave it to me before. A He said, "Sobell is working with me and is helping and contributing - - "

Q Contributing what? A Contributing in giving information to the Russians.

Q And was that persuasive, as far as you were concerned? A Well, I remember very well that conversation, that he was using it as a persuasive argument, and that probably led me to go along with him.

Q Now, in the summer of 1944, or just after that, you took a trip with Morton, didn't you? A Yes.

Q Where? A Cacapon State Park, in West Virginia.

Q Was that in August? A Some time in the late summer.

Q There were just the two of you? A No. My wife and I, and he and his present wife.

Q Then his fiancée? A That's right.

Q Now, did you have a conversation alone with Sobell about this little incident that you now speak about, with Rosenberg? A Yes. I believe it was during that trip - - to go back for just a moment, when Rosenberg mentioned this fact to me about Sobell, I had determined for myself to confirm it, and at the next opportunity I would

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have to see Sobell I would drop this word to him, and see how he reacted to it, to see if he was really going along.

So when I saw him at that time, I said to him, "Well, Rosenberg visited me some months ago, and he said that you were working with him on some espionage deal" -- I didn't use that word -- at which point he became very angry and said, "Julie should not have mentioned that to you, he shouldn't have said that to you." He did not deny it, and I sort of went on to explain that "he knew we were close, and he could tell this to me, and it is all right, and you probably knew he had seen me, anyway," and he still was angry, and said, "It makes no difference, he shouldn't have said this to you."

Q Well, did he tell you he had seen Rosenberg and he knew about Rosenberg visiting you? A No, he didn't admit to that. He didn't say that he was actually working with him, but he in no way denied it, and the inference I got was that he was, but this should not have been discussed with me and should not have been mentioned to me.

Q Where was Sobell working at that time?

A At the General Electric Company in Schenectady.

Q You knew that for a fact? A Yes.

Q Did he tell you that? A I had known that.

Q But did he tell you that? A Yes.

Q Did he tell you what he was working on at the

General Electric plant in Schenectady? A I knew he was working in the sections that do Government work, and that his work would be connected with military information.

Q Did he tell you that? A Yes, he did.

Q Was anything said about the Mark 56? A No, sir.

Q Was that something you were working on?

A No; that didn't come until later.

Q But did he work on it or did you work on it?

A I worked on this particular project.

Q Did he discuss what he was working on at any time? A On numerous occasions he did indicate what he was working at, but at that time I actually didn't know what he was doing. He was sort of - not an apprentice, but he was working his way up in the GE organization, in the laboratory, and I can't recall just what he might have been doing at that time, but it wasn't until later when he became more involved in the development of parts of these equipments.

Q Do you know Sarah Silverman Powell? A I knew her only as Sarah Silverman.

Q What do you know about her? A Well, in 1939 - - I had gone to Washington at the end of 1938, and in 1939 Sobell and I roomed together, and during this time he persuaded me to join the Communist Party. He was a member of the Young Communist League at the time, and he,

over a period of months, starting about May, 1939, sort of worked on me to join the Party, which I did some time late in 1939.

At that time the organization was broken up into Party - - it was Communist/cells, and in '39 and '40 Sarah Silverman was a member of one of these cells which we were in.

Q And did you see her at cell meetings at the place where you and Sobell lived? A Yes.

Q Where was that? A 4925 7th Street, N.W.

Q And what was the year? A 1939 and the beginning of '40.

Q And was she present with you and Sobell at any other meetings of the Communist Party cells? A Probably. I don't recall any other places at which we might have met.

Q Did you visit her place? A Yes, I visited. I don't know whether he ever did. She just roomed, and I don't believe we had meetings at her place.

Q Of course you know Ruth Altscher, don't you? A Yes.

Q Was she the woman who was present at the time you met Mutterperl and Julius Rosenberg? A Yes.

Q And you went to a restaurant of some sort?

A Yes.

the jurors would like to ask?

A JUROR: I have a question, Mr. Lane:

I am not sure how you establish June 6, 1944.

THE WITNESS: I don't say that we established that exact date, but it was not too distant from that, because it was in our minds at that time.

A JUROR: Was the stuff that you were working on, and the other man Sobell working on, classified as "Secret"?

THE WITNESS: At the time, what I was working on would not have been classified as "Secret" but "Confidential," which was a high classification. I don't know what he was doing at that time, but later on he was working on "Secret" or "Confidential" material.

A JUROR: But it was understood that Rosenberg wanted to get "Secret" or "Confidential" information?

THE WITNESS: Yes.

Q What you were working on, however, had something to do with national defense? A Yes.

Q You are sure of that? A Definitely.

(WITNESS EXCUSED)