



The FBI Oral History Project

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**Interview of Former Special Agent of the FBI
William J. Bradley (1940-1945)
Interviewed by John J. “Jack” O’Flaherty
On February 7, 2006**

Edited by Jack O’Flaherty. Corrections, spelling, etc. by Sandra Robinette on March 30, 2006. Final corrections from Mr. Bradley by Sandra Robinette on May 11, 2006.

This is retired Agent Jack O’Flaherty ... full name John, middle initial J., O’Flaherty. It is Tuesday, February the 7th, 2006. I have the pleasure of being here at the residence of Bill Bradley, former Agent, and the interview is being conducted at his residence in St. Petersburg, Florida.

It’s a pleasure meeting Bill. He is a young 93 years of age with a strong handshake, a good strong voice. At this point, Bill, will you please do me the pleasure of reading from the form, known as the Copyright Release and Background Form.

William Bradley:

We, the undersigned, convey the rights to the intellectual content of our interview on this date to the Society of Former Special Agents of the FBI. This transfer is in exchange for the Society’s efforts to preserve the historical legacy of the FBI and its members. We understand that portions of this interview may be deleted for security purposes. Unless otherwise restricted, we agree that acceptable sections can be published on the Worldwide Web and the recordings transferred to an established repository for preservation and research.

O’Flaherty:

Thank you very much Bill. The time that we started this recording was 1:35 pm. Again, that’s on Tuesday, February the 7th, 2006.

At this point in time, to begin with our interview, and it revolves around Bill’s experience not only with the SIS, Special Intelligence Services, during the war, in Brazil in an undercover capacity, but then leads into his later assignment as a Legat in Brazil. So with that introduction, Bill, I’ll just ask you to start in chronological order and tell us about your experiences. First of all, I guess it would be your background in to what was the motivation or circumstances surrounding your becoming a Special Agent of the FBI.

Bradley: When war broke out in Europe in 1939, all of us in the United States, I think, felt the impact of this conflagration, I guess you'd call it. We knew that we would ultimately be drawn into the war and several of us, friends of mine, were most interested in getting into the action, somehow, somehow. Well, I was a lawyer and, at that time, was practicing law in Dayton, and a friend of mine and I went to Cincinnati where there was an office of the FBI. And we made applications: first we were interviewed; then we made an application to the Bureau looking toward becoming a Special Agent of the FBI.

At that time, only two types of individuals could be Agents, namely, lawyers and/or accountants. No other personnel were admitted at that time. So I received, after my application in Cincinnati, a telegram from the Bureau to the effect that after their investigation of me in order to discover whether or not I was a likely candidate, I had been accepted as an FBI Agent, provisionally, of course, at an annual salary of 32 hundred dollars a year; that I was to report to the FBI Headquarters in the Department of Justice Building at Ninth and Pennsylvania Avenue at a specified time.

I left Dayton ... never to return again to live there.

O'Flaherty: And Bill, excuse me, you were saying Dayton and Cincinnati. That's Dayton, Ohio. Just for the recording purposes. It's the City of Dayton in the State of Ohio.

Bradley: That's right. That's where I was born.

O'Flaherty: Okay.

Bradley: However, the application was made to the FBI Field Office in Cincinnati, Ohio.

O'Flaherty: I see.

Bradley: Yes.

O'Flaherty: Thank you.

Bradley: On arrival, in Washington, I checked in and we were told that we had been accepted provisionally and if we satisfactorily completed our courses, including firearms training in Quantico, Virginia, down at the Marine Base there, that, in all probability, we would be accepted. So we had, I forget how many months, of courses at the Bureau concerning it's jurisdiction with respect to violation of Federal laws and then firearms training. I can't remember the exact dates, but I was advised that I was being accepted as an Agent and was immediately assigned to the Washington Field Office.

I spent a short period there in Washington, DC and thereafter, was transferred to the Field Office in Chicago. The SAC there, as I recall, was Bill Devereaux, a great guy. It was while I was working there that he told me that they had received a telegram calling me back to Washington; that I was being considered for SIS, which I did not, at that time, know of its existence or what it was.

O'Flaherty: Or what the, what the letters even stood for, huh?

Bradley: That's right.

O'Flaherty: Yes.

Bradley: And so I went back to Headquarters and there I was advised that SIS was the Special Intelligence Service, that was being started in view of the fact that Director Hoover had been given authorization by the President of the United States, Mr. Roosevelt, to conduct intelligence activities in the Western Hemisphere.

Special courses were given to a group of us. These courses included communications, such as micro-dots, secret inks, Morse code, radio transmittal and receiving short-wave, long-wave, code work, the use of cameras. At that time the Leica camera, a German camera, was considered to be one of the best 35 millimeter cameras, so we worked with that. We worked with another German camera, called Ricomar; then we switched over to a Speedgraphic, used by news people back in those days. Then we were advised that we could procure the Minox, which was a tiny spy camera made in Czechoslovakia. It was about the size of a Dunhill cigarette lighter. I still have my Minox, incidentally.

Bradley: Language: we were given courses in Spanish. They told us that most of the countries in Latin America spoke Spanish. So we took Spanish. However, that did not help at all. When I went to Brazil, I promptly had to forget the Spanish and start again with Portuguese. I immediately got a tutor and had a tutor off and on for several years.

At the time I left to go to Brazil, travel was restricted. We were not in a war at that time but we were certainly active in assisting the allied powers in Lend-Lease Programs, of military equipment.

O'Flaherty: What would have been the approximate date, Bill, when you first arrived in Brazil after your training?

Bradley: I arrived in Brazil, I believe, on May the 31st, 1941. I first touched soil in Belem, which is a northern port of Brazil, and then immediately proceeded, by seaplane to Natal, State of Rio Grande de Norte. It was a sleepy little city of about 40 thousand people; right on the seacoast, but it had a great strategic advantage.

O'Flaherty: For the purposes of the recording Natal would be spelled?

Bradley: N-a-t-a-l.

O'Flaherty: Okay, and then the first city that you mentioned?

Bradley: Was Belem, B-e-l-e-m. And that's the northern port of Brazil, even today.

O'Flaherty: Thank you very much, Bill. Excuse me.

Bradley: Natal, geographically juts out into the South Atlantic further than any other landmass in the Southern Hemisphere on the Atlantic side. It's only about 15 hundred miles from there to Western Africa. So it occupied a very important place relative to military air travel, from the States to the Mediterranean theater of war. When I arrived in Brazil ... and I never will forget that day. It was on a Sunday and we landed on the little river there which empties into the sea, and we were all welcomed by the American Vice-Consul. Well, he wasn't there to meet me but he had a job of monitoring all incoming passengers, international passengers, and I happened to be one of them.

Bradley: My cover, in those days, was ... if you can call it a cover ... I was a representative of the XXXXXXXXXXXX. It was the name of a XXXXXXXXXXX. I was down there supposedly picking up business in connection with making sales of agricultural equipment and related products.

O'Flaherty: And the XXXXXXXXXXX was entitled, XXXXXXXX?

Bradley: Yes.

O'Flaherty: Was there actually cooperation from the cover corporation?

Bradley: Oh, they did everything they could but there wasn't anything much they could do. They would answer my letters ...

O'Flaherty: Sure. I mean as far as they knew that they were cooperating with the Government ...

Bradley: Oh, definitely. Absolutely. They were in on it.

O'Flaherty: That's what I thought.

Bradley: And they offered their company as one that could be used as a cover.

O'Flaherty: Got it.

Bradley: Okay. A few months later, Jack West, who became the Legal Attaché in the American Embassy in Rio, was one of the first to go to Latin America. He had also gone initially undercover about two months before I did.

I arrived in Natal and then he went into the Embassy and got the title of Legal Attaché. He came to Natal and suggested that he needed help down there in Rio and, also, he felt that my cover was very fragile, and that I was causing suspicion among official authorities, that it would be a good time to leave and I agreed with him. So I went down to the American Embassy and worked with Jack ... he was a good agent. Our offices were on the second floor of the Embassy.

Bradley: I think it was the latter part of 1942, when Jack was transferred to Mexico City. I can't remember ... either that or to Havana, Cuba. Shortly thereafter, I became the Legal Attaché.

In the meantime, many things had happened with respect to the establishment of our operation and our headquarters.

O'Flaherty: And a time frame to put on that when you became the Legat and when circumstances started to change?

Bradley: When I became Legat, it's 1943.

O'Flaherty: 1943.

Bradley: Yes.

O'Flaherty: Thank you. You were saying a lot of things were changing.

Bradley: The American Embassy was actually the former residence of Ambassador Morgan. It was sort of a baroque, very classic building, but actually it had a lot of lost space. It had a patio in the middle of the ground floor.

The Bureau started sending down personnel. Some of them were undercover and others came directly to our offices in the Embassy. They did not carry any official status, other than being Embassy employees.

O'Flaherty: And they were Agents?

Bradley: They were actually Agents.

O'Flaherty: ... as opposed to support personnel. Right?

Bradley: Yes.

O'Flaherty: Right.

Bradley: And, I think we had some seven or eight Agents in our office, besides those in all the U.S. Consulates throughout the country. .

Bradley: Communication, in those days, to the United States, or elsewhere abroad was by cable via All America Cable and Radio Corporation. And so whatever messages we had, we coded them and sent them via All America Cable and Radio. This was really not very satisfactory. The Embassy also did the same thing.

We received permission from the Bureau to mount a radio transmitter on the top of the building next door to the Embassy. It was a commercial building; the first ten floors were dedicated to business activities, and from there on up, to the eighteenth, it was residential. So we rented an apartment on the tenth floor and that's where we also lived. Being next door to the Embassy was very convenient for us to go home, or to go to work. Either way it only took about five minutes. (laughing)

Of course, we had obtained authority from the police department and other interested government entities, to operate the station. The name of FBI did not come up. It was an Emm-bassy (*stressing the word EM-bassy*) transmitter and receiver. And, incidentally, they used our radio frequently. It was much faster than going down to the Cable and Radio offices.

O'Flaherty: So the FBI's equipment was more, more effective than ... and more ...

Bradley: Than the commercial because it was quick and convenient.

O'Flaherty: Oh sure.

Bradley: And we were open 24 hours a day practically.

O'Flaherty: Right.

Bradley: We had two radio operators, a photographic specialist, and two code men. Of course, all of our communications were sent in code. And we were given to understand that our messages went directly to a receiving terminal in Maryland, operated by the Bureau, and from there to the head office in Washington. It was very satisfactory.

Our work became very voluminous because of the hyperactivity going on in the area.

O'Flaherty: And, well, by this point in time, the time frame we're into 1943, '44?

Bradley: No. Right now I'm about to describe matters prior to 1940 and from there up to '41, '42.

O'Flaherty: Leading up to the war. Okay.

Bradley: Yes. After we got into the war. What had happened was this. The United States was assisting the Allies after war broke out in Europe in 1939. There was no way for assistance to be rendered with respect to air materiel or anything like that because flying over the North Atlantic, the famous stormy North Atlantic, with airplanes, was impossible in those days. First place, the Nazis had control of the air. So any attempt to fly into London, for example, from the U.S. or Canada was out. So how did war materiel and how did airplanes and bombers, and everything concerned get to the war theater in North Africa? At that time, Rommel, you'll recall, was controlling the war in North Africa?

O'Flaherty: Yes.

Bradley: Well, what happened was the first ten B-25 U.S. bombers, that went to that war theater, came down through Natal. From Natal they went over to North Africa, at a place called Bathhurst, which was then under the control of the British. It's now a country called Gambia.

From there, the planes went up and landed where they would have a friendly reception. Some of the countries were hostile and so each flight depended on the circumstances then reigning. Anyway, that's the way everything initially moved. The B-17 bombers; the B-24 bombers ... all came down through Natal and a neighboring city called Recife.

O'Flaherty: Recife would be spelled?

Bradley: R-e-c-i-f-e. It was about 250 miles along the coast south of Natal.

Bradley: The U.S. Government commissioned Pan American Airways as a vehicle to establish airports in Brazil along its 4,000-mile coastline. This is 1940 I'm speaking of now.

Bradley: And, as a result, there was an organization called Airport Development Program run by Pan America, in Brazil, and they saw to it that all the airports were established adequately to handle the type of traffic that I just mentioned.

Besides war materiel, Brazil was a source of strategic materials ... mica, quartz crystal, platinum, industrial diamonds. The Axis powers depended on these materials in order to conduct their war effort. And they were coming out of Brazil prior to 1940 in European aircraft, namely Condor Airlines of Germany; Lati Airlines, out of Italy; Air France, out of France. The planes that were taking this material back to the Axis were generally three-engine high wing monoplanes. They were either Junkers, which was a German type of plane or Fokker, which was a Dutch plane. And they hedge-hopped from Europe, down the west coast of Africa and then over into Natal; and then from Natal down to Rio, and from Rio down to Buenos Aires; and from Buenos Aires over to Santiago, Chile. And that was a normal run back in those days.

O'Flaherty: That's interesting; the route that they took.

Bradley: After the Hindenburg disaster, in 1937, when it caught fire and fell to the ground in the States, there was really no air, commercial air travel, between the United States and Europe. Up to that time we had the German Zeppelins, going back and forth. They were the air transports.

The United States was favored with the manufacture by Boeing Aircraft, I believe it was Boeing, with what was called, in those days, the Atlantic Clippers and the Pacific Clippers. These were high-wing, four-engine, metal seaplanes. And the idea was that the Atlantic Clipper would run from New York, over to the Azores; from the Azores, and from there into Lisbon. That was the normal run. This was prior to the war. And then they also had a run from New York to Natal, coming down the coast; and then from Natal over to Ascension Island, and Ascension Island to the Azores and into Lisbon. So there were two airways that were in operation, prior to World War II and sometime thereafter.

And those were the only European – U.S. flights that were in existence.

O'Flaherty: The only two?

Bradley: Yes. And these were nice planes. I was fortunate enough to go down and see the Atlantic Clipper. She was tied up in Natal on the Portengy River; she'd come down with dignitaries from the United States who were looking at the airport and discussing other matters.

At the same time there was the Pacific Clipper. And the Pacific Clipper, also performed a great service. Say it left either Los Angeles or San Francisco, went over to Hawaii; Hawaii to Guam; Guam to Midway; Midway, Philippines; Philippines into Hong Kong or other airports. So we had Pan American blanketing the world with airports that it had developed and planes that were adequate for the requirements.

I might mention, in passing, that at the airport in Natal, which is called Panamirim, a very sad occurrence took place. A B-17 bomber, loaded with weaponry of all sorts, had come to Natal en route to North Africa. It took off and shortly, thereafter, plummeted into the ground ... exploded ... all personnel lost. It was determined that somebody, presumably at the airport, had put sugar in the gas tanks and, as a result, the engines could not function.

Brazil's position, at the time that I went down, was neutral. The Minister of War leaned towards the Axis. His name was Enrico Gaspar Dutra.

O'Flaherty: And his title was?

Bradley: Minister of War.

O'Flaherty: Minister of War for the Country of Brazil.

Bradley: Incidentally, a shipment of war materiel to Brazil from Germany ... this took place, I think, in 1940 ... was intercepted en route by the British and taken into Gibraltar. That indicates where Brazil was getting its war materiel at that time. Of course, it didn't reach Brazil; it was intercepted.

- O'Flaherty: Was it your impression, Bill, at that time, that under, say a Minister of War, like this gentleman you mentioned, Enrico Gaspar Dutra ... that the Brazilian Government was leaning towards supporting the Axis, German Government?
- Bradley: I'd say this. Individuals in the Brazilian Government had different leanings. Dutra, as I said, presumably favored the Axis. The Chief of Police in Rio, Felinto Muller, he was of German extraction, and leaned toward the Axis.
- O'Flaherty: No doubting that last surname, right? That's German descent? Yes?
- Bradley: Yes. German descent.
- O'Flaherty: He was the Chief of Police in Rio?
- Bradley: Yes. He was chief back in 1941.
- O'Flaherty: And he was also sympathetic toward the Axis?
- Bradley: His leanings were toward the Axis.
- O'Flaherty: Right.
- Bradley: Now. On the other side, was Oswaldo Aranha. He was the Minister of Foreign Affairs and a great friend of the United States and the allied countries. It was through Aranha that the Airport Development Program was authorized. The U.S. had a 40-year wheat loan program to Brazil; other compensations were made to Brazil and, I believe, that those were relevant in the final position which Brazil took. However, what caused Brazil to break relations with the Axis was the sinking of five of its freighters by German subs.
- O'Flaherty: That's on the Atlantic Coast?
- Bradley: That's the Atlantic Coast. Brazil broke diplomatic relations in 1942 with the Axis.

- Bradley: Right here I think it's necessary to understand what was going on, because it directly affects intelligence matters. Germany had sent a fleet of submarines to the South Atlantic and they were intercepting all sorts of commercial movement; that is, freighters carrying goods and things like that up to Europe. You see, during that time nothing could come from the east via the Suez Canal into the Mediterranean up to the allied countries. The Axis, the Nazis were in control. So everything had to come another way: via Cape Horn, the bottom of Africa, up the South Atlantic, and then into the allied countries. Even so the Germans had a big fleet of submarines operating in that area. And that was one of the big things that we were involved in our intelligence activities.
- O'Flaherty: The extent of the German submarine intelligence gathering and warfare?
- Bradley: Now ... I'm getting a little ahead of my story. Germany had large (estimates of 800,000 or more) colonies of good German people who had been living in Brazil prior to the war. They were located mainly in the States of Parana, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande DoSul.
- Now most of these Germans were not active in carrying out any steps against Brazil. They had become good Brazilians. However, there were a few who were sympathetic to the Axis' cause. Not only the Germans, but the Italian colony, which was located more or less in the Sao Paulo area. And they had several, oh, I'd say over a hundred thousand in that area.
- O'Flaherty: And they had about a hundred thousand ...
- Bradley: Oh, at least.
- O'Flaherty: ... residents. And not all of them, but many of them would be sympathetic to the Axis.
- Bradley: Well, not many. There were relatively few, but ...
- O'Flaherty: Yes.
- Bradley: In addition, there were Japanese, in the Sao Paulo area; as well as in the Amazon Basin.

O'Flaherty: Thanks for spelling that, Bill.

Bradley: The German effort in Brazil, we discovered involved the following matters: General disruption in trade, business operations; propaganda - publications of all sorts, radio transmissions of a favorable note, with respect to the Axis; and vice versa condemning matters with respect to the Allies; sabotage of Allied industrial activity (American, British and Canadian).

O'Flaherty: Which could also involve U.S. commercial shipping?

Bradley: Oh! Any allied boat that they could find.

O'Flaherty: Right.

Bradley: Believe me. It was in this ambience, that we found ourselves, as Agents, and it soon became apparent that the only way we could operate was through informants ... and we had a good set of them in Rio. And the Bureau had sent down to us a list of intercepts ... radio-transmission intercepts ... that the Army Signal Corps discovered.

O'Flaherty: Signal Corps?

Bradley: ... had picked up, well, they were monitoring coded transmissions of all kinds, and these transmissions that were picked up were given to the Bureau and its crypto analysts. I believe the Bureau and possibly a special section of the U.S. Treasury worked on these intercepts and broke the code. This was of vital assistance to our operations in Brazil. We immediately discovered the existence of clandestine radio transmission cells of the Axis that were operating almost daily in sending ship movement and other strategic information back to Germany.

I believe that one of their main receiving stations was in Hamburg. So we were able to then intensify our efforts through the aid of these intercepts which had been decoded and, of course, translated. We were immediately able to start to conduct surveillance of the activities of these groups.

O'Flaherty: It's a major breakthrough. And, again, the time frame?

Bradley: Time frame ... 1941, early '42.

O'Flaherty: And, if I may, Bill, a quick question while I think of it ... I don't want to break your train of thought, Bill, but you mentioned about the development of informants by yourself and other Agents in Rio. Were those informants, would they have been of German descent? Or native Brazilians? Or, was it more of no matter what their ethnic background, they were in a position to provide information of interest? I was just ...

Bradley: Our three main informants in Rio ... one was of Norwegian descent; one was Danish descent; and one was Brazilian.

O'Flaherty: That's interesting. So you were talking about the breakthrough and the surveillances, then, that you were able to start to conduct based on these intercepts.

Bradley: Now, with this information in hand, we went to the Embassy ... well, we were in touch with the Embassy all the time. Our contact was an officer of the Embassy, Third Secretary, by the name of Elim O'Shaughnessy. Elim O'Shaughnessy was a fine guy and he was our daily contact. Oh, we saw the Ambassador on many occasions, but on day-to-day routine, it was Elim. He took these intercepted, decoded messages to the police department in Rio to let them know what was happening. They had no idea that this was going on because they had no section in their departments which was monitoring the airways.

O'Flaherty: Did they have an intelligence gathering unit, do you believe?

Bradley: Well, as soon as they got this information, we know that they sent out a lot of their own investigators to look into the matter. Just exactly what they did, I don't know.

O'Flaherty: Right.

Bradley: But anyway, by late '41, early '42, it was being contemplated, with the cooperation of the police, to conduct a roundup of the individuals involved. The roundup occurred and, oh, I think over a hundred people were taken into custody by the police. They were charged and, put on trial for espionage, or subversive activities.

Bradley: Now, it must be remembered that at this particular time, Brazil had no special legislation concerning spy work or intelligence, or counterintelligence; any activity by a foreign government or an individual, with respect to sending out strategic information abroad, was not a crime against Brazil unless Brazil was at war with the particular country and/or countries that the material concerned. So, many of the charges against the Axis defendants were ruled improper, and they were released, only to be later retried on other grounds, such as being a threat to domestic security.

O'Flaherty: Right. That's very interesting, Bill.

Bradley: Yes.

O'Flaherty: Offhand, a point of interest per se, approximately a hundred that were rounded up?

Bradley: Oh, yes. I just can't remember, but quite, quite a number them.

O'Flaherty: Yes. Do you know the ethnic makeup? I mean, for example, were there actually, say, Germans in place doing it? Or were there like, maybe, double Agent Brazilians that they were ...

Bradley: Number one, we start at the top. Kurt Prufer, the German Ambassador.

O'Flaherty: Kurt Prufer.

Bradley: Then there was Hermann Bohny.

O'Flaherty: Bohny. Okay.

Bradley: He was the German Naval Attaché. And he was probably the most important diplomat involved in espionage activities in Brazil.

O'Flaherty: And Kurt Prufer was this other ...

Bradley: He was the Ambassador.

O'Flaherty: Oh, the German Ambassador?

Bradley: German Ambassador. He was later recalled. I think in late 1941 or thereabout. But Bohny stayed on and he was the king pin; just as in the Argentine, their Naval Attaché down there, I think, was Dietrich Neibuhr. He was deeply involved.

O'Flaherty: Okay. And he was in Argentina?

Bradley: He was in Argentina. These Nazi cells operating clandestine transmitters, sending vital information back to the Axis were operated by mainly Brazilians of foreign extraction.

O'Flaherty: Of foreign heritage?

Bradley: Yes. Foreign heritage.

O'Flaherty: So they were native Brazilians but they were actually from ...

Bradley: Yes.

O'Flaherty: ... someplace in Germany or ...

Bradley: Probably the most active and most important of these espionage agents was an individual by the name of Albrecht Gustav Engels. And his code name was c-e-l ... I mean the code name for his transmission was c-e-l. An intelligent business man; he'd lived in Brazil a long time; later convicted and later released and continued on in Brazil.

O'Flaherty: Very, very interesting and the recollection of names is terrific, Bill.

Bradley: The Legal Attaché's office was deeply involved in this in the following sense: Besides providing the basic information to the Embassy, which was sent to the police, on which the arrests resulted, one of the agents in our office, Rolf Larsen, made contact with the police department and interrogated those who had been picked up. Not all of them, but the special ones, the important ones. So we had a direct playback besides what the police told us. Rolf really became known to the police, I believe, I think they recognized him as an FBI Agent, although I'm not sure.

- Bradley: But anyway, the police interrogations were not satisfactory. Actually they sent us copies of what they had learned from those that they'd picked up and in many cases there were loop holes and incomplete statements and information that hadn't been properly developed. But there wasn't too much we could do about it. We couldn't tell the police just what to do. We were in a foreign country.
- O'Flaherty: Right. Exactly. But that's why this gentleman, Rolf Larsen could develop some liaison with them.
- Bradley: Yes.
- O'Flaherty: That was excellent.
- Bradley: Yes. An interesting incident; after all these Axis people ... I call them Axis, ... all the people that were involved in Axis activity ... were picked up. Subsequently, in 1943, a sailing vessel, about 60 feet in length, hit the shores of a State north of Rio, called Bahia, with two men (spies) aboard.
- They had come from Germany and were trained by the Abwehr or the Sicherheitsdienst, German intelligence organizations.
- O'Flaherty: Right. Both of those were German ...
- Bradley: Yes.
- O'Flaherty: ... espionage organizations.
- Bradley: They caused, through their orders, this entire espionage activity in Brazil.
- O'Flaherty: And this sailboat that came in ...
- Bradley: Yes.
- O'Flaherty: We may be running close to the end here but we'll wait and see and then we'll stop. But with the sailboat that came in ...

Bradley: Yes. There were two onboard. One's name was Marcus Baarn. He was of Dutch extraction; he had been trained in Germany. His companion was a fellow by the name of Wilhelm Koepff.

O'Flaherty: Okay. Alright.

Bradley: Anyway, they were sent from Germany to conduct sabotage/espionage.

O'Flaherty: Bill was commenting about the sailboat that arrived in Brazil on a sabotage mission; identified the individuals, two individuals. You were saying, that this occurred now ... this activity in 1943 ... so it's occurring after the other individuals had been located and arrested by the Brazilian police.

Bradley: Yes. Now as soon as they landed Marcus Baarn sought out the police. (Laughing)

O'Flaherty: And as soon as he landed he sought out the police?

Bradley: He sought out the police because ... although he had all this training by the Germans, secretly he never intended to conduct any activities of a subversive nature. He just wanted to get to Brazil, and after he denounced himself ... that, of course, involved his buddy who was, incidentally, there to carry out whatever subversive activity he could against the country.

O'Flaherty: The country ...

Bradley: Sabotage efforts or subversive efforts, or whatever. He was a true Nazi. The whole enterprise was a complete fiasco.

O'Flaherty: A complete failure. Thank goodness. Sure.

Bradley: Complete fiasco. Another interesting sidelight. In Brazil, at the time, there were several other American agencies involved in the war effort, like Office of Inter-American Affairs, a Rockefeller activity; a Board of Economic Warfare; a Rubber development program, etc.

O'Flaherty: What development program? Rubber?

Bradley: Rubber Development Program, and the FCC ... the Federal Communications Commission. They had personnel in Brazil, in Rio, and special automobiles with rotating antenna on top of the cars searching for clandestine transmissions.

O'Flaherty: So they were doing this on behalf of the Brazilian Government?
Bradley: Pardon?

O'Flaherty: They were doing this on behalf of the Brazilian Government ... to detect?

Bradley: They were doing this on behalf of the U.S. Government with the permission of the Brazilian Government to detect clandestine activities.

O'Flaherty: Sure. Very good. These are American corporations?

Bradley: No.

O'Flaherty: No.

Bradley: The Federal Communications Commission, of the United States Government ...

O'Flaherty: Yes.

Bradley: They are the ones who ...

O'Flaherty: Arranged ...

Bradley: ... sent their people to Brazil and they had these automobiles ...

O'Flaherty: I see.

Bradley: ... with the antenna on top. And their purpose was to search for clandestine radio transmitters.

O'Flaherty: Ordinary looking, I mean, ordinary looking vehicles?

Bradley: Oh yes. Just regular automobiles.

O'Flaherty: Okay.

Bradley: Okay. So here is the interesting sideline. Now, we knew all of their personnel; they knew us. They knew who we were and we knew who they were. We were within the family, so to speak. They knew that we had a radio transmitter on top of the building we lived in, obviously, they would pick us up whenever we were operating. Okay.

Bradley: One night after work, one of the Agents and I told the Embassy guards that we were going nearby to a movie. So, during the course of the movie, somebody from the Embassy came over and said, "Get back to the Embassy. Some FCC men are here." We didn't know what was going on so we immediately went back. They came to explain that they had picked up some transmission, unknown to them. And the interesting thing was, they said, it came from the top of the building where the FBI people lived.

O'Flaherty: Interesting.

Bradley: So we said, "You picked up a transmission. So what?" "Well! We didn't know anything about it." We said, "So what!" What had happened was, that the Bureau had asked us to use a new frequency. We had several frequencies on which we transmitted to the States. And they sent down another crystal to try out, on an experimental basis. Well that particular night, we had just started to use our new frequency. And this is what the FCC picked up. And they came back to the Embassy as if they had something "hot" to report.

O'Flaherty: Thank goodness that's all it was.

Bradley: And so we laughed because they were ... what should I say ...

O'Flaherty: Are they excited?

Bradley: ... disgruntled.

O'Flaherty: Oh.

Bradley: Because we had not previously advised them ...

O'Flaherty: I see.

Bradley: ... that we were using a new frequency. So that was the whole story.

O'Flaherty: Alright.

Bradley: It was a tempest in a teapot.

O'Flaherty: Sure. Well, they probably imagined that they were really on to something here ... right in their own backyard and ...

Bradley: They knew exactly what was going on. They knew it was our transmitter. It's the only thing it could be.

O'Flaherty: Right.

Bradley: Because they said it's coming from the building ... right up there.

O'Flaherty: Yes.

Bradley: So they knew it was us. But the thing was they feigned ignorance and acted as if they had uncovered a spy operation.

O'Flaherty: I see. I see.

Bradley: Anyway, it ended up to nothing and we all had a good laugh. It was an interesting sidelight.

O'Flaherty: Sure. It sure is. A little break there.

 You've been doing very well with your memory here, Bill ... and recollections and what the information that was developed and achieved by the Agents presence there during the time.

Bradley: One last thing: In October of 1944, I married an American girl down in Rio. The rule then was that no Agent may serve abroad if he is married. I so indicated that I was aware of the rule in a radiogram back to the Bureau, saying that since I was getting married I presumed that they would want me to return to head office. And they did. They said, "Yes, come back." So, when I came back my job then in the Bureau was the head of the Brazil desk. I was up there receiving all the correspondence that the office in Rio was sending.

O'Flaherty: Well, they couldn't have selected a better man for that. Now, what year was that, Bill?

Bradley: Forty-four.

O'Flaherty: Nineteen forty-four.

Bradley: And it lasted until the war was over. After the war was over, I believe the budget of the Bureau was cut, because the number of personnel that had been taken on was so great that the Bureau wanted to get back to a normal number of personnel and we were told that resignations might be acceptable. So I put in my resignation and Mr. Hoover accepted it. I have this letter that I showed to you of acceptance and I left the Bureau in November 1945.

O'Flaherty: Okay. While we're on the dates discussed before, Bill, if you could recall the approximate dates where you ... you did earlier ... when you first arrived in Brazil in an undercover capacity and then the year, then, that you then became the ...

Bradley: Legal Attaché?

O'Flaherty: ... Legal Attaché, which is more of an overt capacity.

Bradley: Yes.

O'Flaherty: What would be those dates?

Bradley: Well, you, you want me to repeat those dates?

O'Flaherty: If you could. Yes.

Bradley: Okay.

O'Flaherty: Thank you.

Bradley: I arrived in Brazil, undercover, in May 1941.

O'Flaherty: Okay.

Bradley: I became Legal Attaché in 1943.

O'Flaherty: That's okay. That's fine.

Bradley: And so operated until I returned to the Bureau towards the close of 1944.

O'Flaherty: Right. Excellent. Very good.

O'Flaherty: Okay. We're back on here for a final comment from Bill, about his time of service in Brazil, or Latin America, as a Legal Attaché, but ... go ahead, Bill. You make the statement.

Bradley: I believe that I am probably the oldest Legal Attaché who operated in Latin America way back in the early 1940's. That's my recollection. I may be wrong.

O'Flaherty: Alright. Very good. Very interesting, Bill. And, in conclusion, Bill, unless there's anything else that you think of, I just want to tell you how much I've enjoyed meeting you, personally, and you taking the time. Very interesting. Your recollection of names and events was really, really amazing. And, so, I appreciate your hospitality here today and wish you all the very best.

Any closing remarks you'd like to make before we sign off here? Okay, then we'll sign off at 3:10 PM. Thank you, Bill Bradley.

Bradley: Thank you.

O'Flaherty: Who will be 93 this October 2006 ...

Bradley: The 12th.

O'Flaherty: October the 12th. I give you a happy birthday in advance.

Bradley: (Laughing) Okay.

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