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**Interview of Former Special Agent of the FBI
Charles E. Kleinkauf (1931-1963)
Interviewed by Michael M. O'Brien
On March 23, 2005**

Edited for spelling, repetitions, etc. by Sandra Robinette on October 17, 2005. Final editing was done from Mr. Kleinkauf's notes on December 17, 2005.

We are sorry to report that Mr. Kleinkauf died on November 22, 2005. He had reviewed the transcript despite his ill health and his corrections have been made. We appreciate the support from his family in completing this transcript.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: 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.

Michael M. O'Brien: Charles, do you understand that?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: I understand it.

Michael M. O'Brien: Okay. Do you agree?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: I agree.

Michael M. O'Brien: Okay. And you've signed the form and I have signed the form, and so we're all set. Okay. Now let's begin the interview.

First off ... Charles, your last name, please spell it.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: K-l-e-i-n-k-a-u-f, as in Frank.

Michael M. O'Brien: Okay. Charles, first name.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Charles.

Michael M. O'Brien: Okay. And your middle initial, Charles.

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Charles E. Kleinkauf: E.

Michael M. O'Brien: E, as in Edward. Okay. Any AKA's ... any also known as?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: No.

Michael M. O'Brien: No. No, no nickname?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: No particular aliases.

Michael M. O'Brien: Oh, okay. And what's your DOB? Date of birth?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: March 18, 1913.

Michael M. O'Brien: Okay. Where at?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Sayre ... S-a-y-r-e, Pennsylvania.

Michael M. O'Brien: Okay. And your current position. You're retired?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: I'm retired.

Michael M. O'Brien: Okay. And your FBI service started at what date?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: On May 15, 1931.

Michael M. O'Brien: Okay ... what was your retirement date?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: My retirement date was May 15, 1963.

Michael M. O'Brien: May the 15th! Important day, huh?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Right.

Michael M. O'Brien: Okay, let's see. The periods of time that we're going to cover here, starting in the '30's, going up to the '60's ... so '30's, '40's, '50's, and '60's ... a four-bagger. Okay.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: That's right.

Michael M. O'Brien: So let's start with basically your background. Tell me a little bit about what your background is and how you ended up getting in the FBI.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Well, my background is that I was born and brought up in the small town of Sayre, Pennsylvania. My main objective, as I was entering high school, was to get into the Naval Academy at Annapolis. I succeeded in getting the appointment, passing the Entrance Exam in my senior year in high school, but was turned down on the physical examination at the Academy, in 1930, because of my eyesight.

So back in my hometown of Sayre, Pennsylvania, I was determined to try to get a college education, particularly, and possibly, an Engineering Degree. But in order to accomplish that, I would have to find a way to work my way through college. Penn State College tuition for residents of Pennsylvania was very low, and I felt that once I was able to gain entrance to Penn State, in 1931, I could find some employment at the college; whereby, I could spend four years getting my degree.

In March of 1931, I received a telephone call from a former piano teacher, a lovely woman whom I had not seen in a number of years, because I was really was not too much interested in playing the piano, and I did not have the ability, and so I discontinued it after several years. However, my former teacher, by the name of Ruch, telephoned me one day and asked me what I was going to do. And I explained to her what my intentions were. She said, "Well Charles, if you'll come over and see me, I think I can help you out." So I paid her a visit and she told me that she had a son, whom I had never met, by the name of George Ruch, who was with the Frick Coke and Coal Company in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She had spoken to him about me and he replied that if I would come out and see him, perhaps he could help me in my desire to go to college.

So I proceeded to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, sat down with George Ruch, and he explained that in Washington, DC, he had attended George Washington University, where he received his Law Degree and one of his very close friends was a man by the name of John Edgar Hoover, who was the Director of, what was then, the Division of Investigation of the Department of Justice. And Mr. Ruch suggested that if I was interested in working my way through college in the same manner that he did, he could, through Mr. Hoover, obtain a position for me in this Bureau.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: After discussing it for a period of a few minutes, actually, I decided that it looked like an excellent opportunity to accomplish what I wanted to do to get a college education, and so I agreed. At that point, I remember that George Ruch picked up his telephone, got Mr. Hoover and said, "Edgar, I have a young man who's interested, perhaps, in joining your Bureau. Would you please send him an application?"

I, subsequently, received an application, which I filled out, and returned to the Bureau. I was never interviewed by any Bureau official in connection with my application for a job with the Bureau. I did learn, however, from some of my friends, that there had been an Agent up investigating me. But I, subsequently, then received an appointment as a Messenger in the Bureau, commencing on May 15, 1931.

Michael M. O'Brien: Do you remember what the pay was?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: The pay, at that time, was 12 hundred dollars a year. Yes. So I proceeded, then, to Washington; entered on duty on May 15, 1931; started working as a Messenger, and, subsequently, was promoted to a File Clerk on Grade 2, at \$1,440 a year.

And, interestingly enough, shortly thereafter, President Hoover put in the 15 percent reduction for all Federal employees and I was back to 12 hundred a year.

Michael M. O'Brien: Charles, it's time to put things in perspective. The Depression is going on at this time, correct? The Depression is happening then at the time?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Yes.

Michael M. O'Brien: 1931 ... to put things in perspective.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: That's right.

Michael M. O'Brien: And so, jobs were hard to come by.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Right. That's correct.

Michael M. O'Brien: Continue.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Okay.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Serving as a Messenger, at that time the Bureau was located in the Denrike Building, at the corner of Vermont Avenue and K Street; which was a commercial building, which they leased. The Bureau occupied the third floor and the fourth floor of that building. On the third floor was Mr. Hoover's office; Clyde Tolson, the Assistant Director; Harold Nathan, the Assistant Director; the File Section; the Personnel File Section. On the fourth floor were the various supervisors in the Bureau, headed up by Vincent Hughes; and also, in the Accounting Section, by James Egan. After working as a clerk, then, for approximately a year and a half, sometime in either late '32 or early 1933, I was transferred over from the Day Duty to Night Duty at the Bureau.

I have here an article that I wrote for The Grapevine back in the July 1994, in August and September 1944, describing the Bureau in those early days as a Night Clerk. As a Night Clerk, another clerk and myself, we were responsible for number one, getting out the mail. We reported for duty at three o'clock in the afternoon. We proceeded to get all of the Administrative mail, together with the mail from the Identification Bureau, which at that time was located in the old Southern Railway Building at 17th and Pennsylvania Avenue. After the Bureau closed up at five o'clock, all of the employees worked until then, the Director closed up his office and went home at five o'clock.

We were the only employees on duty in Washington, with the exception of a man in the Identification Bureau to handle any requests for identification records coming in. The Bureau, at that time, had no switchboard. All calls were received through the Department of Justice switchboard, which closed up at five o'clock. But, when the young employees left the switchboard in the Department, they put in a night line to the Director's Office. And, after five o'clock, we were responsible for answering any telephone calls that came in for the Bureau after that time.

Michael M. O'Brien: Was it inside the Director's Office?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Yes. The telephone was inside the Director's Office.

Michael M. O'Brien: So you had to sit in his office.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: That's correct, in order to answer the telephone. Then, if it was an important call, we, of course, would either contact one of the Assistant Directors or contact Mr. Hoover.

Then we go up to a period when, of course, the Bureau was busily engaged, first of all, with the Lindbergh kidnapping case. The Agents working on the case in New Jersey were instructed to send in a telegram, which was the only other means of communication, no teletype in those days. And these telegrams would come in, in code, using the Bureau's Code Book. We would have to decode them and then notify the Director of the developments in the Lindbergh case.

Then any other calls that came in, for example, on Labor Day Weekend ... we had to work holidays, we had to work Saturdays, we had to work Sundays, in our capacity as clerical employees. I often like to think back at all of the protestations that Agents had about overtime and here we, as clerks, were working seven days a week.

Michael M. O'Brien: Did you get paid overtime?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: We got no overtime.

Michael M. O'Brien: No, no overtime.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Right.

Michael M. O'Brien: Uh-huh.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: One interesting thing happened. After I was working at nights for about six months, the other clerk who was sort of described as the Head Clerk, I was his assistant, he went on Day Duty. I was promoted to Head Clerk, so I was supposed to get an increase from \$1,620 a year to 18 hundred a year. Another clerk, by the name of Bob Moore, was brought in to take my former position. After a month, I had not received that increase. So I went in to Mr. Tolson's office and I said, "Mr. Tolson, I'm supposed to get 18 hundred a year but I'm still not getting that." He said, "Well Charles, we changed the rules. In order to get 18 hundred a year, you have to pass the Bureau's typing test."

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Well I had never been a typist, so I spent approximately a month, in the daytime, going to a typing school nearby. I finally passed the Bureau's typing test. A month went by, I still didn't get 18 hundred a year, so I again talked to Mr. Tolson. He said, "Oh, I must have missed seeing that." So what happened? I was raised to 18 hundred a year; Bob Moore, who was working with me, also got 18 hundred a year and he never did pass the Bureau's typing test. Just a little anecdote along the way.

Michael M. O'Brien: That's funny.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: I think on Labor Day in September of 1933, as another example of calls we received on holidays, Frank Blake, who was the Agent in Charge of the Dallas FBI Office, called and said, "Is Mr. Hoover there?" And I said, "No." "Well, ya better get in touch with him because Harvey Bailey escaped from the Dallas County Jail today." Harvey Bailey was one of the kidnapers arrested in connection with the kidnapping of Charles Ersal of Oklahoma City.

So the Director immediately came down to the office and I started making calls to all the various Field Offices, advising them that Bailey escaped. However, we subsequently received a call from Blake that they had apprehended him about six hours later. But that is typical of the types of calls that we received over weekends, holidays, or at nighttime.

Michael M. O'Brien: Excuse me, Charles. Now, you said when you received one of these calls that this person escaped from jail, you were then going to call up other Field Offices by telephone and advise them to be on the lookout?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: That is correct.

Michael M. O'Brien: In a sense, that's how you would send out APB's, by telephone.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Right.

Michael M. O'Brien: And you'd get a clerk on the other end and you'd give them the description and they would look, notify their local police departments.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: That's correct.

Michael M. O'Brien: So that was the first type of APB ... in a sense.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Yes.

Michael M. O'Brien: Now was Miss Gandy around, or is she, is she in the picture yet?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Miss Gandy was the Director's secretary, and had been since he was appointed Director.

Michael M. O'Brien: So she, she was there when you came?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: That is correct.

Michael M. O'Brien: Okay. We'll get to her later. I just want to know if she was still there and I wondered what ...

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Well, now that you've mentioned Miss Gandy, let's go forward a little bit. In July of 1934, on a Sunday evening, I received a telephone call from Melvin Purvis that they had succeeded in killing John Dillinger. So I immediately telephoned the Director. He came down to the office; while he was coming to the office, I called a number of the news reporters who covered the Department of Justice, and the Director held a press conference that evening, in his office, about the capture of John Dillinger.

So follow that up, a month or so later, Melvin Purvis came to Washington for a conference with the Director, which began sometime in the late afternoon. It got to be about 5:20, which was 20 minutes beyond when the Director and everybody usually went home. So Helen Gandy came to the door of the file room, which was directly across from the Director's door, and said, "Can't we do something to break up this conference?" Howard Kennedy, another night clerk, and I were working at that time, and Howard got up outside the Director's door and yelled, "Fire! Fire!" And the door opened and Purvis came out in the hall and the Director said, "Where is the fire, boys?" And we said, "We're sorry Mr. Hoover, we didn't hear anything but we'll check for you right away." That broke up the conference.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Well he immediately knew what had happened, so the next day, while he was out to lunch, he stopped by someplace and bought a little toy red fire engine and gave it to Helen Gandy and said, "This is for future emergencies, Helen."

Now there is a sequel to that story, which I'll now move up to 1972. I had retired from the Bureau in '63 ... we'll go into that later ... but in 1972, for nine years since I retired, I had had no particular contact with the Director. Well, I was in Washington at that time, in March of '72, so I called Helen Gandy and said, "Could I get in to see my old boss for a few minutes?" And she said, "Sure. Come on over about 3:30." Which I did.

And the Director talked in his usual way, and he talked, and he talked about different things. Approximately an hour went by, it was getting 4:30, quarter of five, and I knew that Helen Gandy and the rest of them wanted to quit and go home, so I finally said, "Well Mr. Hoover, it's been wonderful being able to see you again." I said, "Don't you think, however, it's time that Helen Gandy sent in that little red fire truck?" And he laughed. I said, "Do you remember that?" He said, "I remember it Charles, but which one of you boys yelled fire?" And I said, "That was Howard Kennedy."

Michael M. O'Brien: (laughing) Uh-huh.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: That's the last time, of course, I saw the Director because he died two months later.

Michael M. O'Brien: Um-hmm. What was his health at that time by the way? Was he, was he in good shape?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Oh yes. Seemed to be.

Michael M. O'Brien: Uh-huh. Just to backtrack a little bit here, you said his usual way. What, what do you mean by that? What was his usual way?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: The Director?

Michael M. O'Brien: Yeah.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Let me answer that question a little later.

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Michael M. O'Brien: Okay.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: After the Dillinger case, Sam Cowley, who had been at Bureau Headquarters, as an assistant to Harold Nathan, the Assistant Director, Sam Cowley was sent out in to the field to conduct the investigation, the apprehension of Baby Face Nelson, who had been responsible for the killing of an Agent up at Little Bohemia, that I recall. So Cowley, in his investigation, succeeded in locating Nelson and his companion, whose name I've forgotten, which resulted in a gunfight at Barrington, Illinois, where Baby Face Nelson was killed. Sam Cowley was mortally wounded and taken to a hospital.

I was still on Night Duty at that time. So, the Director had been down to the office that evening, called by the fact that this gun battle had ensued; and as he left, about nine o'clock, he asked me if I would stay beyond my usual time to get any reports about Sam Cowley. I received a call from Melvin Purvis at about three AM, in the morning, that Sam Cowley had died. So I immediately called the Director at home and informed him of that.

Let us talk a little bit about Sam Cowley because I got to know him quite well. He was a graduate of George Washington University, where I was going to school. He was a member of the Sigma Chi Fraternity, while I was also a member of the Sigma Chi Fraternity. In, sometime about, I can't place the exact date for you, but sometime within the past 12 or 13 years, while I was attending an ex-FBI Agent's luncheon, in Phoenix, Arizona, one of the Agents said that he had been a poll watcher at the recent election, and he had met a Samuel Cowley, who was a grandson of Samuel Cowley who had been killed in Barrington, Illinois.

And the grandson asked if he could talk to anyone who had known his grandfather. So I volunteered and I called Sam Cowley and invited him to one of our luncheons and told him what I knew about his grandfather from my days and contacts with him in Washington.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Interestingly enough, when the luncheon was over, the wife of one of the ex-Agent's who was at the luncheon came up and spoke to young Sam Cowley and said, "You might be interested to know that I was a nurse in 1933 at George Washington University Hospital, and I attended your grandmother when your father was born."

There were several other amusing incidents that happened while I was on the Night Duty. For example, in the early 1930's, there was a Friday night radio program entitled *Gangbusters*, which was based on Bureau cases.

Being one of his favorites, the Director asked us to record it each week in the event he missed hearing it on the radio. The only Bureau recording equipment was a megaphone system in the Director's telephone, operated from Miss Gandy's desk. So we had to turn on the radio in the Director's Office, set his telephone next to it, open up the line to Miss Gandy's office, and start the machine recording it. One night, the other Night Clerk, Bob Moore, and I were doing this procedure while sitting in big chairs in the Director's Office and smoking cigars.

Wouldn't you know this would be one of the very few nights when the Director and Mr. Tolson would return from dinner to the office? His only comment, that I recall, seeing us there, was that he had been wondering how stale cigar smoke was getting into his office.

Michael M. O'Brien: (laughing) Did you have your feet up on the desk?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: No. (laughing)

Michael M. O'Brien: That's the good part of the story.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: One night when Al Schlenker was on the Night Clerk Duty, the Director called in from California and, while Al was relaying an important memo, the electricity went out. After Al explained to the Director that he could not continue, inasmuch as he had neither flashlight or matches for a light, the Director instructed that, in the future, some auxiliary lighting had to be provided for the Night Clerk. So, from then on, a flashlight was standard equipment for all Night Directors, as we were called.

Michael M. O'Brien: Night Directors! Would your typical day, when you were working this, you would come in on duty at three o'clock ... correct?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Right.

Michael M. O'Brien: And the Director would still be in his office, normally till five o'clock?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Right.

Michael M. O'Brien: So when he left his office at five, you would then go in his office and sit up there?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: No. Not during the week because we would be working getting the mail out, which was coming over in bundles from the Identification Division, and it would take us probably till eight or nine o'clock to get the mail out and put it in the mail pouch and take it down to the first floor of the building, for it to be picked up.

However, on Saturday evenings, when there was not much mail and on Sundays -- we worked a shift where one of us would work from nine until three and the other one would work from three until nine. We would shift off. But during that period of time, on Sundays, with nothing to do except being there to answer the telephone, we were permitted to bring our books and study, in the Director's Office. And we would sit at Helen Gandy's desk with our books and do our studying while waiting for any calls that might come in.

Michael M. O'Brien: Oh, you, you had to copy the radio programs. Was there any interaction with the Director in those days? Did he know your background and who you knew in common back in Pennsylvania?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Oh, well, of course, the, the Director, naturally, knew that I was being sponsored by his friend, George Ruch.

Michael M. O'Brien: Right. Okay. So he, he knew that, who you were?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Right.

Michael M. O'Brien: Okay.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Eventually, because of the conversation that George Ruch had with him the night that I was in George Ruch's office. Then, as I said, the long-range plan was that I was to get my law degree and then go out and join George Ruch, with the Frick Coke and Coal Company. But his death, of course, negated that. So then I went ahead with studying, hoping to be able to become an Agent in the Bureau.

Michael M. O'Brien: Oh, were you studying law at this time?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Well, I took my undergraduate degree, you only needed 60 hours of undergraduate work, but you could get into law school, where you were limited, then, to ten hours.

Michael M. O'Brien: Uh-huh.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: An interesting story in connection with that. Now we go up to a period of time when some time, my recollection was, that at the end of 1934 or possibly early in 1935, I was transferred from the Night Duty to the Director's Office as one of the secretarial staff handling all of his telephone calls, visitors, making his appointments, and special tours for VIPs. I remained in that capacity for the next three to four years until 1939, which we will get into in a moment.

Michael M. O'Brien: You weren't an Agent at this time?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: No.

Michael M. O'Brien: No. Okay. Okay. And so you were working on the night shift and then later on you came back on as secretary to the Director?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: My title was Assistant Secretary.

Michael M. O'Brien: And, and how many people were doing the same thing as you were? Were you the only one?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: I was the only one.

Michael M. O'Brien: Okay.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: I was the only one.

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Michael M. O'Brien: And did you have an office right close to Mr. Hoover's office?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Right next to his office.

Michael M. O'Brien: Right next to his office?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Oh yes.

Michael M. O'Brien: Okay. And so you would come in and sort of make his appointments and things like that?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Oh yes.

Michael M. O'Brien: So did you get to know him fairly well?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Oh yeah.

Michael M. O'Brien: Dealing with him on a daily basis.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Well, what it was, it was the close contact that I had while on Night Duty. I mean, when I was on Night Duty, I'd see him every evening. You know, he'd wave good-bye to us, you know.

Michael M. O'Brien: You got to know him pretty well.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Yeah.

Michael M. O'Brien: On a personal basis.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: I got to know the Director, I would say, quite well.

Michael M. O'Brien: Okay.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: And we will get up to that in a moment.

Michael M. O'Brien: Okay.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Going back to George Ruch. I think I mentioned that he died and the Director came up for his funeral, and so forth, but I mentioned all of that.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: You might be interested to, to know that beginning, of course, with the Bureau being in the new Department of Justice Building. They started having special tours of the Bureau's Headquarters and many prominent people would come to Washington. With the publicity the Bureau was getting in those days, they would want to take a tour of the Bureau. So one of my jobs was arranging special tours for some of these people including, Jean Harlowe, James Cagney, Pat O'Brien, Shirley Temple, Walter Pidgeon, Victor Moore, Billy Gatston, Ben Birney, Guy Lombardo, Ted Lewis, Walter Winchell, and Courtney Riley Cooper, who wrote the first book (unintel).

Eleanor Roosevelt always had visitors coming over wanting a special tour. Her secretary would call me and say, "Eleanor has some guests. Will you arrange a tour for them?" So that was part of my job during those years.

Michael M. O'Brien: So you would take them around for the tour of the FBI?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: I would not take them.

Michael M. O'Brien: You were to make the arrangements?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: I would have them come to the Director's Reception Room and then I would call the Tour Room and arrange for a Tour Leader to come and get them. And this was by pre-arrangement to have them coming at a special time.

Michael M. O'Brien: So you met Shirley Temple, huh?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Oh yes.

Michael M. O'Brien: Who was your favorite?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Oh. My favorite was Walter Pidgeon. For this reason. He was appearing at one of the theaters, I think; and, lo and behold, after I told him I would get the Tour Leader, and so forth. When the Tour Leader came, I took him out and introduced him to Walter Pidgeon and he invited both of us up to his hotel room for a cocktail that evening.

Michael M. O'Brien: Oh. My goodness.

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Charles E. Kleinkauf: Unfortunately, I was going to school so I could not accept the invitation.

Michael M. O'Brien: It might be a day to play hooky.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: (laughing) So I continued working, of course, in the Director's Office until I finished law school.

During that interim period, they had what the Bureau, of course, being engaged in all of this gangster activity, let me say, and important cases, they had put on a number of new Agents. If I recall it correctly, when I came in the Bureau in 1931 there were approximately 400 Special Agents. However, beginning with the anti-crime laws passed in 1934, giving the Bureau jurisdiction over bank robberies and hijackings, and various other criminal offenses that the Bureau had never had responsibility before. As a result of that, they decided that due to the fact that it would require extensive firearms training now, any applicants for Special Agent's positions, had to have at least 20/40 vision in both eyes.

But when I finished law school in 1939, realizing that my vision would not pass the 20/40 test, I decided that I was going to have to look elsewhere for employment. One of the Assistant Director's at that time was Ed Tamm, who later became a District Court Judge, but he was the Assistant Director in charge of the Investigative Division. He had been brought in from Pittsburgh, where he was SAC, after Sam Cowley died. Again on the recommendation of George Ruch, who knew Ed Tamm when he was SAC in Pittsburgh.

So Ed Tamm called me one day and said, "Charlie, you're not going to apply for an Agent's job?" And I explained to him why. And he said, "Well, maybe I could help you out. I have a very good friend who is the president of an insurance company in Texas, and he's coming to New York

Michael O'Brien: Somebody's going to help you look into a job in insurance?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: With an insurance company.

Michael M. O'Brien: Yeah. Okay, right.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: So he arranged for me to go to New York and meet this friend of his. Oh, we talked it over and I didn't particularly want to move to Texas. I wanted something closer to home. In the meantime, my father had had a heart attack so I dismissed the idea of going with that company. Now I say this advisedly because, this is surmised on my part, that I think Ed Tamm had probably mentioned to the Director that he had arranged for this appointment for me.

Because the day after I got back from New York, the Director, I was in his office still at that time, he called me in and he said, "Charles, why aren't you applying for a job as a Special Agent?" And I said, "Well Mr. Hoover, under the present physical requirements my eyesight does not measure up to what is required." So he said, "Well, what is your eyesight?" And I said, "Well, I really don't know but I know that it doesn't measure up." So he buzzed in Miss Gandy and said, "Helen, make me an appointment for Charles to go over and see my eye doctor."

So I went over to see the Director's eye doctor, a Dr. Hyde, and two days later the Director pulled me in and he said, "I have a letter here from Dr. Hyde where he says "the uncorrected vision in the right eye was 20/70, the left eye 20/100 corrected with glasses to 20/15 in each eye." The Director said, "You go ahead and apply for an Agent's job." And a bulletin went out to the Field, in the future they would consider applicant's with the ...

Michael M. O'Brien: Corrected ...

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Right.

Michael M. O'Brien: ...vision. Uh-huh.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: So, I went ahead and put in my application and I received my appointment as an Agent on May 15, 1939.

Michael M. O'Brien: May the 15th again?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Yes.

Michael M. O'Brien: That's too incredible.

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Michael M. O'Brien: It must be your lucky day.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Right.

Michael M. O'Brien: So then your career as an Agent starts.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: That's correct.

Michael M. O'Brien: Okay. And we can get back to the Director if you want to stay in chronological order?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Yeah, we can go back to that.

Michael M. O'Brien: Okay.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Then, I went through Training School and my first office was Kansas City, Missouri; where Dwight Brantley was the SAC. An old-timer, really, dating back a number of years, big in the Bureau. So I worked in the Kansas City, with another older Agent breaking me in. After two weeks of that, he, Brantley called me in and assigned to me cases to go out and work in Wichita, Kansas, and western Kansas. I can only think, in my mind, that Brantley, knowing of my relationship with the Director, was getting me as far away from the office as he possibly could get me.

Michael M. O'Brien: (Laughing) Having been in the Bureau, I can appreciate that.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: And so I proceeded to drive out to Wichita, Kansas, on a very hot afternoon, arriving about five o'clock and checked in at the Broadview Hotel. I didn't notice any cocktail lounge; I'm very thirsty, and the best thing I could think of that will quench my thirst is a nice cold beer. So I started walking down the street and, not seeing a bar for several blocks, I stopped one local guy and said, "Where is the nearest the bar." And he said, "Dang, you must be a stranger because don't you know Kansas is dry." And I said, "No." I said, "That's a horrible thing to face."

Charles E. Kleinkauf: However, it proved to be a blessing in disguise, in a way, because after I became pretty well acquainted, over the next several months, with the various police chiefs in different places, like Ben Jones, for example, in Hutchinson, Kansas. I would walk into police headquarters when I got there and greet the Chief and say, "Well, I'm going to be here for a few days." And they would say, "Well, maybe you might need a little libation" and they all had this special closet where they kept the good liquor that they had from knocking off the various bootleggers coming into Kansas.

Michael M. O'Brien: (Laughing) So it wasn't that dry then.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: (Laughing) So I enjoyed that.

Michael M. O'Brien: Uh-huh.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Finally, after about two months, or maybe six weeks, anyway, of working around but never hearing a word from Brantley, I got a call at the hotel one morning, about eight o'clock. He said, "Kleinkauf, well what're you doing out there?" And I said, "Well, Mr. Brantley, I'm running the wheels off this Bureau car. Before I fully answer your question I have something to take up with you." He said, "What's that?" I said, "When we left Training School, the last day we were told that whatever office we were assigned to, the SAC would advise us of any particular things about the territory that we were going to be working in that might be unusual, and so forth. I drove out here on a very hot afternoon, Mr. Brantley, and all I could think of when I checked in at the hotel was a nice cold beer. I found out that Kansas was dry and you never told me that, Mr. Brantley."

"Hah-hah-hah, come on back and, before the Bureau cuts out your per diem, then come on back into Kansas City." Well now I'm back in Kansas City, and one day we had firearms training, the monthly firearms training, over at the range in Leavenworth.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: The Bureau had just issued a bulletin, a short time previously, that the SAC was to score all of the targets at monthly firearms training because one of the men that the Director had, by the name of W.H. Drainlifter, had gone out and he was, more or less, the one that was the speaker for the Bureau, all over the country; consequently, he was never in Washington, having any monthly firearms training. They finally, the Training Division was able to grab him one time and take him down for the monthly firearms training, and they found 52 holes in his target. He apparently was not a very good shot 'cause he had put a few extra shells in his target.

Michael M. O'Brien: With a pencil.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Not a pencil at all?

Michael M. O'Brien: Not a pencil?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: No, they were actual holes.

Michael M. O'Brien: Oh. Oh. Really. Okay.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Right. So, now we're going back to the firearms session that I mentioned, up at Kansas City. I shot my rounds, and I was a pretty good shot, later, I made the Possible Club. And so when I finished, Dwight Brantley's up there scoring my target and he finally called to me and he said, "Come here Kleinkauf." I went up and he said, "Do you remember that bulletin about more than 50 holes in a target? Look, you've got 53 holes in your target. Where'd you get that extra ammunition? Why'd you use it?" And I looked at it pretty carefully and I could see where the three holes were different. And I said, "Okay boss, I know what you did." And he just laughed and he said, "Oh, I thought I'd have a little fun with you."

I subsequently left Kansas City in December of 1939, and was assigned to the Cleveland Office. But, there's a little sequel to the Brantley story. In 1949, my wife and I were going to take a vacation trip driving to Colorado, staying at a few friends on the way. In order for Natalie's mother to get in touch with us en route, I had left the address of the Kansas City Field Division, if she wanted to write to us.

Charles E. Kleinkauf:

So we arrived in Kansas City, after being on the road for about six days, we checked in about four o'clock at the Pickwick Hotel and I said to Natalie, "I'm going over to the office and see a few friends of mine that are still there." So I walked into the Reception Room, talking to the receptionist, and Jack Hyde, as I recall his name, the Chief Clerk happened to walk through. He had been Chief Clerk when I was there in '39. So he greeted me and said, "Hey, Charlie, glad to see ya."

He said, "By the way, you're here on the inspection, of course, aren't you?" I said, "No. What gave you that idea?" "Oh," he says, "a letter came in for you yesterday and the boss said 'Good God, Kleinkauf must be coming here on the inspection' and he's had us getting this office all shined up and everything, anticipating your arrival." (laughing)

So I said, "Don't say a word to him." So I was ushered into Brantley's office but now I have to figure out in my mind, never having been in an inspection, never having been on one, how does the Inspector act when he first greets the SAC? So I asked a few questions and I asked for personnel lists, and I got a personnel list and so on and so forth. For about ten minutes and then he said, "By the way," he said, "Charlie, I'm sorry, I have a speaking engagement tonight but I'll have Murphy, the number one man take you out to dinner." And I said, "No, Mr. Brantley, no. I'm all checked in at the Pickwick Hotel. I love their lamb chops. No. Let Mr. Murphy go on back and spend the evening with his family." And, so Brantley said, "Well, I'm sorry that I have the speaking engagement." Then very slyly, he pulls this letter out from the box and he says, "By the way Charlie," he says, "this came in for you today." He says, "It kind of tipped things off." And I said, "What do you mean?"

"Well," he said, "you're here on an inspection, of course." And I said, "No, Mr. Brantley, I'm just passing through with my wife. We're on vacation." (laughing) He got the funniest look on his face. He said, "Ah, I haven't been fooled many times but this is one on me and when I finish this talk of mine tonight, you're going to have a drink with me." And so he came over to the hotel.

Michael M. O'Brien: Oh. That's good.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: What he was known as, Brantley's kennel club, dog house, dog house boys.

Michael M. O'Brien: Oh I see. If you're in the dog house ...

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Yeah. You're in the doghouse.

Michael M. O'Brien: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Yeah. One of the Agents, for example, Gene Coyle, if I remember him, in the Newark Office ...

Michael M. O'Brien: Gene Coyle! I knew Gene Coyle!

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Did you know Gene?

Michael M. O'Brien: Gene Coyle, he was one of the guys that broke me in.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Oh!

Michael M. O'Brien: Yeah. He's a baseball player from Jersey City.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: That's right. Well, Gene was assigned to the Kansas City Office before Newark and he got in the doghouse about something. He was single, of course, and he noticed that Brantley signed the Register, the first one every morning, checking in. So Coyle made it a point to get there ahead of Brantley and then Brantley would sign in a little earlier, and Coyle would sign ahead of him again. (laughing) Brantley finally called Coyle in and said, "Okay, let's stop playing games."

Michael M. O'Brien: Gene Coyle. Good baseball player too.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: That's right. Yeah.

Michael M. O'Brien: Yeah.

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Charles E. Kleinkauf: I sent him a letter on his, or a telegram, I was out of the Bureau at the time. I knew his 25th anniversary was coming up, and he was in the Newark Office, so I sent him a telegram and said, "Now Gene, you've had 25 years in the Bureau don't you think it's about time you hung up your jock."

Michael M. O'Brien: Yeah. Yeah. He was an institution in Newark.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Now you were there what year?

Michael M. O'Brien: 1971, 1972. It was my first office. In those days they transferred you after the first year.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Right.

Michael M. O'Brien: And I got a subway token to go to New York. The worst transfer in the FBI.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: In July of 1940, I received a telegram transferring me to, back to Headquarters in Washington, DC. So I arrived in Washington. The directions were to report as soon as possible. I had earlier received a letter from an Agent, a friend, a close friend of mine, who had been transferred to Washington several weeks ago. A letter from him stating that they were getting a group of Agents ready to send to Honolulu. And my thoughts all the way to Washington were maybe that's what they want me for.

Michael M. O'Brien: Was this any connection... I mean, Pearl Harbor had not occurred yet?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: No.

Michael M. O'Brien: Was this is pre-war stuff, do you think?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: That's what I thought.

Michael M. O'Brien: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Yeah. So anyway, I arrived in Washington. I report up to the Chief Clerk's Office, so I'm there. I talked to Nick Callahan, the Chief Clerk, who informed me that I was being assigned to the Director's Office.

Charles E. Kleinkauf:

So I go around to the Director's Office and, I'll take that back. First of all, I was to see Clyde Tolson. So I went in to see Clyde Tolson and he informed me that the reason why I was being brought back was because Stan Tracy, who had been an Assistant Director in charge of the Director's Office, was being assigned to the Ident Unit and that I was to take Stan Tracy's place in supervising the employees in the Director's immediate office. So I assumed that position in July of 1940.

It was a position that was quite demanding, in that the Director would put notations on the memoranda the various Assistant Director's would send in to him, requesting further action on a particular matter. Part of my responsibility was to have my secretary make out a tickler to be sure that the Director's request was fulfilled and to contact what ever Assistant Director his note was directed to, to make sure he complied with the Director's wishes.

The Director, during that particular time, had many appointments during the day. He would wait until about five o'clock in the afternoon and then the mail would start pouring out of his office and I had to review it in order to make the proper notes. And by the time I got out of the Director's Office to go to dinner, it would be eight or 8:30 at night. The Director, of course, he could go to the finest restaurants, which he did, but I had to go to some flea bag place that would stay open until nine or ten o'clock, in many instances.

This was a rather trying situation for me and in addition to that, I had spent, as I previously described, eight years in Washington; four of which I spent in the Director's Office. It was really nothing particularly new. I had looked forward to getting my education so that I could get out into the Field and work as an Agent, not to sit in the Director's Office and read what the Agents were doing. I wanted some action.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: So I decided, after a while, that maybe, maybe I should, perhaps, request the Director for a transfer. While I was mulling this over, I received word from home that my father had had a heart attack. So I took a couple days off and went up to see how my father was getting along. When I came back, that was in March of 1941, when I came back I decided that perhaps I should request a transfer out of Washington. So, I finally sent a notice into the Director that I would like to request a transfer, explaining about my father's condition, to an office which would be nearer to my home. So, the next thing I knew, without any conversation with the Director about this request, I received a transfer to Newark, New Jersey, where I arrived in May of 1941.

During that period of time when I was in the Director's Office, Helen Gandy and I had a bit of an argument, to the point where I decided that well, it would be kind of difficult to get along with this woman. So I decided to resign.

So I sent a letter of resignation into the Director and he called me in and he said, "What's this all about, Charles?" And I said, "Well, Helen Gandy and I, we just don't get along and I know she's of much more importance to you than I am, so I think for the betterment of the office, maybe I better get out of there." The Director said, "Well Charles, let me give you a little advice." He said, "You're young. Someday you may find a nice young lady and you will get married and then you will have to learn how to get along with the female sex. So just go back to your desk and do the best you can." And he tore up my resignation and put it in his wastebasket.

Michael M. O'Brien: Uh-huh.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Okay.

Michael M. O'Brien: Okay. But you must have been pretty upset though if, to go to the extent that you resigned? Instead of saying transfer me out, transfer me away ...

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Well, there's a little, there's a little more to that story. We were going up, now, to the year of 1979 when the ex-Agent's convention was in Washington, and Helen Gandy was living in an apartment in Washington, and I called up and asked her if I could drop out and say hello to her.

Michael M. O'Brien: She's retired by now, too.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: She had retired. She left when the Director died. Seventy-two.

Michael M. O'Brien: Seventy-two.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Right. So I went out and she had a drink there to offer me, and we sat down and had, having a drink together, and I said, "Helen. Do you remember that time that I resigned because you and I weren't getting along very well?" And she said, "Yeah. I remember that, Charles." And she said, "What you don't know is that I resigned once as the Director's secretary. And he did the same thing to me. He called me in and he said 'what's this all about?' nice and plain. And he tore up my resignation and said 'go on back and do your job'."

Michael M. O'Brien: Hmm.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Before I left Washington, Congressman Fred Hartley who was Chairman of the District of Columbia Boxing Commission, and a good friend of the Director's, sent over some tickets for a fight between Tony Galento, who was coming down from East Orange, to fight Buddy Baer in Washington. And accompanying the tickets to the fight was an invitation to attend a post-fight party at the Russian Troika. The Director gave me one of the tickets, there were I don't know how many, but I attended the fight with the Director and Clyde Tolson. We went up to the Russian Troika ...

Michael M. O'Brien: What is the Russian Troika? Is that a restaurant?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: That was a nightclub.

Michael M. O'Brien: Nightclub. Okay.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: In Washington.

Michael M. O'Brien: Uh-huh.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: And among the guests of Congressman Hartley, from New Jersey, was Father James Kelly; who, at that time, was President of Seton Hall College in South Orange, New Jersey. The Director always had a ... hard to describe exactly ... but the Catholic clergy were always something that he apparently admired; and admired the doctrines of the Catholic Church, and so forth. So he and Father Kelly had quite a conversation that evening, at the end of which, Mr. Hoover turned to me and said, "Charles, I've invited Father Kelly to go over and take a tour of the Bureau tomorrow. Will you see that he's well taken care of?" So when Father Kelly came over, I arranged a special tour and then I arranged to have Kelly sent to the airport in the Director's personal car.

That all leads up to a period of time now when I am assigned to the Newark Office. And, Ted Conroy was the Agent in Charge. He had also been down to the fight, which was several months previously.

Ted Conroy said, "You know, we've just received instructions from the Bureau that due to the impending war situation, that the Bureau wants to keep the offices open until Midnight and we need some Night Mail Clerks. Do you remember meeting Father Kelly from Seton Hall College, Charles, at the party in Washington? Go on and see him and see if you can get some students interested in night work in the office down here." Which I did. And there were a number of clerks, then, that worked in the Newark Office, nights; and later became Agents.

Michael M. O'Brien: Um-hmm.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Then later on Father Kelly arranged to have the Director receive an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws from Seton Hall University, which was, I think, either in 1942, '43, somewhere along there.

Michael M. O'Brien: Um-hmm.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: So I was, at that time, assigned to the Resident Agency in Morristown, New Jersey, but at Father Kelly's request, I came down. At a party that Father Kelly then had, after the graduation ceremonies, I was the bartender in Father Kelly's apartment mixing drinks for the Director and Clyde Tolson.

Michael M. O'Brien: Uh-huh. So they continued that relationship over the years with Father Kelly.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Yep. Because in 1943, I was making plans to marry my present wife, Natalie Sherman, her maiden name, in Morristown, New Jersey. And I lived in the Parish where there was a very, very, should I say, Irish Pastor. And they had a regulation in the Diocese that mixed marriages, Natalie being a Presbyterian, could only take place in the Rectory. They could not take place in the church.

Natalie was very disappointed because I had taken her to a Christmas service at the Chapel at St. Elizabeth's College the previous Christmas. So, I was pouring out my grief to Father or to the Chief of Police, Fred Roth, and he said, "Well, I know Monsignor Dannenour," he was the Vice-Chancellor, I think they called them, "of the Diocese down in (**unintel**). 'Why don't you go down and see him?'" So I went down and I explained my situation and he said, "I cannot give you permission to have your marriage take place in the church. I am very sorry. However, if you wish to have a marriage at some place other than the church and if you can find some priest who will marry you under those circumstances, why you're welcome to do so." So I called Father Kelly.

Michael M. O'Brien: Father Kelly. I knew that was coming.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: And he came up and married us and baptized our oldest daughter.

Michael M. O'Brien: Uh-huh.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: And over a period of years, we saw each other occasionally and always exchanged Christmas cards. He passed away in Rumson, New Jersey, some six or seven years ago, where he was living, retired at the time.

- Michael M. O'Brien: Why was it that he and the Director became such close friends?
- Charles E. Kleinkauf: As I mentioned earlier, I don't know. The Director apparently thought very highly of the Catholic religion. And, as I mentioned, Father Lloyd, I think it was, down at the Retreat at Manresa on the Severn River. He had always maintained a close contact with him. I don't know how it started.
- Michael M. O'Brien: Uhm-hmm.
- Charles E. Kleinkauf: Also, the Bishop who, his name I've forgotten, in Chicago, always had correspondence back and forth. Frankly I can't answer that question.
- Michael M. O'Brien: When you overheard the conversations, like you said you were in the night, if the priest, Father Kelly, showed up to the nightclub, correct? You said you all met at the nightclub after the fight? And so was he wearing his priestly garb?
- Charles E. Kleinkauf: No.
- Michael M. O'Brien: Did he just have his collar on when he came in the nightclub?
- Charles E. Kleinkauf: Just his collar. Yeah.
- Michael M. O'Brien: Yeah. Was that pretty unusual for a priest to go in the nightclub?
- Charles E. Kleinkauf: (laughing) Hard one for me to answer.
- Michael M. O'Brien: Okay. Well, I mean I don't think I've ever seen a priest in a nightclub.
- Charles E. Kleinkauf: I think Father Kelly was very liberal, let me put it that way.
- Michael M. O'Brien: Well what would he talk to the Director about? Would they talk about religion? Would they talk about politics? Or just things in general?
- Charles E. Kleinkauf: I can't answer that because I have no idea.

Michael M. O'Brien: Yeah. But you were in the nightclub then you were the bartender at a later time when he and the Director were together?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Up at Seton Hall. When the Director received an honorary degree.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Uh-huh. Okay. Had you socialized with the Director at several occasions? Or was that fight the one and only time?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: That was the only time really, with one exception. When I received the appointment as a Special Agent, after serving in the Director's Office as I previously described, the Director arranged a party for me, a farewell party for me and the employees in his office, which we had someplace. I can't remember exactly where, but somewhere down in Rock Creek Park. And the Director presented me with a traveling kit.

Michael M. O'Brien: Uh-huh. Huh! That was nice of him.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Yeah. Well, when I was in his office every Christmas, he would give presents to his office staff. I never smoked cigarettes.

Michael M. O'Brien: Uh-huh.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: But, one on of these occasions, a Christmas present from the Director was a beautiful cigarette box filled with English Ovals, as I recall, a type of cigarette. And so I kinda liked 'em. So that's what started me smoking.

Michael M. O'Brien: Yeah. Plus you used to smoke cigars in his office. You got caught that one time, you said.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Oh yes.

Michael M. O'Brien: But he didn't smoke cigars, did he?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Oh, no.

Michael M. O'Brien: Yeah. Okay. I assume he smoked because when he'd come in his office I'm sure he smelled the smoke from you guys.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: A few things about our wedding. When I was assigned, of course, to Morristown, New Jersey, I still maintained contact with the Director through the medium of going to see him every time I was going to in-service, and so forth. And, I sent him a note back on the 17th of February that I was planning to be married. And I received this letter in return, dated February the 19th, 1943.

“Dear Charles, I have just received your note of the 17th with which you enclose the clipping telling of your engagement to Miss Sherman. Needless to say, I’m delighted to learn of your forthcoming marriage. However, it does make me feel more and more isolated as I see the old bachelors who have been my associates in the Bureau, gradually falling overboard. I only hope that some rowing of the boat may pitch me also into the sea of matrimony in the not too far distant future.”

Michael M. O'Brien: Uh-huh. Interesting.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Okay.

Michael M. O'Brien: Yeah. I mean, maybe if I could even get a copy of that. Would that be possible to do? Get a copy of that letter and I'll submit that too.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Well.

Michael M. O'Brien: I mean I think it's interesting that, that he would ... I mean people don't even, you know, think of him in that manner and here you're saying yeah. I mean, from what I understand of what you just read, he's looking to get married if the right woman came along.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Uhm-uhm.

Michael M. O'Brien: So I think that I would like to have a copy of that to take.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Okay.

Michael M. O'Brien: I could run out and copy that for you and bring it right back to you. I don't want you to tear it though.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Oh. That's all right.

Michael M. O'Brien:

While you're doing that, I know I'm running out of tape here and I'll go get another one. With everything wireless, you'd think I would have this wireless too. Look under my computer, there's more wires than I've ever had.

It shows, it shows a mindset of where he's coming from. And it's a very personal letter. I agree with you. It's really interesting. I think it's a great letter.

Charles E. Kleinkauf:

1941, of course, as I previously said, I was assigned as Resident Agent in Morristown, New Jersey. It was, of course, a brand new area to work in. No FBI Agent had ever worked out of Morristown, covering the area that I was to cover.

And, naturally then, I had to build up what good police relations I could throughout the area. One of the police relations that I felt was necessary was to establish a good rapport with the New Jersey State Police because the area was primarily rural, for the most part; which was covered by the New Jersey State Police. I learned, however, that the Sergeant of Detectives from the Morristown Barracks, who covered that area, was very, very bitter against the Bureau because of an incident which happened in New York City where the New Jersey State Police were looking for an individual who had kidnapped one of their men and finally released him unharmed after taking his revolver away from him. The Bureau was also looking for the same two men who, it was determined, were holed up in New York City.

The New Jersey State Police also had the same information and they had a surveillance on the apartment where these individuals resided and they were waiting for them to come back to the apartment. The Bureau also had a surveillance on the same apartment. When the subjects returned to their apartment, the Bureau Agents immediately moved in and arrested them without contacting the New Jersey State Police or advising them of the arrest.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: This caused a great deal of resentment on the part of the New Jersey State Police and, particularly, a Sergeant Gus Albright, who was, as I mentioned before, conducted most of his investigations in the area that I was going to be covering as a Resident Agent in Morristown, New Jersey. Having been warned of his animosity, I made a particular point to try to cultivate his friendship and cooperation. Eventually I was successful in so doing, and he became one of my closest friends in law enforcement in northern New Jersey.

Eventually, his son, William Albright, became a Bureau Agent, after his graduation from law school.

Michael M. O'Brien: And you mention that there was an animosity between a lot of the police officers throughout the United States, you had mentioned before, because the FBI was not forthcoming with information.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Right.

Michael M. O'Brien: But because you had shared the information with him that had created a good relationship.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: That's right.

Michael M. O'Brien: And you trusted him and he began to trust you.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Yes.

Michael M. O'Brien: And so that, that helped to, to create a good situation with the Bureau and local law enforcement.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Right.

Michael M. O'Brien: So ... Okay, now. You also mention that you had worked on the Bund.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Yes.

Michael M. O'Brien: And what was the Bund?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: The German-American Bund, which was a propaganda organization, started by Walter Cappey, after Hitler took over in Germany. Cappey was sent to try to gain favor with the United States Government, for what he planned to do in reorganizing the German Government, and so forth. He felt that, apparently, Hitler felt that he needed to have the United States on his side even though there was no indication, as I recall, that he was about to embark, eventually, around warring against France and Belgium, and the Russians.

So with the advent of Walter Cappey organizing the German-American Bund, one of the areas where they established headquarters for the east was at Camp Nordland in Andover, New Jersey, which was in the area that I covered out of Morristown. Shortly after, or possibly shortly before, I cannot recall, the German-American Bund issued a directive concerning the Selective Service Act of 1940, instructing it's members to go ahead and register as required, but, that if they were called up for induction, they should refuse to go into the Army based on the fact that the government had refused to recognize Hitler as the head of the German people.

One of those responsible for the drafting of this directive was August Klapprott who was the eastern district leader of the Bund.

Shortly after war was declared against Germany, a warrant was issued for Klapprott's arrest for Conspiracy to Violate the Provisions of the Selective Service Act of 1940. Charles Watson, another Agent working with me, and myself, went up and arrested Klapprott at the headquarters at Camp Nordland. We brought him down to the office and, at one point, after questioning him for some detail, with no definite results, I left the office. As soon as I got out of the office, as Watson told me later, Klapprott made the remark that "sooner or later you Americans are going to have to do the same thing what Hitler is doing in Germany and get rid of all those damn Jews like that fellow Kleinkauf."

Michael M. O'Brien: Because he assumed you had a Jewish name? Although it's not, but he assumed that it was.

- Charles E. Kleinkauf: That's right. He assumed it was a Jewish name. So that was my experience with August Klapprott. He was later convicted, of course, and sent away for the duration of the war.
- Michael M. O'Brien: Um-hmm. Well the next thing we wanted to touch on was the Director. Let me, let me ask you this. How would you spend time with him? Well, first of all, there's a question I wanted to bring you back to. Why did he pick you to always come back there? What qualities did you have that the Director liked? That you got called back there more than once.
- Charles E. Kleinkauf: No. Just once.
- Michael M. O'Brien: You were originally working in his office as a clerk and then, as an Agent, you came back there a second time. Correct?
- Charles E. Kleinkauf: Oh yeah.
- Michael M. O'Brien: Yeah. So you got called back and so, what qualities did you have?
- Charles E. Kleinkauf: I don't know as I had any particular qualities leading up to that. I think, as I have always thought, that basically he was interested particularly in trying to see that I had opportunities for advancement in the Bureau because of ... number one, the friendship that he had with George Ruch, who, of course, was responsible for my entrance into the Bureau.
- Michael M. O'Brien: Yeah.
- Charles E. Kleinkauf: And, I've always felt that that may have been one of the reasons. The other reason, I think, that I've always felt is, that as Night Clerk and then later on as one of his secretaries, I always tried to do a pretty good job.
- Michael M. O'Brien: You're probably a pretty good writer.
- Charles E. Kleinkauf: Yeah.
- Michael M. O'Brien: To get back to George Ruch. His father had worked with the Director, they went to law school together, you told me?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: No. No.

Michael M. O'Brien: Oh. Okay.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: The man who got me into the Bureau was George Ruch.

Michael M. O'Brien: Right. Yeah.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Who worked with the Director while they were going to law school at George Washington University. They worked in the Department of Justice.

Michael M. O'Brien: Okay. So they had a history of working together in the Department of Justice and law school.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Right. That's where they became very close friends.

Michael M. O'Brien: Yeah. Okay.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: As far as I know, George Ruch was really the only real close friend that the Director had outside, of course, someone in the Bureau, such as Clyde Tolson.

Michael M. O'Brien: Um-hmm.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: But I don't of anybody outside of the Bureau.

Michael M. O'Brien: Did George ever give you, did he ever describe what, what the Director was like, to you? Did he ever make any comments about ...?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: No. I don't recall.

Michael M. O'Brien: No. Okay. How would you describe the Director? What, with your dealings with him? What kind of guy was he?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Well ... I would say, first of all, ... **(long pause)** it makes it a little difficult finding words to describe the Director. He was, without a doubt, in all of my contacts with the various people, one of the most intelligent individuals that I have ever encountered.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: He was, as I mentioned, a very compassionate person when it came to dealing with Agent personnel who, perhaps, somewhere along the line, had stubbed their toe. I can give you an example.

There was an Agent that I knew in Kansas City that I worked with, who, sometime in 1941, was sent on a Special. I believe to the Newark Office. There, he had an indiscreet relationship with a waitress. Although he was married, with a family, living back in Kansas City. In some way, this relationship in Newark was called to the attention of the Director. One of the Inspectors was sent up to verify the information, and this Agent was Dismissed With Prejudice.

Knowing that I was in the Director's Office, he contacted me and came to Washington and asked if there was anyway that he could possibly do something to get this "With Prejudice" removed from his record because it was preventing him from getting another job in the government. So I said, "Well, I would see what I could do." I went and got his personnel file, checked over various things that he had told me. I wrote a note to the Director, and the Director called me in and said, "Do you know this man, Charles?" And I said, "Yes, I worked with him in Kansas City. He's a very good Agent." The Director said, "Well, have him come in and see me." So I called this Agent; he came in, saw the Director. He was reappointed as an Agent after his conversation with the Director.

I just say that as an example of how the Director handled his family ... because the Bureau was his family.

Michael M. O'Brien: And you also mentioned another case about, somebody that the death of parents.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: There was another clerical employee going back to the '30s, who had lost his mother and his father and was an orphan. And one of the other clerical employees, who lived with his family in Washington, took this clerk and had him stay with his family for several months ... to get over his grief. The Director heard about it.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: He called this clerk in, who had befriended this man, and gave this clerk an envelope with a considerable amount of money in it and said, "Please take this to help defray your expenses. I understand you are doing a very charitable thing for this man." The clerk happened to be a good friend of mine, who told me this story. He said he handed the envelope back to the Director and thanked him very much but said, "really, it wasn't needed" but he appreciated the gesture. That would give you a side, perhaps, of the Director that maybe not too many people know of how he felt about his employees. They were his family.

Michael M. O'Brien: Um-hmm. Can you think of an example of his intelligence? You said the first thing that came to mind with you is his intelligence. Is there anything that comes to mind, as an example of that?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Not a concrete example. But, to show how he could maneuver his way through all of the members, let's say, of the Budget Committee, where he had to appear every year ... to the Appropriations Committee, handling various Congressmen; very, very astute in his relations in that regard.

The planning that he made, with the help, of course, of the other Bureau officials, for the successes that the Bureau had during that period. This took a great deal of planning and the Director was responsible for a great deal of it.

Michael M. O'Brien: Was he a hands-on manager?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Hands-on?

Michael M. O'Brien: Yeah.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: At first, let us say, where there were only 400 Agents when I went in, in 1931. He knew every Agent. And when you went to in-service, you didn't ask to see the Director back in those days; everybody who was in for in-service had to go in to see the Director. And the Director would explore any questions that he might have, or any suggestions that these Agents might have. This is the way he used to run the Bureau when I first joined.

Michael M. O'Brien: So he had personal contact with all of the Agents?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: He had personal contact.

Michael M. O'Brien: Uh-huh.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Later on, and I know this to be pretty much of a fact, one of those things that he felt badly about was when the personnel of the Bureau, the Agent personnel, grew to such proportions, and he no longer knew most of the Agents. He felt badly that he could not keep up the personal contact that he had with the group of Agents that were there when he became Director.

Michael M. O'Brien: So he lost some personal contact.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: That's right.

Michael M. O'Brien: Was he affected by that?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Was he affected?

Michael M. O'Brien: Adversely affected by that? He's interviewing every Agent, knows every Agent, and then it gets to be so large he can't keep the same contacts with Agents that he used to have.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Right.

Michael M. O'Brien: Did you notice that, did that affect him? Did that bother him? Did he make any comments about that?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Let me think about that for a moment, Mike, because I would say, although I had no specific situation to tell you, but I always felt that he did regret that, that he had lost his personal contact .

Michael M. O'Brien: Um-hmm.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: But this still did not dissuade him from recognizing the Bureau was his family. And that, I can't emphasize too much.

Michael M. O'Brien: The Bureau was his family then, the most important part of the man.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: That's right.

Michael M. O'Brien: That was his life.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: That's right.

Michael M. O'Brien: And his love for the FBI.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Right.

Michael M. O'Brien: And his dedication to it?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Oh yes.

Michael M. O'Brien: Yeah.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Yeah.

Michael M. O'Brien: Very dedicated. And you, you, you came in at, at two different times and worked in the Director's Office. Before you were an Agent, and after you were an Agent. Did, did he change during that time period or did your evaluation or the way you saw him when you first came in, and later on did it change?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: No. I don't recall that there was any change.

Michael M. O'Brien: Uh-huh. Yeah.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Yeah.

Michael M. O'Brien: As we talked about, there was a lot of allegations made about the Director; about his sex life, about the red dress and all the other things, what do you have to say about that?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Well, I have, over a period of years, whenever anything like that came up I was deeply resentful of any allegations of that type because going back to the period of time when I was a Night Clerk, and on many occasions, at night, when there was nobody else in that office but the Director and myself. There was never, never any suggestion, on his part, that he was interested in having any homosexual relationships, at all.

Michael M. O'Brien: Uh-huh.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: I think the allegations by this woman in New York, which, this is my opinion, were completely unfounded because I think her allegations were made because the Director knew her husband and had, perhaps, though I say this advisedly, perhaps, warned his friend about the background of this woman making these allegations.

Michael M. O'Brien: Before they got married?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Before they got married.

Michael M. O'Brien: And so you think that, perhaps, she found out about what the Director had said about her and, therefore, was upset with him?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: I think that is the case, in my opinion.

Michael M. O'Brien: Um-hmm. So, therefore, she retaliated and made up this story, you think?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: I think so.

Michael M. O'Brien: Yeah. Okay. And again, with the relationship with Clyde Tolson, you have been out on social occasions with both of them. You mentioned you went to the nightclub on that ...

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Yeah.

Michael M. O'Brien: ... did you ever see anything that was unusual that concerned you, or you thought was an unusual relationship?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: No. I never saw anything like that.

Michael M. O'Brien: Okay.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Because Clyde Tolson was living, during that period of time, at least while I was there. He had an apartment with a man by the name of Guy Hottle. Guy Hottle, he became an Agent; was SAC for years in the Washington Field Office. And he and Clyde Tolson had an apartment together.

Michael M. O'Brien: Uh-huh.

- Charles E. Kleinkauf: So, knowing Guy Hottle, as I remember him, it would be nothing to indicate that he would, in any way, have any effeminate characteristics. He was a real go-go guy.
- Michael M. O'Brien: Uh-huh. So your experience would be positive. And you just see a man dedicated to, to the FBI and, and trying to do what's best for the FBI.
- Charles E. Kleinkauf: That's right.
- Michael M. O'Brien: Yes. Okay.
- Charles E. Kleinkauf: That's correct.
- Michael M. O'Brien: Is there anything else you want to add? You mentioned you had a summary.
- Charles E. Kleinkauf: Yeah.
- Michael M. O'Brien: Yeah. Go ahead.
- Charles E. Kleinkauf: I'd like to summarize everything by saying that I had 32 years in the FBI. My brother, after me, had 32 years in the FBI. My brother-in-law had 28 years in the FBI. My brother's wife had a period of seven years in the FBI. All totaled, we had 99 years of Bureau service. But it all goes back to the fact that I studied and had piano lessons from a woman, whose son was a close friend of Mr. Hoover.
- If I had not taken those piano lessons, and never become acquainted with her or her son, I don't know where I would have gone. My parents had no money to send me to college. I had been turned down at the Naval Academy because of my eyesight. And thanks to my former piano teacher and her son, George Ruch, they provided the Kleinkauf family, that I just mentioned, with a wonderful, wonderful life.
- Michael M. O'Brien: Very good. Thank you, Charles.
- Charles E. Kleinkauf: Okay.
- Michael M. O'Brien: And you know, one thing I want to add is, talking about your eyesight, Mr. Hoover sort of saved you on that one.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Yeah.

Michael M. O'Brien: Because you came that close to having a second career sidetracked by your eyesight.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Right.

Michael M. O'Brien: And I notice, I want to add, for the official record, he is not wearing glasses right now. So your eyesight has to be pretty good.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: (laughing)

Michael M. O'Brien: You don't wear glasses now?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Oh yes.

Michael M. O'Brien: Oh, you do. Okay.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Yeah. That's all right.

Michael M. O'Brien: You don't need them to read!

Charles E. Kleinkauf: No.

Michael M. O'Brien: My goodness. I thought it was just me.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: I can read all that stuff.

Michael M. O'Brien: We're the only two guys that don't need granny glasses.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: No.

Michael M. O'Brien: And, officially, I want to add that he has more hair than me too.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: But when the golf ball gets out there about 20 yards, if I don't have glasses on, I can't see where it went.

Michael M. O'Brien: Well, is there anything else you want to add? Or have we covered everything pretty much?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Let me go over my notes here for just a moment, Mike.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Can you think of anything?

Natalie Kleinkauf: I still think it's interesting about hats. The Agents working six days a week and volunteering, so-called volunteering overtime.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Right.

Natalie Kleinkauf: He had at one point, he had his office at home. He didn't have an office.

Michael M. O'Brien: Where was that at?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: In Morristown.

Natalie Kleinkauf: And Agents were coming in, in the house at different hours and they'd go out and strap on their guns and go off on the, the hunt for somebody.

Michael M. O'Brien: Um. And, they couldn't forget their hats.

Natalie Kleinkauf: Yeah.

Michael M. O'Brien: What year did the hats go out? Was that about '68?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: The what?

Michael M. O'Brien: The hat. The hat went out.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: (laughing) Well, I don't remember.

Michael M. O'Brien: I think it might have been '68.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: I was out of the Bureau.

Michael M. O'Brien: Yeah. Yeah. I came in '71. And the hats were not in.

Natalie Kleinkauf: No. Now they have **caps**. You know, you see the television raids.

Michael O'Brien: One thing I want to get on record is the note he sent you when you were getting married.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: I already read it.

Michael O'Brien: How did he sign it?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Signed, J. Edgar Hoover. He signed some letters J. Edgar Hoover and some others with Edgar.

Michael M. O'Brien: Um-hmm.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Yep.

Michael M. O'Brien: And, you had mentioned before that, I was just reminded of the fact, that you said he would talk to you in the usual way. And you were going to explain what the usual way was. He was a man that liked to talk, was he not?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Well, I'm trying to think of what you're referring to.

Michael M. O'Brien: When you said "he called me in his office and he talked to me in his usual way." And I had asked you, "What do you mean his usual way?" And you said to me that "I'll explain it to you later." And we really didn't get around to it.

Natalie Kleinkauf: Did you tell him about Walter Winchell and his hoodlums getting into his garbage?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Oh. Well.

Natalie Kleinkauf: He liked to carry on a conversation.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: There was nothing unusual about any time that we had a conversation about anything.

Michael M. O'Brien: Um-hmm.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: A little anecdote. When I saw him, as I previously mentioned, for the last time in March of 1972, prior to then he had become somewhat in disfavor with the press. Some of the press and some of the columnists were taking pot shots at him.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: One of them wrote, in his column, that Mr. Hoover used Jack Daniels whiskey and that he used Ultrabrite toothpaste. Why a columnist would want to get into that, I cannot understand, but the Director found out how he got the information. What happened was shortly before the Director was leaving one morning, prior to this article, a man hurriedly drove up, parked his car at the end of the Director's driveway; he ran down and started rummaging his garbage can.

There was a television crew, also, nearby, who were going to take some pictures of the Director for a forthcoming movie, and they took some camera shots of this individual. It turned out to be one of the legmen for this columnist. And the Director continued by saying, "Well, the one thing that columnist didn't publish in his article was that when his legman started rummaging through my garbage can, he had to get his hands full of dog crap because my housekeeper who comes every morning at eight o'clock, she picks up the papers in the kitchen which had been deposited for my two terriers to relieve themselves during the night. And I had just put those in the garbage can on top of everything else."

Michael M. O'Brien: Uh-huh. Okay Charles, have we got everything here?

Charles E. Kleinkauf: I don't think of anything right now, Mike ...

Michael O'Brien: Thank you very much for your time. I appreciate it.

Charles E. Kleinkauf: Well, I hope it was worthwhile.