

TESTIMONY OF MR. LANE SUMMERS Attorney at Law

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: Will you stand and be sworn, please?

LANE SUMMERS, called as a witness, after being first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Summers, I will ask you as you testify that you answer audibly and that you spell the names of the people the first time so that it may be recorded correctly.

MR. HOUSTON: Please state your name.

MR. SUMMERS: Lane Summers.

MR. HOUSTON: Where do you live, Mr. Summers?

MR. SUMMERS: Seattle.

MR. HOUSTON: How long have you lived in the City of Seattle?

MR. SUMMERS: Since 1910.

MR. HOUSTON: 1910.

MR. HOUSTON: What is your occupation?

MR. SUMMERS: Attorney-at-Law.

MR. HOUSTON: Mr. Summers, I will ask you if you ever had a child go to the University of Washington?

MR. SUMMERS: Yes, sir.

MR. HOUSTON: What was the name of this child?

MR. SUMMERS: You refer to my son?

MR. HOUSTON: Yes.

MR. SUMMERS: Thane Summers. Thane.

MR. HOUSTON: Do you remember about what years he went to the University?

MR. SUMMERS: 1933 to May 1936.

MR. HOUSTON: Three years he went to the University?

MR. SUMMERS: Yes, sir.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, during this period of time, did he live at your home?

MR. SUMMERS: A part of that time. He lived at my home until May, 1936.

MR. HOUSTON: Until May, 1936.

MR. SUMMERS: Or thereabout. The spring of 1936.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, did you talk with your son from time to time? How he was getting along in the University? How things were going?

MR. SUMMERS: Naturally.

MR. HOUSTON: And did your son seem interested in his university work?

MR. SUMMERS: Very much so and the—particularly in the latter part of it.

MR. HOUSTON: The latter part of it.

MR. HOUSTON: In all respects he was raised as a normal boy, was he not?

MR. SUMMERS: I would say so, yes.

MR. HOUSTON: Your—you describe yourself as a middle-class American family, were you not?

MR. SUMMERS: Well, I'd rather others would describe me but certainly I was loyal to our American institutions.

Son Taught Communism While at University

MR. HOUSTON: Now, did anything occur toward the last year of your boy's attendance at the University that was disquieting to you?

MR. SUMMERS: Well, I would say it was earlier than that, uh—that something occurred which was disquieting to me when I first discovered it and was continuously so thereafter.

MR. HOUSTON: Will you please relate that for us, Judge?

MR. SUMMERS: I would not remember the exact date but after he had been attending the University for some time on one occasion at home he made some comment as a result of a book that he was reading during the course of the evening and I was a little surprised and asked him to read it again, and I said:

“Well, where did you get that?”

Well, that was one of the books he was asked to read by one of his professors.

I said: “Well, that's virtually Communism,” and he said, “Yes, I know that.”

Well, I said, “You certainly don't believe that?”

He said, “Yes, I do.”

That being the first conversation and first occasion during which I learned that he was interested in Communism.

MR. HOUSTON: Did he mention to you what class that book was being used in?

MR. SUMMERS: Well, he did. As of the present date I'm a little uncertain whether it was psychology or philosophy.

MR. HOUSTON: Did he say anything about it not being required reading but that credits would be given him if he studied it?

MR. SUMMERS: There was quite a little discussion during the evening during the course of which he indicated to me that the material that we were discussing was not given to him in his text books but was given to him in so-called “extra” reading. He gave me at that time a list of some, as I recall, twenty books which he said he had been requested by his instructor to read, and had been advised that if he did read all these books he would be given extra credit for the course.

At the time, he was in the process of reading them.

MR. HOUSTON: Were the—did you observe any of these books?

MR. SUMMERS: I was very much interested and made a memorandum of the books. I made, more or less superficial examination of all of them, at a later date.

MR. HOUSTON: Did you come to any conclusion as to the type or kind of books they were?

MR. SUMMERS: Yes, I did. I, in my own thinking, would classify most of them definitely as very radical in their essence and influence. All of them, I think, but one. One of them, as I recall, I felt was a more of a factual book and conservative in its tone.

Son Names Professors Who Taught Him Communism

MR. HOUSTON: Now did your son admit to you that he had embraced the tenets of Communism?

MR. SUMMERS: Not at that time, but later; he didn't only admit it, he asserted it. He was very definitely aggressive in his Communistic attitude before he was finished with his attendance at the University.

MR. HOUSTON: Did he tell you what professors were encouraging him in this stand, if any were?

MR. SUMMERS: Not only did he tell me who they were, but he quoted them many times to me. From the date which you have called to my attention, until he finally left my home, he and I had a great many discussions and arguments about the teaching that he was receiving and about the indoctrination that he had been subjected to, and about the fallacies of it and the right and wrong of it. In other words, when he was not studying, and when he was at home, for many months there was more or less a continuous discussion of the problem between himself and me.

In those discussions, he mentioned several of his professors or instructors, as being the men from whom he was acquiring the indoctrination that I have described.

MR. HOUSTON: Who were these—

MR. SUMMERS: **One of them was Ralph Gundlach.**

MR. HOUSTON: **Ralph Gundlach.**

MR. SUMMERS: **One was Hugh DeLacy.**

MR. HOUSTON: **Hugh DeLacy.**

MR. SUMMERS: **Another was Mr. Rader.** I am not sure that I remember his first name. **Another was Herbert Phillips.** In the same classification of our discussions he frequently quoted from Howard Costigan and referred to him, but he was not connected with the University, so far as I now recall.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, as near as possible, these original discussions then, started along in early spring of '35 and they continued over a year. Would that be about right?

MR. SUMMERS: Well, I'm—I wouldn't want to fix the date when they first started, but he had been attending the University some time, and they continued throughout his attendance at the University.

MR. HOUSTON: And he started to the University in 1933.

MR. SUMMERS: That is right.

Son Leaves Home to Live With Gundlach

MR. HOUSTON: Now, will you explain what occurred in May of 1936?

MR. SUMMERS: Shortly before he was to be graduated, he announced to me, much to my surprise, that he had concluded he was not going to remain at home because he felt it was inconsistent, knowing my conservative ideas, to receive financial support from me when he intended to use his education and his efforts to further Communistic purposes, and he said that he was therefore going to leave home; and he also said at about the same time, that he was—or, perhaps a little later, that he was unwilling to take his examinations for graduation, because he felt that a diploma from the University of Washington might classify him among the intelligentsia and that he didn't want to do anything which would handicap him in his communistic efforts after he left school.

In consequence, he did leave home, he did refuse to take his examinations, and he went to live at the home of Ralph Gundlach, which was at that time somewhere near the Helen Bush School on, I think, Thirty-third North. I delivered him frequently to the house after that, when he would come to my home for a meal or for a visit, and would return; for some time I delivered him to Professor Gundlach's house, where he was then living.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, he moved out of your home because he didn't want to take anything further from a capitalistic system; and moved into the home of Ralph Gundlach.

MR. SUMMERS: That is correct.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, about how long did he stay in the home of Ralph Gundlach?

MR. SUMMERS: I would say some weeks or some months. I cannot fix the time exactly, but it was a period of a number of weeks or a few months. That's my best estimate.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, did Professor Gundlach employ him?

MR. SUMMERS: I'm not exactly certain. At one time he told me that he was receiving five dollars a week. I'm not certain whether that five dollars a week was from Professor Gundlach or whether it was from the Communists; but I do know that he was living quite meagerly. I think he was employed by Doctor—Professor Gundlach on the basis of washing dishes, because Mr. Gundlach had lost his wife, and taking care of Mr. Gundlach's child, I think a daughter, when he was away.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, during this period of time that he was at Professor Gundlach's, he would come back to your home for dinner every once in a while, or to see the family, would he not?

MR. SUMMERS: Yes, sir.

MR. HOUSTON: Did he at any of these visits, tell you that Professor Gundlach was a member of the Communist Party, that he was living with him by—for that reason?

MR. SUMMERS: I don't think that he ever assigned that as the reason. He definitely indicated to me that he was a member of the Party, but I don't think he ever said that that was the reason he was living there.

MR. HOUSTON: Did he definitely indicate to you that Gundlach was a member of the Party?

MR. SUMMERS: Yes, and all the others that I have mentioned.

MR. HOUSTON: The others you have mentioned. Now did he subsequently leave Professor Gundlach's?

MR. SUMMERS: He did.

Son Lives With Professor Phillips

MR. HOUSTON: And where did he go then?

MR. SUMMERS: To the home of Mr. Phillips, out in the University District. I think 9th or 10th, and Brooklyn Avenue. I've forgotten the exact location, but I drove him there on a number of occasions.

MR. HOUSTON: Was that Professor Herbert Phillips?

MR. SUMMERS: Yes, sir.

MR. HOUSTON: Did he tell you why he left Gundlach's?

MR. SUMMERS: Well, not in any detail, but he indicated that he was a little weary of washing dishes.

MR. HOUSTON: In other words, Gundlach worked him too hard, then.

MR. SUMMERS: Well, at least at that sort of thing.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, what next happened to your son?

MR. SUMMERS: Well, I don't recall exactly how long he stayed at Professor Phillips' home. I would say perhaps about as long, although I am not sure; but ultimately he moved from his home to some location, I think

about 8th and Marion Street, an old shack there, where—and at another time he lived in an apartment house with some other young man, a little bit off Madison Street near a white cottage, that was a restaurant. It was known as The Cottage. It's about 16th and Madison, I would say.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, did he evidence any interest in the Spanish War about that time?

MR. SUMMERS: Well, I wouldn't say that it was quite that early. I would say that about that time he was more interested in the national campaign. That was in 1936, and he indicated to me that he was either a member of, which is my best recollection, or working for the Communist Party's campaign committee for King County; and during the fall—late summer and early fall of 1936, he was very vigorously engaged in Communistic activities for the national campaign.

MR. HOUSTON: Of the Communist Party.

MR. SUMMERS: And of Franklin Roosevelt.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, did he subsequent to that evidence an interest in the Spanish War?

MR. SUMMERS: Yes, in discussions and conversation he indicated a definite interest in it.

MR. HOUSTON: Now this would be in the spring of '37 now, wouldn't it? Wouldn't that be about the time?

MR. SUMMERS: Well, if you are taking me that far, I would say by the winter of '37 he had many times indicated interest in the Spanish War.

MR. HOUSTON: Now do you know whether or not Ralph Gundlach was active in that Abraham Lincoln Brigade or any other Spanish front organization?

MR. SUMMERS: I couldn't say as to him. As to the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, I would say that I think Thane referred more frequently to Hugh DeLacy and to Howard Costigan, and to an activity that he was interested in in connection with the Washington Commonwealth Federation.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, he was active in all these things that the Communist Party was interested in, then.

MR. SUMMERS: He was interested in the Communist Party itself and its campaign committee. He was interested in the Washington Commonwealth Federation. He was interested in a lot of Communistic activities in connection with the relief program. He was so much interested that he was arrested with one other young man for putting up placards on light poles and telephone poles, during the campaign, in violation of the city ordinance. He was also interested in fomenting strikes. He and Hugh DeLacy became employed, as I recall, by the King County Road Department, shortly after which a strike developed.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, did he discuss with you the precepts of Communism? Did he—

MR. SUMMERS: Many times.

MR. HOUSTON: Did he believe in the theory that the end justifies the means?

MR. SUMMERS: Ultimately he became very vigorous in preaching that. Many of the things that he talked to me about doing, or talked to me about the Party doing, he justified on that basis.

Son Enlists in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade

MR. HOUSTON: Now, did he subsequently become active in this Abraham Lincoln Brigade?

MR. SUMMERS: He did.

MR. HOUSTON: Here in the City of Seattle?

MR. SUMMERS: He enlisted here.

MR. HOUSTON: Did he say who handled his enlistment? Do you recall that?

MR. SUMMERS: Not specifically, as I now recall. If the—the influence so far—I don't recall his ever mentioning others than those I have mentioned. He may have mentioned others, but I don't recall it now, but he probably did; but insofar as I would be able to name names, I have given you all the names that I have a definite recollection of.

He enlisted in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, but I am rather of the impression that I didn't ever know that he had anything to do with it until after he had left Seattle.

MR. HOUSTON: Now, even after he left Gundlach's home, he still moved in that circle where Gundlach moved?

MR. SUMMERS: Yes, he—he with DeLacy and some others, were among the pickets who picketed the "P.I." I don't remember what year that was, but I am inclined to think that was a little earlier; but he was referring to people that I have mentioned, on many discussions that we had.

Son Is Killed Fighting for Communist Cause

MR. HOUSTON: And did he subsequently, as a result of enlisting in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, go to New York and eventually to Spain?

MR. SUMMERS: Yes, that was in the spring of 1937.

MR. HOUSTON: Did he lose his life in Spain?

MR. SUMMERS: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: Fighting in the Loyalist cause.

MR. SUMMERS: Yes.

MR. HOUSTON: Were you notified of this?

MR. SUMMERS: I was notified of it through the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

MR. HOUSTON: Who notified you of that?

MR. SUMMERS: Well, I gave to you a photostatic copy of the letter. I think I was notified of it first on the telephone; but I was also notified other than a semi-official fashion, by a letter that I received, from the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.

MR. HOUSTON: I believe that's all, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: Thank you for appearing, Mr. Summers—

MR. HOUSTON: Thank you, Mr. Summers, you may be excused.

CHAIRMAN CANWELL: —you may be excused from the subpoena.

(Witness Excused)