

VF 109-8

1114 New York Ave.
Brooklyn 3, N.Y.
June 24, 1958

Major Herbert O. Yardley
9813 Rosensteel Ave.
Silver Spring, Md.

Dear Major Yardley:

This is to thank you for your note of June 8 last. But, nevertheless, I have to tell you that your note was not merely a surprise to me but a disappointment. In fact, it dismayed me.

Surely you cannot have been serious when you wrote "In reference to SOUND players There wouldn't be any poker game if they all played like me." It cannot be that you are egotistical enough to think you would have no opponents both qualified and willing to play with you at this game. What about bridge players and chess players and top exponents of other games - mental and physical?

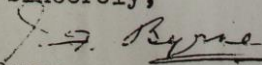
However, I am not really interested in your attitude toward poker. But I am more than amazed when you write "I am no longer interested in codes and ciphers. Am sorry." When I look at the portrait of the debonair young H.O.Y. in "The American Black Chamber", and hear now from an older H.O.Y. that he is no longer interested in codes and ciphers, I simply cannot take you seriously. There could be only one reason for such a "sea change" in you, and that would be that you had suffered some deep and vast disappointment in this general subject.

You say in one brief sentence, "The cipher I refer to as a hoax - the authors later confessed." But if you had proven to yourself "by scientific analysis" that this was so, then you would have needed no "confession" from anyone to sustain you.

In another brief sentence you say, "The cipher I referred to was a key, arbitrary, that never repeated." Now, I am just going to ask you one hypothetical question: If there were in existence a cipher system which would be available for enciphering or encoding in any language, and which would forever produce such a product as would be totally inscrutable and indecipherable, do you, or do you not, think that there would be a universal market for such a system, especially if the system I stipulate were to be produced electronically?

I have no thought here of your spending any money in the electronic development of this electronic system I postulate. Neither you nor I would have enough money to do anything about this. But I am certain that if you had belief in such a system and its universal utility, you and I could do something about it in a really tangible way.

Yours sincerely,


J.F. Byrne