Department of State (ECS)

Amconsul SAO PAULO

October 6, 1969

WELFARE-WHEREABOUTS (ARREST): Gary Wayne TRANTER

7 FAM 351; São Paulo's telegrams 944, 950, 952, and 958

At 3:30 pm on September 24, 1969, Fulbright scholar Gary Wayne Tranter, an American citizen, was to meet an American girl of his acquaintance outside the office building where she worked on Avenida Paulista between Rua Joaquim Eugenio Lima and Alameda Campinas. His friend was late, and he spent fifteen minutes waiting on the sidewalk, consulting his wristwatch from time to time. At 4:45 pm he entered her office building.

Before he reached the elevator, he was apprehended by two plain-clothes policemen, who took him to the back of the building where a police car was parked, and he was directed to the back seat. They asked him who he was, what he was doing in Brazil, how long he has been here, and they asked what he was doing in front of the building. He asked them to verify his allegation that he was meeting a friend by watching for the exit of the girl, whom he described, but they neglected to do so. They seemed satisfied with his story, and said everything would be alright, and that he would be released soon. He chatted with them for the balance of the two hours spent in the police car.

At 6 pm Mr. Tranter was handcuffed and driven to a police station in the city, and upon arrival there he was again asked the same questions by two other inspectors. The questioning, he said, was never intensive. He remained handcuffed until 11:30 pm or 12:00 because nobody seemed to have a key for the handcuffs until one was finally encountered around midnight, when six Brazilians, rounded up at random, were escorted into the police station and the general questioning began again by another set of inspectors. All seven were questioned, one at a time, in the presence of each other.

At 1:30 am Mr. Tranter and the six Brazilians were taken to a jail in

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another part of the city, and all seven were put into the same cell, which had no bed or blankets. Two by two they were interrogated once more.

At 11:00 am the following morning Mr. Tranter and two of the Brazilians were called out and interrogated again. The inspector who interrogated Tranter told him he would be released shortly.

At 9:00 pm September 25, Tranter was released. He had not been mistreated, but he had been without food for 30 hours.

About 8:00 pm on the evening he was apprehended Tranter asked the inspector who was questioning him at the Police Station if he could talk to the American Consul by telephone. The answer was "Under no circumstances." When he asked if the American Consul could be notified, he was told, "We'll take care of it." Mr. Tranter did not raise the subject again, first because he believed from the beginning that he would be released in short order, and secondly to avoid antagonizing the police.

The Consulate General's telegram No. 944 of September 25, 1969 describes the notification received at the Consulate General of Mr. Tranter's arrest. The entire morning of that day was spent trying to determine through official channels where Tranter was being held in order to request to visit him, and involved a complicated series of referrals to other persons, reports that well-known police contacts were out of town or otherwise unavailable, and finally the information that his name did not appear on any of the lists of persons detained.

The primary source of information that he was held (an Army officer) was again contacted, and he promised to phone the consular officer, but did not do so. Mr. Tranter himself called at the Consulate General on September 26, the morning after his release.

A letter was directed to the Secretary of Public Safety, General Olavio Viana Moog, on September 30, 1969, protesting the fact that Tranter was not allowed to communicate with the Consulate General, and asking that he issue orders to the effect that any American who might be detained in the future have access to a consular officer.