

JF 108-15

1647 Macomb's Road
Bronx, New York, N.Y.
November 18, 1937

Rear Admiral Harold G. Bowen
Navy Department
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

I have been told that some months ago you requested an appropriation "for development of a system of cryptography by which warships can transmit signals to another vessel in the fleet which cannot be deciphered by an enemy vessel".

In this general connection I wish respectfully to inform you that I am the inventor of a machine which, I claim, is the only thing of its kind in existence. Permit me briefly to summarize the main points of this device as follows:

1. Insofar as its cryptographic elements are concerned, my machine is designed to be of universal standard make.
2. The machine is available for anybody and everybody, anywhere and everywhere, forever.
3. Possession of a machine by any person or persons would not in the least enable him or them to decipher a message written by any other machine.

I am sending you herewith two copies of a sample of the character of the work which this machine turns out. For purposes of clarity, I have had this sample printed in plain, unambiguous bold-face type. The sample consists of 248 lines of cipher printed on ten (10) pages. In the first hundred lines the same identical sentence has been written verbatim et literatim one hundred times, from which, of course, you may see that the meaning of each of the first hundred lines is precisely identical with the meaning of all the other lines which precede or follow it. The sentence of which I speak is a variant of the well known phrase "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog". On Line 101 I encipher a few words of my own, these words being a brief introduction to the encipherment of the Declaration of Independence which begins on Line 105 and continues without interruption to Line 227, at which point the Declaration of Independence closes and is followed immediately by Lincoln's Gettysburg Speech, which, in turn, closes in the first three words of Line 248. All 248 lines are in the same key.

I am sending you this sample with the flat assertion that it is materially and mathematically indecipherable by any expert or group of experts on earth. It has been elaborated on a working model of my own construction, the actual machine not yet having progressed beyond the blue print stage.

I should be most happy to cooperate with you - on any reasonable basis - in the development of this machine, and, as a preliminary to this, I would, of course, be only too happy to give you a thorough demonstration.

With much respect, Sir, I am

Very faithfully yours,

J.F. Byrne.

JFB:gr