



Episode 2, Short Snorter, Maryland, Washington D.C. and New York City

Tukufu: Our next story investigates why the signatures of these World War II military commanders appear on a worn piece of English currency. It's July, 1942. And the fate of the free world hangs in the balance. The United Kingdom has stood alone against Hitler in Western Europe for three long years. While on the Eastern Front, the Soviet Union is suffering heavy losses on the battlefield. The pressure on America's allies is reaching a tipping point. But even though the United States has been in the war for six months, it has yet to launch a major offensive. The question in the air that long hot summer: when and where will America help open a second front against the Nazis? Recently, Gary Schulze purchased an odd item, dated from that bloody summer of 1942. It's an out of print English ten schilling note signed by many of the Allied leaders who wrote the battle plan for America's entry into the European conflict. If the bill is the real thing, it's an autograph hunters dream. But how did so many famous signatures wind up in one place? And more important, why?

Gary Schulze: I collect World War II objects and documents and autographs. I've been doing that since I was a kid. I think it may be the only one of its kind.

Tukufu: I'm Tukufu Zuberi and I've come to New York City to take a closer look at Gary Schultz's puzzling find.

Gary: Let me show you this, Tukufu. I bought it at an auction about two years ago.

Tukufu: Why did you buy it?

Gary: Well, look at the signatures on it. Dwight D. Eisenhower. You're got Franklin D. Roosevelt. Winston Churchill. Anthony Eden. George S. Patton. On and on.

Tukufu: It's an extraordinary list. These are the men who led America and England in the fight against fascism.

Tukufu: Yeah, those were some of the heavy hitters for World War II, that's for sure.

Gary: Absolutely.

Tukufu: The signatures are on what looks like English currency, framed with a photograph and name.

Tukufu: The Honorable Harry Hopkins. I think he was in the Roosevelt Administration. Nickname "Harry". "Made in London 25/7/42. Short Snorter." I've never heard of a Short Snorter. But whatever it is, it probably belonged to this guy Hopkins. So you really think this is an authentic document?

Gary: I don't know. I mean, I hope it's authentic.



Tukufu: What exactly do you want me to find out?

Gary: Why did Harry Hopkins have this thing made? What is a Short Snorter?

Tukufu: Okay. I'll get back to you as quickly as I can.

Gary: Okay. Great. Thanks so much.

Tukufu: I have a hunch I could have my hands on a really important piece of history. The really exciting and interesting thing about this document is all of the information that it contains. I wonder if this photograph is Harry Hopkins? The date certainly puts it right in the middle of World War II. Were all these people together, in London, on July 25th, 1942? What was going on if they were? But my first question, what on earth is a Short Snorter? I've arranged to meet forensic scientist and former FBI document analyst, Jerry Richards.

Jerry Richards: Wow, that's impressive. Look at those signatures.

Tukufu: Jerry confirms that it's an English Ten Schilling note. They were printed between 1928 and 1969, which matches up with the date on our bill.

Tukufu: Well, what is a Short Snorter?

Jerry: Well I could explain it to you, but I think it might be better if I showed you what it was.

Tukufu: Okay. I don't usually hit the bar this early in the day. So what are we doing here?

Jerry: Well let's have this. To your health.

Tukufu: To your health. [Click glasses] A snort is slang for a small glass of whiskey. Jerry explained that a Short Snorter was a drinking game. It was popular in the military during World War II and involved servicemen signing each other's paper money.

Tukufu: So how was the game played?

Jerry: Well, do you happen to have a couple of dollars?

Tukufu: I do.



Jerry: Alright. Let me just sign that for you. Now you have a short snorter. And I have a dollar bill.

Tukufu: In the heat of war, with servicemen leaving for combat, the snorter would sometimes become a record of a friend who would never return. But if that friend did return, the snorter was an excuse for celebration.

Jerry: Friends would take the local currency and each would sign each others bills and then hand it back, with the agreement that the next time they get together, whoever had collected the least number of names on those bills would buy a drink.

Tukufu: Sometimes many bills from different countries were strung together. But the result was always a keepsake of your buddy's signatures.

Tukufu: So, what I have here is a memento.

Jerry: That's correct.

Tukufu: Are you telling me that Eisenhower, Roosevelt, Patton, all these guys, Churchill, they got together and had a drink over my Short Snorter?

Jerry: It's possible.

Tukufu: I'm not so sure. All these leaders taking time out in London during the war to play a drinking game? Jerry has made a career of exposing forged documents. He offers to put our bill under the microscope. He examines the ink to see if more than one pen was used. Why would having one ink be problematic?

Jerry: Well, we've got thirty names in essence, so if it was all written with one or two, or maybe even three pens, we'd be very suspicious of that. We can actually see that some of these inks are virtually different than each other, even though visibly they look identical.

Tukufu: Next Jerry focuses on the most impressive signatures – Roosevelt, Churchill, Eisenhower and Patton.

Jerry: Many ingenious forgers would take a genuine document and insert some very famous names in it.

Tukufu: But Jerry doesn't see a problem.

Jerry: I find no indication that any of these signatures have been squeezed in-between other signatures as add-ons. So it looks like they were written in order naturally.

Tukufu: Finally, he scrutinizes the signatures themselves.



Jerry: Well, let's take a look at it under the microscope. And looking at the Winston Churchill signature....

Tukufu: When a person signs their own name, the signature is swift and smooth. But a forger's signature often has wobbles and kinks.

Jerry: Do we have any tremor in them? Do we have any patching?

Tukufu: Okay, so what are your final thoughts. Do I have the real thing here?

Jerry: Well, I can find absolutely nothing wrong with it. There's nothing to indicate in any way that it is not a genuine document.

Tukufu: Thank you very much.

Jerry: My pleasure.

Tukufu: Twenty-nine signatures, all apparently real. The plaque suggests it was owned by Harry Hopkins. If so, he's probably key to unlocking the mystery of what might have brought these guys together. There's literally tons of material on Harry Hopkins. Although Hopkins was a major political figure during the Roosevelt administration, he operated very much behind the scenes. Listen to this. "Harry L. Hopkins, President Roosevelt's most intimate counselor, is regarded in Washington as a mystery man." Before the war, the Iowa native had been an architect of the New Deal. He was one of Roosevelt's most trusted and powerful advisors. Listen to what Time Magazine says about him: "By far the most important function of his job has always been to bring people together." After Pearl Harbor, Hopkins was the man Roosevelt used as a personal troubleshooter and ambassador to the Allies. His great strength was diplomacy. Harry L. Hopkins was a major political player. He was Roosevelt's emissary to the world. So maybe he did get all of these famous men around the same table. Then I find something startling, which Churchill wrote in 1942 onboard a plane to Moscow: "The two pilots asked me if I was one of that bloody club Harry H. took up at me for. I said, yes, and signed their dollar bills. But now they want to see mine." Harry H. is almost certainly Harry Hopkins. It sounds like he may have played this Short Snorter game. So this could be some kind of record or memento of all the famous people he rubbed shoulders with that year. Historian Warren Kimble has offered to take a look at the bill. He's an expert on the relationship between America and its war time allies. Have you seen anything like that before?

Warren Kimble: Wow. I've seen Short Snorters, but never one like that. That's really quite remarkable.

Tukufu: Warren suspects the date on the bill may be crucial to figuring out why the names were collected.



Warren: Made in London. 25 July, 1942. That's a very significant date.

Tukufu: What's so important about that date?

Warren: Well, at that time in the Second World War, things were going rather badly for the Allies.

Tukufu: By the summer of 1942, Britain had suffered through the London Blitz. And the Soviet Union was battling 3million German soldiers on Russian soil. Both allies had their back to the wall and needed America's help.

Warren: Churchill believed that the only way Britain could come out of this war successfully was with the United States as a full partner in the war.

Tukufu: Warren says by 1942, Roosevelt and his senior advisors wanted to launch an attack against Hitler, on the European mainland.

Tukufu: So what was the problem?

Warren: The problem was that the Americans didn't have the capability of doing it, nor did the British. Churchill knew for a fact that they didn't have the ability to launch such an invasion in 1942. And, where were they going to go from there?

Tukufu: So the United States was attempting to see how it could significantly impact this war?

Warren: Yes.

Tukufu: Warren says that summer was a turning point in the war. And, the date on our bill, July 1942, was particularly important. We're on our way to the Library of Congress to find out more. So what's so important about July 25th, 1942?

Warren: Well, that's when American and British military leaders met in London to figure out how the United States would get involved in the war in Europe.

Tukufu: At that secret London meeting, American and British leaders agreed to strike Hitler. Not in Europe as Roosevelt had wanted, but in North Africa. The compromise was a key moment in the so called "special relationship" between America and Britain. Many of the men at that conference signed our ten shilling note. Did they sign it to commemorate this historic agreement?



Warren: Let me show you a list with the names of the people who were in London at the time that the conference took place.

Tukufu: Okay. Let's see.

Tukufu: The list does have some of the names on Gary's Short Snorter, including Harry Hopkins. But there is a problem. Most of the people on the ten shilling note were not in London on that date. One major player in particular is missing. I mean, just bam! What really strikes me is where is Roosevelt? Warren says there's no doubt that the date on the bill is when the decision was made to hit the Nazis in North Africa. But that doesn't explain why the President's name is on the Short Snorter, when he wasn't in London.

Warren: He's back in Washington. Roosevelt sent Hopkins as his emissary to kind of keep an eye on things.

Tukufu: In total, 22 of the 30 names on the Short Snorter were not at the London meeting. So why did these famous people sign the bill? Dr. Daun Van Ee of the Library of Congress is an expert on the special relationship between Great Britain and the United States. I had e-mailed him a copy of the bill. He thinks that, ironically, it's Roosevelt's signature that may help solve our mystery.

Dr. Daun Van Ee: One of the first things that intrigued me was one of the names on the note.

Tukufu: He points out that the President's signature is alongside a U.S. Admiral, Jesse Oldendorf. He shows me a document that places the two men, not in London, but in the Caribbean on their way to North Africa.

Daun: One of the things I found was a letter from President Roosevelt's naval aid. And he's thanking Admiral Oldendorf for his hospitality that he showed President Roosevelt while they stopped off at Trinidad.

Tukufu: The date on the letter is six months after the London meeting. It's a critical clue. Don believes that at that moment, Roosevelt and Hopkins were dodging the Nazis, en route to North Africa.

Daun: Well, as it turns out, President Roosevelt and his party, including Hopkins, had to take a circuitous route. They had to go down to the Caribbean to Trinidad, and then to Brazil and then over to West Africa and then up to Morocco.

Tukufu: So, what are they in Morocco for?

Tukufu: Just two days after the President passes through Trinidad, in mid-January, he meets Churchill in North Africa, in Casablanca, the capital of Morocco.



Daun: Patton, Churchill, Hopkins and Roosevelt are all there for the great Allied conference at Casablanca.

Tukufu: Interesting.

Tukufu: Daun says some of the signatures on our bill do appear to have been collected in London by Harry Hopkins. But it seems Roosevelt's globe trotting ambassador gathered the rest of the names six months later in North Africa.

Tukufu: This conference would be something worthy of commemoration.

Daun: Oh, sure. Sure. It was very, very important in the history of World War II. And, actually, world history.

Tukufu: The plan agreed upon that summer in London, Operation Torch, had been a success. In November, 65,000 British and American troops had hit the beaches of North Africa and quickly bloodied the German Army. Now, at Casablanca, the tide had turned and the Allies made a dramatic pronouncement.

Daun: Six months earlier it would have been impossible for the Allies to call for the unconditional surrender of their enemies. But after the successful landings, that enabled Churchill and Roosevelt to call for the unconditional surrender of Germany, Italy and Japan.

Tukufu: Harry Hopkins was in Casablanca, and so was the Short Snorter. What was Harry Hopkins' role here?

Tukufu: What Daun told me next shed a whole new meaning on Gary's document. A Short Snorter is a drinking game.

Gary: A drinking game.

Tukufu: Yes. And your Short Snorter is an original.

Gary: Fantastic.

Tukufu: But that's not all.

Tukufu: Daun Van Ee had explained how Gary had a unique record of two of the turning points of the Second World War. America's decision on how to join the fight and the Allies' decision on how to end it. But it was more than this. It was an intimate record of friendship and trust. Of a special relationship between Britain and the United States. It was this relationship which would ultimately help defeat Hitler.



Daun: There were significant differences in strategy and outlook and style. But things like a short snorter note helped bridge those differences.

Tukufu: In our ten shilling note, we can see the skillful diplomatic hand of Harry Hopkins, bringing powerful men together for a common purpose. It wasn't just the agreement made, but it also meant the conversations, the personal relationships were as important as the official discussions taking place. So you have a very incredible piece of history in your hands.

Gary: I had no idea of the importance of the document. So what you've uncovered is absolutely, absolutely incredible.

Tukufu: June 6th, 1944, just sixteen months after Casablanca, Roosevelt and his advisors finally got their invasion of Western Europe. Operation Torch had bought time for the Allies to strengthen their military. And in 1944, British and American troops stormed into occupied France on D-Day. Less than a year later, on May 7th, 1945, Germany surrendered.