

# The Suitcase In My Closet

3-15-34  
are you there-fuzzy  
hear from me hear from me  
George  
Get the suitcase in my closet  
Calif.  
are you  
Marie Hey!

**W**ork on the long-promised and much-anticipated Post-Loss Radio Study is proceeding well and we're hoping to be ready to send it out to all TIGHAR members in June. Much of the delay in completing the report has been due to the need to investigate new information that keeps turning up. For example, we recently discovered a remarkable parallel to one of the more cryptic passages transcribed in Betty's Notebook\* in a letter written by Amelia to her mother.

At roughly one hour into her reception of the alleged transmissions from Earhart, Betty wrote down:

**George  
get the suitcase in my closet  
Calif.**

Her later recollection of the entire phrase was:

**"Tell my husband George to get the suitcase in my closet in California."**

It seems like a strange thing for someone in Earhart's supposed position to say. If the voice Betty heard really was Amelia's, the situation was desperate and her survival very much in question. What could possibly be in the suitcase that would be that important? We even asked the Putnam family if they knew of any papers or items that may have been found in a suitcase after AE's death, but they knew of nothing like that. For some, the presence of such an apparently trivial phrase casts serious doubt upon the possible authenticity of the entire incident.

Recently, however, we've become aware of a passage in a letter that Amelia wrote to her mother in December of 1934 which provides a possible explanation. AE and her husband, along with Paul Mantz and his wife, had sailed from California for Hawaii on December 20 aboard the Matson liner S.S. *Lurline* with Amelia's red Lockheed Vega strapped to the aft tennis deck. It was a poorly kept secret that she was planning to attempt the first Hawaii to the U.S. mainland flight.

The day after Christmas, as the ship was nearing Honolulu, AE wrote a long chatty letter to her mother Amy who was house-sitting in California. That fall, George and Amelia had decided to move their place of residence from the Putnam home in Rye, New York to the Los Angeles area where GP could be near Paramount Studios for whom he was working at that time and Amelia could be near the Lockheed plant in Burbank where the Vega was undergoing overhaul in preparation for the Honolulu/Oakland flight. They had set up housekeeping in a rented bungalow at 10515 Valley Spring Lane near Toluca Lake in North Hollywood and persuaded Amy, who was living with AE's sister Muriel and her family in Massachusetts, to come out for a long visit.

In the December 26 letter to her mother, Amelia covers a multitude of subjects from the tropical weather, to the shipboard gossip her airplane is generating, to preparations for the upcoming flight. Toward the end of the letter she wrote:

"G.P. said you were an awfully good sport to stay alone in the little house. I said I had known that a long time.

"I have taken possession of the stuff in the zipper compartment of my briefcase. Put it away until I turn up and if I don't - burn it. It consists of fragments that mean nothing to anybody but me."

Just what it was that she wanted burned in the event of her death could be a subject for endless tabloid speculation, but the nature of the "stuff" is not important to our investigation. What is interesting is the synchronicity between the instructions to her mother in December 1934 and the putative instructions to her husband in 1937. The existence of extremely private papers and/or items that AE kept in a briefcase at home and her instructions to a close family member to retrieve the material for destruction "if I don't turn up" has the appearance of being a documented precedent for the passage in Betty's Notebook and one which a member of the general public could not possibly know about.

There are, of course, questions. Why did AE need to "take possession" of such private items? From whose possession did she take them? And how did a briefcase in 1934 become a suitcase in 1937? The answers can only be speculative, but the startling similarity between the two events is undeniable. We are forced to consider which of two highly unlikely events is the more improbable:

- that a nonsensical passage in a misunderstood or hoaxed radio transmission happened to mimic a real-life secret.

**or**

- a 15 year old girl in Florida heard a desperate call from Amelia Earhart.



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*\*Betty Klenck heard distress calls from a person she believed was Amelia Earhart on her family's short-wave radio in July 1937. She transcribed words and phrases of what she heard in a notebook that still exists. For a complete description of the notebook and the transcriptions see Betty's Notebook on the TIGHAR website at <http://www.tighar.org/Projects/Earhart/Documents/Notebook/notebook.html>*