

Just before “the arresto” at his home at 4126 Vicuña Mackenna  
just before the start of curfew on Monday September 17  
(less than a week post-Coup, the curfew started at 6),  
Charles Horman wrote what was his last handwritten sign. A

brief unsigned note, to Joyce, his wife. It was found by chance  
by the CBS stringer who’d incidentally crossed paths with Horman  
in the American embassy that very morning, Frank Manitzas,  
on one of his rounds at the home of the Hormans in Macul West.

Joyce only learned of the note when the journalist showed her it.  
Written *either at the time of el arrest or just before*, stated Manitzas,  
the first four paragraphs seem clear: involving paperwork (*the process needed*)  
so the military authorities would let them leave the country; they’d been put

on a Braniff Airlines standby list by Terry Ann Simon, friend of both  
visiting Chile, who’d also reserved rooms at the Riviera Hotel downtown.  
The fifth paragraph, if not obscure, is at best enigmatic. Though Joyce  
understood one reference contained there (a “*pre-arranged code*” between

Charlie and her: alluding to the way they’d hide banknotes in books<sup>i</sup>),  
she drew a complete blank upon reading the final lines: “I went through  
some of the books on Chile while I was here. Some really fascinating shit.  
Wish I had time to just sit and read for a few days. See you soon, Love.”

¿Ojalá tuviera tiempo para simplemente sentarme y leer por algunos días?  
One could speculate forever whether the note held some “implicit message,”

if Charles Horman had left her money (or other prized sign) in a book on Chile

and if the book was one of those taken by the military patrol that returned  
at midnight to the house on Vicuña Mackenna... What to make of: *I went through  
some of the books on Chile while I was here? ¿Pasé por, dejé, tomé, acabé con  
[tucked my password into?] some of the books on Chile mientras estuve aquí?*

---

<sup>i</sup> Frank Manitzas, “The United States and the Issue of Human Rights: “The Death of the Americans in Chile,” typewritten document, 1976.