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7 November 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT : Meeting with Mr. Herbert Manell

1. Yesterday afternoon I met with Mr. Manell in the company of Messrs. Shepanek and Holmes. The purpose of the meeting was to ascertain Mr. Manell's recollection of certain events in Mexico City in connection with the visit of Lee Harvey Oswald there. I told Mr. Manell the question that had arisen over the memoirs of Win Scott.

2. While Mr. Manell has not read the Scott memoirs, he said that he could offer speculation on how Scott came to write such a thing. Mr. Scott at times was "prone to exaggeration." Manell said that Oswald's visit came at the end of the summer. The summer was a period when lots of "kooks" came to Mexico and contacted the Soviet Embassy. Manell said that this proved to be very time consuming from the Station's point of view as the Station was obliged to report to Headquarters and appropriate Embassy components on these people when they were identified. He considered this function to be one of "no profit" operationally, although it was of course a necessary CI responsibility.

3. When Oswald identified himself in a telephone call to the Soviets it was viewed by Manell as being a meaningless instance of one more probable useless contact to report; for the Station had no record or file on Oswald. Manell's wife, a part-time employee, ended up writing a cable. No one thought much of Oswald, and Win Scott signed off on the cable without question.

4. On the question of photographic coverage he said there is a practical explanation of why there were no photographs of Oswald. He said the work was very boring. He believes that the Mexicans were simply not photographing

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everyone. He is categorical in saying that neither he nor his wife ever saw a photograph of Lee Oswald. While neither he nor his wife reviewed all the photography (a responsibility of Anne Goodpasture) he would have seen it had it existed. He feels that Oswald's appearance was so distinctive that it would have made an impression on him. He said that in his meetings with the HSCA he had told them his personal convictions, which he still holds, that there was "no conspiracy at the Station." He worked the Soviet target and would more than likely have seen all pictures. In sum, Manell and wife are convinced that the Station had no photographs of Oswald; and that the Mexican photo LP operators are probably alone responsible for not having taken pictures of Oswald's entries or exists of the Soviet Embassy.

5. Following the assassination of President Kennedy, Manell recalls a number of Agency personnel listening to radio broadcasts. When the name of Oswald occurred, his first reaction was, "My God, that's the man I reported on." Someone else may have responded similarly but he recalls that as his reaction. This led to a cable to Headquarters.

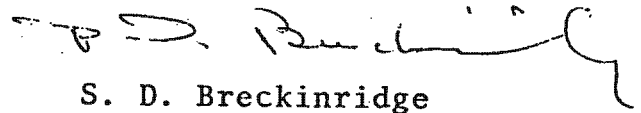
6. Speaking in a rather all-inclusive way he said that there were no photographs of Oswald there then, so there were none to burn or destroy afterwards.

7. Manell mentioned the fact that the HSCA people pressed him on why Tom Karamessines had signed off on a communication for a name trace. He could not understand it. Holmes told him that the Division Chief had signed the cable, which required the next highest person's release. Manell clearly had not thought of that, and in our discussion we observed that the HSCA investigators were asking him (in the field at the time) what had happened at Headquarters at the time.

8. He repeated that there was no conspiracy and he told the HSCA people that they were "barking up the wrong tree." Manell said that at the time he testified he did not know about the statement in Win Scott's memoire so there was no occasion to comment on it.

9. Mr. Manell said that he would speak with his wife to see if she had anything to add to what he stated

above. He reported later that his wife had nothing additional to offer. I told him that I would prepare a draft memo of the conversation and show it to him before putting it into final form, which was done.


S. D. Breckinridge

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