

## MEMORANDUM

To: Review Board  
From: Jeremy Gunn  
Date: May 3, 2017  
Re: Substantive Issues Pertaining to Oswald and Mexico City

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### *CIA's Explanation of the Mexico City events:*

1. Lee Harvey Oswald arrived in Mexico City on September 27, 1963, and (probably) departed on October 2.
2. The CIA first became aware of Oswald's possible presence in Mexico City on October 1. On that date, a person called the Soviet Consulate (at the Embassy) identifying himself as Lee Oswald. The caller spoke in broken Russian and asked whether the Consulate had anything further to report regarding his September 28 visit to the Consulate. The caller also referred to having met with Valery Kostikov.
3. CIA officials in Mexico City examined their photo surveillance of the Soviet compound and identified a person whom they suspected was the Lee Oswald who had called the Consulate. That person was subsequently described as "apparent age 35, athletic build, circa 6 feet, receding hairline, balding top."
4. Through bureaucratic delay, the Mexico City station did not cable CIA HQ about Oswald until October 8 (received on October 9).
5. CIA HQ conducted a file search and identified a 201 file for a "Lee Henry Oswald." HQ cabled Mexico City on October 10 stating that Lee Henry Oswald had been a defector to the Soviet Union. [HQ provided no information about Oswald since his return from the Soviet Union, although it had such information in the 201 file. HQ also said nothing to Mexico City about Kostikov, whom HQ knew to be a member of the KGB Thirteenth Department (Assassinations).]
6. The Mexico City station routinely erased its tapes of conversations approximately two weeks after they were recorded. Any tapes containing Oswald's voice were routinely erased sometime during the month of October and no Oswald tapes were in existence at the time of the assassination.

7. After the assassination, the Mexico City station reviewed its files and determined that Oswald had also visited the Cuban Embassy.
8. The Mexico City station realized that it had misidentified Oswald in the photograph, and that it had no photograph of Oswald. CIA insists that the cameras were not functioning properly during Oswald's visits to the Cuban and Soviet compounds.

*Issues raised by the CIA version of events:*

1. Were the tapes in fact routinely erased? David Slawson and William Coleman of the Warren Commission recall having heard the tapes played to them when they visited Mexico City in 1964. [There are also controversies about whether any FBI officials listened to the tapes after the assassination. Although there are FBI memoranda that suggest that tapes were heard, the FBI officially denies that any of its personnel heard any tapes after the assassination.]
2. It was indeed the standard operating procedure in the Mexico City station to erase the tapes within two weeks. If the Oswald tapes were not erased, *why* were they *not* routinely erased like the other tapes?
3. If there were Oswald tapes, why has the CIA consistently denied their existence (other than to Slawson and Coleman)? Was it really *Oswald's* voice on the tapes? (By almost all accounts, Oswald did not speak "broken" Russian. He made grammatical mistakes, but he was fully comprehensible. KGB transcribers in Minsk apparently did not have any problem recording his words.) Might the tapes contain additional information that is not in the transcript? Might the voice be someone other than Oswald? [There are textual and contextual reasons for believing that it was *not* Oswald who telephoned the Soviet Consulate on October 1.]
4. If there were tapes after the assassination, where are they now?
5. Why did it take the Mexico City station one week to cable HQ about Oswald? Bureaucratic mistake? Contrast the speed with which Mexico City handled the "Laredo" case (completed action within 24 hours).
6. Are there any photographs of Oswald visiting the Cuban and/or Soviet compounds? If the photo surveillance had been working properly, Oswald *should have been* photographed *ten* times. Some CIA people believe that there was at least one photograph taken of Oswald.

7. The CIA did not show photographs from all Cuban and Soviet bases to the HSCA staff. Why not?
8. If there was one or more photographs of Oswald, why did they never surface? Some CIA personnel suspect that there was a photograph of Oswald and that he was accompanied by someone else. Under this explanation, the photograph disappeared because the CIA did not want the other person identified as having been with Oswald. Alternatively, might someone impersonating Oswald have been photographed?
9. In his unpublished memoirs, Winfield Scott, the highly respected Chief of Station in Mexico City, painted a scenario about Mexico City events that is very different from the official CIA version. According to Scott, the Mexico City station was fully aware of all of Oswald's activities in both the Soviet *and* Cuban compounds as they happened. Moreover, Mexico City kept Langley informed contemporaneously during Oswald's visit. The CIA insists that Scott's memoirs are inaccurate.
10. Why did HQ not say anything to the Mexico City station about Kostikov or Oswald's pro-Castro activities in the U.S., even though it had information on these topics?
11. Why did Mexico City apparently tell HQ nothing about Oswald's visit to the Cuban compound? Is Scott correct that the station *did* know about Oswald's activities? Given the surveillance of the Cuban embassy -- including at least one agent inside -- isn't Scott's version more likely?