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D OSCAR CONTRERAS

On March 16, 1967, the American Embassy <sup>received</sup> a <sup>report</sup> ~~call~~ from B. J. Ruyge, the American Consul in Tangier, ~~that~~ <sup>he</sup> ~~reported~~ <sup>that</sup> he had met a reporter <sup>whom</sup> ~~that~~ allegedly met Lee Harvey Oswald

at National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM)

in Mexico City in 1963. [American Embassy Incoming Telegram # A-42

from American Consul Tangier, 3/16/67, CIA # 560; WX-7241, Entry #

570, p 119, CIA # 737] ~~The reporter had told his editor that he had advised him not to report the story. (ibid) The reporter asked the American Consul in Tangier not to reveal his story because he feared losing his job. (ibid)~~

The reporter ~~stated~~ <sup>stressed</sup> that he had only <sup>had</sup> a <sup>fleeting</sup> contact with Oswald, the reporter claimed to know only about Lee Harvey Oswald's desire to travel to Cuba and the Embassy's unwillingness to grant him a visa. (ibid) When B. J. Ruyge asked the reporter for permission to cable the story to the American Embassy, <sup>the reporter</sup> he declined stating that he feared losing his job. (ibid) <sup>the reporter</sup> The reporter explained that <sup>(about his contact with Oswald)</sup> subsequent to the assassination, he had told his editor who had advised him not to report <sup>it.</sup> <sup>(ibid)</sup> the story. The reporter granted B. J. Ruyge permission to cable the story to the American Embassy when Ruyge promised that it would be handled with the strictest confidence. (ibid) Ruyge wrote that he thought the reporter was genuinely concerned about his job. (ibid)

See May 11, 1967 ~~ix~~ A letter from B. J. Ruyge to the State Department, <sup>dated</sup> additional details of the reporter's story, was provided. [Letter to Wesley D. Bowler, Chief of Mexican political affairs, Office of Mexican affairs, Department of State from B. J. Ruyge, American Consul, Tangier, 5/11/67; WX-7241 entry # 597, p 114, CIA # 741] The reporter alleged that he and some fellow students had met Lee Harvey Oswald as they exited the cinesclub at the Escuela de Filosofia (School of Philosophy) at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. (ibid) Oswald told the group that he had gone to the National Autonomous University

of Mexico looking for pro-Castro students who might help him  
 OSwald the assassin that he was  
 promote the Cuban Embassy to grant him a visa. Oswald remained  
 with the students the rest of that day and evening, as well as the  
 following day. (i.b.d) Oswald as a strange and interested individual who  
 spoke very little Spanish. (i.b.d)

R  
 On [redacted], The State Department furnished a copy of Ruge's letter to  
 the Central Intelligence Agency, on [redacted], [The Committee could not learn  
 when the State Dept furnished the letter to the CIA] <sup>On June 14, 1967 CIA Headquarters</sup>  
 informed the Mexico City Station <sup>of copy of Ruge's letter to Oswald.</sup>  
 [Dispatch from the Director to Mexico City, 6/14/67, HHHW 15557; WK-7241  
 Entry # 6016, P.117, CIA # 744] <sup>the</sup> CIA Headquarters concluded Ruge's  
 report "the first piece of substantive info about Oswald's origin  
 in Mexico" since the assassination. [i.b.d] Consequently, <sup>HO's called</sup> they  
 that thought they understood the source's reluctance to become involved  
 "the fact remains that this info cannot continue to be withheld or  
 concealed [i.b.d] Headquarters instructed the Mexico City Station to get the  
 identity of the source from Ruge. In addition, Headquarters asked the Mexico  
 City Station to bear in mind <sup>the following info, by Henry</sup> the allegation that Oswald was a homosexual  
 (i.b.d) The first sentence of the dispatch; "It is in large that the facts  
 obtained through these references will help to confirm that several of  
 Dawson's allegations about involvement of pro-Castro columns, CIA, etc are  
 false", advised the Central Intelligence Agency's interests for  
 examining the story.

On June 29, 1967, the Mexico City Station called Headquarters that  
 a station officer had gone to Tampicit where he had interviewed  
 Rafael Sance, Oscar Estera. [Cable from Mexico City to the Director, WK 115  
 6/29/67; WK-7241 entry # 623, P. 118, CIA # 745] The cable reported that  
 Estera was a reporter for El Sol (a newspaper, The Sun) in Tampico; was  
 since 30 years old; married with three children; studied law at  
 The National Autonomous University of Mexico from 1960 to 1964; belonged to a  
 pro-Castro Cuban group at UNAM; was recruited by the Mexican police for  
 this operation and moved to ~~Tampico~~ <sup>Tampico</sup> to merge the operation.

[Cable from Mexico City to the Director, Mex 1950, 4/25/67; WX-7241, entry # 622 p.118, CIA # 745]

Contreras told the Mexico City Station official that he and four other individuals had met Oswald as they exited a roundtable discussion held at the School of Philosophy at UNAM. Contreras stated that Oswald had made inquiries on the UNAM campus about pro-Cuban groups and had been directed to his group. Contreras reported that the group initially mistrusted Oswald fearing he was a "CIA provocation," they allowed Oswald to remain with them that day and night, and part of the following day. (ibid)

Contreras stated that Oswald never mentioned assassination but kept emphasizing that he had to get to Cuba. In addition Oswald exhibited no homosexual tendencies while he was with the group (ibid)

→

[When Contreras was asked to identify the other four individuals, he refused to reveal their names because he feared that informing on them might endanger his family]

~~The Mexico City Station asked Headquarters if they wanted the Mexican authorities to investigate the Contreras allegation. (ibid)~~

On July 4, 1967, Headquarters called the Mexico City Station that Contreras' story should be explored to the fullest even though he might have fabricated it. [Cable from the Director to Mexico City, 7/4/67, DIR 16823, WX-7241, Entry 626, p.119, CIA # 746] Headquarters suggested that the FBI handle the story. (ibid) The following day, July 5, 1967, the Mexico City Station cabled that it preferred turning Contreras over to the Mexican authorities and the FBI [Cable from Mexico City to the Director, 7/5/67, Mex. 1991; WX-7241, Entry 627, p.119, CIA # 746] The same day, the Chief of Station informed the Legat of Contreras

story, but asked him not to take any action without personally consulting the Mexico City Station. [Memo to Legat, 7/5/67 from chief of Station; Wx-7241, entry 628, p. 119, CIA # 746]

On July 10, 1967 [sic] <sup>[sic] the Revolution</sup> "JKB" wrote a memo <sup>delineating the results</sup> of a ~~review~~ <sup>review</sup> of Oscar Contreras' file. [Memo from ~~JKB~~ <sup>JKB</sup> re Oscar Contreras, 7/10/67; Wx-7241, entry # 634, p. 120, CIA # 747]

According to the memo, <sup>a lone</sup> ~~the only~~ Oscar <sup>Contreras</sup> appeared in the UNAM law school records, Oscar Contreras I adryne, DoB 2/14/39 in Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas. The memo also reported that a newspaper article appearing in "Excelsior" listed <sup>an</sup> Oscar Contreras as a signer of a protest for the Bloque Estudiantil Revolucionario which had been formed mid-1961. [The leaders of the group were Victor Manuel Barrios, Carlos Andalez, Hugo Carlos Acosta, Antonio Tenorio Alame, Jose Guzman Guerrero, Carlos Ochoa Fajola, Daniel Herrera, Bruno Balbuena, Humberto Hernandez, Oscar Gonzalez, <sup>Pascual</sup> Adam Guerra, Pedro Saizy Capela, ~~Abelardo~~ <sup>Pascual</sup> Guzman, Jose Eduardo ~~Rivera~~, Juan Saldaña, Martin Reyes Paussal, Vicente Lullamar, Ruben Fernandez Dorado & Jesus Ochoa] The memo speculated that Contreras probably signed the protest as a front man to protect the real leaders of the group. (i.b.d)

The Mexico City <sup>Station</sup> called the informant <sup>Headquarters</sup> + HQS the following day June 11/67. [Dispatch from Mexico City to Director, #MMA 324 97, 7/11/67; Wx-7241, Entry # 635, p. 121, CIA # 748]

~~[There is no further information in the Oswald 'P' file concerning Contreras. The CIA never reviewed a 201 file on him.]~~

~~It is apparent from the file review that the Central Intelligence Agency was <sup>extremely</sup> ~~originally~~ ~~interested~~ ~~in~~ ~~Contreras~~ ~~because~~ ~~it~~ ~~felt~~ ~~that~~ ~~Contreras~~ ~~might~~ ~~be~~ ~~helpful~~ ~~in~~ ~~giving~~ ~~the~~ ~~United~~ ~~States~~ ~~Department~~ ~~of~~ ~~Justice~~ ~~information~~ ~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~time~~ ~~was~~ ~~conducting~~ ~~an~~ ~~investigation~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~assassination~~ ~~of~~ ~~John~~ ~~Edgar~~ ~~Hoover~~ ~~and~~ ~~about~~ ~~involvement~~ ~~of~~ ~~anti~~ ~~Communist~~ ~~groups~~ ~~and~~ ~~CIA~~ ~~files~~ ~~when~~~~

~~include this~~

# E. Cubana Airlines

of the Senate Select Committee on Governmental Operations

In Book I of the final report on [the performance of the intelligence agencies in the investigation of the John F. Kennedy Assassination] the CIA is criticized for its apparent failure to fully pursue leads surrounding the assassination of President Kennedy and then to fully report to the Warren Commission the results of the investigation they did undertake.

One such lead discussed was a reported five-hour delay (6:00 P.M. EST to 11:00 P.M. EST) of a Cubana flight from Mexico City to Havana the evening of President Kennedy's assassination, November 22, 1963. [The Investigation of the Assassination of <sup>President</sup> John F. Kennedy: Performance of the Intelligence Agencies, Book I, Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations, 4/23/76, p. 30, Senate Report No. 94-755] The most intriguing aspect of the SSC account involved the alleged delay of a Cubana flight to await the arrival at 10:30 P.M. EST of a private twin-engine aircraft. The aircraft deposited an unidentified passenger who boarded the Cubana aircraft without customs clearance and traveled to Havana in the pilot's cabin. [ibid p. 60]

The House Select Committee on Assassinations examined the documents connected to that lead to determine whether the facts which were known by the CIA about the "alleged" <sup>slight</sup> delay warranted further investigation and what investigation was undertaken; b) whether any of that information was reported to the Warren Commission; and (c) whether the known facts suggested any involvement in the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

A chronology of the activity of the CIA on this lead analyzes the information which is in the possession of the agency.

To be done at CIA

The source of that lead was an [Italian diplomat, \_\_\_\_\_] who allegedly was on the same flight. [\_\_\_\_\_]

In the 1977 Angleton General report, the CIA  
 attempted to refute several "misstatements" in the Senate Select  
 Committee report regarding the "alleged" Cuban Airlines flight.  
 That was apparently the only reference by the Agency on the  
 point after the Senate report appeared.  
 The Angleton General report stated the statement  
 in the Senate report that the "Central Intelligence Agency  
 had no information indicating that a freemasonry investigation  
 was conducted to determine the identity of the passenger  
 and had no further information on the passenger, and  
 no explanation for why a freemasonry investigation was not  
 conducted" [The investigation of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy:  
 Performance of the Intelligence Agency, Book 5, subcommittee to study  
 Governmental Operations, 4/22/76, p. 30 Senate Report No. 94-755] The  
 Angleton General report explained that the Mexican authorities  
 were asked about the reported flight delay, although they were  
 no needed response [1977 CIA IC Report, TAB B, P. 11] In addition,  
 the Angleton General report stated that the Central Intelligence  
 Agency conducted regular surveillance of Cuban flights, plus  
 calls reports to Headquarters (ibid p. 11) There was one [considered]  
 CIA surveillance team [CLIFFIER] that observed arrivals and  
 departures of Cuban flights, reporting only unusual [and pending  
 reports of flight movements] (ibid p. 11) [The Mexican government had  
 its own surveillance team] at the airport which provided the  
 CIA with photographs of passengers and copies of passenger lists  
 of individuals traveling to Cuba (ibid p. 11) [In addition, telephone  
 tap operations (LEEVOR) against the Cuban Embassy provided  
 transcripts of conversations between the Cuban Airlines office and  
 the Mexican Angleton Contact Office (ibid p. 11)]

~~5th [LEEVOR] [transcript]~~

The [LIENVOY] transcripts record a series of discussions <sup>concerning</sup> about the status of the November 22, 1963 <sup>delayed</sup> Cubana flight-- when it arrived and when it departed. The transcripts show that the flight arrived at the airport at 1620 hours (All times used will be Mexico City time to avoid confusion) Mexico City time. (HSCA Staff Review of November 22, 1963 [LIENVOY] transcripts) Prior to the arrival of the aircraft, one person stated that the aircraft was due at 1630 hours and "it will go" at 1730, suggesting a quick turnaround that would have reduced unloading and loading time, as well as servicing to a relatively short period. (ibid) However, the <sup>key</sup> report on the departure of the aircraft was a statement at 2040 hours that the aircraft had departed for Cuba five minutes earlier, i.e., 2035 hours. (ibid)

Based on the above, [LIENVOY] <sup>which</sup> was the only record that existed in the CIA files on the arrival and departure times of the Cubana flight) [Neither <sup>24</sup> the Mexico Surveillance team] reported the arrival or departure flights of the Nov. 22, 1963 Cubana Airlines flight to Cuba] the <sup>what</sup> D.C. concluded that there were major differences between <sup>about the</sup> the alleged delayed Cubana flight and the known facts. [ibid p. 2] The Cubana flight was on the ground in Mexico City for a total of four hours and about ten minutes. <sup>(ibid p. 12)</sup> It was not delayed five hours as reported in Book II. [The investigation of the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy, Performance of the Intelligence Agencies, Book II, Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations, 4/23/76, p. 30. Senate Intelligence Report No. 94-785] The Cubana flight departed at 2035 hours Mexico City time, 55 minutes ahead of the alleged arrival at 2130 of a private flight with a secret passenger. (ibid p. 30) The 2035 departure differed with the Senate Intelligence Committee Report that the Cubana flight departed at 2200 hours (ibid p. 31)



In addition, the J.C. staff concluded that in view of the surveillance coverage of the Mexican flight [by both the CIA + Mexican government, <sup>24</sup>]  
it was doubtful that the alleged activity involving the possible hijacked aircraft and passenger, would have gone unnoticed or unreported had it occurred. (b)(7)  
1974 CIA IC Report, TAB B, p.12

Presumably, the disingenuous comments made by the Inspector General are meant to explain the fact that the CIA did not take more aggressive investigative steps to ascertain whether there might have been some connection between the delayed flight and the assassination of John F. Kennedy. In that regard, the 1977 Inspector General report explains that the Agency had carried this lead as far as it was able by

reviewing the <sup>surveillance file of the</sup> [LIFE, ENVOY] <sup>operations</sup> <sup>and asking</sup> [the Mexican] <sup>the aircraft</sup> <sup>the 7/7/73.</sup>  
[surveillance teams] <sup>all</sup> <sup>at</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>time</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>flight</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>fact</sup> <sup>that</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>passenger</sup> <sup>was</sup> <sup>not</sup> <sup>on</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>aircraft</sup> <sup>on</sup> <sup>7/7/73.</sup>  
IC 1977 Report, p.32

of access to further information about the allegedly delayed flight + unidentified passenger <sup>may</sup> <sup>not</sup> <sup>be</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>case</sup>, that fact does not explain either the failure of the CIA to take more seriously the suspicions of the press, and most importantly, to report whatever information it had to the Warren Commission. The attempts of the Inspector General <sup>attempts</sup> to minimize the value of the information provided on the unidentified passenger <sup>do</sup> not diminish the apparent negligence of the agency in seriously pursuing the information as it was received. The CIA is not to be faulted for the strength of its intelligence gathering, but rather for the judgement which kept that intelligence from the Warren Commission <sup>the WC</sup> [which was mandated to pass on the strength of exactly that kind of information]

Despite what is now known about the alleged delay of the Cuban Airlines flight and the unidentified passenger, the Warren Commission may have wanted to <sup>shy</sup> <sup>away</sup> <sup>from</sup> <sup>its</sup> <sup>suspicions</sup> which would remain, and patify itself that these circumstances did not indicate foreign involvement in the assassination. The CIA contributed to those suspicions by not airing the matter and explaining

circumstances which could shed light on otherwise private appearing events.

The Committee has documented instances where the CIA decided to freeze passing information to the Warren Commission out of a desire to not lay bare extremely sensitive sources and methods of intelligence. The [LIFEWAY + LIFE] operations certainly fall within that category.