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- Mr. Colman

SAC, Miami (2-165)

September 6, 1957

Director, FBI (109-430)-1744

CARLOS PRIO SOCARRAS
FOREIGN POLITICAL MATTERS - CUBA

JAMES EDWARD POWELL
IMPERSONATION
KIDNAPING

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 11/4/83 BY SP3CIC/OW

211,326

7-9-94

SP8 MAC/KSR
(JFK)

Reurlet dated 9/3/57.

Based upon your conclusion that the facts do not constitute a bona fide kidnaping complaint, no further action need be taken regarding that phase of the investigation other than to advise local police of the alleged plot to kidnap Carlos Prio Socarras.

NOTE:

Brother-in-law of Prio advised Miami Office on 8/12/57 one of Prio's associates received information that subject Powell and two others were acting under instructions of Batista agents to kidnap Prio and take him to Cuba where he would be shot by Cuban authorities who would announce he made an unauthorized landing. Facts developed by Miami reflect Powell is con man who has criminal record for forgery, larceny, worthless checks and impersonation. In early July, 1957, he contacted Batista agents in Cuba and Miami in effort to get money based on his claim he could furnish information regarding Prio and arms shipments. Info he furnished was unfounded. On 8/12/57 prior to the report of the alleged kidnaping plot Powell was arrested by Miami Agents for impersonating a Department of Justice official allegedly in Miami to investigate Prio. Powell is in jail. Info re kidnaping plot appears to have been attempt by Powell to work con game against Prio as well as Batista. Miami advises it is conducting no further investigation since facts not considered to constitute bona fide kidnaping complaint.

Tolson _____
Nichols _____
Boardman _____
Belmont _____
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Gandy _____

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COMM - FBI
SEP 16 1957

Mail Room

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Mr. HERNANDEZ also was able to advise Agents immediately prior to the arrest of POWELL, that he was in possession of a revolver. This was found on his person at the time of his arrest.

POWELL was brought before the U. S. Commissioner and placed in jail under \$10,000. bond.

On the evening of August 12, 1957, several hours after POWELL's apprehension, Dr. ENRIQUE HENRIQUEZ, brother-in-law of CARLOS PRIO, and a former PSI of this office, telephonically requested SA GEORGE E. DAVIS to call upon him in regard to a "very important" matter.

Dr. HENRIQUEZ advised that information had been received through one of PRIO's associates, whose identity Dr. HENRIQUEZ declined to furnish, that "JIM" POWELL, working with a Puerto Rican known as ~~CARRASQUILLO~~ ^{F.L.A.} and a girl friend of CARRASQUILLO, had come from Cuba fifteen days previously with instructions from the Cuban authorities to kidnap CARLOS PRIO, transport him by plane, then located at Naples, Florida, make a landing at a fixed place in Cuba so that the Cuban authorities could shoot him, claiming that PRIO was trying to escape from an unauthorized landing; that CARRASQUILLO would do the actual shooting; that machine guns had been seen in POWELL's car. Dr. HENRIQUEZ said that a former defense minister in PRIO's government, NICHOLAS _____, had come from Cuba and told ANTONIO PRIO, brother of CARLOS, that there was a project on to kill PRIO.

Dr. HENRIQUEZ said that the PRIO group would like to have the information concerning this matter furnished to the newspapers, so that the public could be informed of the activities of the BATISTA government, as it would make good propaganda for PRIO.

SA DAVIS advised Dr. HENRIQUEZ that the FBI could not become involved in internal Cuban politics and that it would not make premature press releases.

SA DAVIS advised HENRIQUEZ that POWELL, who answered the same general description which HENRIQUEZ furnished, had been arrested that afternoon on an impersonation charge and was in Federal custody.

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Dr. HENRIQUEZ expressed surprise and seemed to be disappointed.

SA DAVIS told Dr. HENRIQUEZ that he would like to talk to any persons who possessed information that POWELL or any of his associates, or anybody else, planned to kidnap PRIO. The investigative jurisdiction of the FBI over kidnapping laws was explained to him.

Dr. HENRIQUEZ said that he would have to check first to determine whether or not the persons who possessed such information could be made available for interview and that he would immediately notify SA DAVIS on the following morning in the event they could be interviewed.

Dr. HENRIQUEZ did not call on the following morning and has, as a matter of fact, not called to date to furnish this information.

Also, during the above interview, Dr. HENRIQUEZ was informed that if CARLOS PRIO felt that he needed police protection, that he should immediately notify the local police authorities.

Two days later, HAL MC INTYRE, Investigator, States Attorney's Office, Miami, telephonically advised that DAVID WALTERS, attorney for PRIO, had asked him to locate and interview POWELL concerning the alleged kidnapping plot. MC INTYRE was advised that POWELL was in jail.

On August 16, 1957, MC INTYRE advised SA DAVIS that he had interviewed POWELL at the county jail, that POWELL had denied any plot to kill PRIO, but claimed that BATISTA's men had offered him money to furnish information concerning arms smuggling.

Also, on the day following the interview with Dr. HENRIQUEZ, SA DAVIS advised Consul General HERNANDEZ that information had been received from a source, which was not disclosed to Mr. HERNANDEZ, that BATISTA had allegedly instructed POWELL to kidnap PRIO. Mr. HERNANDEZ replied that any such allegation was, of course, ridiculous and that the Cuban government would not stoop to such tactics.

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Mr. HERNANDEZ again pointed out that POWELL had voluntarily and on his own initiative approached Col. CANTILLO in Cuba, claiming to possess information concerning planes and guns to be smuggled into Cuba and that POWELL had made about two trips to Cuba to see CANTILLO. HERNANDEZ said that neither he nor CANTILLO had paid POWELL any money, although they had offered to pay him money in the event POWELL was able to furnish any information which could be used as the basis for any seizures by the appropriate U. S. authorities before such arms or planes were shipped out of this country.

Reference is made to Legat, Havana letter to the Bureau dated August 7, 1957 entitled "J. E. POWELL, Police Liaison, Foreign Miscellaneous", wherein it is stated that Col. CARLOS CANTILLO GONZALEZ, head of the Cuban Army Military Intelligence Service had originally requested information on POWELL on July 5, 1957.

Examination of Miami file on POWELL reflects that he has a criminal record which includes such charges as forgery, larceny after trust, worthless checks, escaping from convict camp and impersonating an Army officer.

In view of the failure of HENRIQUEZ and PRIO to make available for interview their source, the political rivalry between the PRIO and BATISTA people, and the fact that POWELL was obviously attempting to work a con game against both factions, the above facts were not considered to constitute a bona fide kidnapping complaint.

This information is submitted for the advice of the Bureau.